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BY THE VERY REV. PRINCIPAL CAVEN, D.D.

"The Law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul; the testimony of the Lord is sure, making wise the simple." Psalm XIX., 7.

The "Law of the Lord" might signify the five Books of Moses,—the Law as distinguished from the Psalms and the Prophets; or, again, the element of precept, command, enactment, in whatever part of Scripture it may be found; or, in the third place, it might designate comprehensively the Scriptures at large. In the present context we have the terms Law, Testimony, Statutes, Commandment, all referring apparently to the Word of God so far as given, when the Psalmist wrote: each term denoting that Word under some peculiarity of aspect, and affirming of it something which has special relation to the aspect under which it is viewed. It is not necessary to prove that if the statement of the text is true when applied to the Scriptures so far as given in the time of David, it is not less true of the Completed Canon, which it is our privilege to possess. We proceed, therefore, with all humility, and invoking the Divine assistance, to consider the double statement or affirmation here made regarding Scripture,—that it is "perfect," and is in consequence fitted "to convert the soul."

I. *Let us speak of the Perfection which is ascribed to the Law of the Lord.* This Law stands distinguished from all other laws—this book from all other books—in that perfection may be attributed to it: for no one surely will claim perfection for any laws or any writings which are merely human. That which is only human exhibits the imperfection and frailty which attach to

man, and however excellent in its characteristics, it has not the perfection which ensures to it perpetuity : it serves its purpose—perhaps a valuable purpose—and then passes away. But let us not in speaking of the Scriptures be content to use, in a careless way, words of general praise ; rather let us reverently enquire what is precisely meant in those epithets of commendation which we find in passages such as that before us. What is the “perfection” here ascribed to the “Law of the Lord ?” The perfection affirmed of Scripture is not a perfection which excludes progress in the revelation of Divine truth. Such progress the Word of God certainly exhibits. Compare the Old Testament with the New, compare the earlier with the later portions of the Old ; and who can fail to observe that God reveals His character and His ways with increasing clearness ? The course of revelation, like the path of the just, shines more and more unto the perfect day ; or, to employ another illustration from Scripture, we have first the blade, then the ear, then the full corn in the ear. The great design of revelation is to make known to men the plan of redemption, and the grace and mercy of God therein displayed. How obvious it is that in the Old Testament this place is progressively unfolded. The first intimation of deliverance is conveyed in the sentence pronounced upon the serpent : “I will put enmity between thee and the woman and between thy seed and her seed and He shall bruise thy head and thou shalt bruise His heel.” Here indeed we have a deliverer, who is human,—here a contest—here a complete victory ; but whilst faith has thus a basis on which to rest, how dark and enigmatical are the words ! But, as the history of the Church proceeds, the person of the great Redeemer stands out with increasing distinctness ; the nature of His work is more and more fully declared ; the incidents of His course are detailed ; the glory of His Kingdom grows in brightness. We learn that the Coming One shall be of Abraham’s seed—of the tribe of Judah—of the house of David ; that His birth shall be miraculous ; that he shall be divine as well as human—the Wonderful, the Counselor, the Mighty God, the Everlasting Father. The Spirit shall rest upon Him without measure. He shall reveal the Father’s will. He shall fulfil the purpose of all sacrifice in His atoning death. He shall vanquish death, and, entering upon full possession of His Kingdom, reign gloriously with His Saints for ever and ever. All this, and much more, we learn regarding Him before Malachi closes the Canon of the Old Testament.

In like manner we find in the New Testament, progress in the revelation of the laws and doctrines of the kingdom of God. The Lord had things to say to His disciples which they could not “hear ;” but He promises after His ascension to send the Holy Spirit, who should lead them into all truth. Nor was this promise forgotten ; and in the writings of the Apostles we have clearly elucidated many questions of high import regarding which little was said by the Lord in the days of His flesh.

Scripture is ever consistent with itself. No subsequent revelation throws discredit on what preceded ; but we can have no hesitation in admitting that the perfection of the “Law” is a perfection which allows, nay, requires, progress in the discovery of the ways of God. Dimly, in the first instalments of the Holy Word, is the path of life indicated ; but, by the gospel, Jesus Christ has illuminated life and immortality.

Again, the perfection of God’s law does not imply that the Bible, even in its completion, entirely reveals the nature and administration of God. The Bible is a revelation for us. It is such a revelation as we require. It declares to us the will of God for our salvation, and clearly sets before us all that God has deemed it necessary that we should know. But, in the present life, we still see through a glass darkly : we still think and understand and speak as children. There are secrets of the spiritual world which it is not lawful—perhaps—not possible—to disclose to inhabitants of Earth. There are high problems of the divine administration with which our faculties in their present estate are not qualified to deal. And the time is to come, the apostle tells us, when we shall see face to face and know even as we are known.

Then discoveries may be made to us which lie beyond the scope of the object for which the sacred writings are given or which unfold truth that could not minister to our spiritual advancement while we are in the body; or which the soul limited and restrained by the conditions of the present life, could not grasp and appropriate. In saying this we say nothing at variance with the declaration that the Law of the Lord is "perfect."

