

Meditations on the Lord's Supper

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MEDITATION No. 5.

QUESTIONS CONTAINED. ST. JOHN 14:8-23.

Philip saith unto Him, "Lord, show us the Father and it sufficeth us."

Jesus saith unto him, "Have I been so long time with you and yet hast thou not known Me, Philip? He that hath seen Me hath seen the Father."

This remark or difficulty of Philip arises out of the words to St. Thomas: "The abiding places are in the Father's House. Thither are we to go by Jesus Christ. Through Him is the way to God the Father." Philip in effect says: "Reveal God to us." But that was just what Jesus came to do. All His words and His actions were God's. This truth is prominent in the teaching recorded in St. John. "The Son can do nothing of Himself but what He seeth the Father do." "I have given them Thy words." "No man hath seen God at any time. The only begotten Son which is in the bosom of the Father He hath declared Him." One of the four great covenant promises sealed to us in the Holy Communion is, "They shall all know Me from the least even to the greatest." At present this knowledge is only partial. But the knowledge of God is pledged to us in the covenant (Hebrews 8:11) and the Cup is the New Covenant. (St. Luke 22:20.) Here, then, we come to the Lord's Table to receive that supernatural revelation of God which Jesus only can give. The knowledge described is surely experimental. It is not opinion; it is not theory; it is experience. "I know whom I have believed." I know the sense of sin forgiven. I know the sense of the Presence of Jesus Christ. I know His Divine Power to keep, to calm, to sustain. It may be only very partial and very dim. But it is experimental knowledge. Philip was one of the Disciples whom Jesus Himself found and called. Philip did not first choose Jesus—Jesus chose Philip. Has He not so ordered things in the world that we have been brought to the knowledge of Him when many in heathen lands have not had the opportunity? Because He has so begun with us may we not believe that He will perfect that which He has begun, and when we enter the abiding places and meet Him face to face we shall know fully, as St. Paul says in I. Cor. 13:12.

At the Lord's table He manifests Himself to His disciples. This raised another question. Judas saith unto Him (not Iscariot), "Lord, how is it that Thou wilt manifest Thyself unto us and not unto the world?"

Jesus answered and saith unto him: "If a man love Me, he will keep My words; and My Father will love him and We will come unto him and make Our abode with him." One of Jesus' words is to come to His Table. "Do this in remembrance of Me." In obedience we come to Him and He comes to us and gives us that foretaste of the abiding places in the Father's House, by making His abiding place in our Hearts—Hearts which He has cleansed so that they may be abiding places, and by His Spirit He comes with the Father and dwells in us. Of this the world knows nothing.

There are two freedoms—the false, where a man is free to do what he likes; the true, where a man is free to do what he ought.—Charles Kingsley.

Spectator's Discussion of Topics of Interest to Churchmen.

The appearance and tentative authorization of the Revised Book of Common Prayer is an occasion of uncommon interest and importance to Churchmen in this Dominion. It will, we believe, mark what in years to come, will be reckoned a new birth of the Church in Canada. It is the very first attempt of the members of the Canadian Church to compile or adjust for themselves a common liturgy to be used in the normal services of public worship. The task that appeared to many of our wisest leaders to be far beyond the capabilities of our poor ecclesiastical attainments seems in the book that has been submitted to the Church public for approval or criticism, or both, not only possible of attainment but a normal undertaking by any people capable of using a liturgy with edification. There is not intended in these words to be a complete approval of all that has been done or left undone, but the book that has emerged is a standing demonstration that it is possible to improve and modify even a book of public devotions and rites without any violent dislocation with the past, or the casting away of the precious heritage of worship that is ours. Those who trembled at the thought of change, those who in minatory words cried "hands off the Prayer Book"; those who besought the Church to allow them to live out their days in peace before the old book was subjected to the uncertain hands of revisers, can now see what important improvements may be made by the gentlest of hands and most timid of reconstructionists. The fact that every member of the Church from the Atlantic to the Pacific can find in the new book almost every word that has appealed to him from childhood and yet is conscious of a new freedom, and possessed of a new breadth of outlook that was absent from the book with which he had been so long familiar, cannot fail to be reassuring. It will do more than that. It will set thousands of minds and hearts of goodwill at work to still further enrich that treasury of devotion and worship before it takes its final form in the canons of the Church. The invitation that has gone out from all the Bishops to all the members of the Church to study carefully the new book and indicate any improvement that may seem good in their eyes, ought to bear fruit in the more complete adjustment of the outward expression, to the inward spiritual needs of our people.

