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JOURNAL OF
THE TRANSACTIONS
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SECRETARY: E. WALTER MAUNDER, F.R.A.S.

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1914.

552ND ORDINARY GENERAL MEETING,

HELD IN THE ROOMS OF THE INSTITUTE, ON MONDAY,
MARCH 2ND, 1914, AT 4.30 P.M.

THE REV. CANON R. B. GIRDLESTONE, M.A., VICE-PRESIDENT,
TOOK THE CHAIR.

The Minutes of the preceding Meeting were read and confirmed, and the SECRETARY announced the election of Mr. George Avenell as an Associate of the Institute.

*THE CHARACTER OF THE BIBLE INFERRED FROM
ITS VERSIONS.* By the Rev. T. H. DARLOW, M.A.,
LITERARY SUPERINTENDENT OF THE BIBLE SOCIETY.

MORE than forty years ago Henry Rogers, the author of *The Eclipse of Faith*, published a volume of lectures which he entitled *The Superhuman Origin of the Bible inferred from itself*. The lecturer set out to show that Holy Scripture cannot be accounted for as the mere product of human faculties and forces. He argued with singular power "that the Bible is not such a book as man would have made, if he could; or could have made, if he would."

The present paper only attempts to illustrate and develop one minor aspect of a corresponding argument. For several years it has fallen to my lot to study the history of Bible translation. And I venture to believe that certain conclusions in regard to the character of the Bible may be inferred from its versions in so many varieties of human speech.

To begin with, let us recall one fact which is so obvious that it escapes attention. To nine hundred and ninety-nine persons out of every thousand the Bible can only come in the shape of a translation. Even among the members of the Victoria Institute many would confess that they do not habitually read their daily portion of Scripture in Hebrew or Greek. And for the mass of mankind such reading of the original text is plainly impossible—and always will be. God's Book

was meant to be translated ; and God's purpose is fulfilled as the Bible speaks to every man in his own tongue in which he was born.

The command to go into all the world and to preach the Gospel to every creature applies to the Bible as well as to the Church ; and to fulfil its mission God's Book must needs become all things to all men. The translation of the Scriptures began in the earliest ages of the Church, and moves along the central tide of Christian history. This work did not wait for the formal decree of any Council ; it proceeded from the deep, spontaneous Christian instinct that every man must learn the Gospel in his own tongue. Early in the second century, from the Church at Antioch where the disciples were first called Christians, came the original impulse to turn the Scriptures into Syriac, which was then the common speech of the regions lying east of Antioch towards the Euphrates valley. About the end of the third century, though in the Church at Alexandria men spoke Greek, the first Coptic version arose, made for the native Egyptians. In the fourth century, from the Church at Constantinople proceeded the early Gothic version, for the barbarous invaders of the Eastern Empire. From the Council of Ephesus a band of young Armenians carried back to their native land certain manuscripts, by whose aid the Armenian version was formed at the end of the fifth century, after Miesrob had for that purpose constituted the earliest Armenian alphabet. Similarly, in the ninth century, Cyril and Methodius invented what has since become the Russian alphabet and translated the Scriptures into Slavonic—the beginning of books and of letters for the great Slavonic race. The Frankish and Teutonic conquerors of the Western Empire accepted Latin as the common tongue which every educated man could read and speak ; so Jerome's Latin Bible became for them not a sealed book, but literally their Vulgate, or common version, and remained the Bible of Western Christendom for a thousand years. When printing began in the middle of the fifteenth century, it was natural and fitting that the first complete book to issue from Gutenberg's press at Mainz should be the Latin Bible. More than 100 editions of the Vulgate were printed before that century ended, and other versions speedily followed in the principal vernaculars of Europe. In Italy, for instance, the Italian Bible was printed a dozen times before the year A.D. 1500 ; and in Germany eighteen folio editions of the German Bible had already appeared when Luther published his New Testament.

But the history of Bible translation is too long to summarize. Let me only mention some results. So far as I can form an estimate, after research among printed editions of the Scriptures, I find that at least some book of the Bible has been translated and published in about 680 different languages and dialects. That total, however, includes certain obsolete languages represented by the printed text of early manuscript translations; and it also takes in as many as sixty-five existing dialects in which versions have been produced merely for philological reasons. Making these deductions, the fact remains that at least some book of Holy Scripture has now been published, with a religious or missionary purpose, in quite 600 distinct forms of human speech.

