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ADDRESS OF THE REV. B. M. PALMER, D.D., OF NEW ORLEANS,  
AT THE SIXTY-FOURTH ANNIVERSARY OF THE  
AMERICAN BIBLE SOCIETY.

The following is scarcely more than an outline of Dr. Palmer's very impressive address, but it is all we have been able to secure, and it will serve to indicate his line of thought :

Mr. Chairman—The Bible differs from all other books because its authorship is divine. It is true, the different parts which make up that grand collection were written by human pens, and the truth contained in them was strained through human minds, but the holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy Ghost, by the divine inspiration, which, like all other inspirations of the Holy Spirit, we do not undertake to explain. But the Lord God Almighty is the responsible Author of the Book, and therefore it is that God's Word occupies the same plain with all other of God's works ; it stands upon precisely the same elevation with the work of creation ; nay, I may even say, without being charged with extravagance, that it is the culmination of them and the crowning glory of them. For where is the key which interprets to us all of God's providences through all these ages past ? How comes it to pass that we have all history concurring with the testimony of this book ? By it we know why Egypt arose and Babylon perished. Sir, all through the Old Testament the prophet stands side by side with the historian, and I contend on this platform to-day that we have in it the interpretation of history through all time. And if the prophet stood by the historian we should know why it was that God scattered a chosen seed over this vast western continent and built up a great and mighty people.

Now, it ought not to surprise us, on the other hand, that Providence should concern itself with the preservation of these marvellous records ; and so I am brought to a point of this address which I shall touch rather briefly—the wonderful manner in which the prophets could see all the tracks of human history in accord with this book. The subject is a vast one, and one that I can only pass around the borders or confines of, in one short illustra-

tion. It is an old thought to students, although it may be comparatively new here, that God raised at two different epochs two distinct peoples, and created two distinct languages, for the distinct purpose of confirming this record. I will not enter into the history of these, but, sir, is it not remarkable that the Hebrew language has for the meaning of every letter and word in it a material object. That language was never allowed to be perfected. And it so stands now that in the study of it you feel that you are walking through a gallery, and as you walk through the corridors you see those pictures. It is a strange fact, that the Hebrew language progressed in its development until the completion of the Old Testament, and from that time it became a dead language, and these records were petrified in a language of stone that can never be changed.

But, sir, the fulness of the time came when He who had been the promise of the world through the prophets of old, came. And then was wanted a language of the utmost delicacy of expression, and then was created the language which will be held up through generations to be born until the consummation of time, as the most beautiful of all languages—the Greek language. But after recording the words of our blessed Saviour in the New Testament, how soon did the Greek language become a dead letter! How well has the Almighty preserved His word in these two magnificent urns! How marvellous this book with its great truths and the simplicity of its language!

Sir, when we read the history of the dark ages, and see how this book has been preserved in all its beauty, until now it is packed into almost all the books on earth, how can we doubt that it is divinely inspired. I tell you, you might burn up and destroy all the Bibles in the world, and it could be replaced from the books and works of man. To destroy the Bible you would have to destroy all the books on earth.

But we are living in a day of scientific research. I thank God for the science that enables men to go down into the bowels of the earth and see mysteries of the hidden world. But there are schools of scientists in the present day that scout at this blessed word—a school which undertakes to show that everything is nature—a false science that undertakes to say that there is no reliable historical record of the supernatural things said to have been done in this book. Well sir, what a wonder it is that alongside of these blind iconoclasts there has arisen a great spirit of archaeological research. Men are discovering the hidden mysteries of the obelisks and temples in Egypt, and excavating around Nineveh and Babylon, interpreting these ancient records, and their discoveries are adding continually to the history of this book, supplying links here and there, and throwing light everywhere. And all these archaeological discoveries God reserved for this day of blasphemy. He has dug up this testimony, hidden under the earth for these hundreds of centuries, and every particle of that testimony goes to the confirmation of that book. Now I wish to speak of this great Biblical institute, the Sunday-school where children of one hundred years ago sit with their grandchildren in infancy. All sit together and drink the sparkling truths of this Biblical fountain.

Sir, God's providence takes care of this book. The Bible is the secondary incarnation of our blessed Lord and Saviour. Through all the chapters, through all the verses, through all the lines, through all the letters which make up this sacred book, Jesus is in it. It is *the* book; there is no other book in the world but this. It is the supreme book. This book reigns over other books as God reigns over the universe. This book reigns over human thought and feeling. It is a book which, though you may hide it in your pocket, embraces the whole world. There is a halo surrounding this book which, we are told in the last portion of it, is the rainbow which surrounded the throne of God, in sight like unto an emerald.

Sir, I have only to add as I close, that my heart thrilled with exceeding joy as Dr. Hunt was telling, a few moments since, of the different means of

circulating the light of this word, and what had been done; and as all this was being told the thought came on me that this was God's own Book—not Paul's, nor Job's, nor Peter's, nor James's, nor Isaiah's, nor Jeremiah's, nor Moses's, but God's Book, written with His fingers, giving light with His eternal mind, and filled with His everlasting love. Let us continue in the great work of scattering this word in all corners of the globe, and thank God that He has redeemed us with His own precious blood, and made us kings and priests in His temple, and as God's true sons do the work of our Father in heaven.

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## Bible Society Recorder.

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TORONTO, 1ST OCTOBER, 1880.

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### BOARD MEETINGS.

