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ANNIVERSARY SERMON,

PREACHED BY THE REV. J. DENOVAN,

In Alexander Street Baptist Church, Toronto, on Sunday, May 4th, 1879.

"And I saw another angel fly in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting gospel to preach unto them that dwell on the earth, and to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people."—REV. XIV. 6.

In all holy scripture nowhere perhaps have we a more expressive and impressive illustration of what the Christian Church should be and do than this symbol affords—a mighty angel bearing God's message of mercy to all that dwell on the earth.

What should the Church of Christ be? *One mighty agent*, like this one angel. One! The Church, alas, is not one; the shame and weakness of the professed Church of the Lord Jesus are that it has been so divided and subdivided into sectional fragments as to present to the world the spectacle of elements in a state of mutual repulsion; it cannot be denied that in some leading doctrines and in many religious forms, to say nothing of names, the modern Church presents to the world such variety and diversity that no person can suppose Christ's earnest prayer in the seventeenth chapter of John's Gospel to have yet been answered, "That they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us; that the world may believe that thou has sent me,"—a oneness which certainly involves perfect unity in nature, name, purpose, word and aim. While every sincere Christian heart must deplore the aspect in which the Church of the present thus stands before the world, every such heart must draw comfort and hope from

the consciousness that there is, underlying all this perplexing and humiliating diversity, an essential oneness of spirit and desire, out of which spring occasional indications of oneness that are visible. And I do not know any aspect in which the Christian Church universal so really appears to be one in sentiment, aim and honest effort as in its noble work through the Bible Society. In this organization, at least, we have to thank God the Church does appear to be the one angel, one heavenly messenger carrying to all mankind one heavenly message. By means of this honoured organization, the Presbyterian and the Methodist, the Episcopalian and the Baptist, hand out one and the same volume, and they hand it out to every person under heaven as the very best gift they can bestow; and, when the person receiving it opens it he finds much about God and eternity, much about the soul and its sins, about Christ and His salvation, but not a syllable about denominations. In this God-like effort alone all Christians stand before the whole world in perfect catholic unity, one "angel," one mighty messenger of grace, bearing heaven's glad tidings to the ignorant, sinning and perishing human family. In the language in which the apostolic pen wrote the original of our text, there is a wonderful unity of idea expressed, the words "angel," "gospel," and "preach" being all derivatives of the same Greek root—making the sentence run thus: "A mighty *angel* having the everlasting *evangel* to *evangelize* them that dwell on the earth."

Our text having shown us what the Church ought to be—one angel, shows us also what the Church should *do*—evangelize the world with the everlasting evangel.

With these remarks on the *general aspect* of the passage before us, permit me now to attempt a short analysis of it.

In this apocalyptic picture, we have—

I. THE COMMISSION, PLACE, AND WORK OF THE ONE GREAT CHRISTIAN AGENCY—THE LIVING CHURCH OF CHRIST.

(1.) *The Commission* authorising the Church's action is apparent in the name "Angel," a name suggesting at once the idea of a messenger appointed by the Most High Himself, with a special message to mankind. Angels do not act on their own responsibility and of their own accord; the name, therefore, excludes all idea of one going or working on his own authority. As God Almighty alone can commission holy angels, so He alone can commission the Church; the Church is composed of those "called out" by God, such being the meaning of the original word; every believer, being a living member of the Christ-Body, has been necessarily "called out" to the active ministry of the Christ-Truth in some way; every Christian, being by regeneration ready for heaven, and heaven being ready for him, there can be but one conceivable reason why he should abide in this world of sin—to be a witness for God, a messenger of mercy, a minister of grace amongst the lost. Few Christians are "called" to, or fitted for ecclesiastical office, few for the work of preaching and teaching publicly, but every one is called to *evangelize* somehow and *somewhere*; while there be men specially qualified for and commissioned to the official work of the overseer and teacher, the bishop and deacon, *all* Christians are called with "an holy calling," *all* Christians constitute the "chosen generation, royal priesthood, holy nation, peculiar (purchased) people," whose use is to "shew forth the praises (virtues) of Him who hath called them out of darkness into His marvellous light;" to *all* believers this great commission applies, "The Spirit and the Bride say, come; and let him that heareth say, come," for the gracious call of God in the heart is the real call to gospel ministry; the poor woman of Samaria, telling her story to the men in the streets of Sychar, as really as Peter standing in the court of the temple delivering his apostolic message to Jerusalem sinners, on the day of Pentecost, is part of the "mighty angel."

(2.) *As to the Place* of the Church in her works it is, saith our text, "in the midst of heaven,"—an expression which I take to teach that the

Church ought always to occupy a region above the common level of mere worldly life—a region in which she shall be free from earthly obstacles. In the world she should not be *of it*, but live *above it*—living, so to speak, on the wing of holy desire and activity.

The constitution of human nature is threefold, man is a trichotomy, *animal, intellectual, spiritual*, and this last characterises the region in which the Church should strive to live and move, to breathe and work—above the *mere animal*, “the lust of the eye, the lust of the flesh, and the pride of life,” subordinating all animal faculty and force to spiritual work; above the *mere intellectual*, subordinating the mind and its powers to spiritual aims and efforts, *above mere business and worldly politics and human associations*, ever skilfully subordinating bending and directing all these to spiritual objects and ends; having the affections thus set on heavenly things and the activities of life directed to heavenly work, the angel—the Church ought to live “in the midst of heaven.”

