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A CHARGE

DELIVERED to the Clergy of the Diocese of Toronto, at the Triennial Visitation, held in the Cathedral Church of St. James, Toronto, on the 3rd June, 1847, by the Honourable and Right Reverend JOHN STRACHAN, D.D., Lord Bishop of Toronto.

[CONTINUED.]

It is with much satisfaction that I inform you that the Clergy Reserve Fund yielded, for the first time, a small surplus in 1845, and a like excess in 1846. This will enable the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts to relieve the distress of those Clergymen whose small stipends had been held in abeyance, and in whose favour I was compelled to appeal to the Church some years ago. The surplus for the present year has been so much greater than for the two former, that it has enabled the Society to relieve your Bishop from his duties of the Rector of Toronto and Archdeacon of York, by granting a very moderate endowment for the support of the See. You will also be pleased to learn that the Provincial Government has greatly reduced the expense of collecting the Clergy Reserve dues, and have thus effected a material improvement in the amount received. Further measures, it is said, are in contemplation, so that the expense of collection may not in future exceed six per cent; a rate as low as can reasonably be expected. For these valuable arrangements the Government of the Province deserves our best acknowledgments. Nevertheless, we have still to complain of the very low valuation put upon the Clergy Reserves, by which they are in a great measure sacrificed. It is true that the Inspectors are more to blame than the Government, but the practical evil is great, and ought immediately to be abated. It is indeed so outrageous that in some instances the Government have been compelled to interfere, but the general injury to the Church still continues. On the whole, while thankful to the present Administration for what in this behalf has been already done, we still feel that, to procure a just and fair valuation of the Reserves by honourable men, would, next to giving the Church the management of the small portion that remains to her, be a great boon, and enable her at no distant period to double the number of her Clergy. After all, our great desire continues to be, to acquire the management of what is left to the Church of the Reserves; and why this reasonable desire is not complied with, remains a matter of deep regret. The present sales of the Clergy Reserves are helping to make the fortunes of speculators, and religion in the next generation will be comparatively destitute of support; for it is plain that no other public provision will ever be made for it, than that which the Government and Legislature are now suffering to be wasted without the smallest public benefit. The late Lord Metcalfe (as indeed every honest churchman must be) was in favour of allowing us the management and disposition of what remains to us of the Church property, by which we would be enabled to assign small endowments of land for the future support of parishes. In this way the extension of the Church would become permanent, and far greater than can ever be expected under the present defective management. Opposition to such a wise arrangement can only arise from selfish and unholy motives, and affords a melancholy instance of indifference to the progress and stability of religion. As to those who, under all circumstances, are against religious endowments, they know not what spirit they are of. The principle of religious endowments and establishments covering the whole land, and accessible to all the population both rich and poor, is not merely natural, but enjoined by God himself; it would therefore be idle as well as wicked, to argue with such opponents—men who forget that there was a national religious establishment in Israel, and that God, who is the same yesterday, to-day, and forever, can never sanction any institution that is wrong in principle. This religious establishment was ordained of God, received his constant support, and possessed throughout its long continuance the full weight of the Divine authority. Nay, it was recognized by our Saviour, and all its requirements strictly complied with by him while on earth, and by his holy Apostles, till superseded in its final accomplishment by the Christian Church. Did the enemies of permanent endowments and religious establishments revile only what is human, silence might be wisdom; but when we find them treating with the utmost bitterness and contempt a Divinely sanctioned principle, it becomes our duty to protest, and say, "O my soul, come not into their secret; unto their assembly mine honour be not thou united." In no religious dispute is there perhaps such a perversion of the Scripture, as in that which relates to religious establishments. The fact that the Jewish Church was national, and in every way established by God himself, stands forth in such bold relief, that it implies a judicial blindness as great and still more wicked than that of Pharaoh, to deny the consequence, that the Christian religion ought to be established by every Christian nation.

