

and the equally isolated situation of the Protestant population in most of the Seigniories—considering also that so many are cut off from all the usual means of either awakening or keeping alive religious feelings in their breasts, and of giving a religious education to their families, whereby they are obviously in danger of becoming little other than practical heathens—it must appear evident to every candid and well-intentioned mind, that there is not only propriety, but also a sort of moral necessity in the attempt to give them that “bread of life” which may be always ready to nourish them in the deficiency of more ample means of grace.

In the hope that the following statement will meet with the approbation of all classes of the community, and draw forth the sympathy and liberal support especially of the religious portion of them, it is laid before them preparatory to an effort to obtain means for carrying out the plan with vigour and effect.

In the spring of the present year a resolution was taken by this Society to supply with a copy of the Holy Scriptures every destitute family in the Province willing to receive it, either by gift or purchase; and a Sub-Committee was appointed to devise and execute the best means of ascertaining and supplying the want. The Committee have kept the object for which they were appointed steadily in view, and have made some progress in discharging the duties assigned to them.

It was, in the first instance, assumed that the Province contains 175,000 Protestants, 35,000 families, besides many Roman Catholics who will receive the Scriptures; and that of these families one-fifth are destitute of the Word of God. To supply those, therefore, 7000 Bibles would be needed, besides great expense of agency in making enquiries and distributing the books.

Application has been made in several quarters for aid in this extensive and benevolent enterprise. The Wesleyan Methodists have engaged to make every exertion in their power. The following is an extract from the minutes of their last District Meeting, May 17, 1837:—

“We sincerely rejoice to learn that our Christian brethren of the Committee of the Montreal Auxiliary Bible Society, have resolved on attempting the accomplishment of so noble a design, and fully concurring in the suggestion of the Committee, ‘that the enterprise will require much money and the cordial and extensive co-operation of Christians in all parts of the Province,’ and being aware of the limited means of the inhabitants at the present time, we shall have great

pleasure in rendering any aid in our power, by gratuitously collecting and furnishing information, raising funds, and distributing the Scriptures in the several sections of the country in which we respectively labour. Any further communications from the Committee we shall be happy to receive, through the Chairman of our District.”

(Signed) WILLIAM SQUIRE, Sec.

The Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge have promised their aid, so far as members of the Church of England are concerned. The British and Foreign Bible Society has generously granted two thousand copies, and the American Bible Society one thousand copies of the Scriptures.

Agents have been engaged for several months at once in examining various places in the Province, to obtain data from which to infer the general destitution, and in supplying in some measure the destitute. In eleven Townships or sections of country, 851 families were visited, of which 337 were found to be without a copy of the Scriptures. In one Township containing 200 Protestant families, 76 were found destitute. In another containing only 20 families, 10 were destitute. A district visited by one of the agents furnished facts as follows:—of 14 families, only 3 had Bibles—some had small parts descended to them from their parents, which they have kept most carefully. One family had not possessed one for three years—another had kept house for nineteen years and had never possessed a copy of the Scriptures. One man told the agent, that he never had a Bible; he said his father had one, but it went astray and he did not obtain one. This man is 68 years of age, and has brought up a large family. All the parties referred to as residing in this district are Protestants, and nearly all connected nominally with the Church of England. Other details might be given, but the Committee deem it unnecessary.

The result of the inquiries yet instituted, shews a greater want of Bibles than was at first supposed. Should the remainder of the Province be in a similar condition to the parts visited, more than *one-third* instead of *one-fifth* will be the ratio of destitute families, requiring for their supply more than 12,000 copies—a number of which, however, would be purchased.

The aids already furnished and expected have been referred to; and for the rest, the Committee appeal to the liberality of individuals, churches, and societies, trusting that a design so noble, and a supply so necessary, will not be suffered to fail for want of funds to carry on and complete the work. It is obvious that a very considerable sum will be