

Canadian Churchman.

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Address all communications

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Lessons for Sundays and Holy Days.

February 21st.—SEXAGESIMA SUNDAY.

Morning.—Gen. 3. Mat. 27. v. 57.
Evening.—Gen. 6; or 8. Rom. 5.

APPROPRIATE HYMNS for Sexagesima and Quinquagesima Sundays, compiled by Mr. F. Gatward, organist and choir-master of St. Luke's Cathedral, Halifax, N.S. The numbers are taken from H. A. & M., but many of which are found in other hymnals:

SEXAGESIMA SUNDAY

Holy Communion: 191, 311, 313, 554.
Processional: 33, 189, 261, 292.
Offertory: 168, 172, 228, 296.
Children's Hymns: 236, 341, 346, 567.
General Hymns: 170, 193, 229, 243, 308, 533.

QUINQUAGESIMA SUNDAY.

Holy Communion: 193, 197, 315, 316.
Processional: 189, 260, 261, 292.
Offertory: 20, 192, 259, 365.
Children's Hymns: 210, 330, 334, 568.
General Hymns: 4, 195, 210, 229, 262, 520.

SEXAGESIMA SUNDAY.

In order to humble ourselves rightly for sin, we must know something of its nature, its dangers and its cures. This, then, is what the Church would teach us to-day. Having called us to repent of our sins, she now shows us what sin is, and who is the author of it; how our Redeemer has overcome it, and how He enables us to overcome it also. The account of the temptation of our first parents, their sin and fall, is therefore selected for our morning lesson. From this chapter we learn to trace the source of all our misery to that chief of wicked, rebellious spirits, the devil. Taking the form of a serpent, we read how he tempted Eve to doubt God's word; finding that she allowed herself to listen to his suggestions, the tempter easily persuaded her to distrust His goodness also—thus destroying at once her faith and love. Without these safeguards to control

and regulate her senses, she soon gave way to their inclination; and so was committed that first act of disobedience, which brought sin into the world, and death through sin. Thus, through the fall of our first parents, did man lose the image of his Maker. His body, from being immortal and heavenly, became vile and earthly; his soul, which had been pure and holy, became dead in trespasses and sins; and his will, which had been entirely conformed to the Divine will, became henceforth subject to the influence and control of the evil one. But God, in His mercy, did not leave us without hope. Even in the midst of the curses uttered in the garden of Eden, a Redeemer was promised. Still does our fallen nature cling about us, and still does the devil strive to tempt those whom he once overcame. As children of the fallen Adam, therefore, we are open to his attacks, though as members of a risen Saviour, we have strength to resist them. Of the awful power of Satan in the world, and of his influence over the hearts of men, the remainder of the services gives us abundant proof. In the evening lesson we see how soon he led men on from the first act of disobedience to the lowest depths of sin and wickedness. Even the "sons of God," that is, those who had been taken into covenant with their Maker, fell into the evil practices of the wicked world with which they associated; and all mankind became so depraved, that nothing less than the judgment of a flood could satisfy the justice of the Almighty God. Warned by their example, the Church would admonish us at this time, that "except we repent, we shall all likewise perish." Only by watchfulness and prayer, with patience and perseverance, can we hope to resist the attacks of the enemy, and to bring forth fruit in proportion to our privileges. Of these virtues, St. Paul in the epistle sets us a bright example. He here lays before us the hardships and discipline which he had to undergo as a faithful member of Christ. And this he does not as claiming any merit of his own, but only to impress upon his hearers what self-denial and devotion is required of those who would overcome the world, and lead in triumph their own passions. May we, then, each according to our different circumstances and characters, profit by this blessed opportunity to gain a victory over the attacks of the evil one. By prayer and self-examination let us discover in what particular point he has the greatest hold over us, and in that particular point let us increase in watchfulness and care. The deep sense of our own frailty which these exercises must awaken in us, will lead us to acknowledge, in the words of the collect, that "we put not our trust in anything that we do; and to rejoice that there is One able and willing to deliver us from all adversity." He has overcome for us, that He might overcome in us. He came to bruise the serpent's head, and He will "recover out of the snares of the devil, those who have been taken captive by him at his will."

OUTLINES ON THE EPISTLES OF THE CHURCH'S YEAR.

(We are happy to announce that Professor Clark, of Trinity College, has kindly undertaken to provide a series of "Outlines on the Epistles of the Year," which may be serviceable to the clergy as outlines of sermons, and to clergy and laity alike, as aids to meditation on the subjects

handled. It is hoped that they may be followed by another set on the Gospels for the year.)

II. Cor. vi. i.: "We . . . beseech you that ye receive not the grace of God in vain." (Epistle for the first Sunday in Lent.) We often hear complaints or lamentations over failures—sad—depressing. Apt to deprive us of hope, energy, power of effort. But there is something more terrible than human failure, viz., Divine failure. Yet this is assumed as possible in the text, and therefore we must contemplate its possibility—in ourselves and in others. Consider the bearing of the Apostle's words on ourselves.

i. *We have received the grace of God.*—We declare in the Catechism that we are in a "state of salvation."

1. Effected in the first place in our baptism. An actual blessing, bringing about a change of condition and relation. Grafted into the Church, the mystical body of Christ. Made living stones in that temple which is inhabited by the Holy Ghost.

2. This primary privilege followed up by others.

(1) The instruction of the Gospel and the Word of God.

(2) The means of grace, public and private prayer, confirmation, Holy Communion.

(3) Above all, that gift which makes all others valid, powerful, instrumental to our good—the presence and power of the Holy Ghost.

Have we not, then, received the grace of God?

ii. *Yet none of these blessings positively guarantee sanctification and salvation.*—Sometimes hard to believe. Seems incredible that God's gifts should fail of their end. And men have devised theories of irresistible grace, and so have made this receiving a mere seeming and not a reality in the case of those not benefited. But this quite inconsistent with the teaching of the Bible.

1. God has made us free. Otherwise no responsibility, no blameworthiness. This liberty our great attribute and glory. Yet may be misused.

2. God will not constrain us. He appeals. He pleads. He beseeches. In His marvellous condescension, He speaks as though He needed us, and could not give us up. Yet all this proves that He does not compel.

3. Men actually break away from Him. They grieve the Holy Spirit of God—they quench the Spirit. By choosing the earthly and sensual. By preferring the things of the world to the things of the Kingdom—thus extinguishing faith and hope and love. They do thus receive grace in vain.

iii. *Hence the entreaty of the Apostle.*—We can understand its earnestness. He knew the riches that were in Christ. He understood all that men lost by receiving grace in vain, by quenching grace. They were losing God. They were losing life. They were losing their own selves. Therefore He entreated them.

1. God comes in Christ.—Do not reject—receive. He comes to bless—to impart the grace He has provided in His Son. Bid Him welcome.

2. He commands our self-oblation and devotion—not to take any good thing from us, but to fulfil all good in us. We give ourselves to Him that we may receive ourselves back made like Him.

3. This double relation realized in worship and service. Thus make full proof that not in vain.