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Lent

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LENT
THE HOLY SEASON



LENT

THE HOLY SEASON

**By thirty Bishops of the
Protestant Episcopal Church**

COMPILED UNDER THE DIRECTION OF

STERLING GALT

1911

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MCMII

“It is easy to fall into the habit of regarding Lent as primarily an opportunity for retirement and contemplation. It is really a call to action. It is a time of preparation for service. It is a time to acquire a wider outlook upon life, in order that its demands and the debts due the great brotherhood of men may be fitly discharged. It is a time for renewing the will, strengthening the purpose, and informing the mind, so that each individual Christian and each Christian Church may the better oppose the forces that hinder the coming of the Kingdom of God.”

Preface

*Those who seek food for Lenten thought
(and who is there who does not need it?)
will find in the pages of this little volume
manna from many holy men.*

—STERLING GALT.

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Lent: The Holy Season.



LENT: ITS PURPOSE.

THE MOST REV. T. M. CLARKE, D.D., LL.D.,
Presiding Bishop, Bishop of Rhode Island.

THE purpose of Lent is to bring us into closer contact with the Saviour.

Surrounded as we all are by worldly influence, and carried along by the turmoil and vanities of life, it is very important that there should be some special intervals when we can be alone with God and reconsecrate ourselves to His service. Jesus Himself set us the

example of retiring at certain times from the world for prayer and meditation.

At such a season as this we feel that we want a God who is human as well as divine — one who is not only all-powerful and all-good and all-merciful, but who has undergone the same kind of trials to which we have been subjected, and suffered as we do.

No taint of sin could ever infect His holy and immaculate soul ; and yet, in some mysterious way which we can not comprehend, Jesus enters into all our trials and sympathizes with all our weaknesses, and it is an infinite comfort to know that His sympathy is not dependent upon our worthiness.

One tear of His is sufficient to wash away the stain of any sin, and that tear will fall upon our souls whenever

we offer to Him the sacrifice of a broken and contrite spirit. No sin can put us beyond the reach of that mercy which is infinite.

How can I know when my prayers are answered? Every *true* prayer is accompanied with a blessing. The special thing we ask for may not be granted and very likely it is well that it should not be, but some other good thing will come in its place.

We must be willing to leave it with God to answer our prayers, and in His own time and in His own appointed way. He knows what we need much better than we do.

Perhaps that cross which you have so long and so anxiously asked God to lift from you, may be in itself a channel of mercy which you can not afford to lose.

Some things may always be asked for without qualification, such as pardon, renewal, submission, trust and faith, but in this case, if we do not receive all at once just what we pray God to give us, we must be content to wait.

If relief does not come as soon as we had hoped, it may be because God sees we need a longer and a sharper discipline in order to bring us close to Him.

No one, however, need be discouraged so long as he has the disposition to go to God with his troubles.

May God give us grace so to improve the Holy Season of Lent, that at its close we may find our hold upon the world weakened and our faith in Christ, our Saviour, strengthened.

LENT AS A DUTY, AS A PRIVILEGE.

THE RT. REV. H. B. WHIPPLE, D.D., LL.D.,
Late Bishop of Minnesota.

THERE are two ways in which to think of Lent—one as a duty, the other as a privilege. Duty is a hard word to use when speaking of anything which is to draw us nearer to the Saviour. It is far better to believe that the Church, as a tender mother, is saying to us, “Come, turn aside and rest awhile,” for it is in Lent that the old promise is fulfilled, “I will allure them into the wilderness that there I may speak comfortably unto them.”

We are living in times when the drift of men's minds seems to be away from the Saviour. The world is exacting. Its cares, its pleasures, are all around us. It gives little time for meditation. It asks no holiness of heart, while heaven, which asks so much, seems far away, and the one is forgotten in love for the other.

The season of Lent gives time for meditation, for reading of God's word, for prayer, and for deeds of charity and love, and should be welcomed by every Christian heart as one of the dearest resting places of life. That which makes it dearer is that the Church is leading us along the footsteps of our Saviour until, standing at the foot of the cross, we read the infinite testimony of the infinite love of God who "so

loved the world that He gave His only-begotten Son that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish but have everlasting life." It is only by the cross that we realize the joy of Easter in the resurrection of Jesus Christ, who has brought life and immortality to light.

The Church has wisely left her children freedom in deciding their individual obligations in the keeping of Lent. She does not tell us what food we may or may not take, how many hours shall be spent in prayer and the reading of God's word, or how often we shall attend divine service. But she does tell us that the blessed season has come in which we may draw nearer to God and by the Holy Spirit make our lives truer and purer.

The prophet Isaiah asks, "Is it such

a fast as I have chosen? A day for a man to afflict his soul? Is it to bow down his head as a bulrush and to spread sackcloth and ashes under him? Wilt thou call this a fast and an acceptable day to the Lord? Is not this the fast that I have chosen? To loose the bands of wickedness * * * to deal thy bread to the hungry?"

The object of Lent is to cure faults and put away sins, to grow more Christ-like and loving, and in this Christ-love shed anew in our hearts by the Holy Ghost, to recognize as never before our brotherhood as children of one God and Father. Self-examination is necessary that we may know ourselves. The record of daily life is written on our hearts, and this is the book of God out of which we shall be

judged. Nothing can be more helpful in the Lenten season than the careful reading of God's word. In it is the history of men and women like ourselves—saved or lost as we shall be saved or lost, and who have found grace and help as we shall find them. One of the duties of Lent is attendance upon the Church's services, made precious by the promise of the Saviour, "Where two or three are gathered in my name, there will I be in their midst to bless."

I will not dwell upon the necessity of ordering our tables simply, of giving up worldly amusements, of abstaining from anything which could take our thoughts away from the privileges of this holy season. All this is a means to an end, and that end is a more

Christ-like life. Nothing will add so much to the joy of Lent as, by personal service, to make other lives purer and happier.

I can not mark out for other Christians a hard and fast rule for Lent, and say to them, "Do this and you shall be blessed !" But I do say that if, when our mother, the Church, calls us to keep this holy season, we remember that it is that we may go nearer and nearer to the Saviour, it will be to us full of blessings, and like the disciples who walked with Him to Emmaus, we can say, "How did our hearts burn within us as we walked with Him and talked with Him by the way !" A true Lent will help us to go forth in the gladness of Easter, living sons and daughters of our risen Master.

KEEPING LENT ALMOST A DIVINE COMMAND.

THE RT. REV. D. S. TUTTLE, D.D.,
Bishop of Missouri.

IN the Old Testament "The Preacher" tells us there is "a time to weep and a time to laugh." The Lord Jehovah upon Mount Sinai appointed six days for labor and one for rest. Divine regulation and human need concur in providing change and variety for the bent of man's activities and in sanctioning different times to be set apart for differing duties.

The observance of Lent, therefore, even if not explicitly enjoined in Holy Scripture, lies along the lines of a divine command and a wholesome practice. The Church in providing for it is right and dutiful and wise, and if earnest Christian folk had not drifted away from her historical anchorage and her wholesome practical guidance, they would have felt no need for fixing a January week of prayer and times of revival. The four serious weeks of Advent and the six sober weeks of Lent, alternating with the joys of Christmas and of Easter, year by year, would have sufficed.

The habit by the Church of setting apart Lent to be kept, and the habit by individuals of keeping Lent, are right and dutiful and wise. Nor is

there any call for the Church to be ashamed or disdainful if society and fashion help her in the matter. If balls and parties and dinings-out are stopped in Lent one need not despise such fashionable abstinence, asking indignantly if the Kingdom of God be meat and drink and dress and feet. To take off one's hat to a lady is an injunction of society and fashion. Even if it be a hollow form, the act helps us all around to be gentlemen; and if it be an outward and visible sign of a real inward reverence and devotion to womanhood, then the help is blessedly multiplied. So, if fashion, paying homage to Godliness, lets up its demands during the six weeks of Lent, even if it do so in hollow formality, it gives time to men and women to think

of higher things and distant things and coming things, and it in no way prevents individuals from getting a firmer grip on their better selves in reverence to God and gratitude to Christ and beneficence to their fellow men.

All hail, then, the keeping of Lent, year by year, by the Church, by individuals, by fashionable society !

Time is given to think. That is worth a good deal in this busy, pushing world. Little self-denials will be wholesome, if nothing more than pinching ourselves to see if we be really awake and not dreaming our lives away. And greater self-denials may, with prayer and faith and God's grace, avail somewhat to God's glory and men's good and the peace of our own souls.

THE END OF LENT.

THE RT. REV. W. C. DOANE, DD., LL.D.,
Bishop of Albany.

LENT is like many another thing in life, a great opportunity with attaching risks and responsibilities. The keeping of it, consequently, is attended with serious dangers, the chief of which are, perhaps, the mistaking of means for ends and the misunderstanding and misuse of means. In her description of the characteristic of days of fasting, the Church requires in the Prayer Book "such a measure of abstinence as is more specially suited to extraordinary acts and exercises of devotion." This is an example. Means

for ends ; fasting in order to acts and exercises of devotion. But it is not an exhaustive example, because the exercises of devotion, to which fasting is a help, are themselves only means. The end, and the only end, is a holier life, with a better mastery of evil and a more true consecration to service.

So, also, are we tempted to misunderstand and misuse means. The extraordinary theory of ecclesiastical menu cards, set forth by authority, prescribing a diet of fish *or* eggs or butter *without* meat, is a caricature of fasting, because fasting demands, if it have in it any power of self-denial, diminution of quantity quite as much as the change in quality of food ; and still more, the giving up of luxuries and of the indulgence of personal appetites.

And the acts and exercises of devotion, what do they mean? Two services on Sunday, when the habit has been to attend one? Attendance at daily service, to be dropped on Easter Monday morning? Of course, this is well, but surely it ought to breed the habit of more frequent worship, and not bring about a relapse into infrequency when Lent is over. And *as* surely the aim should be to make *the devotion* deeper and more intense in the worship, and to bring about that *devotion*, which is the giving up of life more and more to God's will and God's work. The end of Lent is to form habits and make character, and it is misspent if it leaves no mark upon our lives.

REPENTANCE.

THE RT. REV. JOHN SCARBOROUGH, D. D.,
Bishop of New Jersey.

