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ANNIVERSARY SERMON

ON BEHALF OF THE UPPER CANADA BIBLE SOCIETY.

Preached by the REV. T. HARWOOD PATTISON, D.D., of Rochester, N. Y., in the Metropolitan Church, Toronto, Tuesday evening, the 10th May, 1887.

The service was opened by the singing of the hymn 634,

Father of mercies, in Thy Word,

after which the Rev. Dr. Castle led in prayer.

The Rev. W. S. Blackstock then read the nineteenth Psalm, as the Scripture lesson, after which the congregation joined in singing hymn No. 636.

The Rev. T. Harwood Pattison, D.D., of Rochester, N. Y., was then introduced by the Rev. Mr. Stafford, and rose to deliver the annual sermon. He said :—

You will find the words from which I wish to speak to you this evening in the fourth chapter of the Gospel according to Matthew, and the fourth verse, "But He answered and said,—It is written, man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God."

Thus it was, as you will remember, that our Lord met and resisted the first onset of temptation in the wilderness of Judea. Only a few months after this time we meet in the record of the Evangelist with this sentence, "This beginning of miracles did Jesus." Perhaps it is neither idle nor impertinent for us to pause here at the outset of our thoughts and to enquire, What if this entry had been made, not later in the Evangelists, but just in this place? What if Christ had made the beginning of his miracles not at the wedding feast in Cana of Galilee, but in the wilderness, the wasteful wilderness of Judea? Not at the pleadings of a mother's solicitude, but as the promptings of the tempter's malice? Not to turn the water into wine, but to transfigure the desert stones into bread? What then? The answer is simple and near at hand. Then, certainly, we should not have read as the lustrous pendant to the words which we have quoted, these other words :—"And manifested

forth His glory," for at the back of every miracle which Christ ever wrought, or, perhaps, not so much at the back of every miracle as in its very heart there was a distinct definite purpose. Without that purpose the miracle would simply have been a display of power for power's sake, it would have been the marvellous play of the magician, but not the purposeful and practical action of the great Captain of our salvation !

Therefore I wish to make two remarks at once, before proceeding any further ; remarks which may clear the way for our line of thought this evening, — and first this :—Will you think how tragic must have been the significance of this scene in the wilderness to the two principal actors in it ? It was no new temptation with which the tempter plied our Lord Jesus Christ. To himself I think it must have been full of a terrible retrospective significance. Was this temptation not familiar to him not only as he had plied others with it, but as once it had plied himself. We know not but that with this very temptation he had himself been tried, and under the force and pressure of this very temptation he had himself fallen to doubt God ; to question the supreme majesty of God's claims and of God's authority, to think for a moment that it was better to have rule over the meaner creatures of God's hand than to serve God himself. Oh, I say, what strange and tragic memories may have been awakened in the breast of him who sooner than serve in heaven would sway in hell ? And as it was a temptation which very likely had moved in the heart of Satan, so certainly it was the earliest temptation with which he drew near to Eve, in the day-dawn of our human history. You will remember that in words which recall the words which he uses on this occasion he spoke to her "Yea," he says, "Yea ! hath God said ?" insinuating the doubt, as the doubt so often has been insinuated since, in the form of a question, "Hath God said ?" We know that the Lord Jesus Christ was familiar with that dark chapter in human history. He recognized that here history in some strange and significant way was repeating itself, and perhaps it was for this amongst other reasons that when he was preparing to meet the tempter he did so with no other weapon than the simple sword of the spirit, which is the word of God. You will remember the scene in the first instance, how Eve looked and deliberated, and was lost. Our Lord looked not for a moment at the stones of the wilderness, our Lord thought not for a moment of Himself, but just lifted the weapon that has so often proved itself omnipotent since He charged home with the sword of the Spirit, the word of God—"It is written."

The second thought to which I would call your attention at once is the position which our Lord assumed in this instance. You will recall the word with which the devil approached him, "If thou be the Son of God," apparently desiring to measure swords with him on the question of his Divine nature. But our Lord came not into this world that he might dispute with the tempter on that point ; long ages before we may believe that our battle had been carried through and the victory had been won. Christ was in this world not for Himself, but for us. He had emptied Himself of His glory, and He had taken upon Himself the form of a servant. It behoved Him, to be in in all points like unto His brethren, tempted in all respects, like as we are, yet without sin. And therefore instead of listening to the insinuation of the tempter, instead for a single moment of entertaining the challenge that He should prove His divine nature, He took His stand at once upon the nature that was human. "If thou be the Son of God, command these stones to be made bread." But He answered and said, "It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God." Here, then, as in many other passages in his earthly life, Jesus was our model. We are not the mere passive spectators, as in the old mythologies, of a battle between supernatural beings whose weapons clash in thunderous heights far above us. It is the earth upon which you and I daily tread, on which this fray was fought out, and

the weapon, the only weapon which our Lord chose to use on this momentous occasion, the first great crisis of His public ministry, was the weapon whose interests you and I are here this evening to magnify and to praise. I suggest therefore as the theme around which our thoughts may cluster for a few moments, "The Word of God, the Bread of Life!" And I think that our text naturally suggests two points. First of all, we have here Christ's judgment as to life—"Man shall not live by bread alone," and then we have Christ's judgment of the Word of God—"but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God."

