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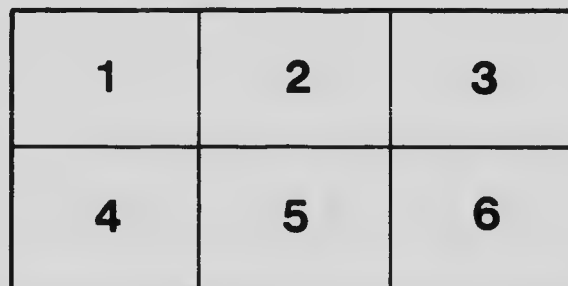
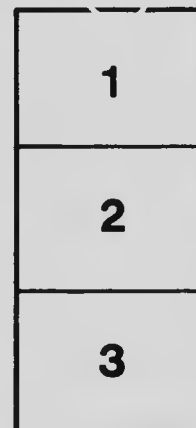
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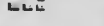
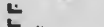
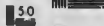
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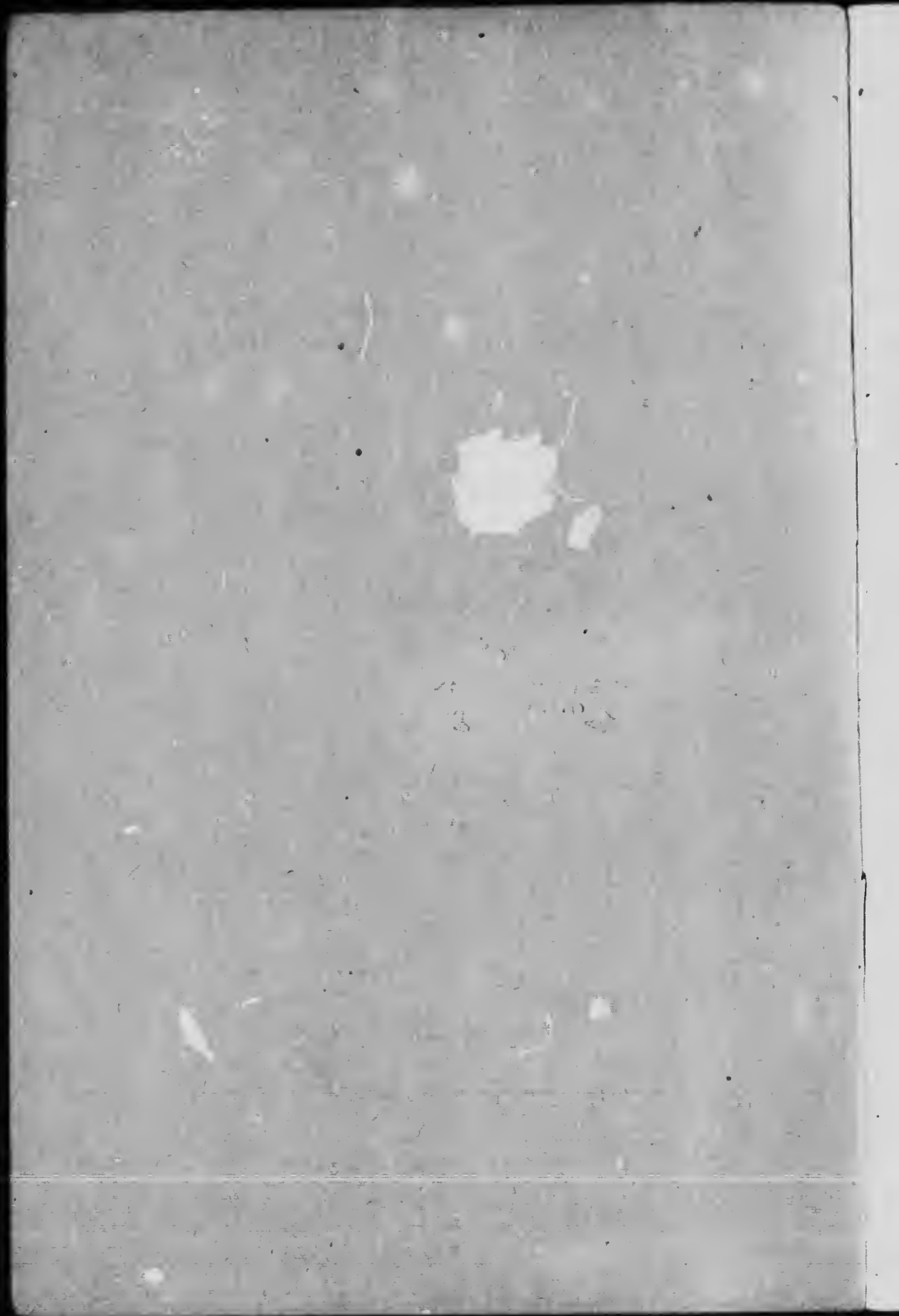
June 27th and July 4th, 1909

