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ANNIVERSARY SERMON.

ON BEHALF OF THE UPPER CANADA BIBLE SOCIETY.

*Preached by the Rev. John Hall, D.D., of New York, in the Jarvis Street Baptist Church, Tuesday evening, May 8th, 1883.*

It is hardly necessary to say, dear brethren, that when I agreed to be the principal speaker this evening, I did not intend to speak to my brethren to the right and left of me, and many of whom I see in the audience—brethren, at whose feet I might myself sit with advantage. I contemplated only speaking to you, their people, and preaching the word of truth to you somewhat as they are wont to preach it. The text is contained in the 1st Epistle to the Corinthians, 15th chap. last verse: "Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, for as much as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord."

If we consider the theme, simply, of this chapter, it is important in the highest degree. For what can be of deeper interest to us than the death and resurrection of our blessed Lord, and our hope of resurrection and eternal life in Him and through Him? If we consider the argument of this chapter, it is no less striking and impressive. For we have the two covenants presented to us, and the logical consequences that follow from the provisions of these covenants, the resurrection of our blessed Lord from the dead, and the results that are necessarily connected with that resurrection, in view of His standing as the representative of His people who believe in Him. If we look at the eloquence of the chapter, it is singularly interesting and attractive. We have illustrations drawn from the most remote and various sources. The facts with which the husbandman is conversant, the constitution and the laws of our human bodies, the sublime objects with which the attention of the astronomer is engaged, and the glorious vision of angels round about the person of Christ as he comes again in His triumph—these facts bring their proper element of illustration to the striking and most graphic exhibition of

the truth as it is presented to us in this chapter. It is no less interesting to us if we consider the questions that we have answered in its progress. What is to become of these bodies? What is to be the future of these souls? What about the cause of Jesus Christ? What about the party of which grace constituted Him the head? What about the issues of His kingdom? What is to be our future? What is to be the standing of believers in the Lord Jesus Christ, one with Him and joined to Him by faith? These are among the greatest questions that we can possibly ask ourselves, and we have answers given in this chapter. The answers are not, indeed, presented so much formally as in close and immediate connection with one another, and for immediate practical purposes. They constitute motives. They are the basis of the word with which the text begins. "Therefore, my beloved brethren." They justify the use of it. The idea plainly is this—seeing that Christ is as He has been represented, seeing that He has done what we have just stated; seeing that His people are so closely joined to Him; seeing that their resurrection follows from His; seeing that death will be conquered, and that all His sons will share in His triumphs, and partake of His victories,—“Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast,”—and so on. I do not need to remind you, dear brethren, that one of the great differences between Christianity and religious systems that have been presented to the world is illustrated to us in this very particular. You turn to the books or read the records of such men as Plato, Socrates, Cicero and Seneca, and men of that class, and you will find that they contain many statements of admirable ethical truth. They indicate many forms of wrong, they present clearly in many instances the opposite right, but they are distinct from the Scriptures in this regard, that they have no such motive to bring to bear upon the soul as Christianity is fitted to exert. Christ is my Saviour; Christ stood for me; Christ conquered for me; Christ died for me; Christ even lives for me; Christ will come again and I shall come with Him; Christ will have His glory and I shall share that glory; therefore, let me be steadfast and unmoveable. Or, as it is put in other words that you will no doubt easily remember, “Ye are not your own, ye are bought with a price, therefore glorify God with your bodies and your spirits, which are His.” This is, you can see, the connexion in which this word of exhortation comes to us. Because these things are so, therefore be ye steadfast. And you will notice the way in which the apostle addresses those to whom he brings this counsel. “Therefore, my beloved brethren.” He is writing to the Corinthians. There were many elements of difference between him and those Corinthian believers, but there was still more in common. He had lived a couple of years among them; had taught them the truth; had been God’s instrument in guiding their feet into the way of peace; he had caught much of the spirit of Jesus Christ his Lord and Master, the gentle and loving and tender and magnanimous spirit, and so he can say truly to them, “My brethren,” “My beloved brethren.” He has sympathised with them as fellow disciples, as fellow servants, as fellow sufferers, as fellow soldiers, as fellow heirs, and so he can most fittingly use this language. I trust it is in that spirit—in that spirit of gentleness and Christian conviction that I speak to you now, and endeavour to re-echo, in however feeble a way, this counsel dictated by the Spirit of the Lord through His servant to the Corinthians, and which is just as fitting for us and as necessary to us, as it was fitting for and necessary to those believers eighteen centuries ago. “My beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, for as much as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord.” We need no division here, the words themselves provide it. In the first instance we are directed to be steadfast. Let us take that word as urging upon us firm and fixed adherence to the truth as God has revealed it to us. Let us take it as equivalent to that other exhortation, “Be not moved away from the hope of the Gospel.” “Be ye steadfast.” Now I do not need to tell you that intellectual faith, with which we naturally begin, in some respects is like faith of any other kind, in this regard, that it is the

