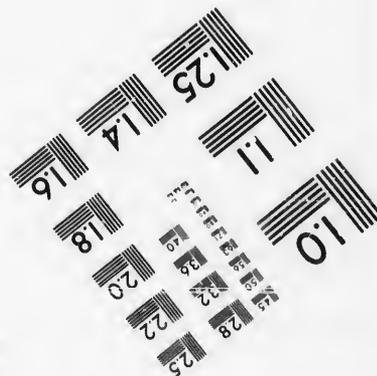
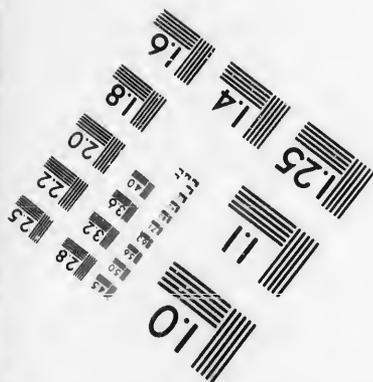
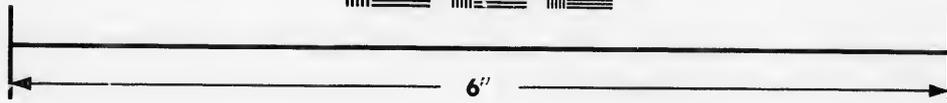
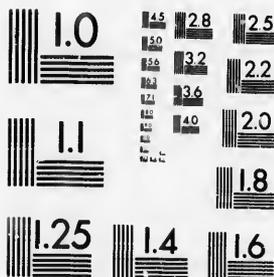


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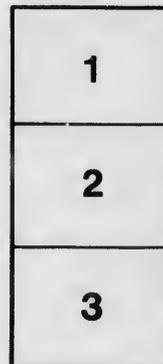
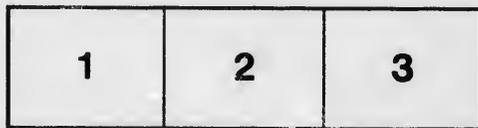
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“Our Duties and Opportunities.”

ANNUAL SERMON,

BY

REV. R. W. NORMAN.

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ST. GEORGE'S CHURCH,

MONTREAL,

APRIL 22nd, 1877.

PUBLISHED BY REQUEST.

Montreal :

