



Published Quarterly.

Under the Direction of the Upper Canada Bible Society.

TORONTO, OCTOBER, 1888.

### ANNIVERSARY SERMON

ON BEHALF OF THE UPPER CANADA BIBLE SOCIETY.

*Preached by the Rev. JOHN HALL, D.D., of New York, in the Metropolitan Church, Toronto, on Tuesday evening, 8th May, 1888.*

The service was opened by the singing of the hymn,

Onward, Christian soldiers,

after which the Rev. Samuel Lyle, of Hamilton, led in prayer, and read for the Scripture lesson the fourth chapter of Zechariah.

After the singing of the hymn,

Jesus shall reign where'er the sun,

the Rev. Dr. John Hall, of New York, was introduced, and delivered the annual sermon of the Society as follows:—

The portion of God's Word, dear friends, to which your attention is now to be called, is in the chapter which has been read already in your hearing, in the book of the Prophet Zechariah, fourth chapter, sixth and seventh verses, "Then he answered and spake unto me, saying—This is the word of the Lord unto Zerubbabel, saying, Not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit, saith the Lord of Hosts. Who art thou, O great mountain? before Zerubbabel thou shalt become a plain: and he shall bring forth the headstone thereof with shoutings, crying, Grace, grace unto it."

As you know, dear brethren, the prophets Haggai and Zechariah were associated with Ezra in the work that he had in hand. He was labouring to reconstruct the temple and to set up again the worship of Jehovah among the people. It was a very difficult work, and there were many hindrances to its success, but you and I may be assured of this, that when God calls us to do any work for Him, He will provide for us the aid and encouragement of which we have need, and notably was this the case with these two eminent prophets. There were two leading officials in connection with the people at this time—Zerubbabel, who had to do with the civil affairs, and Joshua, the

High Priest, who had to do with the spiritual. Zechariah, it is believed, spent a portion of his time in Babylon. You know how ready the mind of the Orient is to occupy itself with forms of instruction that take the shape of figure and definition, and there seems some reason to think that Zechariah had this peculiar oriental habit of mind; and it is God's way, when He is speaking to His people, to adapt His communications to their nature, and to address them in such a way that they can understand Him, and that circumstance perhaps explains the number and peculiarity of the visions through which the word of God was revealed to this prophet, and through him to his other servants whom he wished to encourage in the difficult work that they had in hand.

You notice the character of the vision as it is described in the early part of the chapter. The golden candlestick of the temple and the seven lamps were indications of the sources whence the spiritual light was to come, and it is not difficult to see the appropriateness of this symbolic imagery or the teaching of the great lesson that it was intended to impress upon the mind particularly of Zerubbabel. That lesson was to the effect that his reliance was not to be upon mere human agency, not to be upon political influence, not to be upon the power of numbers, not to be in the strength of an army—“Not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit, saith the Lord.”

Ministers who are here will agree with me that this is a lesson for all time, a lesson that we need to learn and keep in our thoughts when we are trying to do spiritual work in the Lord's name, and to the glory of Jesus our King. You will notice what a bold metaphor is brought into the next verse, for the impression of the idea that was to be impressed upon Zerubbabel's mind. “Who art thou, O great mountain?” You can imagine yourself travelling a plain on foot or on the back of a camel, alone or with a company, and all at once there rises up unexpectedly before you a steep precipice, a hill, a mountain, and you don't see how you are to advance. That is the way in which the difficulties are presented symbolically, and then, as if to show with what comparative readiness such difficulties can be rolled out of the way, the question is put, “Who art thou, what art thou, O thou great mountain? Before Zerubbabel thou shalt become a plain.” You could imagine how you would feel if, under the circumstances indicated, you suddenly saw the mountain subside, and a plain path for your feet before you. Well, that is the idea that is intended to be conveyed to the Lord's servant here, and it is the idea that we need many times in our lives to have brought to our thoughts. Whatever the barriers may be that stand in our way when we are walking where God will have us advance, He can sweep them out of our path, the great mountain can become a plain; and so it was to be, says the prophet, with this worker of the Lord in the great undertaking that he had in hand, until it should be completed and the top-stone brought forth amid the joyful acclamations of a grateful people, “Grace, grace unto it!” Now most of you know very well that this prophecy itself, and its substantial fulfilment, are regarded by Christian people as being a foreshadowing of the building up of a still greater temple, the spiritual edifice made up of living stones, the church of the Lord God redeemed by the blood of Jesus and sanctified by His quickening and comforting Spirit, and the passage naturally suggests that there will be difficulties in the way of the building of that spiritual temple. Jesus is Prophet and Priest and King. He has all the responsibility—if we may venture to apply that word in the circumstances—but there will be difficulties in the way with those who are working with Him and under Him, and they need encouragement in the face of these difficulties. Their confidence is not to be in human resources. It is not to be in the material aid that they can obtain from this or that created hand. Their confidence is to be in the Word of Him who has commissioned them, in the grace of Him who has redeemed them, and in the power that is behind them, which power can take all barriers out of their way and carry them

triumphantly to the conclusions set before their face. That was the lesson that the Lord taught to His Church, in what we call the days of primitive apostolic simplicity. How little the twelve had behind them, how few and feeble were the visible resources upon which they could count; but they had the Word of the Lord, they had the Spirit of the Lord, they had the promise of the presence of Jesus, and as you know, all of you who have thought of the matter, as long as the Church of Jesus held to this simplicity of faith, so long did she continue to make safe and honourable progress. It was when she forgot this and began to place undue confidence in the backing of civil rulers and political authorities that she lost her spiritual influence, and to some degree her standing, and that her interests became complicated as they did. When Christian people began to put reliance upon the strength and assistance that they could have from mere civil rulers like Constantine or Charlemagne, that moment they began to suffer and to lose the spiritual energy that Christ would have His people to possess. I say "complicated," for whenever this state of things began to exist there was a certain kind of sway over the Church claimed on the one hand, sway that belonged to Christ; and the Church, on the other hand, began to exercise a certain kind of sway that was not always good for her, and that was not always good for those over whom the power was exercised. It had been well for Christendom if Christian people had kept to the principles on which Christ sent forth His disciples, and had maintained that reliance that the prophet inculcated upon the Lord's servants in the ancient days,—not by might, nor power of a created and visible kind, but upon the power that is exercised by the Spirit of the living God.

