

Thoughts for the Thoughtful

The foolish ones who "kill time" really kill life; for time is the stuff of which life is made.

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Time is the precious casket which contains all other jewels. To dedicate time to the highest uses is to dedicate everything.

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The Christian life must be in its own degree something like the Master's own life, luminous with His hope, and surrounded by a bracing atmosphere which uplifts all who even touch its outer fringe.

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I bow before the noble mind

That freely some great wrong forgives,
Yet nobler is the one forgiven

Who bears the burden well and lives.

—A. A. Proctor.

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In the nature of man, and in the divine law, it is clearly written that a part of every life's time should be set aside for sacred uses. The Sabbath is God's peculiar shore of life. That day is dedicated to rest and uplook. It is the particular section of time that wears the flavour of eternity. To preserve it rigidly, for noblest uses, as a portion of life peculiarly consecrated to God, is to stand by the divine programme for a human life.

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Many persons have become truly educated merely by the wise use of odd fragments of time. A bit of poetry or a verse of Scripture learned while dressing in the morning; a few foreign words or phrases conned on the way to work, or between tasks; a great book read in snatches while waiting for meals; a dip into noble literature at bed time; a studious effort to secure contact with some nobler person than one's self every day—by such simple plans as these life is enriched and made powerful.

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Many business men are coming to the conclusion that they would accomplish more if they attempted less. Life is becoming overcrowded. A succession of little things fills the time that could more wisely be used for the contemplation of great tasks and the contemplation of lofty purposes. To simplify is to strengthen. Life is more than a mere round of engagements; it is a conscious enjoyment and employment of the spirit's highest capacities.

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When life is realized as a mission, time becomes sacred. The sense that we are God's servants bent on His business, contents us in the hard times, as well as in the easy; in the dark days, as well as in the bright. Annie Johnson Flint has put this thought of purpose into a pretty little poem:—

"His lamp am I,
To shine where He shall say;
And lamps are not for sunny rooms,
Nor for the light of day,
But for dark places of the earth
Where shame and wrong and crime have birth.
Or for the murky twilight gray
Where wandering sheep have gone astray,
Or where the light of faith grows dim
And souls are groping after Him.
And as sometimes a flame we find
Clear-shining through the night
So bright we do not see the lamp,
But only see the light.
So may I shine—His life the flame—
That men may glorify His name."

God's Dominion Will Christians Co-operate to Make it Such?

A sermon preached in the Church of All Saints', Vernon,
B.C., July 1st, 1917, by the Bishop of Kootenay.

"His Dominion shall be also from the one sea to the other:
and from the flood unto the world's end."—PSALM lxxii, 8.

WE are told that when the fathers of Confederation were debating the question of the most fitting name for the proposed federation of Provinces in British North America that many suggestions were placed before them. Some favoured the term "Commonwealth of Canada," others "the United Provinces of Canada," one had this suggestion, another that; until an honoured member spake, and told how in the course of his Scriptural reading he had been struck by the 8th verse of Psalm lxxii., "His Dominion shall be also from the one sea to the other; and from the flood unto the world's end," and forthwith they all agreed and "the Dominion of Canada" became the accepted designation, God's Dominion from Sea to Sea.

Fifty years have passed since Confederation became an accomplished fact, and to-day we are called upon to give thanks to God for His many mercies and blessings showered upon our land, and for the wonderful record of progress and prosperity which the past half century is able to show. From a material viewpoint it is very imposing, and we can lift up our hearts in praise and thanksgiving to God from Whom alone cometh every good gift, and to Whose love and bounty we owe those many blessings which have placed us in the forefront of the most favoured nations of the earth.

But it is not on such matters that I propose to dwell to-day, rather I ask you to consider Canada's position at the present moment from God's standpoint, to ask with me how far we can honestly say that she has remained true to her dedication as God's Dominion from the one Sea to the other?

That there has been progress in things spiritual as well as in things material is but natural, and in common with all the other Christian Communions in Canada we as Anglicans can lift up our hearts in thanksgiving to Him Whose good hand has been ever upon us.

The number of Bishops in B.N.A. has increased from 10 to 26, the number of clergy in proportion, whilst the whole Canadian Church has been consolidated into one body speaking and acting through its General Synod, united under the leadership of one Primate. That office is held at present by the Archbishop of Rupert's Land, whose See City of Winnipeg, with a population of 200,000, was not even in existence when the Dominion was formed.

One might go on in this strain contrasting the condition of our Communion to-day with its condition 50 years ago, and find everywhere signs of progress, causes for gratitude and thanksgiving.

But I doubt if it would be the most profitable use of our time, for we meet not so much to congratulate ourselves as we do to take stock, to note not only our progress but our failures, and to brace ourselves like men for the task of reformation and amendment. We meet not to think of the progress of any section of the community in things spiritual, but of the progress, or failure of progress, in and of the whole Dominion. Has she, then, been true to her dedication, "God's Dominion"?

To ask the question is to receive an immediate answer in the negative.

If we are to be quite honest and truthful, we must confess that Canada has failed to be what she might have been, and that her failure has been most patent in three outstanding aspects.

(1) In her national life God has received no recognition. Doubtless this is due, in part, to the many conflicting creeds which are represented in and through the many races and peoples who combine to form the population of our country, a diversity of creed and belief so accentuated "that organized religion, because of these serious differences, is excluded from many public undertakings on the ground that it is a dividing and not a unifying factor," (V. Bishop of Ottawa's Charge, June 5th, 1917.)

But the real reason is to be sought for deeper down, and is to be found, I believe, in the fact that our very material prosperity and progress has driven God almost entirely out of the life and thought of a majority, and a most influential majority, of our people.

Canada has been so prosperous that, failing to recognize God as the giver of prosperity, she has simply forgotten Him, and concluded that she could get on very well without Him.

(2) The inevitable result of this is to be seen in her educational system. God is simply left out. Having no national recognition of God, she has no national education of her children for God. It is true that in some provinces a nominal recognition of religion is to be found in the public school system, but it is purely nominal, and is never followed up in a serious manner when and if the pupil passes from the school to the university.

In other provinces, such as the province of British Columbia, even this nominal recognition has disappeared, and our children are actually receiving less instruction regarding God than the children of Japan or Turkey who are, I believe, instructed in the principles of Buddhism or of Islamism.

(3) It is not surprising, therefore, to find that with no national recognition of God, no national education for God, there should also be no national obedience to God.

The Dominion, as the Dominion, has forgotten the Commandments of God, forgotten or treated with disdain the Voice of Him Who spake these words and said, "I am the Lord thy God, thou shalt have none other gods but Me." Law, or at least the practical enforcement of law, has been based upon the principle of expediency not of moral right. The cruel, devilish evils of the white slave traffic have been allowed to grow, and little effort put forth to check or punish the principal wrongdoers; the evils of intemperance have been too long sustained because of the power of the liquor interests; gambling, betting, raffling and such like suffered, albeit forbidden by statute; a growing disregard for the sacredness of the Lord's Day has been a marked feature of the period corresponding with our Confederated life; social and economic conditions have arisen which could have been restrained had we been governed by Christian statesmen instead of self-seeking politicians; whilst a code of political morality has grown up which is at once utterly degrading to the national welfare, and attended in days of national peril by consequences which may result in the most acute sufferings to the vast majority of our population.

Alas! we cannot on this our jubilee honestly confess that we have been true to the Lord our God, or that our Dominion throughout its early days of national life has in any true sense been God's Dominion.