

The Church's Warfare

A SERMON

PREACHED BEFORE THE SYNOD OF THE DIOCESE
OF TORONTO, IN ST. JAMES' CATHEDRAL,
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BY

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"That ye stand fast in one spirit, with one mind, striving together for the faith of the Gospel."—PHIL. 1-27.

No one can read St. Paul's Epistles attentively, without being struck by the fact, that they are full of illustrations, drawn from the battlefield, the stadium, and the arena. Indeed it has been commented upon as a matter of surprise and reproach, that the chief herald of the Gospel of peace, should have had his eyes closed, as it were, to the teaching of nature in heaven above, and on the earth beneath, and should have moved so constantly as he does, amid the imagery of war and conflict. The Christian in his apprehension is, before everything else, a soldier of Jesus Christ; as such, his business is to fight. And if he would not prove himself a coward in the day of battle, he must prepare himself to endure hardness. He is exhorted to fight the good fight of faith, and lay hold on eternal life—to wage a good warfare, holding faith, and a good conscience—earnestly to contend for the faith once delivered to the saints. His course is a race, a wrestle, a pugilistic encounter, in which the utmost watchfulness, skill, and energy, must be used, if he would not be defeated and overcome. And so everywhere throughout the Epistles, we hear the clang of the soldier's arms, and see the agony of the athlete's efforts. We have, if I mistake not, two of these illustrations implied in the text, the word *stekete*, stand fast, calls up before our minds, the picture of a battalion or an army, standing firm and unbroken against the assaults of their foes. And the words *sunathlountes*, striving together, carries us away to the stadium to witness over again the fixed purpose, the desperate effort, the unflagging energy of those who ran in a race, or the struggle, and the agony of those who engaged in the wrestle or the pugilistic encounter. This is the picture which St. Paul presents to us of the life to which we are called, and this, as a moment's reflection will show us, instead of being as has been supposed, an incongruity in the great Apostle's life, is one of those undesigned harmonies, which go to establish the authenticity of the Epistles. The pictures he drew were but the reflection of his own life's experiences. And the exhortations which he addressed to others, were but the echo of the voices that were ever sounding in his own ears. His life was, as he has told us, one long agony and battle for the faith of the gospel—lived among the tumult of angry mobs, confronted everywhere with stonings, and

shipwreck, and beasts, and death when the conflict of the faith." No! It runs through claimed by our on earth, but a hold. I send of all men for whosoever killeth endureth to this is the way. S representations the closing book to the end, I of heaven follow the end. And has been, as Church. What back over it! and triumph, Who can realize those ten long spirit of steadfast and anguish amid overwhelm when the Doctor and for a while to understand heartenment, discipline, the Christian heroes men. You ment, and the the conflict, a

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shipwreck, and stripes, and bonds, and imprisonments, and ravenous beasts, and deaths oft, fightings within, and fears without. And so, when the conflict was practically over, and the end nearing, he sums up his apprehension of what he had passed through with the exulting cry, "I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith." Nor is this view of the Christian's life peculiar to St. Paul. It runs through the entire New Testament, and is plainly enough proclaimed by our Blessed Lord Himself. I am not come to send peace on earth, but a sword. A man's foes shall be they of his own household. I send you forth as sheep among wolves. Ye shall be hated of all men for my sake and the Gospel. Yea, the time is coming, when whosoever killeth you, will think he doeth God service. But he that endureth to the end shall be saved. Straight is the gate and narrow is the way. Strive to enter in. Conflict and strife and peril are His representations of the life to which He has called His followers. And in the closing book of the canon, which portrays the history of the Church to the end, He himself is pictured as going forth to war, the armies of heaven following Him, amid scenes of conflict, battle, and blood, to the end. And what these figures imply, and these predictions proclaim, has been, as you know, abundantly fulfilled in the history of the Church. What a picture does the record of her life unfold as we look back over it! Victory and defeat, success and failure, humiliation and triumph, have been strangely intermingled in her whole career. Who can realize now the awful significance of the baptism of blood, during those ten long persecutions, by which she had infused into her the spirit of steadfast endurance! Who can understand the humiliation and anguish of mind endured by those who were striving together amid overwhelming multitudes of heathen, for the faith of the Gospel, when the Docetic, Arian, and Macedonian heresies arose and spread, and for a while triumphed. And who can fail, from our bitter experience, to understand something of the humiliation, and weakness, and disheartenment, which faithful men knew, when on mere questions of discipline, the Montinist, Novation and Donatist schisms rent the Christian host, and embittered the hearts, and the lives, of Christian men. You know how the worldliness and superstition and debasement, and then the unbelief, agnosticism and atheism have continued the conflict, and fulfilled the predictions down to our own times.

