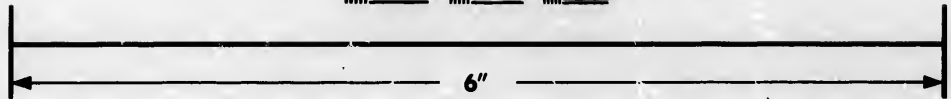
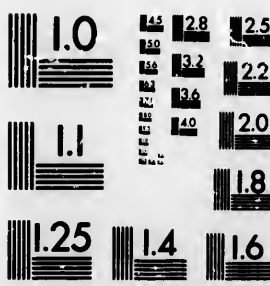


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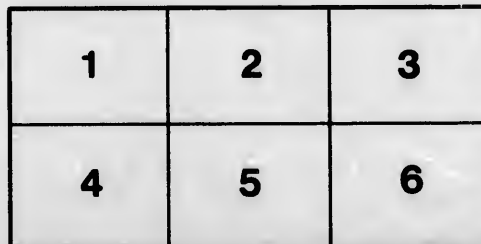
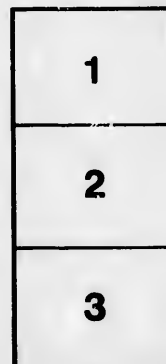
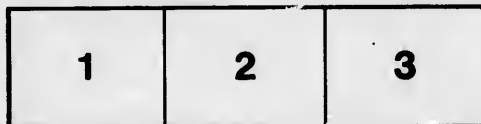
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A SERMON,

PREACHED BEFORE HIS ROYAL HIGHNESS

THE PRINCE OF WALES,

ON

His Visit to Fredericton,

IN

CHRIST CHURCH CATHEDRAL,

August 5th, 1860.

