

from the enclosed what has been done in the course of past years. On attempting to review the whole, we can speak decidedly on two points, the appreciation of the sacred volume by the native converts, and the general reception of it by the people at large.

"In the case of the former, the Bible is a known and valued book. Some of them are apt and diligent students of it, and on many occasions give proof of being familiar with and interested in it. There was a period in their history when the work was put into their hands, and though they could understand the letters as they followed each other in order, they could make no intelligible sense out of the whole. A change has now happily taken place in their minds with regard to it, and the way in which they account for the former obscurity is from the entire novelty of the subject, and their own want of interest in it. Religious ideas and religious books are so utterly foreign to a Chinese mind, and to the pursuits of a Chinese scholar, that, when brought before them, they are looked upon as incomprehensible. The style, the usage of words, the idiom, may perfectly resemble their own native literature, and the book may appear simple in the extreme; yet, from the diversity between it and their current thoughts, it draws upon it the contempt and scorn attached to all religious works in China, on the part of learned men. Our most intelligent converts were at first in the same circumstances, and it was only when they were awakened to a sense of its importance, and had acquired a certain knowledge of its truths, that the Bible became an unsealed book, and began to be read with satisfaction. It is now a pleasure to see them perusing its pages as freely as English Christians do the Scriptures in their native tongue; and there is no wish among them to have its style and phraseology altered, in so far as its expressiveness and adaptation to the better class of readers are concerned. Whatever efforts may be made for colloquial translations in different places or for a simpler version on account of the masses, they will not supersede the volume now in use, which is everywhere appreciated by intelligent students, in whose case, however, as in every other, the above preparatory process will always be needed. Notwithstanding the peculiar difficulties of the Chinese language, even to the natives, it is remarkable to observe the progress made by half-educated inquirers in the knowledge of the Bible when their attention is excited in regard to it. The chief fault at work among the Chinese is their extreme indifference to religion, and on that being broken up, a flood of light is poured upon their minds with respect to the sacred page. We have much encouragement from this matter, in the case of not a few of our Christian converts, and thus a large reward is earned in connection with the labours of the Bible Society. Were our success, or our tokens for good to be only in the proportion in which this result is attained, we should rejoice, and hail the continued operations of the Society, in the way of enlightening and confirming the converts in the knowledge of divine truth. Our hope is that the Christians made in China may be thus established in the faith, and profit from the superiority of the sacred Word over every existing system.

"As to the people in general, among whom the Scriptures have been largely distributed, you may easily imagine that it is a different field to work in. The atheism, the materialism, the apathy of the Chinese mind in regard to religion, coupled with its intense ignorance, peculiar exclusiveness, and satanic prejudices on the subject, are more and more felt to be terrible difficulties in the way of our services. They are all in active exercise on every side, and are the better understood the closer we come into contact with them. From the value put upon the printed page in China, and the apparent eagerness of all classes to receive books, one might augur well of the result in relation to the Scriptures; but there are other things in operation that go to mutilate against these hopeful signs in the strongest manner. Be it so. We are not discouraged. The enemy is alluded to only to show what we have to cope with, and what are some of the causes evidently at work confronting our endeavours to promote the eternal welfare of this people."—*Bible Society Reporter*.