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A Most Favoured Nation:
The Bible in Late Nineteenth-Century Canadian Public Life

by
Preston Lee Jones

Thesis submitted to
the School of Graduate Studies and Research
in partial fulfilment for the
Ph.D. degree in History

Université d'Ottawa/University of Ottawa

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Canada

For
my teacher,
Pierre Savard (1936-1998)

Abstract

A Most Favoured Nation:

The Bible in Late Nineteenth-Century Canadian Public Life

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University of Ottawa, 1999

Supervisors:
David Lyle Jeffrey
Pierre Savard

While it is generally acknowledged that the Bible's influence in Canadian history, as in all Western societies, has been significant, this thesis is the first extended study of the Bible's place in Canadian public life. Drawing on a wide range of printed primary sources, this thesis examines the way the Bible and biblical rhetoric were employed by public figures in Canada in the late nineteenth century. The majority of the figures whose rhetoric and writing is studied here were nationalists interested in defining their nation. This study's most basic conclusion is that the Bible did indeed inform the way English- and French-speaking Canadians spoke about their country in the late nineteenth century. A second conclusion is that Protestant Canadians who perceived French Quebec as a Bible-free zone were mistaken. French Canadian Catholics certainly did not read the Bible independently the way Protestants did, but the Scriptures were available even to illiterate French Canadians— via paintings, sculptures, iconography, and sermons. French Canada's "providential mission" — the belief that the French Canadians were a divinely chosen people in the New World — was frequently

expressed in explicitly biblical terms. Protestants who thought Quebec's French-speaking Catholics were totally ignorant of the Scriptures were wrong. A third conclusion of this study is that, by virtue of their eagerness to attach biblical language to mundane projects, Canada's Protestants contributed to the creation of an intellectual atmosphere in which the Scriptures could be handled casually. Protestant biblicism could not but often render the Scriptures trivial. Finally, this thesis's fourth conclusion is that, according to the terms current in late nineteenth-century Canada, Quebec's catholic culture appears to have been somewhat more "biblical," if less biblicistic, than English-speaking Canadian culture.

Acknowledgments

Given this study's subject, it seems fitting for me to extend my thanks, first, to Mrs. Virginia Thornburg, my third-grade Sunday school teacher, who, with many others, drilled the Bible into my head. I thank Joel Newcomer (sixth grade), Charles Grande (twelfth grade and Crafton Junior College), Senior Chief Paul Keith (U.S. Navy), Elliot Barkan and Cheryl Riggs (California State University, San Bernardino), Yvette Fallandy, Peter Mellini, and Stephen Watrous (Sonoma State University), Michael D. Behiels and Graeme Hunter (University of Ottawa), and Gregory Bloomquist (St. Paul's University) for their encouragement. Of course, I thank my mother, Mary Anne, and Ralph, my father, who I hope are not finally disappointed that I did not make a career of the U.S. Navy.

Anne Marie Jones, née Keffer, my wife and best friend, is probably happier than I am that this project has, finally, come to an end. Of course, I could not have done it without her, nor, for that matter, without the help of her parents Gerry and Maria, and siblings, Greg and Margaret.

David Lyle Jeffrey, co-supervisor of this thesis, is to be thanked for, among other things, well-deserved kicks in the pants and his example as a man who is faithful not only to scholarship, his community in rural Ontario, and his family, but to what G.K. Chesterton called the First Things.

I should of course convey my sincere thanks to the United States-Canada Fulbright scholarship program (United States

Information Agency) for sending me to the University of Ottawa in the 1995-1996 academic year. Also the Pew Program in Religion and American History, based at Yale University, granted me a doctoral dissertation fellowship for the 1998-1999 academic year that allowed me to finish this thesis in a timely fashion. I am grateful for that award.

Without the work of the staff at the inter-library loan office at Sonoma State University, where I was a lecturer in American and world history while writing this thesis, I would have been in very deep trouble indeed.

Finally I wish to express deep gratitude to Pierre Savard, who until his untimely death co-supervised the writing of this thesis, which is dedicated to his memory. Were it not for Professor Savard's willingness to assist a Californian with an interest in French Canadian involvement in the American Civil War (the subject of my M.A. thesis), I would not have won a Fulbright scholarship in 1995; which is to say that I would not have gone to study under his direction at the University of Ottawa; which is to say that I would not have written this thesis. I am glad I did write it; I am glad I came to know Pierre Savard. I regret that he did not live to read this thesis in full. There is consolation in the knowledge that when I speak with him next we shall not be pressed for time.

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Introduction

I discovered that Philip had never read the Gospels. Nor, for that matter, our Christian Old Testament. To me this came as a shock, all the more so as it made one wonder how he had managed to understand Eliot, one of his favorite modern masters. Even before Eliot's religious phase, there must have been problems. "Ash Wednesday"? *The Waste Land*? The grail? For once, Philip concurred. I was right, he agreed, and there was also Joyce, who, though not a believer, used the Christian myth....He promised that he would read the whole Bible if I would leave him in peace.

-- Mary McCarthy, *Intellectual Memoirs*¹

The Bible is clearly a major element in our own imaginative tradition, whatever we may think we believe about it.

-- Northrop Frye, *The Great Code*²

In October 1997 the *Christian Science Monitor* published a story under the headline "Florida Case Reignites Debate Over Scripture in the Schools." The opposing camps -- those who wished to see the Bible taught again in public schools and those who did not -- made their usual cases, the one side arguing that since the Bible is a religious book it should not be taught at taxpayers' expense, the other that the Bible is an important literary and historical source and that religion is beside the

¹Mary McCarthy, *Intellectual Memoirs: New York, 1936-1938* (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1992), 77.

²Northrop Frye, *The Great Code: The Bible and Literature* (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1982), xviii.

point. "Most of the founding documents of our country were based on the Bible," said one disputant. "Without a working knowledge of the Bible students couldn't even understand the basis on which our Constitution was founded."³ Whatever the merits of that particular claim, that this debate is still alive nearly forty years after the United States Supreme Court barred public school teachers from reading the Bible to their classes is telling. The Bible remains a powerful presence in American public life.

"In a manner that finds no exact parallel in any other nation," writes Giles Gunn, "the Bible has become America's book."

The Bible has become America's book not only because Americans like to think that they have read it more assiduously than any other people, but also because Americans like to think that the Bible is the book that they, more than any other people, have been assiduously read by.⁴

If, as one scholar puts it, Gunn's claim that the Bible is "America's book" is "extravagant," the idea itself, expressed by an American, comes as no surprise;⁵ the sight of Americans calling thankfully upon the Almighty for sundry perceived

³Warren Richey, "Florida Case Reignites Debate Over Scripture in the Schools," *Christian Science Monitor* 29 October 1997, 8.

⁴Giles Gunn, *The Bible and American Arts and Letters* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press; Chico: Scholars Press, 1983), 1.

⁵See David Lyle Jeffrey's comments in "The Bible and the American Myth," ch. in *People of the Book: Literary Culture and Christian Identity* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1996).

blessings and for assistance in times of distress, and the employment of biblical texts by White House occupants of whichever party is, after all, common.⁵ Abraham Lincoln, himself probably not very pious, frequently and artfully flavoured his public discourse with biblical quotations and allusions,⁶ and in the 1980s Ronald Reagan echoed colonial American divines, asserting that the United States remained a "city on a hill." In good American style, former president and perennial Sunday school teacher Jimmy Carter published a spiritual autobiography, complete with longish revelations of his appreciation for the

⁵See Richard V. Pierard and Robert D. Linder, *Civil Religion and the American Presidency* (Grand Rapids: Academie Books, 1988); and Robert D. Linder, "Universal Pastor: President Bill Clinton's Civil Religion," *Journal of Church and State* 38:4 (1996), 733-749.

⁶Consider, for example, these lines from Lincoln's second inaugural address, 4 March 1865, given as the American Civil War was winding down (I have italicized biblical allusions and citations): "Both [Confederates and Federalists] read the same Bible, and pray to the same God; and each invokes His aid against the other. It may seem strange that any men should dare to ask a just God's assistance in *wringing their bread from the sweat of other men's faces*; but let us judge not that we be not judged....The Almighty has His own purposes. "*Woe unto the world because of offences! for it must needs be that offences come; but woe to that man by whom the offence cometh....*With malice toward none; with charity for all; with firmness in the right, as God gives us to see the right, let us strive on to finish the work we are in; to *bind up the nation's wounds*; to care for him who shall have borne the battle, and for his widow, and his orphan--to do all which may achieve and cherish a just, and a lasting peace, among ourselves, and with all nations." See Abraham Lincoln, *The Gettysburg Address and Other Speeches* (New York: Penguin Books, 1995), 85-6. For the sources to which Lincoln alludes see, respectively, Genesis 3:19; Matthew 7:1; Matthew 18:7 (cf., Luke 17:1); II Timothy 4:7, Philippians 3:14, Hebrews 12:1; James 1:27.

Bible.³ As these examples and numerous academic studies have made clear, the Bible has had a privileged place in American culture.³ What the present study aims to show is that the Bible has exerted a considerable influence in Canadian history as well.

Up to now little scholarly attention has been paid to the Bible's place in Canadian public life. Tom Sinclair-Faulkner and Michael Gauvreau have ably written on the impact of academic biblical criticism on Canadian university studies and Christian academics (a subject not taken up in this study);¹² John Moir has

³Jimmy Carter, *Living Faith* (New York: Random House, 1996). In 1997 Carter endorsed Gary Gunderson's *Deeply Woven Roots: Improving the Quality of Life in Your Community* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press), observing that it reveals "An exciting and gratifying way to practice what we profess to accept from our Holy Scripture." See *Books & Culture: A Christian Review* (November/December 1997), 37.

³In addition to sources cited elsewhere in this chapter, see, for example, Nathan O. Hatch and Mark A. Noll, eds., *The Bible in America: Essays in Cultural History* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1982); David L. Barr and Nicholas Piediscalzi, eds., *The Bible in American Education: From Source Book to Textbook* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press; Chico: Scholars Press, 1982); Ernest R. Sandeen, ed., *The Bible and Social Reform* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press; Chico: Scholars Press, 1985); James Turner Johnson, ed., *The Bible and in American Law, Politics, and Political Rhetoric* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press; Chico: Scholars Press, 1985); Allene Stuart Phy, *The Bible in Popular Culture in America* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press; Chico: Scholars Press, 1985).

¹²Tom Sinclair-Faulkner, "Theory divided from practice: the introduction of the higher criticism into Canadian Protestant seminaries," *Studies in Religion/sciences religieuses* 10:3 (summer 1981), 321-43; Michael Gauvreau, "The Taming of History: Reflections on the Canadian Methodist Encounter with Biblical Criticism," *Canadian Historical Review* LXV: 3 (1984), 315-346. Also see Michael Gauvreau, *The Evangelical Century: College and Creed in English Canada from the Great Revival to the Great Depression* (Montreal-Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1991), 3, 4, 50, 82, 87, 101-03, 107, 108, 118, 131, 145, 151-53,

published an informative, if dry, history of biblical studies in the Canadian university;¹¹ E.C. Woodley and Paul-Aimé Martin have penned brief, general accounts of organizations devoted to the study and propagation of the Bible in Canada;¹² Neil Semple, with other historians of religion in Canada, has noted the important educational role played by Bible-based Sunday schools;¹³ John G. Stackhouse, Jr. and Robert K. Burkinshaw have written on Bible colleges and institutes;¹⁴ S.F. Wise, Richard Allen, and William Westfall have shown the important role general biblical themes played in nineteenth-century Canadian intellectual life;¹⁵ Norman

173, 223, and 225.

¹¹John S. Moir, *A History of Biblical Studies in Canada: A Sense of Proportion* (Chico: Scholars Press, 1982).

¹²E.C. Woodley, *The Bible in Canada: The Story of the British and Foreign Bible Society in Canada* (Toronto: J.M. Dent and Sons, 1953); Paul-Aimé Martin, *Le mouvement biblique au Canada* (Montreal: Fides, 1996).

¹³Neil Semple, *The Lord's Dominion: A History of Canadian Methodism* (Montreal:-Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1996), 367-372.

¹⁴John G. Stackhouse, Jr., *Canadian Evangelicalism in the Twentieth Century: An Introduction to Its Character* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1993), chapters 3, 4, 7, and 8; Robert K. Burkinshaw, *Pilgrims in Lotus land: Conservative Protestantism in British Columbia, 1917-1981* (Montreal-Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1995), 57-75; and "Evangelical Bible Colleges in Twentieth-Century Canada," ch. in *Aspects of the Canadian Evangelical Experience*, ed., G.A. Rawlyk (Montreal-King: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1997).

¹⁵S.F. Wise, "God's Peculiar Peoples," ch. in *The Shield of Achilles: Aspects of Canada in the Victorian Age* W.L. Morton, ed. (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1968); Richard Allen, "Progress to Providence," ch. in *Religion/Culture: Comparative Canadian Studies* William Westfall, ed. (Ottawa: Association for Canadian Studies, 1985); William Westfall, "Order and Experience: Patterns

F. Cornett and Thomas Flanagan have noted the centrality of biblical ideas in the thought of, respectively, Lionel Groulx and Louis Riel;¹⁶ and, of course, Alberta's colorful "Bible Bill" Aberhart has been the subject of several studies.¹⁷

Canadian professors of English -- most notably the late-Northrop Frye¹⁸ and David Lyle Jeffrey -- have written extensively on the Bible and English literature in general and, in Jeffrey's case, on biblical themes in Canadian fiction in particular.¹⁹

of Religious Metaphor in Early Nineteenth Century Upper Canada," *Journal of Canadian Studies* 20 (Spring 1985), 5-24.

¹⁶Norman F. Cornett, "Lionel Groulx's rationale for French-Canadian nationalism," *Studies in Religion/sciences religieuses* 18:4 (autumn 1989), 407-414; Thomas Flanagan, *Louis 'David' Riel: Prophet of New World* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1996; revised ed., 1979), *passim*.

¹⁷See David R. Elliott, "The Devil and William Aberhart: The Nature and Function of His Eschatology," *Studies in Religion* 9 (1980), 325-37; Joseph A. Boudreau, "The Medium and the Message of William Aberhart," *American Review of Canadian Studies* 8 (1978), 18-30; David R. Elliott and Iris Miller, *Bible Bill: A Biography of William Aberhart* (Edmonton: Reidmore Books, 1987).

¹⁸Northrop Frye, *The Great Code; and Words With Power: Being a Second Study of 'The Bible and Literature'* (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1990).

¹⁹David Lyle Jeffrey, "Biblical Hermeneutic and Family History in Contemporary Canadian Fiction," *Mosaic* 11 (1978), 87-106; "A Search for Peace: Prophecy and Parable in the Fiction of Rudy Wiebe," ch. in *A Voice in the Land* ed., W. J. Keith (NeWest Publications, 1981); "Light, Stillness and Shaping the Word: Conversion in the Poetic of Margaret Avison," ch. in *Lighting Up the Terrain: The Poetry of Margaret Avison* ed., David A. Kent (Toronto: ECW Press, 1987); and *The Fiction of Jack Hodgins* (Toronto: ECW Press, 1989). In *Catching the Wind in a Net: The Religious Vision of Robertson Davies* (ECW Press, 1996) David Little devotes nearly fifty pages (148-97) to the documentation of Robertson Davies' employment of biblical texts. Also see Sandra A. Djwa, "Biblical Archetypes in Western Canadian Fiction," ch. in *Western Canada: Past and Present* ed., Anthony W.

Significantly, over one-quarter of the scholars who contributed to the monumental *Dictionary of Biblical Tradition in English Literature*, edited by Jeffrey, teach at Canadian institutions.²⁰ Canadian students of letters have thus published a great deal on the Bible in literature. What has not been undertaken to the present is a sustained study of the Bible's place in Canada's public life.

It is of course easy to find high praise of the Bible in nineteenth-century Canadian periodical, political, and religious literature; it is also relatively easy to find increasing doubt expressed about the Scriptures, particularly in the nineteenth century's last decades. Sinclair-Faulkner and Gauvreau have shown that by the end of the nineteenth century academic biblical criticism had made inroads into the Canadian academy.²¹ In the same period it was common and in some circles fashionable for orthodox Christianity and traditional Protestant readings of the Bible to be used (apparently) irreverently. In the late nineteenth century less than sober treatments of the Bible appeared in even some serious religious publications such as the *Canadian Methodist Magazine*.²² And yet at the same time

Rasporich (Calgary: McClelland and Stewart West, 1975).

²⁰David Lyle Jeffrey, general ed., *A Dictionary of Biblical Tradition in English Literature* (Grand rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1992), xxix-xxxii.

²¹See footnote 10 above.

²²In a satirical essay entitled "An Excursion" (*Canadian Methodist Magazine* 4:2 [August 1876]), P. Le Sueur calls

conservative opinions of the Scriptures were still stoutly defended. In 1875 George Munro Grant, who is said by a recent biographer to have been a champion of "liberal theological and political views,"²³ claimed to believe in a literal ark built and operated by a literal Noah.²⁴ And, as was the case in the United States, Protestant revival meetings made a considerable mark on Canadian public life, claiming among their converts Canada's first prime minister.²⁵

doctrines concerning election, reprobation, free-will, sovereignty, "sacramental virtue," priestly authority, apostolic succession, "faith with and without works," the unpardonable sin, "the origin of moral evil," and other doctrines "moot points which have been the shuttle-cocks of theologians ever since the creeds and confessions of faith were invented" (161). He also argues that it is absurd for Christians to maintain that salvation can be secured through faith alone.

²³D.B. Mack, "Grant, George Munro," *Dictionary of Canadian Biography* vol. XIII (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1994), 408.

²⁴In the *Canadian Monthly and National Review* Grant defended the revival meetings conducted by Dwight Moody in Canada in 1875. Grant says, *inter alia*, that he, with Moody, believed that the walls of Jericho fell down "in the manner described in the Book of Joshua" and that a literal Noah manufactured a literal ark. In the *Review* see "Laon on 'Messrs. Moody and Sankey and Revivalism,'" 8:3 (September 1875), 250-255. Of the Bible and doctrine Grant writes: "[T]he Bible abounds in summaries of saving truth. We believe that men are sinners....We believe that the kindness and love of God our Saviour towards men hath appeared; that we are saved not by works of righteousness done by us, but by the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Ghost which he hath shed upon us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Saviour; that we are justified by His grace and made heirs according to the hope of eternal life; and that if they who despised the law of Moses or any law worth the name suffered, of how much sorer punishment shall they be thought worthy who reject the Son of God!" (252).

²⁵In 1888 an elderly John A. Macdonald walked the "sawdust trail" at a revival meeting conducted in Ottawa by Hugh T.

If at the end of the nineteenth century the Bible did not possess the same high status attributed to it by Canadians in previous decades, it was nevertheless an abiding presence in Canadian public life. When, moreover, late nineteenth-century Canadians set out to define themselves, they often did so in biblical terms. The majority of those who no longer considered the Bible God's unique "word" still held it to be a great literary work and a source of good moral teaching. According to one anecdote current in the late nineteenth century, even Deists read the Bible to their children, for it was of all books the source of the highest morality.²⁶

Of course, good morals contribute to good health; so when Canadians thought about their physical well being they sometimes turned to the Bible for guidance. In April 1887 the *Canada Health Journal* published a short essay on the "Claims of the Unborn" in which parents were challenged to think not only of their future child's earthly existence but its eternal life in a biblical heaven. If, the *Journal* maintained, parents had regard for the life and health of their unborn sons and daughters, and if they regarded their child's "happiness and well-being in this life,

Crossley and John E. Hunter. See Kevin Kee, "'The Heavenly Railroad': An Introduction to Crossley-Hunter Revivalism," ch. in Rawlyk, ed., *Aspects of the Canadian Evangelical Experience*. For a discussion of the impact of revivals on small towns in Ontario see Lynne Marks, *Revivals and Roller Rinks: Religion and Identity in Late-Nineteenth Century Small-Town Ontario* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1996).

²⁶Egerton Ryerson, *First Lessons in Christian Morals* (Toronto: Copp, Clark & Co., 1871), iii-iv.

and in the life to come," they should be "thoughtful, careful and guarded in regard to all acts, mental and physical, of the mothers during the ante-natal life of their infants."¹⁷ In the following year the *Journal* published an excerpt from a sermon given by one T. De Witt Talmage in New York City. Entitled the "Gospel of Health," Talmage took for his sermon text Proverbs 7:23. The original context of this verse is concerned with a foolish young man who commits adultery and thus brought judgment on himself "Till a dart [struck] through his liver"; yet Talmage found it fit for his own purposes. "I preach to you this morning the gospel of health," he declared; "In taking diagnosis of the diseases of the soul, you must also take diagnosis of those of the body." Talmage noted that "God does not very often honor with old age those who have in early life sacrificed swine on the altar of the bodily temple,"¹⁸ and he admonished young men to keep in mind that "religion does not change the liver": Conversion to sincere faith would certainly restore a drunkard's soul but an abused liver could not benefit from repentance. "God forgives, but outraged physical law never, never, never," Talmage wrote. "That has a Sinai, but no Calvary."¹⁹ *The Nation*, a nationalist

¹⁷"The Claims of the Unborn," *The Canada Health Journal* 9:4 (April 1887), 82.

¹⁸The allusion here is to the desecration of the Jewish temple by the Greeks during the reign of Antiochus Epiphanes (175-63 B.C.). See I Maccabees 1:47.

¹⁹"The Gospel of Health," *Canada Health Journal* 10:5 (May 1888), 171-172. Talmage goes on to make some distinctions between the "gambler's liver," the "drunkard's liver," and so on. In

newspaper produced by prominent members of Canada First, similarly resorted to Scripture to discourage the drinking of hard liquor.³⁰

Even if Talmage's readers rejected biblical authority and his presentation as so much Bible-thumping moralism, they would still have had to acknowledge the Bible's place at the centre of Canadian culture. In 1861 the *Christian Guardian* asserted that the Bible had a special claim on young people in particular: It was the "the basis of all our holy, rich and pure Literature." The Bible's style is "grand, majestic and sublime," the *Guardian* claimed, for in it readers can find "rich biography" and "cheering history," "sublime poetry" and "deep philosophy," "clear logic" and "sound reasoning." Indeed, "the best writers and speakers have drawn their most apt illustrations, and received their most happy and beautiful allusions from the word of God."³¹

referring to Sinai and Calvary Talmage draws on the Christian belief that the new spiritual order inaugurated by Christ (in part on Calvary; see Luke 23:33) superseded the order given by God to Moses on Mount Sinai (see Exodus 19-20).

³⁰"Wine-Drinking and Dram-Drinking," *Nation* 7 May 1874, 69.

³¹"The Bible," *Christian Guardian* 18 September 1861, 1. On 1 November 1865 the *Guardian*, challenging its subscribers to read the Bible more, inveighed against the reading of novels: "[U]nhappily the rage for novels, romances, legendary tales, and plays; together with comic renderings, though by professional and famous readers, is too general to be considered less, even in Canada, than a great social blemish....Let our young men penetrate the surface, become familiar with the venerable and everlasting thoughts of the great Classic of our own tongue, master our mighty theological standard; and taking Isaiah and Paul by the hand scale the battlements of the loftiest truth, and

While some Canadian writers recognized that much the same could be said of the Greek and Roman classics, they maintained that biblical authors excelled their pagan and classical counterparts.³² The *Canada Christian Advocate* observed that Demosthenes's "most splendid oration" was really "just an essay written for a prize," since the Athenian statesman was out primarily to gain personal fame. Not so the biblical writers, for their "rhetorical and poetical beauties of Scripture are merely incidental." The Bible's authors did not write for "glory" or "display," nor did they write to "astonish" or "amaze their brethren." Their aim was rather to instruct and to make their readers morally better. Yet the biblical historians nevertheless out-performed Herodotus and Thucydides.³³

touch the highest standard of Man" ("Young Men and Their Readings," 2).

³²However, the *Provincial Wesleyan* maintained that it was essential that young Nova Scotians should learn to read Latin (6 May 1863, 1) while no such emphasis was placed on the study of Hebrew or Greek. A study comparable to this one on the place of classical literature in late nineteenth-century Canadian public life could be done. While allusions to Egyptian, Greek and Roman sources are not as ubiquitous as allusions and references to the Bible, they are nevertheless common, as the few sources noted above suggest. On 1 October 1862, for another example, the *Provincial Witness* published an article entitled "Choice of Animals for Fattening," the author of which contended with Virgil, Aristotle "and several other naturalists" who maintained that the best cattle had long fine noses. "The nose...ought...to be thick, strong, and as near the ear as possible," the writer maintained (4). Also see William A. Foster, *Canada First: A Memorial of the Late William A. Foster* (Toronto: Hunter, Rose and Company, 1890) for references to Cassandra (42), Troy (46), and Achilles (67). And also *The Nation* 11 June 1874, 125.

³³"Scripture Writers," *Canada Christian Advocate* 15 October 1862. For an interesting comparison of the military careers of

Another Canadian author marveled at how much the biblical "God of mercy" outshone "the incestuous Jupiter, the revengeful Juno, and the lascivious Venus."³⁴ And elsewhere the biblical King David was compared to Homer. "Both were poets of surpassing genius; the one the sweet singer of Israel, the other the epic bard of Greece."³⁵ But they were not to be remembered with equal fondness: Homer had "praised the acts of demons," David "applauded the deeds of virtuous men."³⁶ Also widespread in late nineteenth-century Canada was a belief that if Canadians were faithful to the Book to which David contributed they would enjoy peace and prosperity, born of holiness. "Do we differ from the rest of our fellow-men in knowledge and in happiness?" the *Christian Guardian* rhetorically queried in 1861. "It is because we have the Holy Bible."³⁷ Two years later the *Protestant and*

Joan of Arc and the Hebrew prophetess Deborah see, "Deborah and Joan D'Arc," *Canada Christian Advocate* 2 October 1861, 1. The biblical historical books are Joshua, Judges, Ruth, I and II Samuel, I and II Kings, I and II Chronicles, Ezra Nehemiah, and Esther. The book of Jonah is written as history (biography) but is included among the Old Testament's prophetic works.

³⁴Ryerson, *First Lessons in Christian Morals*, 66.

³⁵Though David did not write all the biblical Psalms they are known by tradition as the Psalms of David. For a commentary on David as musician see I Samuel 16:23.

³⁶"David and Homer," *Canada Christian Advocate* 10 July 1861, 1. The writer continues: "David's God was the source of purity; Homer's gods were slaves of infamy. David's heroes were the good and benevolent; Homer's heroes were the vicious and despotic. David was a disciple of the pure religion; Homer was the slave of idolatry."

³⁷A.C., "The Bible," *Christian Guardian* 18 September 1861, 1.

Evangelical Witness reminded its readers that Queen Victoria "assured" them that the Bible was the "foundation of [their] national greatness."³² And in the wake of Fenian raids in 1866 the Reverend William Stewart of Canada West asked one congregation if anyone would be "bold enough to deny that in the ranks of Canada's gallant defenders of the present day, there are many who are both good soldiers of Britain's Queen, and good soldiers of Jesus Christ?"³³ British North Americans who defended their homeland were in good company, Stewart said. While it was true that the "grand design" of the Gospel was to produce peace on earth, the fact remained that "even the Lord Jesus himself, the Righteous Governor, is represented in the New Testament record as

³²"The Bible in the Common Schools," *Protestant and Evangelical Witness* 14 March 1863, 2. The next month (25 April 1863) the *Witness* waxed even more lyrical: "Stand by the site of ancient cities, and as you gaze in mute melancholy on the ruins of ancient places and splendid mansions, of markets and pleasure grounds, on the desolation that sweeps all around, covering up the labor and skill of the craftsman with the rubbish of ages, amidst which the beasts of prey now find their lair and crouch in concealment, and think that there once were the busy mart, the hum of busy life, there was every means of carnal enjoyment, with the air of confidence and self-wisdom, there the thronged street of mortals with like passions as ourselves, the jovial festival, stirring music and the graceful dance; there might be seen hieing to school blithely as the rosy morn, that happy youth with song of mirth and of patriotism -- but the Word of God was not there -- the Bible was excluded from the school, and God, the God of nations, frowned upon them, and with the besom of destruction He swept them away from being a people -- stillness of death is now there, broken only the screech of the owl or the wild beast, a warring to those who should come after, and a proof that sin is a reproach to any nation, that God will punish those nations and cities who will not acknowledge Him" (2).

³³William Stewart, *The Country's Trouble and the Christian's Consolation* (Brantford, 1866), 7.

'in righteousness judging and making war.'" Abraham, Joshua, David, Jonathan, and "other Old Testament Saints," moreover, had all been men of war.⁴⁰ Stewart did not hope for more conflict with the Fenians but he did think that their raids and the recent American Civil War had borne some good fruit-- namely, an increased "sentiment of nationality" that would soon "bind the Provinces of British North America together." And this was something to be thankful for: God was bringing good from evil. "Right worthily might this triumphant song...ring through the Churches of Canada this day, 'God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble.'"⁴¹

As the above examples indicate, demonstrating that the Bible was cited to strengthen, prove, disprove, or even simply to decorate myriad notions in late nineteenth-century Canada is not difficult. United States historian Mark A. Noll has observed that if it is "easy to establish the omnipresence of Scripture in American life," it is "much harder to say what that omnipresence means."⁴² This observation holds true for Canada as well, though I have aimed to find some meaning in the material I have consulted.

In addition, then, to merely proving the obvious -- that

⁴⁰Ibid.

⁴¹Ibid., 11. See Psalm 46:1.

⁴²Mark A. Noll, "The Bible in American Culture," *Encyclopedia of the American Religious Experience* vol. II (New York: Scribners and Sons: 1988), 1075.

earlier Canadian generations were biblically literate and that the Bible informed their public language -- at the heart of this study is a question about how late nineteenth-century Canadians who spoke and wrote publicly employed biblical texts in the course of their pursuit of that most elusive of intellectual goods: Canadian identity. Thus, recognizing that many "ordinary" Canadians who went about their day to day lives probably did not have much interest in the type of language I cite in this thesis,⁴³ I focus on the words of Canada's French- and English-speaking nationalists, promoters, and enthusiasts, among which were some of late nineteenth-century Canada's most influential men. What did it sound like when Canadians who wished to define themselves and their nation cited to Bible?

Of course, that question begs another, namely, Did French Quebecers, who lived in what many Protestants took to be a Bible-free zone, rely on the Bible for self-definition to any considerable extent? The answer to the question -- an emphatic yes -- would certainly have surprised such English-speaking

⁴³ This parenthetical clause is written in deference to Lynne Marks' *Revivals and Roller Rinks: Religion, Leisure, and Identity in Late-Nineteenth-Century Small-Town Ontario* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1996.) Marks writes that "Images of unified, temperate, churchgoing communities do not quite mesh" with the historical record and that in nineteenth-century Ontario Protestant culture "consensus was elusive" (3). Taking Marks at her word, I readily concede that most Canadians probably did not care about "Canadian identity," just as most average Canadians probably do not care about it today. Among those Canadians who did care, however (politicians, ministers, speech makers, adventurers, missionaries), were those who most shaped late nineteenth-century Canada's public culture.

intellectuals as the young J.S. Woodsworth. Spelling out the extent to which late nineteenth-century Protestant Canadians were wrong in their opinions of the Bible's place in Quebec is a central project of this thesis's second part; and, as very little has been written on the Bible's place in the history of French Quebec, that project may be this thesis's most important contribution to Canadian historiography.

A third and admittedly more tricky question I take up in the thesis is whether, by the end of the nineteenth century, Canadian nationalistic biblicism had not in some way diminished the Bible's authority in Canadian public life. That the Bible was cited in support of nationalist declarations of sundry kinds is obvious; that biblical texts were thereby subordinated to nationalist concerns also seems clear. Was the Bible -- the one book so many of the persons cited in this thesis claimed to revere -- somehow trivialized in the process? So far as Canada is concerned, is there reason to take as a more general proposition Matthew Arnold's claim by the late nineteenth-century in the West the Bible was, in David Lyle Jeffrey's words, "a relic of culture, great in its cultural importance but as dated and stale as the tombs of the Pharaohs?"⁴⁴ If so, were Canadian Christians, who for whatever reason cloaked their political and nationalistic public speech in biblical terms, in some measure responsible?

The question may on first sight seem out of bounds. Some

⁴⁴Jeffrey, *People of the Book*, 315.

might protest that I am asking something of the past that the past did not ask of itself and that I am thus being unfair or imprudent.⁴⁵ Or, as Carl Becker might say (with some approval), perhaps I am playing tricks on the dead in order to get an answer to a contemporary question that served as an impetus for this study,⁴⁶ to wit: How is it that in the 1890s the Bible appears to have been well-known and culturally important in Canada, whereas a century later the Bible is frequently read only by a small minority of Canadians and is, apparently, culturally irrelevant?⁴⁷ What accounts for the loss of the Bible's authority? Certainly Darwinism, biblical criticism, and religious pluralism are major factors. But did Canada's nationalists, Bibles in hand, also unwittingly help -- even in a small way -- to create a cultural environment wherein the Bible apparently lost its cultural authority?

Since the type of biblically informed nationalist language I cite in this study was common in the English-speaking world into the twentieth century,⁴⁸ one cannot assume that the historical

⁴⁵ See Gertrude Himmelfarb, "Denigrating the Rule of Reason: The 'New History' Goes Bottom Up," *Harpers* 268 (April 1984), 88.

⁴⁶ Carl Becker, *Everyman His Own Historian: Essays on History and Politics* (New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, 1935), 253.

⁴⁷ As of the mid-1990s some 8 percent of Canadians claimed to read the Bible daily, 12 percent weekly. See G. A. Rawlyk, *Is Jesus Your Personal Saviour: In Search of Canadian Evangelicalism in the 1990s* (Montreal-Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1996), 100.

⁴⁸ See, for example, Charles W. Calhoun, "Civil Religion and

actors themselves would easily comprehend the question I want to put to them. But even if they would not readily understand the query (and in fact I rather suspect that most would), I do not perceive myself to be, in Becker's terminology, "tricking" them. For when I say that I want to pose a question to historical figures that they might not have asked of themselves I mean that I have envisioned those whom I cite in conversation with me, discussing the matter, and (provided they really held the Bible to be sacred in the first place) coming to the conclusion that perhaps it might have been better for the faith they claimed to embrace had they not so closely linked biblical religion to nationalism and other secular projects.¹⁷ "[W]e ... want to imagine conversations between ourselves...and the mighty dead," writes Richard Rorty.

We want this not simply because it is nice to feel one up on one's betters, but because we would like to be able to see the history of our race as a long conversational interchange. We want to be able to see it that way in order to assure ourselves that there has been a rational progress in the course of recorded history -- that we differ from our ancestors on grounds which our ancestors could be led to accept.¹⁸

the Gilded Age Presidency: The Case of Benjamin Harrison," *Presidential Studies Quarterly* XXIII:4 (Fall 1993), 651-667.

¹⁷ As the great majority of the Canadians I cite were sure that their culture was superior to all others and were therefore not pluralists, I assume that they would not offer me in their defense any brand of theoretical relativism.

¹⁸ Richard Rorty, "The Historiography of Philosophy: Four Genres," ch. in *Philosophy In History: Essays on the Historiography of Philosophy* ed., Richard Rorty et al. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984), 51. Also see Robert Wennberg, "The Moral Standing of the Dead and the Writing of History," *Fides et Historia* XXX:2 (Summer/Fall 1998), 51-63.

Rorty's formulation is not only elegant but, in my view, compelling, for it is in keeping with western men and women's common experience. Every year students of mine who understand the stresses nineteenth-century American soldiers faced nevertheless want those soldiers to know that shooting fleeing Indian women and children in the back was not good service to their nation but wickedness. I doubt that a day goes by that Robert E. Lee is not called upon by regretful Southerners to answer for sending George Pickett against Cemetery Ridge in July 1863. And at least one scholar would like to convince Thomas Jefferson that his "disdain" toward any religious group that seemed to challenge "the civic order" (as conceived by Jefferson) "is repugnant."³¹ "The historian," writes R.G. Collingwood,

not only re-enacts past thought, he re-enacts it in the context of his own knowledge and therefore, in re-enacting it, criticizes it, forms his own judgment of its value, corrects whatever errors he can discern in it.³²

At this point two important questions may arise. First, how can one know that one is asking a *responsible* question of the past and not engaging in mere presentism? Second, how can one

³¹ David Little, "The Origins of Perplexity: Civil Religion and Moral Belief in the Thought of Thomas Jefferson," ch. in Russell E. Richey and Donald G. Jones, eds., *Civil Religion* (New York: Harper and Row, 1974), 203.

³² R.G. Collingwood, *The Idea of History* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1956), 215.

justly imply that the late nineteenth-century Canadians I quote in this study treated the Bible "improperly"? To both questions I reply with an appeal to common sense, or, more specifically, to common sense within the cultural traditions whose roots are in western Christendom.⁵³

I am well aware that those who insist on the importance of "common sense" are, to use Isaiah Berlin's words, sometimes "suspected of seeming to smuggle in some kind of illicit, metaphysical faculty." But, to borrow again from Berlin, I hold that "[h]istorical explanation is to a large degree arrangement of the discovered facts in patterns which satisfy us because they accord with life -- the variety of human experience and activity -- as we know it and can imagine it."⁵⁴ Put another way, and to cite another authority, "historical knowledge is reached by an adaptation of the every-day procedures of human understanding."⁵⁵ And:

[C]ommon sense and the common language through which

⁵³ I make this distinction based on my reading of Clifford Geertz, "Common Sense as a Cultural System," *The Antioch Review* 33:1 (spring 1975), 5-26. My thinking on common sense has also been shaped in part by John Kekes, "A New Defense of Common Sense," *American Philosophical Quarterly* 16:2 (April 1979), 115-122; and George Marsden, "Common Sense and the Spiritual Vision of History," ch. in *History and Historical Understanding* eds., C.T. McIntire and Ronald A. Wells (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1984).

⁵⁴ See Isaiah Berlin, "The Concept of Scientific History," in Leonard M. Marsak, ed., *The Nature of Historical Inquiry* (Malabar, FL: Robert E. Krieger, 1985), 65 and 67.

⁵⁵ See Bernard Lonergan, "History" and "History and Historians" chaps. in *Method in Theology* (New York: Herder and Herder, 1972). The citation is taken from page 197.

it is exchanged serve and always have served men fairly adequately for getting along with the necessary transactions of living from day to day, and ... this creates a strong presumption for the use of both in history.⁵⁶

Such is my position.⁵⁷

Take, then, the question, whether it is proper to ask if Canada's nationalists, in their public pronouncements, subordinated the Bible to manifestly temporal projects and thereby weakened the biblical foundation upon which most of them claimed to stand. The question is born of common experience. So far as popular conceptions of so-called "organized religion" are concerned, there is hardly any criticism more common than one which denounces churches and religious leaders for using religion for personal or national enrichment or to champion political ends. Furthermore, the question is not new. Allegations, oftentimes made by Christians against Christians, that Christianity has been perverted or impoverished for its too comfortable ties with states and kingdoms, power and prosperity are a commonplace in the history of the West.⁵⁸ One thinks, to

⁵⁶ J.H. Hexter, *The History Primer* (New York: Basic Books, 1971), 269.

⁵⁷ I recognize that this position is not unassailable. Anti-theoretical common sense theory is, I know, theoretical. The point is made by W.J.T. Mitchell in his response to a well-known essay, titled "Against Theory," by Steven Knapp and Walter Benn Michaels." See Mitchell, ed., *Against Theory: Literary Studies and the New Pragmatism* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1985). For defenses of common sense, see footnotes 51-54 above.

⁵⁸ See Jeffrey Burton Russell, *A History of Medieval*

cite one example, of Soren Kierkegaard's "attack on Christendom."

"When one sees what it is to be a Christian in Denmark,"

Kierkegaard wrote,

how could it occur to anyone that this is what Jesus Christ talks about: cross and agony and suffering, crucifying the flesh, suffering for the doctrine, being salt, being sacrificed, etc.? No, in Protestantism, especially in Denmark, Christianity marches to a different melody, to the tune of "merrily we roll along, roll along, roll along" -- Christianity is enjoyment of life, tranquillized ... by the assurance that the thing about eternity is settled, settled precisely in order that we might find pleasure in enjoying this life...⁵³

Late twentieth-century scholars who have reflected on nineteenth- and twentieth-century America have come to similar, if considerably more tempered, conclusions.⁵⁴ In the early 1970s Richard Nixon was criticized for appropriating the language of Christianity and applying it "to his own nation, and worse, to his personal vision of what that nation should be."⁵⁵ Will Herberg, discussing American "civil religion" (which for him is synonymous with the "American Way of Life") writes that, as a matter of fact, a civil faith that apotheosizes national life, "religionizes" national values, divinizes national heroes, and

Christianity: Prophecy and Order (Arlington Heights, IL: Harlan Davidson, 1968).

⁵³ Soren Kierkegaard, *Attack Upon "Christendom"* trans. Walter Lowrie (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1968), 34-35.

⁵⁴ See, for example, Jeffrey, "The Bible and the American Myth," ch. in *People of the Book*.

⁵⁵ Charles P. Henderson, Jr., *The Nixon Theology* (New York:

views a particular nation's past as redemptive history "is not, and cannot be seen as, authentic Christianity or Judaism" -- the biblical rhetoric of the civil religion's proponents notwithstanding.

To see America's civil religion as somehow standing above or beyond the biblical religions ... as somehow including them and finding a place for them in its overarching unity, is idolatry, however innocently held and whatever may be the subjective intentions of the believers.⁶²

The present thesis takes this point of view seriously.

For Herberg's conclusion finally to stand, though, one must of course concede that there is such a thing as definitive Christianity, a faith that, for all its many expressions, is defined at its core by creeds and -- dare one employ so unsavory a term? -- dogma. I am thinking chiefly of the Apostles' and Nicene Creeds.⁶³ It is however common in current Canadian religious historiography to assume that an early twentieth-century version of Christianity that consciously existed free of clearly defined creeds and dogma, and even happily rejected the

Harper & Row, 1972), 193.

⁶² Will Herberg, "America's Civil Religion: What It Is and Whence It Comes," ch. in Richey and Jones, *Civil Religion*, 78 and 87. In his essay, "Civil Religion in Theological Perspective" (also in the Richey and Jones volume), Herbert Richardson makes a similar, if less forthright, case. Also see Raymond F. Bulman, "'Myth of Origin,' Civil Religion and Presidential Politics," *Journal of Church and State* 33 (Summer 1991), 535-57.

⁶³ Recognizing, of course, the division between Eastern and Western Christianity over what is often referred to simply as the *filioque*. For a brief discussion see Timothy Ware, *The Orthodox Church* (New York, Penguin Books, 1986 [repr., 1963]), see 58-60.

same, is still Christianity--"full-orbed Christianity," even. Thus Nancy Christie and Michael Gauvreau maintain, against Ramsay Cook and David B. Marshall,⁶⁴ that early twentieth-century Protestants who exchanged "ancient theological systems" for "inner spirituality," dogma for a "non-theological gospel of Christ," and ancient creeds for "warm emotionalism" were "true evangelists" of a "saving faith" based upon "the actual experiences and personality of Jesus."⁶⁵ What the Protestants studied by Christie and Gauvreau believed one needed to be "saved" from is not clear, since they were prone to doing away with doctrines concerning eschatology, heaven, hell and eternal judgment.⁶⁶ And since the Bible was held by many of these same activists to contain something less than actual accounts of the life of Jesus of Nazareth, it would be interesting to find out how they were able to uncover Jesus' "actual" personality.

Of course, Christie and Gauvreau are not promoting a form of Protestantism to which they are partial. They simply take their subjects' assessment of themselves at face value. But that is

⁶⁴ Ramsay Cook, *The Regnerators: Social Criticism in Late Victorian English Canada* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1985); and David B. Marshall, *Secularizing the Faith: Canadian Protestant Clergy and the Crisis of Belief, 1850-1940* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1992).

⁶⁵ Nancy Christie and Michael Gauvreau, *A Full-Orbed Christianity: The Protestant Churches and Social welfare in Canada, 1900-1940* (Montreal-Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1990), 6-8.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, 7.

just the problem. For that self-assessment was flawed.

Take, for example, the claim of a certain W.H. Smith of Vancouver, enunciated in 1920, that Christian preaching should be "simple" and it should "appeal directly to the emotions and be down to earth, just as Jesus had first articulated the Gospels."⁶⁷ Christie and Gauvreau are right that, in propounding this point of view, Smith hoped to tap "into the essence of actual human experience" and thus win men and women over to "social Christianity." But what of the claim that the biblical Gospels portray Jesus preaching a "simple," "down to earth" message that appealed "directly to the emotions"? It seems that on a simple reading of the texts in question the view would be hard to sustain.

The disciples came, and said unto him, Why speakest thou in parables? He [Jesus] answered and said unto them, Because it is given unto you to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it is not given.⁶⁸

And he [Jesus] said unto them, Know ye not this parable? And how then will ye know all parables?⁶⁹

Many therefore of his [Jesus'] disciples, when they heard this, said, This is an hard saying; who can hear it?⁷⁰

And they understood not the saying which he [Jesus] spake unto them.⁷¹

⁶⁷ Ibid., 8.

⁶⁸ Matthew 13:10-11.

⁶⁹ Mark 4:13.

⁷⁰ John 6:60

⁷¹ Luke 2:50.

The point is not that the Scriptures are easily understood, that their proper interpretation is readily available, or even that any final interpretation of them has yet been written. Literary theorist Stanley Fish's point concerning Shakespeare's sonnets is well taken. A sonnet "is only 14 lines long," Fish writes, yet "we haven't been able to get it right after four hundred years."¹² But just because a final interpretation of a Shakespearean sonnet has not, perhaps, yet been apprehended does not mean -- and if human reason exists it cannot mean -- that anything goes. An intelligent reading of a Shakespearean sonnet could not lead one to think that it is concerned with exploration of the Grand Canyon or Disneyland. Similarly, it seems clear that a plain reading of the Gospels would lead one to question the assertion that the central figure described in them was a dispenser mainly of warm-hearted, easily understood, earthy proverbs.¹³

¹² Fish cited in Peter Novick, *That Noble Dream: The 'Objectivity Question' and the American Historical Profession* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), 545.

¹³ For another example of a historian letting her subject off easy, see Marguerite Van Die, *An Evangelical Mind: Nathanael Burwash and the Methodist Tradition in Canada, 1839-1918* (Montreal-Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1989), 192-193. Here Van Die cites J.S. Woodsworth thus: "Sweep away an impossible solution! Is not sincerity of greater importance than orthodoxy? The Master's denunciations were not against erroneous doctrines or independent action, but against all forms of insincerity." Van Die then comments: "To Woodsworth, doctrine no longer accurately reflected experience, and thus he appealed to the founder of Christianity as his authority and called for

To emphasize the point: I do not think that I could say -- and in any case I have no interest in saying -- who Jesus of Nazareth really was. That question is among the most hotly disputed of any among historians;⁷⁴ and popular conceptions of Jesus certainly have changed through the centuries.⁷⁵ But a plain reading of biblical texts make some interpretations more plausible than others: Jesus as British American nationalist, Thomas Scott as dying Christ figure, Saskatchewan as New Jerusalem-- these are unlikely biblical interpretations.⁷⁶ And I

reform." One wants to ask, first of Woodsworth, What of the Gospels' accounts of Jesus' doctrinal disputes with the religious leaders of his day? What is the Sermon on the Mount but largely a correction to bad doctrine? And where in the Gospels does Jesus ever advocate "sincerity," even in the senses that the word was understood by religious writers in the nineteenth-century? And of Van Die one wants respectfully to ask, Why is Woodsworth's eminently flimsy appeal to non-existent words wrongly attributed to "the founder of Christianity" left unchallenged? Perhaps one answer to that question is that, were Woodsworth's assertions challenged by a plain reading of the texts he claims to have been commenting upon, it would become clear that what he advocated was not in any real sense Christianity but a Christian-like civil religion of good works.

⁷⁴ For a brief though helpful overview, see Mark Allan Powell, *Jesus as a Figure in History: How Modern Historians View the Man from Galilee* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 1998).

⁷⁵ See Jaroslav Pelikan, *Jesus Through the Centuries: His Place in the History of Culture* (Harper and Row: New York, 1985).

⁷⁶ Academic assertions that historical figures got their biblical interpretations wrong are fairly common. David Little has noted the "dubiousness" of Thomas Jefferson's "approach to the New Testament." Ronald Beiner has commented on Thomas Hobbes' "utterly bizarre interpretation of the New Testament." Ramsay Cook has made sport of Goldwin Smith who, in arguing that Protestant Christianity was "closely allied with the spirit of commerce and competitive enterprise," seemed to maintain that "[t]he Nazarene carpenter's son may have thought he was building

want to suggest -- note that I do not say "prove" -- that those who put the Bible to nationalist ends helped create a cultural environment in which the Bible could be rather easily set aside.

This suggestion would of course have shocked many late nineteenth-century Canadians for whom piety and biblical religion mattered. And some of them were aware that certain opinions of "nominal Christians" could "make the word of God void" -- that is, ostensibly religious rhetoric, pressed into irreligious service, could lead to the impoverishment of biblical language.¹¹ But the extent to which nationalistic rhetoric came to be associated with biblical rhetoric in English-speaking Canada would, I think, have surprised many Canadians; for they had aspired to the creation of a Protestant culture suffused with Scripture.¹² What they may have ended up bequeathing to their

a church, but evidently it turned out to be a bank!" And historian Mark A. Noll wishes that Protestant dispensationalists had learned by now that the biblicistic prophetic grid through which they have long forced current events has led mainly to error and embarrassment. See Little, "The Origin of Perplexity" in Richey and Jones, *Civil Religion*, 200; Ronald Beiner, "Machiavelli, Hobbes, and Rousseau on Civil Religion," *The Review of Politics* 55:4 (fall 1993), 628; Cook, *The Regenerators*, 34; and Mark A. Noll, *The Scandal of the Evangelical Mind* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing Company 1994), 173-74.

¹¹The Conference of the Wesleyan Methodist Church of 1852 cited in S.D. Clark, *Church and Sect in Canada* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1948), 339.

¹²See Michael Gauvreau, "Protestantism Transformed: Personal Piety and the Evangelical Social Vision, 1815-1867," ch. in *The Canadian Protestant Experience, 1760-1990* ed., G.A. Rawlyk (Burlington, ON: Welch Publishing Company, 1990); and Gauvreau *The Christian Century*.

children and was a culture in which the Bible was eminently manipulable and thus emptied of substantial authority.

In the conclusion to this thesis I pose a different question: Which of the two cultures examined can be said to have more closely approximated the ideal of the biblical, or Christian, nation? The question strikes twenty-first century readers as odd, but that would not have been the case in the late nineteenth century, when the Bible was, to one extent or another, the rule by which a majority of Canadians measured, or said they measured, their lives. The question only takes French- and English-speaking Canada's Christian nationalists at their word. As we shall see, they said that they wanted to build or to see established something akin to the Kingdom of God on earth-- in Canada. How close did they come to their own goal? Did one side of Canada's major cultural divide get closer to the ideal? To get at a plausible answer to that question I draw explicitly on the work of Mark A. Noll. The last few chapters of David Lyle Jeffrey's important work *People of the Book* inform my conclusion as well.⁷³

Finally, I should address two points of vocabulary. First, this thesis is not a formal study in rhetoric. I use the term often in the pages that follow but only in a pedestrian sense.

⁷³ I use *inform* here in the Latin sense-- *informare*: to give form to.

When I use that word I am referring to a manner of speaking. In his excellent book *Awash in a Sea of Faith*, Jon Butler writes:

Millennialist rhetoric predicting Christ's return to earth also expanded [in mid-eighteenth century America]....Providential rhetoric revealed God's approval of the revolution, but millennialist rhetoric located it in sacred time."³⁰

And:

[Abraham] Lincoln's religious rhetoric was abstract, grand, fatalistic--almost Judaic in its emphasis on providence and, certainly deliverance, but only loosely Christian at best and perhaps not substantially Christian at all."³¹

Perhaps Professor Butler had formal rhetoric in mind when he wrote these lines, but he never says so, and one suspects that he is referring primarily, as I am, to a manner of speech. (I wish selfishly to point out, by the way, Butler's judgment concerning Lincoln's language: It was biblical but not in any definite way Christian.) I recognize, of course, that this thesis could be turned into a formal study of rhetoric. But that is not my aim.

