

with great satisfaction to the statement that has just been made that there has been no more prosperous year in the history of this Society than that which has just closed. For this prosperity, I am sure, we have heartily united in the giving of thanks to God Almighty, and let us venture to cherish the hope that each succeeding year will witness yet greater progress in the bringing of a still larger number into the ranks of the supporters of this institution.

We must all accord perfectly with the statement which has just been made from the chair that the increase in the number of very large subscribers is desirable, and may be justly expected. It may not be improper to add to that suggestion the expression of the hope that there will be a corresponding increase in the number of those whose circumstances do not admit of their giving conspicuously large subscriptions. The saying is attributed to John Wesley, who was one of the wisest of souls, one of the best of men, "That he had rather get twelve pence from twelve persons for a good cause, than get a whole shilling from one," for this reason, that when people had given their pennies they would be likely to continue their interest in the cause to which they had made their contributions. And I feel very sure that it is desirable, it is good in the highest degree, that we should enlist as large a number as possible, whether their means be very large, or whether they be limited, in contribution to the maintenance and extension of agencies like the Bible Society. I heard also with satisfaction from the opening statement, that it is in contemplation to give a more adequate and suitable building for the accommodation of this organization in the city. I have not been here for many years, but it is impossible to pass through your city without regarding with the deepest satisfaction the many indications of growth and prosperity, that steady growth that is one of the guarantees of continued prosperity, and I hope that a suggestion that has been made, and that seems to have been under consideration for some time, will be realized, and that you will be able to add to the many attractive architectural features of this prosperous city, a building that will be commensurate in some degree with the magnificent work that is being done, and with the greatness of the interests that this Society represents. (Applause.) There are various ways in which one might present his thoughts in the advocacy of a cause like this. It would be, for example, possible to occupy the time of the meeting with statements of the value, to the human race, of the infallible and inspired word; but that would only be to do in this place what is being done at greater length, and probably with greater efficiency, by the ministers to their various congregations. One might usefully occupy the time of a meeting like this in dealing with some of the objections that have been presented in our time to the authority conceded by Christian people to the Divine Word, and yet I am persuaded that these objections are being met from time to time in the press, more effectively, probably, than they could be made in a great public meeting. And it is just within the limits of possibility that such a dealing with these difficulties might only suggest objections to some minds that have not hitherto been called upon to encounter them. One might take another plan somewhat of this kind. Pictures might be suggested of society; statements might be made regarding the condition of communities morally and spiritually, by which it might be demonstrated that there is need for such a book as the Bible to be put in circulation in these communities. Or one might take another plan still, and looking over the condition of the world, and the needs of humanity, might be able to demonstrate very clearly that the Bible has a special, a divine, adaptation to the requirements of the human race, has that which meets our needs, and supplies to us just that which we want to have, if we are to be lifted up into fellowship with the Father, and with the Son. I shall venture with your permission to take another view of the matter, and to endeavour to present it concisely in another way; and I do