Try for a moment to realize the significance of such figures. The Gospel speaks to the world already in ten times as many versions as can be claimed for any masterpiece of human literature, and the disproportion goes on increasing year by year. One other book does indeed pass that ratio. The versions of the *Pilgrim's Progress* number more than ten per cent. of the versions of the Gospel, though they do not reach twenty per cent. But, as Prof. Moulton puts it, "the *Pilgrim's Progress* will not disturb any inferences we may draw from the primacy of the Gospel among books which exercise a universal sway over the mind of the world, primitive and civilized alike." These manifold and multiplied versions of Scripture contribute a new and impressive chapter to the ever-growing volume of Christian evidences. God's Book has conquered and subdued the Babel of human speech; already it lies open, more or less completely, in languages that are current among fully seven-tenths of mankind.

Moreover we note that at the beginning of the nineteenth century, the Scriptures had been published in translations understood by only about two-tenths of mankind. Since then, the Scriptures have appeared in new versions which appeal for the first time to half the human family. Thus, in the history of the Bible during the last hundred years two outstanding phenomena confront each other: the age of fierce and remorseless criticism has been also the age of unparalleled translation and propagation.

The fact that according to God's will Holy Scripture speaks to the world in translated forms, carries various implications. It shows, at any rate, that the divine and essential quality of the Bible—that which makes it to be "the Bible" and not an ordinary human book—must be something which does not-

evaporate in translation. We know that, in the past, extravagant theories have sometimes been held as to the verbal inerrancy of the Scriptures. There was, for example, the claim put forth by certain Swiss reformers in the *Formula Consensus Helvetici* of 1675, which declared the vowel points and accents of the Hebrew text to be inspired by God. Orthodox Moslems hold the absolute verbal infallibility of the Koran, and feel bound, therefore, to discourage any translation of their sacred book, which must be read in its original Arabic. It was for similar reasons that the rabbis of Palestine, who worshipped the letter of their Hebrew Testament, regarded the Septuagint version as a national disaster. They called the date on which it was begun "the fast of darkness," and compared it to the day on which the golden calf had been made. Yet we know how the Septuagint, whatever its defects, proved the first great missionary version of Scripture, and became, in God's providence, one chief preparation for the spread of the Gospel.

This whole subject of translation has a real bearing on the problem of inspiration. It suggests to us, as De Quincey has said, that "the great ideas of the Bible protect themselves. The heavenly truths of God's Word, by their own imperishableness, defeat the mortality of languages with which for a moment they are associated. The truth of revelation is endowed with a self-conservative and self-restorative virtue; it needs not to be protected verbally by successive miracles; it is self-protecting." The Word of God in the Bible is not of a nature to be affected by verbal changes such as can be made by time or accident. "It is like lightning, which could not be mutilated, or truncated, or polluted." May we not say, further, that God's revelation resides, not in any selected chapters, or texts, or phrases, but in the total content and purport of the Bible, supplemented and corrected by itself?

From the history of the versions of Holy Scripture another conclusion of grave practical import emerges. The world-wide experience of missionaries confirms the weighty dictum which Bishop Steere, of the U.M.C.A., wrote from Zanzibar—"Our work must be all unsound without a vernacular Bible"; but it also proves that, for the Christian Church in any country, nothing is more vitally necessary to preserve its purity, nay, to secure its permanence, than the Scriptures in the language of the people. There are few more tragic chapters in ecclesiastical history than that which records how Islam was able to conquer North Africa, so that those coast-lands are now dominated by the Crescent which once paid homage to the Cross. How can

