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THE WORD OF GOD, LIVING AND ABIDING.

A Sermon preached in behalf of the British and Foreign Bible Society, on the 2nd of May, 1876.

BY THE BISHOP OF GLOUCESTER AND BRISTOL.

"The word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever."—1 PET. i. 23.

"THE word of God, living and abiding"—for so run the words in their most accurate form—the Word of God, quick with enduring life, operative both in the Church and in the individual, through the ever-indwelling power of the Holy Ghost, is the subject to which, dear brethren, I now invite your thoughts at this close of our anniversary service of prayer and praise. In choosing such a subject, I humbly feel persuaded that I am placing before you the one subject which now, consciously or unconsciously, is occupying the whole foreground of our thoughts. Met together as we now are in this noble house of God, this heart and centre of the very world's true civilization, to commemorate the mighty mercies that have been freely vouchsafed along the whole course of the seventy-and-two years during which the British and Foreign Bible Society has been bearing the Book of Life to all lands—met together as we now are to bless and praise God, for a diffusion of His Word that is in itself one of the spiritual miracles of these latter days, and to pray to Him for a still brighter and more prospered future—met together as we thus are, what other thought can now be present with us than this—the living and abiding power of the Word of God?

Let this be our subject then at this happy gathering, and let us now, by the help of Almighty God and the guidance of His Spirit, strive to realize all that is conveyed to us by the Apostle when, in two words telling one holy truth, He sets before us the essential and enduring characteristics of the inspired and written Word. "Living and abiding." How the words seem to come home to the experiences of each individual heart!

"Living and abiding." "Oh, true and telling words," may now many a servant of Christ in this large congregation be saying within his own spirit, "Living? Have I not found it to be life itself, and proved it by that truest of all tests and testimonies—the testimony of a suffering soul? When God last mercifully vouchsafed to deal with me, when sorrow broke over me as a wave, was it not the living and abiding comfort of the Holy Scripture that alone sustained me when human consolation was fruitless, and even human sympathy was unavailing? Or when again, in my last heavy trial, the shadows of sins past and present were resting as night upon the soul—when the sorrow of the world was darkening all around me, and prayer itself was dying away on my lips, do I not vividly and thankfully remember how I had yet faith left to go to my long-closed Bible, and how the first words on the chance-opened page seemed to me as a message from God Himself, and how, in a moment, the light seemed to break, and all to become changed?" "Yes, verily," such a one may say, "God's Word is a living Word. My soul has felt that life. My inner ear has heard. Yes, in that Word and by that Word, God has spoken to me as a man speaketh with his friend, and through the lips of Apostles and Evangelists the very voice has reached me of my own dear, pitying Lord." Such, I am persuaded, is the silent testimony of many a heart among us at the present time. Such the inward witness that the soul of every one of us gives, in our better moments, to the inherent and indwelling life of the Holy Scriptures.

And yet,—though this is the inner belief on which our Society was founded, though every one who now hears me most probably entertains substantially the same convictions,—though the really marvellous development of the work of our great Society may be humbly appealed to as a token from God Himself,—yet, is this the view that has been taken of Holy Scripture from the very first? Is the recognition of this living, operative, and so to say personal power of the Holy Scriptures, that which marks the teaching of the great writers and interpreters of the first ages of the Christian Church?

What can the fair and impartial student of the doctrinal history of the past say more than this: that there *are* traces of such a teaching,—traces, but no clear and general development of it.

Two things there are which we always thankfully recognise in all the estimates of Holy Scripture that have come down to us from the earlier past:—

First, the profound reverence that was ever paid to the written Word; reverence so marked, that if I were asked roughly to name that which most separates the canonical Scriptures of the New Testament from writings—say, for example, such as those of Clement of Rome, which were once deemed to have almost an equal authority—I should at once say, the manner in which Holy Scripture is quoted, and the frequency with which it is referred to. It is as though the writer felt that he could not, on his own responsibility, lay down one principle or press one deeper exhortation without that final and corroborative authority. This profound reverence is that which we cannot fail first to observe: and secondly, and equally clearly, this—that the authority of the Holy Scriptures was deemed to be final and supreme, and that they verily were regarded, to use the language of the holy man whose name I have just mentioned, as "the true utterances of the Holy Ghost." These two characteristics certainly mark the teaching of the early Church, and they are, I need hardly say, of great and enduring importance. The view, however, of the Holy Scripture on which our thoughts are now resting, and which our text brings so closely home to us, is one that found no exponent, or (to use the most guarded form of expression) no adequate exponent, among

the great teachers and writers of the earliest ages of Christianity. Even in that isolated monument, which, as has been well said, "towers grandly over all that surrounds it,"* the Letter to Diognetus,—even there, though religion is presented to us in the twofold character of a revelation and a *redemption*, the second aspect is but little dwelt upon. The essential object of the Gospel, according to this eloquent writer, and of Him whom the Holy Scriptures set forth to us, is, revelation, the disclosure of truth, the enlightenment of the human mind by wisdom and the knowledge of God.

Even such a great thinker and such an earnest student of the Holy Scriptures as Origen appears to have considered the Scripture far more as a treasury of doctrine than as a history of redemption,—as a revelation, rather than a record of that revelation which was set forth in living words and blessed deeds. With Origen even Christ Himself, even He who spake of His own words as spirit and life, is mainly "the introducer of the saving doctrines of Christianity" (this is his own expression)† rather than Himself the substance and manifestation of them.

And so was it with the early Church generally. The Holy Scriptures were the standard of Truth, ended in every letter with wisdom and knowledge—but not that which now every deeper thinker more especially longs to regard them—as salvation's history, the inspired record of a redemption, long, long waited for, searched for through weary ages, anticipated in hope, shadowed forth in prophecy, but never, never realized till the Gospel was preached, and till the "Come unto me, all that travail and are heavy-laden" was heard from the pitying lips of the Redeemer of the world. This deeper view was *felt*, but it was never developed. Felt, no doubt it was from the very first. Clement of Alexandria, amid all his allegorizing, could speak of Holy Scripture as "working, by means of the Lord, to the benefit of mankind."‡ The spiritually-minded Augustine, though ever loving to dwell upon the Scriptures as the treasure-house of wisdom and knowledge, could feel and declare that that which the Scriptures bring home to us is "the redeeming grace of God."§ The reverential good sense of Chrysostom was never so entirely absorbed in the doctrinal and ethical teaching of Scripture as to preclude his recognising its saving power, and, to use his own words, "its softening influence on the hardened soul."*

Even in the mediæval Church, when all seemed one dreary waste of barren scholasticism, this living and, so to say, personal power of God's Word was not left wholly unrecognised. Glimpses of this vital truth there have been in all ages of the Church's history, but it was not till the heart-stirring days of the Reformation that Scripture was felt to be what it is—not simply the display of God's thoughts, but the history and disclosure of His loving purposes; not merely the setting forth of doctrines, but of the Person of Him who revealed them—not exclusively light, blessed as is that light, but the warmth of a realized redemption; not truth only, but salvation and love.

And this deeper view, this recognition of the living and personal relation of Holy Scripture to each individual soul, has more and more become realized in these later days. Though many things are against us; though faith with many has lost its first power; though a doubting spirit has of late spread even within the Church itself,—yet, praise be to God, the truth that His Word is a living Word has been felt and acknowledged by the pure and the holy in our own times even more than when that truth was first more distinctly recognised. Even at the time of the Reformation some of the old shadows of intellectualism still lingered. Nay, more; that very quickening and converting power of the Holy Scriptures on which we are now meditat-

* De Pressense, *Heresy and Christian Doctrine*, p. 227 (Translation). 1873. Hodder.

† The words in the original are, *-εἰσηγητοῦ τῶν κατὰ Χριστιανισμὸν σωτηρίων δογμάτων*. De *Principiis*, Book iii. 1, Vol. i. p. 156 (Ed. Delarue).

‡ Clem. Alex. *Strum.* viii. p. 557 (Ed. Potter).

§ Augustine, *Enarr. in Psalms*, lxx. 1.

