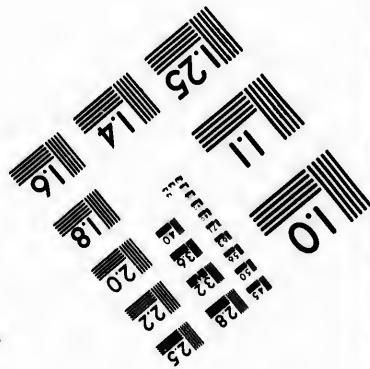
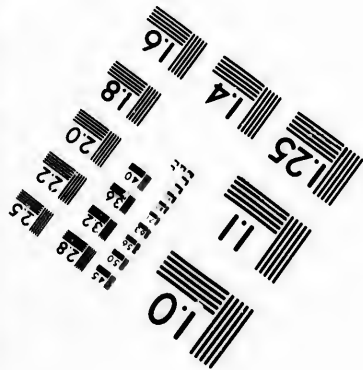
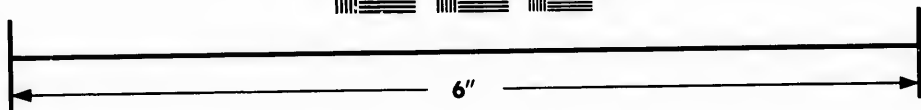
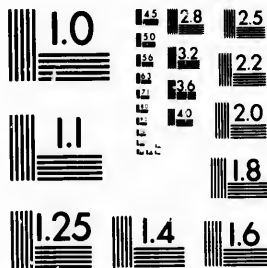


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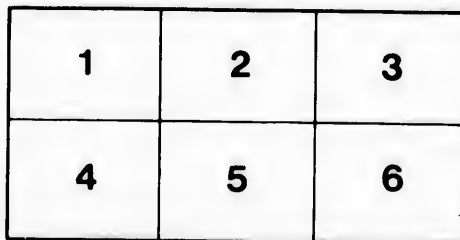
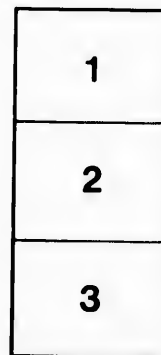
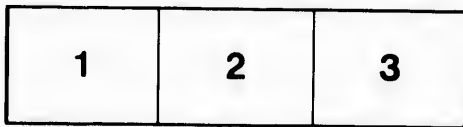
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LOVE FOR THE CHURCH.

✦ A SERMON ✦

PREACHED AT

S. Mary's Church, Woolwich,

BY THE

Right Rev. the Hon. Adelbert Anson, M.A.,

BISHOP OF QU'APPELLE, N.W.T. CANADA,

On Sunday, the 17th of March, 1889

Being the Sunday before his return to his Diocese.

PRINTED BY REQUEST.

WOOLWICH:

W. J. SQUIRES, WELLINGTON STREET.

1889.

(Unw

TO THE
CONGREGATION AND PARISHIONERS
OF
S. MARY'S CHURCH, WOOLWICH,
THESE
WORDS OF FAREWELL COUNSEL
(Unworthy though they are of the great subject of which they treat),
ARE
DEDICATED
WITH DEEP AFFECTION BY THEIR FORMER
PASTOR.

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To the Congregation and Parishioners of S. Mary, Woolwich.

MY DEAR FRIENDS,

I know well that these words, written in the midst of many pressing engagements just before my return to Canada, are not worthy of being placed in print. But your Rector, and some others who heard them, expressed a kind desire that they might be circulated. I was unable to refuse such a request from those who made it.

If, then, these words help in the smallest degree, as it is thought they may, to a truer realization of the reality of the Church as a divine organization ; if they stir some few souls to greater loyalty, zeal, and devotion for that Church ; if they help to increase the brotherly love and concord, and true union that should bind all the members of that One Body together, among those in whose welfare I can never cease to take the very deepest interest ; I shall indeed feel that, however imperfect and unworthy of the great subject the words were in themselves, they were not spoken in vain.

May the Almighty stablish, strengthen, settle you, and make you to be given to all good works for the glory of His Holy Name, and the edification of His Church.

Your sincere friend,

ADELBERT,

Bishop of Qu'Appelle.



