

humble workman. But, in the course of my daily labor, certain convictions have forced themselves on my mind ; and I thank God that he has given me the opportunity of stating them before this meeting. One of the grounds on which this society may claim precedence is the mode in which she renders aid to all missionary societies. She is not the handmaid, but the royal benefactor. I have to thank this society for all the encouragement she has given to our missionaries, throughout the world, by printing, to any extent on the shortest notice and under circumstances of every conceivable difficulty, whatever translations we have asked it to print. But the society has done more than this. There is a modest tone in the report as it states, version after version, "at the request of the Wesleyan Society," "at the request of the Church Missionary Society," "at the request of the London Missionary Society." The Bible Society has done far more than printing at the request of this or that society ; she has exerted a gentle pressure on every society. We, perhaps, being engaged in other matters, might have been backward in placing in the hands of our native churches the whole word of God. The pressure has come from this society : her language has been : "Why do you tarry ? Give us more of that blessed word. We are ready to print it. We are ready even to support your own missionaries, if you cannot do it yourselves, while they are engaged in this work ; only let the whole word of God be given at the earliest period to the native churches." And thus she has acted, not only for the Church Missionary Society, but for every other society. The secretaries of other societies are present to answer for themselves.

There is another mark of royal munificence in the actions of the British and Foreign Bible Society. It takes our version, or the version of any other society, and puts upon it the stamp of common property. It is no longer the version of the Church Missionary Society, or any other society. That little stamp which is on the backs of all the books which the British and Foreign Bible Society issues, is like "the broad arrow" which makes it common property for the defence of the whole nation, no longer belonging to this or that society, but belonging to the church of Christ in every clime and in every age. There is, I think I may say, even a yet higher claim which this society possesses upon our regard, than the aid she renders, and the manner in which it is rendered. This society is a centre of union among the various missionary societies, and exercises a moderating and binding influence among them all. In our separate committee rooms we are necessarily engaged with peculiar questions. We have, for instance, in our society, the Episcopal question, the Liturgical question, and many other questions, and I presume that every other society has its own peculiar and special questions. If, then, we had no common ground—if we met only in our separate committee-rooms—we might imagine that we are engaged, not in the propagation of a common Christianity, but of some peculiar form ; we should be thinking of Episcopacy, or Independency, or Presbyterianism. But when we go to the committee-room in Earl Street we learn that the great object to which all our efforts are directed is one and the same—the establishment of Christianity throughout the world. The same benefit which manifests itself in the church at home, manifests itself, I think, much more in the churches abroad. It has been often cast in the teeth of Protestant missions, and it is to this day the practice of our opponents to say that the Protestant church presents such a variety of sects, and such divisions and subdivisions, and so much opposition between each other, that the native mind cannot discover which amongst us is the true religion, the religion of the word of God. To all this it is a common and obvious answer, that the Bible is the point of union. But observation and long experience have induced me to ask another question, "Where would the Bible have been without the Bible society ?" It might have been in each mission. We might have had an Episcopalian Bible ; we might have had a Presbyterian Bible ; we might have had a Baptist Bible. But