Second, I should note that by "biblicism" I mean to refer to the glossing of a biblical veneer atop a project that does not actually have much to do with biblical -- specifically, Christian -- religion. This is, I recognize, a bit problematic since the most common definition of the word is a strict adherence to the letter of the Bible-- the opposite of how I intend the word to be

³⁰ Jon Butler, *Awash in a Sea of Faith: Christianizing the American People* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1990), 216.

³¹ Ibid., 294.

understood in this thesis. I persist in using the word in this way for two reasons. One, I cannot think of a better word (nor could the rhetorician who brought this matter to my attention). Two, the word has already been used in similar fashion by David Lyle Jeffrey who himself follows Perry Miller and Sacvan Bercovitch. Commenting on what has come to be called America's "health and wealth" gospel, Jeffrey writes that

the presentation of ostensibly biblical religion [by seemingly avaricious American preachers] in [a] transparently self-contradictory fashion is *prima facie* evidence of a foundational confusion of God and Mammon at the heart of American biblicism. As with the corruption of Puritan millennial typology and the "New Canaan" in the colonial period, so too with the typical televangelist: his or her *evangelion* is above all a key to health and wealth.³²

Thus an example of "biblicism" as used in this thesis and, too, an enunciation of a scholarly point of view to which I adhere in the pages that follow.

³² Jeffrey, *People of the Book*, 332.

Part One

The Bible in English-Speaking Canada

Chapter One

He shall have dominion also from sea to sea,
and from the river unto the ends of the earth.

-- Psalm 72:8

The Bible and the Confederation of Canada

When Lord Charles Stanley Monck took his oath of loyalty to Queen Victoria as the Dominion of Canada's first Governor General on 1 July 1867 his left hand lay on a Bible.¹ Such was of course what tradition required, though for many British North Americans there was more to the gesture than a mere nod in the direction of hoary ritual. As one preacher had put it seven years earlier, to swear on the "holy Evangelists" was to make God a witness.² But it was also fitting that the Bible was present at Canada's creation, for the new country over which Monck was to preside had taken its name from a passage in Psalm 72: "And he shall have dominion also from sea to sea and from the river even unto the ends of the earth."

¹Reported in the *Unionist* 12 July 1867, 2.

²John Cordner, *Righteousness Exalteth a Nation: A Discourse Concerning the Relation of Morality to National Wellbeing* (Montreal: Henry Rose, 1860), 13.

Since the Bible enjoyed a privileged place in English-speaking Canadian society in the nineteenth century, it comes as no surprise that the Scriptures were consulted by British North America's leading politicians who had gone to London in 1866 to found a new nation. Yet the enthusiasm of Canadian Christians³ and late twentieth-century academics who make much of this might be tempered by the knowledge that Canada's fathers of Confederation did not really want a Dominion.⁴ They wanted a kingdom. They had gone to London in 1866 to create a "United

³See, for example, Michael Clarke, "Leonard Tilley," in *Canada: Portraits of Faith* ed., Michael Clarke (Chilliwack, British Columbia: Reel to Real, 1998), 61.

⁴This point appears to contradict William Westfall's claim that "the vision of a new dominion 'from sea to sea' captured the imagination of the Fathers of Confederation." See Westfall's *Two Worlds: The Protestant Culture of Nineteenth-Century Ontario* (Montreal-Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1989), 1-4. In her paper, "Ordering a New Nation and Reordering Protestantism, 1867-1914" (in G.A. Rawlyk, ed., *The Canadian Protestant Experience, 1760-1990* [Burlington, ON: Welch Publishing Company, 1990]), Phyllis D. Airhart makes much of the theme of Canada as "His Dominion." Thus Airhart: "The idea of Canada as 'His Dominion' sparked the Protestant imagination and provided symbolic coherence for a broadly-based consensus" (99). Airhart relies on N.K. Clifford who wrote that "[t]he inner dynamic of Protestantism in Canada during the first two-thirds of the century following Confederation was provided by a vision of the nation as 'His Dominion.'" See Clifford's paper, "His Dominion: A Vision in Crisis," *Studies in Religion* II: 4 (1973), 315. Neither Westfall, nor Airhart, nor Clifford offer proof that nineteenth-century Protestant Canadians invested much intellectual, spiritual, philosophical, or political capital in the idea of Canada as "His Dominion." Nor has my own research uncovered any such proof. This thesis maintains that it is true, as Clifford says (and as Airhart and Westfall agree), that the "Canadian version of the Kingdom of God had significant nationalistic and millennial overtones" (315), but that fervor does not appear to have been rooted in an explicit notion of Canada as "His Dominion."

Kingdom of Canada," and Monck soon divined as much. "There exists in Canada," Monck wrote, "and I think also in the other provinces a very strong desire that Her majesty would be graciously pleased to designate the union a 'Kingdom' and so give to her representative the title of 'Viceroy.'" This wish, Monck noted, was based on the North American colonies' "consciousness of their increasing importance and a desire on their part to reconcile their highly prized position in reference to the Crown of England with the natural yearning of a growing people to emerge, at least in name from the provincial phase of existence."⁵ But John A. Macdonald, Etienne Cartier, Charles Tupper, Leonard Tilley, and the other British North American representatives present in London were not going to get their way. Between the opposition of the English governing class to a title as pretentious as that which the North Americans sought and a fear in England that the rambunctious Republic which dominated the New World would not take kindly to the establishment of a political regime that smacked so explicitly of monarchy, the Kingdom of Canada was destined to pass quickly away.

It was Leonard Tilley of New Brunswick who recognized that the words in the seventy-second Psalm fit what he and his cohorts

⁵Cited in Donald Creighton, *The Road to Confederation: The Emergence of Canada, 1863-1867* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1965, 421-22). An editorial in the July 1867 edition of the *Canadian Independent* (Toronto) gives a flavor of the sentiment to which Monck alluded. "[Confederation] is a step upward in national life. We are no longer to bear the juvenile name of a Colony; we are considered to have come to a man's estate"(5).

took to be the British North Americans' aspiration: a national, more orderly counterpart to the United States.⁶ Thus the *Dominion* of Canada was born. Its title, writes Donald Creighton, was a "second-best alternative."

As was true in the United States and throughout the English-speaking world in the nineteenth century, a high level of biblical literacy existed in British North America at the time of Confederation-- a time when only some 1.2 percent of Ontarians claimed to have "no religion."⁷ In mid-nineteenth-century Upper Canada, writes one historian of Canadian religion, the Bible was "popular reading."⁸ And while historians of education in Ontario have correctly maintained that by the mid-1840s a process of secularization in the schools was underway -- in Canada West, for example, there was some debate as to whether the Bible should be

⁶On the emphasis on British North America as an orderly society, as opposed to the presumably disorderly United States, see David Mills, *The Idea of Loyalty in Upper Canada, 1784-1850* (Montreal-Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1988).

⁷Creighton, *The Road to Confederation*, 423. Also see W.L. Morton *The Critical Years: The Union of British North America, 1857-1873* (New York: McClelland and Stewart, 1964), 212-213.

⁸ Rawlyk, *The Canadian Protestant Experience*, 58.

⁹ John S. Moir, "The Upper Canadian Religious Tradition," *Profiles of a Province: Studies in the History of Ontario* ed., Ontario Historical Society (Toronto: Ontario Historical Society, 1967), 191. In Rawlyk, *The Canadian Protestant Experience*, Michael Gauvreau writes that in the mid-nineteenth century the Bible, "which all Protestant Christians regarded as a sure and trustworthy record of God's revelation, supplied the data of faith and the moral principles which directed the conduct of both Christian believers and societies" (54).

read in public schools¹⁰ -- it remains true that the first book of many literate late nineteenth-century Canadians was the Bible.¹¹ In 1870 3,097 of Ontario's 4,566 normal, grammar, and common schools reported that pupils read the Bible during school hours.¹² Portions of the Jewish and Christian scriptures also appeared frequently in English grammars¹³ and, of course, in works employed

¹⁰ See "The Bible in the Ontario Public Schools," ch. in Egerton Ryerson, *The Story of My Life* ed., J. George Hodgins (Toronto: William Briggs, 1883).

¹¹ Terrence Murphy and Roberto Perin, eds., *A Concise History of Christianity in Canada* (Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1996), 144, 159. Also see Moir, "The Upper Canadian Religious Tradition," 193. On the secularization of Ontario's public schools see R. D. Gidney and W. P. J. Millar, *Inventing Secondary Education: The Rise of the High School in Nineteenth-Century Ontario* (Montreal-Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1990), 92-93. Given the detail of Gidney and Millar's text, it is somewhat surprising that they never take up a discussion of the Bible in Ontario's schools. Given their attention to the thought of Egerton Ryerson, who wrote forthrightly on the Bible in the schools, this omission is all the more perplexing.

¹² Egerton Ryerson, *Annual Report of the Normal, Grammar and Common Schools in Ontario for the Year 1870* (Toronto: Hunter, Rose and Company, 1871), 8.

¹³ In his *Introduction to the Analytical and Practical Grammar of the English Language* (Toronto: Adam Miller, 1865) the Rev. Peter Bullions provides exercises, often drawing on the Bible, though he does not cite his biblical sources. In one place, for example, he gives the sentence "Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it" (Exodus 20:8). These are soon followed with an excerpt from the Beatitudes found in the Gospel of Matthew 5 (60). Also see, for example, page 76 -- "Cain wickedly slew his brother, Genesis 4:8 -- and page 89 -- "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom," Proverbs 1:7. Biblical passages appear frequently in J.D. Morell's *Series of Graduated Exercises* (London: Longman's, Green, and Co, 1857). See, for instance, page 24 where the exercise sentences "Except ye repent ye shall all likewise perish" (Luke 13:3,5) appears. Also see Council of Public Instruction for Ontario, *The Spelling Book: Companion to Readers* (Toronto: James Campbell and Son, 1868), 33,37; and G. Brown, *The*

to teach proper behavior and religious doctrine, such as *Lessons on the Truth of Christianity*, a textbook used in Ontario's public schools.¹⁴

Evidence for the Bible's central place in nineteenth-century Protestant Canadian culture abounds. Teachers used the Bible to teach escaped slaves who had taken refuge in British North America to read.¹⁵ Native students in Protestant schools were also taught to read English and written forms of their own tongues via translations of the Scriptures.¹⁶ At least one British American who fought on the side of the Union in the American Civil War

Institutes of English Grammar (New York: Samuel S. and William Wood, 1861), 125, 143, 173, 181; and sections 1 through 5 (pp. 13-24) in *Council of Public Instruction for Upper Canada, Second Book of Lessons: For the Use of Schools* (Toronto, Robert McPhail, 1864) where the biblical stories of creation, Adam and Eve, Cain and Abel and the flood are recounted. One history text which drew heavily on Scripture was the Religious Tract Society's *British North America* (London: The Religious Tract Society), the introduction of which begins with the sentence, "The chief end of man is to glorify God"(1), and then relates a scriptural account of Christian salvation history.

¹⁴Direction of the Commissioners of National Education, *Lessons on the Truth of Christianity, Being an Appendix to the Fourth Book of Lessons, For the Use of Schools* (Dublin: Armour and Ramsay, 1846).

¹⁵ Howard Law, "'Self-Reliance Is the True Road to Independence': Ideology and the Ex-Slaves in Buxton and Chatham," in *A Nation of Immigrants: Women, Workers, and Communities in Canadian History, 1840s-1960s* ed., Franca Iacovetta (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1998), 89-90.

¹⁶On March 1, 1867, students at the Metlakatla school in British Columbia studied the Scriptures in Tsimshian from 3:00 to 3:30 p.m. School schedule reproduced in Jean Usher, *William Duncan of Metlakatla: A Victorian Missionary in British Columbia* (Ottawa: The Museum of Man, 1974), 137.

brought home as a trophy a Bible taken from a dead Confederate.¹⁷ In 1867 the Montreal-based *Church of Old England* informed its readers that even "many criminals" had "much acquaintance with Scripture History."¹⁸ The names of many hamlets in rural Ontario -- Bethel, Beulah, Kedron, Shiloh, Bethany, Ebenezer, Korah, Bethseda, Salem -- served as reminders of Protestant Canadians' deference to the Scriptures.¹⁹ The Bible commonly graced Upper Canada's household tables.²⁰

Of course, the extent to which average Canadians knew the Bible in detail in the second half of the nineteenth century cannot be known; but at least one late nineteenth-century Canadian prime minister, Alexander Mackenzie, is said to have read from the Bible daily,²¹ and debates between John A. Macdonald

¹⁷ Greg Marquis, *In Armageddon's Shadow: The Civil War and Canada's Maritime Provinces* (Montreal-Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1998), 7.

¹⁸ *Church of Old England* (January 1867), 296. In his *English America, or, Pictures of Canadian Places and People* vol. II (London, 1864) Samuel Phillips Day differently observed that among Canada's criminals is an absence of all "religious impressions [and] religious knowledge" (35). For background on this point see Harvey J. Graff, "The Reality Behind the Rhetoric: The Social and Economic Meanings of Literacy in the Mid-Nineteenth Century: The Example of Literacy and Criminality," in *Egerton Ryerson and His Times* eds., Neil McDonald and Alf Chaiton (Toronto: Macmillan of Canada, 1978).

¹⁹ Moir, "The Upper Canadian Religious Tradition," 193.

²⁰ Such, at any rate, is what William Kirby suggests in his epic of twelve cantos, *The U.E.* (1859). See Dennis Duffy, *Gardens, Covenants, Exiles: Loyalism in the Literature of Upper Canada/Ontario* (Toronto: University of Toronto, 1982), 36.

²¹ Pierre Berton, *The National Dream* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1974), 131.

and Edward Blake reveal a detailed knowledge of the Bible.²² Furthermore, such prominent men as the parliamentarian Thomas D'Arcy McGee encouraged all Canadians to read the Scriptures. In a widely circulated speech given in late 1867 to the Literary Club of Montreal titled "The Mental Outlook of the New Dominion," McGee praised the Bible, the "Book of books," as "the rarest and most unequalled [book] as to matter."²³ "If," he queried, "we wish our younger generation to catch the inspiration of the highest eloquence, where else will they find it?" For McGee, the Bible was not only valuable as "the spiritual corrective of all vicious reading" -- that is, the reading of "bad novels" -- but also comprised "the highest of histories, the truest of philosophies, and the most eloquent utterance of human organs." The Bible should therefore be read "for the young and by the young, at all convenient seasons."²⁴ In the same year, 1867, one unnamed contributor to the *Montreal Presbyterian* surpassed McGee's eloquence, writing that the Bible was "the magistrate's best rule, the housewife's best guide, the servant's best directory, and the young man's best companion."

It is the schoolboy's spelling book, and the learned

²² I cite from Macdonald and Blake in my paper "Toward a Study of the Bible in Canadian Public Life," *Journal of Canadian Studies*, forthcoming.

²³ Thomas D'Arcy McGee, "The Mental Outlook of the New Dominion," *Montreal Gazette* 5 November 1867.

²⁴ *Ibid.*

man's masterpiece; it contains a choice grammar for a novice, and profound treatise for a sage; it is the ignorant man's dictionary, and the wise man's directory. It affords knowledge of witty inventions for the ingenious, and dark sayings for the grave; and it is its own interpreter.¹⁵

It might have been added that, more than any other work, the Bible was the one book a majority of English-speaking Canadians of all ages and Christian denominations shared in common.

2.1 The Bible and Political Contention

Given the Bible's place as a common text in English-speaking Canada one would expect that when Canada's political leaders debated the virtues of the confederation of the British North American provinces they would sometimes employ biblical metaphors, which is just what they did, most frequently in the form of rhetorical strikes against opponents. Luther Hamilton Holton summed up John A. Macdonald, for instance, as one who was devoted only to expediency and whose central motto was "'Take care of to-day -- when to-morrow comes we will see what can be done.'" ¹⁶ Macdonald, in turn, took after Holton, noting on one occasion that he had not yet presented any of the sound arguments against confederation he had promised. "I very much regret that although the debate has been so long protracted, and although we

¹⁵"The Bible," *Presbyterian* August 1867, 256.

¹⁶*Ibid.*, 135. See Matthew 6:34.

have had an expression from almost every member of this House, we have hitherto failed in getting the arguments promised in the speech of my hon[ourable] friend from Chateauguay [Holton]," Macdonald said. "Just as Moses went up to Pigsah's top and viewed the promised land in the distance, just so the hon[ourable] member gives us an occasional glimpse of the promised speech, but we have thus far been disappointed in our expectations of hearing it delivered."¹⁷

The use of biblical metaphor and typology in political jousting was not unique to parliamentarians, though politicians were easy targets.¹⁸ In his frequently delivered sermon "Daniel in Babylon" William Morley Punshon took facetious jabs at Macdonald whose enemies, like Daniel's, could never make accusations of wrong doing against him stick.¹⁹ And in July 1867 the Ottawa Citizen ridiculed Nova Scotia's anti-confederate Joseph Howe and the Toronto *Globe's* George Brown, using the form and the language of the Authorized (King James) Version of the Bible. "And behold! in those days there dwelt in the land of Nova Scotia (which lieth

¹⁷Ibid., 155. See Deuteronomy 34:1-4.

¹⁸The United States Congressional election of 1866 provided British North Americans with an example of Bible-laden mud-slinging. In Andrew Johnson's whistle-stop election tour through the northern United States he compared himself to the persecuted Christ and the Radical Republicans, who would later impeach Johnson, to Judas Iscariot (see Luke 22:3-6, 47-49). John M. Murrin et al., *Liberty, Equality, Power: A History of the American People* (New York: Harcourt Brace, 1999), 593.

¹⁹William Morley Punshon, *Daniel in Babylon: A Lecture* (Toronto, 1868), 21. See Daniel 6.

near unto the uttermost sea) a Pharisee named Howe"-- so begins one column titled the "Second Chapter of Chronicles."³⁰

While Canada East and West had in large measure come to terms with the idea of confederation in 1865, the pact that would unite them with New Brunswick and Nova Scotia in 1867 was hotly contested in the maritime provinces well after it had been accomplished. The *Morning Chronicle* was Nova Scotia's leading anti-confederate organ and it inveighed vigorously against confederation and its supposed attendant evils. Sir Charles Tupper, Nova Scotia's representative in London in 1867, was held by its editors in particular contempt, for was it not Tupper and his "creeping toadies" who had abused their power and trampled Nova Scotia's constitution under foot? Should not Tupper's deceit have reminded Nova Scotians of Eden's beguiling serpent? Tupper's deceitful abuse of power and his refusal to meet the demands of Nova Scotia's anti-confederates even reminded the *Chronicle's* editor of Cain's murder of Abel.³¹ Indeed, in the space of a mere few newspaper inches Tupper was likened to the Abomination that

³⁰"Second Chapter of Chronicles," *Citizen* 5 July 1867, 1. The next few lines read as follows: "Now this man had taken unto himself idols which he brought with him out of the land of the Philistines, even from their chief city which is called Washington. And he worshiped these idols; and he called unto his brethren and the people of the land, and said, These be your gods, O ye people! Now when George Brown heard of the fame of this man, he sent letters unto him, saying, Is thy heart with me in this matter and wilt thou fight with me against the elders of the people whom Monck shall set up?"

³¹*Morning Chronicle* 3 April 1867, 2. See Genesis 3:1-6 and 4:8.

Maketh Desolate, religious apostates in general, and Satan himself-- and there were yet more biblical unworthies to trot out against Tupper and his eminently corruptible ilk. Looking to an election in which candidates would be chosen to represent Nova Scotians in the federal parliament in Ottawa, the *Chronicle* warned its readers to beware of confederationist bribery. The funds available to candidates in favor of confederation was "limited only by the contents of the Provincial chest," the *Chronicle* murmured, rightly fearing that this election would seal Nova Scotia's place in the Canadian Dominion.

Every weak-kneed, avaricious, man in the country will be appealed to--every Judas, even though he should afterwards hang himself, will get his thirty pieces of silver; and poor men will be tempted to sell themselves, and their children, their liberty, and country for a share of the plunder of the wreck of the province. That some will fall is unfortunately too probable, but that their numbers will be few we have an abiding faith.³²

If Nova Scotians in favor of confederation were like Judas, were those who opposed it to be likened to Jesus, meek and mild? Indeed not. In the *Chronicle's* view, at any rate, Nova Scotia's independence-minded citizens should not stand in silence as Jesus had done before his Roman persecutors. Confederationists might say that what was done was done and that Nova Scotians should accept it, the *Chronicle* observed, "But the people of Nova Scotia

³²Ibid., 6 April 1867, 2. See Daniel 11:31; and Matthew 26:14-16, 47-49 and 27:3-10.

are not quite so meek and humble that when smitten on one cheek they will turn the other also."³³

Set firmly against confederation since January 1865, the *Chronicle* was -- as is obvious by now -- anything but humble:³⁴ it hurled biblical texts at its foes with persistent gumption. Thus in the ninth of his anti-confederation "Botheration Letters," which appeared in the *Chronicle* between January 11 and March 2, 1865, Joseph Howe wrote that Nova Scotians knew "what happened to men, who lightly, in olden time, profaned the ark of the Covenant," and he was sure that his compatriots would not stand by and let their political independence disappear. "Let those who would touch, with unhallowed hands, the Constitution of this country [Nova Scotia], have a care, lest they be blasted by the indignation of its people."³⁵

Howe also employed biblical metaphors to mitigate pro-confederation slogans such as "Union is strength." "Is union always strength?" he asked.

Was it strength to the Egyptians and the Israelites?....Was there strength when the new wine was united with the old bottle, or the new cloth to the old garment?....Was Sampson much the stronger when the false Delilah had got him confederated, bound him with cords and cut off his hair? No; and therefore we say to the false Delilahs, who would

³³Ibid. 8 April 1867, 2. See Matthew 5:38-39.

³⁴See P.B. Waite, *The Life and Times of Confederation, 1864-1867* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1962), 209.

³⁵*Morning Chronicle* 3 February 1865, 2. See I Samuel 6:19.

bind and shear us, stand off, not a limb shall be degraded with cords, not a hair of our heads shall be touched; have a care ye Philistines, or the foxes shall be into your standing corn, and the jawbones even of asses shall be busy among you. But if, by force or fraud, which Providence forbend, your wicked design shall seem to prosper, beware, or the blind rage of a betrayal or indignant people may make the day of your apparent triumph that of your political destruction.³⁶

Given the *Chronicle's* editorial stance, it predictably marked the first Dominion Day glumly, asserting that clergy who intended on having services in honor of the event would do well to recall that the "Quebec scheme" had been signed on a Sunday. "Let not the clergy forget those who, in order to celebrate its birth, openly violated both the laws of God and man," it warned.³⁷

³⁶Ibid. 8 February 1865, 2. See Matthew 9:17 and Judges 16. Elsewhere Howe wrote: "The builders of Babel were only a little more ambitious than these Canadian politicians, but the Almighty scattered their confederacy, and set His seal upon the policy which bounds human ambition by lines of natural defence and homogenous populations." See Joseph Andrew Chisolm, ed., *The Speeches and Public Letters of Joseph Howe* vol. II (Halifax: The Chronicle Publishing Company, 1909), 472. Of all the prominent Confederation-era political figures whose public work has been consulted for this study, Howe's writing and rhetoric is most informed by the Bible. In Chisolm see, for examples, 474-75 (on Louis Napoleon's "crown of thorns"); 480 ("When Herod and Pilate coalesced there was a sacrifice, and when Galt and Mr. Brown after years of personal bitterness and malignant vituperation consented to clasp hands, it was with the understanding that the Lower Provinces [i.e., the Maritimes], which had nothing to do with their disputes, were to be sacrificed to illustrate their conciliation"). In Joseph Howe, *Poems and Essays* (Toronto: University of Toronto, 1973) see Howe's thoughts on the aesthetic value of the Bible in his essay "Eloquence" (230-247) and his comments on Jesus and the New Testament in "Shakespeare" (189-91). Also see Howe's comments in House of Commons Debates, First Session, First Parliament, 8 November 1867, 10.

³⁷*Morning Chronicle* 1 July 1867, 1.

And, recalling in a letter addressed to the "people of Canada" that the biblical Joseph had been sold into Egyptian slavery by his own brothers, Howe claimed that in the future Dominion Day would be remembered as a "day of gloom-- of intense sorrow."³³ Of course, this prophecy lost its power when Howe renounced agitation against the Confederation of Canada and went to Ottawa as a federal cabinet minister in January of 1869.

2.2 Confederation as the Work of God

If anti-confederationists employed biblical texts to embellish their public musings,³⁴ unionists did as well. As far as

³³Chisolm, ed., *The Speeches and Public Letters of Joseph Howe* vol. II, 524. See Zephaniah 1:18.

³⁴Certainly the most bizarre (and sometimes incomprehensible) biblically informed criticisms of Confederation found by this researcher were published in the *Canadian Quarterly Review and Family Magazine* (Hamilton, Ontario) in 1865. Consider this: "We...say to Britain and her statesmen, beware of consenting to any such arrangement [as Confederation], and to Canadians and their sister Colonists, to beware of metamorphising their animal principles of government into the vegetable principle, and by your retrograde act, range yourself under the banner of the Prince of Darkness" (April 1865, 350). Or this: "[N]o Federal or Confederate system [will] do for us....And we...assert that having solved that 'Mystery of God,' from the knowledge it affords of the ultimate principles of government we know that no system of *Federation or Confederation* can stand for more than a 'little season,'-- Rev. ch. xx. v. 3," and that we have weighed the 'stone--Rev. ch. xviii. v. 21.' The overwhelming truth that will eventually crush out all *Federal, Confederate, and Republican* systems of government, and know it to be sufficient, and know the nature of the 'fire--Rev. ch. xx. v. 29,' that will consume those principles to the end..." (Ibid.) The editor of the *Review* had a very high opinion of it. In April 1866 he opined that "This *Review* becomes pre-eminently the *Review*, as well as the 'Book of Life,' referred to by St John, Rev. 20.12, and ch.

Halifax's *Evening Express* was concerned, for example, the province's anti-union press was manned by fellows who were "without a shred of character of any kind" and who "bellow[ed] their insane and dishonest ravings like the bulls of Bashan."⁴⁰ And how was it, the *Express* asked, that any right-thinking British North American could fail to notice the ways of Providence in Confederation? Like the ancient Israelites who were called time and again to remember how Yahweh had finally established them in Canaan, so too would future Canadians. "This day" -- 1 July 1867, Canada's first Dominion Day -- "will be one of the brightest in our Calendar," the *Express* bubbled, "one to be set apart for rejoicing, as the day on which was laid the foundation stone of our greatness, our security and prosperity as a people."⁴¹

On that day it will be said, A.D. 1867, three Provinces enjoying the same laws, speaking the same language [?!], animated by the same feelings became one. Four millions of people agreed to become one commonwealth, under the jurisdiction of the British Crown. As the day comes round our children and children's children for many a generation will tell over on each returning 1st of July the story of the beginning of our real history, when we first took

22, 19, because in it is explained the bearing of one prophecy upon another..."(467). Apparently the Almighty disagreed; the *Review* ceased publication with the April 1866 issue.

⁴⁰*Evening Express* 8 April 1867, 2. See Amos 4:1.

⁴¹ Laurence S. Fallis, Jr.'s essay, "The Idea of Progress in the Province of Canada: A Study in the History of Ideas," provides a good background for the paragraphs that follow. In Morton, *The Shield of Achilles*.

place and position among the nations of the world."⁴²

Sentiments such as this were not new in British North America. In 1864 A.E. Dawson wrote a pamphlet titled *The Northern Kingdom* in which he urged his readers to stop looking "backward on the Mother Country" for national direction, "but forward to the future," with trust in the "God of nations." The United States was embroiled in a civil war and was on the brink of collapse, Dawson wrote: British North America's hour had arrived. "Have we not also a message -- a mission? It is a stable, limited Monarchy -- the hope of the Anglo-Norman race."⁴³

The following year the *Montreal Witness* similarly challenged its readers to take advantage of the gifts Providence had bestowed on British North America: "ports, rivers, boundless forests" and "the best fishing ground in the world." British America "is ours," the *Witness* continued, and like the ancient Israelites across the Jordan River from Jericho, "we shall stand condemned at the bar of History if we fail to enter in and possess the land."⁴⁴

For John Reade, author of a poem titled "Dominion Day," published in July 1867 in the *Montreal Gazette*, "the king of the

⁴²Article in the *Halifax Express* republished in the *Pictou, Nova Scotia, Colonial Standard* 2 July 1867, 2.

⁴³A Colonist [A.E. Dawson], *The Northern Kingdom* (Montreal: Dawson Brothers, 1864), 18.

⁴⁴*Presbyterian Witness* 11 March 1865, 4. Deuteronomy 31:2-3. See my discussion on "possessing the land" in chapter three below.

months of the year" had crowned Canada "with his glory of love," and "the King of all kings...look[ed] smilingly down on our Land from the height of his heaven above."⁴⁵ Reade surmised that like the formless void over which the spirit of God moved before the creation of the earth, Canada had been lifeless until "the Spirit move[d] over her face" and she "breath[ed] what to her was the first of a nation's breath."⁴⁶

Preaching a sermon on the morning of the first Dominion Day, Halifax's eloquent Reverend Dr. Matthew Richey likewise divined prosperity and blessedness in Canada's future. In Richey's view, Halifax was providentially destined "to be an emporium of wealth, and a centre of importance and influence" among British institutions, which were themselves of especial value in the divine economy. Richey observed that Nova Scotia's inhabitants were not like "the nations of antiquity a few thousands, or even a million of people setting about erecting a system of government which it might cost ages of time, and tides of blood to complete."

We receive a not less but more valuable gift than the ample and rich territory which has been accorded to us, for this experiment [Confederation]. We have received the British Constitution in its full

⁴⁵*Montreal Gazette* 1 July 1867, 2.

⁴⁶See Genesis 1:2. Reade continues, reflecting on Canada's history: "How, with the gentle warriors, others/ Of gentle manners came/ Who called the red men brothers/ And told them of His Name/ Who came from the Great Spirit/ To bless mankind and save/ And Who, for man's demerit/ Suffered the Cross and grave."

development and perfection. That constitution, you will permit me to say, stands unrivaled amidst the civil constitutions of the world. It has been long tried and stood the rudest tests. The lapse of ages tends only to invigorate and make it more effective. It is through its excellence, under God, that an inconsiderable Island [i.e., Britain] has acquired its resources, energy and strength of the mightiest continental empire. It is the object of God's peculiar care, because it is most like his own administration. It is an honor to be born under it-- and a glory to defend and support it. It is like that mighty tree described by the Prophet, widely diffused in its roots, and vast in its stem; its branches are spread over all the earth, and under them fowl of every wing find shelter. It is the envy of the nations of the earth, and should be the boast of its own sons. God alone can overthrow it, but he will not destroy the work of his own hands."⁴¹

The belief that the British Empire was the "object of God's peculiar care, because it is most like his own administration" was apparently common in nineteenth-century British North America.⁴² At the time of Confederation many articulate and influential English-speaking Canadians (and presumably many inarticulate English-speaking Canadians as well) hoped great things for their young nation, and those aspirations were cloaked in biblical terms.

Consider Alexander Morris, a member of parliament in 1867 and later a Lieutenant-Governor General of Manitoba, who referred

⁴¹*Evening Express* 3 July 1867, 2. See Ezekiel 31:3-9.

⁴² See S.F. Wise, "Sermon Literature and Canadian Intellectual History," and "God's Peculiar Peoples," chaps. in *God's Peculiar Peoples: Essays on Political Culture in Nineteenth-Century Canada* eds., A.B. McKillop and Paul Romney (Ottawa: Carleton University Press, 1993).

to Canada's West as a "Paradise of fertility."⁴³ Morris was sure that the West would become a brilliant jewel in the crown of the British Empire; for in British North America lay the "germ of a mighty people."⁴⁴ Thus Morris called upon his fellow Canadians to look with him westward,

over the trail of the enterprising adventurers of the old Canadian North-West Company, and, taking our stand there, judge for ourselves, like the Israelitish spies, of the character of that section of a future great empire...which is popularly known as the Hudson's Bay Territories."⁴⁵

The North-West must be possessed and cultivated, Morris said, for "[T]he British American people have duties and responsibilities of no light character imposed on them by Providence"-- chiefly, the fostering of respect for "the Great Ruler of Events, and the teachings of his Word."⁴⁶

2.3 The Bible and Political Involvement

John Webster Grant has asserted that "Canadians have always recognized the secular origins of their nation,"⁴⁷ and "have never

⁴³Alexander Morris, *Nova Britannia* (Toronto: Hunter, Rose and Co., 1884), 28, 29, 122, 140.

⁴⁴*Ibid.*, 34-35.

⁴⁵*Ibid.*, 53.

⁴⁶*Ibid.*, 49-50, 54.

⁴⁷Commenting in August 1867 on the celebration of Canada's

been disposed to regard their national constitution as a quasi-religious document"-- which is to say that even in the mid-nineteenth century Canadians were not a people given to seeing their nation as divinely chosen.⁵⁴ Grant's modifiers ("always," "never") are too strong; we have seen, and will see in the chapters that follow, that prominent British North Americans believed that God was actively involved in Canadian history. Still, there is something to Grant's assertion. For if biblical rhetoric was indeed ubiquitous in English-speaking Canada in 1867, many of the concerns the Bible was publicly employed to promote were decidedly of this world. Their words had not as much to do with the Christian religion as they did with a form of British American civil religion--a public religion concerned not with individual salvation in the world to come but national salvation in this one.⁵⁵

first Dominion Day the *Presbyterian* (Montreal) complained that sufficient attention was not paid to matters religious: "One would think that the experience of even the last few years [e.g., the American Civil War and Fenian raids] would have taught us that our destinies are not in our own hands....But, from whatever cause, our senators did not seem to think of the need of a public national recognition of this truth, and our City Councils and Celebration Committees were far too much occupied with the arrangement of appropriations, the procuring of fireworks &c., &c., to think of anything so *impractical* as hallowing the day by a solemn religious service....[A]s a nation, we entered upon this new stage of national existence without any reference to the God who guides the destinies of nations as well as of men" (230).

⁵⁴John Webster Grant, *The Church in the Canadian Era* (Burlington, ON: Welch Publishing Company Inc., 1988), 24.

⁵⁵ I do not wish to pursue explicitly the topic of civil religion in late nineteenth-century Canada here, though I anticipate doing so in a future work. Among the sources I've read

Some Canadian Protestants seemed eager to make this point. In a particularly tedious excursion into history and biblical exegesis, for example, Judge John George Marshall of New Brunswick spelled out how he had tested the Canadian Dominion against the witness of Scripture and found it wanting.³⁶ It was clear to him that God would have preferred that the maritime provinces remain independent, and he inveighed fervently against Confederation and worldliness -- the two were related in his mind -- in a pamphlet titled *Facts and Reasons Against New Brunswick and Nova Scotia Confederating with Canada* (1866). Chief among Marshall's observations was that in all the commentary in favor of confederation that had been published in the maritime

on the topic are: Robert N. Bellah, "Civil Religion in America" *Daedalus* 96 (1967), 1-20 and *The Broken Covenant: American Civil Religion on Trial* (New York: The Seabury Press, 1975); Russell E. Richey and Donald G. Jones, eds., *Civil Religion* (New York: Harper and Row, 1974); Rita Kirk Whillock, "Dream Believers: The Unifying Visions and Competing Values of Adherents to American Civil Religion," *Presidential Studies Quarterly* XXIV:2 (Spring 1994), 375-88; Raymond F. Bulman, "'Myth of Origin,' Civil Religion and Presidential Politics," *Journal of Church and State* 33 (Summer 1991), 525-539; "Robert D. Linder, "Universal Pastor: President Clinton's Civil Religion," *Journal of Church and State* 38:4 (1996), 733-749; Charles W. Calhoun, "Civil Religion and the Gilded Age Presidency: The Case of Benjamin Harrison," *Presidential Studies Quarterly* XXIII:4 (Fall 1993), 651-667; Thomas S. Langston, "A Rumor of Sovereignty: The People, Their Presidents, and Civil religion in the Age of Jackson," *Presidential Studies Quarterly* XXIII:4 (Fall 1993), 669-682; Ronald Beiner, "Machiavelli, Hobbes, and Rousseau on Civil Religion," *The Review of Politics* 55:4 (Fall 1993), 617-638; and Rhys H. Williams and Susan M. Alexander, "Religious Rhetoric in American Populism: Civil Religion as Movement Ideology," *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* 33:1 (1994), 1-15.

³⁶John George Marshall, *The Canadian Dominion Tested by the Evidence of Scripture and History* (Halifax: J.B. Strong, 1868).

provinces there was nary a word "as to any advantage it [confederation] will produce to religion, either as to its extension, or increased influence." Rhetoric in favor of confederation seemed rather to point "merely to prosperity, and grandeur of *material* or worldly and political descriptions."⁵⁷

Marshall was not alone. Toronto's *Canadian Baptist* was uncomfortable even with the assignment of the word "dominion" to the Canadian nation. The British North Americans' highest allegiance was to "the King of kings, who has purchased us with his own blood," the *Baptist* declared. "When a few short years shall have passed away, our relations to an earthly *dominion* will be dissolved, but the *dominion* of our Heavenly King is an everlasting one. How vastly does the latter surpass the former in importance."⁵⁸

At the time of Confederation some Canadian Protestants wondered if believers should take an interest in secular politics at all. The *Canadian Independent*, wary of the involvement of Christians in politics, observed that "[f]rom the days of Joseph, Moses, David and Daniel" godly men had held temporal power.⁵⁹ Meanwhile, in 1867 Egerton Ryerson criticized vituperative

⁵⁷John Marshall, *Facts and Reasons Against New Brunswick and Nova Scotia Confederating with Canada* (n.p., 1866), 15. Emphasis in the original.

⁵⁸"Christian and Politics" *Canadian Baptist* 18 July 1867, 2. My emphases.

⁵⁹"Christian Politics," *Canadian Independent* October 1867, 151.

political partisans for not being sufficiently Christian in their conduct and for fostering political grudges rather than working together for the good of all. Unlike Jesus who forgave past offenses, Ryerson wrote, Canada's "pharisees" had no interest in covering old wounds.⁶⁰ How, he wondered, could Canada be truly Christian unless its leaders conducted themselves according to biblical principles?

The Methodist *Christian Guardian* similarly asserted on 31 July 1867 that "notwithstanding the present fashionableness of utilitarian theory," religion and morals should be society's greatest concerns and "therefore it is the imperative duty of a Christian people to secure a national acknowledgment of God and the Bible."⁶¹ The *Guardian's* concerns echoed those of Alex James, a correspondent with the editor of Halifax's *Presbyterian Witness* in 1865. James wrote that the Confederation schemes that had been hatched in British North America ran contrary to the Golden Rule, for the people had not been directly consulted.

[W]hatever the power of Parliament, the proceedings of all bodies or individuals holding arbitrary or even limited power must be governed by the sacred rule of *right*--and that they are not absolved by their position, however exalted, or by their prerogatives, however sacred, from the great golden rule of our religion, 'Whatever ye would that men should do unto you that do ye also to them.' Had God

⁶⁰Egerton Ryerson, *The New Canadian Dominion: Dangers and Duties of the People in Regard to Their Government* (Toronto: Lovell and Gibson, 1867), 14.

⁶¹*Christian Guardian* 31 July 1867, 2.

been recognized in this Constitution it is to be hoped that he would not have permitted these men, who have been elected by us to high honors and emoluments, to deprive us in return of our liberty of voting on a subject so vitally affecting our interests and our liberties."⁴²

James went on to note that he hoped the *Witness's* editor would "battle valiantly for the Headship of Christ, and endeavor to prevent this province [Nova Scotia] from being dragged into any Union or Federation whatever, that is attempted to be built on any less secure foundation than the Chief Corner Stone [i.e. Jesus Christ]."⁴³

While some thus hoped that, so to say, Canada's manual of political operation would be the Bible, others did not think that plausible. Even as Canada celebrated its first Dominion Day one polemicist named Leroy Foote was penning his tract "Christian Liberty and Its Enemies," a work designed to encourage Canada's youth to stay on the straight and narrow path-- that is, away from political life. Foote's bugbears were common to devout Christians of his day and need not be recounted at length here. Suffice it to note that in his view "the mind of the novel reader becomes the thoroughfare of evil passions" (he cited II Timothy 4:3);⁴⁴ that "dancing...is *decidedly sinful*" (he alluded here to

⁴²*Presbyterian Witness and Evangelical Advocate* 11 February 1865, 3. Emphasis in the original. See Matthew 7:12. The *Witness's* motto, published on its first page, was, "The Bible is our great church directory, and statute book."

⁴³*Ibid.* 11 February 1865, 3. See Ephesians 2:20.

⁴⁴Leroy Foote, *Christian Liberty and Its Enemies: A Book for*

Matthew 7:20 -- "a tree is known by its fruits" -- and noted that dancing leads to "nervousness, headache, bad colds, consumption and general prostration of both soul and body");⁴⁵ and, citing II Corinthians 6:17, Foote maintained that Christians should avoid political activity. "Is it not better by far to 'stand still and see the salvation of the Lord,' than to enter into the noisy corrupting stream of the world's politics and be swallowed up in hell?"⁴⁶ For Foote and others like him, the Canadian nationalism of the late nineteenth century, though often cloaked in biblical language, ran counter to the spirit of Christianity itself.⁴⁷

Youth (Montreal: John Lovell, 1868), 43. II Timothy 4:3 reads: "For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears."

⁴⁵Ibid., 45. Emphasis in the original.

⁴⁶Ibid., 82-83. II Corinthians 6:17a reads: "Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord" (Authorized Version). The opposite point of view was expressed by the Halifax *Provincial Wesleyan* on 10 July 1867. "[T]oo long have they [Christians] stood aside, and permitted the righteous cause to be overborne, and God's poor to be oppressed. Shall we not learn, under the teachings of God's impressive lessons, that the continent is His, the nation His, for the good of the race; that we are but stewards, commanded to consecrate *all things* to the building of Christ's Kingdom in the world?"

⁴⁷Three years before Confederation the *Adviser* (Toronto) was explicit on this point. "If Christ has given directions to His people [in the Bible], they must be the best; otherwise the creature must be wiser than the Creator. If Christ has given laws to His people, they are guilty of rebellion if they neglect to obey them. If Christ has given instructions to His people, He will punish their disobedience....Every deviation from Scripture insults the Lawgiver by impugning His wisdom, setting aside His authority, and despising His instructions....For these, and other reasons, we cannot bow down to any national idol, whether that of Rome or England, whether that of Scotland or Geneva": *Adviser* 4:2 (August 1864), 27.

This view was shared in part by the *Montreal Presbyterian*, which observed in August 1867 that Dominion Day had been celebrated with martial parades, the firing of cannons, the ringing of bells and "joyous recreation"-- things not bad in themselves. Yet the absence of pious devotion from the day's celebration, "whole-souled and enthusiastic as it was," could only be "painfully felt by those who feel that 'except the Lord build the house they labour in vain that build it'""⁶³ In the same way, then, that the Bible had been pressed into service by partisans for and against the confederation of Canada, so was it employed to support the arguments of those who advocated the participation of Christians in political life as well as the contentions of their opponents.

My primary object in this chapter has been to show that while English-speaking British North Americans read and cited the same Bible when they spoke of the confederation of British North America, their views on that event were often at odds and sometimes in direct opposition. Such dissent is of course what one would expect to find in a predominately Protestant culture in which "every man" was urged "to read and study and pray over [the Bible] for himself"⁶³ and which cherished, in one British

⁶³"The New Dominion," *Presbyterian* August 1867, 229-233.

⁶⁹David Inglis, *Thanksgiving Sermon* (Hamilton, Canada West: 1866), 14.

American's words, "an open Bible," a "free and full Gospel," and "private judgment."² Yet the voice of dissent -- the voice that rejected Confederation on biblical grounds and that warned British North Americans against the pursuit of national wealth and prosperity -- was a minority. Its opponent, the voice that called British Americans to look to a prosperous and glorious future with hope in a usually undefined "providence," prevailed. It is on this voice that the next two chapters focus.

In the two chapters that follow I will also focus more on what I have only hinted at above, namely, an argument that the same liberty Canada's independent Bible readers enjoyed to construe the Scriptures as they wished may have contributed, over time, to the eclipsing of biblical authority in Canadian public life.

Of course, the ubiquity of Bible-based language in Canadian public life at the time of Confederation had its roots in the generally held belief that the Bible was sacred and therefore authoritative; and because it was the most authoritative text shared in common by Canadians it was cited to support often conflicting projects and points of view. But the same sense of the Bible's significance that led so many to cite the Bible so frequently appears to have served, ironically, to create an atmosphere in which biblical texts could eventually be treated

²Jonathan Shortt, *The Gospel Banner! A Sermon Preached to the Loyal Orange Lodges, Assembled in St. John's Church, Port Hope, July 12th, 1853* (Montreal, 1853), 2.

with all the care of state, if elegant, trivia. For the belief that the Bible was a sacred text could not be preserved in a public culture in which the Scriptures apparently could be fashioned so as to become all things to all men.

Chapter Two

The Bible and English Canadian Identity

The Bible is the basis of the civil laws of our land. The laws of England, and of Canada are justly celebrated throughout the world: they are wise and humane, just and equal, at once our glory and our boast; and it is because they are founded on the Bible.

-- *Christian Guardian* 18 September 1861

Our Queen assures us that the Bible is the foundation of our national greatness.

-- *Protestant and Evangelical Witness* 14 March 1863

Canada Wants Virtuous Men--men with their hearts
Attuned to holiness--men who will take
The Bible as the Charter of their faith...

-- G. Ross, Minister of Education, Ontario, 1893.¹

2.1 The Bible and Anti-Americanism

When civil war erupted in the United States in April 1861 the republic that many British North Americans had long thought, and not a few had hoped, would implode seemed to be on the verge of precisely that. With America at war against itself, the sense of moral, political, religious, and cultural superiority over the United States that had been nurtured in British North American

¹From "What Canada Wants" in Ross's collection, *Patriotic Recitations and Arbor Day Exercises* (Toronto: Warwick Brothers and Rutter, 1893), 109.

hearts and minds since before the American Revolution seemed justified.² In the revolutionary period one United Empire Loyalist who led a train of wagons from upstate New York to the Ottawa Valley noted in his journal that he and those with him were leaving the rebellious American colonies not because they did not recognize "that the king of England seems pernicious, ill-minded or insane," but because they did not believe that they could "yet cut [themselves] off from Europe, from tradition or from the past."³ That the rebellious Americans were, by contrast, "cut off" from their past and therefore politically rootless and destined to slide into moral and social anarchy was a theme repeated time and again in Canada well into the twentieth century.⁴ In April 1861 the speed of that slide seemed to have

²See S.F. Wise, "Sermon Literature and Canadian Intellectual History," chap. in *God's Peculiar Peoples: Essays on Political Culture in Nineteenth-Century Canada* eds., A.B. McKillop and Paul Romney (Ottawa: University of Ottawa Press, 1993). For general background on Loyalism and anti-American sentiment see David Mills, *The Idea of Loyalty in Upper Canada, 1784-1850* (Montreal-Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1988) and Jane Errington, *The Lion, the Eagle, and Upper Canada* (Montreal-Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1987). Errington maintains, and Mills concurs, that anti-Americanism was not as virulent in Upper Canada as the Loyalists descendants tended to think.

³This quote appears in the unpublished journal of an ancestor of David Lyle Jeffrey. In the spirit of his forebear, Jeffrey himself has published strong criticisms of the United States. In "The Bible and American Myth" (chapter nine in *People of the Book: Christian Identity and Literary Culture* [Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1996]) Jeffrey criticizes American biblicism-- often a self-centred, self-serving, and arrogant biblicism that is largely cut off from Christian exegetical and theological tradition.

picked up dramatically.⁵

Four months after the American Civil War began Toronto's *British Herald* observed that British North Americans were indeed sorry about the condition of the United States -- "a Power that shows its inability to take care of itself" -- and simultaneously observed that Canadians should "congratulate" themselves on their "superior position" and take care, lest they "risk the substantial blessing of the sound Constitutional Government we enjoy."⁶ The *Christian Journal's* view was much the same. "We are highly favoured in Canada in being under the enlightened control of Britain and the beneficent rule of her illustrious Queen," the *Journal* declared in June 1861.⁷ Twenty-four years later one enthusiast speaking at a meeting commemorating the coming of the United Empire Loyalists to British North America would opine that

From British Columbia to Cape Breton we, Canadians, can proudly point to one of the largest and finest countries in the world, with as well-behaved and law-abiding a population as can be found anywhere, while

⁵See Carl Berger, "Critique of the Republic," ch. 6 in *A Sense of Power*. In the conclusion to *Yankee Go Home? Canadians and Anti-Americanism* (Toronto: HarperCollins, 1996), Jack Granatstein makes comparable statements about the United States in the late twentieth century.

⁶Robin Winks writes that, for many British North Americans, the Civil War was "a lesson for their times, a parable upon the root of all evil, man uncontrolled." See Winks' *Canada and the United States: The Civil War Years* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins Press, 1960), 215.

⁷"The American Imbroglio," *Protestant Evangelical Witness*, 1 July 1861, 3.

⁸*Christian Journal* 22 June 1861, 2.

south of us, the lawlessness is wide-spread, and the crimes of violence almost without number. Can any one say that the arrival of the U.E. Loyalists here in 1784 did not start this Province well, and that their maintenance of our freedom in 1812 did not preserve a system of government which is a great boon and blessing to us today[?]²

This theme was repeated frequently in late-nineteenth century Canada.

Forgetting, perhaps, the dangers inherent in proud displays of humility, Methodist minister and journalist William Henry Withrow observed in 1893 that "nowhere on earth" was "the Sabbath day so honoured" as it was in Canada; "nowhere is the sanctity of the family so maintained." Taking especial delight in Canada's relatively low divorce rate, Withrow observed that "Without undue self-laudation we may say of our country, 'Happy is the people whose God is the Lord.'"³

²No author, *The Centennial of the Settlement of Upper Canada by the United Empire Loyalists, 1784-1884. The Celebrations at Adolphustown, Toronto and Niagara...* (Toronto: Rose Publishing, 1885), 97.

³Withrow's speech "The Spirit of Canadian Patriotism" is reproduced in George W. Ross, *Patriotic Recitations and Arbor Day Exercises* (Toronto: Warwick Brothers and Rutter, 1893), 209. Withrow, writes G. S. French, believed that the "principal task of the Christian minister was 'the study, the comprehension, the exposition, the defence' of the Bible; he should be aware of the historical context of the Scriptures, know the languages in which the biblical works were written, 'possess all that he can of that secular knowledge which illustrates and confirms' the Bible, and be informed about 'the wonderful revelations and discoveries of modern science.' But, in contrast to the approach of scholars such as [Nathanael] Burwash, who would take the lead in accommodating Methodist theology and education to the sciences and would formulate the notion of 'reverent criticism' of the Scriptures, Withrow's attitude was cautious." See *Dictionary of Canadian Biography* vol. XIII (Toronto: University of Toronto

Opinions such as Withrow's were encouraged by the American Civil War. For the conflict gave English-speaking British North Americans a keen opportunity to compare themselves favourably with their American kin.¹¹ They now saw themselves as being more than a cut above the Americans; they were made of sterner political, social, cultural, and religious stuff. And while they, unlike their French-speaking counterparts, did not construe themselves specifically as a divinely chosen people -- though many certainly did see themselves as being part of a chosen race inhabiting a chosen nation within a chosen empire¹² -- evidence for a religiously-informed cultural smugness that sometimes blurred into biblicistic hubris abounds.

Unlike most newspapers which were not explicitly religious, the bulk of the British North American religious press threw its moral support to the side of the Union,¹³ for the defeat of the

Press, 1994), 1104.

¹¹The opinion of Louisa Stacey, an English emigrant to Canada East in the 1830s is representative of anti-Yankee sentiment in British North America. "I do not like the Yankees at all," she wrote in a private letter in 1854. "The Americans south of the New England states may be all very well, but New Englanders I detest." Jane Vanisittart, ed., *Lifelines: The Stacey Letters, 1836-1858* (New York: Taplinger Publishing Company, 1976), 155.

¹²"What the Israelites of old were to the surrounding nations," the prominent Upper Canadian John Strachan maintained in 1838, "so the British appear to be to the present inhabitants of the world." Strachan cited in McKillop and Romney, *God's Peculiar Peoples*, 37.

