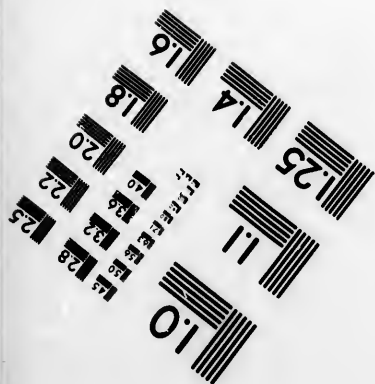
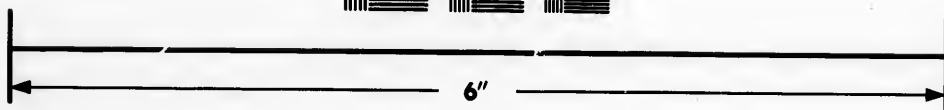
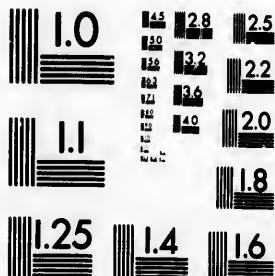


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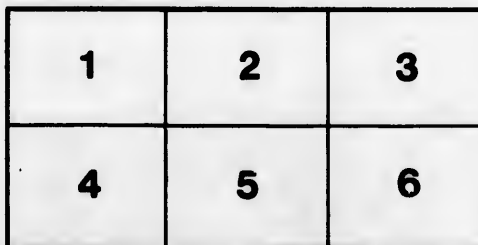
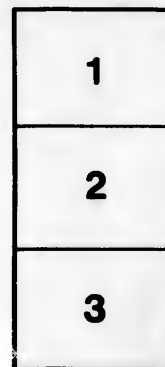
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A SERMON

PREACHED BEFORE

Trinity College School,

IN S. JOHN'S CHURCH, PORT HOPE,

ON

SPEECH DAY, JULY 22ND, 1869.

BY

R. W. NORMAN, M. A.,

LATE WARDEN OF ST. PETER'S COLLEGE, SABLEY.

PUBLISHED FOR THE SCHOOL

PRINTED BY THE CANADIAN PRINTING COMPANY, TORONTO.

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"THE LAW WAS OUR SCHOOLMASTER TO BRING US UNTO CHRIST."

I have been requested, as one interested in Christian education, to preach to you to-day, and I am desirous of showing to the younger ones who listen to me that the principles implanted in them, by the College to which they belong, have Divine sanction, and that of all the valuable duties they are taught, there is none perhaps of such moment as *obedience*.

None of you whom I am addressing can recollect how early in your infant lives this stern and wholesome lesson was impressed upon you. A child from its infancy longs to gratify its inclination. It desires to have its own way, be that way innocent or the reverse. To a child, a desire and its gratification seem as a matter of course connected, and the latter necessarily to follow the former. A child does not at once learn to be disappointed, and however wild the desire, and unattainable the coveted object, it has an instinct that those who love it will not, cannot refuse. Ere long, however, the law of obedience comes into play. Instinct is only just giving place to reason. The wonders of this marvellous world are but just unfolding themselves, and some fresh pleasure can daily be seen and known. At that time obedience has to be learnt. The parent has to command and the child has to obey. Moreover, the child is more generally forbidden to do some things than ordered to do others. Since we are all more naturally prompted to do evil than to remain inactive, the commands given us are negative rather than positive. A child can understand but little of the *why* it is not allowed to do something it likes, and bidden to do something it dislikes. No matter. All the reasoning, all the logic and explanations in the world could not make the matter clear to a

young brain, and the lesson of instant, unhesitating obedience is not a whit less valuable because the reasons for the command are unknown. A child must obey because it is told to do so. It is not the time to question or to reason. If so, the child might think that it is a matter of doubt whether it may obey or not, and this would be destructive to the first principles of duty which the young must learn.

Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden were surrounded by every natural beauty and permitted to enjoy every natural pleasure. Everything combined to make life happy and to render man obedient and grateful. Man before the Fall was in a blest and enviable state, because he was free from sin and sorrow. Only one pleasure was denied, and while many indulgences were granted, only one restriction was imposed. Man was forbidden to eat the fruit of a particular tree. The tree was there, and man had the opportunity of eating its fruit or not, for otherwise there could have been no real obedience. But no reasons were given for the prohibition. The reasons must have been and were weighty, since death was to be the penalty for disobedience. This was the only trial. How gently God dealt with Adam and Eve. How lovingly He tended them and adorned their lives with beauty and plenteousness. But man failed. He could not learn to obey *one* command, and keep his wandering hands from *one* tree out of the thousands before his eyes.

