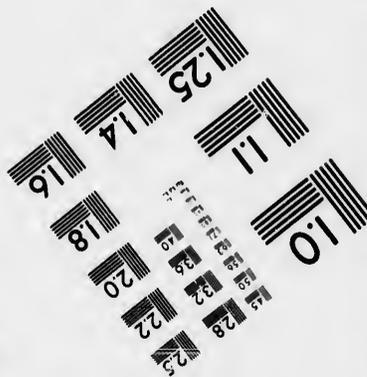
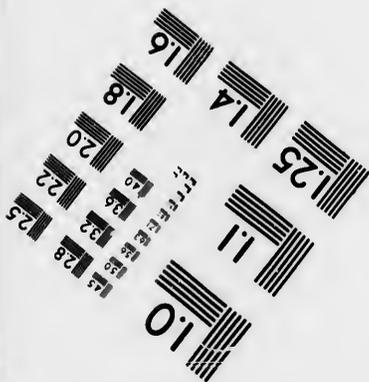
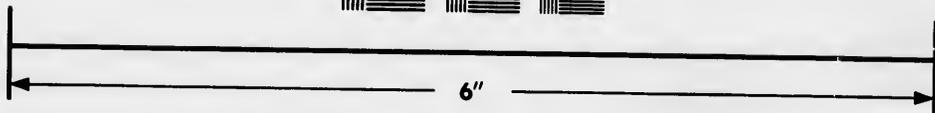
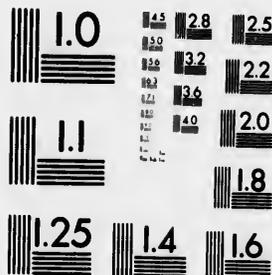


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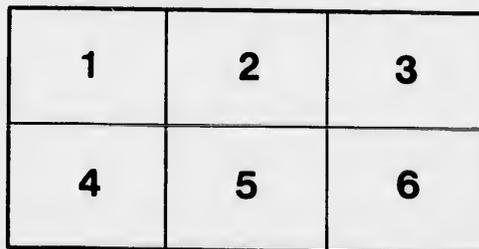
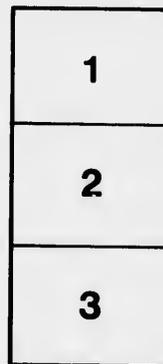
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S E R M O N