The regular Monthly Meeting of the Board of Directors was held on Tuesday, August 17th, at 7.30 p.m., the Hon. William McMaster in the chair. The meeting was opened with the usual devotional exercises led by the Senior Secretary, who, after routine business had been attended to called the attention of the Board to a special notice of the Parent Society, in reference to Bibles stamped in commemoration of the Sunday School Centenary. The Secretaries were instructed to issue a circular stating what our Society is ready to do in the matter, and also calling attention to the "Gleanings for the Young." Several applications were considered and grants made, one of them being fifty Ojibway Testaments and fifty English Bibles to the Parry Sound Branch for the Indians attending a camp meeting in that neighbourhood. After some other business the meeting was closed with prayer, led by the Rev. J. P. Lewis.

The Board met again on Tuesday, September 21st, the Hon. W. McMaster in the chair. Scripture was read by the Rev. J. M. Cameron, and prayer led by the Rev. Dr. Potts. A report from the Agency and Colportage Committee was presented, recommending that certain proposals from the Emerson Board should be adopted, and that Mr. A. McPherson should be appointed Agent for the Society in Southern Manitoba. This report was adopted. A letter was read from Mr. Ansley, Secretary of the Parry Sound Branch, thanking the Board for the grant made, and giving an interesting and encouraging account of the distribution. Other letters of thanks and applications were read and considered, and grants made, one of them to Mr. Rowe, for the Indians at Garden River. There was some discussion as to the destitution of Scriptures in North Hastings, and the Colportage Committee were instructed to give special attention to the needs of that part of the field. The Depository's Cash Account, the Permanent Agent's Report,

the Colporteurs' Reports, &c., &c., were submitted, and the meeting was closed with prayer, led by the Rev. J. M. King.

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### DEATH OF THE REV. N. B. BERGNE.

In our March number we announced the retirement of the Rev. Mr. Bergne from the Secretariat of the Parent Society, hoping however, that the Committee would yet for some years enjoy the benefit of his long experience and wise counsel. But we regret to say we have now to record his death, which took place on the 19th of July, in the 75th year of his age. Mr. Bergne was minister of the Poultry Chapel, London, when, in 1853, he was invited to become Secretary in place of the Rev. George Browne, who had in turn succeeded the Rev. Joseph Hughes, one of the original secretaries of the Society. As we said in March, the correspondence with this Society was chiefly through Mr. Bergne, and probably no one at the Bible House in London understood so much of our operations and methods. We shall therefore for a long time miss his kind and gentle letters, which constantly exemplified the truth of the minute adopted by the Committee of the Parent Society on the occasion of his death, part of which reads as follows: "In a Society where those who love the Bible join with one accord to deliver its inspired message to all mankind, he represented in a rare degree that moderation and charity which alone make such cooperation possible. The work set before the Society, was, in his view, so unspeakably grand and needful that he mourned whenever a disposition was shown to lift secondary matters out of their proper place, or to narrow the foundation on which, under the Divine blessing, so vast a superstructure had been reared."

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### EXTRACTS FROM THE LAST REPORT OF THE BRITISH AND FOREIGN BIBLE SOCIETY.

#### TURKEY.

It might have been expected that in this Empire, so smitten, so shaken, so devastated, so nationally hopeless, the report of your Agent would tell of lessened labours, smaller issues, shrivelled results. On the contrary, Dr. Thomson's report is amongst those where the issues are in excess of the number preached in the previous year; and the work of the colporteurs, performed amidst unusual perils, has been marked, not in one place but in many places, not in one language but in many languages, by features of far more than average encouragement.

Part of this improvement in the present and better hope for the future is no doubt due to the changes brought about by the late war. The two strongest enemies with which our work in the Turkish Empire has to contend are the fanaticism of the Mahommedan rulers and the hostility of the Greek

Church, especially in Greece itself. But since the war a large area of the Turkish Empire has ceased to be under the direct rule of the Porte, and has passed permanently from the Crescent to the Cross. And then as to the Greek Church, especially in the Greek kingdom, though it has not repented of its hostility to the circulation of the Vernacular Greek Scriptures, it has consented to permit the use of the New Testament in the sacred language itself in all the schools of the land; and if the prosperous and educated Greeks at home and abroad would exert their influence, your Agent thinks it would go far to wipe away from Christian Greeks the reproach which cannot be laid to the charge even of the Turks, that they deny to their own children the sacred book of their religion in the speech understood of the people.

Dr. Thomson's description of the conditions amidst which the work was carried on includes a terrible variety of evils; Bulgarians flying from Turks, Turks flying from Bulgarians, agriculture suspended, commerce paralysed, taxation grinding, money scarce, coinage debased, brigands numerous and daring, and famine and pestilence just held at bay by the money and the energy and the Christian devotion of the country, which sends forth the Scriptures.

CONSTANTINOPLE.—The journals of the colporteurs offer many illustrations of the character of colportage in this district. Sevastides entered a Greek school at Therapia to show his books, and was received by the teacher with a blow on the face, while a priest stood by and tauntingly desired him to turn the other cheek. On another occasion he was handed over to the police for having sold a Greek Bible to a baker who had denounced the book as seditious. On examination he was acquitted. Plesanter experiences than these with Greeks are two interviews with Turks. Having sold four Gospels to educated men in the court of a mosque, they asked him, "Why do you sell these books so cheap?" "For the same reason," says he "as Moslems erect fountains; we believe it is for the glory of God and the good of our fellow men." Visiting the Island of Prinkipo, near Constantinople, he waited on the Governor and showed his books. After a little conversation the latter asked him, "What is the meaning of this gigantic attack upon the religion of your neighbours?" Sevastides replied, "The Lord's own command, Go ye therefore and teach all nations," and added in the language of St. Paul, "I am debtor to the Greeks and to the Barbarians, both to the wise and the unwise," and finding the Governor willing to listen, he continued to read the whole of the chapter.

