

which had truth and sanctifying power. If we are true to Christ we surely could not attach less value to the Bible than He did. And if we look upon the matter from His point of view we have a right to stand fast against the contrary opinions of the times.

The second consideration was the historical record of the Bible. One illustration of this, not so often thought of as it should be, may suffice for the present. In the evil days of Manasseh and Amon, the books of Moses—the only Bible of those days—had fallen out of sight. Still the forms and ceremonies of the Church remained, as they did in a similar state of things in the middle ages, and tradition and prophecy kept up some more or less imperfect testimony to the truth, but the Word itself was hidden away. But just as Luther, in a similarly decaying condition of Christianity, was moved to new life by finding a neglected Bible in the library of his convent, so did Hilkiah find, buried among less precious things in the Temple, an old copy of the Pentateuch, not improbably the original manuscript of the books, or at least the Temple copy ordered of old to be laid up in the side of the ark of the covenant. Those who doubt this forget that Egyptian papyri as old as the time of Moses, remain legible even to this day, and are exhibited in our museums, and that some of our manuscripts of the New Testament are as old as this would have been in the time of Josiah. The reading of the newly found book produced a striking effect upon the pious King Josiah, and caused a revival of religion in Judah; but it was too late to avert the ruin of the nation. The decree had gone forth; Jerusalem and its temple must be destroyed, and the people of Judah must go into captivity. But they did not go without the Bible. The old book went with them. They multiplied copies of it, and in a heathen land, without any temple, or regular service, they read it every Sabbath day, and it so leavened their minds and hearts as to fit them to return to their own land fortified forever against the inroads of heathenism, and determined to keep up the true faith till Messiah came. This is the historical significance of the recovery of the Bible in the time of Josiah, and presents some strange features of parallelism with that grander resurrection of the Bible which occurred at the Reformation. Many tell us that the present time is one of decadence of the power of the Bible, but so they might have said in the time of Manasseh, or of Leo the Tenth, and the parallel may hold in the revival, as well as in the decay. The present age is obviously one of decay and breaking up of old institutions. This is, however, only that the things which cannot be shaken may remain. But the Bible translated into every language, speaking to every man who can read, far more widely circulated than any other book, shews no signs of decay, and affords the surest guarantee for a brighter time, even that time when every man, having the Bible in his hand and its truths in his heart, shall know the Lord and shall need no one to instruct him in such knowledge. That time, predicted by ancient prophecy, can arrive only through the medium of a Bible universally circulated, read and believed; but this would inevitably bring it about, however unlikely it may seem now. The third consideration I have referred to, is that the Bible vindicates its power and excellence in the experience of every individual Christian. This requires no proof to a Christian audience. Its evidence is in the heart of every converted man, and I am sure that all present will concur with me in the statement that the more we study the Bible and live by its precepts the more precious it becomes to us.

Such views of the value and destiny of the Bible may appropriately lead me in conclusion to say a few words in relation to the Province which I represent here. Its condition in reference to Bible circulation is very different from that of Ontario. At least five-sixths of the people of that Province