“THE voice of one crying in the wilderness” is still ringing in the ears of men—calling them to repentance. And when that clarion voice of St. John Baptist was silenced the Master Himself took up the cry, “Repent ye!” and the Church, in the forty days of Lent, repeats this message to the sons of men. The Spring Fast is a time for heart-searching, turning

away from sin, and crying to God for pardon. Mere abstinence from food, or a change of diet for the time, is not the only duty or the main thing to aim at. The chief benefits are *spiritual*—"to starve sin." As the Poet Herrick truly says, "The observance of a set time for self-examinings and self-denials has been of untold benefit both in the Church and the world." In this day, when men are hurried and driven by the exactions of business or pleasure it is well now and then to cry a halt and see whither the steps are tending and what the issue of living is likely to be. Lent comes as the opportunity, and if well spent it will prove a lasting blessing to both soul and body. George Herbert calls it "the dear Feast of Lent,"

a holy privilege and not a cross. The daily service of the Church and the more frequent communions are an unspeakable boon to many of God's children. Lent meets a great spiritual need in the lives of those who are hungering and thirsting after righteousness. Its better observance is something to be devoutly thankful for. And "the Holy Church throughout all the world" would be stronger and braver for her work, if "all who profess and call themselves Christians" were to unite as one, in crying mightily to God for the pardon of sin and the gift of renewed spiritual life during the forty days of Lent.

LENT IS OVER.

THE RT. REV. GEO. D. GILLESPIE, D.D.,
Bishop of Western Michigan.

NO; Lent is not over. By far the more important part of Lent remains—its permanent influence on the mind and heart of the member of the Church. If though you have been quite attentive to the services and were engaged in devotional exercises in private and practicing some self-denial; now that Easter is past, you have drifted back into the old way of easy Christian

living, neither cold nor hot. Lent is over as to doing anything permanent for your soul's welfare ; you have had the blessing within your reach and you have the guilt of letting it slip.

But you do not want Lent to be over ; it has been to you a time of refreshing ; you have enjoyed the services. They have brought to you more of the joy and peace in believing than you have been wont to know. You want to keep on in this "newness of life." Then, look over the past, recognize what have been your deficiencies,—make your prayer, "Search me, O God, and know my heart ; try me and know my thoughts ; and see if there be any way of wickedness in me, and lead me in the way everlasting." And your prayers granted, your

mind enlightened, apply yourself to your conversion from "secret and presumptuous sins." Determine to give more time and thought to holy habits — Church attendance with the Holy Communion, prayers, Bible study, good reading, seeking the welfare of others' souls. Then this Lent will live with you, it will be the blessed Lent.

LENT—AN OPPORTUNITY.

THE RT. REV. T. A. JAGGAR, D. D.,
Bishop of Southern Ohio.

“THOMAS, one of the twelve called Didymus, was not with them when Jesus came.” It was the first Lord’s Day evening. Our Lord had appeared to the disciples in the upper room. But Thomas was not there. He missed all the first joy of the Saviour’s return—he missed the first breathing of the Holy Spirit and the benediction of peace after the storm. He evidently had no sympathy with the enthusiasm of Peter and John. Doubtless, he

thought that they had been carried away by the fancies of the women. He seems to have been of that skeptical nature which questions its own impulses and has little patience with that which seems like gush. He was the pessimist among the disciples—honest, but not hopeful or easily convinced. The other disciples were too sanguine. What was the use of getting together and perhaps inviting persecution. The Lord was dead. He had no faith in visions and so “he was not there when Jesus came.”

It was a lost opportunity. He afterwards witnessed a good confession, but it is, nevertheless, true that personally he suffered the clouding of his spirit when the other disciples were glad, became for a time a hindrance

when he should have been a help, and deserved the reproof which made him conspicuous in all history as the doubter.

There are times when Jesus comes.

It is true that he abideth in us, if we abide in Him, for has He not said, "If a man love me, he will keep my word and my Father will love him and we will come unto him and make our abode with him." But keeping His word means faithfulness in all our relations. The three thousand souls which were added to the Church on the day of Pentecost continued steadfastly in something more than individual faith and prayer. "They continued steadfastly in the Apostle's teaching and fellowship, in the breaking of bread and the prayers" (Revised ver-

sion). Just as in our natural lives we are developed not in isolation, but through social influences in the family and other relations, so in our spiritual being we find means of grace in the communion of the Church and its appointments. The Lord's Supper is a social Feast which we can not neglect without loss to our souls. The mystery of His spiritual presence is there with its pardoning love, benediction of peace and breathing of spiritual strength. We can not be keeping His word if we neglect His charge, "Do this in remembrance of me." Back of the Lord's Day services and its sacrament of love is the promise, "If two of you shall agree on earth as touching anything that they shall ask it shall be done for them of my Father

which is in Heaven, for where two or three are gathered together in my name there am I in the midst of them." This promise is our warrant for all those special seasons of common Prayer which have been and observed in all ages of the Church. Every denomination of Christians has proved the worth of prayer-meetings in some form and special times of withdrawal from material Thought into the still hour of communion with God. Our season of Lent, sanctioned by long usage, is our season for pausing in the whirl of earthly interests and searching our hearts in the light of God's love, shining in the face of Jesus Christ,—cleanse them from all doubt and impurity and refresh ourselves by new realizations of the pardon, pity,

help and hope which are ours in the faith of Jesus. By every promise that He has given, by all the experience of saints in the past, and of our own personal faith in the present we may expect Lent faithfully improved to be a time when "Jesus shall come."

Lent as an opportunity for spiritual blessing is of incalculable worth. Who can exaggerate the worth of all our religious seasons as opportunities for getting breath towards God ! We are smothered under mephitic fumes. I talked the other day with a grimy stoker on one of our ocean steamers who had seized the opportunity when off duty to put his head above decks and breathe the pure air. He went down to the hot furnace-room revived and invigorated. We are all like that.

We need to get into the upper atmosphere as much and as often as we can. It is true that ventilation is supplied for the stoker in his work. He may find breath even under decks and so may a true Christian find breath from God even in the midst of his earthly toils and cares. But there is an open-air above decks, in the hour of prayer at home, the Lord's Day services, the Holy Communion, and our Lenten opportunities which is capable of reviving and purifying even to filling us with all "the fullness of God." Life would be very different for many of us if we had not had and improved them. We may not have seemed to appreciate them or to be absorbing anything, but imperceptibly we have been influenced and spiritual health infused and preserved.

Think now of the possible loss to our souls if there are times when Jesus comes and we are not there. If Thomas had been detained by unavoidable circumstances or more exacting duties, of course that meeting in the upper room was not his opportunity. There is no evidence to show that he might not have been there with the other Apostles had he chosen to be. We infer from the record that nothing but his own natural habit of incredulity kept him aloof.

We are not of course responsible for absence from religious services which we will to enjoy but are hindered by other and peremptory circumstances from attending. They are simply not our opportunities. Wilfully to neglect them when we have them is

the neglect of privilege and may be loss to our souls. There are some who argue that they can pray and read their Bibles in secret and even be disciples without an open profession of religion. It is possible I suppose that a man or woman may never go to church or make a profession of religion or kneel at the Lord's Table and yet be a sort of abnormal Christian. But the stimulus of communion with our fellow-Christians and the grace which flows through the Common Prayer are missed. The true worshipper goes from the Lord's House and Table with fresh interest to his closet and his Bible. He is in danger of neglecting both if he never puts himself where Christ has promised to be present with His disciples. Nico-

demus came to Jesus by night, but he was clearly shown that he could not be a disciple in secret.

The Lenten season is our opportunity which may, rightly used and improved, be to us a "time when Jesus comes." If we let the opportunity pass by, failing, through doubt or indolence, to meet with the disciples, we lose words of comfort and influence whose worth to character and life can not be estimated. The breathing of the Holy Spirit was there and the Benediction of Peace, but "Thomas was not with them when Jesus came."

PREPARATION FOR LENT.

THE RT. REV. W. E. McLAREN, D.D., D.C.L.,
Bishop of Chicago.

WE are accustomed to regard a well-kept Lent as a preparation for the faithful performance of Christian duty during the rest of the year. But the reverse of this proposition is quite as true. Forty-eight weeks of hearty Christian living ought to constitute as much to a good Lent as six weeks of Lent to a good year.

It is true that in this life we shall not cease to need the peculiar stimulus

of Lent, its self-scrutiny, its abstinences, its penitence, its resolves. It is true, also, that in the life of the spirit we must be always beginning again ; but it is not the apostolic idea of progress that our fresh starts should always go back to the same old point of departure. The soul that grows "puts away childish things," and every succeeding renewal begins at a point more advanced than the last.

It were a pitiful token of torpidity should any soul find itself on Ash Wednesday just where it was one year before, with no more strength of grace, no more love for God, no deeper compunction, no clearer vision of eternal realities. Surely each Lent ought to be better than its predecessor, and it will be, if there has been adequate

preparation. The period of preparation ought to cover forty-eight weeks, and the results will correspond with the earnestness we put into our preparation.

The possibilities of spiritual development during such a Lent are very great,—much greater than he can conceive who has been accustomed to get out of this holy season only a temporary uplifting, followed by relapse to the former level,—and what Christian has any right to stop short of his possibilities?

THE PICTURE GALLERY OF LENT.

THE RT. REV. GEO. F. SEYMOUR, D.D., LL.D.,
Bishop of Springfield.

THE Gospels of the season of Lent present a series of pictures of our Lord in His conquest of temptation and cure of sin, which are thrillingly interesting and full of comfort for every one who will look at them. They show what He has done and can do for all who will turn to Him in faith for help. Let us stand, as the pictures

pass before our eyes, and see whether we are left out in the comprehensive grasp of His infinite love.

First. We have the Champion of the human race alone with Satan in the wilderness, as Eve was at the beginning in the Garden of Eden. Her fate we know. She fell and compromised the human race. Look at her; she is gazing at the forbidden tree, and *three* things she sees: first, that it is good for *food, the lust of the flesh*; second, that it is pleasant to the *eyes, the lust of the eyes*; and third, that it is a tree to be desired to make one *wise, the pride of life*. The three streams of temptation pouring in upon her at once are too much for her. She yields and eats, and gives also unto her husband with her, and he

did eat. *The fall.* This is the picture in the dim distance.

In the foreground is our Lord alone with Satan, not in the beautiful garden, but in *the wilderness*. Satan puts forth all his archangel's strength, and brings to bear the *triple power* of temptation upon his apparently helpless victim. His appetite is sharpened for victory, because thus far he has not found access to this one human heart. Again *the lust of the flesh, food* for a starving man, appears, "Command that these stones be made bread." Again *the lust of the eyes*, untold wealth and glory for absolute poverty and the seclusion of the desert is employed. The Devil *showed* Him all the kingdoms of the world and the glory of them. Again *the pride of life*, angelic

help and heaven's admiration to one bereft of human society and a companion of the wild beasts is used. Cast thyself down and behold, *Angels will come and succor Thee*. All Satan's resources fail. The Champion of the human race is master of the field. The Devil leaveth Him, and behold angels came and ministered unto Him.

