

Canon Liddon has been writing strongly against disestablishment. At a meeting of the West London branch of the English Church Union a letter was read from the Canon containing strong words of warning. He points out that it is one thing to acquiesce in God's providential ruling on such a point—another to lend our own active aid in thrusting forward so sweeping a measure as the disestablishment of the Church of England, and he for one will have nothing to do with it. Looking, he says, at the Irish Church no one can deny that disestablishment means disendowment; and the endowments of the Church stand upon as firm and ancient a title as any other property in the kingdom. Disendowment would be an admission of the principles of communism, or worse, it would be sacrilege. We cry out against the conduct of Henry the Eighth and his nobles for spoliating, for their own selfish uses, the religious houses and half the parochial titles of the nation. And are we going, he asks, to pave the way for further spoliation of the Church's revenues? When there is no provision made for the Christian priesthood in the smaller parishes, what would be the result? The public witness for God being withdrawn there would be a relapse into heathenism. And he asks, can we not trust God to influence men's minds more and more in the right direction, and so to correct by degrees the anomalies we bewail in the ordering of many Church matters? Is it not the humblest, most truthful, and the safest way, instead of helping to pull down what He, in the main, has built up? And he remarks that it would be well for those sound churchmen who advocate disestablishment to study the brave and common sense speech of Mr. Forster (himself a Dissenter) to his constituents a few days ago. The Canon does not agree with him in all respects, but on that particular question he thinks churchmen may learn a great deal from his long experience and practical political wisdom. The Canon seems to feel very strongly upon the subject and to have arrived at conclusions precisely opposite to those of many of his friends.

SEPTUAGESIMA SUNDAY.

WE have now done with the season of the Epiphany, which has occupied our attention for a longer period than usual. The services of the Church have now a decided and distinctive reference to the greatest Festival of the Christian year, the Festival of the Resurrection of Him Who is emphatically "the Resurrection and the Life." The names of the three Sundays, of which this is the first, may require a passing notice. The fast of Lent was called Quadragesima, and that name was afterwards specially applied to the first Sunday in Lent. The three preceding Sundays were then named in round numbers to correspond therewith, so as to represent the days which occur between each and Easter. Septuagesima is sixty-three days from Easter, and Quinquagesima is forty-nine; and the very nearly correct appellation in the latter case is supposed to

support this idea. All the three titles are found in the Lectionary of St. Jerome, and in the Sacramentaries; although there are none analogous to them in use in the Eastern Church.

Christian self discipline in its negative aspect, is clearly the special subject of the Church's teaching in its practical application to ourselves, from Septuagesima to Easter Even inclusive. This means renunciation of the world; and all that is in the world, according to the Apostle John, may be included under the heads of "the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye, and the pride of life." And it has been well remarked that the world is a mighty, almost an irresistible tradition of all the thought and feeling that has accumulated round itself by the human race since the fall, that is hostile to the rights of God. It is the spirit of all times and races which is handed down from generation to generation, just as a private inheritance is transmitted in a family, or as traditional policy and aims are transmitted in an empire, or among nations. This tradition is a power strong and subtle. Its ancient and modern characteristics are more or less identical. It moulds the individual soul; it determines the institutions and it fixes the destinies of empires. It is like the stream of a mighty river, which rolls its dark waters across the ages, while a thousand civilizations, and races, and nations of mankind have poured their successive contributions, like so many rivulets, into its ample tide, as it flows on from age to age, the arbiter and tyrant, as well as the handiwork and the production of the human soul. It is indeed a kingdom antagonistic to the Church of Christ. It is a power real and energetic, but dread and invisible. It is a miasma which has arisen from the putrefaction of all the sins, both hidden and acknowledged, that have ever been committed on earth. It has hung for ages, like a dark and murky cloud, over the heart of humanity, and it poisons the very air we breathe; and yet we instinctively obey it, just as the flower opens at the bidding of the rising sun. It adapts itself to all ages, and classes, and races; and each partaker of its spirit, while he fancies the circle in which he moves is the world, is in reality only drinking in many of the vast and irreligious traditions which belong to the human race. The spirit of the world too is eminently contagious; it passes like an infection, from soul to soul; and it settles around every duty and every occupation.

Its influence and its power over the heart of man are felt to be so great that the whole period between the present time and the Festival of Easter are devoted to a consideration of the various motives for its extinction and of the means by which its power and influence may be neutralized. In the Epistle for today the efforts of the Christian to attain the goal pointed out for him in the midst of so many and so great difficulties is likened to a race, which in some parts of the ancient world occupied a much more remarkable and elevated position than it does with us. In the race the Christian has to run there are several important particulars in which it

agrees with the contests carried on in the games of antiquity—such as that every one must strictly observe the course marked out by proper authority; he is not to choose his own path. And this particular is most important for us to observe in the present day, when every man is supposed to have a perfect right to make a religion for himself, and one religion is believed to be just as good as another. In the Christian course above all others, nothing is left to our humor or mere inclination. It is necessary that we should be always ready to answer the question: "Who hath required this at your hands?" Christ and Christ's church have laid down and will lay down the laws for the observance of the Christian man, to which implicit obedience must be rendered, if we would be regarded as Christ's disciples.

The Christian race too, like every other must be a persevering one to the end. It will be of no avail to have run well, to have begun well, and to have rapidly and lawfully passed over a great part of the course; the whole distance must be passed through, otherwise the candidate will not be reckoned among those who have the slightest chance of the prize. "To him that overcometh, will I grant to sit with me upon my throne, even as I also have overcome, and am set down with my Father upon His Throne." The charge is "Occupy till I come;" and the promise exactly corresponds therewith: "Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life."

There are, however, several points of difference between the Christian race and all others. "Know ye not," says St. Paul, "that they which run in a race run all, but one receiveth the prize;" but in the Christian race, although there may be great disparity among the members of the Church, yet every one that endureth to the end shall be saved, shall be accounted to have run well, and shall receive a prize suited to the way in which he has acquitted himself in the Christian race. And therefore they who run in that race can have no envy or jealousy among themselves, much less can they hinder each other. The fall of one candidate gives no joy to the rest, for they who run for the heavenly prize would have all nations, kindreds, tongues, and peoples to join them if it could be possible to secure them. One candidate says to another: Come and let us go together to the Zion above, to that city of the great King where true riches and immortal honors are to be obtained.

But there is another peculiarity of the Christian race, and one that distinguishes it from all others, which is, the certainty of obtaining the prize at the end of the race, if that race be continued through the whole earthly existence of the candidate for immortal honors. Perseverance is not only the duty; it is the privilege of all who are engaged in striving for the heavenly world. And though the Law of God obliges them, and their new nature inclines them to keep it in subjection yet they have far better security than any efforts of their own. Almighty Power is their Guardian, and they