Well now, brethren, we are interested, all of us, in this kingdom of our blessed Lord, in its progress and in the agencies by which it can be advanced; and, by consequence, in the difficulties that stand in the way of it. We need to know them, that we may be upon our guard. We need to know them, that we may reflect upon the particular agencies that we can use in the face of them, and probably you will agree with me that it is not unfitting that our attention should be called to a matter of this kind, under the circumstances in which we are gathered together. We are here to promote the circulation of the Word of the Lord, the instrument that the Spirit of God has condescended to use. We may well raise the question in our minds, What are the difficulties that have to be faced and overcome in the building up of the spiritual temple, or, to drop the figure, in the spreading of the Word, and the bringing of souls to the saving knowledge of Jesus. Allusion was made a moment ago to the fact that Zechariah's habit of thinking and representing things was probably affected, in some degree, by his contact with the Babylonians. It is in human nature that man is influenced in some degree by his associations, his surroundings and his education. I should be very sorry if it entered into your minds that the things that are to be stated to you now are due in some degree, on the part of him who states them, to training, education or local surroundings. Many of you know that there was a Convention of Christian people in connection with the Evangelical Alliance that met in Washington during the past winter. The papers that were read to that gathering have very properly been put into print, and I have had the opportunity of looking at them. It may be a little reassuring to you to state that when I speak to you to-night of the difficulties that are in the way of the Kingdom of the Lord Jesus I shall dwell upon the facts, in a good degree, that are brought to our notice in those admirable papers. I would indeed describe some of them probably in a different manner, grouping them together probably in a somewhat different fashion, but I want you to feel that it is not the particular or peculiar views of the speaker that you are to attend to,—that the facts, in substance, have been brought to the notice of the Christian public already, and that the presentation of them is not due to anything peculiar or individual in him who speaks to you, and I trust the

Spirit of God will bless what is to be spoken and make it good for every one of us. I assume from the very outset, that the mind of man, naturally, is not disposed to be submissive to the mind of Deity—the carnal mind is enmity against God and is not subject to His will. We readily see that in the words of the Bible. We do not so readily take in the full meaning of it. There is opposition in the natural heart to the will of Deity and a reluctance to submit to that will. How frequently men have shown that opposition by their hostility to the servants of the Lord. The opposition does not always take the same form, just as hostility to God's servants has not always taken the same shape. It has taken its shape according to the times and places in which it was being exercised. In some instances, for example, they have been flung to wild beasts, in some instances they have been stoned, in some cases they have been crucified—the circumstances, the land in which the hostility has taken place, shape these things. They have been determined by the time and the place, but the hostility has been the same throughout. But one might put it in another way, if you want to illustrate it to the young. For example, there have been great varieties of ways in which men have contended with one another, they have fought with the stone, and with the sling and the stone, they have fought with the bow and the arrow, they have fought with the sword and the spear, they have fought with the gun and the cannon; the hostility is one thing, the form in which the hostility expresses itself is determined by circumstances. You might put it in another way. If a great city is to be fortified, it would be quite an idle thing to fortify it now as it would have been done two thousand years ago. In former days men had to guard cities against weapons that have long since ceased to be in use. Now, if a fortification has to be erected, it is not against the spear or the arrow or the musket; it must be against the cannon ball that may weigh a ton, or the power of dynamite that may blow it suddenly upward. The feeling of hostility exists, the shape it will take being determined by the differences of circumstances, time and place.

Now, I venture to indicate as one of the first,—the great difficulty—with which the Church of Jesus Christ has to contend, the position in which we have been led to put mammon, the favourable attitude in which we have been led to put what the Bible calls mammon. Mammon may stand for worldly advancement, particularly that form of worldly advancement that is found in the accumulation of a great deal of property. If a poor, miserable miser is existing in a den of the earth in comparative hunger and nakedness, we look at him with mingled pity and contempt. But that is not the way in which we look at a man, for example, who has accumulated a fortune, whom we call a millionaire. We have put money in a higher place than is given to it in God's Holy Word. It is a very natural thing for man to do so. Money is the *world* compressed, condensed into the smallest possible space. Have enough of it and you command respect, you awaken interest, you acquire a certain degree of power and influence, you will have notice from the community, you will have notice from the press, and you will have a certain degree of place and prestige in many quarters, because, simply because you have accumulated wealth. In many instances the end is held, practically, to justify the means. There is the magnificent result he has achieved, let us not look too narrowly into the ways by which the result has been attained. There are certain sins, stealing, lying, drunkenness, violence and the like, and public opinion stigmatizes these, but it is not so with the sin of covetousness. A man may be covetous and stand well in society, a man may be covetous and stand well in the Church, a man may be covetous and receive honour at the hands of Christians, while Christians accept the statement that is put down in the Word—“covetousness, which is idolatry.” We have made a great difficulty for the Truth of God, for the Church of Christ, in the too favourable aspect in which we let mammon stand. No wonder that Christ and His Apostles spoke as clearly and definitely as

they did upon this matter. We could name a dozen sins which they have not specifically stigmatized, but O how strongly have they spoken out against this particular sin. Given a certain number of persons who have achieved success on this line, and you can see the disadvantage in which they are placed in relation to the Truth of God. To begin with, there is a vast amount of occupation—pre-occupation. They are wealthy, they are looked up to, they have a certain recognized social standing, there are certain things that they must do because they have reached this standing. They are very much engaged, so that they can justify to themselves the omission of the duties that are supposed to be incumbent upon Christians in ordinary conditions. But there is not only pre-occupation, there is occupation. There is occupation that is in its own nature damaging rather than helpful. Society, so called, looks to the wealthy, accords them in some degree its homage, and they do something for society in return. The result is an atmosphere of insincerity, of form, an atmosphere in which truth does not always have its true and proper place, an atmosphere in which things are held to be justified by the condition of those who do them, that are not justified upon the simple basis of the law, the moral law, that God has given to us.

