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ANNIVERSARY SERMON,

Preached by the Rev. W. S. Rainsford, B. A., on behalf of the Upper Canada Bible Society, in St. James' Cathedral, Toronto, Sunday evening, May 8th 1881.

Luke vi. 47, 48.—“Whosoever cometh to Me and heareth My sayings and doeth them, I will show you to whom he is like. He is like a man which built a house, and digged deep and laid the foundation on a rock; and when the flood arose, the stream beat vehemently upon that house and could not shake it, for it was founded upon a rock.”

Let me offer a few prefatory remarks upon the text—not, as I hope, inapposite to my subject. Here our Lord Himself lays down the conditions of spiritual success. If we would build for eternity—

1. We must dig deep. None of your merely surface-scratching theories, so cheap and so common among giddy souls, will do. It is a feature of our day; everybody must have a theory about everything, no matter how ignorant the person, or inscrutable the subject. We may shortly expect a reaction against this most unsatisfactory state of things. Sooner or later, men will discover that raking the surface, however neatly done, cannot take the place of a deep soul-scrutiny of truth. There lack not signs, I think, already of this healthy reaction. I see at the University of Harvard, Mass., four per cent. alone of the undergraduates return themselves as agnostics. Deep, painful questioning may lead some into what Tennyson powerfully calls “Sunless gulfs of doubt,” but a flippant unbelief should be a thing despised of all good men and pure women. The nature of man after all demands a foundation more permanent than sand—craves a rock, broad, firm, and solid—on which to rest the weight of its, at times, troubled existence. And the good God, who governs all things, is teaching, and will teach us, first by loving leadings, next, when necessary, by ruin crashing after ruin, to dig till the rock is found. Did we constantly remember this, His fixed purpose, surely we could say more trustfully—

“All is well, tho' faith and form
 Be sundered in the night of fear.”

2. We must confine ourselves to the rock once found—build there, and there only—since rock foundations only will stand.

Forgetting this, some of our wisest builders have tried to buttress the rock—strengthen Christ by human masonry. Thus have grown up projecting wings of doctrine—certitudes, as many believe them, of like importance and stability with the work itself. Of latter days, there has been a great shaking among these theological foundations—these offshoots from the living rock—these would be additions and improvements on God's foundation. The inspired writer to the Hebrews tells us that to shake these is the purpose of God, since the various systems man has elaborated, useful as they are in their place and time, indispensable as they were often to those who made them, must pass away that the things that cannot be shaken may remain. The time has come when we must be careful to distinguish between these doctrinal systems, the outcome of changing times—humanly constructed foundations—and the rock itself. These are falling, as God ordains they should fall, and amid the crashing of wreckage and cries of fearing men, small wonder if some fancy the rock is giving way. Be it ours to remember that "he that believeth shall not make haste." Our God abides the same, a faithful Creator, who is still

"Whispering to the worlds of space
In the deep night, that all is well."

Perhaps the greatest poet that ever existed, our own William Shakespeare, spoke of the influence of a pure life removed, on those she leaves behind, in words as beautiful as they are true.

"The idea of her life shall sweetly creep
Into his study of imagination,
And every lovely organ of her life
Shall come apparelled in more precious habit,
More moving delicate and full of life,
Into the eye and prospect of his soul,
Than when she lived indeed."

The idea of her life, all he remembered and felt of her, her sweet aims, her gentle influences, creep, before he is aware of it, sweetly, softly, gently, lovingly, into the real presence chamber of his soul, till, though not present, her life is more powerful to him—her influence at hand to hold him back or beckon him on. So God makes himself first visible to us in His Son. In Him we see the mind of God, the idea of God, and this wonderful idea does creep into the soul—no mere fancy, a most proveable fact, and has withheld millions from sin, has stimulated millions to virtue, holiness, self-sacrifice—as *when He lived indeed*. Let Christ become enshrined in the study of our imagination, the mind of Christ, the example of Christ, the purposes of Christ; and he does become what He was on earth—the First, the Chief among ten thousand.

At the fountain of that life man tastes the old wine, and so, having tasted, all else seems harsh and new. He must be before party; put Him there and party strife loses its acrimony; before Church, put Him there and ecclesiastical distinctions are seen to be trivial; before wishes, and we can forego the most cherished; before fancies, and though we retain we are not dominated by them; before self, and He does increase and self decrease.

How can Christ be brought into the study of the imagination of a distinctly pleasure-loving and intensely active age? This is the question the Church of Christ must boldly face to-day. The answer cannot, I think, for a moment be doubtful. By uniting all true Christians—that is, all in the study of whose heart Christ Jesus dwells and reigns. To declare that nothing but Christ can permanently, worthily, fill the heart of the man He has made. This is the aim of the Bible Society. Any Society having such an aim deserves our support. It would unite all Christians in an effort to distribute that wonderful, that blessed book, in which the living Christ stands before men.

This is not the time, nor this the place, to speak hardly of others; but

I must believe that any who profess and call themselves Christians, refusing to join in this work, no matter how loudly they may vaunt their ecclesiastical commission, have mistaken it and missed their duty. I am well aware that there are some men—godly, Christ-loving men—in our own Church, who, as I believe, in regard to this matter are in the dark—victims of a strange misconception—believing that saving and instructing souls, as well as expounding the word of God, is the exclusive privilege of certain licensed ecclesiastics—all others are to them as Korah, Dathan, and their company. It may be almost impossible for us to comprehend so extraordinary a position; but let us remember that the men of weight and learning, those who have most intimate acquaintance with this book, both in Germany, America, and England, are almost unitedly opposed to any such view. Let me quote Bishop Ellicott, of Gloucester, the well-known expositor: "Supposing," he says, "that some Society, by a wonderful scheme of action, had devised means for diminishing shipwrecks on the coast, would not universal support be accorded to it, as a means of saving human life. Is not support as urgently demanded by a Society that aims to save the soul?" So say we all. God bless the Society that saves men anyhow.

