

Canadian Churchman

Toronto, April 20th, 1916.

The Calendar

THE FIRST SUNDAY AFTER EASTER.

"He that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not the Son hath not life." How trenchant, how refreshingly concise, is the Apostolic statement! Were a modern man asked to define a Christian, he would reply in a volume. The Apostle answers in five words, "He that hath the Son." Such is St. John's definition. That is all; but that is adequate. Enough has been said.

For after all, Christianity is a Life. It has been well pointed out that the First Epistle of St. John (from which our "Epistle" for the Sunday is taken) was written to provide a man with a series of "Tests," by which he might assure himself of the possession or the lack of that Life which is life indeed. Those "tests" were three—righteousness, love, and belief in the Son of God. Did a man manifest these three graces, he might know himself to be a Christian—to be possessed of Life. But the root of the matter was the Life. The three graces were merely the fruits, the natural and inevitable outgrowing from an inward vitality, whose source was the indwelling Spirit of Jesus Himself. The thought is profound, but majestic and appealing in its simplicity. Even the language of St. John, as he reasons of these mighty verities, flows with an artless and a childlike ease; for the Apostle has passed from the multitudinous confusion of the non-essential to the directness of the essential; from the variegated and conflicting gleams of earth to the one white light of heaven.

Some of our Chaplains, who in the trenches have come face to face with the great realities, are writing home, overwhelmed with an almost heart-breaking sense of the Church's failure to meet the needs of the masses of the people. May not this failure be largely due to the fact that we have deserted the simplicity of Christ's religion of love for some intricate system of our own? We have made of Christianity something complicated, esoteric, remote from the life of the home and the market. Small wonder is it that men fail to recognize, amid the strident babel of ecclesiastical voices, clamant in discussion of policy and prescription, ordinance and usage, the one essential message of Christianity. In vain do they listen, amid the shrill mixture of the stops, for that tone which should pervade the whole with the dominance of some mighty diapason—even the simple Gospel of the love of Christ and of life in Him.

Our wisdom were to return once more to the Apostolic perspective. We have been careful and troubled about many things, but one thing is needful. It was the coming of Christ which brought peace and power for service to his discouraged followers on that first Easter evening. The reception of the living Christ will alone bring peace and power to us in our day of need and of opportunity. The truth is simple, but it is essential. "He that hath the Son hath life"—and the Spirit of Jesus is a Spirit of Love. So we must live, and so we must preach.

Among men who have any sound and sterling qualities, there is nothing so contagious as pure openness of heart.—Dickens.

Editorial Notes

The Conquest of Love.

The keynote of Easter is Victory, as that of the Lenten season is Self-denial. From what seemed utter defeat on Calvary, we are carried in the short span of three days to the greatest victory recorded in the history of mankind. It was a struggle, in which the power of universal love triumphed over that of evil. In the words of Mr. Henry Hodgkin:—

"Once in the history of the world there was found a Man who wholly trusted to the ultimate victory of love. All through His life He refused to use any means which love could not sanctify. He went calmly forward along a path which He well discerned, turning neither to the right hand nor to the left, although before Him lay a death of shame. This life and this death have liberated in the world greater forces for good than any other life and death in all the centuries before or since; they have meant more for human progress than has been achieved by all the armies and fleets the world has even seen. Men in every nation are still willing to be conquered by such love, and still resist to the last drop of blood all the efforts to conquer them by force of arms."

The War and Christian Co-operation.

We use the word co-operation instead of unity, as the latter is too frequently construed to mean uniformity. We have already referred to the spirit that ought to prevail within our own branch of the Christian Church and to the harm that is so often done by the lack of charity towards those with whom we disagree. The same principles can and ought to be extended to those who do not worship with us, but still worship the same God through His Divine Son Jesus Christ, and strive in accordance with their own conception of truth to bring others to know Him and to love Him. In the words of the present Bishop of Winchester: "We may be loyal to the things that divide us, and yet be loyal to those that unite us." We do not need to minimize the principles on which we disagree, but we ought to be quite certain first of all that they are in reality principles and not merely prejudices. We have before us to-day in the struggle in Europe a wonderful example of co-operation in face of a common foe. Each unit, while preserving its own identity, is taking its place side by side with others, and the points that differentiate the various units are not allowed to overshadow the unity of the whole or the tremendous character of the issues at stake. So in our warfare as soldiers enlisted under Christ's banner, let us remember that we are fighting a common foe, and that the character and dimensions of the struggle demand an ever-increasing degree of co-operation on the part of all Christians. Let us state our disagreements frankly and in a Christian spirit, and in this way come to understand one another better and to discover the various ways in which co-operation is possible. We shall never learn this by standing aloof. We shall never learn it by taking it for granted that those who do not agree with us are of necessity in the wrong. Let us cling to what we believe is right until we are convinced that we are wrong, but at the same time let us concede the same privilege to those who disagree with

us. In such a spirit of charity, sustained and strengthened by prayer that the Holy Spirit will at last lead us all to be of one mind in Christ, lies our greatest hope for the future.

The Jews.

There is no section of the human race that is more affected by the present war than the Jews. Scattered over the face of the earth, they are found fighting in the armies of every nation engaged in the conflict. They are intensely loyal to the land either of their birth or of their adoption. The home of the majority, ancient Poland, is ravaged from end to end by the horrors of war. The Saviour of mankind came into the world a member of the Jewish race. He lived amongst them and loved them. He wept over the ancient city of Jerusalem, and gave His life on the Cross for Jew as for Gentile. But He was rejected by many of them, as He has been rejected by many a Gentile since. He was spat on by His own people, as He has been reviled and cursed by many a Gentile since. They chose a robber in preference to Him, even as many a man to-day is choosing a life of sin in preference to one of submission to His will. The fact remains that Christ is the Messiah of the Jew as much as of the rest of mankind, and it is our plain duty, whether they want Him or not, to make Him known to them.

The Church of England in Canada has undertaken a definite responsibility in connection with this work, and the offerings on Good Friday are asked in support of it. Surely, then, in loyalty to Christ and in loyalty to our Church, we shall do our utmost to provide the money that is needed, and what is of much greater importance, pray without ceasing that the blindness that "in part is happened to Israel" may speedily be removed.

Easter Vestries.

Another institution of the Church that has been connected with the Easter season is the annual meeting of the vestry. We say has been, for we believe that the day is fast approaching when it will be the rule and not the exception in the Church to hold this meeting earlier in the year. Either this, or the annual financial meeting will be held at a separate time, leaving the Easter meeting for other matters concerning the welfare of the parish. We believe in being conservative regarding changes, but to cling to a custom that does not involve any vital principle when it is known to be a stumbling-block to progress is neither businesslike nor fair to the Church. There was a time when it was not so necessary to have the financial year close on a fixed date, but to-day no secular undertaking would tolerate the condition that prevails still too generally in the Church. Moreover, in rural communities the Easter vestry usually comes at the time when the roads are breaking up, with the natural result that the attendance is usually small.

Financial Statements.

Another matter that needs to be attended to without delay in the vast majority of parishes is the character of the annual financial statement. Such a statement should not be confined in its scope to what are known as the "Services" of the Church, Sunday and weekday. It should take into account every organization of the parish that collects and dis-

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