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LESSON FOR SUNDAYS AND HOLY DAYS. SEPTUAGESIMA SUNDAY

Morning—Gen. I. & II. to 4; Rev. XXI., to 9

Evening—Gen. II., 4, or Job XXXVIII.; Rev. XXI., 9—XXII. 6

Appropriate Hymns for Septuagesima and Sexagesima Sundays, compiled by Dr. Albert Ham, F.R.C.O., organist and director of the choir of St. James' Cathedral, Toronto. The numbers are taken from Hymns Ancient and Modern, many of which may be found in other hymnals:

SEPTUAGESIMA SUNDAY.

Holy Communion: 182, 187, 555, 556.

Processional: 4, 83, 489, 547.

Offertory: 168, 262, 533, 538.

Children's Hymns: 330, 333, 340, 343.

General Hymns: 172, 210, 520, 534.

SEXAGESIMA SUNDAY.

Holy Communion: 192, 314, 316, 323.

Processional: 233, 236, 274, 298.

Offertory: 229, 239, 244, 353.

Children's Hymns: 238, 337, 340, 342.

General Hymns: 165, 234, 245, 288.

Sunday.

In a recent editorial, we spoke of the decline in the observance of the Fourth Commandment. People have suddenly awakened to the knowledge that old ideas of Sunday, and reverent attendance at church on that day have disappeared with the present generation. It is useless to ascribe the change to any one cause, so many must have contributed to it. There is, in our judgment, no need to delve very deeply to find a reason, if for a generation, like a flock of sheep, all the fashionable writers, the newspaper correspondents and illustrators flout and jeer at church-going customs. If, also, the travelling public (an increasing proportion), neglect its observance while abroad, it needs little more to have the rising generation fall

into the new habit wherever English is spoken. The Rev. Dr. Robertson Nicoll has been speaking on this subject, and few are better qualified to do so. Dr. Nicoll is a Scotchman of about 52, who graduated in Aberdeen in 1870, was a Presbyterian parish minister till 1885, and since then has chiefly lived in London, engaged in literary work. Speaking at Arbroath, in Scotland, and referring to the Presbyterians in Scotland, and the Nonconformists in England, he said on this subject: In the Church we have witnessed, to say the least, a very considerable collapse of what I may call conventional religion—that is, public opinion does much less to enforce church attendance and church communion. The change began in Scotland, perhaps thirty years ago. I remember the time when churches were fully attended twice a day, when in many places non-churchgoers were quite exceptional. This is no longer the case. Many are content with occasional attendances, and, in spite of all the efforts of the churches, the number of outsiders is very great, and is constantly increasing. I question, in this respect, whether Scotland is not in a worse position than England. I do not believe that the strength of the churches is less. I believe that much of the lapse is more apparent than real. Yet there is much that ought to force on the Church very serious thoughts in the present condition of things. It does seem as if a very considerable change of method on the part of the Church, and a very great invigoration of spiritual life, were necessary in order to bring us back even to the old condition of things. We have had to face within the Church, and especially within our own Church, the problems raised by Biblical criticism. It is just twenty-five years since they were seriously agitated, and we are by no means at the end. Twenty-five years ago active and aggressive assault on what is termed orthodox Christianity came very largely from the outside. Scientific unbelief was in great strength. The notion that all the universe was under the unbroken reign of law, and that nothing could be known of God and of the future life, turned, of course, the whole Christian story into a fable. In this way it affected the Church very little, but when it was proclaimed within the Church that much had to be conceded, that many of the outworks had to be abandoned in order effectually to defend the citadel, then a new condition of things began. It may be that the Church will even have to ask herself whether she is prepared to stand on the fundamental doctrines of the Incarnation and the Resurrection of Christ. It may be that those who deny both may claim to preach in her pulpits. Whatever opinion we have formed, none of us will deny that the issues raised are great and grave and disturbing. They have undoubtedly made the

work of the Church more difficult in every way than it was twenty-five years ago.

Unity.

On the subject of union, Dr. Robertson Nicoll, inspired to some extent by the union of the dissenting Presbyterian bodies in Scotland, is more sanguine. The tendency to union and confederation among the churches has been very marked. In England denominational asperities have been very much softened. The federation of the Free Churches has already had great results, and gives infinite promise for the future. That there will be among the English denominations any corporate union in the immediate future I do not believe, but they are being united in the best way by common work for common aims, and I have no hesitation in saying that Nonconformity in England is more and more a real force in the national life. Its vigour and resources are increasing. The magnificent response made to the great new century funds is most hopeful and significant. Even in the Church of England, despite the great strength of the sacerdotalist party, there is a movement from the very heart of sacerdotalism for reunion.

Foreign Missions.

The Junior Clergy Association of the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel has asked the similar body, belonging to the Church Missionary Society, to unite with them in a common act of prayer and thanksgiving in St. Paul's Cathedral, on 22nd April. The service will be open to the whole diocese, and the Bishop of London will preach. We rejoice at such united action which must have great practical benefit. Indeed, we think that very great good would come from co-operation with the similar societies here, in Australia and the United States. Doubtless there is already communication and assistance between them all, but there need be no overlapping. Anyone with a vocation should be able to get at any point the necessary aid to enable him to work in any part of the mission field.

Aggravating Tricks in Church Services.

Miss M. L. Wood, in a recent number of the *Manx Sun*, writes as follows: "By the Congregation.—Not getting up promptly when the chant or tune is played over, so as to be ready to begin with the choir; but instead, rising in a confused mass while the first line is being sung. Singing 'fancy parts' in the chants or tunes. By the Clergy.—Starting various parts of the service before the congregation have risen from their knees. Beginning the responses or the collects before the last words of the answering response or the amens have ceased. Reading in an ordinary tone the versicles or the litany when the choir sings the answer. By the Organ-