same human mind that exercises itself about spiritual things, that has to exercise itself about temporal things, and so up to a certain point the processes will be the same. Now you know quite well how frequently persons are other than steadfast in their ordinary avocations and persuasions. You have perhaps met with men who could speak in some such way as this:—"There is a business enterprise; I looked at it; I regarded it favorably; it seemed to me in the first instance as if it was sure to be a success, and I went a certain way into it, and by and by I saw, as I supposed, reason to change my mind, and so I got out of it." And in some instances you will hear men acknowledge frankly that they regretted that it was so. There may be for example, great public enterprises, and you hear men speak about them in some such way as this: "At first I thought very favourably of the movement, and went a certain length into it myself; by and by I had occasion, as I supposed, to change my mind, and so I passed out of it, and ceased to be interested in it;" and sometimes you will hear men make confession that they regretted that their minds did undergo this change. The same thing occurs occasionally with individuals in the matter of outlay of their own energies. You shall hear a man say "I thought of preparing myself to be a medical man, or a lawyer, or a clergyman, and I went a certain length in that direction, but in the course of time other views of life were presented to me, and I changed my mind and have moved in another direction," and sometimes you hear men say they regretted that they did allow themselves to change. Now, what I want you to understand is, that each individual has but one mind, and that mind works along distinct and definite lines, so this matter of steadfastness has something in common, in the matter of ordinary affairs, with the higher occupations of the spirit when engaged with things spiritual and eternal. Now what the apostle says is, "Be ye steadfast;" hold by the convictions of truth that you have received and avowed, and through which you can be possessors of the hope of which I have been speaking to you. "Well," but one may say, "looked at in that point of view, steadfastness is not a thing that will come by order; it is not a thing which a man can evolve from within himself; it is not a thing independent of evidence; it is not a thing which you can direct somebody to get up as it were within himself." Steadfastness—firm and fixed conviction—according to the laws of the human mind rests upon the intelligent perception of evidence. "Well, but perhaps" some of you say, "in this matter of Christian faith, I don't stand exactly as I used to stand; I was brought up by godly parents; I had faithful Sunday-school teachers; I lived in an atmosphere that was saturated with Christian truth; I was perfectly satisfied, without the least hesitation, at one time about the absolute truth of this Christian faith; but in the course of my life other thoughts were presented to me, other views gained possession of my mind; I came to look upon other aspects of things; I took, I venture to think, wider and broader views, and the consequence is I have not the same convictions now that I once had." You may perhaps hear persons make an acknowledgement of this kind, followed by the statement, "I wish I did believe with the same clearness with which I used to do." Why should you not believe as you used to do. What change has taken place in the grounds of belief? What modification has there been of the evidences? Where is the point on which the Christian cause is weaker than it was ten years ago, twenty years ago, fifty years ago? Try to answer the question to yourselves. Where have the manuscripts been discovered that weaken our faith in the originals of these holy oracles? Where have the monuments come to light that disprove their historical accuracy? Where are the travellers who have detected blunders and mistakes in the geography of the Bible? Where are the histories that have pointed out blunders, proved blunders, in the light of contemporary literature? Where has the evidence broken down? It is very easy for you to allow yourselves to think for the moment that there must be some very great change because you hear so many things, and you read so many things now, with which you were unfamiliar in

the former days. But my dear brethren, you have to make allowance for the change of the conditions in which we are living now. It is, I venture to think, one of the good peculiarities of this continent that we have the fullest and the most public record of anything that takes place; and the more singular and remarkable anything is in its nature, the wider the publicity it acquires. If one of my brethren in this city should announce one of these Sabbaths that the best views that he had to teach his people he had learned in the theatre, and if he should follow up that statement after a few weeks by the further announcement, that he had ceased to believe in a personal God, and could not preach any more in that strain to the people, I tell you that these statements would get more publicity in the next week than the declarations of ten thousand men, who have been proclaiming the unsearchable riches of Christ as you are wont to hear them proclaimed; and you must not infer, brethren, because you are witnesses of a multitude of things said and printed—discussing and canvassing what you are not accustomed to hear discussed and canvassed—you must not suppose that the evidence has been touched in any degree, for the very contrary is the case. Turn in what direction you will, take the studious men that are engaged in Egyptology, take the large class of men that are looking into ethnology. I do not need to name the list of sciences in which able men are engaged, sometimes intentionally, and not unfrequently unintentionally, contributing their several quotas to the increase and extension of that volume of evidence by which this is commended to us as a true book, and a book given us by the inspiration of God. I stand here to say in the presence of my brethren, without hesitation or scruple, that there never was a time in the world's history when there was such a mass of scholarship, such a mass of science, such a mass of thought, such a mass of evidence, to say nothing of the mass of wealth and of intellect, ranged upon the side of Christian truth, as in the days in which we have the happiness to live. The volume of evidence is not merely untouched; it is increasing and extending as the years advance. "Oh" some one says, "I can understand certain evidence about which the ministers used to speak to me—the evidence which came from the working of miracles—and I sometimes think if I had been upon the earth when our blessed Lord was here, and if I had seen Him do the things that are recorded in the Gospels, I should never be troubled with doubts or fears." But will you reflect my brethren, that there were many men and women who did witness these miracles and who did not believe? And will you reflect on the other hand that you have compensation for your being removed in point of time from being witnesses of miracles such as those, in another direction. There is the volume of prophecy being fulfilled, that is being unfolded before you, and of which you would not have had the advantage, if you had lived in the days of our blessed Lord. Take the Jewish people alone. During the last two years attention has been called again and again to the sufferings inflicted upon them, to the despotic treatment of which they have been the victims, to the hardships that they have endured at the hands of Germany in the first instance, and later of Russia. What are all these things but the fulfilment of prophetic words uttered many centuries ago—uttered when the Jewish nation was strong and stable—uttered when these nations were unknown? The utterance does not justify the wrong that the nations have been doing, but that these words were spoken, and that they stand as specimens of a whole group of predictions being fulfilled as the ages advance—this fact you and I may take as blessed compensation to us for missing that other class of convincing evidence exhibited in the miraculous works done by our blessed Lord and Saviour. We say, then, that instead of our having less reason now to be steadfast than in the days that are past, there never was so much reason as in the age in which we live for believing. You know how readily one may say, "There are many things proceeding round about me now—call them if you will by the general name of worldliness—with which I was not familiar in earlier Christian days, and which seem to indicate clearly to me that Christian

faith is departing, and the Christian cause is being weakened." There is a place upon the New England Shores which some of you perhaps have seen. It is known as Old Orchard Beach. The peculiarity of it is this that there is a large and wide expanse of level and smooth sand, and that the sea retires to an astonishing distance from the green fields that overlook it. I can fancy the child taken there for the first time on a summer's morning and seeing the water recede until out of sight, leaving the great expanse of smooth and dry sand, being tempted to believe for a moment that the sea was going away altogether. But it is not so; it is only the receding of the tide, and it will come back again at no distant time; and it is so that the things that sometimes strike the eye make an equally undue impression upon the mind. The truth of God is like the ocean, and as one has said of it—

"Roll on, thou deep and dark blue ocean, roll,  
Ten thousand fleets sweep over thee in vain;  
Man marks the world with ruin, his control  
Stops with thy shores."

