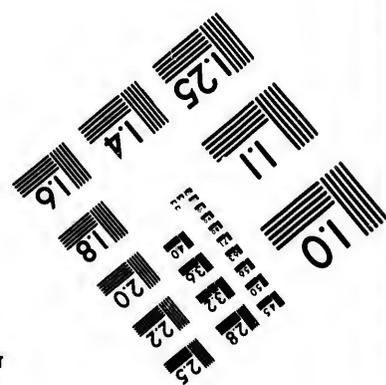
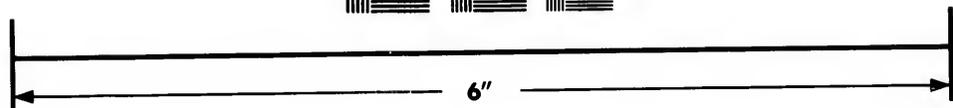
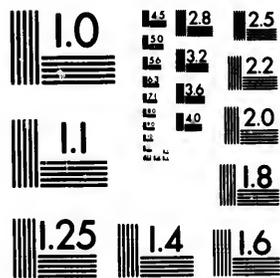


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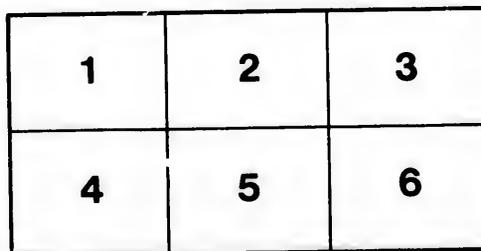
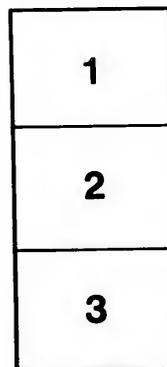
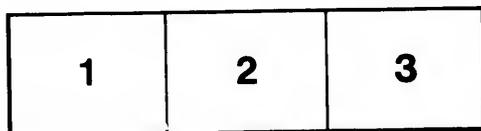
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*sermons*

# SERMON

PREACHED IN

## ST. MARK'S CHURCH,

PORT HOPE,

*SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 8th, 1874.*

ON THE OCCASION OF THE FIFTIETH ANNIVERSARY OF THE  
ERECTION AND OPENING OF THE OLD PARISH  
CHURCH OF PORT HOPE,

BY THE RIGHT REVEREND THE LORD  
BISHOP OF TORONTO.