I have thought it well, my brethren, to recall to your remembrance at the outset this predicted and verified character of the Church's History. For I am persuaded that we are entering upon days of great perplexity and peril to the faith of many. The manifold divisions of the Christian host have practically destroyed all authoritative guidance. And now it is being whispered through the land, that the very foundations, upon which Christians of every name have stood in the past, are being undermined and dug up by the very men who have been set as watchmen on the wall. No wonder, therefore, that they who have but little knowledge of the history of the past, and of the trials of Faith, which it enfolds, and who have looked for peace and sure guidance in the Kingdom of Christ, should be perplexed

and dismayed, as they look out upon the spectacle of the divided and distracted Christendom of to-day. In the face of this danger it is surely well for us to remember that no new thing is happening unto us. Nothing that was not foreseen and foretold, that the trial of our Faith is the key to the perplexities of life, that we are called not to peace but to war—that we are soldiers of Christ, and the time of victory is not yet. It is said by those who have experience, that the surprises, reverses and disappointments of the battlefield are beyond all conception amazing and distressing. The right wing or the left, has made a desperate charge and is sweeping all before it, when word comes that the centre has been crushed, and is falling back in disorder. A seeming victory is in an instant turned into defeat. And often when all seems lost, triumph is at hand; or in another department, a fortress has been made impregnable when lo, it is discovered that it has been undermined by the enemy. It has been thus in the conflicts of the Church, in the centuries past; it will be so in the years to come. Let us not then be discouraged by any dangers or disasters that may threaten our time. We are still in the swirl of the battle. It will often be ours not to reason why—but just to do our best and die. We know that we are soldiers in the army of Him who has gone forth *conquering and to conquer*. But enough of generalities. Let me invite your attention to what I consider to be the special dangers of our time. The enemies against whose assaults we have to stand fast, and upon whom we must wage war. They are tracable to one source, the creeping materialism of the age, the growing spirit of unbelief in the supernatural. But let us confront them as they present themselves to us in the open plain.

Now the first and greatest danger of the present time is, I am persuaded, the renewed and wide-spread attack that is being made upon the integrity, and therefore upon the authority of the Bible. From the first general council of the Church at Nicea to the present hour, when any matter of faith or morality was in dispute, the first question asked was, "what saith the Scripture? The testimony and authority of the Church were invoked to settle what was Scripture, and to witness to the intended meaning of Scripture, which is Scripture; but when once the canon was settled, and the true meaning ascertained, the voice of Inspiration was an end of all controversy. But now, through the spread of what calls itself scientific or higher criticism, the most ancient and uniform testimony of the Church is ruthlessly flung aside. We are practically told that there is no canon. The integrity, the genuineness, and the authenticity of a large part of the Bible are denied. And we are being taught that we must determine by some internal verifying faculty, some real or imaginary *testimonium Spiritus Sancti*, what part of the remnant that is left is inspired, and what is not. The Penteteuch, they tell us, was not written by Moses. It is a mere compilation patched together from previously existing documents by some unknown Jewish writer in the days of Manasseh or Josiah. Its earlier narratives, before the call of Abraham, are of the nature of myths; myth being defined to be the product of mental