we explain the mournful fact that the Church of Tertullian and Cyprian and Augustine vanished, and the whole broad belt between Port Said and the Atlantic became, and has remained, almost entirely Moslem? Doubtless, Christianity in North Africa had departed far from the purity and simplicity of the New Testament. But Archbishop Benson suggested another secret root of the Church's failure to stand fast against the Moslem flood: it had neglected to translate the Scriptures into the languages of its common people. The Latin Bible existed, indeed, but no early versions were made into those Punic and Numidian dialects which were the mother-tongues of the North African races. On the other hand, there were ancient Coptic versions of Scripture; and so the Coptic Church survives in Egypt—a remnant, but still alive after so many centuries of Moslem persecution and oppression. And there was an ancient Ethiopic version; and so the Abyssinian Church still survives, degraded with superstitions, yet not perished altogether. Looking further afield, we trace this same factor in the persistence of other ancient Churches—such as the Syrian, the Armenian, and the Georgian. In comparatively recent times, the infant mission Church in Madagascar endured a quarter of a century of ruthless persecution. But before the L.M.S. missionaries were driven out of that island they had printed and distributed the Malagasy Bible. The books passed stealthily from hand to hand, and were read in secret, at the peril of their owners' lives; yet they kept the sacred fire burning, and when the missionaries could return, twenty-five years later, they found that the little band of Malagasy Christians had grown from 200 to over 2,000. We are tempted to believe that if the early Roman missionaries in China and Japan had popularized the Scriptures among the converts whom they baptized, their work might have proved less destructible. Perhaps there is no example of a nation, once Christian, having ever abandoned the faith, so long as its people have possessed the New Testament in the vulgar tongue.

Another problem of curious interest finds illustration from versions of the Scriptures. People sometimes ask: Are all parts of the Bible of equal value? Which books are the most important? Well, let us consider the experience of missionary translators, who may be trusted to understand what parts of Scripture are most necessary and useful for their converts. Almost without exception, missionaries begin their translation-work by making a version of a single Gospel—generally selecting St. Mark's Gospel, as the shortest and simplest. Then they go

on to translate the other Gospels; probably they next take in hand either the Acts of the Apostles, as illustrating the growth of infant Christian communities, or the Psalter, as the hymn-book of the Universal Church. Before the New Testament has been completed they will often translate the book of Genesis, as the prologue to sacred history. It is curious to note how often the earliest of the prophets which missionaries translate is Jonah—doubtless because Jonah is the most missionary book in the Old Testament. The experience of Bible translators shows, further, that the first version of the New Testament is nearly always revised before a version of the Old Testament has been completed. Indeed, the vernacular New Testament appears to suffice for the ordinary needs of a native Christian community, until the time comes when converts are sufficiently advanced to be trained for ordination; it is for their training that a version of the Old Testament becomes urgent.

In the preface to the second edition of his famous English version of *Plato's Dialogues*, the late Master of Balliol laid down certain canons which must govern every successful translator: "His object is not merely to render the words of one language into the words of another, but to produce an impression similar, or nearly similar, to that of the original on the mind of the reader." . . . "The excellence of a translation will consist not merely in the faithful rendering of words, or in the composition of a sentence only, or yet of a single paragraph, but in the colour and style of the whole." . . . "The metaphors admissible in different languages vary, and the translator will often be compelled to substitute one for another." . . . "The freest and the most literal rendering are not necessarily opposed; but the two principles can only be harmonized by a series of corrections." . . . "The result should read as an original work, and should also be the most faithful transcript which can be made of the language from which the translation is taken."

Such is the high and difficult ideal for the translator of the Bible. Not all have attained to it; there have even been crude and careless and defective versions of Scripture. Some translators have assumed that good intentions can compensate for slovenliness or ignorance. Some translators have not been ashamed to exhibit strong theological or ecclesiastical bias: I need only mention such partisan versions as the Polish Bible, known as the "Socinian Bible," published in 1563—and the notorious French Testaments printed at Bordeaux in 1661-3

and 1686. In this last, *e.g.*, we read in Acts xiii, 2: "*Or comme ils offroient au Seigneur le Sacrifice de la Messe.*"*

Moreover, from the nature of the case, the first attempt to render the Scriptures into a fresh language must always be tentative and imperfect. No Bible translation emerges from the translator's brain, as Athenè was fabled to have sprung, full-panoplied, from the head of Zeus. The Bible learns to utter God's thoughts in a new tongue as a child learns to talk. First in broken words, which gradually gain shape and distinctness; then in sentences, which, though disjointed at first, grow more and more closely connected, till ultimately the child's words become a more or less complete vehicle of his ideas. Behind the finished Book lie its earlier sections, the New Testament or the Psalter or one or two Gospels; behind these, again, lie the first attempts at the Lord's Prayer and a few scattered texts. Arduous preliminary labour is often necessary. About 200 languages have been reduced to written form and provided for the first time with an alphabet and a grammar, simply that they might become channels for the Gospel.

