

THE MISSION OF THE CHRISTIAN MINISTRY.

A sermon preached in St. Albans Cathedral by the Rev. the Provost of Trinity College, at the Trinity Ordination of the Lord Bishop of Toronto.

St. John xx. 21. "As my Father hath sent Me, even so send I you."

It is always a somewhat perplexing problem for the preacher at an ordination to decide whether to address himself to the candidates or to the general body of the congregation. The rubric says: "There shall be a sermon or exhortation declaring the duty and office of such as come to be admitted (deacons or priests, as the case may be): how necessary that order is in the Church of Christ, and also how the people ought to esteem them in their office." And if in view of those directions, I venture this morning to remind—for after all I am but telling them a thrice-told tale—to remind the candidates of some of the ideals they should have before them in the new and untried life which begins for all to-day, and especially for those who are to be ordained to the priesthood. I do it partly that you, too, may be reminded that we, your ordained "servants for Christ's sake," have our ideals of ministerial life and work, and that your prayers that we may have grace to attain to those ideals will help us more than criticizing us, when, as too often and too sadly happens, we fall short of them. And yet he, whoever he may be, that undertakes such a task, is confronted at the outset by a grave and serious difficulty, for he cannot but look back at such a time upon the years that have passed since the ordaining hands were laid upon himself; he catches the far off echo of his own voice that years ago answered in the same words that will be used to-day to the same solemn questions that in a few minutes will be addressed to our brothers here: he cannot but see that the ideals of life and work, which seemed perhaps almost within his grasp, are still by a long way unattained; and yet he is to declare to others the duty which he has not accomplished, as he ought to have done, the office which he has not fulfilled as he might. And then there comes the reassuring thought that after all it is the *duty* and the *office* upon which he has to dwell, not his own or any one else's failure to fulfil them; it is the necessity of the order which he is to declare, and not the indispensableness of any individual. He is to say how the ministers of God are to be esteemed in their office, and not for any personal qualification. What does all this mean? I am not so foolish as to imagine that the office by itself will secure universal respect where the holder of it fails to deserve respect. But I do see that the Prayer-Book direction is intended to point us to ideals. Let us then for the time dismiss all personal considerations, to dwell only on the thoughts suggested by the text, "As the Father hath sent Me, even so send I you." (I) The words sound to us across the centuries, across seas and lands, from the first Easter day, from the upper room in Jerusalem. I leave untouched the vexed question whether their only reference is to the Christian ministry, or whether they have a wider signification as the charter of the whole Church of Christ. It is enough for us to-day to remember that they do refer, inclusively at any rate, though not, it may be, solely, to the Christian priesthood. For in their original connection they precede the words in which our reverend Father in God will shortly pray that you, my brothers, who are this day to be raised to the higher ministry, may receive the Holy Ghost for the office and work of priests in the Church of God. They have, then, some reference to the Christian ministry, and that is enough for my present purpose. They indicate at once a similarity and a difference between the mission of Christ and the mission of those whom He calls to carry on His work in the world. There is a similarity; the very form of the sentence shows it: "As the Father hath sent Me, even so send I you." There is also a difference: where we have the one word *send*, the original has two. The first, it has been said, corresponds with the idea of our words "despatch" and "envoy," and conveys the accessory notion of a special commission, and so far of a delegated authority in the person sent. The second marks nothing more than the immediate personal relation of the sender and the sent. In other words, the disciples, like their Lord received a commission. His, however, was a new one; they receive no new commission; they carry out His. What, then, was His commission? It was far reaching and many branched. But there are two sentences, especially, describing it, of which I will remind you: "To this end have I been born," said our Lord to Pilate, "and to this end am I come into the world that I should bear witness of the truth." "I came," He declared in the allegory of the Good Shepherd, "I came that men may have life and may have abundance," on which it has been remarked that life in itself is not all. There must be also that which shall maintain, and strengthen, and extend the action of life. And this, Christ also assures; His sheep