* Chrysostom, in *Matth. Hom.* ii. p. 31 (Ed. Montf.)

ing was by several of the Reformers even more than inferentially denied. By many great thinkers everything was referred to the direct working of the Holy Ghost ; nothing, except in the case of the elect, to that blessed medium and instrument by which He has ever vouchsafed to work—the written Word of God. Even those who held the vital truth often held it loosely and uncertainly. The full depth of the truths involved in the mysterious subject of personality had not been sounded by men whose lives were spent in action, and in the heat and dust of daily conflict. The general truth that the Holy Scriptures were no mere collection of abstract truths, but the very opening out of God's heart of love, was recognised ; but the development of this truth, and the carrying of it out into practice—as witness the mighty work of this great and prospered Society—belong to more recent days, and may be reverently regarded as a sign, clear and encouraging, that even in an age when, under one aspect, doubt would have seemed to have acquired a pervasive power hitherto unprecedented, Scripture has yet become more loved and realized than ever. Nay, to doubt itself we owe much. By the working of the power of the Holy Ghost many of those very movements of thought which are against the Truth have been overruled to further the Truth. The very alleged errors and discrepancies in Holy Scripture have led us to investigations which have opened out clearer views, and enabled us to realize characteristics, in the recognition of which much of a deeper belief has been found to be involved. We may observe, for example, how much our reverence and love of Holy Scripture has deepened in proportion as we have realized the mystery—that God, in order that He might speak to each human soul, has vouchsafed to speak unto man *through man*. Yea, blessed be God, this treasure have we in earthen vessels. The Scripture is no collection of records whose origin is hidden in twilight and mystery,—a merely supernatural revelation of superhuman truths that has come to us we know not how,—a collection of mystic documents that as much need a teaching Church to interpret, as it has needed a transmitting Church to guard and to authenticate. No, thanks be to God, that which we believe in, and on the heart's reception of which everything here and hereafter depends, is the record of that which every human soul consciously or unconsciously sigils for—redemption, and, through redemption, a return to a Father and a God. And this record, in all its wondrous detail, man has been permitted, qualified, enlightened, and inspired to write down, as it were, from the lips of God,—and yet in writing it to preserve all his human individuality, and by that very individuality to appeal the more persuasively to the heart and to the spirit. Real belief in Scripture, as I am persuaded very many here know by spiritual experience, depends on the heart and not on the head,—and it may be, nay, it would certainly seem to be, that we owe much of our deepest heart-conviction to the latent appeal of that purely truthful human element in the written Word, which answers to modern assaults on the faith have clearly brought out. Just in proportion as we feel this, and with it the true relation that this human element bears to the Divine element, do we deepen in our belief in the living and abiding truth of the Word of God.

Nay, more ; inspiration—that difficulty to many a true heart—has of late been far more clearly felt and realized. The rigid theories that made up the once popular view of a purely mechanical inspiration—an inspiration of the letter traced, and not the soul of him who was permitted to trace it, have been now tested and silently set aside. Hard and fast lines that men once strove to draw between the divine and the human in the Holy Scriptures—cold and sharp definitions that have driven many a poor human spirit into disbelief and antagonisms—have now been admitted to be unreal. Far truer and more reverential persuasions in reference to that which we feel and know to breathe through God's Word, and which eternally separates it from man's word, however elevated and spirit-stirring that word may be, have silently emerged from the very controversies through which we have passed. We feel inspiration the more because we have learned that we cannot rigorously

define it. We know, with a heart-knowledge, that the Word of God is living and abiding, and we seek no more. We know that the life is there, because we feel it stirring in the soul when we read—stirring, not *suggestively*, as in the mental movement that noble human thoughts often cause within us, but *operatively*—manifesting its own inherent power within us, when we receive it with love; just as the grain of corn carries within itself its own inner life, and reveals that life when cast by the sower into the bosom of the receiving earth.

This we know, and it is enough. The heart tells us this, and God, who is greater than our hearts, confirms it with the testimony of the Spirit; and as we read we adore. This is the true *testimonium auiue*, which, when once accepted and realized, not only bears with it, but is in itself, both conviction and life.

If these things are so, if this text on which we are meditating does verily set before us the true and essential nature of God's Holy Word—then, my brethren, what encouragement it ministers to us in our great and now yearly widening work. How it commends that work to us as one of the two most holy works which a Christian can take part on this side of the grave. Two works there are in relation to God's Word—the one, the mighty and responsible work of bringing that Word home to man's heart by preaching, and by the living voice; the other, the scarcely less responsible duty of circulating and spreading it. Yes, I will be bold to say, the scarcely less responsible duty of spreading it. For if the Word is what the text describes it, a living Word—if it involves in itself that personal element by which it speaks to each individual heart—if it contains that appealing and quickening power which I have endeavoured to set forth in this sermon—if the two hundred and fifty languages into which, to a great degree through the agency of this Society, it has now been translated, show that there is no language in which its blessed thought cannot flow as freely as in the language in which it was written—if the ready reception that the Holy Scriptures have met with in every land to which they have been borne, prove, by the very teaching of experience, that the Bible is *for* all, and speaks *to* all—if such be the Word of God, then who does not feel the force of the appeal to join in circulating that Word? Who that loves Christ can refuse the call to take part in bearing His message of Love to the countless thousands that are mutely longing for that message, and who, even among the deep shadows of their heathen darkness, are still unconsciously looking for and hoping for the day? Life, Life, eternal Life—this is the message of the Bible to every soul; a message which oftentimes has been realized when no teacher has been near, and when nought save the living page has ministered to the living spirit who has dwelt upon it. This is the Book which we are called upon to spread everywhere through a waiting world.

Seventy-and-two years ago this call came to the godly and devoted men who founded the Bible Society; and now, in these later days, the call is renewed to ourselves. Who can refuse to hear it?

Thank God, there are many among us who do hear it, and hear it gladly. There is many a cheering and encouraging sign. The blessings, manifold and marvellous, that have rested on this Society—the deeper interest that is everywhere showing itself in the elucidation of God's Word—the wondrous illustrations of biblical history that have been recently collected from the most ancient annals of the world—the firmer attitude of the defenders of the Truth—the patient care of translators and revisers—the multiplied labours of interpreters—the deep national determination that, be all else as it may, the Bible shall never be withdrawn from the hands of our children—all these things may well administer hope and encouragement. All may serve to bring home to us the cheering thought that the Holy Scriptures are still dear to the sons of the Reformation, and though doubt may be more widely spread, yet that the one Book by which England has advanced to the forefront of the nations of the earth is still loved and honoured by this kingdom and people.

Wherefore, dear friends, let us be of good heart. Let us pray that the cheering signs which are now vouchsafed to us may be the harbingers of still brighter days, and of a still wider spread and fuller glorification of the living and abiding Word; let us pray to love that Word, ever more and more, and, in the strength and comfort of that Word, let us go forward, hopeful, thankful, and rejoicing.

Bible Society Recorder.

TORONTO, 15TH SEPTEMBER, 1876.

BOARD MEETINGS.

The Board of Directors met on Tuesday, August 8th, at 7.30 P.M., the Hon. W. McMaster in the chair. A report from the Agency and Colportage Committee was submitted, regretting that all their efforts to make satisfactory arrangements for the free distribution of portions of the Scriptures in French at the Centennial Exhibition at Philadelphia, had proved futile, and asking power to employ the requisite number of provisional agents to visit the Branches on the same plan as last year, &c., &c. The report was adopted. The Permanent Secretary was authorized to correspond with the different hotel keepers, and to offer good-sized Bibles for their sitting rooms gratis, and smaller ones at half price for their bed-rooms. The President, Treasurer, Secretaries, and Mr. Kingstone were appointed a committee to confer with a similar committee of the Tract Society, as to what legislation, if any, is needed in the matter of the bond given by the Societies to the late Mr. Ketchum and the Act of Incorporation.

The Board met again on the evening of Tuesday, September 12th, the Hon. William McMaster in the chair. The committee appointed at the previous meeting to consider if any legislation was needed, reported that the documents had been carefully examined by Mr. Kingstone, who had also consulted another lawyer of high standing, and that it was found unnecessary to ask for any legislation in the matter of the Ketchum bequest, but that it is desirable to have the Act of Incorporation amended so as to enable the Society to receive devises of land to a greater extent than it is at present able to do. The report was adopted, and the Secretaries were instructed to give the necessary notices.

A motion by Dr. Geikie was carried, to the effect that it is desirable to hold Bible Society meetings in different sections of the city, and a committee was appointed to consider the practical carrying out of the scheme and to report.

An application from the French Canadian Missionary Society, through their Agent, the Rev. Mr. Manly, was considered, and a grant of \$250 worth of French Scriptures voted.

Any of our readers who may have spare copies of our Thirty-fifth Annual Report (1874-75), or of the RECORDER for July, September and November, 1875, will confer a favour by mailing any or all of them to the Secretary or Depository in Toronto, for the purpose of completing sets for binding.

THE FIRST COLPORTEURS.—THE WALDENSES.

