

Church Life and the Tithe.

(Written for the CAMPAIGNER.)

I.

"Wesley Chapel," Cincinnati, Ohio, U.S.A., is one of the three "down-town" churches, but it is by no means a "down" church. Instead of presenting a "problem" it answers a question, and, instead of having a past, more or less golden, it has a future because it has a present.

Located on East Fifth Street, near the famous horse-markets, and almost in the shadow of Saint Xavier's (Catholic) Church, its environment would seem to be inimical to success, and yet, under the pastorate of the Rev. J. W. Maguder, it acquired wide influence among the working men of the city; and, under the ministry of the Rev. Gervaise Roughton, its services, both on Sunday and on Wednesday evening, are well attended and conversions are frequent and "old-fashioned."

II.

Mr. Maguder's specialty, if he had a specialty, was sociology. He had studied the Labor Question very thoroughly and had so completely identified himself with exploited labor as to excite suspicions as to his loyalty to "vested interests" and "existing institutions." Indeed, he was pronounced a "Socialist" but he was never a Socialist of the red flag; he was not, and is not, an anarchist. Judicious advertising kept him prominently before the public, and communication with labor unions created a certain degree of popularity among the "masses." It was in "Wesley Chapel" that Demarest Lloyd delivered his splendid lecture on "William Morris."

So thoroughly had Maguder's ministry become identified with "Wesley" that the repeal of the time-limit was proposed; but the appointing power operated remorselessly and Mr. Maguder was succeeded by Gervaise Roughton.

Mr. Roughton is a different type. He probably knows nothing of sociology and has not identified himself in any special way with workingmen and the labor movement and yet he has held Maguder's congregations plus a very fair increase. Of course, there is no crush, and Toronto Methodists would consider the audience very small when compared with their own large audiences. But Cincinnati is a different and difficult field. It is German and Catholic and its dominant industry is "brewing." Nineteen hundred and ninety-seven saloons crowd its thoroughfares and drive out groceries, bookstores and bakeries. This makes church-life an extremely hard problem.

III.

Trinity and Saint Paul's, though in better localities, are not flourishing, while Wesley thrives. It may be said that Gervaise Roughton, who is a very unique personality and a "revivalist," accounts for the audience and the success. But he had served two very difficult fields farther down town, and had met these conditions of failure. Some quality in the man, however, won the attention of Wesley Chapel leaders, and he was appointed to the pulpit vacated by Mr. Maguder.

Personality counts for very much in the pulpit; but it does not account for everything. There is a church-life which must be developed according to fundamental spiritual laws or faith or the pulpit will fail—its personality will be wholly discounted by a church which has not apprehended the essential principles of growth and power.

Wesley Chapel had apprehended these principles, and, in the unit of its organization, had performed the high act of faith, which makes the church the sure medium of spiritual energy for revival and edification—that is to say, she had tithed her income. *And she had removed her "debt."* For Wesley had a "debt," the history of which was a horror, and an open sewer of foul air and filthy water. Dissensions had arisen, and discords had been produced, until "Wesley Chapel" had become a synonym of church trouble.

Then the tithing idea was embodied in the financial system and the debt with its horrible accessories was paid.

IV.

Perhaps this end might have been reached by other methods. As a matter of fact, the new method (or rather the old method) was pursued, and the revival occurred under the influence of an act which, as much as the observance of the Sabbath, *involves faith in God.*

Nothing, perhaps, is more profoundly significant of faith in God than the dedication of the tenth part of net income to the higher service of men. It implies a consciousness of the personal existence of God which not even Sabbath observance implies, unless under the immediate dominance of Moses and the "covenant idea." No one can keep a money account with God Almighty, Omniscient and Omnipotent, without a sense of personal relationship and responsibility which calls into play all the faculties that act in business. The tither will be honest with God. He will act always as under the all-seeing Eye, and he will habitually scan his life for manifestations of Providence. More than any other Christian, he will discern the interpositions of God, and he will pray more fervently than the non tither because he has trusted implicitly, and because he has acquired the most *real sense of the immediate presence of the God with whom he has to do.*

Tithing accentuates the doctrines of the divine existence and affords a medium of persistent, incessant exercise of faith. It coincides with Sabbath observance, not only in principle, but also in process, for the tithe should be paid on the Sabbath, or set apart for future demands.

V.

A tenth of dollars—a seventh of days. That is the secret of church life. It is the key to the most vigorous activity of the congregation.

Wesley Chapel ranks first among Methodist churches in Cincinnati because she holds the key and knows the secret. She fulfils the conditions, and though a critic may demand some things that she does not give, she is true to the tithe-duty and the God of the tithe is true to her.

GEORGE M. HAMMILL, D.D.

Cincinnati, O., August, 1898.

Pay What Thou Owest.

Perhaps there is no other of the commandments upon which we as Epworth Leaguers pride ourselves upon keeping so strictly as "Thou shalt not steal." Surely such pride, if true, is pardonable. If we are in business by ourselves we are careful to remunerate those employed by us, in the manner agreed upon when they entered our employ. In doing so we do not for one moment think that we are doing anything more than being simply honest. If we are