First,—Let us think for a few moments of Christ's Judgment as to Life. "But he answered and said, 'it is written men shall not live by bread alone.'" What had been the effect of this long forty days and forty nights of fasting upon Jesus Christ? There was inevitable hunger to his physical frame, but the question which I now put is of much more importance than any question which centres on the body. I want that we should enquire for a few moments this evening what must have been the influence upon his spiritual nature of the long season of fasting through which he had passed. Must it not have been so that to him earth had grown more and more dim, and to Him also heaven had come nearer. Now let us remember that the temptation of appetite, and especially the appetites which range upon a lower level, is a temptation which is far less severe to him who is accustomed to abstinence than it is to him that is accustomed to indulgence. John the Baptist, the rough-garbed and self-contained anchorite of the wilderness is far safer to resist the lust of the flesh than is Herod in the voluptuous splendour of his palace. And so perhaps it may be that the forty days and forty nights of fasting had formed the very fittest preparation through which Christ could have passed, for the first onset of temptation to which he was now exposed, just as sometimes we ourselves may have found what a benefit it is to our spiritual nature—how the perspective of life gets to be adjusted, how the proportion of life in its truthfulness gets to be restored, when we turn from the crowded city and plunge into the quiet stillness and seclusion of the country, or, to use a still more familiar illustration, how we find our truer and better nature restored to us when we leave the household with its thousand little cares and come over into the sanctuary of the Lord, and worship in the place where His honour dwelleth. I say, therefore, that this forty days and forty nights in the wilderness had been the very best preparation of Christ for the temptation to which he was now exposed. And now will you notice that the first reference in this passage is undoubtedly to the Old Testament, to the words of Moses, the man of God. It was he who wrote, after the forty years of travel in the wilderness, the lesson which to our Lord Jesus Christ assumed such luminous splendour now, after the forty days and forty nights of trial and suffering and fasting there,—“Man shall not live by bread alone but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God.” That was the lesson which Moses read in every blade of grass, and on all the stunted herbage with which the wilderness around Mount Horeb was so thickly planted. At the same time, we are not to limit, I think, the meaning of these words; certainly we are not to limit their application to the first reference in the book of Deuteronomy. "It is written," said Christ, "Man shall not live by bread alone," and we may very naturally enquire, where indeed is it not written? Where can you or I turn this evening where we shall not be confronted by the small still voice of God in nature insisting upon the truth that man shall not live by bread alone but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God. For example,—think of the teaching of History.

Married to the shepherd's daughter, settled as a shepherd himself, now grown to be an old and somewhat weary man, does Moses dream that he is a fixture for life, that there is for him no nobler object and aim than to guide his flocks across the pastures of Horeb? Let the vision of the burning bush and the blazing splendour of the God who is there, teach him that there is an-

other aim and end before him, that there is a broader horizon than that which is limited by the mountains of Horeb, or Sinai! Let him hear the voice which speaks to him there, and says:

"Be not like dumb driven cattle,
Be a hero in the strife."

And so again far away from home does Israel in Egypt entertain the same fatal thought? Are the people satisfied with the abundance that is given them from day to day, in such plenty, by their masters, so that the better they may serve them in the brick fields? Let them understand that the bread which is purchased at the price of liberty and is stained with the blood of human freedom is not the bread which they are to eat. Let them understand it, when they have crossed the raging sea and come out into this weary wilderness with the white manna lying around about them morning after morning, and the voice of God sounding over yonder, and saying, "Here is an ampler and nobler provision than Egypt could ever supply!" I say, then, that the lesson is written in history that man shall not live by bread alone. Equally is it true to say that it is written in our constitution. Moses teaches the people that there is a certain definite purpose which God has in view in all the way in which he has led them, in that wilderness journey. He tells them that God has done it to humble them, and to prove them and to reveal to them their own heart and to turn them to a more loyal obedience. And, dear friends, it is so with us at this present time. I think that never was the lesson of our text, needed more strenuously than it is needed to-day. Now, perhaps, more than ever in the history of the past, do we require to understand that man shall not live by bread alone. The marvelous material prosperity that has crowned this land, and this age of ours; the fact that young men are so constantly taught to believe, and that all unconscious of the influences round about them which threaten them, that the supreme duty of man is to *GET ON* and to prosper and to gain wealth; these facts, I say, render it imperative upon every preacher of the gospel, upon every one who has the future and prosperity of the land at heart, to emphasize, and repeat the lesson of our text, "Man doth not live by bread alone." Oh, how often have I seen the young man, in youth's prime, full of bright convictions and brave hopes for the future of his life, go up to college to fit himself to fight the battle and bear the burden as he should, and the high thinking and hard life of his college course have made him still more prepared for his work, but then, when he has stepped out from the college halls, suddenly the temptation of our text has opened before him, the golden gate of prosperity has rolled back upon its hinges and in a fatal moment he has sacrificed those high hopes and brave resolves, and he has found, as the reward for his surrender, in the bitter words of the old Hebrew prophet, "he has found the living of his hand and he has been satisfied." And when plenty has rolled in upon him and he has had all that heart could wish, and he has answered to his own satisfaction the question, "What shall I eat, and what shall I drink, and wherewith shall I be clothed?" there have been moments when he has looked back on that former vision of his with a smile of contempt, which perhaps ought, in the sight of God, to have been exchanged rather for a tear of the bitterest remorse!

"It is written," not only in history and in our constitution, but it is written also in our circumstances, "that man shall not live by bread alone." Will you notice that there is no ignoring here of that lower range upon which all of us live. Christ does not say absolutely that men shall not live by bread, but He says that he is not to live by bread alone, that he is not to live by bread chiefly, that there are other things which are necessary to the rounding out and perfecting of the life of a man than this bread which perisheth, other things which he will need to pursue after, if he is to stand in the presence of his God as one worthy to be made in His image and likeness.

