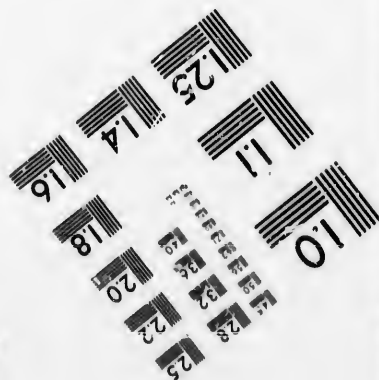
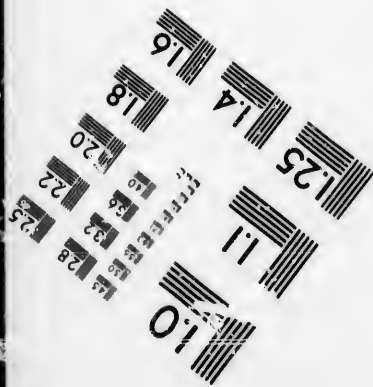
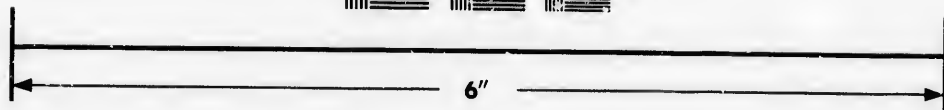
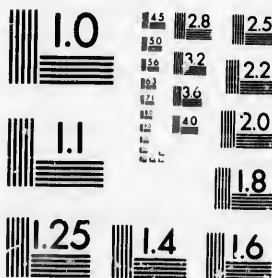


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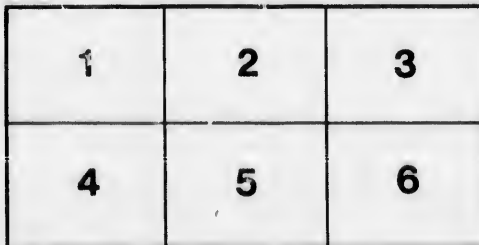
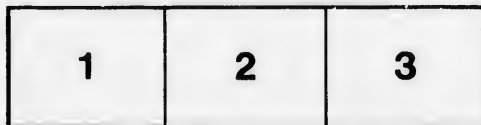
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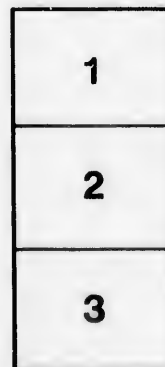
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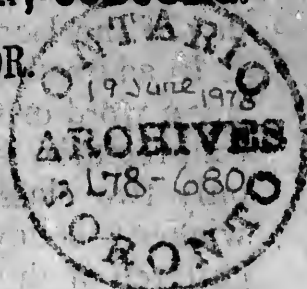
No. 94

THE PRESBYTERIAN CONGREGATION, COBOURG.

BY THEIR AFFECTIONATE PASTOR.

JANUARY, 1847.

*Pamph
1847
no. 24*



MY DEARLY BELOVED BRETHREN,—

It is stated that when the remains of Dr. Payson, an eminent Minister of the Gospel were carried to the Church, where he had so frequently and so faithfully dispensed the word of life, his weeping people saw a paper lying on his motionless breast, placed there at his own request with this inscription, "Remember the words I spake unto you, while I was yet with you."

Now although my address on this occasion may come to you in a manner less fitted to impress your hearts, yet I trust you will receive it as a token of my love for your souls, and not give an unwilling ear to one, who for the last twelve years has laboured among you in the Lord.

As it is customary on such occasions as the present for one friend to express towards another the mutual demonstration of cordiality and good will, so I would beg you to accept of my best wishes for your welfare. It is my earnest prayer that this year on which we have just entered, may be to you the commencement of many happy years to come, and that during the remaining period of your lives you may experience

the blessed fulfilment of that promise "They that seek the Lord shall not want any good thing." But while desiring your temporal welfare, I would not be unmindful of your souls. May they "prosper and be in health!" May they be washed in the blood of Jesus. May they be saved in the day of the Lord.