To this heavenly vision of the place the Christian Church should occupy, oh, what a melancholy contrast the professed Church of our day presents! The sons and daughters of the King grovelling and burrowing in the earth, grasping among the greedy and struggling for self among the unregenerate selfish! Oh! brethren, when shall we acquire the habit of living “in the midst of heaven,” of keeping above the common low level of unrenewed humanity in the higher region of personal holiness, of living and moving in the heavenly atmosphere of habitual communion with God? In our every day walk and conversation when, oh, when shall we appear like this angel—like the messengers of the Lord, holding such a glorious commission as this of carrying the everlasting gospel to perishing men!

Whatever be their sphere or business in “this present evil world” the called of God, if they would be successful in the great work they live on earth to do, should ever keep “in the midst of heaven,” so that the world will see their “fellowship truly is with the Father and His Son” and their “citizenship in heaven.”

“So let our lips and lives confess
The holy gospel we profess.
So let our words and actions shine,
To prove the doctrine is divine.”

That this state is one of holy activity must be very obvious from the aspect of the symbolic angel in the vision before us now; John saw the angel “*flying* in the midst of heaven.” This *flying* does not mean a presumptuous adventuring out of our proper sphere; holy angels are not presumptuous. Nor does the word mean mere religious flights—flights of poetry or emotion or imagination or ignorant enthusiasm. Nor does it mean daring flights of architectural display in church edifices, or flights of questionable financial speculation so frequently the accompaniment of such ecclesiastical architecture; nor flights of fanciful novelties in church services; nor flights of scientific doctrine, or bombastic pulpit eloquence—the skilful flying of intellectual balloons charged with heated gas and the display of religious pyrotechnics designed to interest, amuse and attract the unregenerate. No such thing. This *flying* of the angel—the Church, signifies a going straight to one object, like the arrow to the target, like the dove to its nest, like the eagle to its eyrie; it signifies a fearless rising over all earthly hindrances, human notions, worldly prudence, selfish caution, above the gravitating power of materialism, above “the fear of man that bringeth a snare,” above religious names and hobbies, above the common standard of religious opinion and custom,—in short it is the daring of a dauntless faith, and a holy dignified earnestness of purpose and directness of aim in the wide, liberal diffusion of the message of saving mercy, carrying it over all opposition and adverse argument to all nations and tongues and peoples. Such is the place and spirit of the angel-church of Jesus Christ.

(3). As to the *Work* of the Church, it is, our text saith, the preaching or *proclamation* of "the everlasting gospel."

Now, we all know that a proclamation can be made in two ways. There is the mode adopted by the ancient herald, the old English town-crier, or Scotch bell-man, giving authoritative announcement with the sound of the living voice; there is also the mode common amongst populations the large majority of whom can read, uttering governmental proclamations by means of writing and printing. This last, so largely honoured by the Holy Spirit, is the method employed by the Church in delivering her message of divine mercy through the British and Foreign Bible Society. Thus to proclaim the gospel to every nation, tongue and people, to put into the hands and bring before the eyes of every child of Adam in his own language, the message of divine grace, to circulate amongst every family of fallen humanity this divine Word as the royal proclamation of the King of heaven, is the work, the important business, the splendid and gigantic enterprise of the one living Church of Jesus Christ in her united effort through the instrumentality of the British and Foreign Bible Society—thus the Church fulfils her great apostolic commission: "Go into all the world, and proclaim the good news to every creature."

II.—THE SUBJECT OF THE ANGEL-CHURCH'S MINISTRY IS "THE EVERLASTING GOSPEL."

Not good news merely, like the cry of "A sail! A sail!!" on board the drifting raft where a dozen poor creatures are famishing, or the distant sound of the bag-pipes falling on the ears of the besieged in Lucknow, but *everlasting glad tidings*." If it be demanded what is this "everlasting Gospel!" we answer, The story of Jesus Christ, of what He was, of what He did and said, suffered and promised, of how He died, and why, of where He went and how He will return again,—this old, simple story is essentially "the Gospel," the everlasting glad tidings. But more,—this entire book, called pre-eminently the Bible is the Gospel, for Adam of whom it tells, was the figure of Him who was for to come, the second Adam the Lord from heaven, Eden was the figure of the paradise of God, which blooms in everlasting beauty: Eve was the figure of the Bride, "the Lamb's wife"; Noah and his family saved in the floating ark, a figure of souls saved forever; and every other portion of the Bible points directly or indirectly to Christ, and so is "the Gospel"—the "coming event casting its shadow before"; the patriarchal sacrifices and hopes, the varied levitical ritual, the sweet psalms of David, the history of the judges and the kings, and the wars of Israel, the visions of seers, and the mysterious predictions of prophets—all these constitute "the everlasting Gospel," because all these point to and terminate in Jesus Christ. And of this I for one feel sure that the circulation of the entire Bible is absolutely demanded in these our days, it never before. In these days of unblushing and blatant heresy when professed ministers of the gospel can subscribe creeds with mental reservation; when scientific atheism and rationalistic scepticism dare to arraign both God and nature at their bar, and to assert anything feasible or plausible in tones whose presumption is amazing; when, without either scruple or apology, men can lay the rudest and most familiar grasp on everything sacred, and find public and respectable support while they do so—in these days it is more than ever needful that people be made familiar with the whole Bible, from the cosmogony of Moses to the apocalyptic visions of John. In these days, when the apostate church of Rome is re-arrogating her ancient place in Protestant lands and Protestants are quietly tolerating her arrogance—denying the records of authentic history, pointing with unblushing confidence to her hoary traditions, and demanding universal including political submission to priestly power and papal infallibility,—in these days when even in professedly Protestant churches ungodly and unspiritual men, having intruded themselves into the Christian ministry, are substituting ritualistic ceremonies for the

