

"burning." First, there seems to have come to Puritan souls the thought, "These things do not seem to be doing Churchmen who cling to them very much, if any, harm after all. On the contrary, they seem to get some good out of them. Then came another phase of consciousness which seemed to say, "Perhaps we have made a mistake about these things. There may be *more good* in them than we have been accustomed to think. It is a question whether the good does not really outweigh the evil." After all, what was there to object—except *association*—with similar observances or usages by Romanists? So the argument or reasoning has drifted, till

THEY ENTHUSIASTICALLY APPROVE

what they formerly so bitterly condemned. In these days vast numbers of dissenters not only recognize and confess candidly the admirable effects of episcopacy, infant baptism, confirmation, choral service, surpliced choirs, etc., but they are prepared to advocate a sacred "curriculum" of devout thinking, and praying, and praising, for each and every year as it rolls by. If there is to be fasting at all—which all allow—why not have it as of old on Fridays, vigils, and Lent? Weekly, occasional, annual—what harm is there in the *regularity* of them? Nay, there is good reason not only for an annual Christmas and Easter, and a weekly Lord's Day, but—now they confess it!—strong common-sense in making a prelude or preface of *self-denial* before we begin to give way to religious festivities.

SO THE BATTLE IS WON!

Churchmen may now—without fearing sneers and insinuations, glances of either scorn or pity—go on each year through their solemn and sacred curriculum or "rounds" of religious observances. Nay, they may have the congenial companionship and sympathy—if not positive admiration—from large numbers of those denominations of Christians who lately looked askance at all such customs. They have found out that they are not *really* "Romish"; and they begin to have an inkling of what it is to be truly "Catholic"—without being Roman in the least. What a happy change! It is not the least among the elements for thankfulness that our lines have fallen in more pleasant places and times than those of our forefathers.

SELF-DENIAL

then becomes the *keynote* of the present time of year. The "Salvation Army" and other humanly-devised variations from the Standard of the Primitive Church, have their own pet devices in substitution for our more regular system. Let them do the best they can with their "poor imitations": we have the *real thing*—a strong, clear, well-defined system of self-denial, foreseen, provided, arranged for long in advance—hundreds of years!—whose use and edification have been well *proved* during past centuries. Let us then, more courageously than ever, take up our solemn and glorious role of *Catholics*—members in full and good standing of the "Holy Catholic Church"—*follow our own traditions* faithfully, and we shall be better Protestants and better Christians than we could possibly be otherwise.

THE LENTEN FAST.

BY THE RIGHT REV. F. D. HUNTINGTON, BISHOP OF CENTRAL NEW YORK.

We are not to look on this appointment of a penitential season as an arrangement of our own. It is rather a sacred part of that divinely ordained system of spiritual ministries by which the Lord quickens the consciences and trains the holy life of His children. Traces of such a solemnity of

forty days' continuance are found all along through the earlier and later ages of Revelation. We know that it was the discipline of prophets, the reverential school of saints who lived wonderfully near to God. Entering once more upon it we have not to contrive a scheme of self-improvement without the guidance of the Spirit and the Bride. He who hallowed Lent by the Great Fast on the threshold of His mediatorial work for sinful souls passes into this still retirement with us. All these coming days and nights He will be our witness and our companion. The sincerity or formality of our special observances will be known to Him. Our self-denials He will share. The vows we make will be recorded in His book of remembrance. As the Gospel for last Sunday told us, "Jesus of Nazareth passeth by." The cry of our blindness and our weakness will not need to travel far to reach His ear, nor will He ever rebuke it, either for its ignorance or its importunity. It is with Him we are to walk all the way going up to Jerusalem.

Coming once more to the beginning of this gracious period, we ought, first of all, to put away all superficial thoughts and all flippant conventional language about it. Do not trust to vague general intentions;—in the observance they will come to nothing, leaving only ashes in your mouth. Have a plan which you are not ashamed to own, and which you will probably be able to carry steadily through. So far as all arrangements of time and place and household are at your command, without wronging or disobliging others, make them yield to that plan. It is of less importance just what form your self-denial takes, than that it take some distinct form which you can define and present to your own mind. See that the Cross is really laid on somewhere. Nothing that you cut off from self-gratification for your Saviour's sake will you ever regret or wish to take back. Choose out, if you can, the weakest point. There is appetite in its several importunities; there is the passion for dress; there is idleness; there is the sin of evil speaking, in fact, all the foul brood of the transgressions of the tongue; there is a bad temper; there is the lack of courage in manifesting your Christian convictions and bearing open witness; there is the hurrying or forgetfulness of prayers; there is too little intercession; there is idolatry of the objects of human love; there is pride; there is the self-seeking or self-pleading that creeps even into your works of charity. Sprinkle the ashes where the moral deformity or disorder is most cunningly concealed, that the flesh of the inner man may come again like the flesh of a little child. Dismiss at once from the mind, and keep out of it, any notion that your sacrifices or repentances are to be reckoned to you as merits, or can furnish any ground for your justification. They are meant to bring your soul into that repentant, lowly, and teachable frame, where He who alone justifieth can set His healing and redeeming power more faithfully at work. They cleanse the vision; they open the door; they drive the tempter away, inviting in that heavenly Guest who stands now and knocks with patient solicitation, and who, once bidden by a sorrowing and self-renouncing faith to come in, abideth ever.

