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BIBLE ADVOCATE.

VOL. I.

MONTREAL, JUNE, 1837.

No. 2.

HISTORY OF THE BRITISH AND FOREIGN BIBLE SOCIETY.

Continued from page 5.

The only charitable sources, of a public nature, which were at that time in existence, from which a distribution of the Scriptures could be looked for, were the following. Most of them circulated with the Bible, several volumes and Tracts intended to contribute to their main purposes:—

<i>The Society for promoting Christian Knowledge</i>	1698
<i>The Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts</i>	1701
<i>The Society in Scotland for propagating Christian Knowledge</i>	1709
<i>The Society for Promoting Religious Knowledge among the Poor</i>	1750
<i>The Bible Society (now the Naval and Military Bible Society)</i>	1780
<i>The Society for the Support and Encouragement of Sunday Schools</i>	1785

“The Society for promoting Christian Knowledge is composed of subscribing and corresponding members. The former hold regular meetings, and transact the general business of the Society. The latter are such persons in Great Britain, Ireland, and other Protestant countries, as are chosen to correspond with the Society on the state of religion in their neighbourhoods, to suggest such methods of doing good as occur to them, to distribute Bibles and other books recommended by the Society, and to remit occasional or stated contribu-

tions. Under the patronage of this Society, Charity-Schools have been erected, Bibles, Prayer-Books, and Religious Tracts dispersed, and foreign Missions, particularly in the East Indies, supported. It has printed the New Testament in Arabic, the whole Bible in the language of the Isle of Man, and four editions of it in the Welsh language.”

“The Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts appears to have grown out of the Society for promoting Christian Knowledge, which refers to it, we believe, in all its annual accounts. The object of this Society is limited by charter to Foreign Parts, and more especially to the Plantations, Colonies, and Factories, beyond Seas, belonging to the Kingdom of England. Missionaries, Catechists, and School-masters, are employed by this Society in Newfoundland, Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, Upper and Lower Canada, Cape Breton, the Bahama Islands, the Coast of Africa, New South Wales, and Norfolk Island. The Missionaries are supplied with books, for a library, and Bibles, Prayer-Books, and small Religious Tracts, to distribute among their people as occasion may require. This and the preceding Society are directed entirely by members of the Established Church of England.”

The Society in Scotland for Propagating Christian Knowledge, employs School-masters, Catechists, and Missionaries, and distributes the Holy Scriptures, and a few other religious books. The Scriptures have been translated at the Society's expense, into Gaëlic. A Parent Board is es-

tablished in Edinburgh, and a Corresponding Board in London. The exertions of this Society extend over the Highlands of Scotland, the Contiguous Islands, and a part of North America.

The Society for promoting Religious Knowledge among the Poor, distributes the Holy Scriptures, and a great variety of pieces on religious subjects.

The Bible Society was instituted for the sole use of the Army and Navy of Great Britain. It circulates only the Scriptures.

The Society for the Support and Encouragement of Sunday Schools provides Bibles, Testaments, and spelling-books, and receives applications from any part of England, and Wales.

Mr. Hughes in the Essay before referred to, having enumerated these Societies, and pointed out the advantages of a more general Institution, thus proceeds:—

“Let us then cast a friendly eye over distant countries, and be the parents of the first Institution that ever emanated from one of the nations of Europe, for the express purpose of doing good to all the rest.

“The proposed Society would bespeak much attention which was never yet brought to bear on a subject so truly grand and momentous. Religion would occupy a larger space in the public mind, and the advocates of religion enjoy a new opportunity of testifying the strength of their convictions and the fervour of their zeal. A new impulse would be given to kindred Institutions; and measures hitherto unthought of would be added to those which have long displayed their beneficial effects.

“We have specified Europe; at the same time we would allow ample scope. Correspondence might more or less include every quarter of the globe.

“Many arrangements must be left

to the determination of experience. Light will break in as the friends of the Institution advance; they will act as occasions dictate; always having that to do which will either connect with remoter branches of their design, or stand well insulated and alone.”