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"Christ loved the Church and gave Himself for it."—*Eph. v. 25.*

WE sometimes hear it said that the preacher who speaks much of the Church is narrow-minded, bigoted, uncharitable, and even that he is setting up something apart from Christ—interposing an obstacle that he ought not between the individual soul and its Saviour. Nothing can be further from the truth than such a charge. It is rather true that we cannot speak of Christ as we ought to do without speaking of the Church, for the Church is His very Mystical Body—"the fulness of Him that filleth all in all." (*Eph. i. 23*). "It is more than His representative here on earth; it is that presentment which He wears here, which expresses Him and is identified with Him. Clothed in it Christ speaks and acts among men still."* He, the Head, is not perfect in His incarnate life without the many members that are joined to Him. "For as the body is one, and hath many members, so also is Christ." (*I. Cor. xii. 12*). When men, therefore, presume to speak of Christ without speaking of the Church, they speak of a divided, an imperfect Christ. And to speak of salvation through Christ, but apart from the Church, is certainly a manner of teaching altogether unauthorized by Scripture.

* *Mason's Faith of the Gospel*, p. 231.

Christ came indeed to save men from their sins through the shedding of His Precious Blood. But the means whereby they were to be saved was by being incorporated into His Body, or, as another Divine simile has it, by being gathered into that ark which should be upborne on the waters of Holy Baptism. (I. Pet. iii. 20-21, Eph. v. 26). "The Lord *added to the Church* daily such as were being saved." (Acts ii. 47, R.V.) And He added them to the Church by the new birth of water and the Holy Spirit. (S. John iii. 5, Acts ii. 41, I. Cor. xii. 13). We read in the New Testament of no other way of being saved. (S. Mark xvi. 16).*

And we, my brethren, if we have the "mind of Christ," if His thoughts are our thoughts, if His affections are our affections—because the "One Spirit" inspires—we too shall *love* that Church. It will be something real to us, an object deemed worthy of our utmost devotion, worth living for, and, if need be, suffering and dying for, even as Christ Himself esteemed it. He, we are expressly told, loved the Church, and gave Himself for it. He bid men also "hear" that Church, and be obedient to its decisions. (S. Matt. xviii. 17). [This care and love for a society or collective body, and not merely individual souls, is, it may be noted, in strict accord with God's previous manner of dealing with His people Israel.]

* NOTE.—I hope nothing I have here said will be interpreted as inferring that those who are in a state of schism cannot be saved. Schism, the rending asunder of the One Body of Christ by going apart to worship, especially when the Sacraments are administered, is undoubtedly a *sin*, (I. Cor. iii. 3-4, Rom. viii. 7, Rom. xvi. 17-18), but the extent of the fault in each individual we must leave to God, who alone knows all things. All baptized people are members still of the One Body, and, therefore, partake of the graces therefrom flowing, even though they separate themselves for their acts of worship into parties, or organizations of human origin. God also has often shewn that when the way that *He intended* has failed through the perversity of man, He can glorify Himself even by bringing good out of evil, and can endue with the highest gifts of grace those who are yet without the ordinary channels for the supply of that grace. Thus it was with the separated ten tribes of His old people, the Jews. It is, moreover, a very remarkable fact that those who have separated themselves from the unity of the Church, have universally ceased to regard the Sacraments as real channels of Grace.

The "enthusiasm of humanity" is indeed a good and noble thing, but the enthusiasm of humanity as it is regenerated in Christ, which is His Church, is most assuredly a far higher and better and nobler thing.

I have chosen this thought to leave with you as my farewell counsel before returning to my distant Diocese, in preference to a subject that might be considered more directly connected with personal religion, because we can scarcely doubt, I think, even without taking a pessimist view of the present state of things, that troublous times for our Church are not far distant; times when the faith, the loyalty, the steadfastness, of many of the children of the Church will be somewhat sorely tried. Infidelity is coming in as a flood. The faith of many is trembling. Old fashioned ideas of the verbal and plenary inspiration of the Bible—ideas which yet, after all, are only modern—are being rudely shaken with the advance of knowledge in science and history; and men—forgetful altogether that Christianity and the Faith of Christians existed long before the Bible (at least the New Testament), and, therefore, is not dependent on it, though the Church esteems those inspired writings, which together form our Bible, as its greatest and most priceless treasure—are over much alarmed at difficulties that in reality only concern the outer surface of that Holy Book. And the time seems hastening on when men will have to return to more primitive methods; to a bolder and more unflinching recognition of the Church, as that which was ordained by Christ Himself, to be the Teacher of the world, and by the indwelling, living Spirit designed to be the pillar and ground or stay of the truth. (I. Pet. iii. 15). When we thoroughly grasp this fact, half the difficulties, with which the minds of men are now vexed, vanish into thin air. The Bible is no less dear and precious, as the Word of God, to our souls; but we need not fear if, as it was given to human agents to write, human elements mingled with it in matters that were within the cognizance of ordinary human knowledge and research, or on subjects that did not touch the

