

ART. IV.—THE TRANSLATION OF THE BIBLE IN ANCIENT AND MODERN TIMES.

Address given on Saturday, February 16, 1889, in the School Library of Eton College to Eton boys, by an old Etonian.

I HAVE been invited by the headmaster to speak upon a most interesting subject in my old school, and it gives me the greatest pleasure to do so. I left Eton at Election, 1840, nearly half a century ago, but it is still with gratitude that I look back to the sound education which I received under the headmasters Dr. Keate and Dr. Hawtrey (*non sine virgá*), and my tutors, Bishop Chapman and dear Harry Dupuis. There remain at Eton of that period only Archdeacon Balston and Mr. Carter, my schoolfellows, and Mr. John Wilder, of whom I shall ever think gratefully for having "sent me up for good" at Christmas, 1834, my first out of twenty-one times.

The Old Testament, as you all know, was mainly written in the Hebrew, a Semitic language; but after the return from the captivity at Babylon, in B.C. 536, that language ceased to be the vernacular of the people, and gave way to a sister-language, the Aramaic or Chaldee, in which parts of the Books of Ezra and Daniel are written. Before the time of our Lord, Hebrew had become a dead language, and the Jews, as well as the Samaritans, when they read the Old Testament in their synagogues, made use of Targums, or translations. When our Lord read from the Book of Isaiah in the synagogue at Nazareth, we may presume that, if He read the actual Hebrew text, He explained it by a Targum. Some of the very words which fell from our Lord's lips are quoted: "Amen," "Ephphatha," "Talitha kumi," and "Eloi, Eloi, lama Sabacthani," the latter being a quotation from the Targum of Psalm xxii.: the hypothesis that our Lord and His disciples, mostly residents of Galilee and uneducated persons in a humble position of life, used the Greek language cannot be maintained. When St. Paul is described in the Acts as addressing the Jews in the Hebrew tongue, it means that he used the vernacular understood by the Hebrews, *i.e.*, Aramaic. No doubt St. Paul, a highly-educated man, spoke both Greek and Aramaic.

The Hebrew Scriptures had been translated into Alexandrine Greek about 150 B.C. by the order of Ptolemy Philadelphus, King of Egypt. This translation differs materially from the Hebrew texts which have come down to our time, and is known as the Septuagint, from the legendary number of translators employed. The New Testament has come down to us entirely in Greek, though it is asserted, upon reasonable grounds, that the Gospel of St. Matthew was written in Aramaic. Greek became the Church-language of the early Christians, as the Gospel spread westward into a region where Greek was the

vernacular. A value was then placed upon the Septuagint, as if it were inspired, and this error still clings to the Greek Church. In those days no Christian ever cared to refer to the original Hebrew text, but the Jews preserved it faithfully, and took many precautions for that purpose. About one hundred years before the Christian era, the old Phœnician Hebrew character, which still survives in Samaritan texts, gave way before the square-written characters so well known as the Hebrew. When Moses is exhibited in statues or pictures holding the tables of stone with the Decalogue written in the square Hebrew character, an anachronism is committed. On the other hand, that the square-written character had been adopted in our Lord's time is proved by His remark "that one jot or tittle would not pass away" (*ἰῶτα ἓν ἢ μίαν κεραίαν*), which would not have applied to the old written characters.

It cannot be impressed upon our convictions too strongly, that from the earliest days of the Christian Church there was a strong desire and universal practice to convey the truths of the Bible to the people in the vulgar tongue. In a letter to Paulinus A.D. 395, Jerome remarks with a kind of prophetic spirit: "Et de Jerusalem, et de Britannîâ æqualiter patet aula cœli." In every false religion, such as the Brahmanical, Buddhist, and Mahometan, and every corrupted form of the true religion, such as the Roman, Greek, Armenian, Georgian, Syriac, Koptic, and Ethiopic, the tendency has been to keep the sacred books in an unknown and obsolete language, and restrict the laity and the female sex to oral instruction, or reading of selections, or metrical versions, constructed by the priests. Such instruction may possibly be good and faithful, but it varies from generation to generation, and is imperfect. For instance, sixty years ago Dr. Keate used every Sunday to read one of Blair's Sermons in the upper school, and called it "prose." Dr. Hawtrey used other books of the period, but they would not go down now. Moreover, the revelation which has been made to man is a message in its entirety to each human conscience, and as the vehicle of words and sentences becomes gradually antiquated and unintelligible, it must be translated. We are not at liberty to place any limitation on the great plan of salvation, and must consider the Bible as a precious legacy to be handed down from one generation to another, from one country to another, from one language to another. Wickcliffe put the matter clearly when he wrote: "Since secular men should assuredly understand the Faith, it should be taught them in whatever language is best known to them." Some of you recollect that fine passage in the "Agamemnon" of Æschylus, l. 304:

τοιοῖδ' ἔγοιμοι λαμπροτέρων νόμοι,
ἄλλος παρ' ἄλλον διαδοχαῖς πληροῦμενοι.

It is the link that connects us with the Church in the Catacombs, the golden cord that unites the humble translator, now at work in Central Africa or the New Hebrides, with Luther, and Erasmus, and Wickcliffe, and Ulfilas, and Jerome, and Origen, and the seventy scholars of Alexandria, who set the great example of rendering the sacred books of one race into the language of another, and established the great principle of doctrinal continuity, based upon the oracles of God, ever re-appearing in a new combination of sounds, syllables and sentences. The light shining through a crystal appears in different colours, but it is the same light.

The Church of the Catacombs, recruited from the lower classes of Rome, was not long content with the Greek version, and several translations were made into Latin, the earliest being a gift of the Church in North Africa to its Mother Church in Italy. Many saints suffered martyrdom for the sake of the old Latin versions. A dangerous divergence of texts soon troubled the Church, and Jerome was commissioned by Damasus, Bishop (so-called Pope) of Rome, in the year 385, to revise the whole, and put forth an approved version. He was a most capable man, and used the Septuagint as the basis for the Old Testament. Accompanied by two holy Roman ladies, he settled at Bethlehem, and after he had completed his first revision, the conviction was forced upon him, that the suggestion of Origen in his "Hexapla" was the right one, and that he ought to make a fresh and distinct translation from the Hebrew text: this venerable work was known as the Vulgate. He was not a profound Hebrew scholar, and he had no critical appliances, and he lived one thousand years before the invention of printing. His work was committed to the precarious charge of manuscripts prepared from century to century by ignorant, careless, audacious, and, in some cases, fraudulent copyists. It is astonishing to read of the liberties taken by copyists. Such a thing as a critical conscience did not exist. Glosses, written in the margin by one generation, crept into the text in the next generation; passages were altered to render the supposed meaning intelligible; there was no public or learned criticism to control the copyist working in the cloisters of a convent under particular theological influences. It is not a matter of surprise that the text of the Vulgate, which was the very first out-turn of the new power of the printing-press, cannot be accepted as if fresh from the hand of Jerome, yet it is most valuable. A study of the Vulgate converted Luther and the Reformers.

After a struggle of five hundred years for supremacy over the other Latin versions, it was declared by the Council of Trent, in 1542 A.D., to be the only authorized medium in

which the Gospel would be conveyed to the laity. The Church of Rome had come to the parting of the ways, and had left the highroad of Bible-truth for the tortuous path of mediæval error. At a later period translations of the Vulgate were made, under Episcopal sanction, into Italian, French, Spanish, Portuguese and German, and published in avowed antagonism to Protestant versions.

The main-stream of Christianity flowed westward to Europe; still there remained Churches in the west of Asia and north-east corner of Africa, and the early Church cared for them also. The Syriac translation was the gift of the Church of Antioch, a Greek-speaking Church, in 200 A.D., to the natives of the country, who knew not Greek. This language was akin to Aramaic, but had a peculiar written character of its own. It is a cogent reply to those who fondly urge that our Lord and His Apostles used the Greek language, that two hundred years later the Church of Syria required a translation in the vernacular, notwithstanding the great increase of Greek and Roman influences, and the entire destruction of all indigenous culture. The Old Testament was a direct translation from the Hebrew; and the Syriac manuscripts, which have survived to our time, have been valuable as checks on the Greek and Roman copyists. This version is still used for liturgical purposes by the Syriac Churches in Mesopotamia and South India, though Arabic is the vernacular of the one and Malayalam of the other.

