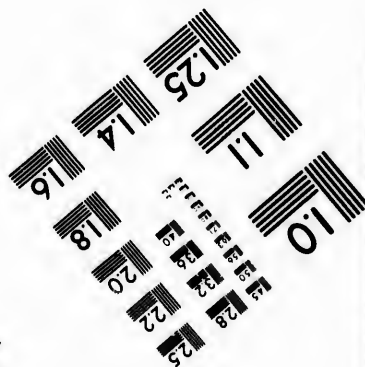
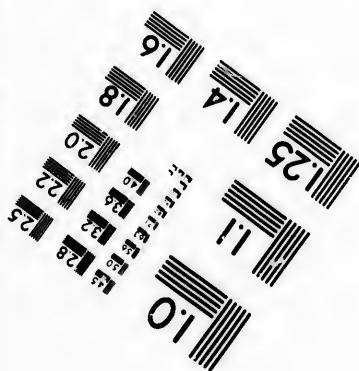
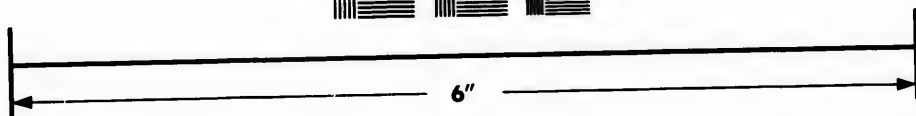
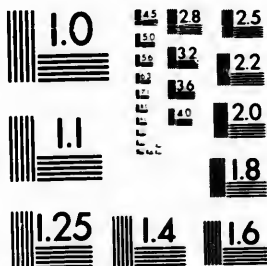


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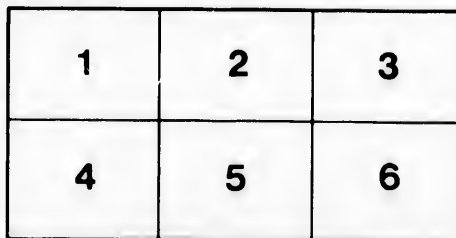
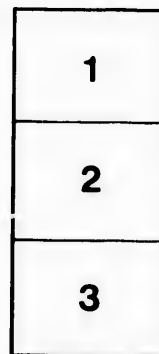
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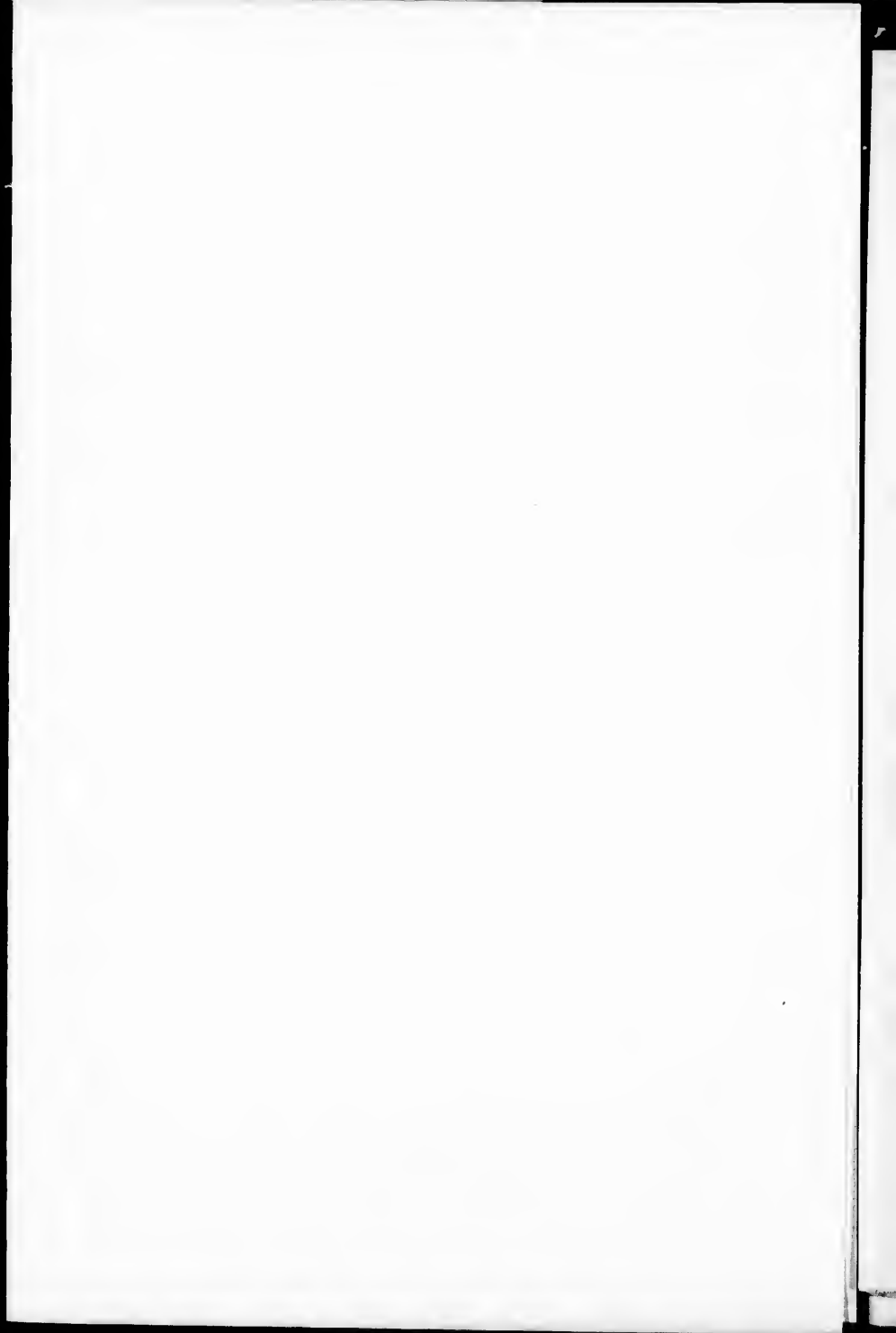
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OUR COLONIES
AND
OUR CHURCH.