This partial consummation of a great effort has been long in coming. In clerical conferences and alumni foregatherings for the past quarter of a century at least the subject of revision has been a live topic of discussion among the younger clergy. As the younger men passed into the ranks of seniors, expanding wisdom taught them that it was not a safe subject to meddle with and its consideration was usually left behind with their youth. Among Spectator's earliest contributions to the public press was an article in the Montreal Gazette at the time of a meeting of the Provincial Synod of Canada in that city. It was on the subject of Prayer Book revision. At that meeting Charles Jenkins pleaded with successful power for the formation of a General Synod which would handle the questions applicable to the whole Church in Canada. He illustrated his argument by a reference to Prayer Book revision which he charitably declared had been set forth in an able article in the Gazette that morning. With varying vicissitudes its advocacy has progressed. After

the meeting of General Synod held in the city of Quebec in 1905, the late Frank Wootten, then proprietor of the Canadian Churchman, wrote to Spectator, who had kept up a steady fire on the subject for several months, stating that he thought, after listening to the debate on the subject, and observing the adverse vote, that Prayer Book revision was a dead issue. From this Spectator vigorously dissented. He was convinced that the leaders of the Church wanted revision but they had a singular shyness about saying so in public. Men had talked so long about the "incomparable" and "matchless" Prayer Book that they felt themselves in a rather awkward position to advocate the improvement of what they had declared to be practically perfect. Even when order was finally taken for revision in 1911 many seemed to think that they had only voted for a Committee to make suggestions about revision and not to revise. However, one big decisive step has been taken and the writer will be greatly surprised if much more thorough revision is not demanded in the not distant future.

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The most obvious improvements to be noted in a summary glance at this new book are the introduction of the name Canada on the fly leaf, the sequence of lections in both Old and New Testaments for Sundays and during Lent, the authority for varying combinations of services, the enrichment of opening sentences and anthems for great festivals, special prayers for varying occasions, new suffrages in the Litany, permissive selections of the Psalms, new occasional offices, etc. The new Prayer Book will have a new meaning and value, for it bears the name of Canada upon its initial page. Since men of the British Isles set foot in this country we have been worshipping with a borrowed book, and now we shall have one of our very own. It is a declaration of our faith, a faith that trusts the guiding of the Holy Spirit in this branch of the Church of God. It is also a declaration of our willingness to do our part to meet the spiritual needs of our own people. Having said this much in general approval of the work that is done, Spectator will not deem it necessary for him to approve in detail all the admirable and obvious things that have been done. What the revision committee and the Church want, presumably, is help, not eulogy. From time to time he will analyze the weak points of the revised book and do his best to give an alternative that may or may not be acceptable to the Church. It is only, of course, by a free, frank setting down of our opinions, now before the final step is taken, that we can really help towards the perfection of the Book. After it is fully authorized it will be the duty of this generation of churchmen at least, to stand by it. Hence the necessity of perfecting it now. "SPECTATOR."

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CHILDREN'S COMPETITION.

In order to stimulate greater knowledge of the Bible and of Church history among the children of the Church we are starting with this number a competition for boys and girls. The character of the competition will change from time to time and prizes will be given to those sending in the neatest and most accurate answers. Reasonable time will be allowed for answers to be sent in so as to enable children in more distant parts to share in the competition. We trust that the parents and other adult readers of the Churchman will assist in making this of real value to the children. Our chief aim is not amusement but instruction, but we can very well afford to combine the two.