

Canadian Churchman

Toronto, May 10, 1917

The Christian Year

The Sunday after Ascension Day.

Three great thoughts for this Sunday are indicated in the Collect:—

1. **The Great Exaltation of the Redeemer.** The Ascension Day is the Day of His glorious Vindication, and on this Day we rejoice with Him in His triumph. Our language of praise is that of the ancient hymn, the Te Deum, where we cry, "We praise Thee, O God: we acknowledge Thee to be the Lord," "Thou art the King of Glory, O Christ," "Thou sittest at the right hand of God: in the Glory of the Father," and of the Collect for the day, in which we pray, "O God, the King of Glory, Who hast exalted Thine only Son Jesus Christ with great triumph unto Thy Kingdom in heaven." We rejoice at this time with Him that all the victorious sorrows and labours of His earthly life are ended.

"But now Thou art in the Shadowless Land, Behind the light of the setting Sun; And the worst is forgotten which Evil planned, And the best which Love's glory could win is won."

2. **The Great Test of Waiting.** He told them to wait. Seldom, if ever, have men had a harder test—to wait, to be dumb with the glorious message of the Resurrection welling up in their hearts, and yet He said, "Tarry ye in the city." The men who could wait in Jerusalem after all they had seen and heard could turn the world upside down. The ten days of quiet waiting between the Ascension and Pentecost is a period which carries with it a great lesson to the individual Christian and to the whole Church. The Master has a way of using and blessing the man who can wait.

3. **The Great Expectation.** "We beseech Thee, leave us not comfortless." Our Lord's words are sounding in our ears, "It is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send Him unto you." The Holy Spirit is the Gift of the Eternal Father through His Ascended and Glorified Son. And at this Ascension-tide we look up to our Father in Heaven and pray, "Send to us Thine Holy Ghost to comfort us, and exalt us unto the same place whither our Saviour Christ is gone before, Who liveth and reigneth with Thee and the Holy Ghost, one God, world without end. Amen." This prayer, it is well to notice, is not answered in the future only, but in a real sense we may expect to receive an answer here and now. Even now, by the power of our Ascended Master and through the Holy Spirit we may sit in heavenly places, "But God, being rich in mercy . . . quickened us together with Christ . . . and raised us up with Him, and made us to sit with Him in the heavenly places, in Christ Jesus." Even now we share the glory of our Exalted Master.

For it is the simple truth to say that those who are trusting in the Risen and Ascended Christ, and rejoice with Him in His victory, and have partaken of His Spirit even now are walking in the light of the Eternal Country, for they "with Him continually dwell."

Humility is the empty vessel up against the fountain.

THE WORK OF SYNODS.

Diocesan Synods in Canada are more or less a disappointment every year. Too much time is spent on matters of secondary importance, while other matters of prime importance are either sidetracked or receive hurried consideration, often in the closing hours, when many of the members have left. Such assemblies of Churchmen, clerical and lay, offer unique opportunities for developing corporate responsibility and enthusiasm, and are too valuable to be allowed to become mere machines for registering approval or disapproval of the reports of committees.

Part of the difficulty is due to the arrangement of the programme. It is most desirable that the advice of leading business and professional men should be secured on certain matters, but the number of such who can give the necessary time is very limited unless they know exactly when such matters are to be considered. By grouping the various subjects and by adhering to a time limit for each group and for each speaker, much time can be saved and a much larger variety of subjects can be given consideration. This means, of course, that rules of debate would have to be adhered to. In too many Church Synods a few members monopolize the time, and frequently speak several times on the same subject. This kills interest, diminishes the attendance, and should seldom, if ever, be permitted.

Still another difficulty under the present system is that little opportunity is provided in the regular sessions of Synods for addresses on subjects of importance to the Church and nation by men specially qualified to speak on them. A great deal of discussion takes place, but too frequently the speeches are poorly thought out and betray a woeful lack of information on the subject. There are several subjects this year that should receive special consideration, such, for example, as "The relation of the Church to the returned soldier," "The place of the Church in dealing with economic and social problems arising out of the war," "The Church and the food problem," "The supply of men for the ministry." There are others that one could mention, but these are urgent matters on which the average delegate to Synod has very crude ideas. Experts on the majority of these subjects are available and should be secured. Nor should such addresses be confined solely to evening sessions, but should be followed by a discussion, not necessarily long, but providing an opportunity for the expression of agreement or disagreement with what has been said and for definite action where such is advisable.

With reference to the first subject mentioned, viz., "The relation of the Church to the returned soldier," we were informed recently on reliable authority that at one centre where soldiers are being discharged, 43 per cent. of the men by actual count for a period covering several months were members of the Church of England. Apart, however, from a small amount of time given by local clergy, the task of meeting these men, of learning their destinations, and of communicating with clergy in these centres, was undertaken by a minister of another denomination, supported by some three denominations, entirely outside the Church of England. There is much that one could say on this subject that is not creditable to the Church, and the earlier it is looked into the better.

Editorial Notes

After an illness of long duration, the Right Rev. William Lennox Mills, D.D., Bishop of Ontario, passed to his last rest at Kingston, Ont., on the afternoon of May 4th. Several times during the past few years, death seemed at hand, but the end came unexpectedly. Born at Woodstock, Ont., on January 28th, 1846, he had entered his seventy-second year.

Bishop Mills was educated at Woodstock Grammar School and Huron College, winning his B.D. degree in 1884 and his doctor's degree from Trinity University ten years later. He was given an honorary D.C.L. by Trinity, and by Bishop's College, Lennoxville, Queen's conferring the LL.D. in 1901. He was made deacon in 1872 and priested the following year, and after serving in the parishes of Norwich and Seaforth in the Diocese of Huron, moved to St. Johns, Que., leaving there for Trinity Church, Montreal, where he subsequently became Canon of Christ Church Cathedral and Archdeacon of St. Andrew's. In 1900 he was elected Coadjutor Bishop of Ontario, with the title Bishop of Kingston, and on the death of Archbishop Lewis in 1901 succeeded to the See of Ontario. Bishop Mills was made a full member of the Mohawk tribe, and given the name of "Sho-rih-ho-wa-neh," that is, "the bearer of an important message." The Bishop of Kingston, Rt. Rev. E. J. Bidwell, D.D., D.C.L., who for four years has acted as coadjutor, now becomes Bishop of the Diocese, and upon his enthronement as such will take the title of Bishop of Ontario.

The attendance at the annual meetings of the Woman's Auxiliary and the systematic manner in which business is conducted is an object lesson for the male members of the Church. They can take time for an occasional devotional address, as well as addresses on different phases of their work, in the midst of their routine of business. They realize the value of the opportunity for such.

Russia seems doomed to have considerable trouble before reaching stability in its government. We hoped that this might be avoided, but it is doubtless inevitable. It is interfering with Russia's share in the war, and we earnestly trust that it will not mean a separate peace on her part. Even though she cannot assume an active offensive for some time to come, it means a great deal to the other allied nations to have thousands of German soldiers held on that part of the battlefield.

The editor has received a letter from the Rev. R. B. Waterman, Carp, Ont., criticizing him severely for omitting portions of his letter that appeared in the correspondence columns recently. The portions omitted were not considered essential to the points at issue, but criticized the stand taken by the Bishops on the matters referred to in Mr. Waterman's letter at the last meeting of the General Synod. We regret under the circumstances that Mr. Waterman was not given an opportunity to revise the letter himself, but we wish to remind our correspondents once more that statements considered by the editor, who must, after all, bear the responsibility for what is published, unnecessary to the elucidation of the subject being dealt with, and out of place in a Church paper, will either be eliminated or the letter left unpublished.