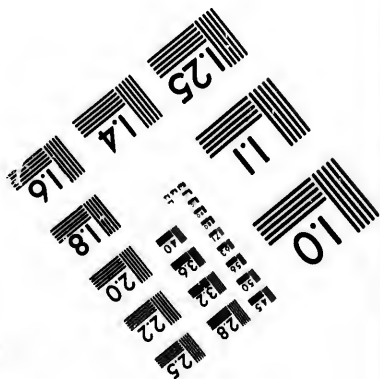
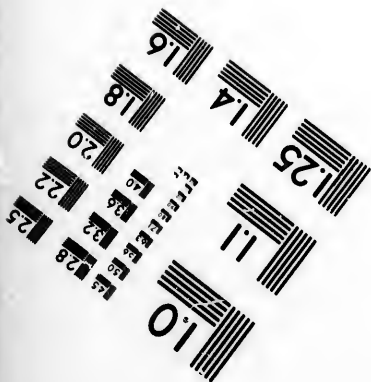
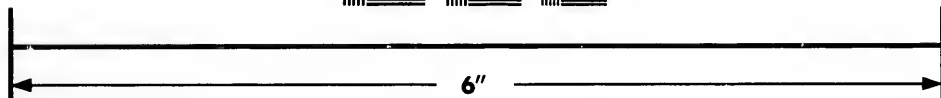
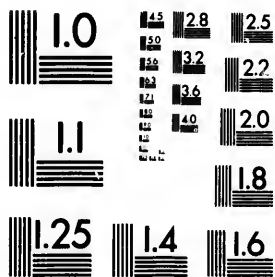


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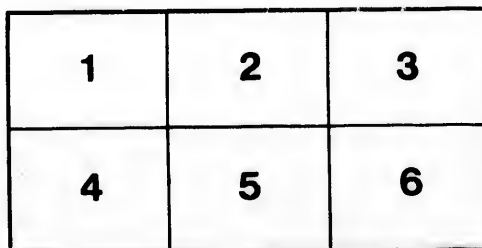
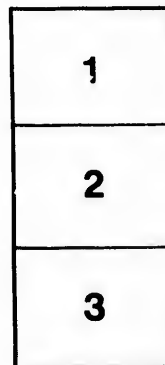
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Rev. W. A. Murray
with kind regards to

A SERMON

PREACHED IN THE

CATHEDRAL CHURCH OF QUEBEC,

BEFORE THE

ST. GEORGE'S SOCIETY,

ON ITS ANNIVERSARY DAY, 23rd APRIL, 1856,

BY THE

REV. OFFICIAL MACKIE, D. D.

PRINTED AT THE DESIRE OF THE SOCIETY.



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1856.

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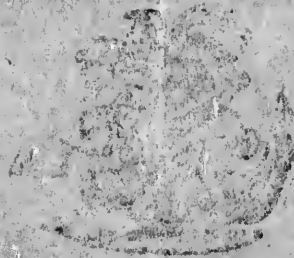
ST. GEORGE'S SOCIETY

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6TH CHAPTER OF ST. PAUL'S EPISTLE TO THE GALATIANS,
9TH VERSE.

"Let us not be weary in well doing : for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not."

He who should for the first time have visited this land when the earth was buried in snow, and all was sere and desolate, might have deemed it a something strange and well nigh marvellous, that the husbandman should hope to win from such a land, so abundant fruits of increase.

Taught by experience, we know that the rigours of climate are but for a season ; that the covering spread over the face of nature is its ornament and defence, and for a pledge of greater fertility : that, yet a little while, and the earth shall renew its strength, and put forth "first the blade, then the ear, then the full corn in the ear." So the Christian, who shall but judge from present appearances, may see little in the moral aspect of the world which can be other than cause for discouragement. Like the prophet in the valley of vision, he may be sorely tempted to ask, how things so very dry can be yet instinct with life ; but let faith stand him in the stead of experience, that faith which can look beyond the veil, and he shall taste even now of rich fruition, in the certainty of the Divine Promises ; shall discern of a truth, that He who ordereth all things in heaven and on earth will carry out His own purposes of mercy, and fulfil all those His gracious designs, which are yea in Christ, and in him Amen, to the glory of God the Father !

