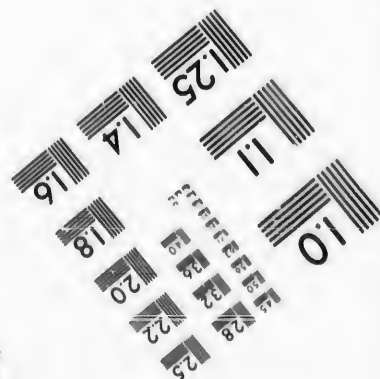
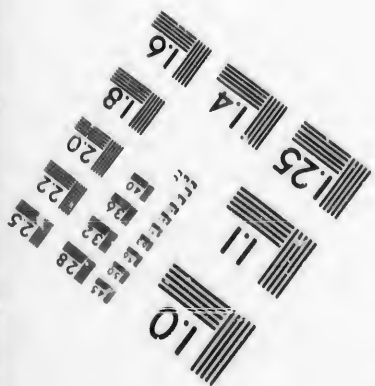
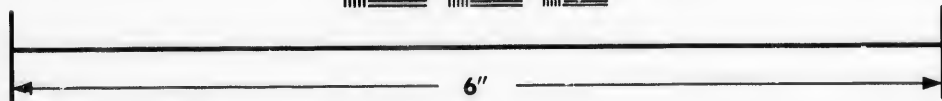
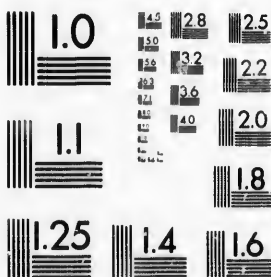


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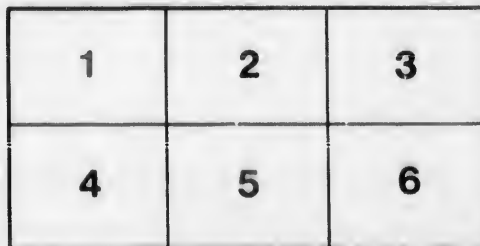
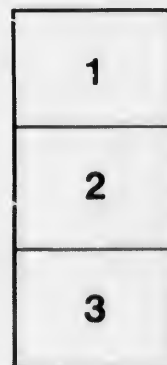
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Apr 20. 1960

["CHURCHMAN'S FRIEND" EXTRA.

The Church Society of the Diocese of Toronto.

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## A LETTER,

ADDRESSED TO THE INCORPORATED MEMBERS,

BY

EDWARD H. DEWAR, M.A.,

RECTOR OF SANDWICH.

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*"Jerusalem is builded as a city that is compact together."*

---

REVEREND BROTHERS AND GENTLEMEN,

THE great danger which threatened the Church of the United States when the course of political events deprived her of the fostering care of the Mother Church of England, was that, instead of becoming one united Church, there would be a number of isolated and unconnected dioceses, having no common objects and interests, and without the strength which is always derived from union. From this danger she was delivered, under God, by the wisdom, patience and perseverance of her noble and patriotic sons, and we now behold her a great, prosperous and united body, consisting of more than thirty dioceses, extending the blessings of religion to millions, and exercising a strong conservative influence amid all the political distractions and difficulties of the times. A similar danger now threatens ourselves. The love of independence is a strong

impulse in every human breast, and the division of the diocese of Toronto holds out temptations to gratify this impulse at the expense of unity, which it will require foresight, prudence and energy successfully to resist.

With men who look upon history as an old almanac, and who think that they can devise a better system than that which the experience of ages has hallowed, it is useless to argue. But I speak to men who are imbued with the spirit of our Reformers, and with the spirit of our prayer-book; who while they are ever anxious to correct abuses and to reform what has become corrupt, yet ever desire to look for the old landmarks and to restore rather than to destroy.

The Church is like a tree; in one sense, one and undivided; in another sense it extends into numerous ramifications and comprises many branches. But these ramifications are successive. The trunk separates into boughs, the boughs divide into smaller branches; the branches spread into numberless twigs and sprays. And so it has ever been the theory of the Church, that her subdivisions proceed in regular order; the Church Catholic is divided into national or provincial churches; the provincial churches into dioceses; the dioceses into parishes. To disregard any one of these subdivisions would be to subvert the order of nature, and to destroy the fundamental constitution of the Church of Christ. The Church Catholic acts in her general councils; the national churches in their provincial synods (general conventions), the dioceses in their diocesan synods, and the parishes in their parochial assemblies. All these are necessary to the healthy and vigorous action of the Church. The first, general councils, are now, alas! impossible, and it is difficult fully to estimate the loss which the Church sustains by the want thereof. To the others in various branches of the Church there are impediments and hindrances; but these hindrances must be a source of regret to every intelligent churchman, and we ought all to seek their removal when possible, and maintain to the utmost of our ability unity of action and of interests. In Canada especially it ought to be our great aim to prepare ourselves for the union of all the Dioceses of British North America into one Church, and so to shape our course in our

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separate dioceses, that no great obstacles may be found in the way when the time for united action shall arrive.

