

THE
FOUNDATIONS OF NATIONALITY.

A

DISCOURSE,

PREACHED IN THE UNITARIAN CHURCH, MONTREAL, ON
THE SUNDAY AFTER THE GREAT RAILWAY
CELEBRATION, NOVEMBER, 1856.

BY JOHN CORDNER.

PUBLISHED BY REQUEST
Of the Committee of the Congregation.

MONTREAL:
HENRY ROSE, GREAT ST. JAMES STREET.
1856.

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FOUNDATIONS OF NATIONALITY.

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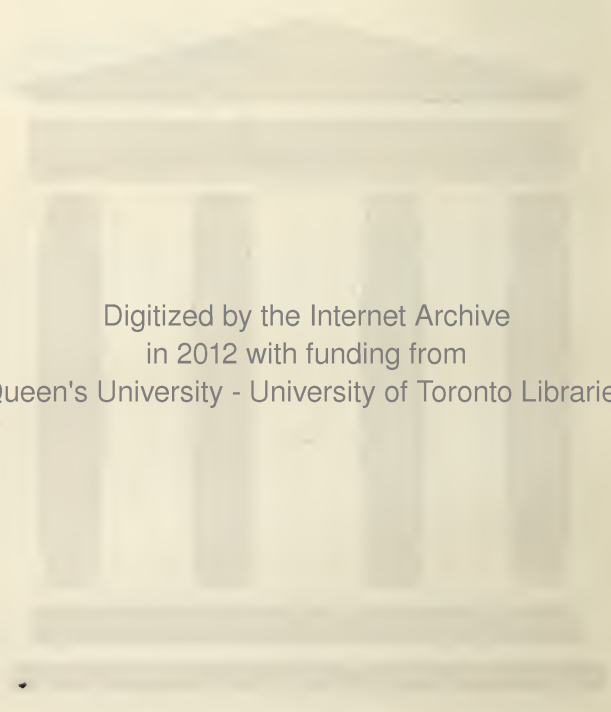
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“ I WILL MAKE A MAN MORE PRECIOUS THAN FINE GOLD ;
EVEN A MAN THAN THE GOLDEN WEDGE OF OPHIR.”

ISAIAH xiii. 12.

THESE significant words lie embedded in an ancient prophecy concerning Babylon. In looking back through the dim vista of the old and far distant civilizations that of Babylon looms up with profuse grandeur and magnificence. Babylonia, or Chaldea, was the most ancient kingdom in the world of which we have any historic knowledge. The Chinese claim an earlier national existence, and may have had it, but we do not find it in independent history. The Chaldean or Babylonian kingdom was probably founded by Nimrod, of the fourth generation from Noah. It had its place in Asia with the Tigris for a boundary, and the Euphrates rolling through its centre. As these are two of the rivers which watered Eden we may infer that the site of this ancient kingdom was not far distant from the spot whence the race from Adam was originally distributed. As well as chronologists can ascertain, the foundation of Babylon, the chief city of the kingdom, was laid by Nimrod more than twenty-two centuries before Christ. We read in Genesis of Nimrod, the son of

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Cush, a mighty hunter before the Lord, and the beginning of whose kingdom was Babel. This mighty hunter laid the foundation of his city somewhat earlier than his kinsman Ashur laid the foundation of Nineveh, the capital of the Assyrian empire, and more than fifty years before his uncle Mizraim built Memphis, the most ancient capital of ancient Egypt. The thought of Babylon, then, carries us far back into the remote past, and this to the contemplative spirit has not only high charms for the imagination, but copious material for reflection. In the vast sweep of time, and in the stupendous revolutions which it accomplishes in human affairs, the philosophic mind finds matter and scope for some of its grandest speculations, and the mind that rises higher than the merely philosophic plane — which possesses the spirit of religion as a living thing, — beholds with wonder and reverential trust the working of God's great plan of Providence.

