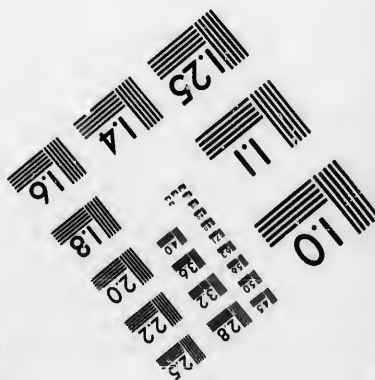
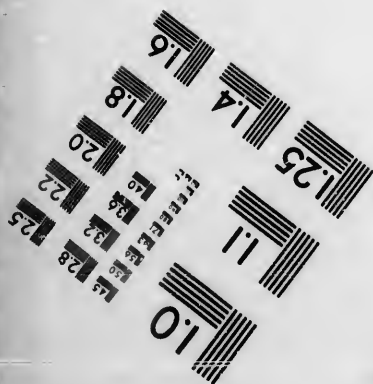
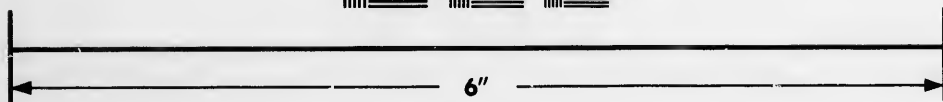
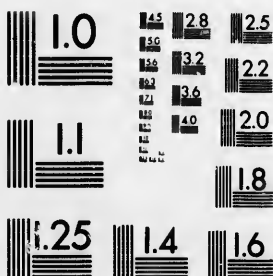


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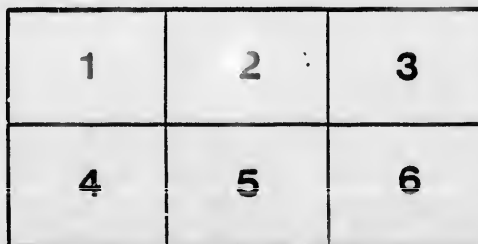
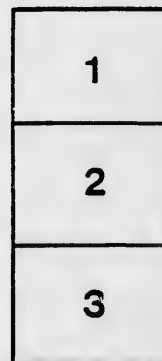
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1850-2

THOUGHTS

ON

THE REBUILDING

OF

The Cathedral Church of St. James.

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BY

THE LORD BISHOP OF TORONTO.

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Printed for private circulation only.

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# TO THE PARISHIONERS

OF

St. James's Parish, Toronto.

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MY DEAR BRETHREN,—

It is to be regretted, that, after the unfortunate destruction of the Cathedral of St. James, by fire, last April, measures were not more speedily taken to rebuild a new Church, worthy of this rising city; because the delay and frequent meetings of the Vestry on the subject have produced differences of opinion, and something of irritation.

Now, a want of unanimity in this matter is very much to be deplored; more especially, as all the parishioners have the same object in view, and are equally anxious to do every thing in their power for its accomplishment. Permit me, therefore, to submit a few seasonable words, in the hope of restoring harmony; for till this be done, we shall not be in a position to make the great and united effort necessary to rebuild a church, which may remain through ages a monument to our piety, and an ornament to the city of Toronto.

1. From the first ages, Christians have had places set apart, with prayers and sacerdotal benedictions, for burying their dead, called Dormitories, or sleeping places; for they considered death a sleep till the resurrection. There were, however, no dormitories or burying places within the cities or villages during the first three centuries of the Christian era. In this respect, the Roman law was exceedingly strict, and prohibited the burying in cities to every rank and station whatsoever. Now, as Christians obeyed implicitly the law

under which they lived in all things, innocent and indifferent, they neither did nor could, during this period, bury their dead in or around their churches; because the churches were all within towns and cities. Their burying-places were, therefore, without the cities,—being either monuments erected above ground, or more frequently caves, vaults, and catacombs in the fields under ground. In times of persecution, these cemeteries, or vaults, and caves, were also used as places of worship, in which Christians could meet in greater safety.

