

Christianity often did. From these considerations he inferred that at the time of its establishment, there existed an absolute, positive, and impious necessity for a society of that nature. This society too possessed an advantage which it had not in common with any others; namely, that it brought together various denominations of Christians, for the holy purpose of diffusing Scriptural truths. A more admirable body of religious instruction was nowhere to be found, than the publications which that society embraced. They abounded with simple interesting narratives, suited to every state, to every degree of education, to every rank of intellect. They abounded with plain Christian truths, fit to build men up in Christian faith and holiness. He had little more to add, except to express his trust that the society would receive that support which the demands of the Christian world made necessary; its results singly were beautiful and effective, while in connection with other religious institutions it was productive of harmony and force.

Mr. Jones (the assistant-secretary) then read letters from Lord Gambier and Mountcashel, apologising for their absence from the meeting, and detailing the rise and progress of the society; the general result of which will be appreciated by the interesting fact mentioned in the first resolution.

The Rev. W. Marsh (of Colchester) said, that when he looked around him, and witnessed the effects which that society had produced, he could not express the wonder which filled his mind. He entreated them to remember in a good sense, as well as in a bad, "how great a matter a little fire kindleth." There were two individuals, the one in Iceland, the other not a hundred miles from the metropolis, whose example in the matter of those tracts, it might be highly advantageous to follow. They were each in the habit every year of publishing one tract for the benefit of their own people. Now to that he had not the slightest objection. He should be understood when he said, that in commerce of that nature he desired to see a perfectly free trade. The Rev. Gentleman then passed to several other topics, in the course of which he read a letter which he had received from Germany. It stated that a working blacksmith had been brought to a knowledge of Jesus Christ, through the agency of the religious tract society. He came for a Bible, the price of which was 1s. 4d; he declared his inability to pay that sum. He went home and had a shovel, and gave it for the Bible. The shovel now hangs up in the study of the writer of the letter in question. The smith soon afterwards paid another visit, bringing with him a pair of tongs, saying, that they too must be accepted, for that he had paid too little for his Bible. The reverend gentleman entreated all present to let this circumstance remain engraven on their hearts, and to think that they likewise had paid too little for their Bibles. He then moved—

That the circulation, since the year 1799, of one hundred and thirty millions of publications in forty-eight languages, demands the gratitude of all persons who are seeking the diffusion of religious truth in the world.

The Rev. John Hatchard (Vicar of St. John's Plymouth) seconded the resolution. He called the attention of the meeting to a circumstance that must of course be well known to them, that in the course of the present year the port of Plymouth had been visited by a body of Portuguese refugees. Soon after their arrival there, he received a letter from the Dowager Lady Grey, informing him, that she had sent by a ship, then in the harbour, a supply of Bibles for the use of those unhappy individuals; at the same time he received a great number of the tracts published by that society. He lost no time in distributing those publications amongst the refugees. After a time, a report was circulated that he was an agent of Don Miguel, and for a time was viewed with suspicion. (Laughter.) But when the Portuguese tracts were nothing more than expositions of the religion of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, judges, priests, officers of high rank and renown in the army, soldiers, women, children, all received them with gratitude and joy.

The Rev. W. Jowett (of Malta) rose to move the next resolution. He said he should merely read it, and leaving others to descant on it, proceed to topics with which, from his connexion with the Mediterranean, he was of course better acquainted. He then read the resolution, as follows:—

That the progress of education, and the increase of readers among the lower classes of society, call on Christians to employ the press to a greater extent than hitherto, in order to check the circulation of injurious works, and advance the knowledge of pure and unadorned religion.

"I will now (said the reverend gentleman) call your attention to the state of the church of Christ in the east of Europe, and to our hopes and prospects respecting it. In less than five years no less than 60,000 tracts were distributed; indeed the greater part of them were sent forth in three years. They were in Italian, modern Greek, Armenian, and other languages; but even great as the number of 60,000 appears, the numerical amount would have been much greater had the works in question been as small as those which you usually distribute. The taste of the people to whose wishes we had to accommodate ourselves demanded works of greater bulk, thus it is that many of ours form substantial volumes. We are bound in an especial manner to bear in mind the strong claim which Greece has upon this country. Eight years ago, on this very week, so aptly called the religious week, I happened to be attending a meeting in this metropolis, when under circumstances the most unlooked for, the most fearful horrors were perpetrated at Constantinople. It was a period of general peace and tranquillity when that awful revolution broke out. Immediately on the breaking out of this revolution on Easter-day, while the patriarch and his priests in their dresses of ceremony were engaged in Divine worship, they were dragged from the place of prayer to a species of mock trial and were afterwards brought back to the chapel wherein they had been officiating, and hanged from a beam in the roof. From that period till the occurrence of recent important events, the revolution proceeded with unabated fury till blood touched blood. I saw the members of the college at Scio scattered; I saw the Greek, as bright eyed as the ancient Athenian; I saw him driven from his native home, and only a few of the members of that college reached Corfu in safety, to avail themselves of the advantage of British protection. I leave you to imagine the sufferings which youths in such circumstances must have endured. Soon after that, a population of 120,000 was carried off, 5,000 males slaughtered in cold blood, and the females carried into a captivity more dreadful than death itself, and finally they were sent as slaves into the various provinces of the Turkish empire. The end of all this has been, however, that the glory of God has been promoted, and that his peculiar providence in respect to the interest of his church was most especially made manifest on the occasion to which I am now alluding. When travelling in Greece I have seldom found any books in the houses of the priests, except, perhaps, a volume or two relating to the church services, to monastic rules, or to some abstruse branch of theology. In some places, I have found as many as fifty folio volumes, filled with accounts of miracles performed by the saints, and thirty with those of the Virgin Mary. I found, however, almost all the plays, novels, and romances, that in the present day contribute so large a portion both of French and English literature. Though I could say much more, I think I have made out a case sufficient to induce the Religious Tract Society to minister to the spiritual wants of the Greeks; and I beg to suggest that if the present society will but open a particular fund for the purpose, they will confer a lasting benefit upon the Christian church, and upon a very interesting portion of the human race." The reverend gentleman was frequently applauded during the delivery of his speech.

