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TORONTO, OCTOBER, 1892.

#### BOARD MEETINGS.

The regular monthly meeting of the Board of Directors was held Tuesday evening, 19th April, at 7.30 o'clock, Rev. Dr. Potts in the chair. The Rev. W. S. Blackstock opened the meeting with prayer. The minutes of the meeting of the 15th March were read and approved. A report from the Committee on Agency and Colportage was submitted and adopted. An interim report was submitted from the Committee on the Distribution of Bibles on railways, in steamboats and hotels. The consideration of the letter of the Secretary of the U. C. Tract Society anent Colportage work in Manitoba and the North-West, to the support of which this Society has been contributing, was referred to the Committee on Agency and Colportage. A letter was submitted from Rev. Mr. Stobo, agent of the Quebec Auxiliary Bible Society, requesting that the annual grant from this Society be continued. In a letter the solicitor mentions that the Chief Justice of this Province has decided that under the Mortmain Act the \$2,000 willed by the late Mr. Senior cannot be obtained because the testator died within the six months following the making of his will. Applications from the Young Men's Christian Association for fifty Bibles, from the Young Women's Christian Association for twenty-five Bibles, and from the Young Women's Christian Guild for twenty-five Bibles, were all granted. The Permanent Secretary reported receipt of a third donation of \$100 from Mr. Robt. Sharpe, of Clarke township, to the British and Foreign Bible Society, which was suitably acknowledged. It was decided, owing to nearly all the city churches having prayer-meeting on Wednesday evenings, to hold the anniversary meeting on Thursday evening, and that the Pastor and Trustees of Knox Church be asked to grant the use of their church in which to hold said meeting. The Permanent Secretary reported having forwarded to the Parent Society remittances both on free contribution account and purchase account. It was resolved to forward \$955.61, the amount of contributions from the Branches to the Quebec

Auxiliary Bible Society, and to add thereto \$500, being a special grant from the Board; also to forward \$32, subscribed by the Branches, to the Montreal Auxiliary Bible Society. The Depository's cash statement for March was submitted, and the meeting was closed with the benediction by the Rev. Dr. Gregg.

A special meeting of the Board was held on the 3rd May, at 7.30 o'clock, Dr. Geikie in the chair. After the usual opening devotional exercises the minutes of the previous meeting were read and confirmed. A report from the Committee on Agency and Colportage was read and adopted. It was decided to employ two Colporteurs in Manitoba and the North-West during the coming season. Acknowledgment of donation of twenty-four Cree Bibles was received from Rev. G. Flett, for the Okanase Reserve, N.-W. T. The meeting was closed with the benediction by the Rev. Dr. Johnston.

The usual monthly meeting of the Board took place on Tuesday evening, the 17th May, at 7.30 o'clock, Rev. Dr. Gregg in the chair. The chairman opened the meeting with prayer, after which the minutes of the last meeting were read and confirmed. Reports from the Committee on Agency and Colportage, and from the Committee on Distribution of Scriptures on railways, steamboats and hotels, were submitted and adopted. A request from the President of the Infants' Home for a grant of Bibles was agreed to.

The draft of the annual report for the year just closed was read and adopted. The list of office-bearers and directors of the Society for the present year was revised. The cash, colportage and other statements for the month of April were submitted. The arrangements for the annual meeting were left in the hands of the Secretaries, and the meeting was closed by the Rev. R. Wallace pronouncing the benediction.

The Board met on Tuesday evening, the 21st June, at 7.30 o'clock, Dr. Geikie in the chair. The meeting was opened by the Rev. Jno. Burton reading a portion of Scripture, after which the Rev. B. Bryan led in prayer. The minutes of the previous meeting were read and approved. The following resolution in reference to the death of the Rev. T. S. Ellerby, a vice-president of the Society, was adopted:—

“That the Board would place on record its esteem for the late Rev. T. S. Ellerby, a vice-president of the Society, who since the last meeting of the Board has entered into his rest. Though prevented of late from taking a very active part in the work of the Society we recognize in him a lifelong friend and worker in its interests. For several years in St. Petersburg he represented the Parent Society in the Russian Empire. On taking up his residence in this Province he took active interest in this Society, which entitled him in our estimation to the position he has long held as vice-president. Modest in demeanour, evangelical in faith, and earnest in Christian work, he faithfully served his day and generation, and has fallen asleep in Him to whom his life service was given.” It was ordered that a copy be sent to his family. Standing Committees for the year were appointed. The meeting was closed with prayer by the Rev. Dr. Maclaren.

The monthly meeting of the Board was held on the evening of the 20th September at 7.30 o'clock, Dr. Geikie in the chair. The Rev. J. J. Hill opened the proceedings by reading from the Scriptures, after which the Rev. Dr. Thomas led in prayer. The minutes of the last meeting (21st June), were read and confirmed. The schedule of Colportage work, and list of gratuities during the last three months, were submitted by the Permanent Secretary, who also read two letters from the British and Foreign Bible Society, one thanking the Board for its latest remittances, and another re

ferring to their present deficiency in funds ; it was decided to place the matter before the Branches of the U. C. Bible Society through the columns of the Recorder.