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activity not yet distinguished into history and poetry and philosophy; or, in other words, a compilation in which it is impossible to tell what is fact and what mere fancy. Practically they tell us that the book of Deuteronomy is a fiction, founded, perhaps, on floating tradition, but not written for eight or nine hundred years after the date at which it claims to have been written. That the whole solemn scene of Sinai never took place, that the Law was not given by God at all, that the tabernacle of witness, and everything connected with it, had never any existence, except in the fabricated history, written nearly a thousand years afterwards. That so far from the Tabernacle being the prototype of the Temple, it was the Temple that suggested the deliberate and elaborate fiction of the Tabernacle. That the older Books were remodelled according to the Mosaic form; and that Chronicles especially were falsified by Priests and Levites to sustain a belief that the tribe of Levi had been set apart from the days of Moses, and that the Priesthood dated from that time (Bishop Ellicott's charge); — They tell us further that the Psalms, with perhaps one exception, were not written by David, but by some one, unknown, at the end of the Babylonian Exile and that the Book of Daniel is practically a forgery, written at least four hundred years after the death of the prophet; "That such a view, writes Bishop Ellicott, in his now famous *Christus Comprobator*, "should meet with acceptance in any Christian country, is sad enough and startling enough; but that it should meet with acceptance to a considerable extent, at the hands of members of our own Church, occupying high positions, is full of very sad augury for the future. But it is so" It is true that the English advocates do not go the full length of their German teachers, they for the most part approach the subject in a reverent, believing spirit. The aim of some of them, Mr. Gore, for instance, as he tells us, was simply to remove perplexity, to lessen unsettlement; to enable earnest enquirers to rest in the Faith of Christ; "to succour a distressed Faith." But in spite of his good intentions Dr. Liddon at once denounced his concessions as not compatible with loyalty to our Lord Jesus Christ. And Bishop Ellicott says, with reference to the moderation of statement so far observed by the English advocates of this new departure, "this however, may always be said—that the tendency of unbalanced minds is—if they accept any modified view—to pass onward to the unmodified." Besides, Dr. Driver, the leader of the English section, has, we are told by one of ourselves who knows his position, frankly endorsed the conclusions of Wellhausen and Kuenen. He has almost copied Knoble's preface in his introduction. And these are the authors of the monstrously extravagant statements about the Bible which I have given above. Kuenen was translated into English and introduced to English readers by Colenso as justifying his position. He was translated into French and introduced to the French people, as endorsing his position, by Ranan. Both these writers start with the *a priori* assumption that any narrative that implies the supernatural, that is, that contains a prophecy or the account of a miracle, is to be rejected, without further consideration, as a myth or fiction or forgery.

"The real harm, then," writes Bishop Ellicott, "that has been done by recent English writers lies in the plain fact that they have actually prepared the way for shaken and unstable minds to arrive at results which will at last be found to involve inability to accept the supernatural, and so lead to a complete shipwreck of faith."

I am quite aware that this is not what they intend or desire. They speak in glowing terms of the inspiration and authority of the Bible, and express their belief that the disencumbered faith will glow out more brightly than ever when their work of criticism is finished. But what kind of inspiration, I would ask, could we assign to a book made up to a large extent, at least, of myths and fictions and forgeries; whose solemn divine enactments, as we have believed them to be, turn out, we are told, to be only the expression of cumulated human wisdom? What authority would such enactments have for the selfish, the tempted, and the weak? And, indeed, when we come to enquire what they mean by all this fine language about inspiration, we find that their definition of it would make every man his own inspired teacher, law giver and guide. "We determine the inspiration of the Book," writes one of them, who seems to be speaking for the whole company "from its internal character, and the voice of the Holy Spirit speaking in it to the believer." In a word, the settlement of this vital question becomes wholly subjective, a mere matter of individual feeling. The testimony of the Church, the canonicity of the Book, the judgment of Catholic writers, the authority of the Lord Jesus Christ, must all become as nothing; the judgment of the individual who, whatever his character may be, is at liberty to assume that the Holy Ghost is speaking to him, is the sole arbiter. "It is not now," writes Dr. Morgan Dix, "so much a question of historic testimony and external evidence, but the implement for settling date and authorship is human intuition. The firm ground of history is abandoned for that of theory, impression and conjecture." And so, as the *Essay and Review* people taught long ago "truth will vary according to the individual who is looking for it." "Nothing," writes Bishop Ellicott, "is more melancholy in this whole controversy than the reckless manner in which the judgment of the Church, which the Apostle declares to be the ground and pillar of the truth, is set aside by Christian teachers in endeavoring to find some new basis for belief in God's Holy Word.

