

demnation—"Because thou art neither cold nor hot, but lukewarm, I will spue thee out of My mouth."

6. And now, my brethren, shall I venture to apply the touch stone of this great principle to St. Matthew's, the church and congregation we all love so well?

Can we trust ourselves to weigh the matter fairly, to judge impartially in a case so entirely our own? Yes, I think we can, if we remember two things—first, the purest congregational life of any church is not due for the main part to what those who now form the congregation have done, but to the labours and lives of those who have gone before us; and, secondly, that the congregational life and conscience may be sound and healthy, in the whole, while the private life and conscience of any one who is now a member may be most universally defective—may be a blot and a hindrance—a menace and a source of danger to the whole body. A humble minded Christian may favour a true judgment and render a true verdict in deciding that the congregational life is healthy, while in his own inmost heart of hearts before God he may disclaim any personal share in the congregation's victories and triumphs. And so, while I would have you all join with one heart and one soul in thankful acknowledgment of what this your congregation is doing and has done, I would counsel you to be free from taking the same to yourselves individually. What a Christian congregation is at any time is an inheritance—handed down to it, in most cases, from a long succession of men and women who have passed away to God. So our Lord teaches:—"Other men laboured and ye are entered into their labours."

My brethren, in the congregational life of St. Matthew's, we who are outside recognize that you have a very precious inheritance, a great trust and responsibility. An inheritance to be handed on, improved, we hope, developed, enriched ever more and more "with the fruits of righteousness with God." We trace—I for one do—most of what is most precious in the past and present of this Church—to the faith and heroism of those holy men and women—not with us—but who having served their generation by thanks to God in their places, are surely to be remembered in this day's festival.

The life of this congregation, like that of many in our young country, is short and is easily traced out.

I am one of the few living who may claim in the words of my text to have known it almost "from the first day until now." To the love and zeal of Bishop George Mountain, exclusively, this parish owes its existence. Happily we possess an authentic account of those beginnings. "In the end of 1822," writes his son Armine, "he began Sunday evening services at the burying ground in a large room in the sexton's house. This very soon became too small, and the whole house was then thrown into one—the windows arched—a turret built and a bell placed in it. About 1830 a sort of transept was added, which greatly increased the accommodation."

His sermons here always consisted of plain expositions of Scripture delivered without a book. There was scarcely ever standing-room in the Chapel. The service and singing were most hearty, and he so loved to preach the Gospel to the poor that often on Sunday nights, when he came home nearly worn out in body, he would say "his soul had been refreshed." "I shall never forget his sorrow," Mr. Mountain adds, "when he saw the place he loved so well destroyed by fire on the 20th June, 1845." Such were the beginnings—it sprang out of the sweet words nurtured by all the best powers of a true saint.

I suppose there was scarcely ever such a ministry as that of Bishop George Mountain, a ministry in which the pastor was so entirely absorbed in his work day and night, so much of it spent in the houses of the poor, by the bedsides of the sick and dying, a ministry so characterized by heavenly-mindedness—humility, the very fire of love, carrying the cross in his heart every day and hour, and which evoked from his people so entire a reverence, trust and love. "The people of Quebec in those days," I was told by an aged member, "so loved Archdeacon Mountain, that they would have paved the streets under his feet with gold if it would have done him any good." No wonder that such a ministry left so indelible a stamp upon this, so peculiarly his own congregation!

The wooden chapel was replaced by a plain stone church in 1749. Sunday evening services only were held in it down to the end of 1852, exactly 30 years, when a Sunday morning service was provided at his own expense by Mr. Armine Mountain, then his father's curate. Two years later—after 5 years of the most devoted service here—Mr. Mountain removed to St. Michael's, when St. Matthew's was made a separate charge, and I became its first incumbent.

Thirteen years later—now exactly twenty-five years ago—I resigned the charge into the hands of Charles Hamilton. My sense of the value of his ministry I have often expressed. Under him this noble church was built, and the work of the parish which makes it a praise in the whole church, organized.

