

SIR WILLIAM DAWSON

Sir William Dawson was Principal of McGill University for thirty-eight years. He was appointed to the post in 1855, and resigned his place in 1893. His public life began in 1843, when he undertook his first formal duties as a lecturer upon Natural History at Dalhousie College, in Halifax, Nova Scotia. His active career covered a period of forty-four years, and his actual life extended to seventy-nine. He was born on October 13th, 1820, in Pictou, and died in Montreal on the 19th November, 1899. His life, therefore, falls into three periods; the thirty-five early years spent chiefly in Nova Scotia and Scotland, thirty-eight years at McGill, and the slow gradations of decay, which occupied six years more.

During this long career many honours were awarded to Sir William Dawson, as a natural and necessary outcome of his work and character. These were academic, scientific, social and theological; and a recital of the more important distinctions which were conferred upon him will best serve to indicate the range of his activities, and his importance in the world.

In 1856, he attained to the degree of Master of Arts in course at Edinburgh, and in 1874, he was made a Doctor of Laws. He had previously obtained the same degree in McGill in 1857, and that of Doctor of Civil Laws at the University of Bishop's College in 1881. His scientific honours would be long even to name. He was made Fellow of the Geological Society of London in 1854; Fellow of the Royal Society in 1862; President of the Royal Society of Canada in 1882, the year of its foundation; President of the American Association in 1882; President of the British Association in 1886, and President of the Geological Society of America in 1893.

1884

In 1882, he was marked out for social distinction, when he became a companion of the Order of St. Michael and St. George, with the "courtesy title" of Sir. Henceforth he was known as Sir William Dawson, though his name was, in reality, John William, and he habitually subscribed himself J. Wm. Dawson. Finally, his importance in the theological world was recognized when he was made Vice-President of the British and Foreign Bible Society. In addition, he was Associate,