I proceed to observe that the perfection of Scripture implies^(a) its *infallibility*. The Scriptures "cannot be broken." The Bible makes no statements which contain error. Whether these statements relate to the past, the present, or the future, they are faithful and true. The Bible may tell us of what took place before human history began; it may record the words which God has spoken from time to time for the instruction, consolation, reproof of His servants, or for restraining and infusing fear into His enemies; or it may carry us forward to the time when the earthly history of man shall close, when the dead shall be raised and the living changed, when the judgment shall be set, when the sentence from which lies no appeal shall be pronounced, when eternity shall be entered on and the New Jerusalem, peopled with the countless multitude redeemed by the blood of the Lamb, shall descend from God out of heaven; but whatever be the time or the topic to which Scripture refers, its utterances are all to be received with absolute confidence in their truth. Its histories are true histories, its teachings on doctrine and duty are true teachings, its predictions are true predictions. Not only is the Book in its scope and substance, authentic, but it was free from the error which must have attached to it had it been, as some affirm, a purely human production. In putting forth this claim for immunity from error, I am not forgetting that there are apparent discrepancies arising from comparison of Scripture with Scripture, or of Scripture with uninspired history, or with certain departments of Science—discrepancies which it is not in our power, perhaps, at the present time, entirely to remove. To enter into details here were, in a discourse of this nature, entirely out of place; but I may be permitted to say that in no instance has the Bible been convicted of error; that in many instances a more accurate knowledge of Scripture, and a better acquaintance with the departments of human knowledge supposed to be in conflict with it, have removed seeming opposition, and brought to light most interesting coincidences and harmonies, thus making it more than probable that our defective knowledge, not any errors in Scripture, must account for the discrepancies alleged. The Scriptures have not indeed been supernaturally protected from such slight mistakes as transcribers, in the course of centuries, would inevitably make. But attaching to such mistakes the utmost importance which any opponent of the purity of Scripture would desire, it were ridiculous to affirm that the teachings of the volume are in any appreciable degree affected thereby. And the truth is, that by most diligent use of the materials for constructing the text of Scripture, we may now with confidence pronounce that text to be free from blemish than the text of any ancient classic. But it is not required that we should here enter upon any discussion of this matter. We may boldly say that whatever room there may yet be for the labours of the textual critic, no labours of his are necessary to give the Bible a title to our reverend trust, as declaring to us truth free from all admixture of error, concerning God and man, concerning sin and redemption, concerning the life which now is and that which is to come.

(b) Again the perfection of Scripture implies that we have in it an adequate discovery of the plan of salvation, and an adequate directory in the duties of life. This is much more than mere freedom from error and mistake. We can well conceive that a book should contain no misstatements, no wrong teaching; that its teachings should be good and salutary so far as they go, and that yet it should not convey to us all that we need to learn regarding the matters of supreme interest. It might stop short before the office of a religious guide is accomplished. We can conceive that words should have been spoken to us from Heaven, and yet these words should have contained

no gospel—no good tidings of great joy. The proclamation of God's holiness might have been heard, or the denunciation of the sinner's doom, but no word to tell us of a gracious and merciful Father who waits to receive His erring children back to favour. Now the Scriptures contain all that we need to know in order to find the way of life, and to render, while here, an acceptable service to God. The Scriptures teach us the evil and danger of sin, and the depth and power of human depravity. They shew the opposition of sin to God; the necessity that under His just and holy administration it should meet with condign punishment; and the utter inability of the sinner to save himself, his inability to make amends to the law which he has violated, or to free himself from the defilement and tyranny of evil. And then while the divine justice and holiness are represented with awful clearness, there is the sure discovery of grace and mercy. God is seen pitying the sinner—yearning over him even when farthest from his Father's house. The purpose of redemption is announced, and our help is laid upon One who is mighty. The coming of this glorious deliverer is, by type and prophecy, presignified. At length His advent is declared. He renders perfect obedience to the law; He endures the penalty. In Him mercy and truth meet together, righteousness and peace kiss each other: in Him God is just and the justifier of them who believe. Nor is the teaching of Scripture regarding the duties of a believing man less explicit and satisfactory. We cannot here attempt, even in the briefest way, to summarise this teaching. In the experience of God's people it has always been found adequate. The Word has been "a lamp to their feet and a light to their path;" nor have they ever, when looking to God for direction, failed to see the way of duty indicated.

There are many questions touching religious truths and interests which we might wish to put, to which Scripture will supply no answer. Scripture will not resolve for us the metaphysical difficulties which will be sure to present themselves to the speculative mind in connection with many doctrines of the Bible. It will not enable us to comprehend the origin of evil, nor to harmonize the Sovereignty of God with the freedom of the creature, nor to see how soul and body are united in the one human personality, or the human and the divine natures in the person of our Lord, nor to comprehend the relations of man and his history to the universe at large. And then how many enquiries regarding death and the world which lies beyond it, curiosity—nay earnest human affection—would prompt us to make, but still there would be no response. What is the mode of existence of those we loved but who are not with us now? What precise relations shall we occupy towards them when we rejoin them there? What shall be the form of the resurrection body, and what its principle of identity with the present body? Where is that place in which the redeemed shall have their everlasting home? What shall be the economy of their daily life—if days may be spoken of when time shall be no more? There is no end to the questions we should long to have answered; but no answer will be given. In vain we scrutinize with intensest interest every verse, every word that might seem to point towards a reply. An unbroken silence will be preserved; for it is not God's will that, in the present life, this knowledge should be ours. But, brethren, we shall not on this account impugn the perfection of Scripture. Keep steadily in view the purpose for which it is given. Remember that the Bible is the disclosure of God's method of grace—that "the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy." The Old Testament speaks of Him who should come, the New of Him who has come and "died and rose and revived again, that he might be Lord both of the dead and the living." This is the theme of the book, in the light of which our estimate of it must be formed. Most clearly the completed Canon possesses this perfection. But our text, if we rightly develop its meaning, ascribes such perfection to Scripture even when it embraced little if anything more than the books of Moses. Even then (though with fainter light) it revealed the gracious purpose of God: even then it presented the object of saving faith: even then it taught the pious how to live as God's children and

do the work for which He placed them here on earth. Recognising gratefully the high privilege of possessing the entire writings of the Old and New Testaments we yet cannot doubt that since God began to reveal His mercy to our fallen race, the light has been always sufficient to guide the feet of the humble into the path of peace.

