

CHRISTIAN SOCIAL ORDER SUNDAY

21st November, 1943.

Pastoral letter from the Most Reverend the Archbishop

(To be read in the Churches on the preceding Sunday).

At its session last year the Synod decided that the Sunday which has hitherto borne the name of "Industrial Sunday" should in future be known as "Christian Social Order Sunday" and I have appointed November 21 as the date of its observance this year.

The change in name gives a wider application to the challenge of our times and bids us remember that the Gospel with which we are put in trust has implications for society as well as for the individual. Of course we must never forget that society is made up of individuals and that even the most attractive of schemes to secure a better social order will be abortive unless the individuals of whom the society is composed co-operate to bring the order to birth and to make the scheme work. The greatest hope, therefore - nay the indispensable condition - for the satisfying and abiding realisation of social ideals is the spiritual regeneration of men and women, and we must strive with undiminished zeal for the eternal salvation of every human soul.

While, however, we must never lose sight of these fundamental facts, we need also to remember that the work of regeneration is frequently hampered and the expression of Christian life and fellowship hindered and obstructed by social conditions and arrangements that are unchristian. It is our bounden duty as members of the Christian Church to work for the alteration of these conditions and for the shaping of our common life in accordance with the mind and will of God. Wherever there are denials of Christian principles and the Christian spirit in our social organisation, we must not only utter our vigorous protest, but also launch and sustain our devoted and systematic effort to overthrow these rebellions against the sovereignty of God.

The favourable turn which the war has taken in recent months is directing the thoughts of many with renewed enthusiasm to plans of reconstruction when the peace has been signed. It will be a tragedy for the world and a lasting rebuke to the Church if we allow the new order to be shaped by forces that are purely secular, and we must give ourselves to diligent prayer and study that we may find how best to bring our Christian contribution, and how most effectively to bear our Christian witness. May the special consideration of these aspects of our Christian duty send us with fresh fervour and strengthened resolution to this very important and very difficult task.

Howard Sydney