

# Canadian Churchman

Toronto, January 17th, 1918.

## The Christian Year

Septuagesima Sunday, January 27th, 1918.

Three messages come to us to-day from Collect, Epistle and Gospel respectively.

*The Collect.* A message of humility is found here. We acknowledge that according to strict justice we deserve only punishment. If we would talk of what we merit, we would talk only of punishment. The Collect would seem to shed some light upon the message of the Gospel. What right have we to bargain with God as to what is our due? So in the Collect we pray, "that we, who are justly punished for our offences, may be mercifully delivered by Thy goodness." We throw ourselves upon the goodness of God asking for deliverance, for this is the attitude in which we may receive the mercies of God.

*The Epistle.* "Know ye not, that they which run in a race run all, but one receiveth the prize? So run that ye may obtain." A condition of success in the spiritual life is here indicated. In those games so much esteemed in Greece, all who were in the lists ran, but one only, out of all, received the prize. St. Paul does not mean to say that this is the case in the Christian race for eternity, that one only receives the prize out of so many. The crown is one that all may obtain, but what he maintains is that just as in the games each one contended with great earnestness, so must it be with us. We must "strive" for success in the great spiritual contest. The conditions of success are earnestness, self-discipline, and a single mind.

*The Gospel.* "The kingdom of heaven is like unto a man that is an householder, which went out early in the morning to hire labourers into his vineyard." What have we in to-day's Gospel? *God's message to the privileged! God's first places are God's hard places!* The call to the place of privilege is the call to the place of sacrifice. It is the call to clear the ground for others, to make their way easier, to bear the burden of the noonday heat in order that others may work only in the cool of the evening hours.

If we read this Gospel aright any privileges, gifts, opportunities of race, religion, or position which we may have that others have not, will not make us feel superior or self-sufficient, or lead us to the delusion that we are better or more deserving than others, with a greater reward due to us as our right; but rather they will make us humble as we realize that, according to the teaching of Jesus, the widening of opportunity and increasing of our gifts mean enlarging of our sphere of duty. All that comes to us in the way of privilege and opportunity, does not mean that we deserve more, or are in any sense favourites. What does it mean? That the duty laid upon us is heavier, that the Penny is becoming harder to earn, that for us the day's work has lengthened, that not one hour or two or three shall win for us the Eternal Penny, but that we have to "bear the burden and the heat of the day."

He who is trying to live a Christian life without the Christian Church is like one who should try to be a musician without ever going to a concert.—Dr. George Hodges.

## Editorial

COME OUT INTO THE OPEN.

There has been considerable criticism during the past few years of our leaders in spiritual matters, there being a feeling in many quarters that the rank and file of church members have not been receiving the degree of leadership that prevailing conditions demand. That such a feeling exists is sufficient ground for serious thought. However, the tables were turned at the meeting of men held in the Church of the Redeemer, Toronto, on Tuesday evening of last week. The Primate in the course of his address referred to the diffidence shown by the average Anglican layman in religious matters, and made a strong appeal to them to "come out into the open."

We certainly want leaders who lead, but we also want laymen who will recognize leadership when it is given them and will see to it that the whole burden is not thrown upon the leaders. The average Anglican layman is much too prone to treat religion as something that can be taken up or laid aside when he puts on or takes off his Sunday attire. He is too prone to look upon every man who dares to speak of religious matters on weekdays as a sort of "goody-goody" person, lacking somewhat in those virile qualities that go to make up a successful business man. To find an Anglican layman who will lead in prayer in a meeting of men is almost as difficult as to find the proverbial "needle in a haystack." During recent years we have witnessed a certain degree of change in the matter of public speaking by laymen on religious subjects, but even yet there is too great a tendency to shirk the definite, straightforward appeal on spiritual lines.

We are quite aware of the excuse that is usually given. Men have seen other men whose lives were not consistent with their speaking and praying. The Anglican layman is taught from childhood by the prayers that he repeats Sunday by Sunday to treat religion as an extremely sacred matter and to despise hypocrisy and cant. "From pride, vain-glory and hypocrisy . . . Good Lord, deliver us," is drilled into his mind. This is as it should be, but there is nothing in those prayers to indicate that the cure for these evils is to close one's mouth on such matters as tight as a steel trap.

Another excuse so often given is that one does not want others to think that he considers himself better than they. Too often, we fear, he is more concerned regarding the opinions of his fellow laymen than regarding the opinion and wishes of God. He knows that other laymen are rather unmerciful in such matters and he is afraid of their gibes. As a matter of fact, reticence in religious matters is in many cases merely a cloak for moral cowardice.

Have we overstated the facts? We know that at bottom there is something genuine that comes to the top when the crisis comes, and no one recognizes this more than the Primate. It has been seen in this war, in the response made by the vast majority of Anglicans, men and women, old and young, in the trenches and here at home. Anglican laymen are not devoid, by any means, of spiritual earnestness. There is at bottom a sense of duty not only to self but to others. This is self-evident but it does not hide the fact referred to above. Can we not shake ourselves free from this latter and with more frankness admit our dependence upon

God, and with more readiness "Come out into the open" in word as well as in deed and acknowledge before men the faith that is in us?

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From all one can learn, there was an encouraging response to the King's call to prayer. Churches were crowded to overflowing and a genuine spirit of subjection to the will of God was shown by the worshippers. We have made a good beginning. Let us not, however, make the mistake of imagining that we have done all that is needed. Let us not sit back and fold our arms as much as to say, "We have done our part. We shall now see if God will do His."

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Once more an appeal is about to be made for the Patriotic Fund, and we trust that the response will be at least as generous as last year. No matter what our views may be regarding the present method of providing for those whom our soldiers have left behind, until some better method is adopted, we must do the best we can along present lines. The main thing is to treat our soldiers fairly, not as objects of charity but as having a just claim for adequate support for themselves and for their dependents.

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It is scarcely necessary to do more than draw attention to the appeal being made to the Sunday Schools of Canada and the United States on behalf of the starving children of Armenia and Syria. In every great calamity, the old, the sick, and the children suffer most, and of all who have suffered and are still suffering as the result of the present war, no country or race has undergone more heart-rending privation and persecution than the one whom our children are asked to help. It provides an excellent opportunity for parents to encourage in their children the spirit of sympathy and self-denial.

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The statements given out by Premier Lloyd George and President Wilson are the clearest utterances on the issues of the present war that have been made. They were definite and simple so that anyone could understand them. There was, moreover, such a degree of unanimity between them that the utmost unity of action is assured. Such statements are of very great importance in paving the way for peace negotiations when the time comes. Every additional move is bringing Great Britain and the United States nearer together and revealing the fact that though differing in their forms of government, they are practically one in their aims so far as their attitude to international questions are concerned.

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We have received several letters during the past few weeks regarding delay in acknowledging receipt of subscriptions. The labels are corrected once a month and naturally those subscriptions that are received immediately after one change is made must remain for a month before being acknowledged. However, there was more delay than usual during the past Christmas season. A large number of new names had to be entered in addition to an extra large number of regular changes. We trust, however, that everything will now be found correct. We shall be exceedingly grateful if subscribers will report any irregularities as it is a difficult matter in re-setting type to avoid making some mistakes.