

PRAYERS AND THANKSGIVINGS,
UPON SEVERAL OCCASIONS.

The OCCASIONAL PRAYERS AND THANKSGIVINGS are almost entirely new; although the old Litanies ended with a series of Collects, including, among others, the prayer "O God, whose nature," &c., the Collect for Peace in our Evening Service, the Collect for the Clergy and People, a Prayer for all Conditions of Men, and for all Souls. They have the greater diffuseness of style of the later Collects, and, dealing as they do largely with the fortunes of the nation as a nation, are naturally full of Old Testament allusions and phrases. As they are concerned mainly with temporal blessings and scourges, they bring out with peculiar emphasis the mystery—to us probably insoluble—of that harmony of human prayer (as of human action) with the Supreme Will of God manifesting itself in "Physical Laws," which is instinctively felt by all humanity and expressly declared to us in Holy Scripture. They occupy necessarily a subordinate position; and, more distinctly than any other prayers, bear upon them an obvious conditionality, being offered only "according to His Will" (1 John v. 14). It is almost needless to add that they imply also that co-operation of action, which fanaticism is apt to ignore, and worldliness to exaggerate,—“Strive and pray.”

PRAYERS.

For Rain.—This was inserted in 1540, with some slight resemblance to an old Collect from the Sacramentary of Gregory, found in the Sarum Missal. The preamble refers to Our Lord's express promise in Matt. vi. 33—the same chapter which contains the Lord's Prayer, with its petition, "Give us this day our daily bread"—authorizing supplication for needful food, and hence for the "moderate rain and showers" necessary to secure it. The blessing is sought, as usual, not only for our comfort, but for God's glory.

For Fair Weather, also found (with slight verbal variation) in the Prayer Book of 1549; and again bearing some resemblance to an old Collect (from the Sacramentary of Gregory) in the Sarum Missal. It refers to the promise of God after the Flood (see Gen. viii. 21 & ix. 11), and recognises physical plagues, as chastisements for our iniquities from His hand, destined to work out their purpose by our repentance and amendment, and then to give place to thankful adoration of Him who doth not willingly afflict.

In time of Dearth and Famine.—The first prayer, inserted in 1552, follows out the same idea, only tracing to God with especial emphasis the guidance of all physical forces and the gift of all animal life, and asking His blessing "for the love of Jesus Christ Our Lord."

The alternative Prayer (also inserted in 1552, but apparently omitted in 1559) was restored with some verbal changes (probably by Bishop Cosin) in 1662. The omission may have been due to the fact that, as it refers to the history of Israel in 2 Kings vi. 25—vii. 20, and as in that case the famine came from the enmity of man, and was removed by the defeat of that enmity, the preamble does not absolutely accord in idea with the substance of the Prayer. The conclusion is specially suggestive of the right use of temporal blessing, first, for God's glory, next, for relief of our brethren, lastly, for our own comfort.

In the time of War and Tumults, inserted in 1552, the words "and tumults" being significantly added in 1662. There is a Collect for the same occasion in the

PRAYERS AND THANKSGIVINGS,
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¶ To be used before the two final Prayers of the Litany, or of Morning and Evening Prayer.

PRAYERS.

For Rain.

O GOD, heavenly Father, who by thy Son Jesus Christ hast promised to all them that seek thy kingdom, and the righteousness thereof, all things necessary to their bodily sustenance; Send us, we beseech thee, in this our necessity, such moderate rain and showers, that we may receive the fruits of the earth to our comfort, and to thy honour; through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

For fair Weather.

O ALMIGHTY Lord God, who for the sin of man didst once drown all the world, except eight persons, and afterward of thy great mercy didst promise never to destroy it so again; We humbly beseech thee, that although we for our iniquities have worthily deserved a plague of rain and waters, yet upon our true repentance thou wilt send us such weather, as that we may receive the fruits of the earth in due season; and learn both by thy punishment to amend our lives, and for thy clemency to give thee praise and glory; through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

In the time of Dearth and Famine.

O GOD, heavenly Father, whose gift it is, that the rain doth fall, the earth is fruitful, beasts increase, and fishes do multiply; Behold, we beseech thee, the afflictions of thy people; and grant that the scarcity and dearth, which we do now most justly suffer for

our iniquity, may through thy goodness be mercifully turned into cheapness and plenty; for the love of Jesus Christ our Lord, to whom with thee and the Holy Ghost be all honour and glory, now and for ever. *Amen.*

Or this.

O GOD, merciful Father, who, in the time of Elisha the prophet, didst suddenly in Samaria turn great scarcity and dearth into plenty and cheapness; Have mercy upon us, that we, who are now for our sins punished with like adversity, may likewise find a seasonable relief: Increase the fruits of the earth by thy heavenly benediction; and grant that we, receiving thy bountiful liberality, may use the same to thy glory, the relief of those that are needy, and our own comfort; through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

In the time of War and Tumults.

O ALMIGHTY God, King of all kings, and Governour of all things, whose power no creature is able to resist, to whom it belongeth justly to punish sinners, and to be merciful to them that truly repent; Save and deliver us, we humbly beseech thee, from the hands of our enemies; abate their pride, assuage their malice, and confound their devices; that we, being armed with thy defence, may be preserved evermore from all perils, to glorify thee, who art the only giver of all victory; through the merits of thy only Son, Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

Sarum Missal, taken from the Sacramentary of Gregory; but the resemblance is slight. The address is to God, as Almighty in two senses—as King of kings over all men, and Ruler over all things—and as using both men and things as instruments of His chastisement and mercy. The prayer is for victory, simply as a deliverance from the pride of strength, the malice of enmity, the devices of craft, arrayed against us; and it ends with a promise to give glory, not to ourselves, but to God alone, as the Giver of all victory.

In time of any Common Plague or Sickness, inserted in 1552, enlarged in 1662 (by the reference to the people in the wilderness). For the scourges of those days it was even more needed than now, and the Great Plague of London in 1666 brought out that need with terrible emphasis. The reference is to the plagues of Num. xvi. 44–50 and 2 Sam. xxiv.—the one the chastisement of rebellion, the other of pride—and to the atonements of Aaron and David, accepted by God's mercy: the prayer is simply for withdrawal of the present chastisement through the Great Atoner, the Lord Jesus Christ.

The Ember-Week Prayers.—(For the origin of the name Ember-Week, see *Table of Fasts, &c.*) The offering of such Prayers is of ancient date, both in relation to the natural Seasons and to the occurrence of Ordinations. The Collects, however, are original, inserted in 1662, and referring only to the latter subject. The former Prayer is the fuller and the more solemn, laying emphatic stress on the purchase of the Church by the Atonement of Christ, praying both for faithfulness and wisdom of choice in the Bishops and for grace in those chosen, and is suitable for the earlier part of the week; the latter, noting simply the diversity of gifts and Orders in the Church, seems to presuppose the choice made, praying only for those about to be ordained, and is more suitable for the later days. Both are full of Scriptural allusion; both

dwell on the two-fold ministry of doctrine and life; both on the two-fold object sought, God's glory and man's salvation.

A Prayer that may be said after any of the former, i.e. as a general expression of penitence and pleading for mercy, after the special prayers of the same purport. It is, however, a prayer for deliverance, not from any external punishment of sin, but from sin's heaviest penalty—the spiritual bondage, which it brings on the soul. It is a translation of a Collect (from Gregory's Sacramentary) in the Sarum Litany, inserted in the Litany of 1544, afterwards, for some unknown reason, omitted till 1559.

Prayer for the High Court of Parliament, inserted in 1662. It is obviously taken from a prayer, exactly coincident in the opening and closing sections, though different and less antithetical in the central portion (“that all things . . . generations”), issued in 1625 and 1628, and supposed to have been written by Laud. As it stands, it is a fine specimen of the more diffuse and rhetorical style, which generally marks the prayers composed in the later Revisions. The term “religious and gracious,” originally applied to Charles I., though not without precedent in ancient Liturgies, is notable, as departing from the sound rule, elsewhere observed, of refraining from the attribution to the Sovereign of any personal qualities. (It was proposed to strike out all such epithets in the Scheme of Revision in 1689.) The prayer itself dwells forcibly on the two objects of all right policy—the glory of God and the welfare of the people, both as a Church and as a nation; and prays that upon this foundation, the conditions of national welfare, described in an ascending climax—as social, moral, and spiritual—may be established for ever.

Prayer for all Conditions of Men, composed by Bishop Gunning, and inserted in 1662. Being intended as a substitute for the Litany, it is said (with

In the time of any common Plague or Sickness.

O ALMIGHTY God, who in thy wrath didst send a plague upon thine own people in the wilderness, for their obstinate rebellion against Moses and Aaron; and also, in the time of king David, didst slay with the plague of Pestilence threescore and ten thousand, and yet remembering thy mercy didst save the rest; Have pity upon us miserable sinners, who now are visited with great sickness and mortality; that like as thou didst then accept of an atonement, and didst command the destroying Angel to cease from punishing, so it may now please thee to withdraw from us this plague and grievous sickness; through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

† *In the Ember Weeks, to be said every day, for those that are to be admitted into Holy Orders.*

ALMIGHTY God, our heavenly Father, who hast purchased to thyself an universal Church by the precious blood of thy dear Son; Mercifully look upon the same, and at this time so guide and govern the minds of thy servants the Bishops and Pastors of thy flock, that they may lay hands suddenly on no man, but faithfully and wisely make choice of fit persons to serve in the sacred Ministry of thy Church. And to those which shall be ordained to any holy function give thy grace and heavenly benediction; that both by their life and doctrine they may set forth thy glory, and set forward the salvation of all men; through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

Or this.

ALMIGHTY God, the giver of all good gifts, who of thy di-

vine providence hast appointed divers Orders in thy Church; Give thy grace, we humbly beseech thee, to all those who are to be called to any office and administration in the same; and so replenish them with the truth of thy doctrine, and endue them with innocence of life, that they may faithfully serve before thee, to the glory of thy great Name, and the benefit of thy holy Church; through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

† *A Prayer that may be said after any of the former.*

O GOD, whose nature and property is ever to have mercy and to forgive, receive our humble petitions; and though we be tied and bound with the chain of our sins, yet let the pitifulness of thy great mercy loose us; for the honour of Jesus Christ, our Mediator and Advocate. *Amen.*

† *A Prayer for the High Court of Parliament, to be read during their Session.*

MOST gracious God, we humbly beseech thee, as for this Kingdom in general, so especially for the High Court of Parliament, under our most religious and gracious King at this time assembled: That thou wouldest be pleased to direct and prosper all their consultations to the advancement of thy glory, the good of thy Church, the safety, honour, and welfare of our Sovereign, and his Dominions; that all things may be so ordered and settled by their endeavours, upon the best and surest foundations, that peace and happiness, truth and justice, religion and piety, may be established among us for all generations. These and all other necessaries, for them, for us, and thy whole Church, we humbly beg in the

great probability) to have at first included the substance of the three Prayers for the King, the Royal Family, and the Clergy and people (after the words "righteousness of life")—perhaps in deference to the desire for such long forms of Prayer expressed by the Presbyterians at the Savoy Conference, and certainly not without precedent in the "Church Militant Prayer," and the older originals from which it is drawn. Of this the word "Finally" remains as an indication. The Prayer itself is a singularly beautiful specimen of the later type. Like the petition for "all men" in the Litany, and the 3rd Collect for Good Friday, it is notable as extending the scope of petition, beyond even the Catholic Church, to all

THANKSGIVINGS.

The General Thanksgiving, composed by Bishop Reynolds, and inserted in 1662, follows the same general type, with perhaps some faint indication of the didactic tendency common in the prayers of that period. It will be seen that it is half thanksgiving and half prayer. It should be observed that the thanksgiving, while it touches on the blessings of this life, passes them over lightly, to dwell with strong emphasis on the inestimable spiritual blessings of redemption, grace, and hope of glory, corresponding to the "justification," "sanctification," and "glorification" described in Holy Scripture, as the beginning, progress, and end of spiritual life. The Prayer is for the spirit of thankfulness, and for grace to express that spirit "not only with our lips but in our lives" of self-devotion and righteousness.

The occasional custom of repeating this Thanksgiving after the Minister, although in itself appropriate enough, and following the precedent of Confession and Prayer, was certainly not originally intended, and has perhaps arisen from a mistaken idea of the meaning of the word "General."

mankind, in prayer for their conversion to God's Truth and Christ's Redemption. Taking, of course, Holy Baptism for granted in "all who profess and call themselves Christians," it seems to regard them all as potentially members of that Catholic Church, though it clearly indicates the existence of heresy and schism by the prayer that they may be "led into the way of truth," and hold the true faith so gained, in "unity of spirit and the bond of peace" (Eph. iv. 4), as well as individual "righteousness of life." It adds, lastly, a large and earnest petition for all the afflicted, that they may be at once comforted by patience now, and relieved by a happy issue in God's good time.

Special Thanksgivings.—All these were inserted in 1604 (in compliance with the very reasonable request of the Puritan party), except the Thanksgiving for the Restoration of Public Peace at Home, added in 1662. They are almost peculiar to the English Prayer Book, and those derived from it. In the American Prayer Book their number and variety have been largely increased. Generally speaking, they are echoes of the corresponding prayers, and are full of Scriptural quotations or allusions (chiefly taken from the Psalms).

Thus the *Thanksgiving for Rain* alludes to the promise in Deut. xi. 14 of "the former and the latter rain," i.e. the spring and autumn rainy seasons of Palestine; and takes up in its thanksgiving the words of Ps. lxxviii. 9. Like the corresponding Prayer, it recognises temporal blessing as not only ministering to man's comfort, but as setting forth God's glory.

The *Thanksgiving for Fair Weather*, not finding in the Psalms any note of "the plague of immoderate rain and waters," of which Eastern experience knew so little, nevertheless quotes from

THANKSGIVINGS.

Name and Mediation of Jesus Christ our most blessed Lord and Saviour. *Amen.*

¶ *A Collect or Prayer for all Conditions of men, to be used at such times when the Litany is not appointed to be said.*

O GOD, the Creator and Preserver of all mankind, we humbly beseech thee for all sorts and conditions of men; that thou wouldst be pleased to make thy ways known unto them, thy saving health unto all nations. More especially, we pray for the good estate of the Catholick Church; that it may be so guided and governed by thy good Spirit, that all who profess and call themselves

Christians may be led into the way of truth, and hold the faith in unity of spirit, in the bond of peace, and in righteousness of life. Finally, we commend to thy fatherly goodness all those, who are any ways afflicted, or distressed, in mind, body, or estate; [*especially when any distresses befall them,] that it may please thee to comfort and relieve them, according to their several necessities, giving them patience under their sufferings, and a happy issue out of all their afflictions. And this we beg for Jesus Christ his sake. *Amen.*

THANKSGIVINGS.

¶ *A General Thanksgiving.*

ALMIGHTY God, Father of all mercies, we thine unworthy servants do give thee most humble and hearty thanks for all thy goodness and loving-kindness to us, and to all men; [*particularly to those who desire now to offer up their praises and thanksgivings for thy late mercies vouchsafed unto them.] We bless thee for our creation, preservation, and all the blessings of this life; but above all, for thine inestimable love in the redemption of the world by our Lord Jesus Christ; for the means of grace, and for the hope of glory. And, we beseech thee, give us that due sense of all thy mercies, that our hearts may be unfeignedly thankful, and that we shew forth thy praise, not only with our lips, but in our lives; by giving up ourselves to thy service, and by walking before thee in holiness and righteousness all

our days; through Jesus Christ our Lord, to whom with thee and the Holy Ghost be all honour and glory, world without end. *Amen.*

For Rain.

O GOD our heavenly Father, who by thy gracious providence dost cause the former and the latter rain to descend upon the earth, that it may bring forth fruit for the use of man; We give thee humble thanks that it hath pleased thee, in our great necessity, to send us at the last a joyful rain upon thine inheritance, and to refresh it when it was dry, to the great comfort of us thy unworthy servants, and to the glory of thy holy Name; through thy mercies in Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

For fair Weather.

O LORD God, who hast justly humbled us by thy late plague of immoderate rain and waters, and in thy mercy hast relieved and comforted our souls by this seasonable and blessed change of

Ps. lxxix. 14 the expression of praise and adoration, there called out by deliverance from persecution and bloodshed.

The *Thanksgiving for Plenty*—accepted thankfully as an answer to special prayer—follows Ps. lxxxv. 12 in referring “the increase of our land” to “the loving-kindness” of God.

The *Thanksgiving for Peace and Deliverance from our Enemies* acknowledges (with Ps. lxi. 1, 2) God as our Tower of Defence against all enemies, and His goodness in saving us from being a prey to them (Ps. cxxxv. 1, 2); and adds a prayer, like many of the prophetic utterances, for such continuance of His mercies, as may make His salvation and deliverance of us manifest to all the world.

The *Thanksgiving for restoring Public Peace at Home* (appropriately added in 1662) again (with Ps. lxxviii. 6) looks to God as the giver of unity, and (with Ps. lxxv. 7) as stilling “the madness of the people.” It bears, perhaps naturally, some slight indication (which in the original draft was stronger) of the polemical feeling, which disfigured the “State

Services” of the period. It is, moreover, less of thanksgiving than of prayer for the future, with some apparent desire to teach what that future ought to be, and to lay peculiar stress on the duties of “quietness and peaceableness” (see 1 Tim. ii. 1, 2), then naturally emphasized, and of continued thankfulness for the blessings we already have.

The first *Thanksgiving for Deliverance from the Plague, &c.*, with the Psalmist, confesses the scourge of God as justly deserved by our sins, and praises Him as in judgment remembering mercy. Its answer to His mercy is (see Rom. xii. 1), as in the Prayer of Oblation in the Communion Service, a thankful dedication of ourselves, our souls and bodies, to Him.

The second, in the allusion to “all the punishments on disobedience threatened in Thy Law” clearly refers to “the curse” of Deut. xxviii. 15, 24. It is specially notable, as acknowledging the weak unworthiness even of our repentance—accepted nevertheless in God’s great mercy—and ending with a singularly emphatic outpouring of praise and thanksgiving.

INTRODUCTION TO THE

COLLECTS, EPISTLES, AND GOSPELS.