Babylon was planned and constructed on a scale of immense magnitude, and, standing among the nations of remote antiquity, it seems to have had a splendor peculiarly its own. The culminating era of its grandeur seems to have been under Nebuchadnezzar, who flourished about six centuries before Christ, and by whom the captivity of the Hebrews was completed, and the city of Jerusalem destroyed. If we may credit Herodotus, who saw Babylon within a century and a half subsequent to the time of Nebuchadnezzar, its dimensions were fifteen miles square, enclosed by a brick wall more than eighty feet thick, and three hundred and fifty feet high. The circuit of this great city wall, then, was sixty miles. We are not told that the entire enclosed space was built up, but we are told of its containing structures

of surpassing magnitude and magnificence. The temple of Belus in Babylon was more extensive in its proportions than the temple of Jehovah in Jerusalem, and Jehovah's temple was plundered to add to the wealth of its appointments. The royal palace with its hanging gardens — immense terraces of blooming and luxuriant earth, rising one above the other to the height of the great wall itself, and resting upon structures of arched mason work, seems to belong to the region of imagination, rather than to that of actual and accomplished fact. Proud of such tokens of her power and prosperity Babylon sat among the nations as queen. The prophet speaks of her as "the golden city" (Is. xiv. 4.)— as "the glory of kingdoms, the beauty of the Chaldee's excellency." (Is. xiii. 19.) He speaks of her thus as "the glory of kingdoms, and the beauty of the Chaldee's excellency," and yet, in the same breath, he declares that she "shall be as when God overthrew Sodom and Gomorrah."

Here is a portion of the burden of Isaiah concerning Babylon: "Howl ye; for the day of the Lord is at hand; it shall come as destruction from the Almighty..... I will punish the world for their evil, and the wicked for their iniquity;.....I will make a man more precious than fine gold; even a man than the golden wedge of Ophir. Therefore I will shake the heavens, and the earth shall remove out of her place in the wrath of the Lord of hosts, and in the day of his fierce anger..... And Babylon, the glory of kingdoms, the beauty of the Chaldee's excellency, shall be as when God overthrew Sodom and Gomorrah. It shall never be inhabited, neither shall it be dwelt in from generation to generation:

neither shall the Arabian pitch tent there, neither shall the shepherds make their fold there. But wild beasts of the desert shall lie there, and their houses shall be full of doleful creatures; and the owls shall dwell there, and satyrs shall dance there. And the wild beasts of the islands shall cry in their desolate houses, and dragons in their pleasant palaces, and her time is near to come, and her days shall not be prolonged." (Is. xiii.). What a picture of desolation is drawn here! And I need not now remind you how it has been accomplished. Even the beasts, and the owls, have long since ceased to shelter in its houses and palaces. The sands of the desert have engulfed the ruins of all, and blotted it from the face of the earth.

In these tame later days of ours, and with our tamer habits of thought, we can scarcely understand the fire of the ancient prophet in his denunciation of human wickedness — we can scarcely appreciate his terrible earnestness and energy in asserting the everlasting laws of God. "Howl ye," he cries, "for the day of the Lord is at hand.I will punish the world for their evil.I will make a man more precious than fine gold; even a man than the golden wedge of Ophir. Therefore I will shake the heavens, and the earth shall remove out of her place in the wrath of the Lord of hosts, and in the day of his fierce anger." Here is a strong — a vehement assertion of a divine everlasting Law. Nothing transcends a Man in value. No gold, not even the finest, no wealth, no widespread national domains, no stupendous national monuments — none of these can rank as a man's equal in value. God holds a man in higher estimation than gold, or any magnificence which gold can buy, or the

shining wealth of Ophir build up, and he will vindicate this law in his dealings with the nations. Yea, he will overthrow them one by one, as a man turneth over an ant-hill, until they come to learn, and respect, and live for this law. Babylon shall fall, and Assyria shall fall, and Egypt shall fall, and Greece shall fall, and Rome shall fall — yea, the heavens shall be shaken, and the earth thrown from her sphere, if the inhabitants thereof fail to recognize, and accept, and act upon this declared principle of God's providential government.

I have adverted to some of the details of the visible greatness of Babylon. And for what purpose? Was it merely to excite a moment's wonder by contemplating a palace so vast and grand, a wall so thick and lofty, a temple so capacious and magnificent? No. Such a purpose were not worthy this place, and this hour. I did so to the end that ye might take note of the direction in which the Babylonian civilization put forth its greatest efforts. It sought wide national domains that it might reap a golden harvest of tribute. It sought to gather to itself the rich and shining wedges of Ophir. And with these treasures] it] constructed and adorned its palaces, its halls, and its temples, until they became marvels of magnitude and magnificence. Of a similar type was the Assyrian civilization, as history informs us, and the exhumed remains thereof show us at the present day. The Egyptian civilization, though possessed of some elements of a higher order, yet had many prominent and important points in common with it, as the huge remains of Thebes and Memphis still indicate. And now what is the tale which such huge remains whisper into the ear of the thoughtful spirit? As we