BY THE

REV. E. A. WELCH, M.A., D.C.L., LL.D.

RECTOR.

Printed at the request of the Churchwardens.



Rev. E. A. Welch

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FAREWELL COUNSELS



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ANGLICAN CHURCH OF CANADA
GENERAL SYNOD, ARCHIVES

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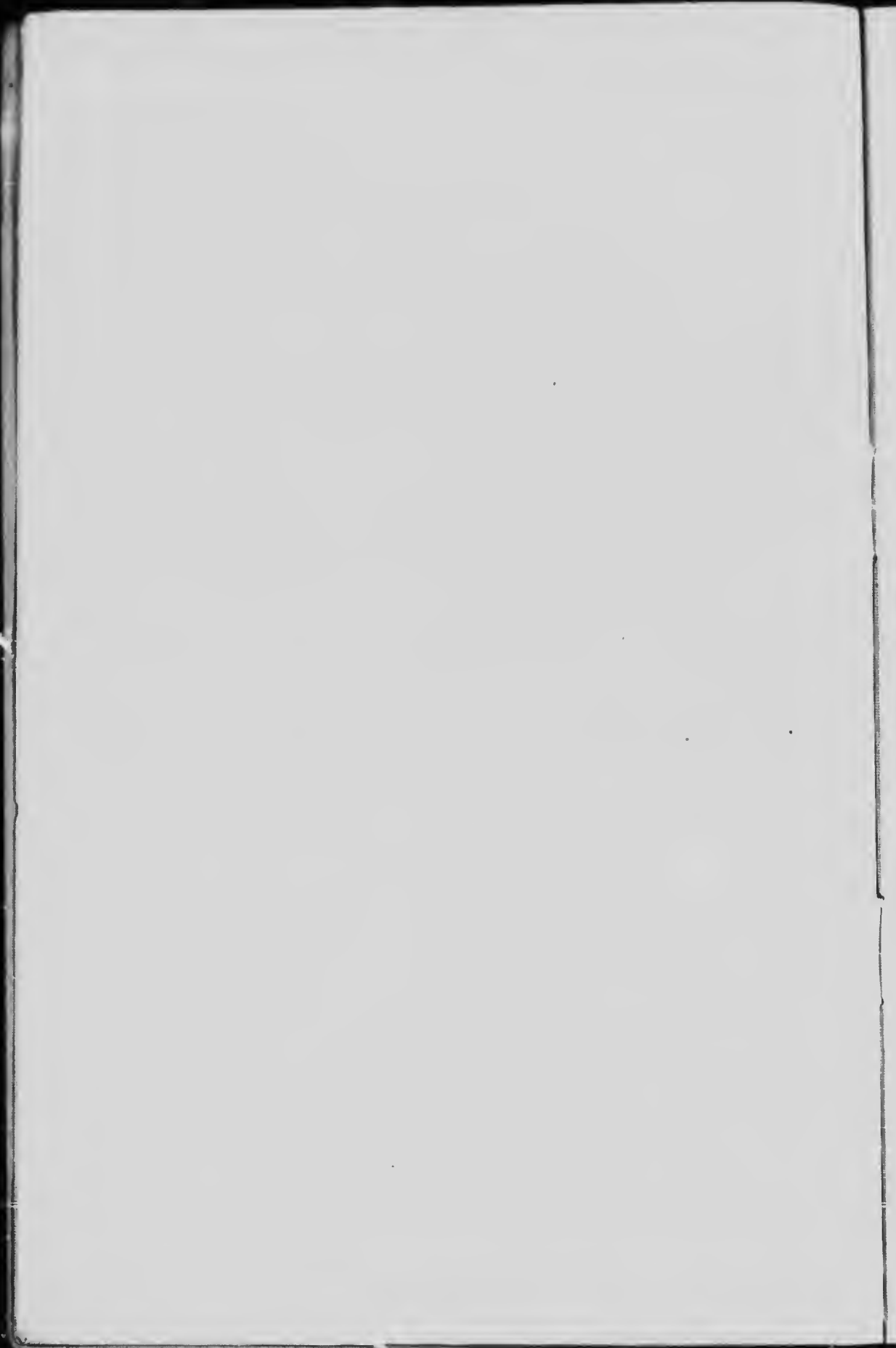
While these Sermons were passing through the press, the satisfactory announcement was made that the Rev. H. P. Plumptre had accepted the appointment to the Rectory of St. James'. Mr. Plumptre is just the right age for beginning work at the Cathedral; he is strong physically, intellectually, and spiritually. He is a thoroughly good scholar, well abreast of modern thought, neither frightened by it nor unorthodoxly affected by it. He is a man of wide outlook and large sympathies, no narrow-minded partisan, but a sound Churchman, who will, I am confident, carry on the work at St. James' on the present lines, and uphold the best traditions of the Cathedral.