In addressing you on this occasion, it is my intention to say a word or two to each of those classes of which every congregation is more or less composed; for while there are only two classes strictly speaking—the righteous and the wicked—believers and unbelievers—children of God and children of the wicked one, these may be divided into other classes indicative of their progress in the ways of holiness or those of sin.

FIRST CLASS.—*Those who have closed with Christ and are living as his true disciples.* Your number, My Dear Brethren is comparatively small. Ye are indeed "a little flock" But "fear not—it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the Kingdom." As Lot was vexed with the filthy conversation of the inhabitants of Sodom, so you cannot but be vexed with the inconsistent character and conduct of many belonging to the congregation. O what need have we "to sigh and cry for all the abominations that are done in the midst of us."

I doubt not, Brethren, but you are ready to complain with Elijah of the few that fear the Lord and keep his covenant, but as he was surprised when God told him that there were 7,000 in Israel who had not bowed the knee to Baal, so there may be "many hidden ones" in this congregation whom he is preparing to take your places when your heads are laid low in the dust. "The Kingdom of God cometh not with observation." It may be that in this congregation,

where as yet so few visible manifestations of the Spirit have been given, God may yet pour out his Spirit upon us in such abundance; that it will appear to us like a resurrection from the dead. And will not that be the case when we see those who are now dead in trespasses and sins revived and quickened—when we see those who are now indulging in all manner of iniquity and rushing headlong to destruction, plucked as brands from the burning, and when we behold those who have hitherto served God hypocritically, serving him in spirit and in truth? Should we not behold this blessed sight while we are on earth, of this we are sure, that at the day of judgment, we shall see standing on the right of the Judge, individuals, whom circumstances or local situation, or their outward defects and infirmities, or their retiring humility and modesty had concealed from our view. What is required then of you, my Christian Friends, is to pray more earnestly and to labour more zealously in the great cause. Many of the prophecies respecting the outpouring of the Spirit have yet to be fulfilled; and we have reason to believe that they be will fulfilled in answer to the prayers of God's people; let your prayers and supplications be earnest and frequent for their fulfilment in your day, that you may see "a nation born in a day." "The wilderness and the solitary place made glad and the desert rejoicing and blossoming as the rose." To your prayers add your efforts for the conversion of those connected with the congregation, who are out of the way and not for them only, but for all who are yet enemies to God and the gospel. If God in his Providence call you to suffer for Christ's sake, bear it patiently—yea, rejoice at it, for "you must be made perfect through suffering." "It is through much tribulation that you must enter the Kingdom." Seek

to glorify him with your souls and bodies which are his. Keep near unto Jesus. He is able and as willing as he is able at all times to help you. Let his love "constrain you to live no longer to yourselves but unto Him that died for you." Then may you entertain the hope that "when he who is your life shall appear, ye also shall appear with him in glory." If the individual now reading this belong to the class I have been addressing, I beseech of him to read it again and to act in accordance with the suggestions which I have given.

SECOND CLASS.—*Those who are not so zealous and hearty in the Christian warfare as they ought to be.*—You are in the condition of the Church of Laodicea—"Lukewarm, neither cold nor hot." You do not indeed neglect religion altogether, but you are not so zealous in it as you ought to be. You do not take so much delight in its exercises as you ought. You acknowledge that "Wisdom's ways are ways of pleasantness, and all her paths, paths of peace." Yet how is it that you are more ready to seek for pleasure in other ways, which the word of God does not warrant? You acknowledge that Jesus is not an hard master; that his yoke is easy and his burden light, yet how is it that when you are requested to do any thing for him or his cause, you need so much pressing to engage in it? How difficult is it for instance to get you out to a meeting for prayer, or reading Missionary intelligence, or something connected with the prosperity of the congregation! How frequently is your pew empty on a Sabbath evening, and how very reluctant are you to give of your worldly substance for the spread of the Gospel at home or abroad! The cause of Christ might languish for aught that you do to keep it alive. The heathen might perish for lack of knowledge. The Jews might continue in