There is reason to believe, from recent historical researches, that the Waldenses possessed the New Testament in the vernacular. The "Lingua Romana" or Romaunt tongue was the common language of the south of Europe from the eighth to the fourteenth century. It was the language of the troubadours and of men of letters in the Dark Ages. Into this tongue—the Romaunt—was the first translation of the whole of the New Testament made, so early as the twelfth century. This fact Dr. Gilly has been at great pains to prove in his work, *The Romaunt Version of the Gospel according to St. John*. The sum of what Dr. Gilly, by a patient investigation into facts, and a great array of historic documents, maintains, is that all the books of the New Testament were translated from the Latin Vulgate into the Romaunt, that this was the first literal version since the fall of the empire, that it was made in the twelfth century, and was the first translation available for popular use. There were numerous earlier translations, but only of parts of the Word of God, and many of these were rather paraphrases or digests of Scripture than translations, and, moreover, they were so bulky, and by consequence so costly, as to be utterly beyond the reach of the common people. This Romaunt version was the first complete and literal translation of the New Testament of Holy Scripture; it was made, as Dr. Gilly, by a chain of proofs, shows, most probably under the superintendence and at the expense of Peter Waldo, of Lyons, not later than 1180, and so is older than any complete version in German, French, Italian, Spanish, or English. This version was widely spread in the south of France and in the cities of Lombardy. It was in common use among the Waldenses of Piedmont, and it was no small part, doubtless, of the testimony borne to truth by these mountaineers to preserve and circulate it. Of the Romaunt New Testament six copies have come down to our day. A copy is preserved at each of the four following places: Lyons, Grenoble, Zurich, Dublin; and two copies at Paris. These are small, plain, and portable volumes, contrasting with those splendid and ponderous folios of the Latin Vulgate, penned in character of gold and silver, richly illuminated, their bindings decorated with gems, inviting admiration rather than study, and unfitted by their size and splendour for the use of the people.* *

The youth who sat at the feet of the more venerable and learned of their *barbes* used as their text-book the Holy Scriptures. And not only did they study the sacred volume; they were required to commit to memory, and be able accurately to recite, whole Gospels and Epistles. This was a necessary accomplishment on the part of the public instructors, in those ages when printing was unknown, and copies of the Word of God were rare. Part of their time was occupied in transcribing the Holy Scriptures, or portions of them, which they were to distribute when they went forth as missionaries. By this, and by other agencies, the seed of the Divine Word was scattered throughout Europe more widely than is commonly supposed. To this a variety of causes contributed. There was then a general impression that the world was soon to end. Men thought that they saw the prognostications of its dissolution in the disorder into which all things had fallen. The pride, luxury, and profligacy of the clergy led not a few laymen to ask if better and more certain guides were not to be had. Many of the troubadours were religious men, whose lays were sermons. The hour of deep and universal slumber had passed; the serf was contending with his seigneur for personal

freedom, and the city was waging war with the baronial castle for civic and corporate independence. The New Testament—and, as we learn from incidental notices, portions of the Old—coming at this juncture, in a language understood alike in the court as in the camp, in the city as in the rural hamlet, was welcome to many, and its truths obtained a wider promulgation than perhaps had taken place since the publication of the Vulgate by Jerome.

After passing a certain time in the school of the *barbes*, it was not uncommon for the Waldensian youth to proceed to the seminaries in the great cities of Lombardy, or to the Sorbonne at Paris. There they saw other customs, were initiated into other studies, and had a wider horizon around them than in the seclusion of their native valleys. Many of them became expert dialecticians, and often made converts of the rich merchants with whom they traded, and the landlords in whose houses they lodged. The priests seldom cared to meet in argument the Waldensian missionary.

To maintain the truth in their own mountains was not the only object of this people. They felt their relations to the rest of Christendom. They sought to drive back the darkness, and re-conquer the kingdoms which Rome had overwhelmed. They were an evangelistic as well as an evangelical Church. It was an old law among them that all who took orders in their Church should, before being eligible to a home charge, serve three years in the mission field. The youth on whose head the assembled *barbes* laid their hands, saw in prospect not a rich benefice, but a possible martyrdom. The ocean they did not cross. Their mission field was the realms that lay outspread at the foot of their own mountains. They went forth two and two, concealing their real character under the guise of a secular profession, most commonly that of merchants or pedlars. They carried silks, jewellery, and other articles, at that time not easily purchasable save at distant marts, and they were welcomed as merchants where they would have been spurned as missionaries. The door of the cottage and the portal of the baron's castle stood equally open to them. But their address was mainly shown in vending, without money and without price, rarer and more valuable merchandise than the gems and silks which had procured them entrance. They took care to carry with them, concealed among their wares or about their persons, portions of the Word of God, their own transcription commonly, and to this they would draw the attention of the inmates. When they saw a desire to possess it, they would freely make a gift of it where the means to purchase were absent.

There was no kingdom of Southern and Central Europe to which these missionaries did not find their way, and where they did not leave traces of their visit in the disciples whom they made. On the west they penetrated into Spain. In Southern France they found congenial fellow-labourers in the Albigenes, by whom the seeds of truth were plentifully scattered over Dauphiné and Languedoc. On the east, descending the Rhine and the Danube, they leavened Germany, Bohemia, and Poland with their doctrines, their track being marked with the edifices for worship and the stakes of martyrdom that arose around their steps. Even the Seven-hilled City they feared not to enter, scattering the seed on ungenial soil, if perchance some of it might take root and grow. Their naked feet and coarse woollen garments made them somewhat marked figures, in the streets of a city that clothed itself in purple and fine linen; and when their real errand was discovered, as sometimes chanced, the rulers of Christendom took care to further, in their own way, the springing of the seed, by watering it with the blood of the men who had sowed it.

Thus did the Bible in those ages, veiling its majesty and its mission, travel silently through Christendom, entering homes and hearts, and there making its abode. From her lofty seat Rome looked down with contempt upon the Book and its humble bearers. She aimed at bowing the necks of kings, thinking if they were obedient meaner men would not dare revolt, and so she took little heed of a power which, weak as it seemed, was destined at a

future day to break in pieces the fabric of her dominion. By-and-by she began to be uneasy, and to have a boding of calamity. The penetrating eye of Innocent III. detected the quarter whence danger was to arise. He saw in the labours of these humble men the beginning of a movement which, if permitted to go on and gather strength, would one day sweep away all that it had taken the toils and intrigues of centuries to achieve. He straightway commenced those terrible crusades which wasted the sowers but watered the seed, and helped to bring on, at its appointed hour, the catastrophe which he sought to avert.

When we cast our eyes over Europe in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, our attention is irresistibly riveted on the south of France. There a great movement is on the eve of breaking out. Cities and provinces are seen rising in revolt against the Church of Rome. Judging from the aspect of things on the surface, one would have inferred that all opposition to Rome had died out. Every succeeding century was deepening the foundations and widening the limits of the Romish Church, and it seemed now as if there awaited her ages of quiet and unchallenged dominion. It is at this moment that her power begins to totter; and though she will rise higher ere terminating her career, her decadence has already begun, and her fall may be postponed, but cannot be averted. But how do we account for the powerful movement that begins to show itself at the foot of the Alps, at a moment when, as it seems, every enemy has been vanquished, and Rome has won the battle? To attack her now, seated as we behold her amid vassal kings, obedient nations, and entrenched behind a triple rampart of darkness, is surely to invite destruction.

The causes of this movement had been long in silent operation. In fact, this was the very quarter of Christendom where opposition to the growing tyranny and superstitions of Rome might be expected first to show itself. Here it was that Polycarp and Irenæus had laboured. Over all those goodly plains which the Rhone waters, and in those numerous cities and villages over which the Alps stretch their shadows, these apostolic men had planted Christianity. Hundreds of thousands of martyrs had here watered it with their blood, and though a thousand years well-nigh had passed since that day, the story of their terrible torments and heroic deaths had not been altogether forgotten. In the Cottian Alps and the province of Languedoc Vigilantius had raised his powerful protest against the errors of his times. This region was included, as we have seen, in the diocese of Milan, and, as a consequence, it enjoyed the light which shone on the south of the Alps long after Churches not a few on the north of these mountains were plunged in darkness. In the ninth century Claude, of Turin had found in the Archbishop of Lyons, Agobardus, a man willing to entertain his views and to share his conflicts. Since that time the night had deepened here as everywhere else. But still, as may be conceived, there were memories of the past, there were seeds in the soil, which new forces might quicken and make to spring up. Such a force did now begin to act.

It was, moreover, on this spot, and among these peoples—the best prepared of all the nations of the West—that the Word of God was first published in the vernacular. When the Romance version of the New Testament was issued, the people that sat in darkness saw a great light. This was in fact a second giving of Divine Revelation to the nations of Europe; for the early Saxon renderings of *portions* of Holy Writ had fallen aside and gone utterly into disuse; and though Jerome's translation, the Vulgate, was still known, it was in Latin, now a dead language, and its use was confined to the priests, who, though they possessed it, cannot be said to have known it; for the reverence paid it lay in the rich illuminations of its writing, in the gold and gems of its binding, and the curiously-carved and costly cabinets in which it was locked up, and not in the earnestness with which its pages were studied. Now the nations of Southern Europe could read, each in "the tongue wherein he was born," the wonderful works of God.

This inestimable boon they owed to Peter Valdes or Waldo, a rich merchant in Lyons, who had been awakened to serious thought by the sudden death of a companion according to some, by the chance lay of a travelling troubadour according to others. We can imagine the wonder and joy of these people when this light broke upon them through the clouds that environed them. But we must not picture to ourselves a diffusion of the Bible, in those ages, at all so wide and rapid as would take place in our day when copies can be so easily multiplied by the printing press. Each copy was laboriously produced by the pen; its price corresponded to the time and labour expended in its production; it had to be carried long distances, often by slow and uncertain conveyances; and, last of all, it had to encounter the frowns and ultimately the prohibitory edicts of a hostile hierarchy. But there were compensatory advantages. Difficulties but tended to whet the desire of the people to obtain the Book, and when once their eyes lighted on its page, its truths made the deeper an impression on their minds. It stood out in its sublimity from the fables on which they had been fed. The conscience felt that a greater than man was addressing it from its page. Each copy served scores and hundreds of readers.

