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EDITORIAL COMMENT

SOME recent Congressional enactments—the Railroad-Rate bill, the Meat bill, the Pure-Food bill, the Employers'-Liability bill—mark progress in the Christianization of law, as well as in the points to which jurists and economists call attention. Paganism lays emphasis on things; Christianity emphasizes personality and its sacredness. Those whom the noblest pagan thought had left in the class of things and chattels for the use of their superiors Jesus raised to full equality of personal right and opportunity with all members of the human family of God. The early Church held to this; the medieval Church lost it; the modern Church is slowly recovering it. During the first three or four centuries the Church, says Uhlhorn in his history of her charities, was "the refuge of all the oppressed and suffering," with work, outfit, loans, alms, ransoms, for varying needs. In this twentieth century the Church is not yet intolerant of the child-slavery that still feeds the seed-corn of the nation to the hog of commercialism. In the Railroad-Rate bill, which aims at the President's ideal of "a square deal for every man," we see that equalization of opportunity between the strong and the weak which conforms to Jesus' teaching of their brotherhood in God. In the Kingdom of God there are no privileged interests. Privilege is an anti-Christian word. Every abolition of privilege is a step toward the Christian ideal. Another step is noteworthy in the Meat bill, the Pure-Food bill, the Employers'-

Liability bill—the better safeguarding of life, especially for the ignorant and the poor; a large interest, surely, of Him who said, "The Son of Man is not come to destroy men's lives, but to save them." "The Christianizing of Christendom" that President Roswell Hitchcock insisted on as an imperative need is largely a matter of vindicating the sacredness of personality in the weak and lowly against the greed for gain that cheapens and stunts their life. On one hand the slum with its enormous infant mortality, on the other hand the steel mill, throwing out its workmen used up at the age of forty-five, give point, when contrasted with the opulence they feed, to Sismondi's passionate exclamation long ago, "What is wealth? Are men nothing?" That cry voiced the protest of the spirit of Christianity against the spirit of paganism. The hope for "the equalization of unhealthy social contrasts," which the German Emperor professed on his accession to the throne, every Christian man will actively adopt who has not gone off the primitive base of Jesus' Gospel of the Kingdom. Many a victory this hope has won since the British Factory Act of 1802 till now, and it has many more yet to win. This is reckoned to be a Christian nation; but a seventeen years' struggle, it is said, was necessary to pass the Pure-Food bill. So far as most property rights are more completely safeguarded than some personal rights, so far the nation exalts the pagan ideal above the Christian. Magnificent as are our charities, it is idle to boast of them so long as they blind us to the demand of the social jus-

influence of his narrow sphere of daily toil. A young woman, toiling as a common operative in one of Attleboro's large jewelry establishments, has become well known throughout the county, perhaps I might say throughout the entire State, as an exceptionally efficient Christian Endeavor worker. Two other growing Endeavorers worked in a mill, one as a spooler of yarn, the other at a spinning jack. With little education at the start, they are manifesting a continually increasing freedom of life and thought, with exceptional power in spiritual service, while others standing beside them at their daily tasks find their lives cleaving to the bobbins and spindles of the factory. Why should such lives be the exception? They ought to be the universal rule.

To-day the Christ is calling to us to give ourselves to His service in the Church or in some of the countless avenues that open before us elsewhere, not that we may be taken away from the toil of common life, not that we may neglect our every-day work, but that we may be rescued from its enslaving power, that we may transform it from a destructive to a developing force. To all the old Hebrew swordsman presents a noble picture of faithful and energetic service. He is a true hero, one of earth's mighty ones; and we should emulate his heroism, his tireless activity in life's common labor. But, doing that, we may yet escape his unhappy fate if we open our life to the higher privilege and cultivate the spiritual being with consecrated activity.

THE REWARD OF SPIRITUAL HUNGER

BY PROF. PHILIP VOLLMER, PH.D., D.D., REFORMED, PHILADELPHIA, PA.

"The hungry he hath filled with good things."
—Luke i. 53.

THESE words form a part of the Magnificat of Mary. She announces here the reward of spiritual hunger. "The hungry he hath filled with good things." These simple words touch upon a principle of very wide range, applicable to the needs of mental, of moral, of physical, and of spiritual life. The text suggests particularly two questions: First, who are to come to the table of the Lord, and, secondly, what will those receive who do come?

