

August 24, 1916.

Canadian Churchman

Toronto, August 24th, 1916

The Christian Year

The Eleventh Sunday After Trinity, Sept. 3rd.

The Parable of the Pharisee and the Publican has gripped the imagination of Christendom for several reasons. There is, first, the unforgettable contrast of two human characters. But there is more than this—there is the startling divine judgment on two religious types.

Now, the type of religion forever pilloried in the Parable was precisely the type which found favour with at least a large section of the Jewish people. The self-righteous keeper of the Law was their "beau ideal" of a saint. The Christian Church naturally let all its preference go in the other direction. The contrite sinner was closer to the heart of God, and also to the heart of Christendom. The prayer of the Publican, almost in its very words, was echoed in countless litanies. "Miserere" and "Kyrie Eleison" took a prominent place in the services of the Medieval Church. Our own Reformers caught the tone in the penitential introduction which they prefixed to Morning and Evening Prayer. Our Litany reiterates the cry for mercy upon "miserable sinners." In all this the Church of the past was not far from the spirit of the Gospel.

But what is the spirit of the Church of today? Which type of religion, that of the Pharisee or of the Publican, is now preferred? The startling answer has to be given that we are reverting, in essentials, to the Pharisaic attitude. The modern man, in a certain well-known phrase, is not "worrying about his sins." He objects to plead for mercy as a "miserable sinner." He is a good fellow, and does his duty as well as others. And as for sins—well, they can be satisfactorily relegated to people who take pleasure in a morbid meditation over their own spiritual pathology.

In all this, is the modern man right? Are his views the result of a higher evolution, which has led him to shake off his terror at the bug bears of the night? Or are they retrograde and decadent? The very fact that he seems so obviously to be departing from the mind of Christ, should give him pause. But to look at the matter in another way—does not the modern man's lack of a sense of sin argue also a lamentable lack in him of a consciousness of the ideal? The sense of sin comes to a man who has glimpsed the heights to which he might rise, and is painfully conscious of how far short he has come. To put the same truth in other words, it was when Isaiah caught a vision of the Almighty, high and lifted up, that he cried out "I am undone." When S. Peter realized the majesty of the Christ, he exclaimed, "I am a sinful man, O Lord."

Lack of consciousness of the ideal, lack of spiritual vision, too complete engrossment with material things—that is the fault of the modern world. That has been the ultimate cause of this war. Civilization has triumphed in the realm of matter. It has failed in the realm of the spirit. And it is the same lack of spiritual sensibility which makes men feel so little their need of Christ. To the awakened soul alone the Gospel is indeed "good news." To such an one the Apostolic announcement that "Christ died for our sins, according to the Scriptures; . . . and that He rose again the third day," is not "foolishness," but the very breath of life. It is the basis, the very heart, of that infinitely precious Gospel "wherein he stands; by which also he is saved."

Editorial Notes

The Moosonee Appeal.

You have, we trust, read the appeal in last week's Churchman from the Bishop of Moosonee, the Right Rev. J. G. Anderson. The recent disastrous fire in Northern Ontario destroyed six of our Church buildings in that diocese—two Churches, two parsonages, and two Church-rectories. It is scarcely necessary to say that little financial assistance towards replacing these can be expected from the diocese itself which has not more than three self-supporting parishes, Chapleau, Timmins and Cochrane, the last of which is one of the heavy sufferers. There is no fund for such purposes in the Church in Canada on which to draw unless it be in connection with the Woman's Auxiliary. The M.S.C.C. makes no provision for Church buildings in the Canadian missionary dioceses. The diocese must, therefore, of necessity make its appeal direct to the members of the Church. Several contributions have been made already and are acknowledged in this issue, but very much more is needed, and is needed at once if the buildings are to be replaced before winter. These buildings at best are of the very cheapest kind, as can be seen by the amount given by the Bishop. Bare necessities are asked for and there is no reason why many times the amount should not be given. We earnestly trust that a generous response will be made.