Copies of the Essay were now put into circulation through a variety of channels; some were sent to Members of Parliament of both Houses, others to the Bishops and many Clergymen of the Established Church, and others to Dissenting Ministers, and influential persons of all denominations. These, no doubt, had great influence in preparing the way for future success; but it was not till eight months afterwards, viz: in January, 1804, that measures were judged to be sufficiently advanced to justify the adoption of any active measures for the execution of the plan; and two months longer before a public meeting was held to establish the proposed Society. The very liberal and comprehensive principle of the institution, was the main cause of this delay; for as the object was to unite all parties in one great effort to circulate divine truth through the world, it became necessary to proceed with caution, and so to consider and adjust all the arrangements as that no one party in the Christian world might be tempted to oppose or stand aloof from the projected Association. Its title at first was “A Society for promoting a more extensive circulation of the Holy Scriptures both at home and abroad,” but it was altered, before the public meeting, to that which it now bears. This meeting was held at the London Tavern, on Wednesday the 7th of March, 1804, when the Society was actually formed, and commenced its beneficent operations. On this interesting occasion the celebrated Granville Sharp, Esq., well known as the friend of Africa, by his co-operation with Wil-

berforce and Clarkson in abolishing the slave trade, was called to the Chair. The proceedings were deeply important. The scene was new; nothing like it had perhaps been exhibited before the public since Christians had begun to organize among each other the strife of separation, and to carry into their own camp that war which they ought to have waged in concert against the common enemy. It appeared to indicate the dawn of a new era in Christendom; and to portend something like the return of those auspicious days, when "the multitude of them that believed were of one heart and of one soul," and when, as a consequence of that union, to a certain degree at least, "the word of God mightily grew and prevailed."

A Committee of thirty-six persons was nominated at the formation of the Society. Respecting this Committee, Mr. Owen remarks:—"Never, perhaps, before were thirty-six persons brought together for the prosecution and attainment of a common purpose, whose views, and habits, and prejudices, exhibited a greater and more unpromising variety. Strangers in many instances to each other's persons, and not a little disaffected to each other's religious systems, they had to struggle against feelings to which time and mutual alienation had given in a manner the authority of principles; and to balance the value of the object itself against that of the minor considerations which must be sacrificed in order to attain it. It is not therefore to be wondered at, that, in the outset of their proceedings, a Committee thus composed should experience no ordinary embarrassment. A sense of propriety dictated, that parties so strangely diversified should mutually advance towards each other with wariness and reserve; and it is natural to conclude that in the exercise of this caution, they would occasionally betray those emotions of

jealously, which served to demonstrate, how much they were indebted to the influence of the Bible for effecting their approximation to a common standard."

At a subsequent meeting, three Secretaries were appointed on the same liberal principle; the Rev. Josiah Pratt in connection with the Established Church of England, the Rev. Joseph Hughes on behalf of Dissenters, and the Rev. C. F. A. Steinkopff to correspond with the foreign Churches. The first of these gentlemen soon after resigned his office in favour of the Rev. John Owen, well known as an eloquent and efficient Secretary of the Institution till his death.

The Society was soon afterwards supported and strengthened by the accession to its ranks of several eminent men of considerable influence and worth; among others the then Bishop of London (Dr. Porteus,) Mr. Wilberforce, and Lord Teignmouth, who became its first President, and filled that important office with singular ability and advantage for thirty years, till his lamented death in 1834.

(To be continued.)

MONTREAL AUXILIARY BIBLE SOCIETY.

We are happy in being able to announce to our readers the noble project lately adopted by this Society. The Committee, in reliance upon divine aid, in expectation of the co-operation of Christians of all denominations in the Province, have passed a Resolution to the following purport:—"That they will endeavour, within the shortest practicable period, to place a copy of the Sacred Volume, by sale or gift, in every family in Lower Canada willing to receive it."

This is the most important step which the Montreal Bible Society has ever taken; it must necessarily involve

great labor and expense. The design contemplated in the resolution can never be accomplished without the aid of Bible Societies, Ministers, and Christians in all parts of the Province.

The announcement of the resolution is now made, for the purpose of inviting that co-operation which the Committee will soon request in a more formal manner. That many Protestant families in the Province are now destitute of the word is unquestionable. There is evidence on this point now in the possession of the Committee, of the most decided and melancholy character. We shall not now attempt to state with accuracy the number who are thus destitute. Several thousands are, beyond all doubt, in that condition.

In the course of a few months it is expected that agents of the Society will visit the various sections of the Province, for the purpose of ascertaining the number of families destitute of the Bible;—soliciting pecuniary aid; and effecting those local organizations necessary to carry on the supply in detail. The general plan which the Committee recommends is, that Christians within a Township, or Parish, or District of Country, assemble at some convenient time and place; then assign to each one willing to give his personal aid, a given territory. The district so assigned to each individual should be small, not more than sufficient to occupy his time for one or two days. He is to visit *each* family in the district so designated, offer to all the Bibles to be taken with him, either at cost, at a reduced price, or as a gift, according to the circumstances of the case. In this way, within a few months, every family in the Province now destitute of the Sacred Volume may be supplied.

