

Collectors of the various Branches throughout the country, to whose zeal and energy the Society is so much indebted; and that the following gentlemen be Officers and Directors of the Society for the ensuing year:—(See list of Office-bearers at beginning of this Report). This motion was also carried.

The Rev. H. B. Ridgeway, D.D., of Evanston, Illinois, moved the second resolution, as follows:—"That the Bible being its own best witness, needs only to be freely circulated as the true Conservator of the highest welfare of mankind."

In supporting this resolution the speaker proceeded to say in substance:

1. We see the capacity of all truth, even what is called physical and intellectual truth, for progress. That which in statement corresponds to reality in the nature of things has a vitality—which sooner or later asserts itself and becomes recognized. A theory may be advanced in natural science which at first is rejected, yet, because true, it steadily advances until its claims are approved. The same law is illustrated in the domains of taste, and in social and political conflicts. Turner's painting was at first decried; Ruskin vindicated his method and now all England crowns him. When Mr. Seward arose in his place in the United States Senate, and uttered with calmness the sentence, "Sir, there is going forward in this land an irrepressible conflict between free and slave labor," he was almost universally condemned; but the truth has worked until slavery has been eliminated from the social and political body of the American nation.

2. If the law of an inherent progress holds good for what we term natural truth, how much more must it stand fast for God's highest moral truth, which is embodied in His word. God has magnified His Word above all His name. High as His name stands written upon all the works of Creation, in the Holy Scriptures it stands higher. His revealed word is the final and completed expression of His power, wisdom and goodness. The Gospel of Jesus Christ is the utmost reach of the Divine thought. It is fair to suppose, therefore, that all the lower works of Creation would be made subordinate—as is seen in the analogies of life—to this Word, and would be rendered tributary to its maintenance and spread. Consequently, far from any contradiction existing between Nature and Revelation, as the teachings of both are more perfectly ascertained there is found to be the closest harmony, and the facts of science are constantly shedding new light on the facts of the Scriptures. The discoveries of Natural Sciences, of Archæology, of Comparative Religion, &c., are more and more illuminating the Sacred page. Then, too, these discoveries as applied in what is called the practical arts, are converted into vehicles for the spread of the Bible. Mr. Lecky said the Reformation of Germany would have been impossible without the printing press. Martin Luther's appeal was from the traditions and corruptions of Romanism to the Word of God. Hence it was indispensable that the people should have the Word in their own tongue, that they might see in it the great doctrine of Justification by Faith. Undoubtedly the movable types gave wings to the doctrines of the Reformation. So steam and electricity have become effective agents in this work. Let a man consider how the steam-press has not only multiplied but cheapened the Bible! Now the Bible is readily placed into all hands, especially in civilized nations, and through the active religious, scientific and political spirit of the age its study and proclamation were never so general as now. And what hidden agencies for its vindication and diffusion may yet be brought out it is impossible to conjecture.

3. Men cannot consent to dispense with the Word of God because of its adaptation to meet their deepest wants. God who knows what is in man, has so suited His revealed Truth to his necessities, that men cannot consent in their hearts finally to reject it. They find here what they do not and can-