ROUMELIA, &c.—In this district the colporteur, Mr. Jacob Klundt, has met with cheering success. He has had trials and troubles, but comfort and deliverances too. Family affliction in the loss of a child, personal affliction in the shape of arrest by the Turks, and an unusual amount of perils of robbers and murderers were the lot of this good man. He traversed his district three times in the course of the year. He found in many places a great desire for Slavonic Scriptures for use in schools, and as a rule the teachers of the schools were friendly to his work. His happiest hours were spent with the Bulgarians scattered amongst their southern neighbours. Of these he speaks with much hopefulness, and he found them alive to the benefits which the Bible Society had conferred upon them. The teacher in Jeeb said: "Our people have no idea of the immense blessing conferred on them by the Bible Society. How many have been stirred up to a taste for reading and improving their time by the purchase of a cheap book." In P—— a municipal officer said, "I don't know how to express our thanks to the Bible Society. If I should use a figure, I should say, were we as tall as to reach the clouds, we should bow ourselves to the earth, and kiss the feet of those who bring us the Word of God." And once more a plain man, also in P——, said, "Thousand thanks to those who bring us the sweet Word of God in our mother-tongue that we can read and understand it, and so cheap that we can buy it."

ALBANIA.—After an interval of twelve years your Agent re-visited this part of his field during the summer. Joannina had risen from the ashes of the great fire an European city. Here he found education advancing and widening, here also the upward movement was shared to the full by the Jew. Dr. Thomson speaks of the Jewish school-rooms as “crowded.” He had more intercourse with them than with any others, “scarcely a day passing without some one coming to pay a friendly visit or to propose a hard question.” Colportage had been uninterrupted, although the men had been changed. Pilo laboured during the first half-year, Sevastides during the last. A third colporteur had been tried and found wanting. Both Pilo and Sevastides are men of most valuable qualities, admirably adapted for their work. At Berat Pilo maintained with success a friendly argument with the Greek Archbishop, who attempted to prove from the case of Philip and the Eunuch that the Bible alone was insufficient. It is interesting to find a Greek prelate now urging the same objection that an English prelate thought so strong in the Bible Society’s early days; but it is a proof either of the strength of the colporteur or the weakness of the argument that he did in a single sentence what it once was thought to need a whole pamphlet to set out, viz., that the reading of the Scriptures predisposes men to receive the teaching of the Church when that teaching provides the true answers to the anxiety which leads men now, as it led them of old, to search the Scriptures.

The sales of Sevastides, although only half of those of Pilo, are a more correct index of the general condition of Albania, for they were effected, not in large numbers in large towns like Joannina, but piecemeal all over the district.

His impression was that the people were living in the deepest spiritual ignorance, blind followers of the blind.

### IONIA AND THE ISLANDS.

Colporteur Darom, whose good work during ten years has proved him to be a very valuable man, left the Society’s service, with Dr. Thomson’s regretful acquiescence, to become an evangelist under Mr. Spence, where no doubt he will still prove himself a good and useful man. His place has been taken by Moschobakes, who had held office under Government in the Isle of Patmos, and who had come to know the truth by the help of another of your colporteurs, Misaelides. The reports of these colporteurs abound with refreshing details. The following instance of the interest felt by a Greek woman in Chios in the Bible is noticeable, and Darom’s remark, as he finishes the story, throws a sad light upon it:—

Darom relates that as he was offering his books in the village of Matens, in Chios, a woman requested to see them, and asked what they were. “They are the Word of God,” said Darom, “and show us how we may enter His kingdom,” putting, as he spoke, a Bible into her hands. The woman sat down on a stone, and read with great interest for about a quarter of an hour. “Oh,” said she, “what a delightful book! I have read three chapters, and wish greatly to purchase it; but I! I’ve not the money.” With these words she went off for a while, but soon returned with the price, which she had borrowed from a neighbour. Her husband, she said, could not read; but she hoped that on hearing her read the book, he would be willing to repay the money she had borrowed. Darom adds that this was the first and only instance in which he found a Greek female interested in the Word of God.

The colporteur Klonares, who has laboured in Crete during three-quarters of the year, has met with very encouraging success. His first step was bold and judicious. On arriving at Canea, the capital, he took copies of the newly-translated Turkish version, and exhibited them to the presidents of the various tribunals. This step, improved upon by his wise use of the op-

portunity and his adroit answers to objections, resulted in the sale of his entire stock, and opened the way for the circulation of a fresh consignment. Your Agent considers this a result of high value. One such interview may be usefully reproduced :—

Klonares brought out both Greek and Turkish editions of various kinds, told the councillors that the Turkish were in a new and beautiful translation, and earnestly commended them as the Word of God. "I don't like these books," said the Mufti, "they don't speak good words." "True, your reverence," said Klonares, "they don't speak smooth words to the wicked, but denounce the wrath of God against all falsehood and injustice, whether in common or in holy things. Hence the wicked hate them, and will neither buy nor let others buy them. But whoever wishes to do the will of God will love t' Word of God." The members stared at him for making this bold speech, but the Mufti, without further remark, bought a Bible, and soon every member of the council had followed his example, by purchasing either Greek or Turkish editions.

