

What drew such a crowd together? Philadelphia is a religious city, and its Christian Churches are very much in earnest in regard to the work of the Lord; but, further, the Directors of this Society have discovered a way of making their annual gatherings interesting, instructive and attractive to young and old. There was no long report read, but I gathered the following facts from a little pamphlet that was put into the hands of every one of the great crowd:

The American Bible Society was organized in the City of New York in 1816. Its business is conducted by a Board of Managers, consisting of thirty-six laymen of various Christian denominations. At the close of this its sixtieth year its total issues of Bibles, Testaments, and integral portions of Scripture are 33,125,766; its expenditure in this work having exceeded *Seventeen Millions of Dollars*. There were only a few speeches made that evening; but there was a choir of 300 voices (the same that sang at Moody's meetings), then there was an opportunity given of hearing a portion of the Bible read in some thirty languages, and that, generally, in each case by a person whose native tongue the language he read was, save the dead languages.

Since the era of Bible Societies began, not far from 250 versions of the Bible, or parts of the Bible, have been produced by the Christian scholarship of the world. It is difficult to comprehend the amount of time and toil implied in a fact like that. Few persons can understand the difficulty of translating from Hebrew and Greek to rude, materialistic languages, the abstract and theological words and expressions of the Hebrew and Greek Scriptures. It required the labour of sixteen years on the part of Dr. Eli Smith and Dr. Van Dyck to translate the Bible into Arabic. It was only in 1864 that Dr. Schauffer, of Constantinople, completed the translation of the Scriptures into Osmanlee, which he began in 1860. Fifteen years of close and continuous labour was needed to turn the Bible into the Chinese Mandarin colloquial. Dr. Williamson and Dr. Riggs, after nearly forty years of study and missionary labour, are only now completing their translation into the Dakota tongue; thirty minutes on an average, one of the translators estimates, having been given to each verse of the translation. It was interesting, therefore, to hear from the platform of the Academy of Music, specimens of this great work of Scripture translation. There was there a Jew to read the 23rd Psalm in his own Hebrew; a Greek to read the Greek. It was a lad in his working-clothes that read the Portuguese; a tall Scotchman read his native Gaelic; and a Welshman the cognate dialect of Wales. A learned Professor did duty several times in reading the dead languages in turn, among which was read the Sanskrit, great mother of them all. A Chinaman in his queue read one of the many dialects of the flowery land; and thus the Babel went on in Italian, Spanish, German, till one might well feel amazed, as in the day of Pentecost, "to hear every man in his own tongue, wherein he was born." There was, however, no one to represent poor Africa, nor any of its wild tongues.

Then came forward the blind to read with their fingers, and among them a young Chinese lady, who as a child was brought to this country by a missionary to be taught to read: she has now attained to the position of teacher in the Asylum for the Blind in Philadelphia. A deaf mute lad greatly interested the vast audience, so that forgetting themselves they *encored* his reading of the story of the woman from the borders of Tyre and Sidon, and the curing of the deaf mute, which, in Mark, immediately follows the former story. It was "fell reading," as the Scotchwoman said to Dr. Chalmers. It was reading, not certainly with the tongue, for, alas, it was tied, nor with noise, but with the whole body—fingers, hands, eyes, face, but chiefly with the hands. Another deaf mute, a young lady, read, which would seem a paradox, *audibly*, so that every one in the great building heard her distinctly, and yet she never heard the sound of a human voice, but learned to move her lips and her tongue, to emit sounds, by watching the mouth of her teacher.