E. A. [unclear]

The Rectory,

7th July, 1909.

ANGLICAN CHURCH OF CANADA
GENERAL SYNOD, ARCHIVES



I.

Heb. xii. 27.—*This word, Yet once more, signifieth the removing of those things that are shaken, as of things that have been made, that those things which are not shaken may remain.*

I propose to say something to-day on a subject which is of general interest to the Church at large, and next Sunday, D.V., to speak about matters that concern our own Parish in particular.

We may take the words from the Epistle to the Hebrews as a starting point, because though they refer probably to some great final upheaval, yet there is a sense in which they are not inapplicable to any of those other "crises" as we call them, greater or smaller, through which the Church has been passing at intervals ever since the day of Pentecost. The causes of these recurring crises are as various as the aspects they assume; but it has happened from time to time that things that seemed immovable have been shaken and have ultimately disappeared, and that men's hearts have failed them for fear, because they thought that everything they held most dear was being taken from them. Then the time of crisis has passed and they have seen that all has been working to a good end and that the things which have been shaken have been removed, that the things which were not shaken might remain.

Now it seems to me that no thoughtful person can doubt that the whole of Western Christendom, including even the apparently unimpressionable and unalterable Church of Rome, is passing at present through just such a crisis as this. And the cause of the present distress is the promulgation of teaching about the Bible which is regarded as at least dangerous, if not actually subversive of the Christian faith. This kind of teaching is popularly known as the Higher Criticism; and it seems to me that there are three ways in which it is being met by different classes of people. Some ridicule it; some are panic-stricken; and some face the situation with calmness and sanity.

Of the first two of these methods I only want to say this—that ridicule is a weapon which is easily turned against those who use it, and in any case is not a suitable weapon to use in a serious matter, while panic is a state of mind altogether unworthy of Christian believers.

Let us see then if it is not possible to make some suggestions for looking at the matter calmly and sanely.

1. In the first place—and this remark is not as unnecessary as it might appear to be—it is eminently desirable that people should understand what higher criticism is. As far as I have been able to observe, I am inclined to think that most people who talk about it, whether to ridicule it or to express their fear of it, have only the vaguest ideas of what it actually is. The name is a rather unfortunate one; because it seems to imply an assumption of superiority on the part of those who accept the conclusions of criticism. But nothing of the sort is actually implied. The lower criticism is that study which concerns itself with the words of an author; it endeavours to discover what he actually wrote, its significance, and so on. The higher criticism is that study which concerns itself with such questions as who was the author of a given book, at what date was it written, and the like. And I ought perhaps at this point to say that the term criticism itself is used in this connexion in a technical sense and has nothing whatever to do with the common use of it in the sense—practically—of fault finding. It is obviously just as lawful a thing to inquire as to the authorship or the date of a book of the Bible as to inquire into the exact meaning and interpretation of its words; that is to say, in itself the higher criticism is as lawful as the lower.