A Sermon

PREACHED BY THE

REV. THE HON. A. J. R. ANSON, M.A.,

RECTOR OF WOOLWICH, AND HON. CANON OF ROCHESTER,

ON THE OCCASION OF HIS

RESIGNING THE CHARGE OF THE PARISH,

TO UNDERTAKE WORK IN THE

NORTH WEST OF CANADA.

SECOND SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY,

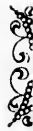
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"It shall be if He call thee, thou shalt say, Speak, Lord, for Thy servant heareth."—I. Samuel, III., 9.

THIS counsel of the aged priest Eli to the child Samuel, so familiar to us from our earliest years, contains a lesson not only for childhood but for every step in the Christian's course. It is, indeed, the very foundation principle on which the Christian life should be built up. Belief that God does speak with His own voice to each separate soul, readiness to hear that call, and willingness to obey it whatever it bids us do—these are all involved in the words; and these should be the guiding principles of our life, if it is to be framed after the pattern of His life, Who from His childhood was constrained to be about His Father's business, Whose meat and drink it was to do the will of Him that sent Him. And yet how apt we are, are we not? rather to turn a deaf ear to that voice or to find a hundred excuses, like the invited guest of the great supper of whom we read in the Gospel this morning, for not doing exactly what it bids us.

It calls us in some midnight hour, when all the clangor and turmoil of the world are silent, and when there is nothing to distract our thoughts, to come out boldly and choose the better path, to declare ourselves nobly on Christ's side, and confess Him manfully before the world, and so to win that prize of eternal glory which He has promised to His faithful ones. Oh! and the heart burns as it hears that voice calling to what it knows, in spite of all, is the truest, noblest, happiest life—most worthy of our manhood. Man's heart has not altogether lost its sympathy with its Creator's voice, and there are few who in some moments, at least, do not yearn for better and higher things than they can find here—more peace, more joy. But then, alas, other thoughts soon creep in side by side with that voice, and the mind thinks of what such a life would involve, how much struggle, and self-denial, and misunderstanding, and perhaps ridicule of friends, and we bid it hush its tender pleadings with some delay or excuse. "Not just yet"; "It cannot matter if I go on a little longer as I am"; "I know I should not like to die in my present state, I know it would be terrible if my life had been wasted when I stand before my Master's judgment, but" (Oh! those awful buts) "I am not strong enough yet. It would be useless for me to try. The Voice has not spoken distinctly enough. It will be time to turn to God in earnest another week,

another year, when I am a little older." Ah! how many souls are lost that might be gloriously saved, that might have a rich harvest of good works stored up in heaven, simply because they would not say, "Speak, Lord, for Thy servant heareth," and rise up in the morning and tell what the Lord had revealed to them.

