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A Word of Testimony
respectfully addressed to
The Archbishops and Bishops
of the
Church of England.

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To the Most Reverend Archbishops, and
the Right Reverend the Bishops, of the
Church of England.

WHEN the work of the Apostles in the first days of the Church was drawing to its close, and one only of their number survived, the Lord Jesus Christ gave to him by revelation a sevenfold message, which he was commanded to deliver to the Seven Churches in Asia. These seven churches have generally been regarded, and, we believe, rightly regarded, as representative of the one Catholic Church throughout this dispensation.

The Apostle John, who delivered this message, having been taken to his rest, the apostolic ministry in its fulness and integrity ceased to be exercised.

Even during the lifetime of. Apostles there had been, as we read in the Epistle to the Church in Ephesus, a departure from the 'first

Rev. ii. 1-7.

love.' After the death of St. John the 'seven stars' ceased to be held in the 'right hand' of the Lord ; in other words, the angels or bishops of particular churches were no longer sustained in their places by that ministry to which He had committed the guidance of the Church universal. Soon the visible unity of the Church became a thing of the past ; the hope of the coming and kingdom of Christ gradually died out of the hearts of God's people, and Christian men for the most part ceased to '*look for* the resurrection of the dead, and the life of the world to come,' as a present, instant hope.

The loss of the ministry of Apostles was followed by the breaking loose of divers grievous heresies till then held in restraint, causing schism in the Body; but for a time the terrible persecutions to which the faithful were exposed were the means of preserving the Church, during the era indicated in the Epistle to Smyrna, from becoming entangled with the world.

Rev. ii 8 11.

Before long, however, the Church found favour with the rulers of this world, and sought their help and protection, at the cost of her fidelity to the One Husband to whom she had been espoused. Thus, like Balaam, she bartered her spiritual endowments for the reward of earthly

advancement, and so came into the condition set forth in the Epistle to *Pergamos*.

Rev. ii. 12-17.

By the favour and patronage of the secular power, the Church at length herself became a power in the affairs of this world, and under the Papacy attained to the Position described in the Epistle to *Thyatira*, wherein 'that woman Jezebel' was suffered to teach false doctrines, and an ecclesiastical system was set up, obscuring and superseding the rule of Christ, the one Head over all things to His Body, the Church.

Rev. ii. 18-29.

The intolerable oppression of this system operated to stifle spiritual life in the hearts of Christian men, and the Church passed into that condition which is expressed in the Epistle to *Sardis* by the words, 'Thou hast a name that thou livest, and art dead.' But even in the darkest hour of that period there were still some found faithful, 'a few names . . . which had not defiled their garments,' and who strove in their day to fulfil the injunction, 'Be watchful, and strengthen the things which remain, that are ready to die.'

Rev. iii. 1-6.

From that time may be traced an awakening, and a revival amongst Christian men throughout the world ; and nowhere was that revival so marked as in this our Land, where, at the time of the Reformation, whilst the supremacy which

had been assumed by the Bishop of Rome was rejected, and many superstitious and idolatrous usages were abandoned, the divinely appointed orders of ministry of Bishop, Priest, and Deacon, were retained, the essential truth concerning the two sacraments of Baptism and the Supper of the Lord was preserved, and the free use of the Holy Scriptures was restored to the laity.

But this revival of spiritual life was powerless to arrest the growth of those evil principles which first stood revealed in the horrors of the great French Revolution at the end of the last century, and were further manifested in a more extended area, though with less concentrated violence, in the general upheaval of 1848, when the axe was laid at the root of all constituted authority throughout Europe. These very principles are now becoming incorporated into the laws and constitutions of the nations of Christendom, and will find their complete manifestation when mischief shall be framed by a law, and the throne of Antichrist is set up. Ps. xciv. 20.

By that terrible outpouring of the judgment of God in the French Revolution the consciences of many were awakened to a sense of the sins of the Christian nations, and of their unpreparedness for the coming of the Lord. Some were thus led to confession of sin, and to the study of the pro-

phetic scriptures which had been long neglected, and to prayer for the outpouring of the Holy Spirit.