real object of the revelation ; the relationship of God to man, and man to God. The "faith once (for all) delivered to the saints," (Jude iii.) is enshrined for us by the Church, in the imperishable memorials of her Creeds (II. Tim. i. 13, Rom. vi. 17). Those simple expositions of fundamental and eternal truths, comprise all things that it is necessary to believe for our salvation.*

We do need a guide and teacher if we would understand what we read—and rightly divide the word of truth—for in it are many things hard to be understood ; we do need an authority above our own individual private judgment—which can so easily be misled—but we must be careful that that "authority" is not the voice of a mere fragment of the Church, but of the whole body in it to which alone the promise was given, that the gates of hell should not prevail against it. (Acts viii. 30-31, II. Pet. iii. 16, S. Matt. xvii. 18). Again the time is probably not far distant, at furthest it will be, we can scarcely doubt, in the life time of some now living, when a great change will take place in the relationship at present existing between the Church and the State in this country. The prerogatives and privileges that the Church has for centuries enjoyed, by no grant of the State power, but solely by reason of her own ancient position and power in the land—predating as she does all state power—may be ruthlessly torn from her. The possessions with which her children endowed her in ancient times, esteeming her worthy of all honour and riches as the Bride of Christ, may be sacrilegiously robbed, and devoted to objects that those who consecrated them to God's Service would certainly not have approved.

And this may be brought about not necessarily by the onslaught of foes, but more likely by the necessity of giving the Church greater powers of self-government and of adaptation of her work, if

* NOTE.—An expression of Faith in the articles of these Creeds, and nothing more, is required of all persons when they enter the Church in Baptism, when they join in worship, especially in the Holy Communion, and when they prepare to die (Order for visitation of the sick).

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she is to preserve her vitality and growth. And this it may be found almost impossible to combine with existing relationships, on account of the miserable divisions of Christianity.

Then, when stripped of her earthly prerogatives and earthly riches, the trial test will come to many, as to whether they will be true, faithful, and loyal to their Mother in the hour of her temporal adversity, when it will demand much self-sacrificing love to be true to her. It is in the hour of difficulty and danger that true allegiance and genuine love are tried.

What time the evening shadows fall
Around the Church on earth ;

* * * * *
Then closer should her faithful band
For truth together hold.

But it will be only those who have learnt to see in the Church something more and far higher than a mere department of the State for the promotion of virtue and godliness, who indeed realize and know and love her for her spiritual prerogatives, because she is in very deed the Body of Christ, who will be able in that hour to be truly faithful.

Therefore, I say, it is well—it is *necessary*—that we should remind ourselves of the duty of having a definite idea of what the Church is, and WHY it should have our most earnest love. Now, brethren, there are, I think it may be said, three special duties to which love for the Church should constrain us.

First, every member of the Church ought undoubtedly to desire to have, and should earnestly endeavour to obtain, an intelligent *knowledge* of the real character, the past history, and the present work of the Holy Church throughout the world, and especially that Branch of it to which we belong. How little interest do most men, even professing Church people, take in such matters. They would be ashamed to know as little about their country, its history, its progress, and its present doings, as they know about their Church. And yet the love of country should be as nothing

compared to the love that we should have for Christ, the Church. We are not, we must ever remember, merely members of this or that little congregation that happens to worship in one building. We are citizens—members—of a world-wide confederation. One, from the time when the Holy Spirit came on the day of Pentecost, to the day when Christ shall return to receive that Church to Himself without blemish and without spot, washed in His Precious Blood.

