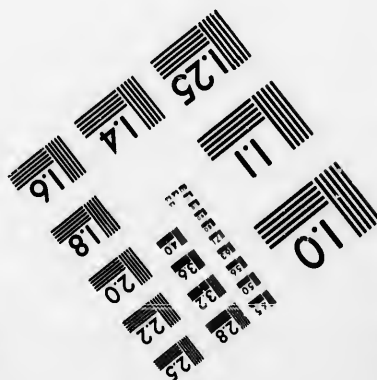
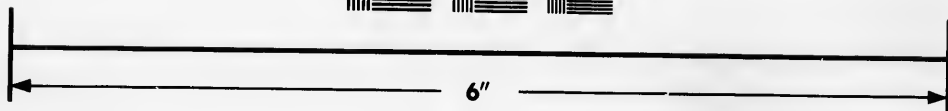
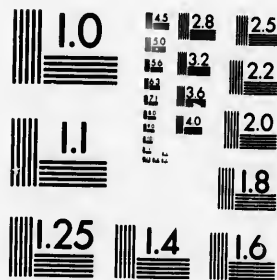


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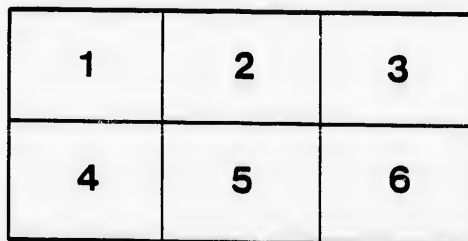
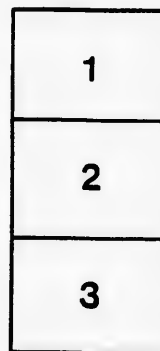
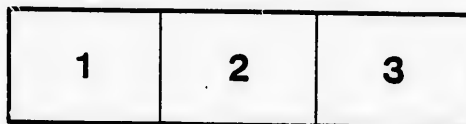
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THE
PROVIDENCE OF GOD
MANIFESTED
IN THE EVENTS OF THE LAST YEAR.
A SERMON.

PREACHED ON THE FIRST DAY OF JANUARY, A. D. 1815,

IN ST. PAUL'S CHURCH,

IN THE SEIGNIORY OF ST. ARMAND.

LOWER CANADA.

BY THE HON. AND REV. CHARLES STEWART, A. M.

Minister of St. Armand, and Chaplain to the Lord Bishop of
Quebec.

When He giveth quietness, who then can make trouble? And when
He hideth His face, who then can behold Him? whether it be done
against a nation, or against a man only. *Job, 34-29.*

MONTREAL:
PRINTED BY NAHUM MOWER,
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1815.

FRELIGHSBURG, St. ARMAND, }
JANUARY 9, 1815. }

MR. MOWER,

I SEND you a Sermon which I request you to print. When I wrote it I had not any thoughts of printing it ; and it is a very imperfect composition. But I have been particularly solicited to make it public. This circumstance, and the hope of its doing some good, induces me to publish it : and with further apology or preface I shall not trouble you or my readers.

I am, Sir,

Your humble Servant,

C. STEWART.

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SO TEACH US TO NUMBER OUR DAYS, THAT WE MAY
 APPLY OUR HEARTS UNTO WISDOM.

IT is always profitable to consider the value of time, and the importance of making improvement of it. The present season of the year affords additional reason for making a survey of the past events of our lives, and of looking forward to our interests in futurity. The text calls upon us to consider the shortness of this life, and to exercise wisdom in making provision for eternity. This is the wisdom that we should learn from numbering our days. We should examine into the state of our account with God ; and we should pray to God to assist us in making the revision, and in applying it to the improvement of our future time. If we would seriously consider the shortness of this life, and the value of eternity, and of our days here, in respect of their being the only time of preparation for another life ; and if we would frequently repeat these considerations, we should certainly be confirmed in the practice of true wisdom.

Our own days, our own lot, and duties, and the mercies and providences of God towards each of us in particular, is what we should chiefly consider. Into this account we can always examine ; and the result of this is of more importance to us than the concerns of all the world besides put together. If we do not take care of our own souls, we shall not do good to the souls of other men ; and

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the first and best way of serving the public is, watchfully and diligently to perform our own duty. We should consider the providence of God towards us; and in reflecting on his government over all things, it is a comfortable and encouraging conclusion to recollect, that it is equally present and attentive to the interest of an individual as to that of the whole world; and that the smallest thing is not disregarded by him in his government over all things. All things in the world are small to him; but he gives an importance to them all, by his superintendance over them, and by his connecting them with the concerns of eternity, and of his judgment and kingdom to come.