PREACHED IN

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MONTREAL,

On Advent Sunday, 1851,

APPOINTED, BY AUTHORITY, FOR THE CELEBRATION OF
THE THIRD SEMI-CENTENNIAL JUBILEE

OF THE

SOCIETY FOR THE PROPAGATION OF THE
GOSPEL IN FOREIGN PARTS,

BY THE

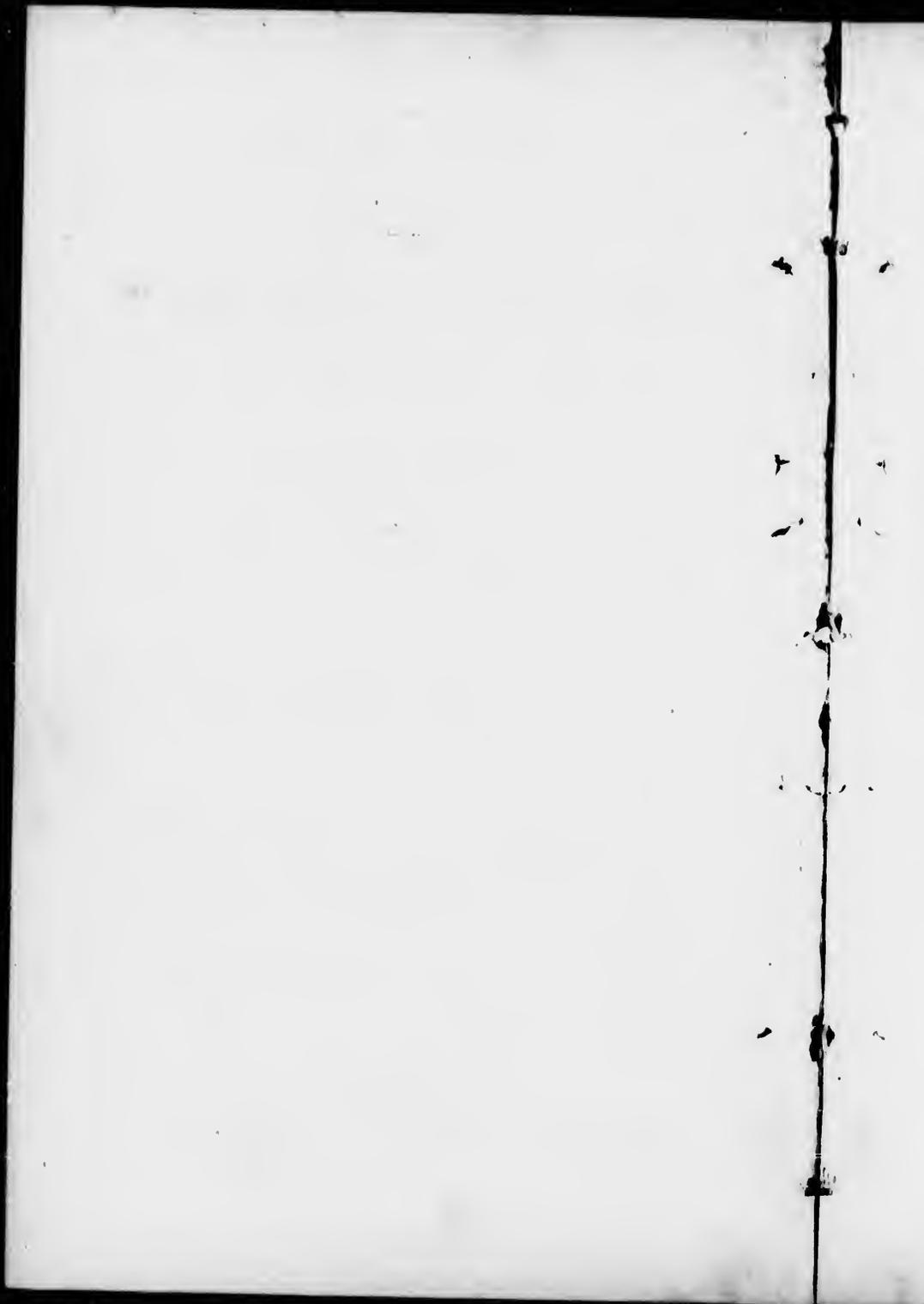
REV. WILLIAM T. LEACH, D. C. L.,
INCUMBENT OF ST. GEORGE'S CHAPEL.



MONTREAL :

PRINTED BY JOHN LOVELL, ST. NICHOLAS STREET.

1851.



MONTREAL, *December 1, 1851.*

DEAR SIR,—We beg to request, for publication, a copy of the Sermon delivered by you in St. George's Church, on Advent Sunday, on the occasion of the third semi-centennial Jubilee of the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel. The assurance that your compliance with our request will be gratifying to your numerous friends, and our persuasion that the extensive circulation of your discourse will prove beneficial not only to the Society, but to the Church generally, will, we trust, be sufficient inducements with you to accede to our request.

We are very respectfully,

Your obedient servants,

CHARLES PHILLIPS, }
WM. FRANCIS, } Church Wardens.
J. J. GIBB,
E. E. SHELTON,
JOHN LOVELL,
ALFRED PHILLIPS,
R. TAYLOR.

The Rev. Dr. Leach.

