

Canadian Churchman

Toronto, May 16th, 1918.

The Christian Year

Trinity Sunday, May 26th, 1918.

At first sight it is a strange combination of messages which comes to us in the Collect, Epistle and Gospel for this day, "the day of the Doctrine of God," which we call Trinity Sunday.

It is "the glory of the Eternal Trinity" which is set before us as we pray the words of the Collect. "The Power of the Divine Majesty," "the Unity"—these are the great expressions put upon our lips in this prayer. We bow before the mystery of the Name of God, which is, as it has been revealed to us, a Threefold Name. It is before God upon His Throne that we bend and say with the worshippers of Heaven, "Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord God Almighty, which was, and is, and is to come." This is a day when we especially contemplate the mystery of that Ineffable Name, when we worship Him Who is so far above us that we can only dimly comprehend the wonder and the glory of His Power and Holiness.

The Epistle also is full of these thoughts, so characteristic of Trinity Sunday. In it we have St. John's vision of the Uplifted Throne of God, for we are shown Heaven itself and catch glimpses of the worship of Heaven. But there is another message in the Epistle full of blessing. It is the message of "the open door." "And after this I looked, and behold, a door was opened in Heaven." God is high, sitting upon His Throne, far removed from sin, unto Whom no sin-stained one may approach, for from His Throne proceed "lightnings and thunderings, and voices." God is Holy and Awful and Strong—all this the Epistle sets before us by a variety of very glowing images. But there is a door opened in Heaven. There is a way of approach for sin-stained man! Yes; even on Trinity Sunday this thought is prominent in the Church's message.

And when we come to the Gospel we hear Our Lord's own message about the way of approach for sinful man to the Uplifted God, and something about "the open door." It is a glad message at any time, but it has especially joyful sound when, as on this day, we realize afresh the Glory, Majesty and Holiness of God. Well might we say with Isaiah, "Woe is me, for I am undone." How can I approach this Holy God, Who is unveiled for me in Collect and Epistle in Divine Majesty? Then it is we hear in the Gospel the true answer. It is because of the New Creation in Christ that we may draw near to God. "Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the Kingdom of God." We have another name given to the open door—it is the Cross of Christ. "And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up: that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have eternal life."

And so it would seem that the combination of messages for this day is not really so very strange. Our religion is one which gives to God the highest place. He is Awful and Glorious in His Holiness and Power. He cannot tolerate sin. Sin in our religion is the supreme horror—separating and death-dealing. But our religion is the religion of "the open door," of the way back to God made clear by God Himself through His Crucified, Risen and Ascended Son.

Editorial

"SPIRITUAL MUNITIONS."

There are two great forces needed in a conflict such as is being waged to-day. We need guns of all descriptions and an abundance of ammunition and other material equipment. We need also a strong human force in order to make the material equipment of value. The material without the human is helpless.

With regard to the human force, there are still persons to be found who speak and act as if all that is needed is numbers and physique; that if we can get a body of men sufficiently numerous and strong enough physically, victory must be ours. This sentiment is abroad in Canada to-day, and it is one of the most plausible, and at the same time disastrous, features of the present situation. Why, you are asked, should you go to the expense of holding church services, of carrying on missionary work, of issuing religious literature? There is a war on. Why not let these things stand to one side? It sounds plausible and appeals to a great many. And if all that was needed in order to win the war and to secure a satisfactory peace were men and money and munitions, using these terms in the popular sense, such questions would be unanswerable.

No less a man than Napoleon is responsible for the statement that in a great national emergency things spiritual count as four to one, and the moral force behind and within a man is of much greater value in the last analysis than physical or brute force. In times of reverses, or of political disturbance at home, as at the present time in England and Ireland, and even in Canada, there must be something more than the merely human in order to carry us through and on to the end. And it is here where the work of the Christian Church must tell, and it is here that the crucial test of its value and of its work comes. True success cannot be gained unless the power that the Church represents is brought to bear upon the struggle, and it is the most utter folly to argue that it should slacken its activities. It should, with every other department of a nation's life, economize wherever possible without detriment to its efficiency, but it is a time for greater effort rather than less, for more careful scrutiny of its methods, and for a fearless consideration of the character of the message that it is delivering.

We have intimated that there is real danger facing us to-day. This danger does not, however, come from our brave soldiers overseas, but from men in our very midst, some of whom, for the sake of a few dollars, would be glad to put a stop to the Church's work. The devil is as real a force to-day as he ever was, and he knows well that the present unsettled condition of people's minds affords an exceptional opportunity for him to get in his work. There is, therefore, only one thing for the Church of Christ to do if it is to be true to its Leader and is to play its part in the present struggle. It must "carry on" in spite of opposition, and it must help with every atom of strength at its command in heaping up such a store of "spiritual munitions" that no sign of wavering may be seen in its ranks, and that the irresistible power that God alone can supply will be given to those responsible for the prosecution of the war.

Last week we emphasized the need of a conference in connection with each of our Synods, and we were naturally delighted a few days ago to receive a copy of a programme for such a conference to be held in connection with the forthcoming Synod of Niagara. This conference will be held during the afternoon and evening of the day immediately preceding the Synod and follows an ordination service in the forenoon. It is a definite effort to improve matters and while mistakes will probably be made and many things be learned, we are convinced that this can be made a valuable asset to the diocese.

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Two dioceses in Eastern Canada have intimated that the holding of the General Synod this year might profitably be postponed, while another diocese has intimated just as strongly that postponement would be a mistake. We do not presume to say which is right, as there are many strong arguments for either side, and we are quite willing to let the matter rest in the hands of the Primate. There are difficulties in the way, but if harm is going to be done by postponement to the cause for which the Church stands, the difficulties should not be allowed to stand in the way. The example of the Presbyterian Church is worthy of earnest consideration, and something might very well be done in order to decrease the expense along the line of lessening the number of delegates.

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We were asked recently to give some information regarding the work of the Church Army. Unfortunately, little is known in Canada of this splendid institution in the Church in England, and of the work that it is doing among the soldiers. It will give some idea of the extent of this latter to know that in the recent fighting on the western front it lost some fifty-two huts and equipment, valued at about £15,000. It works on similar lines to the Y.M.C.A., except that the Anglican Chaplains hold services in its buildings by right and not by permission. Both institutions are of inestimable value in the conflict that is raging. In times of peace the Church Army, which, in its essence, is a "Working People's Mission to Working People," carries on an active evangelistic work. It also conducts a large number of homes of various kinds, and altogether is a valuable part of the machinery of the Church in the Motherland. Full information can be obtained from its secretary, Rev. Preb. Carlile, 55 Bryanston Street, London W., Eng.

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There could scarcely be better evidence of the changed feeling between Canada and the United States, brought about by the war, than the advertisement inserted in United States papers and paid for by the United States Government asking for men to come to Canada to help in food production. The two countries are now facing a common foe and their sons are fighting, and some of them dying, side by side in a common cause. It should not seem strange, therefore, that those at home should stand shoulder to shoulder in backing up the boys at the front and in helping the less fortunate millions in Europe. There can scarcely be a return to former conditions after such an experience. The future well-being not only of this continent but of the world will be advanced very materially by a continuance of good-will and united action on the part of these two nations. (See page 323 for a copy of one such advertisement.)