2. Secondly, higher criticism is, strictly speaking, no new thing, though until comparatively recently it was at a standstill. The lower or verbal criticism has always been a living subject of study. Every Bible student who brings to light any fresh or deeper meaning in any part of the Bible is really in his way contributing to the sum total of the knowledge of the Bible, and so is in his measure sharing in the lower criticism, even though he may be hardly anything of a scholar. And this kind of criticism is, as I said, always going on wherever in the Church there are men of scholarship who are sufficiently interested in the Bible to study its words in a thorough and careful and scholarly way. But with the higher criticism it is different. Centuries ago certain conclusions about the date and authorship of the various books became generally accepted throughout the Church. No one (*e.g.*) had any doubt that all the first five books of the Old Testament were written by Moses. The higher critics of

those days arrived at those conclusions; the method by which they reached them does not concern us now; and those conclusions became traditional in the Church. Not one of us as a child reached any of these conclusions unaided. We were taught what we *were* taught, as (*e.g.*) that Moses wrote Genesis and the next four books, by people who had themselves been taught it in the same way, until ultimately you get back to some one man or some set of men, who in some more or less authoritative way announced that it was even so. Nowadays on the authority of other scholars, who have reconsidered the whole matter, we are asked to accept a different set of conclusions as to the authorship and date and so on of much of the Old Testament. What I want to make clear if I can, is that there always must be some criticism of this kind; it may be conservative, as it all was until comparatively recently, or it may be radical, as a good deal of it is to-day, or it may be moderate, as the wisest and sanest of it is at the present time.

3. The next point that I want to emphasize is that the criticism with which we are chiefly concerned is not the alarming and dangerous and soul-destroying thing which it is sometimes supposed to be. It may involve the removing of the things that are shaken, but there are things which cannot be shaken and which remain. Some years ago a book was published by Mr. Gladstone under the title, *The Impregnable Rock of Holy Scripture*. I don't know whether he was the author of the phrase or not, but in any case it is an admirable expression. Holy Scripture may well be compared to a rock, to an impregnable rock; and critics are like geologists. We all know that it is not so very long since every one believed that the whole of this earth on which we live was, roughly speaking, about 6,000 years old; now geologists tell us that a great deal of it must have been in existence for millions upon millions of years; the rocks, however, are just as sure a foundation as they were, though their age has been multiplied many thousand times. So it is with Holy Scripture. Critics may change their opinions as to the dates of portions of it, as geologists change their opinions as to the dates of portions of the earth. But the rock of Holy Scripture remains impregnable; there it is, unchanged in itself, and undiminished in value by all that has been said and written about it during these last years.

4. Undiminished in value, do I say? Nay, let me once more express, as I have often done before, my own profound conviction that the value of the Bible will ultimately be found to be enormously enhanced by the reverent and careful study of it which is being made by devout Christian men and convinced believers;