apostolic simplicity of doctrine and worship, and when a broad denominational charity has developed into an all-comprehensive and almost boundless religious licentiousness, the people need, above all things, the authentic history of apostolic Christianity, demonstrating as it does, the utter abrogation of everything ritualistic and sacerdotal. In short, the whole world needs to be brought back to, and brought up to this old Word of God as the one and unchangeable standard of morals, faith, worship and life; and the great mission of the one true Church—the angel of God—is to keep us all to this Word as the everlasting verity, and to tolerate no deviation from it, according to the commandments, traditions and theories of men.

We must industriously disseminate this Gospel Book, as if it were in every detail and particular, as necessary and as suitable for to-day as for any day preceding, as if it were indeed “*everlasting*”—beyond change or amendment or improvement—as if, in place of being behind our age, *before it*. And “*everlasting*” it is, because (1) it emanated from the heart and mind of the everlasting God, with whom is no variableness or shadow of turning; because (2) its grand central figure is the divine Son, “the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world”—our world being but the stage on which the divine drama, “The Christ” was to be enacted, and time and history being but the accompaniments, the scenery, the subordinate supporters in the development and manifestation of this central idea of God; this Gospel is everlasting, because (3) it deals with man’s moral and spiritual nature, which is radically and substantially the same to-day that it was in the days of Cain and Nimrod, of Nebuchadnezzar and Cyrus, of Julius Cæsar and Jesus Christ. Many wonderful changes have passed over the world and its population since then, I grant; civilization has taken the place of rude barbarism, the persistent industry of science has divulged and utilized many of nature’s mysteries, popular governments and restless inventions have greatly multiplied all our domestic and social comforts; but men and women, whatever their knowledge and whatever their improved modes of living and travelling and communicating thought, are, beyond all dispute, still spiritually fallen and lost; (4) This Gospel is “*everlasting*,” because it holds out to these ruined and lost ones, a completed, finished, everlasting salvation. *The righteousness* herein provided is “*everlasting*,” because it is divine—the personal righteousness of “God manifest in the flesh;” *the peace* herein spoken of is “*everlasting*,” because it is peace grounded on and flowing from the work and suffering of God Himself; *the life* herein offered is “*everlasting*,” because it is the life of the eternal Jehovah; and *the kingdom* to which it points is “*everlasting*,” because it is not of this world, but stands beyond and above time in *eternity*.

Men and brethren, let us endeavour to receive deep into our souls the mighty meaning of this word “*everlasting!*” In moments of despondency, when we have reason to fear our work is a failure, we may be hard tempted to doubt whether this simple ancient Bible Gospel will meet satisfactorily the demands of our restless and aggressive age, whether, in these times of such intense practicalness and rapid scientific enterprise, when, from the wonder-lands of astronomy, geology, chemistry, and comparative anatomy the excited cry, Eureka! Eureka! is ever and anon bursting, something else and something more than this oldest of all books may not, perhaps, be needed. Our text ought to settle all such doubt and debate and reassure our hearts. This Bible-Gospel is “*everlasting*,” while Earth, Time, and Man come in only as so many links in the long chain of its antecedents and consequents. Looking at the history of the last four centuries, we cannot help standing amazed at the march of mighty intellect, and looking out into the future, already blossoming with the promise of boundless possibilities, one dares not venture to predict what the achievements of science and philosophy, mechanics, commerce and politics may be; our own descendants will, no doubt, contemplate with a quiet smile our boasted civilization and exhibit as curiosities in some museum specimens of our latest machinery;

all human customs and opinions must necessarily change by development; but this one volume is an exception to the laws of development, its Divine Author having anticipated the minutest changes of the future and perfectly adapted its statements and principles to every possible exigency of its varied task through all stages of the strange eventful history of humanity.

And this must be the profound and abiding conviction of the living Church of God, as, against all opposition, she steadily prosecutes her great work of spreading the Gospel, of pressing forward the world-wide advertisement and dissemination of Bible truth—*this truth is everlasting*. Never for an instant must the "angel" yield to the first insinuation of a doubt that within the boards of this one Book she holds life for the death and light for the darkness of all ruined humanity in all circumstances and at all times however far future, for the complicated and inveterate diseases of sin the sovereign elixir of immortal health, for all the ills that flesh is heir to Heaven's never-failing panacea, God's own everlasting catholicism. Let this conviction, my brethren, take full possession of us, and carry us forward! If there be dungeons yet to be opened and fetters yet to be broken, if there be moral swamps yet to be drained and clouds of superstitious miasma yet to be chased away, if there yet be priestcraft to uproot and tyranny to strike down, we must feel persuaded—nay, *we are persuaded*—that this one old Gospel is the instrument by the honest use of which the gigantic task is to be accomplished, and that because it is "everlasting."

