

Canadian Churchman

Toronto, July 12, 1917.

The Christian Year

The Seventh Sunday After Trinity, July 22nd.

God's greatness and power, our weakness and inability to do anything by ourselves—these are the two facts brought prominently to our attention in the Collect, Epistle, and Gospel for this Sunday.

1. **The Collect.** "Lord of all power and might, Who art the author and giver of all good things." We set before us the greatness and the power of the Giver, with Whom there is no scarceness. It is important to be constantly reminding ourselves that with God there is an abundant supply for all our needs. It is important that in our prayers we should, before we think of our needs, remember the "Lord of all power and might," and let that thought fill our minds. Then it is that we are in a position to remember our scarceness, our weakness, and all the great need we have of His power and might in our lives. We match our poverty—all our lack of love, our helplessness, our inability to make any progress—against His riches, crying, "Graft in our hearts the love of Thy Name, increase in us true religion, nourish us with all goodness, and of Thy great mercy keep us in the same."

2. **The Epistle.** Eternal life is the gift of God. In the Epistle we are reminded of the old truth, so easily forgotten, that we can do nothing to earn Eternal Life, that the forgiveness of sins has its source in the compassion of God. We have nothing to offer of ourselves, nothing to plead—we have to accept the gift of God, simply as a gift. It is not a wage for work done; it is a gift from God through Jesus Christ. "For the wages of sin is death: but the gift of God is Eternal Life, through Jesus Christ our Lord."

3. **The Gospel.** Out in the Wilderness were the four thousand far from home, cut off from the source of supplies, hungry but having nothing. The Lord looked upon them and said, "I have compassion on the multitude, because they have now been with Me three days, and have nothing to eat: and if I send them away fasting to their own houses, they will faint by the way." It is a picture of our race in its helplessness. The question of the disciples is being asked always, "From whence can a man satisfy these men with bread here in the wilderness?" There is only one answer. It cannot be done save by the help of God. There is no place where man can be satisfied with bread here in the Wilderness save one, and that is at the Feet of Him Who is the Bread of Life.

So it is that Collect, Epistle and Gospel unite to teach us that in our weakness, sin, and hunger we have to come to Him Who is "all power and might," Who is "Eternal Life," and Who is Himself "the Living Bread."

FEAR NOT.

It is sweeter to hear in the dark of night
The voice of Jesus say
"Fear not!"
Than to walk in the noon of the clear sunlight
And in the glow of day
Hear not.
Philip Henry Dodge.

Editorial

"A CRISIS FOR THE CHURCHES."

This is the heading of an editorial in a recent issue of one of our Canadian city dailies. It expressed the belief "that the experiences of the men at the front will make them more responsive to the pleadings of a practical religion than they were before they went overseas." It, however, doubts whether "they will find a practical religion on all sides in the Churches of to-day." The effect of the war, it says, is to strip "the veneer off a good many things." The soldiers "want a man's religion, simple and earnest, and advocated by men who show in their calling something of the spirit of self-sacrifice our soldiers themselves have shown on the battlefield." And in conclusion it predicts that "the home-coming of the troops from Europe is likely to bring upon the Churches of Canada the greatest crisis in their history," and that "there are few indications that the Churches are prepared for the experience or awake to the situation."

We shall not venture to say to what extent this opinion is true or otherwise. It is in any case valuable in that it should provoke thought and a study of the situation in our own Church. There is no doubt that splendid work is being done by individual clergy from one end of Canada to the other. The greatest weakness is the lack of co-ordination and more corporate action on the part of the whole Church. This was the weak point in the first two years of the war in the attitude of the Church in Canada towards the work of securing and equipping chaplains. There is too great a tendency to drift along with the tide. The Council for Social Service, which should naturally undertake this work, has an organization without a secretary or secretaries, and is helpless except along educational lines. The returned soldier problem would, of course, be only one of the many duties of such an official, but he could be of tremendous assistance at the present time in this one matter alone, and the strongest man that the Church can secure is not too strong for the position. What is needed is some one person who can co-ordinate the activities of the Church in these matters and indicate how the whole Church can best deal with such problems. Delay at such a time is dangerous, as there may grow up, as in the case of the labouring classes, a wall between the returned soldiers' organization and the Church, a wall of suspicion, of indifference, of bitterness even, that it will take years to break down. The work of individual clergy here and there cannot prevent it. They will always be looked upon by the soldiers as good men, but they will not be regarded as representing the whole Church. Some official action leading not merely to the appointment of committees but to practical results is looked for. We cannot, therefore, urge too strongly the need of immediate action. It should be regarded by every clergyman as his duty to recommend to the Council for Social Service men whom they consider fitted for the task and we feel certain that the Bishop of Huron, as chairman of this Council, would appreciate such suggestions.

Subscribers who are changing their addresses during the summer months are requested to notify us at an early date of such changes, giving both old and new addresses. Otherwise

there will probably be irregularity in the delivery of the paper. We are anxious to follow our subscribers even to their summer homes.

China is once more in a state of civil war. The friends of the Manchu dynasty succeeded temporarily in placing the young emperor on the throne, but his reign was short-lived. What China evidently needs is a strong leader, whether as Emperor or President, who can prepare the people for self-government. A republic consisting of nearly four hundred million people, the vast majority of whom are steeped in ignorance and pagan superstition, strikes one as an impossibility.

The Parliament of Canada has by a large majority decided in favour of conscription and the Prime Minister has promised that it will be enforced. He may rest assured that he will have the backing of a very large majority of English-speaking Canadians, and we hope of French-speaking Canadians as well, in his effort. The adequate support of the men at the front and of the cause for which we are at war, is far more important than any trouble that may result from an honest endeavour to enforce the law.

The temptation to pay the Germans back in their own coin is very great. It is no easy matter to see defenceless women and children slaughtered by the enemy without retaliating in kind. If the end of the war were going to be hastened by such retaliation and more lives saved thereby than by refraining from such measures, one might feel justified in yielding to the temptation. It is, moreover, a question not merely of what the enemy deserves but also of the effect of such retaliation on ourselves. Can we afford to do it? We think not.

The Council for Social Service has issued two pamphlets dealing with different phases of their work. These have been prepared by Professor Michell, of Kingston, and are in convenient form, concise and to the point, and should be of great value not only to the clergy but to Church members generally who are interested in this subject. We cannot urge too strongly the study of the various social problems confronting the Church, and while such pamphlets do not pretend to deal with any subject exhaustively, they serve as a convenient introduction to such study.

Russia has surprised her friends as well as her enemies by the rapidity with which she has rallied her forces and returned to the attack on the Eastern Front. It is scarcely likely that her internal troubles are ended or that she will be able to continue her attacks without a let-up. Such attacks as she can make will, however, serve a double purpose. They will compel the return of large German forces and supplies to that front and so relieve the pressure elsewhere, and they will at the same time tend to weld together the diverse elements in Russia itself. The diverting of attention from their sectional grievances to a common struggle against a common foe in defence of a common cause will do more than almost anything else to bring unity and peace at home.

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