

Canadian Churchman

Toronto, November 20th, 1919.

Editorial

A STEP in reorganization was taken at the recent General Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the U.S.A. which eventually our Canadian Church will take. They have created a Presiding Bishop and Council who are to look after the affairs of the General Convention between the times of the convention. We have started on that line by an Executive Council of our General Synod, a very necessary thing, for it is obvious that all the business of the Synod cannot be dispatched at triennial meetings and that matters arise which require execution or declaration between the sessions.

There is another step to come which the American Church lately took, that is that all our departments of the General Synod should be under the ultimate control of the Council of the Synod. At present our Missionary Society's affairs are conducted by an Executive Committee which reports to a Board which reports to the General Synod when in session. The reports to the Diocesan Synod are given by the M.S.C.C. representatives. Our General Board of Religious Education is in a similar state and our youngest child, the Council for Social Service, is managing itself in the same way. A logical step is that these three branches of service should become departments under the control of the Executive Council. And a necessary step too, because it is conceivable that some of the actions of these Boards involve matters which should neither be left over to a triennial session and which should not be pursued without the sanction of some body outside themselves. An *imperium in imperio* may get results all right but at best it is an emergency way of doing business and some day it is possible that a line of action may be undertaken which will not commend itself to the General Synod but which could not be changed without great difficulty because of it being put into execution at once. An executive council will be another way to give effect to the representative character of our Canadian Church.

The co-ordination of policies and efforts is another thing which is to be accomplished by bringing all these boards as departments under one Executive Council.

Do you remember when your feet did not reach the floor of the pew, and when you used to stand on the hassock to get as high as you could amid the forest of grown-ups? Do you remember how you welcomed a hymn in which your childish treble could join? It was such a relief after the Litany had dragged its slow length along. When the sermon started you wondered what it would be all about, and hoped that the minister would preach about JESUS CHRIST, for you knew something about Him, and loved Him in your simple and sincere way. Do you remember how you listened for a story or something about real people?

Let the vividness of your memory of the dreariness of some services be our plea for the consideration of the children who come to church. We have attended services in which there was nothing at all for children except the discipline of a drill in reverence, the satisfaction of pleasing their parents, and whatever consciousness of God's presence they had. There was no children's hymn and no story they could remember.

Don't let any preacher run away with the idea that if he is interesting to children he will be dull to grown-ups. The opposite is the case. We know of one Rector who makes a habit of giving a three-minute talk for the children just after the announcements. Many adults have told

him of their interest in the little talks. Other clergymen introduce an effective incident which is remembered long after his homily is forgotten and carries the point of the sermon. Don't let any Rector be so short-sighted as to forget his future workers and helpers, who are the most responsive of all his hearers.

WHENEVER the churches do find anything in which they can co-ordinate and unite in a common effort, the effect is not lost on the world. We combine in Social Service, and have done so for years, and Social Service is the Church in action for the relief and remedy of wrong conditions. Last Lent all the churches in Halifax went a step further and held simultaneous missions, each in their own church. Good Friday was observed as a solemn day. The effect on the city was remarkable. The daily press caught the significance of the movement. Last week at St. Catharines a similar movement was inaugurated. One of the daily papers devoted a column of editorial to the matter.

One of the notable things about the FORWARD MOVEMENT is that the largest Christian communions, with the exception of the Roman Catholic, are undertaking it simultaneously. The Presbyterians, for instance, are bending their efforts towards a re-dedication mission of life first and money afterwards. The Methodist and Congregationalists have outlined similar objectives. The Baptists have been the last to swing into line, about a fortnight ago, for there is a body of opinion among them against the confusing of issues by identifying themselves with the other communions. The Anglican Church was one of the first to express its appreciation of the challenge of present times and plan for the re-consecration of men and means for the work of the Kingdom.

There are some among us who find themselves in the same frame of mind as some of the Baptists. They do not care for the idea of a United National Campaign lest there be the confusing of issues by common effort. We can appreciate the viewpoint. We all feel that, beside the body of Christian doctrine which we hold in common with all those who love the LORD JESUS, we have certain elements and traditions which are a unique contribution to the understanding of Christian truth and the organization of the Christian Church. But the uniqueness is something which cannot be obscured or lost by common action in the matters in which we agree. Our Chaplains at the Front did not find that they lost any valuable distinctiveness by common action. We do not expect to lose anything by our joining in the World Conference on Faith and Order.

If the uniqueness of our position is something which can be preserved only by a policy of keeping apart, then that uniqueness is incidental, not essential. We may rub shoulders with Belgian, French and Italian in our common cause, but we are none the less British for all that. And what is more, we have a better appreciation of what the word "British" stands for by comparison with the ideals and methods of the others. It seems to us that in advocating a policy of "splendid isolation" for our Church in matters of common cause we should make a mistake, both strategic and fundamental. We should be showing a lack of confidence in the very uniqueness which we claim for our position.

Anglican we are, and that with a capital A, and we are not afraid that we shall lose our distinctiveness by co-operation in the common cause of the Kingdom represented by the Forward Movement.

The Christian Year

Time That Has No End

(ADVENT SUNDAY)

ONCE more the great Church year begins. Another milestone of her history is left behind. She has weathered the storms of life one stage farther; and she is one year nearer to the time when her service here shall have been accomplished, when her Lord shall come again to change the Church militant into the Church triumphant. The Church year is the unit of time in the Kingdom of God. The civil year has the quality of sacredness which is derived from the fact that it is accounted as "in the year of our Lord," but as a unit of time it is viewed civilly, and without the necessary connotation which relates it to the Kingdom of God. The Christian year has always in its meaning the thought of the Advent, because it is a cycle of time which has for its "terminus ad quem," the coming of the Lord in glory—a doctrine and a promise indissolubly associated with the Christian gospel. According to the Christian faith, the termination of the history of mankind, as we know it, is to be the great occasion of the inauguration of the kingdom of the spirit. The age of human life is not to be thought of as terminating with some physical cataclysm which will extinguish all things in a fog of everlasting oblivion. The revelation of God in Christ is meant to reveal to all men the spiritual character of the universe, and the ultimate end of all things in the full manifestation of the reign of God. The Christian year is a perpetual remembrance of the true nature of life and time as a thing eternal, the real interpretation of which must always be in terms of spirit; for as the end is, so is the real character of a thing.

THE STREAM OF TRUTH UNCHANGING.

We are impressed, as we commence again the cycle of time in the Kingdom of God, with the swift passage of the years, with the ebb and flow of life, with unending change, decay and death; but we are also impressed with the unchanging Word which goes on forever, as a living stream, uniting in its unending flow the hopes and aspirations of untold multitudes, whose living and dying have been made great, noble and hopeful in the comfort and consolation of a living faith. For upwards of fifteen hundred years these prayers and these lessons have been offered and learnt, year by year, in the Christian Church. For three times fifteen generations of men, people of all classes of society and all conditions of life have given their quota of hallowed associations to these petitions, and these passages; so they come to us mellow with the devotions, yearnings and praises of the travelling saints of God.

THE ADVENT CALL.

Once again, in this great year of trial and triumph, we are called from the dissipating and distracting confusions of adjustments and reconstructions to the solemn realities of eternal truth. We are to start life anew this Advent season with the thought of the self-emptying of Jesus, who, in the time of this mortal life, came down to visit us in great humility; we are to realize afresh the call to cast away the works of darkness and put upon us the armour of light; we are to keep before our mind the great end

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