But, while ever remembering this, and glorying as we may in that citizenship of the New Jerusalem to which we have been admitted, do not let us forget the advantages we possess in the realized unity of Parishes and Congregations. There is a danger in becoming too exclusively parochial—to the exclusion of the wider interests of the Church as one—in a Town, in a Diocese, in a Country, in the World. But it is not good when that first unity is forgotten, and the special reciprocal relationship of a Pastor and his particular flock is ignored. Especially for the young it is not good. They who have no regular Church in which Sunday after Sunday they go to worship, but who wander about where inclination leads them, and who have no Clergyman recognized as their spiritual Pastor, are very apt to fall away altogether, for lack of one who can be considered as responsible for seeking them when perhaps some temptation has overcome them, or indifference and coldness is beginning to creep into their hearts. How often too, are misunderstandings thus caused. In the hour of trial the Clergyman is often blamed by one who thinks that he cares not for his soul, while the Clergyman thinks that one whom he desires to help, if possible, cares not for his ministrations. And so a wide breach is made between those who ought to be One. Our general love for the Church, as a whole, should concentrate itself in love for the one congregation in which it is our privilege usually to worship.

Again, *love for the Church* will make us active workers and helpers in its cause. The charge given by our Lord to His Church,

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whether to feed His flock, or to evangelize the outside world, comes as a charge to every member of the body alike to carry out the commission in his or her several vocation, and according to his or her power, but to every one according to the gift bestowed upon him. The Church is to be the witness of the love of God to the unbelieving world. It is to win souls for Christ, and to nurture them and build them up in the fear and admonition of the Lord. And the Church is but the aggregation of the individual members that form the body. That solemn charge, therefore, is laid upon every member *alike*, to be Christ's faithful soldier and servant; and soldiers and servants must not be idlers, or mere thinkers of self. To do some work for Christ in His Holy Church, is not then a mere matter of choice, it is our solemn obligation by virtue of our incorporation into that Body, whose purpose it is to carry on the work that Christ began.

And all who love the Church will work, not merely because it is their duty, but because love constrains. But if our work on other souls is to be profitable, even though it be only in the home circle—the influence of a parent on the children—the work must be begun in the secret of our own hearts. “For their sakes I sanctify myself.” Our love and zeal for the work that we desire to see accomplished by the Church will make us ever more careful, watchful, and zealous in the purification of our own lives. And this power of sanctification must come through a close adherence to the Head from whom alone all virtue and grace flows to each member.

But lastly, and above all, if we have the mind of Christ, and *love the Church*, our *prayers* will constantly ascend with great earnestness on its behalf. “O pray for the peace of Jerusalem, they shall prosper that love Thee.” Do you, brethren, beloved, regularly pray for the prosperity of Christ's Holy Church, for your own parish, for your own Clergyman, that a large measure of grace may be given him to execute his ministry to the

edifying of those to whom he has been called to minister, and to the glory of the Church, for all the rulers of the Church, that wisdom and boldness may be given them for the exercise of their authority in these times of difficulty? Oh! if there was only more of that prayer begotten of hearts really aflame with love for our spiritual Zion, what glorious victories might be won! How souls might be strengthened and refreshed and sanctified! We need more faith in the power of interceding prayer.

Of the earthly Jerusalem, the city of David, it was said: "I have set watchmen upon thy walls, O Jerusalem, who shall never hold their peace day nor night; ye that make mention of the Lord, keep not silence, and give Him no rest till He establish and till He make Jerusalem a praise in the earth." May there be many such watchmen on the walls of our spiritual Zion, of which that earthly city was but a type and figure, who shall make answer: "For Zion's sake will I not hold my peace, and for Jerusalem's sake I will not rest, until the righteousness thereof go forth as brightness, and the salvation thereof as a lamp that burneth." And then encompassed with those faithful prayers, our Church would indeed be known far and wide, independent of all earthly circumstances, as she is the chosen of the Lord, elect and precious, and generations following would find in her beloved sanctuaries their guide unto death.

Surely we may, we should say, if we have the mind of Christ:

I love the Church, the Holy Church,
 That o'er our life presides,
 The birth, the bridal, and the grave,
 And many an hour besides.
 Be mine through life to live in her,
 And when the Lord shall call,
 To die in her, the spouse of Christ,
 The Mother of us all.

Bishop C. Cowe,

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