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"GOD'S PROVIDENCE TOWARDS THE BIBLE."

PORTIONS OF AN ADDRESS BY THE REV. B. M. PALMER, D.D., AT THE ANNI-VERSARY OF THE SOUTH-WESTERN BIBLE SOCIETY, NEW ORLEANS, JAN. 16, 1881.

After referring to the connexion of the Society with the American Bible Society, and to the work of this and the British and Foreign Bible Society, the Rev. gentleman briefly stated the claims of the Bible as being *The Book*, and then proceeded thus :—

"In view of all this there arises a question which I propose for solution. If the Bible be the Book of God, claiming jurisdiction over all other writings, is it not to be expected that God's providence shall be conspicuously concerned about its history? I desire, to-night, to point out some of the forms in which this providential intervention and care may be distinctly traced.

1. First then, I direct attention to some facts connected with the two languages in which the Old and the New Testaments were originally written. It is obvious that in a Revelation which is intended to unfold a plan of salvation to guilty men, terms must be employed which shall denote general conceptions, such as those of holiness, sin, redemption, repentance, forgiveness, regeneration and the like. But these purely abstract terms are devoid of significance, until a meaning is put into them by taking up the language of sense—perception and glorifying it with a spiritual import. As ideas are originated in the mind through impressions made upon the senses, the whole terminology of Grace must be created by the transfiguration of images which are drawn from the outward world. Hence the symbolical character of Divine Revelation in the Old Testament. The doctrine of atonement was taught by the institution of animal sacrifice, at the very beginning and instantly upon the first transgression; and this germinal symbol expands afterwards into the whole complex ritual of the ancient Hebrews. Conviction of sin and the con-

sequent obligation to punishment, were deepened in the mind by innumerable ceremonial restrictions; which were constantly violated in the intercourse of life, and which required a constant purgation of the transgressor. The expiation of sin demanded by infinite and inflexible justice, was adumbrated in the various sacrifices offered upon the Jewish altar; and reconciliation and communion with the Most High were illustrated in the sacrificial feasts, which formed so important a feature in Hebrew worship. The holiness of God and the corresponding purity of the worshipper were represented under the ablutions and purifications, which transfigured the idea of physical into that of moral cleanness, and laid the foundation of the whole doctrine of sanctification. It is needless to adduce further illustrations of the pictorial and typical character of that ancient economy—one of its important ends being the creation of a language, through which the Holy Ghost shall reveal to us the mysteries of God's mercy and grace. Those who desire to pursue this line of thought, will do well to consult a popular work in which it is elaborated with admirable skill.\*

Now the Hebrew tongue is peculiarly fitted for this symbolical presentation of Divine truth. As one at least of the primitive languages, every word in it embodies a material image and offers a picture to the eye. The scholar is delighted to find in its vocabulary what appears to him a splendid gallery of art, upon whose walls are hung the most beautiful paintings the eye ever rested upon. Into the tapestry of the language are woven forms of exquisite grace, as well as landscapes of surpassing loveliness. Perhaps it is true of every language in its primordial construction, that every word shall be thus pictorial; but in the development which culture always ensures, this emblematic character is gradually lost; as words pass from their primary use into a secondary and topical signification. What is gained in the accession of general and abstract terms necessary to philosophic precision, is lost in poetic beauty and force. But the Hebrew language was employed as the vehicle of Divine Revelation, whilst it was in its forming stage, and the painting of the material image was hardly as yet dry upon the surface of each word. It was in itself a collection of symbols, exactly suited to the symbolical revelation of which it was made the medium of transmission. It was equally adapted to those grand visions afforded to the ancient Prophets, through whose inspired enigmas the shadows of events yet to come were cast upon the wall. Nor was it less fitted to be the language of devotion and of praise, in those tender lyrics set to the harp of David; and which will be set to the harp of every saint in every age, until they swell into the grand chorus of angels and the redeemed around the throne of God and the Lamb in Heaven.

I turn now from the Hebrew of the Old Testament to the Greek of the New. When "the fulness of time was come," and the Great Prophet appeared upon earth of whom Moses was the type, another language was required for the larger Revelation to be made—a language more developed than the Hebrew, more comprehensive and flexible, and more subtle in expressing the nicest shades of thought. So God, in His providence far back in the centuries, was training the Greeks to frame a language for the New Testament, as before the Hebrews had prepared a dialect for the Old. They were a people remarkable for subtlety of intellect, carrying the culture of art and the study of philosophy to such a pitch as to win for their country the proud distinction of being "the school-mistress of the world." But the grandest monument of their genius is the language which they forged in those high speculations of philosophy which yet rule so largely the empire of modern thought. In the construction of this language they have rendered their largest service to mankind; for into it God has poured all the treasures of that truth in which the symbols of the Old Economy were lost, as the shadow is swallowed up in the substance. It was exactly the language in which to embalm the materials of a scientific theology. In the fulness of its vocabu-

\* Walker's "Philosophy of the Plan of Salvation."

lary, in the variety of its connective particles, in the richness of its grammatical forms and above all in its power of combining words as thought wrestles in its agony to find emphasis of expression, truth is stated with such nicety of discrimination and with such delicacy of shade as to signalize the Greek for the conveyance of Christian dogma. The Biblical student, after warring through elaborate commentaries, often recurs to the original text, surprised to find in itself the best exposition of its own meaning. And who does not know that, in the great controversies through which the creed of the Church was articulately framed in the early centuries, it was the precision of the Greek tongue which enabled the Christian Fathers to detect error, sometimes impaling it upon the shaft of a single letter in a single word.

But if the Divine care is disclosed in thus preparing the languages for the reception of His truth there is deeper significance in the fact that both were broken from the chain of living tongues as soon as they had fulfilled this purpose. Both the Hebrew and the Greek, after gathering into them the Divine testimonies, were sealed up as the urns in which those treasures should be preserved from change through all time. The Hebrew was arrested in its growth, so that it never passed through the stages of development necessary to bring it to perfection. I shall never forget the impression of this incompleteness made upon me when I first entered upon the study of that venerable tongue—nor my wonder that our educators had not embraced it in the curriculum by which our youth are trained, of illustrating how languages are formed and grow in exact accordance with all the laws of thought. This arrest was made under a series of providential dispensations carefully interpreted to us by the prophet standing always close to the historian, and which are so wonderful in character that they are read by us with tingling ears after the lapse of more than twenty centuries. Certain it is, that upon the completion of the Old Testament canon, the Hebrew passed into the sacred dialect, no longer used in ordinary intercourse, free from the fluctuations to which every living tongue is exposed, and consecrated to the one high purpose of preserving in its ark the solemn symbols of a prophetic and typical economy.