### INDIA.

There are signs of steady and hopeful progress discernible by those who follow with intelligent sympathy the labours of God's servants in India and the results of Christian government there.

It is a matter for much thankfulness to find that in every Presidency there are signs of progress. But more, much more, might be done, especially in Northern and Western India.

LAHORE.—This province is the frontier province, touching Baluchistan and Afghanistan. Enterprising journeys have been made into both countries, and in some degree a lodgment effected of the Word of God. The Revs. T. P. Hughes and W. Jukes are engaged in translating the Pentateuch into Pushtu. The Rev. A. Lewis, during a recent tour, sold sixty-three portions amongst the Baluchis, but these were in Urdu.

Mr. E. Meyers, of Amritsar, gives two interesting cases of inquiry after truth prompted by the reading of the New Testament.

The first was that of a daughter-in-law of the late Mahant (religious teacher) belonging to the village of C—. She got possessed of a copy of the New Testament in Gurumukhi, probably given to her by the Rev. W. Keene some two years ago; she had read the book so often that she was able to quote some ten or twelve chapters of St. John's Gospel by heart. I had a conversation with her secretly; she appears to me to have a firm belief in Christ. She earnestly besought me to remove her from the village and take her to Amritsar to be placed under the tuition of the lady missionaries there; I have tried my best to do so, but have not so far succeeded.

The other case was that of a very respectable artisan in Amritsar; he also bought a copy of the New Testament in Gurumukhi some three years ago, and has read it so often that he has thoroughly convinced himself that there is no name under heaven given among men whereby men must be saved, but the name of Jesus Christ, God's only begotten Son. He came to me a few days ago asking for baptism, but said he could not eat with the Christians, for he does not wish to be separated from his family, who are Hindus.

The following is from the *Monthly Reporter* for September :—

The Rev. F. A. P. Shirreff, Secretary of the Punjab Auxiliary, writes from Lahore on July 7 :—

"The Persian Scriptures (*i. e.* Psalms and three Gospels) are now ready, or all but ready, and I trust a good many will yet be circulated in Afghanistan before our troops leave the country. We have voted a free grant of 1,000 Portions to the Rev. G. M. Gordon,\* who is now at Kandahar. Some

\* We regret that Mr. Gordon has since been killed during one of the recent sorties from Kandahar.

of these have already been sent to him, and the remainder will follow. An earnest Christian officer is also diligently giving away copies of the Scriptures as fast as he can get them from us."

**BOMBAY.**—The report for Bombay is the most recent which has reached the society. It speaks of "progress" and "enlargement," and the work of the year compels the conviction that "signs of coming day are abundant."

The following selections from the reports of the colporteurs will be recognized by all who are familiar with Indian subjects as true to the life:—

Met an old Brahmin of my acquaintance. He says he has no faith in Hinduism and is tired of the Hindu gods and customs; but he has no moral courage to become a Christian, and is afraid of his caste and relatives.

A Maratha coolly said, "My soul is worried by these gods and devils of the Hindus, and I wish very much to trust in the only God whom you worship. I often hear you preaching in the streets, and I was about to become a Christian in Poona; but my brother prevented me. He told the missionary he would kill himself if I were to join the Christians."

A Brahmin—"I was in Dr. Wilson's school. I do not believe in Hinduism, and I don't believe in Christianity, but I believe in one God. Jesus Christ was a sinful man," I asked him to show it in the Bible. He said, "I don't remember the place now." I said it is nowhere in the Bible. I told him to read the Bible.

**MADRAS.**—The Madras Presidency takes the lead of all the rest of India in Bible work. With an active agent, a native superintendent of colporteur, and a staff of forty of these labourers, the organization is very complete.

Moreover, the versions in use in this Presidency open the door of truth to dense populations. The Tamil version speaks to 14,000,000 of people; the Telugu to 15,000,000; the Canarese to 9,000,000; the Malayalam to nearly 4,000,000. These four languages almost cover the entire field.

The Rev. H. Goffin writes from Vizianagram: "I am sure that the spreading abroad of God's Word is producing fruit. I am frequently hearing of and seeing men, generally young men, who readily acknowledge that the Christian religion is the only true religion, and Jesus only is the true Saviour; and when I ask them how they have attained this knowledge, they say that they have been reading some 'portion' or other of our Scriptures." Mr. Goffin also refers to the case of a young man who was led to seek for baptism in consequence of reading the New Testament. Solomon Ewing, of Vizagapatam, under date August 20, reports: "This day the butler of the Major of the — Regiment, with his wife, was baptized by the Rev. P. Jagannadham. He was by profession an exorcist. For the last three years he has been receiving books and instruction from me." This agent also mentions the following case: "A certain pensioned sepoy declared that the Hindu gods are vain, and could not grant salvation, and that he believed the Lord Jesus Christ to be the true Saviour, to whom he was praying. This man has also purchased a Testament."

The following brings out plainly the improvement which has taken place in the condition of part of the Syrian Church already referred to. It is the allocation of a Syrian Bishop:—

"Peace and prosperity to all our Syro-Chaldaic children in Malabar through the grace of our Lord Jesus Messiah.

"Beloved children! We are sorry to see a great want among you of the true Gospel which is the light of the heart. It will make us happy if you will read the Bible printed and published by the Bible Society, and walk according to its precepts. This is the only book which removes mental darkness and reveals the will of our heavenly Father. This holy book is a lamp unto our feet and a light unto our path. Children! I wish you to receive Colporteur Kurian, who brings you the bread of Life."