MCGILL COLLEGE,
MONTREAL, *Dec. 2, 1851.*

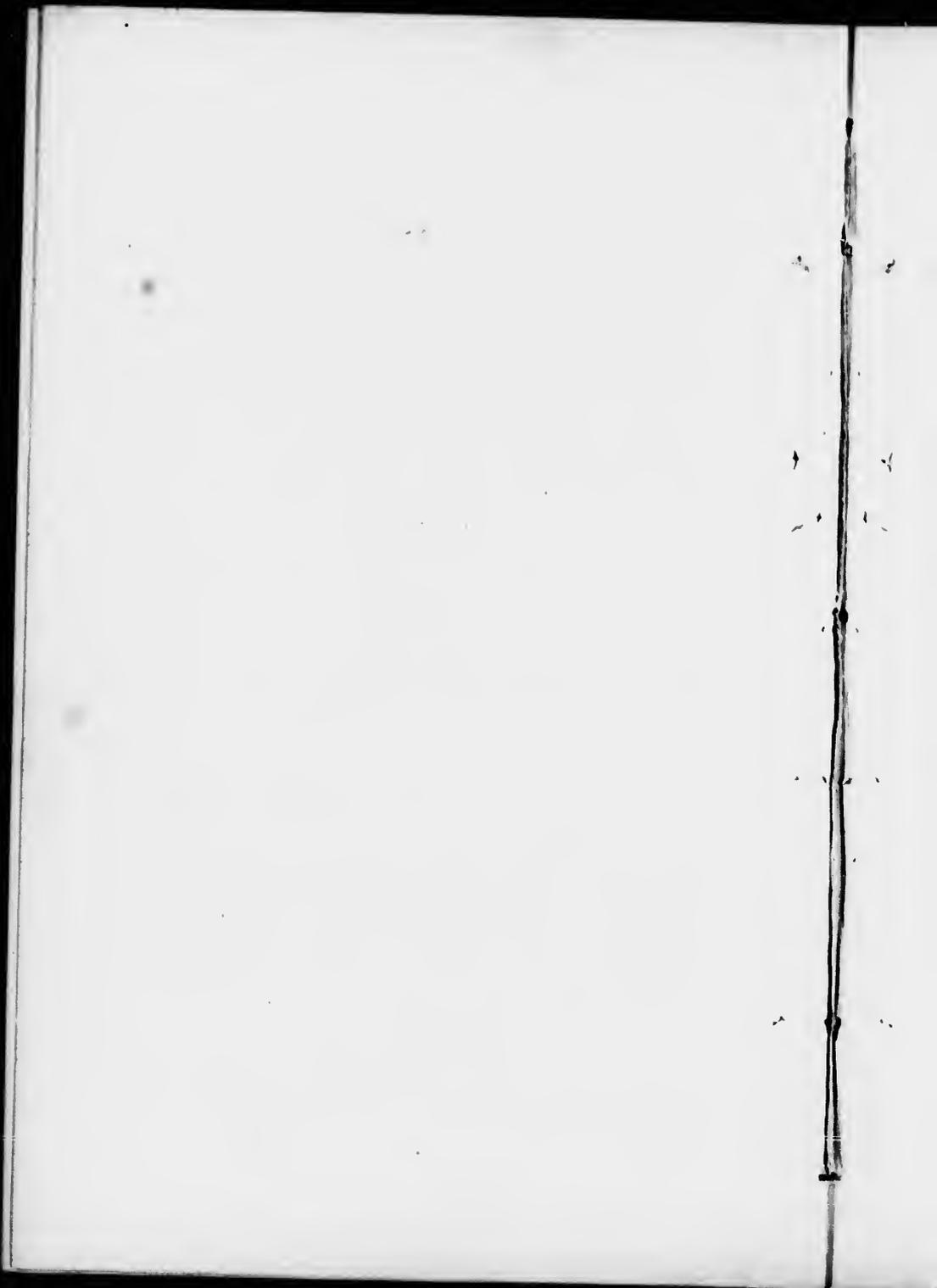
GENTLEMEN,—I send you a copy of the Sermon which you desire, for publication; and although other occupations have prevented me from revising it so carefully as some points which I have ventured to touch, require, my wish to comply with yours, and my desire of being useful in any way, prevail with me to agree to its publication.

Very faithfully,

Your obedient servant,

WILLIAM T. LEACH.

Messrs. Phillips, Francis, &c.



S E R M O N .

“ When He shall come to be glorified in His Saints, and to be admired in all them that believe.”—I Thess. 1, 10.

THE Festival of Advent has been appointed by the Church, for the commemoration of two events, the one past, the other future—the former, the most memorable event to be found in the book of the history of man, the latter, an event to which a great part of the revelations from God direct us to look, as the next to that solemnity of the last judgment, which finishes the annals of time, and begins the always enduring day of eternity.

We are this day called upon to give thanks to Almighty God, as for other numberless acts of His gracious goodness, especially for this, that in His great mercy He sent His Son, Jesus Christ, in the time of this mortal life, to *visit* us in great humility; and no less are our liveliest thanksgivings due for the assurance which He has given us, that the same Jesus Christ, the Saviour of men, shall come again in His glorious Majesty, to judge the quick and the dead, “ when He shall be glorified in His Saints, and admired in all them that believe.”