(c) We remark, yet further, that the perfection of God's law involves accordingly the idea of its *Inspiration*. For how, otherwise, could it possess the characteristics which we have seen to belong to it? How could this "law" be free from all error, and how could it adequately reveal the mind of God, unless the Spirit of God had surely directed the human pens by which it was traced? Even as an inference from the characteristics which the Scriptures exhibit we should reach the doctrine of their inspiration. But we are not left to infer a truth so important as this. In many places the supernatural origin and character of the sacred writings is expressly declared. "The prophecy came not in old time by the will of man; but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost." And the same apostle who uses these words represents the prophets as "searching" the things which they themselves had recorded, but which "the Spirit of Christ that was in them did testify." And the Apostle Paul speaking of the Holy Scriptures which Timothy had known from childhood, declares that "all Scripture is given by inspiration of God;" even as he claims for himself to speak "not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth but which the Holy Ghost teacheth," and demands that "if any one think himself to be a prophet or spiritual he should acknowledge that the things which he writes are the Commandments of the Lord."

Assuredly the Bible, as we often hear, is an intensely human book. Not only are the words those which human lips pronounce, and the themes those which have deepest interest for every child of Adam, but the manner of unfolding these themes is precisely adapted to the nature of man, and from beginning to end he finds the book in closest sympathy with him. God speaks to us by men of like passions with ourselves, and while the things which they announce are His message and the word which they speak His words, yet the true impress of the human mind and heart are left upon the communication. The book is human yet divine—steeped in human experiences, redolent of human sympathies and yet an authentic and infallible message regarding "things which eye hath not seen nor ear heard neither have they entered the heart of man."

Blessed be the Lord that He hath given us a book stamped with this perfection—a book which has His own guarantee and imprimatur on every part of it. No jot or tittle of it shall ever fail. "The words of the Lord are pure words: as silver tried in a furnace of earth, purified seven times."

II. We now advert very briefly to: *That which the Law of God, thus perfect, is qualified to accomplish.*—"The Law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul." The term rendered "converting" some would prefer to render "restoring," and would regard it as referring to the reviving of the life and spirits exhausted by calamity. By so understanding the term we avoid, it has been thought, bringing the teaching of the passage into conflict with that of the apostle who represents the law as "working death." But the truth is that if we take the Law in its stricter and narrower sense, it is just as unable to restore and revive the believer as to convert the sinner from the error of his way: taking the Law, however, in the sense adopted by us—the Word of God—it is the instrument in accomplishing both the one thing and the other. By the Law, God's people are instructed, admonished and comforted; and by the Law, sinners are turned from darkness to light; and from the power of Satan unto God. In the beginning of a holy life, as in its continuance and development, we see how great service the law of God can render. By it the soul is first awakened from its sleep of death; by it all genuine progress in the divine life is directed and presided over; by it strength is supplied in all conflict with sin and Satan; by it comfort is ministered in the hour of death.

We do not forget that the Word of God, considered as a letter, is unable to impart life to the soul—unable indeed to work any good result. The “letter” can only “kill;” it is the Spirit who “giveth life.” Regarding this great truth there is no room, surely, for dispute. The Father has life in Himself, and He hath given to the Son to have life in Himself and to quicken whom He will. This life the glorified Saviour imparts by His Spirit to all them who believe upon Him. The human soul must, in order to possess life, come into immediate and vital contact with Him who is the fountain of life. Nothing but the breath of the Lord entering into the dry bones can cause them to live. In vain were ordinances bestowed, and the terms of the Lord proclaimed, and the invitations of the gospel sounded in the ears, unless divine power should accompany the word and give it an efficacy which it has not in itself. Were this truth ignored, the utmost activity in the application of the word would not result in the salvation of any.

But the Law of God—the Scriptures—God’s truth made known to us—is the instrument which the Spirit employs in the impartation of the new life, and in the development of Christian character and graces; and in this sense, the Law “converts the soul.” In all ordinary cases the Spirit works by means—uses an appropriate instrument; and the Law is the instrument which He designs to employ. “The Sword of the Spirit is the word of God.” And, though the philosophy of this matter may be above us there is doubtless a special appropriateness in the instrument, with reference to the end in view. He who made the human soul and knows it altogether, has ordained His truth to be used in the work of spiritual renovation. The Law declares the unchangeable holiness of God and the guilt and misery into which man has fallen, and these truths the Spirit uses for convincing us of sin. This perfect Law discloses the redeeming love of God, who has sent His Son to die for our deliverance, and shews the office of faith in receiving the gift freely offered to us by God: these truths, applied by the Spirit who works faith within us, inspires us with hope, and we pass from a condemned to a justified condition, from the dominion of the carnal mind, which is death, to that of the spiritual mind, which is life and peace.

Thus, brethren, we see the exceeding value of God’s Law. The greatest and most blessed transformation which the human mind can undergo is effected through its instrumentality. Nor let it be said that we exaggerate the importance of Scripture, seeing that the soul may be converted by means of God’s truth read in any of the thousands of pious books or tracts which may come into our hands, and especially by means of the truth delivered to us by preaching. For this were to forget that the Bible is the one fountain of revealed truth, and that all the streams of a pious literature are fed by it, and that the voice of the preacher, though he be Christ’s servant, can have no authority except as his utterances agree with the inspired word. “to the Law and to the Testimony; if they speak not according to them, it is because there is no light in them.”

Let me conclude by exhorting all hearing me to prize this great boon which God hath conferred upon us—the possession of His perfect law—, and in every way to shew the value they attach to it. Let us testify our appreciation of the Scriptures (1) By the diligent use of them for our personal benefit. Let us say with the Psalmist, “O how love I thy law; it is my meditation all the day:” let our “delight” be in the law of the Lord. Let us not think his language too intense when he says that God’s precepts and Statutes are “more to be desired than gold, yea than much fine gold: sweeter also than honey and the honey-comb.” Most interesting it is to see the anxious enquirer after the truth, searching that word which will not fail to lead him, if sincere and humble, into the light; or to see the reverent and diligent love with which the true and earnest Christian seeks in God’s word as for hid treasure.

Would that there were far more study—thorough and prayerful—of the Scriptures. Is there not danger, even from the abundance of excellent and

pious literature within our reach, that the Bible shall not have the prominence which should ever belong to it? Why should we not give our clearest and best hours of study to the book which comes directly from God?