There was a time when the Christian people of New England used to begin their Sabbath at sunset on the Saturday evening. They do so no longer; but does any man suppose that there is less spiritual religion throughout New England than in the days when that was their usage and their custom? The very contrary can be proved. There was a time in the Province of Ireland where I passed my earliest years when the communion season came twice in the year, and was protracted not only through the services of week-days but on the Lord's day through four or five or six hours. Now it is within two hours; and I can understand how an aged Christian, not very conversant with the things of the world, might be ready to say:—"Oh, such a change as has taken place; it is not now as it used to be in the good old days." But I tell you, notwithstanding the change, there never was so much Godliness in that region as there is at this present moment.

What do all these things go to show us? Why, my brethren, that we must allow for circumstances, conditions, incidents and surroundings, and we must distinguish between these, and their superficial, partial influence, and the inner truth and reality of things with which we have to do. The vesture and some of the attitudes of the mystical body of Christ may undergo changes, but that body does not change; it is like Himself: "the same yesterday, to day, and forever." So I say to you, without hesitation, "Be ye steadfast" in your adherence to the truth; in your standing fast by these oracles that God has revealed. "Yes," but some may say, "there are men who speak to us and are recognised as liberals, and they do not think about this matter as we do, and yet that is a good name that they have succeeded in appropriating." I say that they have no right to appropriate it. We Christians are the truest liberals, in the best sense of the word. Nay, we are the liberals, if the matter came to be thoroughly investigated. It is true they may turn round and say to me, "but you are biassed, you are prejudiced by your training and your education and your early habits and even your professional feelings, you are biassed." I have just as much right to turn to them and say, "you are biassed by your pride, by your vanity, by your self love, by your lusts, by that carnal mind that is enmity against God and is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be." "Well, but," they say, "there are persons now who call themselves and are called by others 'secularists,' and they do not look upon these things as you do." Now, it is sometimes very easy to be carried away by an impressive word—a showy word, and it is good to look into the meaning of the thing. "Secularist," that is one who is devoted to the age, bent upon lifting up the age, making the age better, and so on. I claim that we Christians are the true secularists, and the Bible is the best inspiration of the true secularism—the godliness that is profitable for all things, and has the promise of the life that now is and of that which is to come; and the difference between us and the so-called secularist is this, that he would lift up

the age by powers no higher than are within the age itself ; we would lift it up by the aid of power omnipotent that cometh from above. " Ah, but," they say, " you Christians are in some degree in bondage ; we are free ; we are free-thinkers." I declare again that we Christians are the true free-thinkers. I am a free-thinker ; I do not hesitate to avow it in the presence of any man,—I am a free-thinker—that is to say, I claim to judge upon questions on which I am bound to form an opinion by evidence, but it must be by proper evidence. And there is the blunder into which the so-called " free-thinkers are continually falling. Is it an historical question ? Then I ask historical evidence. A scientific question ? Then I ask scientific evidence. A moral question ?—moral evidence. A spiritual question ? spiritual evidence. And God would have you and me reason in that way. " Prove all things," He says to you and me, " and hold fast to that which is good." That is my counsel to you " be ye steadfast in your hold of all that God has been pleased to reveal." Now, when I make this argument to you, founded upon the nature of the human mind and its processes, I do not forget that the truth of God works faith in the human soul ; but He does not make a human soul a machine ; He works through and by the powers and faculties and aptitudes God has given to that soul, and He does not trample upon the human will, but guides and directs it ; and I would not forget myself, and I would not have you forget, that when once we have committed ourselves to any cause that the Bible condemns, that moment we become disqualified in some degree for the acceptance of its honest teaching. It comes with the statement that sin is unspeakably hateful to God and that its penalty is death. " The wages of sin is death." Let me be conscious of sin without having received the atonement and there will be that within myself which by processes which all men can understand (though they cannot always define them), will make it easy to persuade me that death is an undue, an extravagant, and unreasonable penalty to follow my faults and errors. Take a man who has been condemned and sentenced for murder, to capital punishment, and it will not be very difficult to persuade that man that it is impolitic and unwise, and even unjust, to inflict the death sentence. So I say to you, my brethren, if you would be steadfast, if you would remain steadfast, keep from everything that this word condemns ; do the will of God ; be honest and sincere in your practical loyalty to its truth ; and in the very process of doing it you acquire and cultivate within yourself a susceptibility to spiritual impressions, you invoke and invite the guidance of the Spirit of Holiness. " Oh, send forth Thy light and Thy truth ; let them lead me ; let them guide me." So much, then, for this statement, " Be ye steadfast."

Now we come to the next word, " unmoveable ;" Bengel, in common with many other Greek scholars, we find taking this word and applying it to the regulation of life, the things that we do, and then the meaning is that we are to hold fast to the forms of obedience to this divine will. " Oh yes," some one says, " that word is exactly correct—forms, they are only forms ; religion is the real and spiritual thing, independent of forms, and I value religion in its own proper place, but the forms I don't value highly." Well, now, let us be frank and candid about the matter. Is it true that forms are of no account ? Have you ever had occasion to sign leases ? To write your name to discharges ? To enter into compacts and agreements and form companies ? Were the forms of no importance in these matters ? Forms of justice—are they of any moment ? A crowd persuades itself that a man is guilty of murder, and it tramples upon forms and lynches the man. Is that good policy ? Why, no ! The safety for you and me, in life and property, is in the forms of justice. Forms of politeness—are they of no significance ? Are they of no moment ? Do you educate your children upon that plan ? No ! Do you not know that if men and women habitually disregard the forms of civility it will be difficult for them to keep the reality ? That is human nature, brethren, and God has adapted the system of His revealed religion to our human nature, and so it is neither wise nor right of us to disregard forms of religion

