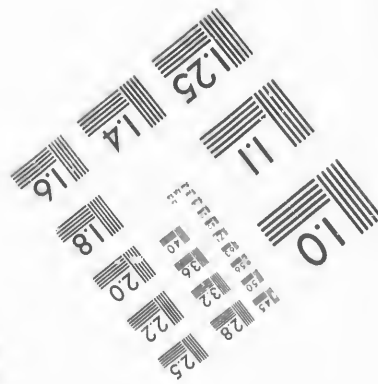
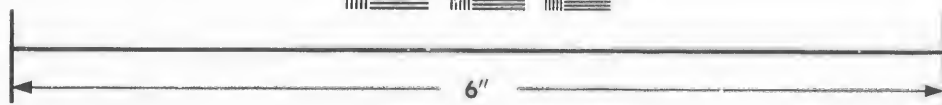
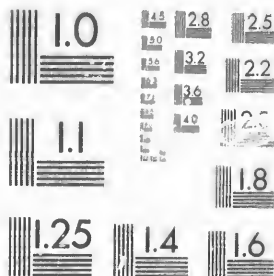


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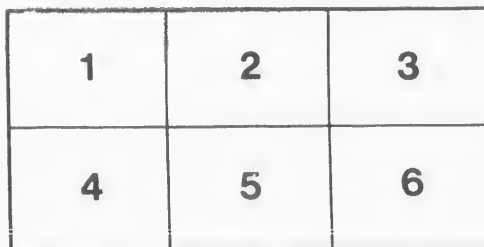
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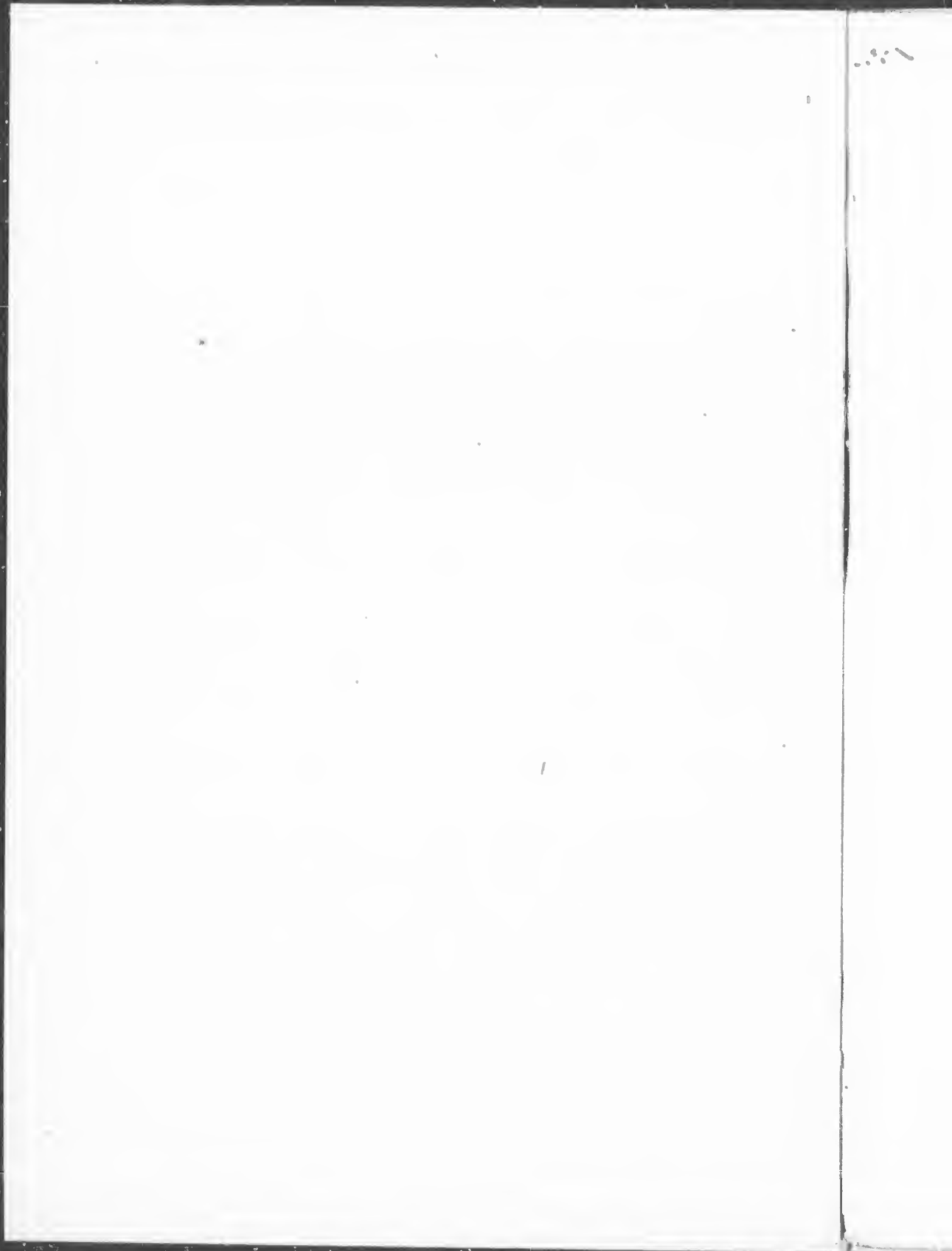
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ON

