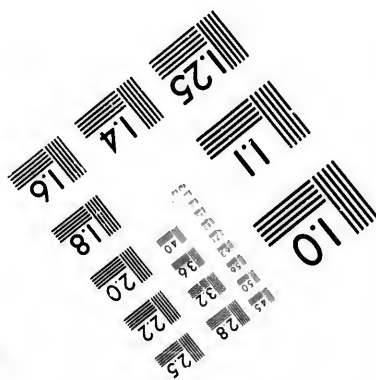
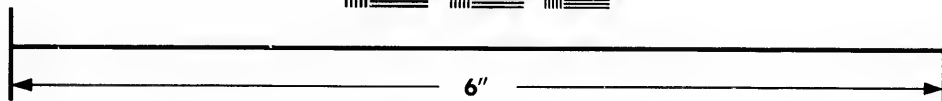
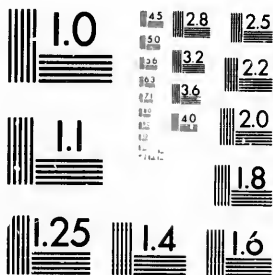


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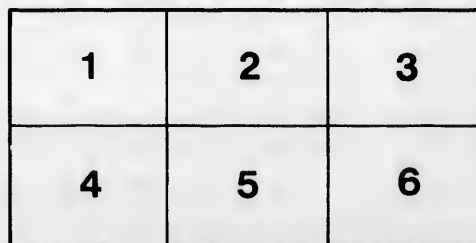
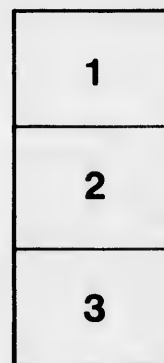
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“Walk about Zion, and go round about her; tell the towers thereof. Mark ye well her bulwarks, consider her palaces: that ye may tell it to the generation following. For this God is our God for ever and ever: He will be our guide even unto death.”
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SERMON.

“Walk about Zion, and go round about her; tell the towers thereof. Mark ye well her bulwarks, consider her palaces: that ye may tell it to the generation following. For this God is our God for ever and ever: He will be our guide even unto death.”—Ps. xlviii, 12, 13, 14.

LAST Monday we celebrated the Fifth Anniversary of the Dominion of Canada. The people as a whole, hailed the day with joy. The merchant closed his shop; and the artisan, glad of a day's rest and ready for a day's enjoyment, prepared himself for the sights of the town or the quiet retreats of the country—as his tastes suggested. Every place of any consequence put on its holiday attire; and flags flying, and bells ringing, and bands playing, and guns roaring, and lusty youth contending on the race-course or on the river: bore testimony all over the Dominion to the general joy.

I have chosen this text with a view of calling your attention to some of those more cheering aspects which the country presents, and at the same time directing your minds to those great duties which your country demands. The psalmist, with the pride of a patriot and the gratitude of a Christian, thought of the glory of his land—its salubrious clime, its radiant skies, its thrilling history, its heritage of promises, its divine government—presided over, as it was, by the God of the whole earth; and it is plain from the text that that which kindled in his heart his deepest joy, was not its physical advantages, but its spiritual blessings—the fact that God dwelt there, that God's house was there, the temple of the Lord, on whose turrets sparkled rising and setting suns, and in whose courts white-robed priests ministered from day to day. He felt as every true patriot feels, that the bulwarks of a nation's strength are not such things as I have noticed, but the blessings of grace—the ministrations of the church—the institutions of religion: and therefore he said, “Walk about Zion, &c.”