The same great change passed upon the Greek tongue, though less abruptly than upon the more ancient Hebrew. But when it had fulfilled its mission, first in receiving into its verbal forms the mighty mysteries of redeeming Grace, and then in defining amidst fierce controversies the creed of the Church, it too became a fixed, hard crystal, protecting from abrasion the precious treasure of Divine Revelation which it enshrined.

The significance of this fact needs but a word of comment. All living languages are in a perpetual flux. Words lose their original meaning, becoming often ambiguous, sometimes obsolete, and in a few instances expressing the exact opposite of its first import. Why, at the end of three centuries we are unable to read Chaucer and Spencer without the aid of a glossary. The modern reader is perplexed in deciphering the early versions of Wicliff and Tyndale. Since the period of the Reformation different versions of the English Bible have been made; and the scholarship of the English-speaking world is at this moment engaged in another and more careful revision, with a view to the expurgation of archaisms and conforming our existing version more nearly to the present state of the English language. Let us suppose then that the Hebrew tongue had been subjected to this law of change through a stretch of twenty-three hundred years since the days of Malachi—and the Greek, through nearly eighteen hundred years since the days of John—where would be the standard text to which we could recur to ascertain the Revelation which God had given to man?

There is another aspect of this same matter. We have reached the period in the history of the church when her great duty is to unfetter these Divine Oracles, in this missionary age, when the church has harnessed herself to the imperial task of subjugating the world to Christ, these Scriptures must be translated into all the tongues and dialects of tongues which are spoken over

the globe. In China and Japan, in Egypt and India, all over the steppes of Asia and through the jungles of Africa, men must read "in their own tongue wherein they were born" the wonderful works of God. But what shall be the standard by which all these versions shall be verified, and what the text from which they shall severally be drawn?

Obviously there can be no final and uniform arbiter, except in a Revelation which has been locked up in a language itself congealed into a fixed form and put forever beyond the reach of change. How marvellous the working of that Providence, by which the unchangeable God has stamped the likeness of His own unchangeableness upon the Record of His own purposes and thoughts! Men may deny or refuse, or misconstrue His testimony: but they cannot add to it, nor take from it. God has locked up the Record in the archives of His own providing, and has taken the key into His own possession.

2. I call attention next to the *providential multiplication and preservation of ancient manuscripts*, by which we are able to-day to establish the verity of the Sacred Text. The topic is large, and can only be handled here under its most general aspect. Of course the question presents itself upon taking up a copy of the Hebrew and Greek Scriptures, have we here the very words which the Holy Ghost inspired Prophets and Apostles to write? It so happens that early copies of the Sacred Record were made with evident care, and were collected at important ecclesiastical centres—such as Alexandria in Egypt, Constantinople and Rome in Europe, in Babylonia and Syria in Asia. With untiring industry these have been collated by the ripest scholars of every age, and through this comparison and combination of testimony the verity of the original text can be satisfactorily ascertained. It will serve to illustrate this point to refer to a single fact. When Kennicott and De Rossi first announced their detection of many thousand various readings in the manuscripts they had compared, the Christian world rose in alarm against critical labours which threatened to unsettle the authority of God's word. But when these variations came to be sifted, they were found almost uniformly of the most unimportant character—such, for example, as whether we should spell the word honour in English with or without the letter u. With the exception of one or two single passages, the genuineness of the received text was unchallenged; and not a single doctrine or fact was displaced or even weakened, by this imposing array of seeming contradictions. The integrity of the Sacred Text was thus unchangeably established; and these manuscripts remain and will be kept with holy vigilance, as permanent vouchers of the integrity of the Scriptures in our hands to-day. How marvellous is that Providence which caused so many copies of the Divine word to be taken at so many points, and at a period when fraud and interpolation, or simple errors of transcription, would certainly be detected! And how remarkable, that so many of these witnessing manuscripts should have escaped the ravages of time and the changes to which all things mortal are exposed! How wonderful that historic criticism finds the evidence for establishing the genuineness of the Scriptures increasing with every new discovery!

3. I pass to another striking verification of the Divine Record, which has come to light in recent times: *the antiquarian researches into the remains of ancient profane history contemporaneous with the events recorded in the Bible.*

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It should be stated in this connection that these researches have made no substantive addition to the sum of our knowledge of the past. They have in some degree rounded out the knowledge we had before, by filling up the gaps which existed in the previous record, but they have added no chapters to history which are positively fresh and new. Intrinsically valuable as enlarging and confirming what was already known, so far as I am aware, the sum total of history remains without increase of bulk. This leaves us to infer not only that we have in the inspired volume the key to all past history, but that God has treasured in His book the cream of all the facts which were worth preserving and transmitting. And it is well suited to provoke admiration, that

the disclosure of all this confirmatory testimony should be reserved to the period when it was most wanted to meet the most formidable assault ever made upon the historical verity of the sacred Scriptures.

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4. I beg leave to submit to your consideration another Providential movement in favour of the Bible, which strikes me as not a little remarkable. I refer to the concerted effort which is now being made to convert the Sabbath School into a regular Biblical Institute.

Almost without hesitation the system has been adopted by all branches of the Christian Church; and to day the ripest scholarship is employed in pouring the accumulated stores of Biblical learning into the lap of the Sabbath school, which had before been treasured in Theological seminaries as a species of esoteric and professional lore. The generations of the future will thus be trained in the knowledge of the Bible as, in itself, a complete Organon: a book of history with its testimonial facts—a book of principles with their tremendous moral sweep—a book to enlighten the reason, and to direct the conscience, and to sanctify the affections—a book, the test of character and the guide of conduct—a book, the final arbiter of all disputes, and the key to open the door of everlasting blessedness and glory.

