

Canadian Churchman

Toronto, May 18th, 1916.

The Christian Year

The Fifth Sunday After Easter.

The ultimate test of the value of any particular religion lies in that religion's influence upon conduct. The Christianity of the New Testament can fearlessly face this criterion. No other religious movement can claim an even approximate worth, for none has possessed such an incomparable moral dynamic. It is instructive to notice the preponderatingly large portion of His teaching which Our Lord devoted to ethical instruction and appeal of the most exalted and yet of the most practical type. His profoundest indignation and His most scathing invective were not directed against the common sins of the fleshly crowd, but against the spiritual wickedness and the immoral religiosity of professed worshippers of God. Nor, when working for what now-a-days would be called "revival" among the masses, did He urge more frequent attendance at the services of temple or synagogue, longer prayers, a more scrupulous ceremonial, or even a more unremitting reading of Scripture, but rather a God-ward movement of the soul, resulting in a man-ward outpouring of the life in deeds of homely and unaffected loving kindness. Christ valued a man, not for shibboleths, but for service. "Not every one that saith . . . but he that doeth."

It is interesting to mark how St. James, the Lord's Brother, continues the Master's urgent pleading for ethical thoroughness. In our Sunday's Epistle he writes a warning peculiarly appropriate to the Churchman of to-day. The black sheep is no longer, in St. James' experience, the calculating hypocrite of Gospel days, but the unwitting self-deceiver—the man who, all unknown to himself, is on the wrong track, because he has mistaken, if not the counterfeit for the true religion, at least the secondary for the essential. He thinks himself to be religious, or, as the Greek word used by St. James implies, a diligent observer of religious forms. And he is perfectly self-satisfied, in spite of his ethical inconsistency, because to him this is the sum total of religion. But to the inspired vision of the first Bishop of Jerusalem, and in the ultimate analysis, all such "worship" is vain as the service of idols. For such a man blocks, rather than advances, the cause of God. With unbridled tongue he scourges those who possess the deeper insight. For some punctilio of dogma or of ceremony he will hold aloof, while the forces of Christ are at death-grips with organized sin. He is, in short, one of those "good men," who, by their colossal inertia, form the most effective barrier to forward movements for which the world is waiting, heart-sick with hope deferred.

How vastly different is the ideal of the Apostle! He sees a man moving in large spaces, with the winds that blow from God's heaven upon his forehead. His outlook is not cabined and confined by the exigencies of some traditional system. His conduct is free from the meticulous precision of the ceremonialist. He lives in an ample and a boundless country sunned by the smile of God. And there his life is ordered and directed, made harmonious and efficient by the perfect Law of Liberty—that royal law, freer than freedom, because it is the spontaneous outworking of the limitless energy of the Spirit of God.

In that mighty land there is one type of worship of supreme value, one indispensable ceremonial—the offering and oblation of human love to hearts in deepest need.

Editorial Notes

Bilingualism.

It is most unfortunate that at the present time there should have arisen anything to interfere with the united action of all races and creeds in Canada in defence of the Empire. In Europe the old feud between French and English has passed away absolutely and they are standing shoulder to shoulder in a common struggle against a common foe. The situation in Canada seems all the more lamentable, as it is a matter that could very well have been left over until after the war had ended. Any fair-minded Canadian would have been willing to let the matter stand without prejudice to either side. There is no true Britisher who would wish to take from the French-speaking portion of our population privileges that are theirs by right, just as there is no true Britisher who would be willing to have his own rights trampled upon with impunity. The French in Canada have certain undeniable rights in the Province of Quebec regarding their language, but the position of that language, and for that matter of any language other than English, in the other provinces is entirely different.

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A Review of the Case.

The present difficulty did not originate within the past few years, but began as far back as the year 1885, when complaints were made, not regarding the teaching of French, but regarding the inadequate character of the instruction being given in English. A commission was accordingly appointed in 1889 to investigate, and certain steps were taken in an effort to remedy the situation. From the very beginning the stand was taken by the Ontario Legislature that English should be the language of all State-controlled and State-aided schools and French was to be used only in so far as it was necessary in the case of French children in assisting them to get a working knowledge of English. Matters seemed at times to improve, but on the whole became more complicated. A second commission was appointed in 1893, and still another in 1910, the latter being followed by the now famous Regulation 17, which is the immediate bone of contention. The commission of 1910 found (1) a large number of teachers in the schools without certificates, (2) an irregularity in attendance, (3) a defective knowledge of English, and (4) inadequate inspection. It was the attempt to provide proper inspection that met with most violent opposition, as even an English-speaking Roman Catholic inspector, who could converse in French and who was employed when a French-speaking inspector was not available, was practically refused admittance to an English-French school.

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The Storm Centre.

The storm centre of the difficulty is the city of Ottawa, where as early as the year 1886 the Separate School Board organized itself into two committees, one English and the other French speaking. The latter in the course of time became much the stronger, and when Regulation 17 was passed it refused to obey it. It attempted to raise money for school purposes, and an injunction was brought against it by some of the English-

speaking ratepayers. The case was tried before Mr. Justice Lennox in June, 1914, and the majority committee lost. The case was then taken to the Court of Appeal in July, 1915, and again they lost. A Commission was then appointed by the Ontario Legislature to take charge of the schools, and on February 3rd, 1916, the teachers of seventeen English-French schools went on strike and the schools were closed.

Such are the main facts of the case as set forth by the Hon. Howard Ferguson in a letter to the Toronto papers in March last.

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Some Wider Aspects of the Case.

One of the significant features of the situation is the stand taken by several leading members of the Dominion Parliament from Western Canada. To our mind their stand indicates a realization on their part of a wider aspect of the whole difficulty. There have come into Canada during the few years of the present century some three million people, speaking some seventy or eighty different languages. If we grant to one nationality the right not only to speak its language, but to have it taught in schools receiving State aid, what reply is going to be given to any other of these seventy or eighty nationalities that claim the same right? It is not so much a question of Provincial rights as it is a question of national unity, and there is one thing certain that with diversity of tongues there can be no such unity. The French were in Canada first, it is true, but they were in return for this fact granted certain privileges in the Province of Quebec. Surely their interest in the Dominion as a whole, and in the future as well as in the present, should lead them to look at the matter in a broader light. Let the French language be taught in all our schools if you will, for its inherent beauty and its simplicity, but let us have one national tongue and one Canada, diverse in its parts but united in its aspirations and efforts, ever working as one for the best interests of the whole country.

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The War and India.

A most significant statement was made recently by Dr. Mott regarding the effect of the war on India. Old partitions have been broken down and the atmosphere has been cleared, and in the work of Christian Missions in that land "the war will put us ten years ahead." There is, he says, a new attitude on the part of the native princes and a great change is coming over the whole land.

We have accepted the assistance of the people of India in this present struggle in Europe, and we have by so doing recognized them as brothers in a common struggle. Our attitude towards them in the future must be different from what it has been in the past, and, whether we want to or not, we must face the question of their admission into Canada. In the best interests of the Empire of which they as well as we form a part, and in the defence of which their sons and brothers as well as our own are laying down their lives freely, we must approach this question from a different angle from what we have done in the past. We must, so far as possible, safeguard our own true interests, but this must be done on the highest possible plane and with the future as well as the present in view.

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