

The Present Outlook

Extracts from the Charge of Archbishop Matheson to the Synod of Rupert's Land.

THE distressful years of the war, sending as they have done the messenger of death into not a few homes, have produced an increased seriousness among our people, an added sense of the reality and the value of prayer and of our dependence upon Almighty God. The comfort also which has come from the ministrations of the Church when hearts have been mellowed by sorrow and by separation, has done not a little to restore a proper appreciation of the place of religion in the lives of our people. To me, at all events, there have been distinct signs of a revival of religion. Wherever I have gone, congregations have been much better than they used to be, and in the services there has been present an indescribable something which has been new, a quickened earnestness, a greater responsiveness to the simple story of the Gospel message.

CHURCH UNION.

At every Synod held recently the subject of Church Union has been much to the front, and I suppose that you will expect a reference to it from me. It is needless to state that never, perhaps, since Christendom became divided has there been among Churchpeople a greater yearning for coming closer together than there is at present. There are many reasons for this. Even before the war, the desire was growing in volume and in earnestness, and the war, as we know, has quickened it to an incalculable degree. The result is that almost everywhere conferences are being held among men of goodwill and discussions as to possible bases of union are going on. The Church in the Motherland under authority from the Archbishops has had a committee of outstanding Anglicans meet with representatives of non-Episcopal Churches and the Interim Reports which they have issued as to the tentative conclusions arrived at are most encouraging. Our own General Synod also took up the subject with warm interest last September and the House of Bishops passed the following resolution bearing on the question:—

"That His Grace, the Primate, appoint a Committee to enter into 'conversations' with representative men from among the Presbyterians, Methodists, Congregationalists and Baptists on the subject of the Interim Reports of the Sub-Committee appointed by the Archbishops of Canterbury and York's Committee, and by representatives of the English Free Church Commissions in connection with the proposed World Conference on Faith and Order, and to report to this House."

"It was understood that each Bishop in his own Diocese should enter into such 'conversations' where possible, and report to the Primate as Chairman of the Central Committee."

I have thought that the Synod should be officially apprised of the steps so far taken by our Church in Canada, and in the meantime, I would venture to recommend that our people be content to entrust the dealing with this profoundly important, and, I may add, extremely delicate question, to the Supreme Councils of the Church. I can assure the Synod that while there is a consuming desire on the part of our Church in favour of Union, no precipitate action will be taken. My own view is that after the Church in Canada has wisely and prayerfully investigated the possibilities of a closer coming together of the different Churches, its representatives will convey the findings arrived at to the Lambeth Conference which takes place next year and will abide by the decisions of the whole Anglican Communion. To my mind, individual action in the interval is neither prudent nor in the interests of an ultimately wise solution of the question. Individually let us by all means be kindly, and do all in our power within legitimate limits to sweeten our relations with other Christian people and to understand their viewpoint; but by all means when we do act, let us act collectively and officially. My own attitude of sympathy to the movement is well known, but I have always deprecated

"short cuts" to our desired objective. When we look up to the "heights" of our desires and longings, just because those heights appear inviting and delectable, we must remember that they are to be attained not by one flight but by steps, and I may add, by steps which must be wisely and slowly built.

THE FORWARD MOVEMENT.

Another action of the General Synod of profound importance to the future well-being of the Church was the resolution to institute during this year a campaign for a great Forward Movement throughout the Church in the whole of the Dominion. For two reasons, I desire to make some reference to this; in the first place, in order to correct some erroneous impressions which have grown up in certain quarters regarding it, and in the second place, in order to impress upon the Church in Rupert's Land and in Western Canada generally, the importance of giving the Movement its unqualified and most earnest support. First, as to the impression that the Churches in this Movement are simply taking advantage of after-war conditions to make what has been termed "a sordid drive in quest of money;" that this, in other words, is their sole object. As Primate, and consequently in close touch with the origin of the Movement, I wish to say that this is entirely erroneous. On the contrary, the genesis of the whole movement is rooted in a spiritual impulse and not in one for mere material advantage. The discussions in the Synod in view of all that the world had gone through in the war, and in view of the clamant challenge to the Church of the living God to do its part in moral and spiritual reconstruction, those discussions, I repeat, created an atmosphere throughout the whole meeting that was tense with the desire really to do something and to do it at once. There seemed to grow up a determination not simply to lay out paths of promise, but paths of performance fruitful in progress. In short, there was born for the Church a new sense of stewardship and service for God and for good. The origin, therefore, of this Forward Movement, was as I have said, rooted in a spiritual impulse. That was its primary and paramount object. It was obvious, however, that in order to carry out spiritual ideals, proper equipment was an essential, and the provision for proper equipment meant the securing of financial means. A financial object was, therefore, deemed a necessity.

