

Canadian Churchman

Toronto, October 5th, 1916

The Christian Year

The 17th Sunday After Trinity, Oct. 15.

"I, therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you, that ye walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called." And what precisely is this vocation? The Apostle has laboured in the inspired periods of this Epistle to enable his Ephesian converts to catch some gleams of its immeasurable glory. This "high calling of God in Christ Jesus" is no divine afterthought, no casually thrown off invitation, but a Divine Purpose moulding the slow development of the ages. "Before the foundation of the world" God proposed "in the dispensation of the fulness of times" to "gather together in one all things in Christ." And so the Apostle paints the picture of this marvellous catholic society, drawn from Jew and Gentile alike, redeemed from sin, emerged by the indwelling of the Holy Spirit; raised by Him even while their mortal bodies still dwell on earth, to "sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus"—a society, bound together by the bonds of love, living a Divine life below, and looking forward to that eternal inheritance of unimaginable glory, reserved for those whose life is now "hid with Christ in God."

"Walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called"—this vocation, the consummation of a past, the earnest of a future, eternity; this vocation, with its treasures of life and light and love and holiness; this vocation to a satisfying human brotherhood through the wealth of a divine sonship in Christ Jesus, made possible by His Death, actualized by His Spirit! Of such a vocation, how should men "walk worthy"? By heights of meditative rapture? By gorgeous ceremonial? By leaving this sordid world for some purer cloister? by ecclesiastical "esprit de corps"?

Mark the Apostolic answer—"With all lowliness and meekness, with long suffering, forbearing one another in love; endeavouring to keep the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace." How startling a transition from vistas of transcendent glory to lowly duties of humble self-abnegation! And yet how profoundly in accord with the real nature of things. Love is the bond that binds together this wondrous society, the crown of the aeonian purpose of God. Love is the law of gravitation in the spiritual world. To sin against love is to disturb the balance of the most vital forces. To keep the unity of the spirit in the bond of love is the supreme duty of all members of the "called" community.

"The unity of the spirit"—if men had been obedient to that command, the unity of the spirit would have prevented diversity of competing organization. If once we recover this unity of the spirit, the path towards unity of organization will at least be simplified. But "unity of the spirit" is the prime essential. Possessing that supreme necessity we may hope to begin, in some measure, to walk worthy of the vocation wherewith we are called, because we shall be working for the realization of the Divine Purpose—that they all may be one.

May God make us each sincerely penitent for our particular share in promoting and continuing "our unhappy divisions"—national, ecclesiastical, personal!

Editorial Notes

The Bible Lesson.

Some time ago we received requests to arrange, if possible, to have the material dealing with the Bible Lesson appear a week earlier. In some parts of the Dominion it is not possible to deliver the Churchman before the Sunday following the day of publication and this has naturally interfered very greatly with the usefulness of the lesson material. We had hoped to adjust matters during the summer, but could not seem to find a favourable opportunity for doing so without breaking the continuity of the lessons. However, Children's Day gives us the opportunity we have been waiting for. Hereafter the lesson will appear a week earlier and will be in the hands of the majority of our readers a full week before the Sunday on which it is to be used in our Sunday Schools. We are certain that this change will be much appreciated by Sunday School workers and it will in no wise mar the usefulness of the lesson for those others who in their homes wish to follow the lesson week by week.

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Children's Day.

We direct the attention of our readers to the article in this issue by the Secretary of the Sunday School Commission. There is no more important work being done by the Church to-day than that among its children and young people, and there is no work that is making greater strides forward. The Church of England has not always been in the front rank in Sunday School work and much of the ground that it lost in this country in years gone by was due to neglect in this direction. During recent years steady improvement has taken place and the formation of the Sunday School Commission was the natural result of the growing interest in, and greater value placed upon, the proper training of the younger generation of Church members. The tireless energy of the General Secretary of the Commission has taken him into every part of the Dominion except the far northern dioceses, and hundreds of parishes have been given a new vision of the work and first-hand information on the best methods to be employed. In addition to this, courses of study have been arranged for both scholars and teachers and regular examinations have been held from year to year. In this way the work is being systematized and teachers are being better fitted for their work. Child life is always of inestimable value, but at no time in the history of the world was this more true than to-day. Boys must be equipped to fill the places of those who are falling at the front, and their religious training is the most important part of that equipment. It underlies and permeates every other part of it. The Sunday School Commission is striving to assist the clergy in doing this work, and it deserves the whole-hearted support of Church members, both on its record in the past and on account of the greater work ahead. Children's Day gives to all a special opportunity to help and we trust it will be taken advantage of to a greater extent this year than ever before.

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The Price of Victory.

Some of the recent casualty lists have made us realize as never before the price we are

paying for victory. The long lists of young men about to enter the ministry or professional or business life, or who had already done so, who have gone never to return, makes one almost tremble for the future. Many of them were the very pick of our young manhood, leaders among their fellows, destined to play a great part in the development of this young country. They have been taken and in many cases a generation must pass before their places can be filled. It is little wonder that the question presses in on one at times. "Is it worth it?" We believe it is, and it is this belief that reconciles us to the loss. It should, however, do much more than that. It should make us put forth every effort in our power to preserve that for which they are giving their lives. It places on the men who are here at home a double responsibility. Those who are free and able to enlist but who have shirked their duty cannot be expected to do much here at home beyond what they think is to their own selfish advantage. But there is a generation of boys rapidly approaching manhood who ought to be prepared for the future and made to realize the tremendous responsibility resting upon them. We do not want a repetition of this horrible carnage and there is only one way to avoid it. If we value the sacrifice that is being made by the present generation of young Canadian manhood we shall exert ourselves as never before in bringing home to the boys of to-day the truths of the Gospel of Christ, not merely in their bearing on the world to come but as the great fundamentals on which the happiness and the peace of this world must rest.

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The National Mission.

During the months of October and November the Church in England will hold its great National Mission. Preparations have been in progress for several months past and the leaders in the Church have spared neither time nor effort in ensuring its success. It was doubtless inevitable that certain things should occur to mar the harmony of these preparations as there are always those whose range of vision is so limited and their grasp of the things of vital importance so feeble that they cannot avoid being carried off at a tangent by some comparatively insignificant issue. The discussion regarding the place of women in the Mission has, we must confess, appeared somewhat childish. We have too much respect for and confidence in the vast majority of Churchwomen to think for one minute that they have any desire to usurp the special duties of the clergy. Apart from this and the efforts made by a few here and there to turn the Mission into party channels, the work has progressed with wonderful unanimity. We admire the power of leadership shown by the Archbishops and the majority of the bishops, and we feel certain that God will abundantly bless the efforts put forth. While the Church in Canada has done little to follow in this respect the example of the Mother Church, still there is no reason why the individual clergy should not urge the members of the Church to remember the Mission daily in their prayers. In addition to this, we trust that the Mission will be remembered by special prayers at the regular Sunday services throughout the Dominion.

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