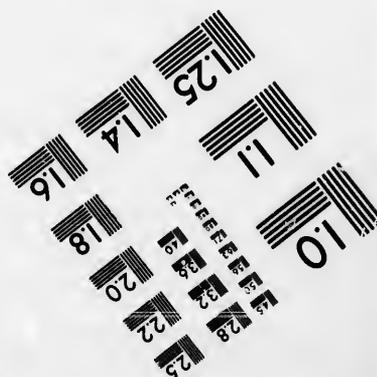
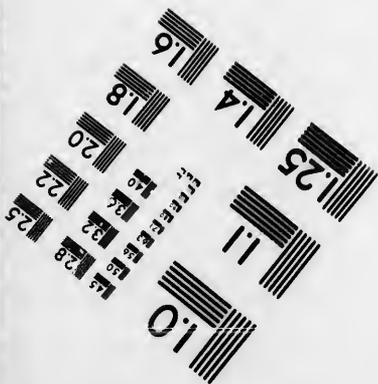
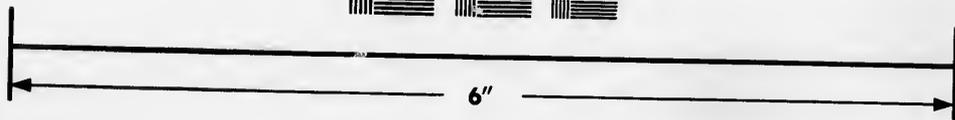
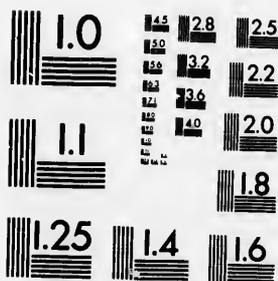


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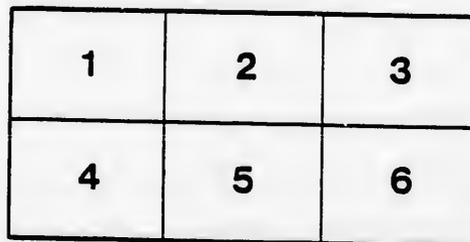
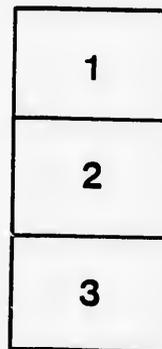
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S E R M O N,

PREACHED IN TRINITY CHURCH,
IN THE SEIGNIORY OF ST. ARMAND,

LOWER-CANADA,

ON THE TWENTY FIRST DAY OF MAY, 1816;

BEING THE DAY APPOINTED BY

PROCLAMATION.

FOR

A General Thanksgiving

TO

A L M I G H T Y G O D,

“ FOR HIS GREAT GOODNESS IN PUTTING AN END
“ TO THE WAR IN WHICH WE WERE ENGAGED
“ AGAINST FRANCE.”

BY

THE REV'D. JAMES REID.

Montreal.

PRINTED BY W. GRAY.

1816.

REVEREND SIR,

We are deputed, by a respectable portion of your Congregation, to return you their thanks, for the Sermon you delivered this day, and request a copy of the same for the Press. Your compliance with this request, will greatly oblige,

Sir,

Your most obedient

humble servants,

G. COOK.

B. CHAMBERLIN.

*FRELIGHTSBURGH, }
May the 21st. 1816. }*

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ISAIAH—CHAP. XIV. 7.

“THE WHOLE EARTH IS AT REST, AND IS QUIET: THEY
BREAK FORTH INTO SINGING.”

BRETHREN,

WE are met together, in obedience to public authority, to keep a day of solemn thanksgiving to Almighty God, “for His great goodness, in putting an end to the war in which we were engaged against France.” The text which I have selected for the ground of our meditations, is very appropriate. It describes the blessings of Peace, enjoyed in the principal kingdoms of the world, after the overthrow of the Babylonian Empire, and the restoration of the Jews into their own land from captivity, through the victorious arm of Cyrus. The children of Israel were held in captivity for seventy years in Babylon, as a punishment, inflicted by the Almighty, for their transgressions and idolatry. The king of Babylon was employed, as an instrument in the hand of God, to chastise them; but he, being cruel, wicked and tyrannical, an audacious blasphemer of the God of Heaven, was cast down from off his throne, as a rotten branch, when the purposes of Jehovah were accomplished concerning

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his church. To excite our gratitude to God for the blessings of peace, I shall

I. Endeavor to direct your attention to the dangers that we have escaped.

II. Consider some of the inestimable blessings which the suffering nations of Europe enjoy in consequence of obtaining peace.