As to the labours of Bishop Hamilton's successors, in their presence I say nothing.

And now a few words in conclusion, from my own personal knowledge of the work done by St. Matthew's in furtherance of the Gospel from the first day until now.

The text which I have chosen exactly expresses what I myself think and feel, and I am sure I am not misinterpreting your thoughts, brethren, when I add—which we all think and feel about the past and future of St. Matthew's.

Looking back over the past history of the Philipian Church, St. Paul sees the whole of it to be matter of thankfulness. Surely that is how we must all feel to-day in looking over the past history of this church.

The ground of his thankfulness he declares to be their fellowship—the joint share they had always had—from the first day until now, he says, in the furtherance of the Gospel. That we have the same ground of thankfulness in abundant measure I shall show.

Looking on to the future, he sees in store for them an ever progressive development and growth of the noble work—the noble character and temper which God had begun in them—a growth never to cease until it become perfect at the day of the Lord Jesus. These without question are our hopes and prayers also for the future of this church and parish.

"I thank my God for your fellowship in furtherance now."

The fellowship of this church and congregation in the furtherance of the Gospel from the first day until now—it would be a long story to set this forth in its fulness.

There is first the conspicuous part which St. Matthew's has taken chiefly and indirectly in the general organization of the finances of the diocese, an organization truly wonderful. There is next the good example the congregation has always shown in cheerfully contributing its money, when asked, for all the varied enterprises of Christian benevolence in the diocese and elsewhere. It is no small thing that even our reverend clergy have been compelled to take upon themselves for Christ's sake that most burdensome of all tasks, soliciting money from door to door, from office to office—for providing the instruments of their warfare—churches, schools, clergy houses, colleges for training the clergy; they all know that they will meet with no rough impatient repulse from the congregation of St. Matthew's—no cold shoulder from its clergy. The liberal and loving spirit shown by this congregation in sending their money away to help the wars of the Church not only in the diocese, but outside, has both reacted in blessing upon the congregation itself, by nurturing unselfish habits and principles in their own souls—but also helped towards evoking the same spirit everywhere.

But this—though it is about this St. Paul is specially referring to in my text—the encouragement afforded him by the money contributions sent again and again from Philippi to help his work, is after all the least part of what this church has done towards the furtherance of the Gospel.

The greatest practical evil in the Church at the beginning of this century was the decay of public worship; and there is no reform to be compared in value to the restoration of worship to its proper place in the conscience and lives of our people.

The bright example of St. Matthew's has shown in making worship the great thing in the Christian life, by giving back to the people the daily service, now nearly thirty years ago—by restoring the Holy Eucharist to its place as the proper distinctive service of the Lord's Day—and by making all the services congregational, attractive by their dignity and beauty, while free from meretricious ornament, and absolutely loyal to the prayer book—has been of unspeakable value to the diocese and to the church. It has helped to raise the conceptions of our people everywhere on the subject of worship to a better standard; and it has helped to show how such a great practical reform as this may be effected with the hearty good will of the whole congregation.

The loyal support which St. Matthew's has always from the first day until now, given with unswerving fidelity to the church's legitimate rulers and to the church's legitimate principles.

There was a time when the rulers of the church in this city might have said with St. Paul—what the saintly Bishop, your founder, did say again and again—"We are troubled on every side, distressed, cast down, pressed out of measure above strength; without are fightings, within are fears."

There was a time—my younger hearers know little or nothing of it, though there are still many among the older men who can enter into what I say—there came a time of fierce persecution in this city—a persecution not of men but of principles, or rather of men with a view to root out their principles—a persecution which it would be difficult to make the younger members of the Church now even understand, so wicked and senseless was it, and so completely did it defeat itself and come to naught.

