

THE BISHOP'S CHARGE TO THE ONTARIO SYNOD

Speaks Chiefly About the Great Forward Movement—Bishop Bidwell Finds Signs of an Increasing Vigor in Church Life Throughout the Diocese.

The synod service held in St. George's Cathedral, on Wednesday night, was well attended by members of the congregation and clergymen gathered to attend the sessions of the synod of the Diocese of Ontario. Bishop Bidwell delivered his annual charge, dealing in an interesting manner with the Forward Movement, and other matters of vital importance to the diocese were dealt with. Bishop Bidwell spoke as follows:

Brotherhood of the Clergy and Laity: Though less than eight months have elapsed since our last meeting, I have called the Synod together at this earlier date, first, that we might have an opportunity of strengthening and inspiring our efforts as a diocese to carry to a successful issue this great Forward Movement to which the church is now called by united prayer and mutual deliberation, and secondly, because, if it be decided that I attend the Lambeth Conference to be held this year, which has to deal with questions of the greatest importance, and will probably prove to be the most epoch-making of all these historic gatherings, it would not be possible to call the Synod together at the usual date. Therefore we meet now to despatch our business, so that whatever may happen, that will have been duly carried out.

The Forward Movement: I shall speak at once of the Forward Movement. It is by far the greatest effort to which our church in this country has as yet been called. It is the beginning of an attempt to arouse the minds of our people to realize what their membership of the church really means, what are the far-reaching duties and responsibilities of that membership. Hitherto we have perhaps thought too much of its privileges only, and have hardly understood that the very enjoyment of those privileges entails a tremendous obligation to look upon life in a certain way, namely, as an opportunity for the service of God, and to shape our conduct in every part of our life in such a way as to help to bring about such a state of affairs in this world as God would desire, and His Son our Lord Jesus Christ approve. It is an attempt to bring about that "peace on earth" of which we were recently reminded at the Christmas season, by making the principal motive in our lives the approval of true brotherhood among men, based on the universal Fatherhood of God, the actual foundation of all our mutual relationships in life, instead of a mere pious platitudes.

While the clash of arms in open warfare has now ended as far as we are concerned for over a year, the world cannot by any means be said to be at peace. Everywhere there is marked social unrest; the propaganda of anarchy and revolution are being spread far and wide, and to an extent which the ordinary law-abiding citizen is totally unaware of. For these sinister forces work largely underground and in secret, so that when they consider the opportunity has come they may strike unawares against an unprepared and unsuspecting people. Again, there is in political life a dangerous tendency towards the formation of groups representing certain classes of the community, which however lofty their professions of governing in the interests of all may be, are almost certain, human nature being what it is, to modify these professions in the direction of the interests of the particular section of the community which they represent.

Christianity Defeats Anarchy: There is no more powerful protection against the prevalence of anarchist teaching than to spread far and wide the principles of Christianity. For it bases all its teaching upon the twin foundations of a man's duty towards God and his duty towards his neighbor. Anarchy, or Bolshevism, which is simply an inverted tyranny, aims at destroying all law and order, in the name of a false freedom, which speedily becomes despotism of the worst kind. Christianity teaches men to believe in a God of Law, Order and Love, and that the only freedom worth while is the freedom to serve God and their fellow-men, which carries with it a wise, just, and beneficial to the whole community. It, therefore, becomes of the utmost importance that the most careful Christian instruction should be given not only to the young, but to all who can be reached, in order to strengthen them to resist the insidious attacks to which they are exposed. This is what the church is trying to do, and it ought to be able to enlist the steady support of all those who desire peace, goodwill, law, and order to prevail, rather than social strife, suspicion, anarchy, and disorder. Bolshevism hates Christianity, and suppresses it wherever they have the power because they are well aware that where Christianity is strong their tenets can never make headway. We ought, therefore, to have been, as Christians, take our obligations as Christian citizens with the utmost seriousness, and see to it that no effort is lacking on our part to maintain and spread abroad that living Christian influence which is alone to be relied upon to overcome the subtle propaganda by which our liberties would be undermined and destroyed.