(b.) Again let us show our appreciation of God's Law by holding fast the great truths therein declared. These never change; they are the same to us as they were to the Saints of old; and they will be the same to our children as to us. Progress indeed there was in the manifestation of God's gracious purpose, from the first gracious word spoken in Eden till the last words of the Apocalypse were traced by the hand of the beloved disciple; nor shall we deny that, in the providence of God, by the faithful study of the completed revelation, and by the illumination of the Spirit more and more fully vouchsafed, the Church of God attains to a comprehension of the depth and riches of meaning that is in *Scriptura*, which is ever becoming more and more complete. But how different this progress, which we would wish with deep gratitude to recognise, from that rejection or fundamental revision of the great doctrines of the Christian faith to which some, in the name of progress, would seek to persuade us!

(c.) Lastly let the estimate which we form of the Bible be seen in our earnest endeavours to send it to those who have it not. It is God's will, doubtless, that it should be rendered into all tongues, sent into all lands, and should accompany and preside over all evangelistic enterprise. Not that the Scriptures should in every instance go before the missionary: for in many countries to which the missionary goes the people cannot read, nor has their language ever been reduced to writing; but wherever the Bible can be read, and the people are willing to receive it, let us not delay to put it in their hands. The devoted men by whom we send the gospel to the unlettered heathen address themselves with great earnestness to the work of teaching them to read—chiefly that they may be able to gain fuller acquaintance with that Law which is "perfect," and which "converteth the soul."

It is too late to imagine that the principle of the Bible Society requires vindication. May the time speedily come when the darkness of heathenism, and of all superstition and unbelief shall be dispelled, and when "the Word of the Lord" uttered by believing lips, and enshrined in the inspired record, "shall have free course" everywhere, "and be glorified."

Bible Society Recorder.

TORONTO, 15TH JULY, 1877.

BOARD MEETINGS.

The regular monthly meeting of the Board was held on Tuesday, May 8th, the Hon. W. McMaster in the chair. After the usual routine business, a report was read from Messrs. Smith and Badenach, auditors, stating that they had carefully examined the cash accounts of the Treasurer and Depository, together with the accounts with the Branch Societies, and had compared the disbursements with the vouchers and found the same correct, shewing a balance in the hands of the Treasurer of \$1,418.88.

The following standing Committees were appointed for the year. On Agency and Colportage:—The Rev'ds. Dr. Reid, Geo. Young, Septimus

Jones, and Dr. Castle ; and Messrs. A. Christie, J. Brown, W. Kennedy, J. Gillespie, R. W. Laird and the Secretaries.

On the Ketchum Bequests :—The Rev'ds. Dr. Reid and S. Rose, and Messrs. Christie, Kennedy, Brown, and the Secretaries.

On Distribution of Scriptures on the Railway Cars :—Dr. Hall, Mr. M'Bean, and Mr. Rogers.

It was moved by Dr. Hall, seconded by Mr. James Brown,—That a committee be appointed for the purpose of collecting statistics and information as regards the London Auxiliary, and to hold communication with the London Committee or with a sub-committee appointed by the London Committee, and report to this Board at a subsequent meeting. The committee to consist of the President, Treasurer, and Secretaries, and the Rev. Dr. Taylor, Rev. Dr. Reid, Rev. J. Potts, Vice-Chancellor Blake, and Messrs. W. Kennedy, J. Brown, J. K. Macdonald, J. Gillespie, H. Mortimer and Colonel Moffat.—Carried.

The Board met again at 7.30 P. M., Tuesday July 10th, the Rev. J. G. Manly, Vice-President, in the chair. The meeting was opened as usual with prayer. Dr. Hodgins presented a report from the Ketchum Bequest Committee, giving an account of the distribution of Bibles in the Public Schools. The Committee appointed at the previous meeting to confer with the Committee of the London Auxiliary reported, having sent a deputation to London and submitted a statistical statement of the results of the organization of the Auxiliary. They also submitted resolutions passed by the London Committee, and a proposition from them for the remedy of the present unsatisfactory state of the Auxiliary. The London proposal was very fully discussed and the Committee instructed to draw up a memorandum expressing the views of the Board.

The usual routine business was attended to, and several grants made to Sunday Schools in destitute parts, and a grant of five hundred dollars worth of Scriptures was unanimously voted to the New Brunswick Bible Society to help to supply those who have had their Bibles burned in the late terrible fire. The meeting closed as usual with prayer.

SEVENTY-THIRD ANNIVERSARY OF THE BRITISH AND FOREIGN BIBLE SOCIETY.

On Wednesday, May the 2nd, the Annual Meeting of this Society was held at Exeter Hall.

The Right Hon. the Earl of Shaftesbury, K.G., President, in the chair.

The Rev. Charles Jackson opened the Meeting by reading a portion of the 1st chapter of the 1st Epistle of St. Peter, and engaged in prayer.

The Rev. S. B. Bergne read an Abstract of the Report, concluding with the following observations, to which the attention of friends is particularly invited :—

“The one pain your Committee have felt during the past year, and the one obstacle to their labours, has been caused by those Christian brethren in this country who have continued to misunderstand their motives and oppose

