

Canadian Churchman

Toronto, December 7th, 1916

The Christian Year

The Third Sunday in Advent, December 17th.

"The Christian Ministry"—what thoughts of boundless opportunity and uplifting responsibility the words should suggest. There is no single class of men to whom are granted such possibilities of moulding the thought and raising the spiritual tone and character of the community. The clergy possess a unique right of entry and welcome to the homes of the people; to them is entrusted the religious education of the children; it is they who are called in to share the deepest joys and sorrows of human life; and it is they who, last but not least, wield the immense potential power of the Christian Pulpit Sunday by Sunday in countless Churches throughout the world.

"The Christian Ministry"—such is its strategic position at the very centre of the springs of life. Has it, in fact, realized the results and accomplished the service which such an opportunity suggests? The answer must be that while much has been done, more has been left undone. "The ministry" which has been "received in the Lord" has certainly not been "fulfilled." The fruit, if "thirty-fold," has by no means reached the divine intention of "an hundredfold."

Consider the cause of this comparative failure, as far as that cause lies within the power of the Ministry itself. The hardness and intractability of the field to be worked, and all other outside causes and recalcitrancies do not come within the purview of our Sunday's meditation.

"Let a man so account of us, as of the ministers of Christ, and stewards of the mysteries of God." Here St. Paul paints the inspired ideal of the Ministry. All failure for which the Ministry is itself responsible, arises from the departure of the Ministry from its own sublime ideal. And what is that ideal? The apostolic words suggest the ideal, first for the man himself, who is called to the Ministry; and then, of his work. "Ministers of Christ"! The Greek word translated "ministers," while it had come to mean simply the servant or underling of some higher official, suggests, at least, its original sense of an "under-rower"—a man who, toiling at the oars of an ancient ship, took his orders, his time, and his swing from another. Transfer this conception to the spiritual sphere. "A Minister of Christ"—a man who takes not only every command, but the very rhythm of his being, from his peerless Master. "Ministers of Christ"—men whose lives are vibrant with the music and the motion and the melody of heaven! With what magic potency would such woo the world for Jesus! How incomparable the dynamic of that celestial lure!

"And stewards of the mysteries of God"—there we read the inclusive ideal for the sacred work. "Stewards"—men entrusted with a wondrous wealth that they may distribute it to those in need. And that wealth—"The mysteries of God." A "mystery" means, as is well known, in St. Paul's writings, a "Secret of God," which man by himself could never have known, but which has, by the Divine grace, been revealed. And that "Secret of God" is just Jesus—Christ, (see Colossians 2:2 R.V.)—the Word Incarnate, who in the fulness of time came forth from the Divine silence, for us men and for our salvation. "Stewards of the mysteries of God"—men

Editorial Notes

The Big Brother Movement.

The figures given by the Rev. T. G. Wallace in his letter re the Big Brother Movement should set members of the Church thinking. They emphasize what we have referred to already in these columns,—the need of greater effort on behalf of our boys. The large number of fathers at the front means a large number of boys without the control and discipline that only fathers can exert and the fact that the Church of England has provided a larger percentage of men than other Communion means, of course, a larger percentage of Church of England boys to be cared for. The Big Brother Movement works in co-operation with the Juvenile Courts and aims at being preventative as well as corrective. The Big Brother becomes the friend of the boy; visits his home, assists him in his work, in his games, and in every way in his power endeavours to lead him to form right habits and right ideals.

Communion Service and Morning Prayer.