With regard to the nature of God's providence I shall here briefly observe, that we are to understand by it, his ordering and ruling over all things; and that he permits nothing to take place, and brings nothing to pass, but what in his good time shall manifestly contribute to his glory, and to the happiness of his people. In this world he has given to us all grace, through Jesus Christ, sufficient to enable us to belong to him; and if we serve him, he has promised, that all things shall work together for our final and everlasting good. But if we persist in neglecting his grace and disobeying him, he will have honour on us in the day of judgment, and in consigning us to the punishment of hell. Here, we are placed in a state of probation to prepare us for a happy eternity. If we will make improvement of the providences, in other words, the mercies and judgments of God, with which he visits us, to make us give ourselves up to him, and to make us place all our dependance on his government over all things, and on his perfectly rewarding all his servants, we shall learn wisdom and righteousness. Believing in his government over all things, and in his will, revealed to us

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in his word, heartily, so as to work in obedience to them, is true faith : and if we so keep his faith, and his commandments, we belong to him ; we are his people, and he is our God ; and all his providences are improved by us, and blessed unto us. But, if we will not seek unto him, and obey his government, and consider and improve his providences and gifts, we are far from him ; his providence is not gracious unto us ; and his gifts become to us curses instead of blessings. This is the true and profitable way of considering the providence of God. It is a plain view of it ; and it is sufficient for our learning to make the best improvement of it.

I have observed, that we should consider the providences of God towards ourselves, in particular. These admit of more close inquiry, and more exact application, in respect of our own hearts and conduct, than we are capable of making in general with regard to the public providences of God. At the same time, we ought to improve general and national providences. The public mercies and judgments of God concern every man ; and every one of us ought to endeavour to make them profitable to himself and to all around him. When they are very remarkable, this is more particularly our duty. This is certainly the case with regard to many great events of the last year. They therefore demand our present consideration ; and of these in particular, on this occasion, I propose treating. But it is only in a very general manner that they can now be mentioned.

First, let us consider some of the remarkable providences of a public description ; then, those of a more private nature ; and let us learn from them to put our trust in God, and to serve him. Lastly, let me exhort you to improve your present time, and to prepare for eternity.

In contemplating the great events of the past year, the restoration of all Europe from a general state of war to a state of universal peace first claims our attention. The beginning of the last year found every kingdom there almost, harassed by war. The commencement of this, finds every nation there, without one exception, restored to peace. This is a wonderful and rapid change, and the government of God in this, calls for our continual acknowledgment and praise and thanksgiving. Consider also, what a long war, and how terrible an one, most of those nations had been engaged in; what an extent of conquest, and system of tyranny, the despot of France had usurped and spread over the greatest part of Europe; how formidable he was in his armies, and military skill; and how many kings he had deposed, and how many he had set up. Now, see his conquests wrested from him, and his tyranny overturned; his armies destroyed, or vanquished, and his military skill failing him; his vassal kings flying, and he himself deposed. In how extraordinary a manner, too, all this took place; how speedily! The allies advance to the confines of France, and through the heart of it, and to the gates of Paris, we scarcely know how. Paris is taken and spared; the legitimate sovereign is restored; and the usurper is dethroned, and yet lives, persecuted only by his own evil passions, and by the stings of a guilty conscience. All, events so far exceeding and contrary to human expectation, power, and foresight, that the providence of God certainly so ordered them, in this wonderful manner, to oblige all men to see and acknowledge his government ruling over all things, and to confess, that "he doeth according to his will in the army of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth; and none can stay his hand, or say unto him, what

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doest thou?"* Consider his power and wisdom at once and as soon as he thought fit, counselling, assembling, uniting, and strengthening nations, armies, and kings, in one common cause ; raising up skilful generals, and carrying them along on eagle's wings as it were, to victory and to triumph ; separating and confounding their enemies, disarming them, and indeed turning them into auxiliaries, friends, and allies, against the tyrant.