When the great Arian controversy long ago threatened to rob the Church of her Saviour; when Imperialism stretched forth its mighty arm to shield and encourage heresy;—what saved the Church from utter rout and ruin? A great defender of the Faith, himself a bishop, said, "*The ears of the people were more orthodox than the tongues of the priests.*" It is not impossible that we may see a recurrence of such a state of things.

I ask your intelligent support for this Society,—

I. Because, as I believe, it indicates the true ground of Christian stability—it gives me the Word of God; not because the Written Word contains in itself life, but because in its pages the living Christ moves, a Friend of sinners, able and willing to save man from his sins now, as from the consequences of them hereafter;—because in its pages the "Rock" is discoverable. Wisely it takes cognizance of no theological formations, of no conclusions drawn from the Word of God, of no formularies of doctrine supplementary to it. Thus its principles are stable as the living pictures of Christ Himself. Here let me say that I trust and believe that so soon as popular Christian opinion pronounces, as it must, in favour of the Revised Version, such arrangements will be made by our Society as will enable it to distribute it.

II. The Society indicates the only true ground of unity. Unity conditioned on the repetition of a common catechism is a chimera;—of such unity the Bible Society knows nothing. Unity consists not in the huddling of many sheep into one fold—the Lord never said there would be one fold and one Shepherd (the cause of Christian unity has sensibly suffered by the mis-translation of John x. 16, where in the final clause of the verse the word "flock" is wrongly rendered "fold")—but that the time would come, His sheep scattered far and wide over hill-side and dale, "the blessed company of all faithful people," as our Church fitly calls them, should feel themselves to be, for all their variety of colour, constitution, taste, manner of life, mode of worship, one flock under the care of one Shepherd. In the past the Church has constantly mistaken distribution for division. The Bible Society would put us right. *Distribution is God's work—division is man's mistake*, arising from too much imperiousness on the one hand—too little yielding on the other. We gain nothing by driving mountain sheep to meadow, nor yet by driving lowland to rock and heath. Distribution is among the deepest problems of the Divine wisdom—it is a fact undeniable. The more we study it, the more are we aware that personal gifts and graces are allowed ample space—personal tastes and wants provided for, in the economy of God our Father; each separate life gifted with a self-adjusting faculty, the more marvellous, the more we study it. See this law of distribution in insect, plant, man—see it in operation among all races, in every clime. You will find that they who have pondered longest these secrets are least disposed to think that the work of

distribution is badly done. If this be the unity of nature, be sure we shall find a parallel and not a contradiction in the economy of grace. What folly to suppose that men who cannot eat, think, love, live alike, will most naturally and most profitably worship God alike.

Among all the definitions of Christian union, none is truer or more beautiful than that of Count Zinzendorf, the Moravian leader, one of Christ's most noble champions in the 18th century. "Our Father," says the Count "has many *τροποι παιδειαι* paths by which He leads His children." Recognise this, and we cease to judge one another; differences of rite cannot alienate us—differences in confessions, constitutions, and modes of worship cannot disturb us, we meet to adore the living Christ of the Evangelists—we wrangle not as to the paths by which we came to join in our common adoration. The Bible lays down no order of Christian constitution; it would have been as unnecessary and as unwise to lay down certain laws for the guidance of the Christian architects, or to prescribe certain diet or forms of dress for Christian worshippers. Our modes of thought, and therefore the forms by which we express our thought, must undergo change as certainly as our manner of life. To name a constitution would, therefore, be to foredoom it to failure.

Many ways.—Had we realized it, how many useless disputations, leaving nothing but bitterness and dust of Sodom behind them, had never vexed the air.

Many paths. That is, I have no right to flourish my Church's government, confession, or doctrine in the face of any other man accepting the Word of God and adoring the Saviour; I have no right to say, Come not near, I am holier than thou, or if not holier, I am at least more theologically correct.

When shall we learn to distinguish between the eternal truth of God and its faulty form of human expression? Has not the wholesale wreck of that magnificent governmental system—the Church of Rome—taught us to remember that no church's creed is, or can be, infallible; and what is more important still, friends, taught us that the creed of each man of us is less likely still to be infallible than is that of his church. Talking of creeds and confessions, there is another strong point of the Bible Society—there is not a trace of proselytism about it, and proselytism is one of the banes of modern Christianity. There is too much competition, too much glorying in unstable Christians passing from one fold to another, among the churches; too much effort to brand the sheep with our own ecclesiastical stamp to gather them into our own fold and count them—than to lead them into the deep, fresh meadows of divine revelation, where the waters of life flow.

III. The Bible Society not only indicates the ground of Christian union, but its most fitting expression. I ask your special attention here:—Such expression cannot consist merely in meetings held or congratulations exchanged, nor yet in the common use of any compilation however beautiful, or creed however ancient, or expression of opinion however bold, or questions, some at least of which lie beyond the sphere of profitable speculation. To seek expression for the deep, underlying principles of unity, common to all that love Christ in sincerity, in anything like a fully expressed doctrinal basis of union, is not only undesirable, but would be a wilful setting aside of our Father's evident purpose of variation and diffusion. I would not put a Prayer-book—though I value it next after my Bible—in every Christian worshipper's hand, if I could do so at this moment.

