

being revised by a committee of Delegates. The New Testament was completed in 1850, and the old Testament, by the English Delegates alone, three years afterwards. The whole was published in 1855. This version, generally known as the "Delegates' Version," has been printed and circulated by the Bible Society for twenty-six years, and it is but just to say that, for correctness and literary excellence, it stands among the translations into Chinese unrivalled. One of the most competent Sinologues has said that "it will bear a comparison for faithfulness and elegance with any version of the Old and New Testaments that he is acquainted with." Take as an example that verse which the Society has printed in 215 languages in order to show us a specimen of each, John iii. 16. I question whether there is one of the 215 translations that surpasses the Chinese in correctness and style. Or take the Lord's Prayer. It is a beautiful composition in the Delegates' Version, each sentence consisting of four characters, and the whole being marked by strength and elegance. It was not until the Delegates' Version was published that the Chinese were furnished with a satisfactory translation of the Scriptures, and fifty years elapsed between the appointment of the first missionary and the accomplishment of this work. This fact should be borne in mind when estimating the results of Protestant Missions in China. The ablest missionaries, after acquiring the language, had to give their best energies and most of their time to the translation of the Scriptures. It is only during the last twenty-six years that they have been able to put into the hands of the Chinese a Bible at all acceptable to their fastidious taste, and that they have been free to circulate and preach it. When this is considered, together with the vastness of the field, the masses to be moved, the character of the people, the difficulty of the language, the inveterate prejudices and exclusiveness to be overcome, it is a matter of surprise and gratitude that they are able to report to-day 15,000 converts, and about 50,000 worshippers. But apart from tabulated results, they conferred a noble boon on China, by giving it the Scriptures. They thus accomplished in a few decades of years what the Romish missionaries had not done in hundreds, and what probably they never would have done. If it be true, as Dr. Buchanan once said, that "he who translates the sacred Scriptures into a new tongue becomes a greater man, and a greater blessing to the world than he who founds a new empire," then those translators of the Bible into Chinese, and the Bible Society, under whose auspices and at whose cost it was published, stand out as among the greatest benefactors of the race. In giving the Bible to China they have opened to her the sublimest revelations ever vouchsafed to the human mind; they have put into her hand the most enchanting histories ever traced by human pen; they have introduced her to the noblest characters that ever adorned human life; they have laid down for her guidance the most perfect code of morals that ever entered into the heart of man to conceive; and they have disclosed to her the means whereby she may be delivered from her guilt and degradation, restored to the favour of God, renewed in His image, and exalted to His throne. In giving her the Bible they have flashed upon her eyeballs a light which will awaken her from the sleep of ages; they have imparted to her an intellectual impulse which will carry her to higher and purer knowledge; they have furnished her with those sacred and eternal principles which will regenerate her character, transform her life, raise her civilization, and brighten her homes. The Bible has blessed every land it has touched. It has done more to raise mankind, to make them prosper and progress, than all other literatures put together. Look at the difference between the countries that know it and those that know it not. Those nations to-day most free, most cultured, most prosperous, where life is of most value, where industry is most honoured, where law is most just in enactment and impartial in administration, are those most swayed by the truths and principles of the Holy Bible. Nobly did our beloved Queen recognise this, when asked by an African Prince the secret of England's greatness, she presented him with a copy of the Bible. It ministers to all