But besides her deliberative assemblies, there are many other objects in which the separate dioceses of a provincial Church may unite and act in concert. And as reason suggests, so experience proves that united action, where possible, is always the most efficient. If each of the English dioceses had its own Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, its own Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts, its own Missionary Society, and its own Bible Society, would the Church of England ever have accomplished, to the extent in which she has done so, the mighty ends for which the Almighty has entrusted her with power, influence and wealth? And so in the United States,—vast as is the country, distant as are the dioceses from each other, diverse as are the interests of its various sections,—yet the Church, besides sending her representatives from all parts to the General Convention, maintains one general Board of Missions, one general Theological Seminary, one general Sunday School Union.

Upper Canada has hitherto all been comprised in one diocese; that diocese is now divided by the consecration of a Bishop for the Western portion. And already, I hear, it is proposed by some among us, to break loose from every tie that binds us to our fellow-churchmen in the remaining portion, to own no fellowship with them, to unite in no common objects, to have no common interests, to be altogether separate, isolated, independent!

Especially, it is asserted, we must have a Church Society of our own! Whence, I would ask, arises the necessity for this? What are the advantages to be derived from a separate organization? The disadvantages are plain and manifest. Each body, and especially that of the new diocese, would be so weak, that it would be a mockery to pretend to carry out the many and important objects which the constitution of the Church Society proposes. In the whole new diocese of Huron there are not, I believe, twenty-five incorporated lay members, and the subscriptions of the clerical members are wholly appropriated to the Widows' and Orphans' Fund. The entire contribution of the diocese to the General



Purpose Fund, including the proceeds of the sermons preached in every church and station, is not much more than £300—not enough to pay for the expenses of management. And yet with this sum bibles and prayer-books are to be distributed, churches built and endowed, parsonages provided, parochial and Sunday Schools maintained. It may be replied that this sum would be largely increased; then why has it not before this been increased? Why are there so many parishes which have done nothing or next to nothing to further the objects of the Society? Have those objects been different heretofore from what they are to be hereafter? Has there been less call for exertion? Have there been no families without bibles and prayer-books? No villages without churches and parsonages? No missions without ministers? No entire districts starving for lack of the bread of life? And if the knowledge that these things are so has not roused men to exertion, I, for one, cannot believe that any lower, earthlier motive, will produce any great and lasting change. A feeling of opposition and rivalry may swell the subscription lists for a year or two; but it will not supply the place of a holy zeal, and of love unfeigned.

But besides being a Society for the prosecution of the great missionary designs of the Church, our Church Society is an incorporated body, charged with important trusts for the benefit of the clergy. It is charged with the management and distribution of the Commutation Fund derived under the Clergy Reserve Secularization Act, and it is charged with the management of the Widows' and Orphans' Fund. And I maintain that, regarding the Church Society in this light, every clergyman not only has a direct interest in its maintenance as one strong and undivided body, but has a right to demand that it shall not be weakened by division. I have surrendered to the Church the income secured to me for my life on the security of the Provincial Government. I have done so on the faith of a bond given by the whole Church Society as it now exists. That bond is good security; no one will be so bold as to assert that if the Society is divided and the fund divided, the security would be equally good. I maintain that I have a right to demand that my bond shall not be cancelled, and that the obligations which it contains transferred by

one of the contracting parties to a body which I, the other party, may deem to be less responsible. And even the vote of a majority of the body cannot annul my bond, or absolve the whole body from the obligation it has assumed. Others may think that the security of a smaller body would be equally good, and may be willing to accept it; but so long as I, or any single clergyman, refuses to release the whole Society, I do not see how it can break faith with me, or divide the fund of which it has accepted the administration. I for one (and I know that I am speaking the sentiments of nearly one half, if not more, of the clergy of the new western diocese) will never voluntarily consent to release the undivided Church Society from the engagement into which it has entered with me. Nor can I believe that the Legislature of the country would, by granting to a new body a charter of incorporation, sanction such a breach of faith.