At the same time it must be remembered that though, as we often said, the war was waged to "make the world safe for democracy," and though we have seen dynamic autocracies and oligarchies go tumbling to their ruin as its result, yet we must have the right kind of democracy if the costly struggle is to be

and the advancement of His kingdom. Missionary Obligations: With regard to the departments of the church's work that this Movement seeks to place upon a firm footing, it need say little in this place about the missionary obligations which lie upon all members of the church. The Divine command must be obeyed, if we are to deserve the Divine blessing. But as far as the work in Canada is concerned, I would impress upon you with all the force at my command the vital necessity of occupying the ground wherever we have the opportunity without delay, and seeing to it that nowhere through any remissness on our part shall settlers or others be without the necessary means of following their spiritual life. The deadliest menace to our country is the danger that any of our people should remain or grow up in surroundings untouched by spiritual influence. A Godless materialism would wreck Canada more surely than any revolution. The responsibility rests upon us to see that this danger does not occur, and, therefore, every effort must be made to cope with the work to which we are called.

At the present critical time, we need as leaders in every department of life men of power and vision. Especially is this true in the social side of life. Therefore, we require a high standard of clergy men who will be fully qualified in every way to be the spiritual leaders of the community in which their sphere of work lies. This is a matter of pressing importance. The problem is largely, as every Bishop knows, an economic one. If the laity desire such men, then they must see to it that the clergyman is placed in such a position that he is able to give his full attention to the work to which he is called. It cannot be stated too plainly that any clergyman who kills a man's spiritual power so quickly and surely as a constant anxiety about the means of support for himself and his family, and the constant dread of the time when he will no longer be able to work, as it is not possible for him, except in rare cases, to make any provision for old age out of his scanty resources. For these reasons a considerable portion of the money raised will be used to create Beneficial Funds where there are none, or only very meagre ones, existent. If we value and believe in the services of the clergy (and I believe me, it would be an evil day for the country and a terrible loss to it in every way if they were to be withdrawn), and if we wish the best men to enter the ranks of the ministry, we must see to it that they are placed in such a position that they can devote themselves wholeheartedly to their spiritual work. More than that, they do not ask; less than that is fatal to their efficiency as spiritual leaders and guides of the people entrusted to their care. I have already alluded to the special importance at the present juncture of the careful systematic and efficient training of the rising generation in the teaching of the church, both for the benefit of their own souls, and as the only real barrier to the doctrines of lawlessness and selfish individualism which are met with on all sides. A properly equipped Board of Religious Education, such as we hope to possess after this Forward Movement, will be able to do infinitely more towards securing this result than its cramped means have allowed hitherto. We must therefore afford as a church to starve our duty as a church. On the contrary it is a portion of our work, of which the importance is such that we cannot spend too much upon it.

Social Service: Then there is the Department of the Church for Social Service. This is still in its infancy, but the work is growing every day. It has plans for useful service which it needs only means to develop. It is now devising a thorough system of keeping in touch with and helping all emigrants coming to this country who are members of our church by friendly advice and assistance, and ensuring them a welcome in their new home. It is a matter of supreme importance that the church should import on all sides the best men to be most closely associated with the state in helping these new arrivals to become happy and valuable citizens of our country. We have the supreme duty of caring for their souls as well as for their bodies. Without proper organization, many are lost sight of and left uncared for. We hope that, for the future, by means of the organization now being developed by our Social Service Council, every member of our church coming to this country will be warmly welcomed, and placed in touch with our clergy and church workers, and so will never be out of reach of that spiritual support needed by all, the absence of which is so harmful. Thus the church is, through its Social Service Council, doing a patriotic piece of work, worthy of the support of all our members.

