

MR. BICKERSTETH AND THE BIBLE SOCIETY.

Mr. Bickersteth, so well known in this country by his various volumes upon religion, has lately been assailed most virulently by one of his neighbors, the Rector of Shenly, for his membership in the British and Foreign Bible Society. In consequence of that attack, he has published a short defence of himself and his course, which is so appropriate and adapted to all regions, and not less applicable to the United States than to Britain, that we present the larger portion of his letter to our readers.

—*Christian Intelligencer.*

CLAIMS OF THE BIBLE SOCIETY.—“I view the Bible Society to be just as much a charitable institution as an Infirmary. I do not ‘object to meet Dissenters’ from the establishment on a plain, defined and understood object for the relief of the soul.

“The fact of my having been, for about thirty years, a member both of the Bible Society and Christian Knowledge Society, shows that, in my view, these Societies do not interfere with each other, or clash in their work. There is ample room enough for all.

“In former days, when an opposition was made between the Christian Knowledge Society and the Gospel Propagation Society, Archbishop Secker met it thus: ‘A true and judicious zeal will carefully avoid an opposition between two charities, which is a much surer method of hurting the one than serving the other; whereas, with this precaution, the first scarcely ever suffers considerably, if at all by setting up a second; but men’s hearts are engaged to contribute to both. Many of us belong to both, and promise to ourselves a larger share of the blessing of God in each for neglecting neither.’

“I cannot withdraw the statement, though I would without reserve admit my own share in the guilt, of too much indifference in our country, not merely to the Bible Society, but to the circulation of the blessed Bible through the world. When we consider what the Scriptures are—God’s own word, the only sure light to men’s feet and a lamp to their paths, ignorance of which is the cause of all error, and which are able to make men wise unto salvation, through faith in our Lord Jesus Christ—we shall see that famine of the word of God is the worst of all famines; and this famine does to this day most largely desolate vast countries to which we have free access. When we consider that the Bible Society is circulating, or helping the translation of the word of God, in at least 120 languages, in which no other Society, without its aid, has even attempted to introduce that word, it is clear that, at present, we can only aid in sending the Bible to the nations speaking those languages through the British and Foreign Bible Society. However valuable other Societies may be as a help in maintaining doctrinal truths, even as it regards the Bible So-

ciety itself, they do not supersede that Society.

“As to incorrect versions, when we consider our reformers received their first light through defective versions, while I would aim at giving the most correct version practicable, I will not wait for what is unattainable—a perfect version. I will joyfully aid in giving to foreign nations any accessible, attainable, or admissible versions—which, though with known imperfections, still have the grand truths of the Gospel written as with a sun-beam throughout the pages of the sacred volume—rather than suffer them to continue in total ignorance of the word of God.

“The union of all Denominations who agree in our version, furnishes a real security that there be no vital or sectarian error *predominating in the fresh Translations*. I can see, therefore, no adequate reason why there should not be, among all who count the Bible the Inspired volume, and *agree in our Translation*, which bears such full and clear testimony to all the great doctrines of Salvation, a cordial and general union for its widest circulation in every land.

“I condemn not my brethren who may differ from me; we stand or fall each to our own master, before whose judgment-seat we shall soon appear; but, by God’s grace, while the Bible Society continues the same noble course which it has now done for thirty-eight years, of widely diffusing the Holy scriptures in all languages through the earth, I will neither myself cease to have a part and share in the joy of aiding it, nor cease to invite my beloved brethren to come and join us in partaking of the blessed privilege of doing good in this particular Society.

E. BICKERSTETH.”

Walton Rectory, June 27, 1842.

FORMATION OF CHARACTER.

A CHAPTER FOR YOUNG MEN.

To the acquisition of extensive knowledge, incessant application and industry are necessary. Nothing great or good has ever been achieved without them. Be willing then to labour; be not satisfied with superficial attainments, and to accustom yourself to habits of accurate and thorough investigation. Explore the foundations and first principles of every science. It is observed by Locke, that ‘there are fundamental truths that lie at the bottom—the basis upon which a great many others rest—and in which they have their consistency; there are teeming truths, rich in stores, with which they furnish the mind; and like the lights of heaven, are not only beautiful and interesting in themselves, but give light and evidence to other things, that, without them, could not be seen or known.’ These are the truths with which we should endeavour to enrich our minds. Be select in your reading—become familiar with the writings of the great master spirits of the world, who will enrich your minds with profound, enlarged and exalted views; and who, while they form you