

Manhood and Citizenship

An Address delivered at the International Epworth League Convention, Denver, Colorado, by Rev. S. D. CHOWN, D.D.

GOOD citizenship aims at making moral conditions in the town or nation where we live a little better than they are, or at the overthrow of some existing evil. The Christian citizen's ideal is the setting up of the kingdom of God on earth, or, in other words, the reign of Christian righteousness and brotherly love. He aims not at reformation simply, but at the re-formation of the nation's life according to the principles laid down in the Word of God, so that righteousness may cover the earth as the waters cover the sea, and in the end produce conditions in which "God shall wipe away all tears from human eyes, and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain, for the former things are passed away." Citizenship in the kingdom of God only, makes us fit for citizenship in the United States and Canada.

If we would do the work of Christian citizens in this our day, we must gospelize two spheres of activity—the political and the industrial. The politics of both the United States and Canada are not based upon Christian foundations, nor are they erected according to the plumb line or the spirit level of Christian principles. In so saying I intend no offence to our public men, for whom I have great respect, a respect, however, which I have to indulge in with a good deal of discrimination. The outstanding fact, however, is that the game of politics and the ethics of competition are

developing manhood, and that men should not be used primarily for the purpose of making money.

The resources of the earth are for the benefit of humanity as a whole, not to gratify the lust of a few grasping multimillionaires. In view of the hard condition of many toilers, such persons shall yet be regarded as moral monstrosities. This earth is one of the mansions of the loving Father's house. The competition of to-day which exalts the dollar above the man makes it an ante-chamber of hell. Competition produces a civilization which is only a thinly-disguised barbarism, and perhaps, in so saying, we slander barbarism. Christianity is in the world to right these manifest wrongs, here and now.

If this be so, it will appear that we need some new kind of a Christian. How shall we get him? First, our conception of the meaning of Christian faith must be changed. Belief in a creed as such has little else than an intellectual value. It lacks in moral force. The thought that the office of faith is to produce agreeable emotions is fragmentary, and has an unhealthy ethical reaction. Faith is something greater and more fundamental. It is a power begotten of the spirit of God that touches the will, the innermost centre of personality. It operates in two directions; it has a centripetal and centrifugal force. Its intake fills the heart with divine love for brotherly human service; its output is a life organized in and for personal and social righteousness. You



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not in harmony with the teachings of Christ. The politics of Christ are summed up in the words, "Seek ye first the kingdom of God and the righteousness of the kingdom, and prosperity shall be added unto you." The politics of the United States and Canada epitomized say to us, in no uncertain sound, seek ye first prosperity and let righteousness creep in where expediency permits. A political campaign is generally a school of mammonism—not as it ought to be, an education in righteousness and brotherly love.

It is the duty of the Church, and particularly of the young people in it, to lift up the public life of the country to the level of the gospel of Jesus Christ. If we cannot do this, we must acknowledge the failure of Christianity to fulfil its mission.

Our industrial life also is unchristian. The only reasonable deduction from the teachings of Jesus Christ is that wealth should be used in all fruitful ways for the purpose of

cannot have your dependable Christian citizen unless you have a man with this kind of faith. To be a Christian is not simply to take refuge under the blood of Christ. That may minister to a subtle form of selfishness, but it is to believe all that Christ says and to try to practise it. Christianity is a divine power giving a man perfect self-control, so that he can do the thing he ought to do, and leave undone the thing he ought not to do.

The first duty of a Christian then is to be a man, and the first duty of a man is to be a citizen, or a man amongst men. We are under no obligation to get into heaven, that is a matter entirely of our own option; but we are under obligation to quit sin and bring heaven down into this world. The heaven above would be no poorer without us; in fact we should be so small as scarcely to be missed if we were to try to get into heaven simply because we think it is good for us to get there. The kind of faith we have just