

Principles is actually begun which will probably suffer little pause till the enemies of the Saviour be made His footstool!

Among the servants of God themselves, perplexities and divisions have been permitted to arise; but already we see these PERPLEXITIES AND DIVISIONS OVERRULED TO A GOOD END: while they have been permitted among the servants of God for the purification of their motives and the humiliation of their hearts, they should not damp their courage or check their zeal: they may deprive them of the countenance and support of those who never added any real strength to their body, and they may separate from their company for a season weak and misjudging brethren; but, their own errors being rectified and their dependence on their Lord and devotedness to His glory become more simple and entire, the hearts of all the faithful will be more closely than ever knit to them—their difficulties and dangers being more clearly seen and strongly felt, will be borne more unworriedly in remembrance before God in prayer—the directing and sanctifying influences of the Holy Spirit will be more earnestly invoked for them; and His blessing on every part of Missionary Labour will be more importunately sought, more confidently expected, more abundantly bestowed, and more gratefully acknowledged.

That it pleases God to purify His Church by its various trials in order to its more abundant and successful exertions in the Conversion of the World, may be inferred from the NEW OPENINGS FOR LABOUR which are presented: for, in the face of all the difficulties attending the work of God, that work is enlarging itself on all sides. The movements of Providence in reference to the two great Antichrists—the Internal Corrupter, and the outward Foo—the Romavist Usurper, and the Arabian Imposter—are most awakening to the thoughtful mind. The work of mercy so happily begun in Ireland—the feverish condition of Portugal and Spain—the rapid growth of Christian Knowledge in France—the precarious state of Austria—the blow which Popery has received in the New World—all these things concurring simultaneously with the shaking to their very foundations of the two great supporters of the Mahomedan Delusion, the Empires of Turkey and Persia, may well lead the most cautious and sober Christian to conclude that we are actually in a Great Crisis of the World. Immeasurable Fields of Labour may be speedily opened to Christians by this shaking of the nations; and, already, the cry of our active Societies for more labourers and more liberal support is loud and pressing, because more opportunities for labour are presented to them than they have the means of embracing. So vast are the wants of the world, that, unless some mighty moral change shall take place, affecting at once, or in a short period, immense masses of mankind, the supply of Christian Knowledge which can be furnished by all our Societies will but create, as God shall bless it, a demand for larger supplies. The following just remarks of the Committee of a Bible Society Auxiliary are applicable to Missions as well as to the Scriptures—

The demand for the Scriptures is not diminishing, hardly even in our own country. If, at the time when the Bible Society began its operations, it could have been foreseen what a prodigious number of copies would be diffused through the Nation within the ensuing twenty years, it would have been presumed that by this time the want and the demand would be nearly satisfied: but the contrary is the present state of the case. And this fact, while it shows that there was such a dreadful destitution of the Scriptures in the community as no one who entertained the worst surmises could imagine, proves also that a quite new sentiment has been excited—that a desire to possess the Holy Book has been created and extended to a wonderful degree. It is most gratifying to hear, that the vast number of copies issued by the Bible Society has been so far from sufficing to satisfy this desire, that the sale of Bibles in the bookselling trade has been increasing in a parallel and rival progress; so that, most happily, the purest Christian Charity has drawn Worldly Interest and Traffic itself into a holy alliance. It appears the case has come to be, that we can no longer content each family, even in the humbler classes, to possess one Bible in their house; but that several of its members are desirous of having each his own, especially those of them who are

leaving the paternal abode to try their separate allotment in life.

There is something grand and inspiring in the view of the rapid and incalculable multiplication of Bibles: extending, as it is in the process of doing, into the languages of all the most considerable tribes of mankind. We see thus the testimony of God, the dictates of His law, and the Overtures of His grace, taking, sensibly and visibly, a position, in numberless situations, where the consecrated vehicle of them had never had a place before. We thus see the BEST BOOK acquiring, in point of number of copies, an immense superiority over every other book in the world; and placing itself by all the good books to improve their usefulness, and by all the bad books to baffle their malignity. It is gratifying to consider how immeasurably far the number of Bibles surpasses the number of copies of any, the most popular, infidel book in existence: and we may trust that the time is not very far off, when all the copies of all the Infidel Writings, existing or yet to be produced, will number but an inferior and dejected multitude in contrast with the growing millions of copies of this ONE BOOK, which is destined to arrest their operation and overwhelm their cause.

In preceding Reports there has been a reference to the rapid extension of knowledge among the people. If it were ever a doubtful question, whether the general acquisition of knowledge would be an improvement of the condition of the community, it is now too late to discuss it: the popular mind is breaking loose from its ancient, fixed, rigid state; and can now no more be stopped or bounded in its movement, than the stream from the dissolving snows and ices of a long winter. And if it be but too evident that the general prevalence of augmented knowledge and mental freedom, unaccompanied by the influences of religion, would be a portentous change, so much the stronger is the argument for an active promotion of the circulation of the Scriptures a circulation, which, by the way, could have no such wide enlargement, but for the very circumstances of the excitement and change in the state of the popular mind. Reverting to the times antecedent to this great excitement, by which some persons have been so much alarmed for the religion and morals of the people, we may ask "Was there then any eager demand for the Bible? Who were there—how many persons in a thousand, to inquire for it, or to care about it? Were not the greater number of families in the land perfectly content without having it, even as a trifling article of furniture, in the house? Did not millions of each successive generation pass through life without any dissatisfaction that they had never read, that they had never been able to read, one chapter or verse? We see, then, that the increase of knowledge, the rousing of the mental existence of the people from its long slumber, brings with it a proportional demand for that very thing which is adapted to be the antidote to the evils to be apprehended from newly acquired intelligence, inquisitiveness, and freedom.