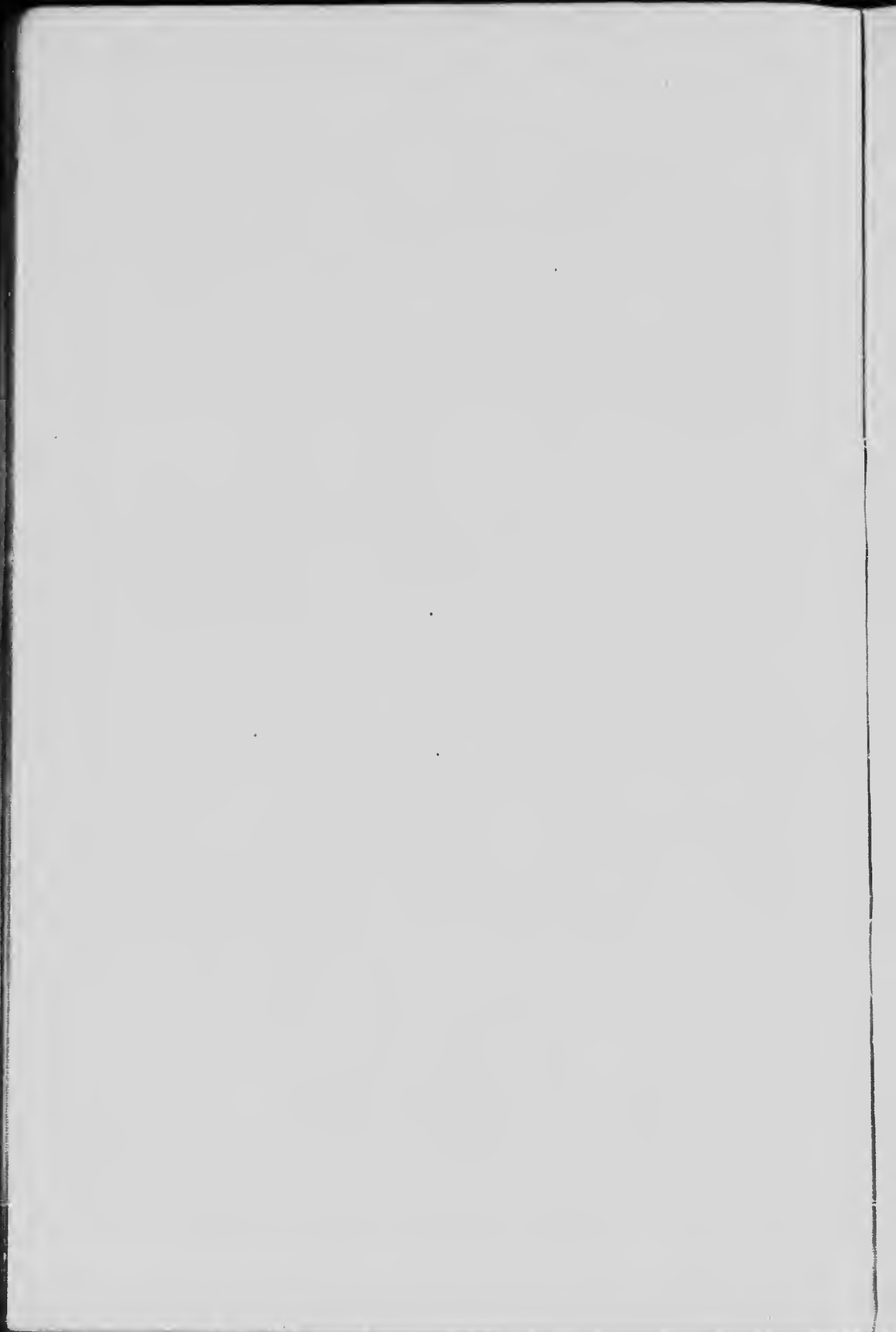
that is, the *spiritual* value of it, the value of it for the personal life. We do not go to Shakespeare for history, nor to Tennyson for science, though there is a good deal of history in the one and science in the other. Similarly, we should not expect to find in the Bible what it is not the main purpose of the Bible to supply. The Bible is the record of God's gradual revelation of Himself to the world; everything else is subordinate to that main purpose. Patriarch, Lawgiver, Prophet, Psalmist, Poet, Historian, each contributed of his own as he was moved by the Holy Spirit; and what modern criticism has done for us, and that for which we owe it a debt beyond the power of words to measure, is that it has set these various parts of the Old Testament in particular in their true relation one towards another, and generally given us a juster view of the whole of that Divine Library which we call the Bible.

