

PROCEEDINGS

OF THE

STATE BIBLE CONVENTION

OF

SOUTH CAROLINA,

HELD AT

COLUMBIA, SEPT. 17 AND 18, 1862;

WITH

A SERMON PREACHED BEFORE THE CONVENTION,

By THE REV. GEORGE HOWE, D. D.

COLUMBIA, S. C.:

SOUTHERN GUARDIAN STEAM-POWER PRESS.

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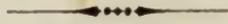
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Characteristics of the Bible.

A SERMON

PREACHED BEFORE THE

Bible Convention of South Carolina,

IN THE WASHINGTON STREET METHODIST CHURCH,

COLUMBIA, SEPTEMBER 15, 1862,

BY REV. GEORGE HOWE, D. D.,

PROF. OF BIBLICAL LITERATURE IN THE THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY, COLUMBIA, S. C.

COLUMBIA, S. C.:

SOUTHERN GUARDIAN STEAM-POWER PRESS.

1862.

CORRESPONDENCE.

Columbia, September 20, 1862.

Rev. GEORGE HOWE, D. D.:

DEAR SIR: The State Bible Convention, at its late session in this city, appointed Rev. Wm. Martin, Rev. E. A. Bolles, and myself, a committee to request a copy of your sermon for publication.

Believing, as we all do, that its circulation will be productive of great good to the cause whose interests we all have at heart, the other members have authorized me, as Chairman of the Committee, to urge the unanimous request of the Convention.

Hoping that you will find it convenient to afford us the pleasure of an early compliance,

I remain Rev. and Dear Sir,

Yours, very respectfully,

ROBERT BRYCE,

Chairman of Committee.

Columbia, September 26, 1862.

ROBERT BRYCE, Esq., Chairman, &c.:

DEAR SIR: I place the Sermon at the disposal of the Convention, and if it shall be at all useful in promoting the distribution of the Sacred Scriptures, I shall be much gratified.

Very respectfully, yours,

GEORGE HOWE.

LIBRARY OF THE
SOUTHERN METHODIST CHURCH
1862.

S E R M O N .

It is a blessing to us, in this world of selfishness and imperfection, when we are drawn into the presence of our fellow-men, from whom we are separated by the connections and business of life. Our employments, our earthly relationships, and the circumstances God has placed around us, throw society into distinct groups. And the infirmity of the human mind in its fallen state, and the different positions from which we contemplate the same truths, have formed us, as Christians, into communities known by different names, each holding, we trust, the essential doctrines and substantial elements of the Christian faith.

Had we remained in our original purity, as far as we did know, our knowledge would have been free from error, like the knowledge of angels; but as to its extent, it would have been finite and imperfect. There is something more than the finiteness of our creatureship to disturb us now, in our pursuit of truth. There is the moral obliquity of our nature affecting us all in an equal degree. And yet, while the great doctrines which distinguish revealed religion are attended with such evidence that to reject them is a crime, we cannot say the same of those minor forms which divide one denomination from another. On this debateable or, at least, debated ground, we may agree to differ. In seasons of controversy we magnify these topics till enmities are begotten which remain for a generation. It is sometimes a blessing when some foreign enemy attacks our common faith, and when, contending for one common cause, we bury our enmities, and remember that we are brethren. But far more pleasant is it, when we are drawn together by common interests and mutual love in times of peace; when, the banner of our hope waving over us, and the hostile camps of our invaders withdrawn, we meet together on common ground, to exchange the pledges of friendship, and to remember that in Christ the middle wall of partition is broken down between us; that we have one Lord, one Faith, one Baptism; and that the Bible, our store-house in peace and armory in war, is our common treasure, and points us to one home in heaven, where we shall see eye to eye, and know even as we are known.

Such an opportunity is afforded us this evening, when from our several places we have assembled around the standard of our faith, the Sacred Scriptures. It is the peculiar honor, hitherto, of the Bible Society, that it has bound together Christians of different name, brought them with one accord to one place, melted away that "pious estrangement" and "consecrated hostility," the growth of ages, and has adumbrated in a new prophecy the return of those auspicious days, when "the multitude of them who believed were of one heart and one soul," and when, as a consequence of that union, at least in part, "the word of God mightily grew and prevailed."