And that is not all. There come in occupations which in their nature are positively injurious. Take our great cities, the wealth that they possess is notable. The caterers to the public amusement, from all parts of the globe, find it in their interest to come to these cities, and it is incumbent, by a sort of common consent, upon those to whom wealth has been given, to recognize their services and enjoy what they bring; sometimes it is corrupting, sometimes it is distinctively weakening, sometimes it is suggestive of evil, too often it exercises an influence upon the human spirit that is directly antagonistic to Christ. to His claims, to His character and the service that He expects at our hands and the holiness of that God with whom we have to do. I do not enter into details or particulars, but I speak what I know when I say that in many instances wealth has become a fearful temptation, a powerful deteriorating influence along the lines that I have thus indicated to you. What minister expects deep and spiritual impressions to be made by the services of God's house upon a family that has been until midnight on the Saturday night at a theatre or a ball, and which family is making arrangements for an entertainment to be given on a Sunday evening in their home! What minister expects the truth of God to have—if I may so say—fair play, in its approaches to minds that are passing through processes and coming under influences like those indicated? Follow this fact a little further. When we everywhere put mammon, and success in the pursuit of mammon, in so favourable an attitude, we are indisposing persons to come to Christ and enter into His service. There is one, for example, who, though he never put the thought into familiar speech, thinks something like this: "I am fond of joy and satisfaction and pleasure. I am living in the pleasures and occupations that are connected especially with the possession of wealth, and I do not well see how I can go in for this religion whose teachers are continually ringing the changes upon crucifying the flesh, dying unto sin, coming out from the world and being separate from it, not being conformed to it, but transformed by the renewing of the mind—I cannot see how I can with comfort and satisfaction go into all this. Besides, this religion of Jesus, as they preach it to us, is continually throwing some degree of discouragement upon the things that make up the substance of my life. The pleasures I enjoy, it is constantly telling me, are only for a season; not only so, but it reflects upon those pleasures as bad in their nature; not only so, but it tells me 'he that liveth in pleasure is dead while he liveth.' Well then, let it be so. I would rather be dead and enjoy the satisfaction and excitement and pleasure that I can have now, than live in the sombre atmosphere and under the continual restraint that this religion of Jesus, as they proclaim it, must needs impose upon me." You remember the young man in the New Testament who was brought into contact with

Christ—and Christ knew him well, as He knows you and me well, and he tested him as He tests you and me, as we need it—and he put before him this—that coming to Christ, as he seemed inclined to inquire about doing, would involve the sacrifice of his possessions, and he was not prepared for the sacrifice, and he turned away. I wonder if there be not Canadian young men and United States young men who sometimes in their secret hearts make calculations of this kind: “I cannot get the possessions I am aiming at and at the same time be a follower of Jesus, so I put him aside and try to realize the dream of my ambition.” I say, this too favourable attitude in which we have learned to put mammon indisposes our fellow creatures to come to Christ, and become as He is. It has other influences of which I will indicate one or two. It sometimes leads one to make a kind of compromise, to attempt a kind of compromise in the mind. “Here are that multitude of people, some of them good natured, kindly hearted people, not of course up to the Christian ideal, but in many cases excellent people and standing well with their fellow creatures—am I to believe that because they are not what the Bible makes out to be Christians, they are therefore under the divine displeasure, with God’s wrath hanging over them, and an eternity of misery and gloom before them? No, I cannot believe that this is so. There must be some alternative. There must be some other chance. There must be some way out of the darkness into the light for them, in this life or in the life that is to come!” You come to them with your Bible in your hand and you present text after text and truth after truth emphasizing this view—He that hath the Son hath life, He that hath not the Son shall not see life. You give word after word, text after text, and truth after truth. They say, “O that is the Old Testament.” You give them New Testament, but they say, “O, that is Pauline, he was ultra-logical and severe.” You give them the very words from the lips of Jesus, you tell them that it was Jesus, Love Incarnate, who gave us the verse—“Where their worm dieth not, and their fire is not quenched.” Your arguments are unanswerable; then they say—“If that is the Bible teaching we will have none of it, we will have none of it. We will not accept truth so humiliating, so repugnant to our natural ideas and conception of things.” You say, “O, that is in delity.” Infidelity is a somewhat unpopular word, it is a good sign of our moral atmosphere that it is so. It is suggestive of a great deal that is disagreeable and unpleasant, and only a very small portion of the people on this American Continent are willing to be stamped as infidels, but there comes some one along, and with an air of lofty superiority he takes some such tone as this: “Why, I am not an atheist, I am not an infidel. I do not indeed accept these statements that are given upon the supposed authority of the Word of God, I do not know a really philosophical mind that does accept them. They may be true, they may not be true. In the nature of the case the thing cannot be settled, I am an agnostic. I do not pronounce against the thing. I cannot believe those who pronounce for it.” Here now is a comparatively new word, a portentous word, so some people think, and for many it gets rid of the difficulties and embarrassments that are associated with the avowal of infidelity; but it has all the practical effects of infidelity upon him who adopts that which the word represents. Well now, what comes of all that? Give us a population, the noticeable, influential, conspicuous part of which sets up Mammon instead of Christ—the sayings, the views, the examples, the influences of this powerful class will go down among the various strata (as we have come to say of society), and these views are accepted, this example is supposed to be good, these considerations are supposed to be conclusive. What then? Then there is no necessity for attaching so much importance to the Bible. Then there is no need for this rigid observance of the day of holy rest; then the Church is not of very great consequence, the ministry is not what our fathers held it to be; then the sacraments—well, they are a matter of course in some degree, and in some degree a matter of taste; then we do not feel ourselves under moral obliga-

tions as we were taught when we were children that we ought to feel ourselves to be. Let these things get hold of the masses of the people and you have disregard of God—irreligion, you have disregard of man's rights—immorality; rights of property, rights of the members of the family, all these going down to a lower plane, and you have the substantial difficulties and perils on which all men are agreed, but traceable to one particular source, namely, the displacing of Christ and the giving of His place to the Mammon of unrighteousness.

