

Canadian Churchman

Toronto, December 6th, 1917.

The Christian Year

The Third Sunday in Advent, Dec. 16th, 1917.

The Third Sunday in Advent is like another St. John the Baptist's Day, for it is the person and message of the great Forerunner of Christ which are brought to our special attention on this Sunday. The Advent message would be incomplete without the message of the stern preacher of repentance. There is no better way to prepare ourselves for the coming Festival of Christmas than by a study of the work and message of St. John the Baptist. Indeed, the Church is always in need of his clear call to repentance. We need it now. Every special opportunity and crisis in the Church and nation can be met faithfully only in the spirit of St. John the Baptist. We must rise up to meet the demands being made upon us as a Church. We must sternly put away from us all slackness, all living on low levels, all shallow-hearted repentances; we must gird ourselves to our great task, confessing all our sinfulness, indifference and selfishness, and then shall we be able to lead the people to repentance, and be enabled to point to "the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world."

The work of the ministry is especially prominent in to-day's message. How well the nature of that high work is illustrated by St. John the Baptist. "The ministers and stewards" of the mysteries of God are to proclaim fearlessly the need of repentance from sin. They are to insist, in season and out of season, on the sinfulness of sin. It is their work, as it was that of John the Baptist, to point to "the Lamb of God Which taketh away the sin of the world." Also, like the Forerunner, they are to prepare the way for that day when "He that shall come, will come."

How clearly the work of the clergy is brought to our attention on this Sunday and the week following this Sunday, for the Collect is a prayer for them, and the Ember Days of this week are set apart for them. "The awful sound of the Advent Trumpet calls on all men to pray for them; for, if others cannot stand in that judgment, how shall they who have so much more to account for? The love and mercies of Christmas-time tenderly appeal to all men to pray for their pastors." They have need of prayers. Very insistently does this Sunday and week bring before our people the duty of praying for their clergy. More prayer, and less criticism, would accomplish great things. If you have never definitely prayed for them before, begin this week. You have a splendid prayer to pray in the Collect for the Day. Many of the delinquencies of the clergy are their own fault, no doubt, but many of them also could be traced to the fact that the people do not pray; do not pray for their own pastor and for their own Bishop, "that the ministers and stewards" of Christ's mysteries may prepare the way before Him. But, above all, let us pray for more men to take up this work of God. The sight of the fields white to the harvest moved our Lord with compassion long ago. He said then that there was only one way to meet the need of more labourers to go to the great task—"Pray ye the Lord of the Harvest that He may send forth more labourers." He knew of no other way, and we shall find no other.

Editorial

WHAT SHALL OUR ANSWER BE?

Recent events in Canada prove conclusively that the coming election will be one of the bitterest struggles that this country has ever known. The opposition to the Military Service Act, not only in Quebec, but in Ontario even, is not of the ordinary election type, but already shows signs of violence. It is well, therefore, that we keep before our minds clearly and constantly the issue at stake. Every effort will be made to draw all kinds of "herrings" across the trail and to make electors lose sight of this issue.

Shortly after war was declared, Canada, with the consent of both political parties, agreed to join the Allies and called for volunteers. The response was enthusiastic and immediate. Some three hundred thousand of the pick of our manhood have gone, and have fought valiantly in defence of a righteous cause. Many have given their lives and many more are incapacitated for life. However, when the call went forth for recruits to fill up the gaps and to provide a reserve force large enough to allow those at the front to have the necessary periods of rest, the response was not adequate to the need. Wherefore, in fairness to those who had gone, it was agreed by men of both political parties that compulsion would have to be resorted to. As was natural, those who had refused to go voluntarily have objected to being forced. The question before us, therefore, is not one of tariff or of soldiers' pay, or even of delay, for the real opposition comes from those who refuse to go at all. The heart of the whole issue is, **Will Canada provide adequate support for the men whom she called for and sent to the front, or is she going to allow them to be slaughtered through lack of sufficient numbers and worn down through lack of proper periods of relief?** This, we take it, is the question that each elector must answer for himself and herself in the sight of God. We do not minimize the importance of adequate pay for our soldiers and their dependants, but this matter surely is safe in the hands of a Government that aims at giving them immediate support at the front.

The collapse of Russia, one of the countries most intimately concerned with the cause of the war, and the weakness shown by a section of the Italian army, should make every sane man realize that delay is not only dangerous, but would probably prove fatal. On the other hand, the successes on the western front should convince us of the advisability of following them up at once. It is an old saying that when the enemy wavers is the proper time to bring up the reserves. The enemy on the western front is being forced back slowly but surely, and has already shown signs of wavering. All possible reserves should, therefore, be in readiness and the men in the fighting line should be kept in the best possible condition. Are we to tell our brave boys that we have no reserves to send them, and that they had better get along the best they can until we consult with those who have already refused to go as to whether they should be forced to go or not? Can anything more cowardly or unjust be thought of?

No; we cannot be guilty of such conduct. Canada's fair name and our own personal honour must not go down to future genera-

tions with such a stain upon it. Rather a thousand times over that Canada should be severed in twain than that the whole country should suffer such disgrace and be guilty of such a crime. May the God of nations guide our country at this time and grant that we may prove worthy of the men who have given their lives in this struggle and worthy of the cause for which they have died.

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The success of the Victory Loan must prove a great inspiration to our men at the front and to our Allies on both sides of the Atlantic. The next step is to see that the administration of this fund is placed in the hands of men who will use it most effectively.

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We understand that another of our Canadian Bishops, the Right Rev. J. C. Roper, has been charged with being a member of the English Church Union. We have, however, been informed on reliable authority that this is not true. He is not and has not been for many years a member of this organization. Once more let us repeat that it would be much better to make sure of the facts before making statements of this kind in the secular press.

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We are in receipt of a couple of Canadian Standard Efficiency Test programmes from Brockville, where this line of work has been carried on with splendid results during the last three or four years. Dr. J. L. Carroll deserves great credit for his work in this connection, and speaks of this system as "the one thing we have at this time to help us in building up a virile Christian manhood." He will be very glad to render any assistance he can to others who are willing to undertake "a real man-sized job."

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We have criticized in these columns the action of the committee in charge of the Brotherhood of St. Andrew in Canada for allowing the work of that organization to fall largely into abeyance during the war. We learn, however, that steps have been taken to revive the work. Owing to the fact that from sixty to seventy per cent. of its members enlisted early in the war it found itself faced with exceptional difficulties. There is, however, a great work for it to do among boys and among returning soldiers, and we earnestly hope that it may be able to renew its activities at an early date. To wait for the end of the war is to wait too long.

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An abstract from the minutes of the last meeting of the Committee on Prayer Book revision has been issued for general information. Several important changes were agreed to, among them being the omission of the Act of Uniformity in all except official and desk copies of the book, and the adoption of the Lambeth translation of the Athanasian Creed. It was decided also to incorporate a brief form of Family Prayer in the Prayer Book. A number of verbal changes were agreed to and a number of prayers added. Directions will also be placed at the beginning of the book as to where to find the various portions of Morning and Evening Prayer. This, we feel certain, will be found most helpful by members of other communions when attending Church of England services. The committee will hold its next meeting in Toronto on the 9th of January next.

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