Let the nineteenth psalm, and the seventh verse—"The law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul"—furnish us, my brethren, with the theme of our meditations this evening.

The Psalmist had been considering the heavens above us :

The heavens, he says, declare the glory of God,
The firmament showeth the work of His hands :
Day utters its speech to day,
And night to night its knowledge.

So, there is handed down through all time the traditionary story of His power and Godhead.

There is, indeed, no word, no speech, audible to the human ear :

Their voice is not heard,
Yet is their silent language gone out into all the earth,
Their testimony to the ends of the world.

But principally the *sun* heralds forth the glory of God :

In the midst of the heavens He hath set a tent for him,
He goeth forth like the glorious bridegroom from his nuptial chamber,
He rejoices like a hero to run his race ;
From the extremity of the heavens is his going forth,
To their end his circuit extends,
And there is nothing hidden from his heat.

Elevated as his soul is by this view of God's glory, as reflected from the world of nature, with unutterable emotion he turns to the volume of revelation. It is the law, the testimony, the statutes, the commandment, the fear, the judgments, of Jehovah ; the teacher, the witness, the legislator, the sovereign, the judge deciding, and carrying

his decisions into execution. "The law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul: the testimony of the Lord is sure, making wise the simple: the statutes of the Lord are right, rejoicing the heart: the commandment of the Lord is pure, enlightening the eyes: the fear of the Lord is clean, enduring for ever: the judgments of the Lord are true and righteous altogether. More to be desired are they than gold, yea, than much fine gold; sweeter, also, than honey, and the honeycomb. Moreover, by them is thy servant warned, and in keeping of them there is great reward." The law of Jehovah, the Eternal, Immutable, Covenant-Keeper, is perfect, sure, right, pure, clean, true, righteous, and to be desired above all things else—converting the soul, making wise the simple, rejoicing the heart, and enlightening the eyes—having every lovely attribute, and producing every salutary effect.

Other men have pronounced an eulogium upon the Sacred Scriptures, and bound them upon their hearts. But here is Israel's greatest king, ancestor and type of the second David, our Lord and Saviour, giving utterance to his own heart-emotions, the Spirit mingling His pure influences in all his thoughts, and shaping, perhaps unconsciously to him, the phrase in which they were expressed.

But how much of this holy book did David have before him? Not the four Evangelists, nor the writings of Paul, Peter, James, Jude, and John, which came not till a thousand years after; not the writings of Solomon, nor of Isaiah, Jeremiah, and the prophets. The whole of this law of the Lord he so enjoyed could be no more than the five books of Moses, and Joshua, Judges, Ruth, and Job; and if in these books he found all this purity and sanctifying power, how much wider is the scope of Divine revelation before *us*, and how much stronger the emphasis these words now bear.

Adhering closely to our text, we should show that the word of God is perfect, and so possessed of every desirable attribute, and then set forth its office in quickening, reviving and restoring the soul of the believing man, which, if we understand the words, is the effect ascribed to it here. We choose, however, to speak of its prominent characteristics in a more general way on *this* occasion.

I. Consider, in the first place, the *Divine authority* and yet *human aspects* these Scriptures bear. The Law is the law of the Lord. It speaks not merely with the voice of a man, but with the authority of

God. "He that believeth shall be saved, and he that believeth not shall be damned." "If any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life, and out of the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book." And yet, behold how all these words touch our human sympathies. The words of this psalm are no less the words of the man David, that he was moved to write them by the Spirit of God. That they "are sweeter than honey and the honeycomb," is David's own appreciation of their worth. "Keep back thy servant, also, from presumptuous sins; let them not have dominion over me," is the earnest prayer of his sensitive conscience. "Lord, not my feet only, but my hands and my head;" "This voice which came from heaven we heard when we were with Him in the holy mount," and "were eye-witnesses of His majesty," are Peter's *own* words, the issues of his own moved and believing heart. And thus there is, throughout, the divine and the human in the Sacred Scriptures, the weeping penitent saying, "Lord, I believe, help thou mine unbelief;" the triumphant saint, "I know in whom I have believed, I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand. I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith; henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord the righteous judge shall give me in that day." And yet these words of believing men moved by the Holy Ghost, are no less the word of the All-Wise God, than those which He uttered to Moses without the medium of human lips, on the holy Mount.