¹³Greg Marquis (*In Armageddon's Shadow: The Civil War and Canada's Maritime Provinces* [Montreal-Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1998]) notices a general difference in opinion between the Maritime provinces' secular and religious newspapers,

Confederacy meant the defeat of slavery-- an institution abhorred by the great majority of British North America's Protestants.¹³

The *Canada Christian Advocate*, for instance, observed in September 1862 that the eventual liberation of the slaves in the American South would be met not only with "the approbation of the civilized world" but of God himself. Yet the *Advocate* worried

though he does not examine and explain it. The split in opinion between the religious and secular press is puzzling, particularly when one considers that the great majority of English-speaking British North Americans were Protestants who would at least pay lip service to their respective denominational faiths. In his *Canadian Studies in Comparative Politics* (Montreal: Dawson Brothers, 1890), John George Bourinot rightly notes that a significant portion of British North America's sympathy went toward the Confederacy. This was born of "the conviction that the Union had become too unwieldy for one government to manage on democratic principles, and that there was greater security for Canada in two or more republics on the continent than in the existence of a colossal state of insatiable ambition..."(41).

¹³Goldwin Smith was not yet a resident of British North America in 1863 but his work *Does the Bible Sanction Slavery?* (London: John Henry and James Parker, 1863) can be noted here. "Not only did St. Paul and the other Apostles spread principles and ideas which were sure to work the destruction of Slavery and of the other political and social wrongs of which that corrupt and unjust world was full; but they embodied these principles and ideas in an institution, founded by their Lord, of which it may be said that though so little revolutionary in appearance that the most jealous tyranny might have received it into its bosom without suspicion, it exceeded in revolutionary efficacy and political force which has ever seen in action among men. At the supper of the Lord the conqueror was required, on his allegiance to Christianity, to partake in the holy meal with the conquered, the master with the slave; and this in memory of a Founder who had died the death of a slave upon the Cross, and who at the institution of the rite had performed the servile office of washing His disciple's feet"(105-06). There were of course some clergy who supported slavery. Stuart Robinson was a Southerner resident in Canada West who, during the war, preached sermons in defense of slavery. See Kevin Kee, "Stuart Robinson: A Pro-slavery Presbyterian in Canada West," *Canadian Society of Church History Historical Papers*, 1996, 5-23.

that the North was not doing all it could to end the South's "peculiar institution," for up to that early point in the war the Union had lost most of its major engagements-- and was that not a sign that the Almighty had not been fighting the Union's battles? If the Northerners truly had the Lord on their side in battle they would rout the Confederates instead of fleeing before them: One Union soldier would chase a thousand and two would put ten thousand to flight.¹⁴ Indeed, the heart of the "haughty South, which seems fully set in it to do evil," had to be "crushed and humbled";¹⁵ but as long as the Union had sin in its own camp the Lord would not take up its cause.¹⁶

¹⁴"The Religious War Movement," *Canada Christian Advocate* 17 September 1862, p.2. On putting foes "to flight" see Leviticus 26:8, Deuteronomy 32:30 and I Chronicles 12:15.

¹⁵"The American Struggle," *Ibid.*, 24 September 1862, 4. On 1 January 1862 the *Advocate* published an article that appeared originally in the *New York Reformer* concerned with the fall of Charleston, South Carolina. "If the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah richly deserved the fate that overtook them," the *Reformer* intoned, "the voice of humanity will, with equal emphasis, pronounce the righteousness of the avenging doom that has consumed the rebellious city of Charleston. The cup of her abominations was full, and the flaming vengeance that sooner or later overtakes the guilty could not long wait for the slow approaches of retributive arms to punish her."

¹⁶The allusion here is to the story of Achan in Joshua chaps. 6-7. Before the Israelites went to battle against Jericho they were instructed by God to keep themselves from the "accursed" things and to bring all the captured silver, gold, and vessels of brass and iron "into the treasury of the Lord" (6:19). Achan, an Israelite warrior, disobeyed this order, however, and failed to destroy or otherwise appropriately dispose of goods he seized in the course of Israel's victory over Jericho. As a result of Achan's sin Israel's army was devastated in its fight against the people of Ai. "Did not Achan the son of Zerah commit a trespass in the accursed thing, and wrath fell on all the congregation of Israel? and that man perished not alone in his iniquity?" (Joshua

Long before the onset of the American Civil War men and women opposed to slavery had spoken about it in biblical terms. Slavemasters were Pharoahs; freedom, due either to escape into free territory or the abolition of slavery through legislation, was to be found in the Promised Land, the Canadian "Canaan." (It might be added, however, that for fugitive slaves the Promised Land, Canaan and New Jerusalem were to be found more in Africa than in Canada).¹⁷ Following the war, President Andrew Johnson told a gathering of black leaders led by Frederick Douglass that he wanted to be the freedmen's "Moses."¹⁸ Small wonder, then, that the Confederate States of America which still defended the institution of slavery thirty years after it had been abolished throughout the British empire,¹⁹ was often likened in the British North American press to ancient Egypt where the Bible claims the Hebrews pined in bondage for some four hundred years.²⁰ Six months

22:20).

¹⁷Robin Winks, *The Blacks in Canada* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1971), 237.

¹⁸Thus Johnson: "I would be [the freedman's] Moses to lead him from bondage to freedom....I would be willing to pass with him through the Red sea to the Land of Promise-- to the land of liberty..." In William Bruce Wheeler and Susan D. Becker, eds., *Discovering the American Past: A Look At the Evidence* Vol. II (New York: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1998), 20.

¹⁹A bill abolishing slavery in the British colonies was carried on 23 August 1833. Slave children under six were emancipated immediately; children six and over were allotted a period of apprenticeship; and slave owners were compensated for their losses.

²⁰See, for example, the 16 December 1863 edition of the *Canada Christian Advocate*: "It seems a law of Providence that no

after the war began a Nova Scotian "Son of a Loyalist" surmised that if one contemplated the "terrible judgments inflicted upon Egypt and her gods of old," one would be inclined to think that the Confederacy was under similar divine judgment.²¹ Three years later the *Advocate* observed that the "modern Pharaohs of oppression" in the American South would be "plagued with God's judgments till the notes of the trumpet shall proclaim throughout the length and breadth of the land the jubilee of freedom arrived."²² "[T]hank God that we live in a land where freedom

race shall always be slaves. That any nation holding its fellow in bondage, shall from that very bondage reap its just reward. Take the case of the Jewish bondage in Egypt (and how many points of resemblance may we find between it and American slavery). The Jews had been greatly oppressed and greatly despised by their imperial master; but at length the day of freedom dawns-- and the enslaved are to go free. But, in the very efforts Pharaoh makes to detain them in bondage, springs his direst overthrow. So here, a people is held in bondage, dire and cruel. The chains that bind them are tightening every day....if liberty comes, it must flow from the insane efforts of the slave holder to tighten the already over-strained bands of oppression" (J.C. Pomeroy, "The American Rebellion," 1). In July 1865 the exceedingly confused and apocalyptic *Canadian Quarterly Review and Family Magazine* viewed the Southern States as Egypt, Eden, and other ancient entities: "The Southern States are, by the prophets, designated as Egypt, as contrasted with the Northern States, or Assyria; but several other names are also used, for the same reason that more than one name is given to Washington. It is named Eden...because under their slave system they lived as Adam and Eve....It is called Moab, Edom, and Ethiopia, when the transactions referred to are, in type, like some that may have occurred in the south country." "The fifteenth chapter of Isaiah," the *Quarterly* continued, "refers particularly to the South" (434). See Exodus 1-14.

²¹"The Prophet and the Prophecy," *Provincial Wesleyan* 29 October 1861, 2.

²²On the biblical jubilee see Leviticus 25.

reigns triumphant, though once [slavery's] dark foot-prints marked the soil of our beloved Canada."²³

Like the *Advocate*, the influential Methodist Christian *Guardian* gave thanks to God that slavery had not existed on Canadian soil for some decades, for the spirit of slavery was that of "Appolyon" and the biblical "Destroyer."²⁴ Slavery "denie[d] the progress of the age," the *Guardian* claimed, it was "infidelity to the Bible"; it condemned and rejected "the Saviour's sufferings for all men"; it was a "practical impeachment of the Son of God for remembering Africa on Calvary!"²⁵ In the fall of 1861 the *Guardian* noted that if the

²³George Smith and M. Lowry, "Report on Committee on Slavery," *Canada Christian Advocate* 11 May 1864, p. 2. Elsewhere the *Advocate* claimed that if the Confederacy's rebellion was successful, "then indeed is *Ichabod* written on the Great Republic, the glory is departed." In "The Cause and Occasion of the War," 5 June 1861, 2.

²⁴On the "destroyer" see Exodus 12:23, Job 15:21, and I Corinthians 10:10.

²⁵"Washington's Wishes," *Christian Guardian* 29 May 1861, 2. Also see "The Barbarism of Slavery," *Canada Christian Advocate*, 14 August 1861, 1. On 22 January 1862 the CCA surmised that in the plan of providence blacks had been brought to America to learn Christianity so that they might go back to Africa and spread the faith there. To be sure the blacks had suffered in America, the *Advocate* observed, and "Thus God, in the hot furnace of affliction, and in defiance of all human wrong, prepares his materials for the regeneration of Africa. Thousands thus fitted, may now return to the land of their fathers, to teach and exemplify a pure christianity....to inclose within the arms of civilization and christianity tribe after tribe in the interior, and by these several means, to extinguish most effectively slavery and the slave trade....The Bible is the only lever that can raise Africa. Give it room, and it will surely raise the dark continent from the depths of its debasement, and place it alongside the nations which God is pleased to favor....the idea is a pleasing one, that the descendants of Ham, emancipated,

South prevailed there could never be any fellowship between "slavery hating England" and the Confederacy. "Britain will not, and does not abandon her faith in the triumph of right and good." The *Guardian* was concerned about the pro-Confederacy sentiment that prevailed in some quarters in England, but it had faith that Britain would remain on the side of right.²⁶

References to the Confederacy in the British North American religious press were often cloaked in allusions to evil biblical persons or spirits. The *Advocate* cited one Southerner whose sympathies were with the Union as saying that he hoped the Federal forces would be able to drive the Confederates into the sea, "as were the devils driven from the hogs into the sea of Galilee."²⁷ Nova Scotia's *Provincial Wesleyan* blasted the Confederacy's "diabolic cruelty" and "moral blasphemies," claiming that Southerners were a "nominally Christian people" and "covenant breakers," that they were "without natural affection,"

enlightened, and christianized by their enslavers, may go back to be the happy instruments of reclaiming, enlightening, and christianizing their own native Africa"(1). On Calvary see Luke 23:33.

²⁶"The Principle of the American War," *Christian Guardian* 4 September 1861, 2.

²⁷"Parson Brownlow," *Canada Christian Advocate*, 23 April 1862, 1. The reference here is to the story of the Gadarene demoniac(s) related in Matthew 8:28-24, Mark 5:1-19, and Luke 8:26-40. Though details vary in these three accounts, the relevant point is that the demons in possession of the demoniac(s) implored Jesus to cast them into a herd a swine rather than send them, in the words of the Markan account, "away out of the country." Jesus did so, and the now possessed herd of swine rushed over a cliff and into the sea.

and that the Confederacy's rebellion had been stirred up by a "titanic demon."²⁸

While the South thus bore the brunt of British North America's religious periodical scorn,²⁹ the entire Republic was the frequent target of critics who, though genuine in their sentiments, must still have enjoyed their own provinces' relative happiness and tranquillity.³⁰ In 1863 Prince Edward Island's *Protestant and Evangelical Witness* pointed to America's "godless" system of education, from which, its editors believed, the Bible had been all but expunged-- hardly an accurate allegation, though nevertheless taken seriously by a readership eager to know what

²⁸"National Conscience: How to Purify it," *Provincial Wesleyan* 6 March 1861, 2; and "The American Conflict," *Ibid.*, 11 September 1861, 2; "Aggressiveness, a Duty in Our Church," *Ibid.*, 26 April 1865, 2. In his letter to the church at Rome, St. Paul lists a number of infractions for which the "wrath of God [would be] revealed from heaven." Having turned from the true God to the worship of created things sinful men became, *inter alia*, "covenant breakers" and void of "natural affection" (1:31).

²⁹One exception to this is the relative high regard in which some Southern generals were held. As was true in much of the British North America press -- French and English -- Southern generals were often perceived to be more courageous, more dutiful and more devout than their Federal counterparts. The famously devout Stonewall Jackson was of particular interest to some of the British North American religious press. See, for example, "General Jackson's Religious Feelings," *Christian Journal* 27 September 1861, 1; and "The Death of General Jackson," *Christian Guardian* 3 June 1863. 4. For commentary in relation to French Canada see Preston Jones, "Civil War, Culture War: French Canada and the American War Between the States," *Catholic Historical Review*, forthcoming.

³⁰On 26 April 1865 the *Provincial Wesleyan* published a letter to the editor from a man who wrote that he had seen "the Devil and Michael disputing" for New York. "New York is tremendously tall; it touches heaven with one hand and hell with the other. It has the filthiest streets in all Christendom.." (2).

ailed the Americans. Thus the *Witness* wondered if what it claimed was the near disappearance of the Bible from public schools in the United States might itself have been a "special cause" of the Civil War.³¹ The *Christian Journal* surmised similarly.³²

Of especial concern to some in British North America was the apparent lack of piety of the Union's politicians and soldiers. The *Guardian* was not surprised that Federal forces had lost the first battle of Bull Run, for instance: It had been fought on a Sunday; the Union had "met the ordinary fate of Sabbath breakers."³³ The occasional attendance of President Lincoln's wife at dancing parties was likewise frowned upon: Even as the president called for days of prayer and fasting his wife led the nation in evening bouts of folly and postprandial extravagance.³⁴ Little wonder that as the war dragged on American religion seemed to be losing ground. Sermons, prayers and religious writing went on as before, the *Guardian* noted, but these were "employed upon the necessities of the present struggle"; and all the while "the

³¹"The Bible in the Common Schools," *The Protestant and Evangelical Witness* 2 May 1863, 2. On the Bible in nineteenth-century American schools see chaps. 2, 3, 4, and 6 in David L. Barr and Nicholas Piediscalzi, eds., *The Bible in American Education: From Source Book to Textbook* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1982).

³²In the *Christian Journal* see, for instance, "Freedom in the United States," 2 May 1862, 2.

³³"The War of the Union," *Christian Guardian* 31 July 1861, 2. "Remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy" is the fourth of the ten commandments recorded in Exodus 20:1-17.

³⁴"Mrs. Lincoln's Dancing Party," *Christian Guardian* 19 March 1862, 1.

salvation of souls and the spirituality of the churches" was in sure decline.³⁵

2.2 Searching the Canadian Soul

The American Civil War provided British North Americans with an opportunity to remind themselves of the superiority of their political and religious systems. It also served to spur some on to search British North America's own collective conscience. To what extent had the sort of libertinism that had contributed to the American war taken root in Canada West or Nova Scotia or Prince Edward Island? To what extent did it resemble the increasingly unchristian United States? The *Guardian*, for one, did not hesitate to reproach its own readers for perceived moral shortcomings, observing in early 1862 that there had been a dramatic increase in crime of late and that this -- along with the influence of graphic reports of violent acts in newspapers -- was almost certainly linked to the alcoholic intemperance it claimed was rife in Canada West. And were not "modern tales and novels fast working moral ruin" in the British American provinces? "Canada was once the most moral country on the globe," the *Guardian* recalled, "but it is fast losing the right to comfort itself by comparisons with other parts of the world."³⁶

³⁵"The War and the State of Religion," *Christian Guardian* 26 November 1862, 2.

³⁶"Increase of Crime," *Christian Guardian* 19 February 1862,

The *Presbyterian Witness* was likewise sure that judgment awaited the unrepentant of all nationalities. It claimed not to be among those who regarded "the majestic career of the American Union as about to reach a sudden end"; and if God would have saved Sodom for ten righteous men, would he not also save the great Republic "for the ten thousands of good men who daily plead with him for mercy?"³⁷ Not that the *Witness* was blind to the faults of Americans, of course; and the accusations it brought against the United States were common: The Americans were "too prone to regard the Dollar as 'almighty' and to fall to down before it in debasing worship"; "Waxing fat," the Yankees had kicked against law and social order, and indulged in "the sins which brought God's judgments on Israel of old";³⁸ American politicians were corrupt. Given all that, it was no surprise that "calamity" had overtaken the United States. Yet the *Witness* also called to mind the Mother Country's own moral shortcomings and reminded its readers that Britain had itself suffered a civil

2. Emphasis added.

³⁷The allusion here is to Abraham's dialogue with God in which he persuaded God to spare centres of wickedness, Sodom and Gomorrah, from destruction if ten righteous men could be found in them. Ten such men were not found in them and they were destroyed. See Genesis 18:16-19:26.

³⁸See Deuteronomy 32, where the children of Israel are reminded of the religious rebellion of their forebears. Israel is called Jeshurun in verse 15 (cf., 33:5 and 26), which reads: "But Jeshurun waxed fat, and kicked: thou art waxen fat, thou art grown thick, though art covered with fatness; then he forsook God which made him, and lightly esteemed the Rock of his salvation."

war. John Bull could "brag and swagger as well as Brother Jonathan-- although of course the fervor of youthful blood makes the latter more demonstrative and extravagant," the *Witness* observed. "If the North is wise in its generation -- if the freemen who are faithful to the constitution are worthy of their puritan fathers or the British blood that courses through their veins they will fight as the eleven tribes fought against Benjamin regardless of defeat and disaster till they conquer and secure a permanent peace." But ultimately it is God who proposes, disposes, and punishes iniquity; and if the United States had been pushed to the "verge of destruction,--for their selfishness, their pride, their forgetfulness of God and their bitter oppression of their fellow-creatures we also must expect similar punishment if we in like manner transgress."³⁹

The *Provincial Wesleyan* said that blame for the preservation of slavery in the American South should be allotted to both sides of the conflict -- that both sides had failed to live up to biblical ideals -- and it warned Nova Scotians not to forget that they too would do well to remember that a man should not focus on the speck in another's eye when he has a beam in his own; "political expediency" was not unique to the United States.⁴⁰ "The

³⁹*Presbyterian Witness* cited in *Canada Christian Advocate*, 11 Sept. 1861, 4. And thus the *Provincial Wesleyan*: "We have watched as for the Ark of God with trembling solicitude, knowing that if the slave power triumphed, the clock of the millennium would be put back a diurnal task, and ICAHABOD would be written on the mountain tops of New England" (3 May 1862, 2).

⁴⁰Jesus's advice that one should not be eager to point out a

evil too often reveals itself among ourselves, and Christian principle is also sacrificed to it, in our midst." Nova Scotians must then pray for their leaders, remembering the biblical proverb's declaration that by "infinite wisdom" "kings reign and princes decree justice."⁴¹

Thus, while some editorialists in the British North America Protestant newspapers did not gloat over the apparent fall of the United States as did others, the American republic's political difficulties encouraged the view that British North American society was morally superior to -- that is, more determined to hold to biblical norms than -- the United States. With the Almighty standing in obvious judgment over the United States, and with the threat of an American invasion of Canada due to diplomatic tensions between the U.S. and Britain that waxed and waned through the war,⁴² an increasing number of English-speaking British Americans began in the early 1860s to think seriously not only of forming a confederation between Britain's remaining American colonies but also about more fundamental questions concerning their collective identity.⁴³ What was British North

speck (a "mote") in another's eye when one has a beam in his own appears in Matthew 7:3-5.

⁴¹"National Conscience: How to Purify It," *Provincial Wesleyan* 6 March 1862, 2. See Proverbs 8:15.

⁴²For an example of the sense of foreboding many British North Americans felt during the American Civil War see E. Stephens' letter to the editor of the *Christian Guardian* 28 June 1865, 2.

⁴³There is some debate over the extent to which the American

America's place in the world?⁴⁴

In the summer of 1861 the *Christian Guardian* ventured a response to that question, suggesting that biblical teaching was a nation's path to greatness: "A truly Christian nation would be one in which the Word of God was universally read, believed, and understood." A nation whose people embraced the Bible would enjoy the leadership of rulers who feared God; its legislators would be "wise and faithful" and its judges "upright," its public servants "incorruptible." Such a Bible-centred nation's ministers of religion would be "as burning and shining lights"⁴⁵ and its

Civil War was a factor behind the confederation of the British North American provinces. It is not disputed, however, that the war and a fear of the northern United States and its veterans (some of whom were Fenians) in the immediate post-war period did prompt British North America's leading politicians to work toward confederation. In his *Progress in Canada* (1902) J. Castell Hopkins wrote that leading up to confederation there had been "other and perhaps more influential causes than discord in the Canadas and a vague desire for closer union in the other Provinces. To the south of these weak and scattered British populations there was now a victorious and united Republic with a million men recently in arms and seeking new worlds to conquer. The shadow of bitter suspicion regarding the attitude of Britain and Canada during the Civil War had developed into a storm-cloud of contemptuous hostility which not only promised the certain abrogation of the Reciprocity Treaty in a year or two; but threatened, in the projected Fenian invasion, to destroy the peace and security of all the Provinces" (377).

⁴⁴In his essay "The Evangelical Creed in Canada," Goldwin French observes that in the 1840s and '50's British American evangelicals were already propounding an "incipient nationalism." In W.L. Morton ed., *The Shield of Achilles: Aspects of Canada in the Victorian Age* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1968), 29.

⁴⁵Jesus is recorded in the Gospel of John to have said that John the Baptist was "a burning and shining light" (5:35). This phrase became a common term of endorsement in the evangelical revival in Britain during the eighteenth century. See David Lyle Jeffrey, ed., *A Burning and Shining Light: English Spirituality*

churches "Zions, where light, and glory, and salvation from God would be enjoyed in abundance."⁴⁶ Indeed, if a nation were truly infused with biblical teaching, said the *Guardian*, it would enjoy a pure and happy public life: "Society would be enlightened, and social intercourse would be sincere and affectionate."⁴⁷

While the *Guardian* seemed sure that Canada West came closer to this ideal than the United States, it still rued the fact that no completely Christian nation had yet existed. But it looked to the day when Christians would remake this world in the image of Eden, and it hoped that Canada's Protestants would work toward that goal.⁴⁸ The "Prince of Peace" had been revealed in first century Palestine amidst the "shaking of the nations";⁴⁹ so what in the 1860s "should hinder, amid their present shaking, the universal establishment of His kingdom?"⁵⁰ And if temporal bliss was not immediately available to humankind, there were

in the Age of Wesley (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1987).

⁴⁶On the biblical concept of "Zion" as it is intended here, see, for example, Psalm 14:7, Hebrews 12:22, and Revelation 14:1.

⁴⁷"A Christian Nation," *Christian Guardian* 17 July 1861, 112.

⁴⁸*Ibid.* On paradise see, for example, Isaiah 51:3 and Revelation 21-22.

⁴⁹Here the editors of the *Guardian* draw on the traditional Christian interpretation of Isaiah 9:6, construing the prophecy of a forthcoming "Counselor...mighty God...everlasting Father...[and] Prince of Peace" to have been fulfilled in the advent of Jesus Christ.

⁵⁰"A Troubled World and Prayer," *Christian Guardian* 27 November 1861, 1. On Christ's "kingdom" see, for example, Matthew 16:28 and Revelation 19:16.

nevertheless numerous benefits the Protestant faith and the reading of the Bible could bestow on civilization. Did British North Americans enjoy civil and religious liberties? the *Guardian* asked. If so, it was due to their high regard for the Holy Bible. Did they have "quiet homes, peaceful Sabbaths, and holy sanctuaries?" Did they "differ from the rest of our fellow-men in knowledge and in happiness? It is because we have the Holy Bible."⁵¹ Of course, a Bible in every Protestant home did not lead to the spirit of neighborliness the *Guardian* envisioned; as has been true wherever Protestants have read and interpreted the Bible for themselves, the Hebrew and Christian Scriptures were enlisted by different Protestants in support of opposing political schemes and points of view. Yet a sometimes mystical faith in the power of the Bible to make society better -- almost, it sometimes seems, independently of its readers' own intentions -- is a constant in late nineteenth-century Protestant Canadian discourse. And not a few Canadians believed that their reading and comprehension of and adherence to the Bible had made their country better than the United States.

2.3 The Bible and National Righteousness

One prominent Canadian who persistently maintained that the Bible should be loved, revered, and obeyed was Egerton Ryerson,

⁵¹A.C., "The Bible," *Christian Guardian* 18 September 1861, 1.

the *Guardian's* intermittent editor from 1829 to 1842, and, beginning in 1844, Superintendent of Education in Canada West and, after 1867, Ontario. In 1871 the Council of Public Instruction of Ontario authorized a booklet authored by Ryerson titled *First Lessons in Christian Morals for Canadian Families and Schools* to be used in Ontario's public schools. This small book is instructive, for it reveals the extent to which the Bible was still an important pedagogic tool in the years immediately following Confederation. While no pupil in Ontario in 1871 could be required to receive religious instruction over his parents' or guardians' objections, and while the arguments of notable opponents of religious instruction in public schools such as the *Toronto Globe's* George Brown made their views known,⁵² the Council of Public Instruction did not frown on Ryerson's prefatory proclamation that he "assumed the truth of Christianity and the authority of the Holy Scriptures."⁵³

As might be expected, a central theme of Ryerson's pamphlet was that the Bible should be at the centre not only of the lives of individuals but of public life as well. "A nation -- if such

⁵²See Egerton Ryerson's *Defence Against the Attacks of the Hon. George Brown and His Assistants Relative to the Ontario System of Public Instruction and Its Administration* (Toronto: Copp, Clark and Co., 1872).

⁵³Egerton Ryerson, *First Lessons in Christian Morals for Canadian Families and Schools* (Toronto: Copp, Clark and Co., 1871), iii. In addition to the references from the Bible, Ryerson introduced those who read his booklet to the Apostles' Creed, as in: "The first principle in Christianity is faith in God the Father: 'I believe in God the Father Almighty, maker of heaven and earth'(9).

can be conceived -- has never left its individual citizens to ascertain their duty by each observing the consequences of his own conduct, and acting accordingly; but it has enacted laws for common protection, and for individual guidance and warning in all that relates to the public welfare," Ryerson wrote.

Much less has the father of the families of the earth given existence to a world of children, and then abandoned them to their own speculations and fancies as to their duty and happiness. He has given them his WORD, as a 'lamp unto their feet, and light unto their path' (Psalm 119:105), and that WORD is able to make them 'wise unto salvation' (2 Timothy 3:15).⁵⁴

Ryerson maintained that the Bible was more than a spiritual guide but also a source of intellectual stimulation. In his view, a "Bible-reading population" was "far more thinking" and "far more intelligent" than one in which mere secular information and extra-biblical philosophical treatises were widely dispersed.⁵⁵

2.4 Canadian Biblicism and National Identity

Like Ryerson, Charlottetown's *Protestant and Evangelical Witness* urged that the Bible should constantly be held dear. This was made especially clear in 1863 in a series of articles

⁵⁴Ryerson, *First Lessons*, 63. Further on Ryerson writes: "The Bible furnishes the only infallible rule and authoritative standard of right and wrong. The rule of Bible morality is the will of God, and its standard is the character of Jehovah"(66).

⁵⁵*Ibid.*, 82.

published by the *Witness* on the Bible's place in public education. This journal repeatedly maintained that if British Americans did not want their own colonies to decline into political chaos and moral anarchy the Bible would have to be their main spiritual, cultural, intellectual, and educational source, for no nation could be great unless it put the Bible and biblical faith first.

Against modernists and infidels who wished to see the reverence afforded the Bible in public diminished, the *Witness* declared itself unable to think "that it is God's will to strip our schools of the seed and blossoms of religion, or of the protectorate of his Scriptures"; for the Bible was the source of personal, community and national morality, and civil government, democracy and just laws had their roots in it.⁵⁶ The same was said of education:

[I]f our government take it upon them to educate the youth of our country, they must do so in such a way as to recognize the religion of the Bible; and this cannot be done without introducing the Bible into all schools organized and supported by the government.⁵⁷

The *Witness* even suggested that if the Bible was taken out of Prince Edward Island's schools its Protestants might engage in some undefined form of civil disobedience.⁵⁸

⁵⁶"The Bible in the Common Schools," *Protestant and Evangelical Witness* 7 March 1863, 2.

⁵⁷*Ibid.*, 14 March 1863, 2.

⁵⁸*Ibid.*, 28 February 1863, 2. "If at any time called upon to

Equally important to the *Witness*, if not more so, was the conviction that the future greatness of Prince Edward Island in particular and British North America in general depended on colonists having a high view of Scripture as well as on their obedience to its commands. "We are a *christian* nation, a *protestant* nation," the *Witness* observed.

Our Queen assures us that the Bible is the foundation of our national greatness...[that] the Bible is the foundation of our civilization; that our political, moral and intellectual character, as distinct from semi-civilized countries -- our constitutional government -- rest upon the Bible.⁵⁹

make such a sacrifice-- to barter away their highest rights and brightest honors, as men and as christians, let them lift up their voices as one man and say to any such demands, in the heroic language of those whose footsteps all christians are bound to follow, '*whether it be right to obey God or men, judge ye*'....Rather than submit to the imposition of a law, excluding the Bible from their schools, we would suppose that men who prize true liberty, would become hewers of wood and drawers of water, if no other alternate presented, where they might enjoy the use of their Bibles. Matmoros, rather than give up his Bible, goes to the galleys." The well-known phrase "hewers of wood and drawers of water" is found in Joshua 9. The western tribes of Canaan banded together to fight the invading Israelites save the Gibeonites who, through deception, made a league with Israel. Because of that pact the Israelites could not attack and destroy the Gibeonites, though nothing prevented Israel from subjugating them. "Now therefore ye [Gibeonites] are cursed, and there shall none of you be freed from being bondmen, and hewers of wood and drawers of water for the house of my God" (23).

⁵⁹Ibid., 14 March 1863, 2. The next month (25 April 1863) the *Witness* waxed even more lyrical: "Stand by the site of ancient cities, and as you gaze in mute melancholy on the ruins of ancient places and splendid mansions, of markets and pleasure grounds, on the desolation that sweeps all around, covering up the labor and skill of the craftsman with the rubbish of ages, amidst which the beasts of prey now find their lair and crouch in concealment, and think that there once were the busy mart, the hum of busy life, there was every means of carnal enjoyment, with the air of confidence and self-wisdom, there the thronged street

Indeed, the Bible lay "at the foundation of true national greatness";⁶⁰ and the "material of national greatness without the guiding principle of biblical morality, would become the mechanical forces to overthrow that greatness, and make shipwreck of it all."⁶¹ British America's world mission -- to "enlighten the nations, as to what true liberty is, and to lead them on to its enjoyment" -- would surely fail if the Bible was not embraced as the ultimate civil as well as religious authority.⁶²

The belief that Canadians were obligated set an example for the United States and, indeed, the world to emulate was common in late nineteenth-century Canada. As has often been the case throughout Canadian history, late nineteenth-century Canadians often defined themselves primarily by stating what they were not -- chiefly, Americans. And while English-speaking Canadians' specific sense of their national identity might have differed,

of mortals with like passions as ourselves, the jovial festival, stirring music and the graceful dance; there might be seen hieing to school blithely as the rosy morn, the happy youth with song of mirth and of patriotism -- but the Word of God was not there -- the Bible was excluded from the school, and God, the God of nations, frowned upon them, and with the besom of destruction He swept them away from being a people -- stillness of death is now there, broken only the screech of the owl or the wild beast, a warring to those who should come after, and a proof that sin is a reproach to any nation, that God will punish those nations and cities who will not acknowledge Him" (2).

⁶⁰Ibid., 2 May 1863, 2.

⁶¹Ibid., 25 April 1863, 2.

⁶²Ibid., 14 March 1863, 2.

many of them shared in common a sense of moral superiority to the United States that was often expressed in biblical terms.

In a sermon given on Dominion Day, 1877, for example, the Reverend John C. Baxter of Montreal suggested as much to members of the Montreal Field Battery of Artillery. Like ancient Israel that had been preserved despite Egyptian oppression, so had God preserved Canada through many troubles. It was true that in Canada's first decade "darkness" had rested upon its national border, and, still in 1877, it was not clear when the "gloom" that seeped across the American frontier -- that is, threats of annexation -- would be uplifted. "Yet out from the thickest cloud we expect a voice of the Most High, summoning to ascend the Mount."

[A]nd then called to closer communion with Heaven, after temporary reverses, may we not anticipate that, like Moses, when he left the cliffs of Sinai for the tents of Israel again, Canada shall be seen with a lustre on her face, to dazzle the nation, and with tablets in her grasp, to show the people the road to rectitude.⁶³

Here, in Baxter's expression, is Canada as a chosen nation, Canada as a nation morally superior to the United States precisely because it was, and was likely to remain, a more truly Christian -- that is, more truly biblical -- nation. And here is Canada, a divinely inspired "lustre on her face," pointing wayward Americans to the right and godly path.

⁶³John C. Baxter, *Dominion Day* (Montreal: Wm. Drysdale & Co., 1877), 8. See Exodus 19.

While Protestant Canadians were thus often reminded that the future prosperity of their nation depended on their remaining true to the Bible, it was evident to some that in fostering a faithful devotion to the Scriptures one could also nurture a love of Canadian history. This is especially clear in the literature dedicated to the celebration and commemoration of the United Empire Loyalists.⁶⁴

2.5 The Bible and the Loyalists

Though the supposed piety of the Loyalists was not universally held in high regard,⁶⁵ allusions to the strong faith of the Loyalists are easy to come by in late nineteenth-century Canadian nationalist discourse; for it was in the late nineteenth century when the Loyalists, whose motivations for settling in British America were far from uniform, were converted by enthusiasts into Canadian champions.⁶⁶ At one centennial

⁶⁴A major work written at the time was Egerton Ryerson's two volume *The Loyalists of America and Their Times: From 1620 to 1816* (Toronto: William Briggs, 1880).

⁶⁵Historian of Methodism in Canada, Alexander Sutherland, was not so impressed by the supposedly pious Anglicans who fled to British North America's loyal colonies. While the Loyalists possessed "many admirable qualities," Sutherland wrote, they were "by no means advanced in their notions of either civil or religious liberty." *Methodism in Canada: Its Work and Its Story* (London, Eng: Charles H. Kelly, 1903), 35.

⁶⁶See Norman Knowles, *Inventing the Loyalists: The Ontario Loyalist Tradition and the Creation of Usable Pasts* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1997). Knowles writes that "Ontario's Loyalist Settlers were...a diverse group that lacked a

celebration of the Loyalists' arrival in Canada in Adolphustown, for example, Canadians were reminded of the "Christian loyalty of the sires of Canada."⁶⁷ In his *Progress of Canada in the Century*, published in 1902, J. Castell Hopkins asserted that while some earlier historians of British North America had looked upon the Loyalists as little more than "a band of Tories bent upon fettering the minds of the people in the swaddling clothes of state-churchism," it should not be forgotten that the Loyalists were the founders of the English-speaking portion of the Canadian commonwealth, the preservers of its youthful institutions from the aggressive influence of United States democracy, and "the conservators of British ideals and principles in this northern part of the American continent." So much, Hopkins said, did the Loyalists suffer in the United States and in the course of resettling in British North America, they merited "a permanent place in any Valhalla of the world's patriotism."⁶⁸

clear and unified identity" (5; c.f. pp. 18). Knowles also maintains that there was little enthusiasm in some quarters of the general Canadian population for lofty reflections on the Loyalists: "Neither the Toronto nor the Niagara celebrations [of the Loyalists] received the positive public response organizers had hoped for" (82). Also see Donald Wright, "Myth, Memory, Meaning," *Literary Review of Canada* (December 1998), 25-27.

⁶⁷No author, *The Centennial of the Settlement of Upper Canada by the United Empire Loyalists, 1784-1884. The Celebrations at Adolphustown, Toronto and Niagara...* (Toronto: Rose Publishing, 1885), 11.

⁶⁸J. Castell Hopkins, *Progress of Canada in the Century* (Toronto: The Linscott Publishing Company, 1902), vi. Castell went on to observe that anyone who laughed at the sense of allegiance that led the Loyalists to endure great hardships "might as well sneer also at the honour which makes the civilised

Less frequent than such accolades, but by no means difficult to come by, are references to the assumed centrality of the Bible in the loyalists' lives. In *A History of Canada and of the Other British Provinces in North America* (1866) J. George Hodgins asserted that the Loyalists had been able to endure "unparalleled suffering and privations" chiefly because of their "ardent love for the Bible."⁶⁹ In 1875 one orator recalled the Loyalists' belief that the only way Canada's natives could be Christianized was "first to educate them and then place the Bible in their hands."⁷⁰ Eighteen years earlier the Reverend I.W.D. Dray of St. John, New Brunswick, said that first among the Loyalists' virtues was a strong faith in the Bible "as a revelation from God." The Loyalists regarded the Bible as "God's messenger to man"; they believed that a knowledge of the Bible was more to be desired than "the brilliancy of a Voltaire or the wealth of Australian mines."⁷¹

No author went as far as the popular writer and public

home a possibility or at the spirit of charity which lies at the root of Christian success"(48). Valhalla, the "hall of the slain" in Germanic pagan religion, is the place where Odin (supplanter in the Scandinavian pantheon of Thor) feasts on boar's meat and mead with brave warriors killed in battle.

⁶⁹ Cited in Knowles, *Inventing the Loyalists*, 97.

⁷⁰In *The Centennial Celebration of the Settlement of Upper Canada*, 39.

⁷¹I.W.D. Gray, *A Sermon, Preached at Trinity Church in the Parish of St. John, N.B., on the 8th December, 1867, designed to Recommend the Principles of the Loyalists of 1783* (St. John: J. & A. McMillan, 1857), 6-8.

servant William Kirby in casting the Loyalists -- "the noble Patriarchs of Upper Canada" -- in holy bronze.⁷² While Kirby noted in his 1885 commemoration of the advent of the Loyalists that all classes -- "judges, lawyers, legislators, clergymen, soldiers, merchants, yeoman, and handicraftmen" -- were present among the Loyalists who fled the rebellious American colonies, and that "Christian men of all the churches" took part in "that great emigration," not one of them was an "infidel of the type of that arch traitor Tom Paine!" who "belonged emphatically to the Rebellion!" In contradistinction to Paine--author of a bombastic anti-Bible diatribe, *The Age of Reason* (1795) -- the Loyalists held dear "their Penates and household gods, their bibles, the sacred communion vessels of their altars, the tables of the ten commandments from the chancels of their churches." And it was "these sacred objects" which the Loyalists opted to bring with them "out of their abandoned temples."⁷³

It seemed as if the voice of Christ was heard by them, as he spake to his disciples upon that last day at Jerusalem, 'Arise! let us go hence!' And the ten commandments...were set up anew in the rude churches which they built to the worship of God in Canada.

⁷² In biblical terms, the Patriarchs are Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. For some background on Kirby see, Knowles, *Inventing the Loyalists*, 38-39; and Dennis Duffy, "William Kirby and the Garden," chap. in *Gardens, Covenants, Exiles: Loyalism in the Literature of Upper Canada/Ontario* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1982).

⁷³ Kirby alludes here to the Israelites' despoiling of the Egyptians as they began their journey to the promised land. See Exodus 12:31-36.

Indeed, for Kirby there was "immense significance" in the fact that the Loyalists, having left behind all other possessions, brought with them "the ten commandments, the Bible, and the sacred vessels of the communion, as the most precious relics of their old homes in the thirteen colonies." These were godly men and women who, having shaken the dust of American rebellion from their feet, made their way to the Promised Land, the "garden of the Lord."⁷⁴ And once they had carried their "sacred emblems" out of the rebellious colonies, the United States could not but fall into sharp moral and social decline. "What was left to fill the blank of that great religious and loyal exodus American history is now daily recording," Kirby asked in a flourish of religious and national pride (which may have prevented him from noticing that Canadian Loyalist history relied to a great extent on work done by American historians).⁷⁵ That the United States was diminished without the Loyalists was for Kirby an obvious "point I need not dwell upon." Indeed, by 1885 American society had declined so drastically its corruption hardly needed to be pointed out: "discerning men can see the blank places left by the removal of those sacred emblems from that country."⁷⁶

The earnest emptiness of Kirby's rhetoric is beside the point; his hearers were not so dull as to believe that the

⁷⁴ John Strachan cited in Duffy, *Gardens, Covenants, Exiles*, 29.

⁷⁵ Knowles, *Inventing the Loyalists*, 43 and 91.

⁷⁶ William Kirby in *The Centennial Celebrations of the Settlement of Upper Canada*, 110-111.

Loyalists took every Bible out of the thirteen colonies. In any case, Kirby did not mean to be taken literally. But what he did take quite seriously -- and this not unique to him -- was the view that Canada was a special nation, and that in large measure because of the legacy of the Bible-toting Loyalists. Canada was special because it was biblical.

2.6 The Bible in Service to the Nation

We saw above that in 1862 the *Christian Guardian* bemoaned the loss of British North America's status as "the most moral country on the globe."⁷⁷ Similar concerns seem not to have been as pressing in much of English-speaking Canada by the latter decades of the nineteenth century, when the idea of Canada as a special nation within the British Empire took especial hold among Canadian nationalists. For William Kirby, Canada's uniqueness could be divined in the history of the Loyalists whose escape from the American colonies resembled the flight of the ancient Israelites out of Egypt. And then there was the religious legacy the biblically-minded Loyalists' had bequeathed to Canada-- a legacy that called upon Canadians to preserve monarchical government, "the system...which is taught to be true, and is commanded in the word of God as the only one through which

⁷⁷"Increase of Crime," *Christian Guardian* 19 February 1862, 2.

national perpetuity can be maintained."⁷⁸

While some Canadians prominent in the late nineteenth century were not inclined to castigate the United States, Canada's moral superiority to the U.S. and its consequent high calling was rarely in doubt. "Every great nation has contributed something to the cause of humanity," wrote the influential Presbyterian minister George Munro Grant. "That is its divine mission and the reason for existence." What then did Canada have to offer the world? For one thing, international reconciliation. In Grant's words:

The schism that took place when the thirteen colonies broke away from the Empire has been a grievous bar to their own development on the best side, and to the progress of humanity. No greater boon can be conferred on the race than the healing of that schism. That is the work that Canada is appointed by its history and position to do.⁷⁹

It is not surprising that Grant would advocate such a mission. If, according to one biographer, he was given more to

⁷⁸No author, *Canada Past, Present, Future, and New System of Government* (Hamilton: George D. Griffin, 1884), iii. One important tract in English tradition that advocates monarchy as God's chosen political system is Sir Robert Filmer's *Patriarcha*. See Johann P. Sommerville, ed., *Patriarcha and Other Writings* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991).

⁷⁹Grant in *Maple Leaves*, 21-22. "Within the Presbyterian Church, Grant was an influential champion of liberal theological and political views. He supported historical criticism of the Bible and did much to wean Presbyterians from a literal adherence to the Westminster Confession." Thus D.B. Mack, "Grant, George Munro," in *Dictionary of Canadian Biography* vol. XIII, 408.

sarcasm than gentle rejoinders in his personal relations,⁸⁰ in his writing he tended toward conciliation. In one place, for instance, Grant cautioned against making blanket accusations against Americans, for they had among them men and women who were "the salt of the earth." In no country was it more necessary "to distinguish between the froth of the surface and the pure liquor beneath,...between the selfishness of the politician and the calm wisdom and great heart of the saving remnant."⁸¹

Grant was not then a glib critic of the United States. Yet he believed that Canada, by virtue of its national mission, was superior to the U.S. When the American colonies fell into revolt against Britain, he wrote, "Cities of refuge were provided in the forests of Ontario, on the banks of the St. John and the shores of the Atlantic for [the] Loyalists..."⁸² And, he wrote, what a great future the nation built by the loyalists now had before it. "Canada is never likely to have more than a tenth of the population of the United States," Grant continued;

but five millions, growing gradually to ten within the lifetime of some of us, are...far more than Athens had in the century after Marathon...[and] far more Judea had in the golden age of that prophetic literature which is still so largely our guide and our inspiration to righteousness..."⁸³

⁸⁰Mack, "Grant, George Munro," 408.

⁸¹Grant, *Maple Leaves*, 21-22. For the allusion to the "salt of the earth" see Matthew 5:13-14; on the "saving remnant" see, for example, Isaiah 10:20-22.

⁸²Grant, *Maple Leaves*, 21. On "cities of refuge" see Numbers 25.

⁸³*Ibid.*, 19.

The "prophetic literature" to which Grant referred was, of course, the Bible, the literary foundation upon which most late nineteenth-century English-speaking Canadians still believed their nation rested. But the times were changing. Some decades earlier the influential British scholar Matthew Arnold had announced that the day had arrived for enlightened men to "renounce impossible attempts to receive the legendary and miraculous matter of Scripture as grave historical and scientific fact" and to accustom themselves to regarding the Bible "henceforth...as poetry and legend."⁸⁴ That some Canadians were coming, perhaps unwittingly, to view the Scriptures in just that way in the late nineteenth century seems clear. William Kirby's casual handling of the Bible, for instance, reveals a casual disposition toward the very book he claimed to revere.

Is a similar laxness apparent in the quotes from Grant cited above? Grant's view that the Scriptures were still *largely* the "guide" of Canadians -- not their sole guide, as his predecessors would have said -- does not mean very much. It would be going too far to find in Grant's words a concession to the spirit of the age, which was moving Canadian culture toward what would come to be called "secularization."⁸⁵ Yet one can perhaps still detect in

⁸⁴Cited in Jeffrey, *People of the Book*, 310.

⁸⁵See David B. Marshall, *Secularizing the Faith: Canadian Protestant Clergy and the Crisis of Belief, 1850-1940* (Toronto: University of Toronto, 1992), chapters 1-4; and "The Rise of the Territorial Church," ch. in S. D. Clark, *Church and Sect in*

them a certain weariness-- a weariness brought on by a decades-long hard wringing of clichéd metaphors out of ostensibly biblical truths: the United States as Egypt; Ontario as a city of refuge; ancient Judea as a sort of utopia to be emulated in the New World. The words are elegant, and yet upon closer scrutiny they seem void of biblical content even as they are full of nationalist meaning.

Such is also the case with these phrases, found in a work by John McLean, published in 1892, on Canada's Indians: "the civilization resulting from the gospel of the Nazarene"; "the superior system of the Carpenter's Son"; "[the] principles found in the gospel of the man of Nazareth"; "the words of the Great Teacher."⁸⁶ What informed each of these lines was McLean's stated hope that Canada's natives would convert to Christianity; and his text, *The Indians of Canada*, is replete with references to Christian efforts being he natives in the west. But it is not clear that Christianity -- "the superior system of the Carpenter's Son" -- was in fact of greater import to McLean than the spread of western civilization, "the civilization resulting from the gospel of the Nazarene."

My object is not to question McLean's piety but rather to

Canada (Toronto: University of Toronto, 1948). Of course, whether such a thing as secularization actually exists is disputed. See, for example, Rodney Stark, "Secularization: The Myth of Religious Decline," *Fides et Historia* XXX:2 (Summer/Fall 1998), 1-19.

⁸⁶John McLean, *The Indians of Canada: Their Manners and Customs* (London, Eng: Charles H. Kelly, 1892), 25, 111, 128, 325.

point out what has been commented upon before in this thesis; namely, that in McLean's text the ideals, aspirations and ambitions of Christianity and western culture are inextricably interconnected.⁸⁷ The drive to convince others of the truth of Christianity is, obviously, a religious pursuit of ancient pedigree; the drive to, so to speak, get natives to mind their grammar and table manners had nothing to do with the Christian religion, though in the late nineteenth century, when Christianity and civilization were seen as one, such a division was no so easily made. When late nineteenth-century Canadians spoke of "civilization and Christianity" one is not sure which of the two institutions was really of greater value. Surely, being Christians, most believed that civilization owed its existence to Christianity. But one knows a tree by its fruit, and, to the men I have cited, spreading civilization was undoubtedly a very high calling. In a memoir titled *My Life With the Eskimos*, penned some sixty years after McLean's text was published, Vilhjalmur Stefansson noted how civilization and the Christian faith were often construed by missionaries as being inseparable. "The three commandments, 'love thy neighbour as thyself,' 'thou shalt keep the Sabbath holy,' and 'thou shalt eat thy potatoes with thy fork,' [were] impressed [by missionaries] with equal vividness upon the aborigines," Stefansson wrote, and were therefore

⁸⁷For example, David Lyle Jeffrey claims to have discovered "a foundational confusion of God and Mammon" in American civil religion. *People of the Book*, 332.

"likely to be seen by them to be means of grace of co-ordinate value."⁸⁸ This was one result of a fundamental mingling of biblical language with cultural norms.

The view of the Bible espoused by Matthew Arnold -- as untrue though comprising culturally significant "poetry and legend" -- was well on its way to taking hold of prominent Canadian intellectuals by the late nineteenth century. And given the increasing doubt in the verities of Christianity that afflicted many of Canada's thinkers and writers, it is perhaps not surprising that some of English Canada's most fervent nationalists, seeking to define themselves and their nation, looked beyond the Bible altogether to more brawny gods.

In the late nineteenth-century some nationalists who were given to the study of genealogy took delight in the typical French- and English-Canadian's "Viking blood" and "Celtic bone."⁸⁹

⁸⁸Stefansson cited by Frank Peake in "Anglicanism on the Prairies: Continuity and Flexibility," in Benjamin G. Smillie, ed. *Visions of the New Jerusalem: Religious Settlement on the Prairies* (Edmonton: NeWest Press, 1983), 59.

⁸⁹In his poem "Hastings" (in William Douw Lighthall, *Songs of the Dominion: Voices from the Forests and Waters, the Settlements and Cities of Canada* [London: Walter Scott, 1889]), John Reade put it this way: "[God] took the lonely Celt and taught him Roman lore; Then from the wealds of Saxony He brought the sons of Thor; Next from his craggy home the Dane came riding o'er the sea; And last, came William with his bands of Norman chivalry"(4). Also see Charles G.D. Roberts' "Canada" in *Ibid.*, where one reads that "The Saxon force, the Celtic fire, These are thy manhood's heritage!"(18); and Isabella Valancey Crawford, "March," in *Ibid.* Also see F.A. Wightman, *Our Canadian Heritage, Its Resources and Possibilities* (Toronto: William Briggs, 1905), 222.

And for nationalists such as Robert Grant Haliburton and William Foster, both of whom were at the centre of the Canada First movement (1869-1875), northerners who lived out their days in harsh climates were, by definition, more industrious and individualistic, philosophically deeper and physically, morally, politically, and spiritually superior to southerners, who inclined toward degeneracy and effeminacy and who pined for firm authority such as that provided by the Catholic hierarchy (or, in the American South, a landed aristocracy).⁹⁰ "Oh, we are men of the Northern Zone; Shall a bit be placed in our mouth?" one Canadian nationalist sang:

If ever a Northman lost his throne,
Did the conqueror come from the South?
Nay, nay--and the answer blent
In chorus is southward sent.
Since when has a Southern's conquering steel
Hewed out in North a throne?
Since when has a Southerner placed his heel
On the men of the Northern Zone?⁹¹

⁹⁰See "The True North Strong and Free," chap. in *Nationalism in Canada* ed., Peter Russell (Toronto: McGraw-Hill Company of Canada, 1966); F. Barlow Cumberland, "Introduction" in *Maple Leaves; Being the Papers Read Before the National Club of Toronto* (Toronto: R. G. McLean, 1891), vii-viii; Wightman, *Our Canadian Heritage, Its Resources and Possibilities*, 209, 260-61, 284; and John George Bourinot, *Canadian Studies in Comparative Politics* (Montreal: Dawson Brothers, 1890), 3, 5-6, 8, 11. Recognizing that an argument for the superiority of Anglo-Saxon democracy over Gallic authoritarianism could get into trouble when confronted with the Puritans' efforts to establish a theocracy in the New World, Bourinot noted that the Puritans' "intolerance and coldness" was compensated for by their pursuit of "truth and righteousness, obedience, purity, reverence and intelligence.... Allied to these great qualities, there was among the Puritans a spirit of self-reliance and a capacity for self-government" (10).