ORIGIN.—The arrangement of Collects, Epistles, and Gospels for the Sundays and Holy-days of the Ecclesiastical year is taken from the Sarum Missal, with (as usual) some simplification and abbreviation, and with full freedom of variation and of original composition, wherever these seemed necessary for carrying out the objects kept always in view by the Compilers of our Prayer Book. The selection differs considerably from the modern Roman Use, and is, therefore, a notable instance of the independent development of the English Services, from the days of St. Augustine of Canterbury downwards.

THE EPISTLES AND GOSPELS.—From the account given of the Christian Services by Justin Martyr in his Apology (where he speaks of the reading of the “Memoirs drawn up by the Apostles,” which are certainly our Gospels, “or the writings of the Prophets”), it appears that readings from the historical or doctrinal portions of Scripture formed, from the earliest times, a regular part of the Communion Service. Both, indeed, appear to have been used; for in the Apostolical Constitutions the reading “of the Law and the Prophets and the Epistles and Acts and Gospels” is referred to.

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weather; We praise and glorify thy holy Name for this thy mercy, and will always declare thy loving-kindness from generation to generation; through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

For Plenty.

O MOST merciful Father, who of thy gracious goodness hast heard the devout prayers of thy Church, and turned our dearth and scarcity into cheapness and plenty; We give thee humble thanks for this thy special bounty; beseeching thee to continue thy loving-kindness unto us, that our land may yield us her fruits of increase, to thy glory and our comfort; through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

For Peace and Deliverance from our Enemies.

O ALMIGHTY God, who art a strong tower of defence unto thy servants against the face of their enemies; We yield thee praise and thanksgiving for our deliverance from those great and apparent dangers wherewith we were compassed: We acknowledge it thy goodness that we were not delivered over as a prey unto them; beseeching thee still to continue such thy mercies towards us, that all the world may know that thou art our Saviour and mighty Deliverer; through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

For restoring Public Peace at Home.

O ETERNAL God, our heavenly Father, who alone makest men to be of one mind in a house, and stillest the outrage of a violent and unruly people; We bless thy holy Name, that it hath pleased thee to appease the seditious tumults which have been lately raised up amongst us; most humbly

beseeching thee to grant to all of us grace, that we may henceforth obediently walk in thy holy commandments; and, leading a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty, may continually offer unto thee our sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving for these thy mercies towards us; through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

For Deliverance from the Plague, or other common Sickness.

O LORD God, who hast wounded us for our sins, and consumed us for our transgressions, by thy late heavy and dreadful visitation; and now, in the midst of judgment remembering mercy, hast redeemed our souls from the jaws of death; We offer unto thy fatherly goodness ourselves, our souls and bodies which thou hast delivered, to be a living sacrifice unto thee, always praising and magnifying thy mercies in the midst of thy Church; through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

Or this.

WE humbly acknowledge before thee, O most merciful Father, that all the punishments which are threatened in thy law might justly have fallen upon us, by reason of our manifold transgressions and hardness of heart: Yet seeing it hath pleased thee of thy tender mercy, upon our weak and unworthy humiliation, to assuage the contagious sickness wherewith we lately have been sore afflicted, and to restore the voice of joy and health into our dwellings; We offer unto thy Divine Majesty the sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving, lauding and magnifying thy glorious Name for such thy preservation and providence over us; through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

Our Epistles and Gospels have for centuries represented both. Naturally in the "Epistles" the New Testament, as its Canon became formed and known, largely superseded the Old. The arrangement supplies, as in all the ancient Liturgies, the reading of the Word of God, necessary to any complete Service, and corresponds to the series of Lessons at Morning and Evening Prayer. The Epistle and Gospel of each day are, no doubt, intended to be connected, although the closeness and obviousness of the connection vary greatly.

The Gospel contains, generally speaking, the record of some act or teaching of Our Lord, and the Epistle the Apostolic, or, in some cases, the Prophetic, exposition of some doctrine represented thereby; or, in the case of a Saint's Day, the Gospel may give some historical mention of the Saint, and the Epistle some word of his, or some lesson which his life suggests. There are exceptions to this rule, as, e.g., on Whit-Sunday, when "the Epistle," taken from the Acts of the Apostles, is the historical record; while the Gospel embodies Our Lord's teaching as to the function and the nature of the Holy Spirit. Hence we have represented in them the two foundations, of actual fact and Divine teaching, on which our Christianity is built. The Collect may be considered as gathering up both lessons into prayer, and applying them, not only on the day to which they properly belong, but through the whole ensuing week.

It is, therefore, not surprising that this arrangement is found to date from early times. In the Western Church it is elaborated with more variety and beauty than in the East. The greater part of our Collects may be traced to the Sacramentaries of St. Leo (A.D. 420), Gelasius (A.D. 494), and Gregory the Great (A.D. 590)—even these being in all probability mainly collections of older materials. The earliest collection of Epistles and Gospels known is by tradition ascribed to St. Jerome (the *Comes Hieronymi*); and, although probably of later origin, appears to embody the tradition of his time (A.D. 342-420). It seems clearly to have determined the old Roman Use, and corresponds far more closely with the Sarum Use, and our own arrangement derived from it, than with the present Roman Use. Independent arrangements, differing considerably from it, are found in the old Gallican and Spanish Liturgies. In the ritual of the Sarum Missal, the reading of both, especially of the Gospel, was, after ancient precedent, invested with great solemnity, of which our practice of standing up at the Gospel, with the use of the preceding Antiphon, "Glory be to Thee, O Lord," and (less frequently) the succeeding Antiphon, "Thanks be to Thee, O Lord, for this Thy glorious Gospel," is the only survival. In the Prayer Book of 1549, two sets of Collects, Epistles, and Gospels were provided on the Great Festivals, for use at the earlier and later Celebrations of the Holy Communion. The appointment of special *Introits*—to be sung as an introduction to the Communion Service—was also retained. These were all taken from the Psalms, and one for each Sunday was printed with the Collect, Epistle, and Gospel. All were unfortunately struck out in 1552, and have never been restored.

THE COLLECTS.—(For the origin of the word *Collect* see the note on the Collects in the Morning Service.) The Collect (as contrasted with the ejaculatory *Versicle*) represents the more thoughtful and concentrated element of prayer in our Service. It almost always contains a preamble, in the form of address, giving (so to speak) the ground of the petition which follows, and invariably ends with a claim of Our Lord's Intercession (unless the Collect be addressed directly to Him), and mostly with an ascription of praise. Unlike the *Litany* and *Hymn*, the Collect is rarely addressed to Our Lord; generally, after the ancient practice, to God the Father through Him. It is not too much to say that from these preambles to the

Collects a full systematic statement of Christian Truth, as to the Divine Nature and relations to man, might be drawn out. The old Collects, translated from the Latin, with or without variation (57 out of 82), may be generally distinguished from the later Collects, composed at the Compilation or Revisions of the Prayer Book, by greater terseness and incisiveness of style, and accuracy of theological allusion. The later Collects, not inferior in beauty and fervency of devotion, are more flowing and fuller of direct Scriptural citation.

PRINCIPLE OF ARRANGEMENT.—The arrangement of our Collects, Epistles, and Gospels, divides itself into two parts.

(A) First comes the Series for the SUNDAYS of the year, and for the great "Dominical" Holy-days (those connected with the Manifestation of Our Lord) interspersed therein. This series is subdivided as follows:—

I. CONNECTED WITH CHRISTMAS-TIDE:—

- (a) The Four Sundays of ADVENT.
- (b) CHRISTMAS, with the three attendant Festivals of St. Stephen, St. John Evangelist, and Innocents' Day, and with the Sunday after Christmas, and the Feast of the Circumcision.
- (c) The EPIPHANY, with the Six Sundays following.

II. CONNECTED WITH EASTER-TIDE:—

- (a) Septuagesima, Sexagesima, and Quinquagesima Sundays.
- (b) ASH-WEDNESDAY and Five Sundays in Lent.
- (c) HOLY-WEEK—Palm Sunday, Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday before Easter, GOOD FRIDAY, and Easter-Eve.
- (d) EASTER-DAY, with Monday and Tuesday in Easter-Week, and the Five Sundays after Easter.
- (e) ASCENSION-DAY and the "Day of Expectation" following.
- (f) WHIT-SUNDAY, with Monday and Tuesday in Whitsun-Week.
- (g) TRINITY-SUNDAY.

III. THE NON-FESTAL PART OF THE YEAR:—

The Sundays after Trinity, which may be as many as twenty-seven.

In the Sections I. and II. of this Series, corresponding to the Festal portion of the year, the principle of Speciality or Appropriateness reigns; although in the Sundays after Epiphany and the Sundays after Easter there seems to be in the selection of the Epistles some approach to regularity of succession. The Gospel and Epistle bring out the great Christian truth commemorated in each season, and the Collect applies it in prayer and adoration.

On the other hand, in Section III.—the non-festal half of the year, which dwells not so much on Christian doctrine as on Christian life—the principle of regularity of succession rules, manifestly in the Epistles, less perfectly in the Gospels; and the connection of the Epistle with the Gospel, and of the Collect with either, is in general less strongly marked.

(B) Next comes the Series of MINOR HOLY-DAYS beginning with St. Andrew's Day (November 30th), which nearly coincides with the beginning of Advent, and ending with All Saints' Day (November 1st). Of these Festivals some are still connected with the manifestation of Our Lord Jesus Christ, which marks the Festal portion of the year. These are (besides the Innocents' Day, the Circumcision, the Epiphany, already mentioned) the Purification, and the Annunciation. The rest—the Saints' Days properly so called—are selections for special commemoration from a far larger number of Saints' Days in the old Sarum Calendar, some of which have been

THE
COLLECTS, EPISTLES, AND GOSPELS

TO BE USED THROUGHOUT THE YEAR.

¶ *Note, that the Collect appointed for every Sunday, or for any Holy-day that hath a Vigil or Eve, shall be said at the Evening Service next before.*

The First Sunday in Advent.

The Collect.

ALMIGHTY God, give us grace that we may cast away the works of darkness, and put upon us the armour of light, now in the time of this mortal life, in which thy Son Jesus Christ came to visit us in great humility; that in the last day, when he shall come again in his glorious Majesty to judge both the quick and the dead, we may rise to the life immortal, through him who liveth and reigneth with thee and the Holy Ghost, now and ever. *Amen.*

¶ *This Collect is to be repeated every day, with the other Collects in Advent, until Christmas-Eve.*

The Epistle. Rom. 13. 8.

OWE no man any thing, but to love one another: for he that loveth another hath fulfilled the law. For this, Thou shalt not commit adultery, Thou shalt not kill, Thou shalt not steal, Thou shalt not bear false witness, Thou shalt not covet; and if there be any other commandment, it is briefly comprehended in this saying, namely, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. Love worketh no ill to his neighbour; therefore love is the fulfilling of the law. And that, knowing the time, that now it is high time to awake out of sleep: for now is our salvation nearer than when we believed. The night is far spent, the day is at hand; let us therefore cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armour of light. Let us walk honestly as in the day; not in rioting and drunkenness, not

in chambering and wantonness, not in strife and envying. But put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh, to fulfil the lusts thereof.

The Gospel. St. Matth. 21. 1.

WHEN they drew nigh unto Jerusalem, and were come to Bethphage, unto the mount of Olives, then sent Jesus two disciples, saying unto them, Go into the village over against you, and straightway ye shall find an ass tied, and a colt with her: loose them, and bring them unto me. And if any man say ought unto you, ye shall say, The Lord hath need of them; and straightway he will send them. All this was done, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the Prophet, saying, Tell ye the daughter of Sion, Behold, thy King cometh unto thee, meek, and sitting upon an ass, and a colt the foal of an ass. And the disciples went, and did as Jesus commanded them; and brought the ass, and the colt, and put on them their clothes, and they set him thereon. And a very great multitude spread their garments in the way; others cut down branches from the trees, and strawed them in the way. And the multitudes that went before, and that followed, cried, saying, Hosanna to the Son of David; Blessed is he that cometh in the Name of the Lord; Hosanna in the highest. And when he was come into Jerusalem, all the city was moved, saying, Who is this? And the multitude said, This is Jesus the Prophet of Nazareth of Galilee.

preserved, on a lower level of commemoration, in the "Black-Letter Saints' Days." The principle of selection is clear and reasonable, confining itself strictly to the record of Holy Scripture. It embraces the Festivals of St. John Baptist, of the Twelve Apostles, of St. Barnabas and St. Paul, of the Evangelists, and of the first martyr St. Stephen. To these are added the two comprehensive commemorations of St. Michael and All Angels, and of All Saints. The Gospels and Epistles of these Festivals are naturally chosen so as to bring out, in fact and in teaching, the event or person commemorated in each; and on Festivals of general scope (like All Saints' Day), or Festivals of Saints, of whom we know little personally, to dwell on the general experience and inspiration of saintly life.

The object of the CELEBRATION OF SAINTS' DAYS can hardly be better described than in the words of the "Prayer for the whole estate of Christ's Church" in the Prayer Book of 1549:—"We give unto Thee most high praise and hearty thanks for the wonderful grace and virtue declared in all Thy saints. . . . whose examples and steadfastness in Thy faith and keeping Thy holy commandments, grant us to follow." It is, first, thankful commemoration of them, and of Christ in them; and, next, instruction and encouragement by example. In both we are greatly helped to realize the Communion of Saints. It is clear also, that, under both aspects, the very existence in them of imperfections and sins, overcome by the grace of God, greatly increases the spiritual value of these commemorations to us; and also that our instruction is drawn from the contemplation both of the saintly character and work in general, and of the individuality of each saint commemorated. Although the celebration of these days has been greatly revived, we are still far from making full use of it, and lose much thereby of that "teaching by example" which history, and especially spiritual history, so vividly impresses on the mind. It is almost needless to say that it has no connection whatever with the Invocation or Worship of Saints, which the Church of England absolutely repudiates. (See Art. XXII.)

It may be noted generally that the series of Proper Lessons, which is later on the whole in date than that of the Epistles and Gospels, seems often to be adapted to them, so as to be either illustrative of, or supplementary to, the teaching which they convey.

¶ *Note that the Collect,* &c.—This Rubric is not free from ambiguity. It does not tell us (a) what "Festivals have Vigils or Eves"—whether only those named in the list of days of Abstinence or others; for, though not found in that list, "New Year's Eve" is mentioned in the Rubric after the Collect on St. Stephen's Day; (b) what is to be done when a Festival falls on a Monday and the Vigil is on Saturday Evening, or when Festivals follow each other. Nor is it easy to see why the "having a Vigil or Eve" should affect the recitation of the Collect, which depended on the idea that the Festival began after sunset on the previous day. The usual practice is to use the Collect by anticipation in all cases, except where the Eve has a Collect of its own. (In the American Prayer Book the Rubric directs that "the Collect for any Sunday or other Feast may be used at the Evening Service of the day before.")

(I.) THE FIRST SECTION OF THE YEAR

(dependent on Christmas).

(A) ADVENT.

The observance of Advent as a fixed Ecclesiastical season of definite length, is of comparatively late date; belonging (like the Feast of Christmas itself) originally to the Western Church, and adopted much later in the Eastern Church. As soon as December 25th was fixed for the celebration of the Nativity of Our Lord, it was natural to introduce it, like the Easter Festival, by a period of penitence, fasting, and devotion. Thus Advent observance grew up; and it is notable, that in the Gallican Church of the 6th century (as in the Eastern Church now), the *Quadragesima S. Martini*, i.e. the period of forty days from Martinmas (November 11th), was made the period of preparation. The analogy to the forty days of Lent is obvious. By the time of Gregory the Great, however, the keeping of the four Sundays (with the previous Sunday as a kind of introduction) had become fixed, and has since continued without variation.

It must be observed, however, that Advent seems to suggest the looking forward to the whole of the Manifestation of Our Lord; for it unites in frequent contrast the ideas of the First Coming of the Lord, which opens His Mediatorial kingdom, and the Second Coming, which closes it. Accordingly it does not breathe the spirit of un-mixed Christmas thankfulness and joy, but dwells strongly on the thoughts of the great Judgment, and therefore on man's sin and its awful responsibility. The old *Dies Iræ* perhaps carries these thoughts to an extreme; but they are plainly traceable in all the Advent Services and Hymns.

The Proper Lessons of Advent are all drawn from the Book of Isaiah; partly because of its Evangelical character, anticipating the general spirituality and perfection of Gospel teaching; partly because of its marked Messianic prediction, drawing out all the chief features of the Revelation of Christ.

The First Sunday in Advent.

The key-note of this first Sunday of the Ecclesiastical year is struck by the Epistle (of which the Collect is an echo), "The night is far spent, the day is at hand; let us therefore cast off the works of darkness, and put on the armour of light." The call is to AWAKENING out of sin, carelessness, or unbelief, in the sense that the dawn of the Second Advent is now a year nearer to each of us; and it is to be

noted that the Coming of Our Lord, recorded in the Gospel, was neither His First Coming, nor His Last Coming, to His own city, and that it accordingly seems to represent His frequent coming to us at special seasons of the present life—"Behold! I stand at the door and knock."

THE COLLECT is a magnificent specimen of the new Collects (composed in 1549), having no preamble, but a double prayer

—for resurrection in spirit now, in reliance on the first Advent of salvation (comp. Eph. v. 14), and for resurrection to immortal life, in body and spirit, hereafter, in connection with the second Advent of Judgment (see Phil. iii. 20, 21)—the one being (as usual in Holy Scripture) considered as the earnest of the other.

THE EPISTLE in the old Sarum Use began (perhaps more appropriately) with v. 11, "And that," &c. Our Prayer Book, desiring to enlarge the Epistle and soften the abruptness of commencement, has had the effect of introducing a section, which is distinct from the special Lesson of the Advent season.

As it stands, the Epistle has two lessons:—(a) The general lesson of Love, as the only debt which can never be fully paid, and as not only comprehending all the commandments of the law, but "fulfilling" it (i.e. perfecting its imperfection). (b) The Advent lesson of awaking (by conversion or refreshment) to newness of life, in the sense of the increasing nearness of our salvation—so as to "put on the armour of light," which is the Image of "the Lord Jesus Christ," and to cast off, as unworthy of it, both riotous self-indulgence and uncleanness (sins of the appetites), and strife

and envying (sins of the passions), both being "works of the flesh" (see Gal. v. 19-21), and "works of darkness" (see Eph. v. 11, 12).

