

Canadian Churchman

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The Christian Year

The Seventeenth Sunday After Trinity,
September 22nd, 1918.

GOD'S GRACE.

All men have sometimes a strong impulse towards good—a feeling they ought to and want to be better and do better. It is equally true to say that in endeavouring to carry out these good impulses, failure is very often experienced. Somehow or other weariness in well-doing sets in. It is well to remember that when an impulse for good comes it is God encouraging us and making suggestions to us. (Does not our conscience witness to the fact that God is constantly suggesting good to us?) God does not leave us alone in our carelessness and sin.

Suggestion of good is not enough for us. We may be weak through the habit of carelessness and sin. But God does not only suggest good but gives us help to carry out the suggestion or impulse. His "preventing," "preventing," or "going before" grace gives us the impulse to good and His "following" or "co-operating" grace gives us power to fulfil the impulse. We are like weary travellers setting out for a distant and beautiful place on foot. God not only tells us how splendid the place is and where it is situated, He travels with us to encourage and refresh us when weary, to help us to our feet when we fall, to dissuade us from turning back.

Guidance and power men need for life's journey. These come from God. His *Grace* means not only His graciousness or His kindness but the influence and power that comes from Him to touch the heart, enlighten the mind and strengthen the will of man to be and to do good. In the Collect we pray for the fulness of the Grace of God—for grace to inspire and grace to help. "Lord, we pray Thee that Thy grace may always go before to suggest good and guide us towards good and follow to help us to perform it.

The impulses from God are a challenge. We must not reply, "I cannot," until we have sought the helping grace of God. "We have no power of ourselves to help ourselves"—yet St. Paul says, "I can do all things through Christ who strengtheneth me."

The purpose of God's grace is to make us devoted *continually* to all good works. Spasmodic Christians are all too common. Models of energy or temper on occasion, or of certain kinds of Christian activity. The Christian ideal is an "all round" character *continually*—at home, abroad, at work, at play, Sunday, weekday, winter and summer, with friend, with stranger.

All good works—not only the kind "we like" (see James 2:10). In the General Thanksgiving we humbly express our gratitude for the means of grace. With our Bibles at our hands, with our knowledge of the efficacy and privilege of prayer, with our Prayer Book supplying us with clear instruction, the manner of public worship and the administration of the Sacraments and Rites of the Church, we Churchmen do not lack knowledge of how we may seek the help of God for every occasion of life. Be it ours to use the means of grace.

Editorial

ANATHEMA.

"DEAF and with an impediment in her speech," sometimes comes close to describing the Church as a whole. It is the diagnosis most charitable to the morals of the patient when we consider her anaemic efforts in contrast to her robust claims. Her message is from God Himself. Her mission is to all mankind. Her claims embrace every sphere and phase of human life. Yet the majority of men and a large proportion of women are not even contemptuous of her claims—they are utterly indifferent. The Church does not impinge on their world.

Does the Church find all things in the world according to the will of God? She pities those who are distressed and crushed by the relentless pressure of the world's hard grind. That hard grind is only the cruelty of heartless selfishness. Does the Church exclaim against that selfishness? Yes, in the secure remoteness of our Synods and from the safe eminence of her pulpits, the Church has much to say of the Spirit of Love that the dear world really ought to listen to.

Is, then, all the wrong outside the Church? Does any son of the Church grind the face of the poor or connive at methods and conditions which are contrary to Christ's teaching? Undoubtedly. Does the Church blast them with her condemnation? No.

Watch some of our Synods with any live question. They move it into committee and by the time it comes out of cold storage it's a dead issue. Then the Church roundly asserts the rights of the case. But the opportunity for leadership has passed and the Church with some relief gets into step with public opinion.

Listen to the run of discussion when some of the timorous start pussy-footing with some hedgehog of a real question of the day brought up by some "freshman." "We must—ahem—move cautiously—ahem—on such—a—ahem—an important matter." Another son of thunder rises to say, "We must remember the great dignity and position of the Church and not take any false step." Some day we shall realize that standing still is the falsest step of all—and one of the reasons why men ignore the Church).

"Afraid to speak out," is that the impotence of the Church? Either fear or lethargy is the cause of the Church's ineffectiveness. *Lethargy in moral issues is as reprehensible as fear.*

"That the Evangel is her great task," is an assertion which comes in to save the face of the Church. True. But the *applied Evangel* is the great need of the world. Who shall make the application? Has not the Church sympathy and wisdom enough to apply it? What has happened in the past is that men outside the Church have applied the message we preach. They have seen that brotherhood and justice in the common light of day are the implicates of the spirit of Love that is preached in dim cathedrals. They have not flinched from demanding fair play for every one of the sons of men. Some of us have flinched.

The Master, like a sheep before her shearers, stood dumb when He Himself was assailed. But that malignity of opposition He drew down on Himself because he espoused the cause of the sinner and outcast and let go the torrent of His invective against wickedness in high places. The Church is dumb when the ad-

vocacy of the cause of the weak ones would cost her "prestige" or money, but she finds her voice, and that a mighty voice, when her funds or privileges are assailed.

Not all of us would have it so. We feel the shame of the Church. It is the task of those aflame to spread the light. The potentialities of our Synod are immeasurable. God help us to realize them. Not until we are filled with the spirit of high consecration shall our Church stand for anything worth while. "He that saveth his life shall lose it," is true of churches and men. We talk about the fundamental priority of the spiritual. How can men believe it when our actions show that the spiritual has no message for the everyday? When the Church gets enough energy and conviction to *anathematize*, to curse, the things that are blasting the lives of men, it will command the respect of the world's manhood.

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CHURCH unity got a decided lift in England by the Remembrance Day Services. The details will be seen in the column, "The Church in the Motherland." At Kikuyu last July the Church Missionary Society, the Church of Scotland, the United Methodists and the Africa Inland Missions accepted the constitution of alliance as modified by the Archbishop of Canterbury and appointed a representative council. Every churchman will appreciate the sincerity of the words of our Primate in his charge to the General Synod. Rev. W. G. Boyd's article in this issue will repay careful reading.

We are thoroughly convinced that the first step some must take towards Church unity is to fully appreciate the uniqueness of our Anglican heritage. There is a definite contribution we can make to the life of our Dominion and Empire if we are vigorous enough to assert it. The man who does not realize this is not qualified to be a guide or spokesman on matters of unity. The impulse from our common worship at home, abroad and "over there" in these times of common distress cannot help but make us realize more and more our unity in Christ. We must never forget that *unity in Christ is a fact*, not an aspiration. It is our part, as soon as we may, to see that the life of Christ's Church expresses the unity of His Body.

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BOLSHEVIKISM will lead to disaster in the Church of England just as surely as in Russia. Utterly disloyal is the decision of some eighty priests and one hundred laymen in conference recently at St. Saviour's Church, Hoxton, to defy the Bishops who forbid the practice of "Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament," to carry their appeal from Canterbury and York even to the Western Patriarchate (Rome) and to provide a fund to support the priests who may be put out of livings on account of disobedience. Let us be thankful that such a movement has no place in our Canadian Church. When every man does that which is right in his own eyes our state is precarious.

N.B.—If your copy of the Canadian Churchman does not reach you regularly, we shall be grateful if you will let us know.

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