There are also being issued by the council a series of Bulletins on matters of social interest, which have attracted wide and favorable comment, and which contain most valuable information. It is a matter of considerable regret to me that Prof. Mitchell, the able editor of the Bulletins, has left the diocese to take position in Toronto. But I am glad to say that he is continuing as editor. Financial Objective: The financial objective of the Anglican Forward Movement for the whole church is \$2,500,000. For this sum, which is a very modest one in comparison with the wealth of members of the church, this diocese is asked to contribute \$90,000. This we certainly ought to be able to accomplish. In fact, we ought not to be satisfied unless we are considerably beyond it. It is true that we are not in any sense of the word a wealthy diocese, but considering that the payment of subscriptions is spread over two years, there should be no difficulty in accomplishing our aim. It should be remembered that twenty-four per cent of the sum we are asked to raise will be returned to us for diocesan purposes, and that two-thirds of any amount which we may raise over the sum asked of us will also be returned to

the diocese. The central diocesan committee of the Forward Movement has informed each parish of the amount it is asked to raise, but I urge very strongly that all should make a strong effort to surpass this amount if possible. The right view for us to take of this appeal is to look upon it as a unique opportunity of making a fitting thank-offering to Almighty God for the great mercies He has bestowed upon us by granting to us the victory in the tremendous struggle in which we have been engaged during the past few years. When we consider what defeat would have meant to the world, including our country, we cannot be too thankful that God has ruled events as He has done. We have heavy losses to deplore; we have many problems to meet. But at least we have seen Right triumph over Might. It is God's work for us to be asking to go forward; it is His cause which we are being called upon to maintain. It is both a duty and a privilege to respond to that call to the utmost of our ability. The Lord hath done great things for us, whereof we rejoice; now it is for us to show our real gratitude to Him by such a thank-offering as will increase and multiply the work done in His name throughout the world. This appeal, too, comes to us as a test of the reality of our religion and our love for the church, and our interest in the work that God has given her to do for Him. If we have had the good fortune so far, since you honored me by electing me your Bishop, never to make an appeal to the diocese which has not met with a cheerful and ready response. I beg of you to let this most urgent of all the appeals that I have made be received in the same loyal and generous fashion. If you do so, I am convinced that under blessing of God this diocese will be inspired to do its share in a notable piece of work for His glory and the church's good. Never let us forget that we are but stewards of all that God has blessed us with in the way of possessions and for our use of them we must assuredly give account to Him. Determine, therefore, to give freely and generously, not grudgingly or of necessity, to the furtherance of His work. And as a last word in this connection, remember the supreme sacrifice offered on our behalf by so many of the very flower of our youth and manhood. For their sakes alone, we must not shirk from any effort of service or sacrifice to make this country of ours which they loved so dearly, and which we love too, a land in which righteousness and justice and true loyalty to the ideals of our Lord and Master Jesus Christ, who loved us and gave Himself for us, flourish and are strong.

The Lambeth Conference: The Bishop's Church throughout the world has been summoned by the Archbishop of Canterbury to a conference to be held at Lambeth this year. It should have taken place in 1918, but was of necessity postponed owing to the war. It is interesting to remember that there are every ten years, were the outcome of a petition put forward many years ago by the late Archbishop Lewis of this diocese. The meeting this year is expected to surpass all former ones in importance, as it will have before it subjects for discussion of the deepest interest to the church at large, and problems upon the right solution of which the future welfare of the church will depend. One of the most important and pressing is the question of the proper steps to be taken with a view to closer relations and reunion with other churches. We shall discuss non-Episcopal, which stands first on the list for discussion. In this matter every Christian is deeply interested, for if there ever was a time in which all the forces of Christianity needed to stand shoulder to shoulder against the present age of unrest and doubt, while the church has to be reconstructed on a new foundation. If Christianity is to be, as we hope and pray, the very corner-stone of the new building, then it must speak with one voice. The course of action that our church, who we desire to be loyal and cheerfully followed, whereas unauthorized and sporadic attempts towards union, however well-intentioned, are bound to fail. Questions of the various faiths in relation to the work which which are attracting people away from the old paths, Missionary Problems, Social, Industrial, and International questions, and the highly important matter of the position of Women in the Councils and Ministries of the Church, will also come up for consideration. There are others, but I have named sufficient to show how exceptionally important this conference is bound to be. The earnest prayers of all members of the church are asked that in its deliberations it may be guided to wise decisions, promoting the glory of God and the good of His church.