In a spirit similar to that of the Psalmist, let me ask you to look to your national advantages. And first: at the large territorial extent of this land. In the lesson of this evening, (xxi. of Rev.) we read of a city whose length is to be twelve thousand furlongs, and whose breadth is to be twelve thousand furlongs,—that is fifteen hundred miles each way—containing two and a-quarter millions of square miles; embracing an area sufficient for the world's population, and allowing a very fair garden for every family. You can scarcely form any conception of such a city, and such a magnitude. Of course, we are not to take these measures, and figures, and facts, sharply and definitely,

and say the City of God is to be so and so, surrounded with a jasper wall two hundred and sixteen feet high—such a literal style of interpretation would destroy the whole teaching of the word. In these symbols of the unseen, God does not so much address the reason as the imagination of men; and through the imagination he would feed the faith of his people, and lift their affections to a glory which eye hath not seen, which ear hath not heard, and which hath not entered into the heart of man to conceive. The striking thing about this city or country which John saw in vision, was its magnitude; and yet it is not nearly so large as that country which we call the Dominion of Canada. Fifteen hundred miles would scarcely reach from Halifax on the east to Winnipeg on the west—that would do little more than span half the length of the Dominion. We have a country more than twice the size of the Golden City of Revelation—a country nearly equal to that of Europe, and something larger than that of the United States! To be sure a large portion lying to the north is of but little value; but making every allowance that justice can demand, we have still a very great country, rich in minerals, fertile in soil, and wonderful in the wealth of its resources—a country, it is said, capable when fully developed, of sustaining one hundred millions, although we have only about four millions now. Russia, inferior in respect to natural advantages, sustains eighty millions with its three hundred millions of acres of arable land. We have more and better land, it is said, lying in the route of the projected Pacific Railroad. Let us not despise the day of small things. The time was, when Great Britain was very small among the nations; when London was small, and Glasgow, and Edinburgh; when the schools and colleges, were of no account; and the question is not what the country is *now*, but what it may become to the *generations following*—what it may become in the hands of a valiant, virtuous, God-fearing population. What other nation in the world has such a field for extension, development, and material prosperity? Our neighbors on the other side have; yes, and that even in a higher degree. But the want of coherence in their institutions and stability in their government, together with the explosive character of some of its elements, is a drawback which cannot be compensated by their otherwise superior natural advantages. Take these things into view, in connection with our relations to England, under whose shadow we repose so safely, and you will sing to-night with a joyful strain: "Walk about Zion, go round about her, mark well her bulwarks, consider her palaces, etc."

In the next place, the growing prosperity of this young country for the last few years, has been the theme of very general congratulation. Trade has been growing on every hand. The lumber business, the mineral business, the banking business, the woollen business, and the shipping business, have all been making great strides. Think of

this country being set down as the third naval power in the world! Think of this country raising more wheat last year, acre for acre, than our neighbors on the other side! Think of a surplus over the expenditure last year of over three millions of dollars! Every branch of business is prospering—every place presents a scene of busy enterprise. Banks, saw mills, woollen factories, and pleasing residences surrounded with gardens and shade trees, are springing up in every town and village all over the land; and trade in all its channels is rushing forward to great dimensions. A few years ago, commercial men were wont to contemplate the future with dismay, by reason of the failure of the Reciprocity Treaty and the imposition of heavy duties; but duty or no duty, business has been going on with increasing vigor, so that it is very nearly as good as ever it was with the United States in its palmiest days; and far better with other customers, and new customers that we have learned to seek out for ourselves. Perhaps no better illustration can be given of the general prosperity than the fact that the assets of the banks are now very nearly double of what they were five years ago, namely, one hundred and thirty-eight millions, as against seventy-one millions of dollars. And if all this may be said of the past, notwithstanding its many drawbacks,—its poverty, bad roads, heavy duties, and inexperience—what shall we say of the future? What of our condition when our canals are constructed, our railroads completed, the Treaty ratified, and the tastes of the people awakened? What of our state when new markets are opened up all over the West, and our large resources that have scarcely been disturbed or developed, when those silent woods that have scarcely seen the face of a white man, are peopled and converted into the homesteads of a thrifty and thriving population? Here again we take up the words of the Psalmist, and say “Walk about Zion,” etc.

