

Meditations on the Lord's Supper

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MEDITATION No. II.

READ ST. JOHN 12:1-17.

"If I wash thee not, thou hast no part with Me." Our first need is to be washed by Jesus Christ. But let us get back to that first Lord's Supper, that we may understand exactly what took place. Our R.V. translates v. 2, "Supper being ended," but the words rather mean, "Supper being served." As soon as the meal was ready and placed upon the table Jesus arose, laid aside His garments, girded Himself with a towel, and, taking a basin, and having poured water into it, proceeded to wash the Disciples' feet. In the East they wore sandals, and the dust would naturally cling to the feet and work into the sandals, and the feet themselves would be hot and perhaps bruised. The duty of washing the feet was usually performed by a slave. But here there was no slave, and their Lord and Master set out to perform this office. St. Peter protested, and received the answer at the top of the page, "If I wash thee not, thou hast no part with Me." We must be cleansed by Jesus Christ if we are to partake with Him of His blessings. Uncleansed, we may not feast with Him; we cannot enter the abiding-places which are in the Father's House; we cannot be branches of the Vine; we cannot receive His Spirit; we are not mentioned by name in His Prayer. But there is more to notice. At the bare thought of exclusion St. Peter says, "Not my feet only, but also my hands and my head," and receives the answer, unfortunately mistranslated in R.V., "He that is bathed needeth not save to wash his feet, but is clean every whit." The man who comes from the bath is clean, but in his passage from the bath some dust has clung to his feet. This dust must be washed away. "If I wash thee not, thou hast no part with Me." We have been to the laver of Baptism. There we have been baptized into the Death of Christ, and yet He says, "If I wash thee not thou hast no part with Me." We need to be cleansed from the sins that beset us day by day. We need to wash our feet, or rather we need to have Him wash our feet, before we partake of His feast. Otherwise that feast will not help us. We have no part with Him. We have come to meet Him at His Board at His gracious invitation. As to Moses or Joshua in His Presence, He says, "loose thy shoe from off thy foot for the place whereon thou standest is Holy Ground." The sandals must be removed that our feet may be washed. He is Himself present to do this. It was for this, the cleansing of His Disciples' feet, that He laid aside the garments of His Glory, and clothed Himself with our Human Nature that He might perform this service for us, taking on Him the form of a slave. Cp. Phil. 2:7. We have come to meet Him with reminders of His Holy Law, with confession of sin upon our lips. He has come to cleanse us that we may partake with Him of all He has to bestow.

Let us say to Him: "If Thou wilt Thou canst make me clean" and listen to His reply: "I will, be thou clean."

THE CHRISTIAN YEAR.

(Continued from page 727.)

In this New Year we may be more than conquerors. As we walk in the Spirit of the Lord our Righteousness we can live in hope of the eternal crown of righteousness which will be granted at the great day to all who love His appearing.

Spectator

The voice of the Bishop of London crying out in his See city against the deliberate, commercialized, unblushing vice that is stalking through the British Isles, unafraid and unashamed, in these hours of fateful uncertainty, sounds like the voice of one crying in the wilderness. It has for many years been a source of surprise and shock to men from Canada going to London for the first time to find the thoroughfares of that metropolis so diligently and so systematically canvassed on behalf of vice. They had been taught to look upon England as the home of homes, as the country of all countries that honoured and appreciated the high things of the soul. Here was a people that had not only built and endowed cathedrals of historic and sublime proportions, but were wont to gather therein to reverence their God and refresh their spirit. Wasn't it England's noble Queen that said England's greatness was built upon the Bible, the impregnable rock? In spite of all this the streets of their cities were the open recruiting grounds of the harpies of lust. Neither youth nor age was free from its obtrusive solicitations. Clergymen wearing the insignia of their sacred office were the objects of its impudent assaults, and yet neither Church nor State seemed to regard it with any sense of concern or shock. It passed as one of the inevitable frailties of the flesh. If that were so in the green tree, what of it in the dry? It is no wonder that the famous Bishop of London should be stirred to the very depths of his soul. Young soldiers return to-day and assure the writer that London is worse than Paris. It is, of course, hardly safe for one country to throw stones at another in a question of this kind. Canada has her own troubles, and perhaps should clear her own record before she attempts to reprove others. In these days, however, when thousands of the most vigorous specimens of our manhood are passing through or residing in England, it is quite in order that we should speak a word of warning. Since England has, through her Government, taken authority to do almost anything and everything for the "defence of the realm"—appropriate railways, assume control of factories, operate shipping, commandeer property, it ought to be able not to stamp out, perhaps, but to rob vice of its publicity and its cheapest and most effective means of advertising. The welfare of our Canadian boys going overseas gives us the right to demand these things. Canada has, through the courage and sound judgment of our Minister of Militia, made drunkenness and debauch almost unknown in the camp life of our soldiers in this country. It may not be logical to treat soldiers differently from civilians, but it certainly has worked for the advantage of the soldiers. In England, where they are more logical than we, they are apparently more drunken also. From a purely business standpoint, when, after months of training and expense, when all the physical weaklings have been retired, everything should be done to retain the fit in their fitness, and Canada has a right to see that it is so.