It is impossible to go into details here and now; but I am sure from my own experience that, unless we hold very mechanical and therefore unworthy views of inspiration, we shall find (though it may cost us much to re-adjust ourselves to a changed point of view) that modern criticism has given us immeasurably more than it has taken from us. It tells you (*e.g.*) that the last chapters of Isaiah are the work not of the great prophet of that name who was one of the chief figures at Jerusalem in the reign of Hezekiah, and other kings of Judah, but of some one who lived during the exile, after the people of Judah had been carried away captive into Babylon. You lose something if you accept what you are told; but you gain a greater sense of reality, inasmuch as the words of the prophet are thus brought home more closely to the life of his people, and therefore—as it seems to me—to all life, to yours and mine.

Let me then, as my parting word to you on this subject, urge you, in the days to come, when the subject is discussed (as it must be more and more), not to put any confidence in any one who is so deluded as to imagine that a grave and serious subject like this can be effectively or adequately dealt with by weapons of ridicule. Let me urge you not to be alarmed by panic-stricken folk who are afraid that the foundations are being cast down. In these days we have the re-assuring knowledge, as once we had not, that the best critical work is being done now by men to whom the revelation of God in Christ is the supreme reality of their lives, who find in their own work confirmation of their faith, and in whose work therefore we too might find confirmation of ours. It is not, of course, to be expected that all the re-adjustment that will be necessary will be accomplished without much pain to those into the very fibres of whose life the

traditional way of looking at things is almost inextricably woven. There never can be a new movement in anything which does not cause distress to some. But the anxieties and the pains are but as the travail pangs which are at once the necessary preludes and the sure heralds of new and vigorous life.

And, as has been said by one who has written wisely on the subject, " 'The battle guns which have been pointed against the Church in one generation shall be melted down into Church bells for the next.' Yes, into Church bells; for the criticism which in the hands of some has been so destructive of all that we hold most dear, shall end in the hands of others by summoning back to the Church our children and our children's children in the generations that are yet to come."



II.

Philippians iii. 13.—*Stretching forward.*

St. Paul, as he dictated the passage in which occurs the word rendered by the Revisers "stretching forward," had in mind, no doubt, the foot-race which would be so familiar a sight to his readers. He calls up before himself the remembrance of some of those great games at which probably he had often been a spectator; he sees the crowded seats filled with an applauding and excited multitude; he sees the running path below with the runners at the top of their speed, their heads erect, their chests thrown out, their eyes never turned back, but always fixed on what he calls the mark or goal, and every nerve and sinew strained to the utmost in the effort of the race. That is the Apostle's image, and for the help and guidance and encouragement of his readers he takes it and applies it to his own life. They, the Philippian Christians, are still, in much weakness and imperfection, struggling on; it is the same with himself; he counts not himself to have apprehended yet; he is still imperfect, though perfection is his goal; and towards that goal he never ceases day by day to press onward; what is past—the things that are behind—is past for ever; the ideal still unattained—the things that are before—concerns him now; and to that ideal he is always stretching forward.

What a picture the words give us of a life of earnest endeavour after higher things, the life of the man who wrote, "I so run as not uncertainly; so fight I, as not beating the air; but I buffet my body and bring it into bondage, lest by any means after that I have preached to others, I myself should be rejected"; the life of the man who exhorted Timothy to endure hardness as a good soldier of Jesus Christ, to be instant in season and out of season, to fight the good fight of the faith, to endure afflictions, and who at its very close could look back upon it and say without any boasting, "I have fought the good fight; I have finished my course."

Progress, unceasing, persistent progress, was indeed a chief characteristic of St. Paul's life. But more than this is implied in his use of the foot-race as an illustration. If the runner is ever on the stretch, if he is exerting every muscle to the full, if he keeps his eyes always to the front, it is that he may attain the sooner to the fixed and definite mark which he has in view. So with St. Paul. His progress was always towards a definite aim; he ran, but he ran as not uncertainly; he was ever stretching forward to the things that are before; his eye was always on the goal as he pressed towards it.

Progress and progress towards a definite aim and with a fixed purpose—these are the thoughts on which I wish to dwell for a few moments this morning. And you will not I trust, think it unnatural or out of place if on this last Lord's Day of my ministry as Rector of the Parish and your spiritual Pastor, I try to apply the thoughts suggested by the text to the work of the Parish and to the lives of the individual members of it.