Is there one here present to-night, my brethren, who can honestly say he has never yet heard that voice of God speaking to him. I scarcely believe there can be. How many have returned the answer which has given joy to the angels in heaven?

Or, again. God speaks to us, asking of us some special sacrifice for His sake, or He comes to the home and calls to us to "resign what most we prize"—the husband, the wife, or the little child, perhaps the only one, to which the parents' heart-strings seem so bound that it would be impossible to separate the one from the other without mortal injury to the one left. When God speaks in these and other such ways, how seldom is the heart found listening for that voice, ready to hear in whatsoever way it comes, and meekly accept its bidding. "It is the Lord": "Speak, Lord, for Thy servant heareth." How would earth's pains and sorrows and trials be softened, yea transformed into blessings, if there was indeed more of this humble, thankful, recognition of God's loving voice in all the changes and chances of this mortal life. We see it sometimes, thanks be to God, and recognize then how wonderfully, amid the bitterest trials, the Lord upholds those who put their trust in Him, and hearken to His voice. Old Eli, with all his faults—and they were not small—knew this great secret of peace in life, and therefore he who counselled Samuel "If He call thee, thou shalt say, Speak, Lord, for Thy servant heareth," was able, when the awful judgment of God upon his house was revealed to him, to say, "It is the Lord, let Him do what seemeth Him good."

My brothers and sisters, beloved in the Lord. I have an announcement to make to you to-night which I know will be received with much surprise by those who have not yet heard anything of it. It would only be affectation in me to pretend to suppose that it will not be received with something more than surprise by not a few. The words which I have taken for our text will shortly, I trust, help to convince you that I could not have arrived at any other decision than that at which I have. A few weeks ago it was my duty to urge upon you the duty of our Church with respect to other parts of the world. In preparing to do so, I was very deeply struck with what I read concerning the truly terrible state of things that exists in North-west Canada, where "emigrants, attracted by a belt of virgin soil extending for a thousand miles from east to west, are pouring in in numbers without parallel in the history of the world." The increase of population seems almost fabulous. In one year alone, 1881,

the population of Winnipeg, the capital of Manitoba, rose from 12 to 20,000. It is now therefore probably nearly 30,000. In 1871 its population was only 300. Last year there were no less than 112,000 emigrants settled in Canada. For the four months of this year ended April, the British emigration to Canada increased 10 per cent. over what it was last year. In April alone it was 7,000. We may well imagine how impossible it must be for the emigrants themselves, arriving in such vast numbers, to provide for themselves the means of grace. But it is probably impossible for us to realise the actual spiritual destitution that is existing there. It is true that the whole of the country is nominally under the supervision of three Bishops, but they have scarcely any more clergy with them in rural districts than were needed for their missionary efforts among the heathen.

The Bishop of Rupertsland says, in a letter written in September last year:—"Fifty-two municipalities have been formed for local government in the part of Manitoba now being settled. In thirty-eight of these embracing over 700 townships, there is no resident clergyman of our Church—each township has thirty-six square miles. Yet there are few of these townships without settlers, and they are, as a whole, being rapidly taken up and sparsely settled on. In several other municipalities, with from twelve to forty townships, there is only one clergyman. But the gravity of the position of the Church will be better understood from a further consideration. The Canada Pacific Railway is being carried still further west at the unprecedented rate of three miles a day. A stream of emigrants goes with it and before it. Many colonization Societies are settling townships further back. There is a Church Missionary Society Indian Mission at Touchwood Hills, about 100 miles north east of Regina. There is not another clergyman of our Church in the whole of the great province of Assiniboia—not one for the new settlers! There ought to be a bishop and a staff of clergy. Nor is this all. The great deficiency of the supply of the means of grace by our Church thus described is simply the result of the emigration and progress of settlement of the last two or three years. In even another year the story will be much worse. Churchmen are scattered everywhere over this country in varying proportion with other bodies—but by the census last year the Church of England was numerically slightly the largest body. It is needless to add that unless a large additional yearly sum can be obtained for some years from England, the Church must greatly suffer. English Churchmen and Canadian Churchmen emigrating to this country must be left without the ministrations of their own Church, and will in a great degree pass away from it. It is an old story. It is not unknown in Canada in the past—but here, owing to the great attractions for emigrants and the unprecedented