And is not such a persuasion founded on incontrovertible evidence? After the youngest part of this Gospel was nearly fifteen hundred years old what was it that aroused from the dishonourable and passive lethargy of ages the mind of Europe? If the Reformation inaugurated modern liberty, progress and manhood, beyond all question it was the Bible which inaugurated the Reformation. What was it that gave England and Scotland (and their colony in the North of Ireland), small and poor as they naturally are, the wonderful name of Great Britain, and their place of eminence among the nations? The free circulation of this Bible. What was it that within the last fifty years transformed the savage cannibalism of the South Pacific islands into communities of quiet, sober, industrious, pious men and women? What was it that but a few years ago broke the horrid spell of ages and delivered the down-trodden, priest-ridden people of Italy, putting ancient Rome under the protection of a free and intelligent parliament? What is it that is now acting like a charm on India and Japan, crushing out hoary devil-worship and blessing them with liberal institutions? Science? No! Political philosophy? No! This old Bible? YES! Reason and argue as men may, the historical fact stands indisputable, the Bibles translated, printed and circulated by John Wickliffe and Martin Luther were the living seed of all these things. Popery, Ignorance, Heathenism, and Barbarism have retired before the Bible everywhere; free institutions, personal independence, virtuous and happy homes, good schools and good health, good morals, good drains, good roads and good shops have everywhere followed this Bible. That all this is simple historical fact no man whose opinion is worth a straw will venture to deny. This one Book is the power of God. There is no religion, there is no philosophy, there is no political doctrine, there is no physical force at this moment on the face of the earth that wields one half as much transforming and aggressive power as this one old Book. If you ask the reason why, there is but one answer: It is "everlasting" truth.

III.—THE AREA OVER WHICH THE COMMISSION OF THIS ANGEL—THE CHURCH EXTENDS: "EVERY NATION AND TONGUE AND PEOPLE."

Such is the vast sphere of action presented to the Christian Church. "The field is the world," said Jesus Christ. The British and Foreign Bible Society has for many years, without staggering at the magnitude of the prospect, accepted this enterprise. Whatever be the perplexing variety of phrenological type, moral status and political condition presented by the populations

of different climes, this Book with the good news must be sent as a proclamation to all mankind without respect of persons, because it is urgently needed by and perfectly adapted to every human being. No wider contrast can be easily imagined than that which obtains between the intellectually subtle Hindoo and the brutalized bushman of Caffraria, between the metaphysical German and the superstitious, sensuous Spaniard, between the stolid Russian and the vivacious, sceptical Frank, between the aristocracy of England and the savages of Central Africa; but this one Gospel, our text assures us, is quite as well suited to the one as to the other—is quite as much needed by both. "Every nation, and tongue, and people" constitute the parties to whom this message is addressed, and the day of Pentecost gave the Church of Christ the key to her great work. It is the "Angel's" business to proclaim to every nation and people *in their own tongue* "the wonderful works of God"—"the everlasting Gospel."

Would to God we were seized and filled and impelled by the omnipotent mastery of this conviction that the Gospel being everlasting must be of universal application!—that it is, without any modification or improvement whatever, adapted to the needs of all men, like the blessed common sunshine and common atmosphere, like pure water and wholesome bread. The beloved John in apocalyptic vision saw, in the angelic symbol of our text, that to preach this Gospel *universally* is the Church's destiny. Let us accept our glorious destiny, brethren! Let us push forward with a vigor unprecedented in this grand Gospel enterprise. Let us arise to our work of translating and scattering, with an activity and liberality worthy of our high commission, this one precious volume, fully persuaded that everything dark and crooked, selfish and corrupt must shrink and vanish before it. As I have often seen the night mist hanging heavy on the flanks of a highland mountain quickly dissipated before a fresh breeze from old ocean, even so, before this voice of the Lord, sin must yield and vanish. As the structure made by boys with snow in the cold moonlight must melt under the beams of the midday sun, as the mimic churches and fortifications ingeniously constructed by children with sand on the seashore must fall before the rising tide, even so everything that is inherently weak, impure and wrong, must ultimately melt and sink before the advance of God's everlasting truth. "The knowledge of the Lord shall cover the earth as the waters cover the sea."

About giving our help to many modern religious undertakings, even to some of our favourite denominational schemes, you and I may have honest scruples, there is so much of the impurity and ambiguity and frailty of human organization about them; but in this holy crusade of the British and Foreign Bible Society we may fearlessly invest money, work and prayer. There are no hidden dangers here. This is the predestined work of the Church. As living members of the one, true, catholic Church of the living God we have this Book of Good news committed to us, and, having it, we hold in our hands the lever of Omnipotence with which we may slowly but surely move and raise the world; having this we really possess that mighty power (long dreamt of as belonging to the fabled "philosopher's stone") by which the baser metals of poor fallen humanity may, by touch, be transmuted into the pure, the beautiful, the precious, the everlasting of the true golden age; having this living Word of everlasting Truth, amid all the perplexities of the present, all the failures of the past and all the boding darkness of the future, blessed be God! we hold in our hands the clue which will certainly guide us and many others into a brighter and better future beyond, where, amid the imperishable verities of everlasting life, this everlasting Gospel shall be crowned with the splendours of an everlasting triumph.

Bible Society Recorder.

TORONTO, 15TH JULY, 1879.

BOARD MEETINGS.

