

Canadian Churchman

Toronto, May 25th, 1916.

The Christian Year

The Sunday after Ascension Day.

Was it at height of noon, as the Judæan uplands lay hushed beneath an azure dome of summer sky; or was it at fall of day, as the evening shadows began to lengthen along the braes of Olivet, that "He led them out as far as to Bethany, and while He blessed them, He was parted from them"? Whatever the hour, the scene is one of those unforgettable pictures of the Gospel page which weave their mystic spell around the heart. Any painting done by hand, however skilled, seems too coarse, too material, to represent the sacred charm of the reality; but sometimes, in moments of quiet pondering, the eye of the spirit seems to glimpse, limned upon the imagination's ideal canvas, some rays of the glory of the great original.

"While they beheld, He was taken up, and a cloud received Him out of their sight." The Ascension was a mighty symbolic act, pregnant with teaching. We are not to think that, beyond the white screen of cloud, Christ continued His journey through space to some divine centre of the universe amid the Pleiades or the star-strewn heights of the Milky Way. The Ascension was no bodily transference, no mere corporal levitation; it was rather a symbol of transition from one mode of being to another, of a passage from the limited conditions of earthly life to the boundless powers of a spiritual and a divine existence.

That the last farewell of Christ to His own should take this form was profoundly necessary. Only through such a symbolic, almost sacramental, act could they realize the mighty happening. As they watched their ascending Lord they understood, as they could by no other means, that Humanity, in the person of the Incarnate Saviour, was exalted to the right hand of God, that death's mighty Victor was raised to the power of an endless life. And as they meditated, they grasped the stupendous implications. The great sacrifice, oblation and satisfaction for the sins of the whole world was accepted. The true High Priest, having made atonement with His own blood for the people, had passed within the heavenly Holy of Holies. As the representative of His people, He had gone within the veil. But He was more than their representative; He was their forerunner. The veil now hid Him from His people's sight; but the hour would strike, foreknown in the counsels of the Father, when the eternal High Priest would once more reappear and take His people to be with Him forever in the inner sanctuary of the Father's House.

The Ascension pointed forward to a grand reunion; but it was not, in itself, a farewell. The bodily local presence was withdrawn that the spiritual and universal companionship might be bestowed. "Lo, I am with you all the days." And if He is with us, as we tread the paths of earth, we, too, even now, may be with Him in heaven. For He is not separated from us by removal through space, but by spiritual advancement. Even now the grace of God can make us "sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus." Even now, as we raise our thoughts and the intention of our lives from all that is base and selfish and impure and fix our affections upon the noble and the sacrificial and the holy, we are come, by

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Editorial Notes

The Wealth of Newer Canada.

There can be no doubt in the mind of any person who has visited Northern and Western Canada, and taken the trouble to investigate conditions regarding the possible wealth of those parts of the Dominion. There is, however, one point in this connection that needs to be borne in mind, namely, that by far the greater portion of that wealth is as yet undeveloped. The fabulous tales that have been spread broadcast in recent years have misled hundreds of people and have done untold harm, particularly to the Prairie Provinces. The possibilities are as yet little realized or understood, even by the settlers themselves, much less by those outside, but the development of these possibilities rests still in great measure with the future. Too much depends at present on one commodity, grain, and failure in this sometimes means starvation to hundreds. This was clearly illustrated during the winter of 1914-15, when, according to the statement of the Minister of the Interior: "A number of farmers who were left quite destitute as the result of the total loss of crops had to be provisioned during the winter months and well on to the summer, until the time came when the crops were so far advanced that the credit of the farmers was re-established. We had to supply them with provisions and with the general necessities of life, some with fuel, some with clothing. In the southern parts of Alberta and Saskatchewan especially, the farmers were left in very destitute circumstances."

The total amount spent for this purpose by the Dominion Government was "for seed grain and relief \$13,362,958." We know that this was exceptional, but it ought to be set over against the wildcat statements of some real estate brokers and speculators.

The Church in Newer Canada.

Another feature of the situation that ought to be clearly borne in mind is that the English-speaking population of all the newer portions of the Dominion, from North Bay to Vancouver, except in the few large cities, is very sparse. A small percentage of this sparse population is Anglican. Added to this is the fact that a large proportion of these Anglicans consists of people with but little of this world's goods, and a certain proportion of them, while claiming to be Anglicans, scarcely lift a finger to assist the Church financially or seldom darken its doors. The percentage of earnest Church workers may, perhaps, be slightly smaller than in the older Provinces, but they are to be found everywhere, and form in each centre the beginning of future Church activity. Left to themselves, they can, however, make little progress, and in some cases lose heart altogether. With timely and judicious assistance from outside many of these small centres rapidly become self-supporting, and, in turn, help other centres. This has been the history of the Church in the past, and will be its history in the future.

The War and the Church.

No Christian communion in Canada has given more freely of its manhood in defence of the principles of Christian liberty than our own, and no part of Canada has responded more loyally to the call to arms than the por-

tionis we have referred to above. It has meant everywhere a greater burden placed upon those who remain behind, and especially so in the more sparsely populated sections of the Dominion. Even in the older portions of the Dominion, parishes are finding it difficult to make ends meet, and it should not require any great effort to imagine what the effect has been on the small missions in the newer Provinces. In addition to this we must remember that the Church in the Motherland has been sending thousands of dollars and large numbers of clergy to assist in the work of planting the Church in those parts; and here, again, it should not require much of an effort to realize what is happening. Appeals have already been sent by the Societies giving assistance that greater efforts be made locally to do without the customary grants, and in several cases work has already been closed down. It is inevitable that these things should happen, but it is well that we should be reminded of them at the present time.

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What About the Future?

In the above we have pointed out: (1) the undeveloped possibilities of the newer portions of the Dominion, (2) the sparse nature of the population, (3) the drainage of male supporters of the Church, (4) the loss of help in men and money from the Mother Church. Under these conditions it is surely time that something was done to place the whole Church in the whole of Canada in fuller possession of the facts. Humanly speaking, what is needed now, and will be needed in greater measure in the near future, is more men and more money. Is the Church in Canada to continue to look across the seas for these, or is she going to provide them herself? As a matter of fact, we fear she will be compelled to look nearer home than she has in the past, but the very necessities of the situation may prove a blessing in disguise. It is no new problem, but the old one of self-support and a native ministry, and the sooner we face it the better for our Church and for our country. We are not going to blame anyone in particular, for all have been more or less to blame. Parents have been loath to give their sons to this work, church members have been too much occupied in money-making, and the leaders in the Church have in too many cases been following the line of least resistance.

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Production and Thrift.

Readers of the "Canadian Churchman" have doubtless noticed the large advertisement that appeared not only in the "Churchman," but in many other papers, with the above heading. It represented a laudable effort on the part of the Department of Agriculture of the Dominion Government to remind Canadians who are unable to go to the front that they can still play a very important part in the war. The struggle cannot be won by the men in khaki alone. They must be backed up by those at home. In order to put material in the hands of clergy and others, who are willing to assist the Government in the above effort, an Agricultural War Book has been issued. It is a perfect mine of information on a great variety of subjects dealing with the present situation, and should be in the hands of every producer in the country. A post card sent to the Publications Branch, Department of Agriculture, Ottawa, will bring you the book free of all cost.

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