rapidity of the opening up of the country, it is being repeated on an enormously larger scale. If things remain as they are, owing to the deep interest taken by other denominations in the progress of their bodies and the number of Missionaries being sent by them to this country, the Church of England is likely to suffer as it has never suffered before." It may well put the Church of England to shame to be told that, "while the Church of Canada has not yet been able to give us one Missionary, the Presbyterian and Methodist Churches in Canada are alone between them mainly supporting little short of fifty Missionaries in this diocese. When our members in many districts are left to the ministrations of other bodies, many of them must become estranged and the Church here be crippled for its future work."

The Bishop of Algoma writes: "As I journey from place to place I am painfully impressed with the spiritual destitution that prevails. As year by year I make my annual visitation tours, and not infrequently, on visiting new settlements for the first time, hold Service and administer the Holy Sacraments of the Church to those who have for years been deprived of the privilege, I find that there are others further back and beyond them who are hungering for the services of the Church into which they have been baptized, and to which they are so much attached. Let me give an instance:—At the close of a service in a village far back in the Muskoka District last winter, I was accosted by a man who told me that he had walked *fifteen miles* to attend the service, and also, as a deputation from the settlement of which he was a member, to ask if a Missionary could be sent to visit them from time to time. You may imagine my feelings, as I was obliged to tell him that for lack of funds it was quite impossible. This same man walked thirteen miles on the following Wednesday, to meet me at another place, in quite a different direction, again to ask whether something could not be done to supply their spiritual wants. Let me mention another fact: on reaching a settlement last winter, which I had never visited before, I found no less than sixty persons assembled, many of whom had travelled eight and nine miles on foot—men, women, and children—to meet me. I baptized five infants, confirmed six adults preached, and administered the Holy Eucharist to no less than *thirty persons*, several of whom told me afterwards that it was the first opportunity that they had had since they came into the bush, five, six, and in the case of one family, comprising five communicants, eight years ago. This case is exceptional only in so far as numbers are concerned, being, in other respects, of too frequent occurrence. I am safe in saying that there are hundreds, ay, thousands, of our members scattered throughout this vast diocese, to whom the sound of the church-going bell is a thing of the past; thousands who are living and dying without any opportunity of participating in the means of grace. Is it to be wondered, if with these

facts staring me in the face continually, I am importunate in asking for the means to send additional labourers into the field which is already white for harvest?"

Mr. Crompton, a Missionary in Algoma, writes thus, of a district to which he had penetrated: "I found a country with clearings on every hand—clearings telling me of hundreds and hundreds and hundreds of human beings called *Christians*, living, breathing, and dying there without having one opportunity of using the means of Grace! I was told I was the *only* man, as a minister, who had as yet penetrated that part. People by the hundred! I sat down on a stone and wept, wept bitterly. I wept because I felt how utterly unable I was to meet and cope with the work now here spread before me. I wept to think of the carelessness, nay, of the utter indifference to the welfare of their brethren in Christ, by those who call themselves the brethren of Christ."

My brethren, surely here is a call—a call such as probably has scarcely ever been heard before by any Church—to our Church, and to everyone of us its members, to go and help those sheep of her fold that are straying in the distant fields. For remember, it comes to us from our own people, our own brethren in Christ, from those who have therefore undoubtedly the greatest claim on a Christian Church; for, if we are bound to "do good unto all men," we are "especially to do it unto them who are of the household of faith." We know that we have passed from death unto life, "because we love the brethren." And if there are but a few of our brethren in Christ in yonder wilds, driven there by stress of circumstances and by the over-crowding of the straitened home here whose souls have learnt in some of the sanctuaries with which our native land is so thickly studded—thanks chiefly to the piety of our ancestors—to love the assembly of God's people and to find peace and joy in the holy ordinances of our Church, if there are but a few such, I say, who shall look in vain for help in the maintenance of their faith from those who, being so richly endowed with all things here, might help them, yea, supply all their needs, but seem not to care to do so, and they suffer loss because alienated from the Church, or are taken captive of Satan for lack of that sustenance which our Master intended His people to have, surely there must be a terrible reckoning in store in the last great day, yea, even now, for the Church, which through her negligence or lack of zeal left those souls to perish alone uncared for. Precious as all souls are in the sight of Christ, greatly as He yearns that all who as yet know Him not, may be taught of His love, anxiously as He desires those who have the opportunity of knowing Him may be brought to love Him, we cannot doubt for one moment that He loves with a special love those who bear His name, and whom He has numbered among His elect, and who have once by His Spirit been brought to love Him. Do not those