The same view holds good in the case of the Widows' and Orphans' Fund. With respect to that fund the Church Society may be considered a Mutual Assurance Society. I have paid my annual subscriptions; I have performed various duties in compliance with the laws of the Society; and in return for this the Society has promised a certain provision, in case of my death, to my widow and orphans. That promise I look upon as good security; a similar promise from a smaller and weaker body I am unwilling to accept in place of it. And shall I be told that, after I have for years fulfilled my part of the contract, the Church Society has the power to transfer its obligation to such a body? No; I maintain that the compact cannot be broken; the whole body has no right to divide itself without my consent, and to give me a claim upon a part in place of the claim which I now have upon the whole. Again I assert that no vote of a majority can be binding upon me; if I choose to consider the security offered to me less satisfactory than that which I now hold, I have a right to claim that the Widows' and Orphans' Fund shall remain inviolate and undivided.

I am willing, however, to admit that some changes ought to be made, and very advantageously can be made, in the constitution and by-laws of the Society, so as to adapt it to the new state of things.

1. Let the title be changed to "The Church Society of Upper Canada". This I imagine could readily be done by a brief Act of Parliament.

2. Let there be instituted a Branch Society in each diocese, which shall annually elect a Diocesan Committee. This committee to meet once a month, and to have power to make grants not exceeding £2 10s., and not exceeding on the whole £100 in any one year.

3. Let the Standing Committee consist of eighteen members, besides the President and Vice-Presidents, and be elected by the Diocesan Branches, in the proportion of two-thirds by that of Toronto, and one-third by that of the diocese of Huron; with the provision that upon the construction of the diocese of Kingston one-third shall be chosen from each diocese. The Standing Committee to meet once a quarter, to make larger grants, and to transact all the more important business of the Society.

4. The exercise of the patronage of the Rectories will hereafter constitute an important feature in the transactions of the Society. And I suspect that this has something to do with the proposed division of the Society. I cordially sympathize with those who desire that the patronage in the case of any vacant rectory shall be exercised by those who are resident in the diocese in which it is situated. But I see no force in the assertion that the Act of Parliament *requires* that there shall be a distinct Church Society in each diocese. It says that the patronage shall belong to the Church Society of the diocese in which the vacant rectory is situated. And I maintain that "The Church Society of the Diocese of Toronto" is the Church Society of this (western) diocese. It is a most unworthy quibble to pretend that it is not, merely because its name is the Church Society of the Diocese of Toronto. It derives a portion of its income from this diocese; it exercises all its functions in this diocese; it holds in trust a large fund for the clergy of this diocese; it is to all intents and purposes, and in the natural and common-sense meaning of the words, the Church Society of this diocese, as much as the United Church of Ireland is the Church of Canada.

Still I agree with those who think that the patronage should be exer-

vised by the members of the Society resident in the diocese to which the vacant rectory may belong. I am also convinced that a large portion of the incorporated members of the Church Society are by this time disposed to agree with me, that the principle of election to sacred offices by a large number of individuals is liable to most dangerous abuses, and likely to result in consequences fatal to the peace of the Church, and injurious to the future usefulness of the clergyman elected. Some such plan as the following might, I think, obviate these objections, and at the same time secure a voice in the appointment to the parishioners of the vacant rectory. In what is now the diocese of Toronto it would not at present come into operation, and God grant that the time when it would may be long distant! At the annual meeting of each diocesan branch let an Election Committee be chosen by ballot; this committee to consist of five, three clergymen and two laymen. To this committee let two more be added when a rectory becomes vacant, to be elected from among the incorporated members of the vestry meeting in the vacant parish, held for that purpose by the churchwardens; the constituency being the same as in the case of the benefice. Whenever a vacancy occurs the selection of an incumbent to be made by the hands of a committee of seven members of the Church Society, three clergymen and two laymen being chosen by the Diocesan Synod, and the remaining two, who may be either clergymen or laymen, in each case by the parishioners of the vacant benefice. It is not, I think, necessary to give the Bishop a voice in the election, because, by refusing to institute, he could always *veto* an improper appointment.\*

This letter has already far exceeded the limits I proposed to myself. I can therefore, in conclusion, only exhort you to consider the subjects I have ventured to bring before you, calmly and dispassionately; to exercise a sound and wise discretion: and to remember that upon the action which you may take will, under God, in a great measure depend the

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\* I would add a law, which ought perhaps more properly to be enacted by the Synod, that any clergyman desiring a vacant rectory should send in his application to the Committee as a body, and that any private application to an individual member of the Committee should disqualify him from receiving the appointment.

efficiency of our beloved Church, and her ability to fulfil the all-important purpose for which her walls have been reared by the great Architect, and enabled hitherto to withstand the gates of Hell.

I have the honour to be,

Reverend Brethren and Gentlemen,

Your obedient faithful Servant,

EDWARD H. DEWAR, M.A.

fulfil the all-impor-  
the great Architect,

men,

ervant,

DEWAR, M.A.