We are at the same time ready to admit, that mere endowments and temporal privileges do not of themselves contribute to the real strength and permanency of the Church; they may indeed serve a most useful purpose in scaffolding, upholding and carrying out her beneficent arrangements, but the true strength of the Church depends upon the faithfulness of her Ministry and the piety of her people. When the Church becomes corrupt, her enemies soon prevail; and in such circumstances no system of concession, such as bending to power and the forms of error, will sustain her from sinking beneath the weight of her transgressions. There is, therefore, only one way of upholding the Church of God and increasing her influence, and that is, the firm and simple discharge of duty on the part of all her members. To look for the strength and power of the Church in any thing but in the conscientiousness that she is doing her duty, and forwarding the lofty purposes for which she was ordained by her risen Lord, is altogether preposterous. Hence she must be ready, if true to her appointment, when duty calls, to sacrifice at once all those temporalities which here contribute to her support; never to lean on the arm of flesh, or to compromise one particle of truth for any temporal consideration, more especially for the vain hope of propitiating the favour of her enemies. Nor ought she ever to consent to measures destructive of her discipline, or which may infringe on her spiritual rights and the legitimate influence of her Divinely constituted Ministry. Above all, she must not yield to the clamours raised against her by the irreligious and faithless, but firmly and boldly resist at all hazards, when vital changes are demanded either in the direction of Latitudinarian error or Romish superstition.

The two Societies, the great handmaids of the Church, continue their nursing care to this Diocese with increasing energy. The Propagation Society, in supporting nearly one half of our Clergy, besides granting many special donations. The Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge bestowing Bibles, Prayer-books, religious Tracts and Books of the most excellent description in the most abundant manner, and affording munificent aid towards the erection of our Churches. Their exertions seem to keep pace with the multiplying demands upon their benevolence. They feel that they are engaged in a holy cause, and, so feeling, they remit not, but redouble their labours. The field of their operations is already immense, and continually enlarging; and so is their responsibility for the judicious application of the means at their disposal. Their success is indeed wonderful, notwithstanding the many obstacles which stand in their way, from without and from within, to their freedom of action in carrying the Church of our Fathers to every quarter. For one hundred and fifty years have they been employed in this vast field, and during the whole of that period the true Missionary spirit has been gaining strength among them, and its present activity is a pledge of onward progress, and of still greater things to

come. These illustrious Societies seek not the praise of men, for they are sustained by what is far better, the conscious integrity of their proceedings, and the great measure of success which has been vouchsafed them. These encouragements, which cannot be taken from them, make them rejoice to spend and be spent in the noble service of their Saviour; and should a moment of despondency arise, it is chased away by the conviction, that thousands, we may say millions, have been brought to the knowledge of saving truth through their instrumentality. Beholding for nearly fifty years the good which has been effected by these great Societies, it is not easy for me to quit the subject; their labours of love are always before me; the Churches they have built—the congregations they have collected—above all, the devoted Missionaries whom they have sent among us. Surely it is allowable to offer our fervent prayers to Almighty God that their power of doing good may be enlarged—that the hearts of our brethren in the Mother Country may be opened to help them—and that no check may be given to their glorious operations. Perhaps before any other audience I might be accused of dwelling too long on this subject; but to you, my brethren, who know and feel the many blessings bestowed upon the Colonies by these noble institutions, I shall appear to come far short of what they merit. Before leaving this subject, it appears to me necessary, though it is most painful, to remark that, holy as the objects of these Societies are, and infinite as is the good they are accomplishing, they have not escaped the slander and reviling of wicked men. Now when we calmly reflect upon what they have done, and are hourly doing, I can scarcely conceive any greater crime than for any one to endeavour by slanderous mis-statements and malicious insinuations, to lessen the well-earned confidence they possess in the opinion of the Heads of the Church and the great body of the Clergy and laity in England, and thus to produce the contraction of their holy operations. It is indeed a deplorable proof of the corruption of our fallen nature, that men can be found, acting under a pretence for religion, labouring with a zeal worthy of a better cause to arrest the stream of Christian benevolence flowing from these institutions; but the Church of God will ever have enemies—hypocrites, Pharisees and Sadducees will ever exist to do the works of darkness under the influence of Satan, their idol; yet we have no cause to fear; the Lord will overrule their wicked devices for the good of his Church, against which the gates of hell shall not prevail. And of this we may rest assured, that no sincere Christian who reads the history of the proceedings of these two Societies, can fail to lift up his soul in praise and gratitude to God, for raising them up to extend the blessings of our holy Church through the numerous Colonies of the Empire, and to comfort and encourage our Missionaries who are labouring under her banner with a zeal, piety, and devotedness worthy of the best ages.