Camp Borden.

We have read a great deal, and listened to a great many people express their views on the subject of the above Military Camp. It is probable that a little less hurry in rushing such large numbers of soldiers to the Camp before it was in condition to receive them would have been wise. There are possibly other details also in connection with the whole matter that are more or less unfortunate. We must confess, though, that we are forced to the conclusion that very much more harm is being done to the cause of recruiting by the unjustified attacks that have been made upon the Camp than by any of the above shortcomings. An unreasonable prejudice is being fostered and the valuable features of the Camp are being overlooked. The most prevalent sins of Camp life the world over are drunkenness and immorality. Proximity to large centres of population renders it almost impossible to protect the men against temptation, and the Minister of Militia showed not only good judgment but also an interest in the highest welfare of the men in the choice of site made. It is natural that certain persons should do everything in their power to foster prejudice against the Camp, but Church people generally should uphold the action of the Minister and strive to purify the surroundings of our boys, many of whom will lay down their lives on the field of battle.

Congregationalism.

When we use the word Congregationalism we do not necessarily imply a particular set of dogmas. We have in mind at present the tendency on the part of both the clergy and laity of a parish to limit the scope of their Church activity to those who worship with them, forgetting or neglecting the scores or hundreds who worship in public nowhere. This is, we believe, one of the greatest evils of the Church of the present day and is at the root of much of

its trouble regarding social and labour problems. It is either selfishness or laziness in the majority of cases. It is, we realize, due in a few cases, particularly in larger cities, to inability to provide Church accommodation or to secure an adequate supply of workers. This, however, is the exception rather than the rule. We fail too often to realize that every Church should be a centre of missionary activity, not only to the heathen abroad but also to the more civilized heathen at our very doors. Christianity is something more than the enjoyment of beautiful services on Sunday, with a few others of our own social or financial standing, in a beautiful building. We should not neglect the house of God nor should we be satisfied with slovenly services, but we need to remember that if our Christianity is genuine we have a tremendous responsibility towards those who have not yet learned to appreciate these things.

Sunday Clothes.

In a recent number of the New York "Churchman" attention is drawn to the opinion of a War Chaplain regarding "the fetish of fine clothes on Sunday." The War is providing an opportunity for the expression of opinions on a great variety of topics, and much is being said now that was only in people's minds before. Many a Church member has regretted the fact that dress has invaded the Church to so great an extent. It is keeping many a poor person from attending the public worship of God, and yet we have tolerated it. No one who has any respect for God's house would excuse carelessness or slovenliness in dress, or lack of cleanliness of body. Still, there is moderation in all things, and much that one sees in the house of God nowadays is dangerously near desecration. It is not only the effect that it has upon the poor, but we fear that in very many cases it makes it a difficult matter for the wearer to keep his or her mind on what the place stands for. The primary object of the assembling of people on Sunday in the house of God is to worship Him in spirit and in truth, and anything that interferes with that ought to be eliminated. We can worship God quite as well in plain clothing, and will thereby impress upon others our earnestness.

Early Church Papers.

Through the kindness of an unknown friend we are in receipt of a copy of the first weekly paper of the Church in Canada. The title of the paper is "The Echo and Protestant Episcopal Recorder," and was published by a Mr. Thomas Sellar in Montreal. The particular number sent us was that of March 1st, 1866, and it states that that was the fiftieth year of publication. This would carry it back to the year 1816, or just one hundred years ago. It is an eight-page paper and the subscription price was two dollars per annum, or a little more than many members of the Church think they can afford nowadays. In size and form it is more like the English newspapers. There is a reference in the above paper to the Canadian Churchman which makes it appear that the latter was in existence previous to 1871, the date usually given as the year in which it was established. If any of our readers can throw light on this subject we shall be exceedingly grateful. We are anxious not only to have the correct date, but also to get more complete information than is at present available on the early history of the Churchman.

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