

encountered, and public attention is drawn to an infinite variety of religious and benevolent schemes, yet results, both in contribution for general objects, and the circulation of the Scriptures in all parts of the kingdom, may be accepted as sufficient proof of the growing appreciation and usefulness of the Society.

The Committee again solicit the attention of their friends and subscribers to that important class of Agents for circulating the Scriptures in the Metropolis, known under the familiar designation of "Bible Women." At the present time there are 152 of these agents employed. The Bible Society has been, and continues to be, identified with this organization, as far as the circulation of the Scriptures is concerned, but no farther. During the past year the Bible Women in London disposed of many thousand copies of the Scriptures amongst classes which, to a very great extent, were beyond the reach of the ordinary means by which the Society is enabled to effect its work; and this circulation was attained, not by the easy method of gift, but by sale, the very poorest of the population being willing, when brought under kind and persuasive influence, to pay for the Bible or Testament by small weekly instalments.

SCOTLAND.—As in former years, grants of Scripture have been made to poor localities, under the direction of the Rev. W. Swan of Edinburgh.

IRELAND.—The HIBERNIAN BIBLE SOCIETY, while prosecuting its own distinctive work, continues to evince unabated interest in the operations of your larger and more comprehensive Society; and, as another proof of earnest desire to have some share in the circulation of the Scriptures beyond the limited range which Ireland affords, has again remitted 500*l.* in aid of your funds for disseminating the word of God in other lands.

The SUNDAY-SCHOOL SOCIETY FOR IRELAND derives annually from your Society a large amount of gratuitous assistance; and the Committee have voted, during the year, in free grants, 16,500 Bibles and 13,000 Testaments, allowing at the same time the privilege of purchasing other supplies at cost price.

CONCLUSION.—In whatever direction your Committee look, they see much to encourage—much to recompense past labour—much to incite to renewed energy and devotedness. They believe that the object of the Society is of unrivalled importance; that it meets a want the world over, which no other

organization can supply. The Society is the Society of one Book; it draws together in loving concord those who, whatever their ecclesiastical diversities, have undoubted faith in the divine inspiration of the Scriptures, and believe that the Sacred Volume may be safely trusted anywhere and everywhere, inasmuch as the Divine Spirit is able to unfold its revelation of grace and mercy to the soul of the reader, even without the intervention of human instrumentality.

The Committee feel that it is incumbent upon them to infuse fresh life and activity into their labours, now that the Bible is challenged to substantiate its claims in a new struggle; and men who should stand in the foremost rank to assert and vindicate, by voice and pen, the immutable authority of inspired truth, are girding on the armour of a vain philosophy, to prove that the Bible owes its sacredness to the weakness of superstition, rather than to the convictions of an enlightened faith. Your Committee must content themselves with the declaration of their solemn and unqualified adherence to the Divine inspiration and supreme authority of the Bible. Take these away, and the object of the Society would be stripped of every claim which now wins the sympathy and zeal of so many hearts. All the motive power which impels to this noble enterprise would be paralyzed; the grand point of agreement, which is felt to be stronger than a thousand minor diversities, would be at an end; and the Society would fall in pieces by a natural decay, and pass into oblivion. But a more worthy destiny awaits both the Book and the Society. The Bible has outlived many a bold and reckless assault; it has been unscathed by the arrows of sarcasm and the shafts of infidelity; one army of its assailants after another has passed away; and so will it be in coming struggles. The stars of science have not put out this glorious orb of truth; there is no flaw or spot on its bright disc; it still shines with undimmed lustre, widening the range of its blessed illumination, and destined to fill the world with its light when all the dark shadows of error have disappeared. The old Bible is the Bible for all times, for all lands, for all hearts,—ever young, ever potent, ever victorious. "THE VOICE SAID, CRY; AND HE SAID, WHAT SHALL I CRY? ALL FLESH IS GRASS, AND ALL THE GOODNESS THEREOF IS AS THE FLOWER OF THE FIELD; THE GRASS WITHERETH, THE FLOWER FADETH, BUT THE WORD OF OUR GOD SHALL STAND FOR EVER."