In Egypt there was a population which did not speak Greek, but made use of the latest, and now extinct, corrupted form of the great Egyptian language, which through the vehicles of demotic, hieratic, hieroglyphic papyri and lapidary inscriptions can be traced back for a period exceeding four thousand years. The Church of Alexandria, itself Greek-speaking, recognised the right of its members, who did not know Greek, to have personal access to the story of their risen Saviour, and translations were made in three dialects, the Memphitic, Sahidic, and Bashmúric, showing their anxiety that the millions of Upper as well as Lower Egypt, in the second and beginning of the third centuries, should, as the best antidote to heresies, not be deprived of their inheritance. Copies of that translation—found like waste-paper in boxes in the convents of the Nitron Lake, and forgotten by a race which have changed their language to Arabic—have brought home certain precious contributions to our Scriptural knowledge. It has its own peculiar written character.

To the south of Egypt is the great country of Abyssinia, which is indebted to Alexandria for its being nominally—only nominally—in the category of Christian nations. Before the

close of the fourth century after Christ a translation was made of the Bible into Ethiopic or Giz—now a dead language, but then the language of the natives—in a peculiar written character. Among the MSS. which have come down to us are the unique copies of the Book of Enoch, the Book of Adam, and some books found in no other Church.

From the north about that period a pressure of the Goths was taking place on the Roman Empire: they were heathens, the advance-guard of the great Teutonic branch of the Aryan family, to which we ourselves belong. The Church at Constantinople thought it their duty to give the Gospel to these heathen in the same spirit that Britons now act to the people of India, of China, of Japan, of Africa, of the Islands of the South Seas, and North and South America. A great man named Ulfilas, Bishop of the Mæso-Goths, who dwelt in Bulgaria (as now called), born a heathen in A.D. 318, and baptized at Constantinople, undertook the translation from the Greek in an alphabet formed by himself for the purpose. A celebrated fragmentary copy of this translation, dating back to the fifth century, is shown at Upsala, in Sweden.

In that same century was held the Council of Ephesus, and some young Armenians came to it, their object being to buy correct manuscripts of the Gospels in Greek. Young Armenians had been sent to Alexandria to study Greek, and, on their return—under the guidance of Miesrob, who had already translated the Bible from Syriac into Armenian—they set about a translation of the Greek into the same language, and accomplished it. The debt which they owed to Europe has in these last days been repaid, for in the Armenian convent at Venice has been found an old Armenian Harmony of the early Gospels of the second century, showing clearly, that the four Gospels must have existed at an anterior date, whatever critics may argue to the contrary.

In the valleys of the southern slopes of the Caucasus is a country called Georgia, now part of the Russian Empire. This is the region known in ancient times as Colchis, whence Jason stole the golden fleece, and to these mountains Prometheus was chained as a punishment for the benefits conferred by him on mankind. The inhabitants had accepted Christianity, and in the sixth century, to supply a want felt, young men were sent to Alexandria to study the Greek language, and this enabled them, on their return, to translate the Bible into the Georgian language, the first language, belonging neither to the Aryan or Semitic family, which had been so honoured, and in a written character peculiar to itself.

The Teutonic races, which had been the terror of Rome up to a certain time, had been pushed forward to the West by

hordes of a different though kindred origin, the Slavs, and the vast plains of Russia had been occupied, and the settlers had accepted Christianity from Constantinople. As if in the fulfilment of a law which could not be broken, two brothers, Cyril and Methodius, sons of a Greek noble at Thessalonica, both learned men, and occupying high social positions, which had enabled them to acquire the language of the Slavonic barbarians, retired into a convent for the purpose of translating the Bible, before the close of the ninth century, in a form of written character invented by themselves, which still bears the name of Cyril.

The same fatality overtook all these translations: the spirituality of the Church which used them was dried up, and the language had become unintelligible to the vulgar, though still clung to by an ignorant and unworthy priesthood. The Gothic language perished entirely off the face of the earth; the others survive, and are used rather to obscure than to teach truth. And part of the duty of Bible societies is to supply the Bible in the modern vernaculars to Churches starving under the shadow of old and venerable, yet dead trees, which no longer bear leaves and fruit for the healing and feeding of the nations.