The regular monthly meeting of the Board was held on Tuesday, May 13th, the Hon. G. W. Allan in the chair. The meeting was opened with prayer, led by the Rev. Dr. Potts. The Secretary was instructed to request the manuscript of Rev. J. DeNovan's sermon on behalf of the Society for publication in the *Recorder*. A letter was received from the Rev. W. W. Ross, giving notice of his resignation to take effect on the 13th of Sept. It was moved by Mr. Kennedy, and seconded by the Rev. Dr. Potts "That the resignation of the Rev. W. W. Ross be accepted, and that this Board wishes to place upon record their sense of the valuable services rendered by him to the Society, and their appreciation of his personal worth, and to tender to him their thanks for his efficient service." This was carried unanimously.

It was moved by Mr. Kennedy and seconded by Mr. Mortimer, "That it is desirable, in the interests of the U. C. Bible Society, that the Permanent Agency be maintained; and that the Committee on Agency be authorized to take such steps as they deem necessary to obtain the services of an Agent to succeed the Rev. W. W. Ross, whose resignation takes effect in September next." Carried. Standing committees for the year were appointed and the ordinary routine business transacted, after which the meeting was closed with prayer led by Mr. Brown.

The Directors met again on Tuesday, July 8th, at 7.30 p. m., the Hon. W. McMaster in the chair. A letter from the Rev. W. W. Ross was read asking the Board to relieve him from his duties as Permanent Agent at once, and his request was acceded to. The Secretary reported what the Agency Committee had done towards getting a successor to Mr. Ross, and that Committee was instructed to examine all applications for the office and submit to the Board some of the most eligible. A report was presented from the same Committee, recommending a plan of work for the coming season, and asking authority from the Board to carry it out. The report was adopted. Colporteurs' reports were submitted from Messrs. Lowry, McPhail, Taylor, and Rouleau, and were more than usually encouraging. Other ordinary business was attended to, and the meeting closed with prayer led by Mr. Kennedy.

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

On Wednesday, May the 7th, 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 part of the 17th chapter of St. John's Gospel, and engaged in prayer.

The Rev. CHARLES E. B. REED, read an abstract of the Report of the Society's proceedings during the past year, from which it appeared that the free income of the Society for the year ending 31st March, 1879, has amounted to £96,426. 11s. 5d., whilst the sum received for Scriptures sold, both at home and abroad, has reached £106,168. 15s. 10d., which, with £136. 10s. received on account of a Special Fund for Indian Colportage, £899. 2s. 4d. for work at the Paris Exhibition, and £10,180. 3s. 8d., in response to the Committee's Special Appeal, makes a total of £213,811. 3s. 3d.

The Expenditure has amounted to £223,476. 15s. 2d., being £4,389. 2s. 11d. less than last year.

The Issues of the Society for the year are as follows :—

From the Depot at home 1,415,214 } 3,340,995 copies of Bibles.

From Depots abroad . . 1,925,781 } Testaments and Portions.

The total Issues of the Society from its commencement now amount to 85,388,057 copies.

In the absence of the ARCHBISHOP OF CANTERBURY, who was to have moved the adoption of the Report, but was kept away by affliction, the BISHOP OF GLOUCESTER AND BRISTOL did so. After reference to some of the most interesting items of the Report, he spoke of the immense work still before the Society, particularly in the way of translation; he pointed out some of the great difficulties with which translators had to cope, spoke of the honour due to such men as the brave Moffat, and encouraged the Society to go on with the help of these men in giving to all peoples the Word of the Lord, which endureth for ever.

The Hon. JOHN WELSH (United States Minister), seconded the resolution.

The Rev. Canon TRISTRAM said; My Lord, the resolution which has been placed in my hands is as follows :—

“That this meeting desires to acknowledge with devout gratitude the goodness of God in the blessing which has rested upon the Society's labours during the past year, and appeals to all to whom God's Word is precious as for enlarged sympathy and support in the prosecution of its important work.”

My Lord: It might appear to a somewhat thoughtless listener to that interesting report, not only that we had cause to thank God for the work that had been done but that the work was done. It might have seemed, as we were carried from Russian armies to African shores, and thence to newly-opened empires—Japan and China—and thence to the isles of the sea, that the whole world had been ransacked by the Bible Society, and that it might sit down, like Alexander, because it had no more worlds to conquer. But when we look closer into the matter, it seems to me that in this age, in which the great battle against Christianity is levelled against the Bible itself, and against the inspiration of the Bible as God's immutable Word, the work of the Bible Society had hardly begun. It seems to me that in many countries the Bible Society, although it is commonly said to be the missionary's tool,