Diocesan Affairs: When we turn to diocesan affairs, I am more than thankful to be able to say that 1919 has been a record year for progress and accomplishment. Practically every parish and mission has been filled. No less than three additional parishes have become self-supporting. Rawdon, Malton, and Kitley, thus not only relieving the Mission Fund, but gaining great credit to themselves for their forward movement. Then, too, for the first time, practically the whole of the apportionment of the diocese asked for at the beginning of the year has been paid in, and \$1,000 more than has been given to the M.S.C.C. for work in Canada and abroad, while at the same time we are steadily raising the stipends of

our own missionaries. The minimum stipend of a self-supporting parish has been raised to \$1,200 and I am glad to be able to say that many parishes which were already paying this amount have materially increased the stipends of their clergy. This result is largely due to the untiring efforts of John Elliott, chairman of the committee, who has given most unselfishly of his already over-occupied time to the work. He has been well supported by others of our laity throughout the diocese, by the energetic action of the rural deans, by the eloquence and persuasive power of Canon Fitzgerald, as well as by the unselfish service of several of the clergy in carrying out the necessary canvass in various parishes. I hope that before long the laity of the diocese will bring about a further advance, making \$1,500 the minimum. When the case is properly presented, it has invariably been found that people who take a willing response to the scale of stipends of their parishes fixed by the canon of stipends has also, since last Synod, been raised by \$100 per annum, and their interests are being more carefully looked after by the indefatigable secretary. It is our aim to see to it that every clergyman is placed in such a position that he can devote himself to his spiritual work without being constantly harassed by inadequate means of livelihood, an aim which has the cooperation of the laity with the Bishop can certainly accomplish.

I desire to tender to the clergy my hearty appreciation of their zealous work, which has resulted in the diocesan appointment being paid in full, and to all our lay members who have contributed to this end. The result is most encouraging, and earnestly hope that it may prove a prelude to still greater efforts in the future. The question of materially increasing the grants to the widows and orphans of the clergy will come before the Synod and I am sure, if we will with sympathetic interest, will see the superannuated grant to retired clergy, which will also be under consideration. Pardon me if I seem so far to have rather laid stress upon material advances, if I have done so, it is simply because I know that they are the outcome of true spiritual progress and a deepened interest in the work of the church for Christ. This I know from personal experience. I am very thankful to God to be able to say that almost everywhere throughout the diocese the signs of an increasing vigor in church life. It is true that there are still far too many who are indifferent and unresponsive, careless of their obligations as communicants, infrequent in their attendance at God's house. Such a neglect will eventually injure the cause of religion and imperil their immortal souls. But, speaking generally, I believe that when we consider the faithful work which is being done in many places by both clergy and laity for the great cause, we may well "thank God and take courage."

Observance of Sunday: I wish to say a few words about the proper observance of Sunday. It is a day of rest from secular labor for the primary and chief purpose of giving all the opportunity of fulfilling one of our chief duties and obligations, which is to worship God. We should never allow its secondary object, which is to give us a much-needed rest from toil, to obscure the first. Attendance at divine service on Sunday is a matter of obligation to all Christians. It is, in the mind of the divine legislator, of as much value as a constant rest in the midst of a very material world, of our physical nature and our spiritual needs. I have the greatest sympathy with those whose heavy toil and long hours of work during the week gives them little time for rest or recreation save on Sunday. But even they would find that they benefit by the real rest and refreshment of attendance at divine service, though by simply giving up the day to idleness and amusement. I myself for twenty years worked six days in the week as a schoolmaster, and took full clerical rest every Sunday, so that I speak from experience. It is true, as our Lord said, that "the Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath," but that is just the point of my argument, namely, that no man reaps the true benefit that God intends the weekly day of rest to be to him, unless and foremost he indicates a portion of that day to the worship of God in company with his fellow-members of the great body of which Christ is the head. This recognition of the paramount claim of God and our own soul, by reserving a day to the House of God, on Sunday, does not mean a return to the ultra-Puritan idea of the Sabbath, which made it so distasteful to many in the past. Sunday is meant to be a day of happiness and rest, and no innocent recreation, and it is not to be a day of condemnations. It becomes a day given up entirely to the worship of God, or the health of our soul, and an irreparable loss is sustained by the individual and the spiritual level of the whole community is impaired.