That prayer was answered, not merely by the quickening of spiritual life in the hearts of God's faithful people, but also by the revival of the gift of prophecy, and by the restoration of the ministry of Apostles. While the restoration of that ministry made it evident that the Spirit of God was working for the help and blessing, not of individuals merely, nor of a portion only of the Church, but of the whole Church of Christ; yet it was in this land, where the truest witness for God had been borne at the Reformation, that His work by Apostles had its beginning ; and it is here that it still has its centre.

It is now more than fifty years since a solemn Testimony to this work of restoration was prepared by the Apostles, and was delivered to your predecessors, the then Archbishops and Bishops of the Church of England, and subsequently, in an enlarged form, to the Chief Rulers in Church and State throughout Christendom. We send you herewith a copy of that larger testimony.

In the later pages of that testimony,* reference is made to 'a pattern, a shadow of what God's universal Church should be,' to be 'brought

* p. 134.

out in seven churches in London.' The pattern there spoken of has been for many years, and still is, exhibited in the midst of Christendom in seven churches in this City ; and we who now address you are the Angels whom the Apostles have set over these churches.

We bear testimony to the blessings which we and the churches committed to our care have received through the Apostles. Our vision has been enlarged to discern the unity of the Body of Christ, and to recognize all the baptized as members of that one Body; and it is in conscious unity with the whole Catholic Church that we continually offer worship, as it has been ordered by the Apostles in the book of 'The Liturgy,' according to the very image of the heavenly things whereof the Law contained the shadow. Thus for many years past we, in common with all the churches gathered under the Apostles, have not only united with our Christian brethren in offering to God such prayers as have been presented to Him by the Church in all ages ; but we have also for a long course of years fulfilled, and we still continue to fulfil daily, a special act of most solemn Intercession for the fulfilment of God's revealed purpose in the Church and in the world.

Heb. x. 1

Further, God has awakened in us and in our

flocks a sorrowful perception of the wide-spread departure of the baptized from His ways, and of the superstition, will-worship, and infidelity by which Christendom is defiled. And the Apostles, in the light of the Holy Ghost, have given us, in the services for the Eve of Pentecost and for All Saints' Day, large and comprehensive forms of confession of the common sin of the baptized.

God has shown us that His purpose in this dispensation is not to bring all the nations into the Church, but to 'take out of them a people for His name.' In the fellowship of His Apostles, and through their living ministry, we have grown in the apprehension of 'the faith once for all delivered unto the saints.' By the grace of His Spirit, ministered through them, God has quickened in us the hope of the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ, and of our gathering together unto Him. And by the laying on of their hands, God is again, as in the beginning, ministering the gift of the Holy Ghost, the sealing unto the day of redemption, and is setting a mark upon the foreheads of the men that sigh and that cry for all the abominations that be done in the midst of Christendom.

This work of sealing is, as we believe, drawing to its close. Of the Apostles who were sent forth to fulfil this work, one only survives, and

Acts, xv. 14.

Jude, 3.

2 Thess. ii. 1.

Acts, viii. 17; Eph. iv. 30;
Rev. vii. 1-3; Ezek. ix. 4.

he is well stricken in years. We point to this fact as a sign that the day of grace is well-nigh ended, and that 'the hour of temptation, which shall try all them that dwell upon the earth,' is near at hand.

Rev. iii. 10.

We beseech you, suffer not yourselves to be misled by the appearance of what men account as failure. Our testimony is that God's work by His Apostles has not failed, but that, on the contrary, it has prospered in the thing whereto God sent it ; and our faith is that by it He will accomplish His purpose, which is not to build up the Church with a view to her continuance upon earth, but to prepare those who will accept His present grace for the revelation of His Son from heaven.

Isa. lv. 11.

If Christian men reject the ministry by which God has been pleading with them during these last fifty years, and refuse His message of mercy, it remains only for Him to speak with the terrible voice of His judgments.

