

finished volume in each language and dialect, the work of ten, fifteen, or twenty years, was sent forth for distribution, what earnest prayers that God would bless the effort to send light to the dark places of the earth, and that his servants who go forth weeping, bearing precious seed, may come again with rejoicing, bringing their sheaves with them.

In this great enterprise the British and Foreign Society has taken the lead, and its younger sister, the American, has followed in the same path. Both have one object, one method, a similar system of auxiliaries and branches, and similar agencies for distribution at home and abroad; and I may add, both are determined to work on until every family on earth shall be supplied with a Bible, and shall be able to read it in their native tongue.

It is noteworthy that these two Societies print and distribute more Bibles every three years than the world contained at the beginning of the present century. And recently, as you know, the gates of countries which for ages had been closed and barred against the Bible, have swung wide open to receive it. Wherever commerce has found or made a way, the Bible has gone, the missionary has gone, the schoolmaster has gone, the printing press has gone, and the seeds of a better civilization have been sown beside all waters.

These societies do not limit their operations by geographical boundaries. Their field is the world. History informs us that the Pope divided all newly discovered countries between Spain and Portugal by a certain meridian. But the English and Dutch had no very profound respect for the title which His Holiness had given. They disputed his right to convey the world in fee simple. But these societies, with their thousands of auxiliaries, are dividing the nations between them by warrant of Him who said "Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature." Experience has proved that the printed Word of God is the most effective of preachers. It is not only the armory from which the missionary draws his choicest weapons, it is the most successful of missionaries. It is itself the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ. No burden of commentaries, no learned exegesis can make the ten commandments or the sermon on the mount one whit plainer to the common mind than the simple text itself.

Let me say further, that the Bible is not only the best of Gospel teachers to instruct men in the way of salvation, it is also the best of moral teachers. True, the book is not a systematic treatise on moral philosophy, but it tells men what they ought to do, and what they ought not to do, in their intercourse with one another. It commands what is right and forbids what is wrong, with divine authority. The Greek moralists set in order all the principles of their science, and illustrated them in language of Attic beauty; but they failed to check the progress of vice. They could instruct men how they ought to live, but could not persuade them to live as they ought. They held no warrant signed and sealed in the chancery of heaven. They offered no motives, either of hope of good, or fear of ill in the future life, which were powerful enough to check avarice, ambition, and lust. Like Macbeth, they who wished to sin, would "jump the life to come," if they could but escape the judgment here, "on this bank and shoal of time." The Bible, and the Bible only, confronts the temptation to sin with the retributions of Jehovah's law, and these reach forward to the eternal world.

Some twelve or fifteen years ago we had on the other side of your boundary what our newspapers allude to as "the late unpleasantness." It is true that many unpleasant things happened at that time in the States. To my unmilitary mind it was unpleasant to see a million men doing their utmost to kill one another. I never could highly appreciate the minstrel who consoled the dying Highland Chieftain by singing of his martial Clan Alpine,

" 'Twere worth ten years of peaceful life
One glance at their array."