There are not only these outbursts of sanctified human emotion to touch our hearts, but the very record itself bears all the characteristics of the sacred writer who makes it. There is the simple dignity of Moses, there is the elegiac tenderness of David, there is the shrewd yet heaven-taught sagacity of Solomon, there is the noble, polished diction of Isaiah, with the plaintive measures of the weeping prophet, and Ezekiel and Daniel wrapped in visions; there is the rapid, graphic sketching of Mark, the profound, heart-felt, penetrating tenderness of John, who lay on the Saviour's breast, the more than Demosthenian eloquence of Paul, the periods of James, with their rhythmic cadence—all these human elements appealing to our sympathies and imaginations, as well as the evidence, continually borne along, that these men spake only as they were moved by the Holy Ghost. There

is this divine-human in the word of God analogous to the divine-human in the nature of Christ, though different from it, speaking with the heart of a man, and yet with the authority and power of God, even as *He* spake when He said, with deep human emotion, and yet exercising His own divine prerogatives, "Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest; take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly of heart; and ye shall find rest to your souls."

II. Again, consider the mere external things, of a wholly secondary nature, which combine to clothe this sacred volume with interest. It contains the *oldest literature* on earth. For, though Moses did not live till past the middle period before Christ, he was nine hundred years earlier than the sages of Greece and Asia, and twelve hundred earlier than the father of Grecian history. The book of Genesis embodies, not improbably, the authentic and inspired literature of a period before Moses. And if the aged man who has long survived his generation, the aged oak that has withstood the storms of centuries, and the lofty pyramid that has outlived the wreck of empires are venerable to us, how much more these records of an earlier age, which, if not contemporaneous with them, yet truthfully teach us the origin of the world and man, the derivation of nations, the beginnings of the family, the State, and the Church of God.

For fifteen hundred years, till John closed the canon with the Apocalypse, and sealed up the prophecy, did God continue from time to time to reveal His will, and move men to write it down. No less than from thirty-five to forty men, whose names are mostly known wielded the pen under the Holy Spirit's guidance, and have given us a book of various contents: laws, histories, psalms, proverbial philosophy, prophecies, biography, epistles. They were men of various culture, various tastes and tempers of mind. They were priests, poets, prophets, warriors, herdsmen, fishermen, scholars. They wrote in the deserts, in the schools of the prophets, in the temple, in the courts of kings, in Western and Central Asia, amid Grecian and Roman civilization. They wrote in the purest simplicity, in strains of unutterable tenderness, and again with a stately and magnificent march of thought and language, in gorgeous imagery, in awful sublimity.

The Bible, therefore, is a book of endless variety, of undying freshness, of constant surprises, of which, if we enter into its spirit, we never tire. It is written, for the most part, in two remarkable tongues, the Hebrew, full of passion, full of feeling, and full of movement and life; and the Greek, exact, copious, and eminently suited to convey definite and clear views of abstract and philosophic truth. The one was the language, for the most part, of a pastoral people, of limited domain, suited to receive a divine revelation, while it was to be perpetuated and held in reserve till He who should stretch forth the rod of His strength from Zion, and carry forth truth unto victory, should come; the other, a language more widely diffused over the civilized world, through which the truth could reach men of many races, in one generation.

The Bible is equally interesting *for the opposition it has encountered*. The powerful and the weak have risen up against it. Learning has sought among its ample stores to prove its declarations at fault, and philosophy, with her boasted discoveries, to prove it inconsistent. It has shamed its enemies, and sent them back to correct their facts and harmonize their testimony. It has been ridiculed, insulted, torn, and burned. But it still lives, and exerts its blessed power upon the world. We regard it with that curiosity and veneration with which we view the battlements of some renowned city, which has sustained siege after siege, and remains unconquered. It has, in turn, assailed its assailants, and ground them to powder. In every attack upon it, they have been vanquished.