THE GOSPEL, taken from the Sarum Missal, records (from the Gospel of St. Matthew) Our Lord's triumphal entry and second cleansing of the Temple (as each Jew before the Passover cleansed his house from pollution). The event is recorded in all the Gospels with singular vividness of detail. The multitudes following were the Galilean pilgrims; those going before, the inhabitants of Jerusalem, who went out to meet and escort Him. The prophecy of the peaceful kingdom of the Messiah referred to is Zech. ix. 9; the cry of the people, "Hosanna" ("Save, I beseech thee," &c.), comes from Ps. cxviii. 25, 26 (a well-known Messianic Psalm); Our Lord's quotation is from Isa. lvi. 7; and His words of rebuke are an application of Jer. vii. 11. His Coming then was to a people who idolized their Temple (for even the traffic in the Court of the Gentiles was for the sacrifice and the sacred tribute), but knew not the true spirituality and universality of God's Worship. The lesson, therefore, is clearly to the Church rather than to the world.

The Second Sunday in Advent.

The lesson of this Sunday (taken again from the Epistle) is addressed to THOUGHT rather than emotion, calling us to grasp the truth of God in Christ, revealed in Holy Scripture, and so to lay firm hold of the hope of eternal life, to be fulfilled in perfection at the Second Advent.

THE COLLECT, composed in 1549, full of emphatic thankfulness for the opening of the sealed book of Holy Scripture to the people, prays (a) generally for grace to "read, mark, learn, and inwardly digest" His Word (in all the gradations of thoughtful perception), and then (b), with special Advent reference, to find in it not only present comfort, but hope of future perfection.

THE EPISTLE comes from the close of the Epistle to the Romans, which urges the unity of Jew and Gentile in Christ. After, therefore, (a) a reference to the true character of "Holy Scripture" (then the Old Testament only), as written for our learning, and as the secret of undying hope, it prays (b) for unity "in mind and mouth," that is, in faith and worship; (c) as an encouragement for such prayer it dwells on the two-fold mission of Our Lord to Jew and Gentile (see Luke ii. 32); quoting in illustration of this union of the Gentiles with the people of God, Ps. xviii. 41; Dent. xxxii. 43; Ps. cxvii. 1; Isa. xi. 10; and (d) ends with a blessing of hope,

ov, and peace, through the power of the Holy Ghost.

THE GOSPEL has less connection than usual with the Epistle. It is a part of Our Lord's prophecy to His disciples on the Mount of Olives, after He had closed His ministry to the Holy City, on which they looked down. It is a prediction of the close of the old dispensation, in the destruction of Jerusalem; with which mingle elements applicable properly to the close of the new dispensation in the Last Judgment—the type blending with the antitype. (a) The signs of the end are to be convulsions, physical and spiritual; and yet the parable following implies

that these, sudden as they seem, are but the completion of a process of growth through conflict, secretly going on now. (b) The prophecy, "Then shall they see," &c., repeated by Our Lord before the Sanhedrim (Matt. xxvi. 64), with obvious allusion to Dan. vii. 13, 14—whatever typical fulfilment it may have had at the fate of the Holy City—waits for its perfect fulfilment at His Second Coming. (c) The concluding paragraph refers only to the close of the old dispensation; but it is clear that among the early Christians this was often supposed to foretell the end of the world itself in a speedy Advent of Our Lord.

The Third Sunday in Advent.

The lesson of this Sunday is obviously suggested by the Ordination, which, from time immemorial, has followed in the ensuing week. The call, addressed primarily to His ministers, secondarily to all His members, is to ENERGY OF SERVICE in preparation for His Coming.

THE COLLECT, composed by Bishop Cosin in 1661 (in substitution for a shorter Collect of 1549), taking its idea from the Epistle and Gospel, addresses itself directly to Our Lord Jesus Christ, referring in its preamble to the mission of St. John Baptist at His First Coming, and praying that, in like manner, His ministers now may prepare His way (see Isa. xl. 3; Luke i. 17), so that at the Second Coming His people may be acceptable in His sight.

In the EPISTLE St. Paul dwells on the two-fold character of Christian ministers, (a) in humility, as being mere "servants of Christ," and, for His sake, of His people (2 Cor. iv. 5); and (b) in authority, as being "stewards of His mysteries," i.e. of the Word and Sacraments—in both simply required to be faithful to Him. He claims for himself, and by implication for them, responsibility to Christ alone, thus appealing to a higher judgment than that of men, or of his own conscience, (even though, he adds, "I know no-

thing by"—that is, against—"myself"), and looking onward to the future manifestation of all deeds and thoughts at the Second Coming of the Great Day.

THE GOSPEL sets forth St. John Baptist as the type of the true minister of Christ in the strength made perfect in weakness. (a) On the one hand it shews his faith wavering for a moment in the weariness of captivity. It records the mission of his disciples to Our Lord, to inquire whether He was really the true Messiah, and Our Lord's appeal to the predicted signs (see Isa. xxxv. 5, 6) now fulfilled, as leading up to, and necessarily connected with, the word of preaching to the poor. (Note in this the true function of miracle in relation to the Word.) So far the Baptist's weakness is rebuked. (b) But Our Lord goes on, in spite of that weakness, to exalt His faithful forerunner as "a prophet and more than a prophet," because he was in a peculiar sense—what all prophets were generally—a "messenger preparing the way" of the Lord. In the application of the lesson to ourselves, we may remember Our Lord's words, "Among them that are born of women there hath not arisen a greater than John the Baptist: notwithstanding, he that is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he."

And Jesus went into the temple of God, and cast out all them that sold and bought in the temple; and overthrew the tables of the money-changers, and the seats of

them that sold doves; and said unto them, It is written, My house shall be called the house of prayer; but ye have made it a den of thieves.

The Second Sunday in Advent.

The Collect.

BLESSED Lord, who hast caused all holy Scriptures to be written for our learning; Grant that we may in such wise hear them, read, mark, learn, and inwardly digest them, that by patience, and comfort of thy holy Word, we may embrace, and ever hold fast the blessed hope of everlasting life, which thou hast given us in our Saviour Jesus Christ. Amen.

The Epistle. Rom. 15. 4.

WHATSOEVER things were written aforetime, were written for our learning; that we through patience, and comfort of the Scriptures, might have hope. Now the God of patience and consolation grant you to be like-minded one towards another, according to Christ Jesus: that ye may with one mind, and one mouth, glorify God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. Wherefore receive ye one another, as Christ also received us, to the glory of God. Now I say, that Jesus Christ was a minister of the circumcision for the truth of God, to confirm the promises made unto the fathers: And that the Gentiles might glorify God for his mercy; as it is written, For this cause I will confess to thee among the Gentiles, and sing unto thy Name. And again he saith, Rejoice, ye Gentiles, with his people. And again, Praise the

Lord, all ye Gentiles, and laud him, all ye people. And again, Esaias saith, There shall be a root of Jesse, and he that shall rise to reign over the Gentiles, in him shall the Gentiles trust. Now the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that ye may abound in hope, through the power of the Holy Ghost.

The Gospel. St. Luke 21. 25.

AND there shall be signs in the sun, and in the moon, and in the stars; and upon the earth distress of nations, with perplexity, the sea and the waves roaring; men's hearts failing them for fear, and for looking after those things which are coming on the earth: for the powers of heaven shall be shaken. And then shall they see the Son of Man coming in a cloud with power and great glory. And when these things begin to come to pass, then look up, and lift up your heads; for your redemption draweth nigh. And he spake to them a parable, Behold the fig-tree, and all the trees; when they now shoot forth, ye see and know of your own selves that summer is now nigh at hand. So likewise ye, when ye see these things come to pass, know ye that the Kingdom of God is nigh at hand. Verily I say unto you, This generation shall not pass away, till all be fulfilled: heaven and earth shall pass away; but my words shall not pass away.

The Third Sunday in Advent.

The Collect.

OUR Lord Jesu Christ, who at thy first coming didst send thy messenger to prepare thy way before thee; Grant that the ministers and stewards of thy mysteries may likewise so prepare and make ready thy way, by turning the

hearts of the disobedient to the wisdom of the just, that at thy second coming to judge the world we may be found an acceptable people in thy sight, who livest and reignest with the Father and the Holy Spirit, ever one God, world without end. Amen.

The Service of this Sunday seems a more direct anticipation of Christmas, dwelling on Our Lord's presence on earth, and calling us again and again to rejoice, in the sense of His gift of salvation. Its call is to thankful DEVOTION.

THE COLLECT, unlike the others, is old, from the Sacramentary of Gregory (found also in Gelasius). As it stood there, it was addressed directly to Our Lord; it is now altered to the more usual form of address to God the Father; but, though the alteration may be justified by John xiv. 23, the prayer to the Father "to come among us" breaks in on the general Advent idea, and weakens the connection with the Epistle and Gospel. The prayer is for the presence of God the Father with us, to deliver us from the hindrance and bondage of sin by the grace of His Spirit, through the satisfaction of His Son Our Lord, and it ends appropriately with ascription of praise to the Holy Trinity.

THE EPISTLE comes from the Epistle to the Philippians, which, though written in prison, is perhaps of all St. Paul's Epistles fullest of peace and joy. Its lesson is first (a) of "rejoicing in the Lord," emphasized because of its difficulty in a sorrowful and sinful world; (b)

then, of "moderation," properly "sense of what is seemly" in a Christian, which exalts and purifies joy; (c) lastly, of that without which joy would be impossible—the casting off all "carefulness" by the power of prayer and thanksgiving. (d) It clenches these exhortations by the Christian watchword (found in the Syriac form *Maranatha* in 1 Cor. xvi. 22), "The Lord is at hand"; and ends with the emphatic promise, not now of joy, but of the "peace of God which passeth all understanding."

THE GOSPEL again returns to St. John Baptist, but now as refusing all glory for himself, and heralding the immediate coming of the Lord and Saviour. He is not (he says) "the Christ"; nor "the Prophet" (of Deut. xviii. 15-18), thought by some to be distinct from the King Messiah; nor (in literal resurrection) "Elias," although coming in his spirit (see Luke i. 17, and compare Matt. xi. 14, xvii. 10-13); he is but a "Voice" of God, preparing the way of the Lord. To the Pharisaic remonstrance, based on this self-effacement, he justifies his baptism, as simply preparing for One, infinitely greater than himself, who shall baptize with the Holy Ghost, already standing unknown among them.

(B) CHRISTMAS-TIDE.

Some observance of the Nativity of Our Lord, as it is most natural, was probably early in the Church. But it is clear that in ancient days the true day of Our Lord's birth was considered to be unknown. Clement of Alexandria names, as conjectural dates, May 20th and April 21st, and seems to discourage, as over-curious, any inquiry into the matter. In the Western Church December 25th appears to have been selected in early times; in the East (as still in the Armenian Church), the Nativity was blended with the Epiphany, and kept on January 6th; and not till about the time of St. Chrysostom did the Western usage prevail. The selection may possibly have had some historical foundation, based, according to some tradition, on a record of the true day of the Nativity in the "Roman Archives," but it has been thought that the Festival was fixed to its present date, in order to lay hold of, and hallow to Christian use, the winter Feast of Dedication among the Jews, and, still more, the heathen midwinter Festival of freedom and rejoicing,—with allusion to the birth of "the Sun of Righteousness" out of the winter of the spiritual darkness of the world. It is notable that of all Festivals, Christmas has most thoroughly associated itself with natural joy, domestic love, and universal charity.

The Epistle. 1 Cor. 4. 1. **L**ET a man so account of us, as of the ministers of Christ, and stewards of the mysteries of God. Moreover, it is required in stewards, that a man be found faithful. But with me it is a very small thing that I should be judged of you, or of man's judgment: yea, I judge not mine own self. For I know nothing by myself, yet am I not hereby justified; but he that judgeth me is the Lord. Therefore judge nothing before the time, until the Lord come, who both will bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and will make manifest the counsels of the hearts; and then shall every man have praise of God.

The Gospel. St. Matth. 11. 2. **N**OW when John had heard in the prison the works of Christ, he sent two of his disciples, and said unto him, Art thou he that should come, or do we look

for another? Jesus answered and said unto them, Go and shew John again those things which ye do hear and see: The blind receive their sight, and the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, and the deaf hear, the dead are raised up, and the poor have the Gospel preached to them: And blessed is he who-soever shall not be offended in me. And as they departed, Jesus began to say unto the multitudes concerning John, What went ye out into the wilderness to see? a reed shaken with the wind? But what went ye out for to see? a man clothed in soft raiment? behold, they that wear soft clothing are in kings' houses. But what went ye out for to see? a prophet? yea, I say unto you, and more than a prophet. For this is he of whom it is written, Behold, I send my messenger before thy face, which shall prepare thy way before thee.

The Fourth Sunday in Advent.

The Collect.

OLORD, raise up (we pray thee) thy power, and come among us, and with great might succour us; that whereas, through our sins and wickedness, we are sore let and hindered in running the race that is set before us, thy bountiful grace and mercy may speedily help and deliver us; through the satisfaction of thy Son our Lord, to whom with thee and the Holy Ghost be honour and glory, world without end. Amen.

The Epistle. Phil. 4. 4.

REJOICE in the Lord alway, and again I say, Rejoice. Let your moderation be known unto all men. The Lord is at hand. Be careful for nothing: but in every thing, by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known unto God. And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.

The Gospel. St. John 1. 19.

THIS is the record of John, when the Jews sent Priests

and Levites from Jerusalem to ask him, Who art thou? And he confessed, and denied not; but confessed, I am not the Christ. And they asked him, What then? Art thou Elias? And he saith, I am not. Art thou that Prophet? And he answered, No. Then said they unto him, Who art thou? that we may give an answer to them that sent us. What sayest thou of thyself? He said, I am the voice of one crying in the wilderness, Make straight the way of the Lord, as said the prophet Esaias. And they which were sent were of the Pharisees. And they asked him, and said unto him, Why baptizest thou then, if thou be not that Christ, nor Elias, neither that Prophet? John answered them, saying, I baptize with water: but there standeth one among you, whom ye know not: He it is who coming after me is preferred before me, whose shoe's latchet I am not worthy to unloose. These things were done in Bethabara beyond Jordan, where John was baptizing.

In the Prayer Book of 1549 an additional Collect, Epistle (Tit. ii. 11-15), and Gospel (Luke ii. 1-14), were provided for the early Communion.

THE COLLECT, composed in 1549, first dwells in thankfulness on the Incarnation of the only-begotten Son of God; next, commemorates our own entrance (in Baptism) on the regeneration of human nature thereby given, and (as a consequence of it) our adoption to Sonship, by God's grace and favour; and, lastly, prays that this regeneration may be continued and renewed in us daily by the Holy Spirit. (See the Catechism and the Baptismal Service.)

THE EPISTLE is the opening of the Epistle to the Hebrews, which brings out with singular explicitness the true Deity of the Lord Jesus Christ; first, in His manifestation on earth, exalting Him above all prophets, as the revealer of God and the heir of all things; next, describing Him in His own nature, as the "effulgence of the Father's glory," "the visible manifestation of His substance," the Creator and sustainer of all things; lastly (in obvious reference to such angel-worship as is described in Col. ii. 18), dwelling on His exaltation above the highest angelic being, in infinite superiority of nature. This doctrine is illustrated, in conclusion, by Old Testament quotations; from Ps. ii. 7 and 2 Sam. vii. 14, dwelling on the true Sonship of the Messiah; from Ps. civ. 7, claiming for Him the worship of Angels; from Ps. xcvi. 7, civ. 4, xlv. 6, 7, & cii. 25-27, contrasting the mere ministry of Angels with His infinite Majesty and Eternity—all expressing the Deity of the Messiah of Prophecy.

THE GOSPEL is the still profounder exposition of His Godhead in the Prologue to the Gospel according to St. John. (a) It describes Him by the name used only in St. John, and expressing essential unity with the Divine nature—the "WORD," who "in the beginning" "was with God, and was God"; and

ascribes to Him the attributes of Godhead—Eternity, Creative Power, inherent Life, which is the Light of men, shining in the darkness of this world. (b) As to His manifestation, dwelling on the testimony of St. John Baptist, it tells how the true Light of all men came into the world to His own creation, yet His own creatures received Him not; but how to those who received Him He gave the Sonship of God, in birth not of the flesh but of the Spirit. (c) As to the nature of that manifestation, it shews how the Word became incarnate, and "tabernacled in our flesh," making visible to man the "glory of the only-begotten of the Father."

In all three, taking for granted the joyful fact of the Incarnation, the mind is led on to the profound meaning of it, as the "mystery of mysteries."

THE PROPER LESSONS from the Old Testament are the two great Messianic promises of Isaiah (ix. 1-8 & vii. 10-17), bringing out the Divine glories and attributes of One who is yet the Son of Man, and His birth from a pure Virgin to be our Emmanuel; and from the New Testament, St. Luke's record of the Nativity manifested to the Shepherds and hymned in Angelic Song (Luke ii. 15), and the remarkable summary by St. Paul (Tit. iii. 4-9) of the new regenerate life, given freely to man, in and through the manifestation on earth, "of the kindness and love of God our Saviour."

Of the three Festivals, which from very ancient times have closely followed Christmas, the Holy Innocents' Day alone has any historical association with it; and various ideal reasons have been given for the connection with it of the other two; some noting in the three Festivals the three kinds of martyrdom—in will and deed, in will alone, in deed alone; others the three typical graces of self-sacrifice, love, and purity. But it is more likely to have grown up accidentally, than to have been contrived on a preconceived system.

Christmas-Day.

The Collect.

ALMIGHTY God, who hast given us thy only-begotten Son to take our nature upon him, and as at this time to be born of a pure Virgin; Grant that we being regenerate, and made thy children by adoption and grace, may daily be renewed by thy Holy Spirit; through the same our Lord Jesus Christ, who liveth and reigneth with thee and the same Spirit, ever one God, world without end. Amen.

The Epistle. Heb. 1. 1.

GOD, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds; who being the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person, and upholding all things by the word of his power, when he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high; being made so much better than the angels, as he hath by inheritance obtained a more excellent name than they. For unto which of the angels said he at any time, Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee? And again, I will be to him a Father, and he shall be to me a Son? And again, when he bringeth in the first-begotten into the world, he saith, And let all the angels of God worship him. And of the angels he saith, Who maketh his angels spirits, and his ministers a flame of fire. But unto the Son he saith, Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever; a sceptre of righteousness is the sceptre of thy kingdom: Thou hast loved righteousness, and hated iniquity; therefore God, even thy God, hath

anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows. And, Thou, Lord, in the beginning hast laid the foundation of the earth; and the heavens are the works of thine hands: they shall perish, but thou remainest; and they all shall wax old as doth a garment; and as a vesture shalt thou fold them up, and they shall be changed; but thou art the same, and thy years shall not fail.