Letters of thanks for donations of Scriptures were submitted from Mrs. Williams on behalf of the Management of the Infants' Home, Mr. F. B. Nicolls, of the S. S. at Big Forks, Rainy River, and Miss Grace Reid, Sec'y of the Sailors' Rest in Vancouver. In answer to an application from Rev. Egerton Young for a grant of Cree and English Bibles for distribution among the Indians in the N.-W. T., it was resolved to give the books required at half price. On application of Mr. Thos. Hassard, Superintendent of the Victoria Industrial School in Mimico, a grant of 200 Bibles was made for use of the boys in that institution. The following Bequests to the British and Foreign Bible Society were reported, \$467.45 from the late Mr. Thos. Swan, per Mr. N. W. Hoyles, solicitor, and £100 from the late Mr. Andrew Hamilton, per Rev. J. G. Manly, executor to the estate ; also the following donations to the Upper Canada Bible Society : \$50 from Mr. Robt. Paxton, who was elected a Life-member, and \$25 from Mr. John Dutton, on behalf of a friend who withholds his name. The Depository's Cash Statement was read and the meeting was closed with prayer by Bishop Campbell pronouncing the benediction.

## Bible Society Recorder.

TORONTO, 1st OCTOBER, 1892.

### AN APPEAL FROM THE BRITISH AND FOREIGN BIBLE SOCIETY.

TO THE SUPPORTERS AND FRIENDS OF THE SOCIETY IN CANADA.

The financial condition of the Society has been the cause of much solicitude to the Committee during the last few years. Since 1889 the Annual Income has fallen very short of the Expenditure. The adverse balances amounted on March 31st of the present year to £67,263. These have been met as they arose out of the surplus income of some earlier years, but this resource is now nearly exhausted.

This serious deficiency was partly owing to the diminution in Free Contributions, mainly in the item of Donations and Legacies ; but it chiefly arose from the rapid and wide extension of the Society's work. The growing zeal of the Churches for home evangelization, and the yet more remarkable and auspicious revival of missionary enthusiasm, have brought demands on the Society which its present income is quite inadequate to meet.

It is not generally known, even by those interested in the Society, how great has been the advance in recent years, both in the translation and dissemination of the Word of God. The Bible in whole or in part has been published in upwards of three hundred languages, to which last year nine new ones were added. The whole Bible has now been translated into all the large languages of the world. The work of translation or revision is now being carried forward in some seventy languages. About four millions of Bibles, Testaments and Portions are circulated each year ; or in other words thirteen thousand copies in various bindings, types and languages have to be provided and despatched on every working day.

Of the extensive Home work of the Society it is not necessary here to say anything. On the Continent of Europe some 300 colporteurs are constantly engaged in disseminating the Holy Scriptures at prices within the

reach of the people: while in Muhammadan and heathen countries, besides the large direct circulation by the Society's own men, copies are supplied on terms the least burdensome to the Missionary Societies, but proportionately costly to this Society. Should not its income be increased, the Committee may be most reluctantly compelled to ask the Missionary Societies to bear a larger share of the expense.

How disinclined the Committee have always been to issue appeals for money is shown in their infrequency. The last appeal was in 1879. When, however, they found that their expenditure had largely exceeded the receipts for four successive years, and that the deficit of the last year was the largest of all, amounting to £23,397, they felt it was their duty to make the Society's circumstances known to its numerous friends.

This they have done by publishing a statement of the Society's financial position, with an earnest appeal for generous assistance, copies of which have been forwarded to its friends and the Christian public.

The Committee, while thankful to record the receipt of donations amounting to £20,000 towards lessening the deficit, and providing against a probable deficiency in the current year, yet feel that the only permanent relief will be an increased income. The Committee, therefore, are applying to the friends of the Society for an additional £25,000 per annum. This would enable them to render the societies and individual workers the help they ask for, and at the same time carry on efficiently their own direct work throughout the world.

The Committee would be doing their warm Colonial friends an injustice were they not to afford them an opportunity of joining in this effort. They appreciate highly the generous support the Society receives from the great Colonies of Canada, the Cape of Good Hope and South-east Africa, Australia and New Zealand; and the Committee cherish the confident hope that their zealous Colonial friends will meet the urgent call now made to them with their habitual Christian liberality.

Among the methods of relief suggested, one proposed by the Bishop of Exeter at the Annual Meeting has met with general approval, and has been already acted upon by himself and many others. It is that all subscribers should give "half as much again." If this rule were universally adopted the Committee's difficulties would be at an end; but as every subscriber, however willing, would not be able to do this, the Committee trust that earnest effort will be put forth to obtain additional subscribers and to form new branches.

The Committee would guard their Colonial friends from supposing that they contemplate withdrawing from any country now occupied, or reducing the scale of the Society's operations. The insufficiency of income in recent years has produced anxiety, but not despondency. They are carrying out retrenchment of expenditure where it can be effected without injury to the work, but the Committee have no misgivings as to the future. While doing the Lord's work they know He will sustain them by inclining the hearts of His people to give them a larger and more prayerful support.

HARROWBY, *President.*

J. GURNEY BARCLAY, *Treasurer.*

CALEB R. KEMP, *Chairman of Committee.*

JOHN SHARP,  
W. MAJOR PAULL, } *Secretaries.*

146 QUEEN VICTORIA STREET,

LONDON, E. C.

September, 1892.

THE SOCIETY FOR THE PROPAGATION OF THE GOSPEL,  
AND THE BRITISH AND FOREIGN BIBLE SOCIETY.

BY R. N. CUST.

