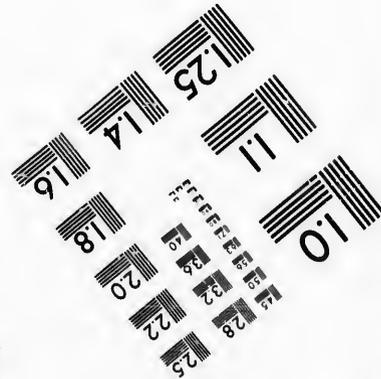
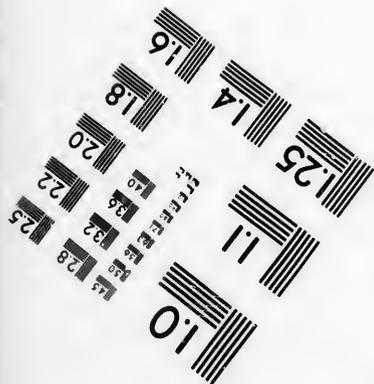
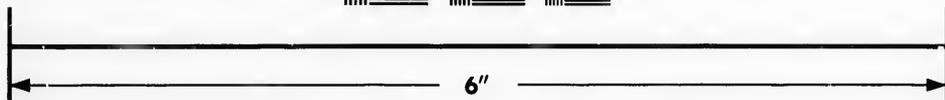
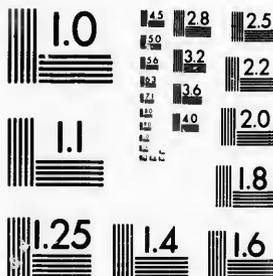


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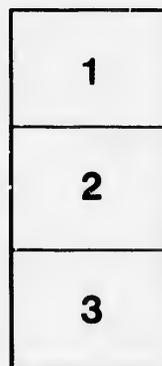
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Rev. J. Camp B.D. ^{b10}

The United Church of England and Ireland

IN CANADA.

A SERMON,

PREACHED BEFORE THE

SYNOD OF THE DIOCESE OF TORONTO,

IN

ST. JAMES' CHURCH, TORONTO,

ON WEDNESDAY, JUNE 14, 1865.

BY THE REV. H. C. COOPER, B.A.,

RECTOR OF CHRIST CHURCH, ETOBICOKE.

TORONTO:

H. ROWSELL, PRINTER, KING STREET EAST.

1865.

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S E R M O N .

PSALM cxxii., v. 3.—“Jerusalem is built as a city that is at unity in itself.”—(*Prayer Book Version.*)

In addressing a congregation such as I see before me, it seems to me that it is hardly my province to read lessons of Christian virtue to those who are themselves teachers of the people in the way of righteousness, or to dwell even upon the great doctrines of the Gospel to those who are themselves preachers and heralds of salvation. Advice and instruction will come with greater weight from authority higher than mine.

Forbearing, therefore, from more accustomed topics, I purpose to take up some points relating to the condition of the Church in this country, and to give expression to some thoughts which appear naturally to suggest themselves on the assembling of one of its periodical councils.

There are many features in the present state of the Church in Canada, which are well worthy of notice. The first, and probably the most obvious, is its remarkably independent position. Hardly, perhaps, since the days of primitive Christianity can we lay our finger upon a Church in a similar position. At any rate, in the history of the British Church, we must go back to a period anterior to the arrival of Augustine; for however many blessings attended his mission, it was accompanied by the assertion, and led to the acknowledgment, of a foreign supremacy of nine hundred years' duration—a supremacy which made the Church of England merely a province of one great spiritual empire, almost coterminous with the civil empire of ancient Rome.

Freed from that dominion at the Reformation, it could hardly be otherwise, considering the circumstances of the

times, than that the Church should become so united with the State, so much part and parcel of it, so blended with, and incorporated in, the civil institutions of the kingdom, that while undoubtedly much strength and prestige accrued to the Church by this union, one thing was inevitable, namely, that she lost the power of acting independently of the civil and national authorities. While her laws were the laws of the land, they had to be made like other laws, and to be enacted by the same legislature. While bound to the State, the Church could not move without the State.