⁹¹Robert Kernigan, "The Men of the Northern Zone," in George W. Ross, ed., *Patriotic Recitations and Arbor Day Exercises*

Robert Grant Haliburton, anthropologist and author, was preeminent among the Canadian nationalists who articulated an apparently religious reverence for the north. He was also one of the first to attempt an application of the theme of northern superiority to Canada.⁹² And while he was committed to holding to traditional interpretations of the Bible unless scientific evidence against a particular view was overwhelming, by 1869 he was prepared to maintain that the "Mosaic chronology" -- the chronologies recorded in the Hebrew Pentateuch -- "must be rejected." And there was something else of which he was sure: The "men of the north" -- the Celt, the Norman French, the Saxon, and the Swede -- must all be "embraced."⁹³

A more stark turn toward a faith in the north seems to have been taken by William Foster, Canadian enthusiast. "The old Norse mythology, with its Thor hammers and Thor hammerings, appeals to us," he wrote, "-- for we are a Northern people." And because Canadians were a northern people they were an important part of the "true out-crop of human nature"; they were "more manly" and

(Toronto: Warwick Brothers and Rutter, 1893), 64. Also see Thomas D'Arcy McGee's "Freedom's Journey" where "freedom" is called "a nursling of the North" (72). At the time of publication Ross was Ontario's Minister of Education. In his preface to his collection of "patriotic selections," Ross encourages Ontario's teachers to inculcate love of country into children's minds.

⁹²Bonnie Huskins, "Haliburton, Robert Grant," *Dictionary of Canadian Biography* vol. XI, 430.

⁹³Kernigan, "The Men of the Northern Zone," 6.

"more real," than "the weak marrow-bones superstition" -- that is, Catholicism -- "of an effeminate South."⁹⁴

Similar thoughts echoed in the *Canadian Methodist Magazine*. In 1876 a reviewer of a book on Norse mythology admitted that Scandinavian gods had been sometimes brutish,

Yet Balder, the beautiful, the Sun god, that quickens with his smile the dead world to life, is a nobler conception than Phoebus Apollo, and the stern virtues of Odin and Thor shame the vices of Jupiter and Mars. The religion of the North seems to us to have a profounder ethical spirit and purer morality than the sensuous worship of beauty of the soft and sunny Isles of Greece. Hence, in the providence of God, the incorrupt and vigorous Gothic races were chosen to supplant the effete civilization of the South and to become the fathers of modern Europe. The noble Anglo-Saxon and Teutonic civilization of the world to-day, the foster parent of social order, stable government, and religious liberty, is the result of the religion of the Bible grafted upon the sturdy stock of that old Norse ancestry, whose honest blood flows in all our veins to-day.⁹⁵

The reference to "the religion of Bible" is interesting-- precisely because its meaning is unclear. Apparently that religion could not save the "south" from ignobility. Apparently the Bible was only of cultural value in the hands of men of the

⁹⁴*Canada First: A Memorial of the Late William A Foster* (Toronto, 1890), 5. Elsewhere in this book Foster chides Canadians who wish to hold too tightly to Britain's apron strings and others who wished Canada's annexation to the United States, noting that there were "too many among us who are ready to worship a foreign Baal, to the neglect of their own tutelary gods" (42). What Foster means by "tutelary gods" is unclear.

⁹⁵Review of *Norse Mythology* by R. B. Anderson in *Canadian Methodist Review* 3:3 (March 1876), 282.

north; which is to say that the "religion of the Bible," ungrafted to Norman flesh and bone, was not of itself efficacious. Here is an example of the Bible subordinated to race; here the Bible is called upon to gloss what seems in fact to have been something other than a clearly discernible "religion of the Bible."

And what, to continue along the same lines, did John Schultz, Canada Firster and Lieutenant Governor of Manitoba, mean when he cited Celtic druids and pagan prophecies on Dominion Day, 1891?

This great northern heritage so vast in area and resources and which we call our own country, is possessed by a northern race and ruled by a northern Queen... [A]s citizens of Canada, citizens of the Great British Empire you will fulfill the prophecy of the Druid priest to Boadicea the first British Queen,

'Regions Caesar never knew
Your posterity shall sway
Where his eagles never flew
None invincible as they.'³⁶

And what, moreover, did William Foster intend when, with emotion, he called to Canadians' minds the memory of young Thomas Scott, the Orangeman executed by Louis Riel in 1870, making of him a martyr? "Humble though his position was--yet he was a Canadian," Foster wrote; "his mental gifts may have been few--yet he died

³⁶Schultz, "The Greatness of Our Heritage," in Ross, *Patriotic Recitations*, 154, 156.

for us."⁹⁷

"He died for us." The allusion here to Christ, who gave his life for the world, is unmistakable.⁹⁸ However, were it not for the fact that similar references to Scott were likewise encased in biblical typology one would be disinclined to make much of it (just as one is disinclined to make anything of John A.

Macdonald's appropriation of Christ's suffering and crucifixion just before his government fell under the weight of the Pacific

⁹⁷Foster, *Canada First*, 43. My emphasis.

⁹⁸See especially Romans 5:8-- "But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us"; and I Corinthians 8:11-- "And through thy knowledge...shall the weak brother perish, for whom Christ died?" The *Toronto Telegraph* observed that on his way to meeting the firing squad Scott "walked with a firm manly step, not like a miserable murderer, but more like a martyr." See George Denison, *Reminiscences of the Red River Rebellion* (Toronto, 1873), 33. Foster did not often allude to the Scriptures. Commenting on Canada's fractious political life, Foster wrote in *Canada First* that "Babels are built and confusion ensues" but once "the turning point [in a nation's public life] is reached...union of those who have their sense left" is inevitable (26). In another place he opines that Canadians do not wish to be "hewers of wood and drawers of water" for the Americans, and that if Canadians are serious about "the foundations of their identity" they had "better not lose sight of the awful possibility of sinking under self-imposed burdens of territory" (39). On the following page Foster borrows from the Anglican Book of Common Prayer, writing that "it is our bounden duty to prepare for [the future] like sensible men..." Also see his likening of political hacks to Scribes, Pharisees, and worshipers of Diana (59), of Sir Edward Blake to Saul and Samson ("[Blake is] a Saul among our statesmen, a Samson among our politicians" [67]). Here Foster also refers to the *Toronto Globe* as "the Alpha and Omega of the Grit party." Later he writes that in England the Ismaelite class has its representatives in the press and in the parliament" (161). Foster is cited in Wright's *Our Canadian Heritage* as saying, "We need patriotism-- the fire that burns off the dross and leaves the metal pure" (239).

Railway Scandal).⁹⁹ Less clear than Foster's biblical allusion though still evocative of Christ's passion and death, for example, is the reference of another Canadian writer, J.C. Hamilton, to Scott having been "pierced" by the bullets of his Metis executioners. After the death squad's blast, Hamilton wrote, Scott had been "pierced, but not killed." On the same page Hamilton writes that "the red man's lead" has "pierced the wood" before which Scott stood the day he was killed. This too evokes Christ's crucifixion: The wooden cross that was, with Christ, pierced.¹⁰⁰

Were Scott not surrounded with a shroud of martyrdom in 1876, when Hamilton's account of the Canadian West was published, one would not think much of Hamilton's choice of words. Yet since Scott was so enshrouded, it does not seem unreasonable to surmise that a well known Scripture passage referring to Christ's death - - "They shall look on him whom they pierced"¹⁰¹ -- echoed at least

⁹⁹ "I commit myself...to the hands of this House," Macdonald said in Parliament, echoing Luke 23:46. Pierre Berton appears to have noticed this, for he titled his chapter on Macdonald's return to the prime ministership "Resurrection." See Berton, *The National Dream* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1974), 92-93 and 161.

¹⁰⁰ J.C. Hamilton, *The Prairie Province; Sketches of Travel from Lake Ontario to Lake Winnipeg* (Toronto: Bedford Brothers, 1876), 35.

¹⁰¹ John 19:37. The original Old Testament passage the writer of the Gospel of John appropriated is even more poignant when applied to the case of Scott's perceived martyrdom: "[A]nd they shall look upon me whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for him, as one mourneth for his only son, and shall be in bitterness for him, as one that is in bitterness for his firstborn" (Zechariah 12:10). Cf. Psalm 22:16-17; Revelation 1:7.

in the back of Hamilton's mind as he wrote.

Twenty-four years later another writer would also recall that Scott fell "pierced by rebel bullets." In this instance one again initially hesitates to make much of the verb;¹⁰² a synonym would have worked just as well. But in full the sentence by Alexander Sutherland reads: "A few moments later poor Thomas Scott fell, pierced by rebel bullets, and his heart's blood crimsoned the snow where he knelt."¹⁰³ Thus we have "poor" Scott the martyr, a victim of "rebels" (Judas Iscariots to the state), kneeling (a silent prayer running through his mind?), "pierced" and broken and bleeding crimson on white snow. Here again, the allusions to Christ, a martyr who himself knelt in prayer the night before his own execution, seem clear. One Old Testament passage taken by Christians as pointing to the efficacy of Christ's future redemptive work has "sins...as scarlet" being made as "white as snow" and transgressions, "red like crimson," becoming "as wool."¹⁰⁴ True, the "crimson" and "snow" in Sutherland's passage on Scott do not mirror precisely the scriptural passage to which they allude; but taken together with

¹⁰²In *Pathfinding on Plain and Prairie: Stirring Scenes of Life in the Canadian North-West* (Toronto: William Briggs, 1898) John McDougall recounts that just after a riding accident he "feared [his] ribs were pierced" (29). Unlike the examples I provide in the text, the verb in this instance obviously signifies nothing other than its literal definition.

¹⁰³Alexander Sutherland, *Methodism in Canada: Its Work and Its Story* (London: Chareles H. Kelly, 1903), 294.

¹⁰⁴Isaiah 1:18.

the description of Scott the innocent, betrayed, kneeling, and pierced crusader, the admixture of his crimson blood and the presumably white snow in Sutherland's sentence is suggestive of the extent to which the Thomas Scott of history -- a vulgar trouble-maker -- had been transformed in some nationalist quarters into a veritable spotless lamb, sacrificed that the nation might live: "He died for us."

If the Canada Firsters had in Scott a martyr, so did they have a creed. The western poet Charles Mair -- a fervent Canadian nationalist in his youth -- placed it on the lips of General Brock, hero of the War of 1812: "I believe, in Britain's Empire," Mair has Brock say, and

In Canada, its true and loyal son,
Who yet shall rise to greatness, and shall stand
At England's shoulder helping her to guard
True liberty throughout a faithless world.¹⁰⁵

Mair's model is of course the Apostles' Creed.¹⁰⁶ But whereas that ancient statement of faith was global in scope, Mair's faith, though couched in remotely biblical terms, was simply in Canada.¹⁰⁷

¹⁰⁵Charles Mair, *Tecumseh: A Drama* (Toronto: 1886), 101.

¹⁰⁶The relevant lines of which read: "I believe in God the Father Almighty...And in Jesus Christ his only son...Who...sitteth on the right hand of God the Father Almighty."

¹⁰⁷ In a discussion of Mair's famous drama *Tecumseh*, Dennis Duffy notes observes that Mair employed "a widespread romantic and post-Christian strategy, the substitution of a secular myth of death and resurrection to fill the vacuum left by the disappearance of the supernatural one. See Duffy's *Gardens*,

By the end of the nineteenth century biblicistic nationalist rhetoric in Canada was more nationalist than biblical. In the 1860s many hopeful British North Americans had asserted that Canada's "greatness" depended on its citizens' making the Bible central in their lives. By the 1890s that focus had given way to biblicistic appeals on behalf of Canadian nationalism as a good in itself. That is, by the end of the nineteenth century the apparently pious rhetoric of earlier years had given way to equally biblicistic appeals, though these latter appeals were in large measure void of obviously biblical significance. These appeals were couched in (sometimes remote) biblical terms but often had little to do with the Scriptures.

To be sure, expressions such those of Haliburton, Foster and Mair's were not the norm in late nineteenth-century Canada. Men and women going about their day-to-day lives did not have time to formulate a metaphysic of northern living. Yet, as we have seen and shall see again in the next chapter, late nineteenth-century Canadian Protestants often put the Scriptures to manifestly nationalist use. They employed the Bible to extra-biblical ends and spent its authority in the process.

In 1893 Ontario's minister of education, G. Ross could declare -- and most British Canadians would have joined him in declaring -- that what Canada looked for was "virtuous men" who

took the Bible as "the Charter of their faith."¹⁰⁸ But by 1893 the faith of many Canadians -- or at least of many of those who wrote and spoke publicly -- was being put in things that were not obviously biblical, their biblicistic rhetoric notwithstanding.

¹⁰⁸From "What Canada Wants" in Ross's collection, *Patriotic Recitations and Arbor Day Exercises* (Toronto: Warwick Brothers and Rutter, 1893), 109.

Chapter Three

[T]he Keystone of [the British Empire's] strength is Canada! I may not live to see it perfected...but most of you will hail the perfecting of this grand scheme of national aggrandisement, and rejoice in its consummation. I, like Moses on the Mount of Horeb, must be content to view the land of promise which shall bring blessings to our descendants; and at all events, I shall close my eyes...with the fervent prayer: God bless the Queen and the British American Empire.¹

-- Charles Bass, *Lectures on Canada*, 1863

Our highest allegiance is to the King of kings, who has purchased us with his own blood. When a few short years shall have passed away, our relations to an earthly dominion will be dissolved, but the dominion of our Heavenly King is an everlasting one. How vastly does the latter surpass the former in importance.

-- *Canadian Baptist*, 18 July 1867²

The Bible and Canadian Expansion

3.1 Bringing the Bible West

In the second half of the nineteenth century most Canadians

¹Charles Bass, *Lectures on Canada, Illustrating Its Present Position, and Shewing Forth Its Onward Progress, and Predictive of Its Future Destiny* (Hamilton: Spectator Steam Press, 1863), 45. Bass seems to have confused Mount Horeb with Pigsah where, just before Moses's death, "the Lord said unto him [Moses], This is the land which I swore unto Abraham...saying, I will give it unto thy seed" (Deuteronomy 34:1-4). Mount Horeb, usually referred to as Sinai, is where Moses received the law of God, etched upon the two stone tablets. See Exodus 34.

²The term King of kings appears only in I Timothy 6:15 and Revelation 17:14 and 19:16. It refers to Jesus Christ.

probably would have agreed, at least in theory, with the Canadian Baptist that ultimately God's heavenly kingdom surpassed all earthly dominions in importance. The extent to which some Canadians did in fact believe this is indicated by the high level of energy and personal commitment they devoted to getting the Bible into the hands of as many of Canada's residents as possible.³ In 1885 one Canadian scholar incorrectly claimed that the sayings of Jesus had been translated into all tongues and were everywhere read.⁴ But even as he spoke some Canadian Christians were in pursuit of that goal. Indeed, the British and Foreign Bible Society's Canadian agents relentlessly sought to make the Scriptures available to men and women near and far. Thus in 1860 they planted Bibles in hotel rooms in London, Ontario, while in 1863 Lachlan Taylor of Ontario formed a Bible Society in British Columbia. Three years later the Society sent a prison

³In 1866 the Reverend David Inglis of Hamilton, Canada West, observed that it was Protestant Canadians' "duty" to, among other good works, "circulate the Bible" throughout their province. David Inglis, *Righteousness Exalteth a Nation: Thanksgiving Sermon* (Hamilton: "Spectator Steam Press, 1866), 14.

⁴J.S. Hunter, *Christ's Divine Mission: A Sermon Before the Union of Victoria University* (1885), 60. In this speech J.S. Hunter observed that Jesus had died at the age of thirty-three, had never written a book, and that if the repetitions of Jesus' words recorded in the four Gospels were expunged "the entire records [of them] would fill but a few pages." Yet the thought of those few pages filled the world. Jesus's teachings "are alive as the words of no other man are. Take Plato, Demosthenes, Cicero, Socrates, Homer--the colleges study them, the student delves into them; but the words of Jesus are ringing everywhere; little children and masters of philosophy are studying them; they are translated into all languages, and men everywhere are reading them."

chaplain to Victoria with Bibles to be given to inmates. Copies of the Scriptures were also distributed among the Haida Indians in the Queen Charlotte Islands.⁵

Eager to bring the Bible to settlers of the Canadian West, the Upper Canada Bible Society opened a depot at Fort Garry (Winnipeg) in the early 1870s. In 1872 the Manitoba Bible Society was formed under the supervision of the Society's Toronto branch.⁶ Bible Society offices were soon formed in Emerson, Manitoba, and in 1883 an additional Society branch was established at Fort Simpson on the Mackenzie River.⁷ Brandon had a Bible Society of its own by 1885 and soon thereafter branches were opened in Moosomin, Broadview, Qu'Appelle, Regina, Moose Jaw, Maple Creek, Medicine Hat, Calgary, and Banff. Six years before the nineteenth century slipped into the twentieth, the British and Foreign Bible Society had opened sixty-two branches in the prairies, with five more in British Columbia. Thus by the end of the nineteenth century the Upper Canada Bible Society had

⁵E.C. Woodley, *The Bible in Canada* (J.M. Dent & Sons, 1953), 85, 88. "Unfortunately," writes Woodley, "the zeal for the Bible Society did not last and, after several years of struggle, the British Columbia Bible Society ceased to function in 1870" (89).

⁶*Ibid.*, 93. Incidentally, in the 1870s Winnipeg's Bible-readers could buy copies of the Good Book at C.F. Strang, Bookseller and Stationer-- across the street from the court house. See Alexander Begg, "Business Directory of the City of Winnipeg" appended to *Ten Years in Winnipeg: A Narration of the Principal Events in the History of the City of Winnipeg from the year A.D., 1870 to the Year A.D., 1879, Inclusive* (Winnipeg: Times Printing and Publishing House, 1879), 239.

⁷Woodley, *Bible in Canada*, 93.

connections stretching two thousand miles west from Toronto.⁸

The British and Foreign Bible Society's efforts were not lost on Alexander Begg, an early historian of the Canadian West. In his *History of the North West* (1895), Begg described the missionary labours of Alexander Sage, a Presbyterian, who in the early nineteenth century saw to it that Bibles were eventually distributed throughout the West in English, Gaelic, German, Danish, Italian, and French translations.⁹ Nor did George Munro Grant neglect to recall the Bible's important place in the emotional and spiritual lives of the west's early Scottish Gaelic-speakers. These Celtic settlers had had their hard times, Grant wrote, but they confronted hardship with deep spiritual resources. "They had their Gaelic Bibles, and could read them," Grant wrote. "They sang the psalms of David in Gaelic to those plaintive tunes that reach to the very marrow of the Highland

⁸Ibid., 98-99. The Countess of Aberdeen noted with approval the work of organizations such as the Bible Society in Canada. Winnipeg's "strongly marked religious tone" was impressive, she wrote, and it was evidenced not only by the number of that city's churches and religious institutions, but in the "earnestness of purpose" which caused Canada's westerners to devote themselves to good religious and charitable works. "One of their latest organizations [the Bible Society?] undertakes to send out monthly parcels of literature to settlers in Manitoba and the North-West. It is difficult for those at home to realize the isolation of such settlers....Church is far away, there are no libraries or reading-rooms or means of self-improvement at hand, and the temptation must be great in such lives to forget mind and soul in the struggle for material prosperity." Countess of Aberdeen, *Through Canada With a Kodak* (Edinburgh: W.H. White & Co., 1893), 101-102.

⁹Alexander Begg, *History of the North-West* vol. I, 277.

nature."¹⁰ In 1894 Samuel Houston similarly recalled the piety of Scotch and Scotch-Irish Presbyterians like Alexander Ross who had emigrated to the British American west in the early nineteenth century. Houston wrote in *Queen's Quarterly* that some settlers, passionately attached to the Bible and simple faith, had to wait many years before "ministers [came] across the ocean and [broke] the word of life to them."¹¹ Missionaries with Bibles in hand¹² -- "pioneers of the Cross"¹³ -- traveled to the West well before it became a destination for farmers and immigrants in search of a better life.

As western civilization spread throughout the Canadian West, British American natives -- called by one writer "our dusky brethren"¹⁴ -- were introduced to the Bible, often translated into

¹⁰Grant, "Churches and Schools in the North-West," 524.

¹¹Samuel Houston, "Early History of Presbyterianism in Kingston and Vicinity," 2:2 (October 1894), 97. On the "word of life" see Philippians 2:16.

¹²As one would expect, Catholic missionaries in the Northwest did not emphasize the importance of Bible reading the way their Protestant counterparts did. This reflected their training, which put theology ahead of explicitly biblical studies. See Robert Choquette, *The Oblate Assault on Canada's Northwest* (Ottawa: University of Ottawa Press, 1995), 16.

¹³Alexander Begg, *History of the North-West* vol. III (Toronto: Hunter, Rose & Company, 1895), 448. In vol. I Begg writes of James Sutherland who had been selected by settlers at Red River in the early 1820s to baptize, marry and "expound the Scriptures" (275).

¹⁴John McLean, *The Indians of Canada: Their Manners and Customs* (London, Eng.: Charles H. Kelly, 1892), viii.

their own languages.¹⁵ In schools built by missionaries the Bible was oftentimes the natives' "main textbook."¹⁶ At the Metlakatla school in British Columbia, for example, natives in the late nineteenth century read from portions of the Scriptures in English and in their own tongue, Tsimshian.¹⁷ Most Protestant Canadians considered the teaching of the Scriptures to the natives a good if often difficult thing to do; they were pleased when natives could read "the Great Spirit's Book."¹⁸

Of course, ensuring that natives actually read the Bible was not always easy. Aside from a reluctance to turn from their own religions, cultural misunderstanding sometimes prevented natives

¹⁵McLean's *Indians of Canada* includes frequent comments on various efforts to put the Bible in native tongues. See pp. 143, 158, 243, 244-45, 248, 250, 253, 295, 296, 332, 336, 340, and 343. Also see Woodley, *The Bible in Canada*, 306. For further commentary see John Webster Grant, *Moon of Wintertime: Missionaries and the Indians of Canada in Encounter since 1534* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1984), 111; Terrence Murphy and Roberto Perin, eds., *A Concise History of Christianity in Canada* (Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1996), 182; and Neil Semple, *The Lord's Dominion: The History of Canadian Methodism* (Montreal-Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1996), 173-178, 294-297.

¹⁶Marjorie Beaucage and Emma LaRoque, "Two Faces of the New Jerusalem: Indian--Metis Reaction to the Missionary," ch. in Benjamin G. Smillie, ed., *Visions of the New Jerusalem: Religious Settlement on the Prairies* (Edmonton: NeWest Press, 1983), 29.

¹⁷Jean Usher, *William Duncan of Metlakatla: A Victorian Missionary in British Columbia* (Ottawa: National Museum of Man, 1974), 137. Usher's text makes frequent reference to the desire of Protestant missionaries to translate the scriptures into Tsimshian.

¹⁸J. C. Hamilton, *The Prairie Province: Sketches of Travel from Lake Ontario to Lake Winnipeg* (Toronto: Belford Brothers, 1876), 74.

from embracing biblical religion. One observer of the Canadian West, John McLean, recounted his recollection of a native boy who wanted to dispose of a picture, given to him by McLean, of Lazarus rising from the dead: the boy took the likeness to be of a potentially malevolent spirit.¹⁹ The poor example set by some Protestant Canadians also proved a stumbling block to natives. The white man's "holy book" taught men to be "pure, just, and peaceable", one native protested, "but surely the white men don't believe it, or they would not disobey the lessons that God's Son has taught."²⁰ Such stumbling blocks in the way of the Indians' conversions into independent Bible readers were numerous but Canada's Protestants persisted in their efforts. If Canada's Christians could only "weave into the warp and woof of the Indian's being the Ten Commandments and the Lord's Prayer," George Munro Grant said, "how thankful we would be!"²¹ While the Christian gospel was imperceptible to some natives, Grant himself was glad that the Métis he once observed attending Sunday school at Hudson's Bay fort at Victoria "[a]ll read the English Bible more or less fluently and with understanding."²² Decades earlier

¹⁹McLean, *The Indians of Canada*, 38.

²⁰Ibid., 275.

²¹George Munro Grant, *Our Five Foreign Missions* (n.p.:1886), 19. For the Ten Commandments see Exodus 20; for the Lord's Prayer, Matthew 6:9-13.

²²Grant, *Ocean to Ocean*, 165. In *Red River* (Montreal: John Lovell, 1871) Joseph James Hargrave writes that the Reverend

another had rejoiced that the "light of science, and still brighter light of the Sun of Righteousness" had shed "a cheerful radiance over many [native] minds."²³ The Protestant's traditional desire to put the Bible into the hands and homes of every man and woman flourished in late nineteenth-century Canada.

3.2 The West as "New Jerusalem"²⁴

At the same time that missionaries were taking and teaching the Bible to immigrants and natives, some Canadians looked to the

William Carpenter Bompas, an Englishman, has "translated considerable portions of Scripture in the Slave language, selecting more especially for this purpose, such simple passages of the Gospel as he could bring within the grasp of the Indian mind" (378).

²³Daniel W. Harmon, *A Journal of Voyages and Travels in the Interior of North America* (New York: AMS Press, 1973 [repr., 1922]), xix. The term "Sun of Righteousness" is taken from Malachi 4:2-- "But unto you that fear my name shall the Sun of righteousness arise with healing on his wings; and ye shall go forth, and grow up as calves of the stall." The reference has traditionally been taken by Christians as a prophetic reference to Jesus Christ. See I John 1:5. Harmon was an American who was employed with the Northwest Company from 1800 to 1819, when he returned to his home state of Vermont. He alludes to the Scriptures several times in his diary. On one occasion, for example, he writes that his day's reading of the Bible and reflections on his "present way of living" revealed to him that his life "too much resembles that of a savage" (27). Also see 29, 195-97, 213-14.

²⁴I put this term in quotation marks because it is more a term used by historians of the settlement of the West than by settlers themselves. As the West was so often spoken of in biblicistic terms, however, it is nevertheless a useful term. The biblical New Jerusalem is described in Revelation 21.

West as a place to build what Anthony W. Rasporich, among others, has called "New Jerusalems."²⁵ In the late nineteenth century Mennonites, Hutterites, Mormons, Doukhobors, Adamites and Quakers all sought to build communities based to varying degrees upon interpretations of the Bible or texts derived from it.²⁶ In 1881 one Icelandic minister in the North West Territories, Fridjon Fridriksson, maintained that "the old Icelandic Adam...must be drowned," and then a "new American" could emerge.²⁷ Socialists, too, planted communities in the west, such as the Harmony

²⁵One text upon which Rasporich relies is Benjamin G. Smillie, ed., *Visions of the New Jerusalem: Religious Settlement on the Prairies* (Edmonton: NeWest Press, 1983), a book long on assertions that sundry groups set out to establish "new Jerusalems" in the Canadian West though short on actual proof that Mennonites, Hutterites, Lutherans, Jews, Anglicans, and French Canadians (excepting Riel and his followers) who settled the West actually employed such messianic, as opposed to more mundane biblical, rhetoric. "My contention," Smillie writes, "is that the theological roots of many settlers, particularly their biblical hope in a New Jerusalem, was an intangible but strong motivation which helped them to survive, in spite of financial hardship and political manipulation" (x). I suspect that Smillie is to some extent right, though the case is not made in this book. Indeed, one contributor, Frank Peake, writing of Anglicans in the Canadian west observes: "The idea that the settlers saw themselves primarily or even nominally as builders on the New Jerusalem accords ill with the evidence" (62). Certainly, as we have seen, biblicistic rhetoric abounded, but it seems to have been put to work.

²⁶Anthony W. Rasporich, "Utopia, Sect and Millennium in Western Canada, 1870-1940," ch. in *Prophets, Priests and Prodigals*, 220-21.

²⁷Cited in Anthony W. Rasporich, "Utopia, Sect and Millennium in Western Canada, 1870-1940," ch. in *Prophets, Priests and Prodigals*, 218-19. The reference to Adam alludes to I Corinthians 15:22: "For as in Adam all die, in Christ shall all be made alive."

Industrial Association in the Qu'Appelle Valley, Saskatchewan, also called Hamona [sic], which its founder incorrectly identified as a biblical "city of refuge."²⁸

Certainly the best known, and most explicitly biblicistic, effort to create a religious city on a hill in the Canadian West was that of Louis Riel, whose self-proclaimed task was "to found the third and last era of the Kingdom of God: French-Canadian-Metis Catholicism, was to follow Roman Christianity as the latter had succeeded Judaism."²⁹

While debates over Riel's aspirations, specific religious views, and mental health have been many,³⁰ what is clear is that,

²⁸Ibid., 224. The biblical Hamonah is not in fact listed among the six cities of refuge: Kedesh, Shechem, Kirjath-arba, Bezer, Ramoth, Golan (Joshua 20, especially vs. 7-8). The city Hamonah is referred to only once in the Bible, in Ezekiel 39:16. It is a "city" to be built in the valley of Hamon-gog where bones of the unrighteous were to be buried. A peculiar choice of names for an intended socialist paradise!

²⁹Thomas Flanagan, *Louis 'David' Riel: 'Prophet of the New World'* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1979), 175

³⁰For a summary of historiographical debates surrounding Riel up to the early 1980s, see Doug Owram, "The Myth of Louis Riel," *Canadian Historical Review* LXIII: 3 (1982), 315-336. In *Louis 'David' Riel*, Flanagan writes that "The North-West Rebellion was as much a religious movement as a political uprising" (121). In *Moon of Wintertime: Missionaries and the Indians of Canada in Encounter since 1534*, John Webster Grant concurs with Flanagan, writing that the basis of Riel's appeal "was essentially religious rather than political. Riel propounded the thesis...that God had a special mission for the Metis..." (159-160). Also see Norman Shrive, *Charles Mair, Literary Nationalist*, 67-82. It is interesting that in his memoirs of the rebellion (*Trooper and Redskin*) John George Donkin referred to Riel as a prophet in the line of Mohammed and the Mahdi and referred to Riel's deity as "the Great Spirit," thus avoiding linking Riel to any the biblical god (102, 105). In the papers collected in

to an extent that was unusual for lay-Catholics of his era, Riel was a habitual reader of the Bible-- perhaps, one is inclined to surmise, too much so. Of course, Riel had learned about biblical figures and saints during his childhood, and he was taught from the Bible in the course of his education at the College of Montreal. His poetry, often informed by and concerned with biblical themes and language, suggests a detailed knowledge of the Bible. After his first uprising in 1869 and his consequent banishment from Canada he likened himself to the young Hebrew poet David, who had been hounded by an iniquitous King Saul-- hence his signature, Louis 'David' Riel.³¹ On the occasions he was held in insane asylums in Beauport and Longue Pointe, Quebec, Riel claimed to have been visited by Moses, to have been in preparation for a triumphal entry in the New World comparable to that of Jesus', and to have been a living symbol of the new Adam (thus on one occasion he appeared naked in an asylum hallway).

George Denison's *Reminiscences of the Red River Rebellion* (Toronto, 1873), Riel's rebels are referred to as "drunken devils" (20). In *Trooper and Redskin in the Far North-West: Recollections of Life in the North-West Mounted Police, Canada 1884-1888* (London, England: Sampson Low, Marston, Searle and Rivington, 1889), John D. Donkin describes Riel, "saint and martyr in the French Canadian calendar," as "the prime agitator" of the 1885 North West rebellion who had with him "about a dozen other spirits more wicked than himself [see Luke 11:26]"

³¹On this point, Flanagan writes: "Riel saw numerous resemblances between himself and David. Both had been forced to flee from the power of government. Both had been taken by others to be insane. David, when he sought safety at the court of the Philistines; Riel, when he stayed with his friends. And both were poets; Riel's verses would be the psalms of the modern era." *Louis 'David' Riel*, 75.

Riel spent some time in manacles for having resisted an order to give up his New Testament which hospital personnel believed was feeding his delusions.³² Some time in the course of the five days in 1885 over which the rebellious, captured, and soon to be executed Riel traveled alongside the Reverend C. B. Pitblado (chaplain to the Canadian expeditionary force) en route to a prison in Regina, he penned his views on the Scriptures on the flysheet of Pitblado's Greek New Testament. "The conscientious reading of the Scriptures is full of life and of consolation," Riel wrote. "The word of Christ purifies our souls."³³ Riel's personal, religious, and delusional lives were encased in biblical language and imagery.

Undoubtedly Riel's most grandiose delusion was that he had been called by God to re-establish the papacy in the New World and thereby preserve an even more conservative version of Catholicism than the ultramontanist propounded by Bishop Ignace Bourget of Montreal. "The French-Canadian nation has received from God the wonderful mission of continuing the great works of France on this side of the Ocean," Riel wrote. "We are working to make the French-Canadian Metis people sufficiently great to be worthy to receive the heritage of Lower-Canada."³⁴ Riel maintained

³²Flanagan, *Louis 'David' Riel*, 5,7,9,38,51-72. On page 258 of his *History of the North-West Begg* discusses Riel's peculiar theology of the Trinity.

³³Ibid., 151.

³⁴Ibid., 82.

that the French-speaking Métis, having been planted by Providence in the Canadian West to establish a new papacy -- just as, according to Bishop Bourget, French Quebec had been providentially established to preserve true Catholic France -- Riel looked to the day when the "spirit of the sovereign pontificate will mount upon the chariot of Elias and flee to Manitoba."³⁵ The new order Riel took himself to have been called by God to establish would abide by Mosaic Law -- Riel rejected St. Paul's "liberalism" -- and would stand long after the British Empire, like ancient Babylon, had fallen. "I saw the spirit of Jesus Christ our Lord shatter all the British possessions," he prophesied, employing the language of Revelation 17;

and of all the vast maritime empire of England, there was only one sail left in the port of London....I saw the capital of Scotland plunge into the ocean and disappear....London and Liverpool will sink to the bottom of the water."³⁶

Obviously, Riel's visions failed; the fact that in the course of his second rebellion in 1885 he had two assistants hold his arms raised as he watched his embattled French Métis, as Moses had done when Israel fought the Amalekites,³⁷ did not help. The Canadian expeditionary force sent out to quell Riel's rebellion

³⁵Ibid., 82. On the "chariot of Elias" (i.e. Elijah) see II Kings 2:11.

³⁶Ibid., 83-87, 92-93.

³⁷Exodus 17:8-13.

did so with ease;³⁸ Riel's city of God in the Canadian West was put down.

3.3 The West as Garden and Wilderness³⁹

While it would be going too far to say that more than a small number of the settlers of the Canadian West were imbued with a theologically-charged sense of divine mission like that of the Puritans in the New World, Riel's Métis, or of nineteenth-century French Canadian nationalists (see part two of this thesis), the Canadian West was often described as an Eden to be possessed, as a land flowing with milk and honey to be exploited, as an "immense garden" blessed with rich soil and grass, as a region that could sustain vast herds of Buffalo, "God's cattle upon a thousand hills."⁴⁰

³⁸Flanagan, *Louis 'David' Riel*, 141.

³⁹On Upper Canada as "garden" see Dennis Duffy, *Gardens, Covenants, Exiles: Loyalism in the Literature of Upper Canada/Ontario* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1982), 9 and 31-36

⁴⁰John McDougall, *Pathfinding on Plain and Prairie: Stirring Scenes of Life in the Canadian North-West* (Toronto: William Briggs, 1898), 95 and 274. McDougall's reference to cattle on a thousand hills is taken from Psalm 50:10. While McDougall's outlook was finally and generally optimistic, it should be noted that he was well aware of the hardship of life on the prairies. McDougall's hopefulness was rooted in his faith in Christianity and civilization. Echoing St. Paul, McDougall expressed simultaneously his recognition of hardship and sense of hope: "We are hungry, yet always feasting; we are tired and weary, yet constantly gaining strength; we are sad, yet full of joy; we are at times despondent, still ever rejoicing" (198). See I

Many such claims made about the West were of course true; but the romanticized language some used when describing the West incurred the criticism of men who knew the "Promised Land" better. In 1883 geologist and explorer Henry Youle Hind, who had himself been a booster of western settlement in the 1850s, accused over-enthusiastic promoters of creating a "fictitious Garden of Eden" out of the West.⁴¹ Four decades later Adam Short took up his pen against those who had laureled the North West with "a halo of superlatives." Through various media Canadians had heard that the West was a "veritable land of Goshen" and a "most favoured nation," Short wrote in *Queen's Quarterly* in 1895; few Canadians could claim that they had never heard this "gospel," for "our government agents have spared neither prose nor verse nor any form of literature, save only fiction from which they claim to have abstained, in spreading abroad the good news." But, Short said, many lives had been wrecked in the western wilderness, and it was less a paradise than many were being led to believe.⁴²

Corinthians 4:10-13.

⁴¹Cited in Doug Owsam, *Promise of Eden: The Canadian Expansionist Movement and the Idea of the West, 1856-1900* (Toronto: University of Toronto, 1992 [repr., 1980]), 1-3.

⁴²Adam Short, "Some Observations on the Great North-West," *Queen's Quarterly* (January 1895), 186. The West was also, Short observed, a difficult mission field. "The work of the missionary in the West is not always a very encouraging one," he wrote. "His ways are not altogether ways of pleasantness nor his paths entirely those of peace." Ibid. 3:1 (July 1895), 19. On "Goshen" also see J. C. Hamilton, *The Prairie Province: Sketches of Travel*

Short's impatience with utopian metaphors for the West seems justified. Unlike the biblical land of Goshen where Egypt's enslaved Hebrews remained safe from the plagues brought down upon hard-hearted Egyptians, the West's hail, locusts and clouds of mosquitoes descended upon the righteous and unrighteous alike-- and on their animals, too: "The tender skin around the eyes of horses and oxen gathers moving crusts of torment," wrote one Red River Valley farmer; "a rider rubbing a hand across his mount's face brings up a pulpy mess of crushed insects and blood. And horseflies, ...a horse will flinch from the bite of one as if he has been nicked by a knife blade."⁴³ Hardship in the West brought to Canadian settlers' minds biblical accounts of plague and pestilence.⁴⁴

That the West was hardly Edenic was the theme of a sermon given in 1882 on Thanksgiving Day by the Reverend Pitblado, minister of St Andrew's Presbyterian Church in Winnipeg. Pitblado observed that for many of those who had gone west "the anthem of praise that rolls over our Dominion from ocean to ocean" had been

from Lake Ontario to Lake Winnipeg (Toronto: Belford Brothers, 1876), 232.

⁴³Unnamed source cited in Peter B. Waite, *Canada, 1874-1896: Arduous Destiny* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1971), 64. On Goshen see, for example, Exodus 10:26. Also see Genesis 45:10.

⁴⁴Speaking of the locusts that invaded parts of the north west from time to time, J. C. Hamilton cited Nahum 3:17 and referred his readers to the second chapter of Joel. *The Prairie Province: Sketches of Travel from lake Ontario to Lake Winnipeg* (Toronto: Belford Brothers, 1876), 161-62.

met with "mingled feelings of joy and sadness." He recalled that he, like his hearers, had left behind "the old wine of the old world safely bottled in the hoary institutions of the east" for "the new wine of the new world being made and bottled in the infant institutions of the West." "[S]ome of us can scarcely help exclaiming as we survey our new surroundings, 'No man when he hath drunk old wine straightway desireth new, for he hath said the old is better'."⁴⁵ Pitblado nevertheless encouraged his hearers to make the best of a difficult situation. God had, after all, led them to the West, and they could trust him to meet their needs. But religious faithfulness did not require pretending that hard times were easy. For Pitblado and his congregation, Alexander Begg's claim, made in 1884, that "One gratifying feature in connection with the Canadian North-West is the fact that the settlers who have made their homes there are, as a rule, content and prosperous" could have been amended.⁴⁶

⁴⁵Pitblado went on to encourage his congregation to remain firm in their faith, for the "Wine Disposer of all events" was in command. C.B. Pitblado, *Our Heritage: A Sermon Delivered on Thanksgiving* (Winnipeg: W.D. Russell, 1882), 1. The metaphor of the old and new wineskins, as Pitblado employs it, is a conflation of the story of the wedding feast at Cana (John 2), where Jesus changed water into wine and was praised by the "governor of the feast" for saving the best wine until the end of the party, and Jesus's teaching (Luke 5:37) that "no man putteth new wine into old bottles; else the new wine will burst the bottles, and be spilled, and the bottles perish." For a discussion on this biblical metaphor see George L. Scheper, "Old and New" in *A Dictionary of Biblical Tradition in English Literature* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1992), 563-573.

⁴⁶Alexander Begg, *Seventeen Years in the Canadian North-West: A Paper Read on April 8, 1884 at the Royal Colonial*

That many in the last decades of the nineteenth century would nevertheless come to view the West as a land of promise, a "fertile garden,"⁴⁷ might have surprised earlier British North American generations. Before the late-1850s most British North Americans who concerned themselves with the West -- and there were not many -- perceived it as a frozen wasteland, a chillier version of its American counterpart, which in the first quarter of the century was thought of as a Great Desert.⁴⁸ In 1884 Sir Charles Tupper echoed this theme, responding wryly to the claim of a political opponent that there had been a "great public meeting" at Moose Jaw in the North West Territories. "How is it that...that great wild and unpeopled portion of the desert...as if by magic, is transformed into a place in which a great public meeting can be held?" he asked.⁴⁹

Excepting those connected with the Hudson's Bay Company, who were later said to have fostered a dismal perception of the West

Institute (London, England: Spottiswoode & Co., 1884), 21. "[N]or," Begg continued, "do they hide their light under a bushel." See Matthew 5:15, Mark 4:21, and Luke 11:33.

⁴⁷Doug Owsram, *Promise of Eden: The Canadian Expansionist Movement and the Idea of the West, 1856-1900* (Toronto: University of Toronto, 1992 [repr., 1980]), 3.

⁴⁸In "A far and distant corner of the Empire," chap. one in *Promise of Eden*, Owsram writes that in the first half of the nineteenth century "The North West was...doubly damned. The arctic and sub-arctic orientation of trade and travel reinforced the image of a northerly waste, and the notion of the American desert condemned it as an arid and inhospitable land" (14).

⁴⁹Cited in Waite, *Canada*, 126.

in an effort to keep immigrants at a distance from its profitable fur trade, the largest class of Canadian settlers who went west before mid-century were Christian missionaries, and many of their reports painted the West bleakly. In his history of the Red River Colony, published in 1856, Alexander Ross employed biblical language to describe a life in which every man, woman, and child was required to toil "from morning till night," though, despite their labor, they only "sowed for the fowls of the air to reap."⁵⁰ So severe were the winters, and so great the colonists' hunger, Ross wrote, it sometimes seemed that they had less hope of surviving than "the Israelites in the desert."⁵¹ Indeed, it seemed that Providence allowed "scourges" to be visited upon the Red River colonists "for the express trial of their faith."⁵² At least Ross's longsuffering and often ministerless Scottish Presbyterians were eventually fortunate enough to have an ordained preacher among them, for he would "expound the Scriptures," the settlers' main source of comfort.⁵³

The Bible also provided comfort to Daniel W. Harmon, a

⁵⁰The biblical allusion here is Jesus's parable of the sower in which birds (representing "the wicked one") snatch up seeds (representing "the word of the kingdom") cast by the sower (representing God). See Matthew 13:4; cf. Luke 8:12.

⁵¹See Exodus, *passim*.

⁵²See I Peter 1:7.

⁵³Alexander Ross, *The Red River Settlement: Its Rise, Progress, and Present State* (Minneapolis: Ross and Haines, 1957; [repr., 1856]), 31, 34, 60.

native of Vermont who was employed with the Northwest Company in the early nineteenth century. "When destitute, we must wait until Providence sends us a supply; and we sometimes think it rather tardy in coming," Harmon wrote in his diary. But Harmon trusted that the same God that had initially directed his way into British North America's "wilderness," where some years earlier "eleven Canadians lost their lives for want of food," would meet his needs.⁵⁴

While it is clear that Harmon's reference to the North West as a "wilderness" was meant to be taken literally, elsewhere in his journal Harmon uses the term to denote not only an actual wilderness but a spiritual wilderness-- a place of temptation and redemption--as well.

The conflation of literal and spiritual wildernesses, which by the nineteenth century was a commonplace in Christian mythography,⁵⁵ is perhaps best expressed in the fourth chapter of Matthew 4, which begins, "Then was Jesus led up of the spirit into the wilderness to be tempted of the devil." Describing his

⁵⁴Harmon, *A Journal of Voyages and Travels*, 76-78, 128.

⁵⁵See Perry Miller, *Errand Into the Wilderness* (Cambridge: Belknap Press, 1956); Roderick Nash, *Wilderness and the American Mind* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1973); and David R. Williams, *Wilderness Lost: The Religious Origins of the American Mind* (London and Toronto: Associated University Presses, 1987). To varying extents, each of these works are concerned with the period in American history before the Revolution; which is to say that the concept of wilderness propounded by the Puritans and others in the New World was part of the intellectual furniture (so to speak) that the Loyalists carried with them to Canada.

own wilderness temptation, Harmon recounts how "the cavils" of religious unbelief had "followed" him into the wilderness "and contributed to overshadow my mind with the gloomy doubts of infidelity." These same doubts had dogged him in civilization, but here in the wilderness he had to confront them, and from his prayerful wilderness struggle sprang enduring faith.⁵⁶

In a work published in 1903 a historian of Methodism in Canada alluded to this same biblical theme, recalling to his readers' minds the great hardship faced by early missionaries in the British North American West and the spiritual victories the missionaries extracted from their struggles. Such "unfavourable circumstances" as those which the missionaries faced, wrote Alexander Sutherland, "might well have daunted ordinary men, and led to a postponement of any effort to organise for aggressive missionary work."

But 'there were giants in the earth in those days,' whose faith and courage were equal to any emergency; men who could read history in the germ and forecast results when 'the wilderness and solitary places' should become 'glad,' and 'the desert' should 'rejoice and blossom as the rose'....In...faith they planned and laboured. They did not despise the day of small things, but with faith in the corruptible seed,' they planted and watered, leaving it to God to give the increase."⁵⁷

⁵⁶Harmon, *A Journal of Voyages and Travels*, 196-97.

⁵⁷Alexander Sutherland, *Methodism in Canada: Its Work and Its Story* (London, Eng: Charles H. Kelly, 1903), 271-72.

Sutherland's choice of biblical allusions was not altogether fitting; the biblical "giants" he alludes to were presumably among the wicked destroyed in the flood recounted in the seventh and eighth chapters of Genesis.⁵⁸ Sutherland, who could not have actually meant for his readers to consider Canada's Methodist missionaries analogous to the giants of Genesis, provides us with an example of a phenomenon we shall take up later in this chapter, namely, ostensibly biblical language that is apparently void of biblical meaning. At present, however, it is enough to note that Sutherland remembered the missionaries for their role in transforming the western wilderness not only into a literal garden but also a spiritual one.⁵⁹ Images of the West as an arduous wilderness and potential paradise vied for preeminence in British North America through much of the nineteenth century. But with the advent of transcontinental railroads after Confederation, the

⁵⁸Genesis 6:4 is undoubtedly one of the more peculiar and most obscure verses in the Scriptures: "There were giants in the earth in those days; and also after that, when the sons of God came in unto the daughters of men, and they bare children to them, the same became mighty men which were of old, men of renown." See "Giants in the Earth," in *A Dictionary of Biblical Tradition in English Tradition* ed., David Lyle Jeffrey (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1992), 303-04.

⁵⁹For the sources of Sutherland's other biblical allusions see Isaiah 35:1-2; Zechariah 4:10; I Peter 1:23; I Corinthians 3:6. In *Promise of Eden* Ooram notes that "The term 'wilderness...took on a metaphorical as well as physical meaning to the Protestant missionary, and as such was invested with much more of a moral connotation than it was to the fur trader or explorer. The wilderness could not be paradise until it was Christianized" (24). Ooram does not note the biblical source of the metaphor.

Canadians' need for growing space, a desire to keep the American expansionists off Canadian territory, and a belief among Canada's nationalists that their nation was destined to be the "keystone" of the British Empire,⁶⁰ the West came increasingly to be seen as an Eden-- a land of plenty to be exploited to the glory of man, country, empire, and, in Victorian parlance, The Great Mover of Events.⁶¹ The belief, expressed decades earlier by the Anglican divine John Strachan, that the gradual conversion to Christianity of the peoples of the world would turn the whole earth into "the garden of the Lord,"⁶² provided Canada's western settlers with a sense of purpose. Doug Oram has observed that the opening of the West in the late nineteenth century was to be done "in the name of progress," which is to say in the name of Christianity, civilization, and economic prosperity, which, by the late nineteenth century were all as one to many Canadians. In the second half of the nineteenth century many English-speaking Canadian Protestants committed themselves to shaping the West

⁶⁰Charles Bass, *Lectures on Canada*, 45

⁶¹"In the 1840s the assumption had been that the West would remain unsettled for some time to come and the primary concern was therefore a missionary one for the Indian," writes historian Doug Oram. "By 1857 the impulse was commercial and based on the belief that the region would quickly be opened up to civilization." *Promise of Eden*, 51-53.

⁶²Strachan cited in William Westfall, "Order and Experience: Patterns of Religious Metaphor in Early Nineteenth Century Upper Canada," ch. in Mark G. McGowan and David B. Marshall, *Prophets, Priests, and Prodigals: Readings in Canadian Religious History, 1608 to Present* (Toronto: McGraw-Hill Ryerson Ltd., 1992), 101.

"according to their own cultural values and economic aspirations."⁶³ In the words of the writer and parliamentarian Alexander Morris, if the North West was properly settled, Canada could look to becoming the "centre of the English-speaking world."⁶⁴ In his memoirs Goldwin Smith referred to the West as a "land of miraculous promise."⁶⁵

⁶³Owram, *Promise of Eden*, 5. While Owram is well aware that the expansionists' rhetoric owed much to biblical literature, he never discusses this in detail. He writes of "overtones of a national manifest destiny and providential design" (102) in the expansionists' effusions and of their confident assertions that "the West had been designed by a wise providence to supply the wants of man" (108). He likewise notes the "mystical powers" which the railways came to assume in the Canadian imagination after Confederation, which, he maintains, contributed to a hope in "the imminent arrival of [an earthly] millennium" (123-24). He does not, however, point out the biblical source of the rhetoric he is interested in.

⁶⁴Ibid., 57. Here is Morris, in his lecture *The Hudson's Bay and Pacific Territories* (Montreal: John Lovell, 1859): "Our Northern riding nationality has an ample field before it,-- a brilliant future in the distance. To occupy that field,--to attain to that future in all its grandeur,-- the people of British North America must take high views of their plain and manifest responsibilities, must evince an adequate appreciation of their duties, and must possess a thorough knowledge of the advantages which they possess, and of the vast resources which Providence has placed at their disposal, in order that they may advance steadily toward that high position among the nations which they may yet attain,--in order that they may enter upon the full fruition of that rich inheritance of civil and religious liberty and of high social and political privileges, which is their birthright as an offshoot of the three united nations who compose the British people" (6).

⁶⁵Goldwin Smith, *Reminiscences* (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1910), 414.

3.4 The West and the Canadian Future

While some Canadian Bible readers thus set out to make the West into a Promised Land of biblical import and others, more modest in ambition, wished only to get the Scriptures into the hands of everyone that all might be saved, biblical rhetoric was also often put to manifestly worldly use by British North Americans familiar with the Old and New Testaments. Service to the Empire and country, supported by Scripture, was fashioned into service to God. Public religious discourse, relying on the Scriptures, sounded Christian; whether it actually was Christian in a traditional sense and not the stuff of a sort of civil religion is less clear.

By the time the Countess of Aberdeen wrote her travel memoir, *Through Canada with a Kodak*, in 1893, it was not uncommon for the pursuit of wealth and personal, national and imperial glory to be construed as a Christian virtue. Consider, the Countess wrote, the Scots who "with pride of old Scotland" had made such significant contributions to Canada's public life;⁶⁶ surely they could serve as reminders of the responsibilities placed upon the Scottish whose children "belong to a race who seemed bound to rise to high position and influence wherever they go, the world over."

⁶⁶E.g. John A. Macdonald, George Brown.

The thought that the destinies of countries far away
 may one day largely rest in our children's hands
 should fill us [Scots] with noble ambition for them
 that they may be able to say with others who have gone
 before--....

We go to plant her [Scotland's] common schools
 On distant prairie swells,
 And give the Sabbaths of the wilds
 The Music of her bells.