Consider the mercy of God in sparing the tyrant, but at the same time making him a monument of the uncertainty and weakness of human power, especially when founded on usurpation and tyranny. Consider also, God's mercy in delivering Paris and France from tumult and insurrection, and from pillage, fire and sword ; and granting them peace, and good order, and regular government, notwithstanding all their extraordinary and unexampled sins and provocations against God and his religion. Consider also, his mercy in restoring the ancient royal family of France to the throne, and in uniting the people in loyalty and allegiance to them. Their restoration is even more remarkable than the downfall of the tyrant ; and it is a signal instance of God's humbling and exalting whom he will, and at what time he pleases, and of his changing the times and seasons, and removing kings, and setting up kings, as to him seemeth best. Learn from the consideration of his power not to be disobedient to him, or to oppose his will, but to do his will ; and from the consideration of his mercy and forbearance be led to repentance and sorrow for sinning against so good a God, and to amendment in your future life.

The perseverance of Great-Britain in a good cause, and her final success in it, should teach us

* Daniel, 4—35.

to be earnest and diligent in doing that which is right ; not to be discouraged by dangers, or difficulties, but to exert ourselves to the utmost in the discharge of our duty, and to hope and strive to the end ; and to believe, that God will in his good way and time, in this world or the next, always reward those who persevere in a good cause. The prayers of Russia and her trust in God, are particularly worthy of our notice and our remembrance ; and they should teach us, that if we seek unto him, and to him commit our cause, and if we at the same time do *our* part in using the means which he has put in our power, he will deliver us from the greatest troubles, and raise us to comfort, peace, and happiness. Her deliverance was extraordinary, and her faith and works toward God were manifest and declared to all the world ; and to her prayers and exertions the happy change in Europe, the mercy and favor of God towards oppressed nations, and the peace and prosperity of the world, (now about to be established, we hope,) are certainly, in a great measure, to be attributed.*

She stands first, in many respects, in lately contributing to the mighty change which has taken place, and pre-eminent in calling upon God for it : and Great Britain is conspicuous and rewarded for never yielding to the reign of terror, which spread over Europe ; and at length, by her perseverance, encouraging and determining the rest of the na-

* The manifestos of the Russian government, and the dispatches of her generals at the time of her deliverance, are distinguished for their expressions of piety towards God, and of earnestness in calling upon all people to resist the common enemy. Particularly we would remind the reader of her manifesto published after the burning of Moscow. (September, 1812.) From which era we may date her deliverance. It concludes with this memorable prayer, which we would almost say partakes of the character of inspiration and prophecy.

"Almighty God ! turn thy merciful eye to thy supplicating Russian church. Vouchsafe courage and patience to thy people struggling in a just cause, so that they may thereby overcome the enemy ; and in saving themselves, may also defend the freedom of kings and nations."

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to resist it, and to overcome. From the history of the late events in Europe we should learn to persevere in good works, and to pray to God for his assistance; and in all our success we should acknowledge his power and goodness, and give him the honour and praise. If the nations are grateful to God for their deliverance, and if they honour him in their ways and their joy, we may hope that they will be blessed with the continuance of peace and the increase of prosperity.

God has been gracious unto them, and his power and providence in removing the scourge and judgment of war, and other evils, and in bringing in the blessing of peace and its numerous advantages, have required and received our acknowledgment. Great and happy is the change which has taken place; and to *him* we are indebted for the peace in Europe. At the same time nothing is perfect in this fallen and wicked world. We have now to lament troubles, and pernicious measures of a bad government in Spain, and her abuse of her deliverance from foreign foes and tyrannical power, and the power and influence of the Pope and Roman Catholic religion seem to be acquiring an accession of strength instead of receiving diminution; which is a circumstance contrary to the expectations lately entertained by Protestants, and I must add, contrary to the wishes which ought always to be cherished by good and intelligent Christians. I mention these facts to make us sensible of the inscrutable ways of Providence, and of the imperfection of all human affairs; and to make us cast our care upon God, and fix our hope and affections on another world, and so teach us to wait on God, and to trust in him in the dispensations of his government ruling over all things, and working all things together for the good of his church, according to his perfect knowledge.

From Europe we must turn to the providences of God in America. Here some chief events solicit our attention, but I must be brief in treating of them.