"find pasture." There are two aspects of the work of Christ: two aspects in which it is carried on by the ordained ministers when they set forth God's true and lively Word, and rightly and duly administer His Holy Sacraments. There, summed up in shortest form, is the work of the Christian Ministry; it is twofold; and its two elements cannot be separated without grievous loss. Yet there is a risk of separation. One man is tempted to neglect the ministry of the Word—to forget that it is his duty to carry on that part of the Master's work which consisted in bearing witness to the truth, and to think of himself only as a minister of sacraments. Another in his zeal and eagerness to proclaim the Gospel of the grace of God, is tempted to forget that he is to be a faithful dispenser of God's Holy Sacraments, no less than of His Word. The two cannot be separated, I repeat, without grievous loss, and the Prayer-Book guards us carefully against the temptation to put them asunder. I have already quoted words from the Communion office, in which the two are set side by side. The ordination services, on which we are about to enter, furnish other illustrations. Even to the office of a deacon "it appertaineth to assist the priest, especially when he ministereth the Holy Communion in the absence of the priest, to baptize, and to preach if he be admitted thereto by the bishop." But, of course, as we should expect, it is in the ordering of priests that the references are more explicit and emphatic. They are told that their duty is to teach and to premonish, to feed and provide for the Lord's family. They are asked if they will give their faithful diligence always so to minister the doctrine and sacraments, as the Lord hath commanded. Each one is severally bidden in the supreme moment of the imposition of hands to be a faithful dispenser of the Word of God, and of His Holy Sacraments, and he receives authority to preach the Word of God and to minister the Holy Sacraments. My brothers, your commission is clear enough; it is twofold. I say it again; it is no new commission; it is your Lord's passed on from hand to hand, "as the Father hath sent Me, even so send I you." He came to bear witness of the truth; you in your preaching and teaching must bear the same witness. He came that men might have life and might have abundance; and no insignificant part of your work, either at once, or later on, will be the administering of those Holy Sacraments of which one is the channel, as the catechism teaches us, of a death unto sin and a new birth unto righteousness, while the other provides "the strengthening and refreshing of our souls." The ministry of the Word and Sacraments—what does this involve, what does it demand from him who is called and sent to it? Far more indeed than any one man can hope to understand, much less express. But let me give you two suggestions. (1) Be definite: teach quite clearly and decidedly what the Church bids you, or authorizes you to teach. There are some great and fundamental subjects on which as faithful ministers of this branch of the Catholic Church, you can speak in one way only: there are other ways of speaking, of course, but if you want to speak in other ways, then your proper place is elsewhere than in the ministry of the Anglican Communion. Be definite and fearless; let no timidity paralyze the force of your utterance, no haziness obscure it. But there are other subjects, important no doubt, but not, it would seem, fundamental, on which, within the Church of England, and within the ministry, there is a perfectly lawful latitude of opinion. On those subjects teach what you hold to be true, and never teach anything except what you do in your inmost heart believe; but remember that there is a lawful latitude, and as you value your own spiritual well-being, and the health of those to whom you minister, do not dare to imitate Rome, and erect yourself, or your party, into an infallible authority; beware of thrusting as essential dogmas what at best are your opinions upon your fellow Churchmen, who have at least as much right to their opinions as you have to yours. (2) And this prompts the second suggestion: shun party spirit as you would shun the plague. Don't be so foolish, so narrow-minded, so short-sighted as to imagine that any one human intellect can grasp the infinity of the truth of God. Don't take the tiny fragment that is yours and hold it so close to your eyes that it shuts out all the vast immensity beyond. Let the grand words that come to us down the ages sound ever in your ears, and be imprinted in your hearts. "In necessariis unitas in dubiis libertas, in omnibus caritas II." So far we have thought only of what has been suggested by the difference between our own commission and our Lord's. Unlike Him, we have no new commission to fulfil: we have to carry out His. But on the other hand, we, like Him, have been sent—even so send I you. My brothers, I am sure that in the months and years of preparation, that in one sense, and one sense only, are now ended, the quietness and the confidence and the hopefulness with which you have looked forward to the great work of your lives, have sometimes been broken in upon by misgivings as to your personal fitness for the work,