This is the day which has been appointed for the commemoration of these events, and on this particular occasion, it has likewise been enjoined upon us, to celebrate

the third semi-centennial Jubilee of the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel, a Society whose zeal and illustrious deeds of charity exerted for the salvation of "the daughter of their people" and the world at large, is no insignificant sign of that future event, of which it now behooves us with joyful expectation, to contemplate the coming. Hence the celebration of this Jubilee is singularly suitable to the day; and in dwelling upon the magnitude of the operations of this Society and the excellence of its plan, we shall behold a powerful agency serving to bring on the period of the second advent of Christ; we may see cause to rejoice in it, as an encouragement and confirmation of our hopes, we may see that not only is there no present chasm in the advancement of Christ's Kingdom, but that it is hastening on, and that the number of His elect is even now being accomplished, so that for us with all those that are departed in the true faith of Christ's holy name, the time is flying quickly towards that *perfect* consummation and bliss, both in body and soul, which we shall have, we trust, in Christ's eternal and everlasting glory.

Let us then advert, in the first place, to the zealous exertions of this Society for the advancement of its design—the Propagation of the Gospel; and in the second place, to the excellent nature of its plan.

The Venerable Society for the Propagation of the Gospel was first formally established by charter, in the year of our Lord, 1701, 150 years ago, and is the oldest Missionary Society, it is said, of the Reformed Church.

Previously to this, partial efforts had been made by some of the French and Dutch Calvinists, to extend the knowledge of the faith of Christ to the natives of Brazil, but unsuccessfully. The Dutch, with better success, gave to the doctrines of the Reformation, a firmer settlement in their Eastern Colonies, particularly in Ceylon; and the Danes, through the liberality of Frederick IV. their king, established Missions in their Colony in the Presidency of Madras. It is certain, however, that during the first century after the Reformation, no material exertions were made to communicate to heathen lands the knowledge of the Gospel. In truth, there was little leisure, little money, and little energy to spare. All were then required for the defence of the Faith, all the powers of reason and all the resources of persuasion; and alas! as it seemed, the less warrantable argument of the sword. For a long time subsequent to the Reformation, England had no Colonies to Christianize; and when she had, she had need at home for all her labour and all her counsel, and had woes great enough of her own to make her hang down her head in pensiveness and sorrow, to see the goodly edifice of the Church of Christ sometimes rent asunder like the bones of a martyr, half consumed and scattered. It was not till the commencement of the last century, that the Church of England, by the goodness of "the Great Physician there," had so recovered from the wounds inflicted by the anarchy of religious fanatics on the one hand and the machinations of the Church of Rome on the other, as to make any vigorous efforts for

the communication of the blessings of true religion to the Colonies of the Empire. The Society for the Propagation of the Gospel, instituted indeed at an earlier date, was in 1701, A. D., as before said, established by Royal Charter. In 1725, A. D., there were thirty-one Missionaries sent forth by the Society. In 1835, A. D., during the long interval of one hundred and ten years, the number of Missionaries had increased to two hundred; but since then till 1849, A. D., during only fourteen years of interval, the number of Missionaries amounted to three hundred and fifty-five.

One of the most gratifying events in the history of this Society, is the eminent success with which God has chosen to bless its agency in contributing to the establishment of the Church in the United States; for, an establishment she has, though on a basis that derives no support from legal statutes. The worldly policy of the Imperial Government for the time then being, declined the duty of establishing her upon a foundation commensurate with the spiritual necessities of the people, a duty whose performance would have been its glory, and perhaps its best wisdom in other respects. So much as this may be said without imputing blame, for who can now estimate the resisting force which was opposed to the execution of such a duty by the theoretical views and wilful prejudices of the Colonists themselves. Be this as it may, to the Venerable Society, next to the Church of England, belongs the honour under Heaven's auspicious aid, of engrafting and making grow a branch which

the Lord has made so strong for himself. Before the declaration of Independence, about one hundred Missionaries, besides Catechists and Schoolmasters, were sustained by the Society. Their obligations to it are unequivocally acknowledged by the Standing Committee of the Diocese of New York, in their late reply to the letter of the Archbishop of Canterbury. They say of the Agents who propagated the Gospel in their land, that "the most effective was the Venerable Society for the Propagation of the Gospel." Glorious indeed was the legacy left by it to the United States at the time when they became politically severed from the authority of the British Crown. Observe the progress which the Church has made amidst the multitudinous forms which religion has there been brought to assume. Witness in all their cities the dignity of her position, and in the remotest settlements the extent of her prosperous march. See in the literature of her Clergy, and in the public acts of clergy and laymen, with what faithfulness they have guarded the sacred trust committed to their keeping. Greater cause of thankfulness can hardly be conceived, greater cause of gratitude and respect to that Society which has been one of the great instruments, under God, of preparing so large a portion of our race against the day, when Christ shall come to be glorified in His Saints, and to be admired in all them that believe.