Let us then, in dependence upon the blessing from above, consider the incentive to a patient continuance in well doing which is proposed in the passage before us : "In due season we shall reap, if we faint not." In due season. It is of the first importance that we learn to tarry the Lord's leisure. The sower when he has committed his seed to the ground, remains for a while uncheered by any token for good, that his work has been successful. Nothing appears on the surface to distinguish the soil from what it was, or ever it received the precious deposit ; yet he is not on that account solicited by fears or misgivings. He knew beforehand that thus it would be, according to the order prescribed in the natural process of vegetation. He looks not for the shoot of promise 'till a certain time shall have elapsed, an interval to be meted out by nice computation. But faith, we may admit, comes short of

experience in that it cannot teach him who sows in righteousness, for how long, or for how brief a period, he must wait for the fruits of increase. It but instructs him to maintain a posture of devout expectation. Were it otherwise, man would walk by sight; and other foundation than that of the sure Word, would be for the ground of his confidence. This much however faith does teach with unerring certainty; that the season of full fruition is not now. "Not as though I had already attained" is the only becoming language of the most highly gifted, and largely favoured among Christians. To rejoice in hope, is the noblest gratification to which he can reach forth in this his earthly pilgrimage. Nothing so good, so replete with enjoyment here below but that he may look forward to some better thing in store for him, when the season of refreshing shall come from the presence of God. So far from being able to compute that convenient season from the progress of events, or to determine when and how God will interpose; he is assured by many proofs not hard to be understood, that God's ways are not as our ways, nor His thoughts as our thoughts. Who can have studied the history of the Church or of the World, and have failed to perceive how that mightiest results have followed from causes which seemed in no way fitted to produce them? how that plans the most wisely matured have come to nought? and how that benefit has accrued, large and enduring benefit, when the agency employed had been all too plainly shapen in wickedness, and only overruled through some mightier influence, to the glory of God?—and this, not once and again, but so frequently, and so commonly, as to have been almost a characteristic feature of every, the brightest reformation?

One great lesson may be learned from all God's dealings to us-ward; that He would have us not to glory but in the Lord.

It is in mercy therefore to our weakness that the season of ingathering the first fruits of harvest is only revealed to faith; lest we, if at any time highly favoured, should be prompted to say: "Our skill and the might of our hands, have gotten us our wealth." Enough for us to know that the season is duly ordained of God, and that it will surely come and will not tarry; and that labour as to the Lord, shall not be in vain in the Lord.

My brethren, Ever bearing this in mind that God will make good His promise, in His own good time, and in His own good way, we will now proceed to examine a little more closely the character of the incentive suggested to us. Present success may be granted in greater or less degree (perhaps some measure of success is denied to none who patiently abide the Lord)

but success though it be welcomed as a foretaste of the Divine goodness, is not to the Christian his warrant to persevere. He does not infer a future and perfect blessing only or chiefly from what he has in part received. His sure hope is in the faithfulness and truth which can never fail. He is warned or ever he is encouraged. That repeated caution that he yield not to weariness, nor lose through faintness whereof he might reap—what does it import, but that the service is arduous whereunto he is called, and that though there be attached to it a certain present reward, it can only be such a reward as may quicken to greater vigilance and activity? To realize some fruit of his labour may be regarded by the believer as an encouragement, but only to abound more and more. It will be to him, as comfort by the way to the traveller; useful, if it nerve him to renewed exertion, but how worse than useless, if it woo him to repose, and cause him to forget that the road to be trodden yet lieth before him. Whether the immediate result of his efforts be grateful or otherwise, the obligation which rests upon him is in any and every case the same. Thus for example: It may be cheering to one who would do good to his own soul, in breaking off any vicious propensity to feel that, under the Divine blessing, success may be achieved by the man who shall quit him like a man; and that whoever is strong, in the Lord may go on conquering and to conquer. But even should repeated efforts appear to result in repeated failures, he must continue instant in a work which demands and must secure his unremitting attention. The father who would train up his son in the nurture and admonition of the Lord, may well take courage to prosecute his work, if he see the child actually following on in the way in which he should go, and giving promise of usefulness in his day and generation; but that parent would sadly misconceive of his duty, who should consider himself justified in foregoing a parental authority, because to all appearance, his labour had been in vain. He too who shall reclaim a fellow creature from sensual and debasing indulgence, and shall restore him to a position which he can fill with credit to himself and advantage to society, may from having thus tasted of the luxury of doing good, be naturally prompted to seek, in continued well doing, the like exquisite gratification, but should his endeavours to reclaim the sensual and profligate be, or seem to be unavailing, his duty as a christian towards his fellows will not be thereby affected. Nay, should his very labour, be misunderstood or even misconstrued, his good, evil spoken of, or worse—requited with evil,

still must he do good, even though he hope for nothing again ; being evil intreated, must only bless, and only bless the more, the more he is evil intreated ; and should the Lord Himself seem to turn his face from him, he must watch unto prayer, must watch—even if his prayer be suffered to return into his own bosom. He only can commit his soul into the hands of the Lord as a faithful Creator, and most merciful Saviour, who commits it in well doing. It is only through patient continuance in well doing that any one may hope for honour and glory and immortality. Though light is often sown for the righteous even here, and joyful gladness for such as are true hearted, yet he who would reap in joy, must be prepared to sow in tears. In any the most promising experience there must needs be much alloy of weariness and of painfulness. Through much tribulation of some kind or other, must we enter into the kingdom of God

