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OTTAWA, WEDNESDAY, MAR. 16, 1910

We wish to direct attention to The Studio Year Book of Decorative Art for 1910, which, as the title page indicates, is "A Review of the latest developments in the artistic construction, decoration and furnishing of the house." It is all of that and the work is exceedingly well done. Great Britain, Germany and Austria are represented in its 258 pages, and dull indeed will be the reader, who can not find many suggestive hints, in the building plans, photos of furniture and decorative articles; especially will the views of interiors be found very interesting. Sixteen pages are devoted to illustrations in colour; and the British stained glass window designs will prove useful to church managers contemplating the introduction of windows of stained glass. The price of the Year Hope or Ogilvy, of Ottawa, or your bookseller anywhere, will give the price in currency, and order for you direct from the publishers, 44 Leicester Square, London, Eng.

The Nineteenth Century and After for January 1910 contains a number of able articles, to most of which the title timely may be appropriately applied. For example, there is one on "Germany's real attitude towards England," by Charles Tuchmehnn, a German official who resided 40 years in England. He takes the position that Germany is ready for war, but does not desire it. The Kaiser wishes to found a great navy, but not with any hostile intent against England. This writer, who is in full sympathy with the legitimate aspirations of Germany, ridicules the alarms of Jingoism and concludes "that there is room on this globe even for two such vigorous nations, so equal in faith, economics, literature, mutual admiration, no one in his calmest moments can deny; that there is a strong desire for a better understanding between them is equally true. Neither the one nor the other should lend its ears to the hideous and ludicrous nightmare dreamed by the alarmists after a banquet on jingoism and supposition." An article on The Constitutional Crisis is of interest, although the election is now over; it shows the dangers of abolishing the House of Lords, but, like all productions from the Conservative side, it fails to do justice to the fact that a Liberal government, whether strong or weak, is always hampered by the present House of Lords. There are many other interesting articles, including one in French on "La Littérature Française Contemporaine."

SYNOD MEETINGS.

The Synods will soon meet. We hear of no "burning questions," no appeals that are likely to take much time, no vexatious business of any kind. So much the better. But let no one say "There is no business." The real business is always there. The vital work of the Church is always before every court. A day at least should be spent on Church Life and Work, which might properly include plans for aggressive evangelistic work. A seditious might well be given to Temperance, another to Sabbath Observance, and a third to the Sabbath School. Might it not be a good thing to dispense the communion at our Synod meetings? If not, why not? If a Synod is a spiritual court why not keep the spiritual element as much as possible in the foreground? Is it not a desirable thing to conduct all such meetings in such a way that ministers and elders may return to their work refreshed and invigorated? The meeting of a Church court should be a spiritual tonic to all its members. Unfortunately it would be too easy to call up meetings of Synod and Assembly that had the reverse effect upon the majority present. If the pastors and elders return to their work discouraged, chafed, irritated and with a consciousness that their time has been lost or worse, the meeting has been a failure in one important feature. Let the great vital concerns of the Church have their proper place at these Synod meetings and no one will say, "Synods are useless—there was no business." There is ample business.

"SHOW HOW THE LAND LIES."

So far as we can judge from congressional reports the present seems likely to prove a most prosperous ecclesiastical year. Whilst there are no very marked movements in many places, there seems to be substantial progress along the whole line. This is probably due to a considerable extent to the Layman's Movement, as well as to the adoption of the duplex envelope system. A high degree of spiritual life in the congregations means prosperity everywhere. Spiritual destitution in the pastorate means failure in every department of Christian effort. Congregations spiritually alive send students to the colleges and send money to sustain the institutions that train their young men for the ministry. A college with a living Church behind it will always have students and financial support. The support may not at times be as liberal as one would like, but it always comes. A living Church supports its missions liberally. In short, when congregational work goes on well, everything in the Church goes on well. The pastorate is really the basis of everything. Successful pastorates make a successful Church. The Church is an aggregate of congregations, and what the congregations are the Church must be. The Church can never be better than the congregations that compose it. Everybody who knows and cares anything about the welfare of the Church watches for the congregational meetings. They always show how the land lies. The most important report in the Church is the congregational report. What we need more than anything else is great outpouring of the Spirit in all our congregations.

PAUL AS A MINISTER.

If we only think of the early Christians and the noble line of martyrs, our sufferings will sink into insignificance. Look at the apostle to the Gentiles; see him arrested and imprisoned, see his back bared to the lash. Five times he received forty stripes save one. See him gathering his garments about his lacerated shoulders when he whispers, "None of these things move me." See him taken to the edge of yonder city, stoned and left for dead. As his friends raise him up they say: "Better abandon the Gospel; they will kill you if you preach"—but he says, "None of these things move me." We see him yonder upon the shore; he has been drawn out of the water; he has been a day and a night struggling in the deep, he is overcome and lies fainting on the earth, the water dripping from his hair. His friends think, surely he will never preach again. But as the pulse beats and the strength returns, we hear him say, "None of these things move me." He is on his way to Jerusalem. The prophets tell him he is to be bound and imprisoned, and the people weep at the thought of seeing him no more. The elders at Ephesus go down to meet him. He tells them that he is going to Jerusalem, and he knows not what shall befall him, but the Spirit tells in every place that bonds and imprisonment await him, but he grandly declares, "None of these things move me, neither count I my life dear unto myself, so that I may finish my course with joy, and the ministry which I have received of the Lord Jesus, to testify the Gospel of the grace of God."

Bonds and imprisonment did await him. He stood before Nero. He was condemned to die, and out of the dungeon of his prison he sends through Timothy this heroic and joyous message, "I have fought a good fight, I have kept the faith: henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness," etc.

Such a grand hero was the apostle living and dying. One work he did unmoved and unmovable, and to us he speaks, "Follow me as I follow Christ."

BESECHING.

The Gospel contains few commands, but many entreaties. Jesus invited, persuaded, exhorted, but seldom commanded. Miraculous mercedes were not given on condition of service, but in general zeal to relieve the distress. If the healed became loyal to their Redeemer it was not from compulsion, but from the choice of their own hearts, the voluntary love and gratitude of their own souls. In the same spirit the apostles taught. Their letters to the churches abound in counsel, advice, entreaty, warning, invitation, promise, but the language of authority is seldom used. This fact denotes the genius of the Christian system and Christian life. The service of Christ is, pre-eminently, freedom. Arbitrary rules, exact regulations, specific organization, uniform prescriptions, are unknown, and great liberty for every believer is allowed, the chief restraint being the internal force of love responding to the gentle beseechings and advice of the inspired Word. Thus the Lord begins at the heart and works out; relies upon love rather than law; takes away the love of sin, and thus removes the terror of the law; makes men free from wicked purposes, so that commands are not needed, since persuasion is effective.