No one can seriously consider all that the new teachers are presenting for our acceptance without feeling that, in the first place, they are going to give us, instead of the Word of Life, a topsy-turvy Bible, beginning, as some of them tell us, with the Minor Prophets, and even in its fragments, deprived of all divine and constraining authority. No one, I venture to think, can ponder the lucid statement of this whole question by Principal Cave, the powerful argument of Stanley Leathes, the dispassionate and masterful consideration of the more than four hundred endorsements of the Old Testament contained in the New, by Bishop Ellicott, the powerful protest of Canon Liddon, the two able articles in the *Church Quarterly* for January, 1892, without feeling that the whole truth of God is involved in this discussion, and that

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the concessions that we beings rashly made are inconsistent with belief in our Lord Himself as our Infallible Teacher and Guide.

When we enquire what are the reasons for this tremendous change of front, the answers that are given are far from being clear or satisfactory. Canon Driver says that it is impossible to tell us how he has arrived at the results which he so unhesitatingly accepts (Pre. p. ix). We are only told that scholars have proved the conclusions announced. That all critics are agreed about the composite character, for instance, of the Hexateuch, the number and order of the documents quoted, the modern date of the different parts of the Bible, and that they have reached results that are scientifically sure. "The Critic" writes Morgan Dix again, when, asked how he has made these astounding discoveries, replies, "my criticism proves them, modern learning establishes them; they are the ascertained results of the best thought of the day," and yet they are nothing better than guesswork and fancy. They are the result of the process correctly described as "free conjecture operating upon the sacred text." And so, when we enquire further, we find that scholarship is not specially involved. That literary criteria, according to the confession of their leaders, are altogether unreliable. That the conclusions do not, to any large extent, depend upon linguistic distinctions, but upon the contents of the Books and their history; so that it is not the knowledge of specialists which others cannot grasp which is alleged in justification of this tremendous change.

Then,—as was abundantly proved by Principal Wace, in his masterful reply to Huxley's savage attack upon Christianity—on the ground of the conclusions of the higher criticism, and more recently by the second essay in the *Church Quarterly*, the scholars and critics, so far from being agreed, are at hopeless contradiction on almost all the points that are claimed to be settled. So that when Principal Grant announces that he feels bound to accept the conclusions of these specialists, we may ask him which specialists? Those who say that the writer of the Penteteuch copied from two documents, or those who say that he must have had three; or those who insist that there were four of those who say that there were none. Must we accept the conclusions of those critics who assert that the Priests Code, as they call it, was the oldest of these documents or of those who say that it was the latest, or those who say that the Psalms were written during the exile, or of those who say that they were written after the time of the Maccabees. Surely with this beautiful unanimity we are at liberty to believe any of them we like, or far better for the present at least to withhold believe from them all.

Then further we find that these scientifically certain results are not scientific at all. They have not been reached by the scientific method of careful collection of facts and extended induction. They are mere theories. Each writer adopts the conclusions of his favorite predecessor and then tells that all scholars are agreed. That critics have proved what he says. He however takes good care to rule out of the category of critics, all who have adopted a different theory from his

own. Hengstenberg, Ewald, Keil, Kurtz and even Deleitzsch are contemptuously expelled from the company of the critics, and after all Dr. Driver's main position as to the late date of the Priest's Code is only endorsed by three critics Wellhausen, Kuenen and Grabe—And yet upon this the whole fabric of his destructive criticism is based.