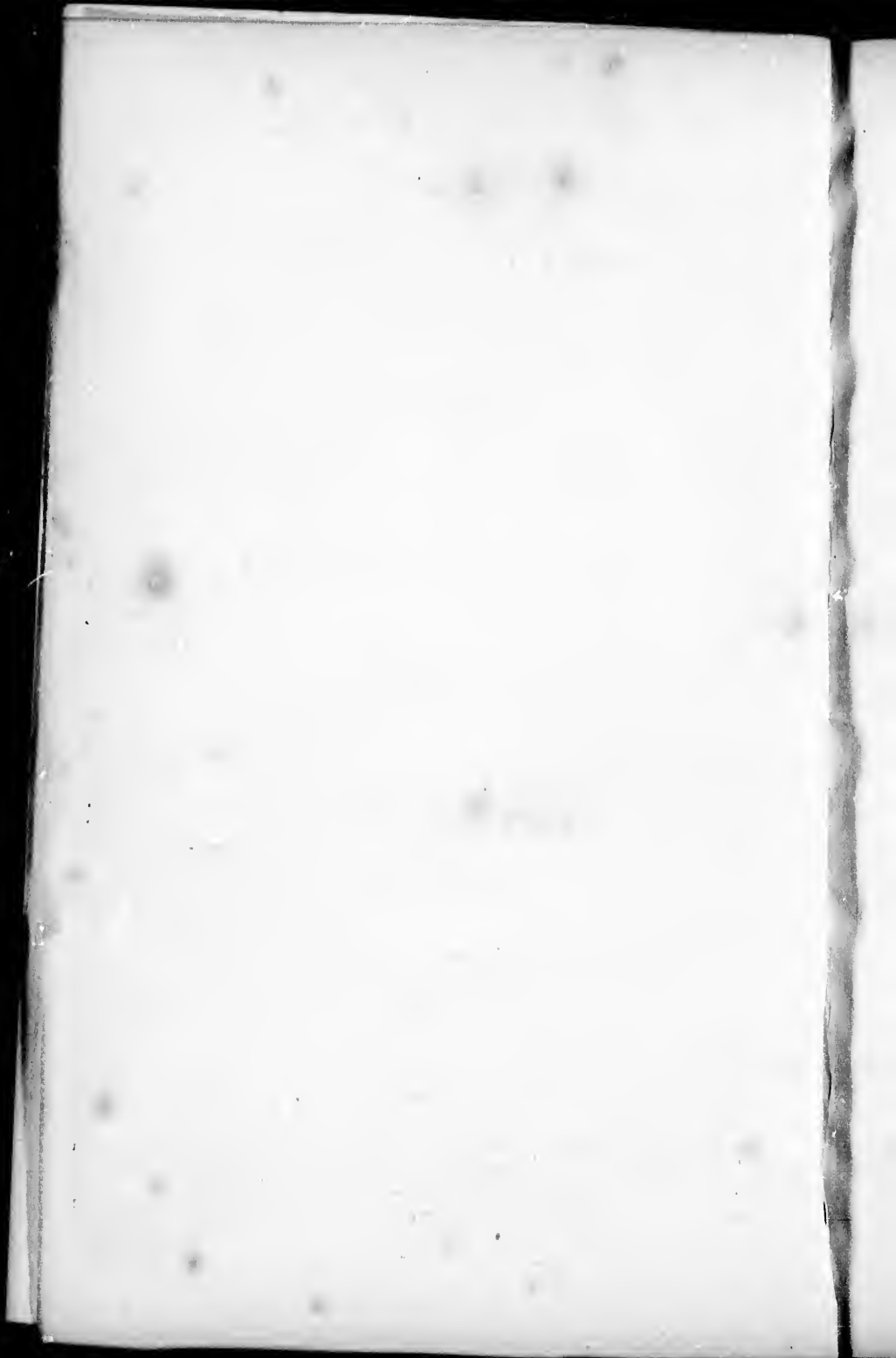
BY JOHN, BISHOP OF FREDERICTON,

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1860.



SERMON.

ROMANS XIV. 12 :—“ *So then every one of us shall give account of himself to God.*”

We are assembled to worship God to-day on an occasion in which we feel a deep interest, and which is remarkable for this circumstance, that we have never all met in this church before, and it is wholly improbable we shall ever all meet here again.

Apart, then, from those topics on which there is no necessity for me to dwell, because your minds are full of them, there is another subject which at the present moment claims our earnest attention.

Pardon me, my brethren, if the subject be not what you may have expected. You may have thought that I should hasten to express (as well as my feeble abilities would allow) the language of congratulation and loyalty, and that I should be the mouthpiece of those feelings which not only exist but overflow in all your hearts. If I adopt a different course, it is not that I do not share with you the common joy. I rejoice with you heartily and loyally; but I have a higher duty to discharge. Can I, dare I, forget that you are all, from the highest to the lowest, immortal souls? sinners redeemed by the blood of a common Saviour, Christians united by a common hope, placed for a few moments under my special charge? Can I forget how much may depend with some one soul, even on this half hour? Can I, above all, forget that, if “every one of us shall give account of himself to God,” I shall myself give account for what I

deliver to you this day? And as I probably address some of you for the first and for the last time, how can I in justice to you, dwell on any other topics than those momentous truths in which all alike have a common interest, in regard to which the bonds of temporal polity, political action, and even national welfare, great as they are, are insignificant, compared with the salvation of your souls throughout Eternity?

I beseech you enter with me at once on this stupendous theme. I pray God that by his help the words of the inspired Apostle may take deep root in your hearts; that with no light, no momentary impression, the truth may dwell there, and abide with you all your life long; filling you with those high and holy principles which will carry you safely through life, and enable you to give up your account at the last day with joy, and not with grief.

The points which the Apostle lays down for our consideration are two:—

1. That we shall all personally and face to face appear before God.

2. That this appearance will not be as a matter of choice, curiosity, or joint consent, but that God will summon each separate soul to give account of itself to Him, the Maker and Judge of all souls.

From these two topics we shall do well and wisely to infer what influence this truth should have, not only on our feelings but on our daily habits and manner of life.

Glance, my brethren, (for it is only a glance the time will allow us) at these two stupendous truths.

1. Have you ever considered what it is personally to appear before God? Every one knows that it is an affair of some moment to make our appearance before an earthly potentate. Uneducated men are very brave and boastful on these subjects till they are brought into the presence of the Court; but the splendour of the ceremony, and the gravity and respectful behaviour of those who know how to