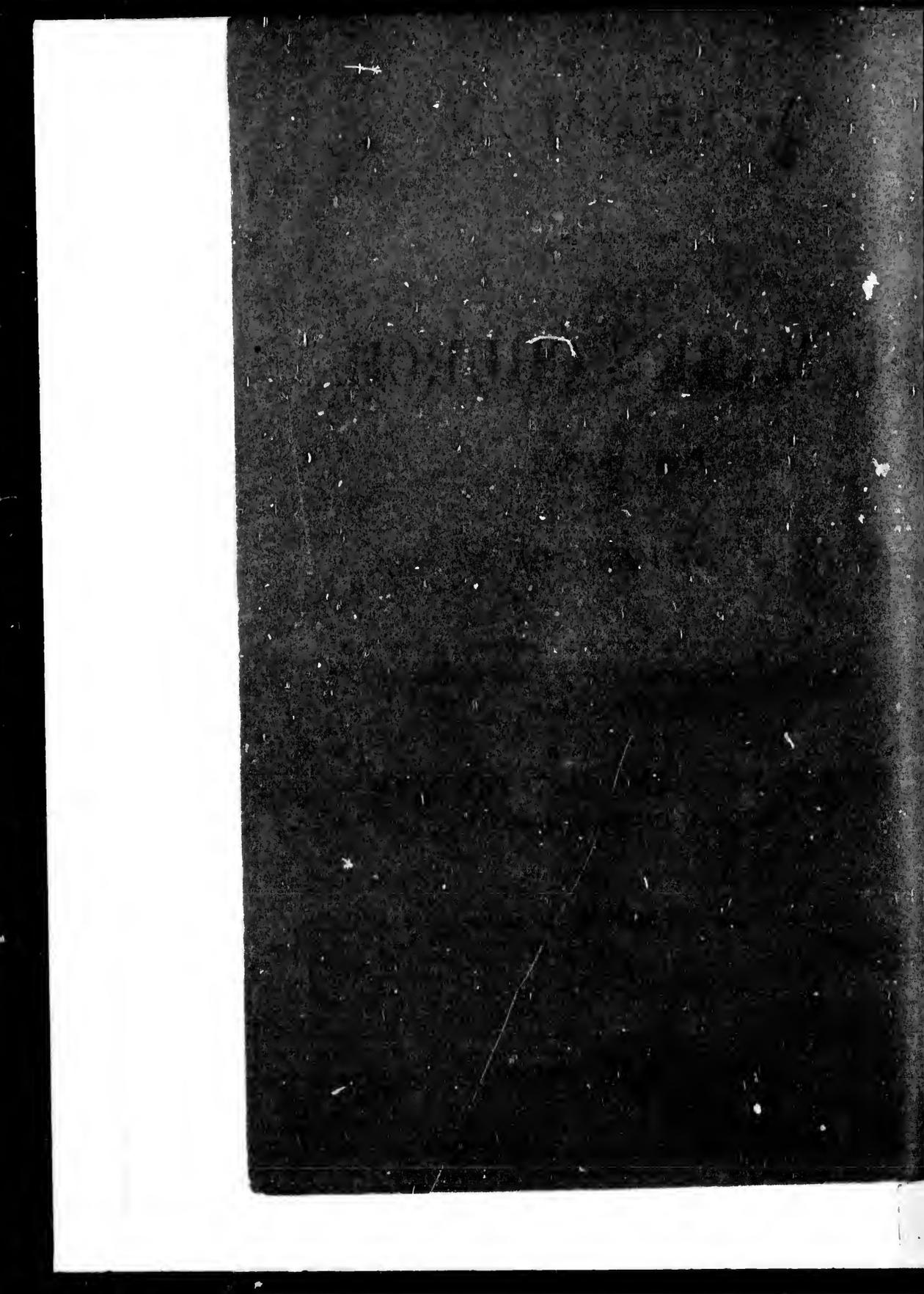
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"Hitherto hath the Lord helped us." 1st SAMUEL, VII, 12.

PORT HOPE:

PRINTED BY J. B. TRAYES "TIMES" OFFICE.

1874.



# A SERMON

PREACHED IN

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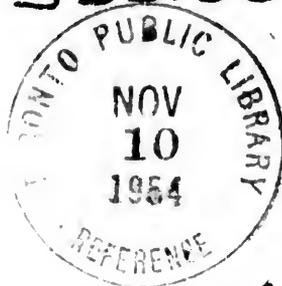
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"Hitherto hath the Lord helped us." 1st SAMUEL, vii, 12.

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## PREFACE.

The following sermon was preached, as its title explains, on the 50th Anniversary of the erection and opening of the old Parish Church of Port Hope, now St. Mark's. The Church was built and opened in the year 1824, the late Rev. M. Thompson being the first Incumbent, and the late Thomas Ward and the late David Smart, the first Churchwardens. Services were held uninterruptedly in the old Church, until the erection of a Church on the other side of the Town, when it was abandoned, and closed for Divine Service. In the Spring of 1873, the Parish was divided, and the old Church, under the name of St. Mark's, was re-opened for Divine Service on Sunday, the 3rd August of the same year, the Reverend Charles W. Paterson, B. C. L., being appointed Incumbent. The Church is *free* and is *entirely* supported by the offertory without even the adoption of the Envelope System.

## DIVINE AID.

1st SAMUEL, VII CHAPTER, 12th VERSE.—“Hitherto hath the Lord helped us.”

Few individuals of ordinary thoughtfulness, on looking back at the changing aspects and varied events of their past pilgrimage, can fail to respond to these words of the prophet Samuel in our text. It may not be to them, as it was to him, a victory over powerful and dreaded enemies, that awakened this thankful acknowledgment; but many an escape from difficulties that appeared insurmountable,—a triumph over obstacles seemingly beyond human power to overcome,—the accomplishment of high and beneficent purposes which were all but abandoned as beyond attainment,—these are things in the lot of many which call forth the exclamation, “Hitherto hath the Lord helped us.”

