

ism in science. A recent utterance of his states this point with remarkable force:—

All the splendour of the external successes of civilization cannot hide the fact that it does not satisfy the whole man, with his inner needs; and that the amelioration of the world around us which it has accomplished does not compensate for the inner emptiness of its excessive concentration of effort on the visible world, its secularization of life.

This is decidedly encouraging, and indicates what Professor Eucken is pressing home in a variety of ways, that our present social and moral civilization fails to meet the deepest needs of humanity. And yet it is curious that side by side with these frank confessions Eucken is unable to accept orthodox Christianity, and in particular the Bible view of the Person of Christ. He advocates what a fine article in the "Church Quarterly Review" for October rightly called "Neo-Christianity," a religion from which every characteristic doctrine of the Gospel has been eliminated. But such a position will be as futile as the materialism against which Eucken inveighs. Christianity is based upon the historical, Divine Christ, and it is only through the Incarnation and the Atonement that man will find satisfaction of his "inner emptiness." A religion that is to meet the necessities of human nature must take the awful fact of sin into consideration, and, with it, the Divine provision of redemption. When this is done, then, and then only, will it be true that "He satisfieth the longing soul and filleth the hungry soul with goodness."

About Ourselves

We desire to take advantage of the close of the year to call the attention of our readers to the "Canadian Churchman," and, while thanking them for their cordial support, and in particular for the numerous kind words which we have lately received about these pages, to ask for their continued and increased support in the coming year. Already three times under the present management we have had to increase the circulation of the paper. We do not propose to announce any programme, but we may say that plans are being made for the New Year which will more and more thoroughly render our paper the representative organ of Canadian Churchmanship. Among our regular features will be the weekly Outlook on current events; special articles for Clergy, Laity and our Lady Readers; a column of "Notes and Queries" in answer to enquiries; occasional notes on Temperance; and a regular column giving information about recent books. We are also taking steps to obtain the latest and best information from all parts of the Canadian Church. We confidently ask the support of our readers in extending the circulation of the paper, and will gladly send copies to all who will use them in obtaining fresh subscribers. If each reader would undertake to get one more subscriber the influence of this journal would be materially extended.

THE CHURCH OF GOD An Enquiry for 1912

The New Testament has at least two unique features—its revelation of Christ and its revelation of the Church. Nothing like them appeared before, nothing like them has appeared since; they stand to-day, as they have ever stood, unique creations of God. Of the uniqueness of the Person of Christ, as God, manifest in the flesh for our redemption we spoke at Christmastide. We are now concerned with the other unique feature, that of the Church of Christ. When the two disciples of John the Baptist heard him proclaim, "Behold the Lamb of God," and left him to follow Jesus of Nazareth, they entered upon a new relationship

to a new Master. On that day a new bond was introduced into the world, a tie of relationship to Christ and to one another in Him. Up to that time there had been ties of blood, of friendship, of intellectual affinity, of patriotism, of political alliance, and to some extent the tie of our common humanity had been contemplated in theory, but a Society the one and only bond of connection between whose members was their relation to their Master Jesus Christ—this was something entirely novel, fresh, unique. We see this very significantly in the "new commandment" of love, where the "newness" lay not in the fact or in the standard of the love, but in the object, "one another," as may be proved from the emphatic repetition of this last phrase (John xiii. 34, 35). This Society was subsequently spoken of in terms of prophecy as "the Church." "I will build My Church," and it is interesting that our English word "Church," though it is the Greek translation of the Greek word "Ecclesia," which means "assembly," "congregation," is nevertheless etymologically derived from a word meaning "that which belongs to the Lord." This Divine Society was in due course constituted by the preaching of the risen Christ and the power of the Holy Ghost on the Day of Pentecost. Then in the Book of Acts we have some record of its progress during the first thirty years of its existence, and in the Epistle to the Ephesians we have the fullness of Divine teaching concerning the Church in its fourfold aspect of the Body of Christ, the Building of God, the Bride of Christ, and the Brotherhood of the Saints. Thus, if we ask the question, What meanest thou by this word Church? we answer, in the familiar words of our Prayer Book, "The blessed company of all faithful people," or, in the words of the Creed, "The Communion of Saints," the partnership of all those who are consecrated to God. When Jesus Christ unites each individual sinner to Himself He necessarily institutes a relationship between all who are in Him, and thus the Church is at once a Society of saved sinners and of sanctified servants of Christ. As we take the opportunity afforded by these closing days of the year to review the past twelve months, in order that we may realize afresh something of what the Church of Christ ought to be, let us take one picture of the primitive Church and try to discover some of those elements which ought to characterize the life of the Church to-day.

