

Thoughts for the Thoughtful

In the deepest night of trouble and sorrow God gives us so much to be thankful for that we need never cease our singing.—Coleridge.

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Do not ask that Christ may be near to you—He is near. Do not pray that He may be closer—He cannot be. Pray that you may realize His nearness and comprehend how close He is.—Selected.

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We may search long to find where God is, but we shall find Him in those who keep the words of Christ. For the Lord Christ saith: "If any man love Me, he will keep my words, and we will make our abode with him."—Martin Luther.

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Jesus Christ has the human hands to bless, He has the human heart to sympathize, He has the human voice to intercede. He feels for all our anxieties, all our sorrows, all our sins. He feels; therefore, He helps. Trust, then, His sympathy, His intercession for you.—Manning.

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The divine Spirit, who guides into all truth, has not finished teaching us; the Lord, Who had many things to say, has not ceased to speak; former times were not "able to bear" all His utterances, and our own time and future times will hear more and more of His words.—Selected.

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"Not new opinion, but renewed devotion to known duty, is what is needed for the impoverished life of a professed disciple of Christ. This is what was meant by the Old Testament prophet, who said: "Thus saith the Lord, Stand ye in the ways, and see, and ask for the old paths, where is the good way, and walk therein, and ye shall find rest for your souls."

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Every day we choose among the multitude of alternatives presented. Are our choices merely the things that are tolerably good, or do we always seek the best, that which is unequivocally good? Do we endeavour to avoid the very appearance of evil? Do we try to live, not merely respectable lives, but truly holy lives? By such choices under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, we may keep so close to the Master that the world will recognize Him in us.

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It may be true that the success of life depends quite as much on our capacity and ability for receiving as it does upon our fight to attain. The influences of God beat upon our lives without our asking, and our best wisdom is to know the time of their coming and to be ready for them. There is, perhaps, no profounder mistake than the belief that the good things of life never came our way, and that we must still look for them in some fortunate turn in the future. They have come every day of our lives. We do not need to scan the coming day with anxious eyes as if by a bare possibility it might bring something to us. It cannot fail to bring something. The disasters we fear will not mainly take the form of a poverty of events or a scarcity of opportunities. They will be far more likely to take the shape of neglect. There can be little question that by far the greater part of all our trouble comes from failure to seize and appropriate the advantages which are ever with us.—Selected.

Recruits for the Ministry

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The substance of this paper was given at the Annual Meeting of the Huron College Alumni Association.

IT is my intention to deal with this very vital question in the simplest and most practical manner possible. It cannot be a matter of surprise to any one that this Great War which is turning all life upside down should have had such a mighty influence upon the Church. We, who, dimly conscious of the tremendous part which the Church of England has played in the nation's history, have been offering up day by day the prayers which she has placed in our hands for the King and Government, had perhaps only faintly realized the far-reaching influence of those oft-repeated petitions. Sometimes, amid our discouragements, we felt inclined to almost believe the anti-church agitators who described us as dying or dead—who said that we did not count—who claimed that we had lost our hold. And as we looked at congregations which were only a fraction of what they should have been, we almost gave ourselves up to despair as we vainly asked ourselves, "Well, what is the matter with the dear old Church?" And then the war came. From big churches, hundreds volunteered—scores from smaller ones. Bishops and bishops' sons, clergymen and clergymen's sons, churchmen everywhere responded willingly and immediately, until the Canadian Expeditionary Force began to look like a Church of England crusade which, by the sheer magnetism of its magnitude, attracted a few other thousands from other communions. The response of churchmen ought to have brought encouragement and joy to our hearts. Call it the result of immigration, or offer any other explanation that you like, but the fact remains that the men of our Church were imbuing more of the spirit of loyalty, fostered by our liturgy, were catching more of the genius of true religion, were displaying a greater readiness to interpret practically the Christ-life, than most of us would have given them credit for. And if the service of Christ means sacrifice, then we can humbly and devoutly thank God that in this hour of the nation's greatest need, in defence of the cause of liberty and justice, Churchmen have shown themselves His servants.

