

# Dominion Churchman.

THE ORGAN OF THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND IN CANADA.

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## LESSONS for SUNDAYS and HOLY-DAYS.

SEPTEMBER 19th—13th SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY.  
Morning—1 Kings v. 2 Corinthians xl. to 30.  
Evening—2 Kings vi. to 24; or vii. Mark xiv. 53.

THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 16, 1886.

**BISHOP COXE ON A DANGEROUS PROPOSAL.**—The Bishop of Western New York (Dr. A. Cleveland Cox) raises his voice against a proposition which meets with considerable approbation, but which in his opinion is subversive of the fundamental idea of daily service. The proposition is to strike out the Confession and Absolution from the daily office, and to allow the reader to begin with "Our Father." In a lengthy letter, the Bishop says: "This destroys our penitential system in one of its essential and most practical details; and though merely permissive, it robs the penitent of the right he now enjoys, to rely on this ministration. For private confession the Church makes all necessary provision, not indeed as the rule, but as the lawful exception. Under the general law of Christ ('Let a man examine himself,') she warns him, on the Sunday, to judge his own case, and on every week day enables him to go to the temple like the publican, and to return 'justified.' He goes indeed, to 'hear God's holy word, to render thanks, etc.,' but, the essential duty is to confess his sins and to receive the sacramental assurance of pardon and peace. For three hundred years the Church has asserted twice every day, that this 'we ought chiefly to do when we assemble and meet together.' I ask, are we going to stultify this testimony of centuries, and of millions of voices which have confirmed it, by overthrowing precisely that which we 'ought most chiefly' to do? If so, we destroy the penitential system of the Church in its daily fidelity to daily needs, and we deprive the Prayer Book of one of the most primitive and Catholic features of public worship. We thus reduce the daily offices to those of a 'prayer meeting,' dignified indeed, but having no sacramental character, and requiring the presence of nobody in Holy Orders! A lay-reader would suffice. The daily service now requires priestly ministration for its full observance."

**A SPECIMEN OF UNDENOMINATIONALISM.**—It is said that a short time ago a Unitarian Minister in America, who had been asked to conduct the funeral of a stranger, afterwards inquired of the friends of the deceased why they had applied to him, and received this remarkable answer—"You see poor

So-and-so believed in nothing particular, and we thought your creed was nearest to his." That this was not a bad shot has been made clear by a recent Conference of "the Unitarian Churches of the West," at which the following resolutions were proposed:—"1. That the primary object of this Conference is to diffuse the knowledge and promote the interests of pure Christianity." "2. That, while rejecting all creeds and creed limitations, the Western Unitarian Conference hereby expresses its purpose to be the promotion of a religion of love to God and love to men." "3. That the Western Unitarian Conference conditions fellowship on no dogmatic tests, but welcomes all who wish to join it to help established truth, righteousness, and love in the world." No. 1 was rejected because it contained the word "Christianity;" and No. 2 because the word "God" was "too dogmatic;" so that all that was left was No. 3. An old epigram states with perfect truth that Luther destroyed the roof of the Catholic faith, Calvin its walls, and Socinus its foundations; but what American Unitarianism has come to would probably have surprised even the author of the distich to which we allude.

**THE PERVERSITY OF SEPARATISTS.**—Butler is not a writer whose works in general are readable. It is solely because his portraiture of the Roundhead saintliness is felt to be so exact that it has become immortal. Great efforts have been made in these days to reverse the verdict of posterity, but they have all proved vain; and if we needed any proof that the accepted view was right, it is supplied by the fact that pretty nearly everything the Puritans sought to destroy, and which they pleaded as a justification of their criminal folly, has been adopted by their descendants, who now build steeple houses, keep Christmas, wear wedding rings, and all the rest of it.

The cantankerousness of the Puritan mind has been signally shown in our own days. In Scotland the members of the Free Kirk has positively treated it as an inquiry that the men of the Establishment should have asked for an Act of Parliament to remedy the grievance that had led to the disruption. In England we have seen the Methodists absolutely altering their standards, because everything had been removed from the Church of England that the Wesleys would have disliked. The Calvinistic Methodists of Wales have shown themselves in no better light. The Prayer Book and Articles are just what they were in the days of Whitfield and Toplady. All that is changed is that the Welsh Church has become efficient, and for that reason the Welsh Calvinists have raised the cry, "Down with her, even to the ground!" What used to be the *raison d'être* of Dissent was an allegation that Churchpeople were lax in doctrine or practice; but we have seen the Dissenters of Northampton repeatedly returning Mr. Bradlaugh, notwithstanding he is an avowed infidel; and what is even worse, we have seen Dissenters insisting that children shall be brought up in Board schools without any effective religious teaching, lest the Church should get them.

