

SUPPLEMENT TO THE CHURCH,

OF JULY 12, 1844.

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 6th June, 1844, by the Honourable and Right Reverend JOHN STRACHAN, D.D., Lord Bishop of Toronto.

[CONCLUDED FROM "THE CHURCH" OF JULY 12.]

IX. In regard to the proper conducting of Divine Service, I desire to make one or two remarks; and although they may be considered of minor importance, they are nevertheless of great use in giving full effect to your ministrations. Indeed every thing connected with our public worship is of essential moment; but if what I have to say be less necessary to my elder brethren, it cannot be altogether unseasonable to those who have been recently ordained.

First, be not regardless of your dress and appearance in Church, and especially with respect to your clerical habits. You may be said to be all, in a great measure, travelling Missionaries, and in riding from place to place it is very inconvenient to carry about with you both a surplice and a gown. I would, therefore, recommend the preference of the first to the second, when you cannot have both; because the surplice ought to be used on all occasions except when preaching, and even then the authorities are divided, and therefore its use can at no time be improper. I need scarcely add, that I greatly disapprove of your performing divine service or celebrating any of the offices of the Church without the surplice. When you are decently robed, remember that the eyes of the congregation are upon you, and therefore it becomes you to take heed that you neither appear affected nor indifferent. The worship of God should be conducted soberly, gravely, and affectionately, in a manner suitable to those who pray, and to the majesty of Him who is addressed in prayer. Many of your people will form their estimate of the services, as well as of your sense of their value, by your manner and deportment. Your carriage and behaviour should therefore, in every respect, be such as becomes a man who is about to perform an important and a sacred duty.

Look at the Rubric for directions, and keep to it as far as practicable, and take care that the places are all found and marked before you commence the service.

Read slowly, with distinctness and solemnity, and have respect, as far as you are able, to the character of the several parts of the service, and suit the tone of your voice to the matter, whether prayer or exhortation, narrative, or authoritative declarations of Scripture.

If in Deacon's orders, remember that you are not permitted to read the Absolution, or consecrate the elements in the Eucharist. The Rubric gives no authority to introduce any other form in place of the Absolution. You are, therefore, to pass it and proceed to the Lord's Prayer.

Give out the day of the month and the number of the Psalm distinctly, and wait a reasonable time for the people to find the place before you begin to read. Do the same with respect to the Lessons, and observe the direction of the Rubric before you announce the chapter, saying, "Here beginneth such a chapter," &c. I would recommend to the younger Clergy especially, to peruse the Lessons before they go to Church, that they may read them with understanding and correctness; and it will be found of great advantage to learn the order of the several books of the Old and New Testament, and of the contents of the Prayer book by heart; so that every thing may be familiar to your minds.

Do not pronounce the Doxology at the end of your sermon hastily or inaudibly, but solemnly and distinctly; and leave not the pulpit in a hasty or careless manner, or be seen entering immediately into conversation upon matters of indifference.

In regard to Music, I am aware that there is great difficulty in finding persons capable of conducting or teaching it in many of our congregations. The difficulty is, indeed, so great that every clergyman whose voice will at all permit, ought to consider it his duty to learn a few Psalm tunes, that this essential and interesting portion of the Service may not be omitted. You should also encourage in your congregation, the cultivation of Church Music; and if you do so with caution and gentleness, you will seldom fail to accomplish your object: for, to learn Sacred Music is always found an agreeable recreation, especially to the young; and if you are found to take an interest in their progress, they will soon acquire all the perfection that may be necessary.

Be particularly careful to keep correct Registers of Baptisms, Marriages, and Burials. This is a matter of so grave importance, that the Church hath thought it necessary in her 70th Canon, to give special directions respecting the due and correct keeping of a Register of Christenings, Weddings, and Burials in every Parish. In order to render it more easy for you to comply with this command of the Church, I shall cause regular forms to be published for your direction.