First, the change in Europe was a most auspicious one in favour of our cause, and it was a complete obstacle and disappointment to the plans and expectations of the enemy. So much so, that the war in Europe which our enemy had expected would disable us from coping with him here, has eventually, fully prepared and fortified us for the contest. He attacked us in our weakest state; but the providence of God defended us wonderfully; and now has visited him, in his presumption to wage war against us, because he thought we were few in number and helpless.

God knows all things well, past, present, and future, and he governs accordingly. Our army this last campaign was considerable, yet its operations were not in all quarters crowned with favourable results. It would appear that providence would teach us not to depend on the multitude of a host, but on his arm, mighty to save or to destroy.

In the Upper Province a small force has successfully contended with the flower of the American army; and they have again been obliged to retire from another fruitless attempt at invasion and conquest. Indeed, God in his mercy, seems to have thwarted attempts of this kind, in general. Our army and fleet in this province advanced into the enemy's country and waters; and Providence plainly was against them; so plainly, that I think it my duty to make improvement of the subject. We are not willing, in general, to see or confess that providence has been against us, and not for us; but this is pride and folly. Let us be wiser and more humble; and learn to see and acknowledge God's government over all things.

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Though he rules and orders as he chooses, and makes the failures and errors of men instrumental to his designs, yet he does not take away their responsibility to him and to man for their conduct. He does not force this, but only influences it according to their seeking to him, or neglecting him. If they trust in him, he will assist them; if they do not regard him, he will not prevent their falling into evil. Far be it from me to speak of the operations of our armies, or the events of the campaign, with any view but that of making religious improvement of them; but where a lesson of this kind can be learnt it is my office to teach it, as well as to learn it myself. Providence I say, was adverse to us in the invasion and attack to which I am alluding; and I need not produce reasons; I think, for this opinion. The improvement I would make of it is this; to reflect that we should not trust in an arm of flesh, but in the arm of God; not in the number, order, strength, or skill of our troops, but in the favour of heaven; not to be confident in our own means or scheme, but to seek the aid and direction of God; and that he who girdeth on his harness, (or armour,) should not boast himself as he that putteth it off, as said one of the kings of Israel.* Boasting ourselves, confidence in ourselves, trusting in human power, is often cast down by God; and it is always odious to him. I would observe, that Providence was against us, because of our sins, of our pride and presumption; to humble us and visit us, and turn us away from breaking his laws, and profaning his sabbaths. This was partly his will, in the providence I am speaking of, I am persuaded; at the same time, I believe it was partly an exercise of his mercy towards our enemy, to deliver them from

* I. Kings, 20—11.

the terror and distress of an invasion, and of an hostile army occupying their territory. I would also observe, that the commander of their fleet was a pious man ; and it is not to be passed over that such a man, every pious man, the Lord delights to prosper, though he sometimes visits them with affliction for their profit.

One other invasion and operation of our army, this last campaign, I shall notice, as it also seems to me a providence fraught with instruction. This was a successful invasion, and an attack on the enemy's chief city. Here the Lord in particular prospered our arms, confounded our enemy, and delivered his capital into our hands. And though I would regret, on our part, the destruction of some of its public buildings, yet it appears to me a just judgment of God against some of the chief actors in them, for their wicked and malicious speeches, and their violent and unnatural conduct against their parent country. It was a visitation on them for their eagerness to go to war, and for their pride and ambition in threatening to take Canada, and Quebec, &c. These proud speakers and the heads of their government were disgraced and scattered ; and our little army returned safe and victorious to their ships and their comrades. But how soon afterwards fell the hero of them ! After fighting many battles and gaining many laurels in Europe ; after taking the capital of America, and triumphing over every difficulty in his first expedition, he is in the succeeding one, in the very onset, killed and cut off from all his honors, carried off in the prime of life, and consigned to the tomb, beloved, admired, and regretted ! What now avail to him past honors, or present applause ; any victory, but that over the world, any conquest, except that of himself, and his own passions ? and this victory and this conquest I would fain hope

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and believe he had won through faith in Jesus Christ ; and I would indulge the pleasing thought that he is now reaping the rewards of Christ in fields of perfect peace and everlasting glory in Heaven above.* His death shews the uncertainty of life, and the transient nature of worldly glory. We would however, at the same time reflect on the numerous escapes he had been favoured with by Providence in the course of a military life, and consider how many he had survived in former campaigns. Much more, how grateful should we be to Providence for the lives of many, dear to us, who have survived him, whether we consider the attacks of sickness, the dangers of war, or the common accidents of life ! I am sure that I and others here, have great reason to be thankful to God on this account. Praised be the Lord ! Oh, that we would look to the mercies of God exercised towards us, and many dear to us, in a kind and superintending Providence ; and that we would strive to have God always for us, and never against us ! This is what we should learn to accomplish from contemplating God's government over all things.