meditate among the ruins of Karnac, or gaze upon the pyramids — as we enter with some persevering Layard into the buried halls of Nineveh or Babylon — what is the testimony which they give concerning man, and the value in which man was held in those very ancient times? Do not these huge remains speak, and bear witness, more potently than any living voice, and say: “Labor, labor, by the bodily labor of man, grinding, and long continued, were we raised in our greatness and glory. A man was considered as nothing in value, compared with us. He was crushed and degraded into a beast of burden that we might be lifted up.” Such I say, is the testimony which these huge remains offer concerning the character and tendencies of those ancient civilizations. We dare hardly offer an opinion as to the amount of human labor — mere bodily toil and drudgery — which was expended, say on the wall of Babylon, or on the hanging gardens of the palace, undertaken it is said, to gratify his queen’s whim by one of the monarchs of the country. But we may form some proximate idea thereof, perhaps, from what we are told of other great structures of antiquity. We learn through Herodotus (Lib. ii.—124.) that a hundred thousand men were constantly engaged for twenty years in building one of the pyramids. This indicates the comparative value of a man in the scale of that civilization. He was estimated as so much available force to dig a quarry, or raise a stone. In the national ledger it might have been written down: — Dr. To the working lifetime of a hundred thousand men. Cr. By a pyramid.

The divine law took effect on Babylonia and Egypt. They fell. They thought less of a man, than of a palace

or a pyramid, and they fell. They did not discern the everlasting truth, that nations are not to endure by the breadth of their territory, by the wealth of their cities, or by the magnitude or magnificence of their structures, but by the quality and character of their men. A new form of civilization came, — that of Greece with its sages, its heroes, its statesmen, its artists unrivalled. But neither did Greece apprehend the true purpose of national existence, nor the divine secret of national permanence. She wrote the Iliad, she conquered Egypt, she built the Parthenon. Yet she fell in her turn. She fell because she did not rightly value the mass of living men which she had in charge. Then came the Roman Empire, rising on the ruins of Greece to the mastery of the world. Here, too, was wisdom, and courage, and art, and enterprise, and magnitude, and magnificence. But all these passed away. Rome did not rightly value the living men within her wide boundaries — she did not rightly value and help them as men — and so the nation withered out of existence by the inevitable law of God.

Now as we glance at the fate of the past civilizations does not the thought at once revert to the present? There is the word of the prophet written in the Bible, telling us that God will make a man — even a man — more precious than the fine gold of Ophir. But in the past types of civilization we see the bulk of the men of the nations depressed and degraded. Instead of being regarded as the end of the national economy — instead of being regarded as the objects for whose welfare and elevation the nation ought to exist — they are treated merely as an item of the national force, and used as mere instruments for the attainment of some false and perishable national

end. If war and conquest be made a national end they are sought and used to attain this. If the erection of huge and magnificent structures be made a national end they are sought and used to attain this. And their value is estimated just in proportion to the help they give towards these national purposes. According to this view and method the man exists for the help and service of the thing, not the thing for the help and service of the man.

How is it in our Anglo-Saxon and American civilization? This is the main enquiry for us. The past lies behind us, the future is before us, but the present is ours. It is with the present, then, that we are chiefly concerned. The past is useful to us only so far as we can make it bear upon the present. This is an era of great triumphs. Steam belongs to our age, and the tall factory chimney, and the swift locomotive, and the low-lying, far-stretching iron rail. The marvellous telegraph wire belongs to our age, making a highway for the lightning as a messenger of human thought. These are at once the symbols and the signals of victories of a higher order than those of Greek or Roman conqueror. Through victories like these the most powerful forces in nature are put in docile training to the bidding of man. The achievements of the present age are wonderful — of a more wonderful order than those which produced the pyramids or the Parthenon. Golden lands of Ophir, too, lie beyond the seas to-day richer and more productive than the Ophir of Isaiah's day. To what purpose have these achievements been made? For what purpose will they be used?