In the peninsula of Arabia the Gospel never obtained a foothold. The Arabic language was, however, destined to play a mighty part in the history of mankind, as the vehicle of a false religion, and as the invigorator by its contact, and linguistic amalgamation, of some of the greatest languages in Asia and Africa. Translations of the Bible were made into Arabic as early as the lifetime of Mahomet, who died A.D. 632; from which, as he knew no other language, he must have gleaned his imperfect and distorted knowledge of its contents. Had such a translation of the Bible as now exists in Arabic been at the disposal of that great high-souled and earnest man, how different would probably have been his utterances!—how different the creed of his followers!

Still further to the east is the kingdom of Persia. The inhabitants of the southern provinces speak a language called Persian. A translation of the Pentateuch was made by a Jew from the Syriac. The date is uncertain, but it cannot be earlier than the ninth century A.D., as the Tower of Babel is called the Tower of Baghdad, a city of which the foundation date is known—A.D. 827.

Let me cast one glance at the extreme west of Europe. By the singular good fortune of the inhabitants of the British Islands, in all the early efforts of Christians they had a conspicuous part. They received the Gospel early; one of the early Christian martyrs, St. Alban, died at Verulam in Hert-

fordshire; and their missionaries to the heathen were early in the field—Columba, Columbanus, Aidan, and Boniface. They were foremost in the Crusades, foremost in Bible-translation, and in the Reformation. Cædmon, who lived in the seventh century A.D., wrote a metrical version, but Anglo-Saxon inter-linear versions of the Latin Bible are found. The Venerable Bede, on the very day of his death (A.D. 735), gave a finishing touch to the translation of St. John's Gospel. King Alfred the Great took part in the translation of the Bible, and prefixed some chapters of Exodus to his Code of Laws in A.D. 890. An Anglo-Saxon Glossary of the four Gospels, dated A.D. 900, is in the British Museum. In the tenth century another Anglo-Saxon version was made from the Vulgate, and the MS. is in the Bodleian.

This completes the story of the different languages to which the Bible was committed at a period antecedent to the Norman Conquest of England: 1. Hebrew; 2. Aramaic; 3. Samaritan; 4. Greek; 5. Syriac; 6. Latin; 7. Koptic; 8. Ethiopic; 9. Gothic; 10. Armenian; 11. Georgian; 12. Slavonic; 13. Arabic; 14. Persian; 15. Anglo-Saxon. There was a dense silence for three centuries, and a dark period preceded the dawn of the Reformation. Oriental travellers know well the darkness that precedes the coming of the morning. It was a darkness of ignorance, superstition, priestcraft, and bigotry. Latin had died out of the mouths of the people; a new birth of vernacular forms of speech had taken place; but the Romish Church was blind in spite of warnings. The first effort of Protestants was to get at the inspired records of their faith, and give them to the people. The Anglo-Saxon versions above alluded to were justly appealed to by the Reformers in England as a proof of the continuity of vernacular versions, and the right of Christian Churches to have the Bible in the language understood by men, women, and children. To Wickcliffe—the morning-star of the Reformation in A.D. 1380, *temp.* Richard II.—belongs the high honour of completing the translation of the entire Scripture in English. At nearly the same time, and before the appearance of Jerome of Prague and Huss, in Bohemia, a translation had come into existence. A German version was made at the expense of the Emperor of Germany in A.D. 1405, and exists in the Vienna Library. A translation into Provençal dates back to A.D. 1179, and one into Flemish to A.D. 1300. These existed before the dawn of the Reformation. Subsequent to that mighty unbarring of the doors of the closed temples of religion and knowledge the following versions sprang into existence: Welsh, Gaelic, Erse, Manx, French, Dutch, Norwego-Danish, Swedish, Spanish, Italian, Rouman, Russ, Osmanli Turki, Old Norse, Lapp, Finn,

Lithu, Pole, Wend, Magyar, Romanch, Lett, Karniola, Ehst, Nogai Turki (twenty-five languages). The invention of printing, the revival of learning, the reintroduction of Greek and Hebrew into the curriculum of Western scholars, made a mighty change. The Latin Vulgate was the first book actually printed and published, in A.D. 1462. Erasmus put forth his Greek version at Basle in A.D. 1516, followed by Cardinal Ximenes in A.D. 1520. Texts were compared, translations revised, and copies multiplied. Bohemian was the first living language printed. In the meantime the world was being explored or discovered, a clearer knowledge of the multiplicity of languages was being obtained; yet, strange to say, it never entered into the conception of the good and holy men of that period that it was a duty to supply the heathen and Mahometan world with copies of the Word of God, and in a systematic way to reintroduce it to the knowledge of the Church of Rome, the Greek Church, and the fallen Churches of Western Asia and North-East Africa. They were content to feed themselves with the bread of life; but it was not revealed to them, nor was it brought home to their consciences from the pulpit, that Jesus died for all, that Christ from the Cross looked down upon the poor heathen also, and that the so-called dogs had a congenital right to the crumbs from the Christian's table.