"And the multitude of them that believed were of one heart and of one soul: neither said any of them that ought of the things which he possessed was his own: but they had all things in common. And with great power gave the Apostles witness of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus: and great grace was upon them all."—Acts iv. 32, 33.

The Church was marked by a profound reality of inward life. "The multitude of them that believed were of one heart and of one soul: neither said any of them that ought of the things which he possessed was his own; but they had things common." Christianity always works from within, and as a consequence we see here two great elements of spiritual reality in the inward life of the Church. The Church was characterized by spiritual unity, "the multitude of them that believed were of one heart and of one soul." It is worthy of note that they were "a multitude," a large number, and, doubtless, with great varieties of temperament, capacity, and antecedents. Yet they were united by faith in Christ, they were all characterized by this simple trust, they were a multitude that "believed." Not only so, they were a multitude of believers possessed of one heart and of one soul. The prayer of the Master was fulfilled in their case, "that they all may be one." The great Cambridge manuscript has a very suggestive clause following these words, "Neither was there any difference between them," and the Oxford Codex has, instead, the clause, "Neither was there any severance between them."

What a picture! One heart, one soul, no difference, no severance, all actuated by the one spirit, living in and for their Master. The Church was also characterized by remarkable unselfishness. The original is very striking, "Not even one said that anything he possessed was his own." Out of the spiritual relationship to Christ came a social relationship to one another. As cause is to effect, so the unity was to the unselfishness; the two could not be separated. Here we find a genuine Christian socialism as the result of individual unity, a socialism which was the spontaneous expression of the love of God in their hearts. Systematic provision for the poor was unknown in heathenism, and had been very largely neglected by the Jews, notwithstanding the commands of the Mosaic law to remember the poor and the stranger. It must, therefore, have been astonishing to the people of Jerusalem to see so many voluntary givers. This picture of Christian socialism is very striking; it shows the difference between the socialism which is Christian and the socialism which is not Christian. As it has been well put, non-Christian socialism says, What is yours is mine; while Christian socialism says, What is mine is yours. Thus by unity and unselfishness this primitive Church was marked by the possession of intense spiritual reality; their inward life was right with God and with one another in Him.

Another feature of the primitive Church was its remarkable prosperity of outward life. "And with great power gave the Apostles witness of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus; and great grace was upon them all." Spiritual life always expresses itself, and reality, as we see it here, leads to genuine prosperity. Mark the power of the Apostolic testimony. "With great power gave the Apostles witness of the great resurrection of the Lord Jesus." The life of the Church acted upon the preaching, the pew influenced the pulpit. How often this has been found since that day! Whenever the congregation is right with God, it necessarily affects the life, preaching, and witness of the preacher. When Spurgeon was asked how it was that his Church had such blessing, he pointed to the place of the prayer meeting below the Metropolitan Tabernacle and said, "My people pray for me." The Apostles were enabled to proclaim, as perhaps never before, the resurrection of their Lord and Master. They bore witness by lip and life to the living Christ who was the centre of their life, and with great power they gave their testimony, a testimony which evidently impressed all who heard it. Mark the power of the Christian life. "Great grace was upon them all." Some would interpret this phrase as meaning "favour" with the people (as in ch. ii. 47), but it is impossible to limit the idea to this meaning. Rather are we to understand that the grace of God was so manifestly upon them all that blessing abounded in heart and life in the extension of the Kingdom, and to the glory of God.

This must suffice for our present consideration of the true nature and spiritual power of the Church, and it constitutes a call to us to test our own life, individual and corporate, in the light of this primitive ideal. But there is a forward look as well, as we confront the New Year, and it remains to give special attention to this important point. If our Church life during the coming year is to be what God intends it to be, we must correct past mistakes in the light of the primitive pattern, and seek to reproduce that by fulfilling the same conditions.

God speaks to us most directly in that which is nearest to us. Straining out to find him in the remote, the extraordinary, the supernatural, however it may pass for piety, is, after all, the very reverse of true piety. There is no higher manifestation of Divinity that we can know anything about than that which appears in the processes of human development. God is revealed to us, in men and women and little children, full of grace and truth.—H. W. Thomas.

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