their unbelief. Your own Brethren in this land might continue to hang their harps on the willows—to mourn over their spiritual destitution, and see their children growing up in ignorance and sin. Were all Christians as lukewarm as you in the cause, there would not have been Missionaries in almost every part of the habitable world. There would not have been a Duff in Calcutta, a Wilson in Bombay, or a Mitchell at Puna. There would have been no societies for the conversion of the Jews; neither would there have been even in this land a Missionary to proclaim to you the glad tidings of salvation, and break unto you the bread of life. I beseech you, my dear Friend, if you belong to this class, to bestir yourself. Awake from your lethargy. Take a deeper interest in the cause of Missions in general, and those of our own Church in particular. Give every support and encouragement in your power to that institution which has been in operation for nearly three years, at Toronto, and which is now so prosperous, having for its object the training of young men for the Ministry. Attend more frequently those meetings which have for their object the spread of the Gospel at home and abroad. And though last—not least, give more liberally and more cheerfully of your means for the cause of Christ. Let your pew in Church be as seldom empty as possible. Be zealous and repent, “And the Lord shall bring forth thy righteousness as the light, and thy judgment as the noonday.”

THIRD CLASS.—*Those who are in a hopeful state, enquiring the way to Zion.*—To you I would speak with all tenderness and affection. Oh that your number were greatly increased. Oh that we saw more concerned about the salvation of their souls. Oh that we heard many uttering the publican's

prayer, "God be merciful to me a sinner" or asking with the Philippian jailer, "what must I do to be saved?" Although at the outset of your enquiries, you may meet with many things which appear dark and doubtful, be not cast down or discouraged. If God grant you his grace, all these will vanish. You are like travellers in a dark night, with not even a star in the Heavens to guide them—but soon will the star of Jacob appear—soon will the Sun of Righteousness arise, and when he shines into your hearts, the clouds of ignorance and error will then be dispelled, and you will see things in their true light. Expect not, however, that this will be done all at once. The light of day comes in gradually. The dawn first appears, "then the morning light, which shineth brighter and brighter unto the perfect day." "God often brings the blind by a way which they know not, and in paths which they have not trod." It was thus that Bunyan, who wrote the Pilgrim's Progress, was brought to a knowledge of the truth. Having married an individual who was decidedly pious, from being careless and sinful, he became thoughtful and serious. One day while travelling through Bedford, he overheard several females conversing on the things of God. They talked of the influence of the Spirit, and of the nature and necessity of the new birth—he felt deeply affected by what he heard, and was strongly convinced that he was as yet ignorant respecting the very rudiments of religion. He engaged in conversation with them, and received from them what light on Divine Truth they possessed. He speedily became a totally changed man. His sentiments—his disposition—his condition of heart, and his entire outward conduct underwent a complete change. "He now rejoiced in Christ Jesus—worshipped God in the

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Spirit, and had no confidence in the flesh." Through the mercy of God, you may be brought to the same blessed state. Are you really anxious for it? Then use the means within your reach. Wait, like the man at the pool of Bethesda, for the moving of the waters. Come to ordinances. Search the Scriptures. Pray for guidance and direction. Consult experienced Christians. Stifle not those convictions of your sin and misery, already produced within you. Rest not till you get a sight of Christ and him crucified. Lay down the burden of your sins at the foot of the cross. If you have lived long in the world, and enjoyed the means of grace, without ever being seriously concerned about your souls—how much need have you for repentance? You have not a moment to lose. With you the day is far spent, —the night is at hand in which no one can work.

There is no sight more melancholy than that of an aged man or woman "living without hope, and without God in the world." How awful, if the individual now perusing this address, should be such an one. Is it really so, my dear Friend? Let me entreat of you to repent without delay. Seek mercy of God through the merits of Jesus Christ, and all may yet be well. If you are young, your time is also precious, for if Satan once take complete possession of your heart, it will be next to impossible to drive him from his strong hold. He is the strong man armed, mentioned in Scripture, and none but Christ is stronger than he. If, therefore, you get no assistance from Christ—yea, if Christ himself do not come and drive him out, your heart, instead of being a temple for the Holy Ghost, will remain "as a cage of every unclean and hateful bird." And can you bear the idea of having Satan dwelling in you, instead of the Holy