Ask your attention brethren to these facts that you may not be dismayed by the rash and confident assertions of these new teachers.

I am quite aware that some of you, who are listening to me are saying in your hearts, what folly! what an ill judged thing, to bring this subject before a general assembly like this, and so before the public. It is only calculated to awaken needless alarm and to create a panic in the public mind—I can only say, Brethren, that I am not responsible for bringing the question before the public—The new opinions are being sedulously propagated by every possible agency, in Sermons, in Reviews, in Magazines, in Newspapers, in Novels and in College halls. And I want to sound the alarm. I want to create a panic, I want to put unsuspecting Christians on their guard, I want them to know that this insidious attack which deprecates alarm does not rest upon any such sure foundations as its advocates assume. It is no new thing in the world. It was propounded more than 100 years ago by German sceptical writers. It was known and the foundations on which it rests were known to such masters of Hebrew and theology as Dr. Pusey and Dr. Joseph McCaul and Bishop Wordsworth, and they rejected it deliberately—yes! and there have been no new facts discovered which give it the overmastering potency which its advocates assume. It is the fashion, just now, like other fashions; it will have its season and pass away. But for individual souls, the fashion is full of peril and so I entreat you in the words of the apostle "Stand fast" in the old faith Hold the traditions which teach and have taught from the beginning that the Bible is God's own inspired word. Let no man's heart fail when he reads strange and painful statements made by learned Hebraists about the Bible and its inspiration. There are many just as learned Hebraists who entirely deny the validity of modern scientific criticism and stand firmly in the old paths. "The ark is safe though the oxen may shake it."

Another great danger of our time against which we must stand fast, and upon which we must wage war grows out of the same root, and is akin to the last. It is the popular dislike to what is called dogma, that is to all positive and distinctive doctrinal teaching; for dogma is only the Greek for doctrine, and doctrine is only the statement, in the most exact language we can command, of the facts and truths of Revelation. "This is a fact," writes Bishop Ryle, in his last charge, "which I am loth to say wants realizing and recognizing far more than has been the case lately. Whether we like to hear or not; it is a sore disease in the land. It is a pestilence walking in darkness, and threatening the well being of the rising generation; the evidences of this dislike to positive doctrine are abundant all around us. Look at the subjects of the sermons that are advertised—and the preached sermons that are published, all sorts of popular topics, are

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treated just as a heathen philosopher might treat them, with a spice of Christian words and phrases and sentiments thrown in; but with only the vaguest setting forth of the faith of the Gospel. Look again at the vague tone of our newspapers, when they touch upon religious subjects. They are always ready to praise Christian morality, but the Christian doctrine upon which that morality is based, if not sneered at, is treated with scant courtesy. See how ready they all are to shovel all Christian truth aside under the vague name of 'sectarianism.' Look at the popular fictions and novels, how they avoid anything like doctrine in the portraits they give us of Christians. Their model Christian is like a cut flower at a flower show, a mere bloom without a root. Then you know how popular speakers are growing more and more to denounce all dogmatic statements as only fettering the freedom of intellectual activity. There is a morbid unreasoning desire in all this to have the fruits of Christianity without the roots. Christian morality and well doing without Christian doctrine. The consequences of this growing dislike to positive and distinct doctrinal teaching are very serious in the present day. It creates and fosters and keeps up an immense amount of instability in religion. It exposes those who fall into it, to great perils; they are tossed to and fro by every wind of doctrine, ever ready for any new thing because they have no firm grasp of the old," and utterly unable to render a reason of the hope that is in them. They have such dread of dogma that they do not know what they believe or where they stand. It was against such a peril as this that an Apostle was guarding, when he called his followers to strive together for the Faith of the Gospel earnestly to contend for the Faith, and so I would entreat you Brethren to hold the Faith, to believe it, to teach it, definitely, clearly, unhesitatingly, to your children, to your Congregations, to your neighbors as you have opportunity. Let others cater for the patronage of the word; turn the worship of God into Sunday entertainment. But let us resolve to teach clear, distinct and well defined doctrines. Doctrine is not of course an end, but only a means to an end. It brings men to Christ, it reveals Christ, enshrines Christ, proclaims His excellent greatness; guards His peerless honor, saves men from base and unworthy conceptions concerning Him; therefore, let us resolve to strive together for the Faith of the Gospel.

