

## The Christian Year Conditions of Power (SECOND SUNDAY IN LENT)

### THE CHOSEN PEOPLE.

THE Gospel for to-day tells the story of the Canaanitish woman, or, as St. Mark has it, the Greek woman of Syrophenician race, and of our Lord's treatment of her in her trouble. The Hebrew race knew themselves to be a chosen people, the elect of God, and, as a consequence, came to despise all Gentiles as being religiously inferior; just as among the Greeks all who were not of their type of civilization were called barbarians. The Jews were indeed a chosen people, but not for their own sake; only that they might be instrumental in God's hands in making His way known upon earth, His saving health among all nations.

### JESUS' LOVE OF COUNTRY.

Jesus did not, however, share the view point of His fellow countrymen. He loved His country. He felt the glowing emotion of patriotism. He longed for His people to enter the New Covenant; whom He would gather together as a hen doth her brood, in the safe shelter of the Father's love. He knew, too, that the foundations of His Kingdom would be so much more surely and firmly laid by the conversion of Israel after the flesh. But Jesus also knew Himself to be identified with a greater world, with interests that far transcended the religious and racial limitations within which His fellow countrymen gloried in proud superiority. His Kingdom was not of this world.

Our Lord's treatment of the Gentile woman looks at first sight as if He had a contempt for her as Gentile. To speak of her people as dogs and of the Jews as the children who had first right to the bread which He had to give was a bitter reproach. He was using the conventional language of His race, but for a purpose which was entirely justifiable.

### THE SIFTING TEST.

Spiritual blessings are conditioned by an attitude of receptivity. There must be a willingness to make the necessary surrender to God's will; there must be consciousness of need; there must be faith. The Gentile woman had heard of the Messiah through contact with Judaism, and though she was a representative of a debasing idolatry she had sufficient good in her to appreciate the purer religion of the Jew, and so was prepared for better things. But our Lord could not take this for granted, so He refuses to answer her first appeal. The silences of Jesus are instructive. They teach us how that, moved as we may be at times to speak our mind, it often happens that silence is indeed golden. They explain to us also how it is that our appeals to Heaven so frequently find no response. Christ is often silent still when we long to hear Him speak. But that silence is disciplinary. It often, if we are worthy, creates the condition by which it is possible for God to act. Jesus could not answer the woman's request until she herself by the acceptance of a humiliation which was transforming in its effect, produced the condition by which He could operate through her upon her daughter. It was not merely an evidence of faith, which was there beyond measure, but a regeneration of character that Jesus looked for, and this was educed through the fire of concentrated eagerness and disappointment. The woman was moved by a high religious emotion as well as by deep desire for her daughter, hence her faith, trust and humility.

We make the conditions for God's grace to act in us. This is the sphere of the freedom of the will. He is literally barred from doing for us what He stands ready to do, because our self-sufficiency, our pride, and our want of trust block the channels of access to our soul. When we become sufficiently conscious of our need, and believe that Christ is the only answer, and we are sufficiently keen to have the need supplied, we shall find the character which accepts willingly and gladly the crumbs that fall from the Table of the Lord. This is the conditions for which He waits to supply all our need.

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We have a leader so gentle, that we can go, as it were, to His tent at night, and tell Him we are afraid of to-morrow's warfare—that the hard battle has weakened our nerves. O tender Saviour, wounded unto death, and yet strong in the consciousness of an indomitable power, Thou, on that white horse, shalt lead us forth conquering and to conquer!—Bishop of St. Andrew's.

## Russian Students in Switzerland

Miss Elizabeth Clark, of the American Y.W.C.A., has been working among the Students in Switzerland during the war and told a fascinating tale in her addresses at Toronto.

"SWITZERLAND is an island, surrounded not by water, but by fire. Very few of the Swiss women were doing any advanced work. There are in Switzerland students from all parts of Europe, and practically from all parts of the world, and in that fact lies the great difficulty of our work. I was brought into contact with students of all nationalities. We did not know whether they were with our side or were against us. The funds we were using were raised in the United States, and some in Canada, and we had to be very careful where we used them, and had to investigate almost every case. War relief work in France does require a good deal of supervision, but in Switzerland every student, on account of the difficulty of the situation, unless she is actually one of our allies, must have her case investigated by one of our allied representatives. This involves a great amount of personal investigation for student relief work and that which I have been doing during the past 18 months nearly has been greater than it would be in any other part of the work.

"The students were caught by the floodtide of the war, and will have to stay there for some time yet. Even if peace were signed, because it has not yet been signed, what would these students have to go back to? A large proportion of these students were studying medicine, and came from Russia. If they were driven back to their own homes, they would be losing all that they have already gained. They would be going back to nothing, having lost all their friends, homes and money. They ought to be encouraged to become self-supporting and useful women in one part or another of Central Europe. Many became despondent, however, and committed suicide.

