

Canadian Churchman

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Editorial

FIVE years ago the world had its dreams of peace shattered by the unbelievable. Is that what you say? Would it not be truer to say that five years ago the utter impossibility of world peace on the existing bases was suddenly revealed by a nation cruelly following the world spirit to its logical issue. Suspicion was the motive and espionage the method dominating world politics. Men put up with it because they thought it the only possible way. No one was satisfied with it except those who had axes to grind.

Not until Germany's effrontery dedicated to Gott her sword red with the innocent blood of Belgium did we realize how utterly futile were all the forces of man's mind to hold in check his passions and lusts. Pledges and conventions were as tow on the arms of a giant. True enough we curbed the beast at last but it was a long last. The madman had run amuck and destroyed and despoiled.

No one can bring himself to believe that wars and rumours of wars are God's eternal purpose for mankind. God has not mocked man by the promise and vision of a new creation in Christ Jesus. By the grace of God we may grow to the fullness of stature of a perfect man. It is not unattainable by God's will but by the weakness of our own wills. The difficulty with which we persuade ourselves that anything unprofitable is right, and the relief with which we leap to action when the profitable and the right are identical reveal the unsuspected degree of the weakness of our wills.

One of the most hopeful signs for humanity was the abandon with which the best of our manhood during these last five years flung themselves into the fight for the things that mattered most. Life under better conditions or a bare six feet of earth was the only reward that they could reap. Which ever it was, they invested a life for a better world and no one can do more. But it took Germany's hideous revelation of whither we were all drifting, to arouse us to fight for our spiritual birthright which our fathers had won through generations of vigilance and strife.

Better things can come only by deliberate planning, which is another way of saying by working according to God's will. That is a fight more difficult than defeating Germans, for our enemies are within the gates.

There are many who frankly desire the old wine saying that the old is better. To settle back into the old habits and conditions would be rest enough for them, after the grim business of war-making. Theirs is the unreasoning conservatism, which forgets that the old has gone forever. In this war some men have been shocked into thinking for themselves. The man who had realized that it paid the country to look after his family and to feed, clothe, arm and transport him as part of a fighting unit is not going to put up with the old hand-to-mouth existence. He has realized his value, his "selfhood." He is certain that the new wine is better because he never had a chance to taste the old.

Both these groups are selfish, unconsciously, and pardonably so but none the less selfish. And it is selfishness which will destroy the possibilities of the new as it has ruined the old. Brotherhood in the mouth of one group means patronage, in the mouth of the other group it means spoilation.

The world is bound to be a new world but whether it be a better one depends on getting these two groups to think together for the right interests of all must be assured. The parts can

have true meaning and function only through the whole. To get these to think together in spite of prejudices and suspicions is the task to which Christians must set themselves. Utterly useless will be our efforts unless we are willing to allow our own lives to be used in exposition of His will and the power of His Spirit. Those who have caught the vision of a new world wherein dwelleth righteousness and peace must bear the travail of its birth.

INTIMATE knowledge gained by years of faithful missionary service is the basis of DEACONESS A. L. ARCHER'S article on Japan. The facts which she gives will be the ground for reaffirming opinions some of us have had for some time regarding social conditions. Her statement regarding Factory Life should awaken to renewed work and prayer. Christians at home who have not realized the practically fatal obstacles to any approach to Christian living by converts in such conditions. Most important is the conclusion forced by Miss Archer's article, that Japan is still in need of evangelization. The day of opportunity is passing but is not past. The strategic place of Christian social effort as an unmistakable exposition of Christianity and as a crying need is clearly set out.

SOME of the special difficulties of the mixed nationalities and religions in Poland arising from her history of subjugation to various conquerors is sharply revealed in this week's chapter on "The Heart of Poland." You may or may not agree with what MR. W. J. ROSE says about Roman Catholics, but you must take his facts into your conclusion. His section on the Colonists is set against the background of the successive invasions of a country where the conqueror's heel has broken the body but has never broken the spirit of a dauntless people.

Those who have been following Mr. Rose's instructive articles will appreciate the point of the Open Letter (July 27th) to the Allies from the Polish Catholic Israelite Patriot Party protesting against Jewish autonomy in Poland, and particularly against the schools which it says: "raise a Chinese wall between citizens of the same country." Did you notice Mr. Rose's description of the Cheder School in the Warsaw Ghetto?

CAN it be that there are men to-day who are penalizing a workman because of four years absence overseas? From one thing we heard it seems like it. The manager of a shoe factory gave a returned man his former work back again at pre-war wages. The workman's complaint was met with the statement that the other workmen had had four more years training and were entitled to the higher scale. The returned man worked on for four months when he equalled the others in quantity and quality of work done and still the manager refused to pay at the rate the others were getting. We can stand some discrimination in favor of the man who kept our country's industries safe, but we certainly can stand none against him.

N.B.—If your copy of the Canadian Churchman does not reach you regularly, we shall be grateful if you will let us know.

The Christian Year

The Unrighteous Mammon (NINTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY)

TODAY'S Gospel contains a parable which, while clear enough in itself, is a source of much questioning and some criticism in the application our Lord gives to it: "Make to yourselves friends of the mammon of unrighteousness." The parable is made to apply to human nature at its commonest level. A steward is unfaithful to his trust; his master discovers it and threatens dismissal. The steward, before quitting his employ, uses the remaining opportunity of handling funds to his own advantage, by putting his master's debtors under obligation to him; and for this selfish providence secures his master's commendation.

THE UNDERLYING THOUGHT.

In the parable our Lord wishes to accentuate the extreme regard a man of business has for even the most unscrupulous exercise of the gifts of the craft; thus anticipating the exaggerated commercialism of the present age. But our Lord was really thinking of the supreme value of the soul, and the interest men ought to have in its life and sustenance, in comparison with these things that are but for a moment; and He was searching for some familiar and concrete means of approach, by which He might be able to convey at least a measure of this value to the intelligence of the man of the world. Why should not that commercial keenness and foresight which will go to any extreme to secure the good things of this world be enlisted in behalf of the life of the soul, which, when once realized, it is the part of providence to preserve from destitution and death? It is a reasonable argument. It does not appeal to the highest motive nor to the truest, but it is the only one many can understand, from which they may be led to an appreciation of the finer one. The desire to save one's soul is not, as has been frequently averred by those who have only a superficial knowledge of Christianity, a selfish thing. It is a day of high heroisms, and the Christian life appeals to the highest and best that is in us. The fact that the way of soul saving is the way of the Cross ought to silence forever any criticisms that may be levelled at Christianity on the ground of its inherent selfishness.

THE TERMS OF THE PARABLE.

The application our Lord makes of the parable would not have proved so great a stumbling block had He not used the terms "unrighteous mammon," which makes it appear as if He justified means by ends, and was prepared to condone unrighteousness under certain circumstances. As a matter of fact the word "mammon" means simply wealth, while the word unrighteous, as Dean Farrar points out, is used by way of metonymy, "because the abuse of riches is more common than their use." In this sense the parable teaches this: "You who can value at full measure prudence and foresight in matters of business, see that you make it your business to exercise a like caution with regard to your spiritual life. Turn your time, talent and energy, or, what is the equivalent, the money which time, talent and energy produce, to the security of your undying soul. Be not cautious and prudent in one thing while you are indifferent to, and neglectful of, another, which is of much greater personal interest and importance to you. Let not the children of this world be wiser in their generation than the children of light, "Seek first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness and all other things will be added to you."