I have spoken to you of the struggle that is upon us for the Word of Life, and for the Faith once delivered to the Saints—we cannot shirk the battle, we cannot avoid the result; we can, however, resolve to stand fast; we can determine that they who would rob us of the one or the other will have to fight their way foot by foot, and inch by inch.

There is another attack peculiar, I think, to our own time, growing out of the same root, and closely allied to the other; but against which we must stand ever on our guard, if we would not betray the Cause of Christ. It is the attempt which is being made to rationalize, naturalise, and theorise out of existence, not the Holy Scriptures, or the truth which they teach, but the Church of the living God which

the Apostle declares to be the "ground and pillar," of that truth, and which we profess to believe in as the witness to, and keeper of Holy Writ.

It was customary with those who in the sixteenth century separated from and assailed the Church, to maintain that Holy Scripture gave positive and detailed directions about the constitution and government of the Church; and those directions, it was maintained, were cleanly contrary to the historical order of things retained in the Church of England. So arrogant, and overbearing were the maintainers of this new theory, that the great Hooker was fain to cry for quarter, and set himself in his immortal book to prove that the Government of the Church was not necessarily everywhere the same, though his argument proved that it had been always the same, and that same the reverse of the contention of the Innovators. The calm and exhaustive discussion of this question, that has since taken place has so completely reversed the position of the contending parties that those who maintained that Holy Scripture taught their system, and no other, are now fain to take shelter in the contention that not only does the New Testament teach no definite system of organization and government, but that there was no divinely constituted Church at all; that Christ, therefore never fulfilled His promise—"upon this rock *I will build* my Church." That St. Paul was mistaken when he proclaimed that He had built it upon the foundation of the Apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the head Corner Stone. That He just taught His truth, and wrought His miracles and lived His life, and died His death, and left them to produce whatever effects they would upon the world, and that the Church instead of having any divine origin or authority grew up in a natural way like any other society. The people who believed Christian doctrine or held Christian sentiment, formed a club, and the club or guild, thought it would be a nice thing like other Guilds to have a Club meal. The meal had to have a chairman to preside, and waiters to distribute. Under the influence of the superstitious spirit of the next age, we are told the club meal grew into the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper; the chairman into the Bishop or the Presbyter; the waiters into the Deacons. This is the folly that is gravely propounded in Brampton lectures, and taught in Canadian training colleges of young men for the ministry, when it is pointed out that this contention is contradicted by the plain statements of Holy Scripture; and every child knows that it is contradicted,—then some of the bolder spirited, a Hatch, or Phleiderer, deny the authenticity of the Scriptures, which contradict their theory; and grave men and earnest, grasp at this desperate remedy rather than abandon the baseless belief which they have inherited. This is another enemy against which we must stand fast. It is a part of the great revolt of an unbelieving age against the supernatural. Either we must abandon the Scriptures as our guide, or we must abandon this contradiction of their plain and oft-repeated statements. It is an evident part of the great enemy's plan of attack at the present time, to set aside not only the guiding light of divine revelation, the guiding voice of the Faith

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once delivered, but the guiding fellowship of the society divinely constituted, to be not only the ground and pillar of the truth, the habitation of God through the Spirit, but the Body of Christ, and so the instrument for extending the incarnate life, and of carrying forward all the activities which the energies of that life awakens among men. Let the world once believe that the church is only a human device, developed out of human wisdom to meet human needs, and not a building of God, which His Spirit created and continues, and its voice of authority will soon be silenced, its oracles questioned and rejected, its fellowship lightly esteemed and easily forsaken.