To the first question the text answers—the hungry are the ones invited. The Lord's Supper is a meal, and only those can enjoy a meal who feel hungry. This is plain enough in the life of the body. Food, we all know, as a rule, benefits neither man nor beast unless there be relish or appetite for it. This is also true of our spiritual nature. What food is to the body, that religious truth and the supernatural grace of our Lord are to man's highest nature, to his undying personality, to his spirit. Religious truth forced upon a soul which has no desire, no appetite, does not illuminate and satisfy,—it only provokes a secret or avowed hostility. The soul must desire God as its true life, its true force, if God is to enlighten and strengthen it. Without this desire a communicant will be sent empty away.

Other tests and conditions have been and

are being emphasized and enforced in the Church. The acceptance of human definitions and explanations concerning the true nature of the Lord's Supper, or certain modes of administering the sacraments and similar tests have been laid down as conditions for admission to partake of the emblems of the Lord's body and blood. In our own and other churches sincere souls sometimes examine themselves whether their religious emotions are strong enough to entitle them to approach the Lord's table. All these conditions and many others which might be mentioned have been imposed by men and go far beyond what is written and emphasized by our Lord and His apostles. Christ appointed a spiritual meal, reserved for His friends alone, whether they be strong or weak in faith, as long as they are true friends. He gave it to Peter, who denied Him a few hours afterward, because He knew that at heart he was true to Him, and a careful harmony of the four gospels shows that the Lord managed to have Judas leave the upper room before He instituted the sacrament because it was apparent to Jesus that this unhappy disciple had become unfaithful. Hence, friendship to Jesus and hunger after the bread of life are the only conditions for partaking of the Lord's Supper.

We do not undervalue doctrinal definitions and explanations, and we should certainly require in the communicant a certain measure

of ability to discern the Lord's body, as well as seriousness and sincerity; but after all, as it is not the ability to make a chemical analysis and describe the constituent elements of the bread which make us enjoy and relish it, so, in the spiritual realm, it is not intellectual apprehension, but spiritual hunger, soul hunger, which guarantees a blessing at the Lord's table. For, as Paul says, "Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have not love, I am become as sounding brass or a tinkling cymbal; and though I have the gift of prophecy and understand all mysteries and all knowledge, and have not love, I am nothing."

As there is no doubt that we all feel this soul hunger, and, knowing that God does not judge man by his imperfect performances, but by his innermost aspirations, we may be sure that the Lord Himself bids us welcome to His table.

But what shall we receive when we come? "Good things," the text says: "The hungry he hath filled with good things." A hungry child asking his mother for bread will not be sent away with a picture card having a loaf of bread painted on it, but he gets a slice of real nourishing bread. Now, argues the Lord, "If ye, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your Father which is in heaven give good things to them that ask him!"

We have only time to name a few slices of heavenly bread which God is willing to give to a hungry soul at communion. The first is a deeper and wider and truer conception of the glorious declaration of the gospel that God is love and that He gave His only begotten Son to die for us. This preparation service, the external elements of the sacrament, the administration, the reading of the liturgy, the hymns we sing,—of all these things the Holy Spirit makes use for our growth in the knowledge of Jesus Christ. True faith is not only a hearty trust, it requires also a certain knowledge. In one sense the sacraments are pictorial sermons, as the Heidelberg Catechism defines them to be: "Visible, holy signs and seals appointed of God, for this end, that by the use thereof He may the more fully declare and seal to us the promise of the gospel that He grants us out of free grace, the forgiveness of sins and everlasting life, for the sake of the one sacrifice of Christ accomplished on the cross." What the illustrations in a book are to the text, that the sacra-

ments are to the verbal teaching of the Bible. The words of Jesus, "He that eateth my flesh and drinketh my blood hath eternal life," are plain enough as explained in their connection, but how much plainer, how much more impressive does the teaching of Christ on the mystical union become when we eat the bread and drink the wine in the sacrament and meditate on the assimilating process going on in the body, and think of the strength which we gain as a result of it; and apprehend the spiritual meaning of all this!

Another slice of heavenly bread offered in the sacrament is the strengthening of brotherly love in the hearts of believers. Partaking of the Lord's Supper is called communion, that is, a "union with" God and our fellow Christians. In the ancient Church great stress was laid on this point. The love feast was observed and before the elements were partaken of, the priest would admonish those present to forgive one another and then the "holy kiss" was exchanged separately among the members of each sex. The liturgies of some churches still lay great stress on the necessity of mutual forbearance and love as a condition for the sacramental blessing promised by God. There is much coldness among God's children, and it has often been the season of communion with all its teachings and associations which has brought warring Christians together. We lay great stress on sound doctrine, but we should never lose sight of the truth that unlovely conduct is the deadliest heresy, the more so as in some sense it affects even our intellectual apprehension of the truth.

