

THE BISHOP OF ALGOMA'S LENTEN PASTORAL.

My Dear Brethren in the Lord,

The season of Lent is at hand. Let me entreat you to make a right use of its opportunities.

The Church's mind upon the subject is abundantly clear. She enjoins us year by year in view of the Blessed Master's example to set apart, by retirement from the engrossing cares and pleasures of the world, the forty days of Lent, as days of special prayer and fasting. In doing this she bids us seek a more complete self-mastery, and a closer walk with God. That it is the duty of Churchmen everywhere to obey this injunction, there ought to be no doubt or question whatsoever. True loyalty to the Lord should involve obedience to the Church which He has founded and through which He deigns to manifest Himself to men.

That it is our wisdom as well as our duty, a very little reflection should serve to teach us. Who does not know something of the deadening influence of the world and its business and its pleasures? Who among us has not deplored the fatal ease with which ardent enthusiasm may be turned into cold indifference in the service of the Lord? Revivals, evangelistic efforts, weeks of prayer and self-denial, parochial missions—all bear witness to the need of an occasional rousing of the spiritual man. It is no new discovery. The Church has known it all through the ages and has made provision with her usual wisdom. Lent is her annual season of refreshing; her ever recurring attempt to shake herself loose from the trammels of worldliness and sin; her effort year by year to fan into a brighter flame the fire of devotion which burns within the hearts of her people.

But surely at such a time as this, it is in a special sense our duty and our wisdom to observe and profit by the appointments of Lent.

Our Diocese is passing through an unusual experience of trial. We are in straightened places financially, and know not where to turn for help. How can we fail to find in the season of Lent a blessed opportunity of relief? It suggests that when we are in doubt where to turn, we may always turn with confidence to God. It offers itself as a glorious opportunity of laying our cares before the Supreme Disposer of men and things, and we should as a Diocese be quick to avail ourselves of it, believing that as we humble ourselves before our Heavenly Father He will comfort us and show us at least the direction in which we ought to go.

In every parish I trust there will be, (1) if

not daily, at least some special week day services throughout the season of Lent, (2) some self-denial and giving of the result to the Mission Fund, (3) on the Second Sunday in Lent an offertory on behalf of the Mission Sustentation Fund, (4) a more general and frequent observance of the Holy Communion, (5) at every service the offering of the following prayer:

O LORD JESUS CHRIST, who didst charge Thine apostles to preach the Gospel to every nation, prosper, we pray Thee, all missions in every part of the world, but especially this Missionary Diocese of Algoma. Grant us whatever may be needful for our work. Pardon our shortcomings. Give us greater zeal for Thy glory. Make us more ready and more diligent, by our prayers, by our alms, and by our examples to spread abroad the knowledge of Thy Truth, and by Thy merciful guidance lead us safely through all our trials and dangers and use us for the quickening of many souls through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

And (6) let Holy Week be a week of special self-abasement and humble following of the Blessed Master through all the bitter details of His final suffering and death.

So may we hope to catch more of His spirit and look forward to an Easter full of blessings and big with the promise of still greater days to come.

GEORGE ALGOMA.

THE MESSAGE.

On a quiet summer evening, when my heart was oppressed with care,
I turned my wandering footsteps, and entered the house of prayer;
Long had I craved a blessing that to me was still denied,
And I grieved that loved ones wandered afar from the Father's side.

'Twas the hour of the vesper service, the people were gathered there,
And the words of the evening Psalter came soft on the summer air;
"I should utterly have fainted, but that I verily Believed in the land of the living, the goodness of God to see."

"Oh tarry thou the Lord's leisure," came the people's answering word,
"Be strong, He thy heart shall comfort, and put thy trust in the Lord."
And all through the rest of the service, through lesson, Creed and prayer,
Like some sweet strain of music the cadence lingered there.

My heart and voice, in triumph, were raised in the closing hymn,
And I knelt for the benediction in the quiet shadow dim,
My heart was freed from its burden, and I thanked the Father there,
For the message of comfort sent me, that night, in His house of prayer.