The Gospel. St. John 1. 1.

IN the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made. In him was life, and the life was the light of men. And the light shineth in darkness, and the darkness comprehended it not. There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. The same came for a witness, to bear witness of the light, that all men through him might believe. He was not that light, but was sent to bear witness of that light. That was the true light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world. He was in the world, and the world was made by him, and the world knew him not. He came unto his own, and his own received him not. But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his Name: which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God. And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only-begotten of the Father) full of grace and truth.

Saint Stephen's Day.

The Collect.

GRANT, O Lord, that, in all our sufferings here upon

earth for the testimony of thy truth, we may stedfastly look up to heaven, and by faith behold the

All that we know of St. Stephen is that he is described in Acts vii. & viii. as one of the first deacons, "a man full of faith and of the Holy Ghost"; probably a Hellenist (or "Grecian") Jew. It is remarkable that he was chosen by God to make "a new departure" in the proclamation of Christ—as a preacher bringing out distinctly the passing away of the Law and the Temple—therefore exciting the wrath of the Pharisees and people, and receiving first the crown of martyrdom—in all this the forerunner of St. Paul, who presided over his death.

THE COLLECT was enlarged to its present fulness and beauty by Bishop Cosin, in 1661, from the simpler form of 1549, which was slightly shortened from the Sarum Missal. Its prayer is the prayer of all Christians, in proportion as they suffer for Christ, and asks for the twofold gift, first, of the vision of Christ, and in Him of the future glory, and next, of the likeness to Christ in the spirit of forgiveness, which His martyrs learn from Him. It is addressed to Our Lord Himself, and, taking up the dying words of St. Stephen, it speaks of Him as "standing" at the right hand of God, rising up (as St. Chrysostom suggests) to receive the soul of the martyr.

THE EPISTLE is simply the record of the martyrdom itself. We note (a) in St. Stephen's vision the coincidence with Our Lord's own words (in Matt. xxvi. 64), and with Dan. vii. 13, 14; (b) in his dying words, the

Saint John the Evangelist's Day.

St. John—"the disciple whom Jesus loved"—at once one of "the Sons of Thunder," the Seer of Patmos, and the Apostle of Love—stands in marked contrast with St. Stephen, chosen to follow Christ first in death. For, after active preaching, and exposure to martyrdom and banishment, he had to wait to extreme old age at Ephesus, when the other Apostles were at rest, that he might put the last stroke

direct prayer to Our Lord as Mediator, to receive his spirit into the bosom of the Father (comp. Luke xxiii. 46), and the echo of the Prayer on the Cross, "Father, forgive them" (see Luke xxiii. 34, and contrast 2 Chron. xxiv. 22). The "laying of the clothes" at Saul's feet indicates that he, a Roman citizen, was chosen to bear the responsibility of what was clearly a tumultuous and unlawful act of sudden rage.

THE GOSPEL is appropriately chosen from Our Lord's prophecy of the persecution of Himself and His followers, and the vengeance, which Jerusalem should thus draw down from His loving and unwilling hand. The "Zacharias" alluded to (in spite of some difficulty attaching to the words "Son of Barachias") is probably the Zechariah of 2 Chron. xxiv. 20-22, whose traditional tomb is in sight of the Temple, where Our Lord was speaking. The closing words—the last which He uttered before closing His Ministry in Jerusalem—are the infinitely pathetic utterance of "a Saviour's Woe," and refer with sadness to the shout of the people on His triumphal entry, which had proved to be so wanting in depth of reality.

THE PROPER LESSONS are the records (Gen. iv. 1-11; 2 Chron. xxiv. 15-23) of the deaths of Abel and Zechariah, the first and the last martyrs of the Old Testament record (see Matt. xxiii. 35); and, from the Acts (vi. & viii. 1-9), the history of St. Stephen's call, preaching, and burial.

to the completion of Holy Scripture and the organisation of the Christian Church.

THE COLLECT (enlarged in 1662, from the simpler form taken from the Sarum Use in 1549) takes as its key-note (from the Epistle) the utterance "God is light," praying for light to the Church, through the doctrine of the Apostle, himself enlightened of God, and in that light the two gifts, which blend

glory that shall be revealed; and, being filled with the Holy Ghost, may learn to love and bless our persecutors by the example of thy first Martyr Saint Stephen, who prayed for his murderers to thee, O blessed Jesus, who standest at the right hand of God to succour all those that suffer for thee, our only Mediator and Advocate. Amen.

¶ Then shall follow the Collect of the Nativity. High shall be said continually us. so New-year's Eve.

For the Epistle. Acts 7. 55.

STEPHEN, being full of the Holy Ghost, looked up steadfastly into heaven, and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing on the right hand of God, and said, Behold, I see the heavens opened, and the Son of Man standing on the right hand of God. Then they cried out with a loud voice, and stopped their ears, and ran upon him with one accord, and cast him out of the city, and stoned him: and the witnesses laid down their clothes at a young man's feet, whose name was Saul. And they stoned Stephen, calling upon God, and saying, Lord Jesus, receive my spirit. And he knelt down,

and cried with a loud voice, Lord, lay not this sin to their charge. And when he had said this, he fell asleep.

The Gospel. St. Matth. 23. 34.

BEHOLD, I send unto you prophets, and wise men, and scribes; and some of them ye shall kill and crucify; and some of them shall ye scourge in your synagogues, and persecute them from city to city; that upon you may come all the righteous blood shed upon the earth, from the blood of righteous Abel unto the blood of Zacharias, son of Barachias, whom ye slew between the temple and the altar. Verily I say unto you, All these things shall come upon this generation. O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee; how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not! Behold, your house is left unto you desolate. For I say unto you, Ye shall not see me henceforth, till ye shall say, Blessed is he that cometh in the Name of the Lord.

Saint John the Evangelist's Day.

The Collect.

MERCIFUL Lord, we beseech thee to cast thy bright beams of light upon thy Church, that it being enlightened by the doctrine of thy blessed Apostle and Evangelist Saint John may so walk in the light of thy truth, that it may at length attain to the light of everlasting life; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

The Epistle. 1 St. John 1. 1.

THAT which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled of the word of life; (for the life was manifested, and we have seen it, and bear witness, and shew unto you that eternal life, which was with the Father, and was manifested

unto us;) That which we have seen and heard declare we unto you, that ye also may have fellowship with us; and truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ. And these things write we unto you, that your joy may be full. This then is the message which we have heard of him, and declare unto you, That God is light, and in him is no darkness at all. If we say that we have fellowship with him, and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth: but if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin. If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess

in one, of "knowledge of truth" and "life everlasting" (see John xvii. 3).

THE EPISTLE is the solemn opening of St. John's great Epistle, first (a), declaring Our Lord as the Word of Life, and emphasizing especially his own visible and tangible knowledge of Him on earth, as the ground of his right so to declare Him, that the knowledge may be the secret of fellowship with God through Him; next (b), setting forth God as Light, with whom they only, who walk in light, casting off the "works of darkness," have fellowship; lastly (c), shewing this fellowship, not as an inherent power of man's nature, but as given to sinners, confessing their sin, in the cleansing blood of Christ, through which God is (not merciful, but) "faithful and just" to forgive and to cleanse the soul.

THE GOSPEL comes from the last chapter (a postscript, as it seems) of the Gospel according to St. John; speaking of himself "as the disciple whom Jesus

loved," of St. Peter's enquiry concerning him, gently rebuked as presumptuous, and of the unfounded belief, derived from the words of Our Lord as to his long tarrying on earth—which, in spite of this passage, blossomed into a luxuriance of later legend—that he should not die. The last verses contain, first, an attestation (by the Church of Ephesus?) of the authorship of St. John, and next, a statement, in hyperbolical terms, of the multitude of the deeds of Christ, of which the Gospel is but an imperfect record (comp. John xx. 30, 31).

THE PROPER LESSONS are (Exod. xxxiii. 9-23; Isa. vi.) the records of the two great manifestations of the Divine glory, to Moses and to Isaiah (on which see John i. 18; xii. 41), anticipations of the fuller Revelation to St. John; and (John xiii. 23-36; Rev. i.) two pictures of St. John, as the disciple whom Jesus loved, resting in His bosom, and as the Seer of Patmos, receiving the vision and the message of the exalted Lord.

The Innocents' Day

The Festival dates from the 3rd century, though the day of celebration may not always have been the same. (In the Greek Church it is kept on the 29th.) Its celebration is most natural, and if the claim of martyrdom for the Innocents fails to satisfy the rigid demands of reason, it commends itself by a singular beauty and pathos. Slain for His sake, who called the little children to Him as the very types of His Kingdom, they come to be looked upon, not only as innocent sufferers, but as martyrs, baptized by blood unto His salvation—witnesses for Him (as the old Sarum Collect had it) "not by speaking, but by dying."

THE COLLECT, altered in 1662 from a more literal translation of the old Collect, quotes Our Lord's own words, accepting childish homage, and dwells on the death of the Innocents as a homage glorifying Him; then prays for the childlike heart of innocence in ourselves (but in

the form of conscious victory over sin), and for simple willingness to suffer even to the end.

THE EPISTLE accordingly sets before us this high ideal, from the vision in the Apocalypse of "the hundred and forty and four thousand,"—sealed as "the first-fruits unto God and to the Lamb"—the types of purity and entire self-devotion to the service of God—"without fault before His throne," and so alone "learning the new song" of Heaven, while others could hear only the vague grandeur of "the voice of many waters and the voice of a great thunder" (comp. John xii. 28, 29).

THE GOSPEL gives simply the record of the angelic warning to Joseph to flee with the "young child and His mother" into Egypt, and to remain there until, after the death of Herod, he should be called back. (The quotation here of Hos. xi. 1 is an instance of simple application of prophetic words.) Then it tells

our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. If we say that we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us.

The Gospel. St. John 21. 19.

JESUS said unto Peter, Follow me. Then Peter, turning about, seeth the disciple whom Jesus loved following; which also leaned on his breast at supper, and said, Lord, which is he that betrayeth thee? Peter seeing him saith to Jesus, Lord, and what shall this man do? Jesus saith unto him, If I will that he tarry till I

come, what is that to thee? Follow thou me. Then went this saying abroad among the brethren, That that disciple should not die: yet Jesus said not unto him, He shall not die; but, If I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee? This is the disciple which testifieth of these things, and wrote these things, and we know that his testimony is true. And there are also many other things which Jesus did, the which if they should be written every one, I suppose, that even the world itself could not contain the books that should be written.

The Innocents' Day.

The Collect.

O ALMIGHTY God, who out of the mouths of babes and sucklings hast ordained strength, and madest infants to glorify thee by their deaths; Mortify and kill all vices in us, and so strengthen us by thy grace, that by the Innocency of our lives, and constancy of our faith even unto death, we may glorify thy holy Name; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

For the Epistle. Rev. 14. 1.

I LOOKED, and lo, a Lamb stood on the mount Sion, and with him an hundred forty and four thousand, having his Father's Name written in their foreheads. And I heard a voice from heaven, as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of a great thunder: and I heard the voice of harpers harping with their harps: and they sung as it were a new song before the throne, and before the four beasts, and the elders; and no man could learn that song, but the hundred and forty and four thousand, which were redeemed from the earth. These are they which were not defiled with women, for they are virgins: these are they which follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth: these were redeemed from among men, being the first-fruits unto God,

and to the Lamb. And in their mouth was found no guile; for they are without fault before the throne of God.

The Gospel. St. Matth. 2. 13.

THE Angel of the Lord appeareth to Joseph in a dream, saying, Arise, and take the young child, and his mother, and flee into Egypt, and be thou there until I bring thee word; for Herod will seek the young child to destroy him. When he arose, he took the young child and his mother by night, and departed into Egypt, and was there until the death of Herod; that it might be fulfilled which was spoken of the Lord by the prophet, saying, Out of Egypt have I called my Son. Then Herod, when he saw that he was mocked of the wise men, was exceeding wroth; and sent forth, and slew all the children that were in Bethlehem, and in all the coasts thereof, from two years old and under, according to the time which he had diligently enquired of the wise men. Then was fulfilled that which was spoken by Jeremy the prophet, saying, In Rama was there a voice heard, lamentation, and weeping, and great mourning, Rachel weeping for her children, and would not be comforted, because they are not.

of the slaughter of the Innocents by the baffled wrath of Herod; and connects it with the utterance of Jeremiah (xxxv. 15), telling of the mourning, heard by the prophetic ear, of Rachel, from her grave in Bethlehem (see Gen. xxxv. 19) over its ruined and desolate homes—a "sorrow" (see Jer. xxxi. 17) "not without hope."

The Sunday after Christmas-Day.

This Sunday (as its Collect implies) is simply the continuation of the Christmas celebration.

THE EPISTLE brings out, from St. Paul's pleading against the Judaistic legalism of the Galatians, the perfect freedom of Sonship in the redeemed and regenerate soul, by virtue of the Incarnation of the Son of God in the likeness of a servant, made under the Law to redeem us from the legal bondage of childish imperfection to the full adoption of Sonship, which brings with it confidence in the Fatherhood of God, and heirship of God with Christ. For it is this freedom which is the secret of the unclouded simplicity of Christmas joy.

The Circumcision of Christ.

The date of this Festival is, of course, determined by Christmas. But it is not till some time after the establishment of the Christmas Festival, that the day has any designation except as the octave of Christmas. Possibly anti-Judaic feeling might shrink from dwelling on Our Lord's Circumcision; and the day seems for some time to have been observed as a fast, in protest against the riotous heathen celebration of the 1st of January; of which protest there is perhaps still an echo in the Collect. The earliest notices of it as "the Circumcision" are Western, and appear to be Gallican. With us now it blends with the idea of New Year's Day, tending to solemnize the opening of the year by the thought of responsibility and the need of painful struggle against sin.

THE COLLECT, freely rendered in 1549 from a Benediction in

THE PROPER LESSONS are (Jer. xxxi. 1-18) the picture of the salvation of Israel, and the "weeping of Rachel for her children," with which it is accompanied; and (Baruch iv. 21-31) the exhortation, "Be of good cheer, my children," on the way through weeping and suffering to joy and salvation in "the Everlasting."

THE GOSPEL records again the story of the Incarnation, but now as told especially to the Jews in the Gospel of St. Matthew. It dwells, therefore, on the message to Joseph as "son of David," of the conception by the Holy Ghost, fulfilling the prophecy of Isa. vii. 14, which declares the Virgin-born Messiah (who is always, as the "Seed of Abraham" and "Son of David," the Son of Man) to be also an "Emmanuel"—a God present on earth—or (which is but equivalent) a Jesus, "Jehovah our Saviour."

THE PROPER LESSONS (Isa. xxxv., xxxviii., xl.) simply continue the Advent series from the "Evangelical Prophet."

the Sarum Use, first notes the Circumcision of Our Lord as an "obedience to the Law"—in respect of an infliction of pain, intended as a warning against sin—not for His own sake, but "for man," as the beginning of His suffering for us. Then it prays for the "circumcision of the spirit"—for the principle, that is, which outward circumcision symbolizes. This is not merely obedience, but obedience through mortification of our "hearts and members," our souls and bodies, recognising sin in us, and our need, in struggling against it, to submit to constraint of law and to suffering.

THE EPISTLE, substituted in 1549 for the old Sarum Epistle (Tit. ii. 11-15), has perhaps less appropriateness than that which it superseded; for it dwells rather on the nullity of circumcision, than on its spiritual significance.

The Sunday after Christmas-Day.

The Collect.

ALMIGHTY God, who hast given us thy only-begotten Son to take our nature upon him, and as at this time to be born of a pure Virgin; Grant that we being regenerate, and made thy children by adoption and grace, may daily be renewed by thy Holy Spirit; through the same our Lord Jesus Christ, who liveth and reigneth with thee and the same Spirit, ever one God, world without end. Amen.

The Epistle. Gal. 4. 1.

NOW I say, that the heir, as long as he is a child, differeth nothing from a servant, though he be lord of all; but is under tutors and governours, until the time appointed of the father. Even so we, when we were children, were in bondage under the elements of the world: but when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons. And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father. Wherefore thou art no more a servant, but a son; and if a son, then an heir of God through Christ.

The Circumcision of Christ.

The Collect.

ALMIGHTY God, who madest thy blessed Son to be circumcised, and obedient to the law for man; Grant us the true Circumcision of the Spirit; that, our hearts, and all our members, being mortified from all worldly and carnal lusts, we may in all things obey thy blessed will; through the same thy Son Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

The Epistle. Rom. 4. 8.

BLESSED is the man to whom the Lord will not impute sin. Cometh this blessedness then upon the circumcision only, or upon the uncircumcision also? For we say, that faith was reckoned to Abra-

The Gospel. St. Matth. 1. 18.

THE birth of Jesus Christ was on this wise: When as his mother Mary was espoused to Joseph, before they came together she was found with child of the Holy Ghost. Then Joseph her husband, being a just man, and not willing to make her a publick example, was minded to put her away privily. But while he thought on these things, behold, the angel of the Lord appeared unto him in a dream, saying, Joseph thou son of David, fear not to take unto thee Mary thy wife; for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Ghost: And she shall bring forth a Son, and thou shalt call his name JESUS; for he shall save his people from their sins. (Now all this was done, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken of the Lord by the prophet, saying, Behold, a Virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a Son, and they shall call his name Emmanuel, which being interpreted is, God with us.) Then Joseph, being raised from sleep, did as the angel of the Lord had bidden him, and took unto him his wife; and knew her not till she had brought forth her first-born son: and he called his name JESUS.

ham for righteousness. How was it then reckoned? when he was in circumcision, or in uncircumcision? Not in circumcision, but in uncircumcision. And he received the sign of circumcision, a seal of the righteousness of the faith which he had yet being uncircumcised; that he might be the father of all them that believe, though they be not circumcised; that righteousness might be imputed unto them also: And the father of circumcision to them who are not of the circumcision only, but also walk in the steps of that faith of our father Abraham, which he had being yet uncircumcised. For the promise, that he should be the

It contrasts it indeed with the faith of Abraham, as being the true condition of the Covenant (of which Circumcision was but the sign and seal), and therefore of the righteousness imputed to him, and the promise attached to that Covenant, which was not to be through the Law, but was to belong to all, circumcised or uncircumcised, who imitated his faith. Except so far as it emphasizes the higher sacredness of our own Christian Covenant, as not of the Law, but of the Spirit, it hardly carries out the special idea of the day.