Such was the life-history of the Bible prepared in New England by the earliest Protestant missionary, John Eliot, one of the Pilgrim Fathers. He began to study the language of the Massachusetts Indians, about the year 1643, with the help of an Indian who had been captured in war. Soon the infant Massachusetts Bible began to learn its new lesson, and growing day by day, it stood forth twenty years later in complete manhood. At the end of his Indian Grammar, Eliot lifts the veil from its history and tells us a little of what it cost. He writes: "I have now finished what I shall do at present: And in a word or two to satisfie the prudent Enquirer how I found out these new wayes of Grammar, which no other Learned Language (so far as I know) useth; I thus inform him: God first put into my heart a compassion over their poor Souls, and a desire to teach them to know Christ, and to bring them into his Kingdome. Then presently I found out (by Gods wise providence) a pregnant witted young man, who had been a Servant in an English house, who pretty well understood our Language, better than he could speak it, and well understood his own Language, and hath a clear pronounciation: Him I made my interpreter. By his help I translated the Commandments, the Lord's Prayer, and

* It must in justice be added that these Testaments were afterwards repudiated by the ecclesiastical authorities.

many Texts of Scripture: also I compiled both Exhortations and Prayers by his help. I diligently marked the difference of their Grammar from ours: When I found the way of them, I would pursue a word, a Noun, a Verb, through all variations I could think of. And thus I came at it. We must not sit still, and look for Miracles: Up, and be doing, and the Lord will be with thee. *Prayer and Pains, through Faith in Jesus Christ, will do any thing.*"

John Eliot's experience has been reproduced in the lives of multitudes of scholars, whose prayers and pains, joined with their faith, have moved away mountains of difficulty and opened out a way for the voice of God to hearts hitherto unconscious of His tones. Let us pay homage to the heroic drudgery of the noble army of translators who have toiled with endless patience to give men God's message in their mother tongue.

All great books must in some degree suffer when they are made to speak in what is not their native language. Even the best translation can be no better than the copy of a picture or the cast of a statue. When we take, for example, the masterpieces of human literature—the *Iliad* or the *Divina Commedia*, or *Paradise Lost*, or *Faust*, or *Macbeth*—and compare them with their finest versions in a foreign tongue, we begin to realize how much has been lost. The translation of an original poem is like the wrong side of a piece of tapestry—the sharp outlines vanish, the clear, bright colours are blurred. For a poet's thought and language must needs be so fused together that it is half fatal to divorce his ideas from his diction. Indeed, the most perfect pieces of literature are the least capable of adequate translation.

The Bible, however, comes to us, not as perfect literature, but as essentially the medium and vehicle of God's revelation. And the Bible has this unique quality that it may be translated into all the languages of mankind without sensibly losing its majesty and tenderness and spiritual power. The Scriptures as a whole can be rendered with but little sacrifice of their energy and their beauty. Into whatever barbarous tongue you translate the New Testament, it seems to fit that tongue as though it had been made for it: it *was* made for it! In every version the Book retains its power to pierce the thoughts of the heart; it still remains sharper than a two-edged sword; it still divides joint and marrow. It does its supreme work—compared with which nothing else matters.

In his recent volume on *The Bible*, Professor Peake points out that "we may reverently and thankfully recognize that even the

choice of the languages of revelation was not left uncared for by the providence of God." It is no small thing that Hebrew, the mother-tongue of Israel—unlike Chinese or Accadian—was a language with an alphabet. Moreover, the Hebrew language by virtue of its simplicity and directness is unusually easy to translate. Bishop Oluwole, speaking of his own West African tongue, has said: "Yoruba is a language into which the Bible phraseology goes easily. We find it very convenient to translate direct from Hebrew, more so than from English." On the other hand, we may recall Luther's exclamation: "Good God, how hard it is to make these Hebrew prophets speak German."

