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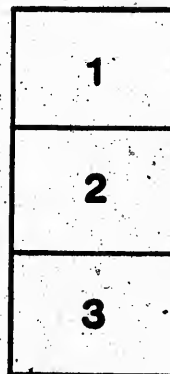
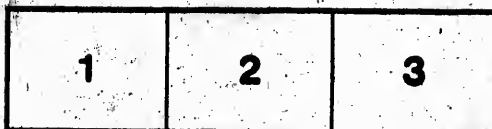
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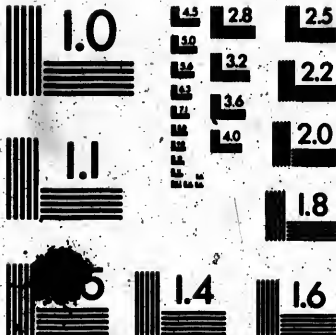
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XVIX

A Tonic to Promote Thankfulness.



ADDRESS

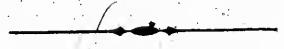
DELIVERED IN

KNOX'S CHURCH, GALT,

ON THANKSGIVING DAY, 4TH DECEMBER, 1862,

BY THE

REV. JOHN THOMSON, D.D., PASTOR.



TORONTO:

PRINTED AT THE GLOBE STEAM JOB PRESS.

1862.

GALT, 1ST JANUARY, 1863.

TO THE CONGREGATION over which the Head of the Church hath called me to preside, and at whose request the accompanying Address is published, I offer, with it, my most kindly and hearty greeting. It will be put into your hands on the opening day of the New Year. While in it your attention is drawn to many topics, not ordinarily introduced into the services of God's house, I do not think that you will find one about which it is not a Minister's duty occasionally to converse with his people. I believe, that on this the first day of another year, you will join with me in thanksgiving to God for our Congregational blessings, and in beseeching Him to continue these unto us and to our children.

Let us seek to begin the year by consecrating ourselves anew to the Lord our God. Praying that the spirit of the Lord may descend upon us and upon all the Israel of God.

I remain,

With sincere affection for you all, and for all who love the Lord Jesus Christ, your friend and servant for Jesus' sake.

JOHN THOMSON.

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"O praise the Lord, all ye nations: praise him all ye people. For his merciful kindness is great toward us: and the truth of the Lord endureth for ever. Praise ye the Lord."—*Psalm cxvii.*

"This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come. For men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, faithless, without natural affection, truce-breakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good, traitors, heady, highminded, lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God: having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof: from such turn away."—*2 Timothy ii. 1-5.*

THIS is a day of thanksgiving and praise to God, for the blessings which he has been pleased to vouchsafe to the land, during the year now drawing to a close. To express our thankness we are summoned, as well by the chief Governor of the Province, as by the presiding Bishop of our Provincial Church; and to this double summons we desire to yield a hearty obedience, in token at once of our loyalty to the State, and of our affection for Presbyterian order. We rejoice that in the councils of our Executive a reigning God is recognized; and that by the precept and example of those in high places, as well as by the instructions of their religious teachers, the people are taught their dependence upon Him, and their obligations to recognize and adore Him.

Truly God's mercies towards us are multiplied beyond our power to number, and they are greater far than we are able to express. It would be very difficult for any one, "out of an honest and good heart," to say which is the most wonderful, the aggregate of our sins against God, or the aggregate of God's mercies towards us; and especially when our hearts tell us that of the least of these latter we are utterly undeserving and unworthy. Alike in our individual and in our social capacity we can say that God "hath not dealt with us as we have sinned, nor rewarded us according to our iniquities." Had God done so, we had to-day been lifting up our voices from "the belly of hell," in the horrid outcries of indigence and despair, instead of humbly yet devoutly endeavoring to give expression to our grateful

emotions within the courts of God's own house on earth. Doubtless many throughout the land will observe this day, with whose mirth trembling will be largely mingled, and with whose memories of undeserved mercies, memories of bitter bereavements and heavy crosses of one kind or another will be strangely blended. While these demand and call forth our sympathies, they need not be permitted to break in upon the harmony of our general action to-day. That there should be aught of distress in any district of, a land so greatly blessed as this, does throw an element much to be lamented into the cup which we are required to drink. Yet if it shall deepen our gratitude for our mercies, and if it shall quicken us in searching out our sins, and if it shall increase our sympathy with the sons and daughters of affliction both in the land of our nativity and in that of our adoption, then shall that suffering itself prove a cause for thankfulness and humble praise.

Give me your attention then while I seek "to stir up your pure minds by way of remembrance," by enumerating some of our mercies which seem to call for special acknowledgment to God:—

FIRST in order I mention the Peace that prevails in all our borders. This is of God, the Supreme Governor of nations. When the year now closing began its course alarms of war lay heavily on many hearts; but as weeks rolled on these all passed away, and our people were allowed to pursue their varied avocations in peace. I do not know that we estimate at its full value the boon of public tranquillity. I fear that we do not. We can read of wars with their accumulated wretchedness and woes, and whither in the histories of the past can we seek and not be moved and oppressed by such records?—for what is history but the narrative of wars. But we have not traversed the field of blood—nor waded through heaps of dying and dead men—nor passed through lands laid bare and desolate by the tramp of gathering hosts. We have never been summoned to lay aside the pursuits of ordinary life, to grasp the sword and to hurry to the camp. We have not been called to put weapons of death into the hands of our children and to send them forth on the mission of strife, nor have we been called to provide for the wants of wounded and dying men stricken down in our defence. None of these things have happened unto us, and yet if the visions of war be so terrible—

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how fearful and heart-sickening must the reality be. We, on the other hand, have been permitted in peace to possess, and with gladness of heart to enjoy our homes. There unalarmed and unmolested we have rested when weary—feasted, when hungry—and have gone out and come in, none daring to disturb us, or make us afraid. I cannot consent to admit that the public tranquility we enjoy has been procured for us by a wise and powerful legislation, or by our being sufficiently prepared for war. There is no such preparation for war as would be sufficient for the length and breadth of Canada, just because in the heart of the people of Canada there is no such apprehension of war as to demand it, and as for our Provincial legislature, it seems wisely disposed to let war alone. And long may our rulers be enabled to do so, to spare the country the cruel cost of it, and the empty glory that thoughtless minds are disposed to associate with it.

