

Canadian Churchman

Toronto, January 31st, 1918.

The Christian Year

Quinquagesima Sunday, February 10th, 1918.

St. Paul, in the marvellous passage which makes up to-day's Epistle, and upon which the Collect is founded, sets forth in language which cannot be misunderstood the utter worthlessness of even the noblest gifts and actions if they do not spring from love. The gift of tongues of men and angels without charity are as sounding brass, gifts of prophecy and faith, philanthropy and even martyrdom without love "profiteth me nothing." The strength and clearness of his statement should cause us to search into the hidden motives of our best actions, lest we should come short in this great essential.

If we were to stop with the opening words of the Collect we might well be discouraged—"all our doings without charity are nothing worth." But the Collect in the next clause shows us where and how to seek for the love which makes beautiful even our poor gifts and actions. We are to pray for love as a gift for us from God the Holy Ghost. Yes, this gift does not come from our poor natures; it has its origin in that glorious Person of the Godhead Whom we call the Holy Ghost. He, Who is the rich Giver of all good gifts, in Whose treasure house there are boundless resources, in the One from Whom we ask this greatest and best gift of love: "Send Thy Holy Ghost, and pour into our hearts that most excellent gift of charity." We are to remember, as we read on this Sunday of the glory and the power of love, of the worthlessness in God's sight of all human acts without it, of the supreme importance of that "without which whosoever liveth is counted dead before Thee," that it is something we cannot look for in our own natures as part, so to speak, of their essential equipment, but that rather we are to turn to God as suppliants of His bounty, seeking that which it is His will to bestow, and which is for us in its transfiguring power as a free gift of God the Holy Ghost Himself.

It is not by accident that this Collect and Epistle are given to us by the Church to use on the Sunday before Lent. We are looking forward in a few days to that season which is so fruitful of blessing and helpfulness to us. Lent with its privileges, opportunities and duties will soon be upon us. We thank God for Lent. It has been a great blessing to the Church. It gives to the Clergy a special opportunity; for the people are in a specially receptive state of mind, they are ready to come to Church more often to pay peculiar attention to what they are taught, and to listen with seriousness to the great and central themes of our religion. It is for us Clergy and people to make the most of this opportunity. As we make plans for our Services, for the delivering or listening to sermons and addresses, for acts of self-denial and self-discipline—let us all lay to heart the great message of the Sunday called Quinquagesima, and pray that that love, which is a gift of God the Holy Ghost, may be at the root of all our special praying, giving, teaching, fasting and worship, for without it all our Lenten discipline will be unavailing.

It is good to be children sometimes, and never better than at Christmas, when its mighty Founder was a child Himself.—Dickens.

Editorial

CHRISTIAN SERVICE.

The word Christian ought always to carry with it the idea of service, for it implies not only a certain form of belief but, as the natural and essential result of this belief, effort to help others. Unfortunately, however, there have been, and still are, those whose idea of Christianity is to a large extent tinged with selfishness. Whether they looked upon it as something that would enable them to save their own souls from hell-fire in the life to come, regardless of what might happen to the masses of human beings in the world, or as a bond of union in a community of individuals which must not be defiled by coming into contact with the wicked world outside, the idea of service was more or less alien to their minds. Beautiful buildings were erected and most elaborate services were provided. The outlook was, however, largely a selfish one, whether of the person or the community.

The development of the missionary conception of Christianity has done more than we can estimate, to correct this selfish outlook. It has gradually brought home to men and women the conviction that the true Christian spirit yearns to share with others the blessings that it enjoys, that selfishness and Christianity are contradictory terms and that "faith without works" not to gain merit for one's self but as the natural result of the faith, "is dead." The millions in heathen darkness provided a powerful appeal to the sympathies of mankind but even within the Christian Church the spirit of selfishness has fought strenuously for the supremacy.

The broader conception of Christian service that takes into account not only those in non-Christian lands deprived of the knowledge of the Word of God, but those in our very midst, the poor, the sick, the afflicted, the down-trodden, the drunkard, the outcast, and the still broader conception that includes not only the ills of the soul and body of the individual man or woman but also those of the community, and of the nation,—has not been fully grasped until recent years. And even yet those who realize the vital relation that exists between our Christian belief, and service for humanity under all conditions and in all occupations, are comparatively few in number. We are gradually learning that everything that affects the spiritual welfare of the human race must be taken into consideration by the Christian Church. The Son of Man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister. He went about doing good and even though He was the incarnate Son of God, He did not think it beneath Him to help a woman taken in adultery, or to cast out those who through their love of gain would defile the house of God.

Social service is not something separate from Christian service nor can it be substituted for it. To be enduring and effective all social effort must derive its inspiration and power from Christ and must never be made an end in itself. Its ultimate aim is to bring blessing to the souls of men not only in the life to come but in this life as well. It realizes the relationship that exists between soul and body, and the folly of overlooking economic, social, and political conditions in our effort to establish and extend the Kingdom of Christ on earth. It is a department of Christian service just as Missionary or Sunday School work is and as

such is worthy of adequate support. Difficult questions are facing the whole civilized world which cannot be solved satisfactorily without the influence of the Christian spirit being brought to bear upon them. It is our duty, therefore, as Christian men and women to take advantage of whatever opportunity presents itself, realizing that if we work in the right spirit we are doing true and laudable service for Christ and for our fellow men.

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We are unable to give the full returns of the M.S.C.C. for the past year, as promised last week, as they are not ready yet. We have learned, however, that 83¼ per cent. of the grants to Canadian work can be paid; about 95 per cent. of the grants to Foreign work, and 85 per cent. of the grants to Jewish work. For these same purposes there was paid last year 69½ per cent., 100 per cent. and 80¼ per cent., respectively. For the first time since the M.S.C.C. was organized, the Foreign work has shared the deficit with the Canadian work.

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Next Sunday, Sexagesima, is the day appointed by the General Synod of the Canadian Church for the consideration of the work of the Council for Social Service. The sum of \$7,000 is asked for in order to appoint a general secretary and to create the necessary machinery. Among the types of work to receive attention is that among returned soldiers. Other subjects, such as immigration and the disorganization of labour, are also emphasized. These are among the greatest and gravest problems confronting Canadians and if the Church is to retain the respect and confidence of its members it must take cognizance of these things.

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We are in receipt of a most useful little pamphlet issued jointly by the General Secretary of the M.S.C.C. and the President of the General Board of the Woman's Auxiliary. It gives in detail a list of the grants voted by the Board of Management, M.S.C.C., and by the W.A., to the various dioceses in Canada, to work among Jews, to work among Orientals in Canada, to miscellaneous objects in Canada, and to work abroad. The totals for Canada, including Jewish and Oriental work and miscellaneous, are: M.S.C.C. Board, \$104,100.33; W.A., \$57,674; and totals for the work abroad are, M.S.C.C. Board, \$66,942.00; W.A., \$46,237.00. The pamphlet should serve a very useful purpose and should be distributed widely.

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The Canadian Food Controller has resigned and his successor has been appointed. We have never been able to agree with much of the criticism levelled at Mr. Hanna. He occupied a most unenviable position in the difficult task of trying to persuade the people of Canada that it was absolutely necessary to economize in certain staple articles of food. He stood between the producer and the consumer, each of which was interested in seeing that his own special interests were interfered with as little as possible. He has set the machinery in motion and his successor will doubtless profit very materially by the experience and inevitable mistakes of his predecessor. If people were more concerned about doing their own share of economizing than in criticizing the official authorities, there would probably be better results.