Spirit? Can you submit to be Satan's slave when you might become the Lord's freeman? At your time of life you are much exposed to the snares and temptations of the world, the devil, and the flesh. It is, therefore, absolutely necessary for your safety to be very watchful. Resist the first attacks of Satan. Let him not get an advantage over you. If any good impressions have been made upon your hearts, seek not only to have them deepened, but also to have them remain with you. Remember the blessed promise, "I love them that love me, and they that seek me early shall find me." O may you, as an individual, know this by blessed experience. May you be of the number of those "whom God chooses and causes to approach unto him—whose transgressions are forgiven, and whose sins are covered."

To assist you in your search after truth, read such works as these, *The Pilgrim's Progress*, *Doddridge's Rise and Progress of Religion in the Soul*, and *James' Anxious Enquirer After Salvation*. Study these along with your Bible, and pray for the guidance and direction of God's Spirit, whose province it is, to lead you into all truth, and to take of the things that are Christ's, and show them to your souls.

FOURTH CLASS.—*Those who are so engrossed with the world as almost if not altogether to neglect the one thing needful.* Whatever be the prevailing sin in other lands none can deny that the most prevalent one in this land is worlliness. It pervades all ranks and degrees of men in it. All are crying "Give, give, what more will you give?" All are crying "Get, get, what more can we get?" "The world," says Adams, "is in some form or other the great Diana, the grand idol of all its inhabitants so long as they continue in their natural state. They bow down to it—they worship it—they

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 imaginations are full of it—their tongues speak of it—their
 hands grasp it—their feet pursue it—in a word it is all in all
 to them, while they give scarcely a word, a look, or a thought
 to Him, who made and preserves them and who is really all
 in all." Another writer speaking of worldly good says "of
 all that have tried the selfish experiment, let one come forth
 and say he has succeeded. He that has made gold his idol
 —has it satisfied him? He that has toiled in the fields of
 ambition—has he been repaid? He that has ransacked every
 theatre of sensual enjoyment—is he content? Can any an-
 swer in the affirmative? not one." To you then, Brethren,
 who are immoderately attached to the world I would say—
 What benefit do you derive from adding house to house and
 field to field, when you know, or ought to know that "vanity
 and vexation of spirit" is inscribed upon every thing earthly?
 How often do riches take unto themselves wings and flee
 away? How often is property lost by reason of having a
 bad title or going to law? How frequently does the seed
 which with much care has been put into the soil and which
 gave early promise, turn out unproductive? Why then do
 you place dependence upon the world? Why do you ex-
 pect happiness from it? How will you answer to God for
 the misimprovement of time and talents committed to your
 care? How will you account for the trouble which you
 have shown about many things, while the one thing needful
 has been seldom the object of your anxious solicitude? You
 dare not say that you are happy—even now while I am ad-
 dressing you, question your own hearts. Are you at peace
 within? Do you fear nothing? Do you wish for nothing?

Does conscience never lift up its still small voice against you? Would you wish to live and die such as you are? Could you meet death without fear and amazement? Could you appear before your Creator without terror or shame. Think, O think seriously of these things. Remember the case of the man mentioned in the Gospel who said "Soul take thine ease for thou hast much goods laid up for many years"—but to whom it was said "Thou fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee, then whose shall those things be which thou hast provided?"

"You cannot serve God and mammon." Whosoever is a friend of the world is an enemy of God. You must be for the one or the other. Which of them will be most likely to give you comfort and satisfaction on a death bed? Surely you can be at no loss to determine. The service of the world has uniformly been attended with disappointment, sorrow and vexation during life, and at death has filled the lover of it with dreadful forebodings; while the service of God has been attended with happiness and peace during life, and at death has filled the believer with the most blessed consolations. Be persuaded then to make religion your great, your principal concern. "Seek first the Kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all other things will be added unto you."