SECOND.—In addition to the blessing of public tranquility, we have enjoyed also the blessing of national plenty. Here and there throughout the land there are dark spots marked and marred by a season's barrenness, and there there cannot fail to be suffering ere the rigours of our winter cease. That in some, perhaps in many, cases, the evil may be traceable to natural and sufficient causes, ought not to seal up our sympathies and compassion with the afflicted nor avert our eyes from the Lord. Even where we can point the finger and say "there is the garden of the sluggard," or "there is the field of the inexperienced and inefficient husbandman," or "there is the fold of a man unmerciful to his beast," and therefore to be regarded as unmerciful to himself, even there there is a call for commiseration on the one hand and for counsel and kindly co-operation on the other. Merely to look on a starved soil or upon untidy and insufficient fences, or upon an improvident or badly arranged fold, and then to hurl anathemas upon their owner's head is very unlikely to mend the matter. The man may be all unwittingly an offender against good taste—his own interests and the public good—but even then I am persuaded that example, advice, and brotherly co-operation are well fitted to benefit him, and in benefitting him to confer a lasting blessing on the neighborhood in which he lives. It is in view of such a case as this that I see one great advantage of what are called

your Agricultural Associations, and that I can measure the dimensions of the good they are calculated to confer both upon the present generation and upon posterity.

In the face however of those dark spots here and there throughout the land, in which an inexperienced and ineffective husbandry, or perhaps causes beyond the control of man, has left both scarcity and suffering, I cannot but express my conviction that the yield of the farm has been in general far beyond what was anticipated in the earlier weeks of the past summer, and certainly far beyond what any of us will say that we deserved. In recalling the varied incidents that occurred during the past summer, in the land, we can remember some in particular that contained in themselves the germs of great calamities, and that gave rise to a deep and widely spread alarm and apprehension of the approach of famine. We remember the drought of the earlier summer; and in the small amount of evil that it caused we can see what evil must have occurred had it been but for a little while longer continued. We remember the whirlwind that rushed down from the northwest upon many districts of the province, laying bare the forest in its track, and sweeping the fields with the besom of destruction, and in the little evil that it wrought we see what great evil must have resulted had it been commissioned to take a wider sweep. We remember the ravages of the insect that alighted so late in the season on the almost ripened grain, and we can see how deadly and desperate had been the blight upon every interest in the country if the plague had come upon us but a week or two earlier than it did. The drought but a few days longer—the insect but a few days earlier, and how fearful the desolation that must have been wrought. We have seen the germs of evils nipped almost at their very heart, and the calamities which they foreshadowed mercifully averted. It may not be then that our barns are stored as they have been or as we venture to hope they may be again—nevertheless in the land there is bread enough and to spare, and a benignant God is the giver of all. What have we here? Peace and plenty; for these it behoves us to be unfeignedly grateful. They are the common enjoyment of the land. In no sense can they be regarded as the fruits of human wisdom, or as the results of the operation of merely human forces. "Who causeth it to rain on the earth, to satisfy the

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desolate and waste ground—to cause the bud of the tender herb to spring forth?” “Hath the rain a father, or who hath begotten the drops of dew?” For an answer to such interrogatories we must needs repair to Him who proposed them. “I will give you rain in due season, and the land shall yield her increase and the trees of the field shall yield their fruit”—“and ye shall eat your bread to the full, and dwell in your land safely.” All this hath happened unto us. Our fields have yielded their increase and our orchards their pleasant fruits; all has been gathered in without the fear of an enemy. Every interest in the country from the oil that bubbles from the soil, up to the highest of our monetary relations has acquired a power and a prominence among the interests of the nations higher than they had reached when the year began. The advancement is marked and manifest, and I cannot therefore afford to envy the soul that is not big enough nor generous enough to merge the peculiarities of its own little case in the growing advancement and onward progress of its country.

Let us remember that *War*, *Famine*, and *Pestilence* are three great weapons that the Lord holdeth in His own hand, and that when any one of these is uplifted upon any nation, it is a token of anger and judgment. From all these we have been mercifully preserved. No enemy hath even trod upon our borders, no disease hath become an epidemic in the land, and as for bread we have enough, and to spare. Judgments have been averted and mercies have been multiplied unto us; and hence it becomes us as a people this day to come before the Lord with thanksgiving and to present unto Him our tribute of praise.