Ah! true unity of the Spirit must find its expression in something immensely more profitable, more fruitful to the world of good than these, before the world, by sight of it, understands that Christ's mission must have been divine. *Nothing can express such unity but unity of effort in a great and good cause.*

Here the Bible Society is ahead of its time. As I see an enterprise so far-reaching, carried out by men so variously constituted, to issues so successful, shall I despair of a time when, from the family of Christ, instead of hissing, envy, jealousy, mutual recrimination, shall rise a mighty voice, strong in its

united harmony, strong to penetrate the fastnesses of evil as yet unreached; making them echo and re-echo to the voice of truth; strong in its denunciation of common evil, strong in its praise of common good—what might not such a unity achieve for this poor, heart-sick world!

Let me be very plain; what I speak of is no visionary idea, but that evident, practical, wonder-working result of unity, of which our Saviour spoke when he said, "That they all may be one, that the world may believe that Thou has sent me," the united action of those who believe in Him.

O for the time when our talked of unity may come to a head in some practical movement!

When the Evangelical Alliance gave its impulse to unity, Dr. Chalmers was far-seeing enough to recognise, and bold enough to declare, "that if unity does not come to a head in practical movement against sin it must be utterly wasted." Of such unity of action the Bible Society is an example. God knows there lack not questions to-day that invite the united efforts of His people; strongholds of error that cannot, except by such efforts, be won for Christ.

To bridge the widening gulf between rich and poor, to protest against the crushing despotism of capital, to demand a purer press, a higher grade of politics—let the united Church of Christ but stand on grounds like these, clad in the robes of the Spirit of her Master who came to make peace. There are wise men in her fold; let her wisest unite with her most fearless, and let well-weighed utterances of protest be given forth—pronounced not by a voice here and there—but caught up and echoed by the united voice of all the multitude that love Jesus Christ our Lord.

Let the Church rebuke the rich who forget the claims of their fellows in hungry pursuit of riches; let her instruct and cheer the poor; let her champion the cause of the weak against the strong; when something like this is the outcome of our unity, let the kingdoms of the world tremble—ancient wrong shall totter—victories, not partial, but stupendously complete, shall be the Church's reward. She would then attract, as once she did, the toiling millions to the Saviour; would again draw mankind, as mankind has not been drawn since the very earliest ages; and she would do it because she was lifting up Christ to the gaze of mankind—because she was at least honestly, emulously striving to rise to the practical enjoyment of that glorious ideal that filled the vision of the soul of Paul—the unity of mankind in Christ. Neither as poor nor rich, male nor female, learned nor unlearned, as slave or free, would he consent to know them any longer. Then would cease our idolatrous homage of wealth,—our too common respect to fashion. Men would be constrained to remember that wealth and position are such dangerous possessions as to be only safely enjoyed in fullest partnership with Christ—as trusts most onerous—as offices in which and by which we may the more effectually minister to our fellows. To-day, alas, the Church has sunk to the meaner trade of heresy-hunting, as though a man did pursue a partridge on the mountains, while rampant beasts of prey, vile sins, great monopolies of evil, make havoc of men's souls and bodies, and openly at noon-day destroy their thousands.

God hasten the day when our unity—a unity even now consciously enjoyed by millions, at least in times of spiritual insight—may find its true expression in action—united action against the common foe.

God hasten the day, and—as the day-star proclaiming its nearness and certainty—God bless and prosper the Bible Society.

Bible Society Recorder.

TORONTO, 1st AUGUST, 1881.

BOARD MEETINGS.

The regular monthly meeting of the Board of Directors was held on Tuesday evening, May 17th, James Brown, Esq., in the chair. The opening exercises were conducted by the Rev. J. M. Cameron, and Rev. J. B. Clarkson. The committee appointed to select and recommend a book-keeper in place of the late Mr. Edward Tyner, presented a report; and on motion of Rev. Principal Caven, seconded by Dr. Hodgins, Mr. J. J. Woodhouse received the appointment, his duties to commence July 1st. Communications were read from the British and Foreign Bible Society, the Winnipeg Branch Bible Society, and the Rev. J. G. Manly, Permanent Agent. On motion of Mr. Warring Kennedy, seconded by Colonel Moffatt, the Rev. Mr. Rainsford's sermon on behalf of the Society was requested for publication in the *Recorder*. On motion of Dr. Geikie, seconded by the Rev. Mr. Clarkson, it was resolved "that a carefully prepared circular letter be addressed to the presiding officers and secretaries of the several great annual gatherings of the religious bodies, assemblies, conferences, synods, &c., soon to be held in Ontario, asking that the importance of the Society's work be specially brought before each of these gatherings; and that the necessity of each minister's taking up with all possible zeal the Society's interests, and impressing these on their respective congregations, be especially presented in the said circular, with the view of inducing the people to attend the Society's meetings, and to sustain it as it should be sustained, and thereby give a marked impetus to the success of the Society over the entire field of its operations." The standing committees of the Society were appointed for the current year; statement of gratuities, schedule of colportage work, and depositary's cash account for April were submitted. On recommendation of the Secretaries it was agreed that the Board should meet in June, but not in July or August, and the meeting was closed with prayer led by the Rev. J. M. Cameron.

The June meeting of the Board was held on Tuesday evening, the 21st., at the usual hour. Herbert Mortimer, Esq., at first in the chair, which was afterwards taken by the Hon. G. W. Allan. The meeting was opened with prayer led by the Rev. R. Cade. The permanent secretary stated that with the consent of the mover and seconder, the circular had not been issued to

the various synods, &c., as it was considered better to defer it till next year, when it can be sent to the assemblies of all the churches in good time, which is already impossible this year. Mr. Higgins submitted the Auditors' Report, which was adopted on motion of Dr. Hodgins, seconded by Colonel Moffatt. The report of the Agency and Colportage Committee was submitted recommending, among other matters, that the large Branches be asked to do without an Agent for this year, if they can do so without disadvantage; and also that a grant of \$300 be made for Colportage work in British Columbia. The report was adopted. An interesting letter was read from Mr. Cole, Secretary of the Quebec Bible Society, asking permission to visit Ontario on behalf of the work of that Society. This communication was referred to the Agency Committee to consider and report upon. Correspondence was read with reference to a bequest to the Society from the late Mr. McBride, Brampton, and on motion it was resolved to correspond further on the subject; and if need be, that the Permanent Secretary make personal enquiry into the matter.