FIFTH CLASS.—*Those who are openly wicked and profane.* This may come into the hands of *some one who is far gone in wickedness and sin*, who regards neither God nor man, and who is perhaps ready to say "no man careth for my soul." Whoever thou art, O sinner, let me assure you, that there are some that care for your soul, and wicked as you are, I have a word to you. I have a message for *you*. I cannot say

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that you are either in a safe or happy condition. You cannot say so yourselves, No. The judgment of a just God hangs over you. "And if the righteous scarcely be saved where shall the ungodly and the sinner appear." Has not the past period of your lives been enough and more than enough to have been devoted to the following out the sinful inclinations of your own wicked hearts? Have you not yet seen the guilt and danger of neglecting the salvation of your never dying soul? Have you not felt that sin is ever accompanied with shame and remorse? Have you not had experience that it is a very bad master and that its bondage is worse than that of Egypt. O sinner, is your conscience completely seared? Has nothing made you repent? Has not the word of God done it? Has not affliction done it? Have not warnings of ministers and the entreaties of friends done it? Has not the fleeting nature of time done it. All these perhaps have been tried upon you, but your heart still remains hard—as hard as it was last year—nay harder—your state is much worse. You are farther from God—farther from salvation—farther from heaven. But you are not yet beyond redemption. The grace of God is omnipotent. Then "harden not your hearts." "Christ came to call not the righteous but sinners to repentance." Even now he is saying "Look to me, believe on me and thou shalt be saved" "Come to me and I will give you rest." Come then, O sinner, come without delay. There is not a moment to lose. Flee for your life. Embrace Jesus this very day, this very hour. He is now standing and knocking at the door of your heart, will you not open and let him come in? He may not tarry long. If you now delay to open, he may depart from you and you may never have such another opportunity

while you are on earth. Oh, will you not say "Come, O blessed Jesus, and take possession of my soul. I make you most welcome to come and abide with me for ever."

SIXTH CLASS.—*Those who once professed to be disciples of Christ, but who have apostatized from that profession.* Your case is even worse than those belonging to the former class inasmuch as you have enjoyed more opportunities and made a greater profession. No language" says a certain writer "can describe the mischief of backsliding and where wilful and continued, no words can express its enormity. It is to give up God—to give up Christ—to give up hope—to give up heaven—to make oneself the slave of Satan and prepare oneself for a miserable eternity." The word of God represents confirmed backsliders as "turned after Satan"—"as drawing back unto perdition"—"as crucifying to themselves afresh the Son of God and putting him to an open shame." And are not these denunciations truly awful? Should they not terrify and alarm you? Should they not cause you to seek for mercy while it may be found? Oh, how awful the guilt which you contracted, in sitting down at a communion table with no love to Christ in your hearts! Often perhaps has the wine been handed to you by God's ministers, but as often have you counted it an unholy thing. Often have you betrayed him to an ungodly world. O thou backslider, is this thy return for all his mercy and love? Does not your heart burn within you, when you think of his bloody sweat and his bleeding side—and when you hear him crying out "My soul is exceeding sorrowful even unto death"—or "My God My God—why hast thou forsaken me."

Look back to the time when you first professed yourself

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his disciple. It was according to our own confession, a solemn day; and it was apparently a happy day too: but where is all your profession now? Who would have thought that one so well instructed, and so promising, would so soon draw back and return to the world? Does not every opportunity afforded you of sitting down at the Lord's table, aggravate your guilt and heighten your condemnation? And can you think of living and dying in this state? Will you still reject Christ and his offered mercy? Shall your minister have cause to mourn over you here, and to be a swift witness against you at the day of Judgment? God forbid!

A young woman, who had made a profession of religion, but had fallen from it, and led a life of carelessness, was confined to bed by some severe sickness. With a countenance full of bitter distress, she said, "I once knew the way of salvation. I once could look at death with comfort—but now I cannot—I fear there is no mercy for me." Unexpectedly her illness took a favourable turn, she then said, "I have suffered much, but not half so much as I deserve for my base ingratitude." Be assured, O backslider, that the longer you continue in this state, the harder you will become. "Your last state shall be worse than your first." Ponder then the path of your feet. "Turn ye, turn ye, for why will ye die? Forsake your sins by repentance, and your iniquities by calling on God. It may indeed be to you like the cutting off a right hand, or plucking out a right eye—but it must be done, if you are to be saved. Seek pardon through the blood of Jesus. Pray often, and pray earnestly. Give not sleep to your eyes nor slumber to your eyelids, till your peace be made up with God. Let not Augustine's prayer before his conversion, be yours, "Lord convert me, O Lord

convert me—but not to-day, Lord, not to-day." Pray that you may be converted this very day—this very hour. Now is the accepted time, now is the day of salvation.

