



THE

Bishop of Montreal's

ADDRESS

AT THE

General Theological Seminary,

M D C C C L I I .

A N A D D R E S S

DELIVERED IN THE CHAPEL

OF THE

General Theological Seminary

OF THE

PROTESTANT EPISCOPAL CHURCH

IN THE UNITED STATES.

ON FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 13TH, 1852.

BY FRANCIS FULFORD, D. D.,

LORD BISHOP OF MONTREAL

New-York:

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MDCCLII.

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NEW-YORK, *November 13th, 1852.*

MY LORD,

We are so much interested in the Address which you so kindly delivered to the Students of the General Theological Seminary, on the evening of the 12th of November, at the request of the Faculty, that we are desirous of possessing it in a permanent form ; and also of enabling many, who were not present upon that occasion, to participate in the pleasure and instruction which you communicated to us. We think, too, that your wise counsels, and earnest and fatherly exhortations, will be of great benefit to those who are preparing for the sacred Ministry. We therefore solicit a copy of your Address for publication.

We are, with very great respect,

Your Lordship's friends and fellow-labourers

In the Church of Christ,

JONA. M. WAINWRIGHT,

Pro. Bishop of New-York.

SAMUEL R. JOHNSON, D. D.,

Prof. of System. Divinity and Dean.

SAMUEL H. TURNER, D. D., *Professor*

of Bib. Learn. and Interp. of Scripture.

BENJAMIN I. HAIGHT, D. D.,

Prof. of Pastoral Theology.

M. MAHAN, B. D.,

Prof. of Ecclesiastical History.

TO THE LORD BISHOP OF MONTREAL.

MONTREAL, *Nov. 20th, 1852.*

RIGHT REV'D. AND REV'D. BRETHREN,

I beg to thank you most sincerely for the letter which I have just received, and for the kind manner in which you have been pleased to express yourselves, respecting the Address delivered by me in the Chapel of the Seminary.

With your request, for the publication of the Address, so made, and emanating from such high authority, I feel I cannot do otherwise than

comply ; and I trust that the additional weight thus given to words of advice spoken by a comparative stranger, will cause them to be the more carefully received by the Students for whose benefit they were spoken.

With warm and grateful recollections of much kindness received from all of you, and with high respect,

I remain,

Yours very faithfully,

F. MONTREAL.

THE RIGHT REV. BISHOP WAINWRIGHT, D. D.,

And the Faculty of the General Theological Seminary.

* * * The Students of the Seminary likewise addressed a letter to his Lordship expressive of their interest in the occasion, and of their desire for the publication of his Address.

It is proper to state that the greater portion of what is now printed in the following pages, has already been made public in another shape. Having, during my short visit at New-York, on the occasion of the Consecration of Bishop Wainwright, been unexpectedly requested to deliver an Address in the Chapel of the Theological Seminary in that City, I had no time to do more than simply to adapt some passages from a Charge lately delivered by me in my own Diocese. Should this re-publication of a portion of that Charge prove in any measure useful for the Students of the Seminary, it will indeed be a source of real satisfaction to me: at any rate it will serve to remind me of a season, during which I joined with the Bishops and Clergy and a great body of the Laity of the American Episcopal Church, in holy services of deepest interest to all of us; and will bear witness for the Unity of the Body, of which we, as Catholic Christians, are severally members.

F. M.

MONTREAL. NOV. 18, 1852.

A D D R E S S .

HAVING been requested by those who bear rule in this Institution to deliver an Address after the Evening Service, I feel that I cannot more appropriately comply, than by making a few remarks on the character and duties of the sacred office of the Ministry, more immediately addressing myself to those who are here preparing for Holy Orders.

And I cannot omit first briefly stating how great has been my satisfaction at having been present in this city during this week; to have witnessed the solemn ceremonial of Wednesday last,* taking part myself in the most important acts in it; and to have had the privilege of mixing in free and kindly intercourse with so many of the most valued members of this branch of the Catholic Church. It has also interested me most deeply to inquire into the particulars of your ecclesiastical constitution and discipline; for, circumstanced as we are in the Colonial Branch of the English Church, we are in many respects looking to our Brethren in the United States as the model after which we may ourselves hope to be organized.