"*Elanothotha*.—The people belong to the party of Bishop Mellus. They have built a new church, and the deacons are taught by a godly priest or Catanar. I told him that I had a circular from Bishop Mellus to show to all his priests and people, recommending them to buy the Word of God. He took the document from me and called the people about the place and told them: 'Veerapoly party object to the reading of God's Word, but our good Bishop Mellus permits us to read the Bible and to buy it from this Colporteur Kurian. I will read you the circular granted to the Colporteur.' Then he read the allocution given above."

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### EAST AFRICA.

The importance of pushing on the translation of the Scriptures into the Suaheli language becomes every day more and more manifest. "A highway shall be there, and a way," is a statement of Holy Writ to which circumstances have given a singular interpretation. Romish missions largely equipped, strong in numbers, are found pushing to the very heart of Africa, and disputing with Protestant missions for the possession of the field. Contrast, if not conflict, there must needs be. The Bible reveals the way—the King's highway—to truth and life, and any other "way," by whomsoever recommended, than the one way, and the one name provided for man in Christ Jesus, must stand condemned by all who "understand the Scriptures." It is a sorrowful thing to think of the perplexities into which the tribes of Central Africa must be thrown by this competition of Romish and Christian missions; but, if the Scriptures can be provided and the people instructed to read them, there will be an ultimate appeal. "My sheep hear my voice and they follow me," is a word full of comfort as the immediate future of the Suaheli-speaking people is thought of.

Bishop Steere, in writing to the Society accepting the office of vice-president, says: "I feel here that our work must be all unsound without a vernacular Bible."

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### WEST AFRICA.

The receipt in a single year of £200 as a free contribution from Western Africa, demands a note of thankful praise. Sierra Leone sends £130, and Lagos £70. Few contributions come to the Society richer in blessing than these. Nor are these the only offerings which these African brethren have made on the altar of gratitude to God. They have given largely to the support of their own ministers, to the maintenance of their own fabrics, and to the various funds for spreading the Gospel to the regions beyond themselves. They were slaves, but the Lord Christ has made them free, in His providence and by His grace. They are "free indeed." "Liberal" and "devising liberal things they shall stand." These are the only places on the West coast from which the Society has received contributions this year.

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### SOUTH AFRICA.

The report from South Africa is of an exceedingly cheering character. Annual meetings were well attended. Branches were bearing fruit. Contributions were increasing. When these things come to pass, work has been well and prayerfully done, it may be for a long time before. The Rev. Dr. Hole has forwarded an account of the year's work which it is a great pleasure to read.

His Excellency Sir Bartle Frere took the chair at the annual meeting held in Cape Town, on November 28, and the leading ministers of the neighbourhood were present.

The special circumstances through which the colony had passed were thus referred to in words of much faith and wisdom by Dr. Hole at the annual meeting :—

In conclusion your Committee desire to remark upon a very cheering feature of the past year's transactions. Looking at the season of trial through which the colony has passed in the two previous years, they confess that it would have been a matter of no surprise to them if this year the funds contributed by the Branches had diminished in amount. They rejoice to say that the contrary is the case. The instances in which there is a slight falling off are quite exceptional, while, as a whole, the contributions of the Branches have been larger than usual. They regard this circumstance as one of happy augury for the future of this land. We here represent, and own for ancestors, two nations—the Dutch and the British—who occupy a unique position in the world's history, having acquired a standing among nations, and exercised an influence in the world altogether out of proportion to their numbers. Doubtless God gave them personal characteristics which have been largely subsidiary in producing these results; but this meeting will, without question, agree that the secret of their greatness is to be found in the fact that they stand alone—and shoulder to shoulder—among the civilized nations in the sacrifices they have made for the truth of God and for the assertion of the rights of conscience; and, above all, but necessarily connected with these labours, are they characterised by respect of the Word of God and efforts for its universal circulation. And do not the encouraging features of the past year justify your Committee in indulging the hope that these characteristics are being perpetuated in this, our new country, so that as it grows in population, in power and experience, making its history for the inheritance of posterity, its advances will be made on the old lines of respect for, and acceptance of, the moral and spiritual supremacy of the Book of God? In this case your Committee dare to say that its future will be glorious. It will be a country united, prosperous, great, and free, for “Happy is that people that is in such a case; yea, happy is that people whose God is the Lord.”

## X. THE HISTORY OF THE ENGLISH BIBLE.

*(Continued from March Number.)*

### THE AUTHORIZED VERSION.

BY THE REV. W. F. MOULTON, M.A. LOND., D.D., EDIN., HEAD MASTER OF THE  
WESLEYAN HIGH SCHOOL, CAMBRIDGE.

