

Canadian Churchman

Toronto, July 27th, 1916

The Christian Year

The Seventh Sunday After Trinity, August 6.

"After all, is a man saved because Jesus died for him, or as a result of his own efforts? Does a man get right with God by 'a look at the Crucified One' or by a career of strenuous service?" So the question is asked now-a-days. To some minds it is an urgent issue. The Epistle and Gospel for our Sunday at least suggest an answer.

In such a discussion the first necessity is to define your terms. What do you mean by "Salvation"? Mark that S. Paul's conception of "salvation" is "eternal life." "The gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord." Now if there is one thing which Our Lord emphasized about "eternal life" more than any other, it is this: Eternal life is not merely an endless immortality passed in a place called Heaven, to which one is admitted in due course if one can, as it were, display the right ticket at the gate. Eternal life is rather a new life of the spirit, a divinely bestowed life which may be granted and received now, and which endures beyond the crisis known as physical death into the unseen and eternal world beyond.

Note that to S. Paul such eternal life can only come to a man as "the gift of God." Any other conception would be preposterous, impossible. How could a man gain or win or deserve by his utmost strivings a gift of such stupendous magnitude—a gift which it taxed all the Divine resources to bestow? In the first place the mysterious barrier erected by the sin of man between man and his Maker had to be removed. This, in S. Paul's view, could be achieved by nothing less than the supreme Sacrifice on Calvary. His own Son "God hath set forth to be a propitiation." In the second place, this eternal life could only be implanted in a man by the direct creation of the Holy Spirit. It was His unique and particular gift. Without this bestowal, the man was spiritually dead, and "if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of His."

Salvation, then, consists in the possession of a life, and that life, like all life, is a gift of God. Has, then, a man nothing to do? If this life is a gift,—is, in fact, nothing less than the Divine Presence in the soul,—should a man remain merely passive? Is he to be as inactive himself as he was in the crisis of his own physical birth? The Gospel suggests an answer to the question. Like the former feeding of the Five Thousand, this miracle reminds us that Christ is the Bread of Life. Now, bread is a gift of God, but it cannot benefit a man without his co-operation. He must eat it. So Christ is Himself Eternal Life, but He can only become our life, by our co-operation. There must be the first definite reception, and then the process must be continually repeated. We must daily "feed on Him in our hearts by faith with thanksgiving." Such a life of vital union will inevitably issue in a life of service. It is, in fact, the only basis of such service. As Christ expressed this truth elsewhere, "the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine." Our duty, the one indispensable necessity laid upon the Christian, both for life and service, is to obey the command "Abide in Me."

Are we saved then by Christ or by our own works? The dilemma is not a true one. We are saved by Christ alone, but only as we yield ourselves in willing co-operation—only as we feed upon the Bread of Life. The mighty fact of salvation has two aspects. On the one side, it is all "Christ"; on the other,— "It depends on you."

Editorial Notes

Second Anniversary of the War.

The Archbishops of Canterbury and York have suggested to the various diocesan bishops in England that Friday, August 4th, the second anniversary of the declaration of war, be observed as a day of humble prayer to Almighty God. In Canada, steps have also been taken by some of our bishops along similar lines, and it is to be hoped that the need of special intercession, especially at the present critical stage of the war, will be fully realized. Nor should the meetings for this purpose be confined to members of our own Church. At least one Provincial Government, that of Ontario, has issued a proclamation calling upon citizens generally to reaffirm on that day "their belief in the righteousness of the cause and their determination to use every effort to bring the struggle to a victorious conclusion." There is an old saying that when the enemy wavers is the time to bring up reinforcements. Our enemies are far from being beaten yet, but the tide of war has evidently changed. To-day is not a time for resting on our oars but the success of our soldiers should spur us on to still greater efforts. They need all the reinforcements we can give them and the greatest of all reinforcements is the help of Almighty God. This will come when we as a nation go down on our knees and ask for it. If we believe that our cause is righteous let us bear testimony to the fact.