I cannot refrain from alluding to another cause for thanksgiving, to wit, the prevalence of social order. In the quietude of our individual and social condition we are apt to lose sight of this blessing; and yet without it how easily might the whole land be made to blaze with the fires of the incendiary, or to harbour bands of thieves and marauders. We know how easily human passions are aroused and how readily excited multitudes betake themselves to practices of wrong and lawless violence. In a country like ours, comparatively new, where society has not yet attained to that consolidation and strength, and to that concentration of will, and purpose, and interest

peculiar to older lands and to maturer conditions, where there appears rather the rush of many peoples earnest in their desire to find their proper level—to reach the position which they are qualified to fill, than the staid and orderly movements of a compact and well-balanced community—where amid divergent creeds, and new conditions of things secular, ignorance strong in its very blindness may often be found side by side with knowledge orderless and inexperienced. In such a condition of things, human passions are doubtless more easily excited, and society is more open to the schemes and aspirings of the demagogue. Yet through all our borders social order has prevailed, and in no one district has the peace of society been seriously disturbed. It may be altogether possible to trace much of this to what are called “secondary causes,” as for example, the liberty we enjoy—a lawful liberty that respects at once the rights of the individual man and the stability of the social fabric; a wise legislation founded on the tried principles of truth and right, suited to the circumstances of the country, and yet susceptible of such modifications and amendments as the progress of the people may require—an impartial administration of law, securing equal justice to the poorest and wealthiest of the people, and lastly in order, although not second in importance to any of them, an improved system of education both local and provincial, with which it is greatly to be desired that neither the sectary nor the infidel shall ever be permitted to interfere. I fully admit the importance of all these, and earnestly desire that their real worth and excellence may be more highly estimated by the people—yet does it become us to remember that inasmuch as the hearts of all men are in the hands of the Lord, to Him we are indebted for social order as truly as for national tranquility. While prizing then the civil advantages which, under God, as a free people we possess and enjoy—while rejoicing in the benignant and honoured government under which we are privileged to live, declaring every where and at all times our love and loyalty to our most gracious sovereign, not boastfully, but with an intelligent appreciation of her worth as a woman, her example as a mother, and her excellence as a queen, while rejoicing in our laws and liberty, and in every blessing directly and indirectly connected therewith, let us lift up our hearts to-day in devout, adoring gratitude to Him who is the dwelling-place of His people in all generations. I venture to suggest another cause for thanksgiving, in the fact

that the harvest is abundant in other parts of the country. The “staff of life” is among the necessities of life, and indeed to bring it to the poor is nevertheless I think a spirit of avarice. The Lord, our God, desires that we should be neighbours to our neighbour; and if our neighbour finds that we shall pay for it at a higher price than he has so much the better. Who can reach the heights of heaven now, at the affliction of our people? At the moment how many have been tempted had bread to eat, and then they sell it at a price more than avaricious—they can look forward to their fellow-subjects, they cannot see their plenty. They are in our midst, and consume it—dance may be

I am well. These are our people, and this kind of avarice is what I am called to speak clearly to know, and to give a vague general

There are many desires as to the sermon as to

that the harvest during the year now closing has been equally abundant in other lands as in our own—and that therefore the value of the “staff of life” is at present generally low both in America and among the nations of Europe. This may seem but a small mercy indeed to bring to the remembrance of an agricultural community, nevertheless I do suggest. I have no sympathy whatever with the spirit of avarice that makes a man, created in the image of a benignant God, desirous of feeding and fattening on the necessities of his neighbour; and that leads him to grumble and complain when his neighbour finds himself in circumstances to fix the price which he shall pay for his daily bread. Doubtless had wheat commanded a higher price in the market, you farmers would have been perhaps by so much the richer—but then with your meal of abundance must have been mingled the bitter herbs of many a brother's starvation.—Who can read without a gush of pity and of sympathy of the sufferings now, at this very hour, borne uncomplainingly by nearly half a million of our countrymen in England and Scotland. Think for a moment how greatly their sufferings must needs have been aggravated had bread been higher in price than it is. I have heard here of one and there of another storing their wheat in their barns rather than sell it at the present low figure. Mark the end of a spirit so avaricious—for the end will come and will not tarry. If these men can look forth from amid their plenty upon their suffering, starving fellow-subjects, and withhold from them that which they need because they cannot get such a return for it as their avarice demands—if with their plenty they have no pity, then I say that God will take it out of them in one way or other. The worm may waste it—fire may consume it—or by a retribution even more fearful, their very abundance may be made their curse.

I am well aware that many are of opinion that such thoughts as these are out of place in the services of God's house. But if any of this kind are present to-day, I would just say to them that when I am called upon to express my thankfulness I want distinctly and clearly to know for what I am to be thankful. This is no time for vague generalities.

There are others so exceeding spiritual in their tastes and desires as to deem the introduction of such earthly things into a sermon as being little short of irreverence and presumption. To be

plain with such, if any such now hear me, I have just to say to them that I have a very low opinion of the spirituality of the man who while professing his unworthiness of all God's mercies, fails to see God's hand even in the least of them, and is slow to acknowledge God's goodness and undeserved favour in the bestowal of them. Why does such a man take advantage of the pleasant sunshine and of God's rain, and of the dew that falleth on the tender herb? Why does he take advantage of seed time and harvest? Why does he rest by night and labour by day? Why does he send his children to school, or avail himself of the facilities for the improvement of mind which a beneficent legislation has secured to him? Or why does he, when injured in his person or his property, invoke the protection of his country's laws? All these are blessings in which the hand and goodness of the Lord may be distinctly seen. A man of true spirituality of mind will acknowledge this, and alive to the benefits alike of mental enlargement and of mental refinement, which these blessings are designed and calculated to impart, and alive also to the degradation and mental imbecility of all that are strangers to them, while enjoying even the least of them, he will not fail to lift up his hands and heart to heaven and say "The Lord is the portion of mine inheritance and of my cup. Thou maintainest my lot. The lines are fallen unto me in pleasant places; yea I have a goodly heritage. I will bless the Lord who hath given me counsel; my rains also instruct me in the night season." I can here speak for myself and say without boasting that the more I see of God's goodness in the earthly blessings of my lot, the more I am disposed to appreciate and to enjoy and to improve "for His name's glory," "the spiritual blessings, in heavenly places, in Christ Jesus" that on every hand surround me. When I look at the snowflake, as it falls in such beauty and so gently to the ground, or at the leaf of my little plant that I seek to shelter from the winter's frost, and find grounds in them for thankfulness to my heavenly Father who hath given them to me for my instruction and comfort, shall I blindly pass over the provisions of His bounty and the arrangements of His paternal care, that are designed by Him to lead the guilty to repentance and to enrich and comfort the life that has been already ennobled by His grace.