2. The laws against burying in cities and in churches continued in force under the Christian as well as the Pagan Emperors for several ages after Constantine the Great. Every city and village had a burial-place without the gates, or near the entrance; and so it continued till about the sixth and seventh centuries, when some relaxations began to be introduced. First, churches were built on the graves of the martyrs; next, Kings and Emperors and eminent men began occasionally to be buried in the porches of churches; and at length, and after a long interval, people were allowed to be interred close to the church or under its walls, but not within the church; then, leave was given to bury Kings, Bishops, and founders of churches, within the church; and in the ninth century the whole matter was left to the discretion of the Bishops. Still, public opinion, as well as the law, were against burying in churches or cities; and, being considered injurious to health, it made slow progress. But in the thirteenth century, when it came to be believed that it was of great benefit to the soul to be buried in or near the church, the dying became eager to gain this privilege, and at length it was generally conceded.

3. A return to ancient usage is reviving; and in most of the large towns in Europe the people are at present prohibited from burying within the walls, and compelled to have cemeteries in the fields or adjacent country without the cities.

4. But, although burying-places were compelled in ancient times to be without the cities, they were protected from robbery, violence, and indignity, by severe laws and canons. The old Roman law was particularly severe in punishing injuries and abuses offered to the bodies, monuments, and sepulchres of the dead. They were considered sacred things,



and the penalty was death or transportation. This severity continued under Christian Kings and Emperors, because of the temptation which the cemeteries offered to the covetous and superstitious: the former were eager to possess themselves of the splendid ornaments deposited with the bodies of the rich; the latter to obtain relics, which were considered, by the weak and ignorant, of infinite value.

5. In regard to the consecration of burial-grounds, much misconception appears to exist, in the minds of great numbers of well-disposed and intelligent persons. We have seen that many ages elapsed before burial-grounds were established around churches, as they are at present; and, consequently, the custom of consecrating them is not of ancient date. Christian churches were indeed devoted to God, and consecrated for holy purposes, from the beginning, because authorised by Scripture, but not churchyards, which have not Scriptural but only Ecclesiastical warrant; nor are there any instances of the consecration of burial-grounds or churchyards till long after they had been made the depositories of the dead,—and then consecration was gradually adopted, and more especially because it began to be believed that they would derive a more perfect security by setting them apart with a holy service, than they had hitherto possessed from the civil and canon law.

6. Consecration adds the sanction and influence of religion to the penalty of the law, in separating by a visible and holy Service a portion of ground around the church of every parish, for ever, in which to inter the bodies of the congregation. This is done by the bishop, so far as in him lies, and by law he can. He separates the assigned portion of land by holy prayer and benediction from all common and profane uses whatsoever, and dedicates and consecrates the same for a burial-ground, or place of sepulchre, for the interment of the dead; and that the same ought so to remain by this his definite sentence and final decree.

7. Such is the purport of the sentence of consecration, in regard to churchyards; and it is subject to three important limitations. First: the civil law of the land, which may forbid, as the authorities of this city have lately forbidden (on account of the health of the inhabitants) any further

interments in the churchyard; and the same prohibition has been recently adopted in London, and will soon be in all the principal cities and towns of the Mother Country.

8. Second: so far as in us lies. This limitation accords with the law, so far as that no burials can take place when the civil law prohibits them. But it comes into action, whether the civil law operates or not, so soon as the bishop is convinced that farther interments may injure the living, by creating or promoting disease. The third limitation regards the rights of the church, which is the principal object in all churchyards; and to her requirements and necessities every thing else must give way. The churchyard is merely an appendage to the church; and its consecration is not equal in authority to the consecration of the church: hence, when the interests of the church itself are concerned, the churchyard may be dispensed with, or removed to another location. In fact, it is so dispensed with, when it can no longer be used as a place of interment.

9. Although consecration of burial-grounds be in strict accordance with all the better and holier feelings of our nature,—and is taught us by the example of God's servants in all ages, who assigned peculiar places where the bodies of the saints may rest in peace, and be preserved from all indignities, while their souls are safely kept in the hands of their Creator,—we must take heed not to carry our good feelings, or the effects of such consecration, to a superstitious or pernicious extent, or deem it equal to the consecration of a church. It is therefore no indignity, much less a desecration, to remove dead bodies with decent care and reverence from a locality found inconvenient to one more becoming. No one thought it a desecration or indignity to remove Gen. Brock's body from one of the bastions of Fort George, to place it below the monument on the Queenston Heights, erected to his honour. Nor have I and others been guilty of an act of desecration in removing the bodies of our dead from St. James's churchyard, to the new cemetery. It became our duty to do so, the moment it ceased legally to be a burial-ground.