III. But when we turn away our view from these outward, yet noteworthy attractions, to its substantial contents, we find it replete with topics of surpassing powers, all embraced in the one word, *redemption*. When we look at home, we find ourselves thrown upon the world oppressed with a thousand evils; a conflict continually waging within between inclination and duty; with aspirations after immortality and peace, yet dragged downward by a weight of moral infirmity, and swayed by unholy and torturing passions, unable to reach the felicity to which we aspire. As we read these sacred pages over, it is plain that their grand subject is *redemption*—redemption from sin, from condemnation, from all these ills. Redemption is the key-note, to which all its parts are adjusted in the sweetest harmony, and is heard ever resounding in the diapason of its song. All its histories of the

past, and prophecies of the future, have this for their theme, whatever the outward event recorded by the historic pen, or adumbrated more dimly in the prophetic vision. From the eternity past to the final consummation, and beyond, into the eternity to come, there is presented to view one illustrious personage, the Seed of the Woman, the Angel of the Covenant, the Messianic King, the eternal Word, the Son of God, the Desire of Nations, the Lamb in the midst of the throne. One central object rises before our eye; it is the community of saints, the chosen of God, the eternal kingdom of Christ, the church of the living God, militant on earth, or washed and sanctified, and adorned, as a bride for her bridegroom, in heaven. It is an ever-flowing stream, issuing forth from eternity past, widening and deepening as it glides along, spreading fertility all abroad through the track of time; bearing on its bosom unutterable wealth; refreshing with its crystal waters of life every thirsting, fainting spirit; watering trees whose fruits and leaves are for the healing of the nations; and flowing on in its purity and healthful power through eternity to come. When it is said, "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth," and we behold the world coming into being out of nothing, "so that things which are seen were not made of things which do appear;" when we behold the darkness of chaos dispossessed by the light of the first morning; the waters lifted up and separated by the airy firmament from those beneath, the bed of the primitive ocean in part upheaved, to form the dry land, this clothed with verdure, and earth, air, and seas peopled with living hosts; when we behold the heavens above and the earth beneath speaking forth the glory of God, when as yet there was no human eye to see nor ear to hear it; when we behold the intelligent and moral creation starting into life, and man formed with peculiar deliberation, as if God's noblest work; when His own image is stamped upon him, and he prepared at once to rule and to worship, as a king and a priest unto God; when we behold him able to stand, but free to fall, the head and representative as he was of all his seed; when we behold him overstepping all the restraints which gratitude, and reverence, and fear of his Creator, impressed upon him, and coming under the awful sentence of temporal and eternal death, his race involved in his curse, and the earth itself, his and their abode, smitten with the divine malediction; when we behold the tempter degraded, and this seeming conqueror conquered, and this spoiler spoiled,

and the declaration distinctly made, that the Seed of the Woman should bruise his head; we begin to see the grand design of all developed. The earth was created for the abode of man, that it might be the theatre of redemption, in which the Divine glory is unfolding itself in increasing splendors. And to teach men this, and not to teach them science, is the grand design of the entire record. The scheme unfolds itself in rapid manifestations. The institution of sacrifices taught man more fully his guilt and moral weakness, of which he must have been conscious before, and, in connection with instructions often given, pointed him to that great sacrifice to be made in the fullness of time. Men who had worshipped God in private, and in the sacred precincts of their own homes, now banded together, and began to call upon the name of God in a more public and demonstrative worship. In spite of all this, amid the prophesying of Enoch, the seventh from Adam, saying, "Behold, the Lord cometh with ten thousand of his saints to execute judgment;" and the warning of Noah, a preacher of righteousness; the degeneracy of men spread wider, and the earth was filled with violence; but lo! the overwhelming deluge, which swept *them* away, bore aloft the Ark, and saved by its waters the chosen Church—a type of this redemption of which baptism is now the figure and symbol. Every thing else in the Scriptures is about Christ, or because of him. Every dry genealogy, every list of encampments and enumeration of the people, has its connection with the story of redemption. All those surprising facts scattered along in the entire narration: the confusion of tongues and consequent dispersion of the nations, though they were of one blood; the selection of one line of descent, and the covenant with Abraham, its head and the father of the faithful, in whose seed the nations would be blessed; the selection of one branch of his family as the depositary of the truth, to perpetuate it in the world; the bondage in Egypt, the miraculous deliverance; the giving of the law; the system of rites and symbols addressing the eye, and thus preaching the Gospel of redemption to the heart; the solemn procession of the prophets, with their cultivated genius, their lofty inspirations, their office as watchmen over the theocracy, and their striking testimony, (for the "testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy;") the clearer indication of the Messiah's approach, and the return of His kingdom, as the time draws nigh; His incarnation, that stupendous event that moved all heaven