Our grounds for gratitude are by no means exhausted—for we

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have blessings richer far than all that I have mentioned, blessings of which many, it is to be feared, are destitute in the more thinly scattered sections of the province—and blessings which many possess, and hold by, without any intelligent appreciation of their value or of the purpose for which they have been given to man. Who can express the value of **THE HOLY BIBLE**, the book of books, the one book of all others that we can never prize too highly nor study too intently—that lights up with a more than earthly lustre the dwellings in which it is daily opened, and cheers with more than earthly comfort the heart that makes it a welcome guest. God's word in every house, and God's Love in every heart would make Canada a paradise and her people a praise on the earth.

OUR SABBATHS—the pillars of a just liberty—the chiefest earthly joy of a free people. The Holy Sabbath which the gracious Lord calls on us to “remember,” is indeed the spring time of our weekly life. Its hours of holy sunshine and of heavenly showers cause the germs of life to shoot forth in the bud—and the bud to expand into the blossom—and the blossom to ripen into the pleasant fruit, which the Beloved will come into the garden to eat with the Spouse. The Lord of the Sabbath descends then to walk in the garden that is full of plants that His own right hand hath planted these. He watches with jealous care and waters every moment. The sun cannot smite them, for He is their keeper. The frost cannot blight them, for He is their shield. Pity the man, the family and nation that knows no Sabbath.

OUR SANCTUARIES—the holy places throughout the land where God's tribes assemble from Sabbath to Sabbath; the true ornaments of any land—humble and unpretending structures, without the ornaments of age to gild them, or the furnishings of luxury and wealth to attract towards them the cold eye of taste; open wherever they raise their fronts alike to the lofty and to the lowly, with their primitive and simple services, and a ritual that, though unread, dates farther back than any that kings have commanded or parliaments confirmed—that speaks to us of a history antecedent to Reformation times, and that links us in the use of it with the Apostles and Confessors of the church's earlier days. With these honoured institutions, revered because they are ancient; loved

because they are the fruits of victories which our fathers won ; and clung to with all the strength of the soul's affection, because they are God's gifts of enduring mercy ; with these we cannot but be a happy and prosperous people. They are the foundations on which social order and public tranquility are securely built up ; the prop of that righteousness by which a nation is exalted, and enemies of sin that is the reproach of any people.

This imperfect review of our grounds for thankfulness may well suggest to an earnest man the propriety of rigid and impartial scrutiny of his own heart, and also of the evils that continue to surround him. Causes for thankfulness, and an intelligent thankfulness of heart do not always exist together. The former we have always and everywhere beside us, but with the latter it is rare to meet. It is rare to meet with it in others—it is rare to find it in ourselves. It is a gift that cometh only from the Lord, and daily have we need to ask of Him "O Lord give me a thankful heart." It acts in the little, but busy world within, as the melodies of King David's harp did in Saul's chamber. It soothes and cheers the disquieted soul, and leads it by the hand into the arbour of its mercies, and there satisfies it with good things. It throws open the shutters of pride and selfishness, and floods in the blessed sunlight of peace and contentment. Look at a thankless man—how horrid the picture—no spirit out of hell so dark and forbidding as his. His very shadow is a blight wherever it falls, and his lips continually distil poison. He plants the miseries of each day all round the walls of his chamber, so that stand where he may, or sit where he may, he looks forth only on a misery ; and when he ventures to look in upon himself, he shrinks aghast from himself the greatest misery of all. A thankful man on the other hand sees mercy in every cup—sucks sweets from every flower—silences the whispers of suspicion and envy, and raises the key note of praise even in dark and troublous times. He is no stranger to himself—and none sees so well as he the imperfections that mar the harmony of his life, and hence rebuke him and reprove him he is still thankful—thankful that one friend is so honest as faithfully to warn him of his danger, and has interest in his well-being sufficient to lead him to rebuke him for his sin.

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setting in order before you your mercies, I did not endeavour to draw your attention to existing evils in the midst of which our mercies are enjoyed. Indeed true thankfulness will quite naturally lead us to search ourselves—and then to entreat the Lord to search us also. Though by no means so grateful a work as that in which we have just been engaged, it seems to me to be not less a part of our rightful work on a day of national thanksgiving.