I think I have remarked, and perhaps all of us have noticed, how men

around whom wealth and honours have gathered thickly, have nevertheless found themselves restless and ill at ease. As one of the greatest geniuses of this age puts it, and puts it, you may remember, in reference to his own condition, he was, after all his honours, haunted, yes haunted, in the presence of all his fame, by a certain dim, undefined but terrible sense of having missed something, having lost something, some opportunity (so it seemed to him), of which, if he had availed himself he would have been another and a better man than he was. Oh, brethren, it is an awful thing to get on to the limits of life and be haunted by an unrealized idea!

And on the other hand, have we not known men who have had to face poverty and suffering and even death itself, but who have done so with an air of such calm triumph as has made it impossible for us to look upon them with pity or with compassion. I recall the last words of Socrates, and how as he turned to his judges, who had condemned him to death, he said:—"Now, it is time for us to depart, I to death, you to life, but which is the better state God only knows!" And in these words we seem to catch the echo of a certain dim sense that the horizon was wider for him than it was for them, that he had bread to eat of which they knew not, that that which he called death, as he faced it, was really life, and that that which they called life, as they went to meet it, was really death. Nay! I recall the words of another, of a greater, of an infinitely more richly privileged man than Socrates, I remember how Paul said that he had solved the enigma of life, that fullness or hunger were equally welcome to him, that he knew what it was to be abased and he knew what it was to abound, for he could make the declaration of his independence of mundane things in this memorable sentence. "I can do all things through Christ that strengtheneth me." Therefore let us acknowledge that when Christ appeals here, as He does, to scripture alone, and refuses to make any other appeal, it is not because he ignores the teachings of history, it is not because He refuses to notice the pleadings of our own constitution, it is not because He would hush the voice of our circumstances,—but it is only because Scripture expresses and gathers up into one brief sentence the fullness of meaning that is in all these. So I say that whether you take one road or another, whichever path you choose, you arrive at the same great truth "Man shall not live by bread alone." Whether you review history, or whether you look upon your own constitution, or whether you gaze around about upon the circumstances surrounding you it matters not, for in any case you come to this as a conclusion: There is something more required for man than mere bread. I demand for the satisfaction of my nature something other and nobler than bread. This fact amounts to an argument, for God who creates this noble dissatisfaction will certainly meet it; God who has formed me for some other than this banquet of perishing bread will certainly provide the other and the nobler food. "Man shall not live by bread alone but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God." It seems to me that the fact that Christ quotes scripture here and scripture only, that He does so on so many other memorable occasions in His life,—that with a text of scripture He opens His first sermon in the synagogue at Nazareth; that with a text of scripture He penetrates the thick darkness gathering round about His cross; that with a text of scripture He illuminates the dull understanding of His disciples on the day of His resurrection emphasizes this truth that whether you or I have to address our fellow man, or whether we have to repel the onslaughts of temptation, or whether we have to pierce the clouds and darkness round about God's throne there is one only weapon that is absolutely invincible, there is one only weapon which we can use with absolute confidence, and that is the Sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God.

I ask you, therefore, to notice, in the second place, that, as we have seen what is Christ's judgment as to Life, so, from this verse, also, we can notice what is Christ's judgment as to the Word of God. "It is written, man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God."

I think it is not necessary for me to apologize here for putting a somewhat limited construction upon these words. No doubt, more is intended here, the words will carry more than the application which I am about to employ. I am not forgetful of the truth of which we have already been reminded in our prayer, that all God's works praise Him in all parts of His dominion. One would be blind and deaf, indeed, could one pass through this golden May day and reach this evening, careless of that lesson which God is ever teaching us, on the right hand and on the left. It is glorious to listen to the voice of God in nature, it is glorious to look upon his handiwork, but, after all, the Lord Jesus Christ, by the triple quotation from scripture, by the unswerving confidence with which he takes his position upon the word of God, and by the absolute assurance with which he wields this sword, seems to warrant us in using the words which he employs in the narrower application of the Bible, as it lies before us to-night; and, doing so, I would ask you to notice that there are three things which can be learned. First of all, I find here suggested the nature of revelation. It is called in this passage "the word of God." Now, brethren, is that not the peculiarity of the Bible? It is, in a sense which is sacred to itself, God's word. It is more to us than any paper or print can be, just as the poor, thorny accacia in the wilderness was more than a shrub or bush to Moses, because it burned and blazed with the Divine presence that was in it. God's voice is heard between the covers of this book as it is not heard in any hymn that we sing, or in any theological treatise over which we pore, or in any sermon to which we listen. In the Monastery Library at Erfurt Martin Luther took down the Bible, on which the dust of many years had gathered, and when he opened out its pages it was not the Bible alone that Luther found. Luther found God. He, as truly as the patriarch, might have said, "Surely the Lord is in this place." Churches and creeds and ceremonies, whatever their office, whatever their power, may hinder sometimes, rather than help, the anxious enquirer seeking for God, but let him open this book, and it is God's Law that utters forth its voice, it is God's Light that is shed abroad, it is God's Love that thrills and pleads. As one of the great Scottish preachers of the last century said when he recalled the bright experience in the day-dawn of his own Christian history "That which gave me such comfort was the discovery of the Lord as revealed in His Word." I say then it is for us to lay emphasis upon this truth, the nature of revelation is that it is the Word of God.