As was observed on a former occasion, the great and efficient help which we are receiving from England is not altogether confined to the two great Societies. The Rev. W. J. D. Waddilove, M.A., of Beacon Grange, Yorkshire, continues amidst weak health, deep affliction, and many discouragements, with a zeal that no obstacles can quench, to support the Stewart Missions. Mr. Waddilove is a bright example of what great and extensive good one man can do if truly in earnest. He maintains at this moment three travelling Missionaries, besides granting donations of money to build Churches and Parsonages, and supplying religious books for distribution among our people. To contemplate this aged Clergyman, almost entirely confined to a bed of sickness, multiplying himself, as it were, into three active young men, traversing the wilds of Canada four thousand miles from his home, to spread the precious truths of the Gospel, and gather strayed sheep into the fold of his beloved Saviour, is one of the most interesting and sublime spectacles which the annals of the Church have ever witnessed.

The New England Society, established by Royal Charter in the reign of Charles the Second, continue to support their missions among the Six Nation Indians, with unabated care and liberality. Their two Missionaries are ever at their posts, and are encouraged by a fair measure of success; the number of Indians still Pagan are rapidly diminishing, and the School of Industry is attracting more and more the attention of the different tribes, and appears in a very flourishing condition. On the other Indian Missions I shall not on the present occasion touch, as the principal ones have been brought twice before the public in a prominent manner by their two able Missionaries, the Rev. R. Flood and the Rev. Dr. O'Meara.

Having thus rapidly surveyed the present state of the Diocese, and seen that if much spiritual destitution remains, and must for a long time of necessity remain, in a new country advancing from a perfect wilderness to populous settlement, yet, through the Divine blessing, sufficient progress has been made in disseminating the Gospel, to encourage us to persevere, I now proceed to such other matters as seem, at this time, more particularly to merit our attention.

In regard to the disputes which at present trouble a few sections of the Church, as to certain diversities in the celebration of Divine worship, I do not, on the present occasion, deem it necessary to enlarge. At the same time, I am quite satisfied that a stringent proceeding, in exacting obedience to such Rubrics as have been long obsolete, is not the way to arrest the agitation, where it unfortunately exists, but rather to aggravate and extend it. And we seem to be supported in this view by his Grace the Archbishop of Canterbury's Pastoral Letter, which was like pouring oil on the troubled waters; and, since its publication, there has been a returning to harmony and peace. His Grace appears to have been roused and alarmed at what they believed to be unwarranted innovations in the revival of Rubrics to which they had never been accustomed. And it must indeed be allowed, that cases may occur which would render the enforcement of a particular Rubric very hurtful to those whose edification we are striving to promote. At the same time, I am decidedly of opinion that if complete uniformity in the observance of the Rubric could be obtained, through a legitimate authority, it is to be desired; but, while such authority is wanting, nothing should be tried but kind and affectionate persuasion, and if these fail, the matter should be left in abeyance, till a seasonable opportunity arrives. With honest and discreet persuasion much may be done, when the point is judged of importance; but this persuasion should precede the change, and then the return to the Rubric will produce no inconvenience. This seems to be the course which is generally pursued by the Clergy since the highest authority in the Church hath spoken, and the consequence has already been a gradual returning to sobriety and moderation in the Church at large, and among the Clergy the adoption of that quiet, patient, and conciliating mode of proceeding which I would desire to recommend. "It would surely be a poor, though a most costly triumph," says the amiable Bishop of Madras, "to revive an obsolete usage at the expense of an immortal soul; and when the soul is driven out from its place of refuge and security in the Church, how often it goes forth seeking rest and finding none, until after passing through the various ordeals of fanaticism, it subsides into infidelity. When the secrets of all hearts shall be disclosed, many such a sad history may be published before men and angels." But while I thus recommend great prudence and conciliation in returning to any Rubric in a congregation where it has become obsolete, yet when the people are convinced of its utility, and have given their consent, it will be found to add much to the beauty and interest of Divine worship. And in gathering new con-

gregations the difficulty of conforming more strictly to the Rubric is seldom felt, and is of great benefit when it can be quietly and honestly effected.