* The Consecration of the Rev. Dr. Wainwright as Provisional Bishop of the Diocese of New-York.

But whatever may be the ecclesiastical constitution of the Church to which we belong; whatever provision may be made for its self-government; however suitably adapted to the circumstances in which we are placed in relation to the civil powers, and our fellow-citizens around us, it is still for us, my young friends, to remember that under any circumstances no blessing can be looked for upon our Zion, no growth and increase of spiritual life within her courts, unless there be also present with us faithful, godly, and laborious ministers, God's remembrancers, watchmen in Israel, who shall bear witness for the truth by their lives, as well as by their doctrine, and point out to their flocks the way to heaven by walking in it themselves. The teaching of Gospel truths in the preaching, and the exemplification of Gospel obedience in the lives, of the ministers of Christ, are a great and powerful means, in the hand of the Lord, for pulling down the strongholds of Satan and establishing the kingdom of God. But while publishing to others "the glad tidings" of salvation, let us for ourselves "make our own calling and election sure;" let us strive to observe that steady consistency of character in our general conversation, that gravity of deportment that becomes our holy office; and "keep our own bodies under, and bring them into subjection, lest while preaching to others we ourselves become castaways."* Besides being our interest, this is our bounden duty for promoting the success of our ministry; since, whatever grace may attach to direct ministerial acts, "which be effectual because of Christ's institution and promise,"† yet the prayers of an ungodly man can be of little use to

* 1 Cor. ix. 27.

† Articles of Religion, xxvi.

others, and no unction can be hoped for to descend on the people from the skirts of our garments, unless we ourselves have received an anointing from above. Moreover, unless we have analyzed the tear of penitence when dropping from our own eye, how can we recognize it when bedewing a brother's cheek; unless we ourselves have tasted of the bread of life, how can we describe to others its strengthening powers; unless we have drank of the fountain of life, how tell them of its cleansing and refreshing virtues; unless we ourselves "have been with Jesus," and with Him, "entered within the veil,"* how can we enlarge upon the excellence of His communion, the fullness of his temple, or the splendours of His throne?

But we must look at the duties of the Clergy, not only towards those within our own Communion, but also towards those who are without. The visible unity of the Body of Christ is marred by the sins and weakness of man, and the unbeliever and the ungodly draw from thence much encouragement to gainsay the truths of revelation, and the plain requirements of the law of God. If, therefore, the differences that exist between various religious communities are not thought of material importance, they must surely appear to us to be unjustifiable and sinful; if, however, we think ourselves justified in maintaining them, we ought to be fully persuaded in our own minds of the grounds upon which they are founded. But in all such questions let it be our care still to maintain our Christian charity; to contend for truth, not for victory; to condemn, not persons, but their errors, and to be far more dili-

* Heb. vi. 19.

gent in declaring positive truths, than in denouncing the belief or practice of our neighbours. A little religion is very apt to engender a violent spirit of partisanship; a larger measure of grace and knowledge, while it confirms us in our own position on better and clearer grounds, teaches us also more correctly in what way we ought to act towards others. "We have just enough religion (says an excellent author) to make us hate, but not enough to make us love one another."* "If we establish truth, (to adopt the language of a learned divine, whose recent loss the Church is yet mourning,) error will fall of itself, not immediately, perhaps, but gradually and finally. Belief cannot be forced. To attempt it will only generate hostility. But by the exercise of Christian virtues, by upholding the truth with meekness and gentleness, by putting the most candid construction upon the motives of them that be in error, by inducing them to view the truth from other points than those to which education or habit has accustomed them;—by such methods will the Christian religion be most successfully propagated."† If you endeavour to cultivate such a spirit, no one, whose opinion is worth listening to, will ever think the worse of you for being faithful to the specific principles of the Communion to which you belong, or for being anxious to act up to the tenor of your ordination vows. Far otherwise; be assured that your truth and consistency will gain respect and confidence, your Christian moderation and charity will win love and souls.

