

and destroy, but to purgo and purify the nations. I did, I confess, rest with pleasure on one or two positions of the report. I heard with interest that Bohemia was about to receive the Scriptures in her own language, and my mind at once reverted back to the gratitude which was due to that country from every Protestant heart. I could not resist an overwhelming feeling of pleasure when my mind reverted to those men, the Waldenses, who had a refuge and shelter in Bohemia. From them it was that England received her light—from the Waldenses did England receive the torch of true light—even Wickliff's never was, and with the blessing of God, never will be, extinguished here. It is delightful thus to consider the streams returning to their source, and that which is impossible in the natural world, in God's moral world rendered possible; and that we, their children, should now be returning the benefits and boons we had first received from them. A meeting such as this should never forget the debt of gratitude which England owes to Ireland; you should remember, that your Saxon ancestors, when they were immolating human victims in performance of the foul rites of their idolatrous worship, derived illumination—the illumination of truth—the illumination of holiness—from Ireland. Those learned men, the Scoti, partly through Calodonia, were the means of converting that portion of England which the previous labours of Augustino had left untouched. It is, therefore, that we, the Irish, come to you for that aid to which we conceive ourselves entitled, as a return for that which, in the earliest ages of Christianity, our ancestors did for yours. The Irish are, I need not tell you, in the utmost want of that book which contains the character of God; that only book which provides a remedy for the ills to which human nature is subjected; that book for which man never will be without a necessity, till time be swallowed up in eternity. [The Rev. Gentleman here related an anecdote, of which, he said, the presence of the Bishop of Calcutta and of the Indian missionary reminded him, of an interview which an American missionary had with the monarch of the Burmese empire, a short time before the triumph of the British arms there. On the American presenting the king with a Bible, telling him it was the "Book of God," the king replied, that the king of kings wanted not the "Book of God."—This was the language which the monarch then held; but one short year only elapsed before the crouching tyrant was made to acknowledge the valour of British soldiers; and the first ship which afterwards entered his forts, contained a freight, part of which was composed of Bibles; and but a very short time sufficed to shew, that he did want the Book of God. Oh! that the whole of my own country were prepared and willing to receive, through the force of conviction, the fulness of that truth, through which alone there is happiness here, and salvation hereafter. England seems, until lately, to have forgotten that Ireland, as well as herself, stands in need of the Scriptures of God. For centuries, though forming a part of the British empire, the eternal interests of that country had been overlooked and disregarded. Without the circulation of the Scriptures, no device of politicians can be of the slightest avail. Their best efforts would be ineffectual in ameliorating the condition of human society, were it not for the spirit which this, and similar societies, has infused. I have infinite satisfaction in being able to inform this meeting, that those who have much influence in Ireland, have, though late, had their minds opened to the necessity of scriptural instruction—have at length learned that the real wealth and prosperity of the country must be founded upon Christian knowledge and Christian morals. The Irish, like the Indians, whom they so much resent, are rapidly forsaking the errors in which they have been educated—like the Indian described by the pious Heber, they are turning unto God, and forsaking their ancient superstition. During the past year, the labours of the Hibernian Bible Society have been most successful in extending the Sacred Volume. There is scarcely a parish or village, from one end of the island to the other, which is not supplied with the means of salvation, though not to the extent which is needed for the purpose of carrying on an aggression against the habitual indolence of man. The peasantry of Ireland have made purchases of copies of the Sacred Volume to an extent far exceeding the most sanguine hopes of

the warmest friends of the circulation of the Scriptures. These purchases could not have been made without considerable savings on the part of that interesting class of British Society. They were compelled to labour, in order that they might save; and thus does the Bible prove the most effectual means of promoting the objects of political economists, by advancing industry, and promoting habits of frugality. An interesting feature of the history of scriptural instruction during the last year is, that now, for the first time in the last hundred and fifty years, the Scriptures have been published in the language and character of Ireland. The examination of the Irish Scriptures has led to an anxiety for the possession and reading of the English authorised version of the New Testament; and thus, again, led to a desire for the authorised version of the Old—thence to the complete English Bible—then to the large English Bible with marginal references. There is one other circumstance connected with Ireland to which I should wish to advert, and which, I have no doubt, will be listened to with earnest attention. It is a fact, not only strange, but awful, that notwithstanding that general ignorance and absence of education that obscures Ireland, there is to be found within its limits no trifling extent of that soul-blasting infidelity which seldom fails to flourish when education is not founded upon a scriptural basis. In a northern, or rather, I should say, a midland county, a discussion, to which the arrangements of the Reformation Society gave rise, took place between a Roman Catholic and a Protestant clergyman. Many persons in the neighbourhood, farmers and peasants, under the influence of infidelity, attended, for the purpose of ridiculing the objects of the two clergymen. The blasphemous writings of Paine and Voltaire had produced their effects; and in a spirit of irreligious mockery some of those persons said, "Let us have a discussion of our own." Champions were appointed on either side, and they seriously set about preparing themselves for the contest; in order to which, however, it became necessary that they should do what they had never done before—that they should read the Scriptures. The result was all that might have been expected from an assiduous examination of the truth; and many of them, rejecting the errors which they had heretofore cherished, embraced the principles of Christianity. On the parties, shortly after the events to which I am alluding, became so conscience-stricken for having introduced into that neighbourhood Paine's *Age of Reason*, and other writings of a similar tendency, that after his family had retired to rest, he committed to the flames the publications. (Applause.) Such are the beneficial effects of the spread of religious information in that country. Let us hope and trust that similar results may be produced elsewhere; that all who leave this room will extend through their respective circles the influence of those principles, which it is impossible long to inhale the atmosphere of this room without imbibing to no trifling extent. It is time, my lord, that I should come more particularly to the motion which I have been instructed to submit. Amongst those who have distinguished themselves in the love and service of God, the friend of Sir Wm. Jones adds to the other obligations he has conferred on the great family of mankind, those benefits which have procured for him the honour and reverence of that country to which I belong. The nobleman of whom I speak is the president of the Bible Society. I feel a pleasure which I am unable to express, in being made the humble vehicle of public thanks to such a man." [The Rev. Gentleman concluded by moving the thanks of the meeting to the Right Hon. Lord Teignmouth.]