The Rev. J. Hughes, in seconding the resolution said that the institution of the Sunday School Society in the year seventeen hundred and eighty-five which, under the Divine blessing, had been the parent of much good might be said to be the foundation of this society. The Religious Tract Society, indeed, might be considered the mild dawn of the evening sky of the last century. When he stated that it was the cradle of the British and Foreign Bible Society, he pronounced upon it a high eulogium, and his reverend friend, Mr. Rowland Hill, near him if he had the opportunity of physical strength, would bear him out in what he had stated. In his opinion, justice had not been done to the usefulness of the society by the name which had been given to it, for it ought to be called the "British and Foreign" So-

ciety, and he was sure no jealousy would be felt in any quarter from this new denomination. It was *Bona fide* British and Foreign; an association, not of nominal Christians, but of the followers of God in Christ Jesus, labouring for the conversion of the infidel and the pagan.

The Rev. Dr. Steinkopff, foreign Secretary to the institution, said, it was in the parlour of Mr. Hughes, a gentleman whose name will be ever endeared to all Christians, that he and some other friends met for the first time upon the business of this society some years ago. They began with a prayer to the Lord, beseeching him to prosper their undertakings; and it would not be arrogance now to say that their humble petition had been granted. He could now look upon it as having diffused 130 millions of tracts, in not only the languages of Great Britain, but forty-eight different languages, as sending little messengers of peace in different directions, over the mountains and through the valleys of Switzerland, through Iceland, several parts of the Russian empire, Malta, Greece, and Palestine. (Applause.) And when one considered the good which even one of these little tracts might produce, the reflection was delightful. The late Mr. Leigh Richmond had stated, that from his own observation no less than thirty persons had been benefited by a single tract. How pleasing, then, from this fact, was the inference of the immense good which might be done by the diffusion of so many. He recollected when these tracts were first beginning to be circulated, there were as many as 30,000 or 40,000 French prisoners of war in the country. These tracts were sent in numbers to those poor captives, who, if it was only for the amusement which so many works in their own language afforded, read them with avidity, and received them with thankfulness. He should never forget one French officer, who had been taken prisoner in Portugal, but who afterwards called at his (Dr. S's) house. This gentleman, who had had a French Bible given him, and read it, confessed with emotion that he came to this country a disciple of Voltaire, but left it a true disciple of Christ Jesus. (Applause.) He should not longer detain the meeting, but would conclude by saying that he felt honoured by being allowed to take a share in this institution.

The resolution was agreed to.

[TO BE CONTINUED.]

REFLECTIONS ON THE 18th CHAPTER OF GENESIS.

[From Dr. A. Clarke's Commentary.]

This Chapter, though containing only the preliminaries to the awful catastrophe detailed in the next, affords us several lessons of useful and important information.

1. The hospitality and humanity of Abraham are worthy not only of our most serious regard, but also of our imitation. He sat in the door of his tent in the heat of the day, not only to enjoy the current of refreshing air, but that if he saw any wearied or exhausted travellers, he might invite them to rest and refresh themselves. Hospitality is ever becoming in one human being towards another: for every destitute man is a brother in distress, and demands our most prompt and affectionate assistance, according to that heavenly precept, *What ye would that men should do unto you, do even so unto them.* From this conduct of Abraham a divine precept is formed, *Be not forgetful to entertain strangers, for thereby some have entertained strangers unawares.*—Heb. xiii. 2.

2. Whatever is given on the ground of humanity and mercy, is given unto God, and is sure to meet with his approbation, and a suitable reward. While Abraham entertained his guests, God discovers himself, and reveals to him the counsels of his will, and renews the promise of a numerous posterity. Sarah, though naturally speaking past child-bearing, shall have a son: natural obstacles cannot hinder the purpose of God: nature is his instrument, and as it works not only by general laws, but also by any particular will of God, so it may accomplish that will, in any way he may chuse to direct. It is always difficult to credit God's promises when they relate to supernatural things; and still more so, when they have for their object, events that are contrary to the course of nature: but, as nothing is too hard for God; so, all things are possible to him that believeth. It is that faith alone, which is of the operation of God's spirit, that is capable of crediting supernatural