

October 4, 1917.

Canadian Churchman

Toronto, October 4th, 1917.

The Christian Year

The 19th Sunday after Trinity, Oct. 14, 1917

To please God! That is a goal worthy of any man's striving. We have to please God; that is the ambition of the Christian. It is the highest and noblest of all the ambitions which find a place in men's hearts. How can I please God? That simple question would correct many distortions in our lives. We are to seek to please Him, and Him only. If I am a failure among men but have succeeded in pleasing God, my failure among men does not matter. If I am a failure with God but have succeeded in pleasing men, my success with men is of no account. I am a failure, indeed. To please God! That is our task. That is our supreme duty and our highest happiness.

The Collect for this Sunday gives us the right point of view in this matter: "O God, forasmuch as without Thee we are not able to please Thee." Very frankly it admits that we are incapable of pleasing God apart from the help of God. Left to ourselves, this goal set before us is an impossible one. Never by ourselves, in our own unaided strength, can we attain to it. This is an unpalatable doctrine to many in these days, but it is one clearly taught in Holy Scripture and by the Church. St. Paul is very plain about this in to-day's Epistle: "This I say, therefore, and testify in the Lord, that ye henceforth walk not as other Gentiles walk, in the vanity of their mind; having the understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart." The Tenth Article expresses the same truth when it says, "Wherefore we have no power to do good works, pleasant and acceptable to God, without the grace of God by Christ preventing us." But let us dwell on the comforting side of this doctrine, namely, God's abundant supply of help for us in our supreme work of pleasing Him. Let us thank Him that He has not left us to ourselves, and that He does not expect the impossible of us. God never mocks, He never requires from us more than we can give. He has provided the means whereby we can do those things which are pleasing in His sight. He has filled our lives with His Grace. He has given us His Only Son, in Whom He is well pleased. "Thou art My beloved Son; in Thee I am well pleased." It is in Christ that we are found pleasing to God, and it is in His power we can do those things which are acceptable to Him. It is the new man in Christ who is capable of thus pleasing God. As St. Paul says in the Epistle for the Day, "that ye put off concerning the former conversation the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts; and be renewed in the spirit of your mind; and that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness."

And then, last of all, the Collect teaches us to rely on the rule and the direction of the Holy Spirit in all matters where we may be at a loss to know what things are pleasing to God. And so we pray, realizing our inability even to know what things are pleasing to Him, "Mercifully grant, that Thy Holy Spirit may in all things direct and rule our hearts; through Jesus Christ our Lord."

Editorial

THANKSGIVING.

In the last estimate sent out from the Census and Statistics Office at Ottawa it is stated that, although the average yield per acre for the present year is slightly less than that for 1916, the increase in acreage has more than counterbalanced this, so that the estimated increase in wheat is placed at 19,851,700 bushels. In oats the increase is estimated to be 34,290,000 bushels; in rye, 1,227,550 bushels; and in barley, 16,671,400 bushels.

Do we realize what these figures mean, in the way of food, and of strength to the Allies? We well remember the anxiety of the past spring and early summer. The continued rains in Eastern Canada and the continued drought in the prairies made many a one fear for the future, but just at the most crucial time the change came. Beautiful sunshine in the East and showers in the West transformed the whole scene. The prayers of the faithful were answered and anxiety was changed to rejoicing.

We do not mean for our readers to infer that this is the only reason we have for thanksgiving. We realize fully that sorrow has entered many a home, and that Canada is a much sadder land to-day than it was a year ago. These clouds of sorrow, though, have their silver lining, and we can, indeed, thank God for the spirit of self-sacrifice that has characterized so large a percentage of our young men in this world crisis.

Let us, moreover, remember the marvellous manner in which the Motherland and the colonies have been kept true to the great principles at stake. In spite of political turmoil and party strife, in spite of profiteering, and of labour and other troubles, the heart of the mass of the people has remained steadfast.

Poor Russia! Some may be inclined to regard the situation there with despair. It was, indeed, a keen disappointment that she was not able to hold her own on the Eastern front, but let us not forget what might have happened had the schemes of our enemies in that land been allowed to succeed. In Russia, in the United States, in Greece, in Mexico, in Argentina, and in Sweden, the plans of the enemy have miscarried, or, let us rather say, have been frustrated through the grace of God. We are fighting no ordinary foe, and each additional revelation brings home more strongly than the previous one the dangers through which up to the present we have been carried in safety.

Canadians never had greater cause for thanksgiving than they have this year. God has blessed us abundantly, and this fact should be recognized in such a way that those who are loath to acknowledge a divine source for blessings are forced to see that the hand of God has been guiding events during the past year. There is a tendency, we know, in certain quarters to make "Providence" responsible for occurrences that are the direct result of human effort or human error, but there is at the same time a very great hesitation, even on the part of many Christians, to recognize and acknowledge the power and mercy of God.

Let us thank God for his many blessings, and at the same time let us pray that He will cleanse us from every unworthy motive and

make us more effective instruments in the defence of those blessings.

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The result of the discussion at the meeting of the Sunday School Commission at Ottawa re lesson scheme is, briefly, as follows: The graded lesson scheme for the main school, i.e., for children from nine to fourteen years of age, was adopted on the understanding that the selection of Scripture passages should be made to correspond as far as possible with those of the International graded series. In the Junior Bible Class department the International Improved Uniform series was agreed to as an optional course. The above was agreed to as a sort of compromise, and it remains to be seen whether it will meet the needs of the case or not.

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The power possessed by Provincial Legislatures regarding the importation of liquor was made quite clear at the recent meeting of the Council for Social Service, but we venture to think that it is not understood by a vast majority of the rank and file of the electorate. A great deal has been said regarding the duty of the Dominion Parliament in this matter, and a great deal of blame has been laid at its door. When we know that each Provincial House has the power at present to stop the importation into its territory from outside, but that in practically every case the power of certain influences within each province is strong enough to prevent legislation being enacted to accomplish this, it is easy to see which foot the boot belongs to. If, as has been said, the present prohibitory laws are in reality a species of class legislation, making the ability to secure liquor dependent upon the length of a man's purse-strings, it is evident that much still remains to be done.

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We desire to draw the attention of our readers to Mr. David Ross McCord's appeal, printed in our correspondence columns, for manuscripts, books and other objects of historical and national interest that have to do with the pioneer work of the Church in all parts of our Dominion. Mr. McCord has for very many years been devoting himself to the collection of materials illustrating the history of Canada, and at Temple Grove, Montreal, has a remarkable collection, which has grown to the dimensions of a National Museum. Although well over threescore years and ten, Mr. McCord is still full of mental and physical vigour, and keen as ever in saving landmarks and forging Imperial links. Practically all the relics of the Church in other departments are already in the Museum. We most warmly endorse his appeal, and earnestly request our readers to communicate with him without delay if they are in possession of, or know of others who are possessed of, such things as he asks for. There can be no doubt that an immense amount of valuable historical material has been irretrievably lost or destroyed in the past. Probably there is still much that is of deepest interest hidden away in remote parsonages, vestries and other places, which, unless rescued, will find its way to the rubbish heap. By sending such things to Mr. McCord they will be examined by an expert, their historical value accurately appraised; they will be preserved, catalogued and described, and become part of our national heritage.

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