The Depositary's cash account was read; and grants made of Ojibway Testament to the Rama Indians, and of English Scriptures to the volunteer camp at Niagara, subsequently for use in Shaftesbury Hall. The meeting was then closed with prayer by Rev. Mr. Sheraton.



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

On Wednesday, May the 4th, 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 Meeting was opened by the singing of a hymn, and prayer was offered by REV. JOHN SHARP, after reading a portion of the last chapter of Book of Revelation.

The REV. CHARLES E. B. REED then read an abstract of the Report of the Society's proceedings during the past year.

EARL CAIRNS, in the unavoidable absence of the ARCHBISHOP OF GANTERBURY, moved the adoption of the report. In doing so, he spoke of the pleasure he felt in looking at the time when this and one or two other great religious Societies had their birth. He also referred to the Society as accomplishing to the letter the great wish of the great martyr Tyndale, that every boy in England who drove the plough might have as ready access to the Bible as any priest in the land; and closed by speaking of the privilege it should be accounted to have the opportunity of offering our good wishes, our prayers and our money to such a Society.

The REV. JOSHUA C. HARRISON,—My lord, I have very much pleasure in seconding the resolution which has been so eloquently moved by the noble Earl. I am glad to join with your lordship and the Society in congratulating our friend, Mr. Reed, on the report which he has presented to us. He must have felt deeply thankful that he had facts so full of interest and encouragement to relate, and we are thankful that he was able to place those facts before us with so much ability and such high feeling. He wrote that Report under pressure of a loss which must have made the words of that sacred Book dearer than ever to his heart—a loss which, while it has deprived us as a Society of one of our staunchest and warmest friends, has deprived him of

a father who loved the Bible from his youth, and strove above all things to make his children love it, and live it too. He has also referred to the loss of other friends, and especially one whom we all knew, Mr. Reed's most honoured and beloved predecessor. It would be out of place for me here, intimately as I knew Mr. Bergne, to dwell at any great length on his character and his services, but I may say that his firmness of principle, and at the same time, his large-hearted charity, his business tact and gentlemanly bearing, his cordial brotherly relations with all his fellow-labourers, his unostentatious but profound piety, his genuineness as a man and consistency as a Christian, his entire devotion to the interests of this Society, and the sagacity which marked all his doings, entitled him to the love and respect which were so cheerfully accorded to him, and which, I trust, will be accorded with equal cheerfulness, and through as many years, to the two brethren who are now so happily united in the conduct of this noble Society. I may, perhaps, be permitted to refer to one little incident in our brother's last illness. He was seized with internal hemorrhage, and for four or five days, in great suffering and exhaustion, lay without being permitted to move a limb. As soon as was prudent, I was permitted to see him, and in talking with him I observed an illuminated card on the wall with this motto, "I will trust"; and when I referred to it, he said, "During those four weary days my eye rested on that very spot where the card hangs, so that I unceasingly read those words, 'I will trust,' and they brought to me just the strength that I needed." Those words from the Book which he loved to diffuse were his great comfort then—"I will trust." The main call which the Word of God makes upon us is to trust, and it is the only revelation which gives adequate ground for trust. All that it says respecting ourselves shows the profoundest knowledge of man, his nature, his capacities, his weakness, his wants. All that it says respecting God serves to bring before us One who is absolutely perfect Himself, and who sees and provides just what mankind must have if they are to become perfect too. I know of no revelation which so imperatively demands from us trust, and then gives us such ample grounds for trust. As to others—well, we must conciliate the gods, bear with their caprices, try to become their favourites, or strike in with some inexorable laws which will crush us if we mistake them, and will never forgive us if we violate them. In the Bible, God is the fountain of blessing. Our goodness extends not to Him, but His goodness is ever flowing to us. All the things that disturb us and fill us with anxiety, sin, shame, pollution, the desire and yet fear of immortality; these things He has engaged to meet. All the grandest names and relations He bears—Creator, Preserver, Ruler, Redeemer, Father, Friend; all the loftiest attributes He possesses—Wisdom, Power, Righteousness, Holiness, Love; all needed provisions He makes—blessings of providence, riches of grace, an unerring law, precious promises, an all-sufficient atonement, the life-giving Spirit, the glimpses of heaven. Oh, my lord, we do need something in this world to trust in, something in which we can confide. Without this Book, where can we find it? How can we possibly say, "I will trust"? But when we get this Book into our hands, and when we read it, we feel without hesitation, "Here we have what we want, and now 'I will trust.'" There is nothing which more makes us feel that Book to be Divine than its imperative claim to trust, and its justifying our largest trust. My lord, within the past few months we have lost two of our most distinguished writers, one the first in the domain of fiction, the other in the domain of general literature and history. Both were brought up in Christian homes, and had their memories stored with the words of Scripture, which indeed have greatly enriched their thoughts and their style. Both, unhappily, to a considerable extent, drifted from their early faith, and with the loss of their personal faith they appeared to lose their hope for mankind. The first in her latest writings, seems to have been haunted by the dream of lofty ideals eagerly pursued but never realized, and never to be realized. Instead of fulfilment, most painful, sometimes almost ludicrous failures, illustrations of the sentiment, "Vanity of vanities, all is