When James I. succeeded to the throne in March, 1603, he found the southern part of his dominions in a state of great uneasiness and disquiet in consequence of the difference between the Puritan party and their opponents in the Church of England. One of the first events in his reign was the presentation of the celebrated “Millenary Petition,” subscribed by some hundreds of Puritans, praying for alterations in the Church service, and for greater strictness of ecclesiastical discipline. The king, by no means unwilling to play the part of moderator, resolved to convoke an assembly in which the discordant opinions of the rival parties might be stated, and be submitted to free discussion. Thus originated the famous Hampton Court Conference,

held on the 14th, 15th, and 16th of January, 1604. We are not here concerned with the petitions and arguments which mainly occupied the hours of debate; our present interest is in a question which was a 'together subordinate at the time, but which the event proved to be the most important and the most fruitful of all the questions raised. At this conference the Puritans were represented by Dr. Reynolds, President of Corpus Christi College, Oxford, Dr. Sparke, Mr. Knewstubs, and Mr. Chaderton; the opposite party by Whitgift, Archbishop of Canterbury, Bancroft, Bishop of London, seven other bishops, and five deans. An account of the sum and substance of the conference, written by Dr. Barlow, Dean of Chester, is our chief authority for the proceedings of this assembly.

In the course of the second day, Dr. Reynolds "moved his Majesty that there might be a new translation of the Bible, because those which were allowed in the reign of King Henry VIII, and Edward VI. were corrupt, and not answerable to the truth of the original. For example, first, Gal. iv. 25, the Greek word *συτροιχει* is not well translated, as now it is; *bordereth* neither expressing the force of the word, nor the apostle's sense, nor the situation of the place. Secondly, Ps. cv. 28, 'They were not obedient,' the original being, 'They were not disobedient.' Thirdly, Ps. cvi. 30, 'Then stood up Phinees and prayed;' the Hebrew hath 'executed judgment.' To which motion there was, at the present, no gainsaying, the objections being trivial and old, and already in print, often answered; only my lord of London well added, that if every man's humour should be followed, there would be no end of translating. Whereupon his Highness wished that some special pains should be taken in that behalf for one uniform translation (professing that he could never yet see a Bible well translated into English, but the worst of all his Majesty thought the Geneva to be), and this to be done by the best learned in both the universities; after them to be reviewed by the bishops and the chief learned of the church; from them to be presented to the privy council; and lastly to be ratified by his royal authority. And so this whole church to be bound unto it and none other. Marry, withal, he gave this caveat (upon a word cast out by my lord of London), that no marginal notes should be added, having found in them which are annexed to the Geneva translation (which he saw in a book given him by an English lady) some notes very partial, untrue, seditious, and savouring too much of dangerous and traitorous conceits. As, for example, the first chapter of Exodus, and the nineteenth verse, where the marginal note alloweth disobedience unto kings; and 2 Chron. xv. 16, the note taxeth Asa for deposing his mother only, and not killing her."

It is not necessary to defend the Genevan Bible against the royal critic. On the real excellence of the translation enough has been said already, and the two notes quoted as dangerous do not need any apology. The narrative well illustrates the conflicting views of two parties, for the quotations given by Dr. Reynolds are from the Great Bible and the Bishops' Bible, and in each case the rendering is corrected in the Genevan version. On the one side, therefore, the Genevan Bible is the standard by which the translations are tried; on the other, the faults and the dangerous teaching of this same version are taken as the ground for a new translation. It is not improbable that the scheme would have fallen to the ground had it not harmonized so completely with the king's turn of mind and favourite pursuits. When Convocation met, shortly after the conference, not a word appears to have been said on the subject. A letter from the king to Bancroft, dated July 22nd, 1604, gives us our earliest information, but by this time the plans for the execution of the work seem to have been completely arranged. The king announces that he has chosen (chiefly, we may suppose, on the nomination of the universities) fifty-four translators to meet in various companies at Westminster, Oxford and Cambridge, under the presidency of the Dean of Westminster and the two Hebrew Professors. Bancroft is required to take steps, in conjunction with the other bishops, for providing the translators

with church preferment in recompense for their labours, and also for procuring from learned men throughout the kingdom criticisms on the earlier translations, and suggestions on difficult passages. Other letters like this bear testimony to the king's earnestness in the prosecution of the work. It is therefore not a little surprising to find that three years passed away before the companies entered on their labours. The difficulty in providing funds to meet necessary expenses, the death of Lively, the Hebrew Professor at Cambridge, and probably of others who had been selected as translators, were, no doubt, amongst the obstacles which retarded the work.

The letter in which the king refers to the fifty-four translators contains no list of names, and no information from other sources enables us to ascertain with exactness on whom the choice had fallen. The lists we possess specify no more than forty-seven. Whether the discrepancy arises from the changes in the composition of the companies which took place (through death or other causes) between 1604 and the completion of the work in 1611, or whether the list of fifty-four included bishops or other scholars, intrusted, not with translation, but with the revision of the work of the six companies, it is impossible to say.

The following statement shows how the work was divided, and gives the names of the chief persons connected with each portion:—(1) Genesis—2 Kings : Bishop Andrews, Dean Overall, Dr. Saravia (the friend of Hooker), Bedwell, the best Arabic scholar of his time, and six others. (2) 2 Chronicles—Ecclesiastes : Lively, Professor of Hebrew at Cambridge, Dr. Chaderton, who had taken a prominent part in the Hampton Court Conference, and seven others. (3) Isaiah—Malachi : Dr. Reynolds, President of Corpus Christi College, the leading representative of the Puritans at the Conference, Dr. Miles Smith, afterwards Bishop of Gloucester, and five others. (4) The Apocrypha : A. Downes, Professor of Greek at Cambridge, and six others. (5) The Gospels, Acts, and Revelation : Dr. Abbot, afterwards Archbishop of Canterbury, Mr. Saville (afterwards Sir Henry), the editor of Chrysostom, and six or seven others. (6) The Epistles. Dr. Barlow, afterwards Bishop of Lincoln, and six others of comparatively little fame.

