

Canadian Churchman

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The Christian Year

The Ninth Sunday After Trinity, Aug. 5, 1917.

TEMPTATION.

In to-day's Epistle St. Paul has a most cheering message regarding temptation. "There hath no temptation taken you, but such as is common to man; but God is faithful, Who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it."

1. Temptation is the common lot of man. Everyone is tempted, no one is exempted from the testing. We are here to be tempted. The life which we now live is the life of temptation. There ought to be no surprise when temptation or trial comes our way. Yet many people seem to be surprised and complain as if they were being singled out. It is not so. We are all being subjected to the testing. As we breathe we are tempted. Not alone do we stand, but we are surrounded by the great army of the tempted, every member of which is being tested likewise, each in his own way. And our temptations should draw us closer to the great Captain Who "was in all points tempted like as we are." Yes, our temptations should be a bond to draw us nearer to one another, since temptation is common to man, and nearer to Him Who "suffered being tempted."

2. The faithfulness of God will never allow us to have more temptation than we can bear. While temptation is very strong, it is never too strong. While we may be tested sometimes almost to the breaking point, yet we need never break down. "I could not help sinning," is a repudiation of the faithfulness of God. He never places a man in a position where he can make that statement with truthfulness. It is never necessary to sin. The promise stands for every man and every occasion—"God is faithful, Who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able."

3. St. Paul goes on to speak of "the way to escape." "But will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it." Possibly some such figure as this is in his mind. A storm rages on a rock-bound coast, a man in a little boat seeks a safe landing place. At first he can see no place where he can land in safety. It is an impossible shore, he will be dashed to pieces without a doubt; but all at once, where he least expected it, he sees "a way to escape," a little landing place, almost hidden by the rocks, to which he brings his boat in safety. So it is often in our temptations, there seems no way to escape. The storm rages on the rock-bound coast. How can the little boat avoid destruction on that shore? See! the little landing place, "the way to escape," which at first you could not see; but there it is, provided by the God who is faithful.

Sometimes before temptation we must flee, for flight is "the way to escape"; sometimes we must stand and bear it. In either case it is to Our Lord Jesus Christ we must go in the hour of temptation. He is every man's "way to escape," and He is every man's ability to endure.

He giveth power to the faint; and to him that hath no might he increaseth strength.—Isa. 40: 29.

Editorial

OUR ATTITUDE TOWARDS GERMANY.

"It was not suddenly bred,
It will not swiftly abate,
Through the chill years ahead,
When time shall count from the date
That the English began to hate."

In the poem of which the above is the closing stanza, Kipling has expressed what many have felt. There is developing in England, and even in Canada for that matter, a feeling of hatred and revenge towards Germany, and everything connected with or coming from that land. In the early days of the war we were horrified at the sentiments expressed in the "Hymn of Hate," and we regarded it as evidence of a lower type of civilization to be found in Germany. To-day we are rapidly moving towards a similar state of mind. It is not necessary to rehearse the events leading up to this. That which concerns us is what our attitude as Christians should be under these conditions. Nor are we thinking solely of our attitude at the present time, but of that of the future as well, when war has ceased and the days of peace have returned once more. What should our attitude as individual men and women be, and what should the attitude of the Church be? To adopt a non-committal attitude, whether as individual Christians or as a Church will give rise to misunderstanding. It is a question that affects the moral and religious life of our Empire, and we cannot remain neutral on such matters without bringing ourselves and the Church into disrepute. We have experienced this already as a Church in our attitude towards the liquor traffic and the labour problem. There are certain fundamental Christian principles at stake which ought to be proclaimed clearly and unhesitatingly if we are to be loyal to our Master and to command the respect and confidence of intelligent men.

Germany must be punished. As Mr. Hilaire Belloc says, "if there is no punishment, then war has changed into a much more evil thing than our race ever knew before, and into a thing that will be wholly destructive to our civilization." But true punishment is not vindictive. Its aim is not only to do justice to those who have been wronged, but also to reform, if possible, the wrong-doer. The problem, therefore, that faces us is to discover a punishment that is in harmony with such an aim. Otherwise, we ourselves may be the greater sufferers.

The story is told of a service being held somewhere in Belgium in which every voice but one became silent when the sentence, "Forgive us our trespasses as we forgive them that trespass against us," was reached. The one voice that did not falter was discovered to be that of the King. The spirit of revenge, and the hatred of human beings, should find no place in punishment. We can and should hate the spirit of evil that drives men to do wrong, and we ought to destroy as quickly as possible any institution or form of government that enslaves and misleads human beings. We are, or should be, praying for a righteous and abiding peace and our attitude of mind towards our enemies should be in harmony with such a prayer. We must do everything in our power to make a repetition of this frightful carnage impossible, but this cannot be done by pursuing any systematic policy of revenge. At the

same time, we must be on our guard lest by some mistaken acts of kindness we make it possible for an unrepentant though defeated enemy to strike us again.

We need also to remember that we ourselves are not perfect, and while we pray that our enemies may be brought to realize the wrongs they have committed and be brought to a state of repentance, let us also pray that we may be made worthy of victory and fitted to use the power that victory gives, for the well-being of both ourselves and our enemies.

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Russia is, unfortunately, still far from being able to present a united front against Germany. We hoped that the recent successes in Galicia would consolidate the various political elements, but Germany does not intend that this shall take place if she can prevent it. German money and German agents find easy victims among the extreme reactionaries in Russia. A strong hand and severe measures are needed, and we trust that those in authority will not be so foolish as to imagine that lenient measures will suffice.

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It is reported that the British Government has yielded to the popular demand for reprisals in spite of the stand taken by the Archbishop of Canterbury, Lord Derby and others. We regret this exceedingly, for we are convinced that it will not hasten the day of a righteous peace. It means, moreover, that the more brutal elements in England have gained the upper hand. Let us hope that it may be only temporary, and that those who are striving to keep the British name untarnished may soon convince the Government of the folly of such a decision.

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Canada is to have an election in the near future. The minds of Canadians, in place of being centred on the problem that should transcend all others, are to be distracted by a political struggle. Electors will be surfeited with reasons why someone else is responsible for this election, as it must be generally recognized as a misfortune. There are loyal men in both political parties who are anxious to do everything in their power to support our boys at the front and hasten the end of the war. There are others though who think more of political spoils and of selfish interests than of anything else. Our duty is to see that such men are not given an opportunity to say what Canada's share in the war shall be.

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The following extract from a letter written by Lord Curzon that was published a couple of months ago on the Mesopotamian front, needs no comment. Words cannot express the contempt and horror that one feels: "I have been so long impressed with the sufferings of the Mesopotamian Field Force, endured as they have been with wonderful patience, fortitude and heroism, that I have been tempted, by reasons of my old connections with India, and also my familiarity with the arduous regions where you are all serving, to send out some little tribute of my sympathy, admiration and esteem. . . . The gift itself takes, what I hope may be a novel form, viz., 70 one-dozen cases of champagne and a whole library of small books. With the former I would like the various officers' messes to have a good carouse, and to remember while doing so that they are not forgotten at home."