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What then is the conclusion into which we drift from this antithesis between infidel propagandism on the one hand, and this Bible education on the other? Why only that the controversies of the age are narrowing down to the issue between a Divine testimony and all human speculations. It is true now as of old, that "the battle is not ours but God's;" and He says to us as He did to Ahab, "because the Syrians have said the Lord is God of the hills, but He is not God of the valleys, therefore will I deliver all this great multitude into their hand—and ye shall see that I am the Lord." It is fit that the Supreme Book, which gives the mind of the Supreme Jehovah, should have power behind it to enforce its testimonies upon the consciences and hearts of men. It is "not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit, saith the Lord of hosts." Therefore it is the church has planted herself upon the Divine word: and therefore it is we are educating our children to stand squarely upon its authority. When infidelity and scepticism marshal their forces, we are content to let the Bible speak with its own voice. The glory of victory shall belong only to Him by whom it is achieved. Let the great battle then with Gog and Magog be fought upon these holy plains, and the host of Israel exclaim "the sword of the Lord and of Gideon!"

5. I will fatigue your patience with only one illustration further of my general theme. It is found in the division of the church into different branches, or, as it is sometimes invidiously termed, into different sects. This divergence has been thrown as a reproach into the face of our Protestant Christianity, nor will I undertake to deny that it furnishes proof of human infirmity. Perhaps it is a fault that we cannot see eye to eye upon all the details of the Christian scheme. But when the vast comprehension of the system is considered, as well as the depths of mystery in which its fundamental truths are sunk—and when further we take into account the natural tendency of the human mind to divergence in the field of speculation—there is at least a diminution of the reproach. Yet if it be an evil, it has unquestionably been allowed in the Providence of God; and it may be of that class which Divine wisdom sees fit to subordinate to a superior good. It cannot be denied that all bodies of Christians, which stand upon the authority and teachings of the Bible, agree entirely upon all the ground facts which that book reveals, however they may diverge in their articulate expositions and deductions. Upon such fundamental truths as the unity of God, and the adorable mystery of a tripersonal distinction in that unity—upon the reality of the Incarnation, involving the two natures in the person of Jesus Christ—upon the fact of redemption accomplished through His death upon the Cross—upon the doc-

trine of justification before God through His perfect righteousness alone—upon the office of faith in appropriating this righteousness and making it our own—upon the truth that salvation is grounded purely in Divine Grace, independent of human merit—upon the fact of the sinner's entire estrangement from God, and his just condemnation under a perfect and holy law—upon the necessity of regeneration by the Holy Ghost; who quickens us from spiritual death into spiritual life—upon personal holiness as the necessary voucher of a regenerate state—upon the offices of the Holy Spirit in renewing, enlightening, comforting, sanctifying and glorifying the believer—upon the resurrection of the dead, and the final judgment—upon the eternal blessedness of the redeemed in Heaven, and the everlasting punishment of the wicked in Hell—upon each and upon all these supreme truths which are the ribs of the Christian system, there is not the breadth of a hair which divides the Evangelical churches of this country or of England. Why in this rapid enumeration I have run up a magnificent creed which none upon this platform to-night would hesitate to subscribe; and yet I have stated only in part the doctrinal consensus of the Catholic Church of God upon earth. It is true, it would not be difficult to draw up a formidable list of topics upon which we would honestly divide. Yet this would happen only when we came to specification of the minor details of the system, or to questions of external order which do not touch the vitals of Christianity at all. Upon the system, itself as it stands before us in its essential facts, we agree as with the heart and the voice of one man.

There arises then from this diversity in unity a capital advantage, that these different branches of the church become concurrent witnesses for the truth which they hold in common. There is no compulsory uniformity in their testimony. There is no collusion between the witnesses, patching up a system to be imposed upon the credulity of men. But in the free exercise of private judgment, each has bent over the sacred volume to find out its meaning for himself. That the investigation has been independent and free, is proved by their obstinate difference in given particulars; and their unanimity in affirming the truths which lie at the heart of the system, is a light shining upon the Bible such as could only be produced by the convergence of separate rays to a common focus.

Why is it that the life of our Lord is written by the four Evangelists? Could not one historian have given the substantive facts, without the apparent repetition of them by the other three? Why should Matthew, with his eye fixed upon the Jewish people, cast his narrative into a form which accumulates the testimonies to the Messiahship of Jesus? Why should Luke with his eye fixed upon the Gentile nations, bring out in minute and expressive features the true human nature of Christ—putting him thus in sympathetic relations to the human race, and tinging his Gospel with such a Pauline colour of thought? And why should John, the holy mystic of the Apostolic College, go back of all this into the pre-existence of Christ who “in the beginning was the Word that was with God, and was God”—reciting those wonderful discourses which breathe the music of infinite love from the bosom of the Father? Why this four-sided history of the Redeemer on earth? I do not pretend to give an exhaustive answer to these questions, touching the manifold uses of just such a history as this. But undeniably there is an advantage to us in being able to go around that blessed life upon all the sides of the square, as light and shade fall upon it from north, south, east and west. May it not be in analogy with all this, that the church of God has been allowed to front all the points of compass in the variations which have been indicated; in order that the solid temple of truth within may be recognised as one and alone by the very number of faces it is able to present?

I am warned by the clock that I must close. Christian friends, I suppose you have felt, in those tender moments which sometimes come to us in the closet, an envy of those who enjoyed the privilege of looking upon the face of our Lord on earth.

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What a compensation have we in place of our absent Lord! As for myself, I am content not to look upon the face of my Master upon earth. This joy, I humbly hope, is reserved for me hereafter; it is enough now if I can meet Him in His word, and feel His strength and pity in the hours of weakness and sorrow, of temptation and of sin.

But duty is co-ordinate with privilege. An obligation rests upon those to whom the oracles of God are committed. Have we the right to monopolize the precious gift? It is God's book and God's salvation given to the world. Would you raise partition walls quite up to the body of the sun, that his blessed beams should slant only upon your dwelling? Would you fence off the expansive air, that it should fill only your lungs and not those of your neighbour? God's love is like the sunlight which bathes the earth with its glory. His grace free as the air which breathes over grass and flower, over land and sea, in the great round globe. You are asked to-night to aid in circulating these Scriptures through the section of the land in which we live, through the vast outlying territory that is beyond, throughout the earth, that all nations may be able to see "the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ." I am ashamed to make any appeal in behalf of what is so supreme as the Bible. One thing is certain, nothing of privilege or duty is higher than this to which you are summoned to-night. Next to the joy arising from our personal interest in Christ, is the joy of uniting with Him who is the Word in spreading God's thought throughout the world.