The Parish should ever be moving forward, and moving to a definite aim. The current of the individual life should always be setting towards some clearly defined mark, and that mark the highest possible.

I.

And, first, the work of the Parish.

We are all agreed that stagnation and lethargy must necessarily be fatal. The only hope for a Parish in these days of progress, as for any other institution, as for an individual, is to keep moving, to advance in line with the advancing life all round.

Let me, then, indicate certain respects in which definite progress should be looked for.

1. First, there should be a constantly growing sense of the corporate life of the Parish. A *congregation* means an assembly of isolated units who gather together for a particular purpose, it may be for worship, it may be merely to be preached to; but a *parish* seems to me to imply corporate life and therefore common work. This sense of which I speak has, no doubt, been growing of late; but it should continue to grow and should become far stronger than it is, till every one who worships here feels that he is in very truth a member of a body. There is no reason why the growth of this sense should lead to mere parochialism; that is, of course, a danger to be guarded against; but the person who is isolated in a parochial sense is at least as

likely as anyone else to be without any due and adequate conception of the Church as a whole and his relation to it and responsibility towards it.

2. Secondly, an increased sense of the corporate life of the Parish will inevitably lead to a larger sense of responsibility for personal service. The more completely we realize the fact that we are members of a body, the more clearly shall we see that every member of the body has a vocation and ministry, a vocation to which he alone is called, a ministry which only he can fulfil. There are diversities of gifts, and in the Church's activities every one can find suitable exercise and scope for the special gifts which God has given to him in particular.

To take a single illustration—in the Parish House when it is completed there will be afforded scope for the gifts of some who perhaps hitherto, though desiring to offer personal service, have not seen any opening for doing so.

3. Again, there has been manifested among us of late, as we all know, a much larger interest than ever before in the whole subject of the missionary work of the Church. This we all thankfully acknowledge as the direct outcome of the Laymen's Missionary Movement. But we have as yet only just begun. We are still far from having attained, to use St. Paul's word; we must continually be stretching forward, till every man and woman among us can say, This is the Church's work; it is indeed the work for which primarily the Church exists, and if it is the Church's work, then it is my work, and by the grace of God my share in it shall be faithfully done.

4. And once more, there has been very general progress in the way of offering of our substance for the service of God; and I do not doubt that there are many who do in that way all that they ought to do; but I am sure there must be some who in this, as in other respects, need to be making progress, need to be stretching forward. Once more let me repeat what I have so often insisted upon—that our giving must be in satisfactory proportion to our means, and must be done, not at haphazard and without care and thought, but regularly and systematically. On the subject of proportion, I will say just this. I am aware of the difficulty in some cases in deciding, owing perhaps to fluctuations in business, what exactly an annual income is; but taking one year with another, most men can say with some degree of accuracy what the profits of their business are or what their professional or other income is; and upon that sum, before any deductions have been made for necessary living expenses or for luxuries, the first charge should be the proportion offered

for the service of God. In other words, if a man decides that the right proportion for him to offer is one-tenth of his available income, then he must live upon, and make what savings he is able to make out of, the remaining nine-tenths. Some people, of course, ought to give more than a tenth; some no doubt are doing their duty if they give less; but whether it is a tenth, or more or less, it should be reckoned as a proportion of the whole that is available for spending. We have, I say, made much progress in this regard of late, but there is room for far more; we still need to be stretching forward.

II.

But after all, there can be no progress, or no progress that is worth anything, in a *Parish*, unless the *individuals* of whom it is made up are themselves making progress in their own lives. To insist on the necessity of such progress is to utter the merest commonplace of the pulpit; and yet it is not common to find men and women following the example of St. Paul, and straining every faculty they possess in the effort to advance in the spiritual life, that is to become day by day more and more Christ-like. It would be well worth while for each of us to ask himself what there is in his life which corresponds to the progress observable in St. Paul's.