Such, doubtless, has been the experience of many whom I am now addressing,—struggling, yet almost despairing; hoping, and yet against hope. But as they go on, in dutiful perseverance, the overshadowing cloud becomes lighter: sunshine has gleamed through it, and the day of despondency has passed away. There may, —and there should be,—in such cases, complacent thoughts upon the value of steady patience and of persistent struggle against every up-hill toil and difficulty; but the Christian mind will turn off from the weakness of human effort by itself, and acknowledge as the grand source of success the favoring Providence of God. *He* has cleared away difficulties which would have rendered our onward course impossible; *He* has opened a

its title explains, on the opening of the old Church's. The Church was the late Rev. Mr. and the late Thomas first Churchwardens. old Church, until the of the Town, when it service. In the Spring old Church, under the r Divine Service on the Reverend Charles d Incumbent. The l by the offertory- e System.

path through mountains of impediments, over which our way were otherwise impracticable.

And as with individuals, so it is with communities, —with organizations for social benefits; with associations for spiritual advantages. It will be so with united efforts for resisting the power of Satan's agencies, and of keeping within a safe guardianship those whom he would make his victims. Without, indeed, the keeping of Christians together in a condition of mutual strengthening and encouragement; without the consolidation of members of God's church into a circle and company of their own, with teachings and ordinances to preserve that union,—the contest would be a feeble one against the powers of darkness that surround them. It would, otherwise, be a single-handed contest against overpowering enemies, and discouragement or failure would be sure to follow.

This shows the value of the parochial system in the Church of God; that is, having allotted boundaries within which His commissioned servants are to labor, —spheres of duty which it is possible for them to traverse and oversee, — companies of the faithful whom they can individually reach and minister to. And in working out this parochial system, so useful and indispensable, there are none of those appointed to its duties who have not grave difficulties to overcome, and great trials to endure. There are none without their seasons of distrust and discouragement; without the temptation, oftentimes, to abandon a godly effort as hopeless. But in the faithful servant, the claims of duty are made to rise paramount over such discouragements: the command of the Great Master will not al-

low the servant to slacken his toil, or give up hope.

That Master, we know, is never a hard or unreasonable one. He imposes no impossible duties; he asks for no strain of mind or body beyond what his servants can endure. He, too, is always at hand for help: when human strength would fail, *He* interposes with his irresistible power. The human effort never relaxed, and the Divine aid never withdrawn, there is success at last. Like Samuel, we can set up the monumental pillar, and say, "Hitherto hath the Lord helped us."

These, my brethren, are world-wide experiences; and if we can recognize such to be our own, the contemplation of them intensifies our interest and our satisfaction. Here, in this parish, they may not have been so varied or so striking as in other places; but you, it is certain, have had shadows and light in your parochial experiences,—dark days, as well as bright sunshine; all but despairing efforts, with success at last to hail and be thankful for. When weariness, or indolence, or decline of faith, is not allowed to mar our energies, God is sure to help us through them all.

To exhibit the lights and shadows of your parochial experience so as to increase your hope and confidence in the future, it may be profitable to make a brief review of its history.

Antecedent to the building of the church in which we are now assembled, occasional services were given in a small homely school house close by, by the late Reverend William Macanlay, then the Incumbent of Cobourg; and I have a recollection of being present at one of these prior to my ordination, when about

thirty persons were assembled. The place was also visited occasionally by the late Reverend Joseph Thompson, of Cavan, who searched out with a good deal of diligence the Church families of the village and neighborhood, and baptized a large number of adults as well as children. Amongst the number were several along the lake-shore to the west of the town; and of the effects of his visits in that quarter I had afterwards a very interesting indication.