My dear friend, Mr. Henry Morris, has recently described the different versions which the British and Foreign Bible Society has supplied for the Church Missionary Society, or rather has published for the use of all Missionary Societies and native Christian Churches, but made large use of by the Church Missionary Society in four portions of the globe, Asia, Africa, America and Oceania.\* There is another great Society, belonging to the Church of England, which has this year published its one hundred and ninetyeth annual report, and which is largely indebted to the British and Foreign Bible Society for its supply of Scriptures in all the five portions of the world: I allude to the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel, which works with a double object—to convert non-Christians to Christianity, and to prevent Christians, such as emigrants, colonists, seafarers, and exiles, from falling away into heathendom.†

EUROPE.

I. In Europe the agents of the S.P.G. supply themselves with translations, entirely or in part, from the British and Foreign Bible Society, in the Italian, Greek, French, Spanish, Portuguese and German languages, for the use of the congregations in connection with the permanent chaplaincies maintained by that Society in these countries. The supply may not be large, but it is important.

ASIA.

II. In Asia a grander missionary work comes under our observation. For convenience I divide that continent into regions—(a) West Asia, (b) the East Indies and Indian Archipelago, (c) China and Japan. The S.P.G. has no missions in Arabic or Persian-speaking countries, but copies of translations in both those languages are required for their mission in the Bombay Province of West India. I divide the East Indies into five sub-regions—West India, North India, South India, Indo-China, and the Indian Archipelago. In Western India, amidst a population of Hindus and Mahometans, translations are supplied in the Maráthi language. In North India a great demand is experienced for translations in Bengáli, Hindi, Urdu and Mandári, or Kol, the latter a Kolarian language spoken by non-Arian mountaineers, still maintaining their old Pagan and non-Hindu beliefs. The Bengáli, Hindi and Urdu are spoken by at least one hundred millions of Hindus and Mahometans in the basin of the River Ganges, and adjoining territories. In South India translations are supplied in Telugu, Tamil and Karnáta (vulgó Kanarese) to the flourishing Mission in that province, where there are Christians of the fourth generation. Translations are also available in the ancient dead language of North India, the Sanskrit, if required by learned inquirers. In the Island of Ceylon the S. P. G. Missions are supplied with the Bible in the Sinháli (vulgó Sinhalese) language, and a version in the Indian dialect of the Portuguese language is available if required. In the region of Indo-China the Bible Society is ready to supply the Bishop of Rangún and his missionaries with versions in the language of Burm., and of the Karén tribe, in three dialects. In the great valley of Assam, where the River Brahmaputra emerges from the Himaláya

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mountains in its course to join the River Ganges, the Bible is supplied to the missionaries in the Asami language, and if the work of evangelising the barbarous tribes on the slopes of the Himalaya extends further, translations are ready in their languages. In the Indian Archipelago translations in the Malay language are supplied to the Diocese of Singapore.

Passing on to the regions of the extreme orient, or China and Japan, the Bishop of North China at Peking makes use of the translations provided by the British and Foreign Bible Society in High Wenli, the famous book-language of China, which speaks only to the eye, like the numerals in arithmetic, the easy Wenli, and the Mandarin in two dialects *spoken* and *written* by two hundred millions. In the Diocese of Japan the Bishop and his missionaries have at their disposal the newly completed translation in the language of that kingdom; and in Korea the Bishop and his clergy, as soon as they are settled, and have acquired the language, will find that the forethought of the British and Foreign Bible Society has prepared for their use the best of weapons, the Word of God, without which all their labours will be vain.

Before we quit the shores of Asia we may record, that the languages placed at the disposal of this Society are but a fraction of the stores laid up in the great arsenal. No two Missionary Societies use precisely the same languages. The British and Foreign Bible Society keeps its eye upon the requirements of the whole world.

#### AFRICA.

III. We pass now into the third portion of the globe. Africa. The missions of the S. P. G. are all south of the River Zambesi in the different Dioceses of South Africa; translations are supplied by the British and Foreign Bible Society in the Zulu, Xósa (vulgó Káfir), Chuána and Sító languages of the Bantu family of African languages. Of European languages there is an ample supply of English and Dutch Scriptures, which in a country with a large and increasing European population is most important. For the Chinese, Indian and Malay immigrants provision is also made. Translations in the Nama dialect of the Hottentot or Khoi-Khoi language are also available. On the west coast of Africa, in connection with the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel is the most interesting mission, known as the Rio Pongas Mission: it is an attempt of the Christian negroes of the West Indian Islands to evangelise by the aid of negro pastors a portion of their mother Continent. The Scriptures in the Súsu, a Negro language, are supplied for the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, and allusion is only made to this fact as suggestive of the great work likely to be done in the next century, when the Christian negroes in North America wake up to a sense of their duty. Within the region of Africa is the island of Madagascar, and the translation of the whole Bible has been revised by a Committee on the spot, on which the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel was represented, the expense being borne, and gladly borne, by the British and Foreign Bible Society.

#### OCEANIA.

In the portions of the globe known as Oceania, or Australasia, the clergy maintained by the S. P. G. use the Fiji translations, and an enormous field of work is reported among the coolies from British India, and translations in whatever Indian language may be required are available. In the new and interesting Mission of the Church of Australia to New Guinea the missionaries found on their arrival translations in the Motu and South Cape languages ready to hand. The Dioceses of New Zealand and Melanesia no longer partake of the bounty of the S. P. G., as they are self-supporting, but translations of the Scriptures in the Maori of New Zealand, and in no less

than eleven languages and dialects in Melanesia, are supplied by the British and Foreign Bible Society.

