

Bible Society, and it is nowhere supported as it ought to be. What, then, is your strength? Where is it? Undoubtedly there has been great skill, great learning, deep piety, many prayers. I would not undervalue human agency, and I confess, as a very old friend of the Society, I felt a little proud when our friends the *literati* could not find what they wanted in the Bodleian Library or the British Museum, and were obliged to come to the Dépôt of the British and Foreign Bible Society. There must be something worth looking at when they condescend to visit our stores. Yes, I admit that the best of human learning and piety has been devoted to this work, but even this has not been the reason of your success. Why has not your ship sunk in her many storms at sea? It is because of the cargo that you bear; it is because you are freighted with the Word of the living God. You recollect that many of those Norman timber-ships have suffered much from bad weather, and sometimes all their crews have been driven from them and washed overboard, but the ship did not sink, because she was laden with timber. And so it is with the Bible Society. Abuse her as you will, she will swim in spite of you, because she carries the cargo of the living God? And what is that cargo? Let us be Custom-house officers for a while and examine the cargo of this ship. You will tell me it is an old book—it is the Bible. What is the Bible? God's written Word, or, as we call it in the Church of England, God's Word written. I do not like the definition altogether. It is true, but not the whole truth, and it is a definition which some are disposed to take advantage of. Some folks there are who sneer at the written Word, and say the world was never converted by a book, and it was not the Word which the Apostles and the Prophets wrote which has authority, but the Church. Some folks build the pyramid apex downwards, in my judgment, and put the Church before the Bible, instead of the Bible before the Church. Here, then, we come to a great point, the view we should take of this blessed Word. How is it that we are so anxious to circulate it? What is it? It is not merely the written Word of God. A great portion of the Bible was spoken before it was written. It is the record of the oral Word of God in all ages; it is the utterings of the earthquake at Sinai. "God spake these words," and when He had spoken them He wrote them. It was first spoken and then written, and that is the history of the greater portion of this grand Book. It is the record of what God said to Adam and Eve in Paradise, of what God said to Abraham, what He whispered in the ear of Jacob when He wrestled with him, what He said to Moses on the Mount. It was all spoken before it was written, and the prophecies were all spoken before they were written. Then with regard to the Psalms, what do you say of them? Were they spoken? I do not know that they were ever intoned till the Middle Ages, but they were said, and sung, and prayed, and then they were recorded for the edification of man. And how strikingly this is the case of the New Testament! What are the Gospels? What are the Acts of the Apostles? Are they merely writings written from God to us? No, they are the very record of the words and actions of the Lord Jesus Christ Himself, so that when you hear this Book read you hear the very words of the Lord Jesus Christ Himself. This gives me a noble idea of the doctrine and power of this Word. I have no longer to quibble about the inspiration of this or that passage; but, as our blessed Lord said, and as the Apostles said, holy men of old spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost. Yes, it is the oral Word of God, recorded by inspired reporters for our edification, and therefore it is that your Society is as prosperous as it is, and therefore it is that I feel assured in my parting address to you—for it may be the last time I shall ever address you—it will be my comfort and consolation to know that when one generation of advocates passes away another will be rising up. I feel almost to-day as if I were the last of a generation. Your fathers, where are they? Where are the stirring voices of a Stowell or a M'Neile? Where are your Pratts and Brandrams? They have passed away; but I thank God that there are younger men rising up, and I have no fear of God's cause. I pray