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The Duke of Devonshire and the Church.

In an editorial in a recent number of "The Record," England, reference is made to the appointment of the Duke of Devonshire to succeed the Duke of Connaught as Governor-General of Canada. "He is chairman of the Central Church Committee for Defence and Instruction and at the annual meeting of that body a few weeks ago, the Archbishop of Canterbury, referring to the fact that the Duke, in the discharge of his high public duties in connection with affairs of the nation was absent in another part of the United Kingdom, added with significant emphasis, 'I think you will all agree with me in saying that if there is any man in our public life to-day who deserves the gratitude of us all for the unflinching way in which he takes upon himself, or allows others to place upon him responsibilities of a varied kind, it is the Duke of Devonshire. It is difficult to exaggerate what we in this society and in the Council really owe to him for the care he gives to its interests, and for the personal share which he takes in the discharge of its work.'"

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Church Publicity.

During the past few weeks we have given a great deal of space to the reports of various Synod meetings. Through the kindness of friends we were supplied with the information, although much was left for the editor to do by way of arrangement of the material. It is possible that a few errors may have been noticed, but on the whole we believe that the reports given are accurate. We are convinced, however, that this part of the Church's work is not receiving the attention it deserves. Why should the Church's publicity work be left entirely to reporters of the secular press, who are, as a rule, ignorant of the inner work of the Church, or to a few voluntary helpers in the case of Church papers? Considering the con-

ditions under which they work, it is remarkable that the reporters do as well as they do and the Church owes them a debt of gratitude. What is needed, though, at every Synod, Diocesan, Provincial or General, and other important Church meetings, is an official reporter who understands the work and who has an opportunity beforehand to become familiar with the business to come before the meeting. The vast majority of Church members know little of what takes place except what they see in the secular and Church papers, and if the information they gather is not accurate the Church authorities are responsible. The custom sometimes followed of appointing a member of the Synod or, in the case of our Missionary Society, of the Board, to act as press reporter is unfair to that member and in the majority of cases of little value. If it is worth doing at all, and we believe it is well worth it, it should be done by one who is free from other duties and who understands what is required. This matter is receiving considerable attention by some of the other religious bodies and we trust that the Church of England will not be the last to fall into line.

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Church Schools.

We wish to call attention to our Church schools for boys and girls. There has in the past been an impression in certain quarters that a resident school is a sort of reformatory, or, if not that, at least a place where only the dull and unruly are sent as a sort of last resource. There may have been some grounds for such an impression in days gone by, and even yet if one were to judge by a few individual cases he might come to this conclusion, but no man who is at all familiar with the life and work of the vast majority of such schools in Canada to-day would hold such a view. They are, it is true, beyond the reach of the very poor, but there are large numbers of the sons and daughters of men with moderate incomes to be found attending them. Why is it? Is it only a fancy, or is it because such schools have a distinct and definite contribution to make? It is undoubtedly the latter. One of the great lessons taught by the present war is the need of more definite religious teaching, not as something distinct in itself, but as an essential and vital part of our system of education. As has been well said by one of our leading English Church weeklies, "a system of education in which the sanctions and restraints of religion find no place, tends, not to civilization but to the development of all that is base and vile in human nature." We have in our public schools in Canada, it is true, many devout Christian teachers who are influencing boys and girls by their lives but, even if they had the training to fit them for it, the system under which they work makes it impossible for them to give more than a few minutes each day at the outside to definite religious instruction. Apart from the training in habits of self-control and self-reliance, of consideration for others and systematic use of one's time, the resident school is proving its worth year by year by the high type of character that it is producing. One finds graduates of such schools, leading in, almost every profession in Canada to-day, and one finds them also leading in large numbers, in the defence of the cause of the Empire and of righteousness.

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I know not where His islands lift
Their fringed palms in air;
I only know I cannot drift
Beyond His love and care.

—Whittier.

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