

pected to be one of great liberality on the part of the numerous friends of the Society, it is necessary that objects of corresponding magnitude and importance should be presented to their view. It is intended, therefore, that the Jubilee Contributions of Individuals, Congregations, Sunday Schools, Auxiliary and other Societies, shall form a Fund, to be appropriated to the furtherance of the following objects:—

(1) Special Grants of Bibles and Testaments to PRISONS, SCHOOLS, and MISSIONS,—with other Charitable and Benevolent Institutions throughout Great Britain.

(2) Special Grants to IRELAND, in such ways as may hereafter be determined upon.

(3) Special efforts in INDIA, AUSTRALIA, and other British Colonies, by Agencies, Grants, or otherwise.

(4) Special Grants to CHINA, and such other parts of the world as may appear open to special operations.

(5) The establishment of a Special and separate FUND, from the annual produce of which pecuniary aid may be granted, at the discretion of the committee, to persons in the employ of the Society, including the colporteurs abroad; and to their widows and children, when in circumstances to require such aid.

It is believed that the above objects, embracing, as they do, our own country, the Colonies, India, China, and whatever other portions of the world may in God's providence claim special efforts, will secure the approbation and co-operation of the patriot and the christian. Contributors will be at liberty to specify to which of these objects they intend their donations to be applied, or, they may direct a division of the amount between them all.

JUBILEE OF THE BRITISH AND FOREIGN BIBLE SOCIETY.

STATEMENT OF OPERATIONS, READ BY THE REV. G. J. COLLINSON, AT EXETER HALL.

At a season like the present, when your committee find themselves surrounded by so large a number of friends, supporters, and able advocates, who have been gathered from every portion of the kingdom to mingle their congratulations, and with united mind and voice to express their heartfelt thanksgivings to that gracious God who first gave the Word, and who by His unfailing providence has ever since protected it,—at a season like the present, the commemoration of your Jubilee, it cannot be otherwise than interesting to trace back the Institution to its origin, to detail the various enterprises upon which it has entered, to dwell upon some of the triumphs it has been permitted to achieve, to glance at the prospects which stretch before it in the future, and, finally, to impress various motives and arguments which urge to further exertion.

The British and Foreign Bible Society dates its existence from the year 1804. The circumstance which more immediately called it into being was the grievous destitution of

the Scriptures in the Principality of Wales. For two years in succession had the cry come up thence for a supply to the only source then known, whence they could be derived. When the appeal proved unavailing, a project was conceived by a few benevolent persons, to contract with a printer for an adequate number. A reduction in the selling price, or, in particular cases, a gratuitous distribution was to be met by subscription. Whilst this scheme was under consideration, the Rev. T. Charles, of Bla, whose itinerating habits as a minister of Christ through the northern counties, gave him a perfect knowledge of that part of the country, came to London. He subsequently was permitted to bring the matter before the committee of the Religious Tract Society; and at a conference was encouraged to propose his plan;—his powerful appeal stirred the thoughts of one member present, whose sympathies, extending beyond the narrow enclosures of the Welsh mountains, gave utterance to those memorable words:—"Surely, a society might be formed for this purpose, and if for Wales, why not also for the Empire and the world?" In this one sentence of the Rev. J. Hughes, was hidden the germ of that noble tree, whose branches we this day enumerate, and whose leaves have already partially proved the healing of the nations.

The thought once expressed was not allowed to die; a circular was forthwith drawn up, calling upon christians of every name to unite for the one simple yet sublime object of sending forth the Bible, without note or comment, over the whole world. By the wide dispersion of this let or, publicity was attained; and, as a result, a general outline of the Society was prepared, and the present definite and comprehensive designation arrived.

These preliminaries settled, a public meeting was held on March 7th at the London Tavern, when the foundation was laid in due form, and from that day the Institution has been recognised in all countries. The assembly mustered 300 persons, and the first subscription announced was £700.

Five days afterwards, three Secretaries were appointed,—two for the home operations, and one for the foreign, the venerable Dr Steinkopf, still living. The broad and catholic principle of the Society was fully carried out in the appointment of the committee. Thirty-six laymen were selected, six of whom were foreigners resident in London or its vicinity, and the remainder were equally divided between members of the Church of England and the other sections of the christian church.

The President, Vice-Presidents, Treasurer, and Secretaries, were *ex-officio* members of the committee; and, with a view to secure the zealous co-operation of clergymen and other ministers, to them the privilege of membership gave a right to sit and vote at the committee.

These arrangements being completed, a second meeting was held on May 2nd, which has given occasion for the Assembly of an annual gathering on the first Wednesday of that month.

Lord Teignmouth was unanimously elected President, and great reason had the committee, in after time, to rejoice in their choice. Most assiduously did he preside at their several meetings; ever did he take an active interest in their proceedings. His pen supplied the first five annual Reports. To him was the Society indebted for opening a communication with the Bishop of Iceland and the

Archbishop, Plato, of Moscow; and to the force of its arguments was greatly owing the lessened opposition of the Indian Board.

From an extensive inquiry that was immediately set on foot in our own country, as well as on the Continent of Europe, the destitution of the Scriptures was found to be most lamentable, and far beyond the power of the then existing agencies in any adequate measure to supply. It has been computed roughly, that the whole number of Bibles in circulation throughout the world did not exceed four millions of copies; and when we consider the number of those that must have been kept in libraries as curiosities from their rareness and antiquity, those in use must have been even less.

Since the Society has been in active operation, it has been permitted directly to issue twenty-five millions, four hundred and two thousand, three hundred and nine copies; while, through kindred institutions which have sprung up in Europe, Asia, Africa, and America, that number has been increased to upwards of forty-three millions of copies of the Sacred Scriptures in whole or in part,—a number, we may safely believe, greater than the whole aggregate issues of all time previous.

Again, if we look at the list of languages and dialects, we shall find that your Society now tells forth the wonderful works of God in no less than 148, while the versions hitherto completed are one hundred and seventy five, of which 121 are translations never before printed. In connexion with this amazing fact, it should be fully borne in mind, that it thus gives access to nearly six-sevenths of the human family to the truth of God.

Another point to be touched upon, is the various associations, branches, and auxiliaries it has called into active co-operation. In Great Britain there are now 3,249, while the Librarian Bible Society numbers 510. The colonies and other dependencies of this great empire still further increase the sum by 498, making a total of 4,257. The different Foreign Bible Societies throughout the world contain upwards of 4,000 similar affiliated associations, and thus we may fairly conclude, that at this moment there are not fewer than eight thousand combinations of christians of every name and sect united in a spirit of fraternal love, to disseminate in their own immediate districts that Word which is able to make those who receive, read, and believe it, wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus.

Such facts as these are well calculated to arrest the mind, and make it pause, and encourage it with hope, when we think that such success has been vouchsafed, such widely-ramified agencies are still at work, and that wherever they exist the actual benefit they confer by the dispersion of the oracles of God is not their only use; the collateral advantage that accompanies their formation cannot lightly be esteemed, viz., the tendency in days like these to promote a right understanding among christians of a different denomination, to concentrate the thoughts upon one object, and to sink all minor considerations into oblivion. Nor would we omit to mention the debt of gratitude we, as a committee, owe to those many self-denying and devoted christians who have co-operated with our design, by visiting amongst their neighbours as collectors, and acquainting themselves not only with the wants which mark them, but also pressing upon their acceptance the Word