The second of the passages of holy scripture read this morning brings before us perilous times indeed—but as the Apostle's wakeful eye saw them, they were not times of actual desertion and barrenness—times in which all mercies were withdrawn—but rather times in which mercies abounded, co-incident with manifold and glaring sins. This indeed it is that renders such times full of peril, and therefore in enumerating our mercies it behoves us carefully to try our spirits in regard both to our enjoyment and improvement of them. Although the profession of religion is wide spread, I fear much that there is about that profession a declension from the vigour and earnestness of true life. I do not say that the Bible as God's word is generally neglected, or that its pure and blessed ordinances are lightly estimated. Nor do I say that vital Godliness has passed from amongst us, or that its restraints are now powerless; but what I lament is the want of heart and earnestness in the life of faith, and the apathy and unconcern as to personal religion that seem to prevail in the multitude. I compare the present highly favourable season of the Church's history with times of clouds and darkness that have preceded it, and I do not find that the comparison sets the Christian life of our day at all in a favourable light. I can see a manifest declension now from the honesty, uprightness, and moral purity, and nearness to God in personal, family, social and public life by which our fathers were characterized, and which have won alike for the Puritans of England and the Presbyterians of Scotland an honoured and enviable name. God lived in and ruled them. The world too largely lives in and rules us. This forms the grand distinction between our life and theirs. They lived as under God's all-seeing eye. So they prayed and praised. So they bought and sold. So they laboured and so they rested. Their watchword was "Thou God seest me." But this ever-present and omniscient God was their

friend—their portion—their Father and *their* God. They loved Him. They walked with Him while they bowed before Him. His presence with them was their strength, by which they believed in Him and suffered for his sake. Their nearness to Him was their joy and delight. Their prayers were as bolts shot into Heaven, and their praises were as incense that rose in volumes to the skies. Now it is very far otherwise. It is largely the desire of men now-a-days to keep God shut up within the church. Men do not want to be overlooked by that holy—searching eye, from which it is declared that there is nothing hid. They do not want God to see them when they buy and sell, and when they lend and borrow, and when they go out and come in, and when they sit in converse with their neighbours. Yea, it is to be feared that even in holy places and at holy times God's presence is not desired. And that there are not a few who would wish God to be out of the church when they are invited to give a part of the money that God hath entrusted to their care to any one of God's many pensioners. They do not want that God should see the vast disproportion between their giving to God and their getting from Him. Let men once lose sight of the truth that "the eye of the Lord is in every place," and let them anywhere or at any time act as if God saw them not, and ere long the perilous and blasphemous idea will be found firmly wedged into the heart, God has nothing to do with my givings—God has nothing to do with business—God has nothing to do with politics. Ah! conceal it from themselves as man may, the simple truth of such language is just this—that when they transact their business or fulfil their duties as citizens, they do not want that God should see them.

Now as your well-wisher and counsellor, and as your servant for Jesus's sake, I want you to understand that love to the Lord Jesus Christ ought to be the very heart, and the glory of Christ the great end of every duty you are called on to perform. It is declension from this that I mourn over—for I believe it to be an increasing evil in our day. It assumes many forms. I have given you one. I shall give you another.

Confidence between man and man is declining. I do not mean that higher trust or confidence which we are warranted in reposing

only in God; which is indeed machinery. that, for self necessary to him to be an ripening fast on hand, and honoured and already sapped needed to in that man's

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only in God; but that mutual confidence between man and man which is indispensable to the right and energetic working of the social machinery. When the idea has gained ground in any community, that, for self defence against imposition and fraudulent dealing, it is necessary to take every man for a rogue until you shall have proved him to be an honest man, depend upon it that that community is ripening fast for any atrocity, or for any ugly work that the devil has on hand, and that the man who acts upon that idea is himself a dishonoured and dishonest man. The foundations of morality are already sapped within him, and a very small spark of temptation is needed to inflame the combustibles that have been heaped together in that man's heart.

A truly Christian community never can be thus, nor can the shadow of a suspicion of such a state of things rest upon it. The presence of the Holy Lord God is felt by that community. The sanctions of absolute rectitude influence the transactions of its most ordinary life, and exhibiting confidence in his neighbour in so far as Christian light warrants him in doing so, the Christian man will of course desire that his neighbour shall place a similar confidence in him. Thus only can the integrity of a high toned morality be sustained and its machinery be kept in harmonious and vigorous working order. In the higher circles of commercial life the absolute necessity for such a confidence is admitted; although frequently abused, the boon itself is seldom undervalued, and when it comes to be a question whether or not it really exists and operates freely, then what is called "*a commercial crisis*" occurs. By far the greater number of those commercial crises that occasionally stir communities to their very centres, and that even lay a temporary arrestment upon national advancement, may be traced to a want of confidence between man and man.

Intimately connected with this is man's sympathy with man. I do not mean merely sympathy with suffering or afflicted man; that in words at least, may be had cheaply in almost any market; but I do mean that real but mysterious power that links the living to the living man—that makes the poor man feel that he is a man, as well as he whom birth or rank or acquired riches have placed above him in the social scale; and that makes the rich man feel that he is but

a man—and in everything that really connects him with his species on a level with the lowliest of those that surround him.

I do not mean that all ranks should be annihilated and that all distinctions whether natural or artificial should be disallowed and forgotten, but rather that, among the classes into which human society, even in its purer conditions, seems naturally disposed to divide itself, there should be felt all the power of a common brotherhood; and all the worth of a common interest. The lofty head and the humble foot,—the hand of power, and the eye of keen perception, all members of the same body, loving together, working together, and in unison and strength carrying out their common purpose and answering in this unison the one creator's grand design. This is sympathy of man with man; and my persuasion is that along with mutual confidence this sympathy is declining. Both seem to have become dislodged from the honorable pre-eminence which they once occupied, and as a necessary consequence the bands that hold society together are becoming weaker and society itself more liable to disorganization and decay. Nor is the procuring cause of this difficult to find. The love of the world, its pleasures and its wealth, yea the very love of its toils and businesses because of the wealth they promise to bring, has taken hold of the heart and soul and strength and mind of the multitude, giving birth to competitions and endless rivalries in business, and fomenting jealousies and envyings even in the more private and confidential departments of life.