Let all the Christians in the Province say, with the spirit of one of old, "The God of heaven he will

prosper us, therefore we his servants will arise and build."

BROCKVILLE AUXILIARY BIBLE SOCIETY.

We have received the Fourth Report of this Society, read at its Annual Meeting on the 10th of April.

After noticing the liberality of the parent Society in furnishing a plentiful supply of Bibles, the Report states, that the old Branch Societies in connection with the Auxiliary had been visited by deputations, and new ones formed.

"*Farmersville*.—The Deputation which visited Beverly, proceeded then to the School-house near this place, where a new and promising Branch was formed, under the name of the Farmersville Branch; and a subscription list opened on the spot, which amounted to above £5. Books have since been forwarded to the value of £10 6s. 6d. and £4 15s. received in payment.

"An adjourned Meeting was held on Saturday, 11th February, at which J. Wenham, Esq. and the Rev. J. Smith attended. This Meeting was peculiarly interesting, from the fact that six members of the Committee voluntarily undertook to visit the neighbourhood immediately, to investigate the wants of the inhabitants and to excite an interest in the Society. At a second adjourned meeting, held on the 25th, and at which Messrs. Wenham and Smith were present, these visitors reported that no fewer than 70 families, out of 208 concerning whom enquiries were made, had been found entirely destitute of the Scriptures, and others only partially supplied. They obtained some new subscriptions and expressed themselves as much pleased with the reception they met and the spirit manifested wherever they called.

" *Augusta.*—On the evening of the 7th March a meeting was held at Wright's School House in Augusta, attended by the Rev. Messrs. Smart, Woodrow and Smith; Joseph Wenham, Esq. in the Chair. A Society, called the Augusta Branch, was formed for that neighbourhood, which, judging from the interest displayed, promises to be a most efficient helper in the cause. The deputation were received with the utmost cordiality, and found a numerous and most respectable body of the inhabitants prepared to co-operate with them. The sum of £6 12s. 6d. was instantly subscribed, and, as at Farmersville, members of the newly appointed Committee volunteered to divide the neighbourhood into districts, to be visited with a view to investigate the wants of the people and to excite an interest in the Society.

" To these accounts, which may on the whole be considered gratifying and encouraging, of your Society's transactions in reference to its Branches, your Committee feel much pleasure in being able to add a more satisfactory report than last year, of operations in our Town and neighborhood. To the causes assigned for the defect under this head in the last report, your Committee deem it but just to themselves to add, that while the attention of the office-bearers of the Branch Societies is confined to their respective districts, much of the time of several members of your Committee is necessarily occupied in visiting the Branches. Still something has been done at home. The town has been divided into four districts, each of which has been assigned to the care of a sub-committee. These sub-committees appear to have, upon the whole, diligently and faithfully acquitted themselves of their task. The free contributions paid directly into your Treasurer's hands, and raised chiefly in town by their exertions, amount to £33 9s. 4d. More has

been subscribed, and, it is hoped, will yet be realized.

" Encouraged by this result, your Committee would invite future Committees of management and all members of the Society, not to forget in the general superintendence of the Branches, the investigation and supply of the wants of their own immediate neighbourhood, and the duties of liberality and patient and humble zeal, in promoting at home, the sacred work in which they are calling upon others at a distance to help them. They would remind themselves as well as their fellow members, that an Auxiliary is expected to be not merely a channel of communication between the Parent Institution and the Branches, but itself also a working Society.

" Such have been the transactions of the past year in one small corner of that immense field in which it is the object of the British and Foreign Bible Society to sow the good seed of the word of life. Humble and imperfect as the labours of our Society may have been, we cannot but feel grateful for the measure of success with which they have been blessed, and view it as an incentive to further exertion. It is by means of Auxiliaries, such as ours, and of Branches and Associations at work throughout the world to the number of more than 3000, that the Parent Society is carrying on so successfully its mighty, sacred, and glorious task."

After alluding to some of the operations of the Parent Society, the Report thus concludes:—

" Viewing these transactions in connection with the other results of the Society's labours in almost every country in the world, your Committee cannot but congratulate this Auxiliary on being associated with an Institution so signally blessed by God for the good of man. At the same time they would desire to excite in every one an interest in the work which still remains to be done, even

in this land of comparative light. This Report contains proof that there is still among ourselves much need for exertion, zeal, and liberality. While we are admiring the wondrous success of the Bible cause in the abodes of refined Infidelity, and of Barbarism and Idolatry, let us remember that the inhabitants of lands professing Christianity, have no other warrant of eternal life, no other guide to it, than the most debased and ignorant of the sons of Adam."