in the place where God has put them and for the use with which he has connected them. The summer before last the troops of the United States saluted the flag of Great Britain at Yorktown. It was a mere form, and anybody that chose to be supercilious might say, "Why, what did it signify?—only the blowing off of a quantity of powder and the displaying of some gaudy silk—only that and nothing more." Yes, it was much more! If that had been done in 1812 by the United States, it would have been surrender to Great Britain. When it was done the year before last it meant mutual reconciliation; it meant peace; it meant good-will; it meant friendship between two great English-speaking nations; and God forbid that it should be sundered or severed. Only a form, but oh! how much it involved! And so, my brethren, when you and I go to the font and baptism is administered; when you and I go to the Lord's table and take the bread and drink the wine,—only a form, but oh, how much it means!—reconciliation with God; friendship with Jesus Christ; a place in the family of the King; and the avowal of an honest purpose to do the Master's will evermore. Even as we sit at His table, bowed down and overwhelmed perhaps by the sense of our unfitness and unworthiness to be there, in the ear of faith we hear Him speaking to us and saying, "I call you not servants, for the servant knoweth not what his Lord doeth, but I have called you friends." Well, the same is true in relation to the Lord's supper; the same is true as to the Lord's Day. I would have you to be unmoveable, dear brethren, in your attachment to it and your right observance of it, stopping ordinary occupations, reading more of the Bible on that day, cultivating family piety and regular attendance upon God's house. It is easy for anybody to belittle these things,—stigmatize them as mere forms; but the history of Evangelical religion proves that in the degree in which these things are maintained and rightly used, in that degree God is real to us, and our souls grow in grace and in the knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ. I had occasion about a year ago to examine with care a report made by a missionary in whom I had a particular interest, who is working upon soil that once was classic; he is working in Greece, and he made this statement as accounting for the comparatively little that he was able to do in the way of systematic teaching; he combines medical work in a charitable way with his teaching of the truth; and he put this view of the state of society where he was labouring:—"The people," he said, "have an immense number of holidays, so-called; they have been multiplied almost indefinitely, and they spend these holidays not in labour, but in indulgence, in pleasures, and I am sorry to say, in many instances, sensual and degraded, and the consequence is," he said, "that when the Lord's day comes around, they cannot afford to keep it; they are compelled to work upon their farms or attend to their business, or they would not be able to live; and so it is hard to get access to them on the Lord's Day." I confess that I thought the statement a little overdone, until I had a good opportunity to see how the thing is in Russia, and to see how the attendance upon the places of worship in the Greek Church is impaired and diminished apparently from the same set of causes. Oh, brethren! be unmoveable in your belief that the Lord's Day can be put where the Master put it. Put no day beside it; put no days along with it; for in the degree in which you act upon His wise plan, in that degree it will be good for you, in that degree you will be effective in your testimony to the truth. It would be easy to multiply and enlarge these counsels under the head of "Unmoveable," but it is not necessary to do it; you do not need to be told that the Bible has its ethics as well as its doctrines, and its ethics and its doctrines are linked together. God has joined them together; woe be to any man that dares put them asunder! Its ethical principles touch every relation of our life. It comes into the home and it fixes the duties that spring out of marriage, which it makes sacred. It goes into business and prompts to honesty; and stamps and stigmatizes deceit, no matter how high the names that are associated with it, and no matter how large the fortunes that may be rolled up by it. It goes into every relation of life,

as between capital and labour, as between master and servant, as between governor and ruled. Be unmoveable in your judgment of the ethics of your Bibles, and in the degree in which you do that you will be a good citizen because you are a good Christian, doing right things because your Master, who is also your Redeemer, has laid upon you the doing of them. Be ye unmoveable. "Oh, but," you say, "upon that plan you would make much of very little things, and you would make life a very grave and serious business; if I am to speak, and think, and reflect upon almost everything that I do, why, all the freedom, all the vivacity, all the happy and light enjoyment, is subtracted from my life." My brethren, this is not your affair nor mine; we belong to the Lord; He is Creator; His Son is Redeemer; happiness of the true kind comes from Him; life is successful when He makes it so; life is joyous when the light of His countenance is lifted upon us; His peace ruling in our hearts is the best guarantee for a true, free, joyous, noble, dignified life; and He has been pleased to set importance upon things that seem to you and me to be little. Take the Apostle Paul, even if you can push aside for a moment the recollection of his being inspired; suppose you forget that for a moment. Paul was not a narrow man, not a bigoted man, not an ignorant man, not a vulgar man, not an enslaved man, not a fanatic, and not a fool; and you remember how he writes to these very people, these Corinthians, about a very small matter. Allow me to put it to you colloquially. A Corinthian believer is invited to a feast, an entertainment, at the house of a friend, a neighbour, perhaps a relative, and the food is placed upon the table, and his host helps him to a slice of meat, and as he does it he remarks casually, "This was offered to our god." What is the Christian to do? "Do not take it, do not eat it." Well, but that will seem very strange, and perhaps rude and uncivil. Oh, but there are higher interests in the world than those of conventional politeness, dear brethren. "Do not take it," says the Apostle; why? for his sake that offered it to you, and your own, and the sake of those who are sitting by; and why? Why, you Christians by your very profession of Christianity allege that you take God in Christ for your Master against all these idols; now do not weaken your testimony, do not compromise yourself, do not leave this impression in any way, even though it seem a slight and insignificant trifling way, that you have gone back upon Him whom you took for your Master, and that you are with the idols as truly as you are with Him. Now, you can see, if you will think of it, that a little thing may be great and significant. Then we are to take our course as though we heard the Master saying to us, "be ye faithful unto death, and I will give you a crown of life." Again I say unto you, "be ye unmoveable."

Now we come to the third and the last of these counsels, and I shall not dwell upon it at any great length, for I confess to keen sympathy with the many friends that have to stand round about this building, and I would not willingly weary you. Here is the last of these counsels. "Always abounding in the work of the Lord, for as much as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord." God has given us our powers of body and mind, and He means that we should use them. He never favours indolence, laziness, inactivity; He means that we should work; meditation is good in its place, so is self-examination in its place, so is instruction in its place, but work has its place also—"Always abounding in work." But this is the "work of the Lord." It is not mere activity, it is not mere spontaneous exercise of vigorous powers of which we happen to be conscious, and the very exercise of which brings us pleasure; it is the work of the Lord—work that He enjoins; work that will glorify Him, work that will be upon the line of His working; work that we do for His sake; it is activity, it is Christian activity; it is toiling, it is toiling for God, it is working with the eye fixed upon Him, as though we said, "Oh, Lord Jesus, this I do for Thee." Now the counsel is that we are to be in the work of the Lord; not only that—we are to be abounding in it, not doing it now and then, dear brethren, when we have a mind to, when we happen to be in the mood, when our friends pat us upon the back and applaud

