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Canadian Churchman

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The Christian Year

The Twenty-second Sunday After Trinity,
November 4th, 1917.

In the Gospel for to-day we have a story told by the Master about the doctrine of the forgiveness of sins. There are two great facts in the story.

1. *The Source of Forgiveness.* A man was brought before his King, a debtor owing a debt so great that even should his wife and children and all that he had be sold it would not begin to pay the debt. And in the story he is freed by the King. On what grounds—that he promise to repay? What could a penniless bankrupt do with a debt of ten thousand talents? No, on the ground that he cried for mercy. "Then the Lord of that servant was moved with compassion, and loosed him, and forgave him the debt." The source of forgiveness is the compassion of God. It is a free gift of God. We can do nothing to earn it. We can only cry for mercy, and at once from the reservoirs of God's infinite compassion there flows into our hearts the healing stream called the Forgiveness of sins. This is one of the great facts of the Christian doctrine of the Forgiveness of sins. Forgiveness has its origin not in our merits, but in the compassionate Heart of God. Neither is forgiveness a question of feeling. If we have repented and asked pardon through Him, Who has won the pardon, even through Him, upon Whom God has laid "the iniquity of us all," we are forgiven. It is not a matter of feeling; it is a matter of fact. It is an article of faith—"I believe in the forgiveness of sins." "Christ has secured the forgiveness of sins for the whole human family, for each individual member of that family, who by faith and repentance makes it his own."

2. *Our duty to our neighbours.* So far we have been thinking only of the first part of the parable in the Gospel. There is a second part. The forgiven man went from the King's presence—free from the awful load, through the compassion of the King;—"and found one of his fellow-servants, which owed him an hundred pence; and he laid hands on him, and took him by the throat, saying, Pay me that thou owest. And his fellow-servant fell down at his feet, and besought him, saying, Have patience with me, and I will pay thee all. And he would not; but went and cast him into prison, till he should pay the debt." He is brought back, the forgiveness is cancelled, and the whole impossible debt is pressing once more upon his shoulders. Why? The doctrine of forgiveness has been called "Christ's most striking innovation in morality." And one of the most striking phases of His teaching is that man's continuance in the blessing of forgiveness depends, in part, upon his treatment of his brother man. You have to treat your neighbour with compassion if you wish to walk with the benefits of the Father's compassion upon you. He taught us to say not merely, "Forgive us our trespasses," but "Forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us."

The golden moments in the stream of life rush past us, and we see nothing but sand; the angels come to visit us, and we only know them when they are gone.—George Eliot.

Editorial

THE CHURCH AND THE RETURNED MEN.

At a joint meeting of the Executives of the M.S.C.C. and Council for Social Service, held last week, it was decided to make a grant of one thousand dollars to enable the Archbishop of Nova Scotia to employ a Chaplain at Halifax to look after Anglicans among returned soldiers landing at that port. One Chaplain is already at work at Quebec, the Rev. Christopher Reed, but in view of the fact that many men will be detained for a considerable period of time at Halifax, after landing, it is felt that a second man is needed. These two Chaplains, together with the Rev. M. Latouche Thompson, Immigration Chaplain, who will spend considerable time at St. John, N.B., will place that portion of the work in a very satisfactory condition. A card system has been introduced, along the lines of that employed in connection with immigration work, and the names of all returning men, members of the Church of England, are being forwarded regularly to the various Hospital Units, to clergy appointed by the Bishops to receive them. These cards are then forwarded to the clergy who are appointed by the Bishops to supervise the work in the different hospitals or in the case of discharged men, to the clergy of the parishes to which the men have gone. Thus a good beginning has been made, but we still feel that the ultimate magnitude of the work has not been grasped and the inadequacy of ordinary diocesan and parochial machinery to deal with it. It seems unreasonable to expect, for example, the rector of a large parish in the city of Toronto to look after his regular duties and also do anything in the way of individual work among the Anglican portion of over four hundred men in a hospital situated in his parish, or in the case of Whitby, in the same diocese, in a hospital to provide for 1,200 cases situated some two miles from the parish Church.

We are in receipt of the latest report of the Military Hospitals Commission, which, unfortunately, is not quite up-to-date, as it deals with the situation previous to June last. The figures in it are, however, of considerable value in giving an idea of the present dimensions and probable future dimensions of this work. There were at the time the report was issued, "57 institutions operated directly by or for the Commission," besides 37 others where accommodation was available or where men could be sent for active treatment. These numbers do not include hospitals for insane. These institutions and those under construction provide accommodation for 14,949 men. The number of returned men to the end of March last was 13,826, and the number of returned invalids up to May 8th was 6,515. The estimated rate at which men will continue to return is from 1,200 to 1,500 per month, based on previous experience. For the management of this work a civil body, known as the Military Hospitals Commission, was appointed which has divided Canada into ten Command Units. Of the total accommodation referred to above, over one-third is in Unit D, beginning at a line west of Cobourg and extending west to Kitchener, or, roughly, the dioceses of Toronto and Niagara. In the diocese of Toronto alone,

including Cobourg of Unit C, accommodation was being provided for 3,901 patients.

So much for numbers. The above Commission, is not, however, confining its attention to these matters alone, but is considering already the questions of employment, immigration, and protection of the rights of soldiers, which will have to be dealt with after the war is over and the thousands of men who return, some disabled and some sound physically, some better men, some worse, all more or less changed as the result of their experiences, have to be restored to civil life. These are the considerations that have compelled us to insist in these columns on something more than ordinary machinery on the part of the Church. There is an extraordinary situation facing the Church and it will require something extraordinary in dealing with it. We have insisted and still insist that co-ordination of the whole work is necessary and the appointment of some one man, the strongest man that can be secured, possibly one of our Bishops, to study, advise and direct regarding the work. The Government realized that something more than ordinary was needed to care for these men physically and surely the Church does not put their spiritual needs on a lower plane.

In the Canadian Churchman of October 4th we reprinted from "Church Work" a summary of suggested changes in the Prayer Book drawn up by Canon Vroom, of Windsor, N.S. Unfortunately it was stated that these changes had been agreed to by the General Synod. This was a mistake, as we find that they were merely suggestions made by Canon Vroom personally. We regret this exceedingly and trust that our readers will assist us in rectifying the error.

The Bishop of Fredericton, Rt. Rev. J. A. Richardson, has been asked by the Canadian House of Bishops "to go overseas to inspect the Canadian forces with a view to making more effective the work of the Church on their behalf." It will be remembered that it was decided at Ottawa to issue an appeal for \$15,000 for the Overseas Chaplains' Work, and to ask one of the Bishops to visit the Canadian forces at the front. We feel certain that this step will meet with the hearty approval of the members of the Church and we trust that the financial response will be such as to justify even greater efforts in this direction. Let us see to it that we leave no room for vain regrets after the war is over.

The visit of the Western Bishops to Eastern Canada cannot fail to result in greater and more intelligent interest in the work of the Church in our Canadian mission field. The Church in Western Canada has suffered severely on account of the war, not only financially but in the supply of clergy and laity. A large percentage of the Church's man power in that part of Canada left for the front early in the war and the whole Church must see to it that the work they left behind is not allowed to die in any place as the result of their loyalty. We have pointed out before this, the necessity of keeping the work alive for the sake not only of the men who have gone, but also of the wives and children who are left. Moreover, the ground already won should, if at all possible, be held for the sake of the future.

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