Then for another thing,—I find here the method of revelation. "It is written." Here you have something that is external, external to our inner consciousness, external to the light of reason, external to the transient changes of fashion and feeling and opinions. Can we be sufficiently thankful this evening that these words, "It is written," describe for us the method of God's revelation to man in the scriptures? In the course of these eighteen centuries, it is wonderful for us to recollect how Christianity has become the moulding power of the civilized world. It has taught us a sweet humanity, it has stricken the shackles from the limbs of the slave, it has stooped down to wipe the tear from the eye of the disconsolate, it has elevated woman to her right and true place among the works of the Creator, it has adjusted the claims of man upon man, and of nation upon nation, the world over. But it has done more than all this, for it has revealed to us God's mercy in Christ, and has given to us a good hope through grace of everlasting life in Jesus Christ, our Lord. Now let all this become mere tradition, let it float to and fro upon the restless billows of every restless age, how long would it be before this revelation of God's word and of God's will to man would become corrupt and changed, confused and perhaps absolutely destroyed? In the fact that God's word is written I find the assurance of permanence and the assurance of purity and the assurance of integrity which fill my heart with gratitude for the work of the Bible Society in this country.

Then I would further remark that not only the nature and the method of revelation, but also its purpose is suggested to us here. "He answered and

said, It is written, man shall not live by bread alone but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God." We have therefore this priceless lesson taught to us here, that man lives by the Bible. Is it not possible that we have thought only of Scripture and the truth that it contains, as something which could be submitted to careful analysis. Have we not perhaps looked at it too much as if it was abstract and logical and methodized? Have we not forgotten that the Bible can never be rightly treated until it be treated as something for which the world is starving for to-night. It is what the race needs to perfect its growth. All round about us men and women are holding up the hands of their souls and crying to us, Give us bread! Now you would never satisfy a starving man if you were to invite him to an analysis of the staff of life, if you were to point him to the harvests waving in the golden autumn time, or if you were to tell him of the fiery hot oven. He would revolt. He does not want a discussion or a dissertation: he wants food. He does not ask for analysis but he asks for bread. Oh, this is a profound truth, which Pascal puts into matchless words when he says, "The things of God must be loved in order to be understood!" You cannot understand God's word until it lies there in your heart as the object of your affection, of your warmest love. "Often," witnessed Jonathan Edwards, "in reading the Holy Scriptures every word seemed to touch my heart. I seemed to see such a refreshing food communicated that I could not get along in reading." He just had to pause lost in wonder and amazement at the glory which God had placed there. And centuries before Jonathan Edwards wrote, one who was in many respects his master, Augustine, said, "In Cicero and in Plato I find many things that are acutely spoken, but not in any one of them do I find that sentence, 'Come unto me all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.'"

Brethren, the Bible claims at our hands to be received as the food which God has provided. Do you ask me, then, why I know that it comes from Heaven? Because it feeds me, because it finds me, because it satisfies the nature in me which God had created, because it meets me when my whole body and soul and spirit are reaching out for the living God! Why is it that Jesus, with such simple and such sublime assurance, falls back upon the word of God in the wilderness of Judea? Intellect, infinite in its resources, was at his command, at that moment, but the acutest human intellect going on to the conflict with doubt and with denial and with despair, has a thousand times since then been vanquished and put to flight; and all the other weapons which human ingenuity and human eloquence have designed have shared the same disastrous fate. But to-day, after centuries of conflict, this sword of the spirit is as keen of edge and as bright of blade as when thrice waved in the wilderness of Judea, and thrice thrust home to the heart of the lie with which the devil would have tempted Christ, it finally drove him from the field vanquished and defeated.

You recall, I cannot doubt, the happy sequel with which let us part one from another this evening, "Then the devil leaveth him and behold angels came and ministered unto him." Long, long before, in the scene which I have already referred to this evening, we are told that when Eve listened and fell, the cherubims with flaming swords guarded the portals of the paradise that was lost;—now the angels came back again to the children of men, and on a mission infinitely more welcome. Not the sword of stern repression, but the sword of loving loyalty has won the battle, and the Lord Jesus Christ seems to take that sword afresh to-night and to put it into your hands and mine, whether it is to be wielded in the pulpit or in the pew, this is His last word to us to-night. It is a message for the household and for the home, for the store and for the street, for the church and for the nations, "Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God."

HOW TO CIRCULATE THE SCRIPTURES.

This is a problem which is always confronting those who are charged with the management of Bible societies. The aim of them all is simple enough—"To encourage a wider circulation of the Holy Scriptures." How shall it best be accomplished?

There are various ways. No cast-iron rule can be formulated. One way is to give the Scriptures freely, a Bible to every one who will accept it. Another is to establish and maintain depositories where all who choose may buy for themselves or for others. A third way is to send men from house to house to offer the Scriptures for sale, and so to furnish the opportunity and the occasion, which otherwise might never offer. Either method is costly. Indiscriminate giving would soon drain the treasury of any society. The maintenance of a depository calls for certain, perhaps a large expenditure for rent and attendance. The employment of a staff of itinerant colporteurs necessitates a large outlay for their wages, their travelling expenses, and the transportation of their books from place to place. No doubt it often costs more to look up a family destitute of the Bible and take the book to their door, than was paid for printing and binding the volume.

It is instinctive with Christian people to advise the free donation of books. Texts of Scripture favour it: "Freely ye have received, freely also give." "Give to him that asketh thee." It is a very cheap way of doing good. Any one can get more for his money in Bibles than in any other commodity. To judicious giving no exception can be taken. But in the matter of indiscriminate giving, or of giving to every person who does not own a Bible, there are few who would not hesitate after making trial of it, and seeing the evils it involves. It does not answer to make the sacred volume too cheap. As a rule, slight value attaches to that which costs one nothing. To give indiscriminately may be casting pearls before swine. An octavo Bible did good service to a Mexican grocer as a ream of wrapping-paper. The hope of securing a second copy reconciled a Brazilian family to the surrender to the priest of a Bible which they had received as a gift.

