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Notes and Comments

A Matter of Bright Lights

The pros and cons of town and country life have been debated from time immemorial. In our days the exodus from the farms to the cities speaks more eloquently than anything else of the preference of the young folk, at any rate. However, perhaps we should not be too critical at this hour, when the problems are so great. Farming is not a short-time occupation. Farmers are inclined to look ahead more from year to year. And so they ask, what of the future? The announcement by the hydro-electric Power Commission that there will be no further extension of rural lines has come "as a distinct shock to many."

The farmer goes to town and sees the blaze of illumination in the streets. True there is a promise that this is going to be checked and that city dwellers will be required to economize in their consumption of electricity. In the meantime, the irritation of the farmer who, after long waiting, was at last seeing his way clear to acquire this invaluable addition to the comfort of his home and the convenience of his agricultural life, now finds himself deprived of that hope, is understandable.

A further case for the farmer even though it may be far-fetched was put forth only last week by Deputy-Reeve Hooper of Markham Township who claimed that the hydro restriction was almost as serious as the labor shortage, and cited cases where farmers have been forced to sell their cattle because they were unable to obtain electric power to alleviate the labor shortage.

Already a committee has been appointed in North York to protest this matter to the Hydro Commission, and it would seem that unless the promises of the authorities to cut down on the heavy city wastage are speedily fulfilled there will be many more such protests received.

Freight Assistance On Feeds for the Farm

Farmers in Eastern Canada are now benefiting from the Freight Assistance policy of the Dominion Government which makes Western grains, millfeeds and feed screenings available to them with virtually no freight charges east of Fort William and Port Arthur. This assistance amounts to \$4.50 per ton within the Montreal freight rate zone, which includes most of Ontario and part of Quebec, and beyond this zone the balance of the through carlot freight charges are also paid. This freight assistance not only applies to direct movements of grain and millfeeds from Western Canada to consuming centres but also to Western grains which have been in store in Eastern Canada since early last summer.

The plan is being carried out in a manner to ensure that farmers get the full benefit of the freight assistance with a minimum of inconvenience to themselves. Only when a farmer buys and has delivered direct to himself from Western Canada carlots of feed he is required to submit a claim for the freight assistance. In all other cases the manufacturer or dealer is required to make the claim and to pass the benefits to the farmer in the prices which he charges. The

What Is A Christian?

People, free people who are still able—and many more than we know among those who have been subjugated to a foreign power in Europe, too are thinking straighter and more fundamentally today than they have for at least a decade or two past. The sudden turns in world events, the staggering march of event that less than two years ago the majority of us would have called impossible, have set us back on our heels, so to speak, and forced us to take stock—of life itself.

Breathes there a man in Canada today whose soul so dead or brain is so blinded as not to have seen the significance of events of the last two years, and that man is, either a fool or is mentally ill. More and more these days, men and women are asking, "What makes one a Christian?"

Through the mails the other day came a reprint of a rather pointed article from the front page of "The (British) War Cry," official organ of the Salvation Army in Great Britain. Incidentally, we are told that that little publication, too, bears the scars of war. Instead of being a paper of twenty or thirty pages as it normally is, it has for a year or more now been down to four pages, including front and back.

The article, headed "What Makes a Man a Christian?", and written by Salvation Army Captain Cyril J. Barnes, of Leek, England, follows:

"He was a Christian gentleman," they said of a dead friend.

"What makes a man a Christian? What makes a man a carpenter if it is not the knowledge and practising of that trade?"

"It is not so much a matter of label. Father Damien was a Roman Catholic; John Wesley, the founder of the mighty Wesleyan Church; William Booth left the Methodists. These people might not all agree on certain points, but they were all Christians!"

"What makes a man a Christian? Christ Himself, living within, bringing out the best, enabling him to live as Christ Himself would live under the same conditions.