Besides, if the mechanical appliances were lacking to those ages, which the progress of invention has conferred on ours, there existed a living machinery which worked indefatigably. The Bible was sung in the lays of troubadours and minnesingers. It was recited in the sermons of *barbes*. And these efforts reacted on the Book from which they had sprung, by leading men to the yet more earnest perusal and the yet wider diffusion of it. The Troubadour, the Barbe, and mightiest of all, the BIBLE, were the three missionaries that traversed the south of Europe. Disciples were multiplied: congregations were formed: barons, cities, provinces, joined the movement. It seemed as if the Reformation was come. Not yet. Rome had not filled up her cup; nor had the nations of Europe that full and woeful demonstration they have since received, how crushing to liberty, to knowledge, to order, is her yoke, to induce them to join universally in the struggle to break it.

Besides, it happened, as has often been seen at historic crises of the Papacy, that a Pope equal to the occasion filled the Papal throne. Of remarkable vigour, of dauntless spirit, and of sanguinary temper, Innocent III. but too truly guessed the character and divined the issue of the movement. He sounded the tocsin of persecution. Mail-clad abbots, lordly prelates, "who wielded by turns the crosier, the sceptre, and the sword;" barons and counts ambitious of enlarging their domains, and mobs eager to wreak their savage fanaticism on their neighbours, whose persons they hated and whose goods they coveted, assembled at the Pontiff's summons. Fire and sword speedily did the work of extermination. Where before had been seen smiling provinces, flourishing cities, and a numerous, virtuous, and orderly population, there was now a blackened and silent desert. That nothing might be lacking to carry on this terrible work, Innocent III. set up the tribunal of the Inquisition: Behind the soldiers of the Cross marched the monks of St. Dominic, and what escaped the sword of the one perished by the racks of the other. In one of these dismal tragedies not fewer than a hundred thousand persons are said to have been destroyed. Over wide areas not a living thing was left: all were given to the sword. Mounds of ruins and ashes alone marked the spot where cities and villages had formerly stood. But this violence recoiled in the end on the power which had employed it. It did not extinguish the movement: it but made it strike its roots deeper, to spring up again and again, and each time with greater vigour and over a wider area, till at last it was seen that Rome by these deeds was only preparing for Protestantism a more glorious triumph, and for herself a more signal overthrow.—*Wylie's History of Protestantism.*

EXTRACTS FROM THE REPORT OF THE BRITISH AND FOREIGN BIBLE SOCIETY.

TURKEY.

It is often by taking the reverse of any proposition that we see more clearly its meaning and appreciate more fully its force. When enveloped for a time in darkness, we become more conscious of the beauty and value of light, and when we have returned from gazing on the still features of a lifeless form, we recognise more distinctly the comeliness of animation and life. And if it were desired to give point to the proverb which the wise man utters, when he says, "The blessing of the Lord it maketh rich, and He addeth no sorrow with it," the present state of the Turkish Empire and the miserable condition of its inhabitants would afford the most practical illustration of the reverse of this beautiful picture. The Rev. Dr. Thomson (the Society's agent) furnishes a heartrending account of the way in which neglect and oppression, disease and famine have made desolate the land. Misery and distrust prevail, the people and the government are alike engaged in a death-struggle for existence, and the severity of taxation to which the latter has recourse for preservation, is enough to quench the hope of the former in any measure of relief, if not to drive them to despair.

Under these circumstances, no surprise will be entertained if the operations of the Society have partaken of the general depression; but the following extracts will be read with interest at the present time, when the eyes of the world are directed to that unhappy Empire:—

CONSTANTINOPLE.—The instrumentality employed for the dissemination of the Scriptures in this city is the same now as in former years. There are a central depôt and a sub-depôt in Pera, and two colporteurs are engaged—Goldstein and Klonares. It is possible that the work might be enlarged were the staff increased, and several offers of service have been made during the year, but much patience and physical endurance are needed, and all but one of those who volunteered relinquished the attempt after a short trial. This one is the brother of Klonares, and bids fair to be successful, having Christian principle sufficient to ensure faithfulness and zeal. Like Peter, his own brother brought him to Jesus, and at the call of conscience he gave up a lucrative appointment which he considered inconsistent with his Christian profession, and offered himself as a colporteur. * * *

Goldstein relates that he sold a Turkish Bible and a New Testament to a Moslem who said that he would always maintain that every man had a right to hear what his neighbour believed, and that it was his duty to acquaint himself with it. He admired the precept to love our enemies, and invited Goldstein to return frequently. Calling soon after at the residence of one who was recently a distinguished member of the Government, the ex-Minister, with a familiarity not unusual in the East, entered into conversation with your colporteur, and expressed his disapprobation of the attempt the Government was then making to prohibit the printing of the Bible. He added that, now that he was out of the whirl of politics, he had time to read the Scriptures, and purchased a Turkish Bible and New Testament, a French Bible, and a Hungarian Psalter for his groom. Who can tell what the introduction of these Scriptures into the houses of men of rank, in the highest classes of society in this capital, may not with God's blessing produce! But other Moslems, too, are studying carefully the Christian Scriptures.

In Beylerbey, on the Bosphorus, Goldstein sold a second Bible to a Turk, who had disposed of a copy he had previously bought to a neighbour. This

man told him he found in the Bible notices of the Millennium, of which there were none in the Koran. He was much interested on hearing of the new Turkish Bible now in the course of preparation, and promised to procure purchasers for it. Again, near the Seven Towers, he sold a New Testament to an Imam, who expressed his great regret that the Moslems were forbidden to read the Christian Scriptures. Such incidents clearly prove that there is a desire on the part of educated and thoughtful Moslems to become acquainted with the Word of God; and we may rest assured that if they read with candour and prayer, the self-evidencing power of the Word will, with the converting grace of God, bring conviction and light and peace to their souls. Bigoted, moreover, as the Ulemas or doctors of the Mohammedan law, generally are, inquirers are to be found even amongst them; for Goldstein sold a New Testament to a Turk within the precincts of St. Sophia itself. Indeed, it would seem as if your Society were the agency best of all fitted to reach Mohammedans, who can rarely be expected to come to the preaching of the Gospel.

Goldstein has also had a good deal of intercourse with a Bulgarian Bishop, who now resides in Ortakioy without any pastoral charge. He is a man of some learning, was educated in Germany, and speaks German, and seems quite inclined to evangelical truth, but deficient in courage and energy. Your agent called upon him one day, and found him all that Goldstein had described—favourable to the circulation of the Scriptures and the diffusion of education, strongly opposed to the pharisaical spirit that pervaded all the ordinances and ceremonies of the Greek church, but, though assenting to the doctrine of free justification through faith in the one perfect atoning Sacrifice, not grasping it with power, and failing to perceive that that one glorious truth swept away at once all the necessity for expiatory ceremonies and practices of every sort, and all their supposed efficacy. I was interested in him, but could scarcely expect him to exercise any very powerful influence. On one occasion, however, he ventured to reprove a brother Bishop for not possessing a Bible. "A Christian without the Bible," said he, "is like a soldier without his arms. With what do you exercise your authority? Is it merely with that staff of yours? My staff is the Sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God.

Among a people to whom all Christians owe so much as the House of Israel, it is pleasing to hear of any tokens of progress. Goldstein reports that there are five Jewish schools among the Spanish community of this city, all of them of a superior kind, exclusive of Mission schools. There is a desire for information springing up. They have begun the proper study of Hebrew, and the Hebrew Grammar and Dictionary for Spanish Jews, prepared many years ago by the Rev. Dr. Schauffler, are now at length being sought for and are used as text-books.

The other colporteur, Klonares, has laboured chiefly among his countrymen, the Greeks, but has also visited the Servians and Croates.

BULGARIA.—The experiences of the colporteurs are very fluctuating. Sometimes their sales are good, sometimes they meet with no success. The priests are generally against them, but the schoolmasters are more enlightened, and by their recommendation many books are sold. In illustration of this, Dr. Thomson writes:—

"At Ragova the priest told Herboldt his books were forbidden by the Bishop, and he would have nothing to do with them; but on proceeding to the school he found the teacher very friendly, and through his recommendation sold 15 copies. Proceeding next to Gargala, where a year before he could not sell a single book, he found the new teacher exceeding favourable. He recommended his pupils and all his friends to buy, 'for these books,' said he, 'contain the purest Christian instruction.' Not only so, but after the afternoon lessons were over, he proceeded with all his pupils to the room of your colporteur, and enabled him to sell 19 copies. The priest in this

instance was a quiet, kindly man, and invited him to his house to supper along with the teacher, when a happy and profitable evening was spent in reading and conversing over the Word. The teacher was much affected, and wept; the priest, too, was glad, and insisted on Herboldt staying with him all night, and next morning, before they parted, he bought a Bulgarian Bible."

Of Herboldt, Dr. Thomson relates the following incident:—

At the town of Gradatz he found a number of merchants, who seemed heartily interested in the truth; and one of them, who had bought a Bible, expressed his heartfelt thanks to the Society which had brought the Word of God to their houses in their own language, and had thus dispelled the darkness in which they had been groping for centuries. He prayed for a blessing on the Society, and for the light of truth to his people. In that town Herboldt sold 18 copies, when the people could scarcely buy bread.

BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA.—The insurrection in the Herzegovina, and the troubles in Bosnia, are matters of such notoriety that it is only needful to refer to them to account for the limited success which attended colporteur Tabory's earnest efforts to circulate the Scriptures. In one tour which he took by way of Livno, an important town on the road to Spalato, in Dalmatia, and thence northward through Turkish Croatia to Glamotch, Bihatch, and Krupa, thence to Priedor and Banyalooka and back to Seraievo, he disposed of 154 volumes. At Banyalooka he found that most, if not all the teachers had been dismissed from a theological seminary on account of the doctrines of Materialism, which they sought to inculcate. A similar event occurred at Seraievo. The following interesting incident occurred to Tabory on his way home from Brood:—

He had as his travelling companion, in the same waggon, the prior of the Trappist Monastery in Banyalooka. It is well known that the Trappists are the severest order of ascetics in the Romish Church, eating no flesh, nor drinking wine, sleeping always on a hard bed, and wearing their coarse woollen habit on their bare body.

In the course of conversation, during the two or three days that they travelled together, Tabory related to his companion the story of his own conversion, and confirmed his views by quoting many passages of Scripture, so that the prior fairly admitted that he was led to doubt the correctness of his position, and proposed to talk no more about religion. But he was unable to keep silence, and was continually starting objections, the replies to which he could not in courtesy refuse to hear. Not only so, but he patiently waited while Tabory stopped for a little by the way, in the villages through which they passed, to offer the Scriptures for sale. He most nearly lost his temper when he heard Tabory expose the sin of worshipping men and women, and of seeking their intercession, to the dishonour of the one Divine and divinely ordained Mediator between God and men. He threatened Tabory with a box on the ear, but soon after acknowledged that he had erred, and had the worst of the argument. He himself condemned the principles and proceedings of several religious orders; but when urged with the conclusion that since these orders had been expressly approved by his church, it could not be infallible, a conclusion which Tabory further supported by referring to the rival Popes at the time of the Council of Constance, who cursed each other and their priests, he only replied that Tabory did not understand that dogma, and that he was too tired for long talk. On reaching Seraievo, the prior lodged at the house of the Austrian Consul, and after celebrating mass on the following day, called at Tabory's house. To while away the time till Tabory, who happened to be out, should return, he read several chapters of a Croatian New Testament, which he afterwards bought. They parted with mutual respect, your colporteur offering a secret but fervent prayer, that the truth he had endeavoured to communicate might be blest to his interesting fellow-traveller.

OLD SERVIA AND UPPER MACEDONIA.—In no part of the agency are there to be found more distinct evidences of the power of Divine Truth than in this district, a result which Dr. Thomson ascribes largely to the faithful zeal and blameless character of the colporteur Klundt. It comprises a fairly representative population—Bulgarians and Servians, Turks, Greeks, Jews and Circassians, and Gheg and Tosk Albanians. The Greeks are the most advanced of these in point of education, having trained teachers and schools for both boys and girls. They, however, almost uniformly oppose the circulation of the Scriptures, which is the more to be regretted as it is said to arise from ecclesiastical differences among themselves. The gipsies are also a numerous race. Dr. Thomson identifies them with “the outcasts of Elam” mentioned by Jeremiah, and gives a pleasing instance of the power of Divine grace as manifested in the conversion of one of them, though for the most part they have no religion. He writes :—

“It was in this town of Pripilipp that in the following month of March Klundt got acquainted with a gipsy named Eliah, whom he describes as very near the kingdom of God. This man had some time before bought a New Testament, and now requested Klundt to visit him and instruct him as to some points which he had noted. One of these referred to the coming of the Lord, as described in Matt. 24 ; another had reference to the use of the Lord’s Prayer, and whether it alone were sufficient for all occasions. As to the former, Klundt enforced the practical precept, “Be ye also ready ;” while he took occasion from the latter to show from Scripture example that our prayers should be the utterance of our wants, and to explain how daily family worship is conducted in all truly Christian families. He was delighted to find that this man had already opened a sort of Sabbath School for his own people, in which he taught adults of both sexes to read in Bulgarian, and instructed them in the elementary truths of the Bible ; so true is it that grace, even in its earliest stages, manifests by deeds of kindness its transforming influence on the heart.

At Prishtina he received an invitation to the house of a Bulgarian shopkeeper to whom he had sold a Bible two years before. This man had read it through three times, and had received all the cardinal doctrines of the Gospel, and amidst much opposition confessed the name of Jesus. In two other towns, Bjeeb and Kratova, he met with much encouragement, finding in the first a lady of some wealth, who was also rich in good works and anxiously seeking after the Truth, and in the second a disciple wholly on the Lord’s side, and who has such delight in reading the Scriptures, that he is not ashamed to face hatred and opposition in his confession of Christ. The sales of Klundt have amounted to 562 copies.

RUSSIA.

There are many circumstances at the present time connected with the Russian Empire, both as regards the development of its resources, and the condition of its inhabitants, calculated to encourage the hope that the circulation of God’s Word throughout its vast extent will be marked by a very rapid growth. The proportion of persons who can read to the general population has been increased, within no distant period, a hundred-fold. The Russian Government is giving every encouragement to the establishment of elementary schools throughout the empire ; and as the length of military service, which is now compulsory, is considerably shortened when the soldier has received a good education, parents are using every effort to bring up their sons to the required standard. In addition to this, the network of railways which already covers European Russia, gives great facilities for locomotion, and others which are projected, or in course of construction, will ere long open a ready access to regions so remote as hitherto almost to appear inaccessible. Nor is the increased freedom which is given to evangelical efforts of all kinds less worthy of observation, or less calculated to call forth grati-

tude and praise to God. If the Russian people, whilst conscious of the power which education necessarily imparts, are to be maintained in loyalty and peace, their minds must be purified, and their knowledge sanctified by the Word of God; and though the end which the Bible Society has in view is chiefly spiritual in its nature, yet it is well to bear in mind that it exercises a beneficial influence upon the political state of the countries in which it labours, as well as upon the social condition of its inhabitants.

To work on continuously in faith and hope is the only way of dealing with such a problem as the evangelization of Russia. It is no use to pause and scan the strength of giant foes, or the difficulties of the country. In God's strength, and with His guidance, we are well able to possess it, and there are many voices which seem to speak and say, "Go forward." This will be more manifest as we review the position which the Society occupies, and the progress which it has made during the last year. The Rev. W. Nicholson, whose report is most encouraging, not only on account of the success to which it bears testimony, but because it seems to emanate from a mind having a firm grasp of the subject with which it deals in all its bearings, makes Moscow the starting point of his observations, as it is the central point of his agency.

Moscow.—The success which has attended the opening of a depot in this city is represented as being most satisfactory, and no place could be more suitable. A motley population of Russians, Greeks, Turks, Tartars, Armenians and Jews is to be found here, which serves to remind one of the scene of Pentecost, though it leaves one thirsting for the blessing which was then bestowed. Four book hawkers laboured amongst these mixed nationalities, whilst booksellers in the city and correspondents from the surrounding country have opened communication with the depot and become purchasers of Scriptures. Here, too, the first step has been taken towards supplying the blind, who, in Russia, are said to number 120,000, with portions of God's Word in raised characters. Mr. Nicholson took advantage of his visit to England to communicate the subject to Dr. Moon, of Brighton, whose sympathies were readily enlisted on behalf of these poor sufferers. Specimens of Scriptures in embossed type, for their use, have already been prepared, and are under examination, and the Holy Synod looks favourably upon their circulation, under certain restrictions, which are intended to guarantee the accuracy of the text. The issues from the Moscow depot have reached a total of 93,371 copies.

THE GRAND DUCHY OF FINLAND.—The rapid exhaustion of editions of the Finnish Scriptures, which have not yet been replaced, and the necessary recall of a colporteur who had been employed with considerable success in Finland, have had some influence in retarding the progress of the work in this part of Mr. Nicholson's agency, and yet the circulation has reached a higher figure by 7,000 than it did last year, having amounted to 27,171. A renewed effort is about to be made to penetrate many outlying villages of this interesting country, which cannot be reached by other channels, by means of colportage, a young man having offered himself for the work who is well recommended. Attention has lately been called to the necessities of the Russian Lapps in connection with the Word of God; and your agent visited Stockholm and Christiania last summer with a view of obtaining information which might be of use in any action which it was thought right to take. No Scriptures, it seems, now exist in their language, though in the first years of the Bible Society some effort was made to supply them. The Norwegian Bible Society has completed the translation of the New Testament, and is now engaged upon the Old, and the Swedish Missionary Society is preparing a catechism and some religious books, but the Bible for the Swedish Lapps has become a scarce book, and the Russian Lapps have no Scriptures in their dialect. A member of the University of Helsingfors has proposed, with the

support of the Senate of Finland, to travel in Russian Lapland with a view of making some researches into the language and social condition of the people, and ascertaining how far the New Testament translated by the Norwegian Bible Society will be available for the Lapps in North Russia. The Karels, or Karelians, are another Finnish tribe, in whose language the first Russian Bible Society translated the Gospel according to St. Matthew, but for whom nothing has been done since.