Now and then there was a bright exception. John Eliot was born in A.D. 1604, and went to New England in A.D. 1631. He learnt the language of the Algonquin tribes, who then dwelt in the States of Massachusetts and Virginia, and translated the Bible, which has outlived the race, religion, and language; for all have passed away. The Bible lives as the language of a dead nation. He had no helps in his work such as men have now; his method was, "Prayers and pains through faith in Jesus Christ will do anything." At the other end of the world some laymen of the Dutch East India Company translated the Bible into Malay. In A.D. 1668 the New Testament was printed in Holland, and large portions of the Old Testament, in A.D. 1723, both in the Roman and Arabic written characters, at the expense of the Government, who also prepared a translation of the New Testament and part of the Old Testament in Portuguese for the use of the settlers in the Dutch colonies, who spoke that language; and this was the first vernacular translation that reached that priest-ridden land (Portugal), and the one which, in a revised form, is still in use. In South India Ziegenbalg, the Danish missionary, printed, in A.D. 1714, his translation of the New Testament in Tamil, and had done part of the Old Testament, when he died; but his great work was completed in A.D. 1727. In A.D. 1661 Gravius, a Dutch pastor in Batavia, printed a translation of

the Gospels of Matthew and John in one of the languages of the aboriginal tribes of the Island of Formosa, within the empire of China. The language is still scarcely known, for before the edition was circulated the mission was uprooted. In Ceylon, before A.D. 1783, the Dutch Government had promoted a translation of the New Testament and portions of the Old into Sinháli, and they were printed at Colombo.

Two reflections arise from these facts. The Dutch supplied translations in Malay, Formosa, and Sinháli, and the Danish in Tamil, while the British had done nothing in Asia. In the following century they made up for their slackness. The famous Roman Catholic priest Beschi was one of the best Tamil scholars of his age, and was alive during the time of Ziegenbalg's labours, but it never occurred to him to translate any book of the Holy Scriptures, for his method of converting the heathen, and his method of guiding a Christian Church, did not require it—in fact, would not have survived the contact with a knowledge of Scripture; and the same may be said of the Jesuits in Paraguay, the founders of the Papist establishments in China, the missionaries of the Romish Church at the present moment, belonging to any one of the great Congregations, labouring in any part of the world, among tribes and nations of any stage of intellectual culture. Not one of them (except the Jesuits at Beirút, who, under the pressure of the Protestant competition, have put forth an excellent, though costly, Arabic Bible) has ever taken their converts to the pure fountain of Christian truth, but substituted cunningly-devised fables of legends of the Virgin Mary and so-called saints. More than that, they are the avowed enemies of Bible-circulation.

In all, at the close of the second period, there were about fifty-four versions in existence, many of them dead, and used only for liturgical purposes, most of them incorrect, and requiring careful comparison with the Hebrew and Greek texts, and all very insufficiently distributed. Many nominal Christians, and some real ones, passed through life without ever seeing a Bible. In England a large Bible was fastened by a chain to a lectern in some churches. Bible-possession was rare; Bible-study, in the proper sense of that word, rarer. A deadness had fallen over the Protestant Churches. There may have been some who desired, but few had the opportunity. At length, at the close of the eighteenth century, the missionary spirit burst into existence, reacting upon the home Churches; and a missionary spirit is based on the Bible—a Bible understood by the people; to be read; to be prayed over; to be thumbed by old folks; to be lisped by little children; to be spelt out by imperfectly-educated men and

women; to be read and explained in churches, chapels, and Sunday-schools; to be whispered into dying ears; to be handed down with pencil-marks and annotations from parents to children.

