

September 28, 1916.

Canadian Churchman

Toronto, September 28th, 1916

The Christian Year

The Sixteenth Sunday After Trinity, Oct. 8th.

The Christian life to St. Paul consisted of a series of magnificent surprises. The great Apostle, as Dr. Jowett has reminded us, was like a man standing in a posture of great amazement before unfolding revelations of startling and unutterable glory. He was continually discovering treasures in Jesus Christ which exceeded all that he had ever dared to ask or think. Surprise only prepared the way for surprise in astounding and ascending measure.

Mark the abundance of spiritual wealth manifested in this sublime prayer, perhaps the sublimest of all his prayers, for those whom he loved at Ephesus. Note the phrases which jewel his petitions—"The riches of his glory," "The love of Christ, which passeth knowledge," "Filled with all the fulness of God," "Him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think." Nor are these phrases mere empty expressions. They are real descriptions of spiritual experiences and spiritual certitudes. St. Paul had himself glimpsed the riches of glory which were his in Christ, and he knew them to be "unsearchable"—incapable of being tracked out and explored to their end. The love of Christ flooded his heart; he experienced a profound joy as he realized something of its individual intensity, as well as of its comprehensive vastness. And all the while he was conscious that beyond the waves which overflowed the little creek of his own heart, there stretched the illimitable spaces of the boundless ocean. Had he ever prayed for spiritual blessings and spiritual power? The abundance of the divine response had filled him with amazement. "All the fulness of God"—that was the astounding phrase in which he summed up the staggering wealth of his divine inheritance.

Christianity—a religion of surprises! Do we find it so? Yes! But our surprises arise generally not from the wealth of unexpected bestowal, but from the disappointment of unexpected dearth. We start upon our Christian race with a shallow and light-hearted optimism. We expect that miraculous gifts of power and insight and joy will drop into our laps, in answer to casual prayers or a presumptuous faith. But this sort of miracle does not happen. And so we affect a pained surprise, imagine ourselves half-fooled, and weary of our journey through such a disappointing wilderness. Why did St. Paul realize untold spiritual wealth, where we perish of hunger? The answer is plain. He was willing to pay the price. Spiritual treasure is indeed a gift of God, but it is only granted in answer to the dominant desire of a life. "Thou shalt find Him if thou search after Him with *all thy heart*." When we, like St. Paul, are willing to "count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus," then for us too the Christian life will become a series of uplifting surprises.

One way in which God works is by making good example contagious. A single generous soul, eager to be of service, glad to make sacrifices, fired with the passion of compassion, may inspire a neighbourhood.

Editorial Notes

Book of Common Prayer.

We have been able to secure one of the advance proof copies of the revised Book of Common Prayer which can be seen in this office at any time. It was suggested that many of our clergy and others might be glad of such an opportunity, and we acted on the suggestion. We regret that we cannot allow the book to be taken away, but trust that any who are anxious to see it will not hesitate to pay us a visit.

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M.S.C.C. Meetings.

The following meetings will be held in connection with the Autumn Meeting of the Board of Management, M.S.C.C., in Montreal: Executive Committee, Tuesday, October 17th, 8 p.m.; Apportionment Committee, Wednesday, October 18th, 9.30 a.m.; Board of Management, Thursday, October 19th, 10 a.m. The *pro forma* meeting of the Board on October 12th will take place in Toronto instead of Montreal, as stated last week.

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The Winter's Work.

There has never been a year in the lifetime of the present generation when it was more difficult than it will be during the present autumn and winter to keep the various Church organizations in working order. Each succeeding year of the war has meant an increasing scarcity of young men and an increasing number of their friends who are devoting time and energy in supplying them and others like them with the hundred and one things that make life in camp and in trench bearable. Never was there, on the other hand, a time when it was more necessary to put real life into those organizations. In all human probability the war will end during the coming year. The men who are spared will return and they should return to a working and not to a sleeping Church. Even before then hundreds of men, incapacitated in one way or another, they have returned and it is necessary that they be brought into touch with the spiritual activities of our country if many of them are to be saved from callousness and indifference. And it is only effective spiritual work that will appeal to them. Church organizations that place amusement in the forefront and neglect the things that count will fail as they deserve to fail. That which holds men is that which strikes them as worth while, and the organization that will hold them is the one that is trying to do a big work. The best way to hold boys is to set them at work, and men are, after all, only big boys. The parish that cannot find work for its men, and boys, as well as for its women and girls, has something wrong, and the quicker it is remedied the better.

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Pictures in Church Work.

The experience of the Editor during the past few years has convinced him that much greater use can be made of pictures in the work of the Church than is the case at present. Year by year the value of the eye in education is more generally recognized and this is being

turned to good account in our secular schools. In Sunday Schools also the number is gradually increasing of those where this feature is emphasized and the possession of a lantern outfit is coming to be regarded as necessary if the school is to do really effective work. The old prejudice against having "picture shows" connected with the Church is passing away, and even older people are beginning to realize that illustrated addresses are intended for adults as well as for children. The demand for lanterns for such purposes is producing much simpler and less expensive types, while the more general use of electricity, or various kinds of gas, is making more effective pictures possible. For a few minutes at the close of the Sunday School session, at an occasional week-night meeting, or even during or after a Sunday evening service, a few pictures thrown on a sheet can be made very effective. In this way the distant can be brought near, and the scenes of the past made to live again. It must not, however, be taken up merely for the purpose of amusing, or of attracting numbers, but always with the great purpose of all Church work in mind. And it must not be taken up as a sort of passing fancy, but with a definite object in view, with a definite plan worked out in advance, and with the best possible equipment that can be obtained. When used as a normal feature of Church work, only a limited number of views should be used at any one time, otherwise confusion of impression results and the desire for more is killed. Used in moderation they can be made of tremendous assistance in impressing on the minds of both young and old the great fundamental truths of Christianity and the world-wide work that is given to the Church to do.

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Victory.

The word Victory is being used a great deal nowadays. What do we mean by it, and what will constitute a true victory in the present war? We are told that Prussia's victory in the Franco-Prussian war was in reality a defeat, and the same can doubtless be said of other nations in other wars. Will the mere overpowering of the Germans, Austro-Hungarians and Turks in the present war, by sheer force of arms and ammunition constitute a real victory? Judging by a great deal that one reads and hears, this seems to be the idea of a very large majority of people in this country. Is it not possible, though, that they may be wrong? We are inclined to think that they are. The prize-fighter has been known to degenerate very rapidly into an immoral brute, the victim of his own victory. And so with the nations at war. God may allow us to overcome our enemies in the present war, but we can be perfectly sure that we shall reap a harvest for any sins we commit in doing so, whether as a nation or as individuals. When one reads and hears of the prevalence of disease due to immorality among our soldiers, long before they reach the firing line, we wonder what the harvest is going to be after the war. It is almost too horrible to contemplate, and yet we fear that the very nature of the facts is causing those in authority to close their eyes to the consequences. Truly the sins of the fathers are visited upon the children, and it is doubtful if there is at the present time any question of more vital importance to the physical life of this country for several generations to come.

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