



View From the Murney Tower: Salem Bland, the Late-Victorian Controversies, and the Search for a New Christianity, Volume 1 (Salem Bland: A Canadian Odyssey)

Richard Allen

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Salem Goldworth Bland (1859-1950) was among the most significant religious leaders in Canadian history. A Methodist and, later, United Church minister, Bland's long career and widespread influence made him a leading figure in the popularizing of liberal theology, social reform, and the Social Gospel movement. He was also a man who struggled with the polarities of evangelical faith and worldly culture, and who sought a unifying world-view in the mentoring of Sir J. William Dawson in the sciences, George Monro Grant in public affairs, and John Watson in philosophy.

The View from the Murney Tower is a two-volume biography of Salem Bland by Richard Allen, author of *The Social Passion: Religion and Reform in Canada, 1914-28*. This first volume begins with Bland's upbringing in the home of an educated industrialist turned preacher. It goes on to explore his emergence as a liberating mind and eloquent speaker prepared to support new currents of scientific and social thought, as well as to discuss their implications for Christian faith and life. Allen concludes this first volume with Bland's departure from central Canada for the west in 1903, by which time he had become a somewhat controversial figure amongst conservative evangelicals throughout the country.

More than just biography, however, *The View from the Murney Tower* is also an examination of progressive religion in late-Victorian Canada, a time in which Darwinism and other Biblical, social, and intellectual controversies were profoundly affecting the growth of a young nation.

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