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## Bible Society Recorder.

TORONTO, 1st APRIL, 1881.

### BOARD MEETINGS.

The regular monthly meeting of the Board of Directors was held on Tuesday, Feb'y 15th, at 7.30 P. M., James Brown, Esq., in the chair. The meeting was opened with prayer led by the Rev. Mr. Botterill. A letter was read from the Rev. Dr. Storrs, of Brooklyn, regretting his inability to accept the invitation to address the Anniversary meeting of the Society in May. Letters from the Rev. Mr. Stevenson, of Montreal, and the Rev. Principal Grant, of Queen's College, were read accepting the invitation to assist on that occasion; and one from the Hon. Mr. Allan, the President, regretting that his duties at Ottawa prevented his going to Montreal to represent our Society at the Bible Society meeting there.

Dr. Hodgins called the attention of the Board to a special report which was presented at the November meeting from the Joint Committee on the care of the premises, in regard to the very unsatisfactory state of the premises, and expressed an earnest hope that the matter would not be dropped, as it seemed to him to be absolutely necessary to consider the subject on an early day. Mr. John K. Macdonald gave notice that he would move the consideration of this report at the next meeting.

Agents reports were submitted from the Revds. J. G. Manly, C. R. Matthew, A. M. Phillips, T. M. Campbell, J. Gemley, and T. W. Jeffery. A grant of Bibles was made to the Protestant Orphans' Home, the schedule statement of colporteurs' labours and sales was read, the Depository's cash account and other business attended to, and the meeting closed with prayer led by the Rev. John Burton.

The March meeting of the Board was held on the evening of Tuesday, the 15th, at the usual hour, A. T. McCord, Esq., in the chair. The meeting was opened with prayer led by the Revd. Dr. Rose. After the reading and confirmation of the minutes, the Permanent Secretary called the attention of the Board to the death of Mr. Edward Tyner, the Society's Assistant Depository, and the following minute was unanimously adopted.

"At the first meeting of the Board since the death of Mr. Edward Tyner, the Assistant Depository, the Directors desire to record their deep sense of the loss the Society has sustained by his removal at so early an age from this scene of work. Entering the Depository in 1862, while still quite a lad, he spent his whole business life of eighteen years and a half, in the joint service of this Society, and the Tract Society. From the beginning he was remarkable for intelligence, quickness, and neatness in his work. He always showed real interest in the objects of the Societies and zeal for their welfare, and the Board regrets deeply the loss of one so faithful, efficient, and experienced in the work.

"The Directors desire also to express their heartfelt sympathy with his widow and family in their sore bereavement and hereby instruct the Secretaries to send to Mrs. Tyner a copy of this minute."

On motion of Mr. Mortimer seconded by the Rev. Dr. Potts, it was resolved—"That three months' salary be voted to Mrs. Edward Tyner in consideration of the long, faithful and efficient services of her husband."

On motion the Secretaries were appointed as a Committee to confer with representatives of the Tract Society, to recommend a person as Assistant Depository, and also to recommend the amount of salary to be paid to the new incumbent of the office.

Mr. John K. Macdonald moved, seconded by Mr. Mortimer "that the Report of the Committee on the care of the premises presented at the November meeting be considered." This was carried, and after some discussion the matter was recommitted to the same Committee with the addition of the President, the Treasurer, the Revds. Dr. Reid, Dr. Rose, Dr. Castle, J. P. Lewis, and Messrs John Macdonald, W. Kennedy, F. A. Ball, S. Triggs, and Richard Brown.

It was decided to request the use of the Metropolitan Church for the Anniversary meeting, and to request the Rev. W. S. Rainsford to preach the annual sermon for the Society. A Committee was appointed to complete all arrangements necessary for the Anniversary. On the recommendation of the Agency and Colportage Committee, the Rev. R. Jamieson was appointed



Agent for the Society in British Columbia. A letter was read from the Bishop of Athabasca, thanking the Board for a grant of Scriptures for use in his Indian mission field, and expressing his hearty sympathy with the work of the Society. The Bishop also offered to make arrangements for the establishment of a Depository for the sale of Bibles, and the Secretaries were instructed to correspond with him in reference to it.

Mr. John Pickering, of Lucknow, was unanimously elected a life member of the Society. The Depository's cash account was submitted, and other routine business attended to, and reports received from the following Agents: the Revds. J. G. Manly, J. L. Murray, E. M. C. Botterill, and C. R. Matthew; and Colporteurs' reports from Messrs McPhail, Badger and Taylor. The Permanent Secretary reported to the Board the resignation of Mr. McPhail, and the Directors feeling that at his age they could not expect him to continue the arduous work of a Colporteur, accepted it. The meeting was closed with prayer led by the Revd. Professor McLaren.

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#### DEATH OF MR. EDWARD TYNER.

Since our last issue the Society has sustained a serious loss in the death of Mr. Edward Tyner, the Assistant Depository. Our readers will see, by the minute adopted at the last Board Meeting, the great esteem in which he was held by the Directors, and also how long, faithfully and efficiently he had been serving the Society. He had been in poor health for several years, and more than a year ago offered his resignation as he felt unable to do all his work. But both Boards felt that it was in the best interests of the Societies to keep the benefit of his intelligence and experience as long as possible; besides being only what was due to one who had served so long and so well, and they hoped that with more open air exercise he might be spared for many years, if not restored to health and strength. He was therefore dissuaded from pressing his resignation, and allowed to employ help, and in the summer he was given three months' entire leave of absence, during which he made a trip to England. The sea voyage however did not benefit him as much as had been hoped, and though at times he appeared better, there was no real improvement in his general health. He continued nevertheless with a few interruptions to attend to his work daily up to within a fortnight of his death, and, as he had more energy than strength, he was more than once begged to be more sparing with himself. He died on the morning of Tuesday, March 8th, at the early age of thirty-six years, and will be long missed by the customers of the Depository, and still more by those of us who for years have been daily associated with him in work. He was the last of the eight sons of our former Vice President Mr. John Tyner who died in February, 1875, who had been a Director of the Society for over forty years, and who was one of the most careful and attentive Directors the Society ever had. He has left a

widow and three children to deplore his loss, besides his aged mother, with all of whom the members of the Society will feel much sympathy. He was buried on Thursday, the 10th, at Mount Pleasant Cemetery, the funeral services being conducted by the Revs. George Cochran and S. J. Hunter.