has gone ahead of the missionary. I was very much interested in hearing yesterday on this platform, the remarkable circumstances mentioned in the report of the Church Missionary Society, that one of our missionaries, Mr. Gordon, the first Protestant missionary who has ever gone to Candahar, found that he had been anticipated there; for almost the first person with whom he made acquaintance in Candahar was a Mohammedan Moulvie, who was studying the Arabic Bible. The Bible had got ahead of the missionary there. I remember an incident that occurred to myself only about five years ago. I had gone in company with a missionary of the Church Missionary Society to a city—Kerak—then absolutely independent of Turkish rule at least which asserted itself to be independent, governed by its own laws or none at all. It certainly was a city into which we, though not the first Englishmen that had been there, were the first ministers of the Gospel who had ever entered. We found ourselves in a few days very much like rats which had entered a trap. There we were, and we were kept there. But the people were not all Mohammedans. Amongst its Mohammedan inhabitants there was still a sprinkling of native Christians. Those Christians lived in a quarter of the town by themselves; and although they belonged to that corrupt and dark Church of the East, the Greek Church, still they were much more enlightened than their neighbours. They had a school in the place; and the Mohammedans, when the boys wished to learn arithmetic, did not disdain to send them to the Greek school. The teacher was a Syrian-Greek deacon. One day we were allowed, under the safe custody of our guards, to visit the school. We found there, in that wild Arab town, Mohammedan boys being taught by a Greek deacon; and what were the books that were in use? There were books of the Church Missionary Society in the lower class, and in the upper class, my Lord, a row of Mohammedan boys were sitting in front of the Greek deacon, and were reading the Gospel of St. John out of books translated by the noble American missionary, Vandyke, into the Arabic tongue, with the stamp of the British and Foreign Bible Society at their back. The Bible Society had there got ahead of the Missionary Society—not far, I am glad to say, for we have now got a missionary there, and I hope that we shall keep him, not a prisoner, but a free agent. As our missionaries have told us, the missionary without the Bible is like a workman without his tools; yet the Bible Society is very jealous as to how the tools should be used. The Rev. Canon then spoke of the way in which men want to trim the Bible to make it suit their own notions, and said. The inspiration of God's Word as the Word of God is the one object of their attack. And why? Because men want, more than ever in these days of free and independent thought, a religion that will serve them, not a religion that they will serve. They want, like the Romans, epicurean gods. They want idol gods. They want an elastic religion—one that will take their impression—not a stern, severe code of absolute right and wrong to which they must conform and mould themselves. The Bible is inflexible, and if the Bible be admitted to be inspired, they are forced to allow that it cannot be moulded. My lord, I think that the Bible Society has great cause for thankfulness in the very interest which these attacks upon God's Word have aroused in other circles than those of believers. I do not know that there has ever been a greater blessing to the world of Biblical criticism than the shallow book of Dr. Colenso. Indirectly they led to the foundation of the Palestine Exploration Fund; and as I look at those two societies, in both of which I take a great interest, and whose work I have observed from the commencement—the Palestine Exploration Fund, and the Biblical Archaeological Society—and when I see the maps, and plans, and excavations of the one, and the volumes of ancient literature that are proceeding from the press of the other, I feel indeed that in all those volumes of the records of the past, worked out in the literature of the one society and the surveying of the other, we have been stirring up thousands of the thoughtful men. Scholars, who did not otherwise take an interest in the Bible, may have been led to study God's Word. They are studying it, and

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

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

one division of it was able to pacify the country without taking a single life. The native chief was invited to the tent of the commander, and here he was shown a New Testament. The commander said, "This is the Book from which we Christians learn what is right, and according to this Book we never put to death or punish the upright, as we often did while still heathen; but the guilty must be punished, for this is the Word of God and the law of the Queen." The following day there was another interview, terms of peace were agreed upon, a beautiful copy of the New Testament was given to the native chief, and the commander said to him, "If ever we make war upon you without just cause, or kill or punish the guiltless, show us this Book; then, indeed we shall be self-condemned." In another native account of this same expedition, it is said that these heathen chiefs came and asked some of the Christian officers, "How is it that you people from Imerina do not now come to destroy our country and enslave us, as you did in former times?" And they were answered, "Because Jesus Christ, the Son of God, the Redeemer of men, has given the Gospel to teach mankind to show mercy." And so, when that army was about to return, a most favourable impression was left upon those heathen people, and they said, "We see that this religion you Hovas profess is not a weakening of your strength, so that you cannot fight, but it is a showing of mercy." I think, my Lord and Christian friends, that that was a valuable testimony to the reality of the change which the study of the Word of God had worked upon many of these Hova people. The heathen saw that it was more than mere words, talk or preaching, and that the Gospel had produced a very real and unmistakable change in their conduct and their lives. That military expedition really became a missionary expedition to some of the most unenlightened tribes, and opened up the way for the advance of the Gospel. Now, dear friends, I fear I have already occupied too much of your time, but let me say in conclusion, that the heathen world is longing, often unconsciously, it is true, but yet longing, for the light and the knowledge which the Book only can give. Could you have stood to preach, as I have done, before some of those heathen crowds in the southeast of the island, and looked upon two or three hundred people who, up to that day had never heard the blessed name of our Saviour, I think you would have felt that you should use far greater efforts than ever you have made to extend the knowledge of the salvation revealed in the Sacred Word. I remember on one afternoon, as we pitched our tent somewhat early at a village called Taranta, we soon had a number of people in to hear what we had come for. We sat down and talked to them of "the old, old story," old to us, but perfectly new to them. How intently they listened as we told them of God the Father, of Christ the Saviour, of the soul and its salvation, and of the heaven beyond. "Tell us again," said they; "these things are new to us, but they make us glad to hear: tell us again." Christian friends, "Tell it again" to them; "tell it again" to the heathen all through the world.

The Rev. W. F. MACDONALD moved a vote of thanks to the officers of the Society and its Branches, &c., in an excellent speech, for which we regret we have not room.