Again, it is not without significance that the Apostles and Evangelists wrote in Greek, which came nearest to a universal language in the ancient world. Moreover, they did not write in classical Greek. Of recent discoveries about the Bible none is more striking than the testimony as to the language of the New Testament which has been unearthed during the last few years out of rubbish heaps of waste paper and broken pottery buried in the sands of Egypt and dating back to the very beginning of the Christian era. What this new linguistic evidence demonstrates may be stated in the words of the distinguished scholar who has done so much to make it available in English: "The conclusion is that 'Biblical' Greek was simply the vernacular of daily life. . . . The Holy Ghost spoke absolutely in the language of the people, as we might surely have expected He would." That is to say, the New Testament was composed in the common homely speech of those who first read its pages; it was written literally in the vulgar tongue.

The astonishing translatableness of Scripture has been explained on various grounds. Some point to the character of its metaphors, the frequent parallelism of its construction, the homely force of its images from common objects. Others emphasize the sublime and pathetic ideas which mingle with its contents. But the real secret lies in the subject-matter of the Bible itself.

With the true classics of the world there is no respect of persons; they are concerned with those things which are common, with matters of enduring and universal interest which come home to everyone alike. Now we have one Book, and only one, which embraces all the heights and depths of human nature. The Bible belongs to those elemental things—like the sky and the wind and the sea, like bread and wine, like the kisses of little children and tears shed beside the grave—which

can never grow stale or obsolete or out of date, because they are the common heritage of mankind. This Book goes down to the root of our bitterest needs, our darkest sorrows. It speaks with accents that are not of this world about the only things which really matter at last to each human creature. Now the things common to all men are far more important than the things peculiar to some men. And the Bible can speak in every language and come home to every race, because it is as catholic as the blood in men's veins and the milk in women's breasts.

This is not the place to dwell upon the immense and inherent difficulties of rendering the Scriptures into the poverty-stricken speech of a barbarous people. In the language of New Britain, for instance, no verb could be found meaning to "forgive." In the Ibo language, current among three millions of tribesmen in Southern Nigeria, Archdeacon Dennis tells us that the same word has to do for "right" and "might," that "servant" and "slave" are synonymous, that "friendship" and "fornication" are scarcely distinguishable, and that "conscience" has to be transliterated. Such examples might be multiplied to almost any extent. They remind us that after all the crucial difficulty in translating the Bible is ethical rather than linguistic. Sir George Grierson, who is the first living authority on Indian languages, has described a tribe in Eastern India whose only idea of a feast was to get intoxicated on their native beer, and whose only word for festival meant literally "much beer drinking." In rendering into their speech the parable of the Prodigal Son, he was put to great perplexity, merely because he could find no word to express the rejoicing on the Prodigal's return, which did not also suggest the idea of intoxication. The fact is that not only the heathen, but the speech of the heathen, must be converted. Their very language needs to be born anew. Their words and phrases must be redeemed from foul uses and baptized into a Christian sense in order to be able to convey the ideas of the Gospel.

Nevertheless experience proves in a wonderful way how even crude and imperfect and tentative versions of Scripture can accomplish spiritual results which bear witness to a power which is not of this world. Take one of the most recent cases. Last year the Rev. Copland King, of the Anglican New Guinea Mission, wrote to me describing how he had rendered St. Luke into Binandere for a tribe in Papua. By that tribe the seat of emotion is considered to be the throat, not the heart. Hence "bad throat" means sorrow, a "throaty" man is a wise man, and to "take the throat" means to love. In St. Luke vii, 45,

“Thou gavest me no kiss” had to be translated “Thou didst not smell my nose.” No word could be found meaning “forgive,” which had to be translated by “forget” or “do not punish.” Well, only a dozen years ago, the readers of this Gospel were using stone weapons and practising cannibalism. But last Christmas twelvemonth the Holy Communion was celebrated in the Binandere language for the first time.

Surely the spiritual potency of its versions in all languages and among all races, sets the New Testament immeasurably above every other book in the world. What is there to substitute for it? A dramatic preacher once pictured a missionary landing on some savage island in the Pacific, and addressing the cannibals who gathered round him in words like these: “Wipe your blood-stained lips, and listen while I read you this passage, which I have translated into your own tongue, from *The Light of Asia*.”