us, when it is a little creditable, when it is the conventional or fashionable thing; not that, but "abounding" in it, always abounding in it, whether it is popular or unpopular, whether it is fashionable or unfashionable, whether it is agreeable or irksome, whether it pleases us or does not please us, always abounding in it, with all the powers that we have, influences, words, works, means, examples; everything that we can set in motion in obedience to God's will we are to set in motion that He may be glorified. "Always abounding in the work of the Lord." Now, it is quite true (I thank God that it is true), any services in our most ordinary walks of life can be transformed into service of God. To sell in the store; to make an agreement; to carry a message; to transact a piece of business: anything, thank God, you can do in such a way that it shall be of service to God. But this means more; it means going out of the way; it means being aggressive; it means taking pains, it means denying ourselves; it means if need be, to be offering sacrifices in the matter; abounding always in the work of the Lord. Well, why? For a thousand reasons; but He only gives one here, and that one is sufficient—"Knowing that your labour is not in vain in the Lord."

I would like to know what other kind of work there is regarding which you can have that assurance. How much money has been invested in hope and all lost; how much energy have men put into enterprises, and they fell to the ground, and there was nothing but mortification and humiliation; they are ashamed to talk of them. How many things have men entered into and given them time and energy and means; but nothing came of them! But it is not so here. This labour is not in vain; and they who are counselled to engage in it are authorized to know that it shall not be in vain: "Knowing that your labour is not in vain in the Lord." What does that mean? It means what it says. It cannot be, it never will be, in vain. "What," you say, "will there always be results?" Why, yes, visible to the eye of Him to whom the work is done: visible to the eye of the employer, and that is enough for the employed. It shall not be in vain in Him for He has seen it, and the motive that inspires it, and the results that He will bring about by it, and it shall not be in vain. Does that seem hard to any of you? Then let me give you a crude illustration that may make it a little clearer. There are two great armies in battle array, the one is in numbers much weaker than the other, and the general of the weaker host sees the difficulty, his stronger enemy has a powerful detachment there on his right, and he must provide against that. He summons a subordinate officer to his side; he says, "you shall take so many men"—a bare handful—"and you shall attack these troops to my right;" and the battle begins, and the subordinate obeys. Does this subordinate, with his handful, vanquish and drive from the field this crowd upon the right? Why, no. What does he do? He keeps them occupied so that the hosts marshalled face to face have it all to themselves, and it is not in the power of those troops on the right to take the flank or rear of the weaker army, and the weaker carries the day; and when the subordinate presents himself before the general-in-chief in the evening hour (his handful of men greatly reduced), is he reproached that he did not drive them off the field? No; but the general says: "Well done, well done; you did all that I expected; I did not mean, I did not suppose, that you could drive them from the field, but you kept them from standing in my way while I dealt with those directly in front of me; well done, good and faithful!" The subordinate did not know, perhaps, what was in his commander's mind; he knew what he was told to do, and he went and did it. And it is so here, my beloved, with the Captain of Salvation. When He gives you work to do, go and do it, go and do it, "Always abounding in the work of the Lord." It will not be in vain; there will be results seen by the eye of Him who gives you the order; and when the great and final review comes, and all stand before Him who administers the kingdom to the glory of the Father, He will say, "Well done, good and faithful, ye were faithful over few things, I will make you rulers over many things,

enter into the joy of your Lord." That is the meaning of the word. May God help you to take it to your hearts, not as my word or as any man's word, but the word of Him who inspired His servant to write thus to the Corinthians.

Some one says, "Well, but I know comparatively little, and I have on great power and influence, and not much courage, and I don't feel much heart to set about aggressive work for the Lord. I wish there were time time to give you some adequate idea of a man who comes up before us, casually almost, as it would seem, three times in the one Gospel. In the first instance he comes by night—whatever was the motive—to our blessed Lord, and he invites conversation and asks questions, and the Lord explains things to him not at all about baptism, as it seems to me, and, as is sometimes alleged, but things touching regeneration and the cleansing of this old corrupt nature, as they are presented in two successive chapters of the Old Testament, which Nicodemus ought to have known and understood, but he did not; and he went away without our being told what impressions had been made upon him. Some time passed, and again we have a glimpse of him. The Pharisees have sent their officers to take Christ, and the officers have come back without taking Him, apparently being converted to His side, and instead of reporting their prisoner, they say "Never man spake like this Man." "Why," they say, "you also on His side! Are you also with these people that are accused?" Then the man that came by night puts in his word; it is a modest word, but it is quite fitting, and it is spoken in difficult circumstances. It is harder for a man to bear testimony to unwelcome truth in his own set, among his own clique, and that is what the man did: and he baffled their design for a time, and they broke up in confusion. And then he comes before us again. Now the scene is all changed. Jesus has been crucified, and Nicodemus goes with others bringing spices, a hundred weight, that the body may be honoured, that this tardy testimony may be borne to the esteem in which He is held, and the glory of His character and His life. There may be something like that with you, my brother. Like Nicodemus you may learn slowly, and even timidly, but what you have learnt upon occasion, act upon as God gives the occasion, and you will gain in knowledge and gain in courage. "Oh, but," you say, "I never can have such an opportunity as he had with his hundred weight of spices." Yes, you can. Yes, you can! There is still the body of Christ, not dead, indeed, but alive; alive by the indwelling of His Holy Spirit; there is His mystical body on the earth; you can bring your spices, you can bring your love, bring your charity, bring your magnanimity, bring your gentleness, bring your patience, bring your diligence, bring your fidelity, bring your piety, bring your manly, and womanly consistency, and when you do this you bear witness to Christ, you abound in the work of the Lord.