Experience has taught missionaries and Bible societies, the world over, to be cautious about too lavish a distribution of the Scriptures even among the very poor. Sales at reduced prices are better than gifts. The purchaser will ordinarily prize the book he has bought with his own money. The Bibles are well circulated in London which are paid for in weekly instalments of a penny.

It is interesting to notice how often this subject is adverted to in the last report of the British and Foreign Bible Society, and we cannot do better than to supplement this article by quotations from different parts of that volume. In the section on Germany the general remark is made:

"Colportage is a costly channel of circulation—more costly even than free grants. It is not from financial reasons that your committee press for sales by colportage in preference to gratuitous distribution in all cases where the choice really lies between the two. It is because any amount of gifts of the Scriptures does not, as a missionary agency, supply the place of a colporteur's visits from house to house in search of those who would never of themselves go to look for a Bible. Colportage is difficult work; its expense is great; it exposes a colporteur to abuse, persecution, and inhospitality. But it is a form of real missionary work, and indispensable in Germany, if the Roman Catholics there are to be provided with the Bible."

In respect to France some observations occur which are applicable to other parts of the continent as well:

"To require a small price for the Scriptures looks less enthusiastic in seeking the salvation of man than to give them for nothing, but it is one safeguard against waste.

"The spread of gratuitous distribution of the Scriptures in France by for-

eigners, who are going there in increasing numbers as evangelists, has also, no doubt, had its share in the decreased circulation, more especially of Testaments, by colportage sales. Such Christians generally give the Scriptures to any one who is willing to have them, or who possesses even the mere reluctance of politeness to refuse a gift. And hence an impression is created that such books ought always to be had without money, which forms a serious hindrance to sales by colporteurs.

"An English traveller lately called at the Bible House to complain that the landlord of the hotel where he had been staying in Brittany had told him that in his opinion a copy of the Scriptures was not to be had within twenty miles of the place. It is an old complaint from the lips of good people, who have not altogether realized how different is the position of the Bible in a Roman Catholic country from that which it occupies in England.

"Something of this kind may easily occur. They cross the Channel, and are at once struck by manifestations of a Christianity which they believe to be so overlaid with serious errors as to be well-nigh void of healing virtue. A remedy which at once suggests itself is to give away as many Testaments or Gospels as possible, in every direction. They are surprised that emissaries of the Bible society are not visibly engaged in a distribution which seems so obviously its duty. Not seeing them, they inquire for the Scriptures at bookshops, but in vain. They return to their hotel, and ask a (Catholic) waiter, or landlord, where Bibles can be bought. He shrugs his shoulders, and replies that he does not think such a book can be obtained within twenty miles! Perhaps, there is a quiet, devoted colporteur of this society at the moment threading his way through the back streets of the town, knocking at door after door, and in earnest friendly tones seeking purchasers for the cheap but attractive copies of Holy Scripture, varied in style and form, which he begs them to examine. His calls have been anticipated; and an appalling warning against the man and his wares had been uttered from the pulpit on the previous Sunday. Monsieur le curé follows him from house to house, to secure for the flames any volumes which the unwary may have bought. Meantime, the English tourist has gone on his way, inwardly or openly blaming this society for some oversight or neglect in having placed no Testament in the bedroom of his (Catholic) hotel; in having secured no section for itself in the booksellers' windows; and in having no colporteur giving away Bibles, like leaflets, in the streets.

"It is the *reading* of the Scriptures which the committee above all desire, and this they have reason to know is, as a rule, far better secured in a country like France by steady colportage sales, than by the most unrestricted and gratuitous distribution in the streets and hotels. And where gratuitous distribution may be desirable, it is best to limit it to *Portions*. In suitable cases, to help evangelistic work and to promote virtual colportage, the committee are ready to meet the expenses incurred by other people in the sale of the society's books by a liberal discount.

"In the metropolis there are four colporteurs, but the numerous Christian agencies now at work in it make their labour almost superfluous and in vain. They are undersold even with the society's own books. Gratuitous distribution in some parts renders sales impracticable. 'People all believe that the books were entrusted to us to give away, and that we keep for ourselves any money we get for them.'

While colportage is considered more effective than free grants, in some cases the depots are still more useful. In Paris, *e. g.*, the committee find that by means of such depots they can better reach some classes of society, though the expense is reduced by contributing to the expenses of the shop and allowing the salesmen to deal in other articles. In Holland also, the staff of colporteurs has been gradually exchanged for a system of sub-depots, while the expenditure of the society is limited to a commission on sales.

Of the colporteurs in France, Mr. Monod remarks :

"For one thing, our colporteurs have very seldom to do with the rich. Being themselves of humble rank, they go among the classes that have to earn their bread by daily toil. Among them it is certain that misery is now extreme. Thousands are without work, and many more have only work enough to keep their families from starvation. Our colporteurs are for such people messengers of good news and of comfort ; and a great deal more time than in former years is now given to reading the Scriptures to inquirers. But to obtain even ten *centimes* or twenty *centimes* for a Portion, or a Testament, is a success not to be expected every day."

Special difficulties, however, stand in the way of colportage in Austria :

"The new torture has taken the form of a delay of two, three, or even four months in renewing expired colportage licenses, which, when they are granted, only last for six months or a year. Meantime, the colporteur, who usually has a family dependent upon him, must be paid and remain idle, as the least attempt towards publicly prosecuting his official duties would at once be followed by an absolute refusal to renew the license.

"Elsewhere the colporteurs hold on their way—patient, self-denying, and persevering—albeit they are denounced from the pulpit, and as they pass along a street the hum of conversation ceases, and Socialism heaps upon them contempt wherever Catholicism halts in its reprobation. 'Truly it is nothing else than a marvel,' says Mr. Millard, 'that our colporteurs are what they are, and that their sales amount to what they do, always remembering in addition, that real colportage, i.e., colportage in its usual form of carrying around books which may be sold outright on the spot to any purchaser, 'is a thing not allowed in these countries.'"