TRUTH BETWEEN MAN AND MAN has lost much of its natural and conservative power. The virtue and excellence which God with such holy jealousy assumes to Himself, in that He is not only the living but the TRUE God, and in that Jesus declares Himself to be "the truth," is now in many things very lightly estimated among men. That it stands so high in heaven might well make it the fairest gem in any creature's crown, yet is it otherwise, and though it be written as with a sunbeam on the page of inspiration that there entereth into the kingdom nothing that defileth, "neither anything that maketh a lie," and also that "all liars shall have their portion in the lake that burneth with fire and brimstone," yet in the face of these is lying practised not only among the competitions of business but even in the very privacies of life. The name of a liar is still held in abhorrence, but

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It has come should not be closely allied your children. But instead but when he his life be the head of truth this become greater means and strifes. and the sorrow paraded before her would be uttered by the weak mind

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the vice itself dressed out anew in the habiliments of virtue and flaunting around its borrowed plumes, finds a place alike in private and in public life. Lies are told as well by impressions left on the mind by a shrug of the shoulders, a wink of the eye, and a cast of the countenance, as by words of positive falsehood thrown upon the ear—yea in a man's very silence there may be a falsehood as powerful for evil as in any words that he can utter. By these the fireside is too frequently desecrated and the confidences of private life and friendship imperilled.

It has come to be an adage in very common use "The truth should not always be told;" and it is in general regarded as being closely allied with prudence in ordinary life. Teach this adage to your children and you instruct them in the very alphabet of falsehood. But instead of that let the words be "man should not always speak but when he does, let his every word be true, and let his looks and his life be the echo of his words," and you place a crown upon the head of truth which your children will never cease to revere. Let this become general, and humanity shall henceforth be spared its greater measure of griefs and its interminable round of bitternesses and strifes. Were it possible to count the tears that are daily shed and the sorrows and anxieties that are daily endured in silence or paraded before the eyes of any community, by far the larger number would most likely be found to have taken rise in a lie either uttered by the lips of malevolence and envy, or impressed upon some weak mind by a shrug of the shoulders or a sigh.

The principle of God's word is expressed with utmost plainness and simplicity, "speak every man the truth with his neighbour." Very different is this from the common saying already adverted to—"the truth should not always be told." The principle above stated, written as it is both in the Law and in the Gospel by no means renders it incumbent on man to be always speaking; indeed where there is a constant readiness to talk—a love of talking—there it may at once be assumed that there is also a tendency to lying. "Speak every man the truth with his neighbour." The tongue is said to be man's glory—and surely it is much to be deplored that it should ever or anywhere be employed in the utterance of aught but truth. Wherever Christian life is healthful and vigorous—and the love of

Christ is felt in its sweet, constraining power, there truth in everything is desired and sought after, and truth possessed is honoured and revered. The very pursuits and businesses of life in themselves and in man's conduct of them are truth. The utterances of the lips are truth—for truth when it dwelleth in the heart, where the true God desires it, must needs show itself—its presence and its power in all that the Christian is, and says, and does.

Our day witnesses a sad and I fear a growing defection from this divine excellence, and though it be coincident with a wide-spread profession of religion, our times are thereby made perilous times indeed.

PARENTAL WATCHFULNESS AND OVERSIGHT are less constant and searching, and as a consequence filial obedience and respect are on the decline. This latter evil meets the eye most readily, because it affects in its operations interests at once so numerous and tender. It is most assuredly increasing amongst us, and manifesting itself in forms and ways, that in their earlier development, never meet the public eye, though they do awaken great anxiety in many a parent's heart. Already has the evil reached a magnitude that calls for wise and judicious consideration. It does not affect parents alone however, but extends to teachers, and indeed to all recognized authorities—as ministers and magistrates. That I may be clearly understood I state it again as my conviction that disobedience to parents and want of respect for teachers and ministers and magistrates are on the increase among the youth of our day. In a Christian community there is ever manifested a respect and reverence for age. It is both the dictate of the divine law and the natural feeling of a refined nature. Ministers are regarded with affection—Elders with honour—Teachers as temporary representatives of parents are treated with confidence and obeyed with a cordial affection—Magistrates and Judges as being the ministers of civil law and the constituted guardians both of individual and social rights are held in honor and respect by every truly patriotic mind. Their very presence is an encouragement to virtue and a restraint upon vice and a protection to every virtuous member of the community—where these fail and insubordination and youthful rowdiness replace them, it is not a time for a lover of his country to be silent. The evils exposed may be

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only in the germ as yet, but now if ever is the time to destroy them. The higher and maturer social evils are easily traceable to *disobedience to parents*. Here the manifestation of the evil may be said to begin. Caution and a judicious tenderness must doubtless be employed with regard to it—but no better encouragement can possibly be given to it than simply an apathetic indifference. To the frank and honest but kindly consideration of this matter let me invite the attention both of parents and youth.

When a young man has come to prefer another fireside to that by which he has been brought up, or another circle of friends to those with whom he is, by nature, and ought to be, by affection united, or when he has come to prefer the corner of the street, or the idle lounging saunter by the highway, to the quieter or more thoughtful scenes, or to the simple, healthful recreations with which his early years have been associated, when he has come to manifest the first symptoms of a reckless insubordination and disobedience, refusing the dictates of parental counsel, and kicking against the goads of a necessary but kindly restraint; when he has reached the idea that the order of domestic life is severity, and its necessary restraints bondage; or when he becomes the victim of an overweening self-conceit that prompts him to regard himself as wiser than his fathers, and to shake off the trammels of their oversight and example, then there is assuredly something wrong, essentially and vitally wrong. The youth may have imbibed much evil from the example of his selected companions, or from his own innate depravity of heart principles may have evolved, and ideas of things may have taken rise at once opposed to truth and to his own interests and usefulness in life. All this may be.—But parents will allow me to suggest the question, “May there not be something wrong about the habits and arrangements of home?” For your own peace and for your children’s welfare I want you parents to ponder this question, and looking the evil in the face with unutterable sorrow of heart, I wish you to try and trace it to its head; for it may be that much of the evil of which complaint is made may justly be charged against yourselves. I have that confidence in you fathers and mothers that leads me to hope that you will begin in right earnest to scrutinize your own domestic arrangements and habits. It is marvellous how large an influence these have in the formation