But there are some here, no doubt, that have never believed in Jesus, and to whose heart all this has a strange sound—a remote and unintelligible message. My dear friend, I don't wish to close till I have spoken a word to you. You are dead in trespasses and sins, but this Jesus can give you the Life. Nay, He is the Life. You have only to take Him, and you live in Him. My dear brethren, God's wrath overhangs you, and, continue as you are, and it will overwhelm you. But Jesus is the Refuge, and the way to Him is plain. You have only to go to Him, go directly and throw yourself at His feet, with the cry, "Lord Jesus, save me or I perish;" and He will save you, and the cloud of divine indignation will roll away, and instead, there will be the light of the Lord's countenance lifted upon you. My dear friend you are a stranger to Christ, but remember from to-night it will be your own fault if you continue a stranger! For why? He says to you to-night (He has said it many a time before, my friends around about me have said it in His name to you many a time; but He says it again here to-night.) "Come unto me," ye that are old, come; ye that are young, come; ye that are poor, come; no matter how poor, come; "Come unto me all ye that

labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." Why will you not come—just as you are? He has given this word of promise, and He never lets a promise fall to the ground. Go to Him, O Christless soul, go to Him with all thy burdens, griefs, sins, with all thy ignorance, blackness, hardness, go to Him, and He will put the sin away and give you rest and peace, and take you in His grace into God's family, and you will become one with Him, hid in Him, of His party, of His sect, of those for whom He stands, of those for whom He pleads, of those whom He will welcome at the last as His own, members of His body and of His flesh and of His bones.

May the Lord bless this His Word to the believers, and to those who are not believers, and to His name be the praise!

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## Bible Society Recorder.

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TORONTO, 1st OCTOBER, 1883.

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### BOARD MEETINGS.

The first meeting of the new Board for the year met on Tuesday, May 15th, 1883, at 7.30 P.M. The chair was occupied by the Rev. H. D. Powis, and the meeting was opened with prayer led by the Rev. H. M. Parsons.

Standing Committees for the year were appointed as follows:—

*On Agency and Colportage.*—The Revds. Dr. Reid, John Burton, T. C. Des Barres, Hugh Johnston, E. M. C. Botterill, T. W. Jolliffe, and Messrs. Jas. Brown, Warring Kennedy, D. Higgins, R. Irving Walker, Colonel Moffatt, Dr. Buchan and the Secretaries.

*On the Ketchikan Trusts.*—The Revds. Dr. Rose, Dr. King, A. H. Baldwin, and H. D. Powis; and Messrs. Thomas Kirkland, Henry O'Brien, Samuel Alcorn, Dr. Buchan and the Secretaries.

*Distribution of Scriptures on Railways and in Hotels.*—Colonel Moffatt, and Messrs. John Earls, John Harvie, and J. C. Copp.

*On Building.*—The President, the Treasurer, the Revds. Dr. Reid, Dr. Rose, and Dr. Castle, and Messrs. John Macdonald, James Brown, H. Mortimer, D. Higgins, T. Lailey, H. O'Brien, John Harvie, Samuel Alcorn, F. A. Ball and the Secretaries.

A grant of Scriptures was made to the Bishop of Algoma; the Depositary's cash account, and the Colporteurs' reports were submitted, and the meeting closed by the Rev. J. F. Sweeny.

The Board met again on Tuesday, June 19th, at the usual hour, the Hon. William McMaster in the chair. The Rev. H. D. Powis led in prayer. The Rev. J. M. Cameron, Honorary Secretary, moved a resolution in reference to the death of W. A. Baldwin, Esq., one of the Vice-Presidents, and formerly one of the Secretaries of the Society for several years. This was unanimously adopted, and Mr. Cameron requested to send a copy to the family.

Mr. Higgins presented the report of the Auditors, which was adopted. A Report was submitted from the Agency and Colportage Committee recommending the general plan for their operations for the year, which was also adopted. Routine business was attended to, and the Board adjourned to September, the Rev. Canon Du Moulin closing with the benediction.

The Board met again on Tuesday, September 18th, at 7.30 p.m., the Hon. William McMaster in the chair. The meeting was opened with prayer, led by the Rev. S. J. Hunter. The Secretaries reported that they had received a copy of the last will of the late Mr. Wm. Ruddock, of Stouffville, who had devised some property to the Society, from which, however, it is debarred by the law of mortmain. The Secretaries also reported the following handsome donations:—\$100 from Donald Fraser, Esq., of Nairn; \$50 from Robert Black, Esq., of Brussels; \$100 from Miss Helen Lesslie, of Dundas, and \$100 from a lady in Toronto, "In memory of a beloved brother." Very encouraging colportage work in Algoma by Mr. Taylor, during the summer, was reported, and other routine work attended to, after which, Dr. Hodgins, the Senior Honorary Secretary, gave an account of the gratifying manner in which he was received at the head quarters of the Parent Society during his recent visit to England. The meeting was closed with prayer, led by the Rev. Professor McLaren.

#### SOME BRIEF EXTRACTS FROM SOME OF THE SPEECHES AT THE PARENT SOCIETY'S ANNIVERSARY.

##### THE ARCHBISHOP OF CANTERBURY:—

"Some time ago I was staying at a French village, and I made acquaintance with an old sailor. He was plainly a devout Roman Catholic, though he never spoke to me about it; but when the time of my going away came near, he asked me whether I would leave him some remembrance of my little chats with him. I said, 'What would you like?' He replied in a way that startled me, though I was not quite sure at the moment whether he said it merely to please me. 'Will you give me a French Bible?' I said, 'Have you not got one?' 'No,' he said, 'I never had one.' Well, I still had plenty of time, and I thought that I should not be doing him much of a real service if it should be the case that he only asked for the Bible to please me, and to flatter me in what he believed to be my ways of thinking. Therefore I delayed a little, and I let him ask me once or twice, until I was quite convinced that he was in earnest; and then I wrote to England for a French Bible when the time of my going away was very near. I was extremely surprised with what he did with the Bible. He instantly took it, and he squeezed my hand till he pained me, and he buried the Bible in his blue shirt, so that no one could see that he had it. I said, 'What are you going to do with it?' He said, 'I shall read it to my children every night.' 'What,' said I, 'do you gather your children together every night before going to bed?' 'O yes,' he said, and his face quite beamed, 'before they go to bed they all of them come and kneel round the table, and I say prayers with them; and now from this time, I shall be able to read them a little bit out of this book.'