This Church was completed, it appears, in the autumn of 1824; but the services rendered by the neighboring clergymen were by no means regular. In the month of July, 1827, I was appointed to the parish of Cobourg, with instructions to afford a regular Sunday service at Port Hope; an arrangement which gave me much gratification to carry out. A regular afternoon service was, therefore, given here; occasionally exchanged for a morning one when the Holy Communion was to be administered. The congregation was not a numerous one,—the average attendance rarely reaching seventy,—and the communicants were proportionally few.

It was impossible, at such a distance, to pay to the congregation that personal attention, by systematic visiting, which is so essential to ministerial success; but occasional calls from the sick and dying were strictly attended to. These were very numerous during the summer of 1828, which proved a very sickly one; and besides the visits caused by these urgent cases, I had frequently to drive up four times in the week to funerals. Amongst the sick calls to this parish, was a very special one from the lake shore, some miles up,—com-

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ing from a young woman stricken with the fever. She expressed a great anxiety to be baptised; having, as she said, very wickedly made light of that duty when it was administered several years before by the Rev. Mr. Thompson to her sisters and several of her neighbours. She was very penitent, and much comforted on receiving this holy ordinance. She died a few days after, and I was summoned to her funeral; and there I took occasion to address very earnestly the gathered friends of the deceased, and urged them to avail themselves of the privileges of the church now within their reach. I had pleasing evidence that these were words not spoken in vain; and obtained a considerable number as candidates for confirmation held some weeks after by that good and apostolic man Dr. Charles James Stewart, Bishop of Quebec. On that occasion thirty-eight persons were confirmed, being the same day on which the church was consecrated,—the consecration taking place in the morning, and the Confirmation in the afternoon.

I continued in charge of this parish until the summer of 1830, when the Rev. James Coghlan, a graduate of Cambridge, was appointed its Incumbent, and was able to apply himself exclusively to its duties. He remained in charge for nearly seven years; and on his leaving, early in the winter of 1837, I was called upon to resume the duties of the parish until an incumbent could be put permanently in charge. In the early autumn of the same year, the Rev. Jonathan Shcrtt was appointed; and without delay he entered very zealously upon his work. He very soon made arrangements to connect some country work with his

labors in town; and with this view he established a service at Perrytown held in the afternoon of Sundays, and involving to and fro a ride or drive of 18 miles. Through his exertions a church was built there, and subsequently in a more westerly direction. In after years he effected the enlargement of this church in which we are assembled, by the addition of transepts and galleries; and the erection of the new church was on foot before he was laid up by sickness.

I shall always retain a pleasing and affectionate remembrance of Dr. Shortt. From our first acquaintance to his death,—covering a period of thirty years,—the cordiality of our intercourse was never broken; and to his dying hour he showed himself a hearty and unchanged friend. Whatever may be the defects of the best of clergymen,—and he was not one to conceal what he believed to be his own,—it is pleasing and gratifying, in reviewing his ministerial career, to see so much that testifies his love of Christ and love of souls. And if we desire in the Lord's ministering servants the manifestation of the spirit which He, the pattern-man, always exhibited in His intercourse with men, we shall be cheered by our recollections of the even temper, the unselfish bearing, the ready sympathy,—which no provocation could disturb,—of our dear departed friend.

The erection of a new Church in the centre of the town, thereby accessible to the bulk of the population, was a wise conception, and one which has been very satisfactorily acted upon. It is a Church very creditable to its projectors, and honorable to those who contributed to its erection.

As regards this house of God in which we are now assembled, I consider it a very happy thought to have rescued it from total abandonment, and restore it to its original purpose. It is always painful to surrender houses of God to the slow or speedy process of decay, and give up all the associations of spiritual interest and edification connected with them. This is sometimes an unavoidable course; but it is a matter for thankfulness that it did not prove so here.

The project of establishing a new parish in this town, was one which, very naturally, would awaken great diversity of opinion. Some would, not unreasonably, regard it as likely to interfere with the progress and prosperity of the parish, of which the new Church is the centre. Much anxiety would be felt as to the removal of the debt contracted in its erection; and the establishment of a rival Sanctuary would be regarded as likely to draw off much of the support requisite for the extinction of that liability.