### A JEW BROUGHT TO CHRIST BY THE SCRIPTURES ALONE.

The following is an extract from the Journal of the Rev. R. Bruce, the Society's Agent in Persia:—

"Four marches, the last a double one, brought us 80 miles from Sultanabad to Hamadan. Nothing very remarkable occurred on the way. My time here for five days has been taken up with the converts from Judaism to Christianity, of whose trials, and persecutions, and steadfastness in the faith, I send you a separate report."

"Hamadan (Achmetha, or Yahbatan) is the head-quarters of the Jews of Persia. There are about 2,000. In the year 1875, Hezekiel Hyim, a son of one of the richest and most influential Jews there, was led by the *Word of God alone* to the conclusion that the Messiah ought to have come and been put to death while the second Temple was still standing. He soon found a brother in the faith in a Cohen, or descendant of Aaron, Dr. Aga Jan. Hyim is a young man of remarkable ability, deeply read in the Hebrew Scriptures, the Gemara, the Targums, &c. The two friends got a New Testament, and became firm believers in Jesus of Nazareth. They openly confessed their faith, and reasoned in the synagogues, and from house to house, from the Old Testament, that Jesus is the Christ. In the same quarter resides an old chief of the Jews, Dr. Elijahu, two of whose sons are also doctors of great repute among the Mahomedans. Though the eldest of his four sons was for some time a bitter enemy of the brethren, yet before long Dr. Elijahu, Dr. Moosha, and Dr. Rahamim (and now the two other sons also) were convinced by the arguments of Hyim. A shopkeeper named Reuben, and Solomon, Hyim's younger brother, also joined them. Hyim's father, who is a wealthy and bigoted Jew, offered him a present equal to £100 to a native of Persia, if he would keep his new faith secret, at the same time threatening to disinherit him if he continued to preach and speak of Jesus. He firmly declined the offer, and he and his brother were disinherited.

"For some time the Jews listened attentively to the arguments of Hyim and his friends, but after a little the Mollah issued a proclamation that anyone who associated or conversed with them should be put out of the synagogue. The rank of Drs. Elijahu and Aga Jan's families, who, with Hyim's families, are three heads of the Jews, did not save them from persecution. It would be impossible to relate here one-tenth of what they suffered. Dr. Rahamim was once beaten so severely in the street that his arm and ribs were broken, and his gold watch was taken from him and never recovered.

"In October, 1878, the Rev. J. Bassett spent a week in Hamadan, and baptized Hyim and Drs. Rahamim and Moosha. Dr. Aga Jan was absent at the time, and was baptized a week later by the native pastor of the Protestant Armenian Church. This is the only visit which has been paid to the Jews from the commencement of the movement (i.e., for more than five years) by any American or European missionary, though Teheran is only three days' journey off by post. Hamadan is more than 6,000 feet above the sea, and a good sanatorium. In 1878 Yair, a poor neighbour of Dr. Aga Jan, who used to treat him with abuse, was overcome by the doctor's mildness and kindness, and became one of the most earnest believers in Jesus. The Jews caught him in the synagogue and told him to abuse Jesus, and on his refusing beat him severely, and turned him out. The Mollahs then collected the whole popula-

tion of Jews, men, women, and children, and surrounded the Governor's house, clamouring for vengeance on the Christians.

"The Governor, the Elkhany, being a liberal man, having summoned the brethren and questioned them as to their faith, imprisoned the ringleaders of the mob for a day, and bound them to keep the peace. Unfortunately the Elkhany was very soon after this removed, and was succeeded by a very different man, Zur Riazatein. The Jews took Yair three times before the new Governor, and each time he was fined a sum of money. They beat him severely in the street. They took him again to the Governor, who, without asking a question, ordered him to be bastinadoed 'till his foot dropped off.' Fortunately the chief executioner was afraid of the Christians. After being beaten he was imprisoned for two days and fined. When they were going to beat him he said: 'If you think to make me deny Jesus by beating me you are mistaken, for if you cut off my head I will confess Him with my last breath.'

"His foes next got an order from the Mujtehid (Mahomedan chief priest) that Yair should give up his shop. The native pastor, who fought nobly throughout, saved him for the time from this. The British Agent in Hamadan and the Governor have now told the Christians that they must sell their homes, leave the quarter of the town they live in, never go to the bath, and buy meat at the Jewish butchers' shops. As leaving their homes would be ruin to them, and several members of their families are still bigoted Jews, and are included in the order about the bath and butchers' shops, these orders have filled them with consternation.

"Hyim and his friends have had several interviews with the Mahomedan Mollahs, and always had the best of the argument. This movement among the Jews will most probably be, if looked after, a most important and powerful witness to the Mahomedans, and open a door for Mission work among them.

"There are at present forty men and fifteen women who profess to believe in Jesus Christ. Five only have been baptized, and four are regular attendants at the Protestant church and at the Holy Communion. The others are afraid to come forward publicly on account of the injustice of the Government. There are also several others, in addition to these fifty-five, who believe in secret, but all are hindered by relations from joining the disciples.

"Hyim is a first-rate Hebrew and Persian scholar, and would be very useful for the revision of the Old Testament. He and his wife and two children suffer dreadfully, living in an attic of the house of his rich, unbelieving father and brothers. He has been well tried for five years in the fire of affliction.

"I must bear my testimony to the exemplary character of the Rev. Shimaïn, native Pastor of the Protestant Armenian congregation in Hamadan, and to his zeal on behalf of the Jews. He and his little flock are 'a light shining in a dark place.'"—*B. & F. Bible Society Reporter for March.*

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### THE BISHOP'S CREED.

I am a very old friend of this Society. For over forty years or more I have never felt the smallest doubt of the great duty, incumbent on every clergyman of the Church of England, to support the Bible Society. The first item of my creed, in relation to the Bible Society, is that the Book it endeavours to multiply and circulate is the only book given by inspiration of God.