These are questions of great moment. And I know not, my friends, where they press more strongly for con-

sideration than upon ourselves. For our position just now is a very responsible one. We are laying the foundations of nationality under circumstances and conditions unprecedented in the history of the world. Two centuries since our country was the battle field of savage tribes — the warlike Iroquois preying on the more peaceful Huron and Algonquin. Gradually has the white man subdued it to himself, and now we witness the wide and ripe fruits of its conquest to civilization. With these results as a basis of future operations what will Canada be two centuries to come? I offer no reply to this question, but suggest it simply to call up thought of the future. We have a future before us pregnant with great results, and the demand of God upon us is that we do our work in the present not blindly, but intelligently. We cannot see the end from the beginning — only One Eye can reach so far — but we may discern and respect the true foundation on which to build. A great jubilee of material achievement has just been held in our city. Crowds of strangers have thronged our streets, borne swiftly here from their distant homes by our new laid railways. Our own mechanics in significant procession have added to the importance of the occasion. The water which had but lately fallen over the great Niagara, or the foaming Chaudiere, was made to leap high again for joy in our squares. By the margin of our broad river a table was spread, and more than four thousand men held a feast, which was nothing less than a wedding feast. Commercial enterprise conceived the idea of marriage union between the Atlantic and the Mississippi to be consummated on Canadian soil. It forged the wedding ring of solid iron, and proclaimed the banns. Rivers and hills forbade them, but the genius

of commerce had no ear for the veto. It sunk the cofferdam beside our city, and showed the St. Lawrence how it was to be conquered here, and where Niagara, hoarse with the roar of thousands of ages, had hollowed out its chasm, it swung across the rope of wire, and showed it how it was to be conquered there. And so the great ocean of the east and the great river of the west are linked together by bands of iron passing through our land.

We are laying the foundations of nationality, I say, and under rare and fortunate circumstances. All the wisdom and experience of the past are before us for help and guidance. The marvellous discoveries and inventions of the present age are fresh before our eyes inviting us to apply and extend them. Our Mother Country, like a true parent dealing with a matured child, wisely and generously puts us on our own responsibilities. A province our country is, but without any provincial degradation. We stand not in the relation of servants to the old parent land beyond the sea, but in relation of sons, and we cleave all the more closely to her because we feel that our allegiance is not through constraint of fear, but of affection. Our land is a land of freedom, broad, generous, and unrestricted, so that every man, whatever be his creed, country, or color, — whether he be Protestant or Catholic, African or European — may, within our borders, enjoy his natural rights of “life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness.” And look at the facilities of intercourse and means of enlightenment which are multiplying on our hands. England was nearly a thousand years a united and independent nation before she had a regular stage-coach between Liverpool and London. Tedious then were journeyings, and few persons went abroad, and one

part of the country could know but little of the other. Canada has means to-day by which the length of England could be traversed within her borders between sunrise and sunset. Steam printing presses are at work for us, as well as steam locomotives, and no man need remain ignorant, but he who loves darkness rather than light.

Our great and increasing facilities of intercourse are eminent helps to the advancement of our country. Times have changed wonderfully within half a century, and we have changed with them. Forty years since it was the avowed policy of Britain to maintain a belt of primitive forest between this city and Lake Champlain, so that intercourse might be cut off between Canada and the the United States. The Governor of that period had instructions from the Colonial Office to let any roads that might be in use fall into decay. Lord Bathurst writes to Sir J. Sherbrooke: "if any means should present themselves of letting those roads which have been already made fall into decay you will best comply with the views of his Majesty's Government by their adoption." That was a time of suspicion between kindred nations. We have now left such times not merely forty but four hundred years behind us. Our present Governor sanctions by his presence our great railroad jubilee, which was designed to inaugurate and mark the opening of more extensive roads and swifter methods of intercourse than ever entered into the dreams of his predecessor forty years ago. Sir Edmund Head, in his speech, says that our great bridges and railroads will connect us commercially and amicably with the people of the United States, and he cordially proposes the health of their President. From Montreal we can now pass to Lake Champlain in less

than an hour, and by various railways are we linked to our neighbors on the other side of the frontier so that we can pass to and fro, cultivating commerce and kindness of feeling. All this seems but the growth of yesterday, so rapid has it been. Ten years since, and fifteen miles of railway were all we had in Canada, but now we have fifteen hundred, equipped and working. Consider what this may do for us. Consider how it may be made to consolidate our people, develop the resources of our country, build up cities throughout the length and breadth of our wide domain, and cause the wilderness to blossom with the results of civilization. Take down the map of America and observe the work which awaits us. There is Canada stretching from east to west some twelve or fourteen hundred miles, with the gulf of St. Lawrence on the one side, and the mediterranean seas of Huron and Superior on the other—our noble river making a highway from end to end. Look at the valley of the Ottawa, the shores of the great lakes, and the wide lumbering and agricultural districts penetrated by helpful streams and railways. Look at the tide of immigration flowing upon us every season in tens of thousands, and the nuclei of villages forming, which our posterity will see developed into large and prosperous cities. Look at these things, and behold the tokens of a great and progressive country passing from its infancy. And as we look, let us consider the part which we have to perform. Shall we in blindness surrender this broad and free domain with all its grand natural advantages to the sway of a mere material prosperity, and rest satisfied with the achievements thereof as the highest for which we ought to strive? Shall we regard mines, and forests, and teeming fields, stupen-

