

# Canadian Churchman

Toronto, August 8th, 1918.

## The Christian Year

The Twelfth Sunday After Trinity,  
August 18th, 1918.

The Christian religion is not an easy religion, nor does it profess to make life easy. It helps men to do difficult things. The most difficult as well as the finest thing in life is to keep the commandments of God. The very idea of God for a morally minded man demands that God must be better than men are. Consequently His commands will make a great demand on man's moral and spiritual effort. Were this not so, we would not respect God. God has made great demands on men. The Jews believe this. God gave His commandments demanding a holy life through Moses. Christians believe this: Our Lord Jesus Christ not only approved the commandments given to the Jews, but widened their scope and enlarged their range so as to reach even to the "thoughts and intents of the heart." The keeping of God's commandments is difficult. Your own experience will tell you how difficult; e.g., have you attained in heart and act anywhere near the fulfillment of our Lord's interpretation of the demands of God's commandments? "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, thy mind and thy soul; and thy neighbour as thyself"? Or have you honestly tried to live out even your own interpretation of the ideal of life in thought and act which our Lord gives us in the Sermon on the Mount? If you have, you will agree that the Christian life is a difficult thing. In fact, some say that the Christian ideal is so high, that the demands of the Holy God on men are so great, that they are impossible for men. They are quite right. The Christian ideal is impossible for man *without the help of God*. In the Epistle, St. Paul is telling us this: "The letter killeth." He found this in his own experience. The knowledge of God's demands that the law gave him showed how impossible for him the ideal was. "All have sinned." The commandment revived and he "died." But "the Spirit giveth life." This is the glory of the religion of Christ. The old law was glorious in its moral majesty—the law in Christ is more glorious. It speaks of the moral majesty of God in His demands on our lives, but it speaks of God helping us to keep His commandments by the help of His Holy Spirit. "The Spirit giveth life." St. Paul, who found experience under "the law" so discouraging, was able to say of his life under "the Gospel": "I can do all things through Christ who strengtheneth me." How true Christian experience has found our Lord's words "apart from me ye can do nothing"! The Christian religion tells us of God's moral majesty in His great demands on us but of God's infinite patience, love and desire for our holiness in His readiness to help us by His Holy Spirit. If God makes demands He is ready to help us to their fulfilment. "Your Heavenly Father will give the Holy Spirit to them that ask Him."

We Christians have our incentive to pray in our knowledge of the character of God made known to us by our Lord Jesus Christ. Our Father who "knows and cares." The failure of prayer is on our side, not on God's. "He is more ready to hear than we to pray." Our

(Continued on page 504.)

## Editorial

### THE GOD WE PRAY TO.

"God save Germany and destroy her enemies," were the prayers of the German Emperor last Sunday. He assured himself and his people that their sacrifices would not be in vain and that God would bring safely through these perilous times the German Empire, including, of course, the Hohenzollern dynasty.

The Kaiser's prayers sound blasphemous to us. The sinking of hospital ships and the bombing of hospital areas do not tally with protestations of devotion to God. Such a combination of "piety" and wickedness can only be accounted for in one of two ways. Either the Kaiser is the smuggest hypocrite that ever whined a prayer or else his God is the arch-hypocrite.

Righteousness and Truth are His habitations but they are to be understood always in the terms of the prosperity and dominance of Germany. There are no such things as lies and treachery so long as the tongue that speaks is German. His blessing is upon rape and rapine, deportation and slavery, torture and murder, if the enemies of the Fatherland are discomfited. The will of God means only one thing: the supremacy of the German Empire.

All the people of the British Empire last Sunday were called upon to bow the knee for God's blessing upon the cause of the Allies. It is just possible that there were some who by their prayers brought God down to the level of the German idea of Deity. Any worshipper who considers that God is bound to preserve the British Empire no matter what she does, has not yet seen God as Jesus Christ revealed him. The only things that God is bound to support are Righteousness and Truth, for they are the expressions of His Will. As far as we are in harmony with these, so far can we confidently count upon God's blessing. As far as we are out of harmony, so far must we expect God's displeasure, if God be a God worth praying to at all.

No Britisher would say that *everything* we have done since this war loomed up has been according to God's Will. Only a German could make such a claim. Godlessness and greed, impurity and intemperance have sapped the strong life of our nations. It is for us to acknowledge it, not with the fear of the craven-hearted lest God should strike, but with the penitence of the honest-minded who desire that our life may be purged from the evil things which have held us back from realizing the full measure of God's Will for us.

When we acknowledge our sins it is not in the least with the idea of putting ourselves in the same class—as those who have regarded neither God nor man, old age nor infancy, who have violated even death itself so that their aim might be accomplished. To do that would be mocking God and His Truth. Our hands may be soiled with greed and filth but they are not red with the blood of women and babes.

Four years ago we took up arms with the pure and lofty aims of justice and brotherhood. We are to see to it that we keep them to the end. We shall not forget them in the dark days, for then they are our inspiration and support. The days of victory will be the time of testing. Already we notice it when there

has been a fortnight of "good news." "We will take all we can get and keep it, too," is the unworthy thought that finds too easy an entrance.

Britain's war aims as set out by LLOYD GEORGE last January at the Trade Union Conference on man power, gave earnestness and strength to many a prayer. We felt at last that the indefiniteness was removed and we could truly ask God to help us accomplish the aims set forth because they were in accordance with His Will so far as we could honestly see. We shall stay in the place of power so long as we are not afraid to pray that God will continually open our minds to the knowledge of His will regarding our present enemies. Righteousness and Truth are our professed concern. We must judge ourselves as well as others by that plumb line. We know that God can grant the continuance of the British Empire only in so far as it makes for the establishment of the Kingdom of God.

The man who is afraid to leave the Allied cause to the impartial justice of God, thereby confesses the weakness of that cause. The man who seeks God's help by pleas for favoritism does not know the Father to whom he prays. God's help is ours so long as we sincerely pray, "Thy Kingdom come."

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It is a satisfaction to note the trend of opinion in England regarding the rights and functions of the laity in the Church, as evidenced by the Report of the Archbishop's Second Committee of Inquiry regarding "the worship of the Church." Some of its salient features are noticed in this issue under *The Church in the Motherland*. While the increased power of the laity cannot be considered as the panacea for all our troubles, yet it is clear to serious observers that the development of the democratic side of our Church is a prime condition of future strength. It is the genius of the British nations. The Church in Canada is in a better position than the Mother Church for we have the laity elected by the vestries bearing an equal part in the Diocesan and General Synods. But we have only approached indirectly any partial control of the Church services by the laity.

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"Clerical autocracy" accounts for quite a number of weak causes. It is still possible in Canada for a clergyman to wreck a church by introducing a type of service which is distasteful to the majority of the parishioners. All through our country golden opportunities are being lost because some clergymen prefer the type of service which makes an irresistible appeal to empty pews. Too often the Anglican service has been a strait-jacket into which the worshipper must be forced and if the jacket does not fit, so much the worse for the worshipper. A wise physician of souls should know at least as much about his patients as his medicines. Some day our clergy may realize that. Whatever the people find helpful to the realization and true worship of God is the thing they should have.

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