

the more they are studying it they are giving it a respect and reverence which, I am thankful to know, in my own circle, has, in more than one instance, resulted in direct conversion and surrender of the heart to God. The Bible Society acts on this simple principle. We say, "Take the Bible, judge the Bible by facts; try it by internal evidence; test it historically; test it morally; test it how you will, it is God's Word, and 'God is His own interpreter, and He will make it plain.'"

The Rev. J. SIBREE, Jr., in seconding the resolution, said: My lord, ladies and gentlemen, as a missionary who has been for nearly sixteen years connected with the great island of Madagascar, I feel special pleasure in taking part in the annual meeting of this noble Society; and for this reason, that from the very introduction of Protestant Christianity into that country, up to the present day, the progress of the Gospel has been inseparably connected with the reading and study of the Word of God. A short but weighty verse in the Acts of the Apostles, describing the influence of apostolic preaching in Ephesus, might be fitly taken as a description of the three chief periods in the history of Protestant mission work in the great African island: "So mightily grew the Word of God, and prevailed." This was true of the first period in its history—that of the sixteen years *planting* of the Gospel in Madagascar, from 1820 to 1836. And then it was eminently true of the second period—that of the *persecution* of the Gospel for twenty-five years, from 1836 to 1861; for during that long quarter of a century the people had no living voice of missionary or foreign teacher to help them, but they had to rely exclusively upon the written or printed Word, interpreted to their hearts by the Holy Ghost. And then again, during the third period of the history of our mission—that of the Gospel's *progress* during the last sixteen years—it has been no less true once more that "So mightily grew"—and is growing—"the Word of God, and prevailed." The Bible has such an influence in Madagascar that even members of the Society of Jesus are driven to a thoroughly Pauline style of argument, and for the time to ignore the claim of authority, and to say in effect, "I speak as unto wise men: judge ye what I say." In reading what is said by the early missionaries about the first Christian converts, I have frequently been impressed by the fact of the depth and earnestness of Christian character so many of them showed, and of the fulness of their religious experience. On looking further into this, to discover its cause, I think it may be traced to the fulness of their acquaintance with the Divine Word. After giving at some length the history of two remarkably faithful Christians in Madagascar, who had been led to the Saviour in a very direct way, by the reading of portions of the Bible, the Rev. gentleman went on to say: "Such my Lord and Christian friends, are some of the men we have in Madagascar, as the fruits of this Society's work in translating and printing the word of God. Allow me to remark that our people have a deep and sincere belief in the Bible as the authoritative standard both of faith and of practice. They regard it as 'the judge that ends the strife,' as the final authority to which to appeal in all difficult and doubtful questions. 'What saith the Scriptures!' is a constant sentiment in their minds in all church disputes. And the Bible is gaining year by year more power in the central provinces of the island. It is purifying society; it is raising the tone of morality and social life; it is shaming out immorality, polygamy and divorce; it is sanctifying family life, and making marriage more and more a sacred thing; it is putting down cruel customs and laws, and it is ameliorating war. One incident illustrating this last point may, I think, be not without interest. Some six years ago the central Government felt it to be necessary to send an army to put down an insurrection in the south-west part of the island; but before the army went away, the Prime Minister called the commander and officers together, and said, 'Now, you are going to fight with the Queen's enemies, but remember, they are the Queen's people too. You know how we carried on war in former time; but remember, you are Christians now, and the cruelties of heathen times are not to be done again.' Well, that army went away, and