But while these men have been doing their duty—and right nobly have they done it, too, winning for themselves and for us, glory upon glory, as achievements courageous, heroic and impossible were marked up to their credit—while these men have been doing their duty so well, in spite of renewed activities on the part of their fathers and mothers and sisters and brothers, the Church's work has been, in a sense, seriously hampered through their absence. Choirs are depleted; Sunday Schools, strange though it may sound, are manned by women; Anglican Young People's Associations look like Girls' Friendly Societies; and Brotherhoods of St. Andrew, where they exist at all, look like the average Select Vestries. There are practically no young men left. It is the Church's best who have gone. Moreover, the number of Chaplains required—altogether inadequate and unfair on a percentage basis—has reduced the man power of the ministry. Members of our clergy, too, have joined both the combatant and non-combatant ranks. And also, as one would naturally expect, our theological colleges have had their student bodies very seriously reduced, until some of them are actually doubting the wisdom of

keeping open during the remainder of the war. And the result of all this is, that the supply of men for the ministry, never sufficient, is terribly reduced—the immediate prospect of its being made up is not by any means the brightest—and it therefore behooves us who have a real interest in this matter to see if we cannot devise some means, even in the face of prevailing conditions—nay, rather, because of prevailing conditions—whereby this state of things may be improved. All of which makes this subject both vital and timely.

Now, I am certain that under conditions as they are, everything is as it should be. I don't believe that any red-blooded Britisher would have it otherwise. If war must be—especially such a war as this one—then our clergy and the Church's sons ought not to be backward in taking their places for right—but rather they ought to be as, thank God, they have been, leading the way to such sacrifice and service. And personally I feel that for me to attempt to enrol as a theological student any man of military age and physical fitness would be for me to be remiss in this hour of crisis. The committee of enquiry upon applications for admission to our colleges ought to be a kind of military tribunal, refusing every fit person so long as the need for men in the army is so pressing. And I suppose most of us feel that our Bishops would be absolutely justified in refusing to ordain to the diaconate any man capable of military service, unless he declares himself to be willing and ready to perform such service for the Empire.

Now, of course, though this condition of a scarcity of men has been aggravated by the war and its demands upon the Church's sons, nevertheless there seems almost always to have been a noticeable scarcity of men in the ministry, and almost always an inadequate enrolment of students in our theological colleges. The possible explanation of these facts have often been reviewed. Amid the materialistic tendencies of our age there is so little to attract young men thither. The satisfaction of doing good, the joy of service, the heart-content of helping men upward—well, it all seems so visionary, so intangible, so unreal to a practical twentieth century youth, whose first question about everything is generally, "What is there in it?" When he learns that the average stipend of the Canadian clergy is about one thousand dollars a year, he quickly and finally decides that the ministry is not for him. There's the poverty of it, compared with a commercial or other professional life—anyone else who made only a thousand a year would be called a failure. And for that thousand a man has to be at the beck and call of his whole congregation, driving or tramping night and day, with meetings almost every night and a thousand unreasonable demands to satisfy. And all the time he's doing this he is watched and criticized if, to some of his uncharitable parishioners, he does something which seems out of the way. It does not sound attractive, does it? Consider the income, the subjection to criticism, the incessant labour, the meagre results—compare them with conditions in other walks of life. Can you honestly be surprised that in such an age as this there should be a shortage of men in the ministry?

I am not at all sure, brethren, that the fault is not partly our own. Perhaps we have failed to present the cheerful side to our young men. Perhaps we have moped over our poverty rather than rejoiced in our service. Perhaps we haven't presented the attractive side of the life as we might have done. Perhaps we haven't got close enough to our boys and young men to be able naturally to approach the subject or, when once approached, to be able to lead them to think seriously of it for