In order rightly to appreciate the position of those

* Quoted in the 459th No. of the Spectator.

† Jarvis's "Church of the Redeemed," Preface, p. xiv.

Branches of the Church, of which we are severally members, it will be necessary that you should fully understand the principles upon which the great work of the Reformation was conducted, and what it really effected. This is far too wide a subject for me to do more than just glance at; but I would wish you carefully to note that it was not a work completed at once, or by one generation of men; and that it resulted in two inestimable blessings, which we now possess as our inheritance, which have preserved to us "the truth once delivered to the saints," and which, I trust, we shall faithfully hand down to those that come after.

The first and greatest of these blessings was The Bible, which now once more received its due reverence and regard; and, having been translated into the language known and used by the people, was placed by command in all churches and places of public worship, that it might be read by all for their guidance and comfort, and be referred to by all who, respecting any matters of faith or doctrine, wished to "search the Scriptures to see whether these things were so.)*" And it is the great excellence of the Church, to which we belong, that, in all her formularies and articles, she shrinks from no inquiry, and fears no comparison with the written Word; and teaches expressly, in her Sixth Article, that "Holy Scripture containeth all things necessary to salvation, so that whatsoever is not read therein, nor may be proved thereby, is not to be required of any man, that it should be believed as an article of Faith, or be thought requisite or necessary to salvation."

* Acts xvii. 11.

The other blessing I refer to is “the Book of Common Prayer,” which serves not only as our guide and assistant in public worship, and in most simple and spiritual language leads us with one mind and one voice to praise and worship God; but it also provides us with Confessions of Faith, and standards of doctrinal truth, by means of which the maintenance of a full and pure system of Christian belief is always preserved, and the Gospel-message necessarily set forth before men.

The weakness of man is so extreme, the temptation to evil so great, and false doctrine so agreeable to our natural inclination, that we may truly bless God that we have not been left, each of us to search out for himself, without such a guide to help us, the great and essential truths contained in the Word of God.* And when we number up the amount of the ever-varying and increasing interpretations affixed to the same passages of Scripture, and affecting most important doctrines; and when we so often hear of the falling away of whole congregations, as well as of individuals, from the faith

* “Q. What need we Catechisms, while we have the Bible ?

“A. Because the Bible contains all the whole body of religious truth, which the ripest Christian should know, but are not all of equal necessity to salvation with the greatest points, and it cannot be expected that ignorant persons can cull out these most necessary points from the rest without help. A man is not a man without a head and heart, but he may be a man if he lose a finger or a hand, but not an entire man, nor a comely man without hair, nails, and nature’s ornaments. So a man cannot be a Christian or a good and happy man, without the great, most necessary points in the Bible, nor an entire Christian without the rest. Life and death lieth not on all points alike, and the skilful must gather the most necessary points for the ignorant : which is a Catechism.”

“Q. But are not the articles of our Church, and the confessions of Churches, their religion ?

“A. Only God’s Word is our religion as the divine rule ; but our confessions, and books, and words, and lives, show how we understand it.”—*Baxter’s Catechism.*”

which once they believed and maintained, we ought not lightly to estimate the mercy of God in allowing us, together with the free use of the written Word, to possess "the Book of Common Prayer." It is true, that notwithstanding the assistance and guidance thus provided for us, there will still be evils to correct and deficiencies to deplore;—there may be also some seasons of less light and less holiness than others, and individual pastors may be untrue to their profession, and teach that which is contrary to the mind of the Church and her continued faithful testimony. But, as a Church, she can scarcely fall away; she bears her own unflinching witness to the same great principles and doctrines; and through the influence of her own expositions in "the Book of Common Prayer," after a time either forces back, as it were, her erring ones to believe and confess the truth, thus set forth, "as it is in Jesus," or causes them to go out from her, because they do not belong to her. The influence of such an authorized exposition of the Church, so simple, so scriptural, to which the Clergy are required to subscribe their unfeigned assent, and pledge themselves to conform, and which serves as the general Liturgy to be used in all our places of worship, cannot but be most beneficial, as a standard of doctrine, and witness of the identity of that Reformed Faith which it embodies. Any mere subscription to a Confession of Faith, or Articles of Religion, by the Clergy at their Ordination, or Institution to a charge, can never produce the same results. Such a subscription is an act complete in itself, and testifying to the opinions of the subscribers at the time, but carrying with it no perpetu-