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"And I say that if Mr. Braithwaite and I may give away our two New Testaments, we all as friends here may join together and give away ninety-six millions of them.

"And then what comes of it? Why, its power seals it. It is not in vain that people walk through the Island of Formosa and part with these copies

for a farthing a-piece. It is not in vain that fragments of the book are scattered under banyan trees, or left within reach even of those who are almost savages, but who can use them. It is not in vain that they are distributed to the most intellectual nations of the world. The power of the Bible seals it, I say, for let any reasonable human being ask himself what would be the effect, supposing that a Mohammedan society were to distribute the Koran in fragments through our villages? Would it act to make one single soul a believer in Mohammed? Impossible. But the mere distribution of the Bible, even if no more can under the circumstances be done, has hallowed many a life and blessed many a death-bed. And moreover, the old teaching of our Lord is found true. The Word is a seed which, in time to come, bears fruit, some thirty-fold, some sixty, and some a hundred.

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"I beg to thank the Committee—and I am sure I can thank them in your name—for what they call the 'policy of withdrawal,' that when they see that the church of any nation is itself disposed to take in hand your Bibles, or their own Bibles, and distribute them, they will leave them to do that work and turn to others. And then, again, I thank them very much for having put that word 'immerse' in the margin of the translations. I must say that I think they were justified in taking this step; and I do not doubt that this conciliation, based upon the real root meaning of the Word, will have its effect. And, again, I would venture to say—though I am not so perfectly certain that it will carry every one along with me—that I have on former occasions thanked the Society, and I should like to do so again, for the wisdom with which, where no other version would be received, they have made it a point to distribute versions of the Vulgate."

THE REV. COLMER B. SYMES said :—"My lord and Christian friends, I have very great pleasure in rising to second the adoption of the Report; and before saying another word upon it, I would take the liberty, in the name of my Christian brethren here, of expressing the very great pleasure which we feel in seeing his Grace the Archbishop of Canterbury coming to the front on the platform of this Society. We are not here to speak words of flattery to each other in the presence of the heart-searching God; but it is a cause of gratitude when one whom God has called to fill so prominent a place in His Church, and to exercise so weighty an influence, can come forward and give to this Society the influence of his example throughout so large a section of the Church.

"The Society itself is unique, not in respect of the organization to which the resolution refers, for organization belongs to all societies, but unique in this—that it is based upon a Book; and upon the worth of that Book it stands or falls. The justification of our history lies in the extreme value of the Word of God.

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"I was rather glad that his Grace the Archbishop of Canterbury did not indulge at any length in speaking of the great catholicity of all who supported this Society. I have long felt that this Society tests the true Christianity of a man, and that, if the truth is dearer to him than his sect, then he will join with this Society; and one sometimes regrets that the cordial catholicity which is freely expressed on platforms is corrected by a courteous coldness when we meet elsewhere. But we rejoice in this—that this Word of God is gradually creating a unity. It is not creating a uniformity, it never will. Itself it is not uniform. It has all varieties. But it is creating a healthy, forceful, manly unity. It is bringing men to see Christ more clearly, and to look at Christians as brethren. It is enabling us to begin to see with other eyes than heretofore how much of Christ lives in all parts of His Church, so that we can grasp the hand of brotherhood. That is true unity."

THE BISHOP OF EXETER.—

"It is the work of this society everywhere to make men feel the value of

the treasure which God has thus bestowed—everywhere to hold on high the banner of the Word of God—everywhere to call all men to submission to its authority, and to acknowledgment of its power and its truth. And it will not call in vain. The more the Bible is spread, and the more the Bible is studied, the deeper, the profounder the thought that is spent upon it, the more earnest the inquiry bestowed upon it, the more careful the criticism, the closer the examination—all the more shall stand out, conspicuous before the spiritual nature, the marvellous power which breathes through all its pages, and tells mankind of the truths which it contains. I fear not any examination to which it may be subjected; I fear not any criticism of its history, or any investigation of its source; I fear not any examination of the details of its meaning. Still I know that, whatever else shall go, this will stand.”

THE REV. DR. MURRAY MITCHELL.—

My lord, and Christian friends, I have been somewhat suddenly asked to take part in the services of this day; but I have not felt at liberty to refuse the invitation. Although I have not had time properly to collect and arrange my thoughts, yet I have lately seen the work of this society in foreign lands; and I venture to hope that the simplest possible statement of facts which I have witnessed with my own eyes may be interesting and useful. I have, just a day or two ago, returned from the East. I have seen the work of this Society and of kindred societies in Japan, and in China, and in India, and, on the way home, in Italy; and I am sure that if, in the short time to which I must restrict myself, I could only state what I have seen, every member of this Society would feel encouraged, and pour out his heart in thanksgiving to God for success in the past, and would again go forward with the assurance of fresh triumphs in the future.”

MR. G. T. EDWARDS.—

“I hope, my lord, we all feel that on these occasions we meet to promote a great practical object. I am afraid that this is what some of our critics would hardly allow. They would say, ‘If you were met to establish a hospital, or to found an infirmary, that is something practical, but to circulate a book, to try and impose your opinions on other people, may be very well intentioned, but it is not practical.’ I, however, apprehend, my lord, that broken bones, and lacerated limbs, and gout, and fever, and rheumatism, are not the only ills from which men are suffering. Are not man’s deepest sorrows within? ‘A wounded spirit who can bear?’ If the Book we circulate can do anything to soothe those sorrows, I apprehend our object is somewhat practical. Now, I maintain as a fact—as certain a fact as any fact in science or history—you may account for it how you will—the Book we circulate has a marvellous power to dry up tears, to bind up broken hearts, to smooth sick and dying pillows, to fill men with an unutterable peace passing understanding. If that is what we are doing, then I think our object is eminently practical. If it be asked, ‘What is the Bible Society doing to meet all the attacks that are being made upon God’s Word?’ I reply, ‘We are not spending any of the money that is entrusted to us in printing defences of the Bible, but we use all the money in printing the Bible itself.’ I apprehend that this is the noblest defence we can make.