THE GOSPEL prefixes to the brief notice of the Circumcision the record (which belongs still to Christmas) of the journey of the shepherds to Bethlehem to see the Infant Saviour, and of the various effects of the Incarnation—in the multitude mere wonder, in the shepherds thanksgiving and praise, in the mother of the

Lord the thoughtful and reverent pondering in the heart. Circumcision was always connected (like Baptism with us) with the naming of the child, as now entering for himself into Covenant with God; and so here Our Lord at His Circumcision received publicly the name Jesus ("Jehovah the Saviour"), in which His Nature and Office are gathered up.

THE PROPER LESSONS are (Gen. xvii. 9-27) the record of the circumcision of Abraham and his house, and (Deut. x. 12-22) an exhortation to Israel to seek the "true circumcision of the heart"; and (Rom. ii. 17-29; Col. ii. 8-18) the contrast between circumcision "in the spirit and the letter," and between the outward circumcision and the "circumcision made without hands," in which we are "buried and risen with Christ in Baptism."

(C) THE EPIPHANY AND SUNDAYS FOLLOWING.

The Epiphany.

The Greek name of this Festival ("the Manifestation") turns our thoughts to the East for its origin. There it seems clear that in the Epiphany the Greek Church originally combined the general celebration (on January 6th) of Our Lord's Manifestations on earth—at His Nativity, at His Baptism, and in His self-revelation by miracle at Cana of Galilee—all these perhaps being conceived as happening on the same day of the year. It was consequently one of the greatest Festivals, and especially one of the days of solemn Baptism. The manifestation to the Wise Men, if recognised at all in the East, was entirely subordinate. In the Western Church from early times (as in the East subsequently) the Epiphany was observed as a separate Festival; but its idea was different and more restricted. Although the old references to Our Lord's Baptism and His first Miracle were not extinct (see the Second Lessons for the Epiphany, and the Gospel for the Second Sunday after Epiphany), the manifestation to the Magi—striking

and significant, but lying as an episode outside the history—took such prominence as to obscure all else, and in mediæval times associated with itself a mass of picturesque legends. The day was, therefore, closely connected with Christmas, as the name "Twelfth Day" shews, and was looked upon as the close of Christmas festivity. The period which it introduces is one of thoughtful meditation on the Incarnation and earthly life of Our Lord, before passing to the preparation for Easter.

THE COLLECT is a translation of the old Sarum Collect (taken from the Sacramentary of Gregory) alluding to the manifestation by the Star, and praying for an Epiphany of the Lord to us, both by faith now, and by the fruition, or enjoyment, of His Godhead, when we see Him face to face hereafter.

THE EPISTLE, substituted in 1549 for an appropriate prophecy of Isaiah (lx. 1-6), is the enunciation by St. Paul (a) of the special commission to him, to proclaim the mystery—"from the beginning hid in God," and

THE EPIPHANY.

heir of the world, was not to Abraham, or to his seed, through the law, but through the righteousness of faith. For if they which are of the law be heirs, faith is made void, and the promise made of none effect.

The Gospel. St. Luke 2. 15.

AND it came to pass, as the angels were gone away from them into heaven, the shepherds said one to another, Let us now go even unto Bethlehem, and see this thing which is come to pass, which the Lord hath made known unto us. And they came with haste, and found Mary and Joseph, and the babe lying in a manger. And when they had seen it, they made known abroad the saying

which was told them concerning this child. And all they that heard it wondered at those things which were told them by the shepherds. But Mary kept all these things, and pondered them in her heart. And the shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all the things that they had heard and seen, as it was told unto them. And when eight days were accomplished for the circumcising of the child, his name was called JESUS, which was so named of the angel before he was conceived in the womb.

† *The same Collect, Epistle, and Gospel shall serve for every day after unto the Epiphany.*

The Epiphany,

OR THE MANIFESTATION OF CHRIST TO THE GENTILES.

The Collect.

O GOD, who by the leading of a star didst manifest thy only-begotten Son to the Gentiles; Mercifully grant, that we, which know thee now by faith, may after this life have the fruition of thy glorious Godhead; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

The Epistle. Ephes. 3. 1.

FOR this cause, I Paul, the prisoner of Jesus Christ for you Gentiles; if ye have heard of the dispensation of the grace of God, which is given me to you-ward: How that by revelation he made known unto me the mystery (as I wrote afore in few words, whereby, when ye read, ye may understand my knowledge in the mystery of Christ) which in other ages was not made known unto the sons of men, as it is now revealed unto his holy Apostles and Prophets by the Spirit; That the Gentiles should be fellow-heirs, and of the same body, and partakers of his promise in Christ, by the Gospel: whereof I was made a minister, according to the gift of the grace of God given unto me by the effectual working of his power. Unto me, who am less than the least of all saints, is this

grace given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ; and to make all men see what is the fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the world hath been hid in God, who created all things by Jesus Christ: to the intent, that now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places might be known by the Church the manifold wisdom of God, according to the eternal purpose which he purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord: In whom we have boldness and access with confidence by the faith of him.

The Gospel. St. Matth. 2. 1.

WHEN Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judæa, in the days of Herod the king, behold, there came wise men from the east to Jerusalem, saying, Where is he that is born King of the Jews? for we have seen his star in the east, and are come to worship him. When Herod the king had heard these things, he was troubled, and all Jerusalem with him. And when he had gathered all the chief priests and scribes of the people together, he demanded of them, where Christ should be born. And they said unto him, In Bethlehem

heretofore hitherto unknown to man, but now revealed by the Spirit—of the call of the Gentiles into the full covenant of God, (b) and, through this declaration of the unsearchable riches of Christ, of the manifestation by the Church before all men and all angels of "the manifold wisdom of God." It dwells, therefore, upon the reality, of which the Epiphany to the Magi was but a type and promise.

THE GOSPEL is the record—given to us clearly for its symbolic significance—of the visit of the Wise Men—that is, the Magi (the "Three Kings" of legend), the astrologers of the East—to the cradle of Bethlehem, led by a star. This star has been thought by some to be a wonderful conjunction of planets which then took place, by others to be a miraculous luminary in heaven; in either case interpreted by their astrology, as heralding the birth of the great King, who (as we know) was at that time expect-

ed, by friends and foes alike, to arise out of Judæa. Led towards knowledge by their own science, they gain it in certainty from the Revelation of God. The prophecy quoted by the Sanhedrim is Micah v. 2—one of the most striking and definite of the Messianic prophecies. The gifts offered were significant—gold to a King, frankincense to One Divine, myrrh, the emblem of death, to a Sufferer. In us they represent the offering to Him of our wealth and energy, our adoration, and our self-sacrifice.

THE PROPER LESSONS are the prophecies (Isa. lx.) of the manifestation of the Kingdom of God, universal, glorious, unclouded in light and righteousness, and (Isa. xlix. 13-24) of the restoration of Israel from captivity and the gathering in of the Gentiles; and (Luke iii. 15-23; John ii. 1-12) the records of two "Epiphanies" of Our Lord, in the outpouring of the Spirit at His Baptism, and in His first manifestation by miracle.

THE SUNDAYS AFTER EPIPHANY (which vary in number from one to six, according as Easter falls early or late) have, as is usual in the period following some great Festival, a thoughtful and practical tone. The EPISTLES of the first four Sundays all come from the practical close of the great Epistle to the Romans; and the GOSPELS all deal with self-manifestations of Our Lord, chiefly by miracle. The 5th and 6th Sundays, which are exceptional in occurrence, do not present the same continuity of teaching.

THE PROPER LESSONS of the first three Sundays complete the series from Isaiah begun in Advent, and those of the last three are the only Proper Lessons taken from the Books of Job and Proverbs.

The First Sunday after the Epiphany.

THE COLLECT, a free and beautiful translation of the old Sarum Collect, strikes at once the practical note, praying for light to "know what we ought to do," and grace to act on our knowledge.

THE EPISTLE answers the question, What is it that we ought to do? It opens the last section of that great Epistle to the Romans, which has dwelt most emphatically on free justification by the mercy of God through Christ, and urges on us "by these mercies" the duty of a living and rational sacrifice of our bodies (as well as our souls); (a) shewing itself towards God

by a change of soul from dependence on the shallow fashion of the visible world to a deep inner accordance with His perfect Will; (b) shewing itself towards man in a resolution to sink all individual self-assertion in the Communion of the One Body in Christ. This is the true "self-denial," which Our Lord declares to be the condition of following Him (Matt. xvi. 24). It is taken up and enlarged in the Post-Communion Office in the prayer of Oblation.

THE GOSPEL begins the record of the Manifestation of Our Lord by the one glimpse given

of Judæa: for thus it is written by the prophet, And thou, Bethlehem, in the land of Juda, art not the least among the princes of Juda: for out of thee shall come a Governour that shall rule my people Israel. Then Herod, when he had privily called the wise men, enquired of them diligently what time the star appeared. And he sent them to Bethlehem, and said, Go, and search diligently for the young child, and when ye have found him, bring me word again, that I may come and worship him also. When they had heard the king, they departed; and lo, the

star which they saw in the east went before them, till it came and stood over where the young child was. When they saw the star, they rejoiced with exceeding great joy. And when they were come into the house, they saw the young child with Mary his mother, and fell down and worshipped him: and when they had opened their treasures, they presented unto him gifts; gold, and frankincense, and myrrh. And being warned of God in a dream that they should not return to Herod, they departed into their own country another way.

The First Sunday after the Epiphany.

The Collect.

O LORD, we beseech thee mercifully to receive the prayers of thy people which call upon thee; and grant that they may both perceive and know what things they ought to do, and also may have grace and power faithfully to fulfil the same; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

The Epistle. Rom. 12. 1.

I BESEECH you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. And be not conformed to this world; but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect will of God. For I say, through the grace given unto me, to every man that is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think, but to think soberly, according as God hath dealt to every man the measure of faith. For as we have many members in one body, and all members have not the same office; so we, being many, are one body in Christ, and every one members one of another.

The Gospel. St. Luke 2. 41.

NOW his parents went to Jerusalem every year at the

feast of the Passover. And when he was twelve years old, they went up to Jerusalem, after the custom of the feast. And when they had fulfilled the days, as they returned, the child Jesus tarried behind in Jerusalem; and Joseph and his mother knew not of it. But they, supposing him to have been in the company, went a day's journey, and they sought him among their kinsfolk and acquaintance. And when they found him not, they turned back again to Jerusalem, seeking him. And it came to pass, that after three days they found him in the temple, sitting in the midst of the doctors, both hearing them, and asking them questions. And all that heard him were astonished at his understanding and answers. And when they saw him, they were amazed: and his mother said unto him, Son, why hast thou thus dealt with us? behold, thy father and I have sought thee sorrowing. And he said unto them, How is it that ye sought me? wist ye not that I must be about my Father's business? And they understood not the saying which he spake unto them. And he went down with them, and came to Nazareth, and was subject unto them: but his mother kept all these sayings in her heart. And Jesus increased in wisdom, and stature, and in favour with God and man.

us of His childhood; when at the age of twelve years (at which each Jewish boy became a "son of the Law") He went up to the Passover; tarried in Jerusalem to sit at the feet of the teachers of the Law "to hear them," "to ask questions," and to "answer" theirs; and declared to those who sought Him that He must by spiritual necessity be "in His Father's House," or "about His Father's business." In this we read the

The Second Sunday after the Epiphany.

THE COLLECT (a literal translation of the old Sarum Collect) is simple in the extreme, recognising God's Almighty Providence, and praying for His peace—a peace with self, with man, and with God—which is the first and last blessing of the Gospel (see Luke ii. 14; John xiv. 27, & xx. 19–21), though it may be for a time broken by the resistance of evil (Matt. x. 34).

THE EPISTLE is a detailed application of the general principles enunciated in the Epistle of last Sunday; first, under the sense of individual responsibility, by resolution to make full use of any gift and corresponding function in the Church—whether of prophecy and teaching, or of practical rule and charitable work—so as to yield a thoughtful, earnest, single-hearted service; next, by the spirit of love in all its forms—in affection for the good, in kindness and humility, in energy of service and hopeful patience, in open-handed charity and forgiveness, in universal sympathy and self-forget-

The Third Sunday after the Epiphany.

THE COLLECT (again a close translation from the old Sarum Collect), recognising our own infirmity within, and the presence of danger and necessity without, prays for God's protection—the only security, in a world of conflict, for the peace prayed for in last Sunday's Collect.

THE EPISTLE, continuing that of last Sunday, recognises still

self-sacrifice of absolute devotion to God—in resolution, in thought, and in action—which is the dominant idea of true human life. But, next, under the shadow of this supreme idea, we find the other element of self-denial and humility in His return to be subject to His earthly parents, and His quiet growth "in favour of God and man." The Gospel thus shews us in example what the Epistle teaches in precept.

fulness. (Compare the description of Charity in 1 Cor. xiii.)

THE GOSPEL begins the record of Our Lord's self-manifestation by miracle—in this case given for the confirmation of the faith of His disciples—marking also His public entrance on His Ministry, and accordingly His resolute though gentle renunciation of the parental authority to which He had been subject. The miracle of Cana of Galilee is an assumption of Creative Power, doing in a moment what God's Providence does by long process and visible means; and, like God's creative power generally, shews itself in gift of temporal blessing, and sympathy with innocent human joy. The two lessons which it especially teaches are these, first, that the true function of miracle is to be a "sign" or manifestation of the Lord, and next, that the asceticism, fleeing from the world and its joys—however it may be often needed as a self-discipline or a protest against evil—is not the true ideal of Christian life.

more plainly the conflict of evil against us; forbidding revenge, teaching us to avoid offence and do our best for peace; and finally, commanding us to leave all retribution in God's hand, and "overcome evil" simply "by the power of good." The quotations are from Deut. xxxii. 35; Prov. xxv. 21, 22. The "coals of fire upon the enemy's head" are certainly under the Gospel—what-

The Second Sunday after the Epiphany.

The Collect.

ALMIGHTY and everlasting God, who dost govern all things in heaven and earth; Mercifully hear the supplications of thy people, and grant us thy peace all the days of our life; through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

The Epistle. Rom. 12. 6.

HAVING then gifts differing according to the grace that is given to us, whether prophecy, let us prophesy according to the proportion of faith; or ministry, let us wait on our ministering; or he that teacheth, on teaching; or he that exhorteth, on exhortation: he that giveth, let him do it with simplicity; he that ruleth, with diligence; he that sheweth mercy, with cheerfulness. Let love be without dissimulation. Abhor that which is evil, cleave to that which is good. Be kindly affectioned one to another with brotherly love, in honour preferring one another: not slothful in business; fervent in spirit; serving the Lord; rejoicing in hope; patient in tribulation; continuing instant in prayer; distributing to the necessity of saints; given to hospitality. Bless them which persecute you; bless, and curse not. Rejoice with them that do rejoice, and weep with them that weep. Be of the same mind one towards another. Mind not high things, but condescend to men of low estate.

The Third Sunday after the Epiphany.

The Collect.

ALMIGHTY and everlasting God, mercifully look upon our infirmities, and in all our dangers and necessities stretch forth thy right hand to help and defend us; through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

The Epistle. Rom. 12. 16.

BE not wise in your own conceits. Recompense to no man evil for evil. Provide things honest in the sight of all men. If it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men. Dear-

The Gospel. St. John 2. 1.

AND the third day there was a marriage in Cana of Galilee, and the mother of Jesus was there. And both Jesus was called, and his disciples, to the marriage. And when they wanted wine, the mother of Jesus saith unto him, They have no wine. Jesus saith unto her, Woman, what have I to do with thee? mine hour is not yet come. His mother saith unto the servants, Whatsoever he saith unto you, do it. And there were set there six water-pots of stone, after the manner of the purifying of the Jews, containing two or three firkins apiece. Jesus saith unto them, Fill the water-pots with water. And they filled them up to the brim. And he saith unto them, Draw out now, and bear unto the governour of the feast. And they bare it. When the ruler of the feast had tasted the water that was made wine, and knew not whence it was, (but the servants which drew the water knew,) the governour of the feast called the bridegroom, and saith unto him, Every man at the beginning doth set forth good wine, and when men have well drunk, then that which is worse: but thou hast kept the good wine until now. This beginning of miracles did Jesus in Cana of Galilee, and manifested forth his glory, and his disciples believed on him.

ly beloved, avenge not yourselves, but rather give place unto wrath; for it is written, Vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord. Therefore, if thine enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him drink: for in so doing thou shalt heap coals of fire on his head. Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good.

The Gospel. St. Matth. 8. 1.

WHEN he was come down from the mountain, great multitudes followed him. And behold, there came a leper and

ever they may have been under the older Covenant—intended to melt, not to consume.

THE GOSPEL continues the Epiphany by miracle; but the miracles here are of Redemption from suffering; in the case of the leprosy from a suffering, which carried with it pollution and consequent excommunication, and was viewed especially as a curse on sin; in the case of the palsy from a suffering not so much of pain, as of weakness, paralysing all joy and usefulness in life. In both cases it is clear that the healing is symbolical of Our Lord's spiritual office of redemption, from the foul guilt and the paralysing helplessness

of sin. (On the law of leprosy and its cure see Lev. xiii. & xiv.) In the case of the leper, His touch both shewed His gracious sympathy, and asserted His superiority to the Law. The healing of the centurion's servant—bringing out the strong simplicity of the faith of the Roman soldier—at once teaches that the faith of one man may be accepted to the benefit of another, and is made by Our Lord Himself a symbolic prophecy of the coming in of the Gentiles to the Kingdom of God—there to enjoy the Communion with Him, which the children of the Kingdom rejected to their own condemnation.

The Fourth Sunday after the Epiphany.

THE COLLECT (varied from the old Sarum Collect) still recognises both our danger and our infirmity, and (in words which form an admirable explanation of the petition, "Lead us not into temptation") asks both for strength and protection, to support us in all danger, and carry us through all temptation.

