

SEPTUAGESIMA.

We now approach the season of Septuagesima, which, properly speaking, is hardly a season, but a time of preparation. The season of Lent is the penitential preparation for the great feast of Easter, and hence the season immediately preceding it, commencing on Septuagesima Sunday, has been aptly termed "a preparation for a preparation."

At no time of the Liturgical year does the spirit of the world contrast so strongly with the spirit of the Church as during the season we are now considering. Under the name of carnival, "*jours gras*," &c., each nation, at this season, celebrates a time of license and indulgence in profane pleasures. In Catholic countries, more particularly, the flesh (*caro*) seems to take a very lingering and loving farewell (*vale*) of the feasting and pleasures which are forbidden during the coming great fast. It is not the object of this article to describe the freaks and follies of this fantastic season as observed by the world, but rather to speak of the "preparation for a preparation" which the Church recommends to her children at this time. Septuagesima Sunday is the third Sunday before Lent, and is followed by Sexagesima and Quinquagesima Sundays. These words mean seventy, sixty and fifty, as, in round numbers, they are at this number of days from the great Feast of Easter, whose due and solemn celebration is now commencing to occupy the mind of the Church. The date of the commencement of the Lenten fast has varied in various countries, under various circumstances, but the number of days fast (forty) has never varied, since it is modelled on that one great Fast made by our Saviour, for our sakes, in the desert. The date of Septuagesima cannot fall earlier than January 18th, nor later than February 22nd, since it depends on the date of Easter. The joyous time of Christmas has either nearly or entirely passed, and it is now time for us to prepare for even a still greater event than the Birth of the Son of God, for that of His glorious resurrection from the dead.

As this is a time of preparation for the great penitential observances of Lent, the Church, by exhorting the faithful to enter into themselves and by meditating on the corruption introduced into the world by the fall of man, and also on the inherent sinfulness of human nature teaches us to appreciate the immense mercy our Saviour has shown us in dying for our sins, and by means of repentance and confession asks us to place ourselves in that state of grace which will render efficacious those penitential works which we will perform during Lent.

How far opposed this spirit is to that of "the world" during the days preceding Lent is evident to all who reflect on it. This is why, in so many churches, the lovely devotion of the Forty Hours is specially practised at this season to offer expiation for the many sins by which God is offended during this time of reckless gaiety and dissipation known as "carnival." In many religious orders, and by many devout Christians, the Lenten fast is commenced at this season if not in all its rigour, yet in a sufficiently penitential manner. Commencing on Septuagesima Sunday, the Church prohibits the use of the divine word *Alleluia*! as too joyous a word for us to utter during our time of sadness. She also forbids us the joyous *Gloria in excelsis* (except occasionally on a Saint's Day during the week) and in sign of penitence, she clothes her altars and priests in robes of sad-coloured violet. Nor is the Ambrosian hymn *Te Deum Laudamus* to be heard until Easter shall again open our lips and hearts to joy with its glorious commemoration of Triumph over Death and Joyful Resurrection.

G. M. WARD.

HIS GRACE ON THE UNITY OF FAITH.

His Grace, the Archbishop, addressed a large audience in the Cathedral on Sunday evening, the 15th inst., on a topic which engages the attention of the Protestant denominations in this country and in England. We give a synopsis of the discourse:

All Protestant denominations feel keenly their unscriptural position on account of their divisions and multiplications of creeds. They are praying and soliciting prayers for union. Our Lord Himself prayed that His apostles might be one as "Thou Father in Me and I in Thee," that they may also be one, and "that the world may believe that Thou has sent Me." (John 17: 21.)

Now, respecting the ministers who preach different doctrines, the world over will not believe that Christ sent one of them. The Church of England is one creed, the Presbyterians another, the Methodists another, the Baptists another and so with the rest. Can all be sent to God to preach different doctrines? Was St. Peter sent to preach a different doctrine from John? "One Lord, one faith, one baptism." All Christians feel humiliated at the figure the preachers of the various denominations exhibit to the infidels of Asia and Africa when they preach to them. What is the sad cause of this diversity of creeds when all say that they build their faith on the Bible? This is a grievous mistake or error, and so often boasted about. As long as there is an uncertain guide error must follow. What is a Protestant guide? Not the Bible, though they often say so, but the interpretation which they put on the Bible. The Bible is right, but the interpretation put on the text by fallible, and, often, men ignorant of the rules of interpretation or criticism is not. "Many men of many minds" is an old proverb.

It is not therefore correct to say "I found my faith on my own view of the Bible texts. My Protestant religion gives me the right to read the Bible, and to take my own meaning of it." Therefore you are your own guide and author of your own faith, as you say of my own views of religion, self-guidance in very serious matters is very often a poor one. You guide yourself by others in most important concerns; your lawyers in worldly affairs, the physician in what concerns your health, your man of business, your banker or steward as the case may be, but in the affairs of your immortal soul, in which an eternity of happiness or misery is at stake, you consult no one; self-love, or worldly love of gain often deceives. Surely Christ who came to teach all truth did not leave it without a guardian or depository, a living witness to all men. Christ did not confide His doctrines or truth to individual men, but to a corporation which He calls His church, and He says to all His followers: "He that will not hear the church let him be to thee as the heathen and the publican."

The Bible could not be the rule of faith for the immense majority who cannot read, or for Christians who lived before the art of printing was invented and Bibles circulated. From what source did they draw their faith, and how many drew true faith from the Bible? The Bible is like unto Christ when he was presented in the temple. Holy Simeon said, prophesying: "Behold, this child is set up for the fall and resurrection of many in Israel, and for a sign which shall be contradicted." (Luke 9: 34.) The Bible is set up for the fall of many who abuse that sacred volume, and for the resurrection of many who are faithful to its teaching.

Pray for true faith as in our Lord, and let us make an act of faith in all the truths contained in the Holy Bible, and not in the false interpretation of fallible men.

The Church in Canada.

Under this heading will be collected and preserved all obtainable data bearing upon the history and growth of the Church in Canada. Contributions are invited from those having in their possession any material that might properly come for publication in this department.

THE REV. PATRICK DOWD.

PASTOR OF ST. PATRICK'S CHURCH, MONTREAL.

Father Dowd, as his parishioners love to call him, was born in the County of Leith, Ireland, in 1813. At an early age he evinced an ardent desire to devote himself to the Church, and made his classical course at Newry. He went to Paris in 1832; he made his theological studies in the Irish College in that city, and his course was a brilliant one. In 1837, May 20th, he was ordained priest by Monseigneur Quelen, Archbishop of Paris; after his ordination, he returned to Ireland where he lived about ten years, six with the Archbishop of Armagh, and was President of the Diocesan Seminary of that town for one year.

In 1847, he resolved on joining the order of St. Sulpice, and