When we come to look at the professed grounds of separation we shall find that "orthodox Dissent," so called, is an apotheosis of the infinitely little.

Our English contemporary seems righteously shocked at the Dissenters of England preferring that children should be educated as atheists rather than that they should become members of Christ's Church. What would he say of those in Canada who are nominally Churchmen, yet who prefer their children to be brought up in schools and colleges without one atom of religious character rather than be educated to become Christians?

**THE UNCERTAINTY OF ROME.**—Now the fact is, that whatever great qualities we ascribe to the Church of Rome, that of certainty is more conspicuous by its absence from the Roman system than in

any organisation that ever existed in the world. Mark, we do not allege that the Roman system as a whole is the most untrue, but that its uncertainty is the most conspicuous, just because of its relation to such mightiness and majesty of claim. Every ecclesiastical scholar knows that whatever uncertainty exists in the Church of England has a completely adequate parallel in the Church of the first centuries, and therefore when a system is elaborated in marked contrast with earlier and original uncertainty, it exposes itself to an indefinitely wider necessity of evidence and proof. Indeed, the imposing grandeur of the Roman system is entirely in its wonderful pretentiousness, and its fatal weakness is that for its support it absolutely requires not the certainty of faith, but the certainty of mathematics. We boldly assert that since the days of Moses, the message of revelation to mankind has always possessed to an appreciable extent a margin for the exercise of faith, which may be expressed by the word somehow. We use the word with restrictions, easily to be understood by the candid Christian, as never being without its adequate and sufficient safeguards: but, as distinct from coming upon mathematical lines, we maintain that truth has come from God to man somehow, and we maintain it only in virtue of this contradistinction. But the very falsity of the Roman system is in pretending to correct this "somehow" by fixing the voice of revelation to one definite spot and one visible mouth, without any difficulty of approach or ambiguity of utterance, and yet while speaking this word of promise to the ear breaking it to the hope. A sufficiently assured somehow of arriving at the truth is exactly proportionate to the chequered history of the early Church, but an infallible somehow is a contradiction in terms and a practical imposture. The Pope is not a bit better equipped as a teacher or a ruler since 1870 than he was before, and if infallibility does not save him from the necessity of political expediency and painful concession—as for instance now in Ireland—then infallibility is a delusion and a snare. Considering the claims of the Roman system, it is unquestionable that Roman uncertainty exceeds that of any other body of which history records the existence.

**DENYING CHRIST.**—The question, I fear, is not with us, "Lord, is it I?" The question is not, when have we denied our Lord, but when have we not done so? When have we confessed Him? Do we confess Him in our daily life? Do all men know that we are Christ's disciples indeed? Do they judge by our conduct that God is with us of a truth? Do they find out by our uniform life and conversation that we are followers of our crucified Saviour? Do we publicly proclaim His love and enforce His precepts? Do we confess Him before men? If not, we daily deny Him. Peter denied Him but thrice, but we deny Him more than this every day of our lives. I deny Christ if I hear His Name taken in vain without reproving the swearer. I deny Christ if I do not at all times stand up for His Gospel, or hear it spoken against and am silent. I deny Christ if I see religion neglected without reproof; if I see iniquity practised without correction; if I see ignorance or blindness without giving instruction in righteousness. How much more do I deny Christ if I myself am the swearer, if I speak against His religion, or cease to practise the precepts of His Gospel! I declare by my whole conduct that I do not know the man. I declare, like Peter, that I do not even understand the language of my accusers, that I consider it a reproach to belong to Christ. Oh! is there not occasion for us to pray to Jesus, "Lord, teach thou me. Tell me plainly of my sin. Cast upon me the same look which brought tears to Peter's eyes. Move me to repentance, to godly repentance, and by Thy blood shed upon the cross, 'By Thine agony and bloody sweat, by Thy cross and passion, by Thy precious death and burial, by Thy glorious resurrection and ascension, Good Lord, deliver me.'"



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