SIBERIA, OR ASIATIC RUSSIA.—As has already been explained, great difficulties exist in connection with the circulation of the Scriptures in this vast territory, but a commencement has been made which will form the nucleus of more extensive operations. A sub-depôt has been opened at Tomsk, the commercial capital of the country, a bookselling firm recommended by the Governor of the territory having received a number of Scriptures on commission. They entertain the hope that when the depot becomes better known a very large circulation of the Scriptures will take place. This is rendered more probable by the fact that a University is about to be established at Tomsk. The issues of the past year have amounted to 650 copies. Sanction has also been given to the appointment of a colporteur to travel through the country and visit the principal fairs, but hitherto no suitable person has been found. Some Mongolian Scriptures have been circulated through an ecclesiastic connected with the mission at Irkutsk, who has since expressed himself most favourably with reference to the merits of the translation, and whilst asking for a further supply, encourages the idea of a new edition.

Your agent closes his report with an ascription of praise to God for these small beginnings in a field which till recently was unoccupied, and prays that the Sun of Righteousness which has begun to dawn upon some of the most prominent points of this vast continent may soon strike upon the hearts of the wandering sons of the steppe and of the desert, lighten the suffering of the numerous convicts who are expiating their crimes in penal servitude, and eventually irradiate the whole land.

CHARKOFF.—It is an encouraging feature of the Society's work that its depôts are largely used by the managers of schools in providing the young with the Word of God. The Truth imbibed in childhood often makes an indelible impression, and though practically neglected for a time, is recalled to mind in the hour of sickness or sorrow, and becomes the source of strength and consolation to many a weary and heavy-laden soul. A considerable number of copies have been distributed in this way, both from the Odessa and Charkoff depôts, and the Curator of the Caucasian Educational Circuit issued a Circular to all the schools in his district, drawing their attention to the facilities which the Society's depôts offered for procuring the editions of the Scriptures printed by the Holy Synod.

TIFLIS.—Your Committee have been very desirous to print a popular edition of the Ararat Armenian Testament, and the Caucasian Censors' Committee gave the necessary permission for printing it at Tiflis; but it was required by law that the proposal should also be submitted to the Patriarch of the Armenian Gregorian Church, and he refused to accede to the request. It will therefore be printed at Constantinople. Colporteur Streike has recently visited the seat of this Patriarch, and although he was eventually sent away, he first succeeded in selling to the priests and monks of his establishment, Scriptures to the amount of £10, whilst in a neighbouring village he sold a still larger number. As the two other colporteurs retired from the Society's service in the course of the spring, though not before they had circulated 2,280 and 1,729 copies respectively, colporteur Streike is the only one whose labours extend over the whole year, and he has effected a sale of 5,040 volumes. Mr. Watt thus refers to his work:—

“Something of Streike's undertaking may be understood when it is stated that, among other places, he visited Vedemno, Shamil's stronghold, where,

only twenty years ago, this mountain chief set Russia at defiance, and actually received back his eldest son and a ransom of Rbl. 40,000 for two Georgian princes whom he had captured in a raid on Georgia. Streike's sales in this Tartar place, chiefly, however, to the Russian soldiery, were 63 copies. He writes : ' In Vedenno I have only sold for Rbl. 25 (over £3). I have done my best ; there is not a house in which I did not offer the Scriptures. My sales are not large, and owing to the badness of the roads travelling is very difficult. I cannot ride with my boxes ; I must always go on foot, the horses scarcely being able to get through the mud. It is also very dangerous to travel after dark, robberies not being unfrequent. This week a man and his wife were murdered on the road to Grosni, and only last night a man was plundered by Tartars of all he had. How necessary it is to bring God's Word among this people ! They also seem very willing to buy, but the dialect of our Tartar Scriptures is not understood. Copies were shown to the Mullah, but even he could not read them.' In Temir-Khan-Shura, the capital of Daghestan, Streike met with encouraging success, a hearty welcome and friendly co-operation from the Russian priest, but, on the other hand, threats and denunciations were the reception accorded him by the spiritual leader of the Armenians, he even forcibly retaining several copies of Armenian Scriptures to send to his superiors, along with a complaint against our work. * * *

"The sub-depot at Stavropol, also arranged for on this journey, effected a sale of over 500 copies in six weeks, when fresh supplies had to be written for. A Russian philanthropic institution in this town labours to promote religious and useful knowledge in the province, and would gladly do something for the Calmucs if we could provide Scriptures in their dialect, which, unfortunately, is not at present in our power. From the library of this institution your agent received what appears to be the four Gospels in the Calmuc dialect, which bears close affinity to the Mongolian. Proceeding farther on the journey, an order for 800 copies for ready money was arranged for at Rostoff, and executed from the Charkoff depot ; sub-depots were established at the towns of Kursk, Orel, and Voronej, and steps taken to have the Volga from Kamyschin to Astrachan colported by an able and conscientious man, who has for many years been one of our best helpers in Bible work in these parts. Astrachan will be visited by him, and provided with Scriptures in the languages required there. He will not be in the direct service of the Society, but receive a commission on the proceeds of his sales. From Astrachan your agent proceeded by way of the Caspian to Temir-Khan-Shura, thence through Daghestan to Tiflis, want of time obliging him to renounce his intention of visiting Baku and Schemacha on the return journey."

RELIGIOUS SOCIETIES IN THE U. S.—BIBLE SOCIETY.

The United States is very much given to Societies of every name and organization. I saw some ten thousand of the Knights Templars with flags and music marching through the streets of Philadelphia. But there are two Societies that are above all their Societies—the Tract Society and the Bible Society. I called twice at the rooms of the Tract Society in New York, and was surprised to find the building and the business so quiet in such a busy centre of trade. To judge, however, rightly as to the work of this important Society, one must visit their printing establishment, and follow the mails and the colporteurs as they scatter their periodicals and their books broadcast over the land.

It was my privilege to be present in the Academy of Music in Philadelphia, on the evening on which was held the sixtieth annual meeting of the American Bible Society. Admission was by ticket ; and several hours before the time of meeting, upwards of 4,000 were given away. I went early, getting a good seat in this magnificent hall, but many had to stand all the evening.

What drew such a crowd together? Philadelphia is a religious city, and its Christian Churches are very much in earnest in regard to the work of the Lord; but, further, the Directors of this Society have discovered a way of making their annual gatherings interesting, instructive and attractive to young and old. There was no long report read, but I gathered the following facts from a little pamphlet that was put into the hands of every one of the great crowd:

The American Bible Society was organized in the City of New York in 1816. Its business is conducted by a Board of Managers, consisting of thirty-six laymen of various Christian denominations. At the close of this its sixtieth year its total issues of Bibles, Testaments, and integral portions of Scripture are 33,125,766; its expenditure in this work having exceeded *Seventeen Millions of Dollars*. There were only a few speeches made that evening; but there was a choir of 300 voices (the same that sang at Moody's meetings), then there was an opportunity given of hearing a portion of the Bible read in some thirty languages, and that, generally, in each case by a person whose native tongue the language he read was, save the dead languages.

Since the era of Bible Societies began, not far from 250 versions of the Bible, or parts of the Bible, have been produced by the Christian scholarship of the world. It is difficult to comprehend the amount of time and toil implied in a fact like that. Few persons can understand the difficulty of translating from Hebrew and Greek to rude, materialistic languages, the abstract and theological words and expressions of the Hebrew and Greek Scriptures. It required the labour of sixteen years on the part of Dr. Eli Smith and Dr. Van Dyck to translate the Bible into Arabic. It was only in 1864 that Dr. Schauffer, of Constantinople, completed the translation of the Scriptures into Osmanlee, which he began in 1860. Fifteen years of close and continuous labour was needed to turn the Bible into the Chinese Mandarin colloquial. Dr. Williamson and Dr. Riggs, after nearly forty years of study and missionary labour, are only now completing their translation into the Dakota tongue; thirty minutes on an average, one of the translators estimates, having been given to each verse of the translation. It was interesting, therefore, to hear from the platform of the Academy of Music, specimens of this great work of Scripture translation. There was there a Jew to read the 23rd Psalm in his own Hebrew; a Greek to read the Greek. It was a lad in his working-clothes that read the Portuguese; a tall Scotchman read his native Gaelic; and a Welshman the cognate dialect of Wales. A learned Professor did duty several times in reading the dead languages in turn, among which was read the Sanskrit, great mother of them all. A Chinaman in his queue read one of the many dialects of the flowery land; and thus the Babel went on in Italian, Spanish, German, till one might well feel amazed, as in the day of Pentecost, "to hear every man in his own tongue, wherein he was born." There was, however, no one to represent poor Africa, nor any of its wild tongues.

