

I will only add on this point, that the importance of these views may be inferred from what we are accustomed to see transpiring around us. It has ever been the tactics of the avowed adversaries of any administration, to fix upon it the charge of partiality and injustice. Why has this course been pursued, except from the fact that the moral sense or conscience of society at large instinctively condemns partiality and injustice in what involves the common welfare—a strong proof that the conscience of a Christian people is the true basis of government, and the development of that conscience its obvious duty and best policy.

III. From legislation and government—the two-fold instrument employed by Society for the promotion of its interests—let us advert to the component parts of that Society, in order to consider their bearing upon its advancement; and in the *Appropriate relation and Sympathetic action of those parts*, we will find a third element of social progress. The variety that appears in the aspects of nature and in the productions of the mineral, vegetable and animal kingdoms, has its counterpart in the diversities of human genius, condition, and employment. The adaptation of different objects in nature for different purposes, is not more obvious than that of different men for different pursuits. In this boundless variety there is endless beauty; and that beauty largely consists in the adjustment of the several parts to produce unity of effect,—of which we have a remarkable example in the formation and disposition of the various parts of the human body. The same wisdom and beneficence are seen in adapting the various talents, professions and employments of human life to the one great end of individual and public happiness. They are not rivals, but fellow-helpers; not aliens, but members of the same household, and parts of the same body. The active sympathy of these relations is the arterial life of a country's social advancement; and it is when its pulse throbs in all its members, that society will exhibit the signs of moral strength, energy and expansion. Society assumes and demands the merging of the individual man in the social man; and the very law of its existence is, that the interests of the whole society are binding upon each member of it. He who is unfaithful to this law, is unfaithful to society. The very law which imposes so weighty obligations on government as the central agent of society, imposes corresponding obligations on each of its members in his more limited sphere, and according to his personal ability. As the happiness of society is but the aggregate of the happiness of the individuals who compose it; so, its social advancement is the aggregate result of the elevation and exertions of its individual members.

Any arrangement, or policy, or feeling, therefore, which isolates and alienates the members of society from each other, and prevents their mutual sympathy and co-operation for the common interests, is inimical to the advancement and welfare of society. It is so in the domestic circle; it is so in the larger family circle of a neighbourhood or a country, especially of a comparatively new and feeble country. Such a country has no superfluous strength to waste in the suicidal work of social warfare, nor can it afford to have any part of its resources perverted and prostituted in the mutual hostilities and havoc of its children. All arbitrary class distinctions, professional exclusiveness, and hostile factions, are, then, so many impediments to the social advancement of the country; and as they prevail to a less or greater extent, will the energies of society for the common welfare be crippled and paralyzed. It was thus that Greece was rendered powerless, both for improvement and defence, and lost its liberty by an ignominious annexation to the kingdom of Philip and Alexander; and it is thus that France is paralytic under a new democratic republic of boasted "liberty, equality and fraternity." May Canada be mercifully preserved from like calamities!

And here I think is our danger as well as our duty. We are threatened by no foreign foe. We are living in peace and amity with our American neighbours. The obstacles to the advancement of society among us are of our own creating. Our divisions are local; our weakness is internal; and if the existing institutions of our land perish, they will fall by the hands of its own sons. The strength of all free institutions is in the principles and affections of their subjects, and not in the laws of the Statute Book; and the progress and happiness of society are involved in the dispositions and conduct of its individual members. Milton has truly said—

"The mind in its own place, and in itself  
Can make a heaven of hell, or hell of heaven."

It is so with the mind of a community as well as of an individual.

If the spirit of sect be stronger than the spirit of Christianity; if the love of party overmatch the love of humanity; if the spirit of faction trample down the love of country, and individual selfishness absorb the spirit of patriotism, then the twilight of the past is but the precursor of a future night, and not the harbinger of a glorious day. But if the ministers and members of the different religious persuasions would seriously consider the vital doctrines and obligations and interests wherein they agree, in comparison of the points, (magnify them as they may) wherein they differ, if the most ardent men of party, and even the abettors of faction, would reflect upon the vastly broader grounds and stronger reasons they have to honor, co-operate with and seek to benefit differing individuals, and sections of their fellow-subjects; than to employ all their energies and means to vilify and depress them; and if the gentlemen of leisure and of the several professions, instead of wrapping themselves up in selfish exclusiveness, would ponder upon the many ligatures by which they are linked to society at large, and especially to the more numerous labouring classes; if the men of various business and trades would think of both the treasures and the pleasures of mind, and the best means of increasing and multiplying them: if the various members and portions of society would act upon the convictions induced by such a survey of their highest obligations and best interests, how mighty would be the impulses to its advancement, and how soon would its resources of strength, elevation and enjoyment be multiplied ten-fold! We would then behold on a large scale, what affords us so much pleasure to see on a small scale in Mechanics Institutes,—men of different persuasions, professions, parties, trades and employments, associated together in the spirit of intelligence, goodwill and philanthropy, for the diffusion of useful knowledge, and the advancement of the common interests. Was this spirit of fraternity expanded, and this circle of patriotic activity enlarged to the widest dimensions of society, and to the comprehension of all its essential interests—there would be a strengthening rather than a compromise of virtuous and noble principles—there would be a large extension of generous sentiments and feelings;—there might still be differences of opinion, as there doubtless are in the Committees of your own Institute; but those differences would be without personal hostility or party enmity; there would still be earnest and varied discussion, but it would be the manly discussion of gentlemen equally interested in a common object, and not the personal detraction and scurrilous abuse that we frequently witness hissing through the columns of a perverted press. Would the members of the several persuasions, professions, parties and employments thus bring their offerings of ingeniousness, tolerance and philanthropy, and lay them on the common altar of our country, their hallowed odour would perfume its whole social atmosphere, and awaken the spirit of growing intelligence and patriotism throughout its habitations. I submit whether Canada has not a claim to this devotion from each of her sons; and shame be upon the son who refuses to acknowledge that claim—whose world is himself—who prefers sect to Christianity, and party to country—who would spread over his native, or adopted land a chain-work of functionaries, rather than enrich it with the treasures of knowledge, and animate, cement, and ennoble it with the principles of justice and generosity, the spirit of charity and progress.

IV. The mutual relations and obligations of the various classes and members of the social compact, naturally conduct our thoughts to the existing appropriate facilities for the diffusion of useful knowledge and the inspiration of elevated sentiments and feelings throughout the land. My next topic of remark, therefore, relates to *Books and Periodical Literature as a fourth element in the social advancement of Canada*. Books of Canadian authorship we have next to none; nor have we any native counterpart of the eloquent *Quarterlies* and elegant *Monthlies* which issue from the British and American press—forming a varied and comprehensive literature, in which the ripest scholars and mightiest intellects of Europe and America have deposited many of their noblest productions. Our American neighbours eagerly hail every emanation of British genius and scholarship: and, through the medium of their ever active press, they soon adopt it as their own. Through the same medium we can obtain the best English works and English Reviews at more than fifty per cent. below the English prices, and generally at the retail prices of the American Atlantic Cities. The latest and choicest productions of British historians, statesmen, philoso-