

and in 1799 this order was executed. These copies were soon disposed of; and as thirty years had elapsed since the preceding edition, the demand was far from supplied, and another edition was called for, but in vain. The Society had either done its utmost, or erroneously conceived, in the face of evidence to the contrary, that it had done sufficient; and no hope remained of farther aid from that quarter. While some private individuals were considering how to supply the deficiency by procuring a competent impression of Welch Bibles, and circulating them cheaply, an occurrence took place, which changed the whole complexion of the business, and laid the foundation of a permanent supply of the Holy Scriptures, not only to the inhabitants of Wales, but to the whole human race.

In the month of December, 1802, the Rev. Thomas Charles, of Bala, an ordained Minister of the Established Church, but officiating in connection with the Welch Calvinistic Methodists, a man of zealous piety and indefatigable exertion, and by his habit of itinerating and promoting Sunday Schools, rendered intimately familiar with the wants of his countrymen, was in London; when he proposed a contribution in aid of the plan for printing and distributing the Scriptures among them. On the 7th of that month, the subject having been introduced by Mr. Joseph Tarn in a circle of friends* who had met to transact a different business, Mr. Charles preferred his suit on behalf of his countrymen; describing the want of Welsh Bibles, and the failures of all attempts to obtain them in the usual channel, and urging with important earnestness the necessity of resorting in this painful extremity to 'new and extraordinary means.'

* The committee of the Religious Tract Society. Mr. Tarn was afterwards Assistant Secretary and Accountant of the Bible Society, till his death on the 10th of January last.

"This proposition gave rise to a conversation of some length; in the course of which, it was suggested, that, as Wales was not the only part of the kingdom in which such a want as had been described might be supposed to prevail, it would be desirable to take such steps as might be likely to stir up the public mind to a *general* dispersion of the Scriptures. To this suggestion, which proceeded from the Rev. Joseph Hughes, a Baptist Minister, and which was warmly encouraged by the rest of the company, we are to trace the dawn of those measures, which, expanding with time, and progressive discussion, issued at length in the proposal and establishment of the British and Foreign Bible Society.

"The propriety of exciting the attention of the public to the general dispersion of the Scriptures having been thus casually suggested, Mr. Hughes was desired to prepare, in writing, such an Address as might contain, in a more digested form, the substance of his unpremeditated observations; in order that the project, if it should, upon revision, appear practicable and important, might be regularly submitted to the consideration of the Public.

"In the mean time, certain measures were pursued, which tended materially to advance the progress of the undertaking. A communication was made of the object contemplated, to some persons of distinguished reputation for piety and philanthropy. Among these, was William Wilberforce, Esq. who, at a private interview, conferred with the parties who had solicited his advice; and furnished such hints as his enlightened mind and liberal heart would be likely to suggest, in order to improve their plan, and facilitate introduction to public acceptance. A similar communication was made to Charles Grant, Esq., and attended with a similar result.