Sunday School Lesson

Lesson for December 7
THE NATURE AND WORK OF THE CHURCH

Golden text—Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it. The Lesson as a Whole

In the different Scriptures suggested for our reading, as well as in the two passages of our printed lesson, we have the "church" presented in two distinct aspects, namely, as the mystical body of Christ, and as a local church in a given district. The first is made up only of the redeemed. It embraces all, from Pentecost on, who have been baptized by the Holy Spirit into one body (1 Cor. 12:12, 13). The latter is the church in responsibility on earth, as in measure committed to men as God's representative; and it includes all in any given place who are gathered together for Christian fellowship, and who profess allegiance to Christ as Lord and Head. In these local churches or assemblies there may be even unconverted people. These are in the so-called visible church, but not in "the church, which is his body" (Eph. 1:22). Originally, all in the local church were also members of the body of Christ. But through man's failure, unreal professors soon found their way into the visible church and such have ever been a source of weakness.

Verse by Verse
 Acts 2:41—"The same day there were added . . . about three thousand souls." The 120 believers constituted the nucleus of the Church. They were baptized into one body (though the revelation of the body was not yet given, but awaited the conversion of Saul of Tarsus) and immediately began to witness to the risen Christ. By nightfall, three thousand, who received the Word and were baptized, were added to their company. This was the birthday of the Church.

Verse 42—"They continued steadfastly in" four things: "the apostles' doctrine," or teaching, receiving needed instruction as given by the first leaders in the church; "fellowship" one with another, as having a common faith and common interests; the "breaking of bread," probably what we call the communion, the daily observance of the Lord's Supper in remembrance of their Saviour; and in "prayers," the expression of the sense of need of divine help and sustenance.

Verse 43—"Fear came upon every soul." The awesome sense of God's presence in the Spirit's power was realized by them all. It was He who

wrought through the apostles in the working of miracles for the relief of human suffering and the accrediting of the new message.

Verse 44.—(They) . . . had all things common." This was not by command of the Lord, but by common consent. Love was so active that those who had been blessed with worldly goods shared gladly with those who had not.

Verse 45—"As every man had need." Some have called this "an experiment in Christian communism." But it was more than that. It was the gracious activity of divine love shed abroad in the hearts of these early believers by the Holy Spirit (Rom. 5:5).

Verse 46—"Continuing . . . in the temple." They still frequented the Temple as the recognized house of God in Jerusalem. But they broke bread, not exactly "from house to house," but at home, as the Authorized Version margin and the Revised Version give it. As Jews albeit converted to Christ, they still thought of the Temple as the place where Jehovah had set His name, but they remembered the Lord in the seclusion of their own homes.

Verse 47—"The Lord added." The best manuscripts omit "to the church." He added to them who were already His "such as were being saved" (margin); that is day by day as others confessed Christ, they were added to the company of the believers. They are called "the church" first in chapter 5, verse 11, but it is clear that it refers to exactly the same group. The Lord adds by the baptism of the Holy Spirit.

Eph. 4:11—"He gave . . . apostles . . . prophets . . . evangelists . . . pastors and teachers." The risen ascended Christ, the Head of the Church has given necessary gifts for the winning of souls and the edification of His body. These consist of "apostles," His special accredited and authoritative messengers; "prophets," men of illuminated understanding, to make known His truth for edification and comfort (1 Cor. 14:3); "evangelists," whose work it is to go out after the lost and through the proclamation of the Gospel bring men to Christ; and pastors and teachers," who are responsible for the building up and instruction of the church. How different is all this from mere professionalism!

Verse 12—"For the perfecting of the saints." As the verse is punctuated in the Authorized Version one would suppose these leaders had full responsibility for three lines of service, namely, perfecting the saints doing the work of ministry, and edifying the body. But if we remove the commas the sense becomes clearer. These gifts are for the perfecting of the saints for the work of service or building up the body of Christ. All members of the body have their

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place and are to labor for the blessing of all the rest.
 Verse 13—"Till we all come in the unity of the faith, . . . unto a perfect man." This gracious ministry will be needed as long as the Church is on earth. It will only be dispensed with when we reach the state of perfection in the glory for which God has chosen us.
 Verse 14—"That we henceforth be no more children." The Lord desires His people to grow daily in grace and in knowledge, and the gifts are given for that purpose. As they learn to know the truth, they will become staple and firm in the faith.

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