The Rev. DR. JOHNSTON, of Belfast, seconded the resolution. In doing so, he said: I think all who are present will agree with me that we have as a president a nobleman who embodies in his life and character all the great principles contained in that Book which it is our business to translate and circulate. I speak the feelings I have no doubt of every heart when I say that it is a great pleasure to see your lordship occupying the chair to-day, and we trust that for many years yet to come your lordship may be spared to occupy that chair, and to preside over the noble operations of the Society in the future as you have done in the past. In so far as the vice-presidents and the treasurer are concerned, I am sure whether we are members of the English Church or other Churches, we enjoy the privilege of being vice-presidents and of being connected with the operations of the Society, in proportion as we

realize the obligations that the Bible and the God of the Bible have laid upon us to do what we can for the dissemination of that blessed Book which has been the source of light and joy to our own souls. I do not think the thanks of this meeting are due in any great degree to us, for we owe far more to the Society than the Society owes to us; and I have long felt that the different Churches of this land do not realize as they ought to do the obligations under which they lie to the Bible Society and the relationship we hold to it. Where would our ministry be without the Word, and where would our Churches be without the Bible Society? The British and Foreign Bible Society is the armoury of the Churches, and it would be just as foolish for Her Majesty to send a whole body of regiments to Africa or elsewhere without guns as to send ministers over the country without their Bibles. And where do we get the Bibles? When we want the Bible for any purpose—for Sunday schools or our day schools—we must come to the British and Foreign Bible Society. It is the great armoury of the Church; and if our ministers, and elders, and churchwardens, and others, realize that we are really depending on this Society for the weapons of our warfare with darkness and spiritual death, the Society will receive far more generous support from the country than it has hitherto done. I cannot understand clergymen of different Churches coming with begging appeals for a hundred Bibles or five hundred Testaments, or a thousand Portions of Scripture, and walking off with a load of books, never feeling that there is any obligation upon them to support the Society that gives so largely to the work. I cannot understand a man coolly coming to the Committee for a hundred Bibles, and then, when asked for a subscription a short time afterwards, saying, "Oh, there is plenty of money given to this Society; you need nothing from me." Every man has a personal obligation to this Society. Whether it be for the light God has given to our land, or the light given to our own soul, or whether it be for the obligation conferred by the Society upon different Churches, every minister, to whatever denomination he belongs, every Christian man, every Christian woman, every Sabbath school teacher, every scholar, owes a personal debt of gratitude; and I do not thank anybody for paying that off in mere words. I agree with the man who said, "I sympathise with the movement to the extent of £5." I like practical sympathy. I do not believe in the sympathy that evaporates into air. I believe that in supporting this Society we are enjoying a very great privilege, and fulfilling a very great responsibility. Can we forget, first of all, that the Word of God, in its written form, is the instrument by which the Holy Spirit works upon the soul of man? Whatever may be the eloquence of the intellect—from that of the reverend preacher down to the humblest Sunday school teacher—whatever be the intellectual power brought to bear upon the exposition of the Word, the Spirit of God uniformly acts by the Word itself. In the conversion of every soul, in the enlightenment of every mind, it is the written Word, the inspired, the authoritative and unerring testimony of the Third Person of the Godhead to the personal work of the Second and the everlasting love of the First—it is the written Word which is the Spirit's uniform instrument of implanting life in the soul of man; therefore, every man in whose soul that Word has implanted spiritual life is brought by the very fact of his being thus converted and quickened, under a personal responsibility to diffuse that Gospel which God had blessed to his own soul. I do not think that Christian Churches understand aright the responsibility which is imposed upon them in this respect. Can we forget that prayer in the opening of the 67th Psalm—"God be merciful unto us, and bless us, and cause His face to shine upon us"? Why? Is it that you and I are brought into personal union with Christ that we may enjoy happiness here, and go to heaven when we die? Is that all? No, my dear Christian friends; observe what follows: "That Thy way may be known upon earth, Thy saving health among all nations." Therefore, the grand object for which God enlightens us is that I may enlighten my fellow men. The grand object for which He gives me His Word is that I may give that Word to my fellow sinners. The

very grace that saves my soul, and the Spirit that quickens that Word and makes it the source of life to me, place me under an everlasting obligation, as long as I live, to go with the message of love to the whole family of man. If I do not do that, I belie the purposes for which God has given grace to my soul. I have tried many a time to impress upon my friends in Ireland the danger arising to our Protestantism in the north of following in the footsteps of the Jews. Protestants are too apt to rest content with their own privileges, rights and enjoyments. When we have religious liberty and spiritual life we forget we are but trustees, that we are bound by the very fact of our calling to give God's message of mercy to all our fellow creatures. I believe that, just in proportion as we throw ourselves lovingly, vigorously and generously into the cause of Christ, a blessing comes back upon our own soul; and one reason why there is such a vast amount of stunted Christianity at the present time is that people are resting upon the profession of their principles without throwing themselves heartily, lovingly and generously into the practical work and onward progress of the Church of the Lord Jesus Christ. If we are to have the blessing of God upon our own souls we must go into the Lord's work thoroughly, and there is no branch of the Christian work into which we should more generously go than in the cordial support of the British and Foreign Bible Society. The Society occupies a high position. Its relation to the Churches is like the position occupied by the Tabernacle of the olden time—the centre around which all the tribes of Israel pitched their tents, and to which they looked as a common centre of light and life and brotherly love. I rejoice to see to-day clergymen from Europe, Asia, Africa and America, blending together in one blessed brotherhood, and coming here to express a common debt of gratitude and love to the Bible Society, a common feeling and desire for the universal circulation of God's message of mercy and love to fallen men. I rejoice in the glorious story that has been told us of its progress during the past year. I offer my best wishes and prayers for the success of the Society and for the coming of the time when "The earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord as the waters cover the sea."