That these judgments, of which the Apostles gave warning in their Testimony, are now at the very door, is the witness continually borne by the Holy Ghost through the word of prophecy in the churches.

The evil which the Apostles fifty years ago discerned to be already working was not then

generally apparent ; but since then it has attained an alarming development in many forms of moral and spiritual wickedness, such as carry back our thoughts to the days of Noah and to the days of Lot. Those who discern the signs of the times, and see how all classes of society are being leavened with the Spirit of lawlessness and infidelity, must acknowledge that we are come to the 'last days' described by St. Paul in his second epistle to Timothy.

2 Tim. iii. 1-5.

While deploring the increasing spread of evil principles, we acknowledge with great thankfulness the growth of spiritual life in the faithful, especially in the Church of this land, which has taken place during the fifty years since the restoration of the ministry of Apostles to the Church. This spiritual growth is manifested on the one hand in the more enlightened understanding of the Holy Scriptures, and the consequent revival of the hope and expectation of the coming again of the Lord Jesus Christ; and on the other hand in the great advance which has been made in the apprehension of sacramental truth, and in the spirit of worship. These two manifestations of spiritual life are seen, however, in distinct and somewhat antagonistic parties, which alike fail to recognize the hand of the Lord in the apostleship, by which He would draw them together, and

hold them in the unity of the Spirit and in the bond of peace.

God has shown us that He is holding back the winds of judgment in order that the work of gathering and sealing the first-fruits may proceed; and that when this work is accomplished, the storm of His anger, long restrained, will break upon Christendom. Rev. vii. 1-3; xiv. 1-5.

To the accompanying Testimony, containing warnings which have been verified by events, we most earnestly invite your very serious attention; and the more so, because it not merely testifies of coming evils, but also points out the only way of escape. It points, moreover, to the true hope of the Church, which Scripture declares to be the Resurrection out from amongst the dead, and the change of those who shall be alive and remain at the Coming of the Lord, who together shall be caught up to meet Him in the air, and so shall be ever with Him. For the fulfilment of this hope we are looking with daily expectation. Phil. iii. 11.
1 Thess. iv.15-17.

The Lord has set before His Church 'an open door,' as He declares in the Epistle to *Philadelphia*; but the hour is at hand when He will shut it. Meanwhile there is opportunity for all who will to receive the full measure of blessing which God is bestowing through the ministry of Rev. iii.7-13.

Apostles – that ‘unction from the Holy One’ by which they may ‘know all things,’ and through which every man will receive wisdom to detect the working of spiritual wickedness, and grace and strength enabling him to abide stedfast [*sic*] in the place where God has set him for the blessing of others.

1 John, ii. 20.

Of the plenitude of this grace and strength we long that you should be partakers, that so you may be enabled to bear the daily increasing burdens which weigh upon you as the Bishops and Chief Pastors of the Church of this land, and that through you the fulness of blessing may extend to all the clergy and people of this realm ; and that you all may be preserved from the Spirit which is described in the Epistle to *Laodicea*. For the Church is rapidly approaching the condition in which she will say, ‘I am rich and increased with goods and have need of nothing,’ while in God’s sight she is ‘wretched and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked,’ because she has failed to seek from Him that ‘gold tried in the fire’ which should have made her rich, that ‘white raiment wherewith she should have been clothed, and that anointing of the ‘eyes with eye-salve’ which should have enabled her to see.

Rev. iii. 14-22

Wherefore we entreat you not to disregard this our testimony, or to deem it a thing in-

credible that God should restore Apostles to His Church ; but to look into the work of which we have borne witness, and to test it by the word of God in the holy scriptures. We are persuaded that, if you will do this, you will be led to acknowledge with us the hand of the Lord stretched forth for the salvation of His Church. And our prayer is that you, with all your clergy, and the people committed to your charge, may be made ready for the coming of the Lord, and may be 'accounted worthy to escape the things that are coming an the earth, and to stand before the Son of Man.'

From the Angels
of the Seven Churches in London.
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