PRINTED AT THE "GAZETTE" PRINTING HOUSE

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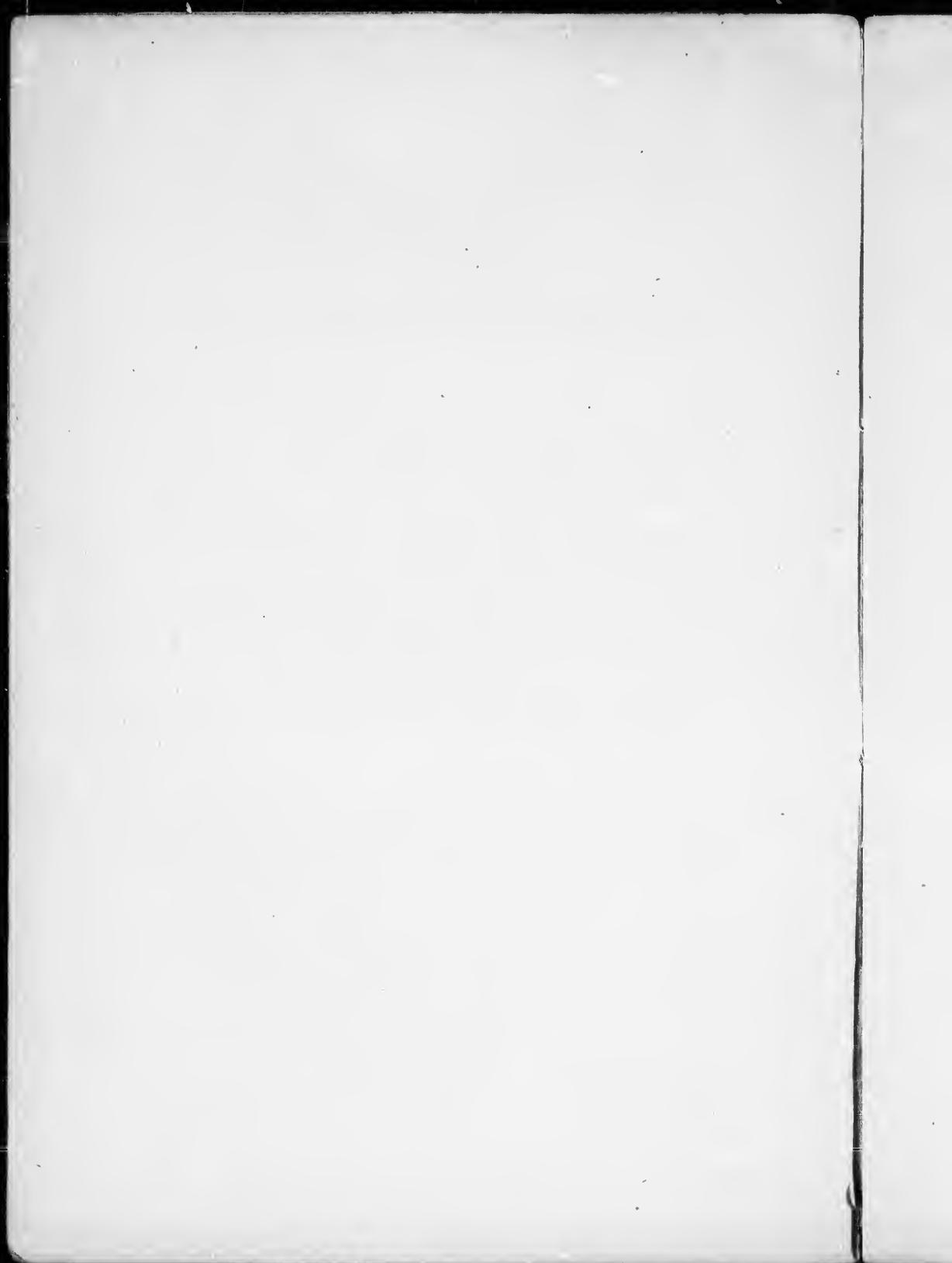
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ANNUAL SERMON.

Ps. cxxxvii. 4, 5, 6.—“How shall we sing the Lord's song in a strange land? If I forget thee, O Jerusalem, let my right hand forget her cunning. If I do not remember thee, let my tongue cleave to the roof of my mouth; if I prefer not Jerusalem above my chief joy.”

I have chosen these words, because of the touching and pathetic patriotism which breathes in every word. The captive Jews sat weeping by the Euphrates, or Tigris, or Chebar, swelling with their tears the waters of those ancient streams, while the whole love and longing of their souls went back to Jerusalem, the city of their God and their people. They hung their harps on trees by the river side, unable to cheer their souls with sacred melody. Their Babylonian conquerors, asked them in their heaviness and sorrow to sing one of their far-famed songs of Sion, to chant again the holy strains of Korah, of Asaph, and of the royal Psalmist himself. How could they, with unwavering voice, or unmoistened eye, sing the joyful and loving hymns sung of old in their now-ruined sanctuary, for the curiosity of their oppressors? Their memories were all they had. Their one wish and craving was to see Jerusalem again. That longing they set above all enjoyment. That painful memory was brought back, clear and plain, by the sound of music and the poetry of psalms. We all know what power a simple strain possesses to recall with vivid and startling force, places, persons, conversations. The music of our own National Anthem, has that magic power. It makes the heart beat, the blood to flow, the pulse to throb. May it never lose that magnetic tenacity upon the hearts of