Other books might be good, clever, and brilliant, but they are all the works of fallible men—all carry the marks of fallibility about them. I care not what kind of books are mentioned, or what class of writers are named. There

are clever men who tell us that Milton was inspired in his way, and that Shakespeare was also inspired in some of his works. Now I do not believe it—they were clever men, but were not inspired; inspiration belongs to the Book of God alone.

BISHOP RYLE, of *Liverpool*.

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### WILBERFORCE AND THE BIBLE SOCIETY.

Many well-known names occur in connection with this Society's early proceedings, and amongst them that of Wilberforce occupies a conspicuous place. His diary records small parties at his house, on "Bible Society formation." "Hughes, Rayner, and Grant breakfasted with me." In 1803, he writes, "A few of us met at Mr. Hardcastle's counting-house . . . on so dark a morning that we discussed by candlelight, and resolved on the establishment of the Bible Society." This item occurs in his accounts, "Mr. Charles, and schools in Wales, £21." In 1815, he left the death-bed of his beloved Henry Thornton to attend the annual meeting at Brighton, when it was said, "as he entered the room he seemed so pale and fatigued, it was feared he would scarcely be able to speak; but he no sooner began than his countenance lighted up and he became animated and impressive."—"*Life of William Wilberforce*," by Dr. Sloughton.

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### PORTIONS OF AN ADDRESS DELIVERED AT THE SEVENTY-FIRST ANNIVERSARY OF THE MASSACHUSETTS BIBLE SOCIETY.

BY THE REV. ALEXANDER M'KENZIE, D.D.

\* \* \* It is truly written that the word of the Lord endureth for ever. It is also written that the word of God is not bound. Its permanence is not that of the mountain which presses down upon the plain, and remains the same from century to century. It is rather the permanence of the tree, which keeps its identity and holds its place, yet sends its roots deeper down and its branches further out, and multiplies its leaves for the delight and refreshment of man. Rather it is the permanence of the man who retains his personality, yet, if he be manly, increases in wisdom and love, grows in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour, and makes to himself a greater power for good.

If we regard the Bible in its relation to the necessities of men we shall mark its increased value. I speak especially of our English Bible when I say that men never needed its instruction more than now, and were never so much shut up to it. The truths which it was given to impart cannot lose their importance. In the quickened activity of our time their interest cannot but be enlarged. Men are searching the unseen world they live in, and sending their questions through the spaces where we see no inhabitant. Of God, and duty, and destiny they are inquiring. The whence and whither of life they are seeking to find. Whatever the motive or the spirit, these sublime themes are diligently, painfully pursued. Meanwhile the voices of nature grow more confused, and the voices of teachers more divided. The oracles have grown dumb. How far this is warranted we need not now pause to consider.

In the extension of its territory it is necessary that knowledge should be cantoned. Yet no man should be ignorant of the things which most concern his duty and his welfare. We cannot stand with both our feet on either sea or land, and be broadly wise : to stand firmly we must rest on both. By the study of material things and physical forces we cannot come to an adequate knowledge of God or of ourselves. We have always known this. The professional students of nature are impressing the fact upon us. They tell us that we have sought and found too much in the world of which we are a part. They change our demonstrations to inferences. They limit the declaration of the heavens and the revelation of the firmament. Sometimes in a reckless but sometimes in a reverent spirit they do. I do not speak of these things to complain of them, but to declare our independence. If these men do not go beyond the truth they do us no harm. They make it more needful that in some other way we come to the knowledge of ourselves and of Him who made us. They make it more certain that in some other way we can attain to this knowledge. What God does not say, through the heavens, he will say if we need to know it. The knowledge of material things by its increase makes it evident that we can know spiritual things which concern us more. The lessons of nature witness to the probability of a spiritual revelation which shall instruct us in that domain of our being where nature fails us. The rigid finger of the fossil points to the voice of a prophet. The enlarged knowledge of the ways of God should convince us that we can have the knowledge of God himself. To know more of the body should make us sure we can know more of the soul. Our Lord gave men the bread which nourished the flesh that they might look for the bread which nourishes the spirit.

This knowledge which we must have, for which our spirit cries out within us ; which the world of nature refuses to furnish, and which her priests tell us is not in her ; which the growth of less important learning makes almost certain, we find here in the Book. Its voice has lost nothing of its distinctness or authority ; it has gained in both since other voices have faltered and fallen under silence. More solitary than of old, the Bible is more grand than ever. More indispensable, it is more valuable. Still it answers our questions, and it will answer them. Deserted of the masters we come up to its serene and sacred heights to hear from the radiant cloud the words of eternal wisdom and everlasting life, " I will not leave you comfortless. Because I live, ye shall live also."

Besides this increase in the relative value of the Bible, there is an enlargement of its absolute and intrinsic worth.

1. It is of more worth because it is of worth to more men. The number of persons who read the Bible and take it for their guide is steadily increasing. Churches are rising up through our own land, and in all lands. Men who believe utterly in the Book are wandering through the waste places of the earth and among its populous countries with the open Bible in their hands. They read, and the people hear. Some become doers of the word, and thus become its witnesses and ministers. Every year enlarges the number of believers.

\* \* \* \* \*

2. The Bible is greater than ever because it is great to men more than ever. It is not merely that more men have received it as a book. It has gone into the lives of more men, and become a living force in them. Its law has more authority, its mercy more acceptance. It has gained the confirmation of the conscience and assumed the control of the life. It is in more character and will, and therefore has more influence, which is to be continued and increased. A telescope is not made larger by having other telescopes made ; but the telescope as an instrument and institution is enlarged. A Bible is no greater for the making of other Bibles, but the Bible as an institution and an element of control, is the larger. Making Bibles, and readers, and doers, makes the Book the more. The continual extension of the Church of God means the augmented power of the word, which is the magna charta of his kingdom.

3. We have to add to this that the truths of the Bible are receiving fresh illustrations, which at once increase their vitality and assure their permanent influence.

\* \* \* \* \*

Our own experience, and the combined experiences which make history, are giving original illustrations of the Biblical facts of a divine Providence.

\* \* \* Read the story of Christian missions to find the Bible incidents repeated in the signal working of God's providence in the line of his own plan.