THE EPISTLE, still in continuation of the former, dwells on submission to temporal power, which, under the Roman tyranny, and in the first enthusiasm of Gospel freedom, perhaps especially needed enforcement by Apostolic authority (comp. 1 Pet. ii. 11-17). It is, of course, obvious that, as Our Lord teaches, such subjection is limited by the higher obedience to God (Matt. xxii. 21). Temporal authority (being necessary to human society) is at once an ordinance of God, carrying with it dignity, and a ministry for His sake to His people, implying responsibility. Its function is, under God's Providence, to put down and punish evil, to sustain and reward good. It is to be obeyed accordingly in all its phases, with deference as well as obedience, not by constraint, but willingly for conscience' sake; and is to receive its due—the material due of tribute and custom, the spiritual due of fear and honour. (It

cannot be disobeyed, even when it must be disobeyed, without deep responsibility and certainty of some evil consequence.)

THE GOSPEL still sets forth the Epiphany by miracle, but here by miracles of beneficent power over the convulsions of Nature, and the possession by evil spirits—the two being probably recorded together, because the one is symbolical of the other. The rebuke of the storm is one of the miracles, which, dealing with the physical world, preclude all idea of mere subjective effect on the imagination. The casting out devils is an instance of a frequent work of His redemptive mercy, recorded always in terms which recognise most distinctly the reality of demoniacal possession, as something more than the mere mental disease which was its effect. The suffering the devils to pass into the swine stands out almost exceptional, as a miracle involving destruction, doubtless justified by some exceptional circumstance and purpose, and certainly forcing upon an unimpressible people a startling conviction of the reality of demoniacal power. The Gadarenes perverted its lesson, not to serious impression, but to the fear which desires at all hazards to be let alone. The granting of their desire was its own punishment.

worshipped him, saying, Lord, if thou wilt, thou canst make me clean. And Jesus put forth his hand, and touched him, saying, I will; be thou clean. And immediately his leprosy was cleansed. And Jesus saith unto him, See thou tell no man, but go thy way, shew thyself to the priest, and offer the gift that Moses commanded, for a testimony unto them. And when Jesus was entered into Capernaum, there came unto him a centurion beseeching him, and saying, Lord, my servant lieth at home sick of the palsy, grievously tormented. And Jesus saith unto him, I will come and heal him. The centurion answered and said, Lord, I am not worthy that thou shouldst come under my roof; but speak the word only, and my servant shall be healed. For I am a

man under authority, having soldiers under me: and I say unto this man, Go, and he goeth; and to another, Come, and he cometh; and to my servant, Do this, and he doeth it. When Jesus heard it, he marvelled, and said to them that followed, Verily I say unto you, I have not found so great faith, no not in Israel. And I say unto you, That many shall come from the east and west, and shall sit down with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, in the kingdom of heaven. But the children of the kingdom shall be cast out into outer darkness: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth. And Jesus said unto the centurion, Go thy way, and as thou hast believed, so be it done unto thee. And his servant was healed in the selfsame hour.

The Fourth Sunday after the Epiphany.

The Collect.

O GOD, who knowest us to be set in the midst of so many and great dangers, that by reason of the frailty of our nature we cannot always stand upright; Grant to us such strength and protection, as may support us in all dangers, and carry us through all temptations; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

The Epistle. Rom. 13. 1.

LET every soul be subject unto the higher powers; for there is no power but of God: the powers that be are ordained of God. Whosoever therefore resisteth the power resisteth the ordinance of God: and they that resist shall receive to themselves damnation. For rulers are not a terror to good works, but to the evil. Wilt thou then not be afraid of the power? do that which is good, and thou shalt have praise of the same: for he is the minister of God to thee for good. But if thou do that which is evil, be afraid; for he beareth not the sword in vain: for he is the minister of God, a revenger to execute wrath upon him that

doeth evil. Wherefore ye must needs be subject, not only for wrath, but also for conscience sake. For for this cause pay ye tribute also; for they are God's ministers, attending continually upon this very thing. Render therefore to all their dues; tribute to whom tribute is due, custom to whom custom, fear to whom fear, honour to whom honour.

The Gospel. St. Matth. 8. 23.

AND when he was entered into a ship, his disciples followed him. And behold, there arose a great tempest in the sea, inasmuch that the ship was covered with the waves: but he was asleep. And his disciples came to him, and awoke him, saying, Lord, save us, we perish. And he saith unto them, Why are ye fearful, O ye of little faith? Then he arose, and rebuked the winds and the sea, and there was a great calm. But the men marvelled, saying, What manner of man is this, that even the winds and the sea obey him! And when he was come to the other side into the country of the Gergesenes, there met him two

The Fifth Sunday after the Epiphany.

This and the following Sunday, which occur less frequently than the others, break the continuity of idea traceable in them. This Sunday, so far as it dwells on the Epiphany at all, brings out the Epiphany of present grace.

THE COLLECT (from the same source as before) still prays for God's grace and protection; but here for the Church as the household of God, seeking and depending upon the Divine grace.

THE EPISTLE accordingly, taken from the last section of the Epistle to the Colossians (there following a description of "the putting off the old man" of sin), recognises Christians as already "elect of God," and bids them put on accordingly the likeness of Christ; first, and most truly, in all the various phases of the "Charity which is the bond of perfectness," growing under the thankful sense of the peace of God; next, in the wisdom coming from the insight of a devotion, which is able at once to teach others and to pour out its own thankfulness to God—in the "psalms and hymns" of the multitude and the "spiritual songs"

The Sixth Sunday after the Epiphany.

This Sunday was inserted in 1662. Till then it was directed, that, in the rare case in which a sixth Sunday occurs, the Services of the Fifth Sunday should be repeated. Its Services dwell on the Epiphany of the Future.

THE COLLECT (drawn up by Bishop Cosin) is one of the finest and most characteristic specimens of the modern type. (a) It quotes in the preamble the description, in 1 John iii. 8 & John i. 12, 13, of the redeeming work of Christ, negatively as destroying the works of the devil, positively as giving us the adoption of sonship and heirship of Eternal life; then (b) (still following 1 John iii. 3) prays that the hope planted by His Redemption in us may be to us a seed of purity now, and the

of the few; lastly, in the sense that "whatever we do, in word or deed," we do "in the Name of the Lord Jesus Christ"—that is, in acknowledgment of His presence, with us and in us, as the source at once of justification and sanctification before God.

THE GOSPEL is the celebrated Parable, explained by Our Lord Himself, of the Church, or "Kingdom of Heaven," as the good seed, sown by the Son of Man in the field of this world, spoiled and choked by the "tares"—a bastard counterfeit of wheat, detected only by the black poisonous grain formed in the ear—sown by the Evil one and his servants; which yet must not be rooted out violently, lest the good seed intermixed should suffer, but left to final division and destruction at the harvest of the Great Day. The lessons of the Parable are many; as, for example, that evil is the counterfeit of good; that tares are best destroyed, not by rooting up, but by cultivation of the good seed; that evil, in the world or in the heart, exists not by God's Will, but by His permission, and exists only for a time.

earnest of perfect likeness to Him at His last Epiphany at the Great Day. (c) It ends with an ascription notable as containing, contrary to ordinary custom, a direct address to God the Holy Ghost.

THE EPISTLE (from which the idea of the Collect is taken) is one of the most striking passages from the First Epistle of St. John, uniting profound exposition of doctrine with stern practical warning. (a) In its doctrinal teaching it starts from the present fact of our adoption to sonship in Christ out of an alienated world; it looks on to the perfection, of which this is an earnest—the vision of Him as He is, and our transformation by that vision to His likeness. (b) In practical exhortation, St. John goes on to urge, as the

possessed with devils, coming out of the tombs, exceeding fierce, so that no man might pass by that way. And behold, they cried out, saying, What have we to do with thee, Jesus, thou Son of God? art thou come hither to torment us before the time? And there was a good way off from them an herd of many swine, feeding. So the devils besought him, saying, If thou cast us out, suffer us to go away into the herd of swine. And he said unto them, Go. And when

they were come out, they went into the herd of swine: and behold, the whole herd of swine ran violently down a steep place into the sea, and perished in the waters. And they that kept them fled, and went their ways into the city, and told every thing, and what was befallen to the possessed of the devils. And behold, the whole city came out to meet Jesus: and when they saw him, they besought him, that he would depart out of their coasts.

The Fifth Sunday after the Epiphany.

The Collect.

O LORD, we beseech thee to keep thy Church and household continually in thy true religion; that they who do lean only upon the hope of thy heavenly grace may evermore be defended by thy mighty power; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

The Epistle. Col. 3. 12.

PUT on therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, longsuffering; forbearing one another, and forgiving one another, if any man have a quarrel against any; even as Christ forgave you, so also do ye. And above all these things put on charity, which is the bond of perfectness. And let the peace of God rule in your hearts, to the which also ye are called in one body; and be ye thankful. Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom, teaching and admonishing one another in psalms, and hymns, and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord. And

whatsoever ye do, in word or deed, do all in the Name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by him.

The Gospel. St. Matth. 13. 24.

THE kingdom of heaven is likened unto a man which sowed good seed in his field. But while men slept, his enemy came and sowed tares among the wheat, and went his way. But when the blade was sprung up, and brought forth fruit, then appeared the tares also. So the servants of the householder came, and said unto him, Sir, didst not thou sow good seed in thy field? from whence then hath it tares? He said unto them, An enemy hath done this. The servants said unto him, Wilt thou then that we go and gather them up? But he said, Nay; lest while ye gather up the tares, ye root up also the wheat with them. Let both grow together until the harvest; and in the time of harvest I will say to the reapers, Gather ye together first the tares, and bind them in bundles to burn them: but gather the wheat into my barn.

The Sixth Sunday after the Epiphany.

The Collect.

O GOD, whose blessed Son was manifested that he might destroy the works of the devil, and make us the sons of God, and heirs of eternal life; Grant us, we beseech thee, that, having this hope, we may purify ourselves, even as

he is pure; that, when he shall appear again with power and great glory, we may be made like unto him in his eternal and glorious kingdom; where with thee, O Father, and thee, O Holy Ghost, he liveth and reigneth, ever one God, world without end. Amen.

necessary result, purity of heart, in obedience to the law of God, without which we can have no sight or knowledge of Him (comp. Matt. v. 8); and warns his children against the delusion, which separates ideal righteousness from doing righteously, and so throws men back into the power of Satan, which Our Lord came to destroy. (Compare the order of teaching in the Catechism—first the Baptismal blessings, then the Baptismal Vow.)

THE GOSPEL similarly proclaims the Epiphany of the Future, from Our Lord's own prophecy to His disciples on the eve of His Passion. In it (a)

He warns against false Christs, even if they shew great signs and wonders, and promises that, when He comes, His Coming shall shine as the lightning from one end of Heaven to the other, with no possibility of doubt or hesitation. Then (b) He describes the preparation for His Coming, in the convulsions of Nature and of Humanity, breaking up the old world. Lastly (c) He tells how "the sign of the Son of Man" (the Cross, as old interpreters believed) shall be seen in Heaven to the terror of His enemies; and then He Himself with His angels shall come, and shall gather His elect together.

(II.) THE SECOND SECTION OF THE YEAR

(dependent on Easter).

(A) SEPTUAGESIMA, SEXAGESIMA, QUINQUAGESIMA.

This period forms a transition between the festal commemoration of Christmastide and the penitential observance of Lent. Of these three Sundays Quinquagesima is rightly named, being the 50th day before Easter, as Pentecost is the 50th day after it. The other two are evidently named, though inaccurately, by analogy thereto. The names are used early in all Western Calendars, but have nothing to correspond to them in the Eastern.

THE PROPER LESSONS.—The First Lessons generally are taken from Genesis, dwelling on the Creation, Paradise, the Fall, the Flood, the New Covenant, and the early history of Abraham. But on Septuagesima a First Lesson at the second Evensong is Job xxxvii., the declaration by the Lord "out of the whirlwind" of the wonder and mystery of Creation; and the Proper Second Lessons (Rev. xxi. 1-9; xxi. 9-xxii. 6)—in contrast with the revelation of the first Creation and the Earthly Paradise—bring out the picture of the Creation of the new heaven and the new earth, and of the glory of the new Jerusalem.

Septuagesima.

THE COLLECT (from the old Sarum Missal) at once anticipates two chief ideas of Lent—the acknowledgment of our sin and its just punishment, and the prayer for forgiveness from God's mercy in and through Christ.

THE EPISTLE brings in the other chief Lenten idea of self-discipline. Addressing the Corinthians, spectators of the great Isthmian games, St. Paul holds out, as models for the spiritual life, the eagerness of the race, and the "temperance in all things" needful for the wrestling or boxing ring. From the

one he takes the lesson of unity and fixity of purpose, "running not uncertainly"; from the other, of practical and definite conflict, aiming blows at our besetting sins, not "as one that beateth the air." For both ends, he declares of himself that he "buffets" and "enslaves" his body, lest, having proclaimed the race to others, he should be rejected from it as unfit. The whole passage brings home, seriously and yet hopefully, the struggle, the hardness, and the danger of our spiritual course.

THE GOSPEL seems to have no connection with this idea, but

The Epistle. 1 St. John 3. 1.

BEHOLD, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God: therefore the world knoweth us not, because it knew him not. Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know, that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is. And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure. Whosoever committeth sin transgresseth also the law: for sin is the transgression of the law. And ye know that he was manifested to take away our sins; and in him is no sin. Whosoever abideth in him sinneth not: whosoever sinneth hath not seen him, neither known him. Little children, let no man deceive you: he that doeth righteousness is righteous, even as he is righteous. He that committeth sin is of the devil: for the devil sinneth from the beginning. For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil.

The Gospel. St. Matt. 24. 23.

THEN if any man shall say unto you, Lo, here is Christ,

or there; believe it not. For there shall arise false Christs, and false prophets, and shall shew great signs and wonders; inasmuch that (if it were possible) they shall deceive the very elect. Behold, I have told you before. Wherefore, if they shall say unto you, Behold, he is in the desert; go not forth: behold, he is in the secret chambers; believe it not. For as the lightning cometh out of the east, and shineth even unto the west; so shall also the coming of the Son of Man be. For wheresoever the carcase is, there will the eagles be gathered together. Immediately after the tribulation of those days shall the sun be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens shall be shaken. And then shall appear the sign of the Son of Man in heaven: and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of Man coming in the clouds of heaven, with power and great glory. And he shall send his angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they shall gather together his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other.

The Sunday called Septuagesima,

OR THE THIRD SUNDAY BEFORE LENT.

The Collect.

O LORD, we beseech thee favourably to hear the prayers of thy people; that we, who are justly punished for our offences, may be mercifully delivered by thy goodness, for the glory of thy Name; through Jesus Christ our Saviour, who liveth and reigneth with thee and the Holy Ghost, ever one God, world without end. Amen.

The Epistle. 1 Cor. 9. 24.

KNOW ye not, that they which run in a race run all, but one receiveth the prize? So run that ye may obtain. And every man that striveth for the mastery is

temperate in all things: now they do it to obtain a corruptible crown, but we an incorruptible. I therefore so run, not as uncertainly; so fight I, not as one that beateth the air: but I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection, lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a cast-away.

The Gospel. St. Matt. 20. 1.

THE kingdom of heaven is like unto a man that is an householder, which went out early in the morning to hire labourers into his vineyard. And when he had agreed with the labourers for a penny a day, he sent them into his vineyard. And he went out about

rather to supply the corrective truth, warning us against abuse of right emulation to envy, and of self-discipline to self-trust and sense of merit. The Parable, spoken in direct reference to St. Peter's question, "We have left all and followed thee, what shall we have therefore?" shews (see Bible heading) that "God is debtor to no man." Like other parables, drawn from the outer world, it cannot convey the full spiritual reality. Each labourer comes when God is pleased to call him; with the first comers there is agreement for a sufficient pay, with the rest none; at the end all receive alike, and the first, though acknowledging their pay as that agreed upon, yet complain of the apparent want of equity, and receive the crushing answer, "Is

it not lawful for me to do what I will with my own?" "Is thine eye evil" (that is, grudging and envious) "because I am good?" (that is, liberal). The lesson is not the one so often carelessly drawn in the phrase "repentance at the eleventh hour," for no call was neglected; but the lesson that it is faithful and earnest acceptance of God's service, not length or extent of work, with which He is pleased. Many who seem first shall therefore be last; many who are called and appear to obey are not chosen in the end. All must look only to God's grace; none must rely on his own merit, still less carp at God's mercy to others. (The need of the lesson is plainly shewn in much of the experience of the religious, especially the ascetic, life.)

Sexagesima.

THE COLLECT (shortened slightly from the old Sarum form) takes up the lesson taught in the last Gospel, disclaims self-trust, and throws the soul wholly on God's protection.

THE EPISTLE comes from the impassioned and indignant close of St. Paul's Second Epistle to the Corinthians, pleading against the rejection of his Apostolic authority and teaching under the influence of the Judaizers. (a) It opens with an ironical wonder that they who are so wise, suffer gladly the fools who enslave, devour, rob, oppress, and insult them. (b) Then—perforce, and not without apology ("I speak as a fool." &c.)—the Apostle feels bound to set before them his own claim to authority, and, for that purpose, draws a picture of his life, which is of priceless historical and spiritual value. He dwells on his privileges of Jewish descent; on his various labours and sufferings for Christ (many of which are not recorded in the Acts); on the continual peril and the hardness and suffering of his life; on his heavy responsibility for the Churches; and his painful sympathy with perplexity and weakness. (c) His glorying (he says) is in his infirmities, by

which the grace of God is magnified, and God knows that it is true. The whole teaches the lesson of the need, and yet the distastefulness, of a righteous self-assertion of authority and character, when attack on these hinders the work of God.

THE GOSPEL seems to have little connection with the Epistle. It is the Parable of the Sower, interpreted by Our Lord Himself; the sowing of the sacred Word (becoming the "engrafted word able to save") by the Son of Man and His Ministers; the various reception of it—only one soil being hopelessly hardened, from which the seed is at once swept away—only one thoroughly good—the others representing the great class of those who are undecided, either from mere shallowness or from worldly pre-occupation, growing for a time, and perhaps bearing some fruit, but none to perfection. The Parable, like all others, contains but a part of the truth; it does not tell the reason of the variety of soils; it does not even suggest how one soil may change into another. Its lesson simply is of the reality of God's gift in itself, of its reality to us according as we receive it.

the third hour, and saw others standing idle in the market-place, and said unto them, Go ye also into the vineyard, and whatsoever is right I will give you. And they went their way. Again he went out about the sixth and ninth hour, and did likewise. And about the eleventh hour he went out, and found others standing idle, and saith unto them, Why stand ye here all the day idle? They say unto him, Because no man hath hired us. He saith unto them, Go ye also into the vineyard, and whatsoever is right, that shall ye receive. So when even was come, the lord of the vineyard saith unto his steward, Call the labourers, and give them their hire, beginning from the last unto the first. And when they came that were hired about the eleventh hour,

they received every man a penny. But when the first came, they supposed that they should have received more; and they likewise received every man a penny. And when they had received it, they murmured against the good-man of the house, saying, These last have wrought but one hour, and thou hast made them equal unto us, which have borne the burden and heat of the day. But he answered one of them, and said, Friend, I do thee no wrong; didst not thou agree with me for a penny? Take that thine is, and go thy way; I will give unto this last even as unto thee. Is it not lawful for me to do what I will with mine own? Is thine eye evil, because I am good? So the last shall be first, and the first last: for many be called, but few chosen.