Family Prayer: The revised Book of Common Prayer contains a very excellent Form of Family Prayer for Morning and Evening. I desire to commend it to your notice, and I earnestly hope that now the church has incorporated this very useful adjunct to our religious life in the official book of worship, the practice of family prayer may be revived where it has fallen into disuse. The prayers are brief and to the point, and will be found, I think, to meet the daily needs of all. The father or mother in every family is responsible for this duty. For those who have lost the custom, or who have never followed it, to make a beginning may be hard. But you will find it a blessing and help to every day's work to begin with a dedication of mind and all else in your life to God. It would certainly be a result that would make the Forward Movement well worth while, if the practice of family prayer became much more general than it is to-day.

War Memorials: I have been called upon to dedicate several war memorials in our churches. Every congregation which was represented by men at the front should have a permanent memorial of them, the living as well as the dead. It is natural and right that those who made the supreme sacrifice should be particularly honored and remembered, but those who risked all and returned safely should by no means be forgotten. It is the duty and privilege of the church to help to preserve for ever the memory of noble self-sacrifice, and faithfulness even unto death to the highest ideals. I want all associations of returned soldiers to feel that on all the anniversaries of historic days that they desire to commemorate, the church will always be ready to welcome them within her walls, and give of her best services to them as part of such commemoration, and that they will see in the memorials there that what they have done is not forgotten. We can do so little in return for what was done for us by them, and what suggests may seem, and perhaps is, but a small thing. But I hope that every church throughout the diocese will eventually contain a war memorial of our men, and will do all that can be done to keep green the memory of their loyalty and courage.

The Late Canon Loucks: Since our last Synod death has summoned one of the most striking personalities among the clergy. Canon Loucks has reached the age long past the usually allotted span. But still quite near the end his physical powers were still wonderful for a man advanced in age, and his mental abilities remained unimpaired to the last. He was a diligent militant Christian. "Evil in every shape or form met with fearless and outspoken denunciation from him. He was a staunch and uncompromising churchman, and made no secret of his views. His devotion to his calling was intense. His life to him consisted in the fulfilling his duties as a priest of the church. Of that he allowed nothing to stand in the way. Neither distance nor weather nor weariness kept him from responding to the call for his services, he was a very thoughtful preacher, who took immense pains with his sermons, and good judges often expressed high appreciation of his preaching. When the war broke out, he could not bear to be idle, and so, old as he was, he placed upon himself the duty of visiting regularly the sick in the hospitals, continuing this work till almost the end. Stern and rugged in demeanor, yet he really possessed an affectionate nature, and never forgot a kindness. He was rigorously punctilious in meeting pecuniary and other obligations, and thought no self-denial too severe to enable him to do so. To him may well be applied in his degree the final claim made by St. Paul for his own life, "I have fought a good fight; I have finished my course; I have kept the faith." May he rest in peace, and may light eternal ever shine upon him.

Canon Bedford-Jones: We are also losing from the diocese, though happily not through death, another of our leading clergy in the person of Canon Bedford-Jones, who has been called to the important position of principal of Bishop's College, Lennoxville. He has the distinction of being the first Canadian scholar to occupy that post. We believe that the college council all have been very fortunate in their choice. But their gain is our loss. It will be strange after so many years distinguished service from father and son to miss the familiar name from the roll of Ontario clergy. Canon Bedford-Jones has given us of his best, whether as rector of a most important parish, which he has kept well to the front in loyal discharge of all—and more than all the calls made upon it, or in diocesan activities, as chairman of the diocesan students' fund and examining chairman to the bishop, chairman of the Sunday school committee, and other activities. When I had to choose a diocesan organizer for the Forward Movement, I selected Canon Bedford-Jones without hesitation. He accepted the appointment, though it meant a very heavy addition to his already arduous duties, with no compensation except the knowledge that he would be serving the church, and has more than justified my choice. I deeply regret that we are losing him, but he will take with him the best wishes of all who know him, and we are confident that the habit of the church at large of coming to the little diocese of Ontario for men to

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