conduct themselves, awe and impress the boldest. But if this Court were sitting on questions of life and death; if the monarch were invested with absolute power; if on his fiat hung all your temporal interests; few men could be found who would not feel some apprehension. But what Court on earth can furnish you with any image of the throne of God, seated in judgment? This is no question of earthly precedence, superior dignity, or emolument. The prize (if one may so term it) is your own soul, the question is your own salvation; the demand is whether you are fit to enjoy what Christ has prepared for them that love Him. With whom are you to meet? Not with a king who may be flattered or dreaded; not with a judge who may be silenced; not with a fellow-sinner who knows little of you but what your own actions reveal; He who meets you face to face, being to being, He whom you will then for the first time look upon, is your Maker, Sovereign, Benefactor, Saviour, and omniscient Judge; He looks not into your eyes but into your soul; He sees all that is and has been there, and reads you off at a glance, what you have made yourself, or what His grace has made you. You stand with all your imperfections and your sins, *alone with God — alone with God!* O merciful Father, what a sight will this be of ourselves and of Thee! How will our poor feeble knees tremble at this interview! And on what can the best and holiest of us cast ourselves but on Thy mercy and the merits of our Redeemer for salvation! The good we have done is nothing, the errors we have committed are numberless. Thy power is infinite, Thy justice is terrible, and the very sight of Thee is sufficient to destroy us but for that merciful assurance, "Him that cometh unto me, I will in no wise cast out."

2. Now if the very sight of God be so awful, what shall we say when we consider the second point here laid down by the Apostle Paul, that each soul will have its own separate account to give to God at that great meeting.

We all know what sight-seeing is; men run together to great sights from mixed feelings, some from curiosity, some from respect

and loyalty, many from both these motives. But curiosity will find no place there. It is to give account that you are summoned. Giving account is not a pleasing duty, when the accounts are complicated, the interests many and serious, and the penalties of breach of trust are heavy ; and we are all glad to be rid of the duty. In no kind of action is the frailty and imperfection of human nature more abundantly displayed, than in giving account. What efforts are made to make the best of a bad business ! What evasive answers ! What positive deception is practised ! What immense ingenuity in avoiding the plain naked truth ! Nay, take the highest standard of duty and the noblest life to be found amongst us, still there is an abatement required, there is a reserve, there is a secret inner chamber of the soul, into which we never admit one human being besides ourselves ; in some particulars we stand alone, and our dearest friends are not admitted into the sanctuary of the heart beyond a certain point. No soul stained by sin can bear that it should be looked at throughout by its fellow-sinner. Yet this account, so painful to all honest humble Christians, so terrible to the holy Patriarch Job, that he said, " I abhor myself ;" so awful to Abraham, that he exclaimed when he came face to face with God, " Behold now I have taken upon me, to speak unto the Lord, which am but dust and ashes ;" so fearful to St. Peter that he cried out " Depart from me ;" so agonizing to Daniel that he " fainted and could eat nothing for many days ;" so terrible to St. John that he " fell at Christ's feet as dead ;" this account, so full of terror and of fear to the just and holiest of mankind, you, my brethren, and I must encounter.

What is it that we are to render up ? What is it which we cannot evade or fly from ? What is it that must all be made known ? It is the life of our souls, the posture of our heart towards God, the life of Christ Jesus, as manifested in our mortal body, the use we have made of our baptismal privileges, the benefit we have derived from the Sacred Scriptures, the union and communion we have had with our risen Lord, the prayers we have offered, the faith to which we have held fast, the example we have set during all the various hours

of life, in all the companies into which we have been brought, in all the relations and capacities in which Providence has placed us, as subjects or rulers, as citizens, as freemen, as electors, as elected, as judges, as magistrates, as pastors, as flocks, as hearers, as preachers; as tradesmen, as mechanics, as rich, as poor, as gifted with powerful intellect or moderate abilities, as physicians, as merchants, as lawyers, as soldiers, as men of science, as handicraftsmen of all kinds, as husbands, wives, brethren, sisters, children, as masters and servants, as those whom God has chosen to bring very near to himself, as those for whom Christ died, and for whom he intercedes and reigns in glory. Surely when you think of this complicated, manifold, tremendous account, you must see the dignity of common things, the momentous issues of common ordinary life, the risk we run in living our common every day life! Surely you must see how judgment and eternity mingle with the daily occurrences which seem too trifling to be remembered, and that our daily prayer and daily fear, and daily honesty, and daily living to the Lord are the threads which hold that life together. Every hour the word or action passes on to judgment. The word is spoken, the action done, and in an instant it has left the world, and cannot be undone for ever, and another line is written on the memory of eternity which cannot be blotted out.

Surely I have said enough (though but little) to show what holy principles should guide us in consideration of these great truths. May God stamp them indelibly on our hearts!

1st. The subject here set before us should lead us to a holy, yet if I may so express myself, a *cheerful fear*.