THE BLESSING OF GOD ON THE
PERUSAL OF HIS WORD.

NO. I.

To the Editor of the Bible Advocate.

SIR,—If you consider the following brief statement in accordance with the design of your paper, it is at your service. You may rest assured of its entire truth.

A few years since, an individual emigrated to this city, thoroughly sceptical as to the reality of experimental religion, and the truth of the Bible. His feelings and conduct were in unison with such scepticism.

Having been induced to attend for a few times the ministrations of an evangelical pastor of the city, he was led to occasional serious reflections. Conscience, which for years had slumbered, began to awake, and remind him of sins which even the light of nature, and the God of the deist, condemned. For a considerable time these troublesome thoughts harassed his mind. At length he one day fell into the following train of reflections.

'That there is a God, I know. If there is a God, he must have some will. Where can I find the communication of that will? If anywhere, I am sure it must be in the Bible. If I follow that, I cannot be far astray. *I will read the Bible.* I will receive whatever it declares.'

He commenced: read day and

night, when released from his business. But he had not proceeded far, when the Divine author of the Bible opened his eyes, convinced him of sin, and led him to the Saviour. The Bible was his teacher and guide. The Bible was the means of his conversion.

This individual has since maintained the character of a consistent Christian. Through eternity, he will bless that Being who inclined him to read the Bible.

TESTIMONIES TO THE EXCELLEN-
CIES OF THE SCRIPTURES.

By producing these we do not mean that the word of God *needs* any support from the testimony of men; nor do we entertain so foolish a thought as to suppose that it can acquire any additional *authority* from such testimony. But, as certain vain and superficial young men contemptuously reject the Bible, without understanding it, or deigning to examine it, their presumption may possibly receive a check, from perceiving, that men of the finest intellect and most profound research, have deemed the Bible true, felt it to be important, found solace in its principles, and sought eternal happiness in the way which it prescribes.

SIR WILLIAM JONES.—The late Sir William Jones, whose interesting writings on oriental subjects have elucidated many obscure points in scripture history, was a general scholar, and embellished and adorned every subject that passed under his elegant pen. In the blank leaf of his Bible the following finely conceived description was found written:—"I have regularly and attentively perused these holy scriptures, and am of opinion, that this volume, independently of its Divine origin, contains more true sublimity, more exquisite beauty, more pure morality, more important history, and finer strains of poetry and eloquence, than can be collected

from all other books, in whatever age or language they may have been written. The unstrained application of them to events which took place long after the publication, is a solid ground for belief that they are genuine productions, and consequently inspired."

SIR ISAAC NEWTON.—This great man set out in life an infidel; but, on a careful examination of the evidences for Christianity, he found reason to change his opinion. When the celebrated Dr. Edmund Halley was talking before him, against the volume of revelation, Sir Isaac addressed him in these or similar words:—"Dr. Halley, I am always glad to hear you when you speak about astronomy, or other parts of the mathematics, because that is a subject you have studied, and well understand; but you should not talk of Christianity, for you have not studied it. I have; and am certain that you know nothing of the matter." This was a just reproof, and one that would be very suitable to be given to half the infidels of the present day, for they often speak of what they have never studied, and what, in fact, they are entirely ignorant of. Dr. Johnson has well observed, that no honest man could be a deist, for no man could be so after a fair examination of the proofs of Christianity.

NOTICES OF NEW BOOKS RELATING TO THE BIBLE.

The Journeys of the Children of Israel, and their settlement in the Promised Land.

The Rites and Worship of the Jews, as described in the Bible, and by Jewish writers.

The Manners and Customs of the Jews, and other Nations mentioned in the Bible.

An Explanation of the Principal Parables of the New Testament. Intended for the Young.

All published by the Religious Tract Society in London, and sold by WILLIAM GREIG, Montreal.

We rejoice to see this admirable Society persevering in its laudable

career of compiling and publishing such works as are adapted to recommend and throw new light upon the sacred writings. Their list of such useful publications is now very extensive; and most of them are of a very interesting character. Desirable as it is to understand the word of God, the young persons of the present age are under great obligations to those who have provided such instruction for them, and presented it in a manner at once attractive and profitable.

Of the first three of the little volumes before us, it is scarcely necessary to say more than that they are strictly what their titles announce them to be. The written descriptions and the illustrative cuts convey all that is necessary to be known by general readers on the subjects of which they treat. Much care has been evidently employed in their compilation; and those who read them attentively will find their time well and profitably spent.