The Sunday called Sexagesima,

OR THE SECOND SUNDAY BEFORE LENT.

The Collect.

O LORD God, who seest that we put not our trust in any thing that we do; Mercifully grant that by thy power we may be defended against all adversity; through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

The Epistle. 2 Cor. 11. 19.

YE suffer fools gladly, seeing ye yourselves are wise. For ye suffer if a man bring you into bondage, if a man devour you, if a man take of you, if a man exalt himself, if a man smite you on the face. I speak as concerning reproach, as though we had been weak: howbeit, whereinsoever any is bold, (I speak foolishly,) I am bold also. Are they Hebrews? so am I. Are they Israelites? so am I. Are they the seed of Abraham? so am I. Are they ministers of Christ? (I speak as a fool,) I am more: in labours more abundant; in stripes above measure; in prisons more frequent; in deaths oft. Of the Jews five times received I forty stripes save one; thrice was I beaten with rods; once was I stoned; thrice I suffered ship-

wreck; a night and a day I have been in the deep; in journeying often; in perils of waters; in perils of robbers; in perils by mine own countrymen; in perils by the heathen; in perils in the city; in perils in the wilderness; in perils in the sea; in perils among false brethren; in weariness and painfulness; in watchings often; in hunger and thirst; in fastings often; in cold and nakedness; besides those things that are without, that which cometh upon me daily, the care of all the churches. Who is weak, and I am not weak? who is offended, and I burn not? If I must needs glory, I will glory of the things which concern mine infirmities. The God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which is blessed for evermore, knoweth that I lie not.

The Gospel. St. Luke 8. 4.

WHEN much people were gathered together, and were come to him out of every city, he spake by a parable: A sower went out to sow his seed; and as he sowed, some fell by the way-side, and it was trodden down, and the

THE COLLECT (substituted in 1549 for an old Collect evidently referring to Confession and Penitence at the opening of Lent) is one of the most beautiful of the later Collects. It at once declares the main idea of this Sunday, in the prayer for the gift by the Holy Ghost of Charity—that is, Love in all its phases—as the very life of Christian life, and the bond of unity between all virtues.

THE EPISTLE is St. Paul's celebrated picture of Charity, that is, Love (properly in its relation to man, though there are analogous features in its relation to God). Under the beauty and freedom of the description lies a profound sequence of thought. Following out the subject of spiritual gifts, treated in the previous chapter, he (a) exalts true Love above the two chief gifts of tongues and prophecy, and above even that faith in God's special mission, which was the condition of all miracles; (b) next, he contrasts the inner reality of Love with its outward signs towards God and man, the devotion of martyrdom and the sacrifice of our wealth to feed the poor; (c) from these negative descriptions he passes to a climax of the positive characteristics of Love—patience and kindness, self-forgetfulness and humility, unselfishness and readiness to forgive ("reckoneth not the evil"), delight in all that is

good and true, "bearing, believing, hoping, and enduring" without limit; (d) lastly, he dwells on the eternal permanence of Love, when in the perfection of the manhood of the future all that belongs to our present imperfect state of childishness—prophecies, tongues, knowledge—shall pass away. Even of the graces which abide—Faith, Hope, Love—Love is greatest (because having most likeness to the God, who is Love).

THE GOSPEL is apparently connected with the idea of the day by its opening with the prediction of the great act and pattern of Love—the unspeakable sacrifice of the Lord Jesus Christ for our redemption. To this it adds one exhibition out of many of the Mercy which ruled in His life—in the miracle wrought on the blind man at Jericho at His last visit to Jerusalem, asked from Him as the Messiah (the "Son of David"), granted to a faith, persevering in spite of rebuke from others, and made, through the thanksgiving of the people, the preparation for His triumphal entry.

It seems clear that this emphasis on the spirit of love, which counts not sacrifice, is intended to teach us the true spirit of Lenten self-discipline and self-denial; without which it may be Pharisaic in self-righteousness, or superstitious in self-torment.

(B) LENT

(the name derived from the old English *Lencten*, "spring," "the Spring Fast").

(a) HISTORY.—The observation of a time of fasting and penitence before Easter, as it is most natural, so appears to have been primitive. But the duration of it varied even in the 2nd century. It seems, however, at least highly probable that in the early centuries it most usually lasted "forty hours"—the time during which Our Lord was under the power of death—in accordance with His own words, "The Bridegroom shall be taken away from them, then shall they fast." The "Great Sabbath" (Easter-Eve) always remained the chief Fast of the year, more strictly observed in the East than even Good Friday. By degrees the time was enlarged, though still with great variation of observance, till it settled down, first to thirty-six days, then, following the example of Our Lord in the wilderness, to forty days. Still, in the reckoning of this time, there was variation, arising partly from the Festal observance of Saturday (except on Easter-Eve) as "the Sabbath" in the Fast. At last, about the

fowls of the air devoured it. And some fell upon a rock, and as soon as it was sprung up, it withered away, because it lacked moisture. And some fell among thorns, and the thorns sprang up with it, and choked it. And other fell on good ground, and sprang up, and bare fruit an hundred-fold. And when he had said these things, he cried, He that hath ears to hear, let him hear. And his disciples asked him, saying, What might this parable be? And he said, Unto you it is given to know the mysteries of the kingdom of God: but to others in parables; that seeing they might not see, and hearing they might not understand. Now the parable is this: The seed is the Word of

God. Those by the way-side are they that hear; then cometh the devil, and taketh away the word out of their hearts, lest they should believe, and be saved. They on the rock are they, which, when they hear, receive the word with joy; and these have no root, which for a while believe, and in time of temptation fall away. And that which fell among thorns, are they, which, when they have heard, go forth, and are choked with cares, and riches, and pleasures of this life, and bring no fruit to perfection. But that on the good ground, are they, which in an honest and good heart, having heard the word, keep it, and bring forth fruit with patience.

The Sunday called Quinquagesima,

OR THE NEXT SUNDAY BEFORE LENT.

The Collect.

O LORD, who hast taught us that all our doings without charity are nothing worth; Send thy Holy Ghost, and pour into our hearts that most excellent gift of charity, the very bond of peace and of all virtues, without which whosoever liveth is counted dead before thee: Grant this for thine only Son Jesus Christ's sake. Amen.

The Epistle. 1 Cor. 13. 1.

THOUGH I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have not charity, I am become as sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal. And though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries, and all knowledge; and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, and have not charity, I am nothing. And though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my body to be burned, and have not charity, it profiteth me nothing. Charity suffereth long, and is kind; charity envieth not; charity vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up, doth not behave itself unseemly, seeketh not her own, is not easily provoked, thinketh no evil, rejoiceth

not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth; beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things. Charity never faileth: but whether there be prophecies, they shall fail; whether there be tongues, they shall cease; whether there be knowledge, it shall vanish away. For we know in part, and we prophesy in part. But when that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part shall be done away. When I was a child, I spake as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child; but when I became a man, I put away childish things. For now we see through a glass darkly; but then face to face: now I know in part; but then shall I know even as also I am known. And now abideth faith, hope, charity, these three; but the greatest of these is charity.

The Gospel. St. Luke 18. 31.

THEN Jesus took unto him the twelve, and said unto them, Behold, we go up to Jerusalem, and all things that are written by the prophets concerning the Son of Man shall be accomplished. For he shall be delivered unto the Gentiles, and shall be mocked,

7th century, the present observance, reckoning forty days, exclusively of Sundays, universally prevailed. In old days Lent was a special period of penance and restoration of penitents, and of preparation for the great Easter Baptism and Easter Communion. (See Preface to *Commination Service*.)

(b) **MEANING.**—The ideas of the Lenten observance are (1) *Penitence*, marked in the Ash-Wednesday Collect; (2) *Self-discipline and Self-chastisement* (marked in the Collect for the First Sunday); (3) *Special Devotion*, and particularly adoring commemoration of the Atonement, as especially on Passion Sunday and in Holy-Week. All these involve the conception of the darker aspects of life—the terrible reality of sin, and the need of earnest prayer and painful struggle against it. But as leading up to Easter, they involve also the sure and certain hope of victory. The method of observance of Lent is in the Church of England left to free spiritual obedience, without any authoritative imposition of fixed rules by the Church as a whole, as in some other Communion; and its first two elements are obviously means to secure the third, which is the chief end.

Ash-Wednesday

(*Dies Cinerum*), a name derived from the practice of sprinkling ashes on the heads of those who were put to public penance and temporary excommunication on that day.

THE COLLECT (composed in 1549, with some suggestion from the old Sarum Collect), dwelling in its preamble on the unfailing love of God to all His creatures, and His special mercy to the penitent, prays first for a heart new in conversion and contrite in repentance—acknowledging the reality and inherent wretchedness of sin—and then, as surely consequent on this, for God's perfect forgiveness.

The direction (given in 1662) to repeat this Collect daily, carries the lesson on through all Lent.

THE EPISTLE is the singularly beautiful exhortation of the prophet Joel to Judah, at a time of great national chastisement. Its first sentence is the message of the Lord, calling for true repentance of heart; taken up by the prophet with encouragement from the unfailing mercy of God, who does not willingly afflict, and may "repent" of His chastisement (which had cut off even the means of presenting the meat and drink offering, see *ch. i. 9*), and turn it to blessing. Then follows the call to solemn universal penitence of the whole people of God in all their classes

and conditions, and the charge to the priests, as suppliants between the porch and the altar, to plead with God by His Covenant and for the sake of His glory.

THE GOSPEL is Our Lord's teaching on fasting, as a sign of penitence—accepting, and so sanctioning, it as a religious duty, in significant union with prayer and almsgiving. He dwells emphatically on the necessity of sincerity and humility before God in secret (as contrasted with Pharisaic hypocrisy and ostentation before men), laying up true and eternal treasures in heaven, and not the vain and transitory treasures of man's approval on earth. (It is almost needless to observe, that this in no way forbids or decries public observance of fasting, not by individual choice, but in obedience to Christian law.)

THE PROPER LESSONS are (Isa. lviii. 1-13) a declaration of the true spirit of fasting observance—the gentle and humble temper before God, which naturally expresses itself in charity to man, and (Jonah iii.) a record of the repentance of Nineveh, accepted by the mercy of God; then (Mark ii. 13-23) Our Lord's acceptance of penitent sinners and sanction of the future fasting of His Church, and (Heb. xii. 3-18) the declaration of the blessing of God's chastening, leading us to repentance before it be too late.

ASH-WEDNESDAY.

and spitefully entreated, and spitted on: and they shall scourge him, and put him to death; and the third day he shall rise again. And they understood none of these things: and this saying was hid from them, neither knew they the things which were spoken. And it came to pass, that as he was come nigh unto Jericho, a certain blind man sat by the way-side begging: and hearing the multitude pass by, he asked what it meant. And they told him, that Jesus of Nazareth passeth by. And he cried, saying, Jesus, thou Son of David, have mercy on me. And

they which went before rebuked him, that he should hold his peace: but he cried so much the more, Thou Son of David, have mercy on me. And Jesus stood, and commanded him to be brought unto him: and when he was come near, he asked him, saying, What wilt thou that I should do unto thee? And he said, Lord, that I may receive my sight. And Jesus said unto him, Receive thy sight; thy faith hath saved thee. And immediately he received his sight, and followed him, glorifying God: and all the people, when they saw it, gave praise unto God.

THE FIRST DAY OF LENT, COMMONLY CALLED

Ash-Wednesday.

The Collect.

ALMIGHTY and everlasting God, who hast made, and dost forgive the sins of all them that are penitent; Create and make in us new and contrite hearts, that we worthily lamenting our sins, and acknowledging our wretchedness, may obtain of thee, the God of all mercy, perfect remission and forgiveness; through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

† *This Collect is to be read every day in Lent after the Collect appointed for the Day.*

For the Epistle. Joel 2. 12.

TURN ye even to me, saith the Lord, with all your heart, and with fasting, and with weeping, and with mourning. And rend your heart, and not your garments, and turn unto the Lord your God: for he is gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and of great kindness, and repenteth him of the evil. Who knoweth if he will return, and repent, and leave a blessing behind him, even a meat-offering and a drink-offering unto the Lord your God? Blow the trumpet in Zion, sanctify a fast, call a solemn assembly, gather the people, sanctify the congregation, assemble the elders, gather the

children, and those that suck the breasts; let the bridegroom go forth of his chamber, and the bride out of her closet; let the priests, the ministers of the Lord, weep between the porch and the altar, and let them say, Spare thy people, O Lord, and give not thine heritage to reproach, that the heathen should rule over them: wherefore should they say among the people, Where is their God?

The Gospel. St. Mat. 6. 16.

WHEN ye fast, be not as the hypocrites, of a sad countenance: for they disfigure their faces, that they may appear unto men to fast. Verily I say unto you, They have their reward. But thou, when thou fastest, anoint thine head, and wash thy face, that thou appear not unto men to fast, but unto thy Father which is in secret; and thy Father, which seeth in secret, shall reward thee openly. Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal: but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal: for where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.

THE SUNDAYS IN LENT.

THE PROPER LESSONS (from the Old Testament) continue the series begun at Septuagesima from Genesis and Exodus, dwelling on the history of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and Joseph, and on the mission of Moses. On Palm Sunday Proper Second Lessons are appointed; for the Morning, Matt. xxvi., the narrative of the Passion, down to the deliverance to Pilate; and for the Evening, Luke xix. 28-48 & xx. 9-21, the story of the Triumphal Entry and the first words and deeds of the Holy-Week.

The First Sunday in Lent.

The special lesson of this Sunday is the lesson of that kind of SELF-DISCIPLINE, of which fasting is the example and representative. It recognises the undoubted power of the body to affect the soul (which modern science so forcibly teaches); and has three objects, (a) *Self-chastisement*, in case of previous excess and self-indulgence; (b) *Self-control*, by subduing of even natural appetites, "enduring hardness as a soldier of Jesus Christ"; (c) *Predisposition to devotion*, and especially to penitence. Its method and extent must vary with age, occupation, climate, and constitution; and hence are left by the Church to the conscience of her members.

THE COLLECT (composed in 1549), addressed to Our Lord, and citing His own fast in the wilderness, prays for the grace of Abstinence, with a view to subduing of the flesh, as a preparation for obedience to His "godly motions" through the Spirit:

THE EPISTLE (taken from St. Paul's unwonted disclosure of his own "spiritual experience") is a glorious picture of the true Christian life. In it he (a) first urges his converts to lay hold, "in the accepted time," of the glorious privilege, given both to His ministers and His people, of being "fellow-workers with God." Next (b) he dwells on the grave responsibility of giving, even before men, full proof of the reality of this service to Him (vs. 1-4); first, by sufferings, hardships, and labours, cheerfully borne (vs. 4, 5); next, by all the "natural" graces of purity, knowledge, patience,

kindness (v. 6); then, by all the supernatural gifts of the Holy Ghost in love, truth, power, and the whole "armour of righteousness" (vs. 6, 7); lastly, through all the contradictions, real or apparent, of honour and dishonour, of life and death, of sorrow and joy, of wealth and poverty, of destitution and fulness, in the spiritual life here (vs. 8-10). It bears thus emphatically on the need of the watchfulness and self-discipline implied in the Collect.

THE GOSPEL urges the same truth by example, in St. Matthew's record of the Temptation of Our Lord. It should be noted, (a) that the Temptation followed the great outpouring of the Spirit at His Baptism, and that He was led to it by the guidance of the Spirit, though it was brought on by the malice of the devil; (b) that it appealed in each case to natural impulse—the appetite of hunger, the ambition to do some great thing for God, the desire to feel and to test God's protection over us—and that the principle of the sin involved was the indulgence of such impulse, without thought of God's will, and without the patience of faith; (c) that each temptation was met by Our Lord simply in the power of a trustful faith in His Father, and answered from Holy Scripture (Deut. viii. 3 & vi. 16 & vi. 13), in that reverent use of God's Word which is a pattern to us; (d) that the Tempter accordingly "quoted Scripture to his purpose" (Ps. xci. 11, 12), by omitting the pregnant words "in all thy ways," which contradicted his abuse of it; (e) that the order of temptation differs in St. Matthew and St. Luke

The First Sunday in Lent.

The Collect.

OUR LORD, who for our sake didst fast forty days and forty nights; Give us grace to use such abstinence, that, our flesh being subdued to the Spirit, we may ever obey thy godly motions in righteousness, and true holiness, to thy honour and glory, who livest and reignest with the Father and the Holy Ghost, one God, world without end. Amen.

The Epistle. 2 Cor. 6. 1.

WE then, as workers together with him, beseech you also, that ye receive not the grace of God in vain; (for he saith, I have heard thee in a time accepted, and in the day of salvation have I succoured thee: behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation;) giving no offence in any thing, that the ministry be not blamed; but in all things approving ourselves as the ministers of God, in much patience, in afflictions, in necessities, in distresses, in stripes, in imprisonments, in tumults, in labours, in watchings, in fastings; by purity, by knowledge, by long-suffering, by kindness, by the Holy Ghost, by love unfeigned, by the word of truth, by the power of God, by the armour of righteousness on the right hand and on the left, by honour and dishonour, by evil report and good report; as deceivers, and yet true; as unknown, and yet well known; as dying, and behold, we live; as chastened, and not killed; as sorrowful, yet always rejoicing; as poor, yet making

many rich; as having nothing, and yet possessing all things.

The Gospel. St. Matth. 4. 1.