So have we accumulated evidences of his love, and mercy, and forbearance. We read these and believe. The former instances make them clear; but our own lives make them clearer. We believe that which was by reason of that which is, and this grows while we sleep. The love and kindness of the Bible make their own witness to its worth. "Truly," said a girl-wife in India, "truly your Bible must have been written by a woman, it contains so many kind things about us." This entrance of its mercy into stricken lives, giving them comfort and hope, makes the mercy more. We comprehend the pity and gentleness of the word when we find the living illustration of its compassion. Prayer never had so much confirmation as now glorifies it. The interceding prophet, the importunate widow, the suppliant mother, the beseeching publican, have been a thousand times repeated since they passed on. The Bible is rich in its witnesses when it would teach us to pray. But it is growing richer in those whom the centuries bring forward, in the multitudes who today throng about its mercy-seat, and come boldly to its throne of grace.

Thus it is that the truths of the Bible are more and more strongly asserted and confirmed and illustrated as year succeeds to year. \* \* \*

Thus more and more is the Bible making illustrations of itself. Men are raised up steadily who confirm the power of its teachings. They stand with us and share our life. Every year produces them, and in the act gives us more for which to rejoice in the word of our God. \* \* \*

To the obedient truth will come. The willing man shall know the will of God. Every child, every child-like spirit, shall be taught. As the Bible has become greater in itself, so can we become greater to hold it and be blessed by it. Thus shall we be greater to give it to the world. We may not see its immediate influence as did the fathers. The times have changed. It was a dull and blind world into which the English Bible entered. All the prose literature of England, save the forgotten tracts of Wycliffe, has grown up since the translation of the Bible by Tyndall and Coverdale. So far as the nation at large was concerned, no history, no romance, hardly any poetry, save the little known verse of Chaucer, existed in the English tongue when the Bible was ordered to be set up in the churches. . . . For the moment, however, its literary effect was less than its social. . . . But far greater than its effect on literature or social phrase was the effect of the Bible on the character of the people at large. The Bible was as yet the one book which was familiar to every Englishman.

Its influence has continued. It is not less real because less striking. It has done a deep work which will not pass away. The Bible is needed to preserve and enlarge this. New generations need the old truth, which is ever new. The strangers entering our gates must be met by the man with the Book. The ships which traverse the seas must bear its comfort, and strength, and companionship on their lonely and perilous way. The isles wait for it. The countless millions whom we are just touching must have its wisdom and grace. The Book will bless man. As in the watered fields in its own prophetic page, everything that liveth, which moveth, whithersoever it shall come, shall live. Let Tyndall speak to us as we go hence, "For we have not received the gifts of God for ourselves only, or for to hide them; but for to bestow them."

We have received, and are receiving. We will give, and let the light shine brighter and yet brighter unto the perfect day.

## RECEIPTS AT THE BIBLE SOCIETY HOUSE, TORONTO, FROM BRANCH SOCIETIES, FROM 21st JANUARY TO 20th MARCH, 1831.

		On Purchase Account.	FREE CONTRIBUTIONS.		
			U. C. B. S.	B. & F. B. S.	Sundries.
		\$ cts.	\$ cts.	\$ cts.	\$ cts.
Shelburne	Branch	\$ 00			
Arnow	do		25 00		
Chatham	do	37 35			
Chesterfield	do		23 46	46 92	
Wiarion	do	17 41	15 60		
Bruccfield	do		32 50	32 75	
Campbell's Cross	do		10 00		
Hastings	do		21 40		
Prince Arthur's Landing	Branch	15 75			
Manchester	Branch	11 23	15 39	15 40	
Forest	do	45 87	17 05	16 00	
Paris	do		65 00	65 00	(1) 65 00
Sandford	do		41 00		
Botany	do	20 00	8 00	8 00	
Uxbridge	do	40 25	83 84		
(Utica Sub. Branch)			3 00		
Alton	Branch	9 63	9 86		
Dresden	do		15 60	15 60	
Lucknow	do	20 00	62 00	24 00	
Lynden	do	1 44			
Plattsville	do	22 49			
Washington	do	7 30			
Newburgh	do	7 15	1 86		
Canifton	do		1 00		
Trenton	do	40 00	7 15		
Picton	do	36 57	3 00		
Bloomfield	do	11 19			
Marmora Depository		7 11			
Fergus	Branch		100 00	100 00	
Barrie	do	11 60			
Omemece	do		15 00	15 00	
Baltimore	do	5 98	10 00		(2) 15 00
Brampton	do	18 59			
Egmondville	do	8 38	3 87		
Lakefield	do	15 04			
East Oxford	do		14 00	13 60	
Mill Point	do		10 75		
Bowmanville	do	33 22	36 92	40 00	
Vernonville	do	9 30	25 74		
Grafton	do		17 00		
Oshawa	do		57 00		
Minesing	do	3 81	26 49		
Ingersoll	do	75 89	100 00	100 00	
Theford	do	12 30	1 50		
Thamesville	do	31 91	17 85	10 00	
Duffin's Creek	do	2 54	27 52		
Gore Bay Depository		20 00			
Elora	Branch	6 74	31 74	100 00	
Shakespeare	do		29 75		
Dunbarton	do		21 00	21 82	
Mono Mills	do		30 00		
New Hamburg	do		23 49	23 00	
St. Catharines	do	116 00	118 00	118 00	
Lindsay	do	92 40	27 97		
Ravenswood	do		20 00	11 25	
Milton	do	15 00			
Welland Port	do	2 55	5 40	5 00	
Fingal	do	8 00	40 00	50 00	
Avening	do		9 20		
Magnetawan Depository		5 00			