Think what it must have been to wring from the gentle and saintly Bishop Mountain such an appeal as this—in point—to his own people in his own cathedral city. (I cull a sentence or two from a book of more than 70 pages):—

"Suffer me to speak one poor word," said he, "of the present Bishop of the diocese. I have gone in and out before this people, my own people in Quebec, for forty-one years. For forty-one years I have watched and prayed and worked for them, without ceasing, watched and prayed and worked. 'I am old and gray-headed and I have walked before you from my youth unto this day. Behold here I am, witness against me before the Lord.' I challenge the world to show that I have been unfaithful to the true interests of the Church of England or swerved from the proclamation of Christ crucified." And you—"You, then, in this diocese who love the Reformed Church of England, know I beseech you who are your friends. They are not your friends who sound an alarm in this diocese. The interests of our Anglican Protestantism in this diocese, I am bold to say, are much safer in my hands and in the hands of those who support me, than in the hands of men who could bring our fidelity into question. For my own fidelity, of course, is brought into question."

Judge from these words of deeply wounded feeling, wrung from the very heart of the aged bishop, what the times were.

The steadfastness of St. Matthew's in those days of trial—its thorough loyalty to its bishop—the quietness and peace and goodness which reigned within the congregation—the calm good sense with which its members withstood the efforts ceaselessly made to alarm them with false cries of Romanizing innovations—all this was a tower of strength to the whole diocese, and helped largely to make it come forth as it did out of a storm of such violence, not only not injured, but immensely strengthened. To the laity this was largely due. Never, surely, were there a body of laity so loyal, so true, so intelligent as were the laity of St. Matthew's in those old formative days, when the links which bound them and their pastor together were forged in the very fire.

The storm passed over, and we were left some years in peace. Yet one more trial came—one last desperate effort—like a thunderbolt out of a clear sky—by which the loyalty of St. Matthew's and its sincere adherence to sound principles were put to perhaps a still severer test.

Our saintly founder, Bishop Mountain, died. On the very day on which he was buried, a formal proposal was made to the rector-elect—St. Matthew's being still technically a chapel of ease within the parish—to endow the chapel with a large sum of money—enough to free the congregation forever from the burden of its own maintenance—on condition that the selection and appointment of the clergyman should be made over in perpetuity to the same extreme party in the church.

How was this received?

The congregation came together to consider the matter. No clergyman was present, the laity asking to be left to themselves. The church was crowded. Henry Pratten was in the chair. George Irvine moved the resolution. The tempting offer was calmly considered; its advantages and the serious consequences of its rejection fully and fairly set forth; and then by a unanimous vote it was deliberately rejected. When one remembers that the great body of the congregation were then of the working class, the noble heroism of this rejection of so great a sum of money will be understood.

It is not easy to say what the result would have been if this attempt to gain possession of St. Matthew's had been successful. Certainly, the religious history of the diocese must have been widely different. And we may safely say that this faithfulness to principle at that crisis was one of the most important services ever rendered to the true furtherance of the gospel.

This was the last attempt to disturb us. "The onflowing scourge passed over." The fires of fanaticism burnt themselves out. And a blessed peace ensued which has made the Diocese of Quebec a sort of Paradise amid the divisions and vexations of party warfare which have so grievously marred the furtherance of the gospel in other fields.

This blessed "Peace of God" I trace largely to St. Matthew's—to the wisdom and Christian temper then displayed by its clergy and its laity—to their generous kindness and forbearance towards those who had "despitefully used them and persecuted them," to their absolute freedom from party spirit, and to the genuineness of their loyalty to the Church of England.

My brethren of St. Matthew's, this is your peculiar glory. This is pre-eminently the "good work" which God began on this spot 70 years ago, under Bishop Mountain's wonderful preaching and more wonderful life—the good work of building up here a congregation of loyal English Churchmen—faithful, helpful, true-hearted—planting in their hearts true principles, which should be the antidote to the disloyal and disintegrating principles which tried with