III. Conclude by an exhortation to thanksgiving to God for his boundless goodness, as the author of peace and happiness. Before entering on these particulars, I must request your indulgence to bear with me, as I do not by any means profess to be adequate to do justice to so comprehensive a subject. My only reason for treating it in this light, is, from a sense of duty, and, from a desire to impress more deeply on our minds, a sense of the over-ruling Providence of God, in governing the affairs of men. The war which has now terminated arose out of the French Revolution; an event which had its commencement in the year 1789. That nation, misled by false principles of philosophy, and hatred to the eternal truths of revealed religion, overturned their ancient constitution, embued their hands in the blood of their Sovereign, and sapped the foundation of Christianity in the land. For a time, all was confusion, massacre and bloodshed, far and near, without regard to age, sex, or condition. Numerous societies were established in Paris, under a variety of names, daily propagating the pestiferous tenets, by which the Apostles of infidelity and anarchy

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archy blew up the flames of insubordination, discontent and rebellion among the people, calculated to infuriate the populace, till all authority was defied, trampled upon, and overturned. They were bold, cunning, and persevering ; and evinced themselves the inveterate enemies of social order and religious belief, not only in their own, but likewise in all other countries. A revolution, originating in these principles, was hailed by many, even in our parent country, as a reformation of inestimable value to the nation. Some applauded the design, but condemned the length into which it was carried, and the ferocious enthusiasm with which it was executed. But there were others who applauded both the principle and the execution. They wished to see it exemplified nearer home. They imitated the Parisian Clubs, made speeches, employed the Press to give them publicity, and called on the people to follow the examples of innovation, plunder and rapine, by which the established order of things, the distinction of rank, property and morals, were, in a neighbouring nation, subverted, ruined, and abolished. * These first impressions, however, were of no long continuance. It was found that the revolutionizing principles, after fermenting and infuriating the populace, could not be controlled, nor their progress anyways arrested, even by the very persons who had set them in motion. They operated on the mob, and pushed them along like a dreadful hurricane. The persons who were one day at the head of power, proscribing and confiscating, were, themselves, on the next, proscribed,

* See Bisset's History of George III.

scribed, and their effects confiscated, by another set of the same stamp. Their armies made war on their neighbours; and wherever they went, they carried the ardour, the enthusiasm, and impetuosity, natural to their character, but now terribly excited by the revolutionizing spirit, so that for years, they drove every thing before them. Times of trouble and exertion are always favourable for raising and developing great characters and commanding talents. The wars which followed the Revolution cherished and called to action the talents of Napoleon Bonaparte, whose activity, energy, boldness, and ambition, wrested the power from the French Directory, and concentrated all the resources of the empire in himself. This extraordinary man was possessed of very superior powers of mind; bold, restless, ambitious, and enterprising, he would grasp the East with the one hand, and the West with the other. His comprehensive schemes of aggression, plunder and conquest, were of the most extensive and daring kind. What he conceived, he executed with prompt decision, and with the ferocity of the tiger. All means, were, in his view, lawful and good, by which he could advance his designs; faith, justice, and sincerity, were prostrated, if they stood in the way of his ambition, without remorse. He employed falsehoods, fraud and treachery, to deceive and ensnare his neighbours, and ruin kingdoms, to establish and advance his usurpations. With but few exceptions, he was haughty, cruel, unfeeling and capricious; but the greatness of his projects, the decisiveness of his character, and the splendour of his achievements, together

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gether with the mighty force that he always had at command, for years, carried terror and consternation in his front, and devastation in his rear; over the kingdoms of the continent, except one, he triumphed. His will dictated to their councils; his treasury received their contributions; his army, the flower of their youth; and his galleries were enriched with natural curiosities, works of genius and monuments of art, forcibly taken away from the rightful owners. If the French, when they were enthusiastic republicans, exerted themselves to overturn the ancient monarchical governments, the very same people, in the hands of the haughty despot, were no less active in creating new kings, and their versatile dispositions were equally pleased in doing the one as the other. They followed him with burning ardour, and almost irresistible enthusiasm, in all his campaigns in Italy, Germany, Egypt, Syria, Spain, Poland, Portugal, Prussia, Piedmont, and Russia. All these, more or less, he subjugated. Some of their kings he deposed, and raised others from among his family and creatures, to be sovereigns of their dominions. Having thus crushed all the states of continental Europe, and formed the confederation of the Rhine, of which he declared himself the head and protector, he opposed our Parent Country, by his continental system operating against her Commerce, with great success for several years, though he was never able to succeed in his threatened invasion of her soil. Shut out from the continent, she was compelled to cope with him, and a world in arms, single handed and alone. She stood firm

firm and unappalled, persevering in her determined opposition to his unjust aggressions and lawless power, till, at length, her mighty arm contributed so amply to wrest his iron sceptre from his hold. *

