

Canadian Churchman

Toronto, August 30th, 1917.

Editorial

The Returned Soldier

HIS POSSIBILITIES

"Axes to grind! Axes to grind!" If the returned soldier has axes to grind he is in the same class as many eminent citizens who have initials before and after their names. In our opinion he has a right to the use of the grindstone for a while, because he has done more for the country than bearing up under a load of honours. Cohesion is necessary for the united action of the returned men. It is what they most lack. Grinding axes has proved an effective motive of combination for political parties. It ought to prove effective for the returned men.

Loads of axes ought to be ground. The returned soldier is not getting the justice, let alone the consideration, he ought to get from the country. The mills of the gods may grind slowly but they are exceeding the speed limit in comparison with the government. Not yet has the Dominion even announced any scheme of land grants for the returned men. Many of them are anxious to settle out West. Ontario is the only province which has a scheme of teaching by experimental farm colonies and afterwards settling the men on the land. It is a start but it is inadequate, for two hundred men were on the waiting list by July. You ought to hear what some of the returned men who have been farmers all their lives say about the possibilities of getting a living off the ten acres which the government clears while you whack away at the other seventy of the grant still in bush. There has been passed some time ago a regulation that the returned man is to get a gift of three months' pay (\$100) in instalments on his discharge. It is a good thing. It saves a man's face if he has a bit to carry on with until he gets work. But the really important point is the money and not the announcement, and the boys are still betting on what discharged man will be the first to get the money.

The subsistence allowance which a returned soldier gets when he is an out patient from the hospitals is sixty cents. Even going to Chinese joints, could you get food and bed for sixty cents a day? When a soldier goes home as an out patient, the patriotic allowance to his wife stops, because he is getting subsistence (60 cts.). She has another mouth to fill, and a big one at that, on just what she was getting during his absence. *But he can't work, surely!* That is just what he cannot do as an out patient, or he is liable to lose his pay (that generous pay of \$1.10 a day) for the period and get fourteen days "confined to barracks" when he comes back to the hospital. There is an axe that needs grinding. And it will be ground with a double edge, we shall find out some day. "The Returned Man will look after the Returned Man." That is the slogan now.

We have had the problem for two years and we are still in the experimental stage. Soon the U.S.A. Republic will be teaching us lessons on the question. Plans for a \$5,000,000 hospital for returned soldiers at Chicago are being prepared. There will be 3,000 beds. \$3,000,000 is to be spent on the hospital

proper and \$2,000,000 on the convalescent homes and the equipment of Vocational Training Schools.

As a political force the action of Returned Men will not be confined to looking out for themselves, if we read the signs correctly. They have definite views regarding the possibilities of this country and having risked their all for the country they are entitled to have their views considered. At the present time we sorely need a strong force which will drive directly on our only objective, "win the war." We need a lead free from obscuring side issues "Hew to the line," no matter who gets in the way of the axe—titles, politicians, capitalists. We need legislators who know not the voice of the big interests as their master.

The returned soldier can be a great factor in the political regeneration of our country, if he does not sell himself.

In the industrial and business world we look for the returned soldier to play a reforming part. There are some people whom the war irritates because they cannot fall back into their former life of enjoyment and ease. "Business as usual" is a motto which, please God, will never again come into being, if usual business means the exploitation of the poor by the rich and free rein to the greed of men. The men who have fought for their homes have the right to say that the homes shall be worth fighting for. The "submerged tenth" have discovered that it pays the country to feed, clothe, shelter, arm and pay them for the purpose of defence. They have realized their value. May God grant that they will never again submit to conditions which make life a hell and heaven a mockery.

In the religious world we need the clear-eyed vision of Christian men who have found Christ sufficient for the temptations of the camp and field, who have found Him all-sufficing for the hour fraught with death. We want Christianity, not churchianity. We want a living body, not a galvanized corpse. We want to strike from us the shackles of a system which has left the slum conditions of our magnificent cities to be explained by platitudes or relieved by charities. We must realize that religion is the man's dealings with God and God's dealing with the man. Judging by the rate at which some ecclesiastics are excluding from heaven the men who have never uttered their "shibboleths," there will be some excellent company outside heaven. There is just a danger lest the servant be not more zealous than his master. "In as much as ye have done it unto one of the least of these My brethren" are the terms of the Master's admission to the elect. The world's freest and noblest spirits pass in under that word.

Efficiency must be the watchword of the Church. We shall have to "scrap" a lot of old equipment and change our methods. Siege emplacements were left behind in the first year of the war. The battle line moved out into the open. The effective Church will not rely on the thunder of big guns for defence but will get down into close grips. We look for the men and chaplains who have found Christ and His salvation stand all tests to come back and give us a clearer vision of His truth and power. We want the vigorous movement and keen discernment of the Returned Christian Soldier in the Church.

The Christian Year

The 14th Sunday after Trinity, Sept. 9, 1917

Three Christian duties are inculcated in the Collect, Epistle and Gospel for this Sunday:—

1. "To love that which Thou dost command." It is a very profitable thing to remind ourselves that it is our duty to love that which God commands. Indeed, one of the secrets of failure is often just this, that we do not love goodness more than evil. "Where your treasure is, there will your heart be also." We must set ourselves to the work of loving goodness and the things that please God. We must place before us the beauty and the glory of the perfect Will of God, than which there is nothing so beautiful and desirable in all the Universe. This should be one of the exercises of our spiritual life—the realizing the loveliness of God's Will, and the glory of His Commands, and the submitting of our wills to His Will. It is by loving His Commands that we become capable of entering into the glory of His fulfilled promises. "Give unto us the increase of faith, hope, and charity; and, that we may obtain that which Thou dost promise, make us to love that which Thou dost command."

2. "Walk in the Spirit." Here is another message from St. Paul regarding the old, yet ever new problem of how to be good. What a problem that is! How universal, how baffling sometimes, how terribly difficult—"for the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; and these are contrary, the one to the other; so that ye cannot do the things that ye would." Who does not know this problem? St. Paul's word is, "Walk in the Spirit!" "Walk!" The word suggests the daily pace; day by day, hour by hour, we are to live in the Spirit, cultivating with the patience with which we perform the every-day duties, the things of the Spirit. Yes, a walk—this means continuing in the every-day prayers and meditations, in the use of the ordinary services of the Church, leaving the extraordinary and the specially uplifting to come as they may, but meanwhile walking in the Spirit, day by day, in quiet patience and steadfast hope.

3. "And one of them, when he saw that he was healed, turned back, and with a loud voice glorified God, and fell down on his face at His feet, giving Him thanks." What privileges we miss, what blessings never come, what weakness remains within, all because we are not thankful enough. Thankfulness is a means of grace itself. Thankfulness is the opening of a little door in the heart through which can enter Angels of God's mercy. He who is seldom thankful is shutting himself out from blessing. We must give a large place to praise and thanksgiving. Are our lives spiritually poor and weak? Let us try the tonic of Praise. "And He said unto him, Arise, go thy way; thy faith hath made thee whole."

There is a frankness which is brutal, and I detest it; a frankness which is indiscreet, and I fear it; a foolish frankness, and I pity it. There is also a frankness which is opportune, delicate, good. Honour to it.—Joseph Roux.

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