dous bridges, railways, and steamships as of more value than the masses of living men within our limits? Shall we thus base our Canadian nationality on Babylonian foundations? Shall we thus prepare the way for future defeat and downfall? I pray to God against such mistake and sin. The word of the prophet sounds in our ears: 'I will make a man of more value than gold, or anything which gold can buy or build up.' Material development is useful to us only so far as it promotes the growth of upright, noble-minded, and holy men. The character of our people grounded on the law of God is the only hopeful foundation of our country's welfare. Unless the mental, moral, and religious growth of our people keeps full pace with our material prosperity we stand in jeopardy every hour. Unless we are a nation loving righteousness more than railways, and hating iniquity more than mercantile failure, we are raising a national structure which must fall and perish through its own lack of soundness.

To what purpose, then, I ask again, will our Anglo-Saxon and American civilization put the great material achievements which it has accomplished? I propose this question here because we are locked up in this form — its spirit and tendencies affect us at every turn, and must have a controlling influence in moulding our national character. And I contemplate it not without misgiving, yet not without hope. As I look upon our present order of civilization I see it overhung with clouds of peril, yet shining through these we may also see the bow of promise. Yes, both peril and promise are before us. It would be strange indeed if there were no peril, since it is the same human nature

which is working in the civilization of to-day, which worked in the days of Ninus and Nebuchadnezzar, of Cyrus and Cæsar, of Pharaoh of Egypt and Philip of Macedon. And strange would it be, too, if there were no promise, since the Gospel of the Lord Christ has been hid like leaven and working in the world for eighteen centuries. Peril we have, surely. Promise we have, surely. And no graver lesson can be presented to the men of the present age than the consideration of these. As the devout mind contemplates humanity in its present manifestation and action, in view of the everlasting law of God which makes a man of more value than the golden wedge of Ohpir — as it beholds the nations of the present hour, and the condition of the masses of men and women that dwell within their borders — as it looks upon the leading aims of these nations, and the prevailing efforts put forth under their forms of civilization — I need not tell you how much there is to deplore. I need not tell you how much need there is of some sign of promise.

I speak still of our cognate Anglo-Saxon nations, and ask :— As Britain and America in all the wide extent of their domains, and collective strength of their people, and magnitude of their achievements, rise up before us, can we say of a verity that they have wisely taken warning from the fate of Babylon and the nations of antiquity? Can we say that they have come to estimate a man at his right value — at a higher value than the golden wedges of Australia or California, than territory in India or in Mexico, than railroads, and factories, and steamships, than coals, and cotton, and sugar? No. As we look upon these great nations, we see to what an extent the Babylonian notion still prevails, and how widely it is

still acted upon. We see, and in sadness we see, that man is still depressed and degraded into a mere toiling tool — through which certain ends are to be reached, certain achievements accomplished. Does Britain desire a portion of India, or the American Union a part of Mexico? Men are then sought and valued in proportion to their powers of extermination. A thousand, or ten thousand, or twenty thousand human lives, besides I know not how much degradation to those who survive, will be paid as an equivalent for the coveted territory. Does Britain wish to raise coal and metallic ore to serve great purposes of comfort and commerce? Men are sent into the bowels of the earth, and valued according to their powers of digging and dragging in the dark, damp mine. Do the Southern States of America wish to cultivate cotton and sugar, and gather wealth thereby? Men are made slaves by statute, and sent into the cane brake and cotton field, and valued according to their powers of endurance there, just as the horse or the ox is valued. In all such forms or manifestations of existing human activities we see a great wrong done to man, and therefore a great offence to God. In the system of slavery by statute we see the most deliberate and daring form of degrading men. But I dwell not now on special forms, since it suits my present purpose better to look at the prevailing spirit and tendency of our civilization as a whole. Is this spirit and tendency Babylonian or divine? Here we touch a matter of direct practical interest to us all. We touch a matter of supreme interest to the generations which are to follow us on the stage of human affairs. For it amounts to this: — Shall Britain and America fall as Babylon and Assyria have fallen, and through similar causes? This

