

Canadian Churchman

Toronto, June 15th, 1916

The Christian Year

First Sunday After Trinity, June 25th.

There is a well-known story which tells us that S. John, the Beloved Disciple, was in the habit of preaching in his old age at Ephesus a very brief, but a very characteristic, sermon. Week by week the aged Apostle, now too feeble to walk, was carried into the assembled Christian congregation. There Sunday by Sunday he delivered the same message, "Little children, love one another." The people in time became weary, not of the sermon's length, but of its monotony; and their murmurs in due course reached the preacher's ears. "It is the Lord's command," the Apostle replied, "and if this only be done, it is enough."

Any discourse on the subject of love would to-day be liable to the same criticism which greeted S. John's remarks. The theme is hackneyed with the wear and tear of a further eighteen hundred years. Yet to-day the matter is more urgent than ever, for the world, though tired of the lesson, has most disastrously failed to learn it.

"Little children, love one another." St. John's words admirably sum up the Master's teaching, as it relates to life and conduct. Love was His new commandment. What bitter irony lies in the fact that the nations, who professed this religion of love, made Europe a charnel house three or four hundred years ago because of religious differences; built up a civilization based upon economic oppression of the weak during the modern industrial era; and now, as the climax of all, find themselves whelmed in a sea of blood through the "frenzied self-worship" of a so-called "Christian" people! Yet, all the time Christendom held the knowledge of the great panacea, of "the love that heals the red wounds of the world"; she knew of "the long-sought remedy, for all the blind confusion of our days."

"Little children, love one another." What is our immediate duty? We cannot in a moment bring peace to the aching heart of the world, but we can set right our own individual houses. Our Lord's most tremendous emphasis was laid on deeds of simple loving kindness. The act of help, "done unto Me" brought its eternal reward. The callousness of Dives to a beggar brought its doom. Take heed, ere it be too late, ye neighbours who are not on speaking terms! Take heed, ye members of cliques, whether in Sunday School or Society! Have a care, ye self-seeking business men! Beware, ye contentious and touchy Christian workers! for "He that loveth not, knoweth not God—for God is love."

"God is love"—here we discover the radiant centre of the whole matter. God Himself is love—love which has had its scope from all eternity in the ineffable relations of the Three Persons of the Blessed Trinity, love which, in time, has gone forth to create and to redeem.

To learn love is our highest privilege, and "Life, with all it yields of joy and woe, And hope and fear,—believe the aged friend,— Is just our prize o' the chance of learning love."

This divine love we can only learn as our hearts are made wise by the Divine Spirit of love. Let us open them to His indwelling Presence.

O Holy Spirit, whom our Master sent Rich with all treasures from the throne above, We pray Thee for Thy gift most excellent, Thy greatest, Thine unfailing gift of love.

Editorial Notes

"Kitchener."

A great man has been taken from us and the cause that he was helping defend has lost a powerful supporter. Few of us on this side of the Atlantic knew him except by report, but he commanded the respect and confidence of all Canadians to an extent practically without parallel. We felt safe with him at the helm and trusted him implicitly. He had been tested time and again, and in the words of Tennyson on the death of that other great soldier statesman, he "stood four-square to all the winds that blew." A man of few words, of an intense sense of duty, of iron will, of fearless courage, and of childlike faith in God, he served his empire with conspicuous ability and devotion. He was not a politician. He was both a great soldier and a statesman, a great constructive genius, who has left behind him undying monuments to his memory. In the midst of his strenuous labours he still made time to worship his God and the chapel near the War Office, as well as the little Church of his boyhood's home in Ireland, will long miss a familiar form. His life as well as his death should nerve every man in the Empire to uphold, even to the last drop of his blood, the cause he served so faithfully.

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The North Sea Fight.

How few of us are able to realize the strain that has been placed upon the navy since the outbreak of the war. And too few have given full credit to the navy for the wonderful work it has done. To have "bottled" up the German fleet, and to have cleared the seas so that not a single British transport between Canada and England, or between England and France, has been sunk, is little short of marvellous. In the recent North Sea fight the enemy had everything in his favour, so far as the choice of conditions was concerned. He chose the time, the place, and the kind of weather. He knew the location of the mine-fields, and had behind him such protection as the coast line might provide. He, moreover, had powerful vessels and guns and was able to throw the whole force of these on a single section of the British fleet which has hundreds of miles of sea-line to guard. To have driven him back to his shelter, to say nothing of the punishment inflicted, speaks volumes for the officers and men of our navy. And when we think of the noble men whose bodies lie at the bottom of the sea, let each of us repeat the words used with reference to our Saviour but so applicable here and elsewhere in this awful war, "Thy life was given for me; what have I given for thee?"

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Canada Mourns for Her Sons.

The casualty lists have been telling us of a terrible struggle in which scores of young Canadians have laid down their lives and scores of homes have been plunged into grief. A very large percentage of these men were members of our own Church, and our deepest sympathy goes out to those who are mourning for the fallen. They have done their duty and while our hearts are filled with grief we would rather a thousand times over have them where they are than have had them close their ears to the call when it came. In the words of one of our own Bishops, "It is better to die than to lie."

Summer Schools.

We have already, in another column, drawn attention to the Summer Schools to be held under the auspices of the M.S.C.C. and Sunday School Commission. This is the sixth year since these were begun as a regular feature of Church work, or five years under the joint management of these two organizations. There was some doubt expressed at one time as to whether the atmosphere and liturgical form of worship of the Church of England would lend themselves to such schools, but those who have attended one or more of them have now no doubt on this score. Doubt was also expressed regarding the advisability of holding these during war times, but again the fact that more applications were received in 1915 than could be accepted did not seem to justify such. These schools provide exactly what is needed—time for quiet meditation in congenial surroundings and an opportunity for securing new ideas and information for the particular kind of Church work that each person happens to be engaged in. We have no hesitation, therefore, in urging all who can, young or old, laity or clergy, to make an effort to attend one or other of these. Full information can be secured from either the M.S.C.C. or S.S. Commission.

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Rich Men's Sons.

We listened recently to a speaker who was emphasizing the need of men for the ministry and he asked the very pertinent question, Why are there not more of the sons of our wealthier Churchmen to be found in our theological colleges? There have been outstanding examples to the contrary in the Church in the Motherland. We have in mind such men as Bishop Patteson, who gave both his life and his patrimony to the work of winning the souls of the South Sea Islanders for Christ. And there have been exceptions to the general rule even in Canada. Unfortunately, however, the fact still faces us that the number of these exceptions has been small. We do not hesitate to use the word "unfortunately," as it is only men that have been reared in such homes who can appreciate the point of view of such, and the difficulties and temptations that beset them. Moreover, the idea is too prevalent, and, previous to the war, seemed to be making rapid headway, that so long as one gave his money to good causes nothing more was needed. It is true that money in a sense represents life, but it is not representatives, but the very life itself that is demanded in order to produce the greatest degree of efficiency in the work of winning souls. The case of the "Rich Young Man" with whom our Saviour conversed, can easily be reproduced to-day.

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A Wrong Impression.

An unfortunate headline appeared in the Toronto "Globe" of Saturday last, which stated that the view prevailed at the Synod of the Diocese of Toronto that "prohibition does not call for gratitude." The facts of the case are that when the report of the Committee on Temperance and Social Service was being presented a suggestion was made that the Doxology be sung in thankfulness that the Ontario prohibition measure had been passed. Objection was, however, raised by a small number of members, and out of respect for their views the singing was dispensed with. The conclusion drawn was unwarranted and the impression sent abroad was unfair to both the Synod and the Church.

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