We must consider the kindness of providence to us here, in sparing us from so many of the evils and ravages of war, which it was reasonable to fear would have visited us ; and under which our friends in Upper Canada have severely suffered. Little indeed have we experienced of the calamities of war ; and we cannot be sufficiently sensible of the riches of God's goodness and forbearance and long suffering towards us, in particular. The enemy have not made many or serious incursions on us, notwithstanding our proximity to their

* Here the author cannot refrain from mentioning, that in the years 1805 and 1804, he was acquainted with Major-General Robert Ross, (then Lieutenant Colonel) ; and that he highly esteemed him as a Man, a Soldier, and a Christian.

territory ; and when they did come, I am sure, we suffered less than our sins deserved. We ought to consider these our sins and our provocations against God ; and his goodness and forbearance should lead us to repentance. We ought to go, and sin no more, lest a worse thing come unto us ; lest we be punished for our sins in the world to come ; and no suffering here is to be compared with everlasting punishment. We have tasted of only a very small portion of the judgments of God in the earth ; sufficient however, I hope, to make us sensible of his power of punishing, and to make us deprecate the evils of war, and above all, the evils of sin, with all our heart. Oh ! that it may have this good effect, and that we may learn wisdom and righteousness ; and remember that judgments are always sent, (and war is one of the greatest of judgments,) to purify us from our sins, and to turn us from the vanities of this world. We have sinned, and we ought to examine into our sins and to confess them and repent ; and I have exhorted you to the performance of this duty, and God has called you to it ; but in his mercy he has wonderfully spared us.

I would on this occasion also speak of some good things, some little works of piety and charity, which we have performed. In considering the providence of God towards us, these may very well be mentioned by me in our present review, if we do it with humility, far from boasting, for these works have contributed to render God's providence gracious unto us. Our evil deeds we should lament ; and we should pray for God's forgiveness of them ; and for our good deeds we should praise him for inclining us, and enabling us to do them ; and we should beseech him to keep us in the way of them.

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Previous to the war, we laid out some of our property, which God had given us, in building this house, sacred to his worship; and we also erected places of education for our youth. These are works acceptable to God. Since the war, we have studied to prevent injury and injustice taking place on our frontier, and to maintain peace and good will with our neighbours on the other side our boundary; and they have done the same towards us; and the violations of this amicable system have not been numerous. The providence of God has smiled on these measures; and the effects of his saving countenance have protected us from the inroads and pillage, and fire and sword, incident to a state of war. To preserve these blessings we must persevere in these measures.

We have also exercised our charity, in commiserating the sufferings and contributing to the relief of our distressed brethren in Upper Canada; and this good work, no doubt, has tended to bless and secure our property to us, for what is given to the poor, or lent to the Lord, he will repay, by preserving to us our present store, and by adding to it hereafter.* Money laid out to the glory of God, and to the good of our brethren, will bring us a blessing sooner or later; for God rules over all things, and works them together according to his pleasure; and it is his pleasure and promise to reward those who put their trust in his government, and who of course serve him. We do not always see *when*, or *how* he does this; but the more we believe and try his promises, the more we shall see into them, and find them fulfilled to us. The public circumstances which I have mentioned, have in some degree, I am persuaded, recommended us to the particular favour of Providence. I

therefore remind you of them this day, to excite your gratitude and your praise to him, and your perseverance in doing those things which are well-pleasing to him, and which have been so profitable to us.

All things belong to God. He enables us to get a sufficiency of them in an honest way, if we seek first his kingdom and righteousness. But if we do not believe him, and trust in him, we have no such promise, independant of our turning to him. Let us not ever seek property in any way not pleasing to him. Property so procured, can never bring any blessing along with it, but only a curse. It is "hewing out cisterns, broken cisterns that can hold no water." It is treasuring up wrath instead of mercy against the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God. "Render unto Cæsar the things which are Cæsar's, and unto God the things that are God's. "Render to all, their dues ; tribute to whom, tribute is due ; custom to whom custom."* Let us improve the talents which God has given us, by prudent care and honest diligence, working that we may have to give to him that needeth ; and bestowing our labour and our gifts well, that we may be able to render a good account of them to God. In this case he will reward us with peace and comfort here, and with good things beyond our present understanding, hereafter. And "the end of the commandment is charity out of a pure heart and of a good conscience, and of faith unfeigned.† Let this be our case, and this the end of our conduct.