The want was felt: nobody knew exactly how to supply it. Some effort must be made to accomplish a great work which had been the desire of so many generations. Who would apply the spark to the train? It came about in an unexpected way. Great rivers spring from tiny fountains. The story reads like a myth of the Middle Ages; like the lying legend of Lourdes in South France, it centres round a peasant girl, who had been in the habit of walking two miles every Saturday to prepare her Sunday-school lesson from the only Bible in the neighbourhood. With the savings of six years, in A.D. 1800 she walked twenty-five miles to purchase a Bible of Mr. Charles, of Bala, who received an annual small consignment from a local Bible association. She burst into tears and buried her face in her hands when she heard that every copy was already appropriated. The minister was greatly moved at the sight, and gave her a copy, which copy is now in the Bible House in London, and respected as its very foundation-stone. In 1802 Mr. Charles went to London to try and found a Welsh Bible Society, but the matter had got beyond his power, and in 1804 was founded in London a Bible Society to supply the world, and the example was followed in New York, Edinburgh, and Holland, and their branches and depôts have spread over the world.

Since that date a great crop of new versions in the different languages of the world has sprung up. Mission-stations were planted by the different Churches, and translations sent home to be printed. Copies were sent back in thousands to be sold below cost-price, to be used in the school, the family, and the humble home, and to be the rule of the new life.

I now ask each boy present to accept from me a present of a specimen book, or sheet of one single verse of the Gospel of St. John, in a great many, though not the whole, of these versions. I place on the shelves of the school-library a selection of versions taken at random from the store of every portion of the world. Some few can tell you off-hand where each language is spoken, and to what family of languages it belongs; what is the state of culture of the people who read it, what written character is used for the printing, and the name of the missionary or scholar who made the translation, or can make use of it; perhaps I can; but no living man can pretend to say that he himself knows more than twenty out of the three hundred varieties, and perhaps not that number; yet the knowledge of each language is by certain specific

persons as certain and accurate as the knowledge of Latin and Greek possessed by the Newcastle Scholar of the year. The versions, when printed, are brought into the immediate use of native pastors, native schoolmasters, and the women and children, for whose use they are prepared; they are not composed to be put away as a *tour de force* on the shelf of a library. Revision goes on with every new edition, and the scholarship of the greatest scholars of Europe and America is challenged to point out defects. Now, if any Eton boy present can point out any error of the rendering of the Greek in the specimens which he holds in his hands, of the Fiji, or Tahiti, or Swahili, or Zulu, or Mohawk, or Telugu, or Mandarin, or Japan, I shall feel much obliged if he will stand up and point it out, and I will get it corrected in the next edition. This is the challenge which we give to the critic, or the doubter, or the unbeliever.

No one part of the world is more attended to than the rest. The sun never sets on the work of the Bible societies; their publications are being read in different quarters at every hour of the day. Many of the translators were simple, unscientific men, but they did their work well. Very often they had no help from dictionary or grammar, for nothing of the kind existed. Eton boys can realize what it is to write an exercise without such assistance. Some required one kind of written character, some another; some were rendered in two or more to suit the requirements of the people. Art and Science have been the handmaids of the inspired Revelation.

A word about the languages of the world. There are more than two thousand mutually unintelligible spoken at this moment; but the great languages, like the English, tread down the small ones, and languages die like the people who spoke them. King Xerxes, who was defeated at Salamis, as you all know, and who was the husband of Queen Esther, issued orders to the 127 provinces of his kingdom, according to the writing thereof, and to every people after their language. All have perished except two, Greek and Hebrew, for they both had become the receptacle of God's Word. Versions are made in dialects where it is necessary, and in some cases in mere jargons, when the people understand nothing else.

Europe is pretty well supplied, and the wants of the tribes who speak the smaller and less well-known languages have been attended to. In Asia great progress has been made, especially in British India; translations have been made in scores of languages, and are diligently distributed. A great work has been done in China: people used to think that there was only one language for all the inhabitants, but the mistake has been found out. The Book-language is intelligible to *the*

eyes of all the educated, but each reader has to express himself in his own vernacular, as the translation is expressed in ideographs, which speak to the eye only, and so far resemble the figures in arithmetic, which each nation calls by a different name. Many other translations have been made in the different provincial colloquials, some in ideographs, and some in the Roman alphabet.

