

# Canadian Churchman

Toronto, June 6th, 1918.

## The Christian Year

The Third Sunday After Trinity, June 16, 1918.

### THE COLLECTS AND THE WAR.

"We, to whom thou hast given an hearty desire to pray"—so this old Latin Collect, dating, perhaps, in its ultimate origin, from the times of persecution, those tremendous days of Colosseum and of Catacomb, describes the members of the early Church that was at Rome. "We, to whom thou hast given an hearty desire to pray"—such were the men who against stupendous odds won the mightiest empire that the world had ever seen for Christ.

"We, to whom thou hast given an hearty desire to pray"—does this description (face the question honestly!) apply in the year 1918 to ourselves? What are the facts—those outward and visible signs from which it is possible to judge something of the unseen spiritual tendency? At the beginning of the war there was undoubtedly an increased assembling for prayer. The shock was unprecedented enough to rouse men and women into some abnormal effort to lay hold upon the Unseen. But the wave soon reached its climax and began to recede. Before long the unvoiced cry of "Prayer as usual" passed among our people as a whole, and things settled down into pre-war indifference—except when some colossal enemy offensive again swung the destiny of the world into the balance. "Prayer as usual"—automobiles as never before!

But there is a yet deeper-lying trouble. Such prayer as there was, seemed mainly to be of a defective type—the natural cry of the human heart for victory and the preservation of dear ones. Any real confession of sin and national shortcoming was in the large sense, tragically and conspicuously absent. We thought much of the goodness of our cause; little of the dubious excellence of ourselves, its defenders; and so we prayed that God would give us success, not that He would make us worthy of it; for preservation, not for character; for an external triumph over others, not for an internal mastery of ourselves. We asked that God would give us things, not that He would make us persons—persons dominated by His Divine Personality and so possible agents for the doing of His work.

But, mark, that is precisely what true prayer is—not a begging for outward gifts, but a consent to be made, a purposeful and strenuous endeavour of the soul to align itself with the Divine Will and the Divine Purpose. Consider the Lord's Prayer. "Hallowed be Thy Name"—it is rank hypocrisy if we pray that for the world, and refuse to honour the Name in ourselves. "Thy Kingdom come"—first in me, if I am honest. "Thy will be done"—by whom is obvious, unless I brand myself a traitor. And the rest of the Prayer, "forgive me, feed me, and keep me straight," as we might paraphrase the closing petitions, all rings with the same intention—fit me to do Thy will, fashion me as Thou desirest, make me an instrument meet for the Master's use.

To be made over by God, to experience a new birth into spiritual power, to become in fact, and not merely in Catechism phrase, "members of Christ"—that is our deepest need as individuals, that is the profoundest requisite

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## Editorial

Sunday, June 30th, has been fixed by the Government of Canada as a day of national prayer and humiliation for the success of the Allies.

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### CHURCH UNION.

Church union is in the air to-day. Practically every chaplain, and many of our bishops in their charges, have spoken strongly on the subject. The task of reconstruction after the war is recognized as demanding united action if any great advance is to be made. The weakness of divided forces in the work of "making democracy safe for the world" is recognized. The large degree of failure on the part of organized Christianity as constituted in the past has aroused all church leaders and workers as never before.

England, which we have become accustomed to look upon as the last place in which any great change would take place, is being stirred to its depths. United efforts have been made already to bring the divided forces closer together. Committees have been appointed by the Archbishops of Canterbury and York, and by the Free Churches, to promote the spirit of union, working in co-operation with the Committee on Faith and Order in the United States. These committees in England in conference have drawn up an interim report of great value which we have printed in this issue.

In the United States the committees in connection with the proposed World Conference on Faith and Order have been carrying on an energetic propaganda for some time and the recent message from Bishop Brent, who is serving with the American forces in France, is bound to carry great weight.

"There is," he says, "no lesson which the churches are learning in the war zone of greater importance than the impotence of our divided Christianity. It is absurd to aim at a united mankind, or even a united Christian civilization, and to be content with a divided church. Many are feverishly anxious for something to be done to bring us together, but the moment for action is slipping by without action.

"But surely there must eventually be two peace tables, one of the exhausted nations, the other of the exhausted churches. I see no glimmer of hope for permanent and fraternal peace among the nations without at least as permanent and fraternal a peace among the churches."

In Canada, as we have intimated, a great deal is being said on the subject but nothing of an official character, so far as the Church of England is concerned, has been done to take up the subject with other communions. There is danger, therefore, that the matter will get nowhere and that it will be allowed to end as soon as the war ends. There is, on the other hand, the danger of unofficial action that can carry little weight and that tends towards confusion and to making the ultimate solution more difficult. We realize fully the serious character of the task ahead of those who undertake the work of bringing unity out of discord, and the impossibility of telling at the present time just what changes are really necessary. We realize also the danger of hasty action. Existing differences have not developed in a day or in a year, and the remedy, which we de-

voutly hope will not be as slow in developing as the differences have been, will not be discovered all at once. Moreover, it is not sufficient to send representatives across the border to sit with committees in the United States. What we need, therefore, it seems to us, is a commission in Canada dealing with this subject officially with representatives on it from all the leading Christian communions and working in co-operation with similar committees in other countries. Such a commission would not have power to legislate and there would be no necessity to compromise any vital principle. The possibilities, on the other hand, of bringing about a better understanding of the points emphasized by each communion, and of getting a clearer insight into each other's point of view are very great. We heard recently of a minister of another communion who was much surprised to find that Anglicans do not speak or think of baptizing a person into the Church of England. There are scores of points that ought to be cleared up as a preliminary to any definite step along the lines of Union.

The main point we wish to emphasize is that all our wishing for and talking about union will get us nowhere unless it results in action. We cannot go back. We must go on. Let it be on definite and constructive lines.

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We have been reminded that the Church of England Institute in Halifax is not the only one of its kind in Canada. We overlooked the Instituté in St. John, New Brunswick, which for many years has served as a diocesan centre. A few years ago it was presented with a new home and is well equipped in every particular and doing an excellent work.

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The Church in England is likely to undergo considerable change if the proposals contained in the recent report of one of its leading committees are carried into effect. It is recommended to give parishioners a right to be consulted in the matter of appointments of clergy; to make the minimum stipend for incumbents £400 yearly, and for clergy not enjoying a benefice who have been five years in orders, £200; to establish parish councils; to give women the right to vote for and serve on all councils of the Church which include laity; to abolish the term palace as applied to Bishops' residences, the size and importance of such to be modified; and to have an advisory committee to assist the Prime Minister in the selection of Bishops. All these recommendations appeal to one as most necessary if the Church is to be made a real part of the life of the people.

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Every Christian in Canada must have felt grateful to the Dominion Government on reading the announcement that the last Sunday in June had been appointed a day for special prayer. We sincerely trust that the Primate either on his own responsibility or in consultation with the other Archbishops, will issue a special form of service for the day. At such a time it is most advisable that some one should act quickly on behalf of the whole Church. Such a form, even though optional as to whether it is used or not, would tend greatly to fix people's minds on the special character of the day and would make it possible to include prayers bearing directly upon the present situation. If all Communions could co-operate in such a form it would be better still, but time will scarcely admit of this.

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