

now amounts to 291, and the number of copies circulated exceeds one hundred and twenty-four millions. The circulation of kindred societies is over eighty-one millions.

The forward movement at the present time, in missionary enterprise, has an important bearing on the Bible Society. The Society is the friend of all, the rival of none; and it is the great storehouse from which the missionaries receive their supplies. The missionaries are not, however, mere receivers. They are invaluable helpers. When the scholarly missionary reaches his sphere of labour, he becomes a philologist in the service of the Society. If there is a no version, he makes one. If there is a poor version, he makes it better. This work goes on incessantly, and at the present moment new work of translation or revision is being done in nearly eighty languages. Perhaps there are, on an average, seven workers actively interested in each of these languages, so that the Society has a staff of 560 philologists doing her service.

The increasing ratio of progress in such work is scarcely surpassed in any branch of human activity. It is computed that there were about forty versions of the Scriptures produced during the first eighteen centuries of our era. During the last thirteen years the Bible Society alone has brought out over eighty versions, or about twice as many as the whole Christian Church had produced from the days of Christ on earth till the formation of the Society.

It is not generally known that the Bible Society is itself a great pioneer and missionary society. Six hundred of her colporteurs carry the written Word to the homes of men all the world round; and through their visits our blessed Lord's words find a fulfilment—"Behold, I stand at the door and knock." Three hundred of her zenana women visit the degraded homes of the East; and while the Marthas serve and the Marys listen, happy Christian homes are formed where the Master loves to linger.

Jesus had compassion on the multitude by the Sea of Galilee, and said: "Give ye them to eat;" and through this great organization the disciples are still engaged in distributing the bread of life to a hungry world.

Woolsthorpe, Upper Norwood, London, England.

ARGUING WITH A SCEPTIC.

"The Bible the word of God!" exclaimed a young sceptic in hearing of a friend. "No, it is the invention of men."

"The Bible claims to be God's word, does it not?" asked the Christian.

"Yes, the men who wrote it pretend that they 'spoke as they were moved by the Holy Ghost.'"

"If the Bible, then, is not what it claims to be, it is, you think, an imposture, and its writers liars?"

"Yes, that is what I believe."

"Good men would not lie and deceive, would they?"

"Of course not."

"Then the Bible you are sure, could not have been written by good men?"

"I feel certain that it was not."

"Now answer me candidly. Does the Bible condemn sin, and threaten bad men with punishment?"

"Yes," rather reluctantly.

"Does it condemn lying and deception?"

"Yes," a little sharply.

"Would bad men—deceivers and liars—make a book that condemns their own sins?"

"They would not be likely to do so, certainly."

The young sceptic felt the ground giving way under him, and changed the subject.