In the great island-continent of Australia large supplies of Bibles in the English language are available in the local Depôts of the British and Foreign Bible Society for the use of the different dioceses, which owe their existence to the liberality of the S. P. G., though now independent, with the exception of the Diocese of Perth. For the Chinese immigrants, and the Kánaka labourers in Brisbane from the New Hebrides translations are available; but the sad fact must be recorded, that not one single translation is in circulation in the numerous languages of the aborigines of Australia. In the far-away Sandwich Islands in the Diocese of Honolulu the American Bible Society has translated the Scriptures in the Hawaii language: the fact is gladly recorded that the venerable Society of great Britain is so far indebted to our American brethren.

#### AMERICA.

In North America the Dioceses of Canada depend upon the British and Foreign Bible Society for their supply of Bibles in the English and French languages. The Dioceses of Canada, with few exceptions, owe their very existence to the S. P. G., and are severally noticed in each Annual Report of that Society, though practically independent. It is not easy to trace out the exact missionary work to the heathen which is done in each Diocese, but it may be averred with confidence that whenever a Canadian Bishop requires translations in the languages of North America, or in the languages of China for the immigrants into that country, he has only to apply to the Depôts of the British and Foreign Bible Society for one or other of their famous translations, and he will get them there, and *get them nowhere else*. In Central America the Dioceses of the West Indian Islands look to the British and Foreign Bible Society for translations in the English, French and Spanish languages, and the Negro dialect of English spoken in Surinam. On the mainland of South America the Bishop of Guiana looks to the stores of the Bible House in Queen Victoria Street for translations in the Karib, Akkaway and Arawak languages.

The Church of England in its entirety makes use of versions of the Scriptures in one hundred and seven languages, and by far the greater portion are supplied, often free of charge, always below cost price, by the Society, whose happy privilege it has been to be permitted to be the Lord's Steward for the great work during the last ninety years. On some translations thousands of pounds have been spent and well spent, for who can estimate the value of a soul saved—saved perhaps by one single verse in the millions of copies issued annually, brought home by the Holy Spirit with power and conviction to the understanding of some doubting, hesitating and humble-minded sinner, saved by Grace. Let us reflect upon the vast void there would be in the last decade of this century in the machinery of conversion, if this new manufactory had not come into existence in the first decade. The world had seen Missionary agencies in past centuries, but the conception had never been entertained of a Bible Society, a great arsenal for forging bloodless, silent and innocent weapons, which at the same time have found themselves to be sharp-cutting, outspoken and invincible. If the mouth of the preacher has converted its thousands, the voiceless volume has saved its tens of thousands, and kept them to the end. *Laus Deo.*

## WITH THE COLPORTEURS.

## IN ABYSSINIA.

The Swedish Evangelical National Society for years past has been engaged in work in and around Massowah, and recently the door, long closed, has been opened into Abyssinia. The letter which follows is from the Swedish Society's Evangelist-colporteur, and gives a very interesting and favourable idea of his labours and of the spirit in which they have been carried on. The Bible Society has long and gladly supplied Scriptures to their Swedish friends. Mikael Nagasch's letter is forwarded by the Rev. R. H. Weakley, the Society's Agent in Egypt, as part of his annual report.

"Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever." May God's grace and peace be with Mr. Weakley and the fellow-labourers in Alexandria! May Jesus visit and watch over you! How are you? Are you well?

I hear that you will be pleased to hear something of Abyssinia. I travel about with my brethren. Some of the people receive us well and listen to the word of the Gospel; others avoid us and will not listen; but this is indeed no new thing; it was the same in old times. May we pray, each one in his own place, that God may send His Spirit to open the ears of the deaf, and to reveal His light to them. In the district of Anseha we are generally received well. In many villages of Anseha the people are ready to hear.

Early one morning we went from Zasega to Addi Hannes, and found many gathered together; among them were two priests; we sat down with them. Afterwards I rose and said to the priests: "Read some of God's Word to us or else permit me to read to you." But they were unwilling. One of the people said to them: "Why do you not read to us, or allow this man to read to us, for we wish to hear?" One of the priests answered, "We do not read." Then I took leave to stand up, and read to the people the fifth chapter of St. Matthew's Gospel, and they listened with pleasure. We remained four hours there and returned to Zasega.

There are good people in Addi Hannes who gladly hear God's Word. Never before had they understood why Jesus Christ came upon earth, and why He suffered and died; but now much inquiry has begun among them. This is the case also in several other towns. We have indeed the promise that Jesus' Word shall not go for nought among them, but shall work for life and salvation. Many become distressed about their sins when they hear it. They beg us frequently to pray for them. Therefore, dear father and brothers, remember us very earnestly, that we may read the Word courageously in the power of the Spirit. Yes, that we may be faithful in working for Jesus. May He Himself be with us, both you and us.

In Daka Doschen they receive us well. At first they were afraid of us, not knowing what our books might contain; but when they heard the Word read, they took courage and said: "People tell us you make no account of the Virgin Mary or the angels. Ye have done well to come. We hated you on a mere report. Come again, for we wish to hear."

Their priests are very ignorant; they do not search the Scriptures, and are just like the Nomads. We parted in peace.

The Anseha people are universally kind. In Addi Gabru, which belongs to Zasega, and Dekata Sehum, people hear us willingly, and many can read for themselves.