My second reason for referring to this subject is with a view to urging that the Church in the West should support the Movement with all its power. For its own sake, it should do this for the simple reason that considerably over half of the amount aimed at will be spent for work in the West. To begin with, if the enterprise succeeds and the objective is reached, all the Missionary Dioceses of the West will at once be relieved of the heavy annual cost of providing for their Indian Mission work. I am aware that there are many demands upon the Churchpeople of the Diocese at the present time, but in view of the uniqueness and urgency of this Movement; the biggest and most courageous (I would almost say, most audacious) enterprise ever put forth by our Church in Canada, I venture to plead with our people to exercise faith and throw themselves into the effort with zeal even to the extent of sacrifice.

EXTEMPORE PRAYER.

There is a resolution of the House of Bishops which I consider should be made known not only to the clergy but also to the laity of the Church. It is as follows:—

"Whereas the desire for legitimate and carefully regulated use of Extempore Prayer in the Services of the Church is found to exist amongst a considerable number of the clergy and lay members of the Church of England in Canada; we, the House of Bishops, recognizing the value of such freedom in prayer under due and proper safeguards, do hereby affirm that in our opinion the already existing right of each Bishop to sanction for use in his own Diocese Forms of Prayer supplementary to those contained in the Book of Common Prayer, can with advantage to the Church be extended in such measure as to permit the use of Extempore

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A Question of Practical Church Politics

SHALL WE REVIVE THE ST. ANDREW'S BROTHERHOOD?

THOSE who were present at the Forward Movement Convention last month will remember the very fervent appeal that was made by the Bishop of Fredericton on behalf of the St. Andrew's Brotherhood. The great convention also recently held in Detroit, has given it a new emphasis in the minds of Canadian Churchmen. We must not let the St. Andrew's Brotherhood die. Never was there a better time to give it new life. It stands for the primary conception of Apostolic Christianity. Its supreme object is the spread of Christ's Kingdom among men. It emphasizes the great thought of our personal accountability to God for others. No finer description of its objective could be given than those golden words of an earnest St. Andrew's Brotherhood worker of past days: "This is to be the thought that should inspire our lives, the thought of our own responsibility; that God has led us to be Christians, the best kind of men, the sons of God, and that He has given us the best work to do, and that work is to win the world to Christ."

It was over thirty years ago that a city Rector came to a young teacher of his Sunday School and as he handed over to him a dilapidated specimen of humanity, he said: "Do what you can for this man. You and your boys hedge him about somehow, and help to shore him up." And that young Churchman, a Chicago banker, Mr. J. W. Houghteling, with his young lads, tried to do what they could for that poor lost soul, how just before his wasted life flickered out, he spoke out at their Bible class one day, and said: "When I was a young man I belonged to a society of Andrew and Philip in the Episcopal Church in a distant city." They asked what that might be. And the poor old fellow said: "You remember that Andrew was the man who first found his own brother Simon, before he did anything else, and that Philip was the man, who first found his own particular friend, Nathaniel, before he found anybody else, and brought him to Jesus." And so as his poor wasted life flickered out, he threw the torch with failing hands, and these young men caught it to hold it high; and by the grace of God, they determined that they too would do what they could after the manner of St. Andrew and St. Philip. And so they started out. The St. Andrew's Brotherhood was launched, not in the excitement of a great convention, nor with the support of a great Church's organization, but as the humble tentative effort, of a brave young Churchman and a few lads of seventeen, who felt that what the Lord wanted them to do was not to win little girls, or influence old men, but just to go out after their brothers and friends and win them to Christ's Kingdom.

The first item of their programme was prayer. They greatly felt the need of God for they knew they could do nothing without Him; and though prayer was old, the power of prayer and the meaning of prayer, came to them with a new inspiration, and they put into the practise of their lives the inspiration of that glorious old, old power, which is forever new. The second item on their programme was equally simple. It was that of service. They were not heedless of the millions without God and without Christ in the score of heathen lands, but they felt that the insistent call for them was to plan and to do for the men right round them, within hearing of the Gospel and yet never stirring one foot to get nearer God. And so the St. Andrew's Brotherhood set out on its way with two very simple rules, and two very definite resolves; to pray every day and to make an earnest effort every week.

What they did has become a matter of history now. Those young enthusiasts, if they are still living, are men well advanced in life, and probably many of them have passed on to be before the throne of God and of the Lamb, where His servants shall serve Him and see His face.

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