their action. Of the character of the opposition they must leave others to judge ; but the fact of it has been made so public that it might be thought there was no answer to be given did this Report close without any reference to the subject. The position held by the Committee and its predecessors in office for the past sixty years has been substantially this : they have universally given preference to versions made from the original tongues, and they circulate them among Roman Catholics wherever it is possible to do so. But there are millions of Romanists abroad who are taught to regard these versions as falsified for Protestant ends, and they refuse to touch the Word of God save in certain translations made from the Latin Vulgate, which their priests use and admit to be genuine, though they fear the people reading them in their own tongue. Now if these translations were in the main faulty, the evil would outweigh the good, and it would be wrong to aid their circulation. But such is by no means the case. It is not pretended that they are faultless ; for, if they were, why give the preference to other versions at all ? But it is maintained, first, that the defects in these versions are greatly overstated, fair examination reducing them to very slender proportions ; and, secondly, that even when overstated they fade into insignificance, beside the vast mass of pure Gospel teaching which they contain, for they tell, in some instances more strongly even than our Authorized Version, that ' there is but one God and one Mediator between God and man, the man Christ Jesus ;' and that ' if any man sin, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous, and He is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world.' Who will take upon himself the awful responsibility of saying to the Roman Catholic, ' We find certain flaws in this, the only Bible you will accept, and therefore you must go without the Book altogether !' Your Committee assuredly dare not assume any such responsibility ; and so long as there are countries in which the great mass of the Roman Catholics will look at translations from the Vulgate as no others, so long must your Committee, not for expediency, but from highest motives of Christian duty, continue to give them the versions, faithful, and in the main, accurate, which reveal a Saviour and rebuke the fatal errors of the Church of Rome. They would as soon refuse water to a dying man because it was not filtered, or bread to the starving because it was not made of the finest wheat. After all, the objectors at home are not the only judges of the work whose opinion is entitled to weight. What do Protestant workers abroad say of these versions ? They use them themselves as their sharpest weapon against Rome, and they beseech you not to take the sword out of their hands because you may discern a speck of rust upon the blade. What do their converts say ? ' We were brought to Christ by these very translations, which taught us to see and renounce the errors in which we had been trained.' What does Rome herself say ? Does she favour these versions which are supposed to favour her ? No, but she burns the ; or else, as in Italy and Madagascar and South America, she is constrained to bring out authorized and annotated editions of her own to counteract them ; and her hatred is the best guarantee for the character and tendency of the versions in question. Above all, what does the Master say ! ' By their fruits ye shall know them ; a corrupt tree cannot bring forth good fruit.' And so, if it be seen that the use of these versions enlightens the mind and sanctifies the heart of the reader ; if through them multitudes have attained to a knowledge of the Gospel who otherwise must have lived and died in ignorance, and God has thus given ' testimony to the word of His grace,' not all the objections levelled against them can persuade your Committee against their circulation. They desire, after their Lord's own example, to be servants of all ; and, if they are to minister to the Roman Catholic world the highest reasons combine to support the course they have hitherto adopted."

The Archbishop of Canterbury said : My lord, I have to move the first resolution, and in doing so I am reminded of the words which were addressed

to me more than twenty years ago, by that man of God, who at that time presided over the clergy of the Church of England, Archbishop Sumner, at my consecration as a bishop. These words were addressed to me: "Are you persuaded that the Holy Scriptures contain sufficiently all doctrine required of necessity for eternal salvation through faith in Jesus Christ? And are you determined out of the same Holy Scriptures to instruct the people committed to your charge; and to teach or maintain nothing as required of necessity to eternal salvation but that which you shall be persuaded may be concluded and proved by the same?" Again, "will you, then, faithfully exercise yourself in the same Holy Scriptures, and call upon God by prayer, for the true understanding of the same; so as you may be able by them to teach and exhort with wholesome doctrine, and to withstand and convince the gainsayers?" The form directs that then the archbishop shall place in the hands of the bishop to be consecrated the Bible, saying: "Give heed unto reading, exhortation, and doctrine. Think upon the things contained in this Book. Be diligent in them, that the increase coming thereby may be manifest unto all men. Take heed unto thyself and to doctrine." And, as all of us probably know, words similar to these are addressed to every candidate for ordination, whether as deacon or as priest, in the Church of which I am the minister; and, thank God! not in that church only, but in every Protestant Church in this land, that which is placed in the hands of the minister is this Holy Book, which we are bound together here to-day in this society to disseminate throughout the world. The Church of which I have the honour to be a minister takes care that this Holy Book shall, from beginning to end, be read in the course of every year in every congregation of the Church of England in this kingdom. There is nothing left to the caprice of individual ministers as to what portion of the Word of God they will bring prominently forward, and what part they will conceal. The Book, the whole Book, and nothing but the Book, is that which we are bound to bring before our people. I think, therefore, I have an encouragement here in the very words which were addressed to me at my ordination, and subsequently at my consecration—I have an encouragement in having joined this great society, now some thirty-four years ago; and I have encouragement also in doing that which, perhaps, I ought to have done before, but which I was convinced this year I ought to do in addressing the clergy of my diocese, and urging all the young men who were rising to a sense of their responsibilities as ministers of our Church to become members of this Society. My lord, it is a great and marvellous work in which this Society is engaged. It has great discouragements, but it has also great helps. There is one thing which has often struck me ever since I heard it insisted upon from the pulpit of the University Church at Oxford, by the honoured Provost of Oriel, now some thirty or forty years ago—that there is nothing more marvellous than this, that in profession, at least, whatever may be the case in practice, there is no man calling himself a Christian who does not acknowledge the supremacy of the written Word of God. Even those who say that Book has a good deal in it that is dangerous still do not deny that it is the Word of God. Even those who would push it into a corner, or conceal it in some language not "understood of the people," are still forced by the conditions of the case to acknowledge that it is the Word of God. * * * * I think the Book may be trusted to speak for itself. It is not as if these truths were confined to this sentence or that; they breathe through it from one end to the other, and the only intelligible means of preventing the doctrines of the Bible from finding their way into men's hearts is to say that you will destroy the Book altogether, and that there is not a word of truth in it from beginning to end. Some alarm has been felt by uninstructed people because a right reverend brother of mine here present, and a number of other persons are engaged in revising the translation of these Scriptures. I remember a very good person saying to me, "So you are going to have a new Bible?" I remember also that in the days of Richard Bentley, when he

proposed to give all the various texts, a number of excellent people said, "Why, you will upset the whole faith of the nation." I have no such fears. Let the Bible be examined with the utmost minuteness, the most reverent criticism, let the light of day be poured upon every verse of it, and my faith in the Scriptures and the truth and glory of Him who delivered them is so great that I feel convinced that those doctrines which speak to our souls will only come out more clearly the more the Book is examined. The fact is, my lord, that this is one of the devices of those who would do despite to this Holy Book, who represent that it does not speak distinctly the same clear language from the beginning to the end, who represent that our faith depends upon this text or that text, and not upon the Book speaking with unmistakable voice all through. This is an old device, which leads people to say that it is a dangerous thing to scatter the Scriptures broadcast among the ignorant and unenlightened, as if they could get hold of ideas in different parts of it which may mislead them; whereas my belief is this, that a common uneducated man, with the Bible in his hands, reading as in the sight of God, and with prayer, will certainly find in every page of it that Gospel of Life which is to be his solace in life and in death, and bring him to a complete union with his Saviour. For these reasons, my lord, I have great satisfaction in moving the first resolution:

"That the Report, an abstract of which has been read, be received and printed under the direction of the Committee."