Now let me try to put that before you in a point of view in which I think it is intelligible to any one. There are difficulties, it is said, in the temper of the masses. What are the masses? Great numbers of our fellow-men and women just like you and me—that is what they are. If they had the fear of God in their hearts, if Christ reigns there and not mammon, is there any particular reason to be afraid of them? Why, no! The more of them, the more complete the masses, the better for the truth and the stronger the Church of Jesus Christ. There are the great cities,—what is the peril in these great cities if the citizens are aiming at becoming citizens of the New Jerusalem? Why, the closer they come to one another, if they be good, the better for the men and the better for the community in which they dwell. There is the Sabbath desecrated. Teach men to love God and to put mammon where it belongs, and the Sabbath is elevated to its true and proper place. There is the peril of the saloon. Teach men that the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared unto all men, teaching them that denying ungodliness and all worldly lusts they should live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world, and that form of temptation will lose its mischievous power; and the same thing is true over the long list of perils that threaten, and the barriers that stand in the way of the spreading and advancement of the truth and the building up of the Kingdom of Jesus Christ. You know how Christ put it? Yes, I say the philosophy of this plan is, make the tree good, and the fruit will be good; the devil's plan is, keep the tree bad and the fruit will be bad. Ye cannot serve God and Mammon, so infallible wisdom has taught, and even natural men have a confirmation of that truth in their inmost natures, and they cannot but feel it; and when Mammon stands well and has so many attractions and is regarded so favourably in the community, when they must make the choice they put Christ aside and adhere to Mammon. Is it not the tendency in some degree, in our time, brethren, to divide up virtue into parcels and make this or that organization to promote the extension of each particular parcel, large or small? Is there not a corresponding tendency to divide up vice into sections, and we get an organization with president and vice-president, a board, a secretary and all the officers usual to such an organization, in order to deal with a particular section of vice? Is not Christ's method simpler? Is it not wiser? Is it not more thorough? Is it not more radical? or as that word suggests, does it not go more thoroughly to the root of the matter, when it deals through the Word and Spirit of God with the heart of the individual? And when that heart is surrendered to the Lord, then all virtue is cultivated on the one hand, and all vice is stamped upon and fought against on the other. Now it is the Spirit of God by the Word of God through whose mighty power God helps His people to do this true work of Grace, a work of resistance to sin, a work of earnest maintenance of truth and purity and holiness. About the year eighteen hundred and seventy the Kingdom of France was divided into as many as eighty-nine departments. In the summer of that year France declared war against Germany, and Germany was prepared to take up the challenge, and she became the invader. Did the princes and potentates of Germany divide the German army into as many sections as there were departments in France, and send a section to the invasion of each? Why, no; there was consideration of the place where the strength and energy of France might be expected to be encountered, and on the onward march

toward that place victory after victory was gained until the heart of France was surrounded by the German troops, and ultimately taken. And I ask you if there ought not to be a wisdom somewhat like unto this on the part of God's Church militant. As God's consecrated host, let us not go to fight against this or that particular fragment of rebellion against God, let us strike against the rebellion itself, in its seat, the human heart, with the Truth, the divinely given weapon, and in the power of the Divine Spirit, and then—not by might, nor by power, but by God's Spirit the mountains that rise up in our way, as the Lord put it in response to the faith of His disciples, will go into the sea, and His servants march forward from victory unto victory, until His spiritual temple is complete, and the cry goes up from the universe, "Grace, grace unto it."

Now, brethren, you are aiming at the circulation of this Book. Do not be afraid to give your money; human literature is fallible, the Divine is infallible. The best Christian literature has some mixture of the human in it, but this is the Word of the Living God. Many a time I feel and sometimes think, as I stand up to preach before large bodies of people, I sometimes tremble as I begin, but there comes the other second thought—it is not my wisdom, my imagination, my rhetoric, my eloquence, my speculation, my philosophy, my guesses after truth, it is not these things, one of them or all of them, that the Spirit of God is pledged and promises to bless. It is the truth of this Word that I am to represent and re-echo as an ambassador of Christ, that men receiving it may be reconciled to God in Christ, and then the preacher is nothing but the mere messenger—the message, in the hands of the Holy Spirit, that is everything, and when the Spirit has done, the cry must go up, "Not unto us, not unto us, but unto Thy Name be the glory."

So I commend to you, dear friends, more thorough reliance upon the grace and power of the Spirit, and the use of the Word attended by that Spirit, for dealing with these evil influences, and for strengthening God's servants in pursuit of virtue. We need that Spirit. You remember how Jesus Christ commanded the demons, and hostile critics looked on and they said, "See, He has cast them out, to be sure, but by the power of Beelzebub He has done so," and you remember how He spoke. It was practically as if He said, "Take care what you say; you may blaspheme against Me if you will, I have done that by the power of the Holy Spirit. I shall go away, the Spirit will come after Me, take care that you do not blaspheme against Him, there will be none to come after that Spirit, there is no fourth Person in the Godhead to take up this work of compassion and grace. Reject Me, speak against Me if you like, I shall finish the work given Me to do, I shall drain the cup to its dregs. When I have gone the Spirit will come, the Third Person of the Blessed Trinity, take care you do not fling Him off, that you do not reject Him, that you do not displease Him, for if you do there is no hope of forgiveness, there is no other way of approach to Me, there is no other power, no other power that can touch your hearts, there is no other divine voice that will make its appeal to your consciences!" *I believe in the Holy Ghost*, and in this Word as inspired by the Holy Ghost. O brethren, office-bearers, Christian people, magnify these powers, keep them at work in the churches. The Church of Jesus Christ is God's divinely constituted society for the discountenancing of all vice and the building up of all virtue. Use the Word in dependence upon the Spirit, and the work shall be done according to God's will, and he will have the glory. May the praise be His through Christ, now and ever; Amen.

The service was brought to a close by the singing of the hymn,

Jesus the Word bestowed,

the Rev. Dr. Thomas pronouncing the benediction.

## Bible Society Recorder.

TORONTO, 1st OCTOBER, 1888.