The duties of the revisers, and the plan of the new work, were defined in the following body of instructions supplied to each company:—

“1. The ordinary Bible read in the Church, commonly called the Bishops' Bible, to be followed, and as little altered as the truth of the original will admit.

“2. The names of the prophets and the holy writers, with the other names of the text, to be retained as nigh as may be, accordingly as they were vulgarly used.

“3. The old ecclesiastical words to be kept, viz, the word *church* not to be translated *congregation*, &c.

“4. When a word hath divers significations, that to be kept which hath been most commonly used by the most of the ancient fathers, being agreeable to the propriety of the place and the analogy of the faith.

“5. The division of the chapters to be altered either not at all, or as little as may be, if necessity so require.

“6. No marginal notes at all to be affixed, but only for the explanation of the Hebrew and Greek words which cannot, without some circumlocution, so briefly and fitly be expressed in the text.

“7. Such quotations of places to be marginally set down as shall serve for the fit reference of one Scripture to another.

“8. Every particular man of each company to take the same chapter or chapters; and having translated or amended them severally by himself where he thinketh good, all to meet together, confer what they have done, and agree for their parts what shall stand.

“9. As any one company hath dispatched any one book in this manner, they shall send it to the rest to be considered of seriously and judiciously, for his Majesty is very careful on this point.

"10. If any company, upon the review of the book so sent, doubt or differ upon any place, to send them word thereof, note the place, and withal send the reasons; to which if they consent not, the difference to be compounded at the general meeting, which is to be of the chief persons of each company at the end of the work.

"11. When any place of special obscurity is doubted of, letters to be directed by authority to send to any learned man in the land for his judgment of such a place.

"12. Letters to be sent from every bishop to the rest of his clergy, admonishing them of this translation in hand, and to move and charge as many as being skilful in the tongues, and having taken pains in that kind, to send his particular observations to the company either at Westminster, Cambridge, or Oxford.

"13. The directors in each company to be the Deans of Westminster and Chester for that place, and the king's professors in the Hebrew and Greek in either university.

"14. These translations to be used when they agree better with the text than the Bishop's Bible; Tindale's, Matthew's, Coverdale's, Whitchurch's, Geneva.

"15. Besides the said directors before mentioned, three or four of the most ancient and grave divines in either of the universities, not employed in translating, to be assigned by the Vice-Chancellor upon conference with the rest of the Heads to be overseers of the translations, as well Hebrew as Greek, for the better observation of the fourth rule above specified."

When each company had completed the allotted task, the several parts were collected for revision. The ninth rule prescribed that every book should be submitted to the judgment of all the companies; but, even had it been possible to carry such a rule into effect, yet much would afterwards remain to be done in the way of arrangement and the harmonizing of details. Six of the translators—twelve, according to another account—one (or two) out of each company, met together at the close to review the work. Boys and Downs, of the Cambridge company, "were sent for up to London, where, meeting their four fellow-labourers, they went daily to Stationers' Hall, and in three-quarters of a year fulfilled their task."

In 1611, seven years after the Hampton Court Conference, the new translation was given to the world. The title-page of the volume (a folio printed in black-letter by R. Barker), contains the statements with which we are all familiar. What we are to understand by the notice that the version is "appointed to be read in churches," it is hard to say. "No evidence has yet been produced to show that the version was ever publicly sanctioned by Convocation or by Parliament, or by the Privy Council, or by the king. It gained its currency, partly, it may have been, by the weight of the king's name, partly by the personal authority of the prelates and scholars who had been engaged upon it, but still more by its own intrinsic superiority over its rivals. Copies of the 'whole Bible of the largest volume and latest edition' are required to be in churches by the Visitation Articles of Laud, 1622 (St. David's), 1628 (London). In the Scotch Canons of 1636, it is said still more distinctly that 'the Bible shall be of the translation of King James' (cap. 16, § 1). . . . The printing of the Bishops' Bible was at once stayed when the new version was definitely undertaken. No edition is given in the lists later than 1606, though the New Testament from it was reprinted as late as 1618 (or 1619). So far ecclesiastical influence naturally reached. But it was otherwise with the Genevan Version, which was chiefly confined to private use. This competed with the King's Bible for many years, and it was not till about the middle of the century that it was finally displaced."\*

Though the Bishops' Bible nominally furnished the basis for the new translation, it is clear that the Genevan exercised a much more powerful influence.

\*Westcott, *History of English Bible*, p. 123.

In the few places in which the Authorized Version differs from the Genevan, the change (which is but rarely suggested by any other version) is usually for the better, the new rendering being more literal or idiomatic, better in style or rhythm.

The translators show much tact and skill in selection, combination, and arrangement, but the number of words first introduced by them does not amount to four in a hundred. It is obvious that the Genevan and Rhemish versions have exercised much greater influence than the Great and Bishops' Bibles. The Rhemish Testament was not even named in the instructions furnished to the translators, but it has left its mark on every page of their work.

An inquiry into the exact relation in which the Authorized Version stands to earlier English translations, to the various foreign versions of Scripture, and to the chief critical authorities of the time, is of course impossible in these pages. For more detailed information the reader is referred to Professor Westcott's most valuable work,\* so often quoted already.