X. The Book of Common Prayer appears to me the best text-book that can be devised for our guidance in preaching the Word of God. In accordance with primitive usage, it embraces in its services all the leading facts of our Saviour's history, and arranges them in the ritual, as selected from the Liturgies of the early Church, with a special regard to the order in point of time in which they came to pass. In this way our Church so marks the Christian year, as to make it one continued commemoration of our Redeemer's life, and thus regulates it by this course of Salvation. From Advent to Trinity may be called her doctrinal season, and from Trinity to Advent, her practical season. Not indeed in so strict a sense as to preclude occasional deviations; but, as a general direction, that during the one or chief attention should be applied to the great truths and facts of the Gospel; and during the other, to the enforcement of that holiness and fitness for heaven which it is the great object of our religion to secure.

The Christian year begins with our Saviour's Advent: then follows his birth, his circumcision, his transfiguration, his meritorious death, his glorious resurrection and ascension, the descent of the Holy Ghost, and the sublime doctrine of the Trinity, all of which are celebrated in the most touching Services.

We were to follow up the course of preaching the Gospel, which our Church has in this manner so fully indicated, the whole counsel of God would be communicated yearly to our people, and we should be found rightly dividing the word of truth. But this, I fear, is not sufficiently done.

Some Clergymen, perhaps unwittingly to themselves, dwell almost entirely upon the doctrines, to the comparative exclusion of practice. Yet faith and practice are never separated in the Scriptures; which teach us that faith works by love, and to love God is to keep his commandments. Now, my Brethren, we should so preach the doctrines as to make them bear upon practice, and the practice as intimately connected with, and flowing from, the doctrines. The Gospel constitutes one whole, and is not to be divided into separate and independent parts; and therefore it concerns us frequently to ask, whether we are declaring to our people the whole counsel of God, neither adding to nor diminishing therefrom. To dwell almost entirely, in our preaching, upon the doctrines, and sparingly on the duties of morality, ought to be scrupulously avoided; because it will be found sufficient, without any real mixture of error, to pave the way to Antinomianism, the most frightful of all corruptions. For though the truth may have been taught, it has not been the whole truth as it is in Jesus: the many alarming and awakening considerations familiar in Scripture have been neglected, and those Christian graces and virtues which constitute purity and holiness of life, have not been sufficiently enforced. Frequent and earnest appeals to the practical precepts of the Gospel must be made; minute descriptions of temper brought home; and special expositions of the personal and social duties urged at

one time by the most endearing, and at another time by the most alarming motives. Every Sermon should have a definite purpose, a distinct subject. This should be stated precisely and with all possible simplicity; and the Sermon should be carefully prepared, for the most successful preachers are at the most pains. It is said of one of the most eloquent preachers in modern times, that although he was able to repeat his Sermons, from a great tenacity of memory, they were most anxiously and laboriously composed, and their more striking passages were so far from being extemporaneous that they were slowly and carefully put together, every word deliberately selected, and the construction and order of the sentences minutely adjusted. His advice to the Clergy was, that if they regarded their characters as God's Ministers, they should prepare themselves for the pulpit with the utmost care, but that it could seldom be done with effect unless they took the trouble to write their Sermons, even if they should be able, from a happy retention of memory, to deliver them without having the manuscript before them. For to presume to proclaim the message of the Gospel without due consideration, were to incur an awful responsibility, and could never be attended with a blessing.

We should abstain from long discussions and controversies in our sermons. Objections are often remembered when the answers, however triumphant, are forgotten. It is far better to give the results of our studies and experience and turn them to practical account. We should likewise avoid abstract and technical views, either of doctrine or of duty; because they are apt to perplex our hearers, to chill their best feelings, and make them think that religion is a business altogether separate from the occupations of life, and has little in common with human pursuits, hopes, and fears, but is unsocial and repulsive, narrow and forbidding. Such preaching can lead to no practical good. How much better to teach heavenly-mindedness and purity of heart, and that our religion, as taught by the Apostles, adapts itself to all the circumstances of life, and is a religion of love, sobriety, moderation, temperance and justice, giving a promise of the life that now is, and that which is to come. Once more, the preacher should not too unreservedly represent the common affairs of life as hostile to our true interests, and declaim, without the requisite qualifications, against the world and the things of the world as among the greatest hindrances and deadliest enemies to our spiritual progress. There is a sense, undoubtedly, in which the world may be so considered, and in this sense it is largely employed in Scripture; but there is another sense in which it is used by the Apostle, when he speaks of those who use this world as not abusing it. The word World has therefore in Scripture two significations, which should be carefully distinguished: in the one, it is put for the wicked who relish merely worldly things and pursue only worldly objects; in the other it signifies our field of duty,—our place of probation, where, in humble imitation of our beloved Master, we must fulfil the work which has been given us to do.