A correspondent in last week's issue expressed regret that more had not been said in these columns regarding "live problems of to-day," and the question of substituting the Holy Communion service for Morning Prayer was referred to as one of these live problems. We must confess, however, that we cannot see exactly what great good is to be gained by a discussion of the subject. Considerable correspondence has been running in some of the Church papers in England on this question and it may possibly be a live problem there. It is possible, also, that it may become a problem here, but we earnestly hope not. The main difficulty we are facing is not the relative importance of this or that Church service, but the indifference on the part of large numbers of even Church members to any service whatever. To substitute the Holy Communion Service for Morning Prayer and eliminate the latter entirely, even once a month, will not, we are convinced, bring more people to Church. Much of the difficulty of the past has arisen from the fact that in some cases three full services, Morning Prayer, Litany, and Holy Communion, were held in succession.

commissioned to preach and to live Jesus Christ, and His redeeming and sanctifying work; men ordained and set apart by the Divine will "to know nothing but Jesus Christ and Him crucified," with all the boundless implications of that supreme fact; men, briefly, whose highest privilege it is to mediate to hungry hearts that divine Gospel which so marvellously meets the deepest cravings of the human spirit, and which opens channels down which can flow the regenerating dynamic of the Spirit of God. "Stewards of the mysteries of God"—men, who deal with the unfathomed depths of personality, and who so have their hands upon those unseen roots from which grow the spreading trees of the visible and social life.

"Stewards of the mysteries of God"! How far is this ideal actually descriptive of the work of our modern Ministry? Visit many a Church, listen to the sermon, and then fill in your description of the preacher. "A Steward of"—what? A most ingenious "steward of a popular topic"—so you would often have to

In the majority of cases the Litany was omitted but the full Morning Prayer taken. The custom of having a shortened form of Morning Prayer at the regular hour, followed by Holy Communion, has been growing in favour, and is, we believe, perfectly satisfactory to the vast majority. The Church is facing big problems that will tax to the utmost its united strength and to agitate changes in the hours of our services and to argue that this or that particular service is older or more important than others will result in taking people's minds away from the great questions, and will not produce the results hoped for. We sincerely trust, therefore, that the leaders in the Church will discourage any such tendencies no matter where they come from.

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"Give Us His Name."

One of the sanest methods in recruiting yet devised is that being employed by at least one Ontario battalion of asking people to send them names of eligible men who will be called upon. Apart from conscription, there seems to be only one way to get men to realize their duty. They must be made to feel that the reason they give for not enlisting meets with the approval not only of their own consciences, which are in many cases almost negligible quantities, but of their fellow men as well. Public opinion is always a powerful influence and when men find that, in the opinion of those who know them, it is their duty to change their place of abode, many of them will begin to consider the matter more seriously. When there is combined with this a personal interview by men who have already donned the King's uniform, a man who has a spark of self-respect or patriotism left in him must feel very uncomfortable until he has at least made the effort to enlist. It will, on the other hand, give him an opportunity of clearing himself of suspicion in case he has adequate reasons for not going. The system of indiscriminate button-holing of men on the streets is degrading to the whole cause. There are hundreds of men here yet who ought to go, but there are hundreds of others who would have gone in the early days of the war had it been possible for them to go, and they naturally resent being held up on a street corner by an eleventh-hour recruit who should be at the front.

write. Or an eager "steward of a popular patriotism," or a steward of some "ecclesiastical polemic," or of "socialism," or "internationalism," or of some other admirable thing—admirable on the platform or in the press, admirable also in Church, as the social expression of the Christian ethic, but out of place as the dominant and controlling message of the Pulpit. For the only way in which to realize these ideals for outward society is to purify, regenerate, uplift the inner life of men. And that can only be done by a proclamation of "the mysteries of God," even the "grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of the Father, and the fellowship of the Holy Ghost." The preaching which searches the conscience, which convicts of sin, which turns "the hearts of the disobedient to the wisdom of the just" by the mighty power of the Spirit, which uplifts Jesus as Saviour and Lord—this is the preaching which, by moving the individual, moves the world, and so prepares and makes ready the way for the Coming of the King.

Cost of Living.

a significant and gratifying that while the cost of every else in the line of necessity gone up—the price of one of chief necessities of all—Life rance—has gone DOWN. those looking for the best able in Life Insurance, it is cient to point to the fact for nine successive years ublic have shown that they nder The Great-West Life ies unequalled. For nine essional years The Great- Life has written the lar- Canadian Business of all Companies.

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