But independent of the slight agitation which has taken place in some portions of the Church, respecting the more strict observance of the Rubrics, it cannot be denied that a great religious movement is now in progress within her pale of far greater consequence, and to which, on an occasion like this, it may be profitable to refer. The causes of this movement may be traced so far back as the Reformation in the 16th century, when the Church of England undertook to cleanse herself from the many errors by which the truths of the Gospel had been in a great measure corrupted and rendered of none effect. Fortunately, this work of renovation to primitive purity and order was undertaken by the heads of the Church; hence her reformation can be considered in no other light than a blessed gift of Divine Providence, scattering light and life over a benighted nation. The deep lethargy which had for so many ages sunk the human mind, burst forth with sudden intellectual energy in the 15th century from the invention of printing, the discovery of the new world, and the fall of the Greek Empire, which spread the learning of the East over the West of Europe. Soon after, the Reformation of the Church commenced in Germany, and was gradually extended to England, where it was entertained with far greater wisdom and moderation than on the Continent or in Scotland. During the reign of Henry the Eighth the restoration of the Church to purity of doctrine and discipline proceeded slowly, but in the meantime the public mind was gradually awakening and getting better prepared for the more rapid progress which marked the short government of Edward the Sixth. Some interruption took place during the five years of the cruel and bigoted Queen Mary; but on the accession of Elizabeth, the Reformation of the Church was happily completed. With so much gentleness and judgment was her renovation conducted, that during the first years of the reign of Queen Elizabeth, it seemed to produce little or no commotion either among the Clergy or people; the Thirty-nine Articles were drawn up with so great moderation that they were subscribed to by the great majority of the Clergy without remonstrance or complaint; indeed out of nine thousand five hundred beneficed Clergymen at that time in England, only 154 left their livings on account of the changes introduced in religion. Moreover, the Prayer Book for public worship was compiled in such a conciliating spirit of Christian charity and forbearance, and with such unselfish consideration for the tenderness of conscience not yet enlightened, that few made any objections; the people attended their parish churches as before, and acknowledged the same pastors. But this happy state of things was not suffered to remain; for in the year 1569, Pope Pius the Fourth issued a Bull excommunicating Queen Elizabeth and all her adherents, and granting her dominions to the King of Spain. This was the true cause of the disruption between the Churches of England and Rome, and induced the Popish party, which had hitherto continued in the Reformed Church, to separate from her Communion. The same year witnessed the Puritan separation. This turbulent sect owes its origin to the exiles who had been compelled to leave England in the reign of Queen Mary. Having been received with much kindness by the Reformers abroad, they gradually imbibed their reckless opinions, and sought on their return to change the Church of England to their favourite models; and not being able to succeed, they declared against her, affirming that she had stooped short in the work of reformation, and still retained many Popish errors and superstitions. From this time they became very troublesome, and strayed farther and farther from the truth, denouncing Episcopacy as anti-Christian, and heaping upon the Church the most bitter and malicious reproaches. By degrees they mixed up politics with religion, and discarding all authority, temporal and spiritual, except to themselves, became very formidable to Church and State.

For a short period in restoring something of order and uniformity in ecclesiastical matters, and in repressing their intemperate innovations, yet by their incessant seditious and persevering hatred to the Church and Government, they gained at length the ascendancy, beheld the Archbishop, abolished Episcopacy, expelled from their parishes seven thousand of the Clergy without a fault, murdered their King, and then sank under the rule of an able and cunning usurper. On the restoration of Charles the Second to the throne of his ancestors, in 1660, the Puritans were deprived of power; two thousand of their Ministers were ejected from the parishes which they had unlawfully occupied, and the Church was restored in her full integrity. And here it is pleasant to observe, that Christianity was so well defended by the sons of the restored Church, that the very madness of the men who brought ruin on their country in the name of religion, who dismissed the Prayer Book from public worship as a beggarly element, and defended every crime, political, moral and religious, from the history of the Jews, the Psalms and Prophets, failed in the end to injure that religion which they had so much misunderstood, and thus the great rebellion was overruled for good.

