

Canadian Churchman

Toronto, November 9th, 1916

The Christian Year

The 22nd Sunday After Trinity, November 19.

Is ignorance a sin? It is instructive to notice, in considering this question, that Nature punishes ignorance with the most unrelenting severity. The best of men who ignorantly makes his body the medium for short-circuiting a strong electric current, pays the same penalty as the most abandoned criminal. Ignorance of sanitary laws results in epidemics which slay their thousands, good and bad, with no discrimination. The Power which orders the destiny of man's terrestrial life treats ignorance with a like unsparing impartiality. A young man may be of unblemished moral character, but if through ignorance of certain laws or principles of living, he makes a wrong choice of vocation or blunders into an ill-advised marriage, he pays a life-long penalty to which there is no reprieve.

These facts are well recognized in secular life. Such ignorance is, indeed, often regarded as more or less culpable, and the unfortunate sufferer wins scant sympathy in consequence. But in religion all is changed. In this sphere ignorance is almost universally condoned. Saintliness and stupidity are not considered incompatible. A man may be very good, so it is thought, and yet remain, quite consistently, narrow-minded, ill-informed, ignorant.

But is this view correct, or is ignorance in the religious sphere also, culpable and wrong? We will not stop to consider that Socrates attributed all sin to ignorance, thereby making ignorance the root of all evil; it is more to our point to remark with what earnestness and with what frequency St. Paul urges the duty of wisdom upon his converts or prays for them, as in our "Epistle," that their love "may abound yet more and more in knowledge." Note, further, that Our Lord Himself accepted as the sum of all duty the old and inclusive Commandment to "love the Lord thy God with all thy heart and . . . with all thy mind."

Ignorance, then, in the religious sphere, is a sin; and we may well ask ourselves what are some of the chief ways in which this sin is sinned in our day and generation among Christian people.

Mark briefly three modes of culpable ignorance. There is first the almost universal lack of any serious attempt to study Christianity. Novels are read; magazines are devoured; but books that shed light upon the Sacred Page, or that help to make Christ more real, or which tell the story of the agony and failure and triumph of the Church Militant here in earth, are largely left to those whose profession is supposed to give them a taste for such reading. These things ought not so to be.

But there are some who read. What, however, do they read? Too often only books that come from their own school of thought. They may even keep a sort of private "Index Expurgatorius" of dangerous books, fearing the effect on themselves of the vision of another point of view. Truth so easily disturbed is indeed in a precarious position. Hence, so often, narrow outlooks, prejudices, and minds shut up to a very tiny corner of the great God-given universe of knowledge.

But chiefly, surely, by "knowledge," the Apostle meant that knowledge of God and of

(Continued on page 712.)

Editorial Notes

The Moosonee Appeal.

At the recent meeting of the M.S.C.C. Board the statement was made that the total amount required by the diocese of Moosonee for rebuilding purposes had been secured. To make quite certain that this was correct we went to the trouble of writing the Bishop, and while the amount given to date will perhaps be sufficient for the immediate present, it is far from being enough even to replace the buildings destroyed. The estimate given by the Bishop, immediately following the fire, is much too small, as greater restrictions regarding the material used in the buildings are being enforced in several centres in order to guard against future fires, and it was, in any case, impossible for the Bishop to know, when this estimate was made, just what would be needed. The losses of our missionaries are, moreover, a serious matter, as those who read the news item in this issue regarding Archdeacon Woodall's experience will realize. We earnestly trust, therefore, that contributions to this fund will continue to be sent in, either to this office or direct to the Bishop at Cochrane.

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All Saints' Cathedral, Halifax.

Those who were privileged to attend the Canadian Church Congress at Halifax a few years ago, and be present at the opening of All Saints' Cathedral in that city, will rejoice to learn that the latter has been cleared of debt. The building is, of course, as yet incomplete, but even that portion that has been erected is a noble looking pile. It will be connected for all time in the minds of Church people with the great man at the head of the Church in the oldest of our Canadian dioceses, who has laboured untiringly to bring about the present happy condition of affairs. The secret of his success has been his boundless faith and his world-wide vision so well illustrated by his missionary message at the evening service on October 29th. It has carried him over many difficulties and his success should be a great stimulus not only to his own diocese but to the whole Canadian Church.

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Payment of Clergy.

The letter in the Correspondence Column in last week's Churchman on this subject, ought to set people thinking. The writer, himself a missionary of several years' standing in one of our Canadian dioceses, is in a position to speak from first-hand knowledge. We hear a very great deal these days about the increase in the cost of living. How many of our Church members have stopped to consider what this must mean to our clergy, whether in the mission fields or in parishes where only a paltry six or eight hundred dollars is paid? We are asking men to minister to our spiritual needs and are in many cases practically starving them. We expect them and their families to preserve a respectable appearance, to entertain strangers, to help every charitable object that comes along. They are, moreover, expected in many cases to own a travelling outfit, or at least to pay for the hire of such. These, together with fuel, clothing and food, are somehow or other to be provided, and yet it is said that clergy are not good financiers. There is one thing certain, there must be a good financier somewhere near at hand, and if it is not the clergyman it must be his noble, self-

sacrificing wife. The editor of this paper has had abundant opportunity during recent years to see something of the home life of our clergy and he does not hesitate to say that there is to be found nowhere a more self-sacrificing class than they and their wives. We are living today under particularly trying conditions. Let us see to it for our own sakes, if for nothing higher, that our clergy and their families are not made to endure unnecessary suffering and privation.

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Armenian Relief.

One of the saddest of the many sad conditions created by the present war is that of Armenia. A simple, peace-loving, agricultural people have been driven from their homes, slaughtered by thousands, and the remnant left to serve as slaves to their Moslem rulers, or driven into exile. Lord Bryce, in a speech in the House of Lords, described their sufferings in language that must have touched the hearts of all his hearers, a speech full of facts gleaned from first-hand witnesses. The men and boys from fifteen to seventy years of age were deliberately slaughtered and the older men, women and children were deported. The latter were allowed to take little with them and were even prevented from having water for drinking or washing. One instance is given where out of a total population of 15,000, men, women and children, 6,000 men and boys were killed at once, and the remainder, after being ranged on the bank of a river, were shot and their bodies thrown into the river. In the midst of our peace and apparent safety in Canada let us remember that a thanksgiving that does not get beyond one's own selfish welfare is no thanksgiving whatever. Such people are like the publican of Bible story. True thanksgiving will lead us not only to be grateful for the blessings we enjoy but what is more important, to endeavour to extend those blessings to others. May God awaken in this country a keener sense of the opportunities placed within its reach of feeding the starving souls and bodies of those less fortunate in other parts of the world.

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Church Union.

The Church of England no longer enjoys alone the distinction, or rather the misfortune, of having two fairly distinct elements within its fold. The cleavage in the Presbyterian Communion, as the result of the union movement, has become very pronounced, and threatens to become more so. It is not in the Scotch make-up to yield readily, and while the old Scotch characteristics have doubtless been modified somewhat through life in another land, still the determination manifested by those opposed to union with the Methodists and Congregationalists under the conditions laid down, is evidently not of the kind that can be easily overcome. A conference of the opposition leaders was held in the city of Toronto recently for the purpose of sizing up the situation and of making their plans for the future. Among these leaders were many strong men who must wield considerable influence, although time alone will tell the extent of this. We have already expressed regret that such a cleavage should have taken place, particularly at this time, and we sincerely trust that the breach may be healed. Dissension injures not only those immediately concerned but brings discredit to a greater or less degree upon all Christian bodies.

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