THEN was Jesus led up of the Spirit into the wilderness, to be tempted of the devil. And when he had fasted forty days and forty nights, he was afterward an-hungred. And when the tempter came to him, he said, If thou be the Son of God, command that these stones be made bread. But he answered and said, It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God. Then the devil taketh him up into the holy city, and setteth him on a pinnacle of the temple, and saith unto him, If thou be the Son of God, cast thyself down; for it is written, He shall give his angels charge concerning thee, and in their hands they shall bear thee up, lest at any time thou dash thy foot against a stone. Jesus said unto him, It is written again, Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God. Again, the devil taketh him up into an exceeding high mountain, and sheweth him all the kingdoms of the world, and the glory of them; and saith unto him, All these things will I give thee, if thou wilt fall down and worship me. Then saith Jesus unto him, Get thee hence, Satan; for it is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve. Then the devil leaveth him, and behold, angels came and ministered unto him.

The Second Sunday in Lent.

The Collect.

ALMIGHTY God, who seest that we have no power of ourselves to help ourselves; Keep us both outwardly in our bodies, and inwardly in our souls; that we may be defended from all adversities which may happen to the body and from all evil thoughts which may assault and hurt the soul; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

The Epistle. 1 Thess. 4. 1.

WE beseech you, brethren, and exhort you by the Lord Jesus, that as ye have received of us how ye ought to walk, and to please God, so ye would abound more and more. For ye know what commandments we gave you by the Lord Jesus. For this is the will of God, even your sanctification, that ye should abstain from fornication; that every one of you

—the one probably following the order of fact (see the dismissal of the Tempter by Our Lord in v. 10), and the other the general order of idea in temptation, through the appetites, the pas-

sions, and the spirit; (*f*) that the intense reality of the struggle is shown by Our Lord's need of the ministration of the angels, as in the Agony of Gethsemane.

The Second Sunday in Lent.

The second and third Sundays follow out the line of thought begun on the first Sunday. For both bring before us, in the Gospels, Our Lord's casting out of devils, conquering Satan for others, as in the Temptation for Himself; and in the Epistles urge upon us struggle and prayer against the works of darkness, especially against sensual sins.

THE COLLECT (translated from the old Sarum Collect) places our helplessness in body and soul under the protection of God—of His Providence against adversity—of His Grace against evil thoughts.

THE EPISTLE (taken from St. Paul's earliest Epistle) is a repetition of his own oral teaching to the Thessalonians, in earnest warning, mainly against lust and uncleanness, secondarily, as often in his teaching, against the spirit of covetousness (which is in some points akin to lust, and often replaces it in old age). So far it is simply an enforcement of high morality on a corrupt age. But it goes on to brand these sins as a disgrace to our

Christian calling, as drawing down God's vengeance, and as outraging the Spirit of God given to us; and thus it supplies the vital religious motive, which is the true strength of morality.

THE GOSPEL is a record of Our Lord's casting out the devil from the daughter of the Syro-Phœnician (marked here as a "woman of Canaan," *i.e.* of the accursed race). It is especially notable, (*a*) for Our Lord's apparent neglect of her petition, designed to draw her on to greater earnestness; (*b*) for His limitation of His work in life (with few exceptions) to the "lost sheep of Israel" (comp. Matt. x. 5, 6); and contrast John x. 16; Acts i. 8 & xiii. 32, 33), till the time when He should be "lifted up to draw *all men* to Him"; (*c*) for the marvellous faith of the woman, accepting the opprobrious title of "dog," and turning it to the account of her own humble request for the mere crumbs of His bounty; (*d*) for the special blessing here given (as in the case of the centurion) to Gentile faith.

The Third Sunday in Lent.

THE COLLECT (from the same source) expresses even more simply the hearty desire for God's help, and prays for defence against all enemies, spiritual and temporal.

THE EPISTLE takes up the subject of last Sunday, but now in the fuller and deeper teaching of St. Paul's later Epistles. (*a*) It begins (carrying on the lesson of the previous chapter, *vs.* 31, 32) with an exhortation to Love, after the pattern, first, of God's free beneficence; secondly, of the self-sacrifice of Our Lord as the Son of Man. (*b*) Then it goes on to warning against unclean-

ness, covetousness, ribaldry, as involving an idolatry of the world and the flesh, and therefore a loss of the kingdom of God, and as drawing down His certain judgment. (*c*) This warning is emphasized by a contrast of the old state of darkness—with its "unfruitful" works, "of which it is a shame even to speak"—not to be for a moment shared or condoned, and the new state of light, in which (for so it should be rendered) "whatever is illuminated by light becomes itself light" to others. (*d*) Finally (in a quotation apparently from some Liturgy or Hymn), it

THE THIRD SUNDAY IN LENT.

should know how to possess his vessel in sanctification and honour; not in the lust of concupiscence, even as the Gentiles which know not God; that no man go beyond and defraud his brother in any matter; because that the Lord is the avenger of all such, as we also have forewarned you, and testified. For God hath not called us unto uncleanness, but unto holiness. He therefore that despiseth despiseth not man, but God, who hath also given unto us his Holy Spirit.

The Gospel. St. Matth. 15. 21. **J**ESUS went thence, and departed into the coasts of Tyre and Sidon. And behold, a woman of Canaan came out of the same coasts, and cried unto him, saying, Have mercy on me, O Lord, thou

Son of David; my daughter is grievously vexed with a devil. But he answered her not a word. And his disciples came and besought him, saying, Send her away; for she crieth after us. But he answered and said, I am not sent, but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel. Then came she and worshipped him, saying, Lord, help me. But he answered and said, It is not meet to take the children's bread, and to cast it to dogs. And she said, Truth, Lord; yet the dogs eat of the crumbs which fall from their masters' table. Then Jesus answered and said unto her, O woman, great is thy faith: be it unto thee even as thou wilt. And her daughter was made whole from that very hour.

The Third Sunday in Lent.

The Collect.

WE beseech thee, Almighty God, look upon the hearty desires of thy humble servants, and stretch forth the right hand of thy Majesty, to be our defence against all our enemies; through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

The Epistle. Ephes. 5. 1.

BE ye therefore followers of God, as dear children; and walk in love, as Christ also hath loved us, and hath given himself for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet-smelling savour. But fornication, and all uncleanness, or covetousness, let it not be once named amongst you, as becometh saints; neither filthiness, nor foolish-talking, nor jesting, which are not convenient; but rather giving of thanks: for this ye know, that no whoremonger, nor unclean person, nor covetous man, who is an idolater, hath any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ, and of God. Let no man deceive you with vain words: for because of these things cometh the wrath of God upon the children of disobedience. Be not ye therefore partakers with them: for ye were

sometimes darkness, but now are ye light in the Lord: walk as children of light; (for the fruit of the Spirit is in all goodness, and righteousness, and truth;) proving what is acceptable unto the Lord. And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them: for it is a shame even to speak of those things which are done of them in secret. But all things that are reprovèd are made manifest by the light: for whatsoever doth make manifest is light. Wherefore he saith, Awake, thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light.

The Gospel. St. Luke 11. 14.

JESUS was casting out a devil, and it was dumb. And it came to pass, when the devil was gone out, the dumb spake; and the people wondered. But some of them said, He casteth out devils through Beelzebub, the chief of the devils. And others, tempting him, sought of him a sign from heaven. But he, knowing their thoughts, said unto them, Every kingdom divided against itself is brought to desolation; and a house divided against a house falleth. If

calls men "to awake from the sleep" of carelessness, "to arise from the death" of sin, that "Christ may shine" upon the soul.

THE GOSPEL is the record of the malignant cavil against Our Lord's miracles, not able to deny their reality, but referring them to Beelzebub (that is, probably, the power of magic). (a) His answer appeals first to their reason, urging that He who set forth the Kingdom of God could not be furthering the kingdom of Satan, and next to their own practice, able to cast out devils in the name of Jehovah, and in it alone. (b) Then He goes on to paint the picture of the cease-

less war between Satan and Himself, "the strong man armed," and the "stronger," his conqueror. Addressing, perhaps, especially the wavering multitude, He warns them that in this war neutrality is impossible, and that neglect of deliverance given brings back a sevenfold bondage. (c) The whole closes with the natural exclamation of a woman, "Blessed is the womb that bare Thee"; and His answer, deeply instructive as to the true position and true blessedness of the Mother of the Lord (see Luke ii. 19), "Yea rather, blessed are they who hear the Word of God and keep it," in reverence and obedience.

The Fourth Sunday in Lent.

This being Mid-Lent Sunday, was called the *Dies refectiois*, "the day of refreshment," in the austerity and watchfulness of Lent.

THE COLLECT (again from the old Sarum Missal) marks this idea, acknowledging our worthiness of punishment, but asking to be relieved, that is, refreshed (*ut respiremus*) by the knowledge of God's mercy.

THE EPISTLE carries on this idea by dwelling on the glad freedom of the Gospel-covenant of love, as distinguished from the bondage of the Law, riveted by fear. The passage (like 1 Cor. x. 1-12; 2 Cor. iii. 6-18) is a striking instance of symbolical interpretation of the Old Testament (Gen. xxi. 1-14), not explaining away the simple historical reality, but bringing out the general principles, which it exemplifies. Hagar, the bondwoman, represents the Law; Sarah, the freewoman, the Covenant of Promise. He who clings to the Law is, like Ishmael, a child of nature and bondage, a citizen only of the Jerusalem which now is, liable to be cast out of the family of God; the true Christian is, like Isaac, a child of promise and of the Spirit, a citizen and heir of the Jerusalem which is above. (The quotation, "Rejoice," &c., is from Isa. liv. 1.) The one, as of old, may per-

secute the other; but he shall be cast out and defeated. The lesson is not only an assertion of our right to freedom, but a warning against the spirit of legalism and Pharisaism, which is especially a snare of the watchful and self-disciplined life.

THE GOSPEL (similarly harmonizing with the name and idea of the Sunday) is the record of Our Lord's great miracle of refreshment to the five thousand in the wilderness—the symbol of His boundless gifts of grace and blessing to the many wanderers in the wilderness of this world. The miracle, wrought perhaps for the Passover-pilgrims to Jerusalem (see v. 4), naturally stirred men, more than any which went before, to hail Christ as the Prophet, and to "take Him by force to make Him King" (v. 15). It alone is recorded by all four Evangelists—by St. John, with the vividness of an eye-witness, and obviously for the sake of the profound teaching which followed it. In the command to "gather up the fragments"—which might have seemed to the disciples strange, in view of the profusion of His miraculous gift—we have the true Lenten lesson of watchfulness that "nothing be lost" of His free bounty, and of encouragement "to gather up" by repentance what would otherwise be wasted.

Satan also be divided against himself, how shall his kingdom stand? because ye say, that I cast out devils through Beelzebub. And if I by Beelzebub cast out devils, by whom do your sons cast them out? therefore shall they be your judges. But if I with the finger of God cast out devils, no doubt the kingdom of God is come upon you. When a strong man armed keepeth his palace, his goods are in peace; but when a stronger than he shall come upon him, and overcome him, he taketh from him all his armour wherein he trusted, and divideth his spoils. He that is not with me is against me: and he that gathereth not with me scattereth. When the un-

clean spirit is gone out of a man, he walketh through dry places, seeking rest; and finding none, he saith, I will return unto my house whence I came out. And when he cometh, he findeth it swept and garnished. Then goeth he and taketh to him seven other spirits more wicked than himself, and they enter in, and dwell there; and the last state of that man is worse than the first. And it came to pass, as he spake these things, a certain woman of the company lift up her voice, and said unto him, Blessed is the womb that bare thee, and the paps which thou hast sucked. But he said, Yea rather, blessed are they that hear the Word of God, and keep it.

The Fourth Sunday in Lent.

The Collect.

GRANT, we beseech thee, Almighty God, that we, who for our evil deeds do worthily deserve to be punished, by the comfort of thy grace may mercifully be relieved; through our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. Amen.

The Epistle. Gal. 4. 21.

TELL me, ye that desire to be under the law, do ye not hear the law? For it is written, that Abraham had two sons, the one by a bond-maid, the other by a free-woman. But he who was of the bond-woman was born after the flesh; but he of the free-woman was by promise. Which things are an allegory: for these are the two covenants; the one from the mount Sinai, which gendereth to bondage, which is Agar. For this Agar is mount Sinai in Arabia, and answereth to Jerusalem which now is, and is in bondage with her children. But Jerusalem which is above is free; which is the mother of us all. For it is written, Rejoice, thou barren that bearest not; break forth and cry, thou that travailest not: for the desolate hath many more children than she which hath an husband. Now we, brethren, as Isaac was,

are the children of promise. But as then he that was born after the flesh persecuted him that was born after the Spirit; even so it is now. Nevertheless, what saith the Scripture? Cast out the bond-woman and her son; for the son of the bond-woman shall not be heir with the son of the free-woman. So then, brethren, we are not children of the bond-woman, but of the free.

The Gospel. St. John 6. 1.

JESUS went over the sea of Galilee, which is the sea of Tiberias. And a great multitude followed him, because they saw his miracles which he did on them that were diseased. And Jesus went up into a mountain, and there he sat with his disciples. And the Passover, a feast of the Jews, was nigh. When Jesus then lift up his eyes, and saw a great company come unto him, he saith unto Philip, Whence shall we buy bread, that these may eat? (And this he said to prove him; for he himself knew what he would do.) Philip answered him, Two hundred penny-worth of bread is not sufficient for them, that every one of them may take a little. One of his disciples, Andrew, Simon Peter's brother, saith unto him,

commonly called in old times **PASSION SUNDAY**, because of the anticipation of the Passion in the Epistle.

THE COLLECT, however (a translation of the old Sarum Collect), has no special reference thereto, and is, indeed, only a shortened repetition of the Collect for the Second Sunday.

THE EPISTLE comes from that part of the Epistle to the Hebrews which deals with Our Lord's Sacrifice, as that of which all the Jewish sacrifices were but types. (a) The passage (*vs.* 1-8) preceding it describes the visible Sanctuary, as symbolic of the old Covenant, and dwells especially on the entrance of the High Priest alone into the Holy of Holies yearly on the Day of Atonement. Our Epistle (b) describes Our Lord as the Great High Priest, entering once for all into the Holy Place of Heaven, through the tabernacle of His human body, by the Sacrifice of Himself; thus (c) having wrought an eternal redemption for us, purifying, not (like the old sacrifices) the outer, but the inner man, and atoning, as the Mediator of the new Covenant, for the transgressions which the old Covenant could not take away. In brief, we have here an almost complete statement of the Atonement.

(C) HOLY-WEEK,

called also the "GREAT WEEK," the "INDULGENCE WEEK" (from the great Absolution at Easter), and "PASSION WEEK." Its observance, like that of Easter, is probably of very early date; and, while it brings to a climax the penitence and self-discipline of Lent, it naturally absorbs both into the adoring contemplation of the Passion and Resurrection of Our Lord.

THE GOSPEL seems to have no close connection with the Epistle, though it clearly refers to the First Lesson (Exod. iii.), retained from the Old Lectionary. It is the record of the close of Our Lord's discussions with the Jews at the Feast of Tabernacles (John vii. & viii.), in which He brings out, by an ascending climax, the revelation of His real nature. (a) He begins with assertion of a sinlessness, and of a claim to reveal the whole Word of God, which could be made by no mere man. This is met by accusation of heresy and infatuation. (b) But He goes on to the still higher claim of a power to save from death those who keep His saying. This provokes a yet fiercer denunciation of presumption, as exalting Him above all the prophets, and above Abraham himself. Still (c) He continues unmoved the declaration that this honour is given Him not by Himself, but by God the Father, and that Abraham himself "rejoiced to see His day." Finally (d), in answer to a scoff of incredulity, He utters the supreme words, "Before Abraham was born, I AM"; claiming the incommunicable name of JEHOVAH. To this there can be but one of two answers—the stoning of the blasphemer or the adoration of the Godhead in Him. The Jews made the one; it is ours to make the other.

There is a lad here, which hath five barley-loaves, and two small fishes: but what are they among so many? And Jesus said, Make the men sit down. Now there was much grass in the place. So the men sat down, in number about five thousand. And Jesus took the loaves, and when he had given thanks he distributed to the disciples, and the disciples to them that were set down; and likewise of the fishes as much as they

would. When they were filled, he said unto his disciples, Gather up the fragments that remain, that nothing be lost. Therefore they gathered them together, and filled twelve baskets with the fragments of the five barley-loaves, which remained over and above unto them that had eaten. Then those men, when they had seen the miracle that Jesus did, said, This is of a truth that Prophet that should come into the world.

The Fifth Sunday in Lent.

The Collect.

WE beseech thee, Almighty God, mercifully to look upon thy people; that by thy great goodness they may be governed and preserved evermore, both in body and soul; through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

The Epistle. Heb. 9. 11.

CHRIST being come an High Priest of good things to come, by a greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands; that is to say, not of this building; neither by the blood of goats and calves; but by his own blood he entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us. For if the blood of bulls and of goats, and the ashes of an heifer sprinkling the unclean, sanctifieth to the purifying of the flesh; how much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit, offered himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God? And for this cause he is the Mediator of the new testament, that by means of death, for the redemption of the transgressions that were under the first testament, they which are called might receive the promise of eternal inheritance.

The Gospel. St. John 8. 46.

JESUS said, Which of you convinceth me of sin? and if I say the truth, why do ye not believe me? He that is of God hear-

eth God's words; ye therefore hear them not, because ye are not of God. Then answered the Jews, and said unto him, Say we not well, that thou art a Samaritan, and hast a devil? Jesus answered, I have not a devil; but I honour my Father, and ye do dishonour me. And I seek not mine own glory; there is one that seeketh and judgeth. Verily, verily, I say unto you, If a man keep my saying, he shall never see death. Then said the Jews unto him, Now we know that thou hast a devil: Abraham is dead, and the prophets; and thou sayest, If a man keep my saying, he shall never taste of death. Art thou greater than our father Abraham, which is dead? and the prophets are dead: whom makest thou thyself? Jesus answered, If I honour myself, my honour is nothing; it is my Father that honoureth me, of whom ye say, that he is your God: yet ye have not known him; but I know him: and if I should say, I know him not, I shall be a liar like unto you; but I know him, and keep his saying. Your father Abraham rejoiced to see my day, and he saw it, and was glad. Then said the Jews unto him, Thou art not yet fifty years old, and hast thou seen Abraham? Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, before Abraham was, I am. Then took they up stones to cast at him: but Jesus hid himself, and went out of the temple.