surely is a question of surpassing interest. Blest with the light of the Gospel, and standing in presence of God, the Supreme King of nations, it surely becomes us to consider this question seriously and earnestly, and govern ourselves accordingly. Let me ask, then, does our present civilization in its general bearing contemplate a man chiefly as a means, or as an end? Is a man practically regarded to-day, even by the most advanced Anglo-Saxon nations, as of higher value than the material achievements which his persevering toil builds up? Is it not beyond denial or dispute that the fair answer to these questions would reveal the Babylonian, rather than the divine, character of our aims and efforts? Go into any city or large active community on either side of the Atlantic — London, Liverpool, Glasgow, or Manchester, — New York, Philadelphia, Boston, Baltimore, or own city — go into any of these communities and what is the palpable spirit of the place? You perceive at once, that it is accumulation. You see every nerve strained in this direction. You see men and things used to this end. If it be thought that the competition of these larger communities stimulates this spirit, and exaggerates this tendency, then I ask you to go into the most remote manufacturing or trading village, and still will you find the presence of the same spirit. It belongs to our nature. It clings to it, and in these days and among our race, subdues all things to itself more readily than any other power I know of. Nay more, in the pressure which we see constantly taking place towards the cities from the more remote and secluded places of the land we perceive the working of this same spirit seeking a field of more intense activity. I need not tell you how this spirit in its

practical working regards a man, or how it is disposed to value him. His worth is estimated according to the number of dollars, or pounds, which his labor can realise.

What is the result of this tendency? We see it everywhere — in cities and villages, but especially in cities, where activity is concentrated — we see it everywhere in the long and wearying hours of labor to which men are subjected. With clerk and craftsman, employer and employed, the whole tune of life is ‘labor, labor.’ The giant Accumulation, mounted on the back of humanity, rides it close to death. The weight thereof, crushes and smothers humane sentiment, religious feeling, all nobler thought, all holier aspiration. Labor is a great blessing, but it may be made a great blight. It is a great blessing when rightly used. No man ever yet felt the full enjoyment of life who did not work. But it becomes an awful blight to a man when it is abused and exaggerated. A man ceases to be a man when he becomes a mere labor machine. Yet so it is with these orders of men, that the whole tune of life is ‘labor, labor.’ The English factory-child seeks legislative protection against the greed of the employer. And well would it be for the employer sometimes if he could secure any adequate protection against himself. I speak not here of the American slave. Legislation has deliberately and formally ignored his manhood. Let us not forget his wrongs; but we speak just now rather of those who are legally free — their own property, not the property of another. The tendency of the present civilization is to oppress them with labor. City clerks and shopmen meet and memorialize, and appeal to public opinion that their hours of toil may be shortened. But with very little

success. They feel that the tide of the times is strongly set against them, and that they can but feebly bear against it, or attempt to stem it. There is an extensive class of workers, who have bare time to refresh the worn body, and its wearied organs, by sleep. They work, and work still, and yet cannot procure an adequate supply of the first necessaries of life. The reigning spirit of accumulation grinds them down to the lowest point. Whilst the various classes of employed persons are thus straitened and pressed, more or less, the condition of those who employ is very generally not much better. We see them driven from morning to night — their hands active, or their minds on the rack, in the heat of competition. They have as little leisure for the higher culture of their minds and hearts — of what belongs to a full and complete manhood — as the poorest drudge in their pay. And what is more, and worse, frequently they do not seem to feel their want. Very commonly they appear dead to every higher and diviner desire.

All this comes from the tendency of our present civilization, and it is not very difficult to see where it would lead. It is not difficult to see that it leads to a partial development of manhood, not a full and just development. The whole of a man's strength is drafted off in one direction, when it should be distributed in several directions. His duties to his God, to his family, and to his better self are sacrificed — subordinated to the one leading aim. The worship of God in the household is neglected. The worship of God in the church is neglected, or reduced to the lowest possible point. The domestic affections are impoverished, and the home in many a case is only known as a sort of nightly resting place. All generous mental

culture, such as might come from reading and meditation, is denied. And the standing reason for all this neglect is lack of time. The whole tune of life being 'labor, labor,' the man does not feel that he has any time to spare for God's more special service; for the better service of his family, or for the service of his own better self.