A third slice of heavenly bread at communion is an increased measure of power from on high which enables us to bear and even to profit by the temptations and struggles of this life. Communion reminds us of the cross and passion of our Savior, and that He learned obedience and was perfected by His suffering. With outstretched hands the Master stands at each communion table saying: "Come unto me all ye that labor and are heavy laden and I will give you rest." During the persecutions in the ancient Church it became customary with the martyrs to celebrate the Lord's Supper before they were led to the stake or cast before the lions in the arena. They did this because many before them in similar circumstances had experienced the strengthening and reviving influence of the sacrament in the most trying

hours of their lives. For reasons sufficient to themselves, all Roman Catholic revivalists insist on frequent communion during the season of their "missions," and it is not all superstition which leads them to do that. Ministers have had occasion many a time to notice how at sick-beds private communion administered to suffering disciples resulted in a larger measure of patience, calmness, and self-surrender to God.

Let me mention one more slice of heavenly communion bread—a general deepening of our spiritual life and a stronger impulse Godward.

In the streets of our cities we may notice two kinds of post-office boxes, each with a different mechanism. Under the one the explanation reads, "Pull down" and on the other "Lift up." This twofold mechanism is a simile of our every-day practical life. On the one hand there is so much that pulls us down, our own temperament, our employment, sometimes our friends and companions, the literature we read. We often re-

semble that noble eagle which I saw in the famous Zoological Garden at Antwerp. He was proudly soaring above the highest trees, but while watching him I soon noticed that he never went beyond a certain height. Going nearer I saw the reason why. The poor bird was fastened by a thin but very strong chain to his cage, and that chain always pulled him down whenever he attempted to soar higher into his native element. To counteract this downward tendency, the Lord, among the other means of grace, uses the holy sacrament to lift us up and bring us nearer to Him. It may not be found in the rubric of communion hymns, but I think it eminently suitable for a congregation to sing before, during, or after communion that intensely devotional hymn by Mrs. Adams, which expresses admirably the chief object of the Lord's Supper:

"Nearer, my God, to Thee—Nearer to Thee,—
E'en though it be a cross that raiseth me,
Still all my song shall be—
Nearer, my God, to Thee."

THE GREATNESS OF LOVE

BY THE REV. T. E. HOLLING, B.A., METHODIST EPISCOPAL, WINNIPEG, MANITOBA.

The greatest of these is love.—1 Cor. xiii. 13.

No word in our language has been more frequently debased and dragged in the dust and in the mire than the greatest of all words—love. It has suffered on the sickly, sentimental side for one thing. It has been the fatal enemy of righteousness and cleanliness and decency of life, instead of the inspirer of these things. And again, it has been a mere weak, shall I say, neurotic passion. "Love," says the hero of a modern novel, "is a woman's word." It might be none the worse for that, for one recalls how one of the noblest women who ever lived, Catherine Booth, stood once before a great audience who had assailed her with missiles and every sort of filth, and that she succeeded in getting a hearing simply by using these words, "My friends, I love you." It was a strong word with her. In Drummond's "Ascent of Man" there is a chapter of great beauty on maternal love. He traced its history down through the dim æons of prehistoric times, from the jealous instinct of brute mothers to its most perfect refinement in the womanhood of the Christian world. Who that has watched its

purity, its passion, its cooing happiness and elation, the power it imparts to the mother of overcoming sleep and rendering with cheerfulness and dignity the most menial services, will fail to bend before it in lowly worship and acknowledge that, if there is one divine thing in this world, it is a mother's love? But the love of a mother for her offspring has a limited sphere of operation. It may also exist side by side with a passion of positive hate. Passing from domestic affection to patriotic love, it is a sad fact that the loftiest type of love of country may coexist with a passion that disregards the solemn sanctities of domestic life. Eulogies of Nelson and celebrations of his victory in Trafalgar Bay are chastened by the recollection of the outstanding sin of his life.

Benevolence is another form of love which is noble in its feeding the hungry and clothing the naked. Yet we have seen it wedded to downright dishonesty and immorality of life.

Paul's notion of love is the response of the heart love to the Divine, which Divine is received into the heart by trust in the Lord