For some time the Romanists and the Puritans under their new name of Nonconformists, being very sensibly diminished in numbers, remained quiet; but after the death of Charles, his brother James the Second, revived the hopes of the Romanists, and by his arbitrary and illegal measures sought to overturn the Protestant Church Establishment, and bring in Popery in its room; but the friends of the Reformation rose in their might, and having compelled him to leave the kingdom, invited William of Holland to occupy the vacant throne. In these events, which constitute what is called the Revolution of 1688, the Puritans took very little part; so that the honor of effecting it belongs almost entirely to the Church. It was a providential interference of God's moral government to rescue the nation from the sin of Popery. From that time till very recently, the constitution of the country has been wholly anti-Romanist, and the succession of the Crown has been limited to Protestant Princes. Severe laws were enacted against Popery, because they were found essential to the national security, to the preservation of the public peace, and the independence of the kingdom. But prosperity is not without its dangers. The Church seemed gradually to forget the great mercies which had been bestowed upon her, and feeling secure from her enemies the Romanists and Non-conformists or Dissenters, fell, during the greater part of the last century, into lethargy and decay. There was an apathy and deadness in her pulpits; speculative enquiries into abstract truth, and dissertations on the beauty of virtue, were in general preached to the people, instead of the sublime and precious doctrines of the scriptures; the consequence was, a general disregard of religious truths, for such preaching could make no salutary impression on their hearts. It is true there were among the Clergy, even in this period of general deadness, many exceptions, many who discharged their sacred duty in the most conscientious and efficient manner; but they were unable to rouse the Church from her slumbers. Thus a way was prepared for such remarkable men as Wesley and Whitfield, who disturbed by their vehemence the repose of both Dissenters and Churchmen, and revived something of the spirit of Partisanship without its disloyalty. These zealous men and their followers certainly effected a partial reformation, both among the clergy and people; but they were made the severe chastisers of the Church, for her supineness and neglect of her high functions, by extending division, despising authority, vitiating the faith, and throwing back the hope of union among Protestants, which can only be obtained by blending with spirituality of heart due submission to discipline and order. Thus matters continued, with very little improvement, till the commencement of the French Revolution, when a movement appeared in the Church and among the nume-

rous sections of Dissenters into which the Non Conformists had by this time divided. Unfortunately, the distinctive principles of the Church had been so long held in abeyance, that they were at this period neglected, or altogether unknown to a large portion of the clergy; and many, partaking of the prevailing excitement, thought nothing more necessary, and finding a similar spirit among the Dissenters, they considered it their duty to join them in their efforts to extend the power of religion. There was perhaps the more excuse for this irregularity from the fact, that the Dissenters of that day spoke with reverence of the Church of England, and differed little more from her than in government. Most of them acknowledged her creeds, and were willing to admit the devotional excellence of her Prayer Book and Formularies. Moreover, they had not yet mingled politics with their religious views, or considered Church establishments subversive of Christianity. Without entering more minutely into the growing differences in religion, which marked the period of the Revolutionary Wars which distracted Europe for twenty-five years, between the Church and Dissenters, and their still more rapid progress, both within and without the pale of our Church, during the last thirty years, which have intervened since the general peace of 1815, I shall content myself with reverting briefly to the religious revolution which was effected by the repeal of the Test and Corporation Acts, in 1828, and what has been called the Emancipation of the Roman Catholics, in 1829, the fruits of which we have ever since and are now reaping.