THE REASON FOR FASTING.

Fasting is a means of grace. So the Church has regarded it from the beginning. From apostolic times, she has observed the forty days (exclusive of Sundays) next preceding the commemoration of our Lord's resurrection, as a special season of fasting, humiliation, and prayer. On that season we are now entering, and at this time are about to engage in its solemn services. Every year's experience adds a fresh testimony to the wisdom of this arrangement, by which the Church is brought down upon her knees, in the dust of a true humiliation, in view of sin, its guilt and power; in view of the Saviour's suffering that He might redeem the world from its bondage and penalty.

John the Baptist and his disciples fasted. Our Blessed Lord, in that memorable fast of forty days by which He consecrated Himself to His public ministry, has sanctioned the practice and proposed it for our imitation, as a suitable preparation for

extraordinary religious services. In anticipation of the practice which was to obtain in His Church through all ages, as a duty, immediately connected with a personal blessing, He gave directions to His disciples touching the mode of its performance; instructing them to avoid, rather than effect, the ostentatious display so common among the Jews. As this exercise was a matter of sufficient importance to be a subject of our Lord's teaching and practice, so may we infer, without any direct and explicit command, that it is a matter worthy the devout observance of all who profess and call themselves His followers.

LENTEN MEDITATIONS.

To live to God is to live well:
To live well is to die well:
To die well is to live with God.

1. Let no day begin or end without prayerful communion with God.
2. Each day study reverently a portion of the Gospel narrative of the sayings and doings of our Saviour, and try to gather some practical lesson from it.
3. When tempted in any way, cry out to God for help, in the name of Jesus Christ.
4. Avoid dreamy idleness; it gives the enemy opportunity for temptation: think more of others and less of self.
5. Practice greater moderation in the indulgence of the appetite; and abstain as far as possible from public amusement, social enjoyments, and luxuries.
6. Crowd out secular and light reading by religious books, and devotional, helpful works.
7. Give more time to self-examination—searching out your faults, and confessing them to God, in order that you may obtain His pardon. Psalm xxxii. 5.
8. Forgive, and seek reconciliation with any one who is at variance with you. "Forgive us our trespasses as we forgive," etc.
9. Determine to attend as many of the Lenten Services as possible, and to fulfil every obligation, especially those in connection with the church and parish.
10. Be more frequent and regular in your attendance at the early celebrations of the Holy Communion; this entails self-denial and extra effort; but the result will be most profitable.
11. During the Holy Week let your thoughts chiefly dwell on the sufferings of our dear Lord; and on Good Friday draw near to the foot of the Cross, that you may mourn over the awful effect of sin.
12. Give your savings, the result of your Lenten self-denial, to God in the Easter offertory.

O Saviour of the world Who by Thy Cross and Precious Blood hast redeemed us,
Save us and help us we humbly beseech Thee, O Lord.

THE SEVEN DEADLY SINS:

Pride, Covetousness, Lust, Anger, Gluttony, Envy, Sloth.

THE SEVEN PENITENTIAL PSALMS.

VI. XXXII. XXXVII. LI. CII. CXXX. CXLIII.

THE SEVEN GIFTS OF THE SPIRIT:

Wisdom, Understanding, Counsel, Strength, Knowledge, Godliness, Holy Fear.

THE STORY OF THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND.

BRITISH AND FOREIGN SCHOOL SOCIETY.

Thereupon the British and Foreign School Society came into existence, and for a moment it seemed as if the "Lancasterian" movement would prevail. But the Church determined to carry on the work the Christian Knowledge Society had so well begun, and the result was the formation—very largely due to the exertions of Mr. Joshua Watson, a city merchant, who spent his whole life and immense wealth in the promotion of Church work—of the National Society for the Education of the Poor; and when, in 1833, the first Government grant was made towards education, it was discovered that whilst the British

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