British subjects, specially those who are English born. But the text, though it supplies us with the note of patriotism, while its tender charm must touch every heart, is in one important respect, happily inapplicable to us. *This* is not a strange land. We are not here as captives taunted by cynical oppressors. Though in another hemisphere, we see our tokens, and feel that we are among friends. But the text suggests to us the theme of to-day. What is the spring of the existence of this Society? Surely it is patriotic benevolence. Patriotism is, as it were, the river-bed, the channel through which the stream of sympathetic kindness wends its healing way. This noble sentiment, which burns in the hearts of all that are truly human, belongs to all time and all nationalities. It gives intense interest to the struggles of heroes of old, for life and freedom. It shines forth in the verses of the text. It was a beautiful feature in that most wonderful and many-sided Bible character, David. It fired the soul and dictated the pathetic lamentations of that most patriotic of all Jews, Jeremiah the prophet. It was conspicuous, be it said with reverence, in *Him*, who proclaimed that He was sent to the lost sheep of His nation, who never crossed its narrow limits, and who, thinking of its perverseness, its blindness, and cruelty, forgot his own wrongs, past, present and to come, and merging them in the dreadful penalties awaiting Jerusalem, wept over it as it lay under the setting sun, a beauteous panorama before His eyes. And, where can we find a more transcendent exemplification of the unselfish beauty of pure patriotism, than in St. Paul, whose heart's desire was the salvation of his own people, and who, after undergoing the most concentrated and unappeasable hatred at their hands, was almost ready to be excluded from Heaven, if at such a cost their eternal happiness could be purchased. It is the love

to the dear Mother Country, and through her, the love for her children, that is the source of this Society's existence. *That* is the bond which unites us all one to the other. It is the strong affection we bear our Queen and Country, the admiration we all entertain for her institutions, that make us recognise and desire to help as brethren those who claim Old England as the country of their birth. Such a sentiment is right and natural. Though we are called on to do good to all men; yet he that is nigh us, our neighbour it is that has the prior claim. So, in the same way, love for home, and home duties, are the smaller circle, whose circumference will hereafter comprehend in its grasp the poor, the suffering, not bound by any tie of kin. Some think that these national societies should all be fused into one general association, established in and for Canada; one that would be practically oblivious of England, Scotland, or Ireland, and consider Canada only as the object of its patriotic affection. As years roll on such an event may happen. It is difficult to forecast the future, or to determine what, under changed circumstances, might be the more desirable course. At present, I cordially approve of such distinct societies. This Dominion is, I conceive, as yet too young to grasp the more general conception. These societies remind us of our origin. They kindle our loyalty. The St. George's Society reminds us that we share the greatness, the glory, the freedom of that land upon whose sacred soil the exile can tread in safety; the land which offers an asylum to the unfortunate, the unhappy, no matter who they be; the land that brooks not slavery, and whereon for centuries no foreign invader has been able to plant his foot. This Dominion is great in itself; greater still in its future prospects. But its greatness is enhanced by its connection with the Mother Land, and it shares, through

common origin, in the illustrious past of the great British nation. Surely of this country it may to a certain extent be said, that the honours on the crest of England are garlands for the head of Canada. It is no proof of national vigour to ignore the past, and live only in the present. While, therefore, we love Canada; while we are ready to serve her interests and promote her advancement, let us still turn a loving glance across the broad sea to the mother of us all. Happily, loyalty is a master principle in the heart of a Canadian. Like justice, of which the Roman poet wrote, which, quitting the world, yet lingered in rural abodes and pastoral pursuits; so loyalty, even if about to quit this earth, which I trust is not to be, yet tarries here, and there is no fear of its extinction. And the loyalty of Canadians is of the true, old fashioned type—unselfish, faithful; the loyalty of the free. In Greece of old, that wondrous nation, whose tongue is the scholar's delight, whose art is unsurpassed, whose literature is imperishable, in whose annals can be found examples of the grandest patriotism, we find a faculty existing which belonged to them alone in ancient times, and which seems the special prerogative of the Anglo-Saxon element in later days—I mean the power of colonization. Details might differ, but the general principle was very similar. The Greek colony was entirely independent of the mother country; but a strong connection bound them together. Great deference was shown to the mother country. The same worship prevailed with the daughter as the mother, and the sacred fire, kept burning on the hearth, was taken from the parent city. And when the superabundant vitality of the Greeks induced the colony to send forth a scion of its own, to carry Greek civilisation, heroism and enlightenment, to some other land, the leader of the expedition was a citizen of that colony's mother coun-

try—a graceful acknowledgment of the maternal and filial relations between the two states.