Once more, look at the comfortable condition of the people and the real wealth which they own, and how that wealth is stimulating them to still greater possessions. Contrast their condition with the condition of the great bulk of the people in Europe, and say whether we have not reason for thankfulness to-night! Never were people so well clothed, so bounteously fed, so comfortably housed, as our Canadian people. Why, their situation in a general way is better than that of nobles in the time of Queen Elizabeth. And then, as man grows in wealth, there is a tendency to augment the conveniences, the beauty, the furniture and the resources of his home. There is an ambition—a rivalry among Canadians, that is infectious—that will not let man alone—that will not suffer him to live and labour in the old hum-drum style. This is a sign of growth in the right direction. Show me a man who is content to live in a low condition, and I will show you one who is just so much below his proper manhood. True growth is not down towards simplicity and narrowness—down to the savage who

is content with a blanket to cover his shame, and a fish to satisfy his hunger. True growth is upward, and is toward complexity and multitudinous power, and a great variety of tastes. In the low state, man has only one mouth; in the perfect state, he has an hundred. In the low state, he is impelled forward by the sense of hunger; but when his feelings have been stirred by the breath of civilization, and kindled by the Holy Spirit, it is not one sense that he has driving him on—the mere sense of hunger—but the senses of beauty, taste, comfort, right and emulation; and not until man is thoroughly awakened, and all his senses fed, and his entire nature cleansed by the Divine Spirit, can he be said to have reached his manhood.

Now, if I understand the Gospel, it is to make every man rich, both as regards this world and the world to come. If I understand the business of the missionary, he is to go to the savage and teach him to clothe himself with a goodly robe; to till the soil with a better plough; to build his house upon a better plan; to raise his wife and children to a nobler life, and surround them with all the comforts and conveniences of a happy home. Men are afraid of wealth and its vices; they ought to be still more afraid of poverty and its vices. Moreover, wealth is not necessarily associated with vice, but on the contrary, wealth is the handmaid of the Gospel, and the child of the Gospel: for wherever the word of this Gospel is preached, it will blossom out into health and strength, abundant harvests on the land, and prosperous voyages upon the sea, and plenty of money in the exchequer. And instead of men toiling and moiling from the one year's end to the other, scarcely able to make ends meet, I look forward to the time when man, rising to greater dominion over the elements because rising into greater favor with the God of the elements, shall be able to take life easy—when a fortune of a million of dollars will not be considered great; when the cities shall be golden, and the nations shall walk in a splendor which Solomon never had in all his glory. There is a great deal of wealth in the country; and the beauty of it is that it is not in the hands of a few, though there are a few rich men, but that it is in the hands of the people. In the old country it is computed there are only about twenty-five thousand owners of land, and some of these very small owners; and in Scotland, if my memory serves me, nearly one half of the land is in the hands of four or five noblemen. But there is no such thing in this country. The land is in the hands of the people, and the wealth of the country is at their disposal. There is danger when wealth is in a few hands. There is danger in corporations, and guilds, and millionaires, clubbing in the interest of each other, and selfishly controlling the channels of business; but there is no such danger when the real wealth of the country—which is in the soil—is in the hands of the people; when it is allowed, like water, to take its natural course and flow in its proper channels, with its hundred

hands carrying life and loveliness wherever it goes. And when you bear in mind that every dollar that a man earns in the back woods stimulates his nature, every book that he reads stimulates his nature, every sermon that he hears stimulates his nature, and so far as he is concerned opens up a market, makes him cry out for a watch to wear in his pocket, or an instrument for his daughters to play upon at home, you can see what the tendency of all this prosperity and wealth which is ours is, and how new branches of industry must ever be springing up to cope with the ever increasing demands of a prosperous people. Look at the country in this light, and you will say with the Psalmist: "Walk about Zion, etc."

But I have greater things than these to speak to you about to-night in connection with our country. I refer to the Educational advantages which it presents to the rising generation. Certainly, no country is better situated in regard to schools and libraries, and facilities for instruction, if we except the United States. There is not a poor boy in the Dominion who has not the free offer of an excellent English education—nay, that is not under law to accept of a good English education. Then by easy gradation, he can rise to the Grammar School, the Collegiate Institute, and finally the University; and if in the course of his instruction he manifests any special aptitude for the arts or sciences, the way of cultivating that special gift is made easy to him by kindred institutions which are generously sustained by the Legislature. There is such an institution in Toronto, attended just now by about one hundred pupils, some of whom have made their way thither through difficulties, and who probably will ere long make their way to real excellence in the arts which they love, and thus become a source of wealth to the land.