The providence of God is therefore manifestly pressing on Christians, by these new openings for labour, the DUTY OF ENLARGED EXERTIONS; and our Religious Societies are beginning, as with one voice, to rouse their countrymen to the discharge of this duty. Appeals of this nature were recorded in our last Volume—from the London Missionary Society, at pp. 153, 154—from the Baptist Society, at p. 411—from the Scottish Society, at p. 412—and from the Church Society, at pp. 512—514. But these appeals are not confined to this country: the American Board of Missions have recently pressed this subject home on their countrymen with a degree of energy, which may well serve to stimulate their brethren on this side of the Atlantic; as will appear, not only from the appeal quoted at p. 565, 566 of our last Volume, but from the following extract of the proceedings of the Board at the Eighteenth Anniversary, held in New-York, in the month of October—

The Committee appointed to report a plan for augmenting the funds of the Board, made a report, whereupon it was resolved,

—That, in view of the great success, which has attended the measures employed for the propagation of the Gospel among the Heathen, and of the indications of Divine Providence favourable to a more extended and universal application of these means, and in view of the growing conviction respecting the

obligation of Christians to cause the Gospel to be preached and disseminated throughout the world, it appears proper that Special Appeals for Liberal Contributions to this object should be made to those who possess wealth, or who, by the prosperity of their business, are enabled to do much in its behalf.

—That the existing operations, engagements, and prospects of the Board give occasion for a loud and urgent call on its patrons and friends for more enlarged liberality, than at any former period; and that it is exceedingly desirable, that so large an amount of funds should be obtained, as shall not only justify a great extension of its operations, but likewise give such an impetus to the Public Mind and to the faith and hopes of the Church, as shall essentially promote the progress of the Cause, and the fulfilment of the Divine Predictions and Promises.

With regard to the other part of the work assigned, which was to consider the extraordinary duties that are devolved on the Christians of the present day, with reference to Missions among the Heathen, your Committee state it as their unwavering conviction,

—That the standard of Christian Benevolence is far too low among all classes of the Christian Community; and that the rich especially have, with some honorable exceptions, fallen in their contributions far below what the Claims of the Great Head of the Church and the Wants of a Perishing World demand; and that some efficient measures should be taken to increase the charities of the Christian Public and the funds of the Board.

Some powerful incentives to enlarged Liberality were quoted at pp. 279—281 of our last Volume, from several eloquent Speeches addressed to the members of different Societies assembled at their Annual Meetings in the month of May; but this subject is placed in a very striking light in the Missionary Herald, published monthly by the American Board of Missions, in demonstrating with what PERFECT EASE THE CHRISTIAN NATIONS MIGHT SUPPLY, IF SO DISPOSED, THE SPIRITUAL WANTS OF THE WORLD. In adverting "to the small proportion which the money expended in Religious Charity bears to that expended on various other objects," it is remarked—

The Annual income of the British and Foreign Bible Society is thought to be a large sum; and it certainly is not a small one; but it is but about a NINE-HUNDREDTH PART of the Annual War expenses of Great Britain, during several years of the late European Contest; and less than a THREE-HUNDREDTH PART of the Annual Interest now paid by that Nation on its war debt. If the sum annually raised by the Bible Society were divided among all the families in the United Kingdom, it would afford about TEN CENTS (five pence) to each family; whereas the amount annually paid, during a series of years, for the support of the late war, was not less than NINETY DOLLARS to each family, and the present annual interest of the war debt is THIRTY DOLLARS, or more probably THIRTY-FIVE, to each family. Now it would be as practicable, WERE THE PEOPLE SO INCLINED, to spend NINETY DOLLARS FOR EACH FAMILY through a series of years, for the distribution of the Bible, the support of Missionaries, the circulation of Tracts, the Religious Education of the poor, and other similar purposes, as it was to spend the same sum for carrying on a war. We would not be understood as saying, that it would be practicable to bear both classes of expence, to this full extent, at the same time: but, in the nature of things, it would be as easy for a great and populous Nation to make a decided and vigorous demonstration of its power and its resources for the Honour of God and the Salvation of Men, as it is for the same Nation to make a like demonstration of its power in supporting a popular War, or defending itself from a threatened Invasion. Nor would we be understood to intimate how large a sum might be wisely expended, in the great and stupendous process of meliorating the moral condition of man; evidently, however, a much larger sum than has ever yet been devoted to this purpose. The men of future times will have that largeness of heart and those results of experience, which will enable them to direct the energies of wiser and more enlightened generations than have yet lived upon earth; to them may be left the plans and estimates of that vast moral machinery, which is to affect the millions of the human race.

(To be continued.)