

THE SERMON

PREACHED BEFORE CONVOCATION, AT

TRINITY UNIVERSITY CHAPEL,

ON MONDAY EVENING, OCTOBER 27, 1890,

BY THE REV. G. C. MACKENZIE, MA.,

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WHEN the Council kindly appointed me the preacher for this Convocation, my first impulse was to decline, feeling that I ought not to accept, even for half-an-hour, the position of a teacher to the Convocation of a learned University. I thought again that you had asked me not as an empty compliment, but, that out of a pastoral experience of over twenty years, I might, with God's blessing, be enabled to say something helpful to my younger brethren of the clergy and laity, and that to decline would be to shirk a call to duty.

First, allow me to congratulate you and all the friends of our Church University, on the evidences of your renewed life and energies; in the erection of your west wing; in the unprecedented increase of matriculants this year; in your medical department, which deservedly stands so high in the esteem of the profession; in the progress of St. Hilda's College for the higher education of the daughters of the Church, and in your rapidly developing influence throughout Ontario and far beyond.

Canadian churchmen of all schools of thought are realizing that this University affords a thoroughness and completeness of education, a broad catholicity of churchmanship and a healthy, social culture that cannot be obtained for their sons elsewhere. So long as Trinity University builds on these lines and is the home of manly, Christian gentlemen, so long will she command the increasing confidence and support of Canadian churchmen.

The future of the Anglican Church in Canada, under God, will be largely moulded by the men who are educated in this University. Therefore I am now going to speak to you a few words on the duty of Christian Fellowship, and for that purpose draw your attention to Acts ii., 42: "They continued steadfastly in the Apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in the prayers."

St. Luke here enumerates four foundation principles of the Church of Christ, into which the 3,000 converts on the Day of Pentecost were baptized and continued steadfast; namely: Apostolic Doctrine, Apostolic Fellowship, Breaking of Bread, The Prayers.

With respect to three of these principles the Church cannot be said to be either indifferent or neglectful. In the renewed life which, thank God, has quickened the Anglican Church in the last sixty years, Apostolic doctrine or teaching has received its full share of attention. In like manner the great memorial sacrifice—the one prescribed Act of Worship in the New Testament, the Breaking of Bread, has been rescued from comparative neglect, and is being everywhere restored to its place of honour and dignity in our churches. Again, the prayers are no longer a duet between parson and clerk, but have become once more "Common Prayer," the voice of the congregation; the fullness and beauty of Liturgical and responsive worship have not only been restored to us, but their scriptural authority and necessity are rapidly gaining the serious thought of our separated brethren, wherever the instincts of reverent worship and culture are felt.

But how has it fared with "Fellowship"? It certainly has not received anything like the consideration of the other three.

Bishop Pearson speaks of these four principles as the image of the Primitive Church; Bishop Andrews says that they are a safeguard to the Church against all innovation of doctrine and discipline.

We have made a great deal, and rightly so, of the first, third and fourth; I fear we have largely neglected the second.

Every principle of divine truth has its God-ward and its man-ward side. For example, in the Breaking of Bread, we show before God and plead the merits of the One Sacrifice for the sins of the whole world; we also, in the same act, lift up the Crucified before man that he may be drawn to Christ. God accepts the One Sacrifice—man offers it and partakes of it. Prayer is communion with God, yet in the great model, "Our Father," Christ teaches that communion with God involves fellowship with man. There can be no love of God that does not extend to our brother—yea, Christ has taught us that the very God-ward side of the unity in the God-head must have its reflection in the unity of the believers—"that they may be one, even as we are one."

We may have very clear conceptions of the truth of the God-ward side of the Sacrifice of the Cross, and yet partake very sparingly of the self-sacrificing spirit of the Crucified; we may be very importunate in prayer for even spiritual blessings for ourselves, and yet seldom rise into the spirit of fellowship involved in the prayer, "Our Father." In like manner, we may prize very highly our fellowship with God the Father, through the Son by the in-dwelling of the Holy Spirit, our fellowship with Apostolic faith, order and worship, and yet lack a sympathetic fellowship with men about us. As a Church, we are thoroughly alive to the God-ward side of this truth of fellowship. I think we have much to learn on the man-ward side.

It seems to me that the success which attends some of the Christian communions in Canada is largely owing to the disproportionate importance which they attach to the man-ward side of several truths; for example, the keynote of Catholic preaching is, "Seek ye first the Kingdom of God and his righteousness"; the popular religionism of the day takes the cry of the Philippian jailor for its keynote—"What shall I do to be saved?"—pre-eminently this one of fellowship. Little or no importance is given to Apostolic Fellowship by many bodies of Christians—all importance is attached to fellowship with men to-day.

Is it not a mark of the Catholic faith to hold every truth of God in a rounded proportion? May I not say that no truth of God has any power to mould the character of man, to enlarge and ennoble his mind, to purify and warm his heart, unless the God-ward side of that truth be clearly reflected in its man-ward side?

If it is true that all things are double, that nothing is complete and perfect without its other side, it is just probable that in our love and zeal for the things of God, we have not been equally zealous in the things of men. In our devotion to the Church of Christ we must seek to know, to love, to serve the Head in the members of His Body.

When Christ told the Pharisees that the "Sabbath was made for man and not man for the Sabbath," He covered the whole ground. Catholic churchmen can understand