Then came forward the blind to read with their fingers, and among them a young Chinese lady, who as a child was brought to this country by a missionary to be taught to read: she has now attained to the position of teacher in the Asylum for the Blind in Philadelphia. A deaf mute lad greatly interested the vast audience, so that forgetting themselves they *encored* his reading of the story of the woman from the borders of Tyre and Sidon, and the curing of the deaf mute, which, in Mark, immediately follows the former story. It was "fell reading," as the Scotchwoman said to Dr. Chalmers. It was reading, not certainly with the tongue, for, alas, it was tied, nor with noise, but with the whole body—fingers, hands, eyes, face, but chiefly with the hands. Another deaf mute, a young lady, read, which would seem a paradox, *audibly*, so that every one in the great building heard her distinctly, and yet she never heard the sound of a human voice, but learned to move her lips and her tongue, to emit sounds, by watching the mouth of her teacher.

The gift of working miracles has ceased in the Christian Church, but it has been succeeded by something more beneficent to the world, and safer to the Church, and equally for the glory of God; the gift, viz. of sanctified ingenuity and unconquerable perseverance in the work of God, so that the Church has made her deaf to speak, her blind to see, and is now able to make herself understood as she preaches Christ in every language under the sun.—*The Canadian Christian Monthly.*

ADDRESS OF FUNG AFFOO,

DELIVERED IN THE HOWARD STREET METHODIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH, SAN FRANCISCO, MARCH 5.

The following address was delivered on Sunday evening, March 5th, at the anniversary of the California Bible Society, by Fung Affoo, a native of Canton, China. In early boyhood he made two trips, as cabin boy, between China and New York, and afterward took up his residence in Washington, D. C., where he received an English education and became a Christian, renouncing the faith of his fathers:

Ladies and Gentlemen,—When I was kindly invited by the secretary of this society to make a short address here to-night, I did not feel like consenting; but the name of this society is so precious in my ear, it compelled me to find words to express its preciousness. I said the name of this society is precious, because it is a *Bible Society*. It has taken the most glorious work in its hand to perform, for the sake of Him who died for the sins of the world, and for the benefit of all mankind. It manufactures Bibles and sends them out to all nations, printed in different languages, in order that the Word of God may be easily read and understood by all. This great book, the Bible, bears the truth of God, who created heaven and earth, and the testimony that He sent His beloved Son to the world to die for the remission of our sins, and that man shall be cleansed by His precious blood. Any family or nation that has not this book of truth for daily instruction is without comfort and without guide.

It cannot be denied that those countries which have the Bible as their instructor are happier, more prosperous, and more civilized. We do know the histories of those nations that years ago had no Bibles, or denied the Bible; how miserably they were existing! their consciences were governed by superstitions, and they were inclined to fall and give way to eternal darkness, but were saved by the sword of the Spirit of God. When they did receive the Bible, and walked by God's command, how everything was brightened up by this great light. God gives them strength to rise, and at the same time He wants to show this light to those who are still living in the dark. He has opened to these nations a fountain of living and healing waters, whose influence shall ever continue and increase. It gives joy to the Christian's heart and encouragement to all who help to send forth this Book of books, to see the heathen nations now demanding more and more the bread of life—the Bible. It signifies that they want to be taught the Word of God; they begin to see where the light comes from. They open their eyes with wonder, and think within themselves why they have lived so long in darkness, while that great light has been shining on every side of them. They begin to realize that they must cling to the Bible, lest they sink deeper and deeper into the dark waters. God be thanked that they do realize this great danger!

Now, I want to say a few words about my own country, concerning the Word of God. China is now much different from what it was some fifteen years ago, in regard to receiving the Holy Bible. The Gospel of Christ has found its way throughout China. The seed sown long ago in that land is now springing up and bringing forth good fruit. I remember that when I was a

little boy and lived in Canton city, one day a missionary gave me a Bible, and told me to take it home to my father to read it for me. So I did. I went home and told my father that a foreigner gave me a book, and wanted him to read it for me; but he said, "I don't want to read the Jesus book; we have our Confucius books." He took it away from me, put it aside and never read it; and he forbade me ever to take any more books from the foreigners.

But, dear friends, such a hard feeling of the people of China against the Holy Bible has begun to melt away, just as when the hot sun shines upon the snow. Now, in China, whenever a Chinaman sees a Bible, he wants to read it in order to find out what it tells about, because he hears every day some of his countrymen talking about that Jesus whose gospel trumpet is sounding like thunder and awakens everybody there, and so large a number of them have become the believers of that "foreigners' God," not only in one place, but in all parts of China. Aroused by such curiosity, he tries all he can to see into this matter, and when he has found out the truth of the "foreigners' God," he himself soon becomes one of His believers. Indeed, very many of my countrymen have become Christians in this way; and as soon as they are Christians they make the Bible their special study, because they have never before studied so true a book as this, and because they want to tell their countrymen on what ground and why they become Christians, and in the hope that others may also be the followers of the Saviour of the world. They cannot refrain from telling others what a new and happy life they are leading. They feel and know that they have passed from darkness to light. "Old things are passed away, and all things are become new." Oh, this Holy Bible! How its light is beaming in that old and mysterious land of China! God means that over four hundred million souls shall come to Him for the living water. He will give them the sword of the Spirit to conquer the devil that comes between Him and man. I do believe that God uses this Bible Society as His instrument to accomplish His great and wise purpose. He will reward every one who puts a hand to do this good work. Every Bible sent out from the Bible Society may do much good for the Master. Now let me tell you how one of my countrymen became a Christian about two years ago, in this city. He used to work in a Chinese shoe-shop among several Chinese Christians. He was well educated in his own language, and was well versed in Confucius. He disliked those Christian Chinese, and often told them how undutiful and disrespectful they were both to their ancestors and their gods. He tried all he could to prevent others from being the followers of Christ. Those Christian Chinese were much troubled, and they tried to prevail over him by argument, but their efforts failed, and they were beaten by him. He had the advantage over them because he was so well versed in Confucius. Finally they gave him the Bible, one in English and one in Chinese, and asked him to read it and see whether it is better than Confucius or not. When he got the Bible to read for a few days, he stopped talking against Christianity. When about two weeks had passed, he confessed to the Christian brethren that he had found some truth in the doctrine of Jesus, and then he seemed to take a great interest in speaking on the subject of Christianity. About a month passed; he told the Christian brethren that he would be an idolater no more; he felt God was telling him so. So he gave up idolatry at once and became a good Christian, and joined the army to battle for Christ. A very short time after his conversion, there was a great argument between the Christian Chinese and the heathen Chinese in Oakland. The heathen side had many able speakers, who had good knowledge in the doctrine of Confucius, and nearly every time in argument they gained the victory over the Christian Chinese. Then he was invited over to Oakland, for he was just the man needed in that fight. When he went there and argued with them for two or three evenings, they, the heathen, knew that they were beaten by him and could not do any better, so all of them dispersed and never came there again to argue about Christianity and Confucius. We thanked God for having him at that time, and at

all times. We believe that God sent him to us to settle that difficulty. Since that time many of those heathen came to hear the preaching of Christ, and afterward a number of them became Christians. O, Christian friends, here we see the good result from the Bible, and here we see the sign that the name of Jesus shall prevail over all nations of the earth, and "all people shall acknowledge Him as their Saviour and their God."

The Lord will bless this Bible Society and its work. May He give a long life to the members of this Society, that they may do good to His people! and when they get through labouring here, God will say to them "Well done."
—*California Alta.*

INDIA.

LETTER FROM REV. B. H. BADLEY, OF GONDA.

At the Ajoodhiya *mela*, in November, a Brahmin came up to the colporteur's table and asked him if he had the Bible. On being answered in the affirmative, he said, "Please, let me have a copy. I have been reading 'Dharm Tula' (a very popular tract in Hindee), and find there some mention of the Bible, in which all these great truths about salvation may be found, so I wish a copy to read." When informed of the price (eighteen cents) he said nothing—a very rare occurrence in this land of bickering, where in giving the first price, the seller is always supposed to be asking fifty per cent. too much—but slyly slipped the amount into the colporteur's hand, adding, "Now, be so good as to pray for me, that I may understand this book and receive great benefit from it." Will not the Holy Spirit help and guide such a person searching for the truth? Such is our faith. It often fills our hearts with joy to place our pure books in the hands of those people. They contain such a glad and simple message, and are so adapted to the wants of these benighted ones, that we feel sure that God will make the printed page a great blessing.

One day in December, as the colporteur was going along a country road, he saw a man sitting in front of a *fakir's* hut, very diligently engaged in reading some book, swaying his body and chanting the words as pundits do. On approaching the colporteur found that the man was a *guru* (religious teacher) visiting one of his disciples—of whom he has a large number in that part of the district—and that the book was a copy of the Psalms in Hindee. The *guru* had obtained it at some *mela*, and expressed himself as delighted with its contents. He also knew something about Christ, and told the colporteur that he considered Him equal with Ram Chandra and other deities, and also that he prayed in His name day by day. The colporteur explained the way of salvation more fully and gave him a gospel. God grant that this Psalm-reading *guru* may soon become a true disciple of the great Teacher.—*Missionary Advocate.*

THE ARMENIAN BLACKSMITH AND HIS WIFE.