The final evidence for the supernatural quality of the Bible lies in the moral and spiritual power with which it is speaking to-day in all the tongues of the world. God’s living voice uttered in the Scriptures still comes home to men’s consciences, and authenticates itself in their deepest experiences. On the title-page of an Italian pocket Testament printed at Lyons in 1551 we read: *Il Nuovo ed Eterno Testamento di Giesu Christo*—The New and Eternal Testament of Jesus Christ. This Book can never be called old, except in the sense in which time is old, while morning is always new. Its message is as mighty as ever to quicken human hearts and regenerate human characters; it moves among the nations with the power of an endless Life.

DISCUSSION.

The CHAIRMAN said there were two great mysteries—Babel and Bible. What was the nature of the confusion which took place at Babel? Was it that men lost their memories, or was there a disturbance of their tongues or of their thinking powers? There were about 2,000 languages now current in the world; how did they come into existence? In the New Hebrides, a dozen different languages sometimes existed in the same island. Probably the transliteration of the Bible began before any translation; a change of character probably took place in the time of Moses. In the book of Genesis, we found two ways of expressing the same thing; thus Laban and Jacob gave different things to their stone of

covenant. The Lecturer had used the word "Hebrew" throughout his paper, but nowadays some authorities, like Prof. Naville, spoke slightly of Hebrew. He wondered what the distinguished and industrious scholar, Dr. Driver, whom we have just lost, would say if he had been told that there was no such language as Hebrew? What name could they substitute for it? Aramaic would not serve; must they adopt Canaanite? A paper in the *Expositor* for January by Prof. Margoliouth, showed that the Gospel of St. Matthew had first been written in Hebrew, and then translated into Aramaic and finally into Greek.

He had himself been head of the Translation Department in the Bible House for ten years, and knew something of the immense difficulties which translators had to face. How, for instance, was it possible to give any idea of the Bible animals to the natives of a country where there was no animal larger than a flea? In such a case the missionary would require to take about with him a travelling zoological garden, or at any rate a good picture book. In translating an English sentence into Chinese, it was necessary to turn the sentence upside down, especially if it conveyed an argument, for the Chinese method of reasoning is quite contrary to our own. But when the Chinese get the Bible in their own language they love it, and a Chinaman has been known to say, "The English Bible is very good, but if you want to know what the Bible really is, you must read it in Chinese." The italics in our Bible are a testimony to the difficulties of translation and to the fidelity of our translators, for they indicate passages where in order to convey the sense, it has been necessary to introduce words which are not in the original.

Mr. PHILLIPS stated that he had a brother who was a missionary in Rhodesia and that he was now sending home for printing the book of the prophet Jonah, which was the first portion of the Bible which he had translated into Walamba. It was necessary that those to whom they preached should have some understanding of sin before the Gospel was proclaimed to them. He further mentioned that the Superintendent of the London Missionary Society in Nyasaland refused baptism to those converts who could not read the New Testament, urging that they had had schools in that country for several years, and that for a convert not to be able to read it showed a lack of earnestness and zeal.

The Rev. F. C. LOVELY, B.A., thought that, as the previous speaker had mentioned the Walamba language, it might interest the meeting to know that the Book of Jonah, translated into the Walamba language, by Mr. W. A. Phillips, of Nyasaland, was at that time being carried through the Oxford University Press, by the Trinitarian Bible Society.

Mr. P. F. WOOD said he had very great pleasure in listening to Mr. Darlow's address; it was interesting in its subject, charming in its phrasing, and would prove very useful. We were not astonished at its excellence as we are accustomed to get good things from the Bible House. Christian people needed to be educated to understand the need for translations and the difficulties experienced in making them so that the Christian Church might learn to pray for translators.

Mr. M. L. ROUSE said that the fact recalled by Mr. Darlow that the Bible of Jerome was from earliest times known as the Vulgate, *i.e.*, version made for the people, exemplified the principle which was believed in at its making, and long afterwards, that the Bible ought to be turned into the common language of those to whom its doctrines are preached. Yet that very version had in later centuries been made the instrument of exclusivism; for the priests of the Church of Rome objected to any other being read: the people must not read the Word of God in their own language but only in Latin. A Roman Catholic priest had once told him that the Church had originally possessed an official Bible in Greek, which as regards the Old Testament, was a miraculous rendering from the Hebrew, but that Jerome thought it advisable to make a translation from the Hebrew into Latin, "because the Greek Septuagint did not give all the nice shades of meaning found in the Hebrew original;" a strange thing to say of a version made correct by miracle! Since then, the Latin Vulgate had been the official Bible of the Church; to allow another to take its place would be grossly to mislead the readers. He admitted, however, that there were other vernacular versions made from the Hebrew Old Testament and Greek New Testament before Jerome's time; such as the first Syriac, the Coptic, and the Gothic; so that the principle had been recognized that it was a good thing to give the Bible to a people in their own language and he could not mention any Church Council as having examined into the matter, and decided against such translations. He also allowed that in preaching he