We are here presented, certainly, with a grave view of life; yet it is far from being a gloomy, discontented, or repining view. The God who sent his blessed Son to save us, who underwent toil and privation, ignominy and death for our sakes, is also the God of boundless night, of glorious variety, of choicest gifts in the creation of this vast world. This God rejoices in the happiness of His meanest creatures, and denies not to us at all fit seasons, the enjoyments with

which His works supply us in the paths of science, in the glories of art, in the splendour of the fields, in the mazes of the forest, in the recreation proper to youth and animal spirits, and high health and virtuous cheerfulness. We neither please nor worship him by refusing to our fellow creatures those innocent joys which lighten the common burdens of humanity, and brace our saddened spirits for those graver duties, which it is our business to discharge.

So that whilst we fear Him, we may rejoice in our Maker always, and may lawfully partake in those sports and recreations which are suitable to our ages and characters, which contain nothing sinful in them, provided we bear about with us everywhere a strict sense of our duty to God and to each other, and are ever ready to fulfil it. I have called this feeling by a compound name, a *cheerful fear*, because under any system of theology which absolutely forbids general recreations, or which denounces as sinful particular kinds of recreation whilst it tolerates others, the mind is led to assume the look of fear of God rather than to feel it, or to feel abject terror in the thought of meeting our God, rather than the holy and living awe which becom. as a Christian.

The proper course would seem to be to remember that God denies us nothing which is really good for the body or for the soul, that we must "serve him with fear, and rejoice with trembling," and yet that He is our friend and constant benefactor, and that a cheerful, hopeful, large-hearted and thankful spirit is that which best enables us to discharge each duty as it comes, looking for the merciful allowance, and confident of the justice of our God.

2d. The account we shall have to give should also be a motive to perpetual love and thankfulness for the vast amount of our present mercies. Now, independently of those which personally belong to each of us, and on which want of time alone forbids me to dwell, I may properly call your attention to-day to those which belong to us all as citizens. When we look round among the nations of the earth, and consider the past and present condition of countries favored with an equally fruitful soil and a more genial climate; when we see how

inestimable is the price of our manly, rational, and constitutional freedom, how deeply should we cherish, how diligently should we guard and preserve the integrity of our limited monarchy, the wise balance of our respective Estates, the just and merciful administration of our laws, and the various safe-guards of our freedom with which a gracious Providence has endowed us. Our monarchy, our language, and our religion are rich in all the associations of the past. Our progress in the useful arts and sciences has been widening and deepening every year; our deliverances from civil war and religious thralldom have been unexampled in the history of the world; our Colonial possessions have in them all the seeds of a great future, and want only a higher education and a more patient development of natural resources to give them birth. A gracious Providence everywhere unites us by successful though calamitous war, and by the nobler arts of peace. Our sufferings and our joys are the common property of the Empire; one year our bosoms throb with fear and sorrow at the massacre of Cawnpore; in another we hail the coming of a Prince, not like his great ancestor reaping his youthful harvest of renown and blood in miseries inflicted on a foreign land, but sent forth by the love of the Mother of our country on a peaceful mission, to consolidate the affections of a distant Empire, and to bring nearer in loyalty, love and friendship, the climes which science and commercial activity have closely united. Surely we shall have to give account for these unnumbered blessings. This "good measure heaped together, and running over," which God has given into our bosom, calls for no narrow gratitude in return; demands of us this day more thankfulness in our breasts, more fervour in our prayers, more charity towards each other, more virtue and holiness as a nation, than we have as yet exhibited.

3rd. The context of the passage before us shews, that the whole argument of St. Paul on the subject of the judgment-day is brought to bear on the great duty of a wise and charitable forbearance towards each other.

The questions which he discusses in this chapter concerning different

kinds of food and religious observances, are questions which in principle are continually brought forward, and he brings in the solemn judgment of God to show us how we should deal with them. "Why dost thou judge thy brother? or why dost thou set at naught thy brother? for we must all stand before the judgment seat of Christ. So then every one of us shall give account of himself to God. Let us not, therefore, judge one another any more."