Second. We inquire to what purpose is this victory over Satan? Does it concern any one beside our Lord Himself? The defeat in Eden ruined the race. Will the triumph in the wilderness restore, or put it within our power to recover what was lost in Eden? The pictures, as the Sundays in Lent pass them before our eyes, answer these anxious inquiries. The second picture shows us our Lord as the central

figure, and around Him His disciples, and kneeling in supplication *a woman*. Who is she? What is her plea, and where is the scene laid? The woman is a descendant of the accursed race of Canaan, whom God drove out by reason of their iniquity. She is a *mother* and is interceding for *her daughter*, who is grievously tormented with a devil. The locality is on the seacoast of Tyre and Sidon. The dear Lord shares with her His victory and her daughter is made whole. The picture then shows us our Lord in *our coasts*, the *Gentile world*, giving His blessings to *Gentiles*; the worst of sinners, Canaanites; *women, a matron and a maiden, old and young*.

Third. The third picture passes and we see Jerusalem and our Lord and a

goodly company, and a dumb man possessed of a devil. No words can plead, but the heart speaks, and the eyes, and he is healed. Ah ! the good gifts go, we see, *to the Jew* as well as the Gentile, and *to the man* as well as the woman, and prayer is heard whether one prays for himself or for another, with the lips, or without a spoken word, from the heart. Now all the human race, Gentile and Jew, woman and man, old and young, are brought by representation into our Lord's presence, *and he blesses them all alike* with the benefits of His victory over Satan.

Fourth. The ground was cursed as a punishment upon man, and evil appears in thorns and thistles, and in barren and reluctant soil. Will the

good Lord heal nature and stay the Devil's power, as he scourges man with mildew and sterility of soil and famine? See the *fourth picture*. Our Lord is the central figure and the scene is lovely beyond expression. The crystal lake of Galilee and the banks rising gently from the waters, covered with the fresh green grass, and men, and women and children, grouping in companies of hundreds and fifties, to the number of more than five thousand, and seated on the ground. What is the Master doing? He is traversing the fields of Nature and useful art *in feeding* that vast multitude. He is making the kneaded and baked bread, and the cooked fish increase and grow in quantity until all the eyes, that wait upon him, receive

their meat in due season, and are satisfied. Jesus blesses Nature's processes and Nature's products, and man's skill and toil. He reverses the curse of the ground.

Fifth. But bad as is Nature's curse for man, man's curse upon himself in his pride and rebellion against God, and unbelief is far worse. Will the dear Lord deal with this the worst development of evil and master it? The fifth picture comes. The scene is the temple in Jerusalem, the seat of the national religion. The central figure is still our Lord, and around Him, pressing upon Him, are the infidels of that day. They have cornered Him, as they feel sure, since they have driven Him to affirm that Abraham, who had been dead full eighteen hundred years, had

seen His day and was glad. Ah! they triumphantly cry, "Thou art not yet fifty years old, and hast thou seen Abraham!" They appeal to the evidence of our senses, since any one could see that the Master was not even a middle-aged man, much less an old man, and hence as a mere man he could not have seen Abraham. They suppose that their triumph is complete. But Jesus responds, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, before Abraham was, *I am*." He does not say "before Abraham was, *I was*." That is I am older than Abraham, but He claims to be *Jehovah, the eternal I am*. This is the panacea for infidelity, the cure for misgiving and doubt. We do not mean that it drives it out of sight; it did not do this in the present instance.

It silenced it and drove it from reasoning to persecution. "Then took they up stones to cast at him." The final resort of infidelity is always the stones, persecution. So our Lord triumphs in His incarnation over the evil which fills mere human thought and dominates the spirit of the world. This revelation of Himself as *the very and eternal God*, prepares us to understand and interpret the awful pictures, which will fill the canvas on Palm Sunday and the days which follow after to Easter Even. Ah! the sufferer does not suffer because *He must*, since He is God as well as man, but because *He wishes* to suffer and die for our sakes. He is not the victim of a mob. "He has power to lay down His life and He has power to take it up again."

His death is the cure for sin, and sin is the fruit of yielding to temptation. Look these pictures over again. How wonderful they are ! Study them one by one, and then study them in relation to each other, and then sweeping, as it were, the eye over them in a single glance, see the unity of the whole and the harmony of the parts, and as you bend beneath the cross, cry, Jesu, mercy, and bless God for the Incarnation. This is one study in the picture gallery of Lent.

HOW SHALL WE KEEP LENT ?

THE RT. REV.

CORTLANDT WHITEHEAD, D.D.,

Bishop of Pittsburg.

THINK as men may concerning Lent, it nevertheless is a fact to be reckoned with. You are a Churchman. You claim to be a Prayer Book Churchman. You also claim to be a Bible student, or at least a believer in the Bible. You certainly claim to be a disciple of Christ—that means a learner, one who acknowledges Christ as Master, who accepts His teaching,

and, theoretically at least, follows His example. Nothing that Christ did or favored could possibly be wrong. Everything He endorsed or practiced must certainly be right. Hence when Lent comes, Scriptural, Christlike, and enjoined by the Prayer Book, it is, as we said, a fact to be reckoned with. And like many other such facts, it is like the Judgment itself, in its measure and degree; it separates, so to speak, between the sheep and the goats. As in the case of the Bible, the Sacraments and the Ministry, so also Lent is in itself inevitably either a "savor of life unto life, or a savor of death unto death." A magnet thrust into a heap of dust is a means whereby the steel particles in that pile may *prove themselves steel*. This institu-

tion of Lent thrust into our congregation, by a law which can not be denied or evaded, enables those who are in deed and not only in word Prayer Book Churchmen, to *prove their own estimate* of themselves measurably correct.

Our Mother, the Church, has no other design except, as the representative of her Lord, to cultivate our truest Christian character, and bring it on unto perfection. And she knows no better way than to follow the footsteps of His most holy life. And if He found it meet and right, and enjoined it upon His disciples, to watch and fast and pray, there is no reason why the disciple should be above his Master. "The Scriptures bid us fast; the Church says Now"; and fasting

means *going without things*, whether amusements, food, sleep, or selfish ease, so as to have more money for alms, and more time for serious reading and religious meditation, earnest prayer, and the practice of true religion, which is to visit the fatherless and widows, the sick and the needy, in their affliction.

Can there be anything better for the development of true Christian character? Is there any reason for an earnest Christian man or woman to *refuse* to keep Lent; or to think slightly of it? To wait on the Lord is to renew one's strength. To seek Him is to find Him. To give up things for Christ's sake, and for the sake of men, is to enter (oh, how slightly!) into the fellowship of His sufferings,

and has most sure promise of blessing. Strong are those words of the Master Christ, "Except a man deny himself, and take up his cross and follow after Me, HE CAN NOT BE MY DISCIPLE."

THE CALL OF LENT,
TO SAY "NO."

THE RT. REV. H. C. POTTER, D.D., LL.D.,
Bishop of New York.

THE world is late to recognize its true heroes, and sometimes suffers them to die unrecognized. Something of the old shortsightedness of Paganism still lingers among us, and makes us heartiest admirers, not of the heroism of resistance, but of the heroism of action. A dazzling deed goes for more than a daily denial, and we shout ap-

plause, not in his ears who has resisted an allurements, but in his who has achieved a success.

This may be natural enough, but it is none the less superficial, and, in the long run, in its results, demoralizing. There are times, therefore, when we need to reconstruct our ideas of moral heroism—to dig down through the saw-dust of the popular arena, and get our feet upon the firm substratum of abiding truth. And something of this sort is needed in these times, for these are times, as very few of us will care to deny, when the world is greatly in love with visible and tangible achievement. One man goes to and fro through the streets, and in and out of the world's traffic and rivalry and pleasure silent, unasserting and simply

faithful. "Well, what of it?" somebody asks. "Doubtless he is a very worthy person. But come and look out of the window with me, at somebody who is worth looking at. Yonder portly figure belongs to a man who has made his own way to the very top of the ladder. He is not, indeed, a person of very nice scruples. His personal habits are hardly those which a father would hold up as models to a son just setting out in life. His history is, indeed, simply the story of a strong and coarse nature, which has grasped at all it could get, and over-reached and over-ridden the weak and less cunning whenever it dared; but, after all, how much the man has to show for his career!" What, now, is this but the purest paganism of judgment—

missing, entirely, in its superficial enthusiasm for merely effective exertion, the true heroism, the intrinsic grandeur of any really noble life? Follow that other unassuming figure whose owner has never dazzled the world by a bold stroke in politics or finance—who has never outwitted his constituents or just grazed the edge of downright fraud in dealing with his creditors. He has been content to refuse to let any most promising bargain for one instant blind his eyes. He has simply resisted any lust, whether for place or pleasure, which would drag him into any unclean intimacy with sin. He has merely been steadfast enough to wave back every, whatsoever, lure that would make him false to duty. Is it nothing, do you say? Come with me,

then, into the presence of the greatest of all Beings, at the moment when He is called to face the crucial trial of His whole life. Read in that story, which is the record of the three temptations of the Master, what, with Christ, was the supreme emergency of His earthly ministry. Strip that story of its accidents, and what is its substance but this : That Christ three times says "No !" According to the world's standard, the triumph of Jesus ought to have been in doing successfully what the devil entices him to do. What a fine victory over stubborn nature in turning the stones that lay about Him into Bread ! What *eclat* in flinging oneself headlong from the giddy battlements of the temple, to alight amid the admiring crowd below,

unharméd ! What a cheap price to pay for that wide empire which He sought over the hearts and lives of men, to kneel, for one instant only, at the feet of Satan ! And yet the real victory is won when, in answer to each overture of the adversary, Christ simply speaks his calm but unequivocal refusal. Do you think it is only by chance that that stern history stands at the threshold of the Master's public ministry ? Read over, then, the records of that ministry with this single characteristic of it in your mind, and see how, over and over again, it re-appears through all the subsequent history, until at length Christ hangs upon the cross, and there, with the last effort of His failing strength, refuses the offered draught by which

His persecutors aimed, with tardy pity, to drown His dying agonies in the stupor of unconsciousness—grander, then, in the divine heroism of His refusal than when He startled men with any mightiest miracle! Are any of us in love with a real, vital heroism? Let us learn, then, from Him, most of all, in what, veritably, it consists, and how, most worthily, you and I may illustrate it!

But to do that successfully we need, first of all, to ask, and to answer the question, What faculty is that upon which such heroism as I have described makes its demand, and which needs, therefore, to be braced and disciplined to respond to that demand? In other words, if a human being is to illustrate real vigor and nobility of character by

sometimes saying "No," out of what, in him, must such vigor and nobility come?