I have been speaking of the natural wealth of the country, but what is that compared to the intellectual wealth of the people? One educated man is better than any one of those silver islands in Lake Superior. One wise man, though poor and not remembered, has before now delivered the city; and we are assured by the highest authority that wisdom is better than arms. The great poet is better than a millionaire: for though he only wrote one short song like that which lately thrilled the heart of Germany,

"The Rhine, the Rhine! the glorious Rhine!"

It may be such a song as to kindle a nation's feeling and become a nation's hymn, so that when sung in the day of adversity, it shall bring more strength to the country than a whole argosy laden with gold. Who does not know that this has been the effect of our national songs? Who does not know that they have been the means of promoting courage and constancy and enthusiasm and a leal-hearted allegiance, and all that conserves order and knits the strength and binds up the hearts of the people? Why was Germany enabled to deal

blows so rapid, heavy and overwhelming last year? Was it because she had better arms? No! Was it because she had more men to send into the field? No! But it was because she had better men; because the German soldier was not a mere fighting machine like the hordes of Russians, among whom there is no enthusiasm and no intelligence; but an educated citizen, a scholar who has passed through the schools of his country, and who perfectly understands the issues at stake; while many of the French officers, not to speak of the rank and file, could not write their own names!

By her schools and colleges, Germany has put intelligence into her people and courage into her soldiers, and thus every man she sends to the field, so to speak, is a double man; every army, a double army; every general a double, treble general—so that the power of the country is overwhelming. Therefore, I think the government of the country is acting wisely in making such ample provision as they have done, for the generous and free education of youth; and when I think of the number of our schools, and the growing facilities extended to the rising generation for improving their minds, I am inclined to take up these words in a grateful spirit: "Walk about Zion, etc."

Another very cheering feature of the country, and one which promises well for the future, is the disposition more and more manifested on the part of the strong to help the weak—the growing sense of their responsibility to lift up those that are bound down. When in Montreal lately, I was much interested with the effort put forth in behalf of the poor boys and girls that had no helper—the efforts of the wealthy of that great city to raise those that are bowed down, to reclaim the drunkard, encourage the weak, and to evangelise the mass and bring them under the influence of the Word. And what is true of Montreal, is true of all the great cities on the continent—New York, Boston, Baltimore; and no less in London and Liverpool, and Glasgow and Edinburgh! It is a good sign of the country when its nobles and great men, such as the Earl of Shaftesbury and the Duke of Argyle, are found ready for such work—illustrious by reason of their position, but shedding additional lustre upon their coronets by such works of faith and labors of love. The time was when such a spectacle was scarcely to be found; when the nobleman shut himself up in his splendid mansion, and kept himself apart from the common people for fear of defilement. How different the conduct of Him who went about continually doing good! He healed the leper—and how? Did he wave His hand, and say: "Away, away! Come not near, lest you defile me?" No; but He drew near and touched him with His hand, and His sympathy, and His love; and who does not know that a kind word spoken, a generous deed done, has a balm and a power to cure which no dole of cold charity can command? Let us not forget that we are *members one of another*; that evil is contagious; that unless the

lower classes are clean, the higher cannot lift themselves above the power of contamination. When the small-pox is in a place, great is the alarm in every household, and great the preparations and prescriptions against the spread of the disease. But there is a spiritual as well as a physical contagion; and if we allow corruption to grow and spread in our cities and through the land—if we leave the infected alone, the drunkard alone, and the drinking places alone to do their work of death without law or limitation, and corrupt literature alone to do its work—how can we assure ourselves that our sons and daughters shall escape the contagion? If we would beat back a fever, it is not enough that we attend to personal cleanliness—the whole town must be cleansed and fumigated; and so, if we would have our country prosper, it will not do for us to say: What have I to do with the corruption of the town? When your child comes in from the street with a black oath on his tongue, he virtually says to you: "That's what you have got to do with the corruption of the town." When a pestilence, rising from degraded homes, meets you on the highway and knocks you down, it virtually says: "That's what you have got to do with the corruption of the town." And so when a rotten representative gets you into his power and makes a whole community smart for their negligence, he virtually says the same thing. Now, this growing sense of responsibility on the part of the strong to help the weak, this disposition to go forth and touch the leper with our sympathy to which I have adverted, is a very cheering feature connected with our country, and promises well for the future.