Are you a better man or woman than you were five, ten, fifteen years ago? I do not ask whether you come to Church more regularly, to Holy Communion more frequently. I ask not what you *do*, but what you *are*. Are you nearer to *Christ*, and is *He* more to you? Some, I am sure, could humbly but honestly say, Yes; and some would have to say No, and to confess that there has been no progress in their lives, because they have never tried to make any progress. It may be that they have neglected the means of grace; it may be that they have not used the grace they have received; there may be a dozen explanations. But whatever the truth is, remember this. As it always is too *soon* to *relax* effort, so it is never too *late* to *begin* it. Without effort there can be no progress, and if there is no progress there is no life.

But is there one here whose unspoken thought is that it is of no use for him to try to go forward, because in the days gone by he has failed and failed again, and failed—it may be—most shamefully and grievously? Do you not know—of course you know it—that it is of the essence of Christ's religion, one of the features which for ever distinguishes it from the fairest fancies of poets and the most exalted dreams of philos-

phers, that it proclaims the forgiveness of sins? Of course you know it; you have said so in the Creed to-day. Past failures, past sin, should be remembered only as helps towards humility; they should never be allowed to paralyze effort. Take, then, the forgiveness that is offered; and *then* forget the things that are behind, and stretch forward to the things that are before.

We do not, any of us, count ourselves to have attained; we are not, any of us, yet what we hope to become, what we will strive to become, either in knowledge or character or spiritual depth. For the very best among us life must be an unceasing advance from strength to strength. And if because of our weakness we cannot, we dare not, hope to go from *strength* to strength, let us not forget that out of weakness we may, by God's infinite mercy and grace in Jesus Christ our Lord, be made strong, and being strengthened with might by His Spirit in the inner man, may then go from strength to further strength, until unto the God of gods we appear every one of us in Zion.

Yes, there must be no standing still for any one of us, but always a persistent stretching forward. To try to stand still is to abdicate one of the highest prerogatives of our race. For progress, it has been nobly said, is—

“Man's distinctive mark alone,
Not God's, and not the beasts'; God is; they are;
Man partly is, and wholly hopes to be.”

III.

I cannot close without one word of a more personal character than anything I have yet said. I wish to express publicly my devout thankfulness to God that nearly ten years ago I was called—most unexpectedly—to take charge of the work of this great Church. No one can be more conscious than I am myself, as I look back upon those years, of the manifold imperfections of my ministry, of the painful contrast between “the petty done” and “the undone vast”; but with all the shortcomings of my time here, I count it the highest privilege of my ministry to have been allowed to serve God in this place, and I most humbly and heartily thank Him for it.

I wish also to ask the pardon of all whom I have harmed by word or deed or by neglect. There are some perhaps whom, instead of drawing them nearer to our common Master, I have rather repelled from Him; and I ask their pardon for my unconscious and unwilling fault. There are some, I am sure, for whom I might have done more, if I had not failed in something.

in courage, or in perseverance, or in love; and for all such failures I ask to be forgiven.

But it is of the future rather than of the past that we are trying to think to-day, and to think with bright anticipations and hopefulness.

When my successor comes he will find here a loyal body of earnest workers in various departments, whom for all their loyal help to me I thank from the bottom of my heart, though their work has been done not for me, but for the Master Whose we all are and Whom we serve. A new Rector is sure to find new openings for work that we have not yet seen or not been able to take advantage of; and for him, from all the church workers and from all who worship here I bespeak the same cordial welcome that was given to me nearly ten years ago, and the same loyal support which I have had ever since.

St. James' Cathedral is, in a sense, only at the very beginning of its usefulness; more and more it must assume the character of what is spoken of as a "down town" church, and more and more must it be ever stretching forward in the effort to fulfil the duties which rest upon it in that character. It has great traditions and unique opportunities, and I have not the slightest doubt that it will live and work worthily of those great traditions and rise to the height of those unique opportunities. That it may indeed be so is a prayer that I shall never cease to offer as long as this life shall last, and my final request to you is that sometimes, both in your homes and here at God's Altar, you will remember me in my new work. Brethren, pray for us.



