

Canadian Churchman

Toronto, September 19th, 1918.

The Christian Year

The Eighteenth Sunday After Trinity,
September 29th, 1918

Man is born to a conflict. Enemies lie in wait to spoil and ravage his life as it develops. These enemies are known to us as the world, the flesh and the devil. We don't create them; they already wait to attack us. Man is no match for these enemies. Alone and unhelped, one of them will overcome him. St. Paul expresses a universal experience when he says: "In me . . . dwelleth no good thing." The good news of our religion is that man may have help to "withstand" these attacks. This help is the grace of God we spoke of last week. Yes, we can be "more than conquerors" through Christ.

The Collect is a recognition of our enemies and directs us to the source of our safety. "Grant Thy people grace to withstand," etc.

Temptations menace us from three directions—watch every approach to your soul! (1) They come from the atmosphere in which we live—our environment, our "world." The "world" for each of us is the sum total of the influences which surround us. These are not all good. We cannot escape all evil influence for we must live in the world as it is. Yet we must not be "conformed to the world" but be "transformed" by other influences. Over against evil influence we set the "love of the Father." It is easy to fall a prey to worldliness. The world camouflages temptation to sin very cleverly. The "cares and riches" may "choke the Word." Hear St. Paul's disappointed comment. "Demas hath forsaken me, having loved the present world."

(2) Temptations come from our physical nature. We may become slaves to bodily desires. Intemperance, impurity, sloth. How many have fallen before these? St. Paul points out the necessity of self-discipline: "I keep under my body and bring it into subjection" (lead it about as a slave). His direction is, "Walk in the Spirit and ye shall not fulfill the lusts of the flesh." Think of Esau, "who for one morsel of meat sold his birthright," etc.

In spite of all grotesque or absurd things that have been said about the devil we would do well to remember all that the New Testament says about spiritual powers that are hostile to the true life of man. Eph. 6:12. Devilish temptations come to man. Think of what is said of Judas: "The devil entered into Judas."

An unwatchful and an unguarded life is an unsafe life. "Watch and pray," is the injunction of the Only One Who was entirely successful in the conflict of human life.

We soon learn by experience to recognize these enemies. However, they ought not to frighten or depress us. Don't be always thinking of the power of temptation. Think more of the grace of God which enables us to withstand successfully. Our Christian conflict is not merely defensive. We have an ideal to attain. "With pure hearts and minds to follow . . ." Seeking grace to attain the ideal of pure obedience to Christ will be found the most direct way to overcome temptations. "Overcome evil with good."

Editorial

BIG BUSINESS.

GOOD it is to be an Anglican these days. The breath of new things is stirring in the valley of dry bones. Bishops and other clergy, chancellors and laymen have all joined in saying that the Church must answer the challenge of the times. That challenge is to make the world of men better than they have been.

The Church is profoundly convinced that she has the only message that can regenerate, make over again, mankind. Her first task is to prove it. The only proof the world accepts is the delivery of the goods. We must show by deed and word in our little world of the Church that the Christian spirit makes for bigger manhood.

When we can agree to differ, and talk of our neighbour's opinions without rancour, and better still, when we can get down to the underlying unity that is fundamental to our contrasting viewpoints, we shall be showing the world that the spirit of the Gospel really has a power. But when they observe overreaching and scheming and lobbying that rob a man of his just due and reject a man's arguments before he has opened his mouth, in other words, a persecution of those that differ from us, the world is using ordinary judgment, after all, when by its indifference it says, "Physician, heal thyself."

Big business is the thing that will fuse us into one spirit. It means that we shall be so possessed by the present emergency that we shall give the only answer that will count. It is little good bewailing the folly and sin of our bickerings. Some great task, some overwhelming burden, is the thing that will compel us to get together and keep together. God forgive the man who can think that his little shibboleth is more important than the whole body of Christ.

Emergencies are good for us. They bring out latent and unsuspected strength. The meeting of the Board of Missions last Friday was a good omen. The Canadian Church girded herself to do a heavy task. We admire the independence of spirit which said that Canada was on her own. Certainly our resources are equal to our tasks. The limit of our possibilities is always on the horizon. It recedes with our advance.

Big business is our challenge to the times. "Talk in millions, if you want to interest him in your scheme," was the advice given to a man seeking the help of Rockefeller. The success of our Victory Loans, Red Cross funds, Y.M.C.A. drives, says to us that it takes something big to assure success. The first step in such success is to make an impression.

"We never did it that way before," is the utterance of a man who has no vision. He would let the methods of the past be the grave clothes of the future. His cautiousness comes close to cowardice or else conceit, which is a greater sin. We are thankful that most men see that methods must be changed where

necessary. The accomplishment of the Church's task is the only thing that counts.

We have lost in the past because we had no big business. In spite of our heroic pioneer work in the great West, we were outgeneralled by a man who had not only vision and fire but a church that saw the vision and caught his fire. Dr. Robertson compelled the attention of the Church and her young manhood, as the strength of the Presbyterian cause in the Canadian West shows. He was no more devoted than our missionaries, but he got his Church to believe in Big Business.

The spirit of consecrated adventure will be the breath of life to our Church. It will show the world that we believe in the power of our message. And this is only another way of saying that the Holy Spirit of God is the only agency that will purify, quicken and enlarge the vision of the Church. The world is waiting for the Church to give herself entirely to the adventure of the Holy Spirit's guidance.

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THE men of our churches present a practically undeveloped resource. Their potentialities have been shown in this session of the General Synod. It was the laymen who insisted on following the gleam at the Board of Missions. Their optimism and enthusiasm set fire to the Synod.

"But it is hard to get men at church work," say the parsons. Perhaps that is more a result than a cause. What work do we offer a man? The financial support of the Church is generally the only avenue of co-operation open to him. If he shows a taste for taking church services, he is invested with a lay-reader's ribbon and hailed as a prize. Our clergy think too much along the lines of church services.

How many parishes have a committee of laymen to visit the sick, to look up strangers, to assist in relief work? The Brotherhood of St. Andrew did some of the work, but there are men who do not care to make the professions of the Brotherhood but are still capable and desirous of helping the work.

The Laymen's Missionary Movement is a good thing. It develops the situation. But it cannot go far enough. Its appeal is educational and financial, with the financial as a measure of its effectiveness too easily applied. What we require for the development of the layman is something he can do. We have in our churches wonderful resources of ability and energy, if we could only tap them. The Church's programme of social activity and interests is the line which can be so presented and developed that it will appeal to the layman who has the average amount of red corpuscles. Did you ever try putting up the work of a boy's Sunday group from that angle?

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The cut of Bishop De Pencier and his sons we run by the courtesy of the "Mission World," and that of the Upper House by the courtesy of the "Mail and Empire."

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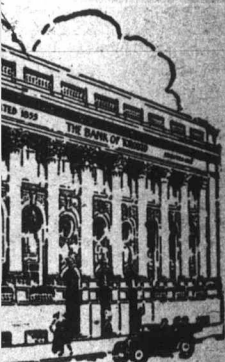
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