XI. I would advise, as far as practicable, the regular observance of the days which the Church has appointed to be kept holy. In regard to our Lord's Nativity, Crucifixion and Ascension, I believe there is no omission; but I am informed that the Circumcision, the Epiphany, and Ash-Wednesday are not, in all places, reverently regarded. Now I recommend that all these be observed, and also that you have public service on Wednesdays and Fridays during the solemn season of Lent, either at your principal Church, or at some one of your Stations; and in addition the Mondays and Tuesdays after Easter day and Whitsunday. I have further to recommend, in as far as your pressing duties will admit, that you keep those Saints' days throughout the year, for which the Church has appointed an Epistle and Gospel. I am aware that a strict and literal adherence to this last recommendation is scarcely practicable by many of you, but some approximation may nevertheless be made. You may for instance make it a rule to have always an appointment on Saints' days, at some one of your stations, as all of you have occasionally services on week days as well as on Sundays. Such appointments will give fresh and lively opportunities of celebrating our Lord's grace, and setting forth his glory as manifested in his saints. They glorified God in me, says St. Paul; by whose wonderful conversion, followed by his indefatigable labours and sufferings, our divine Lord caused the light of his Gospel to shine throughout the world, and therefore ought that great Apostle to be commemorated in the Church as an example of the highest virtues which humanity can attain.

Such commemorations are of the highest antiquity, and our Church has reduced them, in her wisdom, to a reasonable number, and to those chiefly which are more immediately connected with our Redeemer.

They have all appropriate Services, embracing the prominent transactions of our Lord's life and death, and the lives and virtues of the respective Apostles and Evangelists. They are attended with the most hallowed associations: the faithful followers of our Lord carrying his message of salvation to all lands, at the expense of the most cruel sacrifices, even of martyrdom. To keep in remembrance those who have conferred blessings on our race is a principle of our nature, recognized and sanctified by God himself, as appears from his institution of Festivals for remarkable deliverances under the Jewish dispensation. The observance of the Saints' days renders the Christian year more complete. Besides they permit a larger reference to history and particular facts, than may be considered right on Sundays: they unite us more intimately with the Church in its first and purest age,—the same holy Catholic Church which, through the divine blessing, still remains to us. We, as well as they, are members of the mystical body of Christ, washed in the same laver of regeneration, and strengthened with the same spiritual food. Such thoughts and recollections stir up in our minds a strong desire to imitate their examples, and earnestly to seek of God the same grace which gave them the victory. We feel that we are not alone; that we belong to the army which began with the holy Apostles, Saints, and Martyrs, and which has increased in every age, and will continue to increase till the consummation of all things.

XII. It is not left for us to decide whether visiting our people be a duty: for we are bound by our ordination vows Pastoral to use both private and public monitions and exhortations as well to the rich as to all within our cure, as need shall require, or occasion shall be given. Such private visitation of our members should be conducted with great discretion, and due respect to the modest privacy of domestic life. Our object being to do good to the souls and bodies of men, care should be taken not to turn our visits into frivolous conversations, nor into public church-like assemblies; for this would prevent the salutary effects we have in view. Public worship is better conducted in the Church than in a private house, where we seek to win friendly confidence and affection, and to meet face to face as a man talking to his friend. We desire to interest the kindly feelings of the family at their own fire-side in our favour, or at the table of some humble Lazarus.

In this way the Clergyman gains by degrees the hearts of his people; and when by his personal attentions and frankness of conversation he has acquired their good-will and confidence, as our Saviour did the woman of Samaria, he will be able, gently and almost imperceptibly, to instil good thoughts and principles into their minds. Are they negligent in their attendance upon public worship? He reminds them, at a seasonable moment, of the great loss they are sustaining: he shews them how dangerous it is, even in a temporal point of view, for families to waste that holy day in idleness or perhaps in vicious pursuits; and instead of preaching to empty benches, he will soon have the satisfaction of seeing them gradually filling up, as his private and kindly intercourse proceeds.