(a) Plainly, as you will perceive with a moment's reflection, not out of that side of him which is merely physical. There is a certain kind of courage, a familiar manifestation of firmness which distinguishes those whose nervous system is in fine, robust, working order, whose digestion is good, and who sleep soundly every night. One meets with such persons on ship-board, sometimes, and more feminine natures look upon them with a kind of envious admiration. "What firmness and fearlessness," they say, "in danger. What would I not give if I could exchange my weakness for such cour-

age and strength and fortitude !” But only put the strong man and the weak woman over against some strong and sharp temptation ! Come with a bribe to that poor creature who shivers with dread every time the ship lurches in the sea, and see which of the twain is the stronger then ! You see a vigorous, robust man, down in the kennel, wallowing in the mire of his tyrannical appetites, and you ask : “What is manly strength good for if it can not keep such an one out of the gutter ? What an abuse of strength that ought to have been used to resist temptation —not degraded by surrender to it !” Now the mistake and confusion here consists in looking for relief from the wrong faculty. Nothing is more easily susceptible of proof than that the

physical heroes of the world have not been its moral heroes. It is not strength of muscle nor grace of limb that wins for one victories in that domain when one's heroism consists in simply saying, "No." A disordered physical system may lay one open to certain forms of physical temptation, and on the other hand a healthful, well-balanced physical organization may be free from certain vicious tendencies, and, so, disinclined to certain vices. But in either case it has not been any mere physical effort, or the want of it, which saved or wrecked one. When you are steering a boat, or driving a vicious or unbroken horse, you want a clear and open eye, a firm grasp, and strong and steady nerves, but when you are steering your own

restless and wayward nature, or striving to put the rein on your own head-long ambitions, your petty vanities, your tyrannical and yet ever-recurring appetites, you want something more than any or all of these.

(b) And that something is not, as many erroneously fancy, a higher culture. It would be, if our sins, our weaknesses, our feeble concessions to the things that beckon us downward, were the results of our ignorance. But a man or woman may know all about sin and not be, for all his knowledge, one whit the stronger. Go to the drunkard, just as he is lifting to his lips the glass that will turn a man into a beast. You ask him: "Do you know the consequences of this act of

yours?" "Yes." "Have you ever experienced those consequences?" "Yes." "Do you mean to say that you know what it is to have the light of reason in you put out by the devilish mischief that there is in yonder cup—to lose all sense of shame or dignity or decency, to fall down out of the clear, firm self-consciousness of a serene manhood into the drivelling maunderings of a fool—to brutalize yourself until the very herds of swine are less despicable than are you?" "Yes," the answer has been, over and over again, "I know all that!" "Then, verily," I think you would be constrained to confess to such an one, "your sin is not attributable to your ignorance. If you are ever to be other and better than you are, it is not mere education

that you want." And yet, is there anything extravagant or extraordinary in such a conversation as I have rehearsed? Has not every one of us some leaf of sad experience with just such fallen ones to which it answers, almost word for word? You see a woman, cursed with that madness of her sex, the vice of evil-speaking. As she goes to and fro among her fellow-beings she drops this venom with skilfullest art, just when it can hurt most and sting the longest—drops it with such unerring cruelty, in such unscrupulous profusion, with such utter recklessness, that you wonder at last, how, to you and to others who are striving with all your might to love her, she can make herself so unlovely and unloveable! We think she can

not know either what she is doing, or the effect of it, and that if she could be made to see how every scandalous utterance, every calumny of implication recoils upon herself, she would deny her tongue such wanton and wicked indulgence. Alas! there are hours when she knows all that as well as you can tell her—times when she feels it in the pained silence or surprise of others—times, too, when she weeps over this virulent habit and the sore bondage in which it has entrapped her. No! it is not knowledge that such an one wants—not a heightened discrimination, nor an acuter intellect, but simply and supremely

(c) A braver and a firmer *will*. And here we touch the core of the whole

matter. Believe me, if any one among us is ever to act rightly in those frequent and critical moments in every life when duty and honor and conscience and the Holy Spirit of God equally cry out to the hesitating soul, "Thou shall say 'No!'" it must be because we have somehow gotten a sterner fibre and a steadier fixedness to our wills. How many noble and engaging characters have you and I known whose perpetual misfortune and final ruin it was, that this side of them was so utterly and hopelessly weak. Aye, and among them have been intellectual giants, masters of their calling and of their kind, whether in the pulpit or in the counting-room or at the bar—men who could thunder against wrong in tones that made other

men tremble as they heard them, and yet men so impotent in all their powers of resistance that, no sooner did some base solicitation appeal to them, than they went down before it as grass before the mower. Like men who "ride to ruin with their eyes wide open," such an one may never be so thoroughly master of himself intellectually, his mind never so clear and bright and vigorous as when his will, swerving at a lure like a frightened horse, nears the precipice and topples over !

What one so imperilled — nay, what all of us, since all of us so imperilled, need, therefore, is to restore the tone and upbuild the strength of that faculty which Jonathan Edwards with such refreshing clearness and simplicity de-

finer as the "faculty or power or principle of the mind by which it is capable of choosing."

But what is there that can restore this tone or deteriorated quality of the will? I answer :

1st. *Discipline*. Many persons, and especially young persons, are betrayed often by the pestilent sophism that to say "No" is somehow ungenerous and discourteous. There is something benevolent to the casual eye in that yielding disposition which can not pain another, as it declares, with a refusal, and which wins a kind of transient regard from others because of what is deemed to be its good nature. Let us understand right here, if we find ourselves yielding to such weakness, that it is not another's feelings

that we are so much considering as our own. It is not merely the pain which saying "No" gives them that we are thinking of, as the pain which saying it gives us. And what is such a consideration when we try it in the crucible of a candid logic, but sheer selfishness, and not benevolence at all? The young mother can not deny her child its wildest demands, because, as she tells you, she can not bear to wound it with the pain of a refusal. But would she hesitate to refuse the child if there were no pain to her own feelings involved in that refusal; and is it generosity or unselfishness to sacrifice the child's real good to her own feelings? Ah, what a rare school for the training of the will into a firmer habit and a braver readiness for denial

exists in every home among us! You that are parents, read over again the story of our first mother's fall and see there how every complex misery that has come into the world in the horrible train of sin entered it when that innocent wife in Eden weakly refused to say "*No!*" Look again on all the various ramifications of that life that make up home and the family, and remember, whether you are a child there or a parent, encountering the temptations of youth or those of maturity, that God has set you there pre-eminently to put the weak *will* in you under the yoke of an early and steadfast discipline, and thus to learn how the truest grandeur of life consists not in yielding, but in refusing to yield.

And as in the family, so out of it.

Says Emerson, speaking of character in the merchant: "In his parlor I see very well that he has been hard at work this morning, with that knitted brow and that settled humor, which all his desire to be courteous can not shake off. I see plainly how many firm acts have been done; how many valiant *noes* have this day been spoken, when others would have uttered ruinous *yeas*." Who that hears me does not know that it has been that fatal facility in saying "Yes" that has dragged more fair and prosperous barques down to ruin than any financial storm that ever swept the seas of commerce. Some concession, both weak and wicked (wicked because it involved not only our own ruin but the ruin of others), to plausible solicita-

tions to go upon a neighbor's paper, to divide risks in some gigantic speculation; to launch out into habits of living that are neither suited to one's means or his education, all these are occasions when many a man of business has tasted the bitter fruits of a timid, ruinous reluctance to say "No!"—occasions, too, on the other hand, when the courage and firmness and promptness and persistency with which one could say so, have been the four cornerstones of all a man's subsequent success!

And so on, through all our personal or social life. Oh! how sorely do we need, in these over-compliant days, the type of character that refuses to comply; men who, if only by their power of resistance, will let us know

that we have encountered a new and positive quality. But, such a type of character can be developed only by daily and downright discipline. These wills of ours are as capable of increased and more vigorous fibre as are our arms or hands. What they need is, that, set over against the errors, the falsehoods, the evils that are in the world, we should discipline them in the divine art of refusal; daily train them to utter their downright protest and frankly and firmly say "No!" There has come to be, in certain quarters among us, no little scorn of the name Protestant, because, forsooth, it is urged that the attitude of a Protestant is merely an attitude of denial of certain errors, and not an attitude of affirmation of certain truths. It is at

once a silly and shallow objection, for no man ever earnestly denied any error save because he believed in the deep truth which lay behind it, and of which it was the parody. But suppose it were not so—which is the braver and the manlier course, to drift with the stream of falsehood or superstition, droning out drowsy affirmations to lifeless, lying traditions, or to stand up firmly to deny their authority—to protest, aye, to protest against their tyranny, and, when they bid the soul “crook the pregnant hinges of its knees” before them, to say, openly and resolutely, “No! No! I will not bow down before this dreary falsehood which you have dressed up in the vestments of custom or of religion?” Thank God! just that was what did

those brave men who reformed England and our Mother Church, and if they were not ashamed of the name of Protestant, verily we need not be!

2d. But, not inappropriately may the memory of their courage and constancy remind us just here of that other and divine Factor in the perfecting of a heroic will, I mean the indwelling power of the Holy Spirit.

"That is best blood which hath most iron in it,
To edge with, resolve with,"

one has written. Ah! what is it but this iron of a divine strength of which we each one of us supremely need perpetual infusion! No mere self-discipline of our weak and wavering wills, sorely as so many of us need that discipline, can make us strong enough to

say "No!" to any really seductive beckoning of the adversary, until that discipline has been supplemented and invigorated by a strength above our own. We must, verily, put our wills under martial law; but at the same time we must seek for strength to enforce that law in our closets and upon our knees. And so, verily, we see our calling! Do I speak to no one who is consciously under the dominion of a base habit, or a mean compliance? Is there no one of us who has known what it is weakly to cringe and say "Yes," either to his own appetites or ambitions, or to the false or dishonest plans of other men? Oh! then, my brother, be a man and speak the "No" your heart has long ago striven and yet hesitated to utter. Or, if you can not—

if your chains have grown so strong, your lips so stiff you can not frame a "No," ask Christ, first, to set you free, and, while you ask Him, do your part to learn a freeman's firmness. Say "No," for a season at any rate, to some one or more of your trivial and, perhaps, hitherto very harmless indulgences. No man ever knows what power his most insignificant habits have gained over him until he tests them by downright denial. Say "No!" then, for forty days, at least, to some exacting appetite, some domineering custom of the world about you, some wonted harshness of speech or judgment that may seem so natural to you. Say "No" when the aggressive clamors of any secular engagements bid you neglect engagements

with your Maker. Say "No" when any summons comes between you and God's courts, or any other hours you owe to Him! Say "No!" when any lure or bribe entices you to speak an untrue word, or do an unclean deed. God shall see and own the heroism of your endeavor though men may not. He knows, already, what that word "No," if ever you shall speak it bravely for His sake, will cost you, and when at last the books are opened, and the great assize is set, His voice shall crown your steadfast service with His own divine approval.

