

"A circumstance was lately brought to my knowledge, by an individual from the East Indies, which tends to illustrate the importance and value of the Bible; and to show in what various ways its benefits may be displayed, when we are not, perhaps, conscious of the happy effects which it is secretly producing. Archdeacon Corrie, now Bishop of Madras, was, at the time of which I speak, the Chaplain of Allahabad. At that time there was no Hindostanee version of the Scriptures; and it was his custom to translate, on small bits of paper, striking passages of Scripture into the Hindostanee language, and every morning distribute these papers at his door. Twenty years afterwards, he received a communication from a Missionary at Allahabad, who informed him that a person in ill health had arrived there, and that he had been to visit him. He had come to see his friends, and die among them, after an absence of more than twenty years. The Missionary had visited him there several times, and was so astonished at his knowledge of the Scripture, and his impression of its great realities, that he put the question, 'How is it, my friend, that you are so well informed in the Sacred Scriptures? You have told me you have never seen a Missionary in your life, nor any one to teach you the way of life and salvation!' And what was his answer, my Lord? He put his hand behind his pillow, and drew out a bundle of well-worn and tattered bits of paper; and he said, 'From these bits of paper, which a Sahib distributed at his door, whom I have never seen since, have I learned all. These papers, which I received twenty years ago, and have read every day, till they are thus tumbled and spoiled, are passages of Scripture in the Hindostanee language; from them I have derived all the information on eternal realities which I now possess. This, said he, is the source of my information; thence I have derived my knowledge.'"

The meeting was extremely gratified by the appearance on the platform of a coloured preacher of the Negro race, who was once in the bonds of slavery, but has now been for several years employed in preaching the gospel to his fellow-Negroes. This was the Rev. Mr. Fraser, from Antigua, whose speech not only indicated a considerable portion of piety and talent, but made a great impression upon a deeply attentive auditory. Referring to the act of the Society in sending the Bible to the slaves, he exclaimed:

"This was, indeed, to the Negro Race, like waving a torch across the gloom which enveloped us; this was to draw out your souls to us hungry and famishing men; this was to discover the spring in the burning desert, and to cry to us, 'Come, come, without distinction! and come all!' This was to make us triumph over our condition, and to make us exclaim, 'Would to God that all men were even as we are, except our bonds!'"

He related the following incidents:

"The names of Mr. and Mrs. Thwaites are well known in the Island of Antigua, as connected with all efforts of practical education. Mrs. Thwaites gave to a girl, who attended one of their Sunday Schools, a Bible. Nancy—for that was her name—took home the Bible to the estate to which she belonged. Nancy was sick; the Bible was her constant companion. Nancy got well, and went in and out; but the Bible was always near to her. At length the overseer asked her what she had got there. She showed it to him. He looked on with admiration, for it was well bound. 'Where did you get this?' She told him. 'Will you sell me this book?' 'No, Sir; if you will give me my freedom for it, you shall not have it.' Let no one think that Nancy did not know the value of freedom. No: it was not that she despised that; but it was a stretch of thought in the mind of a Slave to find out the most valuable thing with which to compare the Bible; and the most valuable thing to the heart of that Negro was rejected for the Bible.

"Before the Emancipation took place, the Negroes had been able to form some idea of the feelings of the British Nation toward them. There were, at that time, persons here in England who seemed to stand forth as harbingers, to proclaim what would one day be the sentiments of the British Nation. There were those who let us know that such Englishmen dwelt in England, before the voice of the whole nation was heard in that measure of justice and equity which has recently been carried. Some of the individuals to whom I allude raised a fund, and placed in the hands of others a sum of money to purchase the freedom of a Slave here and there, who should be thought deserving, or who was in extraordinary distress. Such sums once came into the hands of these same Teachers, Mr. and Mrs. Thwaites, to select whom they thought fit; and upon whom should the lot fall, but upon Nancy! When Mr. Thwaites tells the story, he says it looks as if God had dealt with her as with Solomon; Solomon rejected the good things of this life, to ask wisdom of God; and God gave him the other afterwards. This girl rejected freedom for the Bible; and God afterwards gave