W. WILBERFORCE, Esq. rose to second the resolution, amidst the cheers of the meeting. He cordially concurred in thanking the noble president for the eminent services he had rendered to the cause of religious instruction. At his time of life the mind, in some degree, lived in the past; and the meeting would probably excuse him for recurring to the origin of the Institution. When the seeds were first sown, and when the plants to which they gave rise began to appear, they were naturally surrounded, and in a manner choaked by the weeds which everywhere grew up around them. But at length those difficulties were surmounted: a blade here and there sprung up, and conquering the barrenness of the soil in some places, and the mis-

chievous fertility which produced weeds in others, a wholesome vegetation was at length brought forth, which promised to overspread the land with the peace and blessings of Christianity. (Applause.) "Every succeeding anniversary" (continued Mr. W.) "brings us new cause for thankfulness and congratulation. One would almost suppose that every combination of fact and thought would be exhausted; yet, strange to say, that at every new anniversary, fresh novelties are brought forward, new facts are stated, new arguments urged, and new illustrations supplied, that were heretofore unthought of. Hence it is that we retire from these anniversaries carrying to our respective homes fresh warmth and light, but what is better still, they compel every man who has attended such a meeting, on retiring to his closet, to ask himself, 'Have I duly estimated the treasure of which I have myself been so long in possession? Have I duly estimated that which a nation does not think itself ill employed in diffusing to the rest of mankind?' The religion of the Bible is the religion, as we all know, best suited to the wants and weaknesses, and the errors of man. Here I cannot help observing, that there is nothing more extraordinary, than that when man comes to make a religion for himself, it is always of such a kind as enjoins penances and mortifications, and personal injuries of all sorts. We find this principle pervading every species of human religion, as if God envied man the happiness he was capable of enjoying. What! God envy man? How different is the lesson which the Bible teaches, that God is all love and mercy, and abounding in grace and favour through the merits of our Redeemer—it teaches that the shortest and the surest mode of becoming happy was by becoming holy, while at the same time it was filled with the soundest dictates of morality, and wisdom, and prudence. It is not aloud at anniversaries of this nature, when we are cheering and animating each other in the great cause of Christian love and Christian charity, that we are doing the best work, which, as followers of Christ we are called upon to perform—it is, when we retire to our closet, and raise our minds and hearts in the love of God; it is then, and then alone, that we are allowing the word of truth to produce its influence upon us. I shall, however, without further observation in this train, proceed to the topic which forms the principal feature of that resolution which I have been called upon to second—I mean the extraordinary obligations, which this society owes to its noble president. I well remember when he went out as governor-general of India—I well remember the frequent and valuable services he has through a long life rendered to the cause of religion and of scriptural information. We have here this day a governor-general of India, and a bishop of India. To the bishop of Calcutta I would say, that I hope he will be able, like our venerated predecessor, to return in the evening of his days to enjoy those mild triumphs which a course of beneficence and usefulness will have prepared for him; and that finally he will enjoy that everlasting happiness reserved for the true Christian. I remember this institution five-and-twenty or thirty years ago. I remember it, too, as the parent of almost all the other religious societies; and in that, as well as in other points of view, we cannot but be grateful to those by whom its infancy was fostered, and by whom at a more advanced period, its interests were promoted and sustained. Amongst the highest of those stands the name of the noble lord, to whom it is the object of the present resolution to offer thanks; yes, my lord, we thank you for what is past, and will thank the bishop for what is to come." Mr. Wilberforce concluded by saying, that as the motion which he seconded could not be put by the chairman, he should propose it for the adoption of the meeting.

The resolution was carried by acclamation.

The noble Chairman assured the meeting that he received their kind acknowledgments with a feeling of deep humility; and it should be his daily prayer to his God that he would spare him sufficient strength during his probation in this world, to do all in his power to conduce to the good of his church. (Applause.)

[TO BE CONTINUED.]

BIBLE IN MADAGASCAR.—We learn from a letter in the Extracts of Correspondence of the British and Foreign Bible Society, just received, that the