THE FREEDOM OF LENT.

THE Rt. REV.

GEORGE WORTHINGTON, D. D.,

Bishop of Nebraska.

THERE are doubtless those in the Church who regard the discipline of this penitential season as a necessity indeed, but still an interruption and a task ; scarcely disguising it to themselves that they shall feel relieved when the forty days are over. This can not be a state of mind that is honoring to God. Neither can God be pleased with such a service as this. Christianity is essentially a filial rela-

tionship. A father desires the obedience of his child, but he would have the service one of love and gratitude. The Church has prescribed certain duties and enjoined specific obligations. It is clear that the benefit to be derived from a recognition of these, hinges upon the spirit in which they are done.

To do the best things, to pray and fast, and engage in works of charity with a close, confined, shut-up heart can never be religion. To feel very free and yet to be very accurate and particular in action ; to be the more bound, because we are not bound, and make the greater liberty the motive of the severer discipline. This is the Christian faith. This is the Gospel.

Lent is the season of Thanksgiving

for the penitent. If truly so, and the confession is sincere, there are no places in his mind which he is afraid to disclose. His penitence and confession has secured pardon, and it is the sense of pardon which is man's emancipation.

To work out our salvation does not necessarily imply servitude. If the inspiration of all that the Church wisely requires of her children at this season is the love of God, there must be perfect freedom in their performance. God is not a master imposing duties, rigidly exacting results, keen to see faults, pleased with pain, unsympathizing with difficulties; but a Father, a loving Father, tenderly considerate, always ready to respond to our cry for help, and when our wills

are submissive to the divine will, He works in us mightily, never forgetting, but always helping our infirmities.

If in the solemn covenant of Holy Baptism, the precious blood is sealed to us, and our spiritual birth makes us the children of God : and He is ever the same loving Father, then to serve him faithfully in every requirement of the church which is the mystical body of His dear Son, must be perfect freedom ; our adoring love for such a gracious Being makes it so.

“Where the spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty.”

THE PRACTICAL VALUE OF LENT.

THE RT. REV.

ETHELBERT TALBOT, D.D., LL.D.,

Bishop of Central Pennsylvania.

THE sanction of many centuries of the Christian Church is a silent witness to the practical value of the season of Lent. The necessity of such an annual revival and quickening of the spiritual life is found in the very constitution of our nature. Under the Jewish dispensation God Himself commanded the observance of a solemn fast, year by year. The teaching of

Christ assumes that men will fast. Lent provides a definite time to enable us to acquire that self-mastery so necessary to spiritual progress. By self-denial, not only in food, but in pleasures, innocent in themselves, the soul is chastened and time is secured for meditation upon things Eternal. There never was an age when Lent, with its lessons of self-restraint and Holy discipline, was more sadly needed than at present.

To all who in the spirit of filial obedience and out of love to the Master, try to improve the opportunities this blessed season affords it will prove, as in the language of the saintly Herbert, the "Dear Feast of Lent."

LENT, A TIME TO GAIN GRACE.

THE RT. REV. J. S. JOHNSTON, D. D.,
Bishop of Western Texas.

IN ALL our observances of Lent we should bear ever in mind this truth : that it is not simply a season to seek forgiveness for past sin, and that too without any serious intention of amendment ; but it is more especially a time, by "a closer walk with God," to gain grace to enable us to attain to greater perfection. When one has

really walked with God, and tasted and known how gracious the Lord is, he will not soon want to go back to "the weak and beggarly elements of the world."

That is but a poor and pitiful view of religion, which looks upon it as merely a contrivance to get pardoned, and does not rather consider it a great workshop where character is hammered out on the anvil of experience, so that men, who were once made in the image of God, and have lost it, shall have the likeness restored, and be fitted to become co-workers with Him here, and co-partners with Him in Eternity. The reason that trial so often comes to these "seekers after God" is, that it is only originally in the white heat of the fiery furnace

of affliction that souls can be welded indissolubly to God. This is principally what the religion of Jesus Christ stands for. Let us not stop short of it, nor flinch under the means which He often uses to "accomplish his perfect work" in us.

THE PRACTICAL SIDE OF
LENT.

THE RT. REV.

LEIGHTON COLEMAN, D. D., LL. D.,

Bishop of Delaware.

My practical bent of mind induces me to write briefly from that point of view. Not that I would do so to the exclusion of the spiritual or devotional side, but, rather, in addition to it.

I often think that if parents properly appreciated the influence of a well-kept Lent, in helping to form habits of self-denial, regularity, and

conscientiousness, they would more generally, and with greater alacrity, co-operate with the Church in furthering its observance.

The lessons and motives by which these habits are recommended and enforced are such as young minds can easily understand, and, with many of them, are calculated to arouse their enthusiasm and activities.

And, not infrequently, through the children, an interest is awakened or revived among the older members of the family, which has lain dormant a long while, and appeared well nigh beyond hope.

The rewards which may be offered, for example, for rising early and promptly ; getting to meals on time ; keeping one's person or clothes tidy ;

practicing music faithfully ; taking exercise regularly ; going without candies, desserts or other delicacies ; avoiding harsh words ; doing some sort of household work—all such rewards are so many aids, when judiciously explained, in the formation of habits that may be of incalculable value in their future and maturer lives.

Therefore, it is that I would earnestly urge upon parents the duty and advantage of encouraging their children to heed the appeals made to them yearly to have them share in the practical benefits resulting from a well-spent Lent.

SPIRITUAL RECUPERATION.

THE RT. REV. WILLIAM A. LEONARD, D.D.,
Bishop of Ohio.

LENT is a season for spiritual recuperation. Just as during the summer season, rest and refreshment come to jaded minds and bodies from nearer contact with Nature: so during Lent, as we draw away from the cares and pleasures and distractions of the world, the spirit may become reinvigorated by closer association with God, through prayer and fasting, by service, and

alms-giving. Lent is a soul tonic. If it be well used, and perseveringly occupied with spiritual exercise, the whole fibre of the "inner man" must be strengthened and built up. Lent forbids idleness, or relaxation in religious avocations. It would stimulate the disciple to more rigorous discipline and to renewal of heavenly labors.

So that, a Lent well spent must develop the Christly stature of the disciple. Much prayer would augment every force of the spirit; much worship would of necessity find the Divine reflection on our daily lives; much work among the poor would assuredly make us humbler and more grateful for our providences; much abnegation would beget a larger habit

of self-sacrifice ; and much sweet communion with our Lord would compel us to be like Him, and would keep us in the Easter path, that leads blessedly through this life unto the gates of Everlasting Life.

LENT AND LIFE.

THE RT. REV. WILLIAM F. NICHOLS, D.D.,
Bishop of California.

A BOOK on Lent would have the largest sale of the year and the most happy result for the building fund of St. James' Mission, Greencastle, if the American people as a whole only felt that they needed Lent. If as a season it appealed to them as, for example, an outing season appeals to them, there would be downright eagerness to get and use expert "literature," as Bureaus

of Information call it, upon the subject. From the nature of the case, however, we know that can not be. As the world is, it would be pure paradox to have a season of withdrawal from the world with all the world going after it.

And yet ought not a little more pains be taken to have the human heart disclose its own instinct for Lent. A good many Christian people, and indeed a good many Church people, seem practically to look upon Lent as if it were a sort of pawn-brokers' cognomen after all, very handy for those who find themselves in the straits to use it,—over-pious, morbid, mulligrubs sort of people,—but meaning no more, really, to the sane and solvent character than the

three gilded balls they happen to notice in passing a sign on a side street. Is Lent really only the resort of a few specially hampered hearts, or is it a market place where all can go for sustaining food? Is it not a season for staples without which there may be starvation of spirit?

The human spirit needs *rest*. It never needed it more, and it never had rest crowded out more than in this century of activities let loose. The worn spirit more often explains the tired body than *vice versa*. And Lent is simply a profound and prescribed outing for that weariness of spirit.

The human heart needs *aim*. Amid the chances and changes of this mortal life it has a real struggle for a fixed position, as the compass-needle quivers

about the pole. Lent is a time to clarify the aim, to pray that our hearts may surely then be fixed when true joys are to be found.

The human life needs *discipline*. It inevitably gets it. No mortal life probably ever had its tear-ducts unused. But discipline uninterpreted is a curse of character. The Cross of Jesus is the only key to its interpretation. And Lent is the season of the Cross — the season for reading life's strange hieroglyphics, the season for discerning the sweet reasonableness of discipline and law in all character — making it yield "the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby."

And if all who in their life wrappings are learning something of the

spirit's need of rest, of the heart's need of an aim and of the life's need of discerning discipline—if they all would try the effect of a well-kept Lent upon these needs, our churches would not begin to hold them, and Lent would become the very instinct instead of the go-by of the multitude.

LENT AS A TIME OF DISCIPLINE.

THE RT. REV.

CLELAND KINLOCH NELSON, D.D.,

Bishop of Georgia.

THE acts and employment of time which the Church inculcates in Lent are of Divine command, approved by reason and thoroughly tested by long use.

To restore the functions of a worn and depleted spirit, Christians can select no better methods than those which the Church has stamped with

the seal of her Master's choice, nor better time than that which rests for its appropriateness upon our Blessed Lord's forty days' fast in the wilderness.

Like the contestants of the world, but with a nobler object, we now enter upon a time of training. We look forward, do we not, with earnest desire, to the enjoyment hereafter of a life of bliss in the presence of our Adorable Redeemer. Then a portion, not niggardly nor indifferently, of our time should be devoted to the cultivation of the mental and spiritual habit, the graces and accomplishments which shall fit us for citizenship of heaven and companionship of the saints in light.

Sooner or later the education must

be had, the discipline undergone. As it is good for man to bear the yoke in his youth, so it is far better for us to yield our members to the lawful and reasonable restraints of this season than at some future time to be restricted and disciplined in a reformatory from which we can not escape.

How can this supreme grace of charity ever be possessed without doing deference to many inborn dispositions and developed tendencies? That we may be able to suffer and yet be kind, to root out envy and jealousy, to be modest and humble, free from conceit and love of self, seeking the good of others rather than of ourselves; that we may "be true and just in all our dealings"; that we may bear, believe, hope, endure will surely

never happen to us, nor result from any natural processes, nor against our wills. The world and its associations do not encourage these virtues, society does not foster them, friendship does not demand them ; human nature is not grooved so that they will pervade our lives as irrigating waters.

Nothing less than attention, self-control, mortification of natural propensities and subjection to a wiser leading than the unaided intellect, will ever bring us into conformity with the model of Divine Charity. There must be an inner conscious force to resist and rise superior to the proneness of a fallen nature.