I visited Kobasa Tjoa and found that willing listeners were not wanting; but the folk are afraid that should another ruler come to the supreme power he would destroy them. They could give no other reason for not receiving God's message. "We have the ordinances of our fathers," say they. It were good for them not to be ruled by carnal fear, but to think of the words of Jesus, "Fear not them that kill the body." But Ras Aloula's name is



written on their hearts. "He is the enemy of the Gospel, and should he come he would kill us," they say. May God, Who wills that all should come to the knowledge of the Truth, give them a righteous king! Help us in prayer that God may raise up one after His own mind, and take away everything that hinders. Then there would be a glorious harvest for your work and ours.

I have also visited the district of Sahuti, and some of its villages. In all these are individuals who hear us; but in Addi Goadad we have much joy. There I met a tribeman, who took me to his house. It was about half-past three o'clock when I went out to the village place of assembly, and after the people had come together I read to them St. John iii. The afternoon was glorious, and until evening fell we read the Bible to the people. Then we returned to the house, had prayers with the owner, and went to rest. Next morning at eight o'clock the people assembled again to hear the Scriptures read, and listened with great attention. They begged us to build a church for them. I answered that would be indeed a good thing for them, but a better would be that their hearts should become temples of Jesus.

They begged me to return, and we parted in peace. Thus by degrees, all shall become well by God's help and power. Many are the difficulties; famine and suffering are rife. The locusts are a heavy affliction, but we still have hope.

Here in Zasega I read every Wednesday to the sick and diseased when they come for treatment. Many people come hither from different districts. The priests of this place are not hostile; they come willingly to hear God's Word. At the beginning of the rainy season an evil spirit possessed them; they thought to prevent our coming hither; now one after another expresses his regret that he did so. All the priests now read our books. Up to the present the chief of the village has opposed us.

Now, reverend and beloved father, forget not to pray for us. The number of books I have distributed in the half-year is sixty-two copies.

Farewell. Jesus be with us all.

From the humble and faithful,

MIKAEL NAGASCH.

#### IN PERSIA.

The following are extracts from the journals of a six months' tour made by Benjamin Badal in 1891:—

"On arriving at Shiraz," he says, "the Governor sent for us and ordered us to leave the place at once. He was exceedingly wrathful, and said, 'The missionaries came here from Isfahan and created great disturbance in the city, and now you have come to excite the people again.' He gave us three days to leave; there was no help for it; we had to obey." From Shiraz Benjamin and his companion travelled eastward to Karman, working in the towns and villages on the route. At Karman, he says, "No opposition has ever been offered to us in this town. There are three reasons for this: the friendliness of the Prince-Governor who has always shown us great kindness and bought our books; the friendly behaviour of the Imâm Jumâ and the Mullahs influenced by the example of the prince; and the circumstances of the people, who are divided into two hostile factions; the *Muthasari*, or *Balasari*, and the *Sheikhi*, who are too busy quarrelling with each other to interfere with us." They then went on to Bam, in the extreme east of Persia, and the journal continues:—"It is the first time that the Word of God has been brought to this place. In almost every town or village where we have begun the work, not only has there not been any hindrance but it has been perfectly successful. The Governor of the place received us very kindly; and when the Mujtahid heard of our work he called an assembly of his friends and invited us to attend. We spent four hours in religious dis-

cussion ; all were most kind and courteous, although we showed them openly of the one Mediator between God and man, the Lord Jesus Christ. The Mujtahid bought our last Bible and the others bought New Testaments."

On the return journey they came by way of Yazd. The Governor of Yazd is the grandson of the Shah. Benjamin says : "It was a pleasure to meet him again and find the same gracious reception as before. On this occasion he bought copies of all our Scriptures, and over and above the price of them made us a present of sixty-three pieces (above £2 sterling). In the presence of many influential personages he gave with his own hands a New Testament to the Imâm Jumâ ; the latter took it with the best grace he could assume, but our opinion of him was that he would have opposed our work had he dared. On this occasion many of those present bought copies of the Word of God." At Yazd they found a young man who had been a Muhammadan and then a Babi. He said to Benjamin : "Nothing has yet satisfied my soul, and I am now determined to join myself to you and live among the Christians." Later on the colporteurs came to a small town, where on a former visit a young man had stood up to oppose them, full of zeal for the Muslim faith. Benjamin found him there now, and says, "Slowly he came to know the Truth ; and then he wanted me to baptize him, saying that he wished to become my brother both in religion and in name ; he wanted the name of Joseph, brother of Benjamin. I declined for two reasons : first, because I am not sent to baptize, being only a colporteur ; and secondly, because such an important step should not be taken in a hurry. I advised him to read God's Holy Word prayerfully and carefully, and to ask God in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ to give him a new heart." Both this young man and the one at Yazd were directed how they might communicate with the missionaries at Julfa. Benjamin concludes an intensely interesting journal with "the humble request that all who read will pray to God to send forth labourers into His harvest, for the harvest is plenteous but the labourers are few." Thirteen towns were visited at immense distances. The toils of a journey through a desolate part of Persia must have been great. Benjamin started with the object of reaching Bampur on the Baluchistan frontier ; but the stock of Scriptures gave out, and Bam was the furthest point reached.