I hope what I have said and shewn to you this day, of the providence of God, will persuade you

* Jeremiah, 2—16. Romans, 2—5. Matthew, 22—21. Romans, 13—7

† I. Timothy, 1—5.

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to persevere in good works ; not to give up or delay the performance of them, but to lay out part of your means and your property to the glory of God, and to the good of your neighbour, in the furtherance of good institutions, and pious and charitable works, that the blessing of the Lord may be upon you, and that the order of his providence may be gracious unto us. This is one of the chief ways of preserving his favour, of preventing the evils of war, and of bringing on the blessings of peace. It would appear that the Lord is about to grant us this great gift. In his mercy, it would seem, that he is accommodating our differences ; that he listens to the prayers of the righteous, for unity, peace, and concord among nations ; and that he would still further and again try us with his blessings, instead of his judgments.† Oh ! that we may walk worthy of his mercy, and not turn it away from us, or forfeit it, by not conforming to his government ruling over all things, or by not trusting in the works of his providence, or improving those of his grace. Let us obey him and cultivate his favor, by honouring him in all our ways and trials, devoting to him all our heart, and talents, and possessions ; especially in prosperity we should be watchful to do this. His love should constrain and our interest should confirm us in holding fast to our duty to him. At all times, there is no substantial peace or happiness without being devoted to God ; and so having confidence in a

† Since writing the above the prospect of peace seems to be diminished ; at the same time it is to be hoped that it is not long delayed. The enemy must be sincerely desirous of peace, we think, and disposed to accept of such terms as are consistent with the great advantages we have gained over them, and with the reasonable provisions we would require for our future security. Peace on honourable terms, which are likely to be permanent and profitable in their duration and effects, is certainly always to be desired ; and such terms it is reasonable for us to require. The evils of war are great, especially its immoral effects. These are not sufficiently considered by most men, but on this account particularly all good men long and pray for Peace.

gracious providence. Let us serve God, that we may be blessed and happy in trusting in him ; and " his loving kindness is better than life.* Let us be his, and have all things ours, profitable unto us, through our belonging to Christ, and his being our protector and our friend. " Trust ye in the Lord for ever, for in the Lord Jehovah is everlasting strength." " Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on thee ; because he trusteth in thee."†

I must say a few words respecting the providences of God of a private description, and of our improvement of them. Were we to look back to the beginning of our years, how much kindness, and how many interpositions of providence in our favour, demanding our acknowledgment and praise, should we discover ? But consider the goodness of God to you during the last year only, and you must be moved to the exercise of gratitude and thanksgiving. How many mercies have you received ? How many of the comforts and blessings of life have you enjoyed, which many of your fellow-creatures are destitute of ? Have you not been free from sickness, while many sons and daughters of affliction have been languishing under fell disease, or painful wounds ? Have not many been deprived of husbands, wives, parents, children, while you have not lost, perhaps, one relative, one dear friend ? Have you been grateful to God for all this goodness ; and have you shewn your gratitude by living to his glory ? Or has he visited you with affliction, with sickness, or with loss of friends ? and have you made proper improvement of his judgment ? Know you not, that he chastens you for your profit, that you should grow in holiness ; that he deprives you of tempora!

* Psalms, 63—3.

† Isaiah, 26—3, 4.