in praise; His matchless instructions and unequalled virtue; His innocent, meek, and holy example; His atoning death, crucifixion and burial; His bursting the prison bars, ascending on high, and assuming universal dominion as head over all things to the church; his reëstablishment of this church on earth, with its impressive sacraments and its teaching ministry; the reiterated announcement of our need of atonement and regenerating grace, and that through Him alone are these to be had; that when He had offered Himself a sacrifice in this outer court, He entered with His own blood to intercede within the veil, having sent forth His Holy Spirit, the second Comforter, to convert and sanctify; the resurrection of the dead, the immortality of souls, their final judgment and endless rewards in heaven or hell; the universal diffusion of the Gospel under Christ our King, its triumph over the hearts of men and the powers of hell, till men will court its favor even when they are not in heart obedient to it; the passing away of the heavens with a great noise, and the conflagration of our earth, when God's people shall have been gathered home; and the new heavens and new earth wherein dwelleth righteousness; all these are embraced within, and are parts of, the central truth of redemption, the great topic of the sacred Scriptures, the key-note, ever repeated, of this wondrous anthem which gladdens every sin-sick soul on earth, and shall fill all heaven with resounding praise.

Does a man wish for subjects of commanding interest with which to arrest attention, enwrap the mind, and affect the heart, let him study deeply these stupendous truths until they penetrate and arouse his powers, then let him go among the haunts of men and publish them to the world. Could you evoke the ancient sages from their dusty beds, or call Newton from his meditations on the stars, or Locke from his investigations of the human mind, and Bacon from his deep reading of the human heart; could you summon statesmen from their attention to the concerns of empires, or politicians from their intense search for the means of moulding the popular will; what system of truths could they devise, which should interest and benefit man, while he lives, at all comparable to this? What other system could form the staple of weekly Sabbath instruction, or so engage, arouse, and transform the popular mind?

Even the fanaticism which has, at periods, swept over the church with desolating fury, shows the power of the true faith. If the

counterfeit has had so great and dismal a sway, what must be the majestic power of that truth under which it has taken refuge? The awful sanctions of the divine law; its searching scrutiny of the human heart; the intuitive justice of its claims; man's impotency to any good, and his entire dependence on divine power; often shake the most determined and stubborn soul. But it is around the cross of Christ that these full-orbed truths of the Christian system revolve. In frozen Greenland, in the Hottentot's kraal, in the wigwam of the savage, and the hovel of the slave, and in the palace of the king, the cabinet of the philosopher, and the tent of the soldier, in the lowest and highest extremes of society, it has spoken in accents of tenderness to the guilty and despairing, and, by the look of faith they have lifted upon it, has translated them out of darkness into light. "The law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul."

IV. Upon this central truth of gratuitous pardon through Christ, there is built a system of the purest morality.

What is virtue? is a short but a pithy question, which has exercised the human mind for ages past, in fruitless efforts to answer it. One has defined virtue to be, living according to nature. Another, living in pleasure. Another has held that lust, or anger, is no more to be blamed than the thirst occasioned by dropsy; that pride, self-valuation, ingenuity, quickness of thought, ease of expression, delicacy of taste, strength of body, and cleanliness, are virtues; and that self-denial, self-mortification, and humility, are not virtues, but useless and mischievous. Another makes *utility* the standard of right; a standard which it requires omniscience to employ. The Bible makes the will of God the rule of right, and sums up all virtue in one precept, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and thy neighbour as thyself." This one precept places the child, in this land of Bibles, far above the wisest philosophers of ancient and modern times. The Scriptures reject from the list of virtues, vanity, pride, the mere love of glory, resentment, revenge, hatred of enemies, contempt of the poor, confidence in self, insensibility under suffering, love of conquest and war; and substitutes instead humility, meekness, forgiveness, self-denial, a mind occupied with heavenly things, sympathy with the poor, renunciation of self, and resignation under affliction. And, while all other systems have been without strength or adequate motive to holiness of life, this system supplies both. "When

we were without strength, Christ died for the ungodly;" and a true believer in Him cannot help being a virtuous man. "How shall we who are dead to^d sin live any longer therein?" Our old humanity was crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin. We are no longer held in bondage under the law, and driven by its lash. We have the living spirit of children, and of rescued friends, and "sin shall not have dominion over us, because we are not under the law, but under grace."

