

# Canadian Churchman

Toronto, June 27th, 1918.

## The Christian Year

### THE COLLECTS AND THE WAR.

The Sixth Sunday After Trinity, July 7, 1918.

"Our sons who have shown us God"—so Mr. Wells, in memorable phrase, makes Mr. Britling describe at least one effect of the World War. "Our sons who have shown us God"—the statement rings with the music of triumph, but through the triumph can be detected the undertones of a plaintive minor. "Our sons who have shown us God"—then we had, before the War, lost our sense of God.

This is not the place to discuss Mr. Wells' particular views of Theism—from the metaphysical standpoint, to speak of no other, they are open to grave objection—we must admit, however, that his diagnosis of the Empire's complaint is sound. We had lost our sense of God. Other lords held dominion over us—idols which could be touched and tasted and handled, and which were to perish with the using.

And the cause of this spiritual atrophy? It is, of course, quite obvious to remark that the gradient on the main trunk road operated by the lust of the flesh and the pride of life is a down gradient, and that our Empire, like her predecessors, showed ominous symptoms of a readiness to take the path of least resistance and that way leads towards the outer darkness and away from God. It is rather our purpose, however, to suggest at least one contributory cause of this progressive alienation—a cause frequently ignored in certain ecclesiastical circles and therefore all the more to be taken to heart by us Churchmen.

It is some time now since Mr. Blatchford brought out his trenchant book, "God and My Neighbour." The volume crystallizes a type of thought spread broadcast through England in the pages of "The Clarion"—a paper for the "working" man. "God" and "My Neighbour"—the terms are represented as antithetical. Why waste money on expensive church buildings when the poor are starving? Why spend time in endless services and pious litanies, when the cry of a suffering world is for action? Why talk about a spiritual love to an invisible God, when the need of your neighbour for practical sympathy is obvious and urgent?

The Church will feel at once that such a statement of the case is one-sided. Our duty, however, is to ask ourselves at once, "What have we done to make such an ex parte view possible and plausible?" And the answer is that we have signally failed, upon the whole, to prove by our life and teaching that "God" and "My Neighbour" are not antithetical proposers of rival claims, but that all deep altruism must rest for support upon a consciousness of what a recent writer has well called "The Spirit of the Whole." In other words, you can only love your neighbour in the best and most telling way if you love God first. And we have failed to make this fact obvious to the man in the street, because we have largely made religion ecclesiastical, when it ought to be human. We have made it a matter of the intellect and of dogma when it should be preponderatingly a matter of the heart. We have crystallized it into a creed rather than vitalized it into a following of the

(Concluded on page 408)

Remember—Sunday next has been set apart as "a day of humble prayer and intercession to Almighty God on behalf of the cause undertaken by the British Commonwealth and the Allies and for those who are offering their lives for it, and for a speedy and enduring peace."

## Editorial

### THE Y. M. C. A.

We are in receipt of several letters from laymen of the Church who are interested in the work of the Y.M.C.A., and, in place of answering each letter separately, we have thought it well to do this in the form of an editorial.

First of all, we wish to assure our readers that we have no desire whatever to injure the work of this organization, and that we appreciate fully what it has done for the soldiers. We have merely referred to certain charges made against it by the Great War Veterans, and we expressed the hope that the matter would be cleared up to the satisfaction of all concerned. It may, of course, be claimed that this is not a matter that concerns us, but we can scarcely grant this, as what affects one religious organization affects all, and if it were found that the work of the Y.M.C.A. had not been properly conducted, it is quite certain that every Christian effort would be affected by it.

We have taken the trouble to question several returned soldiers regarding their grievances, and, so far as we can find out, the difficulty lies largely with some of the men employed by the Y.M.C.A., who have not hesitated to do some profiteering at the soldiers' expense. This is quite possible, owing to the rapidity with which men were sent out and the difficulty of securing men of the right type. However, to treat the charges of the G.W.V.A. as without any foundation is on a par with the attitude of those who seem to preach the doctrine that "the Y.M.C.A. can do no wrong." Reference has been made in letters received to a statement published in Montreal over the name of the General Secretary of the National Council of the Y.M.C.A., and we have been asked to print this. We did not, however, print in the "Churchman" the charges made either by the G.W.V.A. or in a Montreal daily, and do not, therefore, consider that we are called upon to print the statement referred to. Moreover, we question the absolute accuracy of portions of this statement, for the Y.M.C.A. authorities are aware of the fact that a complete audited statement for last year has not as yet appeared. We are willing to accept their explanation of this, but we still claim that in the interests of Christian work generally such a statement should be issued as soon as possible. Any organization that appeals to the general public for funds cannot be too careful in such matters. We cannot agree with the statement made in one letter

received to the effect that audited statements of religious organizations should not be asked for. These, of all organizations, should leave no loophole for suspicion. We do not mean that the Y.M.C.A. has done anything wrong, and we hope that they will soon convince the public that this is so.

Regarding the relation of the Y.M.C.A. to the Chaplains' department of the army, while we believe strongly that the Y.M.C.A. has a great Christian work to do along social lines, we do not believe in any attempt on its part to duplicate the work of the Chaplains. A large percentage of the young men it has sent out are unfitted to do this work; and, moreover, we are not prepared to hand the work of the Church over to any interdenominational organization without proper safeguards, mutually agreed upon by the different Christian Communion. The intention of Dr. Mott and others of its greatest leaders is that the Y.M.C.A. should be the handmaid of the different Churches. It has a great opportunity ahead of it as such, and the members of the Church of England who are identified with it will do well to see that it does not tend to become one more in the long list of Christian denominations. They will do well also to see that it does not become the victim of its power and wealth, otherwise it may very easily be dragged down into the mire.

A short time ago we drew attention to the condition of affairs existing in the Chinese section of the city of Vancouver. Shortly afterwards an appeal signed by several leading Chinese of that city was spread broadcast. This drew attention to the gambling evil that existed and asked that steps be taken to stamp it out. We are exceedingly pleased to learn that the Federal Government has taken the matter in hand. It has increased the penalty from \$50 to \$500 and costs and has made it easier to secure evidence. With an efficient local police force, it should not be a difficult matter now to eliminate the greater part of the evil if not stamp it out altogether.

Under the able editorship of the Rev. C. V. Pilcher and the Dean of Niagara, the Very Rev. D. T. Owen, the Christian Year column has, during the past two years, been a most important section of the Canadian Churchman. We are sorry to lose their assistance for the present, in this portion of the paper, but we have been fortunate in inducing the Rev. Canon Broughall, rector of St. George's Church, St. Catharines, to undertake the work. We feel certain that in his hands the column will continue a source of inspiration and suggestion for our readers.

A long step in advance has been taken by the Government of Ontario in its recent legislation regarding venereal disease. It was high time that something of a drastic nature was done to control this menace to humanity. One of the chief difficulties in the past has been the feeling that a disease of this kind should not be talked about publicly. We can feel thankful that this feeling is rapidly dying out and people are beginning to realize that the sooner the existence and real character of the sins of impurity are made known, and measures are taken to protect not only those afflicted with these diseases but others who contract them innocently, the better for our country, and for ourselves, body and soul.