### BOARD MEETINGS.

The monthly meeting of the Board of Directors was held on Tuesday evening, the 17th April, at 7.30; the Rev. Dr. Gregg in the chair. The Rev. T. W. Campbell opened the meeting by reading from the Scriptures and leading in prayer. The minutes of the previous meeting were read and confirmed. A report from the Agency and Colportage Committee was read and adopted. Letters were read from the Rev. Dr. John Hall, of New York, enclosing the resolution on which he intended to speak at the Annual Meeting on the 9th May, and from the Rev. E. A. Stafford, kindly giving the use of the Metropolitan Methodist Church for the annual services on the 8th and 9th of May. An application for twenty-four Bibles for the Haven was received and granted. Messrs. A. T. Crombie and J. C. Copp were appointed Auditors. The Permanent Secretary reported a special donation of \$100 to the British and Foreign Bible Society by Mr. Robt. Sharp, who was thereupon elected a life-member of this Society. A remittance of \$2,616.36, free contributions on hand, and of £949 17s. 9d. *stg.*, on purchase account, to the British and Foreign Bible Society, was ordered. The Board adjourned, after prayer, to Tuesday, 1st May.

The adjourned meeting was held at 7.30 on Tuesday evening, 1st May; James Brown, Esq., in the chair. The Rev. Dr. Thomas led the devotional exercises. A grant of \$500 was made to the Quebec Auxiliary Bible Society. The Permanent Secretary submitted a draft of the Annual Report which was adopted and ordered to be printed. The list of Directors for the current year was revised for submission to the Annual Meeting. The President having informed the Board that he would be unavoidably absent from the Annual Meeting, it was agreed that the Hon. O. Mowat, one of the Vice-Presidents be requested to preside, but as his health did not permit him to do so, the Rev. Wm. Reid, D.D., agreed to take the chair. The Rev. John Burton, B.D., being about to visit Manitoba, was requested to visit the Branches in that Province. It was resolved that a reduction be made in the bulk of the Annual Report, and that tenders for printing the same be called. The Rev. J. Burton closed the meeting with prayer.

The usual monthly meeting of the Board took place 15th May, Tuesday evening, at 7.30, the Rev. J. G. Manly in the chair. The meeting was opened by the Rev. R. Wallace reading from Scriptures and leading in prayer. The minutes of the preceding meetings were read and confirmed. The Board struck the Standing Committees for the year. Letters were read from the British and Foreign Bible Society and the Quebec Auxiliary Society acknowledging remittances made to them by order of this Board. Applications were received from Miss Tilley, of the Young Women's Christian Temperance Union, for twenty-four Bibles, and from two divinity students for a supply of Scriptures to be circulated in Algoma, which were granted. The statement of Depository's cash account, monthly balances, schedule of colportage, and list of gratuities for April were submitted and approved. The meeting was closed with the benediction.

The regular Monthly Meeting of the Board was held on Tuesday evening, 19th June, at 7.30 o'clock. The President, Hon. Geo. W. Allan, was in the chair. The Rev. Dr. Thomas opened the meeting with prayer. The min-

utes of the last meeting were read and confirmed. The Secretaries reported that in response to their call for tenders to print the Annual Report and the Recorder, that of Mr. C. Blackett Robinson was found to be the lowest and most satisfactory. The Board resolved that the tender be awarded to Mr. Robinson. The reports of the Committees on Grants of Scriptures to Sunday Schools, and on Agency and Colportage, were submitted and approved. A letter of thanks was read from Miss Scott of the Young Women's Christian Temperance Union, for the donation of 24 Bibles. A grant of 24 Testaments to Mr. Robert Hall, City Missionary, for the Volunteer Camp at Niagara, was approved. The usual routine proceedings were gone through, and after prayer led by Rev. Chas. Duff, the Meeting adjourned to the third Tuesday in September (being the customary summer recess).

The Board held their usual Monthly Meeting, on Tuesday evening the 18th Sept., at 7,30 o'clock, Mr. Brown in the chair. The Rev. H. G. Baldwin opened the meeting with prayer. The minutes of the last Meeting were read and approved. A report from the Agency and Colportage Committee was read and adopted. A letter from Rev. A. Fraser, asking for the establishment of a Branch at Comox, B.C. was referred to the Agency and Colportage Committee. Applications from Mr. Henry O'Brien for 48 Bibles for a Mission School, and Mr. Wm. Gooderham, for 100 Bibles for the Christian Institute were granted. In consequence of the removal of the Rev. Mr. Jolliffe from the city, the Rev. D. G. Sutherland, M.A., LL.B., was chosen to replace him on the Board, and the Committee on Agency and Colportage. The Rev. A. F. McGregor, handed in a donation from Mr. T. H. McCaul, of \$100 on behalf of his wife and daughter, who were elected Life Members of this Society. The general routine business was disposed of, and the Meeting was closed with prayer by the Rev. Dr. Caven.

## THE BIBLE, AND WHAT IT DOES.

BY REV. W. M. BARBOUR, D. D., MONTREAL

Why have a society for the distribution of this book?

1. Because of the information it conveys. One can learn more in an hour from the first page of the Bible than he can learn in a thousand years from the wise men of this world. How much have these wise men been telling us? Upon the creation of the world, very little in advance of Moses. Much on the ways and means of creation, but nothing of satisfying fact beyond this primal utterance, "In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth." From Democritus and Darwin we get much interesting speculation, but our last and best word is from the Lord, who only confirms the Mosaic records in saying, "God clothes the lilies of the field, and adorns them with a glory exceeding Solomon's." But of the process he says nothing. If out of the earth and the atmosphere he weaves the sun's robe, and makes the sun painter, good and well, still it is God that is the Creator, as the Bible said at first. And after we go through all sorts of theories of creation, we have to come back for intellectual satisfaction to what is told us here. We desire, then, to keep this and a thousand other like pieces of information before the world for its enlightenment. Hence the existence of a Bible society.

2. For its laws and principles of law. Were the Bible's laws obeyed to the letter, little legislation of our own would be called for. And as to its principles of right and wrong, plain jurymen and skilled *nisi prius* lawyers alike fall back on them for their arguments and judgments.

3. For its quickening of conscience. What a power over the moral nature of man has this book been! Not in its words only, but in its lives of both the good and the bad. How many heroes has David led against the Goliaths of every age? How many collections have the widows' mites increased?