beautiful parables of the Lost Piece of Money, the Lost Sheep, and the Prodigal Son all tell us this especially? It is "whosoever shall give to drink unto one of the little ones a cup of cold water only in the name of a disciple," who "shall not lose his reward." It is, whoso shall offend one of the little ones that believe in Christ, of whom it is said, "it were better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and that he were cast into the depth of the sea."

So is Christ jealous with most tender love for His own. So ought His Church to be for the children that God has given her. There may be some here, however, who may be inclined to think that however much it may be the duty of the Church to follow after and do her utmost to minister to such souls, it is an exaggeration to suppose that the majority of them feel much their loss. They do not value the means of grace while here, why should they so lament the loss there? There is nothing commoner than not to know the value of what we possess till we have lost it. I never knew the luxury of pure water till I travelled through the desert. So, I believe, many more souls there feel the want of a Church, than appreciated it, or perhaps ever used it, when at home. It is a very different thing to pass by the Church's open door, Sunday after Sunday and never enter, and to shun all conversation with the Clergyman whom we are accustomed to see walking in our streets, and perhaps to resent it if he ventures to speak to us personally seriously, to being without any Church into which it is possible even if we would to enter, never to hear the Church's bell, and to know that even in the time of sickness or of death, there will be none to speak at our bedside in the name of the Lord, and to direct us when, perhaps, in the darkness of our own soul, caused by our long neglect and continuance in sin, we need another to lead us to the light, if we would not perish in despair. The children growing up unbaptized—the dead buried without any religious rites—no means of solemnizing the holy rite of matrimony,—these things often make the most careless feel that the absence of what they so despised is indeed a grievous loss.

I have already read to you proofs that there are many there who are hungering and thirsting for these means of grace. Let me give you another from the letter of Mr. Crompton. Speaking of an early Communion at Christmas, at a place he had not before visited, he says: "It was indeed a joyful time for the eighteen who knelt at the Altar of the Lord. One old lady who was present with six of her up-grown children, could not help shedding tears, because, as she said, 'it *does* seem home now we have Church in full.' Again, one man, when speaking about his Church, said, 'Mr. Crompton, if I were but once more beside my old Church at home, I do think I should beg pardon of the very stones for not going oftener than I did when I had the chance; so you may guess, sir, what I

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feel now we are to have service, even if it is only once a month.' Once more in another place I asked those who would like to see the Church service regularly in the village to meet me next morning, at 9 a.m. At that hour over *thirty* men attended, some having walked six, seven, and nine miles to be present. They spoke warmly and plainly, and appeared deeply roused. I told them I would do my best to get them some money towards a Church Building, if they would meet my efforts by their labour. In half an hour I had over £60 worth of labour promised me. One poor man, only an English labourer, offered to do the whole of the work of building a stone foundation to the Church, if the materials were placed on the ground: the value of this was at least £15. The materials were soon promised; and the promises fulfilled. I have been there and found the men working as busy as bees in the evening, when their farm work was done, some of the men walking five miles to give their labour." What would be thought of such zeal for the Church in England?

My brethren, I have felt that the call of which I have spoken was one that I at least could not resist. It seemed to me to be an emergency of the Church which those clergy, who like myself had no special home ties such as is implied in wife and children, and who might be able to support themselves by their private means, might do something to help to alleviate by volunteering for the work. I have therefore placed my resignation of this parish in the hands of the Bishop from the end of next month. But as I have said, I regard it strictly as an emergency of the Church. I do not in the least consider it as of necessity a life-long work. In a few years, say ten, the pressure will probably have passed away, the land will have been brought into cultivation, and the inhabitants will be able to provide the ministrations of religion for themselves in the usual way.