When all critical helps and sources of influence have been taken into account, the student whose analysis has been most complete will find most to admire in the work of our translators. The praise he will award will not be indiscriminate eulogy. He will discover that much that they have transmitted to us was inherited by them from others; the execution of different parts of the work will prove to be unequal—the Epistles, for example, standing far below the Pentateuch in accuracy and felicity of rendering; many flaws and inconsistencies will reveal themselves; occasionally it will be found that better renderings have been deliberately laid aside and worse preferred; but, notwithstanding, every successive paragraph will bear new testimony to the tact, care, diligence, and faithfulness of the men to whom, in God's providence, we owe the version of the Scriptures which has come down to us consecrated by the associations of 250 years.

If we compare one of our modern Bibles with a copy of the first edition, we find that the differences are by no means few or slight. There is a history of the text which it is very interesting to trace. In Dr. Schrievenner's Preface to the Cambridge Paragraph Bible, which embodies the results of many years of labour, the reader will find this history carefully and fully narrated.

The revision of 1611 was not at once received with general favour. Romanists complained (as Romanists still complain) of unfairness in the translators' treatment of controverted passages; and Puritans clung tenaciously to the translation and commentary furnished in the Genevan Bible. On the whole, however, the opposition seems to have been but faint; and though for half a century the rival versions circulated side by side, the latter steadily gained ground. It could not altogether escape the perils of those troublous times. In 1652 the long Parliament made an order that a Bill should be brought in for a new translation of the Bible, and four years later the House directed "that it be referred to a committee to send for and advise with Dr. Walton, Mr. Hughes, Mr. Castle, Mr. Clerk, Mr. Poulk,† Dr. Cudworth, and such as they should think fit, and to consider of the translations and impressions of the Bible, and to offer their opinions therein."‡ The care of this business was especially commended to Whitelocke, and at his house at Chelsea the committee often met, "and had the most learned men in the Oriental tongues to consult with on this great business; and divers excellent and learned observations of some mistakes in the translations of the Bible in English, which yet was agreed to be the best of any translation in the world" "I took pains in it," adds Whitelocke, "but it became fruitless by the Parliament's dissolution."

\* *History of the English Bible* (2nd edit.), pp. 267-280.

† *History* Samuel Clark and Matthew Poole. See Westcott, *History*, p. 124.

‡ Lewis, *History of Translations*, p. 354.

Shortly after the Restoration, the Book of Common Prayer once more underwent revision, and in 1662 was issued in its present form. The changes which were made at once declared and established the supremacy of the last translation of the Scriptures. As we have already seen, the Psalter of the Great Bible was left undisturbed, but in the Epistles and Gospels, and in all the longer portions of scripture which are read in the occasional services (as 1 Cor. xv. 20—58; Acts vi. 2—7; xx. 17—35, &c.), the version of 1611 was uniformly adopted.

In 1856 the subject of revision was brought by Professor Selwyn before the Lower House of Convocation of the Province of Canterbury, but his proposals met with little favour. The desirableness of the appointment of a Royal Commission was urged upon the House of Commons, but without effect. Meanwhile the general interest in Biblical studies was continually advancing. The merits of our translation, on the one hand and on the other the amount of improvement absolutely required, became more fully understood from year to year. Some specimens of a revised version by five clergymen (the present Bishops of Gloucester and Salisbury, the late Dean Alford, the Rev. W. G. Humphry, and Dr. Barrow), published about this time, showed that reverent regard for the Authorized Version might coexist with an earnest desire for its improvement, and helped to prepare the way for the remarkable change in public opinion which has recently taken place.

In February, 1870, both Houses of the Convocation of Canterbury unanimously passed a resolution to the following effect:—"That a Committee of both Houses be appointed, with power to confer with any Committee that may be appointed by the Convocation of the Northern Province, to report upon the desirableness of a revision of the Authorized Version of the Old and New Testaments, whether by marginal notes or otherwise, in all those passages where plain and clear errors, whether in the Hebrew or Greek text originally adopted by the translators, or in the translation made from the same, shall, on due investigation, be found to exist." The mover and seconder of the resolution in the Upper House (the late Bishop of Winchester and the Bishop of Gloucester and Bristol) had limited their proposal to the New Testament, but on the motion of the Bishop of Llandaff it was at once agreed to extend the inquiry so as to include the whole Bible. Eight members of the Upper and sixteen of the Lower House were appointed the Committee of the Convocation of Canterbury. The Northern Province declined to co-operate with the Southern in this inquiry, on the ground that the time was not favourable for revision, and that the risk was greater than the probable gain. Early in May the Committee presented a report recommending that a revision of the Authorized Version of the Holy Scriptures should be undertaken, on the principle of departing as little as possible from the general style and language of the existing version, and "that Convocation should nominate a body of its own members to undertake the work of revision, who shall be at liberty to invite the co-operation of any eminent for scholarship, to whatever nation or religious body they may belong." A Committee was accordingly appointed, consisting of eight members of each house, and the first meeting was held on the 25th of May. It was then resolved that two companies should be formed for the revision of the Authorized Version of the Old Testament and the New Testament respectively; that the company for the revision of the Authorized Version of the Old Testament should consist of the Bishops of St. David's, Llandaff, Ely, Lincoln, and Bath and Wells, Archdeacon Rose, Professor Selwyn, Canon Jebb, and Dr. Kay, together with eighteen scholars and divines, who should be invited to join in the work; and that the company for the revision of the Authorized Version of the New Testament should consist of the Bishops of Winchester, Gloucester and Bristol, and Salisbury, the Prolocutor, the Deans of Canterbury and Westminster, and Canon Blakesley, together with nineteen invited scholars and divines.

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