Upbearing, like the ark of old,
 The Bible in our van,
 We go to test the truth of God,
 Against the foes of man.⁶⁷

As we have seen in the two previous chapters, the Countess's use of biblical language to promote national ambition was common in late nineteenth-century Canada, though certainly not unique to it. In the late seventeenth century prominent American divines such as Thomas Shepard mistook New England's material prosperity for an evidence of spiritual grace and warned their congregations that if America's second generation Puritans turned their backs on God they could expect that he would "turn this fruitful land into a wilderness again."⁶⁸ And, of course, the belief that faithfulness to God will lead to earthly prosperity -- to a land flowing with milk and honey -- has its rhetorical roots firmly in the Hebrew Scriptures. On Dominion Day, 1877, for example, the Reverend John C. Baxter remembered the ancient Jews who, on account of their religious faith, were "the most progressive

⁶⁷Countess of Aberdeen, *Through Canada With a Kodak*, 138. Ishbel Aberdeen wrote her memoir for the information of Scotland's Onward and Upward Association.

⁶⁸Williams, *Wilderness Lost*, 75.

Asiatic peoples," and whose example should be emulated by Canadians.⁶⁹

In the late nineteenth century there appears to have been something else afoot as well: A mix of piety, national pride, and expansionist thirst akin to that which was stirring throughout the English-speaking world. As we saw above, George Munro Grant rejoiced to see natives, Bibles in hand, delivered from spiritual darkness. Grant also prayed that God would grant Canadians "purity and faith" and "deliverance from the lust of personal aggrandizement." But if he hoped to see spiritual humility instilled in the hearts of his Bible-carrying countrymen, he also hoped to inspire them to gird themselves for the great temporal purpose of establishing a Canadian dominion worthy of the name, for "A great future" beckoned.⁷⁰ Alexander Begg brought his *Great Canadian North West* (1881) to a conclusion in a similar spirit, noting that with the completion of the Canadian Pacific Railroad -- completed in 1885 -- the Canadian West would "enter the threshold of its glorious future" and eventually "rival the greatest nations upon the earth."⁷¹

When expansionists and forward-looking Canadians such as

⁶⁹John C. Baxter, *Dominion Day* (Montreal: Wm. Drysdale & Co., 1877), 5.

⁷⁰Grant, *Ocean to Ocean*, 358.

⁷¹Alexander Begg, *The Great Canadian North West: Its Past History, Present Condition, and Glorious Prospects* (Montreal: John Lovell & Son, 1881), 135.

George Munro Grant and Alexander Morris looked to the Canadian West they did so with a certain "sense of mission"⁷²-- a sense informed by a desire for civilizational, religious, and economic power and influence that was shared by well-placed Britons in a time when England's embrace encompassed the earth.⁷³ Accordingly, a language of land "possession," the ultimate roots of which are in the Torah,⁷⁴ became fashionable among Canadian nationalists and expansionists.⁷⁵ Thus the view of John George Bourinot, clerk of the Canadian House of Commons, as recorded in the *Westminster Review* in 1882, that

For a century past the United States have been able to attract millions of souls, while Canada has been comparatively overlooked, through the belief...that she had far inferior advantages to offer to intending settlers. Every year, however, is furnishing more

⁷²The term is O'ram's. *Promise of Eden*, 125 and 156.

⁷³Jean Friesen writes that "Like other men of his time in the Province of Canada, Morris was enraptured by dreams of imperial destiny. "Morris, Alexander," *Dictionary of Canadian Biography* XI (Toronto: University of Toronto, 1982), 609.

⁷⁴Here for example is Deuteronomy 1:6-8: "The Lord our God spake unto us [Hebrews] in Horeb, saying, Ye have dwelt long enough in this mount: Turn you, and take your journey, and go to the mount of the Amorites, and unto all the places nigh thereunto, in the plain, in the hills, and in the vale, and in the south, and by the sea side, to the land of the Canaanites, and unto Lebanon, unto the great river, the river Euphrates. Behold, I have set the land before you: go in and possess the land which the Lord swore unto your fathers, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, to give unto them and to their seed after them."

⁷⁵In his *Social History of Canada* (New York: Penguin Books, 1989), George Woodcock titled his chapter on western expansion "Possessing the West." He does not note the biblical origins of the phrase.

convincing evidence that she possesses at last in the Northwest a fertile area far more valuable and larger than any now owned by the United States...⁷⁶

In 1857 Alexander Morris claimed that British North America had "a brilliant future in the distance," "an ample field before it"-- a field to be "occupied"; for the right to take and exploit the West was part and parcel of the British North American's "birthright."⁷⁷

The biblical example of Joshua leading Israel into Canaan to "possess" the promised land was drawn upon emphatically in a sermon given in Montreal by R.W. Norman in 1877. Opining that "righteousness and true patriotism" exalted a nation, Norman claimed that no Christian society had done more to spread the faith throughout the world than had Britain and that within the Church of England was contained "all spiritual truth as held and taught in the purest times." In ancient times Moses' successor Joshua had been required by God to rout the Canaanites, to stamp

⁷⁶John George Bourinot, *Canada As a Home* (London, England: Trübner and Co., 1882), 28. My emphasis.

⁷⁷Alexander Morris, *The Hudson's Bay and Pacific Territories* (Montreal: John Lovell, 1859), 6-7. Twenty years later Morris was more sober. In his introduction to *Treaties of Canada with the Indians of Manitoba and North West Territories* (1880) he noted that the white man's "possession" of land had led in large measure to one of the "gravest" questions the Dominion of Canada confronted--namely, what to do with the natives who had been displaced by white settlement. Yet Morris remained optimistic, noting in his preface that the Dominion's "helping hand" had opened to the Indians of the North West a "future of promise" (7). On the biblical birthright see Genesis 25:31-34, 27:36, and 43:33; I Chronicles 5:1-2; Hebrews 12:16.

out their religion, and, with the Hebrew people, to prosper in the new land they had possessed. Now it was the Anglo-Saxon's duty to carry true religion and culture around the globe.

"Joshua, the servant of the Lord, was the first man who received a portion of the Holy Scripture to be his guide," Norman declared.

He [Joshua]...always referred to the book of the law of the Lord. That shews the estimation in which the Holy Scriptures should be held. And it is to our glory that we [Canadians] profess to make that sacred book our rule and guide. Joshua conquered his enemies, led by God's law. May not we, led also by teaching, achieve a greater victory-- the civilization and christianizing of the ignorant, the heathen, the ungodly. And if so what a glorious mission is ours.⁷⁸

Less stark, though nevertheless revealing of the extent to ancient Israel's taking of Canaan figured in the minds of Canadian settlers and nationalists spying out their terre promise, is one traveler's recollection that, while those with whom he traveled through the prairies in the 1860s might have grown weary and pined for "the onion and garlic of...Egypt" -- that is, for the comforts of civilization -- they set themselves rather to the Christian task of exploring the West, resolutely confronting the wilderness "as did Joshua and Caleb."⁷⁹

⁷⁸R.W. Norman, *Our Duties and Opportunities* (Montreal: 'Gazette' Printing House, 1877), 8.

⁷⁹John McDougall, *Pathfinding on Plain and Prairie: Stirring Scenes of Life in the Canadian North-West* (Toronto: William Briggs, 1898), 25. On the onions and garlic of Egypt see Numbers 11:4-6. In this passage the Hebrews, wandering in the desert,

Another enthusiast for western settlement, Charles Bass, also looked to the west with Joshua's entry into Canaan in mind. "Arouse, Canadians," he wrote in his *Lectures on Canada*, "set your legislators to a work that shall enrich your country, extend your glories, and benefit mankind....assume that place that God marks out for you." Bass observed that, like Moses looking into Canaan from a mountaintop, he would live to see neither Canada's place within the British Empire "perfected" nor "the perfecting of [Canada's] grand scheme of national aggrandisement." But he was sure such a day would come, and he fervently prayed that God would bless the Queen and the British American Empire.⁸⁰

Most explicit of all in his use of the biblical rhetoric of land "possession" was John McLean, author of a book on Canada's Indians. Over the "fertile fields of Manitoba" Canadians and immigrants were "speeding their way," he wrote; Canada's faithful sons and daughters were destined to follow those settlers with churches and schools, "to make them [the settlers] a united

grumble remembering, with considerable selection, how good they had had it as slaves in Egypt. "We remember the fish, which we did eat in Egypt freely; the cucumbers, and the melons, and the leeks, and the onions, and the garlick..." (v.5).

⁸⁰Charles Bass, *Lectures on Canada*, 45. Thirteen years on similar sentiments prevailed among Canada's westward-looking Protestants. The *Canadian Methodist Magazine* observed that it was "absolutely imperative" that Methodists follow the Canadian "path-finders of empire" who were then settling the West. Otherwise multitudes would "perish for lack of knowledge" and the "grandest opportunity for occupying the country in the name of the Lord may be lost." Cited in O'ram, *Promise of Eden*, 145. Also see James Woodsworth, *Thirty Years in the Canadian North-West* (Toronto: McClellan, Goodchild, and Stewart, 1917), 230-33.

people in our glorious Dominion."

Who shall guide us but the great Master of Life, in whose hands are the destinies of nations and men? God has given to us a blessed heritage in that western country, with its vast areas of excellent land....This is God's heritage for our children, and we must go up and possess the land for our Lord and Christ.⁸¹

McLean's text also illustrates a common propensity for Canada's Protestants, like Protestants throughout the English-speaking world, to resort to military metaphors when discussing the settling of the West.⁸² In McLean's view, the "Nazarene was destined to conquer and win the red man for Himself"; for "Steadily the truth is progressing, and the final conquest soon will follow."⁸³ McLean's use of this language in his text is somewhat peculiar, for he himself criticized late eighteenth-century Americans who, considering the Indians to be "the Canaanites expelled by Joshua," pushed Indians off their land.⁸⁴ "Increased knowledge," higher philosophical and moral sophistication, prevented Canada's Protestants from acting as

⁸¹McLean, *The Indians of Canada*, 319-20. My italics.

⁸²The rhetoric of missions as soldiers' work was not of course unique to Protestants. See Choquette, *The Oblate Assault on Canada's Northwest*, which itself is organized around military metaphors.

⁸³*Ibid.*, 349. Again: "The Master's marching orders are obeyed year after year by hundreds of devoted men and women, who go out into the desert places of the earth to teach the despised races of men the way of life" (291).

⁸⁴*Ibid.*, 268-69.

brutally toward the Canaanites of the New World as had their ancestors, McLean opined⁸⁵-- and indeed, it is well known that Canada's record of Anglo-Indian relations shines in comparison to the bloody Indian-American wars of the United States. It is thus all the more peculiar that McLean himself clung to the militant language of the Old Testament book of Joshua to encourage Canadian settlers to take the West for the good of the civilization, even as he argued that Canada's natives were fundamentally noble people who deserved to be treated respectfully. That he did so is perhaps suggestive of the extent to which biblical rhetoric was so common in the late nineteenth century as to become trite: elegant but not necessarily meaningful. As McLean himself pointed out, in the late eighteenth century the term "go up and possess the land" could have meant that the land's current inhabitants would have to be expelled or killed, as were the Canaanites. But by the time McLean himself employed that phrase, to possess the land could mean simply to build a farm on property previously known only to Indians; or to lay railroad tracks; or to extract other forms of wealth from nature. To possess the land was to prepare it for "Commercial enterprise, mental culture, and moral influence";⁸⁶ it was to bring the "National Park! The Fairyland of the Rockies! The Wonderland of the West!" into submission to Christian

⁸⁵Ibid.

⁸⁶Ibid., 210.

civilization.⁸⁷

The call for men and women to up and possess the land was, of course, not unique to late nineteenth-century English-speaking Canada. In his first inaugural address Thomas Jefferson referred to Americans as a people "possessing a chosen country."⁸⁸ Around the same time Daniel W. Harmon, an American in the employ of the Northwest Company, reflected in his diary on the time "before the British obtained possession of Canada."⁸⁹ In 1881 Adolphe-Basile Routhier encouraged his French Canadian compatriots to reflect upon the holy way in which Jacques Cartier had "taken possession" of what would become New France.⁹⁰ Perhaps the most explicit and influential expression of such rhetoric among English speakers in the New World is John Winthrop's sermon "Modell of Christian Charity" (1630), in which he draws directly on passages in Deuteronomy. Winthrop informed his fellows aboard the *Arbella* that before them was a choice between "life, and good, deathe, and evill, in that wee are Commaunded this day to love the Lord our God...and keepe his Commaundments." If the Puritans kept to God's laws, Winthrop said, they would "live and

⁸⁷Ibid., 189.

⁸⁸Richard Hofstadter, *Great Issues in American History: From the Revolution to the Civil War* (New York: Vintage Books, 1956), 188.

⁸⁹Harmon, *A Journal of Voyages and Travels*, 27.

⁹⁰Adolphe-Basile Routhier, "Le role de la race française en Amérique," in *Fête nationale des canadiens-français célébrée à Québec en 1880* (Quebec: L'imprimerie A. Cote et Cie, 1881), 289.

be multiplyed" and they would be blessed "in the land whether wee goe to possesse it." But if the hearts of God's chosen people in the New World turned from him, they would surely "perishe out of the good Land whether wee passe over this vast sea to possesse it."⁹¹

Winthrop's formula -- obedience to divine law will lead to earthly blessings, disobedience to curses -- has ancient roots and it remains a commonplace among some Christian groups. It is also easy enough to come by in the primary literature of late nineteenth-century Canada. Consider the words of Duncan Morrison, a Protestant minister from Owen Sound, Ontario, who could see Canada's "glorious future" in the distance. The "actual religious life" of Canada was healthy, Morrison observed. Churches were being planted, ministers trained, Sabbath schools attended, and Bibles were read and distributed throughout the Dominion. Surely such obvious righteousness could only redound to future blessings. "No country is more favorably situated in respect to the ministers of religion and the means of grace, than Canada."

Throughout the whole land, even the remotest districts, the gospel is preached, and the word of God has free course and is glorified. Along the Red River and the Fraser River, where emigrants are thronging, there are faithful men to be found ready to minister to their wants..."⁹²

⁹¹John Winthrop, "A Modell of Christian Charity," in *Early American Writing* ed., Giles Gunn (New York: Penguin, 1994), 112.

⁹²Duncan Morrison, *The Glorious Future of Canada* (Owen Sound, 1872), 8.

The "true bulwarks" of a nation were spiritual, not material, Morrison continued; Canadians' "real strength is not our great natural advantages -- not our millions of acres of unreclaimed land -- not the aegis of the mother country, under which we repose so safely -- but that righteousness which exalteth a nation."⁹³ That, at any rate, is Morrison's religiously proper conclusion. What of his sermon's beginning and middle? Morrison's text was taken from Psalm 48 -- "Walk about Zion, and go round about her: tell the towers thereof" -- and he said that it was in "a spirit similar to that of the Psalmist" in which he challenged his listeners to hear him as he extolled Canada's "national advantages."⁹⁴ Canada's vast territory to the west and north thus put in mind, Morrison called his hearers' attention to the great heavenly city described in the twenty-first chapter of Revelation, a city "whose length is to be twelve thousand furlongs, and whose breadth is to be twelve thousand furlongs,-- that is fifteen hundred miles each way." One could "scarcely form any conception of such a city, and such a magnitude," he said. And yet, for all its magnitude, it was "not nearly so large as that country which we call the Dominion of Canada." The distance between Winnipeg and Halifax was scarcely fifteen hundred miles,⁹⁵

⁹³Ibid.

⁹⁴Ibid., 1.

⁹⁵Morrison was imprecise. The distance between Halifax and Winnipeg is about 1,980 miles.

said Morrison, and that was little more than half of the whole span of the Dominion of Canada. Thus Morrison's irresistible conclusion: British North Americans inhabited "a country more than twice the size of the Golden City of Revelation"⁹⁶--a dubious though, apparently for Morrison, significant calculation which seemed to indicate that Canada's Protestants could look forward not only to heaven in the next life but could enjoy something just shy of paradise in the here and now. "Never were people so well clothed, so bounteously fed, so comfortably housed, as our Canadian people,"⁹⁷ said Morrison. But he was only warming up.

It is doubtful that many figures in Canada's public life propounded a gospel of wealth as starkly as did Morrison, who said that one object of the Christian gospel was "to make every man rich, both as regards this world and the world to come."⁹⁸

[W]ealth is the handmaid of the Gospel, and the child

⁹⁶Morrison, *The Glorious Future*, 2.

⁹⁷Ibid., 3.

⁹⁸In 1879 one William Brown observed in an essay entitled "Philosophy of Immigration" that Christian virtue could actually hinder the settlement of Canadian West. "The pedigree of the general immigrant," Brown wrote, is not to be found among mere "fanatics" but among those who in life had stood firm in the face of economic adversity. And preferable were those immigrants who showed "more the desire of the speculative, and not so much the desire of 1 Timothy, vi.8." Brown refers here to St Paul's exhortation that, "having food and raiment," Christians should be "content." For Brown, the lack of interest in worldly riches back of this injunction could not be of use in Canada's West. In *Rose-Belford's Canadian Monthly and National Review* (June 1880), 565.

of the Gospel: for wherever the word of this Gospel is preached, it will blossom out into health and strength, abundant harvests on the land, and prosperous voyages upon the sea, and plenty of money in the exchequer....I look forward to the time when man, rising to greater dominion over the elements because rising into greater favor with the God of the elements, shall be able to take life easy-- when a fortune of a million of dollars will not be considered great; when the cities shall be golden, and the nations shall walk in a splendor which Solomon never had in all his glory.⁹⁹

Ostensibly biblical language such as Morrison's, enlisted into the service of national aggrandisement, may not have been as prevalent in Canada as it was in the United States, where steel magnate Andrew Carnegie's "Gospel of Wealth" was making rounds in the late 1880s.¹⁰⁰ Yet in some cases, something akin to what David Lyle Jeffrey has called "a foundational confusion of God and Mammon at the heart of American biblicism" -- that is, a basic confusing of a civil religion of prosperity with traditional Christianity -- seems to have been at work in late nineteenth-

⁹⁹Morrison, *The Glorious Future*, 4. Here is more: "If I understand the business of the missionary, he is to go to the savage and teach him to clothe himself with a goodly robe; to till the soil with a better plough; to build his house upon a better plan; to raise his wife and children to a nobler life, and surround them with all the comforts and conveniences of a happy home." The pursuit of wealth among some clergy in the West has been noticed by O'ram. He writes that in the early 1880s "Even the respectable and conservative Anglican bishop of Saskatchewan, John Maclean, yielded to the worldly race after quick profits." *Promise of Eden*, 170.

¹⁰⁰See "Carnegie's Gospel of Wealth" in Thomas A. Bailey, *The American Spirit: United States History as Seen by Contemporaries* (Lexington, MA: D. C. Heath and Company, 1978 [repr., 1963]), 543-45. It should be noted that Carnegie believed, and maintained, that the wealthy were obligated to spend turn their wealth to the good of the nation and their communities.

century Canadian Protestantism as well.¹⁰¹ That is not to say that the belief that personal piety would lead to temporal prosperity was itself somehow extrabiblical. As the scriptural citations of sundry Canadians whose work was consulted for this thesis suggest, the Old Testament in particular provided them warrant for their claims that a godly nation was necessarily a wealthy nation.¹⁰² (Needless to say, the New Testament Gospels, purveyors of "blessed be ye poor"¹⁰³ and similar beatitudes, are cited much less frequently in this connection.) But simply to acknowledge this and to end the discussion is to ignore the assumption at the heart of the Protestant Canadian nationalists' syllogism: The

¹⁰¹Jeffrey, *People of the Book*, 332. Here I differ with Allan Smith who has written that in late nineteenth-century Protestant Canada "material gain" was "pronounced incompatible with a truly successful" --i.e. godly--life. It appears to me, rather, that many prominent late nineteenth-century Canadians perceived godliness as a means to acquiring wealth. See Smith's paper, "The Myth of the Self-made Man in English Canada, 1850-1914," *Canadian Historical Review* LIX: 2 (1978), 203-205. It might also be noted that some late nineteenth-century Canadian observers also denounced what they perceived as an inordinate interest in the accumulation of wealth among their compatriots. See Norman Knowles, *Inventing the Loyalists: The Ontario Loyalist Tradition and the Creation of Usable Pasts* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1997), 85.

¹⁰²For a discussion of the use of the Old Testament by Upper Canadian divines in the early nineteenth century see A.B. McKillop and Paul Romney, eds. *God's Peculiar Peoples: Essays on Political Culture in Nineteenth-Century Canada* (Ottawa: Carleton University Press, 1993), 35-37. Also see Michael Gauvreau, "Protestantism Transformed: Personal Piety and the Evangelical Social Vision, 1815-1867," in *The Canadian Protestant Experience, 1760-1990* ed., G.A. Rawlyk (Burlington, ON: Welch Publishing Company, 1990), 79-84.

¹⁰³Luke 6:20.

godly nation is wealthy; Canada is wealthy; Canada is therefore a godly nation.

To ask whether late nineteenth-century Canada was in fact "godly" is, thankfully, beyond the scope of this study and is probably ultimately unanswerable. And yet it cannot be altogether ignored. We might then ask: Does the way in which the English-speaking promoters of Canadian greatness used the Bible indicate that their first concern was "godliness"? Or might we surmise that for some of late nineteenth-century Canada's public opinion shapers national greatness was the chief good, and that that good was, like so much else, merely expressed in biblical language?

Holding that question in mind, consider one Canadian's view that, while the material and human costs involved in settling the West were great, Canadians would come to recognize that it had been worth the cost. When Canadians considered "the extent of the valuable territory peaceably secured and opened to the immigrant," he wrote

it will be admitted that the sum payable, and all the pains that can be employed in civilizing and Christianizing these aborigines will form but a trifle compared with the value to accrue to our own and future generations.¹⁰⁴

Some of the "value" the author thought likely to be gained from the settlement of the West was moral and religious; converted

¹⁰⁴J.C.D. Hamilton, *The Prairie Province: Sketches of Travel from Lake Ontario to Lake Winnipeg* (Toronto: Belford Brothers, 1876), 73.

natives would, for example, give up pagan and immoral practices. But the context in the work from which this quotation comes has mainly to do with the acquisition of wealth, not religion: Biblical religion and the words of the Bible were being employed to promote the pursuit of personal and national wealth. As the author of these same lines approvingly "prophesied" elsewhere in his text, the Canadian West "would yet be the home of millions of people prosperous and happy."¹⁰⁵

Perhaps one more example will suffice to make the point. On December 4, 1881, the Reverend Joseph Wild preached a sermon at Toronto's Bond Street Congregational Church. A British Israelite (who yet sounded like many a Methodist, Presbyterian and Anglican),¹⁰⁶ Wild found the key to grasping Canada's past and future in Micah 4:8: "And thou, O tower of the flock, the strong hold of the daughter of Zion, unto thee shall it come, even the first dominion; the kingdom shall come to the daughter of Jerusalem." At the outset of his message Wild noted that the

¹⁰⁵Ibid., 110.

¹⁰⁶British Israelism maintained (and maintains) that modern Anglo-Saxons, particularly those in North America and Britain, are the literal descendants of the Ten Lost Tribes of Israel. While sources supporting this view go back to the late seventeenth century, John Wilson's 1840 work, *Our Israelitish Origin*, was the first text to clearly state the views that British Israelites of the late nineteenth century came to hold. By 1901 there were some 2,000,000 British Israelites in the English-speaking world. See Charles S. Braden, "Anglo-Israel," in *Twentieth Century Encyclopedia of Religious Knowledge* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1955), 44; and "British Israelism" in J. Gordon Melton, ed., *The Encyclopedia of American Religions: Religious Creeds* (Detroit: Gale Research Company, 1988), 622-624.

Hebrew word *eder*, translated in the Authorized Version of the Bible as "tower," meant "a power standing prominently out over a group of powers"; and given the obvious vitality of the economy in the Canadian West in the early 1880s¹⁰⁷ and Canada's bright future, Wild could "without any violation of the strict and literal meaning of the word [*eder*], apply it unto the Dominion of Canada, because I believe that the Dominion is a power that stands out distinctly so." More than any other nation, Wild said, Canada was loyal to its Queen. Canada's "prosperity" was unmatched, its territory yet to be possessed was grand. Its statesmen were highly honourable, the extent of its commerce impressive. Canada's greatness was also evident in its high public and private morality, in its "intelligence," and in its religious liberty.¹⁰⁸ Wild was confident: the God of the Bible was on Canada's side.

Wild saw the hand of providence at work especially in the West. Only a few years had passed since Canada's legislatures had watched over "a few thousand square miles of territory," he said, but by 1881 the Dominion of Canada stretched from sea to sea. "Providence" had provided Canadians with natural resources that

¹⁰⁷Owram writes that "practically every indicator of the West showed marked improvement in the years surrounding 1880....The long-awaited destiny of the North West seemed to be imminent." *Promise of Eden*, 168. Also see Begg, *History of the North-West* vol. III, 68.

¹⁰⁸Joseph Wild, *The Conservative Convention and the Future Destiny of Canada: A Sermon and Answers to Letters* (Toronto, 1881), 7.

were "marvelous" and demanded exploitation, promised wealth, and proved Canada's special place in the divine economy.¹⁰⁹ "And so, dear friends, the end is inviting!...Canada has a fair field, a grand future. Let us work in harmony with Providence, and we shall be successful if we do."¹¹⁰

Lynne Marks has pointed out that in small-town nineteenth-century Ontario "a certain standard of material prosperity increasingly became part of what it meant to be a good Christian"; and Marks and William Westfall have both noted that the elaborate churches built throughout Ontario in the late nineteenth century were not fashioned so much to accommodate a flood of new church-goers as they were to display the riches enjoyed by God's people.¹¹¹ This study supports Marks' and Westfall's theses.

3.4 Biblical Rhetoric Void of Biblical Content

¹⁰⁹Ibid., 11.

¹¹⁰Ibid., 12-13. Though significantly less enthusiastic, Begg noted in 1895 that the north west's yet unexploited resources -- coal outcrops on the Red Deer and north Saskatchewan rivers, for example -- had been placed by "a wise Providence to serve the needs of humanity when the time for their exploitation shall arrive." *History of the North-West* vol. III, 452.

¹¹¹See Lynne Marks, *Revivals and Roller Rinks: Religion, Leisure and Identity in Late-Nineteenth-Century Small-Town Ontario* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1996), 52-61; and William Westfall, *Two Worlds: The Protestant Culture of Nineteenth-Century Ontario* (Montreal-Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1989), 128-158.

Did Wild's rhetoric, and the biblical language of those who made similar claims, come (so to say) from the heart or merely from the mouth? In his study of biblical rhetoric in early American history, David R. Williams maintains that the late eighteenth-century colonists who likened the New World to Canaan and King George III's England to Egypt were doing more than relying on well-known "buzz words." In employing biblical terms to explicate current events, Williams writes, "the people by their language revealed just how important their collective religious identity was."¹¹² Whether Williams is correct about the American scene is not an issue here. Suffice it to say that to many of the loyalists who fled the American colonies for Nova Scotia, the rebels' biblical language was (as Williams notes) "just words."¹¹³ What of the rhetoric of the late nineteenth-century Canadians cited in this study?

While the biblicistic language we have seen in the two previous chapters and in the paragraphs above certainly says something about how late nineteenth-century Canadians perceived themselves -- namely, as Christian citizens of a Christian country that should contribute to the creation of a Christian world -- it does not say very much about the level of religious devotion that actually informed the rhetoric of Canada's public

¹¹²Williams, *Wilderness Lost*, 130.

¹¹³That is not surprising since, in turn, the loyalists would paint themselves as Israelites escaping Egypt.

men and women. Whether Duncan Morrison really believed it significant that, by his calculation, Canada was larger than the heavenly city, or whether that biblical metaphor simply provided him with a seemingly authoritative entry into his primary subject - i.e. Canada's future blessedness -- is unclear, just like the muddling of Christianity and civilization in so much late nineteenth-century writing is difficult to parse.¹¹⁴

Consider a sermon preached in 1877 by the Reverend R.W. Norman of Montreal. Norman's subject was patriotism (an apt subject on Canada's decennial anniversary), and he chose as his text a verse from Psalm 137, a lament written by a Hebrew in Babylonian captivity: "How shall we sing the Lord's song in a strange land? If I forget thee, O Jerusalem, let my right hand forget her cunning. If I do not remember thee, let my tongue cleave to the roof of my mouth; if I prefer not Jerusalem above my chief joy."¹¹⁵ Norman confessed that he chose this passage for

¹¹⁴For another example of this mélange: In 1878 one wrote in the *Canadian Methodist Magazine* that amid all of Canada's "material prosperity I discern the truer elements of national greatness. Schools and colleges spring up through all the land. Graceful spires point evermore toward heaven, and seem to intercede for the cities at their feet. And not least among the thousands of Israel I behold our beloved Methodism, equally adapted to the most advanced civilization and the highest degree of refinement as to the lowly miners and fishermen among whom its earliest trophies were won. I behold it utilizing the increased facilities for good, sanctifying a national literature, consecrating wealth and power to the glory of God, writing upon every enterprise and industry of the age, 'Holiness to the Lord.'" W.H. Withrow, "A Hundred Years Ago," *Canadian Methodist Magazine* 8:4 (November 1878), 437.

¹¹⁵Psalm 137:4-6.

the "touching and pathetic patriotism which breathes in every word," though, he continued, he might have chosen many other passages, for, he said, patriotism was a central theme in the Bible. It was "a beautiful feature in that most wonderful and many-sided Bible character, David"; "It fired the soul and dictated the pathetic lamentations of that most patriotic of all Jews, Jeremiah the prophet." In Norman's view, even Jesus Christ himself was given to love of country:

It [patriotism] was conspicuous, be it said with reverence, in Him, who proclaimed that He was sent to the lost sheep of His nation, who never crossed its narrow limits, and who thinking of its perverseness, its blindness, and cruelty, forgot his own wrongs, past, present and to come, and merging them in the dreadful penalties awaiting Jerusalem, wept over it as it lay under the setting sun, a beauteous panorama before His eyes.

Then there was St. Paul "whose heart's desire was the salvation of his own people, and who, after undergoing the most concentrated and unappeasable hatred at their hands was almost ready to be excluded from Heaven, if at such a cost their eternal happiness could be purchased."¹¹⁶ Norman averred that patriotism in itself was of course not to be praised, though patriotism in service to biblical religion qua civilization certainly was. "The Queen's drum beats round the world," Norman said, and not merely to the ends of national aggrandizement or "commercial prosperity"

¹¹⁶R.W. Norman, *Our Duties and Opportunities* (Montreal: 'Gazette' Printing House, 1877), 4.

but to "the christianizing of the heathen," the dissemination of the "free open Bible," and, through the establishment of a sort of heavenly paradise on earth, the hastening of the second coming of Christ. In the meantime, Canadians could count on the fact that "Righteousness and true patriotism exalt a nation" and that as Canadians became "more and more a God-fearing people" the troubles of the world could not prosper against them."¹¹⁷

Here again, the rhetoric alludes to Scripture; and yet the ends to which Scripture is put has mainly to do with temporal goods--patriotism and national pride. "Righteousness exalteth a nation," says the writer of Proverbs (14:34). The word patriotism never appears in the Bible.¹¹⁸

As this study is concerned with public rhetoric, questions about the private beliefs of the Canadians whose words I have cited have been left unasked. While it seems clear that much of the biblical language that echoed in Canada's public life was, by the end of the nineteenth century, emptied of much of its theological content, the majority of those who spoke in the fashion being criticized here may well have been people of sincere religious faith. Whether they were or not, however, it

¹¹⁷Norman, "Our Duties and Responsibilities," 12.

¹¹⁸It may be worth noting that prominent observers of the American political scene charged Richard Nixon with making "patriotism" his religion. See Raymond F. Bulman, "'Myth of Origin,' Civil Religion and Presidential Politics," *Journal of Church and State* 33 (Summer 1991), 535.

appears that the legacy of their public language lingers, independent of the speakers' own intentions.

In an article published in the *Canadian Monthly and National Review*, one of these Canadians, a certain Thomas White, called on Canadians to strengthen their "faith." "If we would have a nation worthy of the name...[and] a national spirit wherewith to build it up," White said, Canadians must exercise "faith"; for if "faith" could move mountains, it build nations. It was, White wrote, precisely for this that the Anglo-Saxon and Celtic races had been "planted" in British North America. They had their own "destiny" to work out. So Canadians should look to the future with confidence. "Let us have faith; faith in the country itself; faith in its resources; faith in our power to develop them; faith in the institutions we possess; and faith in the destiny that is before us."¹¹⁹ White's language of faith -- a faith that does not to have much to do with traditional religion -- might nevertheless say something about English Canadian civil religion-- a religion whose faith was invested in the nation. It also might say something about the gradual emptying of biblical content from biblicistic language in late nineteenth-century Canadian public discourse generally: The faith White calls for, though allusive of biblical texts, has nothing to do with the Bible.

¹¹⁹Thomas White, Jr., "The Immigrant in Canada," *Canadian Monthly and National Review* 2:1 (July 1872), 8.

For another example, consider the words of James Woodsworth, father of J.S. Woodsworth, the founder of Co-Operative Commonwealth Federation. Woodsworth senior spent thirty-two years as a Methodist minister in the Canadian West. "I am thankful to have had a share in foundation-laying in this great country," he wrote. "Never for an hour have I lost faith in its future....my faith in Canada's future is stronger than ever."¹²⁰ Elsewhere in his memoirs Woodsworth makes clear that his "faith" in Canada was rooted in a faith in the advent of British imperialism-- "the greatest opportunity the world has ever presented for the application of those principles which alone can truly exalt any people and cause God's glory to dwell in the land."¹²¹ One doubts that Woodsworth really meant to subordinate "God's glory" to British imperialism. But he did seem to suggest that that glory could not have shone so brightly had the Empire not been there to help it along. The Bible followed the flag.

Keeping with this point, here is Sir John Thompson, speaking at an inter-provincial conference in Ottawa in 1887:

¹²⁰James Woodsworth, *Thirty Years in the Canadian North-West* (Toronto: McClelland, Goodchild and Stewart, 1917), xvi-vii.

¹²¹Ibid., xv.

The great object of our hope is that...the ocean which divides the colonies shall become the highway for their peoples and their products. On this happy occasion [the conference], these delegates assemble...not to consider the prospects of separation from the Mother Country, but to plight our faith anew to each other as brethren, and to plight our faith anew with the Motherland, that faith which has never been broken or tarnished.¹²²

Aside from Thompson's rhetoric of faith, which does not differ in essence from White's, there is another biblical allusion to consider: The ocean which divided the colonies of British North America shall, he said, "become the highway for their peoples." One cannot know for certain the source of Thompson's choice of words on this particular occasion, but Isaiah 40:3, which appears in one of the most commonly known passages in the Hebrew Bible, is as good a candidate -- probably a much better candidate -- as any. It reads: "The voice of him that crieth in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make straight in the desert a highway for our God. Thompson did not intend to impose upon maritime routes that would serve as "highways" for Canada's travelers any messianic value -- not in a Christian sense, at any rate -- though Thompson's choice of words could plausibly take on such significance within the context of a discussion of Canadian civil religion. No, he only said what he wished to say in a language -- a language that drew on biblical imagery -- which was familiar to all.

¹²²Cited in Begg, *History of the North-West*, 466.

Which brings us again to the point: at the end of the nineteenth century biblicistic rhetoric shaped Canada's public discourse as much as ever. But to some important measure, it seems to have been drained of properly biblical meaning. To borrow David Lyle Jeffrey's words (Jeffrey is paraphrasing Matthew Arnold), in late nineteenth-century Canada the Bible remained "great in its cultural importance" -- of that there can be no doubt; but, in terms of traditional significance, its teachings, injunctions and commands were "dated and stale as the tombs of the pharaohs."¹²³ On the evidence consulted for this study, David B. Marshall's contention that by the late nineteenth century much of Canada's public Protestant discourse had been in large measure reduced to sentimental clichés seems warranted.¹²⁴

To come at this argument another way, it appears that by the late nineteenth century Canada's Protestants had successfully accomplished one of their chief projects: in one way or another the Bible touched ordinary Canadians daily. And yet within that very success were seeds that, grown up, would perhaps ultimately undermine the Protestant project. For if, through their sheer ubiquity, the Bible's words could be construed to mean almost anything, or if they could be wrenched into nearly any context with impunity, then, one might plausibly have concluded, those words must in fact not mean not much at all.

¹²³Jeffrey, *People of the Book*, 315.

¹²⁴Marshall, *Secularizing the Faith*, 5.

In the United States presidential campaign of 1896 William Jennings Bryan defied the Republican Party declaring that it would not "press down upon the brow of labor this crown of thorns," that it would not "crucify mankind upon a cross of gold." Soon after the event Bryan's critics charged him with trivializing the Bible: *Judge* magazine published a cartoon titled "The Sacrilegious Candidate" that depicted Bryan trampling on a Bible.¹²⁵ Surely Bryan -- he who would defend in court a literal interpretation of the first three chapters of Genesis in Dayton, Tennessee, twenty nine years later -- did not mean to equate the hardships of laborers in pursuit of a better silver monetization policy with the passion and crucifixion of Christ. His use of biblical imagery to illustrate and rhetorically invigorate a political point came nowhere near the crass oratory of one senator from South Carolina who in 1894 claimed that President Grover Cleveland's "deception" of the American democracy was "blacker" than Judas's betrayal of Christ.¹²⁶ But one wonders if Bryan's critics were not to some extent correct in suggesting that his now famous rhetorical flourish somehow helped to denigrate the authority of the Bible. One wonders if Bryan did not unwittingly contribute to the creation of an environment in

¹²⁵John M. Murrin et al., *Liberty, Equality, Power: A History of the American People* vol. II (New York: Harcourt Brace, 1999), 654.

¹²⁶Senator Benjamin Tillman continued: "[Cleveland] is an old bag of beef and I am going to Washington with a pitchfork and prod him in his fat ribs." Cited in *Ibid.*

which he and his fellow biblical literalists would eventually be laughed to scorn.¹²⁷ Certainly Bryan's cultural loss (if legal victory) at Dayton, Tennessee, was rooted primarily in a growing scepticism of the Bible due to scientific discoveries and modern biblical criticism. But it seems reasonable to suggest that by the early twentieth century the Bible could be more easily derided because it had been handled so casually by so many apparently devout Protestants. To the extent that there is some truth to the saying that "familiarity breeds contempt," we may surmise that the sheer ubiquity of biblicistic language in North American public life -- a mark of Protestants' success at getting the Word out -- itself worked to undermine the perceived authority of the Bible. That the Bible was still considered an authority at the end of the late nineteenth century is manifest; else so many would not have continued to cite it in support of their various projects. But precisely because the Bible was cited to support so many projects, some of which seemed to run counter to plain biblical teaching (if not to imperial aspirations), it appears that the Bible had in many quarters been reduced to the status of container of useful anecdotes, metaphors, slogans, and figures of speech. One measure of the extent to which this is

¹²⁷After the Scopes Trial of 1925 Walter Lippmann would write that the fundamentalists' belief in the reliability of the Bible "no longer appeals to the best brains...and the [fundamentalist] movement is recruited largely from the isolated, the inexperienced, and the uneducated. *Preface to Morals* (New York: Time-Life Books, 1964 [repr., 1929]), 29.

true is that many historians of American populism have not taken biblicistic rhetoric like Bryan's seriously, while others who do purport to take it seriously nevertheless recognize that it served chiefly a political purpose.¹²⁸

At the end of the twentieth century Catholic novelist Percy Walker commented on the "devaluation" of biblical language:

It is a strange world, indeed, a world [American culture] which is, on the one hand, more eroticized than ancient Rome, and yet a world in which the Good News is proclaimed more loudly and frequently than ever before by TV evangelists and the new fundamentalists. There occurs a kind of devaluation of language, a cheapening of the very vocabulary of salvation, as a consequence of which the ever-fresh, ever-joyful meaning of the Gospel comes across as the dreariest TV commercial.¹²⁹

One need not share Percy's concern for the integrity of Christian and biblical religion to appreciate his central point: the ubiquity of biblicistic public rhetoric detached from actual biblical texts "cheapens" the "vocabulary of salvation"--precisely the vocabulary Protestant Christians have traditionally been most interested in preserving.

To return again to Canada, we can perhaps see such a

¹²⁸ See Rhys H. Williams and Susan M. Alexander, "Religious Rhetoric In American Populism: Civil Religion As Movement Ideology," *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* 33:1 (1994), 1-15. For a different point of view see Mark A. Noll, *The Scandal of the Evangelical Mind* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1994), 150-165.

¹²⁹ Cited in Jeffrey, *People of the Book*, 344.

devaluation of biblical language in the memoirs of James Woodsworth, who recalls having once met a man in the Canadian West who quoted Scripture to support his penchant for wearing distinguishing hatbands, "for the Bible said, 'Mark the perfect man'"¹³⁰-- and thus was the man able to persuade others to wear such bands as well.¹³¹ This bizarre use of the Scriptures was perplexing to Woodsworth, but it is interesting that he offered no counsel against it. In any event, he could not have done so easily: his memoir makes clear that he himself had embraced a hermeneutic that allowed for the transformation of biblical phrases into cultural and nationalist slogans. Woodsworth cites in his memoirs a proclamation of the General Conference of the Methodist Church which declared that as "as an ever swelling tide" of immigrants was making its way "to the virgin acres of our great North-West," it was the churches' "highest privilege and duty" to follow them and keep them on the right path. What was that path? "We are laying the foundations of empire in righteousness and truth," the Methodists said. "We are moulding the institutions of the future; we are shaping the destiny of the country."¹³²

We are laying the foundations of empire in righteousness and

¹³⁰Psalm 37:37-- "Mark the perfect man, and behold the upright; for the end of that man is peace."

¹³¹In *Thirty Years in the Canadian North-West*, 194.

¹³²*Ibid.*, 11.

truth. But what is truth? And, indeed, what is righteousness? When a Canadian traveler in the West said that he discussed with others there "the broad questions of civilization and Christianity"; when this same traveler spoke of another man as one "to be cultivated and made useful for God and country"; and when he doted on Victoria, British Columbia, as "a flourishing settlement, where Christianity and civilization are to the front as in no other place in this big western country"-- in each instance we are not sure if Christianity and civilization were distinct in the traveler's mind.¹³³

Given this close connection between Christianity and civilization, empire, and nationalism current in the late nineteenth century, it is perhaps not surprising that James Woodsworth's son, founder of the Co-Operative Commonwealth Federation in 1932, would himself ask questions and, in time, largely jettison the faith the of his father--or that part of his father's faith that still made a distinction between things sacred and secular.¹³⁴ But to the extent that Woodsworth senior, with many of his compatriots, seemed to confuse Canada, or Canada within the British Empire, with the kingdom of God, it appears that Woodsworth the younger completed his father's blurring of

¹³³John McDougall, *Pathfinding on Plain and Prairie*, 22, 56, 276.

¹³⁴Edith Fowke, *Toward Socialism: Selections from the Writings of J.S. Woodsworth* (Toronto: Ontario Woodsworth Memorial Foundation, 1948), 16.

temporal and eternal lines. As two historians of religion in Canada have put it:

J.S. Woodsworth's passionate conviction that there was no distinction between the secular and the sacred, and that, in fact, all manner of social and cultural existence was penetrated by Christian feeling and purpose, was a powerful testament to the impressive authority of Protestantism in public life. It evoked the belief shared by a large majority of Canadians that all facets of everyday living fell under the guiding superintendence of God's grace.¹³⁵

Such is what Nancy Christie and Michael Gauvreau have called Woodsworth's "full-orbed Christianity"-- a faith that put "doctrinal rigidity" in its place, which is to say out of existence. Whether such a religion can in fact be called Christianity is doubtful,¹³⁶ but that it does not have very much to do with the Bible is fairly clear. If, as Christie and Gauvreau maintain, early twentieth-century Canadian mainline Protestantism could get along without theological orthodoxy, it could also do well without the Bible-- save in those instances when its cadences and familiar phrases could usefully decorate public language. Thus in his work on hardship in Canada's cities titled *My Neighbor* (1911) J.S. Woodsworth cited biblical passages

¹³⁵Nancy Christie and Michael Gauvreau, *A Full-Orbed Christianity: The Protestant Churches and Social Welfare in Canada, 1900-1940* (Montreal-Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1996), 244.

¹³⁶What do Gauvreau and Christie mean by "Christian feeling"? What do they mean by "grace"? Without Christian creeds and tradition these terms are meaningless save to individuals who wish to create their own religions and call them Christianity. The point is not theological. The point is one of intellectual

on cities out of context, and not so much to add theological strength to his argument as to make his case seem more appealing to readers who would recognize his biblical allusions. It is true that in a biblical account Woodsworth cited Jesus wept over "the city" (Jerusalem), but, as far as can be told from the New testament account, he did not do that with the socio-economic concerns at the center of Woodsworth's political project in mind-- however worthy that project might have been.¹³⁷

Woodsworth's appropriation of Scripture in this instance did not have very much to do with Scripture.

Elsewhere in *My Neighbor* Woodsworth borrows the language of St. Paul, likening the workings of a city to that of a church;¹³⁸ but, again, he appears to have done this primarily for the literary, not religious, power the passage he cited (I Corinthians 12: 23 & 26) lent to his cause. His book's title itself alludes to the New Testament story of the Good Samaritan (Luke 10:25-37), whose example Woodsworth held up as a model for urban Canadians to emulate. Yet he did not appeal in this book to Canada's Protestants to circulate the Bible as well as material goods. He had done so in *Strangers Within Our Gates*, published two years earlier; but here the sole reference to the circulation

and historical integrity..

¹³⁷See J.S. Woodsworth, *My Neighbor* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1972 [repr., 1911]), 24, 129.

¹³⁸*Ibid.*, 14.

and teaching of the Bible comes not from him but from the pen of another minister, quoted at length by Woodsworth, who lauded the efficacy of "Bible classes" wherein many of the urban unprivileged were "led to Christ and noble moral ideas."¹³⁹

Woodsworth's reticence on the circulation of the Scriptures in his second book is worth noting, for in the first decade of the twentieth century -- well before he finally resigned from the ministry and just two years before he wrote and published *My Neighbor* -- he had propounded the Protestant belief that the Bible should be put into the hands of every Christian and non-Christian alike.¹⁴⁰ In *Strangers Within Our Gates* Woodsworth maintained that if Protestant English-speaking Canadians were going to help Canada's non-English speaking Catholic immigrants "work out their own salvation," then they would need to teach the immigrants to think for themselves. Independence of mind and spirit had to be fostered among these immigrants, and "Independence means...that the Bible is placed in their hands."¹⁴¹ Woodsworth rejoiced that "many" among Greek immigrants were "eagerly seeking more light," were "studying their Bibles," and were "mingling with Protestant people and catching the Protestant

¹³⁹Ibid., 201.

¹⁴⁰Woodsworth's title alludes to Exodus 20:10.

¹⁴¹J.S. Woodsworth, *Strangers Within Our Gates, or Coming Canadians* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1972 [repr., 1909]), 256.

spirit."¹⁴² It is somewhat peculiar, then, that after putting this much emphasis on the importance of the circulation of the Bible Woodsworth should have grown all but silent on that point by 1911. Or maybe this is not peculiar. Perhaps by 1911 Woodsworth's project, informed by a self-made form of Protestantism, had undermined itself.¹⁴³

If, as Woodsworth put it, a Bible in the hand meant spiritual "independence," then what would prevent one, after having tasted that liberty, from deciding to become even more free and to put away the Bible altogether, or, more likely, to do with it what one willed? To put my now oft-repeated point in the form of another interrogative: Is it not reasonable to think that as the Bible became more common it also became more easily trivialized? And, if so, would that not be one explanation, albeit a minor one, for the loss of biblical authority in the twentieth century?

¹⁴²Ibid., 254.

¹⁴³Oddly, in an article published in 1915 Woodsworth repudiated "individualistic religion" as being of "an earlier age." But it was precisely the individualism inherent in Protestantism that made it possible for him to form his own ideas concerning the true nature of Christianity. See Fowke, *Toward Socialism*, 13.

Part Two

The Bible in French Quebec

Chapter Four

The Bible in French Quebec

4.1 Emigration and Colonisation

The late nineteenth century was hard for French Quebec. Of course, by modern standards the late nineteenth century was hard for everyone. But in British North America those times were especially hard for New France. In the late nineteenth century French Canadians felt a growing sense of cultural isolation as they were becoming an ever smaller minority within North America in general and within Canada in particular. At the time of the union of the Canadas in 1840 the French had outnumbered their English counterparts. But with the confederation of Canada East and West with Nova Scotia and New Brunswick in 1867, French-speaking British North Americans made up less than a third of the Canadian population.¹ Whereas young English-speaking Canadians, or immigrants to Canada who would soon become English speakers, were not only free to resettle in the Canadian West but in many cases were actively encouraged to do so,² as the nineteenth century wore on that option became less and less appealing to French Canadians who feared the loss of their language, culture,

¹Mason Wade, *The French Canadians, 1760-1967* vol. 1 (Toronto: Macmillan of Canada, 1968), 331.

²See, for example, Preston Jones, "'To Set Wales Aglow With Enthusiasm for Canada': The Peculiar Work of Thomas Mills," *National Library of Wales Journal*, 1999.

and Catholic faith.³ French Canadian Oblates and Catholic missionaries of other religious orders labored intensely in the Canadian wilds through the nineteenth century;⁴ but the Northwest did not draw the attention of French Quebeckers the way it did their English-speaking counterparts.⁵ And while work-hungry English-speaking Protestants could emigrate to the United States and be at home in the Protestant culture that predominated

³One prominent French Canadian who advocated French Canadian immigration to the North-West was Monseigneur Alexandre Taché, bishop of St. Boniface in Manitoba. In his *Sketch of the North-West of America* (Montreal, 1870; trans. D.R. Cameron) Taché notes that the natives of the North-West "are, like other races, quickened with the breath of life which made the descendents of Adam intelligent beings" (116). And: "The Indians of the Northern Department, even before the arrival of missionaries amongst them, were possessed of some religious ideas, at least some *biblical traditions*, easily recognized, interwoven with the gross follies and superstitions which encompass them" (117; emphasis added). Taché also described some native "sorcerers" who had declared themselves spiritually powerless in the presence of holy objects, including "the Book of Holy Writ" (118). Also in this work Taché asks, "From where are the Indians descended?" and answers himself with race theories then current: "[T]hey are descended from Adam. I add, Noah was their ancestor, and Shem their progenitor--for the Redskin or American is connected with the Mongolian race, from which he differs less than do the descendants of the three sons of Noah, one from the other" (118). References to the Bible and biblically-informed works appear in Taché's earlier *Vingt années de missions dans le Nord-Ouest de l'Amérique* (New York: Johnson Reprint Corporation, 1969; repr., 1866), 16, 19, , 37, 51, 99, 100, and 195. In 1885 Jean-Baptiste Proulx (*Le Canada, le Curé Labelle, et la colonisation* [Saint Jacques, PQ: Editions du pot de fer, 1992; repr., 1885], 24) approvingly cited one observer who said that the Red River valley in Manitoba could be described with all the superlatives employed by Josephus in describing the biblical promised land.

⁴See Robert Choquette, *The Oblate Assault on Canada's Northwest* (Ottawa: University of Ottawa, 1995).

⁵See A. I. Silver, "Confederation and the North-West," ch. in *The French Canadian Idea of Confederation, 1864-1900* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1982).

there,⁶ Quebec's French-speaking Catholics, many of whom were displaced by an increasingly industrial economy (driven in large measure by English-speaking entrepreneurs)⁷ were shut out from the growing prosperity of Montreal, and went to the U.S. at the expense of what their clergy said they should hold dear: religion et patrie. Still, in the second half of the nineteenth century perhaps as many as 500,000 French Canadians nevertheless left Quebec to work and live in the United States.⁸

Historians have rightly maintained that so many of Quebec's French-speaking Catholics left Canada for the United States simply because they could make a better living there-- particularly in New England's factories. Most of the emigrants themselves would have said as much at the time. Had these emigrating Quebecers been Protestants, interested in making money and getting on in life, their departure might have been viewed by their ministers as understandable, if regrettable. But French Quebec was not (save for a very small minority)

⁶In 1850 there were about 150,000 British North America-born persons residing in the United States; by 1890 there were nearly a million. Donald Creighton, *Dominion of the North: A History of Canada* (Toronto, Macmillan of Canada, 1957), 354. Of course, some emigration went the other way. In 1900, for instance, about 19,000 residents of the United States moved to Canada, and in 1905 about 58,000 did. Robert Craig Brown, *Canada, 1896-1921: A Nation Transformed* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1974), 61.