Life is the season God has given,
To fly from Hell and rise to Heaven,
That day of grace fleets fast away,
And none its rapid course can stay.

I leave you in the hands of a merciful God. May he have mercy upon your soul. And may you yet be seen sitting at his table on earth a true and faithful disciple, and be thereby prepared for sitting down at that table in Heaven which shall never be drawn.

Having thus addressed the several classes of which, as a congregation you are composed, I would draw to a conclusion. God's goodness has been manifested to you in sparing you to see the beginning of another year. Let your hearts be filled with gratitude, and your tongues with praise. Let holy resolutions of amendment and devotedness to his service be formed and carried out. Let it be seen that you are pilgrims and sojourners upon the earth—that your treasure is in Heaven, and that you are looking for those new Heavens and that new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness.

Who can tell, Brethren, which of you may be called away by death during the course of this year? It may be a father—it may be a mother. It may be a son—it may be a daughter. It may be a true believer—it may be one unconverted. Let none "boast of to-morrow, for we know not what a day may bring forth." And now I commend you to God, and the word of his grace, and beg to subscribe myself,
Your Affectionate PASTOR.

Cobourg, January, 1847.

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APPENDIX.

TO COMMUNICANTS.

For the benefit of those of you who design, in the providence of God, to commemorate the death and dying love of Jesus, next Lord's day, I beg to annex the following hints respecting that ordinance:—

The spiritual exercises of a believer at the Lord's table, are—1. *Meditation.* 2. *Prayer.* 3. *Self-dedication.*—Self-dedication is a cheerful, voluntary surrender on the part of the believing communicant to the service and glory of God. Isa. 44: 5. Jer. 1: 5. Rom. 12: 1. 2 Cor. 8: 5.

This exercise of the soul is the language of—

1. *Conscious Weakness.*—Ps. 49: 1, 2. Isa. 33: 14; 40: 29.
2. *Lively confidence in the Divine Promises.*—2 Cor. 12: 9. Sam. 3: 24. Ps. 73: 24.
3. *Felt obligation to redeeming mercy.*—1 Cor. 6: 20. 1 Pet. 1: 17, 18.
4. *Ardent and enlightened love.*—Ps. 73: 23, 26; 106: 1. Sol. Song 1: 3; 5: 10; 8: 6; 1 John 4: 19.

THE PROFESSION IMPLIED IN A COMMUNICANT.

Whoever approaches the Lord's table in effect professes—

1. That he has spiritual life. John 11: 25: 14: 6. Ps. 69: 32. Rom. 8: 6; Col. 3: 4.
2. — hungers and thirsts after the nourishment of the spiritual life within. Deut. 8: 3. John 6: 35. Matt. 5: 8. Ps. 42: 2. Isa. 44. 3.
3. — makes an open confession of sin. 1 Cor. 11: 26.
4. — has an apprehension of the person and work of the Lord Jesus. 1 Cor. 11: 24, 29.
5. — entirely and exclusively depends on Christ for pardon, acceptance, and eternal life. 1 Cor. 11: 29.
6. — Has a sense of obligation to the Lord Jesus. 1 Cor. 11: 24. John 14: 13, 21.
7. — an honest resolution henceforth to seek the glory of Christ. Gal. 6: 14.
8. — a sincere desire to separate from the world. 1 Cor. 10: 21. Eph. 2: 18, 19.
9. — a determination to prefer the people of Christ to all other society. Acts 4: 23. Ps. 119: 63.

NOTE.—Let the above be carefully and prayerfully read and meditated upon by each intending communicant.

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