I had often noticed in the Harpoot chapel a large, tall man—"head and shoulders above his brethren"—with broad, open, sunny face, that seemed shining with good nature and Christian feeling. At last I inquired who he was. "Why don't you know the blacksmith? That's Menzar, our good blacksmith." It appears that this good man had been for several years a Christian, and was very useful in teaching others the way of life. When a villager came to his shop, Menzar would draw from his bosom his constant companion, the New Testament, and reading a verse (with his hearty manner and ringing tones), while hammering away upon the horse-shoe, he would every now and then direct a blow at the man's conscience; and when the work was done, would "catch him with guile," by saying, "If you would like to take that book, I'll lend it to you." Another Testament would quickly supply its place; and in fact, he generally kept one "lying around loose," as

he said, to catch the eye of those who dropped in ; and when a copy was returned, would say, " Well, now, as this book is a little worn, if you want to buy it, I will let you have it for less than the cost." In this way the gospel leaven was introduced to many a village.

Menzar's wife was a pleasant, winning little woman, whom I had occasionally seen in my meetings at the other side of the city ; but I did not know who she was, till one day, when visiting an aged Christian, I found her by the bedside ; and when she had modestly slipped from the room the good mother said, " That is Yeghsa, the blacksmith's wife ; she often comes to sit with me, and reads the Bible and prays."—*The Romance of Missions.*"

THE WAR IN THE EAST.

The Committee have forwarded instructions to their Agents in Austria and Turkey to do all in their power to circulate the Scriptures among the people of the disturbed provinces. But the difficulties are great and numerous. The colporteurs apply in vain to those whose minds are bent wholly upon strife, and the authorities are at such a time peculiarly suspicious of any work supported from abroad. So far as Servia is concerned, the Bible is no unknown book. In the Society's Report for 1875 it was stated that " the Servian field has been now for many years under cultivation, and the wonder is that the demand remains so steady. Those who know and follow the Lord Jesus form a compact and growing band, whose influence is considerable. The power of their religion is felt ; and the Book which is their one confession of faith and sole code of laws, is regarded by their neighbours with awe."

Provision for the sick and wounded : as been offered through Dr. Laeron, to whom the Committee have granted Scriptures to as large an extent as may be found needful.

Bulgaria, the scene of the recent atrocities, has long been cared for by the Society. There is a principal depot at Rustchuck, and three colporteurs work respectively in the eastern, central and western divisions of the country. The Committee trust that they may be able to strengthen this agency at the present juncture. But their friends will not need to be reminded that the difficulty is not how to send in a vast number of copies—for that would be easy—but how to provide that the number sent in shall be judiciously distributed, with a reasonable probability of their being read and valued.—*British and Foreign Bible Society Reporter for September.*

AN OLD COLLECTOR.

Miss Ann Dresser, of Thirsk, Yorkshire, has sent £5 to the Society on the occasion of her withdrawing from the office of collector, which she has held for fifty-two years. But Mr. Edwards tells of an older helper still :—

"The Association at Ulpha, in the beautiful valley bearing that name, has been mentioned in previous years as containing probably the oldest collector for the Bible Society in England. Miss Susan Wilson, now ninety years of age, still delights to work for the Society, and acted as collector last year, though a violent thunderstorm prevented her, with many others, from going to the meeting. At Kendal, the much esteemed President of the Auxiliary, W. D. Crewdson, Esq., was absent from the meeting in consequence of serious illness, and it was stated that the chair had been occupied by father and son bearing the same names, at successive anniversaries, for a period of fifty years. A note received from him and read at the meeting bore testimony to his undiminished interest in the Society's great work, and it also enclosed a liberal donation towards the collection. Long may such friends be spared to us, and may their bright example lead many more to follow in their footsteps."—*British and Foreign Bible Society Reporter.*

SPAIN.—AN INCIDENT IN GALICIA.

BY REV. THOMAS L. GULICK.

In Santiago, I gave two or three tracts to the boys who had carried my baggage to the railroad station. Soon there was a crowd around me begging for tracts. I got into the car to escape the crowd, which began to collect about the doors and windows. In five minutes I sold some twenty gospels. When the train was in motion I sold a number of gospels to those who were in the same car with me.

To one of my neighbours, a young priest, I handed the Epistle to the Romans. He began to read, but stopped with a sudden surprise: "What does this mean? He says, 'I am debtor both to the Greeks and the barbarians.' How could Christ be debtor to anybody?" "You certainly know," I replied, "that the Epistle to the Romans was written by Paul and not by Christ." He still looked surprised, but assented and continued his reading, and becoming much interested bought a New Testament and several other books.

While reading a tract, *El Libro Maravillosa*, he finally said, "This book seems to favour the right of private interpretation." "When my father writes me a letter," I replied, "I always claim the right of reading it myself, and of understanding it according to the plain sense of the words. I claim the same right when my Heavenly Father writes me a letter to show me the way of salvation." It then dawned on his mind that I and my books were Protestant. He was much shocked, and said that our Bible was not really the Bible, that it was greatly corrupted; that their bishop had lately bought up a great number of them and burned them.

I asked, "Do you read Greek?" "A little." "Have you read the New Testament in Greek?" "No." "Well, I have, and have compared it with the Spanish Testament which you hold; and though the translation is not absolutely perfect, as no human work can be, I assure you, from my personal knowledge, that it is not intentionally corrupted in a single word or syllable. You, perhaps, are not to blame for saying that it is; but those who have taught you so *know*, or *ought* to know, that they speak falsely. If they have been burning Bibles, it is not because the Bibles are corrupted, but because they do not wish the people to search the Scriptures and know exactly what the word of God says. You are a religious teacher, and yet I doubt whether you can tell me what are the ten commandments."

He was much pleased by the challenge, and began to repeat very fluently the version in the Roman catechism, leaving out the second, and changing the fourth to, "Keep the feast days." "Stop there," I said; "you have omitted the second and changed the fourth." "No," he said, "I have repeated them correctly, word for word." "You have left out the second." "No, I haven't." "You are mistaken, and I doubt whether you know what the second commandment is." Finally he asked, "What is it, then?" I told him. "And now," I said, "I don't believe you can repeat correctly the fourth, which you call the third." He could only say, "It is, 'Keep the feast days.'" Again he was compelled to ask me what the commandment really was.

"Now," said I, "you have been ignorantly accusing us of corrupting the Bible. The charge is false; but I have just proved that your teachers have wilfully so mutilated and corrupted the word of God that you, a teacher of that law, do not even know the ten commandments. You are not so much to blame, because you believed what was taught you; but the case is very different with your superiors. God has spoken terrible denunciations against those who *take from, or add to, His Word*. Let me advise you henceforth to search the Scriptures. Take them as the rule of your life, and the gospel which you preach." He turned pale and was much agitated. "But," said he, "if I should do so I would lose my living, and everybody would be

against me." "Very likely," I replied; "that is exactly what Christ said would happen. Your enemies will be those of your own house; but if you obey God, you may be sure He will take care of you. One man with God is mightier than all the world against Him. You and I, in less than seventy years, will have to appear before the judgment throne. Our Lord will not ask us, 'Did you obey your bishop?' but, 'Did you obey me? did you search the Scriptures? did you preach my gospel?' Whatever difficulties and dangers there may seem to be in the way of the course which I have recommended to you, you may be sure your present course is much more difficult and dangerous."

He seemed much impressed and thanked me most cordially. Just then the cars stopped and he left the train, taking his Testament and tracts with him. I pray the good seed may find lodgment in his heart.—*Am. B. S. Record.*

THOMAS L. GULICK.

RECEIPTS AT THE BIBLE SOCIETY HOUSE, TORONTO, FROM
AUXILIARY AND BRANCH SOCIETIES, FROM 1st JULY TO 31st
AUGUST, 1876.

	On Purchase Account.	FREE CONTRIBUTIONS.		
		U. C. B. S.	B. & F. B. S.	Sundry.
JULY.				
Alliston Branch.....		\$ 25	10	
Kintyre do		10	00	
Drummondville do	*1 60			
Mono Centre do		6	57	
Millpoint do		7	18	
Melrose do		6	02	
Shannonville do	4 00			
Caesar's and Sandhill do		9	90	
Lloydtown do		10	00	
Tilsonburg do	32 00			
Ravenswood do	3 00			
AUGUST.				
Eugenia Branch.....	11 00			
Newmarket do		80	00	
Uxbridge do		25	00	+9 00
Malton do	*1 75	21	50	21 50
Sault Ste. Marie do	19 78			
Meaford do		29	70	

* On Recorder Account.

† Free to Manitoba.

Special Notice to Treasurers of Branches.

The Bible Society year closes on the 31st day of March, but it is important that Branches should remit their funds as soon as they become available, and thus enable the Society to make early remittances to England.

PRICE OF THE "RECORDER."

From six copies upwards of the *Bible Society Recorder* are furnished gratuitously to each of the Branches. Extra numbers are furnished at the following rate per annum.—Single copies, 20 cents; ten copies to one address, \$1.50; over ten and under 50 copies, \$13 per hundred, any quantity over 50 copies, \$12 per hundred; in each case including postage.