

The Rev. Mr. ARMSTRONG, in moving the first Resolution, spoke nearly as follows :—

*Mr. President, Ladies and Gentlemen.*—Though I stand before this audience in the character of almost a perfect stranger, I am no stranger to the British and Foreign Bible Society. I have been the sincere friend of that Society for forty years, and five and thirty years ago I was the favoured instrument of establishing an Auxiliary to it in one of our Colonies, and which Auxiliary, I am happy to find, continues to this day. I love both the object and the constitution of the Bible Society. Its object is that of circulating the Scriptures without note or comment in the vernacular language of every nation throughout the world. I love also its constitution, I mean that feature of it which unites the members of every communion in carrying forward the grand object which it has in view. Such an association is not to be generally attained; if, therefore, there be one object in the promotion of which all may unite, it is, I think, a point of great importance to secure it. Amid all our differences, however, thank God, there are many points of agreement between us, and those of the greatest importance too. We agree in all the most essential articles of the Christian Faith—in the grand doctrine of the Trinity, in the atonement made by Jesus Christ, and in the influence of the Holy Spirit. We agree in the genuineness, authenticity and inspiration of that volume which we unite to circulate; and, especially, we agree in that all-important point—we agree, I say, unanimously, decidedly, and determinately, that the Scriptures, and the Scriptures alone, are the only Rule of Faith—an agreement of the utmost importance at this juncture, when mighty efforts are made to Romanize Protestantism. Now shall not they who agree in so many points be associated together for the purpose of furthering those very objects of agreement by the best means that can be devised for it; viz., the circulation of the Scriptures? I made allusion, just now, to the present juncture, as a time of fear, alarm and danger. Allow me to return to this allusion for a moment. The present time, I say, is one of alarm, and danger. The enemy of the Scriptures has made an aggressive movement, the object of which is nothing less than to Romanize all England and her dominions. It is time then for us to furnish our weapons, to stand upon our watch-tower, and prepare for the attack. Is the Bible the religion of Protestants? Then, surely, it behoves Protestants of all creeds to unite as one man for the defence of it, as the inalienable right of every human being. But what is the practice of Rome, even now that she is under restraint and control, and when her influence is greatly limited? To suppress the Holy Scriptures. What then will be her practice, if she gains an ascendancy over our own highly Protestant Nation? To suppress the Scriptures to an unlimited extent. Rome is an enemy to the Scriptures, because the Scriptures are an enemy to Rome. The Papal Church and the Bible can never stand together: either one or the other must be sacrificed. Yes, Mr. President and friends of the Bible Society, if Popery should ever regain an ascendancy in the

privilege of circulating the Scriptures; the Bible Society will be proscribed; the doors of Earl Street will be closed, the stock of the Scriptures will be destroyed, and the officers of the Society, probably, incarcerated in the dungeons of the Inquisition.

But I must not forget the duty entrusted to me—of moving the first Resolution, and which I now do; it is the following:—"That the Report, an abstract of which has just been read, be received, printed, and circulated, under the direction of the Committee."—The Report, of which you have only heard a part, is of a deeply interesting nature, and I hope when it is printed, you will all give it your attentive perusal. The extracts which it takes from the last Report of the Parent Society refer largely to the labors and success of Colporteurs, more especially on the Continent of Europe. The system of Colportage is one which I have much admired for its adaptation to the object sought and in the striking instances of usefulness related by this humble but worthy class of laborers, I have for several years taken the deepest interest. Our Colporteurs are not merely vendors of the Scriptures—that would not be sufficient; neither are they accredited ministers of religion—that is not required; but they are Christians of sound principles, intelligent in their understandings, apt to teach, to speak a word in season, of heavenly minds; men who while they carry the Bible in their hands, carry the spirit and principles of it in their hearts, and whose labors have been abundantly blessed. There are those who are unfriendly to such an agency, as being an intrusion on the ministerial office. If it be so, it is an intrusion recognised and sanctioned by the Apostles. Let any one read the last chapters of the epistle to the Romans, and say whether lay-agency is not recognised by St. Paul, as one of great usefulness in the Church. His very first commendation is on the behalf of Phœbe, a servant of the Church, and a succourer, he says, of many and of myself also. In the very next verse, he greets Priscilla and Aquila his helpers in Christ Jesus; who have for my life, he says, laid down their own necks: unto whom not only I give thanks, but also all the Churches of the Gentiles. And in what endearing terms he salutes another of these useful helpers: *Salute the beloved Persis, which labored much in the Lord.* With such direct recognition, by the highest authority, of lay-agency in the Church, we need not, I think, scruple to have recourse to it. What sanction here also have we for our kind and enduring collectors of contributions and distributors of the Scriptures, in their own immediate neighbourhoods. Let then our female friends persevere in their labors of love, and may many another helper in Christ Jesus be added to their little band!

But let me turn to another subject. What encouragement does the Report hold out to us to continue, perseveringly to continue, in promoting the circulating of the Scriptures? Much in different respects. It is not, however, to the more splendid operations of the Society that I shall now direct your attention, as affording the greatest encouragement, but to some few instances of direct usefulness. I shall not direct your attention to the thousands and tens of thousands of copies of the Scriptures cir-