Let us now turn our eyes nearer home, and contemplate our own obligations. Nearly three hundred clergymen are maintained in the colonies by the liberality

of the Society; and for this and other objects comprehended in its plan, the sum of nearly £36,000 is annually expended. Suppose that the ministrations of these three hundred had never furnished to their flocks, the consolations of the truth in Christ, had never proclaimed to them the knowledge of their God—what a painful thought! The number and magnitude of the evils which thus would have been added to the troubles and trials of their laborious life, who can estimate? Few enough at the best are the comforts and joys of a family—the lonely dwellers of the woods; cut off, we may say, from the living world of men, with its innumerable sympathies and enlivening motives, and doomed to the hard service of a prolonged contention for subsistence with a stubborn though not perhaps an ungrateful soil. How many hundreds of families, but for the voice of those crying in the wilderness, and the ministration of the heavenly things which belong to their office, would have faltered in their faith, and sunk from their hopes, and swerved from the ways of God! What prospect could have remained to the pious father of a family, of concluding his days in peace, where there was no church for his children to receive a blessing from the hand of Christ, and give them holy counsel, and lead them as it were, by the hand, through this vale of tears to their last repose in hope that Christ shall come again. How much heavier had been the weight of their chains, how much more melancholy the weariness of their days, and the darkness of their nights, more especially, as year after

year, their expectations would have been disappointed, and their prayers have seemed to be disregarded, perhaps even by God. Oh ye who generously aid in the propagation of the Gospel of Christ, ye know not, how much heavenly truth your deeds of light have scattered—ye know not, how many hundreds of bleeding hearts your ministering hands have healed, but when Christ shall come again to be glorified in His Saints, *then* ye shall know.

The three hundred Missionaries supported by the Society, together with the rest of the Clergy, are necessarily few and far apart on so wide a field. Their number is inadequate, by far too small, for an efficacious employment in so large a vineyard, of the spiritual functions of the Church. But this is not the point now to be attended to. Rather now let our grateful acknowledgments be rendered to God for having treated us so graciously. In most of the frequented parts of the Province, on the banks of the parent stream and of the western lakes, where the children of our people have pitched their habitations, the ark of the church has found a permanent resting-place, we trust, and an honorable name. Many a solitary place has been made glad ; into many a dark place has the true light of the Divine truth been made to shine ; and that the lamps which diffuse it shall be fed with oil enough to make them burn ever brighter and brighter, there are many instances of pure and well directed zeal to encourage, if not to justify, the hope. It would be a reproach indeed, a melancholy proof of the little value we placed upon the best gifts of heaven and upon the object most dear

to the heart of our Lord, if we should not strain every nerve to preserve and extend the walls of our Sion, if we should not strive to emulate the wise and holy zeal of the Society to whose aid we owe so much. If the hearts of *its* members and friends, touched with a grateful sense of Christ's compassion to themselves, have overflowed with compassion to us in this distant land, shall ours remain insensible? Our causes of thankfulness indeed are so numerous, but our deeds hitherto so defective, that it is hard to say, whether we ought more to rejoice in God's exuberant goodness, or to deplore with repenting tears, our remissness. Let the exemplary zeal of this "great and good Society" provoke us, and its eminent success in the cause of Christ which is also our cause, encourage us to seek with far more earnestness, the extension of His Kingdom, that we likewise may have a part in the joy of the Universal Church, when He shall come again to be glorified in His Saints, and to be admired in all them that believe.