The shattered remnant of God's original creation can never of itself grow to any seemly proportions, or

rise to the stature of our Exemplar and Pattern.

For the holy purpose of mending, modifying and improving the inner life, Lent is an opportunity.

Like any other means of grace it is either a blessing or a curse according to the use we make of it ; — a blessing if we attune our lives to its prevailing tone, a curse if we neglect it or spend it hypocritically.

It is no time for compromises with sin. Every delay of discipline makes future hardship greater. Each unfulfilled resolution carried over renders us weaker.

Until Christians cease to regard Lent as a formal observance, and its acts as a series of unsavory duties, it will ever prove stupid and profitless.

But if we can but realize our need of a thorough stirring up of heart and mind, and will view the Forty Days as a precious privilege, there remains the hope that the yearly Easter will by successive consecrations of our labors bring us nearer to a joyful participation in the final Resurrection.

LENT, AND THE GRACE OF HUMILITY.

THE RT. REV. ELLISON CAPERS, D.D.,
Bishop of South Carolina.

WHAT grace, of all others, will help to make Lent holy and profitable? We venture to say, the grace of humility. Without it, all our doings will be nothing worth. We are all going up to the temple to pray, and to give alms, and to pay our vows unto our Lord. Let us recall the example of the two characters set before us as types; types of the *right*, and the

wrong spirit ; and remember, that they are set before us for the one purpose of teaching what *is* the right spirit.

Two men went up into the Temple to pray, one a Pharisee, and the other a Publican. We understand what the spirit of the Pharisee was, and we understand the mind of the Publican. In the Christian Church these two men have ever stood for two distinct characters, and no two characters are better known than the characters of these two men.

Good taste and good manners, not to speak of good religion, condemn the Pharisee, and praise the Publican. There is something cold and forbidding in the spirit of the one, while the spirit of the other attracts us. One is

the spirit of arrogance ; the other the spirit of humility. One is offensive to man, and we should not wonder that it is an offense to God. Yet for all this, the spirit of the Pharisee easily dominates our hearts, and drives the nobler spirit from us. This is a most serious fact. However much we may applaud the Publican, still we must confess, that it is easier to be like the Pharisee. The Publican's grace, Humility, is not at the command of our wills. Over against the Publican's heart-felt sense of his imperfections we set our self-esteem. Nothing is easier than to over-estimate the worth of our righteousness, or to under-estimate the moral beauty and strength of a genuine humility. The reason is obvious : the standard of

conduct by which we are most easily influenced is always at hand; is asserted by the majority with whom we daily associate — it is the generally accepted standard of the world; the worldly standard of life. The Christian's Standard is the pure law of God; the character of Jesus Christ. Measured by this standard there can be no ground for self-laudation, and no warrant for self-righteousness. Humility, before the pure law of God, is an absolute moral necessity, for without it there can be no true penitence. Christian humility is the sincere confession of the actual state of our heart and life. It is the devout acknowledgment of the truth. Coming to God, the Publican came in truth and sincerity. Judging his life by the law of

God, he confessed what he knew was truth respecting his life, and God justified his sincerity. His prayer of humble access stood for a noble faithfulness to the truth. The Pharisee knew that his prayer stood for his over-estimate of himself, and that the law of his life was not the law of God. A pure heart ; truth in the inward part of the soul ; lips that speak no guile ; a mind not lifted up unto vanity ; an undefiled conscience : all this was not in his mind. His prayer was no confession of truth, for it ignored the real state of his life, presenting only what was praiseworthy, and taking no account of what God saw to be unclean, unworthy, and unholy. The Pharisee's prayer was a deception ; a deception in the face of Him

who knows the heart of man. What a contrast to the Publican's mind ! I venture the affirmation, that the great need of our Christian life, is the need of the grace of humility. Humility, which exalts the law of God, and the example of Jesus Christ, our Righteousness ; humility, which has the courage to confess a fault with the purpose to correct it ; humility, which craves the smile of God before the face of man ; humility, which judges all conduct by the one only standard of human life—the will of God. Our Lord's purpose in the Parable is to teach us our need of the grace of humility. One of the prime objects of Lent is to help us on towards the attainment of this grace. The Church gives us abundant opportunities for

self-examination, self-discipline, self-sacrifice. We must never forget, that the religion of the Crucified can never be the religion of the self-satisfied. Every Christian knows, that without the sense of his sins and his sinfulness he can have no just appreciation of his Master's Cross. No sane man can stand before the Cross of Christ, Our Lord, and admire or praise his own righteousness. It would shock the moral sense, and seem the veriest mockery. But every man who humbles himself before the Cross knows that *there* he feels, that his nature is exalted, and every fibre of his heart is enriched by the sense of God's eternal love, and Christ's redeeming Sacrifice.

LENT : NOT NEGATIVE, BUT
POSITIVE.

THE RT. REV. THOMAS F. GAILOR, D. D.,
Bishop of Tennessee.

THE season of Lent, in one aspect of it, and perhaps the truest, represents opportunity. It is not a mere rest from the business and activity of life ; but it is the wise provision for the increase of spiritual power. It is not sanitary, but sanatory. It is not negative, but positive ; and this fact is worth emphasizing.

It is one thing to nurse and minister to an invalid, who has small chance of

recovery, and it is quite another thing to transfer a person of good vitality, who has been depressed by unfavorable conditions, into an atmosphere and environment which will give the vital forces free play and stimulate and encourage the expansion and increase of life.

We must insist upon the positiveness of the divine life in us. The Christian spirit is a positive and aggressive force in the world. It is not on the defensive. It is not a mere shrinking from evil and abstinence from wrong-doing. It is the shedding of a new light into the world. It is a triumphant marching onward in the Name and faith of Christ. It is a confident, joyful challenge to the armies of unrighteousness. It expels bad

passion by introducing true love. It conquers the disease of sin by increasing the amount and improving the quality of vigorous righteousness. It overcomes evil with good.

In an environment absolutely free from unfavorable conditions, the spiritual nature, by itself, would soon and inevitably grow to complete supremacy, but it is now hindered and restrained in daily life by its ancient enemies, the world, the flesh, and the devil. It has to fight for every advance it makes, being sustained and strengthened only by prayer and sacraments.

Now, Lent is the Church's opportunity, once a year, to reinforce the ordinary operation of the means of Grace by restricting, in some degree, the avenues through which the enemies

reach the soul, and by increasing the facilities for spiritual development. Thus, the test of a well-spent Lent is not the satisfaction felt at having been severe in abstinence and punctilious in attendance upon religious services, but in the consciousness of deeper spiritual insight and greater spiritual power. For, by daily services, by frequent communions, by serious meditation and survey of self, by abstinence from those things which, while not wrong in themselves, are the everyday occasions of temptation ;—there should be the accession of vital force and larger dominion of the soul.

Those who object to the observance of Lent, on the ground that it seems to them to be a mere formal and perfunctory intermission of social pleasures,

which, if wrong at all, ought to be eschewed always by all Christians, do not do justice to the positiveness of the Christian life.

A soldier may be granted a few weeks' special drill and training, in seclusion from the enemy, in order to increase his efficiency in actual warfare, but he would cease to be a soldier if he failed in the day of battle to meet his foes on the open field. It is right for Christians to retire now and then into the large, serene realm of devotion ; but they would be unworthy of their Leader if the spiritual power, so augmented, were not used in the practical experience and contact of the political, social, and industrial life of mankind.

The failure of Churchmen to actual-

ize the ideal in our time, to the full measure of its meaning, does not detract from the intrinsic excellence and spiritual reasonableness of the ideal, which makes the observance of the Lenten season one of the most precious and helpful and time-honored heritages of the Universal Church.

REPENTANCE.

THE RT. REV. A. C. A. HALL, D.D.,
Bishop of Vermont.

THIS is the great work of Lent.

"Turn ye even to Me," saith the Lord, "with all your heart, and with fasting, and with weeping, and with mourning" (Joel ii, 12).

"Seek ye the Lord while He may be found, call ye upon Him while He is near: let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts: and let him return unto the Lord, and He will have mercy upon him: and to our God, for He will abundantly pardon" (Isa. liv, 6, 7).

The work of Repentance in its several parts of self-examination, sorrow for sin, confession of sin, amendment and satisfaction, can not be better summed up than in the weighty words of the exhortation in preparation for Holy Communion in the Prayer-Book. Those who would find acceptance with God are therein bidden :— “ First, to examine your lives and conversations by the rule of God’s commandments ; and whereinsoever ye shall perceive yourselves to have offended either by will, word or deed, there to bewail your own sinfulness, and to confess yourselves to Almighty God, with full purpose of amendment of life. And if ye shall perceive your offenses to be such as are not only against God, but also against your

neighbors ; then ye shall reconcile yourselves unto them, being ready to make restitution and satisfaction, according to the uttermost of your powers, for all injuries and wrongs done by you to any other; and being likewise ready to forgive others who have offended you, as ye would have forgiveness of your offenses at God's hand."

With regard to *Self-Examination*, consider not only your *past life*, but also your *present state* before God, the real condition of your soul in His sight : consider the *graces* and *virtues* that should adorn it, as well as the *vices* that actually disfigure it. Be *definite* in your examination and in all your repentance.

"I so run, not as uncertainly : so

fight I, not as one that beateth the air," said the Apostle (1 Cor. ix, 26). Many of those who are really trying to serve God would have to say of themselves if they truly described their manner of struggle, "I run indeed but very uncertainly" — not keeping in view the goal to be reached, and stretching continually toward it, with no particular virtue that I am striving for, no definite standard before me; "so fight I just like one that beateth the air," spending my strength in vain because I do not clearly see the enemy with whom I have to contend, and against whom I ought to direct my blows. Find out your *besetting sin* or sins, the faults into which you most commonly fall, that are at the root of most evil in your life, the

habits that more particularly hinder and mar your Christian life. Set yourself during Lent in good earnest to combat these. Concentrate the force of your prayers, your self-denials, your sacraments upon these strongholds of the enemy within you.

What evil habit, ask yourself, am I specially to grapple with this Lent? What virtue in particular am I to cultivate?

The Seven Capital Sins (so called because under one or other of these heads of evil all possible sins whether of thought, word, or deed, can be classified) are sometimes more helpful than the Ten Commandments as an outline for self-examination, because we are thus enabled to trace the *symptoms of evil* (condemned by God's commands)

to the *roots of evil* from which they spring. *Pride, Envy, Anger*, are more especially the works of the devil ; *Covetousness*, the worldly sin ; and *Lust, Gluttony, Sloth*, the sins of the flesh. The capital sins are the development of the three-fold root of evil, the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye, and the pride of life, which draw away from the love of God (1 St. John ii, 16).