In Africa and Oceania a great work has been done, and much more is being done; the whole Bible is now to be purchased for a small sum in scores of languages, the very names of which were unknown at the beginning of this century; and they are valued above all things by the people, who gladly pay all the cost. Most of these languages are melodious, and capable of expressing every idea: all the stories of savage languages have been disproved. Every language of the world can be tuned to sing the same great Psalm of Salvation.

Passing into America, we find the same necessity for, and the same power of giving, the Bible, but strangely different is the vehicle of speech: while in China every word is a monosyllable, in America the word seems to disappear, and the unit of speech is a sentence, a compact expression in many syllables. It is asserted that the word "kneel" can only be expressed in eleven syllables. To record such intolerably long sentence-words a syllabary, consisting of a united consonant and vowel, has been composed, so as to shorten the inordinate length in printing; and I leave in your library specimens of this remarkable and ingenious device to bring a knowledge of the Gospel home to the Red Indians.

I recall to your recollection the lines of dear old Horatius Flaccus, who was fond of airing his geographical knowledge, which was not more accurate than that of the authors of the Acts of the Apostles, who tells us that there were devout men at Jerusalem from *every nation under heaven* (*ἀπὸ παντὸς ἔθνους τῶν ὑπὸ τὸν οὐρανόν*), but his enumeration of them reveals a very limited area. So Horatius Flaccus tells us in his own pretty way of the unlimited diffusion which he anticipates for his charming odes:

Jam Daedaleo ocyor Icaro
 Visam gementis littora Bospori
 Syrtisque Gaetulas canoros
 Ales Hyperboreosque campos.
 Me Colchus et qui dissimulat metum
 Marsae cohortis Dacus et ultimi
 Noscent Geloni, me peritus
 Discet Hiber Rhodanique poter.

And again:

Visam Britannos hospitibus feros
 Et laetum equino sanguine Concanum,
 Visam pharetratos Gelonos
 Et Scythicum inviolatus amnem.

How true is this, though magnified a hundred-fold, of the books, or rather the one Book, issued by the Bible Society! It finds its way to "Urbesque, gentesque, et Latium ferox," well called "ferox," for no such antagonist to the Bible has been found, both in deed and spirit, as the Latin Church.

I have told you of the past; let us look forward to the future of the Bible societies. Dear boys, you are the heirs of all the ages, the "enfants terribles" of the next half-century, the juvenum "recens examen Eois timendum partibus, Oceanoque rubro." To your generation will be committed the duty to carry out to completion the work left undone by the men of the time of Victoria, who came to the throne while I was an Eton boy. Let me appeal to you, in the names of old Etonians, whose glory you have to emulate. You recollect that grand passage of Demosthenes "De Corona"? We had it, if I recollect right, when Mr. W. E. Gladstone and his brother-in-law, Lord Lyttelton, came down in 1840 to be the examiners for the Newcastle Scholarship, and I and Bishop Mackarness were in the Select; and a few years back I reminded Mr. Gladstone of the honour conferred upon us by his hands, doubly an honour when conferred by him, much as I differ from him in politics:

Μὰ τοὺς Μαραθῶνι προκινδύσαντας τῶν προγόνων, καὶ τοὺς ἐν Πλαταιαῖς παραταξαμένους, καὶ τοὺς ἐν Σαλαμίῳ ναυμαχῆσαντας.

I will tell you how this applies. Fifty years ago, moving about in our midst, were two figures, one that of a young man who was a private tutor, and one a boy, just such a boy as each of you are—perhaps I may have fagged him to fetch a book or carry a letter—but the names of those two are now mentioned with love and honour and fond regret wherever the English language is spoken:—George Augustus Selwyn and Coleridge Patteson.