In all human affairs there is a point, beyond which the smallest step is productive of ruin to the whole. Bend a bow to its maximum force, and your shaft will fly with vigour to its destined mark; go beyond this point, and you destroy its elastic power. This was the case with him. When to all appearance his power was well established and taking deep root, he overstretch'd himself—he went beyond his might, and, like the Roman Empire, fell by his own weight. Had he contented himself with his acquisitions, as they stood at the Treaty of Tilsit, without adopting such a system of fraud, treachery, and aggression, against Spain and Portugal, and afterwards against Russia, he might, in all probability, have continued to reign over France to the day of his death. But he was taken in the snare which he had prepared for others. He fell in the pit which he dug with his own hands. When the Almighty means to stop the career of ambitious prosperity, he turns the counsels of the wise into folly, and leaves them to hasten their own destruction. No doubt the Almighty girded this man with strength for the battle; to be the

* “ Well hast thou stood, my country! the brave fight,
 “ Hast well maintain'd through good report and ill;
 “ In thy just cause, and in thy native might,
 “ And in Heaven's grace and justice constant still.
 “ Well art thou now repaid—though slowly rose,
 “ And struggled long with mists thy blaze of fame.”

[See, WATERLOO, a Poem, by Walter Scott, Esqr.]

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the scourge of nations for their wickedness; but when his wise purposes were, for the time, finished, he laid him aside.

The secondary causes which contributed to his overthrow, and produced the Peace, for which we are called upon this day to render thanks unto God, may be comprehended in the following:—The perseverance of Great Britain, together with the exertions of the Spanish Patriots, at length, opened the eyes of Europe, and exhibited in their example, what a combination of virtue, talents and force, well directed, might be able to accomplish. His going to Russia, at the head of the greatest and best appointed army of modern times, alarmed all nations. All flocked to the standard of oppressed humanity, immediately after the conflagration of Moscow, with a determination to conquer or die. One heart, one soul, animated the whole. They fought and harrassed his wide extended legions, he became weak as other men, and knew himself to be a worm of the dust. The cold of a polar sky, the famine, and the sword, were the messengers of Heaven, sent to destroy him. Still his person escaped from all danger. Exposing himself (particularly in his Italian campaign) with the fury of a thunderbolt, where the thickest of the battle raged, where the thunder of cannon, and the groans of the dying reached unto the Heavens, we do not find that he ever met with a wound. This produced in him a belief that he was protected by some invisible power, that never would desert him. He is now indeed ta-

ken and secured so effectually, as to preclude the least apprehension, that he ever again will disturb the nations. The nation that promoted his career of ambition, bloodshed and mischief, and that submitted to his despotic sway, is now under the yoke, as the just retribution of her conduct. The power of doing mischief has been taken away from her, for the present, as well as from the Tyrant, on the principles of self-preservation. This may be reckoned hard; but nevertheless, it is just and necessary. For as long as victory attended his car, they showed for joy, laid the resources of the nation at his feet, and hastened to follow his banner to new conquests and plunders. As a nation, then, they must be punished with temporal judgments, and drink of the cup which they had administered to others, in the days of their triumph.

Read, then, the dangers, that we have escaped, in the history of every country on which he set his foot, and remember, that, had he succeeded against Great Britain, her fate would have been much worse than that of any other nation that submitted to his yoke; as his enmity against her was greater than against any other country in the world. The destruction of England was his great object, in all his wars. For this purpose, he succeeded in getting all the continental ports shut against her commerce; expecting, no doubt, she would necessarily become his victim at last. Let us now

Idly, consider the inestimable blessings that suffering nations enjoy, or may enjoy, in consequence of having obtained