vanity." The other, sometimes speaking almost in the tone of a prophet, and claiming to be a preacher of righteousness, set down the people in general as for the most part fools, to be driven forward, or held in, by men of force, or genius for rule, and indeed, in his Latter Day Pamphlets, if incorrigible, to be relegated to some limbo where they would cease to do harm. In all his writings I read strong denunciations of the rabble, but not one word which shows the way by which they can be reclaimed. His message is a message of despair to them, not a word of hope; and I cannot wonder that a man who took such a cynical view of the people should have very small sympathy with the Gospel. The Lord Jesus never scorned the multitude, He had words of hope for all. He went among publicans and sinners, until at last, in derision, He was called their friend. When He spoke, "the common people heard Him gladly." He came to seek and to save the lost. Destroy the bad, and so get rid of their badness? Oh, no. Destroy their badness, that they themselves may live. On the other hand, if we lose our hold on the Bible, we may well despair of mankind. Discord, strife, war, selfishness, intemperance, impurity, crime, exist on so gigantic a scale that we look in vain for any human power that can arrest them. Where can any deliverance be found? In man none; but it will be found in Him who says, "Look unto Me and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth, for I am God, and there is none else." Throw up the Gospel, and you must look upon the world wholly in despair; but hold fast to the Gospel, and with this Book in hand we may still say, "I will trust." My lord, we speak boastingly of the greatness of England; but sometimes there is enough to make our hearts sink when we think of England; yet I feel that so far as England is great—and after all she is great—she owes her greatness to the Bible. If we let that slip, depend on it, the greatness of England will very soon decline. Look abroad the world over, and what do you see? Speaking generally, with some exceptions certainly, you see in the Governments far-reaching lofty ambition and high-handed rule met by Nihilism, Communism, and deadly crime. You see in the world of letters and science, law, evolution, development everywhere; God nowhere! You see in religion, ritualism, aestheticism, culture, icy rationalism, very little simple faith. You see in commerce and daily life, low-toned morality, self everything, our neighbour nothing. What does that mean but, briefly, just wilfulness, the spirit of lawlessness, renunciation of an unerring rule, no appeal to a higher court, man his own lord and judge. Now, I will not venture to say how it is in our own country. Certainly something of that you may see in private and public affairs in our own country; but I may say what I should like to see—I should like to see statesmen taking the principles of the Bible as the basis of every measure they bring in, and then the spirit of party would never overbear the spirit of righteousness. I should like to see commercial men taking the principles of the Bible as their rule in every transaction, and then we should not have to lament the untruthfulness and disingenuousness which, like a fretting leprosy, are eating into our commerce, and your lordship would not have to lament again, as you have done on this platform, the dishonour thrown on the English name by dishonest manufacturers, but the brand of every merchant would mean exactly what that of many does now mean—thorough genuineness in the articles that are presented. I should like to see working men taking the principle of the Bible as their guide, as, thank God, thousands upon thousands are doing; but I should like to see them all do it, and then their names would never be associated, as they now sometimes are, with intemperance, improvidence, miserable homes, and bad work, but always be associated with sobriety and providence, and godliness and honour. In fact, I should like to see every Englishman, of whatever name and rank, take the principles of the Bible as his law, and then I should look forward to the future of England without the smallest fear. What I have been wishing is the very end which this noble Society is seeking, and which, God helping it, it intends to pursue until it is realized; and, because I

believe it will be realized, therefore as I look on my country I can say, "I will trust."

The Lord Bishop of ROCHESTER said,—My Lords, my Rev. Brethren, my Christian Friends, I am greatly honoured by being permitted to move the following Resolution :—

"That the Society, as represented in this meeting, renders humble thanks to Almighty God for the opportunity given in so many lands for holding forth the Word of Life; and, that, while rejoicing in the success granted to all other Societies that have this object in view, it gratefully acknowledges the blessing that has rested upon its own labours during another year."

My lord, there are two things that this age of ours, in which I for one, am so thankful to be permitted to live, passionately desires, and I think it is the glory of the age that that is the case: they are Truth and Unity. We know perfectly well that they cannot always be had together, and we also are quite of one mind as to which has to come first when they cannot both be had at once. But I suppose we here to-day quite agree in this, that when we can have them together our hearts sincerely rejoice in it; and we are met together here to-day, not because we pretend to have a perfect agreement of opinion as to the meaning of every passage in the Bible, but because we believe that it is our duty to circulate the Word of God among all those for whom the blessed Saviour died. We are here, I say, thankful that we have this opportunity of battling together as one great army of the soldiers of Jesus Christ, face to face, and shoulder to shoulder, to do what we can for Him. It is the surest and safest way to fight our battle for Him. We can each of us say in our deepest heart, "Thy Word is tried to the uttermost, but Thy servant loveth it." I have often thought that there is no easier or better test of our actions in this life than the endeavour to anticipate what our feelings about them will be when in the spacious tracts of our Father's house we have left our present life behind us, and looking back to what we have done and said, sincerely ask ourselves if we would do or say the things again. I don't think we need much fear that when we are permitted, if God in His goodness permit us, through the mercy of His dear Son, to give each other a happy and holy greeting presently in the sinless and fearless land, we shall have much regret that we met here to shake hands over the Bible to-day. There is one sentence in the Report (which to me at least was not one minute too long) which struck me as a very forcible one. It spoke of the Bible as the book of the people, and it seems to me that one great question which this meeting suggests to us as practical men is, "Ought it to be the book of the people?" and "Shall it be?" I was very much touched by the allusion that was made by Mr. Reed in this report to the memory of his excellent father. I had the honour of enjoying Sir Charles Reed's friendship—at least I hope I may say so—we were together on the first School Board for London. We had many opportunities—he in a prominent way, and I in a humble way—of doing whatever we could to take care that the Word of God was read in the Board Schools of London. I believe nothing was so near to his heart as that, and he died, having, I believe not only for our time, but for many years to come, clinched the victory of the Bible. I do not suppose that there is one person in this vast and important assemblage who would not feel that a very great injustice was being done to him if he was accused by anyone outside of having any sour or fixed distrust of secular knowledge. We are here just because we trust the God of the Bible, and just because we feel that reason is one of the greatest gifts of God to His people, we desire to open out the entire dominion of knowledge to all the creatures that God has made in His own image; and we do not wish selfishly to keep the key of knowledge in our own hands, and shut it up from our poorer brethren. We may indeed be foolish in being Christians, but we are not quite so silly as that. What we are here for to-day is to correlate and complete secular knowledge by the revelation of the Word of God. We want to take care that our fellow-Christians who have fewer chances than ourselves shall have a fair start in life, with a chance in