The knowledge of our sins must be followed by a humble *Confession* of them before Almighty God, with a true sorrow for the offence we have thereby committed against Him, and a sincere purpose of amendment. There can hardly be a better form of confession, if one be needed, than the General Confession in the service for Holy Communion, if we say it in the sin-

gular number, slowly, and pausing at the end of each clause, to recall our own special transgressions, and to let the words we repeat find a real echo in our hearts.

Concerning the special further confession of our sins to God in the presence of His Priest, the exhortation which has been already quoted thus concludes: "Because it is requisite that no man should come to the Holy Communion, but with a full trust in God's mercy, and with a quiet conscience, therefore, if there be any of you, who by this means [of private personal repentance] can not quiet his own conscience herein, but requireth further comfort or counsel, let him come to me [the Parish Priest] or to some other minister of God's Word,

and open his grief ; that he may receive such godly counsel and advice as may tend to the quieting of his conscience and the removing of all scruple and doubtfulness."

Let none whose consciences are troubled, either with the burden of past sin or with evil habits from which they find themselves unable to break free, shrink from seeking the help and assistance of those whom (as Richard Hooker puts it) "our Lord Jesus Christ hath left in His Church to be spiritual and ghostly physicians, the guides and pastors of redeemed souls, whose office doth not only consist in general persuasions unto amendment of life, but also in the private, particular cure of diseased minds."

The bringing home to the individ-

ual soul of God's pardoning word may be of unspeakable comfort to the penitent, while the personal guidance of one accustomed to deal with spiritual things may be of great value to a soul in struggling against temptations.

Among "works of repentance" by no means forget the necessity of reparation for wrong done and of the forgiveness of injuries suffered, if we are to be ourselves at peace with God. Take care that you incur not the rebuke of the prophet, "Behold, ye fast for strife and debate, and to smite with the fist of wickedness" (Isa. lviii, 4). Put away (in Lent) the leaven of malice and wickedness that you may celebrate the Paschal feast with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth (1 Cor. v, 8).

THE TIME FOR ACTION.

THE RT. REV. FRANK R. MILLSPAUGH, D.D.
Bishop of Kansas.

- LENT is an appointed battle ground.
- Halt! Right-about face! Forward, march! cries the Captain of our Salvation to the soldiers of the cross. Some by the influence of numbers have been led to march with the legions of the evil one. The world and the flesh are exciting. The food in the haversack, put there by the Captain's orders, has been wanted. Truth

no longer girds the loins. The breastplate of righteousness has been laid aside. The feet bathed have become soiled and allowed to so remain. The shield of faith is carried as an ornament and the fiery darts of the wicked are penetrating to the heart. The Sword of the Spirit is left hanging by the side. The standing orders, watch and pray, are forgotten. Halt! Right-about face! Forward, march! comes the cry of the Captain of our Salvation.

WHAT IS THE USE OF LENT?

[For the Children.]

THE RT. REV. LEWIS W. BURTON, D.D.,
Bishop of Lexington.

YOU do not mean to ask a question. Your feeling is that there is no good reason why you should keep Lent.

The other day I saw a man, standing in a store window, going through all sorts of foolish-looking motions. He was advertising a machine for exercising the body. Now, what's the use of a gymnasium? What's the

good of drawing yourself up by your arms till your chin can reach above the pole or the rings, or beating away at a hanging bag, so that your hands are blistered and your muscles are sore? I'll tell you. The gymnasium turns out men like General Lawton, with a body that can stand more rough living than an Indian. It made Bishop Whipple wiry and strong, so that, when a crazy student was about to shoot him in Church, the Bishop knew just how to jump on him and was able to pin him down till the lunatic could be arrested.

Lent is a sort of gymnasium for character. It trains the will. It makes us morally strong. In Lent we do without some things we like and which in other seasons we might properly

enjoy ; and the practice makes us able to say "No" to some things we like and ought not to have. In the store window is some candy ; in your mouth is a "sweet tooth" watering for it ; in your pocket is money to pay for the sugar-plums. But you have made up your mind to do without candy in Lent. So you pass on and give your nickle to the Sunday-school or the Church, that it may do good to other children than yourself. Every time you do that you are getting more and more control over yourself and growing in the habit of unselfishness. When you grow up you may have to face some great temptation ; or some chance to do a nobly generous deed will come to you. What will make you a hero or a saint, when other men

or women are weak and fail, is the gymnasium you put your soul through in what you will then feel were the dear old Lents of your childhood.

This is what the Collect for the first Sunday in Lent means.

LENT, A SPIRITUAL OPPORTUNITY.

THE RT. REV. HENRY Y. SATTERLEE, D.D.,
Bishop of Washington.

IF you open the Book of Common Prayer you will find at the beginning (in the table of Fasts, before the Order for "Daily Morning Prayer") that the forty days of Lent are described as a time of fasting

"On which the Church requires such a measure of abstinence as is more especially suited to extraordinary acts and exercises of devotion."

The authority of the Church means here, of course, the authority of centuries of Christian experience. Untold generations of believers have discovered that the keeping a season of retirement from the world, when one can walk with God, undistracted by worldly engagements, is a great spiritual opportunity. In the process of a distinctly religious evolution, this Lenten Fast has gradually grown to be a regular season of the Christian year. Its devout observance has been proved to be a strong spiritual safeguard to myriads of believers. The weight of this testimony, from generation after generation, has been so convincing that the Church is moved to speak authoritatively, and, in her Prayer Book, she solemnly "*requires*" a

conscientious observance of Lent among all those with whom her voice has any influence.

Observe, however, that in so doing the Church appeals to our reason and our conscience. She does not prescribe fasting for the mere sake of fasting, but as a means to an end. Neither does she give any set rules regarding the way in which the Lenten Fast is to be observed. All this is left by her to our own consciences. She simply calls upon us to practice "such a measure of abstinence" as, in our own judgment, "is suited to extraordinary acts and exercises of devotion."

This is the New Testament way. Christ in the Gospels lays down no rules for holy living ; He simply sets forth the principles on which His re-

ligion is founded, and the conditions under which, alone, growth in grace and the knowledge of Him are possible.

When Christ said, "If any man will come after Me let him take up his cross and deny himself and follow Me," He plainly indicated that following Him necessitated a life of self-denial and self-discipline. He stopped there, for He *trusted human nature* to carry out the spirit of His command. Allegiance to Christ means far more than formal obedience to set rules. Love—love for Christ—is the fulfilling of the law. He knew the power of His Gospel over loyal hearts. He knew that there were divine instincts within us which would respond to His Voice; He depended upon that response; and was aware that this faculty or ability

to respond would awaken in every true soul a corresponding sense of responsibility.

This season of Lent comes to us as a divine call to stop and think, in all honesty, whether we are loyally discharging this responsibility which the Lord has laid upon us. We are called upon to retire for a season from the world that we may view how the world looks from the outside and that we may learn the life lessons our Lord Himself would teach us.

There is one such life lesson which we ought especially to ponder. *The gravest danger which assails all modern society is the lack of the sense of personal responsibility.* Irresponsibility is the growing evil of the times. Christian people should be on their

guard against a thoughtless, careless, aimless routine of mere pleasure-seeking, for it opens the door to evils which, by and by, fasten themselves persistently, and often permanently, upon a community, before their true nature is realized. The power of wealth, for example, brings with it in these days an abnormal power of social influence. Through the multiplication of seductive occasions for pleasure, it is often used as a handle to overthrow the moral safeguards of a community. It likewise becomes a bribe, for which weak characters will barter not only their birthright, but also their conscience and their Christian principle. At first only the weakest and the most worldly yield ; then others regard it as narrow-minded to hold aloof ; then

social influences rise like a great flood and completely submerge Christian influences ; then the whole moral tone of the community is lowered ; then those who have means, but not morality, flock from all sides to take advantage of the situation.

Christ says that His disciples are to be *in* the world, but not *of* the world ; that they, in that state of life in which it has pleased God to call them, are to be "the light of the world," "the salt of the earth," the leaven which "leaveneth the whole lump." Wherever we go, and whatever we do, our influence, first, last and always, is to be for Christ. We are distinctly warned not to "*let our good be evil spoken of.*" If it is hard for us all to stand firmly against social influences which

are contrary to Christ and the spirit of His religion, it is much more difficult to do so, and requires real moral courage in us, when considerations of personal friendship become involved. It is then that we must fall back upon our sense of personal responsibility ; and whichever way we decide we must count the cost and face the consequences ; the alternative is forced upon us of either sacrificing personal friendship, on the one hand, or else of sacrificing Jesus Christ and our religious convictions on the other. It is hard to decide rightly and wisely ; yet, in taking a stand for Christ, we should never forget that, in reality, we are at the same time the best and truest friends of those who are most offended and alienated by that stand.

We must not be afraid to say "No" to anything which clashes with our Christian principle : we must dare to refuse all social engagements which seem inconsistent with the season of Lent or our sincerity as Christ's followers ; and we must resolutely separate ourselves and our families from those associations which tend to destroy purity of character, to lower the tone of society, or to impair the security and sanctity of family life.

THE PURPOSE OF LENT.

THE RT. REV.

CHAUNCEY B. BREWSTER, D.D.,

Bishop of Connecticut.

LENT is a time to augment force of character, to exercise, and so invigorate the moral fibre; to cultivate the power of choice, of making efforts, of quiet persistence. It is a time to see whether we have any real purposes, a time to confirm vague wishes we were better into definiteness of purpose to be better, to set ourselves, by force of resolve, moving in the direction of good,

to exercise the will manfully, to practice self-discipline, to learn at the first solicitation of temptation to bring down the will as with the weight of iron to settle the matter, to learn to choose "yes," as duty shall demand, thus to drill self in decision and power to act, and commit our will to *do* the will of God.

Such effort will reveal short-comings and faults enough. Lent is a time to face the fact of sin, not merely sin in general, nor the sins of others, but one's own sins in particular; and to deal with them in a definite way, to find them out, to confess them, and to make them matters of especial prayer and watching and endeavor for amendment. It were a Lent surely not in vain if even one sin might be thus re-

pented of, the bonds of one bad habit broken, the power of one deadly fault overcome.

The root of sin is selfishness. The great business of Lent is self-denial. If you have sunk to, or never risen above, low levels of character, possibly it is because of some lack of the severe in your life. That note of severity was never absent from the perfect music of the life of Christ. If you would beat your music out, there must be that note, stern and distinct, of self-denial. Hard knocks of circumstance force it out of some lives. It can be struck in any life. And where it is not, the life fails of its best. That you can live in luxury need not, must not, make you luxurious. Amid surroundings of comfort one must take

the more heed, not to slip and slide softly down, and become worse because weaker.

