

is absolutely incalculable, and those who produce schism and sectionalism, either by fostering prejudices on the one hand, or by putting unnecessary stumbling-blocks in the way on the other, do incur a most grievous responsibility. If our differences are rendered less by this effort to raise funds for the Mission Board, the result will be most satisfactory, whether or not the whole amount needed is at once realized.

Some of the more violent of the Democratic party in the United States are inclined, by factious manœuvres, so to delay the conclusion of the Electoral Count, that Congress shall not be able to declare the result before the 4th of March, in which case all the votes given both for Hayes and Tilden would be useless, and provision would have to be made for the temporary occupation of the Presidential chair for one year. But the better men of the party are opposed to any such manœuvre, which it seems most probable will not be adopted. Oregon having been counted for the Republicans by the same party vote as decided the other questions, Hayes may be considered as *de facto* President elect, and, as such, has begun to undergo the burden of shaking hands with the washed and the unwashed; the terrible tax which is laid on high position or popularity in America.

The Dominion Parliament has got to work with more than usual alacrity, the Government having with commendable promptitude, poured in a stream of bluebooks and reports during the early days of the Session, and the Finance Minister having made his Budget Speech at an unusually early date. There are indications that things will be a little more lively this year than has lately been the case. Dullness is certainly wearisome, but personalities, such as excitement produces in our Legislatures, are very unseemly. Cannot a debate ever be carried on without each side making a minute analysis of the moral and political delinquencies of its opponents?

THE THIRD SUNDAY IN LENT.

THE similarity between the teaching of the Church in the seasons of Advent and Lent is prominently shown in the epistle of the communion office for this Sunday. The outcomings of moral evil as exhibited by human nature are mentioned as the works of darkness; which are required by the Gospel of Christ to be put entirely aside, and to be supplanted by those more fruitful works of the Spirit, which will abide and flourish when made manifest by the light. And especially, again, the sin of uncleanness, is dwelt upon which, in pagan times as well as in the present day, there might be strong temptations to palliate, as a venial and trifling offence. And therefore did the apostle in this passage as well as in the epistle for Sunday last enforce a strict attention to the moral duty he required, as of Divine obligation: "Let no man deceive you with vain words: for because of these things

cometh the wrath of God upon the children of disobedience."

The depth of depravity in the human heart is particularly shown in the Gospel. The Lord had cast out another of those evil spirits which, in His day, were permitted to exercise an almost unlimited power over the bodies and spirits of some; perhaps in order to afford opportunities for the manifestation both of His power and of that special object of His coming which was to destroy the works of the devil. But the highest exhibition of Omnipotent energy, and the purest display of holiness, fail to convince men of the truth, who are determined not to be convinced. And therefore the unbelieving Jews attributed the Lord's miracle to the agency of Beelzebub the prince of devils. Their conduct shows the depth of iniquity as well as the intense hardness and the blind infatuation which the soul of man can attain when the back is turned upon the Author of truth and righteousness, and when, "Evil be thou my good" expresses the main principle of action.

The Lord met this way of accounting for His miracles by showing that Satan would not act against himself; and by asking them: "If I by Beelzebub cast out devils, by whom do your sons cast them out?" Some have supposed that the Lord here refers to the seventy disciples who were enabled to triumph because the very devils were subject to them. But in this view the whole force of the *argumentum ad hominem* would be lost. We learn from Irenæus and others that it was the custom of the Jews to cast out evil spirits by invoking the name of God. Irenæus says: "All things are subject to the Most High, and by the invocation of His name, even before the Advent of our Lord, men were saved from evil spirits and all kinds of demons." Josephus informs us that God gave the art to Solomon of exorcising evil spirits, and that he left behind him an account of the means of doing so. And Justin Martyr says to Trypho: "If any of you do exorcise demons by the name of the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, perhaps he will be obeyed." In the parallel passage of St. Matthew he goes on to show how this wicked practice of the Jews was in danger of becoming the unpardonable sin; the Jews in reality speaking of the salvation wrought out by Christ as the work of the Destroyer of men's souls. But the Lord shows that He is the only One that can cast out Satan, and that all driving out of the Evil One is the work of Christ, as all sin is really the work of the enemy, and comes originally from his instigation. He purifies our nature in His own immaculate Person. He cleanses His Church by the power of His grace; and He sanctifies the soul of the christian in the ministration of the word and sacraments. His power therefore extends over every form of Satan's power, whether physical, mental, or spiritual.

The awful sympathy of human nature with evil, and the increased power of Satan's influence produced by every neglect of resistance to it, are shown by what the Lord fur-

ther says about re-possession, which makes this Gospel so fearfully impressive. The last state of the man who neglects to improve his spiritual advantages is indeed worse, ten thousand times worse than the first! The Lord's words were originally spoken of the generation of the descendants of Israel to whom the Lord came as to His own, but who received Him not. His words also have an application the most pointed to Christian Churches which have fallen into heresy or worldliness; and they urge with fearful earnestness the duty of repenting and doing the first works, lest the candlestick of Divine Truth and the ministrations of the Gospel should ultimately be permanently removed. In the case of the Jews, the sympathies of the nation were towards evil; and after their rejection of Christ and His apostles, their spiritual condition was far worse than it was at the time when the Lord spoke of them as a "generation of vipers." The strong man, once vanquished by the Lord, returned again, because the Jews invited him; and the horrible sins of that generation, between the Ascension of our Lord and the destruction of Jerusalem were indeed a terrible filling up of the nation's iniquities. Their sins of hardness of heart, of blindness, and of cruelty, were probably never exceeded by any age or nation. And, not without reason, has it been suggested that the return of Mohammedism in the East and in India is a return of the strong man armed, with seven others more wicked than himself, to nations where the Church had been received for a time, but was afterwards rejected when a new form of unbelief appeared.

"HEAD OF THE CHURCH."

THERE are few things of more importance in connection with Christianity than correct principles, accurate ideas and expressions respecting the Headship of the Church. That the Lord Jesus Christ should be Head of His Church is one of the main objects of the Christian religion; and the recognition of his right to sustain this position is absolutely essential to any system that can possess the smallest claim to be considered Christianity. It is not therefore without considerable surprise that we find some of our contemporaries, who might be expected to know better, speak of the Sovereign of England as "Head of the Church!" That the present occupant of the British Throne claims to hold that title we have never been informed. But however that may be, it is very certain that such a claim has never been admitted by the Church. Henry the Eighth claimed to be "The Supreme Head on earth of the Church of England." The Parliament accepted the title; but the Church, speaking through Convocation, considered the title as doubtfully consistent with her allegiance to God, and recognized it only "so far as by the law of Christ they could." The subservient Cranmer expressed himself in favour of the claim; but just before his death, he said he only meant that "The King is head and governor of his people which are the visible Church;