or clouded by visions of difficulties that are sure to confront you. If such is the case, here is the strength in which you must meet all such misgivings. You are not simply *choosing* this work, as other men choose the law or commerce as the sphere of their energies; you have been called to it; you are *being* sent. You have been called. Either long years ago, or in comparatively recent days, either at some well-defined moment, or by a process of gradual growth, there has come into your minds and hearts the conviction that will make it possible for you to answer the questions that will be addressed to you even now. Do you trust that you are inwardly moved by the Holy Ghost? Do you think in your heart that you are truly called? You have been called—and now you are being sent. There is the outward mission as well as the inward vocation, both necessary, neither complete without the other. In the years to come you will, I doubt not, return again and again in thought and memory to this Trinity Sunday, this ordination day; and when the clear sense of vocation becomes dimmed and obscured by clouds of passion or self-will, and you find yourselves saying, "How dare I stand up and preach? How can I celebrate the holy mysteries?" you will recall the sense of vocation that is clear and strong upon you now, you will feel once more the touch of the ordaining hands upon your head, and hear again the words of the dread commission, "Take thou authority, receive the Holy Ghost for the office and work of a priest in the Church of God," and your failing sense of vocation will be revived, and you will gird yourself more bravely for your task, because you know that you have been sent. "As the Father hath sent Me even so send I you." Let the words—the charter of your office—ring ever in your ears, stirring you to faithful endeavour, strengthening you in moments of weakness, bracing you in hours of weariness, disappointment and difficulty, until the same Master who calls and sends you now, comes and calleth for you then, and from the same gracious lips which first spoke them, you hear the yet more welcome word, "Well done."

You, who your Lord's commission bear
His way of mercy to prepare—
Think not of rest, though dreams be sweet,
Start up, and ply your heavenward feet.
Is not God's oath upon your head,
Ne'er to sink back on slothful bed;
Never again your loins untie,
Nor let your torches waste and die,
Till when the shadows thickest fall,
You hear your Master's midnight call?

Home & Foreign Church News

FROM OUR OWN CORRESPONDENTS.

MONTREAL.

WILLIAM B. BOND, D.D., BISHOP, MONTREAL.

MONTREAL.—*In transitu*.—The Most Rev. Dr. Machray, Archbishop of Rupert's Land and Primate of all Canada, was the guest of the Dean and Mrs. Carmichael for two or three days last week, the bishop being absent on his annual diocesan visitation.

Church of the Advent.—This parish having been made independent of the Church of St. James the Apostle, the contemplated enlargement of the present edifice will be proceeded with during the ensuing two months.

BLACK RIVER.—The anniversary services of St. Andrew's Church were held on Sunday, June 7th. Both services were well attended, especially in the evening, when it was difficult to find seats for the numbers that wished to be present. The Rev. Mr. Lewis, of Christ Church Cathedral, preached in the morning, delivering a forcible and clever sermon, which was much appreciated by those present. Between twenty and thirty received Communion. In the evening the Rev. G. Osborne Troop, rector of St. Martin's, preached an able and eloquent discourse from the text, "Ye must be born again," at times holding the congregation spellbound as he unfolded idea after idea full of sublimity and touching pathos. Mayor Wilson-Smith was present, and at the close of the service a lady member of the church, on behalf of the churchwardens, presented His Worship with a bouquet of choice flowers. The choral portion of the service was exceptionally well rendered.

ONTARIO.

J. T. LEWIS, D.D., LL.D., ARCHBISHOP OF ONT., KINGSTON.

OTTAWA.—*Annual Meeting of the Woman's Auxiliary*.—The tenth annual meeting of the Woman's Auxiliary of Ontario Diocese was held in this city on the 3rd and 4th of June. Twenty-nine branches were represented, and a very busy two days was spent. The bishop of Ottawa preached at the opening service,