Does he find any backward in coming forward to the holy Communion? His frequent visits afford him opportunities of removing scruples and objections, and convincing them of the danger of neglecting this the most solemn act of public worship. By this private intercourse he becomes acquainted with the personal history of every family,—with the particular points in which they are ignorant,—the sins and temptations to which they are most exposed, and to their removal he can address himself with more effect both in public and private, and this in such a manner as to beget no suspicion that the instruction is personal.

I am aware that such a laborious task as this implies, considering the great extent of your charges, is very difficult, and in most of your missions can only be imperfectly accomplished, but yet much may be done. That difficulties will intervene—that your visits will not at all times be well taken, and be sometimes offensively repelled, I am well aware; but believe me this will seldom happen, and when it does, you must not despond. Disinterested kindness almost invariably begets kindness, and it is our duty to be instant in season and out of season, and to go from house to house and to take an interest in the affairs, temporal and spiritual, of our people, if we are anxious to win them to Christ. It is not easy to set any limit to the influence for good which you may acquire in your general Missions from such private visiting, added to the regular ministrations of the Church.

XIII. The establishment of Sunday Schools can easily be effected when such an influence has been won, and if properly conducted under adult Teachers imbued with faith Schools, and well acquainted with our distinctive principles, such schools become fruitful nurseries of the Church, and extend the knowledge of her excellence beyond our own people. I am aware that there is great difficulty in finding competent instructors; and in some places it is almost impossible. But where the Clergyman assiduously visits his people, he knows who are able, and who, from their disposition, desire to become so; and these he is at pains to instruct and prepare, and ever after they are deemed capable of conducting Sunday Schools, the Clergyman should make it a point of seeing them frequently to impart farther instruction, and while he approves and modifies their plans, he should encourage them to farther attainments. He should also make it his duty to examine the children themselves from time to time and encourage them in their progress. In this way you must invite little children to come unto you for knowledge and direction; for in order to have the stream pure, you must begin at the fountain head.

We ought to have a Sunday School at every one of our stations: its establishment and success is of the utmost importance to the well being and extension of the Church; for the scholars thus cared for, when they become men and women, will seldom fail to become zealous members of our congregation.

Small Lending Libraries may be generally attached to every Sunday School, consisting of books on religious and useful subjects, which may be furnished to the children, both poor and rich, as a source of rational and improving amusement, while at the same time they establish a friendly communication among the Teachers and Scholars, and become a new bond of attachment to the Missionary, who must be the living principle to animate the whole. With regard to funds for supporting the Library, furnishing books for the scholars, &c. there is far less difficulty than is commonly apprehended. A small commencement may, in general, be obtained from some Society or generous friend, and contributions of one half-penny per week, or one penny per month, from each scholar that is able, if carefully collected, will be found sufficient.

XIV. The subject of Education having been thus introduced, I take the liberty of stating that the desire of the Church has been to procure the education of her children, and Education, for this purpose, to establish a parochial or day school at each Mission and Station, and in all other places where we can collect an adequate number of pupils to give it tolerable support. For this object, when the School Act was under discussion in the Legislature in 1841, I petitioned that the Church should be allowed her share of the public money in proportion to her numbers. With this reasonable request there was a disposition to comply, as appears from the eleventh section; but the act was found contradictory and impracticable, and no benefit could be derived from it, during its continuance.

I petitioned again while the new School Act was under consideration, praying that the sum appropriated by the Legislature for the use of common schools might be divided among the recognized denominations of Christians in proportion to their respective numbers, or in proportion to the funds raised by each, or from the combination of both. Such a plan is altogether free from religious difficulty, and would produce great emulation among the people; or if it should be preferred that a certain sum be allowed to each congregation of Christians for the purpose of aiding in the education of the children thereof, the sum granted, to be given in proportion to what shall be raised by said Congregation. No notice was taken of this application: the former law of 1841 was dropped; and a new statute enacted, in which, throughout all its 71 clauses, there is no reference to Christianity. The only notice of Religion is in the 54th clause, which enacts that no child shall be required to read or study in any exercise of devotion or religion which shall be objected to by his or her parents or guardians; and in the 55th clause where it provides that separate schools may be established for the Protestants and Roman Catholics in any locality. Thus compounding the Church of England with the myriad of Protestant denominations, and depriving her of any benefit which she might derive from this enactment, while such benefit remains to the Roman Catholics.

