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## CONTENTS.

The Book.....	141	Meetings of Presbyteries and Synods.....	149
The "Dayspring" in 1883.....	142	Obituary Notices.....	152
Trinidad.....	143	Ecclesiastical News.....	153
International Sabbath School Lessons.....	144	Formosa—Rev. Dr. Mackay.....	156
Our Own Church.....	146	Missionary Cabinet, Dr. Robert Morrison.....	157
The Colleges.....	147	Persecution and Progress in Spain.....	158
Manitoba Items.....	148	Christianity in Japan.....	159
Church and Manse Building Fund.....	149	A Page for the Young.....	161

### The Book.

THOSE sacred writings which have come down to us from pre-historic times, which contain the revelation of the Creator to mankind, and in which all the faiths of Christendom find a common origin, are called *The Holy Scriptures* because they were originally committed to writing and in that form have been continued in existence. They are called *the Word of God*, because they declare authoritatively His mind and will, containing the divine code of laws which teach us what we should do and what not to do; and they are vocal with the promises of God. They are called *The Oracles of God*, because of them we are to enquire in all matters of difficulty, and especially respecting the affairs of another life. We call these writings *The Holy Bible—par excellence* THE BOOK—the Book of books—the best of all books: a name comprehending all other names by which it is known. It is related that Sir Walter Scott on his death-bed asked some one to read him a portion of "the book." "What book?" asked his attendant. "*There is but one book for a dying man,*" said the great author who had fascinated the world with the number and the brilliancy of his own writings.

*Wonderful Book!* At once the oldest in existence and the newest. Other old books find a quiet lodgement on the topmost

shelves of our libraries and acquire a fictitious value proportioned to the dust that gathers on them. Not so the Bible. It still holds undisputed sway in the hearts of men. It is the most popular book in the world to-day. Read by old and young, rich and poor, it has the entrée into "Society"; it commands homage from all sorts and conditions of men. The sailor sleeps with it under his pillow. It is the traveller's companion. It is the solace of the sick-room. It brings rest to the weary. It calms the troubled breast. It opens the door of heaven. It is the Magna Charta to humanity. Never within the boards of a single volume was there ever compressed so extraordinary an amount and variety of information and instruction as is to be found in the Bible. As a book of history it is unique. There is no such literary marvel as the Bible. The best history of England does not profess to give authentic information much beyond the Christian era. You must be content to begin the history of America a thousand years later. But the Bible carries you back to the very genesis of the human race—well on for 6,000 years, and with scarcely a missing link in the thread it traces the history of an important portion of it during four thousand years with the consecutiveness of a panorama—marvellous for its exactness and often for minuteness of detail. Assuming the Penteteuch to have Moses for its editor in chief, that portion of