Colporteur Peter sends an interesting journal. In the Chahar Mahal district of the Bakhtiyari highlands. "We visited," he says, "most of the villages ; we sold our books, and everything passed off quietly. It is a cause of thankfulness that wherever we went we were received very kindly. The people are friendly to us—whoever wants a book having one, and those who do not wish to buy do not give us trouble." Passing through these wild mountainous regions Peter and his companion came to a village called Gardunan. "The teacher in the school bought six New Testaments from me and distributed them among his pupils. We spoke to them of the teaching of the sacred Book. The teacher said that he had already bought a Testament and had found its teaching good, and for that reason he wished his pupils to read it also." At Gulpaigun they found a colporteur of the American Society. At the Custom house, where the books were examined, the chief official said : "These books are not of the least use to us." We went to a caravanserai and sold six copies to the merchants.

The journals of the Baghdad colporteurs relate a visit to the Shiah shrines (where on one occasion they lodged in Ezekiel's tomb). Fifty-nine copies of the Scriptures were sold in these hot-beds of Muslim fanaticism.

Colporteur Anton and an assistant went down the Persian Gulf as far as Maskat. "At Maskat we met with shop French, who showed us much love and sympathy. We were not able to visit him because his house was far outside the town. He preached in the bazar ; the people were very angry, and some of them would have stoned him had he not escaped from their sight.

"At Bahrein (on the Arabian coast) Mackertich became very ill; he grew worse and worse in spite of the doctor's care, and died on the 2nd of May on board the steamer. The captain and officers buried him at Basra at their own expense, greatly lightening my trouble and affliction." Mackertich was Anton's assistant. On this journey the colporteurs sold eighty-eight copies of the Scriptures.

T. R. HODGSON.

### ENGLAND AND GOD'S WORD.

In a very special way we English people seem to have stepped into the position of the Jews. *Their* great privilege was to hold in trust "the oracles of God;" and that, it seems to me, is our privilege more than any other nation's to-day. The English people have been in a peculiar sense the guardians of the Scriptures. Most of the modern translations come from us, no matter what the language is. And, indeed, this loving guardianship of the word of God is very characteristic all through our history. The Bible was known and used in the early days of Christianity in England to a degree which we scarcely suspect. Large portions of the books of the Bible were translated into the language of the people, and many Anglo-Saxon homilies survive to show that some knowledge of the text of Scripture is presupposed by the writer. Religious instruction, based upon Scripture, was one of the regular rules of the church. Then came the Norman Conquest which drew our national church nearer to that of the Continent, and, by consequence, introduced continental customs. For some time to come after that date there are small traces of Bible knowledge, until at last when the undergrowth of that which was really English shot up through the superincumbent mass of what was Norman and continental, then we find once more a longing for the pure spring of God's word. Wycliffe only fed a desire which had been previously implanted. Unwise churchmanship, as we believe, strove to repress and extinguish this thirst; but there is abundant testimony to prove that though the church authorities refused to allow the translation of the Bible, independent translators were at work on all sides. The bishops' registers of the fifteenth century give us ample proof of this fact—pathetic proof, too, of the translators' fate. It was only with the sixteenth century that the longings of the people were once more roused and gratified by Tyndale, by Coverdale, by Rogers, and others, until the days of King James and our own Authorized Version. It is not a little significant that the beautiful collect used in the Church of England in Advent week is derived not from the ancient sources whence so many come, but from the pen of Cranmer, who wrote the preface to the Great Bible ten years previous to the issue of our Authorized Version. In this light of history the collect reads like a national thanksgiving for the restoration of the word of God in "a tongue understood of the people," after the manner of the primitive church.

Now it so happens that the century which witnessed the work of our Bible translators, also witnessed the beginning of our great colonizing age. From that time until the present day Englishmen have been passing out in a never-ceasing stream to the farthest bounds of the earth. It was characteristic of the first colonists that they carried the Bible with them. It was only too slowly, however, that our countrymen began to feel that a call was sounding to us as a nation to undertake the "propagation of the gospel," as in some degree our special destiny. It is now nearly two hundred years since the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge and the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel began their efforts, only too poorly supported at home, in order to evangelize the heathen. All through the last century these societies persevered constantly, through a hard and unsympathetic age,

to fulfil the mission which they had set themselves. Just as the century was expiring, and at the very moment when the groundswell which followed the French Revolution was making its way into the quiet harbours of English thought, and causing not a little strain upon the moorings and even some shipwreck of the faith—then it was that these two venerable societies were joined in their work by the Church Missionary Society—not a hostile agency, but a young fellow-labourer in the great harvest field. The circumstances of the present century have brought about a wonderful development in the extent and thoroughness of missionary enterprise. One of the most interesting things in connection with that development is the wide translation of the Holy Scriptures into the languages and dialects of the various peoples among whom our missionaries are working. This prime necessity of Bible vernacular translation for evangelizing the heathen is not of modern recognition. In the early church it was seen and acted upon; and we have now, not always in a complete form, at least four translations of the Greek Testament into the common speech of Egypt and North Africa, which date to the second century of the Christian era, and were made for missionary purposes. The Bible is now translated into three hundred different languages and dialects. How near to its fulfilment, it would seem, in these closing years of the nineteenth century is the dream of Erasmus, which he expresses in the preface to his New Testament in the year 1516:—"I wish that even the weakest woman should read the gospels—should read the Epistles of Paul; and I wish that they were translated into all languages so that they might be read and understood not only by Scots and Irishmen, but also by Turks and Saracens. I long that the husbandman should sing portions of them to himself as he follows the plough; that the weaver should hum them to the tune of his shuttle; that the traveller should beguile with their stories the tedium of his journey." Yes, that is possible now not only for the people that Erasmus mentions, but for nations unborn in his days, and in countries only then discovered in part for the first time, now known to contain a multitude of dialects which Erasmus never suspected.