This law, as well as the former, is based on infidelity or indifference to religion and proceeds upon the most shallow and unphilosophical view of human nature; since notwithstanding the fall, man is essentially a religious being, and therefore religious culture ought to form the principal part of his education, whether private or domestic, social or public. "Religion," says Dr. Southey "ought to be blended with the whole course of instruction, that its doctrine and precepts should drop as the rain and distil as the dew,—as the small rain upon the tender herb, and as the showers upon the grass." It is not probable that the present School Act can remain long in force, or that so large an appropriation as that now given, can be continued. It is, therefore, worthy of grave consideration whether or not all our Parishes and Stations should not petition the Legislature to get the education of our own children into our own hands, and such a part of the public money as shall be due in proportion to our numbers.

The Church and the School-master must go hand in hand. It is our paramount duty to train up a child in the way he should go, and to bring up our youth in the fear and admonition of the Lord. Good parochial schools are the greatest benefit even in a temporal point of view. To teach the rising generation to read, write, and cast accounts, and their duty to God and man, is to make them good members of society and candidates for heaven. Were this effectually done, our goals would soon become comparatively empty; our courts would be relieved from the greater portion of their business; and the expense of guarding against crime, and of detecting and punishing it, would be greatly diminished, and personal injury and loss prevented. And why should I not revert to a fact so completely established in the public documents, that partial as the teaching of the Church in this colony has yet been, it has produced the most happy results? During the late melancholy disturbances, our people were foremost in defending the Government, and restoring peace and order, and scarcely any of them were found in the ranks of the rebellion. Their conduct was a noble illustration of the instruction which they had received,—obedience to lawful authority and the

strict discharge of all the domestic and social duties; the discouragement of rash innovation and the avoidance of those who are given to change. This teaching was well illustrated by the generous ardour and rapidity with which, in the hour of peril, her children rushed forward to rescue the country from destruction, and to put down pillage, massacre and rebellion; nor will they ever be found wanting, should circumstances of a similar nature unhappily recur.

XV. You must be careful to search out those who have been baptized in the Church, but have neglected or forsaken those who her communion. They are alas, more numerous than is commonly imagined; for in the more early settlements, the baptisms were all administered by the two or three Clergymen of our Church then resident in the Province and who were accustomed to travel through the townships for this purpose. These baptized persons have been scattered through the Province, as it gradually filled up, and may have become infected by the Sectarians around them, by whose exertions the good seed has, in some cases, been choked. Now we have a sacred claim upon these persons, they are still ours, though for a time alienated from our communion, and there are peculiar arguments and tender associations which may be brought to bear upon them which cannot fail of being often successful.

Moreover many emigrants from our Church at home, are in much the same perilous situation, and require active protection and encouragement to continue in the good old paths, to resist the poisonous allurements of dissent, and never to forfeit their baptismal vows.