## RECEIPTS AT THE BIBLE SOCIETY HOUSE—Continued.

	On Purchase Account.	FREE CONTRIBUTIONS.		
		U. C. B. S.	B. & F. B. S.	Sundries.
	\$ cts.	\$ cts.	\$ cts.	\$ cts.
South Etobicoke Branch.....		33 35		
Fullarton do.....			54 00	
Norwich do.....	62 71	14 74	14 74	
Paisley do.....		20 00	70 00	
Norval do.....		32 60	32 61	
Peterborough do.....	70 03			
Teeswater do.....		40 00	40 00	
Dungannon do.....		26 50		
Laskey do.....		5 21		
Streetsville do.....		2 87		
Selkirk do.....	11 81	2 25		
South Cayuga do.....	38 63	36 88		
Port Colborne do.....		5 67		
Cayuga do.....	28 00			
Manilla do.....	12 14	24 00	10 80	
Bervie do.....		14 00		
Garden Hill do.....		46 72		
Oakville do.....		22 71	43 00	
Glanford do.....		45 84		
Orono do.....		53 00		(3) 3 00
Rosemont do.....		14 67		
Varna do.....		27 00		(1) 7 00
Port Albert do.....		26 00		
Belleville do.....		70 00	70 00	
Elimville do.....	8 76	20 00	30 00	(5) 4 24
Norwood do.....	14 74			
Underwood do.....		20 00		
Ayton do.....	17 59	23 37		
Little Britain do.....	16 86	11 76		
Fordwich do.....		19 43		
Cherrywood do.....	4 97	17 00		
Hope do.....		38 00		
New Dundee do.....		53 00		
York do.....		20 00	10 00	
Hamilton do.....	310 17	50 00		
Unionville do.....		20 00		
Blueval do.....		17 00	17 00	
Hagersville do.....	23 55	10 70	12 00	
Dawn Mills do.....	18 14	6 27		
Mitchell do.....		15 00		
Woodstock do.....		44 00	140 00	
Thorold do.....		35 00	35 00	
Keene do.....	2 16	67 49		
Strabane do.....		54 35		
Kramosa do.....	5 00	48 00	48 00	
Mimosa do.....		00 82		
Mona Centre do.....		15 50	15 50	
Ripley do.....		22 50		(1) 22 50

(1) To Montreal Auxiliary. (2) To Quebec Auxiliary. (3) On Recorder Account.

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THE FORTY-FIRST ANNIVERSARY  
OF THE

**Upper Canada Bible Society**

-- IN THE --  
**METROPOLITAN METHODIST CHURCH,**

WEDNESDAY, MAY 11th, 1881.

The Hon. G. W. Allan, President, will take the Chair at 7-30 P. M.

**SINGING.**

*Reading of Scripture and Prayer by Rev. JOHN POTTS, D. D.*

CHAIRMAN'S ADDRESS.

The Permanent Secretary will move the adoption of the Report, seconded by JAMES BROWN, Esq.

1ST RESOLUTION—Moved by DR. W. W. OGDEN, seconded by F. A. BALL, Esq. :

That thanks be given to the Officers, Committees and Collectors of the various Branches throughout the country, to whose zeal and energy the Society is so much indebted; and that the following gentlemen be Officers and Directors for the ensuing year :—

**Patron :**

His Excellency, the Marquis of Lorne, Governor-General.

**President :**

THE HONOURABLE GEORGE W. ALLAN.

**Vice-Presidents :**

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HENRY O'BRIEN, Esq.  
JOHN EARLS, Esq.  
JOSIAH PAGE, Esq.

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2ND RESOLUTION.—Moved by the Rev. JOHN BURTON, B.D., seconded by JOHN K. MACDONALD, Esq. :

"The continuous increase in the circulation of the Scriptures and the renewed attention the forthcoming revision promises to direct to the teachings of those Scriptures, call for gratitude and increased confidence; acknowledging which this society resolves that the incoming year shall be one of augmented trust and work."

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SINGING.

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3RD RESOLUTION.—Moved by the Rev. PRINCIPAL GRANT, D.D., of Queen's University, Kingston, seconded by COLONEL MOFFATT,

"That as the Scriptures are the symbol and outward basis of the spiritual unity that binds together Evangelical Christendom, and the common standard of faith to which it appeals, the duty of the Church of Christ, especially of the English speaking churches, to disseminate them wherever Christ is preached is imperative."

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COLLECTION AND ANTHEM.

4TH RESOLUTION.—Moved by DR. GEIKIE, seconded by WARRING KENNEDY, Esq. :

“That the hearty thanks of this meeting be presented to the Dean and Churchwardens of St. James Cathedral, for its use on Sabbath evening last, and to the Rev. W. S. Rainsford, for the instructive sermon which he preached in the interests of the Society on that occasion.”

5TH RESOLUTION.—Moved by HERBERT MORTIMER, Esq., seconded by JOHN HARVIE, Esq. :

“That the hearty thanks of this meeting be presented to the Pastor and Trustees of this Church for its use on the present occasion, and to the Choir for their valuable services in connection with this Annual Meeting.”

## DOXOLOGY AND BENEDICTION.

### 1ST HYMN.

- 1 O WORD of God, Incarnate,  
O wisdom from on high,  
O! Truth unchanged, unchanging,  
O light of our dark sky!  
We praise Thee for this compass  
That o'er life's troubled sea,  
'Mid mists, and rocks, and quicksands,  
Still guides, O Christ, to Thee.
- 2 The Church from her dear Master,  
Received the gift divine;  
And still the light she lifteth  
O'er all the earth to shine.  
It is the priceless casket  
Where gems of truth are stored;  
It is the heaven-drawn picture  
Of Christ the living Word.
- 3 O! make Thy Church, dear Saviour,  
A lamp of burnished gold,  
To bear before the nations  
Thy true light as of old.  
O! teach Thy wandering pilgrims  
By this their path to trace,  
Till, clouds and darkness ended,  
They see Thee face to face.

- 4 O! Father by Thy mercy,  
And by Thy Spirit's grace,  
May we abide forever  
On this sure resting-place ;  
And pass from life's long battle,  
To Thy blest home of love,  
And see in heaven's own radiance,  
Jerusalem above.

## 2ND HYMN.

- 1 **L**ORD of all power and might,  
Father of love and light,  
Speed on Thy Word :  
O let the Gospel sound  
All the wide world around,  
Wherever man is found ;  
God speed His Word.
- 2 Lo, what ombattled foes,  
Stern in their hate, oppose  
God's Holy Word :  
One for His truth we stand,  
Strong in His own right hand,  
Firm as a martyr-band ;  
God Shield His Word.
- 3 Onward shall be our course,  
Despite of fraud or force ;  
God is before ;  
His word ere long shall run  
Free as the noon-day sun ;  
His purpose must be done ;—  
God bless His word.
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