How many garments has Dorcas's needle put into shape? How many missionaries has Paul drawn after him to the Gentiles? And what shall we say of Him who seems to walk the earth, even now, as an incarnate conscience, with no virtue His presence does not commend, no vice it does not condemn.

4. For the Bible's stimulus to the intellect we keep it in circulation. Two centuries ago, a book as large as an ordinary family Bible was filled with the titles of books written on this one volume. And since the emancipation of the press, what has followed? Take this as an instance: The Epistle of the Romans is a small pamphlet which any workingman can read of an evening after his day's labour, fold it up and put it in his breast-pocket for further consultation; yet, on that pamphlet, over twenty years ago a library of over 5,000 volumes was catalogued. And as to its food for thought, let this be cited: the sermons preached in one year (in the English tongue alone), if printed, would fill 150,000,000 octavo pages. Every one of these sermons gets at least its text from the Bible, and in most cases its course of thought. Now as my brethren around me must join me in testifying, many of these sermons are "poor affairs;" yet it is a very poor affair indeed that does not, at all events, set somebody to thinking how much better the preacher ought to have done, with such a Bible to preach from.

5. For its influence on human society. Take a wide view of the world with and without the Bible. Compare North with South America, Russia with Prussia, Holland with Austria, Great Britain with the peninsula south of it. Look into the wards of cities, the streets, the houses, the hearts of men, and ask for the bearing of this book on what is found there of purity, enlightenment, comfort, hope, and the results are a justification of the existence of a Bible society.

6. Its revelation of salvation is the main reason why we unite for its dissemination. Granting that it reveals to us the best of laws, and the most sweetly reasonable of all religions—for what doth the Lord require of us but that we love one another, do justly, love mercy, and walk humbly with Himself—the law we have broken, every one of us, the religion we have not observed, and what then? How shall a man be just with God? What shall I do to be saved, not only from the consequences of my sin, but—of far greater import—from sin itself? Shut the Bible, and to us there is as yet, no satisfying answer. Come from where it may, be written by whomsoever it will, up until this hour there is no book within our ken that has ever grappled with this dread theme as the Bible has done. It is all but needless to add, none that has proposed a remedy at once so satisfying to both the God-ward and the man-ward aspect of this question. Upon much that men wish it to speak, it says nothing; it does not profess to speak fully, except on the one great theme: "These are written that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing ye may have life through his name."

7. And under this revelation we spread the Bible for its inspiration to high endeavour. Here is a short answer to the question, "Is the Bible inspiring?" Certainly it is; for of all books it is the most inspiring, and, if so, to what? Let history answer, let experience continue to assert, let life tell its own tale as to what the Bible has led it to. After the book's own record closes with the missions to the Gentiles, touch whatever has been great and you find the Bible has been there. The preaching of Chrysostom, the confessions of Augustine, the sculptures of Angelo, the glories of Raphael, the "Paradise Lost," the architecture of Wren, the Analogy of Butler, the hymns of Cowper, the whole of the sweetening charities of the church, the enfranchisement, the politics, the parliaments, that have had the relish of salvation in them, what had they been but for the Bible, and what the Bible has directly or indirectly inspired men to do?

8. Specially do we desire the Bible's presence among us for its controlling idea of a sway of love. Notwithstanding its revolt, the earth is still the

Lord's; and it is not to be given up, if the Lord can save it. Said a profound thinker: "Had I been an inhabitant of another planet, and had the news been brought to me, that in one of the orbs keeping us company round the sun, a moral revolt had led its inhabitants away from God; and with that news, had it been told me that to win back his free creatures their loving Creator had gone among them in the person of His Son; had taken their sad condition upon himself; had lived their life, and died their death—indeed, to show them what they had done both to Him and to themselves, by a great sacrifice, even that of His Son's signominious death, had so commended His righteousness and righteous laws to them as to win them back by love, I should willingly have given my life for the idea, and that irrespective of whether it were true or false." And such is the estimate we put upon this thought of God—we who unite to preserve it in this book.

9. And it is an additional reason for our distribution of the Bible, that by it as a book of truth, and not by coercion, is this saving idea to gain its supremacy. "Why" we are asked, "if the Bible is the book of God, why does he not have it believed at once by all who read it?" The answer is at hand. Truth cannot be taught by force; not even by the force of one intellect on another. Even our Lord did not convince every one who heard him. "If I speak the truth," said he, "why do you not believe me?" The bruised reed of a human mind he is not to break by the weight of an infinite wisdom. He is to handle it as a bruised reed till he sends forth his truth unto its victory. It does not surprise us to hear that learned men, and men of great intellectual grasp, find things in the Bible that trouble them. How else shall they be tested and tried by the truth if there is nothing to task them in their commerce with it? Were any man's resistlessly overborne and carried into this kingdom of truth by any kind of force, how could they ever become its willing subjects? Wisdom is justified of her children; but how if they cannot justify her, but by force?

10. To conclude. We desire to be instruments in the continuance of this blessing to the world. "What," said one to a Roman conqueror, "what can be added to a triumphal procession like this?" "Continuance!" was the answer. Yes, the fine show would soon be over, and what next? And so we say, as the glare and glory are passing away. This we can add: "The glory of man is as the flower of grass; the grass withereth, the flower fadeth, but the word of the Lord endureth for ever." It has shown good evidence of this already. From its life after the decay of Rome, we can hold that when Macaulay's New Zealander sits on the broken arch of London Bridge and sketches the ruins of St. Paul's, there will be Bibles in the hands of those wandering among the ruins of mighty London.

Allow a conclusion from personal experience touching the lasting nature of the word of God. Said my honoured instructor, Professor Stowe, on my calling upon him not long before he died: "Do you remember the days at Andover over the Bible? Do you remember the close of the ninety-first Psalm? Well, I am a living instance of its truth. With long life God has satisfied me; I have lived as long as I desire to live. I am satisfied with all he has shown me here, and now I am just waiting to see his salvation."

Said one other venerated teacher of teachers, President Woolsey, of Yale, to me the other day: "I am about through this life: the only event of interest to me is death. Here is my hymn book, here is my Bible—without my Bible how could I live out what remains of life?"

Blessed man, who through all his fame has held to the one book, ever saying: "How precious are thy thoughts unto me, O God! how great is the sum of them!"—*Religious Herald*.