Upon the various complications, not to say evils, arising out of this condition of things in the Mother Church, I will not dwell; nor need I pause to consider how such anomalies may be removed, or such evils remedied. Never, perhaps, for some centuries past, have those difficulties presented themselves in a more trying form than of late years—in a form, indeed, threatening the vitality of those sacred truths which are the very life-blood of her existence.

But while we cannot be blind to the dangers attendant upon, and arising from, the peculiar position of the Church at home—seeing them, indeed, all the more clearly from our distant stand-point—while hoping and praying that, under Divine guidance, the wisdom and piety of her rulers and the Christian zeal of her people, never more conspicuous than at present, may be blessed to the discovery of such measures as may both preserve the Church in its high position as “the Church of England,” and also remedy the evils which appear to have grown as excrescences upon the system—while trusting that means may yet be devised for continuing both to Church and State the benefits of this time-honored alliance—while viewing the troubles of our parent Church with the filial sympathy which is her due, we cannot but perceive, and thankfully rejoice, that none of those difficulties harass and encumber us. For us God in his providence seems to have marked out a different course. Unallied in any way with the State, we yet enjoy, and the

State accords to us, the respect, recognition, and protection which are due to a Society of Christian men; while, at the same time, we are free from State control in every matter of discipline and doctrine.

The entireness, the absolute character of this independence, is most remarkable; presenting, as it does, so strong a contrast to the position of the Church at home, and to what was our own position not many years back. Perhaps we have scarcely yet realized the powers of our position.

Whether in the inception of the movement fourteen years ago, it was contemplated that our independent power of self-government would grow to what it is, I can hardly say. When we recall to mind how slow and hesitating were our first steps in this direction—how we were first summoned together simply as a “Conference,” in doubt whether we were not infringing certain ancient laws by which Synods and Convocations of the Church of England were fettered—when we review our proceedings up to the passing of the Synod Act of 1857, we may well congratulate ourselves upon the degree of Christian liberty which we have achieved; and we must also acknowledge that the caution exercised by those who guided the movement, though more than some of us then thought necessary, was yet, considering the momentous change in progress, in an eminent degree wise and prudent.

I think I may venture to say, that since the Reformation there has not taken place within the Church of England a greater revolution than that which has been gradually and peaceably matured here within the last fourteen years. I say *peaceably*, and with a purpose; for it should be a cause of thankfulness that it has been accomplished without strife or contention—without any struggle with the Provincial or Imperial authorities—without any estrangement or alienation of feelings between ourselves and the Mother Church, —without any rupture, or even weakening, of those ties of loyalty and affection which bind, and I trust may long continue to bind, us to the Church of England and to the Crown

of the British Empire. We had but to petition the proper authorities, and the Act of our enfranchisement was passed, and the royal assent was as readily accorded to that Act, extinguishing though it did every right and prerogative of the Crown which could in any way shackle, or interfere with, the free internal self-government of the Church.

When we see that not a step can be taken by the deliberative Councils of the Church at home without special and continually renewed permission—that her Councils too are merely *deliberative*, and possess no legislative authority—when we see how cumbrous and unwieldy the whole system of ecclesiastical law has become, how antiquated and out of date much of it is, we cannot but rejoice at the free and untrammelled position in which we now find ourselves.

In no feature is the revolution more marked than in the share given to the Laity in all our Church legislation—their participation in all our Synodical proceedings. At home, the intimate union of the Church with the State may have rendered this less necessary. The civil legislature is also the Church legislature; and the Church is represented by her Bishops sitting as peers in the upper house. And however insufficient this system may be for the present exigencies of the Church, and under the altered character of modern parliaments, yet the laity of the Church have still in parliament a certain control over Church laws and Church affairs. The case being far otherwise in our Provincial legislature—the Church not being in any way officially represented there, nor having any special recognition more than other religious bodies, it became evident that in any system framed for the internal self-government of the Church the presence and co-operation of her lay members was both a right to which they were entitled, and an advantage to the Church as a whole. The nature of this lay representation has now been settled, its mode of operation has been successfully arranged, and it is working harmoniously and beneficially to the admiration of the Church here and elsewhere.