I know there will be those who will be ready to ask and urge with some degree of plausibility, is not the position I hold here one of greater responsibility than any I am likely to find there? have I not here the charge of a greater number of souls than I can have there? and in the great dearth of clergy which we are all so continually lamenting, even for the supply of our home needs how can I reconcile it with my duty to forsake the work at home for work in another country? To these objections I would make these two simple, but to me, it seems all sufficient answers. I quite recognize the work here is more responsible than anything I can have there, but then God's calls do not necessarily always come to posts of greater responsibility. There may be more specially urgent and therefore important work needed for a time in places of less responsibility. The great difference, however, seems to me to be this, that while there are many willing and fully able to carry on the work I lay down here, I shall be there doing work, however imperfectly and humbly, which otherwise would not be

done at all. And, secondly, while I am fully sensible of the dearth of clergy at home, I regard our Church as just as responsible for those of her children who go from these shores to a land which after all is only an extension of our kingdom, even though a wide ocean divide us, as for those at home. Supposing that ours was a great country like the vast Empire of Russia, with thousands of miles of land as yet uninhabited, but gradually being taken up with the overflow from other parts, would not the Church consider it her very first duty to spread her ministrations as rapidly as the waste places were being peopled? Yes, if there was a spot in this land with but a few people, even a dozen, fifty, or sixty miles from any Church or spiritual provision, should we not at once recognize that that spot had a greater claim on the Church for immediate help than any other in the country? And this is the case with our colonies. But we do not realize it because, forsooth, a few miles of ocean rolls between us. Because we inhabit a small island we have had to colonise, and in those colonies is England's greatness and glory. England's Church should not be behind hand in extending her privileges to her children's future home, so that as they rise up they may acknowledge her as their beloved mother the same there as here. No one who knows me will think for a moment that I desire to under-rate the importance or the necessity of home mission work. The Church must strengthen her stakes at home. But this I will fearlessly say, she must enlarge her borders also. And though it is her duty in love to do her utmost to compel men to come in and accept the good things which she offers, yet when they are offered, as they are throughout this Christian land within the sight and hearing of every soul, the responsibility of not accepting them, rests with those who refuse to listen, rather than with her. While on her must rest the awful responsibility if those gifts and blessings given to her by her Master are not placed within the reach of every soul that will accept them.

My dear brethren, though I have not now to say farewell, it is impossible for me to make the announcement to you I have done to-night without concluding with a few words of more personal allusion. It is not necessary for me. I am convinced, to assure you that the severance of the tie which has bound me to this parish for nearly eight years will not be easy for me. The feeling created by the spiritual relationship of priest and people, when there has been any real work in drawing a soul to Christ is mutual, though one often does not know how deep it is till it has to be severed. I shall leave many here and elsewhere, from whom it will be hard indeed to part, but I trust they are all such as will feel that the call of our Master is far above every consideration. In looking back, as one cannot help doing at such a moment over these few years, I am indeed deeply sensible of how imperfectly the work entrusted to my charge by our beloved Bishop, the present Bishop of St. Alban's, has been carried

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out—how much more might have been done than has been. To those to whom I have not been that help in their spiritual life that they might have looked for from their clergyman—to those to whom I have been, by any act or word, even, perhaps, a stumbling block, I would very earnestly say, let not the infirmity of the man of like frailty with yourself be a hindrance to you in accepting the message he brings from God, even though his life may be such an imperfect interpretation of it. But, notwithstanding my own unworthiness, I should be ungrateful indeed to Almighty God, and to you, my dear friends, who have been helping in the work as district visitors, school teachers, members of the choir, and in many other ways, if I did not acknowledge and return most earnest thanks for the blessings which have been allowed to rest on the work, however imperfectly done. I trust that not only have many souls been brought nearer to their Saviour, but that loyalty to, and affection for, our beloved Church, His Bride, the Holy Catholic and Apostolic Church of this country has been increased, strengthened, and deepened in this town. I trust that the increase of communicants at Easter, from 65 in 1875 to 350 this year, is no mere outward sign of a formal profession, but a vital token of the spread of true spiritual life.

Dear brethren, I would now ask your very earnest prayers for him who is to take up the work of this parish when I lay it down, that God's blessing may rest more abundantly on you all, that he may prove a greater help for your souls, and that he may make more fully known among you the glorious gospel of the grace of God, and the enrichments of His Holy Church than I have been able to do; and, for myself, that our God may direct me where I may be able to work most for His glory, and the benefit of His Holy Church.