Observe also by what means Satan succeeded in ruining our first parents. It was by giving a false, but still a supposed reason for the prohibition, by appealing to slumbering pride and vanity, and rousing the latent ambition and dormant spirit of rebellion in their hearts. This illustrates the danger, when we are young, of questioning commands, and desiring always to know the why and the wherefore we are subjected to certain laws and fixed discipline.

Adam and Eve represent to us the infancy of each one of us. The happiness of our homes, the love and cherishing care which there watched over us, are no unworthy symbols of the paternal love manifested by our great God

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towards Adam and Eve. And as obedience was required in Eden, so in every home, obedience should not only be expected but enforced. That wise writer, the son of Sirach, has shown us in the book of Ecclesiasticus what miseries will fall upon parent and child, if the child be not distinctly taught to obey. Disobedience, also, was not only the first sin of our first parents, but it is the fundamental sin, the source and origin of all others. So important is it in the sight of God, that God has annexed to it life and death. All other sins followed from that first sin. All the iniquity, all the known and nameless crimes, the bloodshed, the suffering, the horrors that have defaced the image of God throughout the world, were the offspring of that one sin.

As disobedience is and ever has been, in two senses, the parent and cause of all evil, so obedience is the foundation and necessary substratum of all good. The serpent was, before the Fall, in all likelihood a beautiful and attractive creature, and Satan, who assumed its form, took care to suggest to Adam and Eve such questions as these,—“Why should we not eat this fruit? What harm can there be? We are allowed to eat other fruit, and there is an evident caprice in cutting this one off from us.” The more they thought, the more they longed; and from daring to reason upon God’s prohibition and to murmur against it, they disobeyed it. There would have been in itself no harm in eating the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, if God had not forbidden it; but since He did emphatically forbid it, the act, from its disobedience, became sin.

Every one has felt within himself the sad and terrible consequences of that first sin of disobedience. Which of us has not been called upon to wrestle with evil and fly from temptation? We bear as long as we live the marks of that Fall, and inherit the tendencies to rebellion and disobedience.

Then came God’s dispensation, manifested in a gradual development. It was first seen in a family, then a tribe, then a nation. These were ordered to obey God’s law, and, in the midst of widespread disobedience, to uphold the lamp of truth and bend their necks to the yoke of the most High. Still do we find the same

divine command ever ringing in their ears, "Obey my words, obey my law."

The most glorious promises, the most golden future, privileges temporal and spiritual, were held out on the condition of obedience. On the other hand, their very existence as a nation depended on this condition. If they failed to observe it, they were to be taken captive, enslaved, slain, scattered over the face of the earth, disgraced and blotted out.

God's laws are now more numerous, more detailed, more minute and more complete. Whereas Adam and Eve were only forbidden one thing, the Israelites were forbidden many things. In the former case the principle of obedience was tested, and since it was found wanting, no further trial was made, but the guilty ones were driven forth from Paradise. The Israelites, on the contrary, were hedged in by a multitude of restrictions, some of which seem to us very astonishing.

The evil consequences of man's first sin had come thickening on with fearful rapidity. Owing to the degeneracy of man, to the enormity of wickedness, the Flood swept off the impenitent, and destroyed them utterly. But the egg had produced the scorpion, and the one sin had propagated a countless offspring. A number of positive sins existed, odious to God, contrary to man's real nature, but still the fruit of one evil. One test was therefore insufficient. The law of obedience had to be applied to many separate acts. As definite and lengthy creeds were needed to exclude the varied growths of error, so precise commands were put forward to meet the inroads of temptation.

A general command is comparatively useless unless it is applied to particular cases, for otherwise human self-deceit renders it nugatory. The ten commandments are at the same time distinct and comprehensive. Also, as if they were not clear enough, they are explained still further with greater minuteness and at greater length in the Books of Moses. And besides these moral precepts, intended to guard the Israelites from the sins which defiled their neighbours, another and a different class of injunctions are given them.