I call the Book of Job, apart from all theories about it, one of the grandest things ever written with pen. One feels, indeed, as if it were not Hebrew; such a noble universality, different from noble patriotism or sec-

tarianism, reigns in it. A noble book; all men's book. It is our first, oldest statement of the never-ending problem—man's destiny and God's ways with him here in this earth. And all in such free, flowing outlines; grand in its sincerity, in its simplicity, in its epic melody and repose of reconciliation. \* \* \* Such living likenesses were never since drawn. Sublime sorrow, sublime reconciliation; oldest choral melody as of the heart of mankind; so soft, and great; as the summer midnight, as the world with its seas and stars! There is nothing written, I think, in the Bible or out of it, of equal literary merit.—*Thomas Carlyle.*

## THE WORDS OF CHRIST.

A PORTION OF ONE OF THE CANTERBURY SERMONS OF THE LATE DEAN STANLEY.

“Heaven and earth shall pass away, but Christ's words have not passed away, and shall not pass away.” They are still read; they are still revered; they will be read and revered hundreds of years hence, as they are now; let us trust, more than they are now, more than they ever have been. What are the causes of this undoubted fact? What are the causes of this hope that is in us? Let us humbly and devoutly ask this question, remembering whose words they are of which we speak—words which it seems an almost equal irreverence to praise or to censure—words, however, which it is our duty and privilege to understand, to examine, and to explain.

1. Suffer me to begin with the most simple, homely peculiarity of our Saviour's teaching, true of the Scriptures generally, but especially true of His words, namely, their brevity. Perhaps we hardly enough consider either the fact or its great importance. Remember how small a book even the whole Bible is, and remember, further, how small a part of that book is occupied by His words. Compare them with the teaching of other celebrated teachers in our own or former times. One collection alone of the sayings of the Arabian Prophet, Mohammed, fills no less than thirteen hundred folio pages. All the sayings of Christ are contained in the short compass of the four Gospels; the few that are not there do not occupy two pages at most: the whole Sermon on the Mount—the greatest discourse ever preached, the whole code of Christian morality, the whole sum of saving doctrine—would not, if read from this place, take more than a quarter of an hour. Consider how greatly this has assisted the preservation, the remembrance, the force of Christ's words. We have not to go far and wide to seek them; they are within our grasp, within our compass, within our sight; very nigh to us, in our heart, and in our mouth, easy to read, easy to recollect, easy to repeat. The waters of life are not lost in endless rivers and lakes. They are confined within the definite circle of one small living well, of which all can “come and drink freely, without money, and without price.”

2. But the well is not only easy to find, but it is deep, and its “waters spring up into everlasting life.” You never get to the end of Christ's words. There is something in them always behind. They pass into proverbs, they pass into laws, they pass into doctrines, they pass into consolations; but they never pass away, and, after all the use that is made of them, they are still not exhausted. One reason of this is to be found in their freedom from local, temporary allusions. Allusions of this kind, no doubt, they do contain. Some light is thrown upon them by the knowledge of the country, and of the manners and customs of the time. But by far the larger part of his teaching is drawn from subjects so familiar, so natural, that they can be equally understood in almost every country. No learning is needed for their illustration—shepherds, sailors, ploughmen, soldiers, fishermen, can understand them as fully as the greatest scholar that ever lived. Another cause is their great variety. Each one of the classes I have just mentioned

can find something even in the outward form that will apply to their own particular case—much more in the object and meaning of the different parts. Each man, with his own peculiar temptations, joys, sorrows, may find something that suits himself; each man, like Nathanael under his fig-tree, may find the Saviour's eye fixed on him alone. We sometimes imagine that by "preaching the gospel" is meant preaching the same truth over and over again in the same words, to congregations however different from each other, under occasions however different each from each. This was not the preaching of the Gospel by Him who first preached it; even in the short compass of the Gospels every chord of the heart is struck, every infirmity of the conscience and mind is roused and soothed. Heaven and earth may pass away, but as long as a single human soul survives in the depths of eternity, in that human soul Christ's words will live, will find a hearing, will awaken a response.

And this variety is expressed and is secured by a process in itself instructive. Not by one form of teaching only, but by many. By things new and old; by discourses, such as the Sermon on the Mount; by stern truth or severe rebuke, as in the argument with the Pharisees and Sadducees; by pleasant fiction and parable, such as those He spoke on the sea-shore of Genesareth. Remember this, all that learn and all that teach. Not by one channel only, but by many, is God's truth conveyed; one may have more attraction for one class, one for another; by some means or other, Christ would have us taught to know His Father's mind, to do His Father's will; but every one of those ways and means is after His example.

3. Consider, again, how the words, as it were, force us away from the mere letter that kills to the Spirit that gives life and lives for ever. Some of you may have heard Luther's celebrated description of St. Paul's language: "The words of St. Paul are not dead words; they are living creatures, and have hands and feet." He meant thereby to describe, and did faithfully describe, the extraordinary force and completeness of the words of that great apostle, each of which seem to have a distinctness and substance of its own. But there is something in our Lord's words higher still: we almost forget that they are words; they seem but as a transparent light in which the truth is contained. No sect has turned them into watchwords; they are almost like a soul without a body; to use His own description, "The words that He speaks to us *are spirit and are life*."

This peculiarity is connected with another, which the apostle himself has indicated. It is true of the Scriptures generally that they treat of general principles, not detailed applications. But this is specially true of our Lord's teaching, even in comparison with that of His own apostles. "Not I, but the Lord," says St. Paul, when he lays down the universal principle about marriage. "I, not the Lord," he says, when he gives the special application and exception. And this is brought about by the very form in which our Lord's teaching is expressed. He himself speaks of His words as the seeds cast forth by the sower. So they are. They are not mere crumbs of bread thrown down, devoured, and lost, but seeds which sink into the ground and bear fruit. But here also is His own saying true: "Except the seed die, it abideth alone; but, if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit." The word, the precept, the letter of this teaching often not only dies, but carries so evidently on its face the mark of death, of impossibility, of contradiction, as to tell us that not in the word itself, but in the meaning, in the life, in the spirit of the word is the real truth to be found. Like Himself, it "is not here, it is risen." Take the precepts which tell us to turn the left cheek to him that smites on the right, or to cut off our right hand when it offends us." The obedience to the letter is impossible; it throws us off to something greater, higher, wider than itself. Or take the instances of passages which appear to oppose

each other. "He that is not with Me is against Me;" "He that is not against us is on our part;" "Render unto Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's; render unto God the things that are God's."