TURNING TO THE EAST

IN

SAYING THE CREEDS.

BY A CLERGYMAN OF THE DIOCESE OF TORONTO.

PUBLISHED BY REQUEST.

KINGSTON:

J. H. PARNELL, PRINTER AND PUBLISHER.

1866.

F. 12
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1892

ON TURNING TO THE EAST IN SAYING THE CREEDS.

I have been sometimes asked why I turn my back to the congregation in saying the Creeds, and it may perhaps be satisfactory to others if I put on paper all that I have found myself saying in reply.

I do not intend to turn my back to the congregation, but to turn my face towards the East, or to that part of the Church which is commonly in the East, that is the chancel. I do this first, because I was brought up to do so from my childhood, as every person was in the part of England in which I was born; because when I went to the University, I found it the universal custom in all the colleges; because, when I went to other parts of the kingdom I found it generally done wherever I went; because I understood it to prevail in all Cathedrals, as it certainly did in all that I visited.

And I think these were good reasons. For there must be some good cause for a custom so widely spread, practised (as it then was) by clergymen and laymen of all parties: a custom, the origin of which cannot be stated with certainty; which was retained by our Reformers, when so many old things were abolished; and which therefore must have commended itself to their minds for some good effects arising from it, or from its being supposed to be a custom of Apostolic times; a custom which prevailed without interruption generally in the Church from the Reformation downwards; and which did not begin to be dropped until men began to give up all old customs, and generally not until the French Revolution had led men to despise and neglect all religious observances.

We think it right to keep up old customs, even when they have

only come down to us from our parents or grandfathers; how much more when they have come down to us from antiquity of which we cannot discover the beginning!

And in time I discovered reasons for so doing, although I probably felt them before I noticed them. The different changes of posture which we make in divine service serve to draw our attention to the part which follows the change of posture. We thus renew our attention to the subject in hand and enter upon it more thoughtfully. We were before standing to praise God, or to hear His Gospel; and it is a change suitable to the profession of our faith, that the minister should thus visibly put himself in a manner at the head of the congregation in offering this profession to the Lord. Different minds feel different reasons for this. One will say that our standing, and turning all one way, with our minister at our head, fitly signifies our determination, our unanimous determination, to maintain the faith we have received. Another will feel, as I do myself, that it fitly signifies our coming forward unanimously, priest and people, to offer our homage to our common Lord, the Author and ground of our faith.

The following views on this subject have long appeared to me very appropriate. "With the heart man believes." In confessing our faith, we yield up our souls unto God. We not merely rehearse the outward standard of our faith, although that has great benefit, but we give expression to the trust and repose in God, wrought in us by the Holy Ghost.

True faith is the answer of man's spirit to God, when he says, Give me thy heart; it is the action by which it enters into fellowship with Father, Son and Holy Ghost. The creed sets forth all the sources of faith, and hope, and joy in God; and in uttering its words thus solemnly before God, this faith and these hopes and joys are revived, and specially offered before Him in one unanimous act of worship and homage to Him.

Taking the subject in this point of view, and at the same time knowing that it is a point of view which will not suggest itself spontaneously to most minds, I see a special propriety in having a special ceremony which will have a tendency to teach it. We do not so much need it in the case of prayer and praise, because the

language used teaches it: but if we have no special ceremony for the Creeds, then we shall naturally rest contented with supposing that they are only a public profession of our faith, for our own mutual encouragement, and for a testimony to the world at large. It is true that they are that; but they are something more than that; and the change of posture of the minister, and as many of the congregation as are not looking already towards the chancel end of the Church, draws attention and leads to enquiry; and thus leads to the enquirer's being instructed in the full force of our Creeds, as recited in public worship. This in fact is one divinely appointed use of ceremonies, viz., to cause enquiry and thus lead to instruction in truth. See Exod. 27, 26.