frequently made an unofficial translation of the Latin Vulgate by turning one or more of its verses into French. Surely it was better for the people to have a translation of the Holy Scriptures carefully made direct from the Hebrew and Greek by a number of the most learned and pious men in a nation, than to hear such fragmentary and unofficial translations as any chance parish priest might give.

Mr. MARTIN, who had had some experience of the difficulty of presenting Christian truth in the Chinese language, spoke of the problem which had faced translators in finding the right term for God, whether Shun = Spirit, or Shang-Ti = Supreme Ruler. The former term is indefinite, and the latter, although used in Chinese Classics, has become obscured by the canonisation of a man in the first century A.D., to whom was given the title "Shang-Ti." Either term must be explained or "converted" before conveying the required meaning.

Many words in the language need deepening; there is no word for "love," the nearest being "like." Therefore, to express "love," one of two words is added, "pain," or "dote," viz., "to painfully like" or "to dotingly like."

There is a lack of a word to express the Christian idea of sin, the nearest equivalent being "to offend"; to intensify this thought the words for "vile" or "evil" are added.

But experience puts new meaning into language, and during recent revivals in China the old words for sin and love have taken on deeper meanings to the Christians.

The Nestorian Church in China is an example of a Church without a Bible, which has perished, the sole memorial being the Nestorian Tablet, erected in A.D. 781 at Sianfu, in Shensi Province.

The Rev. J. SHARP expressed his gratitude to Mr. Darlow for his admirable paper. He would not criticize any part of it, but add a remark on one or two points. Mr. Darlow pointed out that the Greek of the New Testament was the vernacular of daily life; the familiar language of home. In Eastern lands there was usually a great difference between the literary language and the home language. In India, for instance, the educated classes, and the pundits, wished to have their translation of the Bible in the literary language; but they never used this themselves in their own homes, and the great mass of the people, and the very members of their own households, neither spoke it nor understood it. So the Bible Society was trying

to get simpler versions of the scriptures for India, and for North Africa. The allusion that had been made to the need for a missionary to carry a little "Zoo" about with him, in order to obtain vernacular names for animals mentioned in the Bible, recalled to him how some Indian natives had been taken to the zoological gardens in Calcutta and saw a cameleopard for the first time, and promptly named it the Long-Neck. People when they see an object will soon find a name for it.

John Eliot was not the first missionary to learn a North American-Indian language; the Spanish and French Jesuit, Franciscan, and Dominican missionaries were very industrious in this work; but so far as he could discover their translations of scriptures did not go beyond the Paternoster, the Ave Maria, and occasionally the Ten Commandments or the Beatitudes. This was a good beginning but they ought to have gone on to a Gospel—indeed to the whole New Testament. The point to be emphasized was, that in spite of all the difficulties attending translation, the Bible was the most translatable of books, and even imperfect translations of it were full of power to reach the heart and conscience.

Col. MACKINLAY and the CHAIRMAN expressed their gratitude to the author for a most valuable paper, in which the Meeting cordially joined.

The Rev. J. GOSSET-TANNER asked permission to add a single remark, namely, that in present-day Arabic they had a number of the very words which Moses himself was accustomed to use; for instance, the words for "right," "left," "foot," and so on, were those that appeared in the Pentateuch. And Arabic was now spoken by a hundred millions of men.

The Rev. E. SEELEY thought that it would be most helpful to translators if they had a Bible picture book of animals, objects and incidents, for which names and words so often seem to be lacking. The people to whom the pictures were shown would often supply names and words that might greatly help the translators.

The CHAIRMAN: That is a very good old plan. We find it in the second chapter of Genesis: "God brought the animals to Adam to see what he would call them, and whatsoever Adam called every living creature, that was the name thereof."

The LECTURER briefly returned thanks, and the Meeting adjourned at 6 p.m.