These, and many more that might be quoted, are examples of that comprehension of different sides of truth which alone can give to any teaching a permanent and enduring value. Only those teachers, only those churches which so embrace the various wants of the minds and consciences of various and conflicting characters can hope to render their voices heard beyond the narrow circle of time and space in which their own lot is cast. Such wide expressions of truth, such seeming contradictions, brought about, doubtless, in great measure by secondary, inferior causes, yet producing the same blessed, evangelical result, we happily possess in the mixed forms of our own church; in this respect, we may humbly say, echoing the various tones of our Master's words, and securing something of the same vitality to the whole counsel of God thus delivered amongst us.

4. There is yet another feature of Christ's words, more important than any that I have named; namely, that they are not merely abstract words, but they directly flow from His acts, His character, Himself. Above all qualities needed to give force to a teacher's words, is this correspondence between himself and them. "He only" (says the old proverb) "whose life is lightning can make his words thunder." Most remarkably is this the case with the teaching of our Lord. Not only do His discourses and parables bring before us His mind, His mission, one might almost say His very look and countenance, but nearly every one of them grows out of some special occasion, and is intertwined with the memory of some gracious action. In each turn of expression, not He only, but the whole scene, the whole atmosphere, the whole spirit of the Gospel narrative, seems, as it were, to live over again. His words live because He lives; they continue the same, because He was and is the same; His immortality, His eternity, is reflected in them; they are the words of God, because He is "The Word" of God.

#### DO YOU READ THE BIBLE?

A strange question this, to ask, and yet not needless; for multitudes have the Bible who do not read it. Are you one of these? Is it laid upon your shelf as a forgotten thing, or only looked at now and then? Do you neglect it while in health, and fly to it for comfort only in sickness? Do you pass over it on the six days of labour, and consult it only on the seventh day of rest? Do you neglect it in prosperity, and have recourse to it only when in trouble? Do you read it in your family, and not in your chamber? or in your chamber, and not in your family? Do you read it for amusement and not for instruction? for its consolations, and not for its warnings? for its promises, and not for its precepts and threatenings? The possession of a Bible is no security against danger. The leaves of the Bible contain no charm against trouble. The treasure is there truly; but it is those who seek that shall find, and they alone. What would it avail you to have food within your reach if you refused to taste it? Would that food prevent you from starving? What would you be the better for rivers of water if you lay down by their streams, but still neglected to drink? Would those waters quench your thirst? The Bible is food for the hungry soul and water to the thirsty soul, but are the soul's hunger and thirst to be satisfied by an unopened volume? With a fierce and unrelenting enemy behind you, and an open door before you, entering which you would be safe, of what avail would be the asylum if you linger on the way, or turn your back upon it? Alas! alas! Such is your condition while you treat the Bible with neglect. An enemy is behind you; that enemy is death, and hell is in her train; an open door is before you; that door is the salvation which the Bible reveals. Flee for your life, sinner! Flee for your life!—*Selected.*

Receipts from Branches at the Bible Society, Toronto, from 1st May to 30th Sept., 1888.

	Branch	On Purchase Account.	FREE CONTRIBUTIONS.		
			U. C. B. S.	B. & F. B. S.	Sundries.
Arkwright	Branch	\$10 00			
Atwood	"	5 40			
Aurora	"		9 35		
Ayr	"		36 00	36 00	(2) 20 60
Belgrave	"	2 15	29 41	20 00	
Bethany	"		12 50	12 50	
Binbrook	"		13 00		
Brucefield	"	10 26			
Burford	"		17 71		
Campden	"		6 00		
Cannington	"	7 46			
Cataraqui	"			12 25	
Cherrywood	"		4 50		
Chesterfield and Ratho	"	18 59			
Claremont	"	4 08	2 92		
Columbus	"		6 00	14 00	
Cumminsville and Lowville	"	3 50	10 75	10 75	
Derry West	"		28 11		
East Williams	"		84 00	50 00	
Eglinton	"		10 00		
Emerson (Man.)	"		57 40		
Fingal	"	51			
Georgetown	"		33 25	32 00	
Glanford	"		75		
Goderich	"	25 00			
Grimsby	"		4 59		
Hibbert	"	8 32			
Hollin	"	1 30	30 16		
Huntsville	"	25 00			
Ingersoll	"	1 80			
Janetville	"		44 37		
Lakeside	"		11 00	11 00	
Lefroy and Bell Ewart	"		11 60		
Manilla	"		16 65	16 65	
Manitowaning	Depository	9 20			
Marmora	"	2 60			
Molesworth	Branch	2 20			
Mt. Pleasant (Brant)	"		3 15		
Napanee	"	44 13	27 48		
Newburgh	"		9 20		
Newcastle	"		6 00		
Orillia	"	40 00			
Orono	"		45 00		
Painswick	"		50		
Paris	"	24 00	42 42	42 42	(3) 42 42
Portage La Prairie	"	61 10	6 95		
Port Dover	"		35 00		
Port Hope	"	20 08			
Preston	"		15 00		
Richard's Landing	Depository	9 47			
St. Helen's	Branch		8 89	8 88	(1) 8 88
St. Mary's	"		49 03	49 02	
Scarborough	"		4 25		
Sombra	"	1 41	3 08		
Tamworth	"		5 64		
Thessalon	Depository	31 80			
Tweed	Branch		22 10		
Underwood	"	5 13			
Victoria (B.C.)	"	4 50			
Walkerton	"		41 51	25 00	(2) 10 00
Watford	"	30 00			
West Darlington	"		10 07		
Weston	"		25 00	25 00	
Winnipeg	"		65 71		
York	"		10 00		

(1) To Quebec Auxiliary. (2) To Building Fund. (3) To Montreal Auxiliary.