But events seemed to have proved that all these forebodings were unfounded. There seems to have been no misconception as to the strength of the church in this town and neighborhood; no erroneous calculations as to the materials which existed for forming two flourishing congregations within its limits. I believe I am correct in saying that there has been no perceptible falling off in the number of attendants at St. John's Church; no diminution of its communicants; no contraction of its offerings on the Lord's day. And in regard to this Church of St. Mark's, I have on several occasions witnessed here the gathering of large congregations; and have often had the assurance that the

number of communicants was satisfactorily increasing and that the offerings on the Lord's day were not on the whole disappointing. We can never bring ourselves to say that there is enough done in this respect or that the largest gifts thus contributed at all approach the amount which duty to God should instigate men to give. Yet, even with this persuasion, we must always be thankful for any growing evidence that the grand obligation to honor the Lord with our substance is being more and more appreciated.

In contemplation, then, of the privileges you enjoy in possessing this capacious house of prayer, and of having a minister of the Lord resident amongst you to supply you with the devotions and teachings and ordinances which are the purpose of the Sanctuary,—I must entreat you not to be forgetful of the *responsibilities* which the possession of such a privilege lay upon you.

In the first place, these responsibilities demand that there should be a steady and conscientious attendance at God's house, for the reviving and strengthening of the soul. Souls must not be left in isolation; each to think and work for itself apart. Its fervour in such case would soon die out: without contact or sympathy outside, it would easily be drawn away into the excitements and dangers of the world.—Our blessed Lord meant to encourage union in religious exercises when he said, "Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them." And no doubt the Lord's injunctions, as well as their own sense of its importance, urged his early followers to meet stately on the first day of the week for the breaking of bread and

for prayers; and it gave force to the apostle's exhortation "not to neglect the assembling of themselves together" on such holy occasions.

If, then, these duties should be disregarded, the house of God would be divested of its great end and purpose. It would be an edifice merely to contemplate, and not to use.—You must endeavor, brethren, to avoid such an inconsistency, and escape the shame and condemnation it would bring upon you.

And as appointed services and ordinances of God's house cannot be supplied and maintained unless there be a ministering servant, specially appointed, to perform them; so it becomes the obligation of the Lord's faithful people to provide for the support of such minister and ambassador of Christ. He relinquishes all worldly causes to devote himself exclusively to this work; a fact which involves the duty of his reasonable and dutiful support from those to whom he ministers.

This fact is, by Christian congregations, generally admitted. The support of their clergyman in a becoming way, is acknowledged to be a duty. But, unhappily, there is too frequently a failure in the discharge of it. Much too commonly the complaint is made that clergymen have to submit to a great inconvenience and to meet privation, through the carelessness and indifference of congregations in providing the support to which they are pledged.

I trust, my brethren, that such a complaint will never reach me in regard to you. I believe rather that the obligation I have referred to, will be honestly and conscientiously fulfilled; and, instead of being pained by such a complaint, I have every hope of re-

ceiving assurance that, as the parish increases in numbers and wealth, proportionate additions will be made to the stipend of your minister.

Your gifts and offerings for advancing God's work on earth, He will always recognize; yes, and He will repay all by redoubled temporal blessings to yourselves; and more than all, by rekindling within you the glow and joy of the spiritual life. This richer gift He will vouchsafe you, if to assiduous prayer and careful waiting on His ordinances, you join those evidences of work and self-denial for His cause.

A peaceful conscience, an assurance of drawing near to God here, and a growing confidence of seeing Him face to face hereafter,—these are aims and hopes beyond and above all the aspirings for, and all the gains of the world. The best gifts of earth perish in the using, and often, alas, they leave a sting behind; but the graces and gifts of the Saviour, will be part of the joy and glory of the immortal being.

O how many, since my ties with the worshippers in this church were first formed, have gone to their everlasting rest! How many have closed their conflicts on earth, to enjoy, as we trust, the peace of heaven! We weep and mourn for them; but we are fast following them to the same destiny. As long as we survive them, may we so discharge our duties, and so fulfil our responsibilities, that coming generations may look to our example; and each as they pass, in the contemplation of success to pious enterprises, be enabled to say, "Hitherto hath the Lord helped us."

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