

I speak of the American Bible Society as the *younger* brother of the Board, because six years must yet elapse before it can celebrate its seventy-fifth anniversary. But I might almost call them *twins*, inasmuch as the formal organization of the Bible Society in 1816 was but the blending in one of numerous local societies whose existence began in the first decade of the century.

The close relationship of the two societies is due to various circumstances. If in colonial days the fathers had preached the Gospel to the Indians of New England, and translated the whole Bible into their tongue, why should not the sons, one hundred and fifty years later, look out on the wide world and ask what could be done to give all men the glorious Gospel of the blessed God?

The firm establishment of our national life had given unity to Christian activities and prepared the way for societies distinctively American; recent revivals of religion had kindled earnest desire in Christian hearts for the thorough evangelization of our land, and for the conversion of such of its inhabitants as were Catholics, infidels, or pagans; the value of the printed page as an agency for diffusing light and knowledge had become more clearly understood; and the success of Moravian and British missions prompted the enquiry whether the American churches might not have a larger share in advancing the kingdom of Christ among remote nations. So while young men like Mills and Hall, in college and in seminary, were consecrating their lives to missionary work abroad, older men, in Massachusetts, in Connecticut, in New Jersey, in Pennsylvania, were organizing societies for circulating the Bible without note or comment; and in 1809, Dr. Jedediah Morse, of Charlestown, went so far as to advocate the forming of a *National Bible Society*, and to draw up a plan for that purpose. The next year this American Board of Commissioners was formed "for the purpose of propagating the gospel in heathen lands by supporting missionaries and diffusing a knowledge of the Holy Scriptures," and six years later, Dr. Morse's desire was fulfilled by the alliance of forty-three local societies in one national body, which from the first resolved "to extend its influence to other countries, whether Christian, Mohammedan, or pagan."

The men who laid the foundations of these two American institutions were to a considerable extent the same. Dr. Jedediah Morse and Dr. Samuel Spring, who had so much to do with shaping the early history of this venerable Board, went to New York in 1816 as delegates from Massachusetts to organize the American Bible Society. One-fifth of all the members of that convention are on the roll of corporate members of the American Board. Elias Boudinot, its first president, was a corporate member. So have been seven of the nine who have held that office since his death. Jeremiah Evars was one of its first managers.

The close relationship of the two bodies is shown in other ways. The Hon. John Cotton Smith, a vice-president of the Board in 1823, became its president in 1826, and held that office fifteen years. He was also a vice-president of the Bible Society from 1816, became its president in 1831 and held that office fifteen years.

The Hon. Theodore Frelinghuysen was president of this Board for sixteen years from 1841, and president of the Bible Society for sixteen years from 1846.

In 1823 a young man, who had graduated from Andover in the class with Rufus Anderson and Wm. A. Hallock, was sent by this Board to explore certain parts of South America with reference to mission work among nominally Christian people. He spent some time in Buenos Ayres, crossed the continent to Chili, came up the west coast to Mexico, and passed overland to the Gulf. When he returned in 1826, the time was not deemed favourable for sending him back to reside permanently in any country which he had visited, and so the Bible Society gained a secretary, John C. Brigham, whose experience as a missionary in a foreign field gave him exceptional fitness for his work.