

## The Twenty-fifth Annual Report

*Of the Guelph Branch of the Upper Canada Bible Society.*

Your Committee, in presenting their Annual Report, would call attention to the fact, that the Society whose affairs they have been called to manage during the past year, has now been in existence for a *quarter of a century*. What wonderful changes have taken place during this period, and how marked the contrast in the aspect of the world as a field for Bible circulation, twenty-five years ago, and now. No intelligent Christian can survey the varied points in this marked contrast, without discerning abundant cause for thankfulness to Almighty God, whose providence has so mightily wrought with his people in their efforts to spread Divine truth through the earth. Events tread so closely on each other's heels in this age, that to give even a bird's eye view of the chief occurrences of the past quarter century, in their bearing on Bible Society operations, would make a respectable volume. But, as it is often easier to see, after an interval, that a plant or tree *has grown*, than it is to satisfy one's-self that it *is* growing—so it often helps a just appreciation of a holy enterprise, to view it at two points or periods of its history, and note the progress made through intervening years. Such a contemplation of the Bible cause as a whole, would be a good spiritual prescription for those hypochondriac Christians, who for want of observing the wondrous works of God in the Earth, are evermore taking despondent and gloomy views of things, in their bearing on the kingdom of Jesus Christ.

The past year has been inferior to no preceding one in signs of promise and tokens of encouragement. Indeed, the year 1860 will ever be memorable, if for no other event, for this, the opening up of Italy for the circulation of the Word of God. That interesting country, where until recently, priestly tyranny punished the cravings of souls hungry for the bread of life, with torture and imprisonment, is now free, and Christian sympathy can minister unimpeded to its moral needs. Nowhere had the Bible been more rigidly interdicted than in Naples, but no sooner was the dictatorship of Garibaldi established, than the interdict was done away, and men might be seen standing behind their stalls holding up the Book of Books, and exclaiming, "Who will buy the Bible?" In Tuscany and Florence, where, a few short months ago, parties were imprisoned for having a copy of the Scriptures in their pos-