

Canadian Churchman

Toronto, October 9th, 1919.

A Message From the Bishops

BROTHERS AND SISTERS IN THE CHURCH OF THE LIVING GOD:—

We, Your Bishops, responsible for your guidance in spiritual things, deem it our duty to suggest to you certain grave questions which we think it is essential you should face and answer without delay.

Do you realize that the Church of Christ has come to a great crisis in her history; that the world's future depends very largely upon the course the Church adopts to-day, and that the day of opportunity is slipping, nay, hurrying by?

Consider. The great war is over. Victory is ours. Back and forth over the allied nations the glorious news has surged. We still hear the plaudits of rejoicing multitudes. The walls of our Churches still reverberate with the echoes of our Thanksgiving Services. God has been very good to us. We have escaped the most awful peril the world has faced for ages. Tyranny has been overthrown and freedom established throughout the world; and now, with an intensity of relief which baffles expression, we have exchanged the instruments of war for the implements of peace, and are going back to our ordinary avocations with glad and thankful hearts.

But as we go back do we realize how appalling the cost has been? To beat down the spirit of greed and lust, embodied in Germany and her Allies, the gathered nations of the earth have literally bathed themselves in blood. Desolation, destruction, and irretrievable loss have been the order of the day. The hosts of mutilated men our Victory stands for may be numbered, but not the maimed lives and the broken hearts. So then by its awful price we may know the value of this Victory, and the weight of responsibility it lays upon us to be worthy of it. To go back to our old life, concerned only for our own gratification and gain—or it may be with an inflated sense of our merits and rights—would be to show ourselves unworthy of God's goodness. Such a course might indeed turn our Victory into a curse instead of a blessing. It is surely our bounden duty to make this Victory our own by using it aright. We owe it to those who have bled for us. We owe it to God "Who giveth us the Victory." We owe it to ourselves and to the world at large. If we fail in this we shall assuredly merit the contempt and pity of all good men.

We may well ask ourselves what is meant by the war being over and the Victory won. Let us not for a single moment imagine that we were fighting Germany and her Allies alone. Behind and within them was the dominating spirit of pagan lust and greed. And it is not enough that we brought Germany to knees. The question is, did we overcome the pagan spirit, and that not merely in the beaten foe but in ourselves? For, alas, the spirit of selfish lust had a footing with us as well as with the enemy. Have we mastered it and cast it out? If not, our Victory is no true Victory.

Look around upon our own world to-day. Remember it is a victorious world. It is supposed to have conquered the spirit of Prussianism and to have vindicated the laws of God and man. Whence, then, is this menace of lawlessness everywhere in evidence? What is this unrest disturbing the social order, especially in the industrial world? What is this ruthless profiteer-

ing so terribly prevalent? What is this heartless competition in the business world sweeping the weak before the strong? What is this passion for pleasure filling the places of amusement and emptying the Churches? What is this pitiful contrast between expenditure on self-indulgence and expenditure on the spread of God's Kingdom? Why are Clergymen allowed to exist—we might say to starve—on salaries which a day labourer would scorn to accept? Why are the Church's enterprises always struggling while money is abundant for every other interest affecting the life of the world? Obviously the pagan spirit has not been conquered, but is obviously at work among us. And, unless we are watchful and resolute, we shall soon be bound in fetters even more grievous than those we have shaken off. As a matter of fact, the war is not really over, nor the final Victory won. We are still required to "carry on." The forces of the Church must not be demobilized. Recruiting for the Service of Christ must go on with all the vigour displayed by the officers of our King. Why should not at least the same measure of loyalty be shown towards the King of Kings as is shown towards the transient and subordinate Kings of this world?

It is no mere fancy that sees in outbreaks of lawlessness and anarchy a menace even greater than the Prussianism we have defeated. It is no mere baseless vision that sees in Christ the one true remedy for all ills. With all the energy we possess, and in a spirit of self-sacrifice as ardent as any modern soldier's, we should give ourselves to the maintenance and propagation of Christ's cause. It is a sacred obligation, resting upon every member of the Church, to live up to the Baptismal Pledge as a soldier and servant of the Lord Jesus Christ.

The Victory we have won is a test. All depends upon the use we make of it. If we use the freedom it brings us only for selfish ends, we shall most certainly lose it. If we employ it for the Glory of God it will transform our lives and help to make the world a safe place for men and women of every rank to live in.

Look around you once more. Society is seething with restless discontent. Lust for wealth, and pride of power, like explosive force, threaten our safety. Yet on every hand men are calling for what the Church alone can give, *vis.*, true guidance. What they need is the knowledge of the one Lord and Master of mankind, Jesus Christ. Democracy has won deserved recognition; and Despotism is out of date. But beneath the seething surface of life there are signs of heart-hunger for the one true King which none but He can satisfy. Can we doubt that the world is ripe for a great onward movement of the Church of Christ, and that Christ, Himself, is waiting till His wayward followers come to themselves, put away their worldliness and, with whole-hearted devotion, rise up to hail Him Lord.

Brothers and Sisters in Christ Jesus, how long shall we keep Him waiting, with His pierced hands and feet, and His heart aflame with love? How long shall we go on satiating ourselves with luxuries and striving with one another for mastery? The Lord stands ready, the moment it turns to Him, to lead the world to everlasting peace. It is ours to set the fashion and the pace.

As leaders of the Church, we place ourselves deliberately at the head of the Forward Movement (now being definitely organized by the representative Committee appointed for that purpose by the General Synod) of the Canadian Church. We bid you, one and all, awake to your duty. This autumn will bring you opportunities of entering, with all the power of personal consecration, into the work. Do not refuse them. Too long Christian profession has been more or less a mockery. Too long people have borne the name of Christian without living the life. Too long they have forgotten that they are stewards of God's gifts hastening toward the day of account. In face of all that has happened of late, no man should be content to mock his Lord by an empty profession which costs him nothing. It is surely time for every man to shoulder his burdens, to take up his cross, and to follow his Master in truth and honesty.

Be assured it is not your money we are seeking. The time will come, next February, when appeals will be made for that. But now it is *you* we want—you, with all your power and fervency of service. We want *you* on the Lord's side, ready to live and die for the furtherance of His gospel, and for His enthronement as King of all the earth.

If we can but win *you* to take a right view of life and duty, as Jesus Christ has set them forth, there will be no need of "Drives" and "Campaigns," or any other clever commercial schemes, to draw money out of grudging pockets. The love of God, and the sense of duty it inspires, will constrain you to be generous givers, and will compel you to sweep away the reproach of struggling missions and poverty-stricken Clergy, and to make the Cause of God and of His Christ the leading force for good the wide world over.

Men and women of the Church, awake; rise up. Too long we have tarried amid the fascinating but dead things of this world. "Rise up, let us be going." It is the Lord Himself who calls us.

From the Altar of the Cross, glorified with its ineffable sacrifice, and glistening with fresh brightness from the lesser sacrifices of our heroic soldier boys, His call comes down to us to-day,— "Come unto me," lay yourselves, and all your value, at my feet; and I, your Lord, the one true Master of mankind, assure you that never, for one single moment, shall you regret the gifts and sacrifices you make for the glory of God and the establishment of His sway throughout the world.

Commending you to Divine guidance and grace, we are your faithful servants in Christ,

S. P. RUPERT'S LAND,	JOHN MONTREAL, ...
	<i>Primate.</i> JAMES TORONTO.
C. L. NOVA SCOTIA,	JOHN G. MOOSONEE.
F. H. CALEDONIA,	M. M. QU'APPELLE.
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