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blessings, to wean your affections from this world, and to make you set them on things eternal? Have you considered his ways, and your ways; been drawn off from love of the world, and been taught to put your trust in him? Have his mercies increased your love of him, in consideration of your happiness in this world; and his judgments have they added to your faith, in looking to those things which are to come? Have you grown in knowledge of him, in consequence of his dispensations? If you have not, his judgments and mercies have not been improved by you. This is knowledge of him, that we should love him; and "this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments."* Examine yourselves, and see how far you have learnt this lesson, and practised this wisdom. Have you looked to God, and acknowledged his restraining and directing grace in what has happened unto you? Whether you have received good, or whether you have received evil, have you blessed the name of the Lord? Have you kept his commandments, his sabbaths, his sacraments, or his covenant? Examine into these things, and judge yourselves impartially; and you will learn not to judge other men severely. You will say, "Verily, I am deficient in love of God, in gratitude to him, in trust in him, in keeping the faith and the commandments of Jesus." You will confess, that, "it is of the Lord's mercies that we are not consumed, because his compassions fail not. They are new every morning."† This is a time, a special time, for making this examination, confession, and improvement. A new year has begun, and new mercies are repeated. Let them not pass away unimproved. Reflect on the goodness of God to you in the dispensations of his providence, in the riches of

* John, 5--5.

† Lam. 3--22, 23.

his grace, and in his particular mercies to you during the last year, and the preceding years of your lives. Repent of your past negligence in not duly caring for these things; in not serving Christ, and putting your trust in him; and bring forth works worthy of repentance in future faithfulness and obedience. Begin without delay, and persevere in pursuing the cause of God, of your souls, and of everlasting life; and thus improve the providences of God, and arrive at his perfect kingdom, in which all the ways of God are glorified for ever and ever. *Amen.*

FINALLY, I would further exhort you to prepare for Eternity.

We have numbered our days in looking back on the government of God, and on the events of his providence, this last year; and this should teach us wisdom—the wisdom of fearing and loving God, seeing that he rules over all things, and that he will in his perfect way and time reward the righteous, and punish the wicked. We should also number our days in looking forward to the time to come, to things and years eternal. This is the account to which the text would particularly direct us; and considering which, must make us apply our hearts to wisdom.

Consider the shortness, and uncertainty of this life, and the value, and importance, and immeasurable length of eternity; and you must see the little value of days and things here, in comparison with time and things eternal, except in their affording time and means for preparing for life everlasting. Consider this, and you must value your time, on this account, and improve it to laying hold on things eternal. Consider the value of things eternal; and you must set your affections on them—on God, the author of all good things, and on

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Jesus Christ, who purchased all good things for us, when we had lost them. Loving them, you will live to them; and you will overcome the world, and all its troubles, and trials, and vanities. What are its vanities in comparison with everlasting good things in Heaven? Shall its troubles or trials distress us; seeing that they are the dispensations of a good God, to wean us from sin and the world, and to fit us for holiness and for Heaven? "Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us,"* if we love him and things eternal. Are your affections set on things eternal? If not, what have you done for them, to know them, or to love them, or to acquire them? Have you so numbered your days, as to apply your hearts unto wisdom? Have you improved your time, this last year; devoted a part of it, to cultivating holiness, and preparation for eternity? Have you given a part, a small part of every day, to using the means given you by God for growing in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord? Unless you have done this, how can you be more wise, more holy, more set upon things above, or better prepared for eternity, than you were a twelvemonth ago? You cannot, and yet you have an account to give of the use you have made of all your time and talents for the year past; and you know not how soon your account will be closed.

The day lasts. The year commences. Still, time is granted unto you to improve a day of grace, and to make this an accepted year of the Lord, acceptable to him, and profitable to you, in your working out your salvation; in your laying up treasure in heaven, and laying hold on life eternal. Oh, improve the year to come, every day, while it

* Romans, 8—37.

lasts ; and be more ready, every day, to give a good account ! Pray to God in the words of the text, "So teach us to number our days, that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom." Work and strive to do this, as well as continuing instant in prayer for it. Then God will work in you to will and to do of his good pleasure. Trust in Jesus Christ, who died for you, and who will give you all good things, yea, work all things together for your good, if you love him. Think on these things, day by day, and you must grow in love of him, till it spring up to life everlasting. This day, give yourself up to the Lord ; and he will never fail you. The world will fail you ; but his foundation standeth sure ; and those who belong to him are written in Heaven. May this day be the beginning of days of greater devotion to God ; this year, the beginning of years of greater happiness in our Lord—to all of us ; through our putting our trust in him, and serving him, and so having his providence always gracious unto us. Remember, that he rules over all things ; and that if he be for us, who can be against us ? God grant us faith in him, and love everlasting.

Now, to God, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, Trinity in Unity, be ascribed all honor and glory, thanksgiving and praise, love and obedience, henceforth and for evermore. AMEN.

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