Of Egypt, the society's agent remarks :

"Tens of copies sold after much earnest dealing with an individual soul represent much more real missionary work than thousands of copies given away easily to all receivers. There is much painful waste in the latter method of distributing the Holy Books."

The policy of sales at low prices, rather than of free gifts to any one who will take a copy, finds ample justification in facts reported from Port Said by Mr. Weakly in the *Monthly Reporter* for December last. Some one seems to have made a most lavish distribution of the Scriptures at the entrance to the Suez Canal, and the result was this :

"Packets of books, so distributed, are brought to our depot for sale by Arab boatmen, who had obtained them on board the ships for a few oranges or some other trifling article. The captain of a collier told Mr. Taylor the other day, 'It is no use your coming ; we can buy cheaper from the Arab boatmen.' The alleged justification for all this is that if one book in a thousand is useful, the effort is not in vain. The scandal caused by the misuse of the 999 is not considered. There is no serious effort to get at souls in this kind of work. A single Bible sold to an ungodly man after an hour or two's earnest expostulation tells more to the angels than the mechanical and hurried distribution of thousands on board vessels during their short stay at the gate of the Suez Canal."

We close these extracts with a few sentences showing what results are to be seen in Portugal, where a few years ago colporteurs were browbeaten and imprisoned, and their books were confiscated by the magistrates :

"The fruits produced by the Bible society's work are such that they are now visible everywhere, and the promise that we shall see greater things than these seems on the eve of fulfilment.

"It is sufficient proof of the marvellous change produced to state the fact that in a country where twenty years ago almost nothing had been done to enlighten the people in the truth, and where the word of God was scarcely

known, there now exists sixteen places of worship where the Gospel is preached in the native tongue, either by natives or by foreigners; that there are Sunday and day schools in connection with many of these places of worship where hundreds of children receive both spiritual and secular instruction; and that liberty exists without interference or restriction, save occasionally still from the prejudices of the people, or from petty attempts to persecute on the part of a priest."—*American Bible Society Record.*

Bible Society Recorder.

TORONTO, 1st OCTOBER, 1887.

BACK NUMBERS OF THE "RECORDER."

Any friend having spare copies of the following dates of the *Recorder* would confer a favour by mailing them to Mr. John Young, our depositary, with a view to complete fyles, viz., September, 1877, all the issues of 1878, and January, 1879.

BOARD MEETINGS.

The monthly meeting of the Board of Directors was held on Tuesday, the 19th April, at 7.30 o'clock. The Rev. Dr. Potts in the chair. The meeting was opened by reading of the Scriptures and prayer by the Rev. J. Burton. The minutes of the last meeting were read and confirmed. The Permanent Secretary read a letter from the Rev. J. M. Cameron, announcing his resignation of the office of Senior Honorary Secretary; it was resolved that a delegation from the Board call upon him with a request to withdraw it. Reports from the secretaries and the agency and colportage committee were presented and adopted.

In acknowledging a donation from Dr. Whiteside, it was resolved that he be elected a life-member. Applications from the Toronto Christian Temperance Mission and from the Ministerial Association for leave to hold their meetings in the rooms of the Bible Society until the completion of the Young Men's Christian Association building, were granted. The usual routine business was disposed of and the meeting adjourned, subject to the call of the secretaries.

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The adjourned meeting was held at 7.30 o'clock, on Thursday, May 5th, Hon. William McMaster in the chair. After devotional exercises, led by Rev. J. F. Sweeney and Rev. T. W. Jolliffe, the minutes of the former meeting were read and confirmed. A report of the Agency and Colportage Committee, recommending the appointment of Mr. McLeod as Colporteur for Manitoba, was read and approved.

The Rev. John Burton, on behalf of the delegation, reported that the Rev. J. M. Cameron could not withdraw his resignation, owing to an increased pressure of clerical duty; the following resolution was, in consequence, passed and a copy ordered to be forwarded to him: "The Board, in accepting, as they now regretfully do, the resignation of the Rev. J. M. Cameron, senior
 "Honorary Secretary, desire to place on record their deep sense of loss in
 "the retirement of Mr. Cameron from an office he has efficiently filled for
 "thirteen years.

"Punctual, faithful, earnest in the discharge of duty, wise in counsel and
 "courteous in his intercourse with his brethren, he has ever endeared himself to those with whom he has been associated.

"The Board trust still to enjoy his counsel, and pray that the blessings of
 "the Master he so faithfully serves may continue in growing richness to
 "rest upon him."

The Rev. J. M. Cameron was unanimously elected a Vice-President of the society.

The draft of the annual report was read by the Permanent Secretary and ordered to be printed for the annual meeting. It was resolved that an address be prepared for presentation to Her Majesty on this the jubilee year of her reign, to be submitted by the president for approval at the annual meeting. A grant of \$500 was made to the Quebec Auxiliary Bible Society. A letter from the Booksellers and Stationers' Association, asking that, in the interests of trade, an advance be made in the price of our better class of Bibles, and that the cheaper class be placed in the hands of the trade on the same terms as with our branches, was referred to a special committee for report. The vacancy caused by the retirement of the senior hon. secretary (Rev. J. M. Cameron) was filled by the appointment of Warring Kennedy, Esq., and the Rev. John Burton was chosen to replace Mr. Kennedy as junior honorary secretary.

