

# THE BISHOP'S CHARGE

## Delivered at the Synod of the Diocese of Ontario.

### Unbelief is Rampant and Worldliness Has Broken Down Religious Convictions--The Pastoral and Prophetic Office Not Regarded as Highly as it Ought to Be--Too Little Preaching of the Gospel of Salvation.

On Tuesday afternoon the Bishop of Ontario read his annual charge to the clergy. We give it in full:

*Rev. Brethren, and Brethren of the Laity.*—I am glad to have the pleasure of welcoming you once again to a meeting of Synod, and with ranks unbroken by death. The grim reaper, however, has not been idle for several prominent Churchmen, to whom I shall presently refer, have been taken away during the past year.

Nothing has arisen to seriously disturb the even tenor of our way in this Diocese since last we met, a fact for which we should be devoutly thankful, for peace and quietness and steadfastness of walk in the old paths have not been enjoyed by the Church everywhere throughout the world. The mystery of iniquity, which has been working all down through the ages, seems to have gathered together its forces for a fierce attack against the very citadel of Truth itself, and its ruler and King, the Captain of our salvation; and may soon bring about the great apostasy which is predicted before the second coming of Christ. For, as it was in the days of Noah, and as it was in the days of the destruction of the cities of the plain, so shall it be in the days preceding the coming of the Son of Man. "Shall He find faith on the earth when He comes?" His coming, however, will restore all things; for then every knee shall bow to Him, and every tongue confess that He is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

Unbelief is rife and rampant; it is in the air, and is manifesting itself in many forms. It has been eating for some time, as a canker, at the very vitals of religion, and now, by its different exponents, it attacks in some instances certain portions of the Scriptures, which have generally been regarded as historic, and characterizes them as merely a combination of myths. In others, it throws the whole Bible to the winds, as in no sense a revelation from a Personal God. Nor is this the end; the Incarnation, the Miracles, the Resurrection, the Divinity of Jesus Christ, are scoffed at and ridiculed as unworthy of credence; and, a science, falsely called, speaks of an impersonal creative power in Nature, and of man's development from ocean slime to his present physical and mental condition, declaring that there has been no fall, and consequently no need of redemption. Among those who pretend to be in a personal God, not a few, with marvellous inconsistency, refer to the doctrine of the Incarnation, on account of the mystery connected with it, though God has seen fit to explain this mystery, and tell us how His life was made flesh, how the manhood was taken into God, how Jesus Christ was conceived by the Holy Ghost, born of the Virgin Mary; showing how His life, from his conception to His resurrection, was one harmonious, consistent, intelligible whole; and how in Him the entire human race has been brought into touch with God. If we will only believe what is devoid of mystery, the area of our belief will be very limited indeed. We are living in a world of mystery; mystery surrounds us, and touches us on every side, for our lives are mysterious, which we can only approximately understand or explain. Medical science has made great advances, and great discoveries, but no scalpel has ever laid bare the life's dwelling place in the human body. No investigator has ever seen life; he has only seen its manifestations; he knows not, except by inference, how it entered, how it controls, or how it leaves the human frame.

Trials for heresy have not been numerous, because of the Church's patience and long suffering; but cannot be said they have not been earned. Not a few, who have failed to get potory in any other way, have actually courted martyrdom, and in this means they might get before the public, and be accounted, if not heroes and martyrs, at least intellectual leaders. While I have the profoundest sympathy with, and respect for, an honest doubter, who is seeking, and desiring, of finding light and truth, but whose intellectual makeup prevents him from accepting what is clear and satisfactory to others,—yet, for a clergyman, who holds and teaches doctrines contrary to what at his ordination he has sworn to maintain, who eats the Church's bread, while false to her, I can command no language strong enough to express my contempt. The question as to the position such a man occupies is not a theological question, but a moral one. An honest man, when he could not teach what the Church believes and requires to be taught, would at once resign, and if he felt most prominently his views would proclaim them, as a free man, outside of her.

The intellectual difficulties which thinking men are supposed to have to contend with are often abundantly over-estimated. There are difficulties, there are few thinking and reading men who have not struggled with them. But many who talk of their difficulties are merely repeating parrot like what they have heard others say. They do not either read or think. Real difficulties, honestly dealt with, may bring us nearer to God. You have heard, perhaps, of the professor, who said to his class, "If I were asked whether I believe in the Divinity of Jesus Christ, I should have to acknowledge that I do not." He then showed the value of his opinion by adding, "I confess I give no thought to the matter at all." There is an epidemic of unbelief sweeping over our country and in every religious body in France, once renowned for its piety and religiousness, the name of God has been struck off its coinage, and it is openly boasted that the Church is being driven out of the schools, the colleges, the hospitals, and the army, and will soon be driven out of the country altogether; and that if there is such a

so men do not get what they ask for in prayer, because their purpose is to use it apart from God; as James expresses it, "To consume it on their lusts."

"People no longer understand how to make the Sabbath a delight," "Holy of holiness," "the Lord, and to have a man of such distinction as its Rector and Dean. I appointed the Rev. R. W. Spencer, from the Diocese of Toronto, to the parish of Roslin, vacant by the resignation of the Rev. W. Archbold. The Rev. R. S. Wilkinson resigned the parish of Amherst Island to accept work at Fernie, in the Diocese of Kootenay, British Columbia. The Rev. J. A. Lindsay, B.A., resigned the mission of Edwardsburg, and I appointed him to Amherst Island. The Rev. F. G. Kirkpatrick, M.A., resigned the rectory of New Brunswick, and I appointed Mr. Boyne and Lombardy, and I appointed Mr. A. Meek, from the Diocese of Saskatchewan, and he is doing a good work there. The Rev. C. J. Boulden, M.A., has left the diocese, to become president and vice-chancellor of the University of King's College, Nova Scotia, and has been succeeded as principal of St. Alban's School, Brockville, by the Rev. F. G. Orchard, M.A., who is now a licensed clergyman of the diocese. The two young Englishmen whom I ordained to the Diaconate last year have both left us for the American church; though not successful in their parishes, they were both seeking after better positions. I appointed the Rev. A. O. Cooke to the mission of Maynooth, and the Rev. W. H. Forster to Coe Hill. The Rev. W. H. Lipscombe resigned the curacy of St. Paul's, Kingston, and is now acting as locum tenens of Gananoque. I gave the rector of Gananoque, last November, a year's leave of absence, to allow him to go to England on account of the illness of Mrs. Serson.

The Ven. Archbishop Carey, D.C.L., has been obliged to retire from active work, on account of illness, retaining the title of rector of St. Paul's and the endowment connected with the parish, but giving up all pastoral oversight, and all connection with the work of the parish. At the earnest request of the parishioners, several of whom furnished a written guarantee of the sum required, I appointed as vicar the Rev. W. F. Fitzgerald, M.A., who resigned the rectory of Leeds River to accept. On the nomination of the parishioners, I have appointed the Rev. E. H. Foley, M.A. (Lennoxville), of the Diocese of Montreal, to the rectory of Leeds River. I have transferred the Rev. Walter Cox from the mission of Clarendon to the mission of Parham.

(Continued on page 7.)

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