al check, and bearing no audible testimony in case of subsequent unfaithfulness. Notwithstanding the many trials and persecutions which the Church of England has undergone during the last three centuries; notwithstanding the violent controversies which occasionally, as now, have been raised within her own communion, yet she still holds fast to the same great Catholic Truths, continues faithful to the principles upon which she was reformed, believes only what the Church has always believed, and preserves her unity with the whole Body of Christ, "built upon the foundation of the Apostles and Prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner-stone."*

To you, my young friends, however, who are training up to fill, if God shall so please, the office of Ministers of Christ, and conduct the public services of the Church, it belongs to see that the people, who shall wait on your ministrations, have the full benefit of that provision which has thus been made for them. Let not any irreverence or carelessness on your parts, in the performance of your duties, lead the people to forget the nature of these services, or to Whom it is that your prayers are addressed. Teach them by your manner, as well as by your words, the meaning and importance of the work in which you are engaged, and that "God is very greatly to be feared in the council of the saints, and to be had in reverence of all them that are round about him."† There is no one point, perhaps, (especially with the mixed population among whom you dwell in this country, as we do also in my own Diocese,) which it is more necessary to keep ever before them; without it your "prayers will be an

* Ephes. ii. 20.

† Ps. lxxxix. 7.

abomination to the Lord,"* an insult to His Majesty: and the rich blessings of the Gospel will be an encouragement to sin. However rude the building in which you may, in many parts of this great and growing country, be called to assemble for divine worship, however few or humble the worshippers, "where two or three are gathered together in the name of Christ, there is He present in the midst of them;" therefore be ye very careful how ye pray, and what ye speak. Remember that your business is not merely to deliver a message, or to preach certain important doctrines, but to watch over your flocks, and to train souls for Heaven; so that they may be fitted to join with the people of God in those holy and blessed services which will be the employment and the joy of the followers of the Lamb for ever and ever.

In the use of "the Prayer Book" as a standard of doctrine and exposition of faith, it should be our object, as far as may be, to act up to its teaching; and to receive what it teaches in a simple and literal meaning, without overstraining its words, or explaining them away to suit other systems, or private interpretations. Without too curiously defining the exact extent or manner of the operations of grace, we are always warranted in adhering "to the law and to the testimony" given for our use, that the Sacraments are "outward and visible signs of inward and spiritual grace given unto us, ordained by Christ Himself, as means whereby we receive the same, and pledges to assure us thereof;"† and that "Sacraments ordained of Christ be not only badges or tokens of Christian men's profession, but rather

* Prov. xxviii. 9.

† Church Catechism.

they be certain sure witnesses and effectual signs of grace, and God's good-will towards us, by the which He doth work invisibly in us, and doth not only quicken, but also strengthen and confirm our faith in Him."* There is nothing unreasonable in the fact that Christ works by means provided for our use, and by ordinances appointed by Him; but it will be perverting those means, and making those ordinances of no effect, if we rest in them as the end, or consider them of any force or value except as leading us to Christ. As the Bible itself, from Genesis to the Revelation, is but the history of man's fall, and his redemption by Christ, so also it is with the Church and all her ministrations; "being born in sin, and children of wrath, we are hereby made children of grace," and are taught "heartily to thank our heavenly Father that He hath called us to this state of salvation;" and to "pray unto Him to give us His Grace, that we may continue in the same unto our life's end."† Whatever we do, whatever ordinances we attend with an intelligent spirit, must constantly remind us of the evil of sin, and of our lost estate by nature, and that it is by grace only we can be saved;‡ and that as our persons can only be justified for Christ's sake, so that we may have access to the Father as our reconciled God, so only by the gift of the Spirit, purchased for us by Christ's blood, can we ourselves be sanctified, or enabled to do that which is well pleasing in God's sight. May we all walk worthy of this our calling in Christ; and "work

* Articles of Religion, xxv.

