

# Canadian Churchman

Toronto, June 14, 1917

## The Christian Year

Third Sunday After Trinity, June 24th, 1917.

### THE HANDS OF GOD.

The Epistle for to-day tells us about the Hand of God which is stretched down into human life. "Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God."

1. *God's Hands are strong.* The Hands of God are shown in the Bible performing different kinds of work for men. It is the Hand of God that helps us in troubles; by that Hand we are, to quote the Collect, "defended and comforted in all dangers and adversities." He fights on our behalf against our enemies, we are guarded and protected by His Hand—for we are to live sheltered and secure in that mighty Hand. "My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me; And I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of My hand. My Father, Which gave them Me, is greater than all; and no man is able to pluck them out of My Father's hand." Again, He can hold all the care of the world in His strong Hands. We cannot bear our cares alone. But care need not overwhelm us if we remember St. Peter's advice, "Casting all your care upon Him, for He careth for you." All your care—yes, we are to place it all upon Him. The only safe place for our care is in the Hands of God.

2. *God's Hands are tender.* In the Collect we not only pray to be defended "in all dangers and adversities," but "defended and comforted." God's Hands comfort. So strong are they that they uphold the whole universe. But that which upholds and protects also consoles. The hands of a skilful surgeon wonderfully combine strength and tenderness—how powerful and yet how gentle! So with God, "Who hath measured the waters in the hollow of His Hand," and yet is the Same of Whom we read, "And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes." It takes gentle hands to wipe away tears, does it not? But the Hands which will wipe all tears away in the land where "there shall be no more death, neither sorrow nor crying," are the same which uphold the universe. Well may we pray on this Sunday: "Grant that we . . . may by Thy mighty aid be . . . comforted in all dangers and adversities."

3. *God's Hands seek for those who stray.* They are stretched out to find the lost. The Gospel for this day tells the story of the seeking Hands more beautifully than it has ever been told. The Shepherd who went for the one lost sheep, and the Woman who swept the house for one lost piece of silver—what are these but illustrations of those seeking Hands stretched out into the world to draw back to Himself those who have wandered away?

Humility is what gives us the sheltering of the Hands, for humility places us in the attitude in which God can cover us. He shields only the prostrate form. We have to bend in order to be hidden by His Hand. We have to be low in order to be lifted up. "Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you in due time."

Impertinent and lavish talking is in itself a most vicious habit and a wretched hindrance to our spiritual proficiency.—Thomas à Kempis.

## Editorial

### LAYMEN'S FORWARD MOVEMENT.

At the last meeting of the Sunday School Commission it was felt that steps should be taken without delay to provide the General Secretary with assistance in the matter of Field and Editorial work. A sub-committee was therefore appointed consisting of four lay representatives on the Commission, and these gentlemen have launched what they have called a "Laymen's Forward Movement" in an effort to interest other laymen of the Church in this work and to secure the necessary funds. The sum that is estimated as being necessary for the first year's operations is \$5,000, a portion of which will be used for the salary of a Field Secretary, who will devote all his time to this work. It is believed that the work of such an official will, in the course of a year or two, lead to an increase in income sufficient to enable the Commission itself to provide for this additional expenditure.

It is not necessary to say that we agree heartily with this movement. Nearly a year ago we emphasized in these columns the need of just such a step in both our Sunday School and Missionary departments and we have seen no reason for changing our mind. As is so well emphasized in the little folder that has been prepared by the above Committee, "the future of the Home, the Church, the Nation, the World, is wrapped up in the Child" and "if the Church is to succeed in training her children and youth it must be done very largely through the Sunday School and related agencies." The next few years will indeed be years of great responsibility and opportunity. Before the spirit of self-sacrifice that is abroad in the land has been swallowed up in a rising tide of materialism, the older members of the Church should be brought to realize as never before the importance to the Church and to the Nation of a decided advance in the matter of systematic religious training for our boys and girls. An investment in work of this kind produces the highest kind of dividends. It produces dividends for the Church in the form of earnest and intelligent workers, for it is estimated after investigation that 85 per cent. of the active workers of the Church come out of and are trained in the Sunday School. And it produces dividends for the Nation in a higher type of patriotism, in a keener sense of duty, in a more unselfish spirit regarding the welfare of others, and in a purer home and personal life.

Laymen have been charged with considerable indifference regarding Sunday School work, but there are many indications that a decided change is taking place in this respect at the present time. When they are presented with facts, not fiction, and are convinced that the work towards which they are asked to contribute financial assistance is both worthy and wisely conducted they usually rise to the occasion. No work appeals to them more strongly than that among boys and girls, and lack of interest on their part in the past has been largely due to the inefficient methods employed. The Sunday School Commission is steadily winning confidence as the result of the sanity of its methods. It has reached a point where it must either branch out or beat time. The Church cannot afford to let it do the latter, and we hope, therefore, that the ap-

peal it is making will meet with a ready and generous response.

A Million Dollar Superannuation Fund for the Church throughout the Dominion is something worth working for. The Bishop of Toronto, in his Charge to Synod, made the suggestion and a committee was appointed not only to see that the matter is brought before the General Synod at its next meeting but also to gather information in the meantime so that when the suggestion does come before the Synod the latter will have something to work on. The idea is to leave the various diocesan funds as they stand and to create a new fund quite independent of them. If other dioceses would follow suit in the matter it would not be many years after the termination of the war until this would be an accomplished fact.

According to the April Monthly Bulletin of the Department of Agriculture of the Dominion Government, "out of the total estimated wheat production of 1916, 21 per cent., or 45,638,000 bushels, remained in farmers' hands at the end of March. In 1916, at the corresponding date, the proportion was 23 per cent., in 1915 it was 12½ per cent. and in 1914 it was 16½ per cent." In addition to the above there was at the same date 62,764,956 bushels in elevators, 4,884,825 bushels in flour mills, and 12,862,356 bushels in transit by rail, or a grand total of 126,150,137 bushels as compared with 197,050,753 bushels on the same date in 1916, and 79,130,593 bushels on February 8th, in 1915.

A Conscription Bill has at last been brought before the Canadian Parliament. This step is necessary and the only fair one for all concerned. It is well, however, for those who believe in it to remember that it is not enough to compel men to go to the front in khaki. If conscription is to be absolutely fair it should include all whether fit to don the uniform or not. Those who stay must do their share and no man should dare to compel another to do something that he is not willing to share in, by every means in his power. We overheard a man say a few days ago that he noticed that the majority of those who were calling for conscription were not able to go themselves. This may be quite true, but they can do their share in supporting those who can go and while such work does not entail the same danger to life, it is just as necessary.

The place of the Bible in our Secular Schools is a vital question. The increased proportion of non-Christians in Canada is each year making it more difficult to deal with and there should be no effort spared in urging its importance upon members of our various governments. The Synod of Toronto diocese at its recent sessions urged the lay delegates to communicate at once with their representatives in the legislature and secure, if possible, the support of the latter in behalf of the proposal made by Dr. Seath whereby the Bible will be made an optional subject for examinations in Ontario public schools. Synods can legislate for members of the Church, but such legislation may be of little if any use if our legislatures do not proceed along similar lines on questions that concern both. It is clearly the duty, therefore, of lay members of our Synods to use such legitimate means as will bring the actions of Church and State into harmony with each other on such matters.