And what agency is that which has chiefly realized the dream of this ancient scholar, Dutchman by birth, Englishman by adoption? That grand honour rests mainly on the British and Foreign Bible Society. Let me particularize. The Society for the Propagation of the Gospel used about thirty-five translations. A large proportion of these are obtained from the Bible Society. Twenty of these—that is more than half—cannot be obtained from any other source in the world. The Church Missionary Society uses about sixty different translations. Very few of these can be procured from any other society. The case is even more forcible in regard to the Nonconformist societies. They are practically dependent upon it for all their versions. It comes to this, that without the Bible Society, missionary work would be at a standstill.

That to my mind is the chief argument for the support of all Christian people.—*H. Gee, in the Bible Society Reporter.*

### CONFIRMATIONS OF BIBLE HISTORY.

BY WILLIAM HAYES WARD, D.D., LL.D., IN "ZION'S HERALD."

The Bible has not been buried, and never will be, but an immense amount of lost history, illustrating the Bible, has been dug up from eastern ruins and recovered. The Bible, that which makes it the Bible, the one book different from other books, is what St. Paul tells us it is when he says (2 Tim. 3: 16) that "All Scripture, given by inspiration of God, is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness."

It is the distinctive mark of the Bible, that which accounts for its being given by inspiration of God, that it is profitable for the religious purposes mentioned above, and is authoritative for these purposes. Other books may be as true—no inspiration can be truer than Euclid or Legendre—but these other books are not Bibles, because they are not profitable for the purposes mentioned by Paul. Now what has been dug up is not Bible, but history. We learn from it something we did not know before about people mentioned in the Bible; or something which the Bible has already told us is told us again. All this is important, and is very interesting. Just as we feel a peculiar respect for the cover of our Bible and its blank leaves, so we do for its history. There were a hundred pagan kings of Moab, but we care very little for any of them except Mesha, and for him only because he is mentioned in the Bible as one who rebelled against the King of Judah. When, then, a stone was found twenty years ago in Dibbon containing Mesha's own account of his rebellion and expeditions, it was intensely interesting, and I was glad myself to give weeks to its study—but it was not Bible. It did not make the Bible one whit more profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness. It only illustrated the Bible in its historical and non vital part, in that which is its lifeless vesture, and not that which is its living soul.

We must not forget the definition of our Lord, "The word which I speak unto you, it is spirit and it is life." It is that which is spiritual and vital which is valuable; the lesson, not the parable. My parable of the Bible would compare it with the rind, the shell, and the kernel of a nut. I take a walnut in my hand and tear of the rind; that has been valuable; without it the nut could not have grown; but it is without life, unproductive, cannot grow, cannot maintain or reproduce life. Then there is the shell; it has been useful, essential, has protected the life within, and has grown with it; but it has no inherent life, is as dead as the wood in the desk before me, is equally unable to maintain or reproduce life. But within these envelopes is the kernel which is all life. It maintains its life when dropped from the tree; it will support life, or it will grow into a new and multitudinous generation of life. The Bible has grown with its concentric parts, some of them protective and some vital; all important, but not all equally so; its spirit and its life are at its centre. It needed its rind of history—out of that it grew, and could not have grown otherwise—but in that there is no life; that is not the Bible we hold dear. It needed its harder shell of argument or doctrine, necessary to its growth; but this is not its life. The kernel of its life is in that which is food for the soul and stimulus for the conscience; it is in the bread of life and the water of life which Jesus gives. That is vital and that is nourishing. Of course the parable is not perfect—no parable is. Rind and kernel, history and instruction, are closer connected in the Bible, here and there, than they are in the nut; but the parallel holds nevertheless, and we must, in our thought and study of the Bible, keep ever in clear distinction the tremendous relative value of its vital part, and the comparative worthlessness of what is lifeless, and, it may be, as in the case of the elaborate Jewish ritual, transient, imperfect, and only relatively true.

What, then, is the gain which we, as lovers of the Bible, get from these remarkable discoveries in the ruins of old and buried cities? Simply this—a fuller and clearer understanding of the history in which the Bible is set. The jewel is precious and the setting is interesting and important. We value the setting as well as the jewel, but not as much. We keep in mind their relative values. We know that the setting is for the jewel, not the jewel for the setting. We will dig out of Nineveh or Babylon or Pishom nothing about the doctrine or instruction, but we will dig up much about the history, much that was in the book, but not in the essential Bible.