The resolution was put and unanimously carried.

The Hon. and Rev. E. CARR GLYN, Vicar of Kensington, moved the vote of thanks to the Chairman.

The Rev. Dr. MOFFAT: Ladies and Gentlemen,—Before I second this resolution, allow me to make an apology for arriving so late. Last night I was in Yorkshire, and I could not get away before this morning. My memory had betrayed me into a mistake, as I had thought that your meeting was to-morrow, and when I found out that it was to-day, I was of course in a fever. It was finally resolved that I should start early to-day, and I am thankful that I did so. I am exceedingly gratified that I have been permitted to enjoy this delightful season. Nothing is so dear to me as the Bible Society. While delivering occasional speeches in Huddersfield, I was very much pleased to find when I made reference to the Bible Society (which I hope all there loved), there was a delightful response. I will not detain you long. The Bible, my dear friends, is a power, and I have witnessed its influence over and over again amongst savage people and people of all kinds. I have felt its force in my own being, and I have witnessed its operation in hearts as hard as stone. I remember an instance, which I will just mention: and which will show the idea of a heathen man under its influence. Some time after the Gospel had been preached among the Bechuanas, and converts had been made, I met an elderly man who looked very downcast. He had quite an elongated countenance, such as I had never seen him with before. I said to him, "My friend, what is the matter; who is dead?" "Oh!" said he, "there is no one dead." "Well, what is the matter? You seem to be mourning." The man then scratched his head and said, "My son tells me that my dog has eaten a leaf of the Bible." "Well, what of that?" I said; "perhaps I can replace it." "Oh," says the man, "the dog will never do any good; he will never bite anybody; he will never catch any jackals:

he will be as tame as I see the people become who believe in that book. All our warriors become as gentle as women, and my dog is done for." Let me mention another anecdote to illustrate what the Gospel and the Bible can do. There was a man in the congregation over which I was pastor, in the country where I laboured, and he had conceived a bitter hatred of me, which burnt like fire in his breast. The cause was this: he had observed that the people who received my testimony became quite other creatures, and he could not comprehend what kind of medicine I used in order to produce the change. The general testimony borne in answer to his inquiries, was, "Oh, Moffat has got his medicine out of the book; that is the medicine that changes men's hearts into women's hearts." The man continued to hate me, and he would have given anything to get me cut off. If I met him by chance in a narrow lane he would get out of the way. On one occasion when I thus met him with shield in one hand and a spear in the other, which he was flourishing to frighten me, I thought to myself, "Have you found me, O my enemy?" There was no alternative for him but to come forward. Of course I was not going to turn back. As he came on he shouted in the Bechuana language, "Look away from me." Then he came nearer and nearer, until he came within a few paces, he roared out again, "Look away from me." When he came close with the intention of passing, I stood before him so as to hinder, and said to him, "My good friend, what is all this about?" smiling at him all the time. "Why do you want me to look away? I can look at you, and you can look at me." He then dropped his spear and shield between us and called out, "Forgive me, my lord, forgive me." I grasped his hands at once. "Forgive you!" I said; "with all my heart I have forgiven you." He again repeated imploringly, "Forgive me." I said, "What have you done? I have forgiven you whatever you intended to do or whatever you have done." He said, "If I had had my will you would have been long since dead. I have waylaid you with that spear when you knew it not, but I dared not throw it. When you returned from visiting the sick during the midnight hour, I had my bow and arrow, and I could have shot you, and you would not have known where it came from; but I dared not, I could not. I have sat behind the bush when you have been returning, in order to cut you down with my waraxe, but I could not. Failing in all this, I endeavoured to persuade some one with a reward to poison you, but they would not. Oh, forgive me!" "But what," I asked, "has brought all this about? It is surely not my face; you always saw my face, and knew that I was kind?" The man replied, "You were kind to my wife." An incident had taken place about two months before: his wife had been ill, and the man had been absent, as the Bechuana men always are, when their wives are poorly. The Queen had sent for me one day (I might have been considered physician to Her Majesty); and having asked her if she had a headache, "No," she said: "but there is a lady who has been dead three days." I knew what that meant, and asking where she was, the Queen sent her maid to conduct me to the house. I did not know who the "lady" was, but I knew she belonged to a very heathenish division of the town. I could not have visited her, unless I had authority from the Queen, because, where there is a female sick, no man dare approach the premises. I administered medicine to the lady, and she was very soon restored. She and her friends were highly gratified. Kindness, my dear friends, is a key to the human heart; and missionaries should take bushels of it when they go abroad. Kindness to this man's wife had melted his heart, and he was afterwards a steadfast admirer of everything that had to do with the work of missions. I have very great pleasure in sending this resolution.

The resolution was put and carried.

LOED SHAFTESBURY gratefully thanked the mover, the second, and the meeting, and alluded to the fact that it was the thirtieth time he had taken the chair in the same hall at the anniversary of the Bible Society.

The benediction was then pronounced, and the meeting separated.

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