† Church Catechism.

‡ "We must note that in a Christian man there is, first, *nature*; secondly, *corruption*, perverting nature; thirdly, *grace*, correcting and amending corruption."
—Hooker's Sermon, "A Remedy against Sorrow and Fear."

out our salvation with fear and trembling, because it is God that worketh in us both to will and to do of his good pleasure.”*

I trust that you who are now passing through your course of studies in this institution, will bear in mind the responsibility that lies upon you to see that you use so great a blessing aright. This is a *Theological Seminary*, to prepare you for the work of the Ministry. Let not the solemn prayer we have just offered up for God’s special grace and favour on this Seminary, and in which you are daily addressing the Almighty, be used as a mere matter of form.† “All things whatsoever ye shall ask in prayer, believing, ye shall receive.”‡

Doubtless, the first and most important point in that training, is the formation of the students’ character, that their thoughts and tempers, and habits of life and conversation, may be conformable to the work and office which they seek to undertake; that they may be men of thoughtful, religious and pious minds, fully impressed themselves with the importance of those truths which they are about to preach to others. Without this foundation, no superstructure of acquired knowledge can be raised of any efficient value for the work of the ministry. And at the earliest age at which any candidate can be presented for Deacon’s Orders, whatever practical experience may be wanting, the character in all essentials ought to be formed and the choice made. But though this be especially necessary, we must not undervalue the importance of possessing, if possible, a learned as well as a pious clergy. It is true that there may be spheres of duty, in which classical acquirements may seem

* Phil. ii. 12, 13.

† See Appendix.

‡ St. Matt. xxi. 22.

unnecessary, and erudition thrown away; but when all the world is agitated by an inquiring spirit; when all those around us are making progress in knowledge; when truth is assailed on every side, and by every weapon; when new forms of controversy are forced upon us, or old ones reproduced, it becomes us to look well to all our armour; to be "the scribe instructed unto the kingdom of heaven, who is like unto a man that is an householder, which brought forth out of his treasures things new and old," and we must "be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh us a reason of the hope that is in us."*

But when we consider the limited sphere, the retired cares, to which so many of you must necessarily be called, we cannot expect men of education and talent to abide contentedly in their work, unless they have indeed been disciplined and trained after the mind of Christ. For myself, I can most truly say that when I witness the spheres of labour in which my own clergy are often called to officiate, where they must often be "hoping against hope," patiently toiling "for souls that will not be redeemed," cut off from all those who can appreciate and sympathize with their previous tastes and habits, with many an anxious intruding thought as to the future prospects of those around them in their own family, I cannot but feel how essential it is that they should be men of strong and settled faith, who, in humble dependence upon God, are satisfied to do His will, committing to Him all their ways, laying up their treasure with their heart in heaven. For men of such a spirit, "the wilderness and the solitary place shall be glad, and the desert shall rejoice and blossom as the rose,"† whilst

* 1 Pet. iii. 15.

† Isaiah xxxv. 1.

we, if we be otherwise minded, though now we may be had in honor, and our cup may seem full, shall give way to them "in the regeneration," and "begin with shame to take the lowest place." There is some excellent advice bearing upon this point in a short passage from Bishop Taylor's "Holy Living," which will not be out of place for any of us: "God is master of the scenes; we must not choose which part we shall act; it concerns us only to be careful that we do it well, always saying, *if this please God, let it be as it is*: and we who pray that God's 'will may be done on earth as it is in heaven,' must remember that the angels do whatsoever is commanded them, and go wherever they are sent, and refuse no circumstances; and if their employment be crossed by a higher decree, they sit down in peace and rejoice in the event; and when the angel of *Judaea* could not prevail on behalf of the people committed to his charge, because the angel of *Persia* opposed it, he only told the story at the command of God, and was as content, and worshipped with as great an ecstasy in his proportion as the prevailing spirit. Do thou so likewise: keep the station where God hath placed you, and you shall never long for things without, but sit at home, feasting upon the Divine Providence, and thy own reason, by which we are taught that it is necessary and reasonable to submit to God."