To strengthen our tottering virtue, and draw our affections heavenward, it establishes among us a system of pure *worship*. You ask paganism what you shall worship. In her more rational moments, she bids you lift up your eyes to the sun, moon, and stars, and behold your deities. She sends you to the temple of the winds, or of the god of war, or of drunkenness, or of the goddess of pleasure; or she bows you down to the crocodile, the serpent, the toad; to birds, and four-footed beasts, and creeping things. You ask her with what *rites* you shall worship, and she bids you offer the fruit of your body for the sin of your soul. The priest of the Phœnician Moloch would have you lay your helpless babe on the arms of his brazen idol, to fall into the fires raging beneath; the priest of Greece bids you whip your naked boy on the altar of Diana until he dies. Within our own generation, the South-Sea Island mother—now, thanks to God, more happily taught—rendered cruel by her religious rights, has buried her infant alive, and trampled the earth upon it with her own feet; while the priest of India would have her throw it to the crocodile thirsting for its blood. And so when nations consulted their oracles. The people of Carthage, when involved in calamity, are told that their misfortunes are owing to the anger of Saturn, because, instead of offering up children of noble descent, there had been fraudulently substituted for them the children of foreigners and slaves. With fearful repentance, they forthwith atone for their sin by rivers of blood. Two hundred children of the best families are immediately sacrificed; and upwards of three hundred citizens, from a sense of guilt, seek in voluntary death propitiation for the pretended crime. The rocks are still shown, on whose sharp points our British ancestors immolated their victim, and in whose rudely hollowed basin they floated him in his own blood. And our Saxo

ancestors were polytheists and idolaters, whose god, Woden, prompted them to deeds of sanguinary vengeance, and whose highest idea of heavenly blessedness was to lie on couches and quaff ale from the skulls of slaughtered foes. But you ask of the Bible how and where you shall worship God, and it tells you, "Neither in Jerusalem, nor in this mountain, shall men worship the Father. God is a spirit, and they that worship Him must worship Him in spirit and in truth." Paganism, by its very worship, encouraged looseness of morals, and savage ferocity. You would blush at the morals of Cato, the Senator, and Socrates, the wise. In Christian countries there may be vile pollution, but it is not sanctioned by our religion. Not so in pagan lands. The moving car on which Juggernaut is seated is covered over with obscene images, the provocatives of vice. As a code of morals, "the law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul."

Finally: that the Bible is the best and most perfect gift heaven has bestowed on man, is shown by its blessed power both for this life and that which is to come.

It quickens thought, promotes intelligence, and fosters learning. This it does by arousing the mind with its grand disclosures, its weighty truths, on which eternal consequences hang, its moral requirements, which demand that all the provinces of human thought should do homage to them. It calls upon the whole system of public and private morality to arrange itself in conformity with its precepts. It calls upon the whole system of jurisprudence and international law to harmonize with it. It proffers them its aid, and on its principles are they, in all but barbarous nations, now arranged. Nations and individuals are alike invested by it with a moral character. It summons them to its tribunal, and gives forth to them its laws. Behold the influence it exerts in times of peace, the discussions it evokes in every realm of thought, and the learning which is implied when the last resort must be had to an ancient standard like this, written in foreign dialects which have ceased to be used. Academies, colleges, and schools fill all Christian countries. Behold its influence in times of war, when the nation takes the sword to defend itself and punish its foes. The war now waging on our own shores is sufficiently terrible. But in China or in Africa, how different. The prisoner is disembowelled, beheaded, or dismem-