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The monthly meeting of the Board was held on Tuesday evening, 17th May, at 7.30 o'clock. Hon. Wm. McMaster in the chair. After the usual devotional exercises, led by Rev. T. W. Jolliffe and Rev. P. McF. McLeod, the minutes of the previous meeting were read and confirmed, and the secretaries presented their report on the revision of the rules governing the Branch Bible Societies, which was adopted. The address of this society to the Queen was placed in the hands of the secretaries to be suitably engrossed, illuminated and bound, and forwarded to Her Majesty. The Board then proceeded to appoint the standing committees for the year. A letter was read from the Rev. R. Jamieson, of New Westminster, B. C., asking for a colporteur; \$150 were granted to pay the salary of a colporteur during two months. Letters of thanks were read from the Quebec Auxiliary Bible Society for \$500 granted by the Board to assist in colportage work; also from Montreal Auxiliary for \$128.28, contributed by our branches for a similar purpose. The depository's cash statement, colporteurs' reports, list of gratuities, and memorandum of cash balances, were read. The meeting then closed after prayer.

Tuesday evening, 28th June, the Board met at 7.30 o'clock. The Hon. Wm. McMaster in the chair. The Rev. J. Fielding Sweeney opened the meeting with prayer. The minutes of the previous meeting were read and confirmed. The committee appointed to consider the request of the Ontario Booksellers and Stationers' Association to advance the price on Bibles, &c., reported verbally to the Board that the matter was still under consideration. A report from the Agency and Colportage Committee was submitted and approved. Letters were read from the Ven. Archdeacon Cowley, thanking the Board for the 100 Testaments granted to him for distribution in St. Peter's reserve, Manitoba; and from the Rev. R. Jamieson, of New Westminster, B.C., acknowledging receipt of \$75, being for one month's salary of a colporteur. A grant of fifty Bibles was made to the Victoria Industrial School. The auditors reported having examined the accounts for the year and found them correct. The special committee appointed to wait upon the Winnipeg Branch reported that, after conferring with the officers of that society, it was decided that they should embody their views in a memorial to be submitted to this Board. The ordinary business was then attended to, and after prayer, led by the Rev. E. A. Stafford, the Board adjourned for the summer months, to meet, as usual, in September.

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The usual monthly meeting of the Board was held on Tuesday evening, 20th September, at 7.30 o'clock. D. Higgins, Esq., in the chair. After devotional exercises, led by Rev. Dr. Thomas, the minutes of the last meeting were read and confirmed. The Permanent Secretary presented a report from the Agency and Colportage Committee, which was adopted. A memorial from the Winnipeg Branch was submitted, showing the lack of circulation of general religious literature, suggesting the establishment of a distributing centre for said purpose and requesting the earnest attention of this Board to this matter. The question was referred to a special committee for report. The following resolution was passed unanimously:—"That this Board feel constrained to place on record their deep sympathy with their old and respected member, J. K. Macdonald, Esq., in his late affliction—the loss, by accidental shooting, of a much-loved boy. They commend their brother to Him who bindeth up the broken heart and gathereth His own unto Himself." A letter from His Excellency, the Governor-General, was read, thanking the U. C. Bible Society, on behalf of Her Majesty Queen Victoria, for the dutiful and loyal congratulations contained in the address presented on the occasion of this Jubilee year of her reign. The following grants were made:—Six Hebrew Testaments to Rev. T. S. Ellerby and 25 English Bibles for the News Boys' Lodgings. The employment of the gospel waggon for colportage work was discussed and it was resolved to co-operate with the Upper Canada Tract Society in any use to be made of it. The usual routine proceedings were gone through and the meeting was closed with prayer by Rev. J. Burton.

In Memoriam.

With sincere regret we record the sudden removal by death, on September 22nd, of the HON. WM. McMASTER, Senator, a Vice-President and Treasurer of this Society, and who has for the past fifty-one years been a faithful friend and liberal supporter of it.

His connection dates from 1836. In the interim he served as Minute Secretary from 1837 till 1854, when he was appointed a Vice-President. In 1853 his name was enrolled as a life member, and in 1856 he was elected Treasurer, which office he held during life. He was a most regular attendant at the Board meetings, and was a wise counsellor. His presence and influence will be much missed by his co-directors, a large number of whom paid a heartfelt tribute of respect by following his mortal remains to their last resting place.

We have also to record the death of MR. CHARLES HENRY DOAN, another life member, who died at Kansas city, U.S., on the 16th April last, after a short illness. Deceased was the youngest son of Charles Doan, Esq., of Aurora, Ont., an old and earnest friend of the Society.

CONTENTS OF THE BIBLE.

In a sense, the Bible is a plain and a simple book, which he that runneth may read. The language is that of ordinary life. The words are for the most part familiar, and the sentences brief, open, and clear. In another sense, it is one of the most difficult books to interpret. The subject is large, and lies mostly in the spiritual domain. The heavenly things can be seen only as reflected in a broken earthly mirror. To add to our difficulty, the Bible is given, not in systematic form, in ordered and philosophic phrase, but as a collection of fragments. Though clear in itself, each fragment is to be modified by all others. The single sentence, verse, or chapter is but a part of the whole, a single segment of the wide circle of the truth revealed to us in the word of God. As Milton has it, "There is scarce one saying in the gospel but must be read with limitations and distinctions to be rightly understood; for Christ gives no full comments or continued discourses, but speaks oft in monosyllables, like a master scattering the heavenly grain of His doctrine like pearls here and there, which requires a skilful and laborious gatherer, who must compare the words he finds with other precepts, with the end of every ordinance, and with the general analogy of evangelical doctrine; otherwise many particular sayings would be but strange, repugnant riddles." The itemizers have often been huge misinterpreters of the gospel. If single verses had contained the gospel, their interpretation would have been correct; but as these verses contain but a fragment of the truth, their statement of it is entirely incomplete. And an incomplete statement, a half truth, is often more deceptive than an entire untruth. The only reliable interpretation is that which takes account of the entire body of revealed truth, and this wide connection and relation of Bible truth is that which many positive people fail to grasp.—*Western Christian Advocate.*

AMONG THE BOHEMIANS.