But besides the great exertions and zeal of the Venerable Society for the Propagation of the Gospel, let us advert in few words to the excellence of its plan. When this Society commenced its sacred work in America, call to remembrance what was then the state of religion there. There was little or no agreement in faith and worship throughout the country generally. The prejudices, the wild theories, religious and political, that had been generated or adopted from abroad, during the stormy times of the Commonwealth in England, had floated across the

ocean and infected almost every part of the North American Colonies. A great portion of those who first settled in them, had been sufferers for Non-conformity, and brought into their new settlements a disaffected, if not a hostile spirit to the Church of England, and either formed themselves into separate congregations after the independent manner, or lived regardless of any public celebration of the solemnities of religion. Such a state of things, if constant in its resistance to regulation, can no where result in any thing else but a fatal corruption of religion or a scornful rejection of it. The servile spirit of man bends him prostrate before the vilest idols and superstitions; the defying spirit of man, distorts and mutilates, and at last confounds and destroys religion. Great is the interval indeed between these extremes, but the middle space is clearly the field marked out by the hand of the Great Creator as the dwelling place of truth and virtue and holiness, and ever as any race of men best performs its duties, and best fulfils its destiny, it is known to approach the nearer to this central dominion consecrated to order and intelligence and a loved obedience to God's eternal laws. But if the interval is great, great also is the space occupied by the extremes of servility and defiance, and hence we see the heathenism of the Pantheon holding in servile bonds, the spirits, I know not of how many millions, and Christianity broken into so many pieces by the spirit of defiance, and that sacred name given by it to so many forms of stupid error or fanaticism or vain philosophy, that few of mortal men, even with

the Bible in their hands, could say with any confidence what Christianity is, but for the authenticated interpretation of it which the Church has given us in the Prayer Book. You can hardly enumerate the various divisions and sub-divisions into which Christianity has been split, in the anarchy and prevalence of the spirit of defiance. Think of the number of their opposing creeds and forms of worship. Is it in this distracted way that the great God ought to be worshipped among men? Was it thus improvidently that the wisdom of Christ instituted the plan of human redemption? The seductive mythology of the heathens, and the fierce barbarity of the tribes that trampled down the civilization of the ancient seat of empire in which Christianity was first established, these were causes, to say nothing of Jewish prejudices, which combined with the many passions and much darkness of a world lying in wickedness, to obstruct the prosperity of the plan of Christ; but a plan it was, a plan designed in the heart of Christ, where all the resources of celestial wisdom were united; and when it pleased God at the Reformation to make His plan visible again, it reappeared luminously in England. The corruptions with which it had been overlaid for so many ages, were torn off and cast away, and after a prolonged contest with the servile defenders of its corruption, maintained by the best and wisest men I find any memory of in the history of this world, the Church of Christ came forth—the King's daughter glorious in her beauty, with the unmuffled Book of God in her one hand, and the human interpre-

tation thereof, the Prayer Book, in her other. The Church, as it was then, comprehended all the specific truths which we now profess to believe, and was constituted, as we believe, in the visible form in which the Kingdom of God ought to subsist in the world ; it was then as it is still, and we pray God will continue to be, till Christ come again to be glorified in His Saints, and to be admired in all them that believe.

Now what I am concerned to remark is this, that the plan of the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel, seeks to establish the Church of Christ in her integrity. Its plan of operation is in harmony with the plan of Christ. It seeks to establish that regular form of Faith and Worship, which at the time of the Reformation was decided upon, in England, to be that plan,—decided upon with rarer degrees of holy zeal and learning and moderation and experience of human affairs, than ever before or since have been brought together for the determination of any cause or question whatsoever.

One of the special objects of the Society is the maintenance and extension of the Episcopate abroad. The support of the order of Bishops in Foreign parts is the *first* thing set forth in the recommendation of contributions to be made to the Jubilee Fund, and its careful providence for an order which is essential to the Church's integrity, is a proof that its plan is in harmony with that of the Church to which you belong.

It is pleasing to see in what light the Standing Committee of the Diocese of New York regard this essential

point of harmony. They say in their late communication to the Archbishop of Canterbury, on the subject of the Jubilee, "The civil independence of the States opened the way for us to obtain, from the charity of the Scottish and English Bishops, the Episcopacy, and in it, the means of securing for all future time a succession of divinely authorized Ministers of the Word and Sacraments." They say further of the Church of England and their own, that "both are founded on the same faith, are knit together in the same Sacraments, and are governed agreeably to the same word of God by Bishops and Pastors who hold their authority, an authority which is supreme in spiritual things, *immediately* from the Divine Head of the Church!" It is surely delightful to observe the communion and the unity of spirit which, by the maintenance of sound principles, are thus produced among the members of the body of Christ. In these happy effects we see the wisdom of the Society justified of its children. We find in the letter of the Standing Committee, that the Episcopate is distinctly recognised as essential to the integrity of the Church, and the constant adherence to this principle of unity and government, has unquestionably, in the United States, where the state of religion so urgently required it, given to Her the pre-eminent place which she holds among the multitude of diverse denominations there; and this is one of the principles which has always governed the proceedings of the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel, and which still governs it in its efforts to reclaim this Colony to the

Church of God, and make it, as it is said, and not causelessly, to have been instrumental in making the United States "the praise and envy of the nations of the earth."