SIR WM. MITCHELL seconded the resolution. He said: My Lord, ladies and gentlemen,—It affords me the highest satisfaction which I can possibly have to be present at this meeting; for I regard the British and Foreign Bible Society to be the Queen of religious societies in England. * * *

It is a great work this which has to be done in giving the Gospel to the 240,000,000 people in India. Throughout the whole country the way is clear. We have nowhere the difficulties which have just been referred to as existing in one part of Europe, for throughout every part of India the Gospel can be put into the hands of the natives. There is no let and no hindrance anywhere, and even in the Native States the distributions can be freely carried on. And we still need your help; there is much work yet remaining, for, although translations have been made in many dialects, still there are dialects into which the Scriptures have not yet been translated, and most of the existing translations require to be perfected. The work of translation is one of the most difficult, perhaps, which the human mind can accomplish. * * *

How was it that those unlearned men of Galilee knew what to say and what to leave unsaid! Is it not a proof of the inspiration of the Scriptures that we have received through them this morality in such a wonderful and marvellous form! But it is not so much that as it is the power which is in the Bible which marks its Divine origin. The old, old story of the Gospel of Jesus Christ is the "power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth," and it is the power of God in India, and the power of God among the Africans. Everywhere and whenever received it gives life and power and quickens the dead. On my coming back to England, after a long absence, there were two things which struck me and delighted my heart. One of these is to find Sunday observed as it is in this country. I find the busy tide of trade throughout this vast metropolis suddenly stopped; the mason's hammer silent! It is a marvellous tribute this from the world to the great truth that "the life is more than meat, and the body than raiment." Oh! my friends, rejoice in what you have in this respect, and esteem it one of your highest privileges to maintain that Sunday inviolate. The other thing is connected with this Society. We find the Bible everywhere, in every house and almost every public place. When I first landed I found the Bible of your Society a silent preacher in every room in the hotel into which I entered. It is a noble Society, this British and Foreign Bible Society. It is the emblem of liberty and freedom; and just as in travelling over the world, wherever you see the British Union Jack lifted up, there you see the

emblem of freedom and liberty, and know that there is no slavery, no tyranny or oppression there, so wherever you see written up "British and Foreign Bible Society," there you have freedom, there you have liberty, there you have catholic principle; and wherever this Society's agents are, you will be sure to find the advocates there of liberty and Christianity undefiled, and of the uprising of the human race.

The Rev. W. E. COUSINS (from Madagascar) said: My lord, ladies, and gentlemen,—I owe the honour of taking part in this great meeting to the fact that I have been for several years engaged in the revision of the Malagasy Bible, a work undertaken with the approval of this Society, and carried on at its expense. Standing here this morning, my lord, among the friends and supporters of the British and Foreign Bible Society, I feel it my bounden duty, in the first place, to acknowledge the great indebtedness of the people and missionaries of Madagascar to this noble Society. Madagascar owes the printing of its Bible to this great institution. When the first edition of the complete Bible was issued in the year 1835, it bore upon its title-page a statement of the fact that though the translation was made by the missionaries of the Society to which I belong, the London Missionary Society, and the printing was done at our mission press, at Antananarivo, the paper was given by the Society. And that, my lord, was the first of a long series of generous and valuable gifts from the year 1835 to the present time. Many editions of the Scriptures have been printed for the Malagasy Christians at the expense of this Society. The work has been going on year after year, and never have we found that Madagascar has overtaxed the resources or liberality of the Society. On behalf, then, of the Malagasy Christians, who have been the recipients of these generous gifts, and on behalf of the missionaries, in response to whose appeals these gifts have been made, allow me this morning to tender to the supporters of the British and Foreign Bible Society our deepest and most sincere thanks. But not only would I thank you. I think I can go farther. I can congratulate you on the fact that your generosity has not been lavished in vain. I have been asked this morning to move this resolution:—

"That this meeting recognises with devout thankfulness the many tokens of Divine goodness by which the course of the British and Foreign Bible Society has been marked during the past year, and whilst tracing in these a loud call to renewed activity and zeal in this branch of God's service, would plead most earnestly that the Holy Spirit's influence may accompany the written Word wherever circulated, and make it effectual to the ingathering of many souls within the fold of Christ."

* * * * * My lord, it always seems to me that the history of the Bible in Madagascar, after the missionaries were banished, is a glorious and noble illustration of the value and importance of the work of this Society. The voice of the living teacher was no longer heard in the land; but God carried on His own work in His own way. I have often recalled to mind with great pleasure a phrase used by these persecuted Christians in one of their letters written to the missionaries who had been driven away from them. They say:—"It is thought that we shall certainly forget the Word of God now that we have no teachers here: the Queen, however, does not know that the best teacher of all—the Holy Spirit—is with us still." These are memorable words, and I often think of them with profound pleasure. Yes, the best teacher was there still. The missionaries who had given them the Bible were no longer with them to guide them in the way of truth; but there was there that living power, the blessed Spirit of all truth, "the best teacher," and he preserved alive in their hearts the faith of the Lord Jesus Christ. These Malagasy Christians loved their Bible. It was a distinguishing mark of their Christianity. Nothing that Queen Ranavalona could do, with all her strong will and her determined opposition to the Gospel, could wear her people from their love of the blessed Book that it is the object of this Society to circulate.