the future to enable them to win their bread. And we also desire, God helping us, to give them the light which the Bible alone can give upon the problems of the future and the sorrows of the present. We desire to speak of them of the Incarnate Only Begotten Son of God, of whom the Bible is the written Word."

The Bishop continued his speech, commending the wisdom and prudence with which the Report referred to the revised translation of the New Testament, commending Professor Westcott's "History of the English Bible," and closing with the following exhortation:—"Let us to-day not content ourselves with coming to this meeting and listening to words that interest us, or to speeches that may move us, but let us each do what we can when we go back to our homes to help on this good and holy work."

The Rev. SILVESTER WHITEHEAD, Wesleyan Missionary from China, in seconding the resolution said,—My presence here to-day is due to the fact that I was ten years a missionary in South China, where I had exceptional opportunities of observing and assisting the operations of this Society. I shall, therefore, confine myself in the remarks I have to make to the Chinese department of the Society's noble work, remembering that it is not only the "British" but the "Foreign" Bible Society. And certainly I know of no field of the Society's toil that can be compared for one moment in magnitude and importance with that of China. If you exclude the Mohammedan population, about half the heathen world is in the Chinese empire, and it is there where heathenism is found in its most ancient, most gigantic, and defiant aspect. The fathers and founders of the Bible Society were fully alive to the importance of giving the Bible to China. The special cause of the Society's formation was to supply the Welsh with Bibles in their own language; but the next object contemplated was to furnish the Chinese with the Scriptures. And it is remarkable that the first Protestant missionary to China, Dr. Morrison, was sent out by the London Missionary Society, about the end of the very year in which the Bible Society was formed, with the more immediate object of acquiring the language and translating the Scriptures, so that the Bible Society's enterprise in China, and the work of Protestant Missions there, commenced at the same time, and by the same person, and they have gone hand-in-hand ever since. For a long time the missionaries acted as the agents of this Society, and they still form its committees and are closely identified with its work. Dr. Morrison reached China in 1807, and for sixteen or seventeen years laboured with indomitable perseverance in the face of immense difficulties and discouragements at his great task of translating the Bible. During part of the time he was assisted by Dr. Milne, who lived to see the translation finished, but succumbed under the severity of the toil before the work issued from the press. The whole was revised and published by Dr. Morrison in 1820, within two years after Marshman's version at Serampore. It was a noble monument of arduous toil, patient perseverance, and believing prayer. If he had done nothing else he would have accomplished a great work. It was an inspiration to me when I stood at that great man's grave in Macao and thought of what he had accomplished for Christ in China. It rekindled my enthusiasm and sent me back to my work with new heart and hope. There is a movement on foot to erect on the Thames Embankment a bronze statue to William Tyndale, who gave us the first printed English Bible, and I doubt not that the time will come when the grateful Chinese will erect a monument in one of their cities to Dr. Morrison. But the version of Morrison and Milne, being a first translation, and made with the help of native assistants not very high in the literary scale, was of course far from perfect in idiom and style. Dr. Morrison himself soon felt this, and took steps for a revision, but he died before it could be carried out. But when, by the treaty of 1842, five ports were opened to foreigners, and the Island of Hong Kong was ceded to Great Britain, the missionaries of the different societies undertook the work. A portion of the New Testament was allotted to the missionaries at each of the five ports, their joint labours

being revised by a committee of Delegates. The New Testament was completed in 1850, and the old Testament, by the English Delegates alone, three years afterwards. The whole was published in 1855. This version, generally known as the "Delegates' Version," has been printed and circulated by the Bible Society for twenty-six years, and it is but just to say that, for correctness and literary excellence, it stands among the translations into Chinese unrivalled. One of the most competent Sinologues has said that "it will bear a comparison for faithfulness and elegance with any version of the Old and New Testaments that he is acquainted with." Take as an example that verse which the Society has printed in 215 languages in order to show us a specimen of each, John iii. 16. I question whether there is one of the 215 translations that surpasses the Chinese in correctness and style. Or take the Lord's Prayer. It is a beautiful composition in the Delegates' Version, each sentence consisting of four characters, and the whole being marked by strength and elegance. It was not until the Delegates' Version was published that the Chinese were furnished with a satisfactory translation of the Scriptures, and fifty years elapsed between the appointment of the first missionary and the accomplishment of this work. This fact should be borne in mind when estimating the results of Protestant Missions in China. The ablest missionaries, after acquiring the language, had to give their best energies and most of their time to the translation of the Scriptures. It is only during the last twenty-six years that they have been able to put into the hands of the Chinese a Bible at all acceptable to their fastidious taste, and that they have been free to circulate and preach it. When this is considered, together with the vastness of the field, the masses to be moved, the character of the people, the difficulty of the language, the inveterate prejudices and exclusiveness to be overcome, it is a matter of surprise and gratitude that they are able to report to-day 15,000 converts, and about 50,000 worshippers. But apart from tabulated results, they conferred a noble boon on China, by giving it the Scriptures. They thus accomplished in a few decades of years what the Romish missionaries had not done in hundreds, and what probably they never would have done. If it be true, as Dr. Buchanan once said, that "he who translates the sacred Scriptures into a new tongue becomes a greater man, and a greater blessing to the world than he who founds a new empire," then those translators of the Bible into Chinese, and the Bible Society, under whose auspices and at whose cost it was published, stand out as among the greatest benefactors of the race. In giving the Bible to China they have opened to her the sublimest revelations ever vouchsafed to the human mind; they have put into her hand the most enchanting histories ever traced by human pen; they have introduced her to the noblest characters that ever adorned human life; they have laid down for her guidance the most perfect code of morals that ever entered into the heart of man to conceive; and they have disclosed to her the means whereby she may be delivered from her guilt and degradation, restored to the favour of God, renewed in His image, and exalted to His throne. In giving her the Bible they have flashed upon her eyeballs a light which will awaken her from the sleep of ages; they have imparted to her an intellectual impulse which will carry her to higher and purer knowledge; they have furnished her with those sacred and eternal principles which will regenerate her character, transform her life, raise her civilization, and brighten her homes. The Bible has blessed every land it has touched. It has done more to raise mankind, to make them prosper and progress, than all other literatures put together. Look at the difference between the countries that know it and those that know it not. Those nations to-day most free, most cultured, most prosperous, where life is of most value, where industry is most honoured, where law is most just in enactment and impartial in administration, are those most swayed by the truths and principles of the Holy Bible. Nobly did our beloved Queen recognise this, when asked by an African Prince the secret of England's greatness, she presented him with a copy of the Bible. It ministers to all