The Church of England thus wisely seconded by her potent auxiliary, may be said, without arrogance, to be, in North America, the representative of Catholic Christianity. She is opposed to the servile spirit and opposed to the defying spirit; remote from the servility of Romanism as from the anarchy of Puritanism and Dissent. She steers a midway course between the dreaded rock that juts from the Italian shore, and the whirlpool so perilous to the vagrant barks. She appeals with confidence to the intelligence of men. She gives them the word of God and her interpretation of it to guide them. There is the divine charter for them, and there are the rules of her incorporation warranted by it. She comes invested with a claim of right upon their obedience, an ancient and acknowledged right, which has been demonstrated a thousand times over to be valid. She claims, that assent be yielded, upon rational conviction, to that deliberate interpretation of the word of God which she, the true representative of Catholic Christianity, has given to it. This is a claim that never has been shewn to be unfounded. Who ever justified his rejection of it? We as members of the Church all acknowledge it, acknowledge our belief in her sacraments, and articles of religion, creeds and catechism, and the divinely authorized appointment of her Ministry. The belief of these things remains imperative upon us, and to keep the truth in all its in-

tegrity, and make it efficacious for the winning of many souls into the one fold of Christ, are manifestly the high aim and destination of that Venerable Society whose third Jubilee we now commemorate. Persuaded that the plan of its operations is in harmony with that of the Divine Head of the Church, convinced of the inestimable value of the benefits which it has bestowed upon us, and is still generously extending to us, we rejoice in a benevolence and a wisdom, so honorable to human nature. How many thanks are due to God for having given us, through this Society, such a pledge of the future victory of the truth in Christ, in this Colony? How many thanks are due to the Society itself? How many prayers that God may never suffer its zeal to decay, and may always cause its resources to grow? May the tongues of men and angels ever call it blessed, and when the next Jubilee shall arrive to be commemorated by our posterity, may the praise of this Society in all the Churches, give them still greater cause of thankfulness to God. In the meantime, there is much for us also to do. Let our best endeavours concur with it in the same cause. With united love and many prayers, let us seek the same end, so that all our efforts may unite in bringing on the blissful consummation when Christ shall come to be glorified in His Saints, and to be admired in all them that believe.

In conclusion, let what has been said of the Venerable Society for the Propagation of the Gospel, serve to convince us that unity of feeling and action, such as that which has for so long a period distinguished it, is at all

times necessary for the effectual maintenance and extension of the kingdom of Christ. Individual efforts are but vain oblations when separated from a regulated system of operations. Nor indeed are they merely *vain*, but positively mischievous, inasmuch as the very circumstance of their being made separately, is a tacit condemnation of the system, whose rule of procedure they reject. However successful therefore may be the separate exertions of individuals, that success can never compensate for the badness of their example which persuades to the obstruction of the collected experience and resources requisite for the due advancement of any worthy cause. The children of this world are in this respect wiser than the children of light. Look at the enormous effects produced for the moral desolation instead of the salvation of men by their evil passions when working in combination. Look at the rapidity with which any worldly scheme proceeds to its completion, carried along on the projecting wings of a gainful speculation. Observe on the other hand how often the holiest enterprises are weakened by the wilfulness of individual or party eccentricity. Be it your care then, if you have any persuasion of the value; if you have any love and admiration of that heavenly thing among men—the Church of the Living God, that eye of light, that glory of this dark world below, to unite your exertions, counsel and resources, that you may co-operate with the general plan for the extension of the Gospel of Christ. You shall thus have it in your power to do the best thing which it is permitted any of mortals to have the

honour of doing—contributing to render the Church of your Redeemer, efficacious for human salvation. If wisely directed, then your faith and zeal shall have their perfect work; then shall the blessing of the God of Peace be upon you, when Christ shall come again to be glorified in His Saints, and to be admired in all them that believe. Amen and Amen.