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obtained peace. "*The whole earth is at rest, and quiet; they break forth into singing.*" We do not know of any war that is carried on at present. All is quiet, and busily engaged in arranging what was in disorder and confusion, and preparing to enjoy the sweets and industry of peace. Among the blessings of peace, the renewal of illustrious and domestic habits claim a distinguished rank. In time of war the morals of people most generally relax, and are apt to receive a wrong bias from the privations, sufferings, and bustle, into which they are inured. Peace restores order, and presents to all classes of the people the happiness that may be enjoyed, when every one pursues a peaceable occupation, "*Sitting under his own vine, and fig tree, none making him afraid.*" Families, that had been separated for a long time, of whom many had fought the battles of their country, will meet together with joyful congratulation, and the most tender endearment. A son comes home to the place of his birth, and scenes of his juvenile gaiety, to embrace his aged parents, to rejoice the heart of a brother, or a sister. A husband, that was thought dead, on some foreign shore, arrives to cherish and support, to wipe away the tear from a faithful, beloved partner, the wife of his youth, and to provide for his tender offspring. But, alas! how many disappointments? how many fathers and mothers are left childless, and doomed to go mourning down to the grave? how many widows are left alone to struggle with adversity and misfortune? how many fatherless children, are cast on the wide world, without a guide? Since the commence-

ment of the war, the total number of men that have been enrolled in the British 42d Regiment, amounts to 13,127. There is now only three men, according to late accounts, remaining of the corps that fought against Bonaparte's Invincibles in Egypt,* If such has been the destruction of the human race, in one corps, how great the aggregate number of human beings that have perished in the British Army and Navy, during a contest of twenty-five years, must be? how many thousands, yea millions, must have fallen in Europe, in the same time? To attempt any thing of a calculation, is too distressing. The miseries, depredations, and sorrows, that that firebrand of war and desolation has spread in the world, cannot be repaired for many years to come. They will be remembered to his disgrace and infamy, when he is rotten in the dust, until time shall be no more. They will live in his memory, and torture his soul with inexpressible anguish and remorse, unless he be lost to all feeling and repentance. He finds himself indebted for the preservation of his life to the greatest, the most generous, (himself being judge) of all his enemies. Blessed be the name of GOD, he has driven this plague of the human race from off the theatre of action, and has brought the war, long in duration, terrible in its progress, to an end. † "*The whole earth is at rest and is quiet.*"

In

* This is stated on the authority of an article, in the New York Spectator, copied from a London Paper of March the 22d.

† It is a most pleasing consideration to reflect on the humanity, generosity and benevolence, with which the people of England, burdened with taxes as they are, stepped forward to the relief of the sufferers, occasioned

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In consequence of the Peace, the Arts and Sciences will be cultivated with success; and, perhaps useful discoveries shall be made, calculated to improve the state of Society, and add to the comforts of man. Within these last thirty years, convulsed as the civilized world has been, discoveries, the most useful, have been made. By means of many improvements in mechanic science, the labour of man has been greatly abridged, and, at the same time, a greater quantity of work is performed, with less expence. Journeys can now be made by rivers and coasts, in an expeditious manner, at small expence, so that travellers and men of business may calculate the time of their absence, with considerable precision before they leave home. Peace is favorable to farther improvements and discoveries. When vigour of mind and soundness of intellect are applied to such studies, as promote the welfare of mankind, who knows what may be effected in the course of the next thirty years to come? Much, indeed, has been accomplished. Vaccination has been introduced, and it promises incalculable benefits to the rising generation. The streets of large cities are lighted with gas, by which means a large quantity of money may be saved, that can now be converted to some other use. But the field to be explored is yet immense, and we may reasonably presume that men of genius and science will continue to add to the stock of general knowledge, while they cultivate the

arts

by the battle of Waterloo. The subscriptions raised under the patronage of his Royal Highness the Prince Regent, for their relief, amount to the unprecedented sum of £140,000. A glorious example of charity and liberality?

arts of peace. Compare the state of science, of agriculture, navigation, commerce and manufactures, to what these branches were three or four centuries ago, and you will see the great difference that has taken place; and yet they have not arrived at all the perfection of which they are susceptible. New improvements and discoveries of real and permanent utility are daily suggested and put in practice. The habits of peace will constantly add to the number.

In consequence of the peace it is to be hoped, that more exertion will be made to ameliorate the moral and spiritual condition of mankind, by a more extensive diffusion of the knowledge of Divine Truth. A great deal has already been done in this great and good work, by the friends of our holy religion; but much yet remains to be accomplished, before all the heathen nations shall have been evangelized. That highly favoured country, to which we have the happiness to belong, has set a glorious example. Missionaries have been sent to the Islands of the Pacific, to almost every Province of Africa, to the East Indies; some have penetrated to the kingdom of Persia, to the Chinese Empire, and indeed, to every quarter of the globe. The Scriptures, which reveal the way of Salvation to mankind, have been, or are translating, into the most part of the languages spoken among men, and are distributed to an unparalleled extent. If such works as these have been accomplished in time of war, what may we not expect in time of peace? Surely it will not

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* Isaiah, Ch.
† Gen. i. 1.
§ Job, Ch. i.
|| Ps. LXXVIII.