Now it is evident that the material achievements of our present civilization — the steamships, the railroads, the telegraphs, the factories, the new found mines of gold — it is evident that these, as they are increased, are calculated to increase the existing activity of men, by the wider area which they give to their enterprise. In this way may they augment the tendency to put the bulk of men under bondage to excessive labor, and thus stunt their manly and divine growth. Herein lies the peril. And if it be not guarded against, and set aside, the fate of Babylon and Egypt will also be the fate of Britain and America. If the manhood of the man be neglected, if his just value in the divine scale be depreciated, if he be regarded merely as a means to an end, if his worth be estimated simply in proportion to his use in accumulating wealth, or in building roads, bridges, factories, or palaces, then must our civilization share the fate of the civilizations of the past. God will vindicate his law, though the term of the trial given be reckoned by thousands of years, instead of by hundreds. God will vindicate his law, and the nations shall fall, if they fail to recognise that a man is of more value than territory or structure, than the nuggets of Australia, or the wedges of Ophir. Yea, they shall crumble into decay where the foundations are Babylonian, and not divine.

I have spoken of the peril of our present civilization,

and would now speak of its promise. And here I say again, that it would be strange indeed if there were no promise in our present civilization, seeing that the leaven of Christianity has been hid and working in the world for eighteen centuries. Through the coming of Jesus a new element of divine power was infused into human society. Hereby, I am convinced, will the world be renovated. Another Babylon can never be raised, where Christianity is known. Nor can another Egypt. They belong exclusively to the past, and can never be reproduced in the future. They can never be reproduced in the future, I say, though the Babylonian principle may be so far reproduced as to bring decay and downfall to nations nominally Christian. I look with admiration on the working and unfolding of God's great plan of providence. I look with something more than admiration on the working and unfolding of his method of grace and salvation. When I look merely at the material achievements of the present day, I perceive that they have capacities for the help and development of humanity which those of the older civilizations did not possess. A recent writer on Egypt says that the social and civil condition of the agricultural population of that country at the present day is about the same as it was in the days of the Pharaohs. Humanity is stationary in its degradation within sight of the pyramids. But is it possible that it can remain so by the side of the railroad track, and the printing press? This question at once suggests the wide difference between the character of our achievements and those of the past. Some persons looking at this difference may be disposed to infer a premise for man's elevation apart from Christ, and independent of him. But the inference would

be false, the result of a view extremely superficial. Christ cannot be separated from human history. Man has sometimes attempted strange divorces in the great world of providence, but he would be regarded as no less than a fool who should seek to ignore the influence of Jesus on the mind and heart of the modern world. His doctrine goes to quicken and expand mind and heart, and propel to new and wider activities. Subtle things, it is said, were known in ancient Egypt. Much curious knowledge lay in the heads of the priesthood. The surmise of some is that they even held the secret of steam. But their knowledge, great or little, mostly died with them. It was not diffusive. It was for themselves, not for the race. In later times the secrets of knowledge could not be thus held. Like the generous Nile-waters they flowed outward, and all around, to refresh and fructify. This diffusive tendency of modern knowledge may be traced to the influence of Christianity. Such diffusiveness is one of the leading characteristics of Christianity itself. From the first it protested against its light being put under a bushel. It placed it on the hill. It spoke its word from the house-top. It imparted no goodness to be held and cherished for selfish purposes only. Its injunction was: "freely ye have received, freely give." Thus, through the gospel of the Lord Jesus, was the mind and heart of man quickened and stimulated as it never had been quickened and stimulated before. Hence came mental development and human progress. Hence the marvellous march of invention and discovery in later times, by which the modern world is lifted so far above and beyond the world of antiquity. Hence it is that the Egypt of to-day, standing on the ground of the Egypt of the past, was

without steamship or railroad until it received the boon from our Christian civilization.

Yes, the material achievements of modern times are not mere material achievements. They have a high moral purpose. They stand not like palace or pyramid, apart from the great mass of humanity. They penetrate into the very centre of the mass to move and help it. The steam engine is destined in the unfolding of divine providence to work out a higher purpose than millowner or stockholder dream of in their anxious survey of profits. It is destined to relieve man from the constant bondage to physical labor, and thus leave him free for a full development of his manhood. God's hand of wisdom is in the work. Christ's spirit of humanity is in the work. The grasping spirit of accumulation may seem to lay its hand on it for the time, and use it solely for its own purposes. But God is working meanwhile, and men are doing a grander work than they think of. Until this result come to pass -- until mankind are relieved from the bondage of physical labor, and are granted leisure and opportunity for the culture and development of mind and heart, of what real service, let me ask, have our modern achievements been to man? This I believe is their true purpose in the grand economy of the divine providence. Men want freedom and leisure from constant pressing labor, that their souls may grow with a fitting growth. The genius of Christianity invites to this. And it is proof of the wisdom of the Roman Catholic church that it has decreed holy-day after holy-day throughout the year as some relief from the pressure of labor. When the world gets wiser it will take more leisure and more recreation. When men come to a better appreciation of

their own value, and to a truer understanding of their destiny, they will think more of the inward, and less of the outward — more of the mind, heart, and spirit, than of the wares of Manchester or wedges of Ophir. Then will it be seen that to build up a true and holy manhood will be a nobler achievement than to build a palace, a pyramid, or a colossal fortune.