that is pure and lofty in refinement and taste; it has given to art, poetry, and music their sublimest subjects. What would the Doré Gallery have been but for the Bible? Where but in its pages could Milton find a theme adequate to his genius? And what but its doctrine of the Messiah could furnish Handel with a subject grand enough for the full swell of his incomparable music? Millions have risen from the perusal of its pages with new light in their understanding and new joy in their heart, and have adored the matchless perfections of that glorious Being, whom it is its chief function to reveal. Who then can estimate the boon that is conferred when a book like this is given to a country like China? No version of the Bible was ever printed that opens its treasures to so many people as the Chinese version. The literary style is understood all over the empire, and in every Chinese colony. Though the people of different provinces cannot understand each other's speech, they can each other's writing. In this respect China has the advantage over India, where so many languages are employed. No other language can convey the Word of Life to so large a portion of the human race. Alexander conquered the world, but it could not understand his Greek. Rome laid her belt of 1,000 miles around the Mediterranean, but her empire was a Babel. England has thrown her arms around the globe, but her Bible cannot be read by a hundred million souls; nor can the French, or the German. But the Chinese version is intelligible to hundreds of millions. Happy the man and honoured the Society, who put the all-regenerating Bible, the Law, the Psalms, and the Prophets, the Gospels, the Epistles and the Apocalypse, into a language that can reach about eighty millions of homes, and four hundred millions of hearts. And what a people the Chinese are! They are not Hottentots or savages wandering about red-ochred and tattooed, whose first sight of their printed language is in the Bible given to them by the missionary. They are an ancient and ingenious people, living under the most venerable government on earth, with a literature nearly as old as Moses—a people who had their poets, sages, and philosophers centuries before English history began, and who are trained in many of the arts of civilized life. They may justly be described as a keen, inquisitive, and reading people, with mental capacity for almost anything. And their patience, perseverance and industry are proverbial. There is a beautiful story of a Chinese peasant boy, which illustrates their character. He was unable to study by day, and resolved to study by night, and not being able to buy a lamp, he carried home each night a glowworm to apply to his book. Give such men Jesus, and let them apply their glowworm to the Bible, and what a people! Make them familiar with the grand old patriarchs of Scripture and its inspired prophets, let them know its apostles and learn to adorn the majesty and love the goodness of that high and heavenly figure that fills its gospels; let its narratives charm them, and its pictured scenes delight their imagination; attune their minds to the music of its psalms, and engage their fancy with the parables; let its beatitudes and commandments control their life, its miracles awe their wonders, and its cross excite their gratitude and win their trust, and what may not the Chinese become? What nation may they not rival? What limit can be put to their power and progress? And among no people has the failure of every other system been so signal as among the Chinese. It might seem as if God had isolated them from the rest of the race for many centuries just to see whether human nature has in it any recuperative power, whether man—apart from God—can devise any system, social, political, or moral, sufficient for the suppression of vice, the exaltation of virtue, and the promotion of happiness. And certainly they have not been wanting in expedients. They have had three great national systems in full operation—two of them for twenty-five centuries and the other for twenty. These systems “occupy the three corners of a triangle—the moral, the metaphysical, and the material.” They appeal to the three chief faculties of the soul, the will, the sensibility, and the intellect; and they unite in ignoring God. They have had ample facility for developing every possible potentiality they may have had for elevating the