### REFUGEE TRAGEDIES.

"The refugee trains passing through Switzerland have been made up almost exclusively of French and Belgians, and in conjunction with my work, I had been going down to the trains when they were going through, generally at unearthly hours, always at from two to four in the early morning. I have seen as many as two hundred persons down at the station to welcome these travellers. All brought clothing for the children, cocoa and tea for the women, children and old, old men who have suffered so much. They seemed to have no life in them. I had the impression that they were dead everywhere except in their bodies. There was an element of cheer and hope among the wounded soldiers, in the thought of going back to their homes, but in going down to these trains of refugees one had the impression of absolute discouragement, loss of all hope as well as of interest in life. In fact, I will never forget one of the trains that I visited. An old man sat in the corner of one of the carriages. He seemed very still, and upon calling one of the doctors, we found that he had died there unnoticed by any of the other occupants of the carriage. He had just died in his corner there while the others were too used up by their own experiences to even notice him. All the refugees seemed so absolutely worn and tired as to have no interest in life or death. All this, however, was but a side issue of my work, and as the problems with which I had to do became more difficult, I could not find time to go to the trains.

"In June and July, just before war broke out, I went into Austria to attend a Students' Conference, where about twelve nationalities were represented. We hadn't been there for very long when war broke out. In the very last week of July, while we were in Austria, we were informed that as Austria had declared war on Serbia, unless we wanted to stay there throughout the war, we would have to leave within the next few days, because after that we would not be allowed to travel. We asked the officer who delivered the message about how long the war would last, because then none of us had any idea of what was coming, and he said that it might be over within six weeks, but certainly would be within three months. So we left, making our way down through Germany, and I may say here that during the last of July and first of August, while Germany was supposed to be making no preparations, and were supposed to be holding back to see what the other nations were going to do, one of the trains we saw was

so packed with German officers that you wondered how they all got in.

"At the beginning of the war there were about 5,000 foreign students in Switzerland, 3,000 of these in a difficult situation financially, because they were cut off from all contact with their homeland by the enemy land lying between. The majority of these were Russians. We did not know what the relations were between the countries. The first thing we did was to try and arrange with the universities to send home as many as possible of the Russian women students. A great many of the women who were advanced in their studies wanted to go home to be with their relatives during the crisis, and immediately came the difficulty of procuring passports and money, and again we had to step in and try and arrange with the boat officials to advance money or to let them pay at the other end. Food had to be provided for all of them during the journey. Most of them were so excited that they did not bother to eat or think about it, and the full responsibility fell upon us. As soon as Turkey came into the war, the situation immediately changed. It was no longer possible to let the women students return to their homes by the eastern route, for fear they would fall into the hands of the Turkish soldiers. From then on all our efforts were centred on trying to find all possible means of helping the women students left to keep from starvation and also help them keep up with their studies.

"There was an attitude of suspicion through all the years, except this last year, and I was seriously asked at least fifty times what it was that President Wilson of the United States expected to accomplish in Russia by sending me to Switzerland. I assured them time and time again that President Wilson was not even aware of my existence, but they only smiled and looked as though they knew a lot more about it. That was their idea, and it was that attitude of suspicion which was the most difficult element in the work.

### A BOLSHIEVICK SPY.

"We have been asked why the students stayed in Switzerland. There is the question of boundaries, passports, and also of work. The knowledge of their being foreign would suggest that they would not have a perfect command of the language, and so would keep them from getting government appointments. The one line of work which has been very successful is stenography. The Swiss women were discharging their own servants, keeping one instead of two, so that, although the students did not know how to do housework, this likewise was no solution. There was also the question of food. We had bread tickets, butter, cheese, rice, macaroni and fat tickets long before they were known in other countries.

"The Y.M.C.A., in conjunction with my work, opened a large hostel. They took over for that purpose a building that had been used previously as a large domestic science school, and in which nearly three hundred were served with food at noon, with sleeping accommodation for forty or fifty men and an annex for another thirty or so. This was for university students only. It opened the first of October, and about the first of November the American consul said it would have to be closed as it was being used as a headquarters of the Bolsheviki. A woman who had been sent out from headquarters, told to tell the tale of a poor Russian student, was to get her meals at the hostel. She had been provided with about 25,000 francs. So this hostel, paid for by American funds, opened on the first of October, had to be closed by the first week in November because this woman and two men had been found going there for their meals and for instructions from their headquarters. We are trying to do everything in our power to make Switzerland a melting-pot, not a mixing-pot.

"Most of the Russian students who are now in Switzerland are in sympathy with the Allies, although this does not apply to all of them. At the time of the Russian revolution Germany opened its doors to allow any Russian students or otherwise who could prove to the satisfaction of the German authorities that he or she was in

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