

Canadian Churchman

Toronto, February 14th, 1918.

The Christian Year

The Second Sunday in Lent, February 24, 1918.

The power of evil met with the overcoming strength of the Conqueror, Our Saviour Christ, would seem to be the theme of the Second Sunday in Lent.

In the Gospel we are told of the girl who was "grievously vexed with a devil." It would seem as if evil were in full possession of her heart, manifesting itself in many dreadful ways. The mother in her great distress goes to Jesus Christ as He came into her country, "the coasts of Tyre and Sidon," and in spite of every apparent discouragement both from the disciples and from the Master Himself, refuses to be put off until she hears the words, "O woman, great is thy faith; be it unto thee, even as thou wilt." The power of evil is met by the power of good, and goodness proves the stronger for "her daughter was made whole from that very hour." The greatness and strength of goodness is something we should realize more than we often do. We stand discouraged in the presence of wickedness in ourselves and the world, assuming it to be so strong that it is useless to try to overcome it. Such should not be the attitude of those who believe in the Conqueror of sin, the Victorious Hero of the Wilderness of Temptation, the One before Whose face the powers of Hell flee away. We should lay to heart the confident words of St. Paul in to-day's Epistle, "We beseech you, brethren, and exhort you by the Lord Jesus, that as ye have received of us how ye ought to walk, and to please God, so ye would abound more and more." It is true that we cannot, in the presence of evil, too much mistrust our own strength, but it is also true that we cannot too much trust His strength, Who in the wilderness wrestled with and overcame all the powers of darkness and Hell. He is a Saviour, Who can at a word banish all those enemies which surround the citadel of the soul.

In the Collect we have a prayer which should put us in the right attitude in which He can overcome evil in us. We throw ourselves on Him in faith acknowledging our own inability. "Almighty God, Who seest that we have no power of ourselves to help ourselves." The clause would seem to call up before our eyes the picture in the Gospel, the poor Syro-Phenician woman at the Saviour's feet crying, "Lord, help me." She is invincible in her helplessness; in her knowledge of her complete dependance upon Him for help, she is a type of those who through the ages come to Him in faith. It is such dependance, persistence, and faith, which win from Him the overcoming word, "O woman, great is thy faith, be it unto thee, even as thou wilt."

No gentle word is ever spoken that Christ's voice does not also speak; no meek deed is ever done that the unsummoned Vision does not there and then appear.—Henry Drummond.

Whosoever has not yet made up his mind about the great principles of religion, because he has not yet examined whether religion is certain or problematical—whosoever finds himself in this doubt, should have no more fervid business than that of ascertaining the truth.—Saurin.

Editorial

THE GOSPEL OF HATE.

Conan Doyle, the well-known novelist, is making an unenviable name for himself in England. First, as an advocate of an easy method of securing divorces, and later as a preacher of the "Gospel of Hate" towards Germany, he is the mouthpiece of a by no means small section of the English people. Nor are those who agree with him, at least in his later rôle, confined to the British Isles, as is evidenced by a column in one of our foremost Canadian dailies by one of its leading contributors. The Bishop of Winchester, who ventured to dissent from his proposal, is described by the above writer as having come off second best in the argument, and it is stated that the British Government "could follow no truer patriot, no man with a better understanding of the commonsense of the average man who speaks the English language."

The gist of the argument is that it is "useless to quote Christ while carrying on a war." He refuses to see "the distinction between hating the sin and hating the sinner." He claims that the Germans have recognized from the beginning of the war, and prior to it, the value of inculcating in soldiers and civilians alike, a hatred for their enemies, and he would have a propaganda carried on throughout England for the purpose of developing a similar spirit of hatred on the part of the British towards the Germans.

His doctrine is that, in order to fight successfully a soldier must hate his enemy. It is not unfair, however, to place side by side with this the statement of no less a man than General Byng, the hero of the November drive on the Western Front, who said: "Give me Christian young men. They endure the monotony better than non-Christian men, and their valour is unequalled in the hour of crisis." Which of the two is the more likely to be correct? If it is brutality that Conan Doyle wants, his doctrine is doubtless the correct one. If, however, it is courage, steadfastness, unselfish devotion to a just cause, loyalty and obedience to leaders, patient endurance under all conditions that is desired, experience has shown beyond the shadow of a doubt the absolute hollowness of such a doctrine. To be consistent, he would remove all Christian influences from our men at the front. The Word of God would be a closed book. The partaking of the sacrament before going "over the top" would be eliminated. In place of prayer, there would be thoughts of hate, and men would go into the presence of their Maker with cursing in their hearts.

Apart from all these facts, which we humbly suggest Conan Doyle and his friends should think over seriously, we ask how long such a doctrine would hold the forces of the Allies together? What was it rallied these around a common cause and is holding these forces together to-day but the belief that the cause was and is in harmony with God's will which is Christ's will? What is it but this very doctrine that we are fighting to-day? What right has he to construe the words of Christ as meaning that even when divine interests are at stake we are to sit down and let the enemies of God ride rough-shod over us? Let him not forget that like begets like, and that there will be a reaping after the war from the seeds sown during its progress. If he wishes to destroy the

unity of the Allied cause, if he wishes to propagate adultery with all its horrid brood, if he wishes to make the restoration of a rightful and abiding peace impossible and to drag the good name of England down into the stinking mire, let him and those who are supporting his unpatriotic, unmanly and ungodly propaganda, so influence "the powers that be" in Great Britain that they will follow his leading. Canada will not follow it, and we do not believe that the United States or even the Motherland will follow it.

The Children's Number of the Mission World reflects great credit on those responsible for it. It is attractive in appearance, has plenty of variety in the character of its reading matter, and has a good supply of illustrations. It deserves the hearty support of all members of the Church.

It has been well said that self-denial does not necessarily mean the depriving oneself of certain articles of food or certain kinds of pleasure. It may mean the doing of something usually left undone. The season of Lent is with us once more and it cannot be a difficult matter for each of us to discover some way in which we can make it of real value. We can all make a definite effort to make our religion a deeper reality in our every-day conduct. Unreality and cant are keeping scores out of the Church.

The three "heatless days" in Central Canada have apparently been a decided success. To help the situation, the weather showed the first decided inclination of the winter to be mild. Altogether it must have meant the saving of several thousand tons of fuel which are needed badly. Seldom, if ever, have Canadians been compelled to undergo greater suffering from cold, and it should prove conclusively the need of greater foresight and greater co-operation on the part of all.

It has been announced officially that United States troops are holding a sector of trenches in the Lorraine area of France and that they have already been bombarded heavily by the enemy. Our neighbour to the south has yet to go through the trying experience of long lists of casualties. We feel certain that her representatives at the front will do credit to themselves and their country and we believe also that those at home will show the same spirit of determination and the same staying power displayed by the other allied countries.

The statement of Sir Eric Geddes that "the submarine is held" is a most cheering message. It is childish to attempt to minimize the serious character of the destruction to the Allied shipping caused by German submarines. We have been told very little regarding the extent of this damage, but taking even the authorized figures of the Associated Press that the German claim of 9,000,000 tons is more than 50 per cent, too great, it still means that the quantity of food that otherwise would have been available for Great Britain and other allied countries in Europe has been seriously decreased. The First Lord of the Admiralty rightly gives warning that the number of ships must be increased if full advantage is to be taken of the success achieved thus far.

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