These then have been the leading reasons why, notwithstanding that for some years I was almost solitary, and was liable to be misunderstood by uninstructed and narrow-minded persons, and be called a Puseyite, I have felt it my duty both in my own person and in training others to retain this ancient custom, and to urge upon others in authority the propriety of sanctioning it by their example. There are, however, other reasons, which some may regard as fanciful, but which I think merit due consideration.

It appears that in some parts of the world, the early Christians addressed *all* their worship towards the East; and that others, probably all others, addressed portions of their worship in that quarter. One reason given by them was that they expected Christ to come from the East, when he comes to judgment at the last day; and that they used that posture to keep themselves in memory of the judgment, and their minds and hearts in a posture of readiness to meet him.

This reason appeals to our imagination, a faculty of the mind which is weak amongst English people, and especially in men. I confess that I once thought it rather fanciful; but as there are many persons in every congregation whose imaginations are a great help in their religious life, even if I could never realize it myself, I should think it unreasonable that others should not be enabled to do so. It is my case with some hymns. I cannot enter into them myself, but I see no impropriety in them, and do not wish to discourage others in what seems to be a help to their devotion, and so I join in singing them.

There is another reason or two given by early Christian writers why they worshipped towards the East: such as that our Lord Jesus Christ is called "the Sun of righteousness," and "the Day-spring," and "the Day-star from on high." From this it is, perhaps, more than probable that it was in this way (that is, by worshipping towards the dawn and the sun-rising.) that they realized the truths that Jesus is the Mediator, through whom all our worship must be offered; that in him resides all the fulness of the Godhead, and that he is "God manifested in the flesh." And in that view there would be a special propriety in making the confession of our faith to him, and in using an outward ceremony which is intended to remind us that this is what we may most fittingly do.

I began with noting the wide extent of this and its venerable antiquity. On this part of the subject I have a word or two more to say. When I was in England, at a jubilee of the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel, held in 1851, in St. Paul's Cathedral, I observed that the whole body of the congregation turned to the chancel at the Creed; not only so, but the whole body of Bishops present, without distinction, used the same custom. Why is it so seldom used in Canada?

Again, did no one ever observe that Christians generally, without distinction, place their graves with the feet to the East. Why do they do this? Simply because it is the old custom. How did this custom originate? From the same idea from which worshipping towards the East is said to have originated. They are so placed in order that, when the Lord comes to judgment, and they rise on their feet out of their graves, that may meet immediately the sight of Him descending from heaven. Can any one give another reason?

Still further, most Christian churches, in most Christian lands, are placed with their chancels to the east. What can have been the origin of that custom? Clearly the ancient practice of worshipping towards the east. Can any one give another cause?

I have heard it objected that there is no rubrical or canonical direction for that custom. But will any one point out to me a rubric or a canon directing us to stand at reciting the Psalms and

Canticles; or to divide them responsively between minister and people; or for the whole congregation to sing the Gloria Patri, when chanted, without any division; or to say, "Glory be to Thee, O God," after the Gospel has been announced; or to join all together in saying the hymn "Therefore with angels and arch-angels," &c.? The authority of these stands only upon custom, and that a far more modern and less general one than that of worshipping towards the east.

I find, from a remark once made to me by an Orangeman, that some suppose that in so doing, and in bowing during the Creeds, we pay some special reverence to the Communion Table, or to the cross sometimes embroidered on the covering of the table. He said that he had watched me and observed that I never did so. In fact, those who observe the most ancient custom, still kept up in St. Paul's Cathedral and in many other places, cannot do so, at least in the Communion Service; for in reciting the Gospel the Priest comes forward from the side of the Altar towards the Communion rails, or to the front of the Altar platform, and then, when he has to recite the Creed, he turns directly round, not towards the Table, but towards the wall which goes behind it; and in a similar manner all the other ministers turn, who happen to be near the Table.

This last matter is so trifling that I should not have alluded to it, but that I learnt from this Orangeman that some of his fraternity were offended by what was merely a mistake of their own.

I trust that these explanations may lead to a revival of an old English custom which has so much good meaning in it. The circumstances, under which these Colonies have been formed, have naturally led to the dropping of many old customs; but love to our fatherland is gradually leading to their revival, why should this be left out? Especially as, if intelligently used, it makes our use of the Creeds themselves more full of meaning and more impressive.