⁷Wade, *The French Canadians*, 334-39.

⁸In 1890 the United States census showed that there were 302,496 Canadians of French origin residing in the U.S., and some students of this question maintain that as many as 500,000 French Canadians emigrated to the U.S. between 1851 and 1901. See Silver, *The French Canadian Idea of Confederation*, 14.

Protestant, and French Canadians were consistently urged to shun the pursuit of filthy -- that is, Protestant -- lucre. Thus for Quebec's Catholic clergy the emigration of French Canadians to the U.S. was looked upon with some sorrow.

Considerable space below is devoted to Trois-Rivières Bishop Louis-François Laflèche. Suffice it to note here that at one point Laflèche maintained that the primary cause of emigration from Quebec was faithlessness to the Christian gospel Canada's French Catholics were obliged to uphold. In his Sermon on the Mount⁹ Jesus had taught that those who were content with little were to be blessed, both in this life and in the life to come, Laflèche said in 1880; but Quebec's emigrants were obviously discontented. So discontented were they, in fact, they were willing to leave hearth and home, language and religion in pursuit of earthly contentment. The Scriptures also taught that a man's living should be drawn from the sweat of his brow.¹⁰ Yet, Laflèche said, Quebec's emigrants sought a life of ease. They hoped to find in the United States bread for which one need not toil.¹¹

⁹Matthew 5-7.

¹⁰Genesis 3:17-19.

¹¹In H.J.J.B. Chouinard, ed., *Fête nationale des canadiens-français célébrée à Québec en 1880* (Québec: L'imprimerie A. Côté, 1881), 326-30. As usual Laflèche cited numerous Scripture passages in support of his lecture, including a reference to the godly, "strong woman" ("femme forte") described in Proverbs 31. Surely no French Canadian woman who was truly devoted to her faith, family, and nation would wish to emigrate to the United States, Laflèche maintained (331).

Thus for many of Quebec's clergy, by going to the United States Quebec's emigrants had proven themselves disloyal to their people's calling. Or at least they had proven themselves spiritually weak. And even if Quebec's emigrants were unwitting apostates -- Laflèche himself seems to have felt genuine pity for those wayward souls -- they were apostates nevertheless. As Henri Bourassa would put it early in the next century, Quebec's emigrants had chosen to put America's "golden calf culture"¹² before their own Catholic one. Or, as Laflèche, Bourassa, and Louis-Antoine Paquet agreed -- the biblical account of Jacob and Esau in mind -- Quebec's emigrants had sold their Franco-Catholic heritage for a "mess of pottage."¹³ They had turned their backs on the providential mission of their own French Canadian people.

Some, looking on what they hoped was a bright side, opined that Quebec's emigrants to New England were, so to speak, shock troops on the front lines of a spiritual battle that would eventually lead to the annexation of Catholicized parts of New England to Quebec. Even Bishop Laflèche temporarily entertained this vision.¹⁴ But such a view could not stand; for it was soon

¹²On the golden calf see Exodus 32.

¹³"Our language received no divine promise of preservation, except the one that God made to all the peoples and men who have enough heart and energy to defend their soul, their body, and their national and family heritage," Bourassa said in 1912; "but this promise holds nothing for those whose hearts are so base that they would swap their birthright for a mess of pottage." In Ramsay Cook, *French Canadian Nationalism: An Anthology* (Toronto: Macmillan of Canada, 1969), 141. On the biblical mess of pottage see Genesis 25:29-34.

¹⁴Wade, *The French Canadians*, 433.

clear that it did not take long for French Canada's emigrants to become for all practical purposes Americans-- albeit in some cases French-speaking ones.¹⁵ Connections with the old country would remain strong for some emigrants for a few generations; but once they were settled in the U.S. few of them returned to live in Quebec, where the virtues of poverty were preached with candor and simplicity.

In 1850 Lower Canada's bishops urged Canada's French Catholics to reach out in sympathy to their compatriots, those "errant lambs," who had gone to live "without temples and without pastors" in the United States.¹⁶ "Oh! Qu'ils s'ennuient sur cette terre étrangère, où ils ne peuvent plus répéter les doux cantiques qu'ils chantaient si joyeusement, quand ils étaient près de vous," the bishops cried.

Semblables aux malheureux enfants d'Israël, errants sur les bords des fleuves de Babylone, comme ils pleurent amèrement, au souvenir de leurs pères qui ne vivent que pour eux; de leurs mères qui ne comptent que par leurs larmes les longs moments d'absence, de leurs amis et de leurs voisins dont la société leur était si agréable!¹⁷

¹⁵I discuss this concern in my "Civil War, Culture War: French Quebec and the American War Between the States," *Catholic Historical Review* (2000).

¹⁶Human beings are frequently likened to sheep and lambs in the Bible. For example, Isaiah 40:11 reads: "[God] shall feed his flock like a shepherd: he shall gather the lambs with his arm, and carry them in his bosom, and shall gently lead those that are with young."

¹⁷*Mandements, lettres pastorales, ciculaires et autres documents* vol VIII (Montreal, 1887), 81-82. No scriptural passage was cited more in connection with discussions of Canada's French-speaking immigrants to the United States than this one from Psalm

Comparable words of French Canadian woe were repeated again and again into the twentieth century.

Given late nineteenth-century French Quebec's economic difficulties, its status as a linguistic and religious minority in North America, and the exodus of a few hundreds of thousands of its residents from what their religious leaders told them was a chosen land to a riotous republic of Protestant anarchy and Mormon polygamy, one might have expected a general gloominess to have prevailed in Quebec. And jeremiads, pronounced in times of perceived distress against both private and public sins -- like privately favoring liberals and Liberals and then voting for them, for example -- there certainly were.¹⁸ Bishop Laflèche, for instance, declared a vote cast in favour of the Liberal Party, which did not recognize the Church's preminence in temporal

137. See, for example, Adolphe-Basile Routhier, *Causeries du Dimanche* (Montreal: C.-O. Beauchemin, 1871), 81. It should be noted that while Routhier thought emigration regrettable in the short-term, he thought that ultimately God would use French Canadian emigrants to win North America to Catholic civilization. "Je vois des Canadiens-français se groupant et s'agglomérant sur tous les points des Etats-Unis, y construisant des villages et y fondant des villes. Je vois nos autorités ecclésiastiques députant des prêtres, des pères à ces pauvres enfants prodiges, et les ramènent dans les bras de leur père qui est dans les cieux. Et comme la vérité a quelque chose du rayonnement du soleil, je vois la lumière évangélique jaillissant de ces différents foyers et illuminant l'horizon" (82).

¹⁸See, for example, Roberto Perin, *Rome in Canada: The Vatican and Canadian Affairs in the Late Victorian Age*, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1990), 96-99.

affairs, a violation worthy of eternity in the fiery pit.

But what also appears to have prevailed in most influential quarters in Quebec was a sense of hopefulness -- sometimes not easily distinguishable from hubris -- that was informed by passages in the Bible. "God has planted in the heart of every French Canadian patriot a 'flower of hope,'" the arch-nationalist American expatriate Jules-Paul Tardivel wrote in 1895. At the centre of his hope was the "aspiration that there be established, on the banks of the St. Lawrence, a New France whose mission shall be to continue in this American land the work of Christian civilization."¹⁹

One response to French Canadian emigration in which this sense of hopefulness manifested itself in the late nineteenth century was Quebec's colonization movement, the chief proponent of which was Antoine Labelle, curé of Saint-Jérôme, deputy-minister of Quebec's Department of Agriculture and Colonization, and, thus, the first Catholic priest in North America to hold an important governmental post.²⁰ So committed to colonisation was

¹⁹Tardivel cited in Tom Sinclair-Faulkner, "God's 'Flower of Hope': The Religious Matrix of Québec's Indépendentisme," *Canadian Issues* VII (1985), 367. See the comments of one Abbé Rouleau in P. Ph. Charette, ed., *Noces d'or de la Saint-Jean-Baptiste: Compte-rendu officiel des fêtes de 1884 à Montréal* (Montreal: Typographie du Journal Le Monde, 1884), 20-26.

²⁰In addition to the desire to staunch the emigration of Quebecers by hymning the virtues of maintaining an agricultural and French-speaking life in Quebec rather than an industrial and English-speaking one in the United States, the colonization movement aimed simply to fill its vast open spaces with French Canadians. In 1872 Bishop Langevin of Rimouski opined in *Le*

Labelle, "Apostle of the North," that the Frenchman Jean-Baptiste Proulx likened him to Saint Paul, who never failed to preach his gospel in and out of season.²¹

In chapter three above we saw that English-Canadian expansionists spoke of "possessing the land," an idea with ultimately biblical roots.²² The expression is likewise easy to find flowing from the pens of French Canada's nationalists; and when it came to citing Scripture in the cause of possessing land, Curé Labelle could have held his own against even the most fervent Protestant.

Consider that in June 1884 Labelle initially appeared to be reminding one audience of what God had done after deciding that he wanted to rescue Israel from Egyptian servitude, only to suggest a few moments later that it was neither ancient Israel nor Egypt that he really had in mind, for God "fit de la femme juive une femme canadienne"; and "Grâce à la bénédiction du ciel et à la co-opération de la femme juive, ses enfants se multiplièrent à un tel point que ni les travaux forcés, ni la persécution la plus barbare, ne purent anéantir la race

Canadien that "In the colonization of the immense fertile areas which our Province contains is to be found, at least in part, the key to our future." Langevin's letter in *Le Canadien*, 15 January 1875, is cited and translated in Silver, *The French Canadian Idea of Confederation*, 113.

²¹Jean-Baptiste Proulx, *Le Canada, le Curé Labelle, et la colonisation* (Saint-Jacques, PQ: Editions du pot de fer, 1993; repr., 1885), 30. Proulx also enthused that "the veritable French Canadian race" was "incarnate" in Labelle (39).

²²See, for instance, Deuteronomy 31.

d'Abraham"-- that is, the French Canadians, inhabitants of a new "terre promise": French Quebec.²³ Whether a people could be assigned any greater task than being the chosen of God is doubtful. And that important task, Labelle believed, belonged to the French Canadians.

While the colonisation movement focused on French Canadian settlement in, among other regions, the Ottawa Valley, and the land around the Eastern Townships (which became predominantly francophone in the late nineteenth century), le nord was particularly alluring to colonisers. Of course, just what enthusiasts of colonization meant by "the north" varied. For some the term referred primarily to territory within the province of Quebec; for others, such as Labelle, the north included present day Ontario and the prairie provinces.²⁴ Whatever the case, in the late nineteenth century the north became to French Quebecers

²³Labelle cited in Gabriel Dussault, *Le Curé Labelle: messianisme, utopie et colonisation au Québec, 1850-1900* (Montreal: Hurtubise, 1982), 91.

²⁴See Christian Morissonneau, *La Terre promise: Le mythe du Nord québécois* (Quebec: Hurtubise, 1978), 126-146. Morissonneau observes that "the north" tended to be thought of by some French Canadians as the Canadian north, by others as the north of Quebec, and by still others as the land just north of Montreal (128). For Captain J.E. Bernier the "north" extended to the north pole. Morissonneau reprints a letter to Bernier from a priest eager to be the first to celebrate mass on the pole. "Si, comme Canadien, vous ambitionnez d'arriver le premier au Pôle; moi, comme prêtre, je veux être le premier à y planter la Croix, l'étendard de Notre Roi..." the priest wrote in 1899. "Vous planterez la croix et sous son ombre, je célébrerai le Saint-Sacrifice; consacrant par un acte solennel de possession divine ce point de notre globe qui n'a jamais été vu du ciel & qui désormais appartiendra à Dieu...et à nous" (138).

what the West was to the Americans:²⁵ A wilderness to be conquered, a land to be possessed, a mission field.

That the north was more than merely a place to send French Canadians who might otherwise emigrate to the United States-- that it was, at least in the minds of some prominent French Canadians, a literal promised land seems clear. For example, M. A. Nantel, director of the *Seminaire de Sainte-Thérèse*, said that wherever the French Canadian colonist set his foot he brought with him his faith and "religious virtues." "[P]artout il se révèle comme le fils d'une race choisie qui est appelée à continuer sur cette terre d'Amérique la mission providentielle de la France"²⁶-- a providential national mission whose intellectual roots dated to at least the thirteenth century.²⁷ When France sent

²⁵Ibid., 59.

²⁶Nantel cited in Ibid., 96.

²⁷In that century Jacques de Vitry noted: "There are many Christian nations, the first among them is France, the French are pure Catholics." Cited in Liah Greenfeld, "The Three Identities of France," ch. in *Nationalism: Five Roadsto Modernity* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1992), 93. An important corollary to the French Canadians' belief that they were carrying on France's religious mission in the New World was the view that New France's fall into the hands of the British at the end of the Seven Years War was a blessing, for with the Revolution of 1789 France, generally speaking, became apostate. "En changeant de régime [in 1763], nous avons évité les maux, les errements de la révolution française et les violents soubresauts de la politique de la France qui se font sentir jusqu'à ce jour," Curé Labelle opined. "[Of Britian n]ous pouvons donc nous écrire avec le saint vieillard Zacharie: *Salutem ex inimicis nostris*." Antoine Labelle, *La mission de la race canadienne-française en Canada* (Saint-Jacques, PQ: Edition du pot de fer, 1992; repr., 1883), 9. In the twentieth century the influential historian-priest Lionel Groulx would reject the view that Quebec had benefited from the Conquest. See the first three chapters in Ronald Rudin, *Making History in Twentieth Century Quebec* (Toronto: University of

colonists to what would become New France in the sixteenth century, explained Curé Labelle 1883, its goal to was to establish a race that was not only "virile" and "vigorous" but "eminently Christian."²⁸

Labelle himself was perceived as something of a Moses--one in a long line of French and French Canadian deliverers.²⁹ Indeed:

Quelles émotions dut éprouver le curé Labelle quand au mois d'octobre 1872, après une ascension difficile dans l'eau et la boue jusqu'aux genoux, il s'arrêta sur ces hauteurs pour la première fois, et qu'il vit se dérouler devant lui ces campagnes [to be possessed] sans limites. C'était la Terre promise se dévoilant aux regards et aux aspirations de Moïse..."³⁰

Thus the recollections of J.B. Proulx, one time secretary of Labelle; and Proulx's memory was faithful: Over ten years later the colonist-in-chief himself again declared Quebec a terre

Toronto, 1997).

²⁸Labelle, *La Mission de la race canadienne-française en Canada*, 6. Also see Jean-Baptiste Proulx, *Le Canada, le Curé Labelle, et la colonisation* (Saint-Jacques, PQ: Editions du pot de fer, 1992; repr., 1885), 10.

²⁹In June 1912 Henri Bourassa encouraged the first Congrès de la Langue Française au Canada to "take pleasure in thinking" that Joan of Arc's heart had "crossed the Atlantic and come to Canadian soil, where the cross of Christ and the French way of thinking were the first to push back the barbarians, where the French spirit cast the first seeds of Christian civilization..." In Cook, *French Canadian Nationalism*, 146. Thirty-two years earlier Judge Adolphe-Basile Routhier referred to New France's Bishop Laval as "le Moïse du Canada." H.J.J.B. Chouinard, ed., *Fête nationale des canadiens-français célébrée à Québec en 1880* (Quebec, 1881), 283.

³⁰J.B. Proulx cited in Chouinard, *Fête nationale de canadiens-français...*, 73.

promise flowing with milk and honey.³¹

At the same time Labelle made this claim, one Charles Thibault, another proponent of colonisation, somewhat more humbly reminded French Canada's nationalists that only the Almighty, who exalts and abases nations, knew what the future reserved for "le vaste bassin formé par les Laurentides, les Alléghanies et les Montagnes rocheuses, à la nation canadienne."³² But his hopes were as lofty as Labelle's. And surely both Thibault and Labelle would have approved of a lecture given by a certain Father A. L. Mothon seven years earlier, in 1877, to an audience of some 1,500 at Laval University entitled "Nos frères de la Louisiane: Le présent et l'avenir de la race française en Amérique."

In this lecture Mothon maintained that French language and culture were all but lost in Louisiana, and that was true in large part because the louisianais had not been faithful to their Catholic religion and traditions. "Au temps des splendeurs de la Louisiane, on appelait la Nouvelle-Orléans...l'Athènes du sud," Mothon said-- but no more: Louisiana's glory, snuffed out by religious indifference, had departed. But Quebec's fate, Mothon said, should be otherwise. For if the French Canadians lived up to their high calling, Quebec City would take New Orleans' place as "l'Athènes du nord" and would be recognized as the centre of a vast French-speaking Catholic nation-- a nation that seemed to Mothon to be in the process of an astonishing expansion. "En face

³¹*Noces d'or de la Saint-Jean-Baptiste*, 434.

³²Thibault cited in Dussault, *Le Curé Labelle*, 65.

de [l']effacement progressif de l'élément français sur le continent américain," he observed, "c'est avec un sentiment profond de consolation et de plaisir qu'on reporte son regard sur cette terre canadienne, où notre race, bien loin de s'affaiblir, s'étend au contraire et se développe chaque jour." Mothon continued:

Je n'aime pas la flatterie, mais je puis le dire parce que c'est la vérité. Oui, l'extension actuelle de la race française au Canada est une des plus rapides et des plus puissantes dont l'histoire fasse mention....dans le Nord-Ouest, dans ces immenses régions du Manitoba vers lesquelles commencent à émigrer les Canadiens et où, pour la première fois, réside, maintenant un gouverneur canadien-français. Non seulement notre race s'étend en prenant possession des contrées nouvelles, mais elle envahit la race anglo-saxonne elle-même; elle la refoule, et lui reprend pied à pied, par une conquête pacifique, la terre dont l'a dépouillée autrefois le sort des armes, dans le Nouveau-Brunswick et la Nouvelle-Ecosse où, quatre ou cinq comtés complètement anglais naguère, sont déjà au pouvoir des Canadiens; à Ottawa, qui comptait à peine quelques Français, il y a quinze ans, et où ceux-ci maintenant forment la moitié de la population; enfin dans les cantons (townships) de l'Est, où cet envahissement irrésistible est plus frappant peut-être que partout ailleurs.³³

So where, Mothon queried, would the this peaceful conquest of anglo-saxondom end? And what was the continental destiny of the French Canadians? "Dieu seul le sait," of course; "et ici nous entrons dans le champ des hypothèses;

³³In 1861 just 56.1 per cent of the population of Quebec City was composed of French Canadians, while that number rose by 1901 to almost 83 percent. Over the same period Sherbrooke's French Canadian population grew from 24.1 to 62.7 per cent. Silver, *The French Canadian Idea of Confederation*, 17.

mais il n'est pas défendu de jeter un regard sur l'avenir, et de chercher à apercevoir dans le lointain des temps, ce que nous réserve la Providence. Si les décrets impénétrables de Dieu, ou nos propres fautes, ne mettent pas une barrière à ce développement magnifique; si surtout, comme il arrive trop souvent, la prospérité et le succès ne nous sont pas plus fatals que le malheur, qui peut dire aujourd'hui ce que sera le Canada dans cent cinquante ou deux cents ans, quand de nombreux chemins de fer nous relieront à toutes les provinces d'en bas, au Saguenay aux plaines lointaines du Nord-Ouest, et sillonneront les immenses forêts encore inexplorées de l'Ottawa; quand des manufactures se dresseront tout le long de nos rivières et de nos torrents; quand notre sol si riche nous aura livré tous ses secrets et nous donnera le charbon, le fer, le cuivre, tous les métaux, qu'il renferme dans son sein; quand des villes florissantes s'élèveront où apparaissent aujourd'hui de modestes villages; quand enfin depuis l'Ontario jusqu'au Terre-Neuve, depuis Manitoba jusqu'au lac Champlain, le Canada comptera quinze millions, vingt millions, trente millions de catholiques et de Français?³⁴

That the number of French-speakers in Canada has never approached the numbers Mothon looked for is not important here. What is important is that at the moment Mothon spoke it seemed plausible: French Canada's Ultramontane public figures were sure that their nation and people were actors in a divine play of universal import: God himself was on the French Canadians' side. If God was for them, what, save their own sin, could prevail against them? If they remained faithful to their providential mission, how could they not but prosper and eventually win much of North America to the faith?

³⁴Mothon's text is printed in H.J.J.B. Chouinard, ed., *Annales de la Société St-Jean Baptiste de Québec* vol. IV (Québec, 1903), 277-296. Also see Antoine Labelle's similar enthusiasm in Proulx, *Le Canada, le Curé Labelle, et la colonisation*, 63.

A question that might be posed here is whether this sort of hopeful hubris propagated and supported by French Quebec's most influential opinion leaders was not rooted so much in belief but was in fact a reaction to the fears and uncertainties modernity and a bustling and dominant Protestant culture were raining down upon French Quebec. Reference might of course be made to the American Sioux and their desperate revivalist religion of the Ghost Dance in the late 1880s or to Thomas Flanagan's interpretation of Louis 'David' Riel's messianic revolt against the government of Canada as examples of stressed peoples finding strength in messianic faith.³⁵ So it might be asked if Quebec's French majority suffered an inferiority complex for which they compensated with visions of continental grandeur. This very thing has been asserted, and with good reason.³⁶

³⁵In response to the decimation of Sioux culture the prophet Wovoka preached religious revival via a "ghost dance" that would lead to the retreat of the white man in North America, the return of the Buffalo, and the restoration of native culture. The bewilderment of American soldiers in the face of the dance contributed in some measure to the massacre at Wounded Knee, South Dakota, where some three hundred men, women, and children were shot to death.

³⁶Thus Mason Wade on the numerous rhetorical and political conflicts waged by French Quebec's purveyors of their people's divine mission against liberals, Liberals, modernists, and so on: "This [late nineteenth-century French Canadian] nationalism, as befits the circumstances under which it arose, sometimes uses religion for political ends, and sometimes politics for religious ends, and in either case arouses the antipathy of English-speaking North Americans, whose cultural tradition is largely based upon separation of Church and State. As in the case of the inferiority complex of the individual whose feelings of inadequacy cause him to adopt the arrogant and aggressive attitudes which are a form of defence mechanism, so the minority complex produces similar manifestations which intensify the

But be that as it may, what is called for here is an exercise of imagination. What must it have been like to have been a member of a society that believed itself providentially chosen to maintain Christian civilization after its previous handlers, the European French, had abandoned the New World? And what must it have been like to believe that when, for example, one bore children one was not only keeping up the family line and producing future farm hands but also contributing to a plan designed by Providence itself? However peculiar it seems now, Tardivel's belief that God had planted in the heart of every French Canadian patriot a 'flower of hope' was taken seriously by Tardivel himself and others.

4.2 The Bible and Confederation

Flowers need tending, of course; and if there were ever pests that threatened God's French Canadian garden, they were disobedience to legitimate authority and Protestantism. Needless to say, as far as that latter point went, Canada's Protestants saw things the other way. For them, if there were ever a divine cause worthy of Protestant sweat and tears that cause was the extirpation of Roman Catholicism. In 1925 one British minister would claim, as had countless thousands before him, that with modernism and bolshevism the Christian church's greatest enemy

conflict between the majority and the minority..." *The French Canadians*, 333.

was "Romanism."³⁷ The view that popery was the true Christian church's eternal foe was a verity with which few Canadian Protestants of earlier generations would disagree. As we saw in part one of this thesis, English-speaking Canadian society was inhabited in large measure by independent Bible readers who took pride in the freedom each Protestant enjoyed to consult and interpret the Bible for himself. Thus when British North Americans read their Bibles and then denounced, embraced or yawned at Confederation or other public affairs, they were to their own minds simply declaring the facts as they saw them.

While there were often differences of opinion among Quebec's prominent opinion leaders on public affairs in late nineteenth-century Quebec, there was not the variety available in, say, Halifax. One obvious reason for this was, generally speaking, the deference Quebec's Catholics habitually and ungrudgingly lent their religious leaders. "Oh well, I suppose it'll be a good thing!" *La Revue Canadienne* reported some French Canadians as saying in reference to the confederation scheme being worked out in 1865. "I don't know," said others-- "M. Le curé hasn't breathed a word about it."³⁸

Eventually Quebec's Catholic authorities would have

³⁷A minister associated with the Keswick movement in Britain is cited in a collection of letters written between Wales and Patagonia edited by Dafydd Ifans, *Tyred Drosodd: Gohebiaeth Eluned Morgan a Nantlais* (Abertawe: Gwasg Efengylydd Cymru, 1977), 52.

³⁸Cited in Silver, *The French Canadian Idea of Confederation*, 26.

something to say about Confederation, though not a great deal. Once the plan was sealed they called simply for submission to what in their view was ultimately God's work. Those among Quebec's Catholic clergy, like Bishop Ignace Bourget of Montreal, who were less than enthused with the scheme before its actualization nevertheless put aside their own sentiment and accepted what they believed was the will of God. And, citing Scripture, they required that all of Quebec's Catholics do likewise.

Walter Ullman has suggested that the bishops' unified acceptance of Confederation once it was accomplished was the result of their "political acumen."³⁹ There is no point, after all, in railing against a done deal; and since the bishops might have needed political assistance at some time, there was no good reason to rock too many boats. But what Ullman's surmise lacks is a recognition that obedience to legitimate government was central to the conservative Catholic faith the bishops propounded. The bishops' decision to accept Confederation quietly was not merely political; the theological universe in which they operated required them to submit to political authority, which was itself under divine authority. Bishop Thomas Cooke of Trois-Rivières, for instance, reminded French Canadians that they should accept Confederation because God was in control of worldly events, had proven himself faithful in the past, and would not let them down

³⁹Walter Ullman, "The Quebec Bishops and Confederation," *Canadian Historical Review* 44:3 (September 1963), 234.

in the future.⁴⁰

This is not to say that Quebec's Catholic bishops were hesitant to speak out on public matters related to faith, which for most of them included very much indeed. In a circular required to be read to parishioners prior to the federal election of 1867, Bishop Charles-François Baillargeon declared that any body politic that pretended to function without due reverence for the laws of God was to be pitied. "[M]alheur au peuple qui, dans l'exercice de ses droits politiques, oublie Dieu, et méconnaît ses lois saintes," Baillargeon wrote; "malheur aux hommes à qui un tel scandale arrive; et malheur aussi à vous, si vous vous laissez entraîner à un pareil scandale!"⁴¹ And, citing Exodus 20:16, Wisdom 1:11, and I Corinthians 6:10, he reminded French Canadians who might be lured by seemingly good yet impious men seeking political power that even if political liars were otherwise noble men, they would still be held accountable on the day of eternal judgement.⁴² Recalling to mind that God had the power to cast both body and soul into hell (Luke 12:5), Baillargeon reminded Quebec's electors to keep the gravity of their democratic calling in mind when they voted.⁴³

⁴⁰In *Nouvelle constitution du Canada* (Ottawa: Atelier Typographique du Journal, 'Le Canada,' 1867), 61.

⁴¹H. Tetu and C.O. Gagnon, eds., *Mandements, lettres pastorales et circulaires des évêques de Québec* v. 4 (Québec: Imprimerie Générale A. Cote et Cie, 1888), 385-86.

⁴²*Ibid.*, 388-89.

⁴³*Ibid.*, 390.

Meanwhile, Bishop Charles Laroque of Saint-Hyacinthe rebuked those who agitated against the confederation scheme, for did not the Scriptures teach that just authority should not be resisted and that those who did resist it merited "a proper condemnation" from both God and men?⁴⁴ For Christians politics could be nothing other than proper ethics applied to government, Laroque wrote, and the aim of government should be to encourage men to conduct their public affairs according to divine law.⁴⁵ Material gain was certainly to be hoped for, but the nation that would be strong must, above all else, follow the teachings of the Holy Spirit mediated through Rome. Jesus-Christ had said, "Cherchez d'abord le royaume de Dieu et la justice qui y conduit: et tout le reste vous viendra par surcroît," Laroque wrote;⁴⁶ yet many political men acted as though religion were not relevant to public affairs, "comme si la lumière du flambeau de l'Evangile ne devait pas guider les pas des peuples, aussi bien que ceux de chaque homme en particulier."⁴⁷

⁴⁴In *Nouvelle constitution du Canada*, 68. "Déjà même quelques-uns d'entre eux, d'abord prononcés contre la Confédération, vous ont donné l'exemple de ce que vous avez à faire comme de bons citoyens, en même temps que comme de bons chrétiens, qui ne peuvent ignorer que résister à l'autorité, c'est selon l'Apôtre, résister à l'ordre établi par la Providence, et mériter une juste condamnation et de la part de Dieu, d'abord; et ensuite de la part des hommes sages et modérés, qui savent que toute institution humaine doit nécessairement porter le cachet de son origine."

⁴⁵For Roman Catholics divine law is not drawn only from the Bible but also from Canon law and magisterial teaching.

⁴⁶Matthew 6:33.

⁴⁷In *Nouvelle constitution du Canada*, 73.

4.3 Franco-Protestants and the Biblical Defense of Catholicism

That Quebec's bishops cited the Scriptures in their directives to Quebec's Catholics did not mean very much to Protestants, who took it as a given that Quebec's francophone Catholics were not only unfamiliar with the Bible but were prohibited from reading it altogether.⁴⁸ "The Word of God is a closed book to the vast majority of the inhabitants of the Province of Quebec," J.S. Woodsworth quoted one missionary as saying; "Rome" had "confiscated the Sacred Book" in Quebec-- this was "an incontrovertible fact." "A short visit in the homes of any village in Quebec will show, not only that the Bible is not in the possession of the people, but that they are afraid of it, having been told it was a dangerous book."⁴⁹ Some fifteen years earlier the ultramontane Adolphe-Basile Routhier had claimed that despite the many differences between English and French-speaking Canadians the two groups had important things in common, not the least of which was a belief in the Bible, "the Book of books."⁵⁰ But had Woodsworth heard Routhier's words before 1909, when he

⁴⁸Like their Canadian counterparts, American Protestants mistakenly interpreted the Catholic prohibition of private interpretation of the Bible as a prohibition against the reading of the Bible altogether. See Gerald P. Fogarty, *American Catholic Biblical Scholarship: A History from the Early republic to Vatican II* (New York: Harper and Row, 1989), 6.

⁴⁹J.S. Woodsworth, *Strangers Within Our Gates* (Toronto: University of Toronto, 1977 [repr., 1972; 1909]), 245.

⁵⁰Adolphe-Basile Routhier, *Conférences et discours* (Montreal: Librairie Beauchemin, 1904), 117.

published *Strangers Within Our Gates*, they would have rung hollow in his ears. Like many Protestants of his day, Woodsworth believed that Catholic laypersons were not only discouraged from reading the Bible for themselves but were forbidden from doing so.⁵¹

In the 1870s such allegations could have been heard in the vicinity of Victoria Square and Craig Street in Montreal, where, at a shop owned by one F. E. Grafton, publisher and bookseller, one could buy for fifteen cents a small pamphlet titled *Will you give up your Lantern? or, the Bible and the Church of Rome*.⁵² And some of the views expressed in this work repeat claims made two decades earlier by John Shortt, Orange spokesman, to the Loyal Orange Lodges assembled in St. John's Church in Port Hope, Canada East.

In his sermon Shortt encouraged fellow Orangemen to remember their "high and holy calling"-- a calling that would "add new lustre to the crown of Empire, and confer dignity on the Sovereign by placing her at its head." To be faithful to this

⁵¹On 27 December 1867 the *True Witness* ran an article entitled "Cool, Not to Say Impudent" which was devoted to recounting how members of the zealous English Bible Society "had the impertinence to wait upon the Emperor Louis Napoleon for the purpose of presenting him with a Bible." Consider what this action by members of the Bible society implied, the *Witness* continued. "That he to whom the Bible was given is ignorant of its contents, and was in little better plight than the heathen, or the dusky South Sea islander" (4).

⁵²Other available titles were, *Three years in the Church of Rome, what I saw, and why I left it* (30 cents); *How I came out of Rome, by a Romish priest* (75 cents); *Secret History of Romanism* (\$1.10).

calling, Shortt said, one had to recognize that at the center of the Orangeman's mission was his obligation to preserve "truth as opposed to falsehood" and "the religion of Christianity as opposed to the delusions of antichrist"-- that is, Roman Catholicism. And the way to preserve this "truth" was to work for the maintenance of certain Protestant privileges, among the "best and chiefest" of which were a man's right to "an open Bible," to a "free and full [Protestant] Gospel," and to "private judgment"⁵³-- goods Canada's Catholics did not cherish.⁵⁴

Religious wares such as these were consistently heralded by Protestants in nineteenth-century Canada as the source of spiritual liberty, and it was presumed that those who did not enjoy them, or at any rate did not enjoy them as Protestants did, were necessarily living in darkness, spiritual bondage, and under the thumb of the Evil One generally.⁵⁵ For sincere Protestants,

⁵³Jonathan Shortt, *The Gospel Banner! A Sermon Preached to the Loyal Orange Lodges, Assembled in St. John's Church, Port Hope, July 12th, 1853* (Montreal, 1853), 2. Shortt ended his sermon thus: "Let us not fear to shew our colors; nor to acknowledge which side we are on; but let us manfully do battle in the great conflict of truth ad error. Let us go forth against the Goliah [sic] of Rome, like David, in faith and dependence on the Lord of Hosts the God of the armies of Israel whom Rome hath defied..."(12).

⁵⁴On 24 August 1865 the Catholic *True Witness* of Montreal railed against the inefficacy of an "open Bible," since Bible reading did little to arrest Protestants from spreading lies about the Catholic Church.

⁵⁵Anti-Catholic sentiment among nineteenth-century Protestants hardly needs to be proved. Suffice it to note a line from a private letter, penned in 1858, by Louisa Stacey, an emigrant to Canada East from England. "I do not care for the Yankees," she wrote, "and French habitants are not very friendly, and besides they are Catholics." Jane Vanisittart, ed.,

then, getting the Bible into the hands of Roman Catholics was a matter of eternal significance. If Catholics could only be introduced to the truth of the Scriptures, many of Canada's Protestants thought, they would turn to true faith. These themes are prominent in R.P. Duclos' *Histoire du protestantisme français au Canada et aux Etats-Unis*.

Considered here is Duclos' account of the conversion of one Docteur Cote, a participant in the Papineau revolt of 1837. We pick up Duclos' account at the point where he has Dr. Cote listening with disgust to two Catholic priests arguing over the nature of venial sins. Cote "déplorait l'influence néfaste du clergé sur ses concitoyens et ne pouvait admettre qu'une religion dont les ministres tiennent le peuple dans l'ignorance et la superstition put venir de Dieu," Duclos wrote; and it was at this point that Cote realized that Christianity should not be confused with popery. But despite this revelation Cote was not yet ripe for conversion to Protestantism. He turned instead to Deism. But this religion of the intellect, like Catholicism before it, failed to satisfy his spiritual hunger. So he turned to the Bible, which, Duclos observes, the previously nominal Catholic hardly knew at all.⁵⁶ Cote wanted to know what Protestants believed, so he went to the "source des enseignements de Jésus-Christ et des apôtres."

Lifelines: The Stacey Letters, 1836-1858 (New York: Taplinger Publishing Company, 1976), 176.

⁵⁶R.-P. Duclos, *Histoire du protestantisme au Canada et aux Etats-Unis* (Montréal: Librairie Evangelique, n.d.), 131.

Il ouvrit le saint Livre, non sans quelques préjugés, fut frappé de la majesté divine qui éclate à chaque page et se laissa gagner par la beauté et l'élévation de ses enseignements. Bien que la Bible lui parlât avec autorité, il ne voulait pas se rendre: il en discutait les enseignements et les comparait avec ceux du déisme; mais cette parole de Dieu fut plus puissante que la parole des hommes et comme une épée à deux tranchants elle lui perça le coeur.⁵⁷

Upon his conversion to Protestantism after reading the Bible -- he did not need a minister or church to direct him -- Cote eagerly sought his French Canadian wife's salvation. He thus wrote her from the United States, where he had been converted, and implored her, for the love of her own soul, to "open her eyes" and "consult the Word of God." "[L]is avec soin, tâche d'apprécier les doctrines qui y sont enseignées par le Fils même de Dieu."⁵⁸ And here the plot briefly thickens, for Madame Cote was a devout Catholic. Duclos writes that when she received the Bible her husband sent her she was so enveloped in a "Roman robe" that she was not able to bring herself to read the Bible for herself.⁵⁹ Thus was she torn between faith and family. But in time she essayed the unthinkable: She opened the Bible, and "toute tremblante d'émotion et de crainte," she resolved to become a Protestant.

Whether the facts concerning the conversion of Dr. and Madame Cote are just as reported in Duclos' history is not

⁵⁷Ibid.

⁵⁸Ibid., 134.

⁵⁹Ibid., 137.

important here. What is important is the message Duclos intended to keep constantly before his readers-- namely, that due to a baneful priestcraft that befuddled unregenerate minds Quebec's Catholics were afraid of the Bible, and even if some were not afraid of it, they were nevertheless forbidden from reading it. Perhaps the most ardent French Canadian proponent of this argument in nineteenth-century Quebec was the notoriously combative Protestant, Charles Chiniquy.

Father Chiniquy, as he was called even after his conversion to Protestantism, began his religious career as a Roman Catholic. He studied at the Seminaire de Nicolet and in 1833 was ordained a priest in Notre-Dame Cathedral at Quebec.⁶⁰ In March 1840 Chiniquy, by then a parish priest in Beauport, founded a temperance society which some 1,300 parishes joined. When he began to advocate total abstinence the next year, over 800 of his parishioners joined him. Four years later Chiniquy published a book entitled *Manuel ou reglement de la société de tempérance*, 4,000 copies of which were printed. This book made Chiniquy Quebec's "official theorist of total abstinence" and thrust him into prominence in French Canada. "Admired and adulated," Yves Roby observes, "Chiniquy was indefatigable; he preached without respite."⁶¹

⁶⁰The following biographical account is taken from Yves Roby, "Chiniquy, Charles" in *Dictionary of Canadian Biography* vol. XII (Toronto: University of Toronto Press 1990), 189-92.

⁶¹*Ibid.*, 190. Roby notes that on 10 August 1849 the *Mélanges*

In addition to his vigorous advocacy of temperance the young Chiniquy was a ferocious opponent of Protestantism and liberalism. One of his rhetorical targets was the radical newspaper *L'Avenir*, which advocated the separation of church and state and argued for Canada's annexation to the United States.⁶² One no less than Montreal's Bishop Ignace Bourget heartily approved of Chiniquy's efforts on behalf of Roman Catholicism in Canada East. But Chiniquy's control over the bottle and command of Ultramontanist doctrine did not extend to his amorous impulses, and after being twice disciplined for illicit affairs with female parishioners he was sent in 1851 to minister to French Canadian emigrants settled in the regions surrounding Chicago.

This change of venue did nothing to bring Chiniquy's troubles to an end, however. He was soon again at odds with his superiors, and on 3 September 1856 was finally excommunicated from the Roman Catholic Church. Soon thereafter Chiniquy became a Presbyterian and, along with about 2,000 followers, joined the Presbyterian Church in the United States.⁶³ For reasons that

religieux claimed that in an 18 month period Chiniquy had delivered more than 500 sermons and had inspired some 200,000 conversions to temperance.

⁶²On the struggles between late-nineteenth century Quebec's conservatives and far left influential liberals and radicals see, for example, Philippe Sylvain, "Quelques aspects de l'antagonisme libéral-ultramontain au Canada français," ch. in *Les idéologies québécoises au 19e siècle*, ed., Jean-Paul Bernard (Montréal: Les éditions du boréal express,, 1973); and Perin, *Rome in Canada*, 95-126.

⁶³Roby, "Chiniquy, Charles," 192.

remain unclear he was soon barred from that Protestant denomination as well. Finally the Canada Presbyterian Church accepted Chiniquy as a minister in 1862, at which time he set himself on the course he would follow to the end of his days thirty-seven years later: the former champion of Ultramontanist Catholicism was now French Canada's most prominent anti-Catholic polemicist.

The complaints Chiniquy brought against Rome at the end of his life in January 1899 were the same ones he had voiced since his break with Catholicism. They stemmed in large measure from his belief -- one assumes that at least on this point Chiniquy was sincere -- that most Catholics were ignorant of the Bible and that those who were not ignorant of it nevertheless warped it in their interpretations. One of Chiniquy's persistent grievances, for example, was with the dogma of apostolic succession from St Peter. This, he said, was "an imposture" for which there was no warrant in Scripture. "There cannot be found a single word in the holy gospel to show us that Peter has passed a single hour in Rome."⁶⁴

Even on his deathbed Chiniquy asserted that he would never return to Roman Catholicism -- when it was clear he was near death some prominent Catholics in Quebec admonished him to reconcile himself with the church -- "because every Roman Catholic bishop and priest is forced to perjure himself every

⁶⁴"Text of Dr. Chiniquy's Declaration of Faith; Signed Just Before Death," *Montreal Gazette* 23 January 1899, 5. My emphasis.

time he explains a text of the Holy Scriptures."⁶⁵ From the day a newly ordained priest vows to interpret the Holy Scriptures "according to the unanimous consent of the holy fathers he has seldom preached on a text of the Scriptures without being guilty of perjury." This was so, Chiniquy said, because "the Holy Fathers have been unanimous in only one thing, which was to differ on almost every text of the Scriptures on which they have written."⁶⁶

There is certainly some irony in the Protestant Chiniquy's criticism of the Catholic tradition for a perceived lack of unanimity; it would be difficult to prove that the disagreements that had arisen within the Catholic tradition outnumbered the discordant brass band of biblicistic exclamations that echoed in Canada's Protestant streets in the late nineteenth century. But this probably never occurred to Chiniquy, who considered his own Protestant interpretations of the Scriptures to have come to him directly from the Holy Spirit and not through the traditions of men. Thus freed from the blight of mere human teaching -- teaching beholden to Catholic tradition -- Chiniquy hoped to lead other French Canadians to spiritual liberty. He made a career of revealing to Quebec's Catholics the extent to which their minds were enchained.

To illustrate the point we turn to Chiniquy's memoir, where he recalls a priest's visit to his childhood home. The minister

⁶⁵Ibid.

⁶⁶Ibid.

went to the Chiniquy's home because he had heard that that family was in the habit of reading the Scriptures without a priest's guidance. It was thus his duty to burn the family's Bible.⁶⁷ "Est-il vrai," Chiniquy has the priest ask his father, "que vous lisez la Bible et que vous la faites lire dans votre maison?" Chiniquy's father replied that not only did he read the Bible but his son did as well; and, in fact, if the priest was interested in listening, the young Chiniquy could recite numerous passages of Scripture from memory. "Je ne suis pas venu pour cela," the priest responded coldly. "Mais est-ce que vous ne savez pas qu'il vous est défendu, par le concile de Trente, de lire la Bible en français?"⁶⁸

⁶⁷In his memoirs -- collected under the title *Chiniquy* (Québec: Editions Beauport, 1989) -- Chiniquy recalls his love for the Bible as a youth. "Avant de quitter le séminaire de Québec, mon père avait reçu du supérieur, comme marque d'estime, une très belle Bible française et latine. Cette Bible fut le premier livre, après l'A B C, dans lequel ma mère me fit lire. Elle choisissait les chapitres qu'elle croyait les plus propres à m'intéresser, et je les lisais avec une attention et un plaisir incroyables.

Certains chapitres avaient un si grand attrait pour moi, que je les relisais jusqu'à ce que je les sache par cœur. À l'âge de huit ans, j'avais appris l'histoire de la chute de l'homme et du déluge, le sacrifice d'Isaac par Abraham, l'histoire de Moïse et des plaies d'Égypte, le beau cantique de Moïse après le passage de la Mer Rouge, l'histoire de Samson, les principaux événements de la vie de David, plusieurs Psaumes, et tous les discours de notre Seigneur Jésus-Christ, avec le récit complet de ses souffrances et de sa mort, tel que St-Jean nous le donne.

Combien d'heures délicieuses j'ai passées auprès de ma mère, à lire les pages si sublimes et si simples du Livre divin!" (13-14).

⁶⁸In 1546 it was pronounced at the Council of Trent that the Latin Vulgate would be normative for all "public readings, disputations, sermons and expositions." Also prohibited by the council was the private interpretation of the Scriptures as a restraint on "irresponsible minds" and those who might "rely on

-- Je ne vois pas quel mal il pourrait y avoir pour moi de lire la Bible en français plutôt qu'en latin ou en grec, puisque je connais ces trois langues [the elder Chiniquy replied].

-- Mais votre enfant, vous ne pouvez, en conscience, lui laisser lire la Bible: l'Eglise vous le défend absolument....Vous devez savoir que je ne puis vous permettre de garder cette Bible. Je viens donc la chercher pour la brûler.⁶⁹

After some further discussion along these lines, Chiniquy's father flatly refused to hand the Bible over to the priest, who huffed off in a rage. And that, Chiniquy recalled, was how the Roman Goliath was thwarted and his family's Bible saved -- saved to instill in Chiniquy's soul "des rayons de lumière que tous les ténèbres et sophismes de Rome n'ont jamais pu éteindre."⁷⁰

While the Protestant Chiniquy claimed to have been able to recall late in life that, deep down, he had always been an independent Bible reader and suspicious of Rome, this was far from evident in the record he compiled as a Catholic priest. The

[their] own conceptions to turn Scripture to his own meaning, contrary to the meaning that Holy Mother Church has held and holds..." The Council's pronouncements are cited in Gerald P. Fogarty, "The Quest for a Catholic Vernacular Bible in America," ch. in *The Bible in America: Essays in Cultural History* eds., Nathan O. Hatch and Mark A. Noll (New York: Oxford University Press, 1982), 163-64.

⁶⁹Chiniquy, *Chiniquy*, 15-16. Catholic clergy did in fact burn unauthorised Bibles. Gerald Fogarty ("The Quest for a Catholic Vernacular Bible in America") notes that in the 1840s one eager priest who too zealously enforced the regulations set down at the Council of Trent gathered Bibles given to his parishioners by Bible societies and publicly burned them. One publication responded thus: "To burn or otherwise destroy a spurious or corrupt copy of the Bible, whose circulation would tend to disseminate erroneous principles of faith or morals, we hold to be an act not only justifiable but praiseworthy" (165).

⁷⁰Chiniquy, *Chiniquy*, 17.

text of a debate between Chiniquy and a certain Protestant surnamed Roussy in January 1841 makes this clear. Against allegations similar to the ones he himself would later make against Catholicism -- that the Scriptures had been usurped in Catholicism by human tradition and that Roman clergy wished to keep the Bible from their parishioners -- Chiniquy maintained that the Bible was in fact available to French Canada's Catholics and that they were free to read the Bible if they wished to do so. To support this point he held up a copy of the New Testament which had been published in Quebec City in 1836 and recommended it to all the faithful.⁷¹

The fact that the Bible was available to French Canadians in the nineteenth century does not mean that many Quebecers actually read it. And when Protestants said that Quebec's Catholics were not free to interpret the Bible for themselves they were correct. The idea that laymen and women should read and

⁷¹See n.e., *Le Chiniquy d'autrefois* (Montreal: 1875), 15-16. This publication is made primarily of a reprint of "*Le suisse méthodiste confondu et convaincu d'ignorance et de mensonge*," published in 1841 by Chiniquy. This was republished in 1875 so that French Canadians in 1875 could see that Chiniquy had changed radically and so they would think him an opportunist. The unsigned preface reads: "Ceux qui liront cette petite brochure pourront comparer le Chiniquy de 1851 et le Chiniquy de 1875. Le premier est catholique et confond les Suisses: le second est apostat et soulève le coeur de tous les honnêtes gens."

Qui croire de ces deux Chiniquy? Quand il combattait pour l'Eglise Catholique, Chiniquy était-il dans l'erreur? Si oui, qui nous assure qu'il est aujourd'hui dans la vérité[?] Pourquoi un homme qui s'est trompé dans les années les plus fortes de sa vie, ne se tromperait-il pas dans sa vieillesse[?] Si non, si Chiniquy n'était pas dans l'erreur en 1851, il est donc aujourd'hui, car il prêche le contraire.

Donc, dans l'un comme dans l'autre cas, le Chiniquy de 1875 ne mérite pas qu'on l'écoute"(3).

interpret the Bible for themselves was anathema to Quebec's Catholic leaders, as indeed it was to many ordinary French Canadians themselves. In 1861 French General Consul Charles-Henri Philippe Gaudrée-Boilleau noted that the rural French Canadian families residing in the parish of Saint-Irénée respected priestly authority, for their priest was their one source of knowledge concerning the Christian gospel and spiritual matters. "La religion des habitants est sèche peut-être et dénuée de tendresse," Boilleau-Gaundrée noted, "mais elle a pour base une foi sérieuse."⁷² French Canadians were sure that their clergy would not mislead them.

If French Canadians were discouraged from coming to their own conclusions about the Bible, the Protestant claim that the clergy in Quebec actively discouraged parishioners from reading the Scriptures was false. What Quebec's bishops objected to were not Bibles per se but what they called "false Bibles"-- that is, Bibles that did not include the Apocrypha and formally sanctioned annotations.⁷³ Protestants who claimed that Quebec's Catholics

⁷²Charles-Henri-Philippe Gaudrée-Boilleau, *Paysan de saint-irénée de Charlevoix en 1861 et 1862* (Québec: Les presses de l'université Laval, 1968), 23-24.

⁷³In contrast to a requirement that Catholic translations be accompanied with annotations, the scholars responsible for the Authorised (King James) Version of the Bible were commanded to include no marginal notes at all, save "only for the explanation of the Hebrew and Greek words which cannot without some circumlocution so briefly and fitly be expressed in the text..." See Stephen Prickett, *Origins of Narrative: The Romantic appropriation of the Bible* (Cambridge University Press, 1996), 84.

were not allowed to read the Bible would have been right had they said that French Canadians were prohibited from reading Protestant Bibles.

The campaign against what might be called laissez-faire Bible reading and Protestant Bibles was waged by Quebec's Catholic bishops through the nineteenth century. So too was a campaign to instill what the bishops considered a proper biblical ethic and sound knowledge of the Scriptures into the minds of French Canadians.⁷⁴

4.4 Bibles True and False

In the charged atmosphere created by the rebellions of 1837 Lower Canada's bishops called on their flocks to keep themselves under the authority of their spiritual shepherds and legitimate political leaders. Bishop Lartique cited Saints Peter and Paul to the effect that Christians should be subject to political authority, which itself received its authority from God.⁷⁵

"Voila...les oracles de l'Esprit-Saint, tels que nous trouvons

⁷⁴See *Mandements* vol. I, 49 and 50; vol II, 116 and 468; and "Circulaire au clergé," no. 112 in *Mandements, lettres pastorales et circulaires des évêques de Québec* (Québec: Imprimerie Générale, 1890), 321-22. In 1934 Mgr Louis-Adolphe Paquet urged French Canada's "faithful" to keep "good books" in their homes to be read to families especially on Sundays and saints' days. For an overview of the efforts of Catholic clergy in the United States to protect their flocks from unauthorised Bibles see the first two chapters of Gerald P. Fogarty's *American Catholic Biblical Scholarship*.

⁷⁵*Mandements*, 16.

dans la Sainte Bible: voilà la doctrine de Jésus-Christ, telle que les Apôtres Pierre et Paul l'avaient apprise de la bouche de leur divin Maître."⁷⁶ Given that the teaching of Scripture and tradition was so clear, Lartique wondered how it was possible that some who called themselves Catholics could have refused their bishops' counsel and participated in the rebellion.

Ne voyaient-ils pas que par là-même ils se séparaient du Troupeau de Jésus-Christ," he asked, "car ce divin Sauveur nous assure que ses véritables brebis entendent la voix du Pasteur, et le suivent... parce que l'étranger ne vient que pour piller, tuer et perdre le troupeau; au lieu que le vrai Pasteur ne cherche qu'à donner à ses brebis la vie la plus abondante."⁷⁷

At the same time Lartique rooted his claim that Lower Canada's Catholics should submit to proper religious and political authority in Scripture he also cited Pope Gregory XVI's proclamation that no Christian should ever pretend to interpret the Scriptures for himself,⁷⁸ for a proper understanding of the Scriptures could not be had without a sound understanding of church tradition and of the teaching of the Church Fathers.⁷⁹ Protestantism and rebellion went together. The arrogant belief that one could understand the Scriptures without the assistance of clergy who were themselves faithful to Catholic tradition was at the root of political revolt such as that of the Lutherans

⁷⁶Ibid., 17.