When the palace of King Sennacherib of Nineveh was opened, his own contemporary annals were found, written in his own life, at his own order,

by his own historian, and put away for succeeding ages, preserved by a curse, like that which guarded Shakespeare's bones, upon anyone who should destroy the record. That record tells the story of his campaign against Palestine, and makes plain, what we did not know before, how it was that Hezekiah had provoked the anger of the Assyrian king, how he had harboured the rebel king of the Philistines, and how it happened that the king's main army was at Lachish, from which city the Rabshaketh was sent to demand the submission of Jerusalem. We have on a stone an actual engraved picture of Sennacherib at Lachish, receiving the submission of the surrounding nations. All this is extremely interesting, not so much because it confirms the general historical truth of the Bible story—for that there was no special reason to doubt—but because it adds to its facts and makes it more vivid. When we find the same fact given in the records, we are pleased at the confirmation. So when the writer of 2 Kings tells us that Hezekiah gave Sennacherib thirty talents of gold and three hundred talents of silver, and we find that the archives of the palace at Nineveh record the same tribute of thirty talents of gold and eight hundred of silver, it pleases us to remember that there was a large and a small talent in the ratio of three to eight, and that the Jewish historian made the number small by reckoning by the large talent, while the Assyrian historian made the number large by reckoning according to the small talent, while the weight of silver was the same. And when we find that Sennacherib does not record the destruction of his own army, we are not surprised, but we notice that he does not claim to have captured Hezekiah's city. We find a general agreement, and if we cannot easily settle all the points of comparative chronology we do not wonder, and we do not care much, for we keep in mind the relative value of the spiritual and the material.

Another admirable illustration of our principle is found in the book of Daniel. Fifty years ago that book was the only authority for Belshazzar at Babylon at the time of its destruction. The Greek authorities said that Nabonidus was the last king, that he was not at Babylon when it was taken by Cyprus, but at Borsippa, and that he was not killed, but captured. The conflict between the two sources of information seemed absolute. Now we have dug up from Babylon the whole story. We know that Belshazzar was the son of Nabonidus; that his father sent him to resist the invading army; that he failed, and that his father then left him as viceroy in Babylon while he led the army himself, and that Belshazzar was in Babylon, as the Bible says, when that city was captured, while Nabonidus was absent, as the Greek historians say. Both authorities are equally corroborated. Here is a remarkable confirmation, if we choose, of Bible history, and equally of profane history. We value it greatly, and yet soberly.

Extremely interesting is the last discovery from the monuments—that of a letter written by a successor of Melchizedek, king and priest of Jerusalem, to the king of Egypt, and discovered with a number of other old archives at Tel-el-Amarna. It is plain enough that just such a royal pontiff as Melchizedek was, reigned at Jerusalem, named Ebed-Tab, soon after his time, and this discovery illustrates and makes more vivid the Bible history of this early time. Just so it illustrates and at the same time confirms the Genesis story of the raid of Chedorlaomer, king of Elam, against the five cities of the Plain in the time of Abraham, to learn from the Babylonian records that an Elamite dynasty ruled at precisely this time over Babylonia, and that Arioch, one of Chedorlaomer's associate kings, is mentioned in those records, and that we know that his father was Chedorlaomer, and his grandfather Sinitisilhak. Such discoveries answer many doubts and objections that have been raised against Bible history.

It is only fair that I should answer the question, sure to be asked, whether the monuments always confirm the Bible, or whether they ever discredit a historical statement there found. Beyond question they are gener-

ally confirmatory, but they sometimes raise new difficulties, chiefly chronological; and occasionally on some unimportant matter they seem to contradict a scriptural statement. Perhaps as positive a case as any is that of Darius the Mede, who is said to have taken the rule of Babylon on its capture by Cyrus. It was a Mede, Gaburu (Gobryas), and not Darius, who became governor of Babylon, according to the monuments, while Darius was a later king. It is possible that there may be a copyist's error—that easy device for escaping a difficulty—but quite as likely the confusion was in the mind of the original writer. It is a small matter, and it is quite unimportant how the error arose, as the statement that it was Darius is not profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, or for instruction.

I might multiply examples of confirmation and illustration indefinitely, but my purpose now is rather to warn against putting too much weight upon them. They can answer many objections against the correctness of Bible history, but they can add no positive argument for inspiration, much less revelation. They can illustrate history, but they cannot confirm miracle. They are of value within a historical period, but they cannot go back of the succession of kings into the realm of the origin of human history without carrying us into a cycle of myths, instructive and interesting, but without historical value. The Babylonian story of the flood or of the creation of the world is extremely interesting, and valuable for comparison with the Genesis story, but their form is completely mythological, and they are of no worth for historical purposes. They are valuable chiefly by way of contrast with Genesis, their crude, coarse polytheism being the very contradiction of the unsurpassed religious lessons of the Hebrew story, which tells us of one only God who alone created the heavens and the earth, who destroyed the race of man for their sins, saved Noah and his family, and gave him the merciful promise—such a God as the civilization of the nineteenth or twentieth century need not be ashamed to worship. Still it is the religious teaching, not the statements of history or chronology or science or philosophy, which is the essential and valuable instruction of the Bible, in which we hear the voice of divine inspiration.

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#### THE VALPARAISO BIBLE SOCIETY.

There was a goodly number of young and old at the Union hall, on the 23rd of March, to hear what had been done during the past year, and what word of cheer or progress for the current one. The secretary read the directors' report, adding a few words about the outlook for the current year, which is very encouraging. Attention was called to Mr. Muller's recent trip to Concepcion and the frontier, during which he sold, in two months' time, 671 Bibles and Testaments, and 584 religious books, receiving for the same nearly \$800. He had visited 1,046 families and given away more than 2,000 tracts. Mention was made of Mr. Olssen, colporteur of the American Bible Society, who had traversed Patagonia coming over to Chili by the Villa Rica Pass. While awaiting the arrival of expected books, prior to returning to the Argentine, he accompanied the writer to Quillota, La Calera and Los Nogales, where in two days 180 Bibles and Testaments were sold. Such success in a field hitherto notably unfruitful, is considered as an omen of better days for Bible work in Chili.—*The Record*.

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