

THE COLLECT

O LORD, we beseech thee, let thy continual pity cleanse and defend thy Church; and, because it cannot continue in safety without thy succour, preserve it evermore by thy help and goodness; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.



1. With what do we pray God to cleanse and defend his Church?
A. With his continual _____ (Psalm 5:12)
2. When cannot God's Church continue in safety?
A. Without his _____ (Psalm 127:1)
3. How do we beseech Him to preserve his Church?
A. By his _____ and _____ (Ps.97:10)
4. How long do we beseech Him to preserve his Church by his help and goodness?
A. e _____ (Psalm 125:2)

INTRODUCTION.

We noticed that last week's Collect was very old, and that the time period in which it was written was a time of danger. Danger, for which the Church needed defense; error, for which the Church needed cleansing. The error that needed cleansing was the idea that men could be good of themselves without God's help. Is there any sentence in this week's Collect that speaks of this error? "It cannot continue in safety without Thy succor." Read: Isaiah 4:2-6 & Revelation 7:17

In Isaiah 4 we saw how God cleansed and defended His Church of old. Revelation 7 tells us how God defended and cleansed the Christian Church, but in v.17 there is something more—"the Lamb...shall lead them." There is guidance, and that is what the last part of the Collect means. The words "governed and preserved" mean guided and cared for as a pilot takes guidance and care of a ship. So we have God's cleansing, defense, and guidance.



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I. FIRST COMES CLEANSING
“let thy continual pity cleanse...”

1. **This comes first** because—without cleansing it is not worth defending. Until Achan and his sin were removed from Israel, God could not defend and help them (Joshua 7). When God was going to defend Israel in the days of Gideon, what had Gideon first to do? Take away the idols (Judges 6:25-27)
2. **What is cleansed? Thy church.** It is cleansed as a body: (i.) by the removal from it of the evil, *e.g.* Achan’s removal (Joshua 7); the removal of Gehazi (2 Kings 5); the removal of Judas; the removal of Ananias and Sapphira (Acts 5), and (ii.) by the removal of error, which is best done by teaching the truth, and (iii.) individually; for if the body is to be cleansed, the hands, face, and feet must be washed.
3. **How does He cleanse?** (i.) *by washing* (Isa.4:4; Rev 7:14, I John 1:7). with precious blood of Christ. What is the outward and visible sign of that? The water of baptism (I Peter 3:21) (ii.) *by fire* (Isa 4:4) “Spirit of burning,” but also “spirit of judgment,” which means the same thing, i.e. by trials and afflictions. Persecutions cleanse the Church. Trials and sufferings, sanctified by God’s Holy Spirit, cleanse the soul. (Rev. 7:14) (iii.) *by the Word*. It shows the need of cleansing. It applies the cleansing as in baptism; as in words of pardon, when e.g. Christ said, “Thy sins are forgiven.” It teaches the truth and cleanses the Church from error.

II. DEFENSE.
“defend thy Church...”

1. **How does God defend?** In Isa 4:5 it is by His presence, in the pillar of cloud and fire; so in *v.*6 the tabernacle is for God’s presence. So in rev. & “He...shall dwell among them.” God will defend wherein He dwells (Ps. 46:5,7,11). The disciples were safe in the ship because Christ was with them (Mark 4 and Luke 5).
2. **How is His presence a defense?** Being full of God, who is the fullness of good, is a defense against evil. Just as a fire in a camp keeps wild beasts at a distance, God’s presence in His Church is felt and seen by her enemies and they fear. “Upon all the glory of God shall be a defense.” It is a defense when we reflect God’s glory.
3. **The cloud was also for guidance.** God’s Holy Spirit also is our Guide, just as the cloud guided the Israelites. He comes into His Church and people as a pilot into a ship, keeping us safe, defended against dangers.

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