10. In England there are at least ten thousand parishes. Each parish has its church, and many of them have had

churches more than a thousand years. During that long period these churches have, no doubt, been several times renewed and enlarged, as they fell into decay, and the population increased; but did any one ever dream that because the parish church was to be renewed or enlarged, or its site changed to another more eligible part of the church-yard, where it might cover many graves, and require the removal of many bodies, that this was desecrating such bodies? Certainly not: the church is the first thing to be considered.— Besides, most men desire the church to cover their graves, and when this cannot be done, to remove them with pious reverence to another part of the burial-ground is perfectly consistent with the most solemn consecration. Were it otherwise, no new church could ever be built or enlarged; for parishes have, in general, no other site than the churchy<sup>ard</sup>. To the re-building or enlarging of a parish church, there<sup>fore</sup> as the most important and necessary parochial object, & other thing connected with the churchyard must yield. this the site or church plot was originally given. The bu<sup>ilding</sup> of the dead is a secondary object, and must not be allowed to hinder or stand in the way of providing, in a becoming manner, for public worship—nor, I believe, has it ever been made a question in any parish. It would, indeed, be an indignity to the dead, as well as the living, to permit graves to obstruct the building or enlargement of churches. Such a thought can never be entertained, even for a moment, by a sincere and well-informed Christian. Hence:

11. When the law prohibits the inhabitants of a parish from burying any longer in their churchyard, it is found that the parishioners hasten to remove the bodies of their friends to a fitter place; and if there be any that are unable to do so, they should be assisted by the parochial authorities, for it is found by experience that when a churchyard ceases to be a place of interment, it is less carefully attended to,—the graves are trampled upon, and become flat,—the headstones are defaced, and the tombs fall into ruin. Now, it will not be contended that those who have with reverent care removed their beloved ones from a churchyard where burying is no longer allowed, to another cemetery more safe and convenient, have less affection for their dead than some of their neighbours, who leave their dead exposed, as they may be, to

the chance of indignity. On the contrary, their affection is shewn in a more rational and becoming manner: all their dead are again brought together, and deposited in ground which promises, from its locality, never again to be disturbed.

12. These general principles and limitations apply to the present state of the parish of St. James. At the more early meetings of the Vestry, after the destruction of the cathedral by fire, it was found that twelve or fifteen thousand pounds would be required to build a new church worthy of the city, and that about five thousand only were in hand.— Now, it is quite true that the difference, viz., nine or ten thousand pounds, could be raised by the congregation; but it is equally true that, in the present times, it could not be raised without much difficulty, for the parishioners have had already to build two churches, both of which have been destroyed, at an expense of not less, I believe, than twenty thousand pounds. This naturally induced the Vestry to look around for help. They saw that by leasing some lots the required sum might be raised, and although every member of the vestry wished to retain the land, they came to the conclusion, though with great reluctance, that there was no other alternative; and as it was doubtful whether a proper title could be given, they were at the trouble of procuring an Act to settle that point.

13. Since then, a plan for rebuilding the church, on another part of the burial-ground, has been adopted by a great majority, the cost of which is estimated at nearly fifteen thousand pounds: but in the meantime a cry of desecration has been got up, as if it were sacrilege to disturb a single grave for any purpose whatever, however necessary and holy, and the parish is threatened with a continuance of the great evil it now suffers, in being without any place of public worship. Now if this cry were well founded, it would be entitled to grave consideration, and, associated as it may be in some sincere hearts, with tender feelings and affections, it deserves kind treatment and full evidence that it is founded in error and misconception. What the Vestry proposes to do has been done through all Christendom in every age, and is at this moment in daily practice. First, respecting the site of the contemplated church, which may, it is believed, be placed to