⁷⁷Ibid., 28. See John 10:11-16.

⁷⁸Ibid., 17.

⁷⁹Ibid.

and, Lartique seems to imply, the Patriote revolt then underway.

While Lartique asserted that tradition was essential to a proper understanding of the Bible and ordering of society, he also cited Gregory XVI to support his appeal to Lower Canada's Catholics to refute Protestants with the very Scriptures they claimed to revere.

Il convient que, pour l'avantage et l'honneur des Disciples de Jésus-Christ, leurs fausses doctrines soient mises dans leur jour: il faut réfuter leurs principes par la parole immuable de l'Ecriture Sainte, et par les monuments authentiques de la Tradition de l'Eglise."⁸⁰

Fourteen years later, in 1851, Lower Canada's bishops inveighed once more against Protestant Bibles and other pernicious books, likening them to "cruel wolves" which had entered Quebec's Catholic sheepfold and the clouds of destructive locusts described in St John's Apocalypse. "Ne laissez entrer dans vos maisons aucun de ces mauvais livres que l'enfer vomit tous les jours de ses entrailles embrasées, pour séduire les nations et les enrôler sous l'étendard de Satan, afin de les préparer au grand combat qu'il livre contre le Dieu vivant," the bishops urged. "Ce seraient autant de serpents que vous nourririez dans le sein de vos familles, et qui, dormant avec vos tendres et innocents enfants, ne manqueraient pas de gâter leur esprit et de corrompre leur coeur."⁸¹ The bishops warned Lower

⁸⁰Ibid., 19. In response to the rebellion Lartique, citing Scripture, called for acts of public repentance, including fasting and alms-giving which would appease God's anger (29).

⁸¹*Mandements* vol VIII, 65. Also at issue here was the work of such *Rouge* organizations as the *Institut Canadien* which made

Canada's Catholics in particular to be on guard against the seeming piety of Bible colporters who, in their view, handled the Bible as if were just another piece of merchandise.⁸² Indeed, the Protestant colporters were themselves "murderous wolves disguised in sheep's clothing" who pretended to have a great respect for the "religion of their fathers" but whose conduct belied their claims. Citing the Epistle of Jude the bishops called the colporters clouds without water, fruitless trees, raging waves, wandering stars, and murmerers who complained endlessly while slavishly following their animal passions.⁸³

These anti-Protestant themes were repeated again almost thirty years later. In 1880 Quebec City's archbishop Elzéar-Alexandre Taschereau expressed consternation at the news that "Protestant Bibles" and error-filled books were being distributed in certain parishes of his diocese.⁸⁴ "Vous vous ferez un devoir de mettre les fidèles en garde contre les agents des sociétés bibliques qui colportent ces écrits et les vendent à vil prix," the archbishop ordered parish priests. He demanded that those

available in its library the works of, among others, such unbelievers as Voltaire and such malicious newspapers as the Protestant *Witness*. Wade, *The French Canadians*, 343-45.

⁸²See Terrance Murphy and Roberto Perin, *A Concise History of Christianity in Canada* (Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1996), 192-193.

⁸³*Mandements* vol VIII, 66-67.

⁸⁴Sixteen years later Taschereau's battle against Protestant Bibles continued, only then he noted that Bibles were being distributed even in Quebec's nether reaches. See "Circulaire au clergé," no. 243 in volume 4 of *Mandements*, 256.

Protestant works that had found their way into the hands of Quebec's French-speaking Catholics be burned⁸⁵-- a mandate that must certainly have encouraged Chiniquy to recall his childhood experience with a pirotechnic priest.

While Quebec's Catholics were consistently prohibited from reading the 'falsified Bibles' zealous Protestants hoped to place in their hands, it is clear that the Protestants' missionary ardour forced Quebec's Catholic clergy to study and better familiarize themselves with the Bible and to make the Scriptures available to literate Catholics so that they might have a fit biblical response to the allegations Protestants brought against Rome.⁸⁶ One episcopal response to the work of Protestant Bible societies in Lower Canada in the early 1850s was a requirement that libraries be established in every parish.⁸⁷ Drawing on the authority of Gregory XVI's *Oeuvre des Bons Livres*, the bishops

⁸⁵"Circulaire au clergé," no. 97 *Mandements, lettres pastorales et circulaires des évêques de Québec* vol. II (Québec: Imprimerie Générale, 1890), 228.

⁸⁶This was also true in the United States. In 1833 the Roman Catholic bishops in the U.S. declared that, for clergy in particular, "the continual study of the Holy Bible is absolutely of obligation." Gerald Fogarty observes that by requiring the reading and study of the Bible the bishops were indicating "their desire to disseminate the sacred books" among American Catholics. See Fogarty, "The Quest for a Catholic Vernacular Bible in America," 168-69.

⁸⁷The ultramontanist Cercle Catholique de Québec (1876-1897) itself opened a public library in St.-Roch and distributed Catholic literature. See Savard, *Aspects de la civilisation...*, 106 & 126. For a study of one ultramontane's library see "Une bibliothèque ultramontaine," ch. in *Ibid.*

envisioned that "chaque bibliothèque paroissiale sera une...chaire de vérité, dont les livres seront comme autant de langues de feu qui iront se reposer sur chacune de vos maisons, pour y faire briller les vives lumières de la foi, et y allumer les ardeurs de la charité." The books held in these libraries would be "autant de bouches qui vous répèteront, autant de fois que vous le voudrez, les leçons de sagesse d'en haut. Ce seront de muets mais éloquents prédicateurs, qui vous apprendront à connaître, à aimer et à servir Dieu qui nous crée tous, et à sauver vos âmes; car c'est là tout l'homme."⁸⁸ Among the books Catholics were authorized to read were the Douay and Rheims translations of the Bible,⁸⁹ as well as the translations prepared by Quebec's own bishops.

One translation of the New Testament published especially for French Canada's Catholics was prepared by Bishop Charles-François Baillargeon and completed in 1865. In the introduction to Baillargeon's translation Pope Pius IX noted that in providing an authorized version of the New Testament for Lower Canada's Catholics to read the bishop had provided an "antidote" for "le venin de l'erreur" which was spreading through Christendom as a result of the reading of "corrupt" editions of the Scriptures. "Et comme toute Ecriture inspirée de Dieu est utile pour

⁸⁸*Mandements* vol. VIII, 73. Also see *Mandements* vol. IV, 421.

⁸⁹"Pour empêcher le peuple de lire de mauvais livres," the bishops maintained in 1854, "il faut lui procurer de bons. De là la nécessité des bibliothèques paroissiales." *Mandements* vol. II, 469.

enseigner, pour reprendre, pour corriger, pour former dans la justice," Pius wrote to Baillargeon, "vous avez pourvu, par votre traduction, à la nourriture spirituelle de votre peuple, vous lui avez fourni des armes puissantes contre l'erreur, et un aliment très-propre à nourrir sa piété."⁹⁰ The pope hoped that Baillargeon's translation from the Vulgate into French for the benefit of Canada's French-speaking Catholics would serve to put an end to the "calumny" constantly repeated by "heretics" that the Roman Catholic Church prohibited its members from reading the Bible.⁹¹

With those Protestants who railed against the biblical ignorance of Catholics in mind, in his own preface Baillargeon emphatically encouraged Quebec's French-speakers to read the New Testament; for, he wrote, when one reads the Bible one is reading the very word of God and the words of eternal life which point the way to salvation.⁹² It was therefore crucial that Lower

⁹⁰Pius IX, preface to *Le Nouveau Testament de notre-seigneur Jésus-Christ, traduit de la vulgate en français avec des notes explicatives, morales et dogmatiques, pour en faciliter l'intelligence* (Québec: Atelier Typographique de Léger Brousseau, 1865), i-ii.

⁹¹In his preface Baillargeon informs his readers that while the Church had always proscribed the reading of "versions mensongères" of the Bible it never disapproved of the faithful reading versions approved by ecclesial authorities. "C'est donc une insigne calomnie, inventée par l'esprit d'hérésie, et toujours repoussée avec indignation par les catholiques, que de dire que l'église défend la lecture de l'Ecriture. Ce qu'elle défend, c'est d'altérer et corrompre la parole de Dieu, par des traductions infidèles..."(vii).

⁹²Ibid., iii. Here Baillargeon cites 2 Timothy 3:16, 1 Thessalonians 2:13 and the Gospel of John 6:69. Religious and biblical literacy was of course important to French Canadian

Canadians had a "good translation of the Bible in French" especially approved and designed for the faithful of the province.⁹³ Baillargeon noted that the Church had never made reading the Bible mandatory, but it had hoped that the faithful would read it, particularly in the original biblical languages and in "authentic versions" such as the Vulgate.⁹⁴

Baillargeon also stressed that readers should not approach the Bible proudly as he believed Protestants did. One was instead obliged to read the Bible with a "profound sense of humility" and "une parfaite soumission d'esprit et de coeur à l'autorité de l'Eglise." In contrast to the man who approached the Bible with humility was the one who took it up in a spirit of pride, a spirit borne of the opinion that one could properly interpret the Bible for oneself.⁹⁵ It was to the Church, not individuals, that Jesus Christ promised to send his Holy Spirit, to teach it in all truth.⁹⁶ Given this view, it is not surprising that Baillargeon's annotations make frequent reference to the Roman Catholic Church. Commenting on Jude 19, for instance, he maintains that those whom

missionaries as well. See Taché, *Vingt années dans le Nord-Ouest de l'Amérique*, 37 and 51.

⁹³Le Nouveau Testament, ix.

⁹⁴Ibid., vi.

⁹⁵Ibid., iii-iv.

⁹⁶Ibid., iv. While making this case Baillargeon also cites 2 Peter 3:16, 1 Timothy 6:10, 2 Peter 1:20, Acts of the Apostles 8:30, 1 Timothy 2:4, Gospel of John 14:26, Gospel of Matthew 28:20, Gospel of Luke 10:16, 1 Timothy 3:15. Emphasis in the original.

Jude says have drifted from the faith should be recognized as "schismatics" who had separated themselves from Rome.⁹⁷

As the preceding paragraphs show, Protestant evangelism in Quebec spurred Quebec's clergy to familiarize themselves with the Scriptures. This is borne out in Christine Hudon's history of religious life in nineteenth century Saint-Hyacinthe. Hudon writes that a point often raised at the ecclesiastical conferences in the nineteenth century was that Quebec's clergy should be able to answer each Protestant objection to Catholic doctrine and practice with references to Scripture.⁹⁸ Ensuring that priests possessed knowledge of the Bible was thus an important duty of Quebec's educational institutions in the late nineteenth century. Students at Quebec's seminaries, and to a lesser extent the classical colleges, were made familiar with the Bible in the course of their studies. On a typical day in the grands séminaires students were exposed to the Scriptures. One seminary schedule Hudon reprints in *Prêtres et fidèles dans le diocèse de Saint-Hyacinthe* shows that in addition to the Scripture passages cited in daily services, classes devoted to the study of the Bible were held at least a few times a week, and each day seminarians were required to read a chapter in the New

⁹⁷Ibid., 758.

⁹⁸Christine Hudon, *Prêtres et fidèles dans le diocèse de Saint-Hyacinthe, 1820-1875* (Sillery, Quebec: Septentrion, 1996), 204.

Testament.⁹⁹

While this training laid a foundation of biblical knowledge on which Quebec's clergy could build, it was rhetorical battle with Protestants which most served to sharpen and deepen their familiarity with the Bible.¹⁰⁰ To prepare for such skirmishes priests gathered at clerical meetings were sometimes required by their superiors to reconcile texts from the Old and New Testaments that seemed to contradict one another. Hudon notes that on one occasion priests were charged with the task of commenting on St. Paul's teaching on glossalalia and prophecy in I Corinthians 14 and with proposing how one might respond to Protestants who wished to dispute this text.¹⁰¹ Biblical and theological defenses of the veneration of saints, purgatory, the primacy of Peter, the immaculate conception, and transubstantiation were also developed, as were responses to the Calvinist doctrines.¹⁰²

⁹⁹Ibid., 178-181.

¹⁰⁰Choquette, *The Oblate Assault on the Canadian Northwest*, 14.

¹⁰¹Presumably at issue here was Paul's claim that prophecies would cease, which has been interpreted by many Protestants to mean that once the Scriptures were written there could be no further unfolding of divine truth. Thus doctrines like papal infallibility were considered extra-biblical and therefore false.

¹⁰²Hudon, *Prêtres et fidèles dans le diocèse de Saint-Hyacinthe*, 204. Pierre Savard notes that in the 1830s and even more so in the 1840s Quebec's institutions of higher learning became, "selon l'expression du chanoine Groulx, lentement mais sûrement, 'l'institution la mieux musclée' du Canada français. L'amélioration de la qualité du clergé et son accroissement numérique expliquent en grande partie cette évolution....La multiplication des séminaires et l'émulation entre les réguliers

What seems clear, then, is that while Canada's Protestants were wrong when they claimed that the Bible was kept from Quebec's Catholics who were allegedly ignorant of the Scriptures, the allegation itself served to spur on a greater biblical literacy in Quebec. Thus while probably only very few, if any, recognized it, the Protestant campaign to spread the Bible in Quebec and to get the Scriptures into more French Canadian hearts was to some measure a success. The Protestant hope that Quebec might be transformed into a province of individual Bible readers who interpreted the Scriptures in light of what the Holy Spirit revealed to them personally failed; what Protestants actually encouraged was a reaffirmation of the centrality of the Bible, with tradition, in the Catholic faith. Yet that reaffirmation was rooted in an understanding of the Bible that was necessarily broadened and deepened in response to Protestant arguments.

4.5 The Bible in French Canadian Society

While Canada's Protestants were wrong when they maintained that French Canada's Catholics were prohibited from reading the Bible, it is nevertheless probably true that relatively few French Canadians actually did so. One reason for this was the high rate of illiteracy that prevailed in Quebec into the

et les séculiers enrichissent la vie spirituelle du clergé." *Aspects de la civilisation...*, 28.

twentieth century.¹⁰³ At the time of Confederation only about half of French-Quebec's population was literate. That percentage would rise considerably through the nineteenth century,¹⁰⁴ but by 1901 some twenty-two percent of Quebecers of school age and higher were still unable to read.¹⁰⁵ In 1861 Bishop Bourget required parish priests to explain official policy concerning the defense of Canada against an anticipated invasion from the United States on the grounds that many Quebecers did not -- and could not -- read newspapers.¹⁰⁶

Those who did learn to read in schools -- such as the two thirds of the children living in the parish of Saint-Irénée observed by Gauldrée-Boilleau in 1861¹⁰⁷ -- were exposed to Bible stories, in addition to the Catholic catechism, readings about saints, and prayers. In the first section of a small textbook

¹⁰³Another reason for this in the first few decades of the century was that, generally speaking, the clergy themselves were poorly educated. Savard, *Aspects de la civilisation*, 26.

¹⁰⁴In his observations on life in the parish of Saint-Irénée, written in 1861-2, Gauldrée-Boilleau noted that "L'éducation n'est pas aussi avancée à Saint-Irénée qu'on serait en droit de le souhaiter. Il n'y a guère que les adolescents qui sachent lire et écrire," but that, "Grâce au zèle des curés, on a réussi à fonder dans la commune de Saint-Irénée trois-écoles: deux sont élémentaires; la troisième est une école-modèle dont la création date de l'an dernier. Ces établissements sont fréquentés par les deux tiers des enfants appartenant à la paroisse. On y apprend à lire, à écrire et à calculer, de même qu'en France dans les écoles primaires." *Paysan de saint-irénée de Charlevoix en 1861 et 1862*, 25.

¹⁰⁵Silver, *The French Canadian Idea of Confederation*, 29.

¹⁰⁶*Mandements*. vol IV, 267.

¹⁰⁷Gauldrée-Boilleau, *Paysan de saint-irénée de Charlevoix en 1861 et 1862*, 25.

titled *Nouvelle méthode pour apprendre à bien lire* (1847) was included an account of the story of the Prodigal Son, which is followed by paraphrased accounts of the story of Adam and Eve, Noah's flood, Joseph's rise to political power in Egypt, the triumph of David over Goliath, the preservation of Daniel in the lions' den, and the birth, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ. These Bible stories were followed by a series of prayers of, among other things, confession, hope, and contrition (which were supposed to be memorized), and by a paraphrased rendition of the Ten Commandments.¹⁰⁸

Le livre des enfans [sic] (1850) also drew on the Scriptures. "Enfans [sic], obéissez à vos pères et à vos mères en ce qui est selon le Seigneur, car cela est juste," students were exhorted in a chapter entitled "Maximes tirées de l'écriture sainte." Other passages of Scripture Quebec's young scholars who studied from this book were "Celui qui aime son père et sa mère plus que moi, n'est pas digne de moi," from Matthew 10, and "Que votre lumière luise devant les hommes afin qu'ils voient vos bonnes oeuvres, et qu'ils en glorifient votre Père qui est dans le ciel" from the Sermon on the Mount.¹⁰⁹ Scripture sentences like these take up several of this book's pages.

Biblical references also appeared in works written for adults, such as Abbé L. Provencher's travel memoir, *De Québec à*

¹⁰⁸Jean Palairat, *Nouvelle méthode pour apprendre à bien lire* (Québec: William Cowan et fils, 1847), 77-78, 85-93.

¹⁰⁹n.a., *Le livre des enfans; nouvel alphabet français* (Québec: Imprimerie de Edward S. Pooler, 1850), 37-39.

Jerusalem (1884)-- a book so replete with references to biblical stories and persons it would make little sense to readers ignorant of the Bible.¹¹⁰ Provencher wrote that in the course of his travels in the Holy Land he had walked the same routes traveled by Abraham, David, and Solomon, and that he had touched "le sol qui a reçu les empreintes des pieds de Jésus et de Marie, de Joseph et de Jean-Baptiste, de Pierre et des autres." He also travelled on paths Jesus himself had trod, and it was to these roads that he claims himself to have been most "attached."¹¹¹ Readers of this work were given accounts of the Valley of Gehenna, the tomb of Absalom, the Garden of Gethsemene, Golgotha, and numerous other biblical sites.

While the pious such as Provencher provided the biblically literate with news of the Holy Land, a man as apparently impious as Gonzalve Doutre of the *rouge* Institut Canadien also drew on scriptural metaphors to make plain his own cultural heresy. Arguing against those who, like Louis-François Laflèche, believed that the French Canadians were a chosen people, Doutre argued for what in the late twentieth century would come to be called the celebration of diversity.¹¹² "Do not believe that by discovering

¹¹⁰Other biblically-centred works published soon after the period under study are Adolphe-Basile Routhiers' *Le centurion: roman des temps messianiques* (Paris, 1909); *De l'homme à Dieu: essai d'apologétique pour les hommes du monde* (Québec, 1913); and *Paulina: Roman des temps apostoliques* (Québec, 1918).

¹¹¹L. Provencher, *De Québec à Jerusalem* (Québec: Typographie de C. Darveau, 1884), 7.

¹¹²Nive Voisin, *Louis-François Laflèche: deuxième évêque de Trois-Rivières* vol. I (Saint-Hyacinthe: Edisem, 1980), 101.

the New World Cristopher Columbus transplanted a unique and homogenous people there," Doutre argued in December 1864. "Far from that, it was like a new crossing of the Red Sea, newly opened up for the progress of all peoples."¹¹³

What of the large number of illiterate French Canadians who could read neither Provencher nor Doutre? Though the Bible was of course open to them to a lesser extent and in a less direct way than it was to their literate compatriots, it was nevertheless available. One thinks of the high instance of parishes in Quebec named after biblical and traditional saints, reminders of the centrality of biblical and Christian history to French Canada's history. As Pierre Savard has noted, "[L]e Québec offre le cas le plus poussé au monde où le nom d'un saint avec son préfixe s'applique à des noms de paroisses tant civiles que religieuses."¹¹⁴ Then there is the iconography, stained glass depictions of biblical scenes, and other church decorations with which parishioners became familiar, as well as the sculptures and statues of biblical figures that still stand throughout Quebec. Sculptures in Quebec of Saints Peter and Paul, sacred texts in hand, depict them as men of the Book and thus suggested to French Canadians the importance of the Bible.¹¹⁵ Statues of prominent clerics such as Abbé Pierre-Marie Mignault, missionary to the

¹¹³Gonzalve Doutre, "The Principle of Nationalities," in Cook, *French Canadian Nationalism*, 109.

¹¹⁴Savard, *Aspects*, 161.

¹¹⁵See Musée du Québec, *L'Art du Québec au lendemain de la Conquête (1760-1790)* (Québec: Musée du Québec, 197), 45.

Micmacs in Halifax and curé in Chambly, Quebec, for some forty-nine years in the nineteenth century, serve as reminders of the centrality of sacred texts in Quebec's history; for they often depict a minister engaged in reading and explaining, if not the Bible itself, then a religious work that itself depends on the Bible.¹¹⁶

The iconography in Notre-dame Cathedral in Ottawa, sculpted by Philippe Hébert of Quebec, can not be taken as representative of all of French-speaking Canada's Catholic churches, though in the late nineteenth century, when the cathedral was completed, several places of worship were built in Quebec-- for example, the cathedral of the Immaculate Conception in Trois-Rivières (1858), the church of Saint-François-Xavier in Batiscau (1863), and Sainte-Anne-de-la-Pérade (1869). The cathedral in Ottawa, built and expanded between 1839 and 1885, thus provides some insight into the extent to which an illiterate layman who was yet aware of his surroundings could absorb biblical stories.¹¹⁷ In addition to the sculptures one would expect to see of the Virgin Mary, the baby Jesus, shepherds and angels, the crucifixion, and the resurrected Christ, also in Notre Dame are images of John the Baptist, Peter, Paul, Luke, John the evangelist, Mark, and the

¹¹⁶See Bruno Hébert, *Monuments et patrie: Une réflexion philosophique sur un fait historique: La célébration commémorative au Québec de 1881 à 1929* (Québec: Les éditions pleins bords, 1980), 356.

¹¹⁷Norman Pagé, *La cathédrale Notre-Dame d'Ottawa: histoire, architecture, iconographie* (Ottawa: Les presses de l'Université d'Ottawa, 1988), 153-57.

apostle James. There is also a sculpture of Abel, offering a sacrifice to God; of Abraham with staff in hand, walking toward the promised land; of Isaac carrying the sticks Abraham, his father, will use to start a sacrificial fire; of Joseph, carrying in one arm the grain that saved Israel's forefathers from starvation; of Moses, holding the law of God written on two stone tablets.¹¹⁸ Undoubtedly explanations of these images alone would provide a parishioner, literate or not, with a wealth of biblical knowledge. "For catholics," writes Christopher Hill, "images [were] the books of the illiterate."¹¹⁹ Indeed, what Hill says of seventeenth century English men and women can be said of nineteenth century French Quebec: "Men and women who had never opened a Bible would be well acquainted with many of its best stories, with the commandments and the beatitudes, and with moral exhortations based on the Bible."¹²⁰

One Bible story in particular, Jesus's baptism, was recounted on at least one hundred baptismal fonts throughout Quebec in the nineteenth century.¹²¹ In his *Extrait du Rituel du Québec* Monseigneur Joseph Signay required that baptismal fonts be adorned with paintings of the baptism of Jesus by John the Baptist. In addition to supplying Quebec's painters with work,

¹¹⁸Ibid., 118-123.

¹¹⁹Christopher Hill, *The Bible and the Seventeenth-Century Revolution* (New York: The Penguin Press, 1993), 14.

¹²⁰Ibid., 39.

¹²¹See Mario Béland, ed., *Painting in Quebec, 1820-1850: New Views, New Perspectives* (Québec: Musée du Québec, 1992), 445-46.

this ordinance provided illiterate French Canadians with an opportunity to "read" a portion of the Scriptures for themselves, yet within the Roman Catholic tradition. At the parish church Saint-François de l'Île d'Orléans the baptismal scene was accompanied with a depiction of Edenic serpent wrapped around the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil-- a reminder that baptism overcame the consequences of the Fall.¹²²

In addition to statuary, church art, and iconography, paintings also purveyed biblical stories and reminded those who looked at them of the importance of sacred books. "Religious paintings, whether originals or copies, were chosen to embellish churches on the basis of their imagery," writes one student of painting in Quebec. "The goal was to constitute a homogenous whole based not on style but on subject matter." In early nineteenth-century French Quebec paintings were meant to promote piety. "Certain themes from the life of Christ, such as his baptism and crucifixion, and works inspired from the life of the Virgin Mary and Holy family were especially in demand."¹²³

Some portrayals of biblical themes could be misleading. Antoine Pamondon's reproduction of *The Arrest of Christ*, originally painted by French artist Jacques Stella (1596-1657), is considerably more disturbed than the New Testament's accounts.

¹²²Yves Lacasse, "Le baptême du Christ," *Le Grand Héritage* 1984, 240.

¹²³Laurier Lacroix, "Yesterday's Standard, Today's Fragment: Element of Esthetics in Quebec, 1820-1850," ch. in *Painting in Quebec, 1820-1850: New Views, New Perspectives* (Québec: Musée du Québec, 1992), 66.

Even Peter's severing of one Roman guard's ear -- in tradition the guard is called Malchus -- depicted by Stella is portrayed more violently than the Gospel stories would lead one to imagine.¹²⁴ But French Canadians who viewed even inaccurate paintings nevertheless became familiar with the outline of biblical stories.

Paintings of French Canadians with an obvious commitment to the Bible and books that derived their authority from it were plentiful in nineteenth-century Quebec, just as they have abounded in the West generally. In the Renaissance period Mary, Jesus's mother, is often presented in paintings as what David Lyle Jeffrey calls an "ideal reader," and in his book on "Christian identity and literary culture" Jeffrey provides numerous examples of medieval, Renaissance, and post-Renaissance paintings which depict prominent figures in biblical and Christian history as close readers of the Scriptures. "In Christian art of the Middle Ages (and beyond)," Jeffrey writes, "the reliable writer or teacher is only that person who is first a faithful reader."¹²⁵ In this view, one's current authority relies on the extent to which one has been a just reader of the Word.

That the authority of Quebec's clergy and religious was rooted to a considerable measure in their attachment to books,

¹²⁴Béland, *Painting in Quebec*, 432.

¹²⁵David Lyle Jeffrey, *People of the Book: Christian Identity and Literary Culture* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1996), 230.

which themselves depended on the Book, is evident in numerous French Canadian paintings. In his memoir, *Vingt Années de missions dans le Nord-Ouest de l'Amérique* (1866), Bishop Alexandre Taché described the French Canadian missionary as one who, with a breviary in hand and truth on his lips, spoke boldly of God.¹²⁶ Representations of such men and women abound in Quebec. Around 1765 Abbé Antoine-Marie Morand was painted respectfully holding a copy of the Bible.¹²⁷ Twenty-seven years later Mère Margeurite-Thérèse Lemoine-Despins was depicted with hands crossed atop a religious book, while paintings of Abbé François Boissonnault (1810), Abbé David-Henri Têtu (1841), Monseigneur Jean-Jacques Lartique (c. 1840), and Monseigneur Joseph Signay (1847) present each of the ministers reverently holding a book--presumably the Bible or other works that depended on it.¹²⁸ Another early nineteenth-century work shows Saint Anne, the Virgin Mary, and Saint Joachim consulting a sacred text-- almost certainly the Hebrew Scriptures that foretold the advent of the

¹²⁶Taché, *Vingt années de missions dans le Nord-Ouest de l'Amérique*, 51.

¹²⁷See Musée du Québec, *L'Art du Québec au lendemain de la Conquête (1760-1790)* (Québec: Musée du Québec, 1977), 23. In this work also see the portraits of Père Emmanuel Crespel (29) and Abbé Augustin-David Hubert (31).

¹²⁸See Béland, *Painting in Quebec*, 154, 301, 419, 520. In *People of the Book*, Jeffrey points out that in traditional ecclesiastical iconography this gesture symbolizes meditative reading-- the ingesting of the Word (239). Antoine Plamondon's 1836 portrait of Louis-Joseph Papineau has the soon-to-be leader of a revolt in Lower Canada standing by copies of obviously recently consulted works by Thomas Jefferson and Aristotle. See Béland, 420; and cf., p. 426, 427, 434, 435.

Messiah.¹²⁹ In 1835 Bishop Têtu was painted with his left hand resting atop Thomas à Kempis's *Imitation de Jésus-Christ* and another work titled *Histoire Sainte*.¹³⁰

Perhaps one of the most captivating of French Canadian paintings is Antoine Plamondon's *Soeur Sainte-Anne* (1841). Sister Sainte-Anne, née Marie Matilde, served in the Hôpital général de Québec from 1840 to 1908. In one writer's view Plamondon's painting captures her "open, attentive, and intelligent disposition," as well as her "generous humility."¹³¹ It also presents her as a woman of the Book; though the title of the

¹²⁹Musée du Québec, *Peinture traditionnelle du Québec* (Québec: Musée du Québec, 1967), 99. In this work also see the painting of Saint John, portrayed in a reflective moment during a bout of reading or writing (101).

¹³⁰Ibid., 418. The title of the third book beneath Têtu's hand cannot be determined.

¹³¹Ibid., 433.

particular religious volume she is holding is not evident, its centrality in her life and thought is apparent.

Obviously the respect for literate clergy shown by French Canadians was borne in some measure of the ordinary deference persons unable to read give to the literate. But what the numerous paintings of French Canadian clerics with books in hand suggest is that that respect was also rooted in the belief that the truths literate religious leaders gained from their reading would be faithfully passed on to the uneducated. For answers to life's most profound questions, French Canadians depended on their clergy. Such a dependence certainly put French Canadians in a more precarious position than that of Protestants, who could check for themselves what the Bible had to say on a given topic. But the French Canadians' faith in those they presumed were faithful readers of the Bible and who themselves placed their faith in interpretations passed down through tradition, contributed to the social cohesion French Quebecers enjoyed through the nineteenth century.

The Bible, biblical images and biblical rhetoric were ubiquitous in nineteenth-century Quebec. That is not to say that all religious discourse in nineteenth-century Quebec was explicitly biblicistic. For the simple reason that the words that passed between French Canadians on the street or at the market cannot be known, the precise extent to which French Canadians spoke to one another expressly in biblical terms cannot be gauged. And while there is little doubt that by the late nineteenth century most of Quebec's clergy and their Ultramontane

lay-supporters were generally familiar with the Bible, some directly drew upon that knowledge more than others. American expatriot turned Ultramontane Jules-Paul Tardivel, for example, headed each chapter of his apocalyptic nationalist novel *Pour la patrie* (1895) with a verse of Scripture, though direct references to the Bible appear infrequently in his writing.¹³² In a collection of Tardivel's writings, *Mélanges ou recueil d'études religieuses, sociales, politiques et littéraires* (1903), references to Scripture do not appear even in discussions of subjects gathered under the rubric "questions religieuses." Similarly, Philippe Masson's *Le canada-français et la providence* (1875) often alluded to biblical passages but rarely cited Scripture directly, and on the few occasions he did cite a biblical passage he did so in Latin-- a language accessible only to the educated.¹³³

In contrast to Tardivel and Masson, Louis-François Laflèche's frequent citations of Scripture betrayed a detailed knowledge of the Bible, gained in the course of private study,¹³⁴

¹³²See Jules-Paul Tardivel *Mélanges ou recueil d'études religieuses, sociales, politiques et littéraires* (Québec: Imprimerie de S.-A. Demers, 1903).

¹³³Philippe Masson, *Le canada français et la providence* (Québec: Atelier typographique de Léger Brousseau, 1875). See, for example, Masson's allusion to the story of Adam and Eve (Genesis 3), pp. 9, 16, 18. For a citation in Latin see p. 17.

¹³⁴Voisin, *Louis-François Laflèche*, 39. Voisin notes that Laflèche had gained some knowledge of the Bible while a student at collège de Nicolet (38).

that might have made even a devout Protestant's head swim.¹³⁵ So dependent was Laflèche on the Bible for analogies, metaphors, illustrations, and prophetic assertions, it is doubtful that he could be understood by readers who did not possess a rather thorough knowledge of the Bible.¹³⁶

Bishop Laflèche was of course not the first Catholic to rely to such a great extent on the Bible, though it was not common in the Roman tradition for Catholics to do so. In Thomist tradition the Bible had not been privileged; saints and prophets were often overridden in Thomist works by philosophers.¹³⁷ But after the onset of the Protestant Reformation prominent Catholics turned increasingly to the Scriptures. Chief among those who did so was

¹³⁵While a young teacher in Quebec Laflèche had little time to study theology. He acquired his "sound knowledge of the Bible" during a sojourn in the Canadian West. See Nive Voisin, "Lafleche, Louis-Francois," in *Dictionary of Canadian Biography* XII (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1990), 507. Cf. Voisin, *Louis-François Laflèche* vol. I, 39n15. Perry Miller's claim that it was the assumption of the colonists who adhered to Thomas Hooker's Congregationalism in seventeenth-century New England that "for every single act of church government a specific chapter and verse must be cited" could be applied in considerable measure to Laflèche as well. *Errand Into the Wilderness* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1964), 20.

¹³⁶Save for slight allusions to some of the passages on which Laflèche drew, Voisin passes over this topic altogether-- a peculiar omission in a very detailed biography. Laflèche's views concerning, for example, national territory (see below) is noted as having its impetus in a belief in Providence, but the fundamental texts on which Laflèche relied are not mentioned. See, for instance, *Louis-François Laflèche* vol. I, 100, 101, and 106. For a general related discussion see Preston Jones, "Toward a Study of the Bible in Canadian Public Life," *Journal of Canadian Studies*, forthcoming.

¹³⁷See Patrick Riley's introduction to his translation of Bossuet's *Politics drawn from the Very Words of Holy Scripture* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1990).

Jacques-Benigne Bossuet, Bishop of Condom, France, and tutor to the French Dauphin in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries. Bossuet drew vigorously from the Bible, as the title of his *Politics drawn from the Very Words of Holy Scripture* (1709) indicates. There was nothing equal to "a book as profound and as precise, not to mention as divine, as Scripture," Bossuet wrote, and the ubiquity of scriptural citations in his work forces one to take Bossuet at his word.¹³⁸ In the late nineteenth century French Canada's clerics took Bossuet seriously. They shared his "conception of history": Mgr. Louis-Antoine Paquet placed him in the same company as Clovis, Charlemagne, and Joan of Arc: Laflèche, with others, cited him as an authority.¹³⁹ Laflèche also took Bossuet's bibliocentrism as a model for his own writing.

In 1866 Laflèche published one of the most influential works in French Canadian history, *Quelques considérations sur les rapports de la société civile avec la religion et la famille*. In addition to becoming, in Nive Voisin's words, the "bible of die-hard ultramontanes till the 20th century,"¹⁴⁰ this collection of

¹³⁸Ibid.

¹³⁹See Cook, *French-Canadian Nationalism*, 26, 93, 155.

¹⁴⁰Voisine, "Laflèche, Louis-François," 508; and as cited in Rejean Beaudoin, *Naissance d'une littérature: essai sur le messianisme et les débuts de la littérature canadienne-française (1850-1890)* (Montreal: Boreal, 1989) Voisine is cited as writing: "Ce qui prouve davantage l'accueil que font les autorités religieuses à l'oeuvre de l'abbé Laflèche, c'est le nombre de souscriptions qui sont envoyées à l'éditeur avant même l'édition de l'ouvrage: au-delà de 3500 exemplaires sont ainsi commandés, dont 2289 pour le diocèse de Trois-Rivières et 472 pour celui de

short tracts published first in the *Journal des Trois-Rivières* is also among the most Bible-centred politico-religious works written in nineteenth-century Canada.

4.6 The Bible and French Quebec's Providential Mission

As I noted at the outset of this chapter, central to the case Laflèche makes in his *considérations* was the view that the French Canadians had been given a special divine mission to fulfill. Not that Quebec was unique in this respect. In Laflèche's view, every people had some particular responsibility given to it by God. But if French Quebecers had this in common with other nations, Laflèche and many another Ultramontane leaders in the late nineteenth century believed, French Canada was nevertheless special, for its mission in the modern world was comparable in universal importance to that of the ancient Hebrews.

Laflèche, with many others, believed that in some very important ways French Quebec was re-enacting in the New World the providential history of ancient Israel. God had called Abraham to the land of Canaan, the promised land; and God had called Jacques Cartier to Canada, a new promised land. In both cases, God was intimately involved in the history of his chosen people, and in both cases the chosen were destined to carry God's message to the

Québec. Les souscripteurs sont surtout des professeurs de collège et des cures: il n'est donc pas surprenant que la diffusion du livre se fasse surtout par l'intermédiaire des bibliothèques collégiales et paroissiales et qu'on en recommande la lecture dans les grands séminaires jusqu'au début du XXe siècle" (41-42).

world. First the Hebrews, then the Christians: and in the 1860s the best Christians on the globe happened to live in Quebec. Of course, a comparable point had been and would be made by others. Echoing the seventeenth century Puritan divine Cotton Mather, George Munro Grant would say much the same of English-speaking North America in 1897,¹⁴¹ and in 1943 American fundamentalist Harold Okenga would make the same claim for the United States.¹⁴² Whether Laflèche knew that his idea was unoriginal is beside the point. Even if he did know, that would have meant nothing to him. For the Ultramontanes' claim that French Canada was a new Israel was not to them the stuff of mere rhetoric. In the view of Bishop Laflèche and others, the Bible was not only a religious and thus authoritative text but it was a living text-- living in the sense that it purveyed an ongoing story of universal import in which they themselves were actors. For those who took this interpretation of Scripture to heart, Laflèche's analogy between Abraham and Jacques Cartier seemed not only plausible and interesting but true. To them Cartier did not merely resemble Abraham; he was Abraham, a new Abraham for a new world.¹⁴³ Perry

¹⁴¹See Carl Berger, *The Sense of Power: Studies in the Ideas of Canadian Imperialism, 1867-1914* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1985 [repr., 1970]), 218.

¹⁴²Okenga said that "the United States of America has been assigned a destiny comparable to that of ancient Israel." Quoted in Joel A. Carpenter, *Revive Us Again: The Rawakening of American Fundamentalism* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997), 149.

¹⁴³In his *Le Curé Labelle*, Gabriel Dussault writes: "Pour des hommes comme [historian H.-R.] Casgrain et Laflèche..."la 'France américaine' n'est rien moins que le nouvel Israël de Dieu,

Miller's claim that John Winthrop's belief that the Pilgrims who went to the New World in the early seventeenth century were involved in "an essential maneuver in the drama of Christendom" applies as well to Laflèche and Quebec's ultramontanist leadership in the late nineteenth century.¹⁴⁴

There is no doubt that L.F.R. Laflèche -- missionary, polemicist, priest, and, finally, bishop of Trois-Rivières, was one of Quebec's most influential proponents of French Canadian messianism.¹⁴⁵ He was a committed and unapologetic Ultramontane, and at the center of his worldview was a belief that the Roman

puisque'elle est l'héritière de la vieille France, des 'Gesta Dei per Francos' et par là, héritière des promesses faites à l'Eglise at auparavant à Israël" (61). If this interpretation is correct Louis "David" Riel's delusions may not seem so out of place. Surely his grandiosity was borne of delusion, yet the theological stuff of which his delusions were made -- e.g. a belief that the French in America were in fact special in the eyes of God -- was available in French-speaking Canada. See Peter Beyer, "La vision religieuse de Louis Riel: L'ultramontanisme Canadien-français au service de la nation mètisse," *Studies in Religion/Sciences religieuses* (winter 1984), 87-100. For a comparison to an American messianic movement see Melodie Moench, "Nineteenth-Century Mormons: The New Israel," *Dialogue* 12 (spring 1979), 42-56; and Philip L. Barlow's *Mormons and the Bible: The Place of the Latter-day Saints in American Religion* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1991) where one reads: "Like the Puritans, those [Mormons] who followed Brigham Young westward felt they actually recapitulated key biblical episodes" (76).

¹⁴⁴Miller, *Errand Into the Wilderness*, 14.

¹⁴⁵Rejean Beaudoin, *Naissance d'une littérature: essai sur le messianisme et les débuts de la littérature canadienne-française (1850-1890)* (Montreal: Boreal, 1989), 39. Beaudoin notes the use of classical literature and biblical and metaphors by French Canadian nationalist writers. In some cases, Beaudoin writes "les guerres iroquoises métamorphosées en nouvelle bataille des Thermopyles, pendant que le sieur de Maisonneuve refait en mieux les travaux mythiques d'Enée, l'historique fondateur de Vill-Marie rejoignant ainsi le légendaire fondateur de Rome" (25; also see pp. 30 and 36).

Catholic Church was the preeminent source of both secular and spiritual authority. *Quelques considérations* -- a collection of thirty-four articles originally published in *Le Journal des Trois-Rivières* (which he had co-founded in 1865) -- was his most influential work: some 3,500 copies of it were sold even before it was available to the public, and most of these were purchased by priests and professors who passed the bishop's ideas on to their charges. This work's chief concern is the French Canadians' providential mission.

Laflèche maintained that at the heart of the French Canadians' mission were two obligations. First, the French Canadians were required to maintain Ultramontanist Catholicism in the face of secularism, liberalism, and revolution. Second, it was the duty of Canada's French-speakers to be a collective witness to the true Catholic faith in North America. This witness, it was believed, would lead ultimately to the conversion of large portions of North America to Catholicism. Thus in 1870 *La Revue Canadienne* declared that Quebec was "the instrument chosen by Providence to evangelize the American continent, to instruct the ignorant, help the poor, care for the sick, guide children on the right path of life, over the face of this immense continent,"¹⁴⁶ and the next year one prominent Ultramontane opined that the conversion of the anarchic United States to Catholicism would be its "salvation."¹⁴⁷

¹⁴⁶Silver, *The French Canadian Idea of Confederation*, 234.

¹⁴⁷Adolphe-Basile Routhier, *Causeries du Dimanche* (Montréal:

To prove that the French Canadians had indeed been given a special mission by God, Laflèche turned to the Bible. Yes, Laflèche wrote, all of human history could be mined for examples of faithful peoples who had been led by God into the ways of "abundance, prosperity, and happiness"; but for Laflèche the best lessons were to be drawn from "sacred history."¹⁴⁸ Thus stating why he chose to rely in large measure on the Bible, he went on to maintain that one clear teaching of the Scriptures was that God had distinct plans for every people. No individual nor people nor nation had been created by God without a divine purpose to fulfill. Here Laflèche directed his readers to the story of the Tower of Babel in Genesis.¹⁴⁹ Furthermore, he wrote, it was true that humankind had been divided by language due to the sin of idolatry; among the descendents of Noah one could see a "diversity of beliefs and the worship of idols." But God's separation of humankind at Babel was providential, for it prevented those who worshipped false gods from spreading improper belief. In confusing men's tongues, then, God was not merely reacting to human behaviour; one must always keep in mind that "Tout est coordonné selon l'idée divine d'un plan infiniment sage." Indeed, God had determined from the beginning of time that

C.O. Beauchemin & Valois, 1871), 85.

¹⁴⁸Ibid., 41.

¹⁴⁹Laflèche seems to have thought that some might argue with his use of the Bible as an authoritative historical source, for he refers to Noah's flood, "que la science géologique nous montre encore aujourd'hui écrit partout dans les ossements et les débris dont il a couvert la surface de la terre" (37).

he would separate humankind and that his primary method for doing so would be via the confusion of languages. So, Laflèche maintained, while it may seem that history was the working out of the consequences of merely human action, Laflèche wrote, every French Canadian should believe that each individual within a family, every family within a nation, and every nation within the family of nations has its own role to play in the working out of God's plan.

The establishment of different human groups on linguistic grounds was at the center of God's will.¹⁵⁰ It was also in his plan that each nation should have its own land. Laflèche maintained that if one were to trace the movements of the world's peoples through time one would discover that every national family had been led by a "special inspiration," an "invisible divine hand," to some specific place.¹⁵¹ Laflèche's prime example was Abraham, who, the Scriptures record, God called from one

¹⁵⁰Laflèche, *Quelques considérations*, 37-39. Here Laflèche cites the writer of Psalm 2:9, where of God's relationship with the nation it is said: "Vous les gouvernerez avec un sceptre de fer; vous les briserez comme un vase d'argile" (39). (In the Douai version "gouvernez is translated as "rule"; in the Authorized Version as "break": "Thou shalt break them with a rod of iron.") In his "Principle of Nationalities" Gonzalve Doutre wrote that since the at the heart of the story of the Tower of Babel is the division of human beings it was to his mind "nothing more than a legend that...does not even have romantic appeal." Against that ancient tower, Doutre said, men had long been building a different one that would eventually lead to human harmony. Men "are building a tower of granite to which each century is adding a stone....Modern civilization has given a strong hand to the brave workers who are building this monument." In Cook, *French Canadian Nationalism*, 110-111.

¹⁵¹Laflèche, *Quelques considérations*, 39.

specific place to another. The following passage from the twelfth chapter of Genesis is lengthy, but because it figures so prominently in Laflèche's thought -- he reproduces it in his own text -- I produce it here.

Dieu dit à Abraham: Sors de ton pays, de ta parenté et de la maison de ton père, et viens dans la terre que je te montrerai; là je ferai de toi une grande nation. En conséquence Abraham quitta la Mésopotamie et s'en alla sous la direction de l'Eternel son Dieu vers l'Occident jusqu'au pays de Canaan. Là, Dieu lui apparaissant de nouveau, lui dit: C'est cette terre que je donnerai à ta postérité. Lève tes yeux maintenant et regarde du lieu où tu es vers le Septentrion et le Midi, à l'Orient et à l'Occident, je te donnerai à toi et à ta postérité toute cette terre que tu aperçois; je multiplierai ta race à l'égal de la poussière de la terre, des étoiles du ciel et du sable qui forme le rivage de la mer.¹⁵²

As we shall see shortly, references to this text in public religious commentary in late nineteenth-century Quebec are legion.

One problem not mentioned in this passage was that the land Abraham was to possess was already occupied; it was the land of the Canaanites, a "perverse people" so debauched by their "abominations -- despite Abraham's godly example and "eloquent and saintly language" -- God had determined to exterminate them. Thus war, famine, and other divine visitations ("le feu du ciel") were poured out upon them "jusqu'à ce qu'enfin l'heure de leur

¹⁵²This translation is provided in Cook, *French Canadian Nationalism*, 40.

extermination ait sonné."¹⁵³ Their own sins had made the Canaanites unworthy of the land providence had originally allotted to them, Laflèche said, so God decided that a new nation, Abraham's descendents, would go and "possess" Canaan.¹⁵⁴

Pendant ce temps Abraham, comblé des bénédictions du ciel, arrive, après diverses pérégrinations et les vicissitudes d'une longue épreuve, au comble de la plus grande prospérité; il lui est donné de marcher à l'égal des rois. Plein de jours et de mérites, il meurt dans cette terre de promesse avec le consolant espoir qu'il laisse à ses descendants une patrie dont Dieu saura les mettre en possession définitive au jour marqué par sa providence.¹⁵⁵

Given this, how could one fail to recognize the similarities between the history of Abraham and that of New France?

What Christian, believing in the dogma of an all-wise Providence controlling every event on earth could fail to be struck by the resemblance between Abraham's behaviour when he took possession of the land God promised his descendents, and that of Jacques Cartier as he took possession of this Canadian territory to which, through his king's mandate, the same Providence had guided his footsteps?¹⁵⁶

As was true in ancient Canaan, before the arrival of the French Canada had been inhabited by a sinful, "guilty" race-- a stiff-necked race destined to be exterminated. God in his mercy had wanted to give Canada's natives an opportunity to repent and turn to the Christian faith, Laflèche said, and so he sent Jacques

¹⁵³Ibid.

¹⁵⁴Ibid.

¹⁵⁵Ibid., 41.

¹⁵⁶*Quelques Considérations* is excerpted and translated in Ramsay Cook, *French Canadian Nationalism*, 102.

Cartier, "a heavenly messenger," and other faithful servants to them. But the same fate that befell the ancient Canaanites who failed to turn from evil and live also fell on those natives who hardened their hearts.¹⁵⁷ Thus "the rich valley" of the great St. Lawrence River was taken from the "criminal races" that inhabited it and was handed over to the Canadiens as their rightful heritage-- just as the fertile land of the "guilty children of Canaan" had been handed over to the descendents of Abraham, the "father of the faithful." "Grande et terrible leçon qui se lit en tête des livres historiques de Moïse, et que notre origine nationale a répétée avec une fidélité remarquable."¹⁵⁸

God's leading of Abraham to Canaan served as an example to Laflèche of how God directed faithful peoples, and so did the history of the ancient Hebrews, as well as of the world's Jewish communities of late nineteenth century. In spite of centuries of persecution the Jews had maintained their cultural distinctiveness and were therefore a model for French Canada's Catholics. In *Quelques considérations* Laflèche gives a brief account of the oppression the ancient Hebrews suffered under the Assyrians, Persians, Greeks, and Romans, and he notes that in spite of the Jewish diaspora in the first century the Jews continued to maintain a distinct culture and an imperishable hope in their future. How, Laflèche wondered, could one explain this phenomenon that was unique in the histories of all nations? From

¹⁵⁷Laflèche, *Quelques considerations*, 54 and 60.

¹⁵⁸Ibid.

where did Israel's descendents acquire their "national," cultural, and religious tenacity? "C'est là sans doute l'oeuvre de Dieu."¹⁵⁹ What French Canadians must then do was study and learn from the history of the Hebrews.¹⁶⁰

The divine mission bestowed upon the French Canadians was of course a weighty one-- a point Laflèche made often. Faithfulness required that French Quebeckers conform their society to supposed biblical norms¹⁶¹-- thus Laflèche's biblical argument for the superiority of limited monarchy, as opposed to absolute monarchy (which Bossuet defended) and especially republicanism. To make this case Laflèche noted that while Moses was Israel's primary leader -- its king, so to speak -- he was assisted by seventy-two wise men who were duly elected and who helped Moses administer justice in Israel. "Dans la constitution mosaïque, le chef de l'Etat, d'abord désigné sous le nom de juge, et ensuite connu sous le nom de roi, est aussi investi de l'autorité souveraine,"

¹⁵⁹Ibid., 107.

¹⁶⁰Since prominent French Canadians held up the ancient Israelites as a people to be emulated in some important respects, one is inclined to think that A.I. Silver's claim that in the late nineteenth century Quebec's Catholic clergy thought of the Jews as "always evil" stands in need of amendment. There is no doubt that anti-semiticism thrived in French Canada, as elsewhere, in the late nineteenth century. But the case is obviously more complex than Silver, with others, allows. See Silver's comments in Robert Bothwell, *Canada and Quebec: One Country, Two Histories* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1998 [repr., 1995]), 69.

¹⁶¹The pages that follow do not contain a detailed analysis of Laflèche's political theology but a brief account of some of his views which illustrate the extent to which he cited the Bible in his public discourse.

Laflèche wrote; "le Sanhédrin, ou conseil des vieillards, a voix délibérative, et les juges subalternes constitués dans les villes, et vivant au milieu du peuple dont ils sont les représentants naturels, ont voix consultative."¹⁶² Since this was how God ordered the political culture of his former chosen people, it was only reasonable to assume that that was how providence wished French Canadian society to be ordered.

Puisque Dieu a choisi un peuple pour être d'une manière toute spéciale son peuple, puisqu'il a voulu lui même être son législateur, et lui donner une constitution politique, capable de résister à toutes les causes de destruction qui font disparaître dans le cours des siècles les choses humaines les plus fortement et les plus sagement établies, n'est-il pas légitime de conclure que la forme du gouvernement qu'il a donné à ce peuple est la meilleure?¹⁶³

As Laflèche found biblical support for Canada's form of government, so did certain passages in Scripture inform his opinions on the proper ordering of society. In St. Paul's discussion of the exercise of gifts in the church, for example, the apostle noted that each member had been given certain gifts

¹⁶²Ibid., 109.

¹⁶³Ibid. Laflèche continues: "Dans la constitution mosaïque, le chef de l'Etat, d'abord désigné sous le nom de juge, et ensuite connu sous le nom de roi, est aussi investi de l'autorité souveraine; le Sanhedrin, ou conseil des vieillards, a voix délibérative, et les juges subalternes constitués dans les villes, et vivant au milieu du peuple dont ils sont les représentants naturels, ont voix consultative."