It would be wearisome to pursue the details of ancient and modern colonization, but it ought not to be tedious to reflect for a few moments upon the prospects, unparalleled in their magnificence, of the Anglo-Saxon race. Independent of this great Dominion, which Providence has blessed with such natural advantages and natural wealth, at the other side of the world we know there is a growing nation, free like Canada in its home government; free like Canada in its religion; the increase in whose material resources, wealth and population is one of the marvels of the age. This nation is bound, like ourselves, by a filial bond to Great Britain. I need say nothing of India, so great a source of riches, so boundless an empire, and yet so enormous a responsibility, if we do not christianize it. Into what harbour, I wonder, does not the fluttering canvas of an English vessel indicate that British commerce is at work? And though the great neighbouring Republic is an independent nation, yet its very greatness, its increase—so astonishing a phenomenon—is the result, in a great degree, of youthful Anglo-Saxon energy working in a fresh field, and untrammelled, as some may think, by any checks of ancient institutions which it might deem impediments to progress. British settlements are as a girdle encircling this earth. The Queen's drum beats round the world. Surely this extraordinary power of growth, this facility of adaptation, this diffusiveness, were not bestowed upon the Anglo-Saxon race above all other human elements, and upon Great Britain especially, merely for her own aggrandizement, for her commercial prosperity, to amass wealth or gratify cupidity? Such is inconceivable. It must be for higher ends; for the christianizing of the heathen, for disseminating the free open Bible, the

Holy Scriptures, for hastening the coming of Christ. No element in the christian world has done so much to spread the knowledge of God's revelation as the Anglo-Saxon race. Joshua, the servant of the Lord, was the first man who received a portion of the Holy Scripture to be his guide. He was always referred to the book of the law of the Lord. That shews the estimation in which Holy Scripture should be held. And it is to our glory that we profess to make that sacred book our rule and guide. Joshua conquered his enemies, led by God's law. May not we, led also by its teaching, achieve a greater victory—the civilization and christianizing of the ignorant, the heathen, the ungodly. And if so, what a glorious mission is ours. How infinitely secondary, how contemptible do all selfish personal motives appear in the light of the great work which God has put before us. All Christian bodies should share in this. And the Church of England is destined to play a considerable part in this history. She contains all spiritual truth as held and taught in the purest times. She presents some of the features which, in our civil constitution, excite admiration. I mean the combination of great freedom with needful law. As we believe the British Constitution ensures the greatest possible amount of genuine and rightful liberty to all men, whether rich or poor, so the Church of England offers perhaps the greatest freedom and latitude of all Christian Communions on earth. Sometimes, to outsiders, this very feature of freedom may seem anomalous; but it would be a hazardous matter to curtail it. The Church of England was pronounced by Dr. Newman as one great bulwark of Revelation. Coming from such a source, this testimony is as striking as it must be impartial. The Church of England has been one great means of preserving orthodoxy among Protestant bodies generally. The wisely moderate character of her reforms, her con-

connexion with the past, the *via media*, one of her distinguishing characteristics, and her history, adorned by the names of the great and good, while they point her out as likely to aid in bringing about the reunion of Christendom, also assist in checking revolutionary changes. Compare the condition of Germany and England on the question of religious faith, and see whether our happier condition be not largely due to the mode in which the Reformation was carried out, and to the sober and primitive character of the Church of England herself. I say this not in a spirit of controversy, or of proselytism, or to depreciate other denominations, for that would be an unwarrantable abuse of my position here to-day. The civil and religious liberty which we enjoy, which enables us to respect one another's conscientious convictions, none of us would surrender, but the consideration of our civil constitution naturally led me to think for a moment of the dominant form of christianity in England. Both have features in common, and both are a blessing to the community at large. And it is possible that God has still further privileges for the Anglo-Saxon race, which some do not see their way to accepting. An idea is held by many minds and is undoubtedly spreading, that the descendants of the lost Ten Tribes are to be found in the Anglo-Saxon race. The idea has much to recommend it. Nothing can be easier than to throw ridicule on such a theory, and to denounce it without investigation as folly. Some details in the writings of those who uphold it may be erroneous, or may seem trifling, but that the main position deserves very careful and respectful consideration, I do not doubt. I do not urge it here as an article of faith, or as a certainty. I state it as something which may be true. As yet it has not been answered, while the probabilities of its truth seem accumulating. I would commend it, if I may, to the careful considera-