Great as all these changes are, they have arisen out of the necessities of our position. A provincial Church needed for its well being a local legislature, just as much as the Province itself required one; and on very similar grounds, namely, the unsuitableness of many of the Church laws of England to our local wants and circumstances—the tediousness and expense of ecclesiastical law proceedings—the need of less costly, more expeditious, simpler, and more practicable modes of procedure—added to our remoteness from the centre of the national Church government. These all constituted urgent motives leading to obtain powers of local Church government.

In fact, these great changes were sought—and herein may we not see a reason for the success which Divine Providence has vouchsafed to our efforts—not through a restless desire for change—not through mere impatience of control—not from a refractory revolutionary spirit, but simply and purely for the good of the Church, and for the furtherance of the sacred objects for which the Church exists. Our desire to possess the power of internal self-regulation was rational, it was just, and for Christian ends; therefore our claims were admitted without objection, and no difficulties were thrown in the way. For that principle of government which attaches due and proper weight to the declared wishes of the subject, however vauntingly proclaimed elsewhere, seems to be no where more readily acted upon and acknowledged than by the Government of that Empire to which happily we belong. That such powers were so willingly conceded—that so much of that prerogative of which governments have generally been most jealous and tenacious, should have been yielded without murmur or dispute, tells well for the high and generous principles on which the Imperial Government of our Empire is administered.

Recent events have shewn how necessary it is that the Church here should be both self-acting and self-reliant. The

government of the Church by the State, as at home—its being tied down by State courts and legal fictions—its being, as it were, kept in leading-strings by the law officers of the crown—has eventuated in a degree of confusion which seems as unaccountable as it is detrimental to the interests and dignity of the Church ; it has caused the Church to present, as regards the patents, powers, and jurisdiction of her Colonial Bishops, an almost disorganized and chaotic aspect, under cover of which openings are found for the escape of the most glaring heresies, and of the most palpable disobedience ; it has induced a condition of things into which, it may safely be averred, the Church would scarcely have fallen with her eyes open, and if left to herself.

But to whatever extent these doubts may be supposed to affect us, we have the plain straight-forward remedy in our own hands. The Synod Act of 1857, gives us every necessary power ; for an Act more comprehensive and absolute in a just sense, could hardly be framed. By it the whole unwieldy fabric of English ecclesiastical law, as regards us, is virtually swept away, and every prerogative of the Crown in Church matters unconditionally surrendered. By it we possess the power of doing everything relating to, or necessary for, the appointment or deprivation of any person holding office in the Church, of whatever grade, and for defining and securing their jurisdiction. The powers and authority hitherto conferred by royal letters patent may, and undoubtedly now ought to be, conferred by the Church here, in some manner duly specified and provided for by a Provincial Canon. And so in every other matter connected with the welfare, stability, and progressive requirements of the Church, we are freed from all the perplexities of English ecclesiastical law, and are invested with full power to take care of ourselves.

But while we thus possess and exercise the legal power of regulating the affairs of our Church in all matters relating to discipline, and necessary for order and good government,

this involves no severance from the United Church of England and Ireland. Our spiritual relations to our Mother Church remain the same. In our adherence to her doctrinal standards, her ritual of worship, her orders of the ministry, we continue as we were, and with the unaltered determination, as expressed in the Declaration of the first Provincial Synod, (1861) "in dependence upon the Divine aid to preserve those doctrines, and that form of Church government, and to transmit them to our posterity."

While thankful to be thus exempted from various difficulties attendant upon the present position of the Church in England, our sentiments of reverence and attachment to the Church herself need in no degree be impaired or diminished; nay, rather, they should be strengthened; for the connection is now unhampered by many vexed questions which have hitherto encumbered it. The maturity of power, and the position to which we have now attained, need not weaken or extinguish the filial affection which is due from us to that Church from which we sprung, which fostered us in our infancy, to whose sympathies we still appeal, and whose hand is still open to aid our Christian enterprises. The mutual bond is of a higher, holier, and more enduring nature than if it rested only upon old acts of parliament, or upon questionable decisions of judicial committees.