"En presence de ces faits et de ce haut enseignement de la religion et de l'histoire, ne sommes nous pas autorisés à conclure...que le meilleur et le plus parfait des gouvernements est celui où le souverain, investi de l'autorité suprême, est assisté d'un sénat dans lequel les premiers de la nation ont voix délibérative dans les conseils, et où le peuple a, par ses représentants, voix consultative?" (109)

and talents and that for the church to function properly each member had to put his gifts to the best use possible. For Laflèche, the same was true of French Quebec, a national church unto itself. Providence "a fait l'homme pour vivre en société," Laflèche wrote;

elle a dû en conséquence lui donner tout ce qui lui était nécessaire pour atteindre ce but. Et attendu que la société est un être moral dont chaque individu est membre il s'ensuit que chacun a des fonctions différentes à remplir, suivant le poste auquel Providence elle-même l'a appelé. Car, comme notre corps, qui n'est qu'un, est cependant composé de plusieurs membres, et que chaque membre a des fonctions diverses et les aptitudes nécessaires pour les remplir convenablement, de même dans le corps social il y a diverses fonctions à remplir, et de là, sans aucun doute, la diversité des dons et des talents que Dieu a départis à chacun de ses membres, pour rencontrer les besoins divers de la société. De là aussi obligation pour chaque homme de bien connaître le poste auquel il a été destiné, s'il ne veut pas être dans la société un membre déplacé, toujours souffrant, et quelquefois dangereux.¹⁶⁴

Of course, for any society to function well it must be governed by just men. The quality of Quebec's political leaders was therefore a matter of some importance to Laflèche. What sort of men should those eligible to vote elect into office?¹⁶⁵

¹⁶⁴Ibid., 194-95.

¹⁶⁵Laflèche was certainly not alone in his concern over elections. In 1867 Bishop Laroque bemoaned the corruption that had accompanied previous elections and asserted that if that the upcoming federal election were conducted in an orderly Christian fashion the sins of the past could be redeemed. "Pour arriver à cette magnifique conquête, serons-nous plus que jamais sous le drapeau de notre religion! Le catholicisme a des remèdes pour tous les maux, comme il a des enseignements sur toutes les vérités. Lui seul a le secret de cette parole de la Sagesse Eternelle: *sanabiles fecit nationes orbis terrarum*. [Sag. 1. 14.]

Laflèche maintained, first, that it was God's wish that leaders should be chosen from among his elect so that the religious and national unity of his people might be preserved.¹⁶⁶ That is, political aspirants who were not committed to Ultramontanist Catholicism were, in God's opinion, unelectable. Citing Deuteronomy 1:13 Laflèche noted that when the Israelites were called to "possess" Canaan they were required to choose from among themselves men of sound character and piety.¹⁶⁷ "Attendu que le premier et le plus puissant élément national est le lien religieux, il s'ensuit que l'électeur catholique, fidèle à ce principe, agit non-seulement en bon chrétien, mais encore en bon patriote..." Definitely excluded from the list of men for whom good French Quebeckers could vote were "les libéraux et les démagogues qui veulent exclure la religion et le prêtre de l'ordre politique." Such men were "les plus dangereux ennemis de nos intérêts nationaux."¹⁶⁸

As for voting itself, Laflèche also found relevant material in the New Testament, where "many passages" that shed light on the proper running of an election could be found. As an example Laflèche cited the election of Matthias as a replacement for

Dieu a rendu curables toutes les nations de la terre!" In *Nouvelle constitution du Canada* (Ottawa: Atelier Typographique du Journal, 'Le Canada,' 1867), 74.

¹⁶⁶Laflèche, *Quelques considérations*, 204.

¹⁶⁷*Ibid.*, 206.

¹⁶⁸*Ibid.*, 205. Italics in the original.

Judas among the twelve apostles recorded in the first chapter of Acts. "St.-Pierre, en sa qualité de chef du collège apostolique, trace la règle à suivre dans ce choix important," Laflèche wrote;¹⁶⁹ this passage, along with the election of deacons described in Acts 6, related a truth unknown to most electors but of great importance: It proved that every elector should consider himself the possessor of a "divine mandate" to see to it that men of proper faith are elected into political office.¹⁷⁰ Citing Psalm 112, Laflèche also noted that political candidates must be men of godly wisdom.¹⁷¹

What would happen if Canada's French-speaking Catholics failed to follow the route Laflèche inveighed against and elected impious men into political office? Quebec would likely fall into anarchy-- perhaps even civil war. Laflèche pointed to the biblical account of Rehoboam's rebellion against divinely instituted authority.¹⁷² "La guerre civile, et un schisme malheureux, divisa pour toujours la maison de Jacob," Laflèche

¹⁶⁹Ibid., 207-08.

¹⁷⁰Ibid., 208.

¹⁷¹Ibid., 216.

¹⁷²"Un autre fait tout aussi propre à démontrer la nécessité de faire assister la sagesse aux conseils des nations, et à faire ressortir avec éclat les malheurs réservés aux peuples qui dédaignent ses salutaires enseignements, c'est la conduite du jeune Roboam, au commencement de son règne....[C]e jeune prince eut l'imprudence de mépriser les conseils si sages de ces vieillards....Ce jeune prince, abandonné à son aveuglement par un juste jugement de Dieu, ne voulut point écouter la demande si juste de ce peuple. Mais il exaspéra par la dureté de ses paroles, et le poussa à la révolte par ses menaces intempestives." Ibid., 219-20.

wrote. "Cette division déplorable fut le signal de la décadence de la nation sainte; elle prépara les voies à la captivité de Babylone, et amena finalement la dispersion complète des dix tribus qui formèrent le royaume rebelle et schismatique d'Israël. Grande et terrible leçon!"¹⁷³ It was thus all the more important that Quebec's electors be able to determine who was not fit to govern. And to prove his point Laflèche turned to the story of Absalom, King David's rebellious son.¹⁷⁴

Like Absalom, many political aspirants and leaders were merely ambitious and were not willing to wait for God's timing but instead pursued power at the expense of the good of the country.¹⁷⁵ One characteristic of a false friend of the people, like Absalom, is that he is a flatterer-- "C'est ce que faisait Absalon pour gagner le coeur des hommes d'Israël."¹⁷⁶ Political usurpers also foster contempt for legitimate authority. "C'est ainsi que l'on prépare les populations à la révolte, et à toutes les horreurs des guerres civiles."¹⁷⁷

That civil war was a fate that could befall the French Canadians if they failed to live up to their high calling was clear to Laflèche. But if they were true to their traditions,

¹⁷³Ibid., 220.

¹⁷⁴Ibid., 232. Laflèche's employment of the story of Absalom calls to mind John Dryden's allegorical poem, "Absalom and Achitophel" in which King Charles II and his illegitimate son, Monmouth, are likened to David and Absalom.

¹⁷⁵Ibid.

¹⁷⁶Ibid., 234.

¹⁷⁷Ibid.

language, and the faith that gave their culture meaning they could believe that Providence would see them through any difficulty. God had fought on the side of the ancient Israelites, a small people, and God would fight for Quebec's French-speaking Catholics. No matter how weak an obedient nation might be, and no matter how small its territories, Canada's French-speaking Catholics had nothing to fear. With the civil war that raged in the United States while he composed his *considérations* in mind, Laflèche wrote that even if a small chosen nation were surrounded by powerful and ambitious peoples, God would protect his faithful. "Dieu le protégera et combattra même pour lui s'il le faut, comme au temps de Sennacherib et de Judas Machabée."¹⁷⁸ Unlike the U.S., Britain, or other great powers which put their faith in human might, French Canada put its trust in God.¹⁷⁹

Louis-François Laflèche was nineteenth-century Quebec's, if not Canada's, most sophisticated employer of biblical texts, as the examples just cited -- only a handful of the hundreds of the direct biblical references in his work -- amply demonstrate.

While no other leading figure in late nineteenth-century Quebec would rely so explicitly on the Bible, the themes he

¹⁷⁸Ibid., 42.

¹⁷⁹Ibid., 77. "Si tous les habitants du Canada, à quelqu'origine qu'ils appartiennent, pouvaient bien comprendre cette importante vérité, et mettre en pratique cette loi du christianisme: 'Traitez les autres comme vous aimeriez à en être traités,' la confiance la plus intime régnerait toujours entre eux, et les règles de la plus stricte équité présideraient à toutes les relations journalières qu'ils ont ensemble."

invoked in *Quelques considérations* appeared in the less original writing of others. In *Le Canada-français et la providence* (1875), for example, Philippe Masson evoked Abraham as an example of one who had remained faithful to the task given him by God and whose descendants were consequently blessed. Canada's French-speaking Catholics would be blessed, too, Masson said, if they remained true to their providential mission.¹⁸⁰

A similar theme was taken up at the Saint-Jean Baptiste celebration in Quebec City in 1880, where the bishop of Sherbrooke compared those gathered to celebrate mass in Quebec City to the gathering of Israel described in the eighth chapter of Joshua.

Nous lisons dans les livres saints que Josué plaça les enfants d'Israel sur les monts Garizim et Hebal, pour prononcer les bénédictions réservées à ceux qui demeureraient fidèles à l'alliance du Seigneur, et proférer des malédictions contre les transgresseurs de sa loi et que, durant cette solennité, l'Arche d'Alliance se trouva entourée des Prêtres, des Levites, des Juges, des Officiers et des Anciens du peuple, et fut placée dans la vallée qui sépare les deux monts

-- and how much the gathering before him reminded the bishop of that "grande scene biblique."¹⁸¹ For there in Quebec, as in

¹⁸⁰Philippe Masson, *Le Canada-Français et la providence* (Quebec, 1875), 23. "N'est-ce pas que nous devons irrévocablement périr, sans une assistance toute particulière de la Providence, et que nous sommes aujourd'hui [un] miracle persistant de la protection divine?" (26).

¹⁸¹H.J.J.B. Chouinard, ed., *Fête nationale des canadiens-français célébrée à Québec en 1880* (Quebec: L'Imprimerie A. Cote et Cie, 1881), 164.

ancient Judea, the earth, sky, and landscape together comprised a holy temple; the Saint Lawrence River, Plains of Abraham, Laurentides, and villages of Beauport and Charlesbourg, perched on the hills "like eagles' nests," together made a cathedral.¹⁸²

The bishop's sermon text was Deuteronomy 32:7 -- "Souviens-toi des anciens jours, pense à chacune des générations; interroge ton père, et il te le racontera; interroge tes ancêtres, et ils te le diront" -- and his message was essentially the same as Laflèche's.¹⁸³ He quoted from Psalm 2 ("Tu es mon fils, je t'ai engendré aujourd'hui; demande-moi, et je te donnerai les nations pour ton héritage") and said that Jesus Christ has been given a global empire and rule over all of humankind, that God had separated humankind into different groups, and each human group was at liberty to exercise its free-will to pursue whatever ends it wished, though in God's perfect plan each nation, like every individual, had a special mission to fulfill. The vocation of the "Christian races" was to spread religious truth, to enlighten nations less advanced in their knowledge of God and to risk life and limb to introduce true faith, justice, and civilisation to the ignorant.¹⁸⁴ Like Laflèche's Jacques Cartier, the new Abraham,

¹⁸²Ibid., 105.

¹⁸³Ibid., 169. Also see Antoine Labelle, *La mission de la race canadienne-française en Canada* (Saint-Jacques, PQ: Editions du pot de fer, 1992; repr., 1883), 4-5. In light of the close connection between religion and *patrie* in Quebec, Labelle writes, "n'est-on pas tenté de s'écrier avec le prophète Balaam: 'Que vos tentes sont belles, ô enfants de Jacob! Que tes pavillons, ô Israël, sont merveilleux!'"

¹⁸⁴Chouinard, *Fête nationale des canadiens-français*, 170.

who was called from France to this new Canaan, God called Canada's first missionaries from France. "Quittez votre belle patrie, premiers apôtres du Canada," the bishop has God say; "venez prêcher l'Evangile et éclairer les peuples qui marchent dans les ténèbres de la nuit; venez, par le saint sacrifice, faire couler sur ce sol, encore infidèle, le sang de la sainte victime..."¹⁸⁵ The bishop went on to observe that Quebec's unique mission was evident in Jacques Cartier's first act in the New World, the erection of a cross,¹⁸⁶ and that Quebec's French speakers had been faithful to this mission. For since Cartier's day Canada's French Catholics had, like John the Baptist, prepared the way in the New World for the religion of Jesus Christ.¹⁸⁷ As long as the French Canadians remained true to this cause, they could be sure that they were walking in God's way and remaining true to their mission.

In his famous "Sermon on the Vocation of the French Race in America" Mgr. Paquet also imagined Canada's French Catholics to be reenacting sacred history. The text for this message preached before the Société Saint-Jean Baptiste in 1902 was Isaiah 43:21: "This people have I formed for myself; they shall shew forth my praise." In this passage of Scripture, cloaked in language of "such lofty meaning," Paquet perceived a clue as to the true nature of the "noble mission" that had been confided to to the

¹⁸⁵Ibid., 173.

¹⁸⁶Ibid., 171.

¹⁸⁷Ibid.

French Canadians.¹⁸⁸ "Open the Bible, my brothers," Paquet said,

glance at these moving pages which overflow with the Divine Spirit, from Abraham to Moses, from Moses to David, from David to the Messiah who was imagined by the patriarchs, announced by the prophets, and who sprang like a flower from the Jewish stem, and tell me if the Hebrew people did not fulfill a priestly mission on the earth despite shame, failure, and disbelief.¹⁸⁹

And just as the Hebrews had fulfilled a divine mission under the pre-Christian "old law," so was there a mission to be fulfilled under the "new law." Fulfilling that mission was the French Canadians' task. "All peoples are called to a true religion," Paquet said, "but not all have received a religious mission."¹⁹⁰

Now my brothers,-- why should I hesitate to say it? -- we have the privilege of being entrusted with this social priesthood granted only to select peoples....we are not only a religious people, we are messengers of the spirit of religion; we are not only dutiful sons of the Church, we are, or we should be, numbered among its zealots, its defenders, and its apostles.¹⁹¹

Paquet hoped that a commitment to this mission would be attached to the forehead of every French Canadian as a "Heavenly sign."¹⁹²

The same message was also pronounced by ultramontane Judge Adolph-Basile Routhier, who in 1894 encouraged one French Canadian audience to recount to their children the story of how

¹⁸⁸Translation of Pâquet's sermon found in Cook, *French Canadian Nationalism*, 152-53.

¹⁸⁹*Ibid.*, 154.

¹⁹⁰*Ibid.*

¹⁹¹*Ibid.*

¹⁹²*Ibid.*, 159.

God's hand had always been evident in Quebec's history.¹⁹³ French Canada's children should be told how their predecessors were, like baby Moses, saved by two daughters of a king which were "greater than all the pharoahs"-- the Roman Catholic Church and France. They should be told how their forefathers had crossed "the Red Sea of the Conquest," and how French Canada's "bloody body" had been "left for dead" on the Plains of Abraham, was gathered up ("dans un drapeau blanc fleurdelisé") and was laid in "a tomb on which proud Albion wrote: here lies New France, 1763!"¹⁹⁴ Yet despite all that, the French survived in Canada-- irrefutable proof of providence's care for Quebec.

In a lecture given the following year Routhier located the strength of French Quebec's enduring religious roots in the martyrdom of missionaries in the early history of New France. Those who wished to see French Canada's Golgotha should return to 1649, when Jean de Brebeuf and Gabriel Lallement followed Jesus all the way to "Calvary" and thus washed New France's soil clean of the stains of native idolatry. Had not Jesus Christ himself said "le grain ne porte point d'épi, s'il ne meurt en terre"?¹⁹⁵

¹⁹³"N'oubliez pas d'apprendre à vos enfants dès leur plus tendre enfance à aimer leur race et leur patrie," Routhier said. "Parlez-leur souvent de leur nationalité, de ses origines, de ses grandeurs et de ses gloires. Racontez-leur ses malheurs, ses luttes chevaleresques ses victoires et ses défaites, ses rêves d'avenir et les hautes destinées que la Providence lui réserve." *Conférences et discours*, 120.

¹⁹⁴Routhier, *Conférences et discours*, 121.

¹⁹⁵*Ibid.*, 151-53. See John 12:24

Blessed martyrdom was not only a thing of the past, for in the late nineteenth century French Canadian Zouaves put their lives at risk for the sake of the faith. Nothing drew more enthusiasm from French-Canada's Catholic leaders than the efforts of Quebec's Zouaves who volunteered to fight in defense of the Holy See against Italian nationalists from February 1868 to September 1870.

In February 1893, on the twenty-fifth anniversary of the first departure of the Zouaves from Quebec, Abbé Gustave Bourassa gave a speech in the veteran soldiers' honour. Taking I Machabees 14:29 as his text -- "Ils ont fait rejaillir leur peuple une grande gloire" -- Bourassa called to mind the ancient Hebrews who gathered around the temple in Zion to render thanks to Simon Macabeus and his "heroic family" for their services to Israel's "national cause" and likened the event at which he and his listeners had gathered to it. Like the ancient Israelites, numerous French Canadians gathered at the Eglise de Notre Dame in Montreal to honour the memory of the Zouaves who had been willing to lay down their lives for the sake of the Catholic Church. For Bourassa the "patriotic work" of the Machabees and Zouaves was the same.¹⁹⁶

Bourassa took up this theme again two years later, on the 25th anniversary of the surrender of Rome (16 September 1870) at the cathedral in Montreal. On this occasion he quoted Revelation

¹⁹⁶Gustave Bourassa, *Conférences et discours* (Montreal, C.O Beauchemin et fils, 1899), 107-08.

14:13: "Bienheureux ceux qui meurent dans le Seigneur"-- a passage he found "true," "consoling," and "full of eternal promise."¹⁹⁷ Recalling the Zouaves' worthy mission, Bourassa declared that he did not glory in battle and that he was a minister of the "God of peace." But he was also a servant of the "God of armies." Was it not true, he asked, that Jesus Christ had come to earth to set children against parents and parents against children?¹⁹⁸ Was it not true that God's order for a fallen world could only be established once the attacks of those who set themselves against the rule of God had been thwarted? And was it not true that history had proven that God employed human arms to achieve his own ends? "[N]ous voyons partout et toujours le soldat à côté du théocrate ou du pontife," Bourassa said, "le chevalier à côté de l'évêque ou du prêcheur. Sous la loi de Moïse, ce sont Moïse lui-même et Josué, Samuel et David, le second Josué et Zorobabel."¹⁹⁹ There was thus ample proof that it was not wrong for the Zouaves to have taken up arms in defense of the Roman pontiff; for, having fought on God's side, the Zouave-martyrs who lost their lives in defense of Rome had washed their robes in "the blood of the Lamb, who purifies all blemishes."²⁰⁰ And so should all true believers fight the "good fight of faith

¹⁹⁷Ibid., 129.

¹⁹⁸See Matthew 10:21; Mark 13:12.

¹⁹⁹Ibid., 181.

²⁰⁰Ibid., 136.

and Christian charity" as befitted Christ's "brave athletes."²⁰¹ 254
In 1902 Bishop Paquet would add another military metaphor to Bourassa's catalogue, saying that Canada's French-speaking Catholics should consider themselves among the Church's most ardent zealots and defenders who "with the pen or the point of a sword have engraved the name of God into history."²⁰²

To "write God's name into history," to be salt and light in an increasingly decadent and materialistic world, to preserve Ultramontane Catholicism-- these were the tasks providence was purported to have allotted to the French Canadians. The statues, monuments, icons, religious paintings, and biblicistic rhetoric that one might have met at every turn in late nineteenth-century Quebec reminded French-speaking Catholics of that fact. Because Protestants threatened the French Quebec's providential mission, they were embattled by Catholic clerics who had made it a point to fortify their own familiarity with the Bible and were thus able to answer Protestant complaints with Scripture. And because the French Quebecker's mission was to write God's name into history, those who abandoned New France for the United States and its promises were, at best, to be pitied. The Bible did not say so explicitly, but for French Canada's Ultramontane leaders this much was clear: the Bible was on their side.

²⁰¹Ibid., 138.

²⁰²Cook, *French Canadian Nationalism*, 154.

Given the French Canadians' religious project, it is not surprising that the prominent Quebecers cited in this chapter drew primarily on the Hebrew Bible. Obviously, the Old Testament prevailed in this way because it has more to say about politics and government than the Christian scriptures. The books of First and Second Kings, First and Second Chronicles, Esther and Ezra are devoted in large part to accounts of the lives and deaths of political regimes; and while passing commentary on secular government is ubiquitous in the New Testament,²⁰³ particular secular politics are never a central concern in it-- save at the end of Revelation when the King of Kings establishes a perfect regime that shall not end.²⁰⁴ Even more important for French Canada's nineteenth-century nationalists, the Old Testament is concerned primarily with the salvation of a people, the Jewish nation, which was called to possess a specific territory. The Hebrew Scriptures are not concerned with the salvation of individuals. The New Testament, by contrast, construes a "holy nation" not as one people in right relationship with its own

²⁰³For example, Jesus is recorded to have called Herod Antipas "that fox" (Luke 13:32); and the author of I Timothy exhorts his readers to make "supplications, prayers, and intercessions" for "kings, and for all that are in authority" (2:2).

²⁰⁴Revelation 21:1-3 reads: "And I saw a new heaven and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away....And I John saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven....And I heard a great voice out of heaven saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God" (AV).

local god but as a "peculiar people" comprising every linguistic, racial, and ethnic group.²⁰⁵ Considering the New Testament's advocacy of pluralism within the household of faith,²⁰⁶ it is little wonder that French Canada's nationalists made small use of it in their political discourses.

Of course, French Canada's religious leaders were not original in their scriptural choices. For the same reasons as those just cited, in the public discourse of seventeenth-century England and the works of Bossuet, for example, the Old Testament prevailed as well. And by the time Laflèche wrote his *considérations* a discourse derived from the Torah's account of the Israelites long march to Canaan had been established in North America since the seventeenth century. John Winthrop's famous proclamation aboard the *Arbella* in 1630 that the eyes of the whole earth were on the Pilgrims who would "possess the land" and build a "citty on a hill" in the New World is well known. The mainly Old Testament rhetoric that informed the Latter-day Saints' drive to establish Utah as yet another promised land in the New World now seems, even by the 1840s, almost clichéd.²⁰⁷

National salvation, not national enrichment and glory, was the primary interest of French Canada's religious leaders in the

²⁰⁵See I Peter 2:9 and Revelation 5:9 and 14:6.

²⁰⁶Of course, there was considerable debate among Christians in the first century over the extent to which Gentile converts to Christianity should be compelled to follow traditional Jewish custom and ritual. See, for example, Acts 15 and Galatians 2.

²⁰⁷See Barlow, "Diversity and Development: The Bible Moves West," ch. in *Mormons and the Bible*.

late nineteenth century. Hoping to preserve and expand an earthly garden where North America's chosen people would dwell in holiness, they cited the Old Testament. It is true that they sometimes cited passages in the New Testament, urging their countrymen to keep their eyes heavenward; but more often than not, the heaven French Canadians were exhorted to keep in mind was Quebec. Thus even some of the few New Testament sources cited by them were put to national use. Calls to national greatness were cloaked in Old Testament references; calls to humility, sacrifice, and heavenly-mindedness in the Christian Scriptures.²⁰⁸ the message was the same.

Because Quebec's French-speaking Catholics were discouraged from coming to their own conclusions about the Bible, the Scriptures were handled more fearfully, or at least less diffidently, among French Canadians than was the case among Canadian Protestants. The casual use of passages of Scripture, such as we saw in chapter one above, for example, was rare in French Quebec. What Canada's English- and French-speaking nationalists had in common, however, was a desire to root their national projects in biblical language and history.

²⁰⁸See Hill, "Chosen Nation, Chosen People," ch. in *The Bible and the Seventeenth-Century Revolution*.

Conclusion

To twenty-first century readers a manner of speaking that construed Jacques Cartier as a new Abraham and a relatively uninfluential people as "the beacon of light in the new world"¹ seems odd. So do English Canadian claims that providence meant Canada to fulfill, within the British Empire, a mission comparable to that of ancient Israel's. But these world views provided English- and French-speaking Canadians with a deep sense of purpose -- and "power."² How sobering and exhilarating must it have been to harbor beliefs such as these? Surely there was some gratification to be had in the knowledge that one was a member of a chosen people; and among Quebec's French Catholics especially, there was a sense of foreboding: if they failed in their mission they would be judged by God.

In contemporary French Canadian memory Bishop Laflèche and his like-minded compatriots have been castigated as purveyors of medievalism and cultural darkness.³ But Laflèche really believed

¹*La Minerve* cited in Silver, *The French Canadian Idea of Confederation, 1864-1900* (Toronto: University of Toronto, 1982), 234.

²Carl Berger, *A Sense of Power: Studies in the Ideas of Canadian Imperialism, 1867-1914* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1970).

³See, for example, Denis Monière, "Noon-Day of Ultramontanist" in *Ideologies in Quebec: The Historical Development* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1981).

that Quebec's liberals and Liberals jeopardized French Canada's providential mission. He believed that if French Canadians did not take the mission he propounded seriously, their culture, language and mission would be lost. Thus even in his railing he emerges as a man, however unappealing, with his people's best interest in mind.

Yet whatever their good intentions or beliefs, many of the Canadians cited in this study twisted the Scriptures to support manifestly nationalist and civil religious aims. S.F. Wise's claim that during the War of 1812 the sermons of Upper Canadian Anglicans "became progressively less humble and more patriotic in content" rings a bell;⁴ for at the end of the nineteenth century, at least in public nationalist discourse, humility was in short supply while hubristic patriotism abounded.

This is of course not unique to nineteenth century Canada; readers through the ages have always contorted the Scriptures to sundry ends.⁵ As Stephen Prickett maintains, from the first-century Christians' "appropriation" of the Hebrew Bible -- or, indeed, from the Hebrews' own appropriation of Mesopotamian (among other) ancient literary sources -- to the present day, men and women have construed biblical texts to fit their contemporary circumstances. Prickett observes, for instance, that the decision

⁴In McKillop and Romney, *God's Peculiar Peoples*, 33.

⁵Thus S.F. Wise: "In every age men, in innocence or presumption, have brought the deity down into life and attributed divine sanction to their earthly ends." Ibid. 20.

of the Authorized Version's translators to refer to the angels in Luke 2:13 as a "heavenly host" rather than as "heavenly soldiers" was in large measure political:

At a time when religion and politics were not merely inseparably intertwined, but within a generation were to spill over into Civil War, any suggestion of multitudes of heavenly soldiers, whether properly organized into armies, was clearly unacceptable..."⁶

The politicization of Scripture is a commonplace in Western history; the claim that one can "prove" nearly anything from the Bible is by now a cliché. Not to recognize that the Bible has long been used to further immediate temporal aims or to give meaning to current events, says Prickett, is to miss the point of medieval stained-glass windows and illuminated manuscripts where "Patriarchs or Apostles are performing their typological roles in contemporary dress and setting"; it is "to lose sight of the corresponding deployment of biblical metaphor and typology not merely in religious and moral polemics but in the parallel contemporary discourses of politics trade, medicine and everyday

⁶Stephen Prickett, *Origins of Narrative: The Romantic appropriation of the Bible* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 87. Earlier in this work Prickett writes: "Whatever degree of idealistic fervour for a return to presumed origins that accompanied the first English translations of the Bible, the English King James Authorised Version was as much a political as a religious undertaking, in which the Protestant appropriation and alteration of the Catholic Vulgate was to parallel the earlier Christian appropriation and alteration of the Jewish scriptures" (56); and later: "The Authorised Version was not the product of Calvinistic predestination, nor yet its modern equivalent of blind historical or linguistic forces, it was the outcome of a deliberate piece of social and linguistic engineering" (98).

life."⁷

At Ranworth church, near Norwich, a late fourteenth-century manuscript shows Jonah, dressed much as a local parson, being swallowed by a great fish from the nearby Broad. A panel of thirteenth-century stained glass in Canterbury Cathedral shows Jesus raising Jairus's daughter in a curiously perspectived mediaeval merchant's house. To James I of England, thundering against the filthy habit of smoking, it seemed entirely natural to compare the perverted lusts of smokers to the Children of Israel "lusting in the wilderness after quails". To Oliver Cromwell, fighting against Catholics in Ireland, it seemed no less appropriate to justify the brutal obliteration of Catholic society and, if necessary, the massacre of his opponents, by supporting the Protestant Plantation in Ulster with images of the Israelites occupying Canaan appropriated from the Book of Joshua.⁸

Martin Luther himself realized that one need only to "throw many passages together helter-skelter, whether they fit or not to easily prove from the Scriptures that beer is better than wine."⁹ Perhaps more than any other historical work, Christopher Hill's *The English Bible and the Seventeenth-Century Revolution* spells out in detail the extent to which the Bible was employed to various ends by the ancestors of nineteenth-century British Canadians.¹⁰

⁷Ibid., 64.

⁸Ibid.

⁹Martin Luther as cited by Nathan Hatch in "Sola Scripture and Novus Ordo Seclorum," ch. in *The Bible in America: Essays in Cultural History* ed., Nathan Hatch and Mark A. Noll (New York: Oxford University Press, 1982), 61.

¹⁰Christopher Hill, *The Bible and the Seventeenth-Century Revolution* (New York: The Penguin Press, 1993). Hill writes: "[B]y the mid-seventeenth century English men and women had experienced a quarter of a millennium of emphasis on the sovereignty of the

In pressing the Bible into political service, then, Canada's nationalists were not doing anything extraordinary. This may lead one to conclude that even as Canadians cited the Bible to support claims that their nation was in some way special and distinct from the United States, they were unwittingly demonstrating the extent to which Canadian public life resembled public life in the United States. If the irony that, in relying as they did on the Bible to define their promised land, French Canada's nationalists resembled their English-speaking counterparts more than they knew can be appreciated, so can the claim that biblicistic Canadian nationalists of whatever stripe often sounded very much like the manifestly destined Americans they deplored, feared, envied, and scorned. This is not to say that biblical language pervaded the public life of late nineteenth-century Canada to the extent it did in the United States. From the arrival in the New World of the Puritans to the present, the Bible has served as a source for American political rhetoric. In 1776 the Deist Benjamin Franklin suggested to the Continental Congress that an image of Moses leading the ancient Hebrews through the Red Sea be made the national seal. Twenty-three years later George Washington's public eulogizers likened him to Abel, Jacob, Moses, Joshua, Othniel, Samuel, Abner, Elijah, David, Josiah, Jehoida, Mordecai, Cyrus, and Daniel. Another sixty-five years later most of these figures were again hauled out in memory of the assassinated

Scriptures as the unique source of divine wisdom of all subjects" (18).

Abraham Lincoln, who, since he was murdered in mid-April, was also cautiously compared to Christ.¹¹ John Winthrop's famous sermon aboard the *Arbella* in 1630 had its echoes in President Ronald Reagan's frequent reference to the United States as a "city on a hill" and in Bill Clinton's political advocacy of a "New Covenant."¹²

While biblicistic rhetoric like that which has pervaded American public life from the first European settlements to the present was thus not as omnipresent in Canada in the late nineteenth century -- none of Canada's prime ministers ever approached the Bible-laden public language of their American counterparts, for example -- we have nevertheless seen that the Scriptures were still very present in late nineteenth-century Canada's public life. Some Canadians quoted the Bible to prove that the United Empire Loyalists were morally superior to American republicans. Louis Riel and his followers did the same to convince the Métis that Manitoba was to be the new seat of a new Vatican. The New Israel rhetoric of some American Puritans, English Canadians, French Canadians, Mormons, and Métis is sometimes strikingly similar.

A recognition that, in terms of biblicistic rhetoric, late nineteenth century Canadians were not as different from the

¹¹See Mark A. Noll, "The Image of the United States as a Biblical Nation, 1776-1865," ch. in *The Bible In America*, 40, 44.

¹²For commentary see David Lyle Jeffrey, *People of the Book: Christian Identity and Literary Culture* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1996), 327-328 and 340.

Americans as they themselves thought might serve as a slight corrective to a surmise made by one historian of American Christianity. "[D]espite a national history without the ideology of special divine blessing," writes Mark Noll, "Canada has...[a] better objective argument for being considered a "Christian nation" than does the United States."

The list of comparisons with the United States is striking: Canada did not tolerate slavery, it has not thrown its weight around in foreign adventures, it has not done quite so poorly with its Native Americans, it has not puffed itself up with messianic pride, it has tolerated less social violence, until very recently its rates of church attendance were considerably higher, its believers have promoted missionary outreach at home and abroad at least as vigorously, its churches have had much more (Quebec) or considerably more (Ontario, the Maritimes) impact on local public life, it has cared more humanely for the poor and weak members of its society, and its educational structures make some provision for teaching religion.

"In other words," Noll concludes, "if believers want to find a more convincing history of 'Christian America,' they should look to Canada.'¹³

There certainly is enough in this quotation to set Canadian

¹³Mark Noll, *A History of Christianity in the United States and Canada* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1992), 547. Also see Noll's *Adding Cross to Crown: The Political Significance of Christ's Passion* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1996) where Canada's tolerance of denominational schools are pointed to as an example of Canada's greater claim to being a biblical nation (41). Since the time this work was published, Newfoundland's denominational schools and Quebec's confessional schools have been abolished.

and American nationalists at one another's necks;¹⁴ and there are some points in it that do not seem quite right. The main reason Canada has never thrown its weight around in foreign affairs, for example, is that, relative to the globe's major national actors, it has never had any weight to throw. Yet if the language of Canada's nineteenth- and early twentieth-century English-speaking nationalists is to be taken seriously, one might safely conclude that had Canada ever acquired any weight, it would have been thrown. At any rate, enthusiasm for Britain's foreign adventures was never lacking in English-speaking Canada till well into the twentieth century. English-speaking Canada's monumental losses in the First World War stand as a testimony to the extent to which many Canadians responded to the call of king and empire.¹⁵

As for messianism, one thing this study has shown is that many late nineteenth-century Canadians participated in or sympathized with fervent messianic movements which claimed national status. The Métis rebellion of 1885 brought not only Riel's vision of himself as the human founder of a new kingdom of God in Manitoba into conflict with Orange Ontarian empire

¹⁴Probably the most unfortunate, and unwitting, exercise in anti-Americanism to be published in the late-1990s appeared in the introduction to G.A. Rawlyk's *Is Jesus Your Personal Saviour? In Search of Canadian Evangelicalism in the 1990s* (Montreal-Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1996). This passage of Noll's is cited by Rawlyk (13). See my responses in "A Canadian with an Attitude," *Christianity Today* 7 April 1997, 44; and "The Irony of the 'Irenic Canadian Evangelical,'" *Evangelical Studies Bulletin* 14:3 (Fall 1997), 1-3.

¹⁵See J.L. Granatstein, *Yankee Go Home? Canadians and Anti-Americanism* (Toronto: HarperCollins, 1996), 67-75.

builders, but soon led to a clash between imperially-minded Anglo-Canadians and French Canada's purveyors of Quebec's own providential mission. Messianism in nineteenth-century Canada is not as obvious as it is in the history of the United States, but that has mainly to do with the fact that (1) in a typically Canadian fashion, no over-riding nationalist view was ever able to prevail throughout Canada (though not a few French- and English-speaking nationalists looked hopefully to the eventual cultural assimilation of their linguistic counterparts),¹⁶ and (2) the most coherent messianic movement in Canada was articulated in French--now the first language of only some six million Canadians. Yet it is clear that messianic notions informed the minds of the prominent opinion-shapers in Canada's two primary "nations" in the late nineteenth century. At least as far as these two points are concerned, then, Canada seems not to have been so different from the United States.

More important to Noll and others¹⁷ who have written in Canadian religious history than these points, however, is the idea, clearly expressed at the end of passage quoted above, that, by virtue of its history, Canada can be called a more truly

¹⁶ See S.F. Wise, "God's Peculiar Peoples," chap. in *God's Peculiar Peoples: Essays on Political Culture in Nineteenth-Century Canada* (Ottawa: Carleton University Press, 1993), 43.

¹⁷For example, John G. Stackhouse, Jr., who maintains in his *Canadian Evangelicalism in the Twentieth Century: An Introduction to Its Character* (Toronto: University of Toronto, 1993) that Canadian evangelicals have managed to avoid much of extremes of their American counterparts.

Christian -- that is, more truly biblical -- nation than the United States. That Noll would come to this conclusion after making a study of Canadian history is understandable, for by the time he came to it he had been in academic pursuit of a biblical nation for some time. For all the United States' biblicism, which has been well documented by Noll (among others), Noll has not found in America's past what many Americans claim is there, namely, proof that the United States has been and remains a "Christian nation."¹⁸ "There was little self-conscious deception, and hence little deliberate manipulation of Scripture for ulterior purposes," says Noll of preachers in antebellum America who, for example, likened westward expansion to the ancient Israelites' possession of Canaan. But

in becoming common coinage a certain debasement of the Bible's message did take place. A quantity of bad money -- nationalistic particularism, presumptuous self-righteousness, gratuitous assumptions about national election -- drove out the good -- universal standards of righteousness and grace, intimations of a hope in Christ transcending loyalties to earthly powers. The result was that although the Bible had worked itself into the foundation of national consciousness, it contributed little to the shape of the structures built upon that foundation -- except for the conviction that the structures were as sacrosanct as the biblical foundation itself."¹⁹

That is, in their public life Americans used the Bible to justify

¹⁸See, for example, Laurie Goodstein, "Christian Coalition Moans Lack of Anger at Clinton," *New York Times* 20 September 1998, A28.

¹⁹Mark A. Noll, "The Image of the United States as a Biblical Nation," ch. in *The Bible in America: Essays in Cultural History* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1982), 46.

selfish ends -- "nationalistic particularism, presumptuous self-righteousness, gratuitous assumptions about national election"-- but did not strive to make their nation conform to the demands Christian tradition has claimed the Bible makes on men and women. "Did ministers, preaching from the Bible as public spokesmen, really use Scripture as a primary source for the convictions they expressed?" Noll asks. "Or did they merely exploit Scripture to sanctify convictions -- whether nationalistic, political, social, or racial -- which had little to do with biblical themes?"²⁰

The questions are rhetorical; Noll views much of the rhetoric of the hundreds of figures whose words he has examined as biblicistic, not really biblical. Thus he writes that those who "applied the Bible's teachings to the nation's destiny most directly seemed to have understood its message least," while those "for whom the country itself was least important seemed to have understood it best."²¹ To put the point another way, the proud and self-assertive seemed to have gotten the Bible wrong; presumably, then, the humble and deferential, whoever they may have been, came closer to getting it right. But one assumes that the efforts of those who were truer to the Bible's, especially the New Testament's, own message were not as influential in American history as were the others. The United States cannot then be called a biblical nation.

²⁰Ibid., 41.

²¹Ibid., 51.

Implicit in this claim is the view that the Bible is more than a mere text upon which human beings act and that the Bible itself has claims to make on its readers. Noll is himself an American Christian who believes that the Bible is, in T.S. Eliot's words, "the report of the Word of God," and as such, that the Bible is capable of (so to say) speaking to its readers: for it is "quick and powerful, and sharper than any two edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart."²² Thus when Noll suggests that antebellum American public life was more biblicistic than biblical, he means that for all the scriptural citations employed by opinion shapers in the United States, the Bible itself was not as influential as one might have thought. While public figures cited it in support of their own schemes they seem to have been in some measure deaf to the Bible's discernment of their own "thoughts and intents." In David Lyle Jeffrey's words, they seem to have been "hard-hearted," "willful" readers who imposed their own ideas upon the biblical text but were not imposed upon by it. They rejected, unwittingly, a traditional biblical hermeneutic, summed up by Jeffrey, which assumed that "no one reads Scripture sensibly who does not wish to know what its Author intends [its readers] to know."²³

²²Hebrews 4:12.

²³David Lyle Jeffrey, *People of the Book: Christian Identity and Literary Culture* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 1996),

To return, then, to Noll's claim that Canada seems to have been a more Christian, or biblical, nation than the United States: Noll's view is that Canadians appear to have been more willing to allow the Bible to impose itself upon them than was the case among their American neighbors.

I have already made clear that I have some reservations about Noll's conclusion. Yet I do not want to put it away altogether; for there is something to the question underlying Noll's comparison of the United States and Canada: which collection of Bible readers created a national public life more in keeping with biblical demands? This same question might be asked of Canada's Protestant and French-speaking Catholic communities.

To readers unwilling to accept the notion that the Bible is the "word of God" and thus that it has some claim to make on men and women whether its readers recognize these claims or not, the question -- which country or culture was more biblical? -- may seem irrelevant. Yet even if the traditional hermeneutic upon which the question rests is now not widely accepted, it nevertheless remains true that the great majority of Canadians in the late nineteenth century believed that the Bible was in fact a "living" text -- a text through which God spoke, either to individuals directly or through tradition. So whether one nation was more biblical than another is a question which late

nineteenth-century Canadians themselves took most seriously.

If, then, one is to know whether a nation conducted itself according to the biblical principles most citizens of the nation would themselves have recognized as normative, one might examine the content of that nation's public biblicistic rhetoric to determine whether biblical virtues (as traditionally understood) were promoted by that rhetoric. Thus at the heart of Mark Noll's surmise that antebellum America, in its public life at least, was more biblicistic than biblical is a conclusion that "nationalistic particularism, presumptuous self-righteousness, [and] gratuitous assumptions about national election" -- national characteristics borne of hubris and vainglory -- prevailed over other virtues informed by humility.²⁴ For Noll, a more truly

²⁴The Hebrew and Christian Scriptures abound with warnings against human pride and exhortations that humility will be rewarded. Pride -- "the inordinate love of one's own excellence" -- is of course the first of the traditional seven deadly sins, a list not taken directly from the Scriptures though certainly not at odds with them. (The others are envy, wrath, sloth, avarice, gluttony, and lechery.) Pride has been considered in Christian tradition as the main source of human sin: Saint Augustine, Gregory the Great, and Thomas Aquinas counted pride as the genus of all other sins, for example, and in his *Parson's Tale* Chaucer contrasts a tree of penitence, the root of which is contrition, and the tree of sin, whose root is pride. See Ronald B. Bond, "Seven Deadly Sins," in David Lyle Jeffrey, *A Dictionary of Biblical Tradition in English Literature* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 1992), 698-701; and S.F. Parmisano, "Pride" in the *New Catholic Encyclopedia* vol. XI (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1967), 765-766. The Scriptures are themselves clear that "God resisteth the proud" (James 4:6; I Peter 5:5): "The Lord shall cut off all flattering lips, and the tongue that speaketh proud things" (Psalm 12:3); "For, behold, the day cometh, that shall burn as an oven; and all the proud, yea, and all that do wickedly, shall be stubble" (Malachi 4:1a); "[God] hath shown strength with his arm; he hath scattered the proud in the imagination of their hearts" (Luke 1:51). Conversely, the Scriptures and Christian tradition

biblical nation, on the other hand, would be one whose public language adhered more closely to "universal standards of righteousness and grace, [and] intimations of a hope in Christ transcending loyalties to earthly powers." The question, then, is whether the late nineteenth-century French or English Canadian nationalists who were in the habit of citing biblical passages actually made an effort in their public discourse to encourage in their societies the sort of biblical ideals to which Noll refers or if they appropriated the Bible to support nationalist causes primarily because it was the one authoritative text they and their hearers and readers held in common.

I have to some extent already answered this question. At the end of the previous chapter I concluded that both Canada's French- and English-speaking nationalists had pressed the Bible

are clear that God looks with favour on humble men and women. Humility, writes one scholar, is a "virtue opposed to pride and self-conceit, by reason of which a man thinks of himself more highly than he ought to think...and places himself in subjection to him to whom he owes subjection. This person is primarily God, so that humility is, first of all, the sense of absolute dependence upon him." (Elias Benjamin Sanford., ed., *A Concise Cyclopedia of Religious Knowledge* [Hartford, CT: S. S. Scranton Co., 1904], 427.) Among the relevant passages in Scripture are these: "If my people, which are called by my name, shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek my face...then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land" (II Chronicles 7:14); "For thus saith the high and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity, whose name is Holy; I will dwell in the high and holy place, with him also that is of a contrite and humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite ones" (Isaiah 58:15); "Every one that exalteth himself shall be abased; and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted" (Luke 8:14); "God resisteth the proud, and giveth grace to the humble" (I Peter 5:5b). See David L. Jeffrey and Peter H. Davids, "Humility," in *A Dictionary of Biblical Tradition in English Literature*, 367.

into nationalist and civil religious -- that is, apparently extra biblical -- service. Now, taking Noll's work into consideration, I would add that the rhetoric of both French and English-Canadian nationalists appears more biblicistic than biblical. But did one of the two get closer to the ideal--the ideal to which they themselves claimed to aspire?

Because the vision of Quebec's French-speaking Catholic leaders was more often on this world than the next, and despite their frequent use of the Bible and thoroughly Catholic rhetoric, it seems that they resembled their English-speaking counterparts more than they knew. J.B. Proulx's recollection of Antoine Labelle's vision of the "north" as a "terre promise" to be possessed by French Canadians²⁵ is not unlike Charles Bass's claim that he, "like Moses on the Mount of Horeb," looked on British North America as "the land of promise which shall bring blessings to our descendants";²⁶ and neither of these claims has much to do with the original text to which they allude. These lines are representative of the biblically-infused rhetoric of late nineteenth-century Canadian nationalists. Yet there is a discernible difference between the rhetoric of English- and French-speaking Canadian nationalists. For while English

²⁵J.B. Proulx cited in H.J.J.B. Chouinard, ed., *Fête nationale des canadiens-français célébrée à Québec en 1880* (Quebec, 1881), 73.

²⁶Charles Bass, *Lectures on Canada, Illustrating Its Present Position, and Shewing Forth Its Onward Progress, and Predictive of Its Future Destiny* (Hamilton: Spectator Steam Press, 1863), 45.

Canadians often spoke of the glory to come to their nation in terms of wealth and national or imperial splendor, French Quebecers looked, yes, for national glory, but theirs was a glory to be rooted primarily in service to their French-speaking community and deference to proper authority. Certainly many Anglo-Canadian nationalists took up the "burden" bestowed by providence on English men and women; yet often the sense of service that drove them to spread what they believed was the world's highest civilization and true religion to the ends of the earth was subsumed under a call to earthly greatness.

The employment of Scripture to such ends is less easy to come by in late nineteenth-century French Quebec than English-speaking Canada, though it was not absent. One Ultramontane who sometimes mixed classical and biblical allusions to the point of confusion was Judge Adolphe-Basile Routhier.²⁷ At a celebration of the 400th anniversary of Christopher Columbus's arrival in the Americas, for instance, Routhier not only praised the old sailor's bravery, honour, and piety but nearly transformed him into a Christ-like classical god. In Routhier's hands Columbus was fashioned into the form of an early modern Janus who looked simultaneously to the east for trade, wealth, and missionary opportunities and to the west -- Rome and Christian civilization -- for guiding inspiration. Like the magi who followed a guiding

²⁷ William Kirby, writing in English, did likewise. See Dennis Duffy, *Gardens, Covenants, Exiles: Loyalism in the Literature of Upper Canada/Ontario* (Toronto: University of Toronto, 1982), 36.

star to the baby Jesus in Bethlehem, Columbus followed the light that shone from Calvary to a New World in need of redemption. Columbus was a Moses: Like the ancient deliverer before the Red Sea, he demanded that the Atlantic Ocean make way for the Latins, a new chosen people,²⁸ on their way to a "new promised land." Columbus was Prometheus, the purveyor of the "fire of heaven" and "divine light."²⁹ And, led by Christ himself, Columbus made his way to the New World,³⁰ the three ships under his direction (Nina, Pinta, Santa Maria) evoking the memory of the three legendary magi.³¹ Columbus's role in universal history, moreover, was not altogether unlike that of the very babe in the manger, for he too was an intermediary between the world and God.³² It took fifteen centuries for men to travel from Calvary to the "pillars of

²⁸Adolphe-Basile Routhier, *Conférences et discours* (Montreal: Librairie Beauchemin, 1904), 69. Routhier wrote: "[Dieu] avait fait des races latines l'objet de ses plus chères prédilections, et elles avaient merveilleusement grandi sous sa tutelle."

²⁹Ibid., 68.

³⁰Ibid., 69. Routhier continues: "Au surplus, il avait donné à l'Europe tout ce qu'il pouvait lui donner, et il avait de droit de lui dire en pleurant, comme autrefois à Jerusalem: 'Que pouvais-je faire pour toi que je n'ai point fait?'"

³¹Ibid., 77. "O souffles de l'atmosphère, brises de la mer et du ciel," Routhier exclaimed, "n'éteignez pas cette flamme sainte dont le monde a besoin, et qui est plus lumineuse que l'étoile des Mages, puisqu'elle porte avec elle non seulement la Révélation, et les prophéties, mais tout l'Evangile, toute la lumière dégagée par quinze siècles de christianisme!"

³²Ibid., 79. "Colomb est bien le messenger du Christ, et c'est bien sa venue qu'il va annoncer aux Infidèles du Nouveau-Monde."

Hercules,"³³ Routhier said; but in a much shorter time Christian light had been shed throughout the New World, and the sea of darkness and ignorance that had formerly separated the old from the new had been vanquished.³⁴ Columbus resembled "the great figures" whose exploits were published in "biblical poems."³⁵ No English-speaking Canadian Christian I am aware of ever merged so forthrightly sacred and extra biblical texts.

³³The term "pillars of Hercules" refers to the two "opposite promontories at the entrance of the Mediterranean, one in Spain and the other in Africa....The ancients supposed that these [points] marked the utmost limits of the habitable globe." William Rose Benét, *The Reader's Encyclopedia* (New York: Thomas Y. Crowell Company, 1958), 854.

³⁴*Ibid.*, 82.

³⁵*Ibid.* And: "On lit au livre des Machabées une histoire merveilleuse et bien étrange. Après les grands événements du Sinaï, les Hébreux avaient reçu l'ordre d'entretenir toujours le feu sacré devant la face de Jéhovah. Mais, un jour, vaincus et réduits en esclavage, ils durent s'acheminer vers l'exil. Avant de partir, ils enfouirent le feu sacré dans une vallée, au fond d'un puits profond et desséché. La captivité de Babylone dura longtemps, et deux générations y moururent.

"Or, quand les petits-fils des exilés, libres enfin, revinrent dans leur bien-aimée Terre Promise, ils ne retrouvèrent plus au fond de leur citerne qu'une eau boueuse qui avait étouffé le feu sacré. On vit alors un grand et merveilleux spectacle. Le Grand Prêtre prit où le feu sacré avait été noyé, et il l'éleva vers le ciel, pendant que le peuple agenouillé priait.

"Tout à coup, sous un rayon de soleil qui déchira la nue, la boue s'enflamma, et le feu sacré brilla de nouveau. Depuis dix-neuf siècles, ce n'est plus le peuple d'Israël, mais l'Eglise, qui a la mission d'entretenir le feu sacré devant la face de Jéhovah, et bien des fois le prodige raconté au livre des Machabées, s'est renouvelé.

"Bien des fois, les successeurs du Christ et des apôtres, évêques, prêtres, religieux, ont été proscrits du coin du terre qu'ils avaient comblé de leurs bienfaits et agrandi de leurs oeuvres."

Of course, L.F.R. Laflèche, Antoine Labelle, and the other French Canadian nationalists cited in this study were like their English-speaking counterparts in that they looked to a bright future for Quebec; and to the extent that the French Canadians' salvation was to be rooted in a plot of land along the Saint Lawrence River or among French-speaking Catholics elsewhere in Canada, their Christian and nationalist visions merged. Bible passages such as those concerned with Abraham's march to Canaan were so common in some Ultramontane circles they probably lost much of their existential meaning.

But what persisted in French Quebec's public life after it seems to have been diminished in English Canada was an ideal that, in theory at any rate, is at the heart of Christian tradition, namely, that humble personal service to and personal sacrifice for one's community is a higher calling than the pursuit of personal or national wealth and glory. True, like English-speaking Canadian Protestants, Quebec's Catholics employed the Bible to promote (to use Noll's words again) "nationalistic particularism, presumptuous self-righteousness, [and] gratuitous assumptions about national election." The end they had in mind, however, was neither treasure nor political power for their own sakes but the salvation of North America.

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