* * * * *

In connection with the translation of the Malagasy Bible, there is one fact that has always seemed to me a very instructive one. With your permission, my lord, I will lay before this meeting a contrast. I have shewn you how within fifteen years the Protestant missionaries gave to the people a complete version of the Scriptures. It may be known to some of you that the earliest attempts to Christianize Madagascar were made by missionaries of the Roman Catholic Church. The first mission was sent out by the Portuguese soon after the discovery of the island by Lawrence Almeida, in the year 1506. The mission was soon abandoned, and left scarcely a trace of its existence. The next attempt was made more than a century later by missionaries sent out from France. These men continued at their work under great difficulties, and amid many hardships, for about eighteen years. We read something of their doings, and find from old reports that they prepared catechisms, prayers, confessions to the Virgin Mary, to St. Michael, and John the Baptist, with the command of the Church to abstain from flesh on Fridays; but we read not one word about Bible translation. Now, the Protestant missionaries were in Madagascar only fifteen years; but they considered Bible translation a primary duty, and with God's help they were able to accomplish what they desired. That shews most clearly the different conceptions of missionary work entertained by missionaries of these different churches. * * *

We rejoiced a few years ago to notice in the "Annals of the Propagation of the Faith" the following statement of the Roman Catholic missionaries;—"We have not as yet had the consolation to find a single village unaffected by the bite of the serpent of heresy." We know what these gentlemen call the bite of the serpent of heresy. We have heard sounds of this kind before. We know that the heresy lies in our Protestantism, and, above all, in our Protestant Bible. Well, it is something to get the testimony of an adversary to the fact that there is scarcely a village in Madagascar where these men do not find the bite of the serpent of heresy. We rejoice that this glorious Book, this so-called book of heresy, has been so generally diffused; we rejoice to hear that this so-called poison has affected so many of the Malagasy people; and herein lies the ground of our hope that Madagascar, as a nation, will never yield to the attacks of Popery. Before sitting down, allow me to say a few words about our revision work. We have now been engaged for a little more than two years in the task of attempting to render more perfect the translation prepared by our honoured predecessors. We have a Revision Committee. That Committee consists of a principal reviser, and of delegates from the various bodies of Christian missionaries working in Madagascar. The London Missionary Society sends three delegates; the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel sends one delegate; the Norwegian Missionary Society sends two delegates; and the Society of Friends sends another. Coming as we do from different sections of Christ's Church, we are glad to find that there is no practical difficulty in the way of our co-operating in this glorious work. We further believe that, as we are thus brought nearer together, a spirit of brotherly love and harmony will be promoted; and then we look upon our various congregations and remember how again and again the Jesuit missionaries point the finger of scorn at the divisions of the Protestants. They say to the people, "Look at these Protestants, they cannot agree among themselves." Well, it is sad that it should be possible for the enemy to point at us in this way; but, on the other hand, our union in the blessed work of revising the translation of God's Word will shew to the natives at least one thing—that though we may be divided upon some minor points, we are all one in our loyalty to God's blessed Word. I am happy to be able to tell you that Queen Ranavalona reads the Bible in private, she hears it read and preached from in public, and, more than this, I have seen her act as a distributor of God's Word. About three or four years ago, I was present at a large school examination in the capital of Betsileo, about 200 miles from Antananarivo. At the close of the examination the Queen made presents to some of the more diligent scholars, and those presents chiefly

consisted of hymn-books and Testaments. Thus was the Queen of Madagascar engaged in the great work of Bible circulation. May we not, my lord, regard these latter changes that have come over the government of Madagascar as an earnest of brighter and happier days for the people? Let us, then, pray earnestly that, as in the dark days of persecution, so in these brighter days of liberty, the faith of the Malagasy people may be based upon the pure Word of God.

The Rev. PREBENDARY CADMAN seconded the resolution.

The Rev. MARMADUKE C. OSBORNE said—

“That the thanks of this meeting be given to the president and vice-presidents for their continued patronage; also to Joseph Hoare, Esq., the treasurer, who is requested to continue his services. That grateful thanks be also presented to the officers, committees, and collectors of the various auxiliaries, branches, and associations throughout this country and the colonies; to whose untiring zeal and energy the Society is again indebted for so large an amount of free contributions during the past year, and to whom they would earnestly appeal for a continuance of their efficient and valuable services; and that the following gentlemen be the committee for the ensuing year, with power to fill up vacancies.” (Names read.)

I deem it a great honour, my lord, to be permitted to stand on this platform to-day, and to advocate in a very few sentences the British and Foreign Bible Society. I am not an archbishop; I am not a missionary from Madagascar, nor am I an African bishop either; I am a plain, simple, straightforward Methodist preacher. I do not presume to represent the community just now to which I belong, but it may be permitted me to say that so far as I understand the common sentiment and feeling of that community its confidence in this Society to-day is unabated, and its attachment is as strong as ever. It is my honour to be a member of the Committee of the Wesleyan Methodist Missionary Society, and I know something of the extent to which that Society is indebted to this; and it was only on Monday last, when the anniversary meeting of that Society was held in this room, that grateful mention was made of an instance of assistance by this Society during the course of the past year in providing a supply of copies of the Scriptures in Arabic for the use of our newly-revived and resuscitated mission on the Cambia. The object of this Society is very simple, and to me, indeed, the simplicity is the charm of it. Its simplicity is so delightful and sublime—I was going to say divine—that it at once commends itself to my understanding and judgment, and fascinates my fancy. It seems to be in very delightful analogy to the object of the Christian minister and missionary. We ministers go forth to preach a Man, and you associate to circulate a Book. The religion that we profess in common is not orthodoxy; it is not a creed; it is not a set of opinions; it is not mere dogma; it is not a ritual; it is not an organization; but it consists in a loving trust in and an allegiance to a living, loving, and personal Christ; and the great purpose which our ministers at home and missionaries abroad go forth to accomplish is, to tell the story concerning the life, and death, and resurrection of this Man—this God-Man, this Divine Human Saviour. That is the theme, I need not tell you, as we were reminded, indeed, this morning, of the entire Book which you seek to circulate.