of mind and in the direction of character. You may possibly see that some of those that well sufficed for your children while they were of tender years, scarcely suffice for them now that the thought and speech and understanding and aspirations of opening man and womanhood are beginning to replace the simple tastes and confidences of early childhood. It behoves you to consider that there is a growth in mind as well as in body in every healthful and rational child, and that that mental growth must as surely be the object of your care and study and solicitude. It behoves you to make the homes of your children truly HOMES to them, where they shall find that pure sympathies have full play, and mutual confidence full power; scenes of alternate rest and recreation, of alternate amusement and serious and thoughtful reflection; where the rude, rough ways of the world without are not admissible, and where there is felt to be a power present and ever at work that smoothes the angularities of youthful character, lights up the domestic circle with a softened and refining love, and links together all its members in holy and lasting affection. This when combined with cleanliness, order and social regularity, and all flowing forth from a heavenly Father's hand and sweetened with his blessing cannot fail to attach your children to their homes, and to you their parents as being next in their affections to God. It behoves you to supply your children with books. This is as truly a duty as to give them in God's name their daily bread. In so far as your endeavours can prevail, there is no more hopeful antidote to the allurements of passion, and to the power of youthful lusts, than in an unpretending but well assorted collection of books in any home—when your children have free access to them, the use of them will create a love of reading, and reading will store the memory with facts and incidents and principles, and lead at the same time to habits of reflection. Thus you shall have done your utmost to prevent the life of your children from ever becoming the mere creature of circumstances or the sport and plaything of undisciplined desire.

Let your *conversation* in presence of your children be always pure, affectionate, kindly and respectful; respectful both to those that are present and concerning those that are absent. It may be, that much of that want of respect for ministers, magistrates, and teachers, of which I have complained, arises from the unguarded conversation of

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the domestic circle. Children listen to the disrespectful language of their seniors, to their suspicions and fault-finding, often as ungenerous as it is unjust; and they lay it up in their young hearts, and it rankles there, like poison injected into the very blood, until it ends in what may very naturally be expected, a want of respect to those of whom the evil has been spoken, and a growing defection from the love and obedience due to those by whom unhappily it was spoken. I do not hesitate to express my conviction that the parent who either by word or deed encourages disrespect to acknowledged authority on the part of his children, may naturally expect to reap a harvest of disobedience sooner or later towards himself.

I now turn for a few moments especially to the youth that are before me. To you, my dear young friends, I say, that I have that confidence in you which encourages me to hope that admitting the existence of these evils which I have now mentioned you will try to set your hearts and minds against them. You may not think them to be so great and so perilous as a riper experience knows them to be; but when your own experience convinces you, as I know it does even now, that they are hurtful to your own enjoyment—for an unloving, disobedient and wayward child cannot be happy,—you may well judge, that that which is in itself unlovely, and hurtful to your present happiness, while it is only in the bud, will not be less so, when allowed to expand into blossom and to ripen into fruit. I would remind you to-day that in the Holy Book of God it is written for you, "Children obey your parents in the Lord for it is right:" and also of the first commandment in the second table of the Law, "Honour thy father and thy mother that thy days may be long in the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee." These are the commandments of the Lord and you see that they are addressed to you. You think you would like to be remembered by the Lord Jesus among His loving friends. Well then remember that Jesus saith—"ye are my friends if ye do whatsoever I command you." To those of you who are at school in the town or in the country let me say that the above commands embrace obedience and honour not only to parents but also to teachers, and to all that are in authority either by age or office over us. Your teachers are, in the matter of your early training, in the room and place of your parents to you; and there-

fore the honor and obedience and love, with which God requires you to regard your parents, are also required for those to whom parental responsibilities and duties are for the time being transferred.

To those of you that are rising up into man and womanhood I need scarcely say that all your interests, your well being and well doing lie very near my heart. Next to my own and my family's salvation lies the desire to behold you "walking in the truth." I know that you believe this—and hence I feel constrained to address you with great plainness and freedom of speech. I have some ideas still of what are the ardent wishes and hopeful aspirings of youth; and of the peculiar temptations that assail you, both as to their character, their forms, and their issues, I feel that I have a just though perhaps an inadequate perception. You are just now at or near that stage, at which you take on the form and shape that shall mark your moral and your spiritual life, more or less, during all the years of your after pilgrimage; and hence the necessity that exists for acquiring right principles to guide you, and right motives to action at the very outset of your career. You have reached an age at which you can comprehend, and at which, if you will give reason and conscience their proper sway, you can to some extent appreciate the Divine counsel "Seek ye first the Kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you." Our Father in heaven knows that we have need of food and drink and clothing—and he will enable us to provide ourselves with them. But we need also a higher and a better good. We need "the Kingdom of God." We cannot eat our bread with gladness, nor drink our wine with a merry heart if unpardoned and unreconciled to God—if God dwell not in us and walk not in us—we, His people, and He our God. "What shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world and lose his soul?" Beware of indifference as to this momentous question; for interests more stupendous than the highest interests of time may hang upon the consideration which you now give to it. Be persuaded to begin to make your relation to God your personal concern. Separate yourselves, each from his companions, even for one short hour, and give all the force and vigour of a "fixed heart" to the questions What am I? Where am I? and whither am I going? Am I in Christ? Am I