Selwyn preached in the Maori language within a few weeks after his arrival in New Zealand. Some Bishops occupy their dioceses for decades, and are dumb dogs to the end of their days. The Bible in Maori was revised, and Bishop Selwyn the second and his widowed mother aided in the revision. Coleridge Patteson exhausted linguistic worlds, and then invented (in the proper sense of "invenio") new. From island to island in the New Hebrides he took the Gospel of Salvation as a new idea, and he left it embedded in the language, habits, and hearts of the wild tribes for whom he gave up his life. Had he lived longer, he would have left more ample memorials of his genius and his devotion, but his mode of life and death has left you all a great example. You remember, boys, the Greek monumental inscription on those who fell at Plataea, which is now in the Museum at Athens. Let me apply it to you: "Go, boys, do as these

did, and fall as this one fell." England and Eton must be foremost in arts and arms, in the battlefield and the playing-ground, on the river and on the sea, in the lecture-room of the scholar and the mission-chapel of the missionary, in the speeches of the orator and the printed books of the author :

Αὐτὸν ἀριστεύειν, καὶ ὑπείροχον ἔμμεναι ἄλλων.

The office of a translator is a noble one. Over the grave of one it is recorded that he translated the whole Bible into a language the existence of which was unknown before his arrival on the spot. When the Lord cometh, and maketh a reckoning with His servants, such as he will have a good account to render of the talents committed to their charge.

And, finally, a good knowledge of Latin and Greek—as taught at Eton in my day, and in my case flogged into me, and still taught under Dr. Warre—is a *κτῆγμα ἐς αἰετὴν*, the best mental gymnastics in the world. It is taught scientifically now, but in my days the science of comparative grammar had not become known. I remember Henry Hallam, the author of "The Middle Ages," asking me in 1842, at Cambridge, whether it were true that the Sanskrit language, which I had acquired, resembled the Greek and Latin in its structure and word-store. My reply was that in Sanskrit alone was found the secret of the inflections of the verbs and nouns of her younger sister-languages. All this is in the public school primer now, and every schoolboy knows what a stem, and a root, and a suffix is. But Dr. Keate cared for none of such things, and probably would have flogged any boy, who suggested such nonsense. I repeat that a scientific grounding in an Indo-European language forms a sound platform for further study. If Hebrew could be added, as a representative of Semitic languages, so much the better ; but every language evoked by the genius of man, in spite of all its multiform varieties, must have a method of expressing the object, the predicate, and the subject—must have elementary roots and some method of modifying them so as to express the meaning of the speaker—it must have a sound-lore, word-lore, and sentence-lore.

The Bible is meant to be the faithful witness of past times, the solemn teacher of the Church in all times, the fountain of inexhaustible truth, the awakener of souls from a fatal slumber, the still small warning voice to the sinner to repent from his ways ; it is not meant to be the subject of a merely mechanical, musical, system of chants and anthems and antiphons, sung or muttered or intoned by non-spiritual hirelings ; it is not meant to be the school-book of non-Christian children, the mere shibboleth of the conventional worshipper, the *corpus*

vile of the ingenious philologist, ethnologist, geologist, or historiologist. No Christian Church has ever existed without some rudimentary translation. The eunuch of Kandacé, as he sat in his chariot reading his chapter of Isaiah, understood the literal meaning of the words, as he had probably an Aramaic Targum in his hands, but understood not the application and the hidden meaning until Philip, taught by the Spirit, explained it.

Many non-Christians have been converted by Bible-reading, unaided by oral instruction. In all ages and countries there has been a desire, a desire not always realized, to communicate the Bible to others. It is mere folly to urge at this period of our knowledge of the languages of the world, and the intellectual aptitude of barbarous races, that the contents of the Bible cannot with care and precision be conveyed to every nation or tribe or language under the sun, so as to be understood by men, women, and children. For two thousand years since the Septuagint was taken in hand, one stream of solemn music has been sung in the multiform voice of the human race to the honour of the Great Redeemer,

Πόλλαι μὲν Θυήτοις γλῶσσαι, μία δ' ἀθάνατοις,

telling the same story in fresh combinations of syllables, fresh blending of sounds, fresh scratchings of the pen, fresh impressions upon the human soul.

ROBERT CUST.

February 16, 1889.

P.S.—I must record my obligation to the Rev. Prebendary Edmonds, of High Bray, Devon, for the advantage gained by the perusal of his published addresses on this subject in Exeter Hall, and his sermon in Exeter Cathedral, in 1888, and his kind letter of suggestions. He was with great propriety selected to give the address at Eton. At the last moment the date was altered, and his services were required elsewhere. I was called upon unworthily to fill his place, for which I have only one special qualification (so far, superior to his), that I am an Etonian, sprung of a race which for seven generations have known, and desire to know, no other public school but Eton.