In Jesus we have the sign of promise for the world. His word was for the raising and the healing of the nations. The genius of his religion was quickening, expansive, diffusive. It impelled to new and wider activities, and it is destined to sanctify them all to the highest use of the human race. Then comes, too, the Lord himself in his personal and fraternal relation to the individual soul, infusing into every soul that sincerely seeks him a new and heavenly life — imparting thereto a baptism from on high. In Jesus, then, and his religion, we see elements of a new order which enter into our civilization, and which give it a promise of permanence which the older civilizations did not possess.

And it devolves on us as Christians — it devolves on the Christian Church as the working body of Christian believers — to give effect to Christianity in the world — to carry its principles faithfully into the present economy of the world's affairs. Jesus by his coming, his suffering, and dying, to save the human soul from sin, gave the highest emphasis to the value of a man, and it devolves on us to affirm that value, to maintain it, and to insist that the economy of the nations shall be ordered in view thereof. It is not merely that the weak, the poor, and the enslaved, should have our sympathy, advocacy, and aid, (for the Christian obligation here is palpable,) but we

should strive, and see to it, that our, *i.e.* the Christian, nations should have for their prevailing economy and policy a basis not Babylonian, but divine. We should strive and see to it that all national management and government should be for the help and elevation of the masses of the men and women within the limits of its control, rather than for the extension of territory, the accumulation of wealth, or the erection of huge national structures. So long as we admit that a man may be kept ignorant and depressed, as a tool for raising coal,—so long as we admit that a man may be degraded from his manhood, and legally enslaved, as a tool for raising cotton — so long as by active advocacy or by silent acquiescence we admit this, so long do we maintain in effect that a man is less precious than the gold of Ophir — yea, less precious than the mines of Newcastle or the cotton of Carolina.

Standing as we are here on the banks of the St. Lawrence — engaged as we are in building up a national structure, let us not so far forget the early days of civilization in this land as to struggle for material prosperity as the only thing worthy of our effort. Let us not forget that among the earliest messengers of civilization to Canada was the Christian missionary, who, for the sake of dark and uninstructed men, braved all the perils of the savages and the wilderness, and pitched his habitation here, enduring hardships betimes, such as we in these days can scarcely understand. He came through love of God and man to labor in this wild and distant place, and he laid a foundation of religion which no mere material achievements ought to be permitted to damage or obliterate. In the dogmatic and ecclesiastical system which he brought along with him I have but little faith. It is

not a system which aids advancement in widespread material prosperity. Had Canada remained under the sway of such a system we should have had no such railway celebration as that which took place during the past week. This was the fruit of another and different order of things. But so far as the Catholic missionary came in the self-sacrificing spirit of Christ, and through love of God labored for the good of man — so far as he came in this spirit, through this motive, and for this purpose, he was a pioneer of religion, and it would be a sad commentary on our Protestant order of civilization if it should crush and smother an element like this by the dead weight of mere material achievement. In such a case we should be false to ourselves, and false to our ideas of Christianity. We should be false to the law of God, as laid down in the Bible, and clearly indicated in the text and elsewhere.

To us has been unfolded with singular emphasis the divine principle of building up nations in permanence and excellence. To endure they must feel and know that they have nothing more precious within their borders than their masses of living men, and that for their permanence they must depend on the life and character of these men — on the normal Christian development of their various faculties of mind, conscience, and heart. Truth, righteousness and love — these are everlasting as God himself, and to have these embodied in the living men and women who form a nation, cementing them together as a whole, guiding their thought, and directing their action — this is to fix therein a god-like principle of permanence. And not only of permanence, but of progress. For this is a principle of divine life, and so long as it is retained there can be not only no fall, but no de-

cline. The nation will not only endure, but it will advance in prosperity and glory — prosperity and glory of the highest order. For a nation cherishing this principle — standing on a basis like this — there shall be no prophecy of desolation from the Lord, for the Lord himself will build it up, and it shall abide as a witness for himself, and a living monument to his glory upon the earth. “Blessed is the nation whose God is the Lord;” saith the psalmist. “Let thy mercy, O Lord, be upon us, according as we hope in thee.”