Were other cause of sorrow wanting, what a constant source of grief to the well affected mind is that which is found in a sense of manifold infirmities and multiplied short-comings and negligences and ignorances. In working the work of God how sorely are we, the best of us, both let and hindered ! What enemies are we to ourselves, and either to other ! How readily, in how many and various ways, and with what untiring zeal does our great adversary the Devil ply all his wiles against us, if thus to divert us from the work of our salvation. And we—how greedily do we catch at the various pretexts which he offers, and seek from them if haply to excuse ourselves to our own consciences, for remitting a labour which he has known to render distasteful to us ! In view of the many dangers and difficulties which beset his path, the Psalmist was constrained to cry out : “ I had utterly fainted but that I believed verily to see the goodness of the Lord in the land of the living.” And what though we, in this our day, are not exposed to those fiery trials which beset some in an earlier age of the Church, it may be that our danger is only on that account the greater. There is something in persecution mercifully ordered to brace the soul through fervent and devoted prostration before the mercy seat, to a sustained and loftier endurance. There is a virtue in this so painful discipline which causes that men be in suffering more than conquerors ; and hence the Apostle to the Hebrews can thus speak, when exhorting those who were fast relapsing into negligence because the fury of the oppressor had somewhat abated : “ Call to remembrance ” “ the former days in which after ye were illuminated ye endured a great fight of afflictions,” reminding them that they had still

“need of patience” that after they had “done the will of God” they might “inherit the promise.” Circumstances, be they to outward seeming, prosperous or adverse, do render our work more or less difficult according as they more or less nearly affect our peculiar temperament, or stated employment, or disposition of mind; and the measure of success cannot be without some influence whether for good or for evil. But we must learn to contemplate our duty to God apart from all circumstances, and conditions, and secondary causes whatsoever.

It is a wise and a gracious appointment that the work of well doing should be, if a labour of love, yet a work fitted to tax our energies to the uttermost: a work to be prosecuted with unreserved devotion of mind and will, and with unflagging perseverance. In any case, let us see to it that we be not weary of well doing, nor account of the service itself as burthensome. This were indeed to draw back unto perdition. Rather let us seek to abound in the work of the Lord, if “faint” yet “pursuing.” The end to be attained is worthy of our utmost exertion. Place we in the one scale the light afflictions which are but for a moment, and in the other the exceeding weight of glory which shall in due season be revealed, asking it of ourselves whether that which shall be, will not prove a more than sufficient compensation for whatever we may now be called upon to do or to suffer in the name of God, and for the cause of his Christ. If, in the anticipations of faith, the crown of thorns bud into the crown of glory that fadeth not away, then is there a certain charm thrown around trials and sufferings, which, so they be endured for Christ’s sake, can furnish to the devout believer a very earnest of never ending blessedness with the church of the first born, whose names are written in Heaven.

But if special encouragement be vouchsafed in the performance of any special duties, we honour God by giving due heed to this intimation of His good pleasure, since we magnify His wisdom and love when we avail ourselves of whatever aid He has afforded to us in running the way of His commandments. The Apostle suggests the moral of our text, by hinging upon it this fitting admonition: “As we have therefore opportunity let us do good unto all men, and specially unto them that are of the household of faith.”

If there is no man living, about the welfare of whom we may safely be unconcerned—If we are “members one of another” in a sense the most intimate and affecting, yet must we consider some men to be marked out by the finger of God as those who

have a neighbour's claim upon our sympathy, as those whom it behoves us especially to love and to cherish.

Doubtless of all peculiar claims, the closest is that which grows out of a common faith. The tie which binds us together as children of a common Father, by adoption through the Son of his love, is the strongest of all possible ties; and hence, we are enjoined to care for the household of faith more, so that we care not for any of our fellow creatures less. Not studying their interests at the expence of those which any of our fellows may challenge at our hands, yet must we be specially concerned to promote them. The good providence of God has so brought them nigh unto us that we cannot overlook them except at the risk of doing violence to each better feeling of our better nature; while the discharge of duty comes fraught with a more than wonted satisfaction, when they who perform it most readily perceive it to be a duty; and they most fully appreciate it, in behalf of whom it is called into exercise. To creatures, infirm of purpose at the best, such solace is not to be little accounted of, nor lightly esteemed.