XVI. Many grave questions have been put to me respecting the validity of Lay-baptism. Indeed a spirit of inquiry has for some time manifested itself in this Diocese Lay-baptism, respecting the nature and importance of both the Sacraments and their due administration, and serious and well-disposed persons are every where becoming anxious about their religious position. Weary of the bitterness of dissent and the endless divisions of the various Sects which distract the Province, they begin to think that such divisions and such violence and uncharitableness cannot be from above, and they wish for some peaceful haven,—some rock on which they can safely rest. Numbers are disturbed with the fear that they do not belong to the Church of Christ at all, and are therefore not entitled to any of her privileges. They have either no knowledge how they were admitted into Christ's Church, or they feel convinced that they were admitted by persons who had no lawful authority. Hence the question of lay-baptism has been raised in a way that compels attention. My counsel to several Clergymen who have referred to me on the subject has been, that although our Church has not by any formal decree declared Lay-baptism null and void, her sense against the practice was solemnly given in the Convocation of 1573, and more especially in 1604, when the Rubric was so altered as to confine the administration of the Rite to lawful Ministers. It further appears from the Catechism, that, in the judgment of the Church, the two Sacraments, Baptism and the Supper of the Lord, are generally necessary to salvation, but not absolutely so. Hence I infer, that whenever they cannot be lawfully administered,—it is better to wait God's own time for receiving us into covenant with him. We are indeed bound by his commandments, when it is possible to obey them; but God is not so bound, nor is his hand shortened, and he will devise the means for supporting us with his grace in a manner more accordant with his will, than in breaking the established order of the Church, and the law which he himself has ordained. In the Scriptures we find no provision made to supply the Sacraments when they cannot lawfully be had, and our Church appears to prefer their omission to their unlawful administration, and rests in faith on the goodness of God to supply the deficiency occasioned by such necessity. Yet we should embrace the first opportunity to use the appointed means, that the recipients may be sanctified by the prayers of the Church and become her members visibly, and entitled to the glorious privileges which baptism confers. This appears the most humble and devout way to consider the matter. We presume not to limit the boundless mercies of God; for he can extend his blessings to those who are not members of his Church. We know indeed from Scripture, that he has promised his blessings through certain channels and attached to them certain conditions, as he makes food to depend upon labour; but we likewise know from Scripture, that he can at his pleasure feed thousands with bread from heaven, and so may he confer the blessing of the Sacraments on those who have never had an opportunity of partaking of them, according to his appointment. Conscientiously believing that the validity of the Sacraments is founded upon the commission which the administrator has received from Christ, as taught in the 26th Article, I feel it my duty to recommend to you my brethren, that in all cases of adults applying to you for admission into the Church by holy baptism, under a serious conviction that it has been defectively performed or not performed at all, you receive them into the Church in the usual manner. In cases where there appears any doubt, you can make use of the form provided in the Rubric at the end of the Office of Private Baptisms. Or should you have scruples in any case to this course, or be at a loss to determine whether all things have been done in order, then you are to prepare the applicant for Confirmation by the Bishop, on which he will be admitted to the Eucharist and acquire a right to the privileges of the Church. This plan of setting all things right by confirmation, Bingham in his letter dedicatory to the Bishop of Winchester, appended to the second book of his Scholastical History of Lay-baptisms, p. 2, folio Edition 1725, declares to have been the practice of the Church of England for the last two hundred years; and as he wrote nearly a hundred and fifty years ago, it must now be considered the practice of the Church for 350 years. I think it right to add that this method of rectifying imperfect baptism, is concurred in by one of the greatest living authorities of the present age.

XVII. The return of the period of Confirmation, is a favourable season for extending the power and influence of the Church. The youthful mind is open, frank, Confirmation, and ingenuous; it has not yet become a prey to the selfishness and wickedness of the world, and is in a happy state to receive godly impressions. In ancient times, when candidates for baptism consisted chiefly of grown up persons, Confirmation took place generally on the same day. "Immediately," says the learned Bingham, (book xii. chap. 1. sec. 1) "after the persons came up out of the water, if the Bishop was present at the solemnity, they were presented to him in order to receive his benediction, which was a solemn prayer for the descent of the Holy Ghost upon such as were baptised." In this way has the living Church been gathered in all ages. The young are brought into her fold and made to feel that they are members of the body of Christ,—branches of the living Vine. Man has ever been anxious for something visible, and every heart has echoed at some time or other the request of St. Philip, "Shew us the Father and it sufficeth us." And although we cannot shew our Lord and Saviour in the flesh, we can shew them his body the Church with which he is ever present, and of which he is the animating principle, and we can farther shew them that, in becoming members of this body, they are hencforth of his flesh and of his bones.

The act of appearing before the congregation,—of renewing before God and his Church their baptismal vows,—the tender sympathy of the people on beholding the future seed of the Church, who are to worship in that place when they are gathered to their fathers,—the blessing of the Bishop, and the imposition of his hands, that the Holy Spirit may descend upon them, to confirm and strengthen them in keeping their vows and leading a Christian life, present the most touching perhaps of all spectacles that can be witnessed on earth, and