It is with much regret that every right-thinking Churchman beholds the growing schism in the Presbyterian Church. An effort has been made to effect union with two other communions, and division has occurred in the family of one of the high contracting parties. There has always been a closer bond

of sympathy and admiration between the Anglican Church and Presbyterians than exists between us and any of the other Protestant communions. This is partly accounted for by the position of the two Churches in Great Britain. Both are State Churches there, and both have acquired a reserve and dignity that become the spiritual directors of a great nation. In addition to this, Anglicans have always looked upon Presbyterians as possessed of a deeper insight into the essence of spiritual things than has come to some of its neighbours. It has never been carried off its feet by any of the enthusiasms of the day. It has looked to the to-morrow of its spiritual ventures. It has deprecated that piety which, to maintain, engenders insincerity. And finally, Presbyterianism has had the churchly instinct and a keen appreciation of the historic. In many points does it command the respect and call forth the admiration of all Anglicans. Many of its members have bluntly declared that they would prefer union with the Anglican Church than the one contemplated. The situation as it is now developing would seem to make any thought of a wider union absolutely a dead issue for years to come. It would look to the writer that, as the present union nears completion, and it becomes apparent that the Presbyterian Church will retain its identity and continuity, a larger and larger body will cleave to it. The bitterness of a family quarrel is developing, and this will adversely affect the position of all communions in the eyes of the laity. If one member suffers, then all the members suffer with it.

At a meeting in the Metropolitan Methodist Church, Toronto, a few evenings ago a strong appeal was made to the members of that communion to enlist and aid enlistment. A definite resolution, committing the meeting to the largest measure of support to the appeal for men made by the Prime Minister, was unanimously passed. Inasmuch as this meeting was presided over by the highest officer of the Methodist communion, we may be assured that the appeal that is good for Toronto will be re-echoed throughout the whole Dominion. The Minister of Militia for the first time admitted the possibility of conscription in Canada, and intimated that it would be first applied where recruiting had been least responsive. He did not say, however, that this principle would apply to communions as well as localities. At all events, these evidences of a welcome awakening to a manifest duty, through the pressure of public opinion, are gratifying in the extreme. The report brought back by Mr. Rowell from England and the admission by the Minister of Militia a few days ago that one division in France had melted away and the number of Canadian reserves was not sufficient to properly fill the thinning ranks of the other divisions, tells as nothing else can tell the imperative necessity of more men from this country. Every father, mother, wife, sister that is represented in the fighting area of France, whether in the trenches or the graves of that stricken country, should cry aloud for the necessary reinforcements to make the blood of their relatives of some avail. No dash at the outset will compensate for an ineffective continuance of the war. The final awakening of some of our citizens may do much to supply the deficiency that now exists. If to this could be added the whole-hearted efforts of those who have hitherto failed to supply their full share of Canadian soldiers, our position in France would be as hopeful as the spirits of the men who are now in the firing-line, doing their duty with undaunted courage.