No one can fail to be struck with the multitude of

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outward observances in the Jewish law. No part of an Israelite's daily life, no matter however seemingly unimportant, relating to food and dress, was exempt from some regulation ordered by God Himself. This would appear vexatious and almost incomprehensible but for St. Paul's explanation. He tells us that the law was the schoolmaster which was to bring men to Christ. The original is *Παιδαγωγός*, which strictly means a person whose business it is to conduct children from their homes to the house of their authorized teacher. This idea is not wanting in the text, and is susceptible of beautiful and copious illustration: But the prominent signification is the training, the discipline, the restraints, the punishments which mark the period of the Mosaic law. These were intended to form the habits of a people, so that when the higher law of Christ came, they would be schooled to benefit by its privileges, and not to abuse them. Their tone of morals, their habits of religion, their views of duty would be thoroughly established, so that a change would not be injurious, but would find them ready to meet it.

Christianity would not have been suitable to the Israelites in their early national life. They required a preparatory system, which would lead the way to it. We must also not forget that the Israelites were at first placed under a Theocracy. They had no king on earth. God was their sovereign, while Moses and Joshua were His instruments. God intended to remind the Israelites that they, in a different degree from surrounding nations, were the especial objects of His careful and protecting love. In return He desired their worship and their obedience. Many of the rules and laws dealt with insignificant questions, such as would seem to us more fitted for an earthly than a heavenly lawgiver. But this very act would instruct them, as it ought to show us, that this stage was one of preparation, and that through it they were to be trained to follow out and obey a more perfect code of law and religion which was to come. The law of Moses was less perfect than the law of the Gospel, as the bud is less perfect than the blossom, and the seed than the plant. But the inferiority went no further.

The rigid obedience at this time exacted of them was needful; but if they thought on the matter, or listened to the voices of their prophets, they knew that their future national life would be spent under a somewhat different and a nobler system. If the Jews had obeyed God in the wilderness and the Holy Land, then when Christ came they would have been prepared for Him, and would have believed in Him. As it was, their former disobedience hardened their natures, so that as a nation they rejected God and were rejected by Him.

Four points, therefore, present themselves to us as worthy of our attention and remembrance.

FIRST. That precise obedience was required by God of the Israelites, and was essential to their perfect training.

SECOND. That the principle of obedience was sternly enforced by severe punishment.

THIRD. That obedience to external ceremonies was necessary, because it afforded hope that God's people would conform to the greater and eternal precepts of the moral law, and the Gospel to come.

FOURTH. That the violation of the lesser led to the violation of the greater law, and that to the destruction of the nation.

I would now address myself to my younger hearers, and ask for their special attention for a few minutes. Your homes, with all their love and innocent happiness, are, as I have said, no very unfit representation of the garden of Eden. The Church, of which you are made members in baptism, is not unlike the theocratic kingdom which governed the Jews. Their King was not visible. He only made Himself manifest through the cloud and the fire, which were as it were Sacraments of His presence. So we have a King above who veils His presence in outward signs, and the object of our worship, the Blessed Trinity, is unseen by us in this life. Your school is as the law of Moses. That law was the schoolmaster, the disciplinarian intended in God's purposes to fit the Jews gradually for Christianity. Your school training, its laws and regulations which must exist, and which you are called upon

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to obey, are meant to educate your characters for after life, and for Heaven.

The Jews under the law were young as a nation. In like manner, you are young as individuals. The comparison, therefore, holds good throughout. The ordinances which God imposed on the Jews may seem to you, as no doubt they seemed to them, singular, needless, troublesome, and fretting. They were not the best judges; in fact, they were not to be judges at all, any more than you are to be judges. God did not tell them that they were at liberty to obey such injunctions as they understood or agreed with, and leave the rest undone. He told them to obey, and warned them that if they disobeyed they would be punished. They did disobey, they were punished repeatedly, and at last were cut off, as a people, from the proffered message of salvation. So you, while at school, find yourselves subjected to various rules and laws, and to a system of discipline, though one far easier to bear, and more intelligible, than that of the Jews. Some of you may dislike it. This is most likely true of the younger, and this is natural—natural, at least, to your characters when yet unformed. Some would like to have no limits set them, but would desire to go wherever they chose, work as little as they like, to give way to sloth, to gratify every whim and fancy. Most, if they chose for themselves, would wish that all discipline and severity should be relaxed, and all precise and strict rules to cease, and to be for ever banished. But then you are not the best judges, or rather you are not judges at all. It is your plain duty, without questioning, to obey a law because it is a law, no matter whether you appreciate it, agree with it, or no. It is a duty not merely first in order of time, but first in order of importance.