Upon this so solemn, so weighty obligation, I shall not now insist. The theme is too large; nor were it altogether appropriate on an occasion like the present. Rather will I notice, and that briefly, the lesser but not unimportant duty which we owe to those between whom and ourselves that God who assigns their bounds to all the dwellers upon earth, has established the relation of fellow countrymen. But are there any discouragements in the performance of a duty so simple as this? Perhaps only such as are fitted to test our patience, and to give method and system to what were else but a desultory and fitful benevolence. That we may see of what kind the hindrances are, which we may expect to encounter, we will consider what objects the society has in view, the Anniversary Celebration of which we now hallow by religious observance. The great design of our Association is to succour the Englishman when in need, sickness, or any other adversity—to cheer him while yet a stranger in a strange country—or to enable him, if disappointed of his hope, to return to the land whence he came out. In ministering to such want, the St. George's Society has earned the goodwill and esteem of all who have hearts to feel, both on account of the liberal aid which it has dispensed, and the kindly manner in which it has dispensed it. For many years it has done a good work, and has done it well; as without partiality, so without parade; nor has it ever, to the best of my knowledge, attempted to "make capital" as the term is, out of the necessities of any, or to take out in patronage a

certain equivalent for bounty administered. But the Society seeks also to attract hither those natives of England who by leaving their mother country may benefit themselves, and by their presence here may, in every the best sense, whether physically, morally, socially, or religiously, promote the true interests of this land of their adoption.

It needs not that I institute comparisons between this or that other race. To do so, were only to flatter your self-love, and to establish a foregone conclusion ; since you are all more than satisfied with the rank among the nations which has been assigned to Great Britain, in the providence of God. I have only to appeal to a settled and deeply cherished conviction, when I say that, in your estimate of things, the more truly British the Colony, the more truly virtuous and prosperous will it be. In furthering therefore, this design of the Society, you can perform with good conscience, and in far other than a selfish spirit, that which you conceive to be your bounden duty. Now, with reference to the labouring classes of Englishmen ; we may not hope that they will resort hither in any large numbers. The higher civilisation of England renders them unskilled to compete on equal terms with men of fewer wants, and simpler habits and humbler pretensions ; nor will Englishmen generally fail to prefer that section of the Province, where, on a kindlier soil, and beneath a fairer sky, they may have readier access to the blessings of Education, and of religious communion. But there is abundance of room here, and of suitable occupation too for English immigrants ; and it is painful to think that there should be a growing disposition to leave this Lower Province, on the part of those who had been induced to settle amongst us, and that a feeling should now so widely prevail that Englishmen cannot obtain that fair play, more than which they do not demand, nor would desire. That the earlier settlers of the country should not be forward to welcome men of another race and different creed, is not surprising ; nor ought it to be matter of complaint. Situated as they are, should not we feel as they ? But we may regret that they should push to extremes that power of the majority for the exercise of which they are indebted to the spirit of British Institutions, and we may complain that the tendency of legislation should be such as almost to ignore the fewer in number, or to treat them when deemed worthy of a passing notice, as aliens and intruders in a British Dependency. Time, let us hope, will modify if it do not remove this evil. Meanwhile, the existence of such a state of things lends a peculiar import and value to our National Societies, and marks them out as rallying points around which men of

kindred origin may gather, and by means of an organization as simple as it is inoffensive, may form a closer acquaintance either with other, and promote the best interests either of other.

I could wish that Englishmen would in greater number join themselves to the St. George's Society ; and that the actual members of the Society would by increased exertion, enlarge the scope of its aims, and extend its influence for good.

In requesting your contributions this day, I will venture to use an argument, which, strangely as such a statement may sound, I have always hitherto forborne to employ. On five different occasions I have pleaded the cause of the Society, and in spite of good humoured intreaties and remonstrances have declined to avail myself of the latitude which seems to be tacitly conceded to the preacher, and have refused to make out a case of need when I felt that there was rather cause for gratulation. I may hope, therefore, that you will believe me sincere when I now beg you to add, and in no niggard spirit, to the amount of the gift which you had purposed to offer. I will mention in few words whence the present need has arisen. The collection after the last Anniversary Sermon was, as you may remember, devoted to the support of the Victoria Hospital. It was then thought that this sum might be spared with comparatively little inconvenience ; but, owing to whatever cause, such proved to be the pressure of the times, and such the extent of distress, that in the earlier part of the winter, the Charitable Fund was exhausted ; and but for the disinterested kindness of the President of the Society, and of the Secretary of the Charitable Committee, several urgent and most truly deserving cases would have been unrelieved. Let this fact plead with you, and with an eloquence all its own.

My Brethren : I am persuaded better things of you than to suppose that you need to be lured to benevolence by any arts of popular preaching. I am sure that you will not hesitate to supply what is lacking, and all the more cheerfully at this time, when you are fain to present to the God of Nations some not unsuitable tribute for that His Mercy displayed in the restoration of peace, of peace fraught with such promise of renewed and enlarged and abiding prosperity to the land— Give then, as mindful of this, and not unmindful of all those other manifold and undeserved blessings which you have received : and may He, who loveth the cheerful giver, so stir up your wills, that plenteously bringing forth the fruit of good works, you may of Him be plenteously rewarded ! The good Lord grant it ! Even so, for His own name's sake.—Amen and Amen.