A judgment, indeed, we must form upon men and things with a view to Christian discrimination; but let it not be necessarily a judgment to condemnation in things indifferent; let it not be, above all, a harsh and uncharitable judgment, but let the severity of your condemnation be directed to this point, that none of you put an occasion to fall in your brother's way, and cause him to sin by an unwise and useless abuse of liberty. Here then you see another important principle arising out of the solemn subject of our appearance before God in judgment. If all of us shall be judged, and if it be so hard and difficult for us to meet that judgment of ourselves, how strongly does this urge on us the principle of mutual anity, forbearance, gentleness, consideration, abstinence from boasting and arrogance, from envy, railing, evil surmisings, and uncharitableness. This is the special argument of the Apostle, and I wish there were not sufficient reasons for my pressing it upon you. Much allowance is to be made for the excitement of men's minds; but let us remember one thing. We owe it to our Sovereign, we owe it to our Province, we owe it to ourselves, to let no ill feeling mingle with or follow the gracious visit, if I may so speak, of our *common friend*. Let us charitably suppose that every one has done his best to welcome him; differences of opinion are ensured by our freedom of thought; but we have too many points of union, too many subjects of devout and glowing thankfulness to allow one envious, ill-natured, or uncharitable thought to have a lodging in our breasts. Why should we set at naught our brother in Christ, when we shall meet together as sinners before a common tribunal hereafter? Let us remember that the unbounded liberty we enjoy of saying and printing all we think or feel, should

be a check rather than a guarantee for license; for the greater our freedom, the heavier must be our account.

And addressing for a moment my dear friends and brethren of the Church of England specially, ought not this thought of your own personal appearance before God to lead you to value more highly, and to be more fervent in the use of your own holy and common prayers? You have sometimes, perhaps, looked on what are called State-prayers as if they did not nearly concern you; you have repeated them coldly and without a personal interest; no fervent *Amen* has come from the depths of your hearts.

Our good and Gracious Sovereign has now sent to you one of the dearest members of her family, to remind you that she is not an abstraction, a pageant of the state, a court ceremony which, stripped of its externals, comes to nought; but a living, personal, responsible being; an anointed Queen, a Christian mother, fully alive to all the responsibilities of her exalted station, desirous to glorify God in that station; depending on the mercy of God in Christ Jesus the Saviour of us all, looking forward with you to His great and glorious advent, and solicitous, may I not say, deeply, tenderly solicitous for the benefit of her people's prayers. And will you deny that profitable, motherly, natural, pious request? Surely when we meet together in the Church, the thought of this day's assembly shall sometimes infuse fresh fervour into that petition which, once more, I presume in your name and in my own to offer:

“Endue her plenteously with heavenly gifts, grant her in health and wealth long to live, strengthen her that she may vanquish and overcome all her enemies, and, finally, after this life, she may attain everlasting joy and felicity through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.”

Thus it may be seen that the remembrance of our appearing before God in judgment has a directly practical bearing upon our whole lives. It may serve to correct our view of human life; to moderate and chasten our joys; to sanctify and soothe our sorrows; to dignify every common action, and lessen the importance of worldly

honor and gain ; it may elevate the poorest, and humble the richest among us, by abasing all before the footstool of one common Father, Benefactor, Saviour and Judge.

But the subject cannot properly be closed without the suggestion of the holy and comfortable hope which is connected with it.

Awful as is the subject to those who, like Felix, tremble at the mention of "temperance, and righteousness, and judgment to come," the humble believer in Christ will remember with a trembling joy that it is not only judgment, but salvation that is to be "revealed at the last time."

Of ourselves indeed we must speak less confidently ; but we have all many loved and dear ones gone before us, the reality of whose faith, the fervour of whose charity, the holy fruitfulness of whose good works supply us with the best foundation for a lively and comfortable hope. When we recollect the unfeigned faith that was in them, their many trials, their gentleness and brotherly kindness, their pious munificence, their fervent prayers, their humble and active piety, and how they passed through the gate of death, supported by the Comforter, and, "in a Father's arms, contented, died away," we can even contemplate the judgment-seat of Christ with a lively hope. On that throne is exalted our Redeemer, our Brother, and our Friend ; on that sacred form are imprinted the marks of his sacred passion ; in that majestic presence we recognize that gracious Being to whom all our prayers are offered, on whom our faith is fixed, the Author and Guardian of our life, the Rock of ages in whom is everlasting strength. Let us then ever bear about with us this holy principle of duty, this two-fold remembrance of the account we have to give, and of the promise which He to whom we give that account has made to receive us to Himself. Let this principle awe and terrify the impenitent, awaken the slumberer, dry the mourner's tears, quicken every good resolution, moderate every joy, hallow every motive, and be our shield against temptation, our hope and stay in that hour, when neither princes, physicians, nor friends can grant us any longer their protection, succour or counsel.

In that hour ; by thy cross and passion, Good Lord deliver us. In that hour ; suffer us not, for any pains of death, to fall from Thee.

Above all, when "God ariseth to shake terribly the earth," when "the judgment is set, and the books are opened," Good Lord deliver us.

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