Upon the same principle, you have learnt various grammatical rules which perhaps many can scarcely understand. But they were placed before you in the character of rules to be fully comprehended at a later day. You have also learnt the Creed and the Church Catechism, because the Church and your instructors taught you to do so. As you grow older, you will discover what the rules of grammar mean. You will

recognize their importance, their utility, and impart them, or something like them, in turn to your children. You will also, I trust, attain to some knowledge of the blessedness, and the value of the teaching of the Creeds. You can trace that teaching in Scripture, trace it in history, trace it in God's works, trace it in your own hearts and natures, and you will, I hope, cling to it and revere it. But you must take it first on trust, obey it, and learn it, because you are enjoined to do so.

The humble teacheableness of obedience is an absolutely necessary part of a christian character, and unless acquired in childhood is not likely to be acquired at all. Such a doctrine may not be popular in an age like this, when men are inclined to constitute themselves judges of what they should believe and hold; but in a place of education connected with the Church, it is and must be one portion of the foundation. This quality of obedience is closely allied to faith; in fact, there should be a considerable admixture of faith in the obedience of a child and a boy.

Boys when at school are not to discriminate and say, "I will obey this law because I think it a good law, but I will take no heed of that because I do not approve of it." Test this principle in the right way. Apply it to religion and to morals, and in the former case you will obtain heresy pure and simple, while in the latter the result will be immorality, and a yielding, on the part of each individual, to the besetting sin.

The Israelites were commanded to give entire obedience. You are called upon to do the same. In the Bible there are unceasing injunctions to the same purport. The Psalms, the 119th Psalm particularly, are replete with commands to obey, and overflow with the blessedness of obedience. The Book of Proverbs also, ever and anon, tells us to obey the word, the law of God. And by obeying man, you learn to obey God. If you disobey man you are certain to disobey God; nay, rather, you disobey God by the very act of disobeying the lawful authority of man.

This obedience will fit your characters for the larger sphere, the greater distractions, the stronger temptations, the more

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harassing cares of after life. You will have learnt by discipline to keep a straight course before you, and will have been familiarized with plain practical principles. You will not resemble a wild unbroken horse, but will be as one that can be trusted, and that has known the bit and curb. Moreover, by learning to obey, you will learn to command. The heir in St. Paul's Epistle to the Galatians is under tutors and stewards till the time appointed of the father.

Those only, as a rule, are efficient rulers, who in their own youth have been disciplined. They know the value of discipline. They know how it should be applied. They are strict but judicious, uncompromising but discreet. The rule they have themselves borne makes their characters sober and thoughtful, and enables them to be entrusted with the great responsibility of directing others.

Do not, also, suppose that for men there is no discipline. They are supposed to have learnt, in their youth, to school themselves. In some points, as is but natural, they are more free. That which is suitable to one age would be distinctly unsuitable to another. But all professions require and enforce certain discipline, and some callings are very exact and rigid in their external laws. Many men who have lived, as you would say, in most enviable freedom, have thought with a regretful sigh of their schoolboy days, as in reality the freest and happiest period of their lives.

A Public School System is, in my belief, the best training in the world. And when that system is based on Church principles, it becomes nearly perfect, as far as the needs of this life are concerned. In no other way can the Public School theory be so fully worked out; and though I cannot boldly assert that such a plan is adapted to all national characters, there is none, I am convinced, so beneficial to our own.

Lastly, the English Church, like the English public school, demands obedience from her members. The English Church, like the English public school, supplies reasonable liberty, and is no iron despotism which unduly cramps and fetters the

intellect and reason. The Israelites were being educated for the Gospel. The Gospel requires submission and discipline of motive, as well as of act. The liberty of the Gospel implies a higher law, for though freedom, it is the service of God. The Jews would have learned to follow the Gospel, if they had hearkened to the law. The system under which you are placed, though you may not adequately esteem it, is constructed to produce in you habits of honour, purity, modesty, manly independence and energy. The Church to which you have the honour of belonging, though its privileges are far beyond your present appreciation, will foster in you that combination of dependence on God with fixed and stable independence of principle, which is the best security for a religious and moral life.

All of us are being educated for Heaven, and our education only ceases with our lives. The school and the Church join in preparing you for this world and the next. Be loyal, therefore, in your hearts and actions to both. No one can go to Heaven who has not learnt to obey. In Heaven there will be no counter will to God's will, no opposition to God's law. Man will have been satisfied with the will of God. Such harmony, such conformity, can only be the effect of God's grace working in hearts that strive to be earnest and obedient. Nevertheless, I have spoken of no mere ideal condition. We professedly aim at it, and try to realize it by anticipation, when we say, "Thy will be done on earth as it is in Heaven."