But the most cheering feature of all is the actual religious life of the country—the number of churches, ministers, sabbath schools, bibles read and bibles distributed through the country every year. I know that in this respect there is much that is fitted to depress. When we think of the prevalence of scientific scepticism, the letting go of cherished beliefs, the removal of old land marks, the growth of intemperance and uncleanness, and the idea with many that Christianity is losing ground—that it is an old story, a mere superstition—we naturally despond. But this scene takes place every three or four hundred years; and then there is a reaction, and religion sets in stronger than ever. You are standing on the shore beaten by the coming tide, but ever and anon the great swelling wave retires, and for the time you think the tide is ebbing; but the tide is not ebbing—and if you stand long enough, you will see the whole shelving sands covered with the flood. We can only see a small part of God's ways; but to Him with whom a thousand years is as one day, there is no failure, no reflux of the wave; and if we had a longer vision and a stronger faith, we should see the tide rolling in all the time, and at last the whole earth filled with glory. I am not shaken by such things as those to which I have adverted. They are signs of change; fulfilments of prophecy;

prognostications of a better day. My faith does not stand in men, or minister, or books, or churches, but in God, and in that strong, unchangeable human nature which cannot do without religion, without God, without the ministration of the Word; and which, amid all conditions, cries out for God—the living God.

Now what I say is this: No country is more favorably situated in respect to the ministers of religion and the means of grace, than Canada. Throughout the whole land, even the remotest districts, the gospel is preached, and the word of God has free course and is glorified. Along the Red River and the Fraser River, where emigrants are thronging, there are faithful men to be found ready to minister to their wants, and more are ready to follow; and all along the Gattineau for hundreds of miles, a great lumber district where thousands of Frenchmen assemble every winter in the shanties, for whose souls no one seemed to care, except the confessor, till a few years ago, when our church was moved to take up this mission. All along, every winter, our ministers of the Ottawa Presbytery are to be found laboring in word and doctrine, and leaving behind them multitudes of books and tracts in both the French and English languages. Whether then, we look to the town or country, the old settlements or the new, we have reason to thank God and take courage. And while I am grateful for those high advantages to which I have adverted—the territorial extent of the country—the prosperity of the country—the wealth of the country—the educational advantages of the country—the generous disposition of the strong to help the weak in this country—I am especially thankful to Almighty God for the spiritual blessings of the country—the thousands of evangelical pulpits that are eloquent every Sabbath with the high themes of the Gospel. I wish I had more time to dwell upon this part of my discourse, and to shew you that Christian men and Christian institutions are the true bulwarks of a country. It was this feature in Israel that chiefly attracted the eye of the Psalmist. It was not its physical advantages—it was not its genial clime and well watered plains; but it was because the Lord, in an especial manner, dwelt there; because the temple was there, and thousands of true men that waited for the consolation of Israel, who delighted to linger about Zion and listen to those strains of heavenly minstrelsy, which awoke the enthusiasm of the nation. And not until we rise to the true conditions of a nation's strength; not until we see wickedness as ashamed, hiding its head; not until we see righteousness flowing through the land like a stream, purging our politics, and cleansing our council halls and judgment halls, making faith more intelligent, knowledge more scriptural, business more lofty in its tone, and Christian men more earnest, and ministers more faithful—not till then shall we be able to sing this psalm in the true spirit in which it was originally sung: "Walk about Zion, go round about her, mark well her bulwarks; consider her palaces, that ye may tell it to the generation following: for this God is our God, for ever and ever; He will be our guide even unto death." Depend upon it, that the true bulwarks of a nation are spiritual, not material; that our real strength is not our great natural advantages—not our millions of acres of unreclaimed land—not the *ægis* of the mother country, under which we repose so safely—but *that righteousness which exalteth a nation*. Let the country be faithless in this regard: place improper men in positions of trust; profane her Sabbaths and neglect her poor—and nothing can save her from the doom of those rotten nations of antiquity, that arose, fell, and passed away like the cloud of the morning.

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