

there were Jewish communities, and where, there being those large and important Jewish communities, a considerable portion of the heathen population had been led to attend the synagogues, and there, whether they were actually proselytes or not, had heard the Holy Scriptures read Sabbath after Sabbath, and so had their own minds and souls and spirits prepared for the evangelization which was carried on by the apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ. If you just look at it for one moment in detail, you will recall to your minds the instances; you will remember that the first heathen convert, the Ethiopian travelling in his chariot on his way back to Ethiopia, when overtaken by Philip the Evangelist, was doing—what? Reading the Prophet Isaiah. He did not understand it, and he did not know what it meant, but still there were his heart and mind prepared by reading those Holy Scriptures, &c., &c.

* * * It seems to me, therefore, that one of the most important works that this great Bible Society has to effect is this: By a wholesale distribution and dissemination of the Word of God among different populations and different people, sowing the Word here and there, not knowing exactly why, they are preparing the way for the time when the missionary shall go forth with his feet shod with the preparation of the Gospel of peace, and there, upon prepared ground, deliver the full message of God's grace."

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The Rev. W. S. SWANSON, in seconding the resolution, said:—"My lord and dear Christian friends, I rise to second the resolution that has just been put to this meeting, and I do so with feelings of the very deepest pleasure; because I know full well the immense benefits that this noble Society has conferred upon the land where I have spent the last twenty-three years of my life. I feel that this Society is one of the most substantial, one of the truest, and one of the most real missionary institutions we have in this or any other land; and I feel a deep debt of gratitude to this noble Society when I think of the magnificent work which it has been privileged by God to do in the land that lies very near in all its highest interests to my own heart—I mean the immense empire of China. And I second this resolution not only with a feeling of gratitude for what this Society has already done in China, but with a lively expectation of benefits to come in the same great land from this British and Foreign Bible Society. I feel, my lord, in supporting this resolution, and with a special view to the interests and wants of China, that I have to speak on one of the most important questions that can occupy the attention of Christian people in this or any other land. I sometimes think that there is no subject in all the world so much misunderstood, or so little understood, as this great question of China, and the work for Christ in that empire; and I am perfectly certain that in the measure in which a knowledge of the importance of this great question is brought home to the hearts of Christian people in this land of ours, and to the hearts of those who have the ruling and the guiding of this Society—in that measure will this Society lend itself to our help in the immense empire of China, and with double the vigour and force that it has ever done in the past. There is no empire in all the world like China; if you think of it in its extent, in the multitude of its people; if you think of it in its grand old history, stretching back over 3,000 years, with the wonderful civilization which we find imbedded in that history, with a literature all along the line of that civilization—a literature existing at a time when there was no literature in any other part of the world. And when I think of China to-day I come to the same conclusion. I go East, and pass down the Red Sea; I go out into the Indian Ocean; I pass the Bay of Bengal, and I go up through the Straits of Malacca, and I come to China, and I can fearlessly say that there is no country or people that I pass on my way exerting the same influence in the world to-day as the empire of China, and as this Chinese people. I made a voyage the other day from China. I went down to the Straits of Malacca, and I found what sixty years ago was a wild, uncultivated jungle, undeveloped by its aboriginal population, a perfect garden—one of the most wealth-producing parts of the world. And who did it? Why