bered or sold into hopeless bondage, the mother and the child devoted to cruel death, or indignities more brutal still. The monuments of Egypt and Assyria reveal the same or greater cruelties as practiced in ancient times. *Our* enemies, if wounded, as soon as practicable, are kindly cared for; our prisoners are fed, and in due time restored to their homes. Behold, how it has elevated woman from a state of servitude to be the favored and respected companion of man; her mind and tastes cultivated, her sphere assigned her and hedged about with impregnable defences, where she reigns as queen with her ministries of love. How different from the condition in which polygamy and unrestricted divorce leaves her in heathen lands. Paganism abandons its sickly, deformed, or aged, to perish. It has no arrangements to alleviate their sufferings or make existence tolerable. It has no asylums, no refuges for the unfortunate, no almshouses nor hospitals. The religion of the Bible gives, as far as instrumentalities can, hearing to the deaf, language to the dumb, and sight to the blind. The land is at this moment full of its deeds of charity and its yearnings over suffering and want. It hushes the infant to its slumbers in the cradle with a song whose theme is the babe of Bethlehem; it allures the child to virtue by the example of Josiah, Timothy, and Samuel; it warns the wayward youth, and reproves the erring man, and calls the hoary sinner to repentance. It administers strength to the tempted, courage to the weak, hope to the desponding, comfort to the bereaved, and enables the dying to cry, "O Death, where is thy sting; O Grave, where is thy victory!" The soldier has read its pages on the morning of the bloody battle, has offered the prayer it prompted amid the sanguinary strife, has opened its leaves to take a last look at its blessed promises as his life-blood was ebbing away on the gory field, or has remembered the patient sufferer of Calvary as he lies pining and wasting away in the distant camp amid wintry snows. The earthly house of his tabernacle is dissolving, but he beholds "a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens."

Precious is the boon God has given you, precious that which you are offering to men of every degree. You give to them God's gift to you. It is *plain*, they can understand it. It needs not that its truths should be distilled through priestly lips. Each has the right of private judgment, and you give it to each one that they may read,

meditate, and judge. You give it to them, not to win them to your party, but to Christ. You give it to them, because it is all they need, with the Spirit's aid, to save them from the second death. Withhold it not, my brethren, lest God should withhold His grace from you. Your countrymen need it, and your best efforts to procure it in this peculiar season, when they are cut off from other sources of supply. The nations of the earth need it, they need its light, they need the salvation it proffers, and the view it gives, so inspiring, of a happy immortality. They need the bond of charity which it supplies, and which will bind into one sisterhood all nations, when they shall learn its story of redemption, when their minds shall be roused, their characters formed, their intelligence called forth, and their literature created and moulded by the Scriptures. Happy day! when the barbarous nations shall be lifted up, and have their eyes purged from ignorance and error by its light. Happy day! when the heathen, Messiah's pledged inheritance, shall receive His yoke, and "the mountain of the Lord's house shall be exalted above the hills, and the nations shall flow unto it, and say, Come, let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob, and He will teach us of His ways, and we shall walk in His paths. For out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem, and they shall beat their swords into plough-shares and their spears into pruning-hooks. Nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more."

Let us gather courage at this our convention, my brethren, to attempt the work God has given us to do. Let us gather around the Bible Society of these Confederate States, ushered into being, happily, since our last annual convention, and in accordance with our earnest desire, and by the agency at that time inaugurated by us. Let us aid it to enthrone the Bible in every dwelling of our Confederacy, to place the whole word of God, or at least the Christian Scriptures, in the tent or knapsack of every soldier that fights our battles in this cruel war; and let us await with expectation and hope that day when, peace reigning throughout our borders, scope shall be given us to distribute the Scriptures in foreign lands, thus preaching the Gospel to every creature, in obedience to the Saviour's command, and fulfilling the prophecy respecting Christ, that "in His name shall the Gentiles

trust." "He shall not strive, nor cry, neither shall any man hear His voice in the street. A bruised reed shall he not break, and the smoking flax shall he not quench, till he send forth judgment unto victory."

"How fair the daughter of Jerusalem, then!
How gloriously from Zion hill she looks!
Clothed with the sun, and in her train the moon,
And on her head a coronet of stars,
And girdling round her waist, with heavenly grace,
The bow of mercy bright; and in her hand,
Immanuel's cross, her sceptre and her hope!
Desire of every land! The nations come
And worship at her feet; all nations come,
Flocking like doves;
The East, the West, the South, and snowy North,
Rejoicing meet, and worship reverently
Before the Lord in Zion's holy hill;
The desert blossoms and the barren sings,
Justice and Mercy, Holiness and Love,
Among the people walk; Messiah reigns,
And Earth keeps jubilee a thousand years."

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