For such heed, Lent offers opportunity, opportunity to be severely stern with self, somehow to endure hardness, to cultivate by exercise a robust hardihood, and, at the cost of whatsoever trouble and pains, enter into the secret of the Cross.

Thus Lent comes to put our discipleship to the test. It is a time for that discipline which means a kind of discipling. Anew we become disciples, scholars, to learn of Him who said: "Whosoever doth not bear his own cross and come after me, can not be my disciple."

The denial is not an end in itself. The further from self, the nearer to

God, and in God one's true self found.

Lent is a time of gracious opportunity. Seek the Lord while he is near. The season calls you to seek him in sacrament and prayer. Let your response be to yield yourself to the thrill of that noblest of aspirations: "Nearer, my God, to Thee, nearer to Thee."

LENT A TIME FOR SELF-CON- SECRATION.

THE RT. REV.

JUNIUS M. HORNER, D. D.,
Bishop of Asheville.

WE live in an age of such rush and turmoil that it seems a necessity that we have a season of retirement in order that we may make preparation to live as becomes the children of Our Father in Heaven. The time set apart by the Church for fast and prayer must not be looked upon as an end in itself, but

rather as a time in which to make spiritual preparation to meet the temptations of the world. After our Lord's fast of forty days, He was tempted of the Devil.

There is a sore temptation that comes upon many, to feel, after a Lent spent in almost constant communion with heavenly beings, and in contemplation of heavenly themes, that a license is thereby won to indulge in an otherwise forbidden pleasure. We see the tendency to this kind of feeling show itself in the preparation for, and indulgence in, worldly amusements that are crowded into the few days immediately following the Easter festivities. This tendency should be avoided by Church people, if for no higher reason than

at least because it brings reproach upon the Church. Give not the enemy an occasion to blaspheme.

David gives us an example of a beautiful spirit of self-consecration in his prayer for cleansing that should be imitated in our lenten devotions, and in our efforts after purity of thought and action :

“Make me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me. Then shall I teach Thy ways unto the wicked: and sinners shall be converted unto Thee.”

This should be our constant aim in all efforts after holiness of life, that we may be the more efficient in the Master's service.

If we keep constantly in view that for which we wish to discipline our-

selves, namely, the better to do the work committed to us by our God, the Holy Season of Lent will most probably prove a profitable one.

LENT IS A SPIRITUAL NECESSITY.

THE RT. REV. WM. HALL MORELAND, D.D.,
Bishop of Sacramento.

THERE are sad anniversaries in everyone's life. There are days when you deny yourself to visitors and do not come down to meals. Why? Could we look into the privacy of your chamber we would know the reason. Before you is the picture of a dear face, in your heart the memory of a beautiful life, in your ears the sound of a

voice now stilled. It is the anniversary of a loved one's death. Your spirit is subdued and there are tears upon your cheek. Each of these days is like a little Lent. If you enter with the right spirit into such sacred seasons you will come out of them with a blessing. The spirit of Lent is devotion to a person. You are brought very near to the suffering Saviour. As you have kept the glad, bright anniversaries of His life—Christmas, Epiphany, Easter—so you enter into the days of His Temptation, Passion and Death. Our reason for keeping Lent is because we are Christians. It would be strange and unnatural not to keep it. It would be a poor love for Christ which can rejoice with Him, but which can not suffer and die with Him.

This explains why the Churchman who really loves Christ does not attend social festivities and theatres in Lent. Would you go to a ball on the anniversary of your mother's death? To do so would not be a sin, but the very thought shocks you as of an act incongruous and heartless. Therefore when the Christian is missed from his usual haunts in society during Lent, let the reason be understood. He is in mourning for his Lord. It is a sacred time for him. He can have no heart for the gayeties and frivolities of life, however innocent, while one dearer to him than all the earth beside is treading the wine-press of agony alone. The Christian and Christ are one. Therefore Lent is a spiritual necessity.

DAILY LENTEN SERVICES AND
HOME READINGS OF THE
SCRIPTURES.

THE RT. REV. SAMUEL COOK EDSALL, D.D.,
Bishop of Minnesota.

Two of the most noticeable defects in the religious life of our time are absenteeism from divine service and neglect of the Bible. To these two causes can be traced much of the ignorance of religious truth and much of the indifference to spiritual things which curse society. The man who

gets into the habit of staying away from church and of neglecting the Holy Communion need not be surprised if the spiritual side of his nature becomes dwarfed or atrophied. The longer he stays away, or the more irregular his attendance becomes, the harder is it for him to experience a genuine and reverent interest in the Church service. The spirit is quenched. At last he becomes hardened into an unconsciousness of his soul's need. That there exists a widespread ignorance of the Holy Scriptures, even among Christian people, is lamentably obvious. At a literary club in one of our cities, the women were suddenly asked to name the Twelve Apostles. Most of the answers started off with "Matthew, Mark, Luke and John," ignoring the

fact that two of the Evangelists were not Apostles. One such typical instance may suffice.

Among the purposes of the Lenten Season should be, first, the search for what is amiss in our religious life, and second, the effort to correct and amend. A practical use of Lent for very many people would be to take it as a time for correcting these two faults. Make of it a time when we can renew by frequent practice the habit of church-going. Make of it a time when we can renew and refresh both our intellectual and devotional acquaintance with Holy Scripture. Privileged is the man or woman who lives in a parish where Morning and Evening Prayer are said daily during Lent, with the Litany on its appointed days ; and

where there are frequent opportunities for receiving the Holy Communion. The comparatively short services, interspersed at different hours of morning, afternoon and evening, will make it possible for many a busy and world-weary man or woman to gain at least some hour or hours during the week, when, in the silence of the temple, they can kneel in self-examination, can ask God to help them know their faults and give them true repentance, can pour forth their souls in confession, prayer and Litany, can listen to the words as they come from lectern and pulpit. It is well, then, for a priest to give his people these frequent opportunities, and not to be discouraged because the attendance is small. It is well for the parishioner

to make some definite resolve to avail himself of as many of these opportunities for church-going as his circumstances may permit.

• But how about the little parishes and missions where they can not have daily services? How about the scattered sheep in the wilderness, who are many miles away from any church? How about those who are kept at home by sickness or are otherwise "let and hindered"? Well, all of these can, if they but will, share in these privileges, and at the same time increase their knowledge of Holy Scripture. Let them, in some quiet half hour at night or morning, or both, take their Prayer Books, carefully read through the appointed service for morning or evening, as the case may

be, and in particular give a thorough devotional reading to the appointed lessons from Holy Scripture for that day. It will do them good to learn to find their places in Prayer Book and Bible. And it may help them to know that in their quiet solitude, in their effort to use their Lent aright, they are joining in the very words of a service which is being said that day all around the world.

LENT: A SEASON FOR PRAYER
AGAINST SIN.

THE RT. REV. JAMES B. FUNSTEN,
Bishop of Boise.

THE mystery of sin we can not understand, but the evidences of it abound within our hearts and in the world around us. Unhappily, however, we are too often blinded to the true nature of sin. Like the syrens of old, sins are by their deceitful allurements destroying many who all the time are unconscious of any real dan-

ger. The Bible speaks of sin in plain terms and unveils its hideousness. Modern literature throws a glamour over sin and describes it in terms that rather excuse than condemn it. Let us turn to God's Word for our definition. There we find it described as blindness, debt, sickness, crime, leprosy, corruption, shame, trouble, slavery, the way of death, works of the Devil, enmity to God, separation from God and light. The whole story of the Cross, the beautiful life and death of Christ get their mighty force and meaning from the fact that sin was so dreadful and so far-reaching in its destructive effects that in order that men might be redeemed "God gave His only begotten Son that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish

but have everlasting life." The Cross of Christ which shines so brightly for the redeemed casts a dark shadow on the sin that defies God's will. The realization of sin's true nature and effect comes from the Holy Ghost.

Well may we pray this Lent of 1902 as we never prayed before, "Search me, O God, and know my heart : try me and know my thoughts : and see if there be any way of wickedness in me and lead me in the way everlasting." This may bring us to lay hold of those blessed words of our Communion office, "This is a faithful saying and worthy of all acceptance that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners."

THE OBSERVANCE OF LENT.

THE RT. REV. JOSEPH M. FRANCIS, D.D.,
Bishop of Indiana.

LENT is an opportunity provided for us by the Church, during which, to use another's words, we are to "sacrifice the lower for the sake of the higher self." This is to be done, and can only be done, by self-denial. The opportunity is one which we can not neglect or misuse without serious and lasting loss.

First, then, I put the sacred and

weighty obligation which rests upon us to endeavor to use and observe Lent for the purpose for which it has been set apart by the Church in loving imitation of our blessed Lord.

Secondly, I would urge you to consider the spiritual benefit which results from a Lent well kept. The crying need which we all feel in the midst of our busy and strenuous lives is the need of time for thought. "Get time to think" was the exhortation of the great Saint Bernard; "get time to think" is my exhortation to you at this time. How great an advance may be made if only we use the forty days of Lent for careful thought about God and about our souls! In order to do this it is necessary that we have a rule by which we may live day by day.

Additional opportunities of grace will be given in your Parish Churches; there will be special services, more frequent celebrations of the Holy Communion, instructions, meditations and the like. Make a rule for yourselves before Lent begins concerning your attendance at these services, and also make a rule for your private life, as to your prayers, your reading and study of God's words, your self-denial, your work for others. Withdraw so far as possible from the world in order that you may cultivate God's presence. He speaks to those who listen for His voice; He comes to those who are waiting for His coming. Make rule, then, and make it simple. Do not try to do more than you can reasonably expect to be able to perform, but make

it a rule which will require self-denial, the sacrifice of the lower for the sake of the higher self. The three great duties of life are Prayer, Fasting and Almsgiving. Your rule, to be of value, must include all three. It is for each one to determine how strict his rule shall be, to determine between God and his own soul.

Then, finally, let me warn you against a use of Lent which is utterly useless. Many use this season as a time when they do their religious duties for the year. Constant services, frequent communions, much parish work mark the season, and when Lent is over they go back to the world and to their forgetfulness of God and to their disregard of the rules of the Church as if Lent had never been. Such a Lent

can bring no blessing. The object in self-denial is self-discipline. By surrendering what is in itself lawful we discipline our desires so that when a temptation comes to do that which is unlawful we may be strong to resist and overcome. Each Lent should find us further advanced on our road towards God. Each Lent should mark a higher level of spiritual life. Each Lent should find us better equipped, when it is over, to keep our baptismal vow, to fight manfully under Christ's banner against sin, the world, and the devil, and to continue His faithful soldier and servant to our life's end.

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