

SUPPLEMENT  
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ZION CHURCH—MONTREAL.

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INDUCTION of the REV. ALFRED J. BRAY.

*(Late of Manchester, England.)*

INAUGURAL ADDRESS.

THE WORK AND OFFICE OF THE CHRISTIAN MINISTRY—CHURCH UNITY—WHAT IT MEANS AND WHAT IT DOES NOT MEAN.

*(From the Montreal "Gazette," October 30th, 1876.)*

MY FRIENDS,—Three weeks ago I said to my congregation in England, at the close of my last sermon "and now, farewell: It may be for years, and it may be for ever. I can see but a little way, and know not what lies before me. I go to a new country—to fresh experiences; perhaps to fresh trials." You will believe me when I say I could scarce command my tongue to utter that word of parting. It meant to me and mine the sundering of ties we had learned to hold as dear and sacred things. It meant separation from friends who had lavished their love upon us; it meant the breaking up of "home, sweet home," and having a thousand tender associations wrenched away. To me it meant also the laying down of a ministry which I had loved with a great love, separation from earnest and true fellow-workers, from a congregation who had heard me with intelligence and appreciation and a constant generosity. We had learned to esteem each other. They were a great, free people, owning in me no priest, no vicar, no slave, but a friend and a brother, to whom they had given confidence, a free pulpit and the right to freedom of speech. To leave such a place and such a people was a hard, a sad, a bitter trial. Com· what may, the memory of my life and work in Manchester will always be a sweet and precious thing. But the separation was expedient for me. The

strain of work had been too much, and to change the place of labor would be, I knew, to relax the strain and give me for a time comparative rest. At your own request I paid a visit to this country back in the summer and preached several sermons in this pulpit. I had no thought of ever becoming the pastor of this church, so I made no effort to catch the fancy of the people. But most of those who gave me their ears gave me their hearts also at that time. I valued the gift—I went back to England feeling sure that there were hosts of true and great-hearted men and women in the Canadian Dominion. And when the invitation came to assume the pastorate of this church I was almost startled every now and again to find myself considering the matter as a possibility. The unlikely has come to pass. The All-wise Father and Master of our destinies has brought us together in this close and sacred relationship of pastor and people. Our prayers for guidance have been earnest; we have cried to heaven with passionate pleading; we believe the voice has come forth; we believe the finger has pointed the way. Friends, in the name of God our common Father, in the name of Jesus Christ our Lord and Saviour, in the name of that truth of heaven, of earth, of life and immortality, which I have come to declare unto you, I give you greeting. Be our union a