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“The Bible Society defends the Bible by circulating it. What a wonderful defence it is! It found the world with, perhaps, five millions of Bibles; it has given to it now, you hear, more than ninety-five millions—nearly a hundred million copies. It found the Bible in fifty languages, it has sent it out in two hundred and fifty, not always the whole Bible, nor do we mean to say all these versions are now in actual circulation. How wonderful, my lord, when we think of forty of these languages specially reduced to writing to give the people speaking them God’s Word. Here are forty languages, that eighty years ago were only spoken languages, and now men are reading

in their own tongue wherein they were born, in these various languages, the wonderful works of God. I believe that when the Oriental Congress met in this great city some few years ago, and visited the Bible Society's house in Queen Victoria-street, and when they saw these various versions upon the shelves, they did not fail to acknowledge that, though this is a Christian and benevolent, not a literary society, yet it had done more, even in the interests of philology, than any literary society in the world, all its energies being expended in the production of one glorious Book, God's precious Word."

#### A TRIP TO JAVA.

A few extracts from a letter from Mr. Haffenden, the Society's Agent for Malaysia :—

"Since I last wrote you I have been to Java and back again. I had intended to have written to you while in Java, but my time there was necessarily so short, and at the same time so fully occupied, that I really had not time; and I am glad that I did not do so, as I think that what I am able to tell you now will be more reliable than if I had given you my impressions of the place and of the work to be done as they at first came to me.

"I had been long asking the Lord to show me the best place to which to make my first trip, and I had once or twice, or perhaps oftener, mentioned in my letters my thoughts and difficulties on this subject. But now, on my return, I feel that truly I have been led of the Lord to the very best place in the whole of Malaysia in which to gain the information I require before starting off on more extensive journeys.

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"The work to be done in Java, and in fact in the whole of Netherlands India, is immense, and as yet the ground is almost unbroken as far as Bible work goes. In order to be able to estimate the possibilities of work in and round Batavia itself, I took with me a small supply of Chinese and Malay Scriptures, and in three days, in the bazaars in Depök and Beutenzorg, I sold 100 copies of Malay and Chinese Scriptures, spending about two to three hours each day in the work. One of the days in Beutenzorg, with the assistance of my eldest boy, whom I took with me to Java, I sold fifty-four copies to Chinese and Malays, principally the former, the people crowding round me everywhere to buy and to hear the story of the cross, and I should have been able to dispose of hundreds of copies more had I been able to stay there a few days. I find it is a good plan to have two persons at work, for I did best in this instance where I spoke, and my little son (who is quite up to the work, and rejoices in being allowed to help) sold. It appears to me that the Chinese population of Java are of a better class than those of Singapore, and the proportion of readers is much larger. Then there is a large population of country-born Chinese, who are almost all able to read Malay in Roman characters, and who are willing to buy, which the same class here hardly cares to do. Then, again, the Malays, Javanese, and Sundanese, do not appear to me to be nearly as strict Mahometans as the Malays here in Singapore, and thus there is more chance of getting at them. \* \* \*

"It will be interesting to you, perhaps, to have an account of the population of Java, as giving you some idea of the work that, it appears to me, now lies open to us. Dutch, in Batavia alone, 7,211; Dutch in all Java, 33,708; natives in all Java, 19,015,291, of which about 3,000,000 are Javanese, 8,000,000 are Sundanese, and 3,000,000 are Malays; Chinese in all Java, 206,051; Arabs in all Java, 10,027; other nationalities, 3,079. Then of native Christians there are in Java alone about 7,720, all Protestants, and in the remainder of the Dutch possessions, principally, of course, in Amboyna and the north part of the Celebes, there are 254,455 Christians, of whom more than two-thirds are Protestants, and the remainder Roman Catholics. So that alone, amongst the native nominal Christian populations, there is a very large work to be done."—*British & Foreign Bible Society Reporter for August.*

## RECEIPTS AT THE BIBLE SOCIETY HOUSE, TORONTO, FROM BRANCH SOCIETIES, FROM 10TH MAY TO 24TH SEPTEMBER, 1883.

		On Purchase Account.	FREE CONTRIBUTIONS.		
			U. C. B. S.	B. & F. B. S.	Sundries.
		\$ cts.	\$ cts.	\$ cts.	\$ cts.
Cooksville	Branch	1 01	22 49		
Aurora	do	55 44			
Embro	do		32 76	65 52	
Campbellville	do		15 00	15 00	
Fort William	Depository	6 70			
Sault Ste. Marie	Branch	16 65	15 00		
Cumminsville	do		12 57	12 57	
Thamesville	do	32 38	10 00	10 00	
Berlin	do		60 05	60 00	
Parkdale	do		25 00	15 00	
Streetsville	do		25 00	25 00	
Smithville	do	7 56			
Mt. Pleasant, Brant,	do		21 07		
Stouffville	do	20 00			
Campbellford	do		1 50		
Milford	do		4 02		
Pinkerton	do	90			
Atwood	do	1 90			
Barrie	do		21 00	21 00	
Theford	do	9 60			
Arkwright	do		2 00		
Bond Head	do		15 00		
Churchill	do		29 00		
Keene	do		86 20		
Innerkip	do		22 84	22 00	
East Williams	do		105 00	50 00	
Fullarton	do	10 06			
Meaford	do	20 00			
Goderich	do		85 44		
Port Dover	do		57 67		
Weston	do		20 00	20 00	
Beaverton	do		70 00		
Wallaceburg	do	5 00			
Haliburton	Depository	8 39			
Newmarket	Branch	11 00			
Tweed	do	18 29	33 85		
Kinmount	do	22 75			
Thessalon	Depository	9 73			
Port Elgin	Branch	14 64			
Kirkton	do	20 90			
Lindsay	do	6 30			
Moir	do	5 00	7 27		
Orillia	do	50 00			
Mara	do	1 64	19 95		
Chatham	do	82 81			
Mount Forest	do	26 69			
Parry Sound	do		11 28		
Midland	do	1 12	14 09		
Huntsville	do		8 00		
New Westminster	do	8 40			
Belleville	do	20 75			
Chippawa	do	6 00	4 00		
Niagara Falls and Queenston	do		9 68	5 00	
Caistor	do		30 00		
Mount Albert	do		40 00		
Seaforth	do		24 02	48 00	