It is true of them that, when converted, the Bible is their daily and open study, at every opportunity. Its principles take deep root, and they cling to it to-day with the same love and fidelity as when the 4,000 suffered martyrdom for being the followers of John Huss, and loving the gospel of Jesus.

A single illustration will show you their adherence to principle. A young man, a merchant in a small way in Prague, was converted. His Bible was his daily study. One evening he was reading the Commandments, when he suddenly stopped, saying to his wife, "Anna, what do you think this means, 'Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy?' Does it mean that we ought not to do any work on Sunday?" "I think it must mean that," she replied, "Then," said the husband, "I ought not to sell any more goods on Sunday, for that is my work, and it has been my best day." "Yes," said the wife, "and what will you do about it? You can't refuse the people that come from the villages." "But I must," said the husband, "if that is what it means. I'll ask Mr. Adams."

The next day Mr. Adams was sought, and of course there was but one answer. Sunday the little store was closed. About the middle of the forenoon an old customer came a distance of twelve miles to make a large purchase. She sought the merchant, when he told her frankly his convictions, and that while he was sorry for her disappointment, he couldn't do wrong. She begged to look at the goods, and select, and leave them to be sent during the week. No, he was firm. She became very angry, declared she would never give him another kreutzer's worth of trade, and left him.

On the way home she thought much about the matter, and came to the conclusion that if this man was so conscientious in such matters he would be, as she had always thought, an honest man to trade with. The result was that during the week she returned with renewed confidence, bought more than three times the amount of goods intended first, and pleasantly accepted the change. And God did not forget or overlook this sacrifice; he returned it to him more than twofold, for during that year he was obliged to change his store, for more than, four different times.

This spirit "to search the Scriptures" is a marked feature of a Bohemian Christian in Bohemia; what it will be in America, is a lesson yet to be learned.—*From a Leaflet of the American Home Missionary Society.*

 NEED OF THE SCRIPTURES.

The theology of nature sheds powerful light on the being of a God; and even from its unaided demonstrations, we can reach a considerable degree of probability, both for his moral and natural attributes. But when it undertakes the question between God and man, this is what it finds to be impracticable. It is here where the main helplessness of nature lies. It is baffled in all its attempts to decipher the state and the prospects of man, viewed in the relation of an offending subject to an offending sovereign. In a word, its chief obscurity, and which it is wholly unable to dispense, is that which rests on the hopes and the destiny of our species. There is in it enough of manifestations to awaken the fears of guilt, but not enough again to appease them. It emits, and audibly emits, a note of terror; but in vain do we listen for one authentic word of comfort from any of its oracles. It is able to see the danger, but not the deliverance. It can excite the forebodings of the human spirit, but cannot quell them—knowing just enough to stir the perplexity, but not enough to set the perplexity at rest. It can state the difficulty, but cannot unriddle the difficulty—having just as much knowledge as to enunciate the problem, but not so much as might lead to the solution of the problem. There must be a measure of light, we do allow; but, like the

lurid gleam of a volcano, it is not a light which guides, but which bewilders and terrifies. It prompts the question, but cannot frame or furnish the reply. Natural theology may see as much as shall draw forth the anxious interrogation, "What shall I do to be saved!" The answer to this comes from a higher theology.—*Dr. Chalmers.*

RECEIPTS FROM BRANCHES AT THE BIBLE SOCIETY HOUSE,
TORONTO, FROM JUNE TO SEPTEMBER, 1887 (INCLUSIVE).

		On- Purchase Account.	FREE CONTRIBUTIONS.		
			U. C. B. S.	B. & F. B. S.	Sundries.
Beachville	Branch	3 12	19 02		
Portage La Prairie	do		55 00		
Bobcaygeon	do	11 73	24 65		
Scarborough (additional)			7 00		
St. Mary's	Branch	24 97			
Derry West	do		13 60		
Sutton	do		9 90		
Lakefield	do		75 00		
Mt. Pleasant (Cavan)	do	6 12	23 96		
Mt. Pleasant (Brant)	do	3 90	5 20		
Trenton	do		19 75		
Bethany	do		8 00	8 00	(1) 5 00
Zurich	do	27 03	34 70		
Newburgh	do		13 85		
Brooklin	do		23 00		
East Williams	do		135 00		
Goderich	do	25 00			
Kinlough	do	1 11			
New Dundee	do		12 57		
Roth-ay	do		15 00		
Pepetanguishene	do		1 40		
St. Helen's	do		9 86	9 87	(1) 9 87
Paris	do	35 00			
Glenallan	do		12 60		
Thamesville	do	16 50	17 65	10 00	
Millbank	do		22 40		
Rodney	do		7 00		
Greenwood	do		28 00		
Fort William	Depository		5 00		
Craigvale	Branch		10 00	7 43	
Stouffville	do	40 00			
Port Hope	do	15 00			
Milton	do	20 79	100 00	63 68	
Hollin	do	90			
Mimosa	do		7 00	7 00	
Underwood	do	4 38			
New Westminster	do		41 50		
Fullarton (from Motherwell and Avonbank)			20 00		
Alliston	Branch	11 12			
Jarvis	do		30 00	30 00	
Port Perry	do		30 57	20 00	
Jerseyville	do	8 31			
Midland	do	7 11			

(1) To Quebec Auxiliary.