Till 1829, Romanism seemed almost dead in Great Britain: its adherents were few in number, and apparently disposed to slum away in particular notice. In Ireland they were indeed numerous, and from time to time indicated some life; but not such as to produce any serious apprehensions among the Protestant population. But, from the day of their emancipation, things greatly changed; the removal of the safeguards of the Protestant constitution instantly infused new life and hopes, and since that time the Romanists have become more and more formidable, till they now heard the whole legislature. At first they were humble in their requests and profuse in their promises of gratitude, but lately they demand as rights what they formerly requested as favours; nor is it mere equality which they demand with the Protestants, but superiority; and they have been much favoured by the growing indifference to all religion, which the long peace appears to have fostered. Our great intercourse with the Continent of Europe, and our greater familiarity with the arts, seductions, and superstitions of Romanism, have had a great effect among our legislators and higher members of society, and made many of them believe that it has changed its character. A false liberality has sprung up, and under the pretence of religious freedom, the most important truths, which concern our happiness in time and eternity, are by thousands disregarded or deemed not worth contending for. But the Romish Church never sleeps, and she has availed herself of this spurious liberality to remove all the obstacles which stood in the way of her equality with the Church, and with such success, that she now begins to look forward to ascendancy. Nor is this hope without feasible grounds of success. All the safeguards against her, which our forefathers believed so necessary for the preservation of true religion, the peace of the community, and the stability of the throne, are expunged from the statute book. And among professing Protestants she finds numerous and powerful allies, while the Church of England has had the mortification to find many false brethren within her own bosom. Not merely do the neutral and indifferent, who call themselves her children, seem to feel no interest in her prosperity, but many, who avow themselves strenuous believers in her doctrines, hesitate to support her as a National Establishment. Add to these the whole body of the Dissenters, who delight in opposing her; and although they avow still greater hostility to Romanism, as a religious system, they willingly join in opposing her, and are thus, in the most palpable manner, justifying Churchmen in their exertions to preserve the laws which were deemed at the time of their enactment absolutely necessary for the protection of our civil and religious liberty. Nevertheless, I have such confidence in our holy Church, as the pillar and ground of the truth, that I see no reason to despair. And accordingly, recent events have shown that she is quite able to fight the battles of Popery and Dissent, notwithstanding her false friends and numerous enemies.

The Holy Scriptures are her bulwark; on them her Book of Common Prayer and Articles rest, and set forth their substance and spirit, for they are the very essence of Gospel truth—the fervent delineations of the faith once delivered to the saints—and dispensed by the same ministry which has obtained in the Church since the death of the Apostles. But in order to use these invincible weapons with effect, we must employ them with the same zeal and love for Divine truth, and the same reliance on Almighty aid which animated our progenitors, the Reformers. And already we see manifest proofs that our Saviour is with His Church. Have not, then, her enemies been in close combination for many years past, to bring her to destruction, and have they not equally failed? Was she not weak and timid, accustomed to lean on the arm of flesh, and to look to Government and the laws for protection? Did she not at first shrink from the conflict, when her enemies, in close combination, began fiercely to assail her? Seemingly, to the worldly eye, without friends or means of defence, and at last forsaken by the Government in which she had so long trusted, her ruin appeared certain. Measure after measure of discouragement and injury was inflicted.—

Ten Bishops were suppressed at one blow. Her Prelates were admonished, by the first Minister of the Crown, to set their houses in order; the Prayer Book was to be altered, to suit sectarian and heretic caprices; the wildest schemes, under the pretence of strengthening her, were proposed, and she was advised to purchase, if possible, a little quiet at the price of her holy and distinctive doctrines. Nor was this a summer storm; it had, as we have seen, been long blowing, for it was the fruit of Parisianism and Romanism, not separate, as before the great Rebellion, but joined hand in hand in this work of wickedness. But they knew not the strength of our Church, or that God was with her. She had doubtless come short in many things, and deserved this and greater punishment. But the vital spark was still alive, and, looking up and beholding her danger, she turned to her invisible Head in humility and prayer. She threw off all dependence on earthly power, and the zeal which animated the first Christians and the heroes of the Reformation, burst forth anew. She spake, and her children hastened to her aid; and their affection for their mother prepared them to hazard life and fortune in her defence.— Her enemies were astonished and dismayed, and freely confessed that they had no conception of the greatness of her moral power. The triumph of the Church of England at this critical time, is perhaps the greatest that ecclesiastical history can furnish. But although the Church, trusting in her Saviour, has risen in her majesty, and for the time discomfited her enemies, the contest may be said to be hardly begun.— She has indeed been roused to self-knowledge, and the avowal of her gifts, and privileges, and heavenly calling, and is preparing to fulfil the great ends of her Divine institution; but many obstacles are yet to be overcome, and often will her enemies return to the combat, and strictly will they watch every opportunity to assail her to advantage. Even in the assertion of her distinctive principles, she will give offence to many of her weak or mistaken friends, for some of these principles will appear new, because they have been forgotten, and thus for a season increase the discussions which she designs to prevent. For when we have remained long in error, truth itself sometimes seems a strange and false thing. How seldom do we think correctly? We are disposed to take