be abandoned as ineffectual or unnecessary. No! the holy flame, that has been kindled by the breath of heaven, will burn more and more, till the whole earth shall be illuminated with its beams; till all nations shall be led by divine rays, to know and adore the Saviour of sinners, and serve him with reverence and holy fear. *“So shall they fear the name of the LORD from the west, and his glory from the rising of the Sun.”** *“The Gentiles shall come to thy light, and kings to the brightness of thy rising.”* † *“Instead of the thorn shall come up the fir-tree, and instead of the briar shall come up the myrtle-tree; and it shall be to the LORD for a name, for an everlasting sign, that shall not be cut off.”* ‡

Alidly, let us render unfeigned thanks and praise to ALMIGHTY GOD for the blessings of national peace, and for putting an end to the war in which we were engaged. We have seen the dangers from which we had the happiness to escape; and we acknowledge the goodness of GOD that said to the Tyrant, *“hiberto shalt thou come and no further, § and that scattered the men who delight in war.”* || Let us therefore, ascribe unto him that gave us the victory, and wrought deliverance for us, glory, honour and dominion, with grateful hearts. What would our condition, and that of the world in general, have been, had the false philosophy, the disorganizing principles that produced the French Revolution, been

* Isaiah, Chap. L. 19.

† Gen. 49. 10. C. ap. L. 13.

§ Job, Chap. XXXVIII. 11.

|| Ps. LXVIII. 30.

been allowed to take deep root in the world? Religion, the best comfort of life and death, had been banished from off the face of the earth. A great proportion of mankind would become worse than barbarians. The most enlightened of the French demagogues resembled devils in human flesh, more than human beings; as it will always happen that a wicked man of talents, is much worse than one who is ignorant. The contest, at first, was between profligacy and order; between vice and virtue; between infidelity and religion; between the Arch-Apostate and the God of Heaven. Let us give thanks to our Heavenly Father, "*which stilleth the noise of the seas, the noise of their waves, and the tumult of the people.*" * There remained so much virtue, talents, and religious zeal, on the side of our excellent Constitution, and our Holy Religion, as arrested the torrent of political innovation, and of scepticism in Religion, in its daring, sweeping, progress, and preserved them both entire. Our Country was enabled to make a dignified stand against the usurpations and aggressions of the restless, enterprizing, and ambitious despot, when all other nations of the Continent fell under his power, and contributed to further his lawless designs. She was the asylum of the distressed, receiving with open arms all that flew to her hospitable shores from the rod of oppression on their own. She remained firm and decisive in Council, persevering in action, till the spirit by which she was actuated, was infused through all the Councils of Continental Europe. Her dignified attitude, amid

* Ps. LXV. 7.

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the wreck of nations, encouraged them to shake off the yoke, to rise to the greatness of their united strength, and to form an impenetrable, overwhelming phalanx, against the legions of Napoleon, which he could not resist. For this strength and courage, vouchsafed to Great Britain and her allies, we are thankful to Almighty God, "from whom cometh every good gift." Peace was obtained, and the disturber of nations was hurled from off his throne, as the glorious reward of their trials on many a well fought field. O Napoleon! how art thou fallen from thy Imperial dignity. *"how art thou cut down to the ground, which didst weaken the nations! For thou hast said in thine heart, I will ascend into Heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God; I will sit also upon the mount of the congregation, in the sides of the North. They that see thee, shall narrowly look upon thee, saying, is this the man that made the earth to tremble, that did shake kingdoms; that made the world as a wilderness, and destroyed the cities thereof?"**

Let us all testify the sincerity of our gratitude for the blessings of peace, by a holy and religious life. Let us cultivate the love and fear of God in our hearts, and make religion the study, the practice, and comfort of our lives. Let us remember to keep the Sabbath day holy, and *"not forsake the assembling of ourselves together"* on this day, appointed for rest and religious worship, *"as the manner of some is."* † Let us keep in mind that GOD will punish an

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* Isaiah, Chap. XLV. 12, 13, 16, 17. † Heb. Chap. X. 25.

individual for sin and contempt of his word, as well as nations ; and that there is no way of escaping his wrath, but by leading a life of faith on the Son of GOD, who died for, "*our offences, and was raised again for our justification.*"* Our GOD, while a consuming fire to the wicked, verily rewardeth the righteous, and putteth a difference between him that serveth GOD and him that serveth him not. And as "*the whole earth is at rest, and is quiet,*" may we possess in our minds that joy and peace, which the Gospel alone can communicate. AMEN.

* Rom. Chap. IV. 25.