tion of my hearers. Its investigation will at all events bring about more minute and devout Biblical analysis, which will itself be a great good, and if the idea be a visionary one, the Holy Spirit, which was promised to believers, will enlighten the understanding of those who wish to ascertain the truth at whatever cost, and to follow the guiding hand of Providence. This much I would ask permission to say, that as far as I have been able to examine the question, this theory affords the only solution, at all satisfactory or intelligible, of Old Testament prophecy, when relating to the Ten Tribes, and that it prevents the common confusion between Israel and Judah, so commonly committed by Bible readers. I used to think these predictions were a completely sealed book, but now I think I see the beginning of the light, irradiating and explaining what was dark and incomprehensible. Also, it may be considered as practically proved that the cradle of the Anglo-Saxon race was the very district to which the Ten Tribes were transported by Shalmanezzer, and from which they never returned to Palestine. The people of this district were called by ancient writers by a name akin to Saxon, and the Scriptures seem to tell us that their future home was to be Isles, north-west of Palestine. If there is any possibility of truth in the matter, how much are our national responsibilities elevated and increased! How incalculable seems our possible influence for good! How splendid the glory of the work before us! It is noticeable that in our English Church services we apply to ourselves the honoured titles and epithets of God's people, God's inheritance, the sheep of His pasture. These are expressions which were first and originally the dower of Israel.

It may be replied that, as the Jewish church has been merged into and succeeded by the Christian

church, they are ours by legitimate bequest and right as Christians, and that we may use them boldly. We all grant this, but would not the name possess greatly increased interest, if we remembered that, in more than one sense, we were inheritors of the promises, and that the history of our nation, already glorious and renowned, links us to the ancient Hebrews. Every bible reader knows that the whereabouts of the Ten Tribes has been a mystery, which many an earnest soul has endeavoured to discover. A reverent consideration of the problem, and an effort to solve it, are wise and admissible. If this theory be *wrong*, it will have done no harm. It strikes at no moral virtue; it impairs not one iota of Christian truth. It does not diminish the need for hopes of salvation, of personal purity and holiness. If *right*, it will most powerfully aid in the conversion of the Jews, and the reunion in Christ of all the scattered fragments of that mysterious nation. Whatever were the early idolatries of the Ten Tribes, they have not on their national conscience the stain of the Saviour's blood, and to them, among others of the dispersion, did St. Peter write, recalling former great and precious privileges. If all such conjectures be erroneous, let them be proved to be such. They will have conferred one benefit on English speaking men throughout the globe, in that they will have enhanced our responsibilities, promoted study of the Holy Bible, and directed our more earnest attention to the unexampled opportunities which we possess of spreading the principles of true liberty and respect for law and authority; and, what is even higher, the tenets of a pure and apostolical Christianity.

In conclusion, I would impress on my hearers to do their utmost to increase the membership of this St. George's Society, and to contribute liberally to its funds. The recently published report informs us that the list

only numbers 21 life members and 312 ordinary members. This is very small, considering the number of Englishmen actually resident in this city. The much desired increase of membership would not only to a certain extent increase our funds, but would be beneficial, inasmuch as it would augment interest in the work of the society, and thereby promote its efficiency. The charities have been admirably administered, and some of my own parishioners have profited by them. The amount expended has been \$1,220.64, and special donations have been given at the beginning of the winter, in order still further to extend relief to distressed English poor. Owing to careful management, a balance in favour of the Society is still in hand. But, as business depression still continues, and many sad cases of destitution have been known to exist in homes where want was formerly an unknown visitor, it is hoped that, for the love of God, and in recollection of our dear native land, that free island home, unconquered, and we believe unconquerable, we shall prove that the tie of brotherhood is strong, and, to the best of our power, help our brethren.

And as to the Ancient Greek, wherever his countrymen were, *there* was Hellas, with all its fame and glory; so here in Canada, though thousands of miles part us from the sweet smiling valleys, the chalky cliffs, the rich pastures, the ancient homesteads of England, yet no Englishman landing on these shores is on strange ground, but feels at home, seeing floating above his head his country's flag, and knowing that where England's institutions exist, there is liberty. Righteousness and true patriotism exalt a nation, and if we become more and more a God-fearing people, then, whatever troubles may agitate the world, we may cherish a good hope that no weapon forged against us shall prosper. I commend the claims of the Society to your liberality.

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