Therefore, stand fast against this third insidious foe and quit yourselves like men who can read and think for themselves, and who will not be made the dupes of any blind leader of the Blind.

I had intended, when I began this sermon, to speak to you chiefly, not on the defensive side of the Christian warfare as enjoined in the "standfast" of the text; but of the positive, active, aggressive side as presented to us in the picture of the Athletes definite aim, and determined, unflagging effort. I can only touch upon that side of our duty now. It is a most important side. We can only continue in the Faith, and stand firm and unmoved in its defence, first by realizing its truth and solemn significance to ourselves and to all men; and then secondly, by setting ourselves, with fixed resolve and combined, concentrated effort, to live the truth and to propagate the truth vieing with one another, to be first in holiness and in nearness to our Lord, and foremost in bearing the glad tidings of salvation to perishing men. That is the picture which the contests of the stadium recall. Is it the picture, my brothers and sisters, of our lives? Are we not content with the lowest attainments in holiness? Willing to make almost any compromise with the world that we may live at ease and escape the peril of the battle? The effort and the toil of striving together for the faith of the gospel? Is not this the very secret of our coldness and deadness, and want of success in the things of God. This half-heartedness, this compromise with the world. Who are the people for instance, here in Toronto, who throng the theatres; who bet and win and lose on the race course, who get up and lavish their money in barbaric display or on the senseless parade and extravagance of the ball-room and the party; who perform in the silliness of what is called Rotten Row? They are not all Church-people, no doubt, but two-thirds of them are. No wonder that others put us to shame by the generosity of their giving to the cause of God; that we are falling behind those who have not had half our advantages in the noble strife for the Faith of the Gospel, as they understand it.

Now I want to press this matter upon you laymen, and especially upon you who are here as the representative men of the Church in your parish or mission. There is a good deal of complaining about the clergy in many places: they are not good preachers, or they are not good visitors, or they are not as conciliating as they might be. But what about yourselves? Does your parish or missions present a picture in anyway resembling that drawn by the Apostle's hand? Are you as a

congregation striving together for the Faith of the Gospel? Have you taken pains to ascertain that Faith, to understand it with your minds, to embrace it with your hearts, to live it in your lives? Do you confer together about the interests of the Kingdom of God? Do you combine and organize, and strive together, each one doing his best—not merely in giving, but in working to extend and to defend the Kingdom? Is that the picture, or do you just fold your hands, and leave all to the Parson; go to church, perhaps, once on a Sunday; perhaps criticise the sermon; perhaps go to sleep. Never pray for the clergyman; never read a book in explanations or illustration of the Faith; never speak to a neighbor about the interests or the claims of the Church, well content to leave him alone, if he will leave you alone—is that the picture? And then you wonder that the clergy don't attract large congregation, that the Church does not succeed. The loftiest commendation that Newman ever gave of his fellow-workers in the Tractarian Movement was, that they were "brimful of schemes for the Church's good." Is not that just what is lacking in most people's lives? They are brimful of schemes for their own good—for the good of their children—for the good of society—but for the Church of Christ never a thought or a plan or care. Brethren, to be indifferent about the truth, to be inactive in the cause of Christ, to leave things to take their own course, not to use the best thought and judgment and energy and skill that we have, not to stand fast, not to be striving together for the Faith of the Gospel, is to be a traitor to our Captain and our King, and to prove ourselves unworthy of our privileges and of Him. The kingdom of God was meant to be a kingdom of workers, as it exists in most of our parishes it is a kingdom of drones. What are you doing? I ask you, one and all, that you can think of as a striving together for the Faith of the Gospel, what are you doing to extend the Truth, to defend the Faith to uphold the Kingdom? What would you think of an army whose generals and colonels and captains were the only men that ever tried to learn their drill, that bore arms, or fired a shot in the day-battle! would you be surprised at their failure, at their utter defeat?

Soldiers of Christ arise,
 And put your armour on,
 Strong in the strength which God supplies
 Through His Eternal Son.