more advantage in the middle of the square, it is only required to do what, sooner or later, must be done in every parish where a church is to be built or enlarged, viz., remove a few bodies with decent reverence to the cemetery, or to another part of the present church-yard. Second, in regard to the land to be leased; if it be devoted, or, what is the same thing, its proceeds be devoted to rebuilding the church, which is a better and holier purpose than that of becoming a depository for the dead, it is altogether a mistake that the ground is thereby desecrated and an act of sacrilege committed. Look at the city of London: all the churches had at first burial-grounds around them; but the city grew, and necessity compelled relaxations, from time to time, or enactments for the benefit of the living, till, in many instances, nothing is left but the bare church, witness, for instance, St. Clement Danes in the Strand, and St. Martin's in the Fields. Yet no charge of desecration has ever been made, because during the process every thing was done with reverence and decency, and to constitute sacrilege there must be neglect, irreverence or intentional indignity. The cathedral of St. Paul covers the whole of the ancient burying-ground and nobody complains, for, though it be a natural feeling to respect the dead, the rights of the living must neither be neglected nor sacrificed.

14. The subject, therefore, of re-building the church, as contemplated by the vestry of St. James's Church, in whatever light it be correctly viewed, involves no case of desecration or of sacrilege. If built upon the middle of the square the bodies can be piously removed, as daily happens in other places. All desire the ground to be preserved, if there be a possibility of building the church otherwise. But if it be found impossible, from inability or disinclination, the ground may be leased without any apprehension of desecration, for, to speak of desecration when the land is thus devoted to the glory of God, is totally to misunderstand the meaning of the word.

15. Once more: some persons think that there is no occasion to be at any great expence in erecting a church.-- For they argue, that God may be as sincerely worshipped in a building of clay or of timber, as in the most gorgeous

cathedral. Now this may not only be true, but proper, when the people are poor and unable to build any thing better, but it involves a great error when sought to be applied to a community like this. The uniform practice of Christians through the whole period of Ecclesiastical history, has not only been to build according to their ability, but not unfrequently according to their faith. And that this is their duty is manifest from Scriptural example and the annals of the Church. Solomon's Temple was built exceedingly rich and magnificent, at the immediate command of God, and Christians having this all-prevailing authority before them, have frequently in their churches and cathedrals surpassed the Temple itself as far in size, beauty, and costliness, as their endowments of divine gifts and privileges in spirit and in truth, go beyond those of the Jewish people. Often have they built God's holy sanctuary like high places, not merely from their own resources, but from faith in their children. Hence many of the most renowned churches were more than one hundred years in building, and exhausted the means of several generations. The first promoters had little regard to cost, they gave freely what God had given them, and expected their successors to do the same, till the building was completed. If this be seldom done in the present age, it is because our faith has waxed feeble.

16. In regard to the restoration of the Church of St. James, it will not do to make it of less dimensions, because in that case it would not accommodate and reunite the congregation,—nor ought it to be so plain and destitute of architectural beauty as the one we have lost. If our means are at present insufficient for its completion, why not build a portion of the magnificent plan that has been adopted, and in a few years do something more, and trust in faith as our Fathers did, that our children will finish, what we have begun?

17. The writer of these remarks is entitled to a hearing, and therefore to recommend them to the serious perusal of every one of the parishioners of the parish of St. James. He was against devoting the ground along King-street, to rebuild the church or cathedral, and offered to be one of thirty or forty to erect it, but was not supported. He was then compelled to yield to the conviction, that in the present circum-

stances and state of mind of the parishioners, the rebuilding of the church cannot be accomplished without the assistance to be derived from the proceeds of the ground. Had he supposed that to put it to this sacred use was a desecration he would not have consented; but it is no desecration of this or of any ground to be devoted to the building up of the House of God. Contrast the magnificent buildings which now replace those along King-street destroyed by the fire, with the ruins of the cathedral, and ask with the Prophet, "Is it time for you to dwell in your ceiled houses, and this house lie waste?" Were every member of the congregation to reflect seriously on this, the means of rebuilding would not be long wanting.

18. In fine: let the Vestry consider the whole matter calmly and dispassionately, and if the Church can be built and the ground preserved—let it be so. But if this cannot be done, devote the rents of the ground to the sacred purpose of rebuilding the House of God, that we may again worship therein; for, in doing so, there is no desecration.

I remain, my dear Brethren,

Your affectionate Diocesan,

JOHN TORONTO.