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reconciled to God through Christ? These are plain, but trying and searching questions—worthy of the individual engagement of a human heart and of the highest human understanding. In order to a right and just consideration of these things, ask of God His Holy Spirit to give you light and heart in and for this work of self-inspection. I long to see you personally engaged about this—even troubled by a sense of personal sin, and by a consciousness of personal danger—urging as from “the depths” the personal inquiry “What must I do to be saved?” I long to see you personally closing with the Lord Jesus Christ—and publicly acknowledging your acceptance of Christ as your Prophet, Priest and King—standing up for Jesus in all places and at all times, and testifying for Him boldly. Oh then—then and only then, when breaking away from all your idols and even from all your righteousnesses as grounds of hope in God’s forgiving mercy, you flee for refuge to lay hold on the hope set before you—the first great battle of life is over, and the victory is secured for truth and holiness. Morally and spiritually your path can never after be long a doubtful one, nor can your progress towards the highest attainments of which your regenerated natures are capable, be for any great length of time arrested. Only let Christ be in you, and you are safe—for ever safe. “Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and *Thou* shalt be saved.”

But while thus commending to you the Lord Jesus Christ, and urging on you to seek, and to seek first a personal interest in Him, I would not have you to be regardless either of your healthfulness of body or of your companionships and associations; for these are largely helpful both to your mental refinement and to your personal usefulness in the world. I would not be understood as suggesting that you should so tie yourselves to your own homes, or so attach yourselves to the members of your own families, as to shun all society besides, and to avoid all intercourse with your neighbours. So far is this from being my counsel to you, that I would much rather have you to cultivate society, but always such a society as may not only benefit you, but also receive benefit from you; and to cultivate and cherish such companionships as may act and re-act, the one upon the other for good. Those companions alone are to be trusted whose spirit is truth—whose principles are fixed, and whose character is holy.

Nor would I commend you to abstain from healthful, manly, and invigorating recreation. So far from this, I tell you, that were I a young man, and had I six evenings of the week, or even two, at my own disposal, I would try conscientiously to divide them between the enlargement and refinement of my mind, and the invigorating of my bodily health; and while mainly intent on the former, I would endeavour to make the latter subserve the same great end. I would avail myself of such privileges as I could command for both the one and the other. I may mention by way of example—the Bible class and the Library for the one—and the drill room during these winter evenings for the other. In the more genial months of the year you have the highways open for you on every hand, the healthful and bracing cricket ground, and the invigorating exercise of rowing. Should your tastes incline you, you have a field for acquiring geological knowledge, second to none in Canada, while the gentler but not less interesting science of botany lies wholly within your reach. I have not spoken of anything you perceive that lies beyond your reach, or that requires unusual exertion or self-sacrifice to obtain it. All the appliances whether for mental culture or for bodily exercise which I have mentioned are at your command. Without money and without price, or almost so, they are yours. Without the suspicion of invidiousness I may say that, of all the means for healthful and invigorating bodily exercise with which I am acquainted, I know none better than the cricket field in summer, and the drill room in the winter months; and of this latter I may say from personal knowledge that its routine, and discipline of sinew, muscle, and bone, have been instrumental in restoring strength to the frame that at one time threatened to yield to the attack of wasting disease.

And now, having exposed certain evils that threatened to rise into strength in the land, and having also prescribed certain remedies, let me further counsel you in a few words to avoid mental stagnation. Of all pestilential marshes that curse the abode of man, a stagnant mind is the most perilous. In its neighbourhood "all life dies and death lives." Avoid unprofitable and unprincipled companionships—their vaunted liberality is the very soul of slavery—their steps lead down to death. Avoid the corners of the streets. Evil lurketh there—for it is the place of the scorner, and the begin-

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ning of ruin to many a thoughtless youth. Avoid the places where drinking and gambling are allowed—their owners will flatter you while you have a shilling to spend, and will kick you when penniless to the door. Those who enter them know, when they do so, that they can only meet with the ungodly there, whose company is pollution, and whose end is never-dying death.

I have sought to set before you to-day our mercies in their multitude and our sins increasing in their number and their aggravations—and these our sins increasing while our mercies are being multiplied. They are not sins of ignorance, but rather sins against knowledge. Surely this might awaken even the most careless and inconsiderate. Might not the Lord say concerning us “What could have been done more to my vineyard, that I have not done in it. Wherefore when I looked that it should bring forth grapes, brought it forth wild grapes?” Analogous to this is the picture I have sought to set before you of our own times, in which we have God multiplying His mercies unto us, while we, receiving them, are multiplying our sins against Him. It is this that makes them perilous times. It sometimes seems to me as if it were one of God’s ways of showing us how very wicked we are, and how fast the ungodly are ripening for the judgment of the great day. If thus it be, are not our multiplied mercies rather harbingers of approaching judgment than tokens of good to us. Oh! come and search out our sins in order to forsake them; and so bring glory to the Lord by returning to Him “before He cause darkness and before your feet stumble on the dark mountains; and while ye look for light He turn it into the shadows of death, and make it gross darkness.”

And now, having fulfilled a duty, with pleasure, pain, and hope strangely but strongly blended, “I commend you all to God and to the word of His grace.” And “now the very God of peace that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great Shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting Covenant, make you perfect in every good work to do His will, working in you that which is well pleasing in His sight, through Christ Jesus; to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen.