In the fourth of these volumes the parables of our Lord are explained in a very simple, striking, and spiritual manner, so as not only to make their allusions more intelligible, but so to fix upon them the attention of the reader, as to gratify his feelings and improve his heart. We quote one of the shortest, as a specimen of the whole.

PARABLE OF THE RICH MAN WHO DIED SUDDENLY.

LUKE, XII. 16—21.

If my young friends will read from the 13th verse of the chapter which contains this parable, they will better understand what our Lord intended to teach us from it. He had been discoursing on a very solemn subject; and the man who could interrupt him at such a time to speak about his temporal affairs, showed that his mind was by far too much engaged with worldly things. It also appeared that he coveted, that is, desired to have some part of what was possessed by his brother. All the Saviour's hearers must have known that at the tenth commandment says, "Thou shalt not covet any thing that is thy

neighbour's." They did not need to be informed that covetousness was sinful; but our Lord spoke this parable, to show them that it was foolish too.

The most covetous person could scarcely have desired more than this rich man had obtained. The only thing that troubled him, was the difficulty of finding room to contain the abundance of his goods. But he resolved to pull down his barns, and build them larger; and he expected that then he should be perfectly happy, as he should have nothing to do, but to "eat, drink, and be merry." But God said unto him, Thou fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee: then whose shall those things be which thou hast provided?" God called him a fool; he had made abundance of provision for his comfort in this world, where he was not to remain for another day: but as to that world, where he was to live through everlasting ages, he had secured to himself nothing but misery.

Let children think of this parable, when they feel disposed to wish for gayer clothes, nicer food, or a greater variety of amusements than they at present possess. Supposing you could obtain all the things that you desire, and supposing that they afforded you all the enjoyment you expect from them, how long could you keep them? There is a night or a day coming, in which God will say to each of you, "Thy soul is required of thee." And how great will then be your dismay, if the only things which you have loved and enjoyed, are those which you must part with for ever!

But is there no brighter prospect than this, that I can set before you? Is there nothing which you may seek and obtain, of which even death cannot deprive you? Yes, my dear children, there is; there is "an inheritance, incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away," 1 Pet. i. 4: there is an "eternal weight of glory," 2 Cor. iv. 17. there is fulness of joy in the presence of God; and at his right hand, there are pleasures for evermore, Psa. xvi. 11. And may children hope to obtain such high and glorious blessings? Yes, for Jesus says, "Suffer little children to come unto me, and forbid them not, for of such is the kingdom of heaven." "Fear not, little flock, for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom." Many persons toil all their lives for riches, without ever obtaining them; but of the heavenly riches Jesus says, "He that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh, it shall be opened." He commends Mary, because she "hath chosen that good part, which shall not be taken away from her."

And let not children think, that those who "lay up for themselves treasure in heaven,"

have no pleasure in the enjoyments of earth. On the contrary, they taste a sweetness in them, which others know nothing of. They receive every comfort as from the hand of their Father in heaven, and as a proof of his love to them. They know that he has forgiven all their sins, and is no more angry with them, so that they have no fears of future punishment, to disturb them in the enjoyment of friends or of wealth. Neither is their present peace interrupted by anxious cares as to what they shall eat, or what they shall drink, or wherewithal they shall be clothed, for the time to come. Their "Father knoweth that they have need of these things;" and they are assured, that he who feeds the ravens, and clothes the lilies, is able to supply all their wants. Even if they should be for a time in sickness or poverty, they are not deprived of happiness; for "they know that all things work together for good to them that love God:" and they know too that after these "light afflictions, which are but for a moment," they shall enjoy the "rest" which "remaineth for the people of God." "Happy is that people that is in such a case; yea, happy is that people whose God is the Lord."

Poetry.

DIVINE ORIGIN OF THE SCRIPTURES.

Whence, but from Heaven, could men unskilled in arts,
In several ages born, in several parts,
Weave such agreeing truths? Or how, or why,
Should all conspire to cheat us with a lie?
Unask'd their pains, ungrateful their advice,
Starving their gain, and martyrdom their price?

Then for the style, majestic and Divine,
It speaks no less than God in every line.
Commanding words, whose force is still the same
As the first fiat that produced our frame.

To what can reason such effects assign,
Transcending nature, but to laws divine,
Which in that sacred volume are contained,
Sufficient, clear, and for that use ordained?

DRYDEN.

* * Secretaries to Branch Societies and Associations are requested to send accounts of their Annual Meetings and proceedings, free of expense, to the Editor, for insertion in the Advocate.