

Canadian Churchman

Toronto, August 22nd, 1918.

The Christian Year

The Fourteenth Sunday After Trinity,
September 1st, 1918.

The last fault most men care to acknowledge is ingratitude. The last thing we would wish said of us is that we are ungrateful—that we have no appreciation of the kindnesses that we have received. The sin of ingratitude is more common than we think and, like every sin, is not only unworthy of a Christian but has its penalty. The Holy Gospel illustrates how common the sin is. When we think of it about only "one in ten" return to give glory to God by "giving Him thanks" for mercies we receive. Think of the small place that thanksgiving has in the devotion of most people! Petitions and intercessions abound, but praise and thanksgiving fill but a small place.

We have every reason to pray—our needs are many and our difficulties and sorrows great—but what manifold reason is there for thanksgiving! "Count your blessings," "think and thank." Begin with the numberless unnoticed providences which follow your daily "going out and coming in," and include in your survey all the dangers past by our Empire because of "the Good Hand of our God upon us and the matchless faith and devotion of our fellow countrymen."

The penalty of ingratitude is seen by the fact that the nine had their request granted—their immediate need supplied—but by not "returning to give thanks" missed the fuller knowledge of our Lord and His benediction. Nine were grateful for healing—one was grateful for healing and a knowledge of Christ. He had a new incentive and ideal for life. By his gratitude he rose to a higher plane of knowledge. In Romans 1. St. Paul suggests as the cause for man's degeneration his ingratitude—"neither were they thankful." Men took God's gifts for granted and sought not the Giver in His gifts.

Nothing will stop men from giving more quickly than ingratitude. God cannot give His best to the unthankful. Ingratitude stops more and higher gifts. Give thanksgiving a greater place in your prayers. You will look through your blessings to God and find from His goodness a greater incentive to earnest service. Count your blessings and you will be surprised how rich you will find yourself and how much happier you are. Let the spirit of the Holy Communion service enter more the spirit of your private devotions. "Let us give thanks unto our Lord God." "We most heartily thank Thee."

"By their fruits ye shall know them." In the Epistle, St. Paul suggests a way to test the reality of our religious lives. Do the virtues he speaks of as the "fruit of the spirit" manifest themselves in our characters? He directs us to the source of the Christian character—"the Holy Spirit." If a man "lack," let him ask of God "Who giveth His Holy Spirit to them that ask Him." Prayer is the secret for us of spiritual growth.

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The mightiest empires are destined to decay, and all their intellectual glories, all the triumphs of their literature and art will perish, too. But the restoration of men to God is an immortal work; it will endure when the heavens and the earth have passed away.—Selected.

Editorial

THE LABOUR OF SERVICE.

PERSONAL dignity is about the largest idea that can get into some people's heads. The heads are wooden and so the idea that finds lodgment there is wooden too. Their dignity consists in being "quite proper." They have not enough dignity to comport themselves well in a new situation so they must keep to the beaten track. "To earn one's bread by the sweat of the brow" is common. That is the chief article of mental furniture in their garrets. They would gasp if discovered at actual labour. One of their main concerns in life is to convey to all they meet that their forebears lived by the sweat of other men's brows.

The tribe of snobs and climbers and tuft-hunters cumbered the earth considerably before the war. Not so many are around now. Some have died from heart failure since the war on account of seeing earls and what-nots working with their hands like "common" people. Some are engaging in the pretence of labour because it is now quite the thing, but they affect just enough clumsiness to show that they are really not quite at home in "overalls." Others have been converted by a realization of the true dignity of labour.

One result of the war has been to force upon us the conviction that every man's work is necessary for the good of all, and that no work is common or unclean which ministers to the well-being of the people. Service is the standard of true greatness, as our Lord JESUS CHRIST taught us. Some day we shall be ready for the deductions from that proposition. He who serves has the only right to be served. Every one who serves has the right to perform that service under proper conditions of service. That means good shops, good wages, good homes, good clothing and good food for all workers in the vineyard of humanity. So contrary to Christ's teaching has the course of our history led us that now the "flower" of humanity blossoms blood-red from the life drawn out of those below.

The Church has always striven to relieve suffering and distress. Her task has been like the rescuing of victims from the path of a great boulder that crushes its way down hill to greater ruin. Not relief, but change, not charity, but justice must be the message of the Church. Truth and Righteousness not only among nations but also among men must be her challenge. Impartially to all she must say "a fair day's wage demands a fair day's work, and a fair day's work demands a fair day's wage."

On Labour Day, September the first, our pulpits should ring with the message of Christ. His principles have been working like a leaven through the world for nearly nineteen hundred years. Sometimes the leaven has worked most freely outside the Church. Afraid of her own message the Church seemed to be at times. Men have justly mocked her with the taunt that she knew not the Master she professed to serve, that she knew not of what spirit she was. Her concern was her own life and not the lives of men. The men of to-day must see to it that they are not craven-hearted but are bold to let the Spirit of Jesus have free play, for only thus shall the old sores of our world be healed.

CHAPLAINS from Canada on service overseas should not be forgotten by those charged with the responsibility of filling our important churches which fall vacant from time to time. We have never heard any complaint, but we can imagine a just resentment arising in the minds of men overseas if they observe that those who have stayed by the goods are settling down into all the best positions that fall vacant. It is not equitable that the man who got the opportunity to answer to the call of the strategic and necessary work of a chaplain to the Forces should lose his promotion because he is overseas on the King's service.

It may be said that the man who has endured the strain of service at home and missed the fascination of service overseas has a prior claim. We are not concerned with any comparisons. A man is a man wherever you put him and an excuse is an excuse no matter whether he is in khaki or a cassock. The only hope for our Church is for the men to be put into the chief positions. One of our bishops has set the excellent example of recalling chaplains from active service to preferment to important charges at home.

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OUR congratulations to the Honourable Dr. Cody on his first political victory. He has our best wishes for increasing service and usefulness in the task that has chosen him. After he has secured his seat by the fairly safe majority of 4,800, he will be able to square his elbows to the tasks of his office. That difficulties will beset the path of a Minister of Education in Ontario who will blaze a trail to needed improvements no one has any doubt, least of all the Minister himself. His grasp of the situation has already been shown in his acts of office and public utterances which have the hall mark of keen sighted ability which his friends have come to take for granted. After the matters of curricula, technical education, teachers' salaries and several other things which the general public know nothing about have been set right we hope the Minister will be able to give some place to Religious Education in the Schools. In fact, we hope this problem will not have to wait for the settlement of the several other things first. The course of discussion on the Education Bill in England would surely open the eyes of the blind to see the necessity of religious instruction having a proper place in our schools. And the clamour for the same thing among the Americans who have boasted of their breadth would open the eyes of one born blind.

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THE abundance of sacrifice and service which the sons and daughters of the Church are so freely giving overseas should not remain unknown. It is right that we as a Church should humbly thank God for their valour and devotion to King and country. Many of us would be grateful for the opportunity of entering into the joys of the honours won and most of all into the fellowship of prayer for the sorrows and troubles that come to those at home and overseas. We ask for the co-operation of our readers in making our new column, "On Active Service," a record of the devotion and sacrifice which we as churchmen ought to know.