Finally, my young friends, if the present be with you, in many ways, as it is with us, "a day of small things," it is also, I feel sure, a day of hope; if we are conscious of our weakness, we must only be led by it more earnestly, in dependence on God's blessing, to seek "to strengthen the things that remain." But although we be little among the mighty gatherings of

the people around us, yet have we fellowship with a countless host, whose tents are spread throughout all the world, whose voices are heard in one united strain of prayers and praises in the courts of the Lord's House, and whose bands of love and unity are being drawn increasingly closer every day. The world is everywhere full of excitement, eager after progress, and pleased with novelty :

“ Human kind rejoices in the might
Of mutability.”*

But the Church of Christ, like her great Head, is, in all her great principles of faith and doctrine, “ the same yesterday, to-day and for ever.”† She may be rich or poor, settled or missionary, persecuted by a Diocletian, or served by a Theodosius, but still her identity as a spiritual body is maintained, her faith unchanged, “ built upon the foundation of the Apostles and Prophets, Jesus Christ being himself the chief corner-stone.” Nor shall the principles of “ Apostolic Order and Evangelical Truth,” by which we stand, now fail, though the light be quenched in one or more of its present candlesticks. The Church of the Reformation, in which we are alike partakers, for awhile insular, shut up within the four seas that encircle the British Isles, now has her home in every quarter of the world. She embodies facts which are known and recognized. She appeals both to the Bible as the foundation, and to Catholic testimony as the living witness of “ the faith once delivered to the saints.” She has gone forth, and been planted and taken root in this Mighty Empire, in our English North American colonies, in the East and West Indies, in

* Wordsworth.

† Heb. xiii. 8.

Africa, China, and Australasia, and everywhere has raised up seed, and is full of reproductive life.

And now unto the Great Head of the Church, and to God the Father, invisible, eternal, with the Holy Spirit, be ascribed all praise and glory, giving thanks for past mercies, and praying that we may have grace to keep us from falling into sin or error. And "peace be to the brethren, and love with faith, from God the Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ. Grace be with all them that love our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity. Amen."*

* Ephes. vi, 23, 24.

APPENDIX.

Prayer

SAID AT THE DAILY SERVICE IN THE GENERAL THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY,
BEFORE THE GENERAL THANKSGIVING.

MOST Gracious Father, who, by Thy Blessed Son, our Saviour Jesus Christ, didst commission Thy Holy Apostles, and through them a succession of Pastors to the end of time, to proclaim to the world the knowledge of Salvation through a Redeemer, we implore Thy blessing on this Seminary, instituted with a view to the same Ministry of the Gospel. May the hearts and the hands of Thy people be open with supplies for carrying the design into effect. May the Trustees and Professors be endued with fidelity and wisdom, and sustained by Thy Providence in the discharge of the duties respectively committed to them. May the Pupils be favored with health for the prosecution of their studies, and preserved by Thy grace from all temptations to relaxation of industry in the pursuit of knowledge. Strengthen in them the good desires which have been excited in them by the inspiration of Thy Holy Spirit, and impress on their minds a sense of the high origin, the salutary tendency, the awful duties and responsibilities, and the rich rewards of the Gospel Ministry. Endue them with humility in the pursuit of truth, and with zeal and steadfastness in the profession of it. Preserve them from prejudices, and from whatever else may betray their understandings into error, or their hearts into sin. May they be useful in their generation to the increase of Thy glory and the edification of Thy Church: and may they at last receive the commendation of faithful servants from the great Shepherd and Bishop of souls, Thy Son, Jesus Christ our Lord, in whose name, and through whose prevailing merits, we offer up these our imperfect prayers. *Amen.*