The suitability of the teaching of the Bible to the wants of the world has been tried amongst all people, and in all places, upon men of every caste, every colour, every clime; amid the snows of Labrador, and amid the sunny islands of the Southern Seas; it has passed to the great Australasian land; it has found its way and flourished on the banks of the majestic rivers and amid the pine forests of the great American continent; it has proved its suitability and been successful amid the teeming cities of China, on the plains of India, in the wilds of Africa, upon all sorts and conditions of men the wide world over. It has been tried by the Queen in the palace of royalty, and by the widow in the cabin of poverty; by the rich man in purple and fine linen

farung sumptuously every day, and by the ulcerated beggar at his door, desiring to be fed with the crumbs which fall from his table; by lisping youth and tottering age; by men in every meridian of longitude and every line of latitude; by the man panting at the line, and by the man shivering at the pole. It has failed nowhere; it has succeeded everywhere; and it has proved itself to be the power of God unto salvation to everyone that believeth. I was reading the other day a very interesting account of the shipwreck of Dr. Duff, when he sailed for India, in the year 1829. When about twenty miles north of Cape Town, the ship was wrecked, and the ship, cargo, and everything went to the bottom; and the Doctor's curious and carefully-collected books, and all his manuscripts, the accumulation of his life to that period, were destroyed, beaten into pulp by the waters as they dashed upon the rocks on which the vessel struck, and the Doctor himself said, "I never knew before then that I was an idolator of books and written papers." But, strange enough, the waves washed up one box containing a Bible and a Psalm-book that had been presented to him by a number of friends before he left. Being packed in a leathern case they were preserved to him; and he said when he found that Bible it seemed like an inspiration, as if a voice from heaven said to him, "You want no other book, you want no other paper; take that Bible in your hands, go forth and preach the message it contains to the people of India, and you want nothing more." A very curious comment on that was given in this room on Monday last. A returned missionary told us that a friend of his, some time ago, was travelling in Bengal. Arriving at a small town, he heard that some fifty-two people at that time were engaged in Christian worship. He found them out; he discovered that they really were acquainted with the Truth, and that they met for worship and witness. He inquired as to the manner in which they were brought to a knowledge of the Truth, for no missionary had ever visited the place before; and he was told that one of their number some time before had got a copy of the Bible in the Bengalee tongue; he read it for himself, he read it to his neighbours, and it had been the means of bringing them to Christ. They had believed to the saving of the soul; they had formed a little church among themselves, guided by the teaching of the Book, and they met regularly for worship, and celebrated in the best way they could the divinely instituted sacraments of religion; proving that without messenger or missionary, if you give this Book a fair chance, it will accomplish in the world the great designs for which it was sent. This Society has done a great work in the circulation of this blessed Book; * * but only think of the countless millions, the teeming millions, that have never seen a copy, never read a word, know nothing at all about the glorious Gospel which that blessed Book declares. There is great reason to be thankful, and we are encouraged, but we must not relax our efforts. We are not to rest and be thankful. The very successes of the past beckon us onwards; multiplied facilities, open doors, and a waiting world impose upon us the gravest responsibility, and urge us to renewed effort.

Bishop Crowther, in seconding the resolution, said: My lord, ladies and gentlemen,—I am requested to second the resolution. It is with the greatest pleasure and gratitude to the Bible Society that I stand here to acknowledge the benefits which we in Africa have derived from this Society. Before I embarked for England, the request that I received from those who were engaged in completing the translation of the Scriptures into the Yoruba language was to ask the Bible Society to take into consideration the best mode of binding the whole of the Scriptures in the Yoruba translation into one volume, so that it can be portable, and the people may conveniently carry it with them wherever they go. That, however, was merely a secondary object. &c., &c.

The Rev. Canon WILKINSON moved, and the Rev. Dr. STODGTON seconded the resolution of thanks to the Chairman, who responded in his usual earnest tone and the meeting was closed with the benediction pronounced by the Rev. Mr. Bergue.

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APRIL.	On Purchase Account.	FREE CONTRIBUTIONS.		
		U. C. B. S.	B. & F. B. S.	Sundry.
	\$ cts.	\$ cts.	\$ cts.	\$ cts.
Campbell's Cross Branch	14 52			
Avening do		14 35		
Nassagaweya do	4 50	22 50	22 50	
Cumminsville do		3 75	3 75	(1) 2 50
Seaforth do		60 00	25 90	
Port Colborne do		10 00	10 00	
Waverley do	3 73			
Newcastle do	18 46	44 13		
Grimsbey do		19 00		
Newmarket do	75 09			
Tilsonburg do	30 00	49 00		
Oshawa do		100 00		
Keswick & Medina do	4 97	15 00	4 33	
Belgrave do	8 28	28 16		
Markham do	22 18	40 00		
Holland Landing do	4 80	3 66		
Ashfield do		3 00		
Mt. Pleasant (Cavan) Branch	9 64	39 61		
Yorkville do		93 25		
Durham do	0 60			
Claremont do		60 00		
Derry West do		8 87	8 88	
Eden Mills do		10 00		
Columbus do	18 92	25 00	25 00	
Kirkfield do		10 00		
Janetville do	9 40	26 05		
Garafraxa do		16 67	16 67	(2) 16 66
North Doura do	45 20	50 00		
Downsview do		21 62	21 63	
MAY.				
East Puslinch Branch		32 00	32 00	
Penetanguishene do		11 00		
Niagara do		45 00		
Bolton do			35 00	
Dunnville do		25 00	15 00	
Fenelon Falls do	4 60			
Orillia do	50 00			
Londeshoro' do	20 00	32 50		
Kinlough do		4 00		
JUNE.				
Richmond Hill Branch		40 09	50 00	
Port Robinson do		9 35		
Wellandport do		9 28		
Owen Sound do			37 65	
Little Britain do		19 87		

(1) On Recorder Account.

(2) Free to Quebec Auxiliary.

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