Neither is our acknowledgment of the Queen's supremacy affected by the surrender in our favor of her Majesty's ecclesiastical prerogatives. "We still," to quote the same declaration, "maintain the ancient doctrine of our Church, that the Queen is rightfully possessed of the chief government and supremacy over all persons within her dominions, whether ecclesiastical or civil, as set forth in the 37th of the Articles of Religion; and we desire that such supremacy should continue unimpaired." The difference will henceforth lie in this—that in an appeal to the Crown arising out of any important Church difficulty, the question will be settled by reference to our own Church regulations, and no other.

All that the Crown would be required to decide would be, whether the Church here, in its executive capacity, had rightly administered its own laws.

But now, my brethren, there are other and very serious considerations arising out of the position in which we find ourselves. With increase of power comes increased responsibility. We assemble for objects connected with the highest interests of man. And though a Church Synod may not be surrounded with the outward honors and ceremonials of a secular parliament, nor occupy so high a place in the public estimation, nor be watched with so much interest, nor give rise to so much popular feeling and excitement, yet its utterances, compared to the whirlwind of political agitation, may be as the "still small voice," indicative of a higher presence; its actions may have a deep pervading influence, operating, though indirectly, not less powerfully, upon the moral and religious tone of thought among our whole people.

It behoves us, then—need I say how deeply it behoves us—to conduct our deliberations in a spirit of Christian forbearance and Christian courtesy, to set aside personal and selfish considerations—to act as before God, and only as we may conscientiously believe to be for the good of His Church. To this end all mere party feeling must evidently be kept in abeyance. We meet not to struggle for pre-eminence. We are not constituted, like some other assemblies, of a party in power, and a party out of power. We do not expect to see a minority pertinaciously opposing and harassing the action of the rest, nor a majority recklessly over-riding, and setting at naught, the wishes and feelings of the smaller number. Not unfrequently men forget that the highest test of character is not success in obtaining power, but the way in which they use it when obtained.

Especially must we school ourselves to admit of each other that men may be sincere Christians, good Churchmen, faithful ministers of Christ, and yet on many points hold opinions varying from, perhaps diametrically opposite to, our own.

While retaining our own honest convictions, let us not quarrel with others for doing the same. All men's minds will not run in the same groove; probably it was never intended that they should. The accidents of education, training, reading, and early associations will give a set or leaning to the mind, without materially, if at all, affecting its practical reception of the essential doctrines of the faith.

In the management of our deliberations, as in the spirit with which they are conducted, we are undoubtedly learning and improving as we proceed. It could hardly be expected that such unaccustomed powers would be managed to perfection at first; and indeed under a system so utterly new to English Churchmen, it would not have been strange if we had found ourselves not altogether equal to our new responsibilities. Yet under the judicious and impartial presidency which we have enjoyed, the character of our deliberations has been open to very little exception; and their results are gradually consolidating themselves into a most useful and efficient code of Church laws.

Much have we to be thankful for. Undisturbed by the weak fondness for medieval superstitions which has exhibited itself so painfully elsewhere—untainted by a neology which threatens to culminate in practical infidelity—we are solving a problem which has exercised the prayerful thoughts of many, namely, how, under a monarchy, can the Church be worked independently of the State? And I think we are bidding fair to arrive at a satisfactory solution.

Let us go on, then, as we have begun, profiting by every year's additional experience, and casting away no right or privilege because some difficulties may attend its exercise. To manage our new powers aright, is the duty which Providence has assigned to us; and to give back any of those powers, or to transfer them to other hands, asking others to do for us what we ought to do ourselves, is hardly in character with the high and honorable position which the Church in Canada now occupies in the eyes of the Church Catholic.

Lastly, and again, as regards ourselves, let us not forget that we are *one* by the profession of a common faith, and in the ministry and membership of a common Church. Let us, therefore, endeavour the more to avoid and discountenance whatever may generate or foment division or ill-feeling; for undoubtedly the strength of our Zion will be found in this, that she is "as a city which is at unity in itself;" and if we are to do our Redeemer's work, it must be done in the spirit of his commandments.