people. They have had a wide field, length of days, freedom from outside interference—they have basked in the smiles of the Government, and enjoyed wealth and patronage. They have had every possible advantage, and what is the result? It is an empire more corrupt and degraded than they found it. Notwithstanding any good influence they may have exerted, the nation has sunk under their ægis into deeper darkness and fouler immorality—a most convincing proof that man-made systems, however plausible, can never regenerate human nature and raise the race. We have been recently urged to adopt in place of the old creeds, religions, and philosophies, as the resultant of them all, what is called a synthesis, a human synthesis—"an organic co-ordination of man's general ideas and activities—a theory to explain whatever belongs to man, and from man's point of view." The synthesis, drawn equally from David the Psalmist and from David Eame, from Paul and from Voltaire, from Jesus and Tom Paine, is to be the great regenerator, both of the soul and of society. Now, the Chinese have had something answering to this synthesis for centuries—a combination of the best elements of different systems of philosophy and religion, but it has failed to improve their condition. And any such eclectic system must fail, even though Bible elements be in it. The Bible does not need and will not bear admixture. China's sacred books have some points of truth in the midst of much error and folly; but the Bible contains the whole truth and nothing but the truth, and it is ever accompanied and made effective by the Spirit who first inspired it. It is possible to have truth without its producing any permanent effect, just as it is possible to have light that will fructify nothing. Pure white light, we are well aware, is composed of three fundamental colours—red, yellow, and blue. Red is the caloric or heat-giving ray, yellow is the luminous, and blue the chemical or active ray. Now, if you take certain plants and put them under a glass so coloured as to absorb the blue rays of light, you will find that, though they grow with the greatest rapidity, and put forth luxuriant blossoms, they will just as quickly fade away again without bringing forth fruit. Does not this look like a physical reflection of a religious fact? You may have truth, and even religious truth, which brings forth no fruit unto perfection, either because it is not pure, or because it is not complete, or because it is not accompanied and made active by the influence of the Holy Spirit. He it is that makes Bible truth efficacious. His influence is its active and fructifying ray. Hence the Apostle teaches us that all Christian virtues are to be viewed as the fruit of the Spirit. "But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance." Hence the Saviour could pray—"Sanctify them through Thy truth; Thy word is truth." And accordingly, while the most perfect heathen systems have failed, the Bible is efficacious. Wherever it goes and is received, men are raised, and changed, and bettered—born again, "not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the Word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever." Wherever it goes and obtains a foothold, the wilderness is turned into the garden of the Lord. "Instead of the thorn there comes up the fir tree, and instead of the briar the myrtle tree: and it is to the Lord for a name, for an everlasting sign that shall not be cut off." The Bible began to flash its light upon the minds and to touch the hearts of the Chinese even when in the process of translation and printing.

The speaker then gave an account of the conversion of Frac-A-Ko, the first Protestant Christian of China, and of Ch'è, a Confucian temple-keeper, who became a Colporteur and the first Protestant Christian martyr of China, and further pressed upon the Society the importance of this field, saying, "The time, the set time, to favour China seems now to have come."

The Bishop of MOONSONE moved the following resolution:—

"That the thanks of this meeting be given to the President and Vice-Presidents, for their valued support, and to Joseph Hoare, Esq., V.P., and

Treasurer, who is requested to continue his services. That warm thanks be also presented to the Committees and Collectors of the various auxiliaries and branch societies at home and in the colonies, on a continuance of whose cordial help the Society relies; and that the following gentlemen be the Committee for the ensuing year, with power to fill up vacancies." [Names read.] In doing so, he made a speech, in which he gave a very graphic description of the difficulties and encouragements in his far north diocese. We regret we can only find room for one extract.

The Indians, when they had once received the Word of God, became missionaries to their brethren. Some time ago, while I was at Rupert's House, where there is a numerous tribe of Indians, a man came to me, and said he should be very glad to be baptized. I looked at him with astonishment, and said, "I have never seen you before; how, then, can you ask me to baptize you? Can you read?" "Oh, yes," he replied. I asked him to bring me his book, and he did so, and read with great fluency. I said to him, "How came you to get this book, and to gain this knowledge?" He replied, "Last winter a body of Indians to which I belong, who were out on a hunting expedition, met with a body of Rupert's House Indians. Finding that they could read, pray, and sing, we asked them to teach us to read, and they did so." Those two parties of Indians sat down side by side, and one party taught the other to read; and when they were obliged to separate for want of food, the Rupert's House Indians gave their companions, at parting with them, a portion of their books. I am happy to be able to add that, before my departure, I baptized the man, and the whole tribe were afterwards admitted by baptism into the Church of Christ, a large number of them being communicants.

The Dean of RIFON seconded the resolution in a good speech, showing that all missionary societies are indebted to the Bible Society.

In answer to a vote of thanks, the Earl of Shaftesbury said:—

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN.—It is to-day, I believe, the thirty-second time that I have had, by God's blessing, the honour and happiness of taking this chair upon the anniversary of the Bible Society; if so, it is the thirty-second time that I have received your vote of thanks—it will be the thirty-second time that I have to return my expression of gratitude for the vote of thanks you have passed; therefore you cannot expect anything novel either in sentiment or expression. I can only say that every hour of my life, and all that I hear and see, attaches me more and more to this great Society. Dark and dismal as the prospect is in England and on all sides, I see in this a great conservative principle; and I cannot but think that by the blessing of God this grand old empire will weather the storm under the sheltering protection of the Bible Society and kindred efforts from God's house. Now, your resolution to-day is particularly warm and affectionate in its expressions. I am deeply grateful for it, and I feel honoured, too, by being made the subject of a particular resolution; nevertheless, I assure you I like very much the resolution that preceded it, in which the President was mixed up with the Vice-Presidents and with all the officers, and the Committee and many others. Let me say of that Committee that I have known them in succession for above thirty years, and I have never known in my experience such a succession of men so judicious, so sincere, so careful, so anxious to devote their time and talents to the furtherance of this great cause. We have gone on for all these years without a difficulty, a collision, or a doubt. The affairs of the Society have been governed with singular prudence to such an extent that I cannot but look upon the whole from the beginning to the end as a positive miracle and an intervention of Almighty God. I can only say again I very deeply feel the sympathy you have expressed, and if it should please God to grant me health and strength, I trust to meet you here again another year;

if not so, I hope by His grace and mercy we shall meet in a much better place.

The benediction was pronounced by the Right Rev. the Bishop of Moosonee, and the meeting terminated.

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