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THE BIBLE AND CONTEMPORANEOUS FACTS.

Extracts from a Lecture by the Rev. J. B. Thomas, D.D., of Brooklyn, N. Y.

The Bible is itself a fact as well as a record of facts. It does not melt before the gaze, nor crumble in the hand. It is overhung by an immense cloud of subjective personal experience, more or less indefinable and incomensurable; it is wrought into the foundations of various ecclesiastical organizations; its words are recast into divers symbols of faith and systems of doctrine; it is closely encompassed by a heavy growth of gloss and comment; it is the nucleus of an immense body of devotional literature; it is continually taking new phases in strange languages and in new translations in our own; and yet it is no more in danger of losing its identity or concreteness of outline, by reason of these concomitants, than the lighthouse by reason of the floods of light it sheds, or the tree by reason of the fruit it bears. Unlike the Hindoo sacred book, of which the original outline is gone; the substance being transmitted indistinguishably into the parasitic growth of comment that has infested and consumed it, it bears but is not overborne. Like flower and bee, sealed up for future generations in the amber of geology, the Old Testament was deposited in the Hebrew, which forthwith congealed, escaping henceforth the mutations of a living tongue; and the New Testament in the more fluent Greek, copied by many independent writers—whose very errors were to become in time, by interlacing testimony, reaffirmatory of the true text—was unwittingly hidden from the tampering or curious, hoarded in dismembered sheets under prosaic, monkish essays, until the Greek language, being also dead, and movable type ready to hide it from mutilation by stereotyped publicity, it came forth the New and the Old Testament, linked thenceforth in double and abiding testimony, became one book, The Book, to work its marvellous ministry in the earth.

I trust a further study of the contents of the Bible itself may vindicate the suggestion as reasonable, that there is more than a casual coincidence in the fact that men who have seen deepest into the mystery of things, and

caught most of the prophetic breath of the coming morning, such as Bacon, Kepler, Newton, Faraday, and others, were earnest students of the Book, in which they devoutly believed the heavens were truly reflected, and the earth's mysteries an 'open secret.'

It is interesting to observe how inevitably candid inquiry brings men back by however circuitous a road to the cardinal doctrines of the New Testament, as the true goal of human perfectness. Mr. Herbert Spencer, building his colossal system of synthetic philosophy, after so wide and careful exploration, finds the tremendous pyramid converging to a point whose top-stone at last must be the truth which a 'little child' might at the beginning get from Scripture. For in his 'Data of Ethics' he sums up all in the humble hope and faith that some reasoned form of the ethics of the New Testament may yet become the life-core of society. He thus declares that this wonderful book which has preceded the modern era is still in advance of it, and reaching towards the sublime ideal as yet unreached. Considering how slowly moral ideas are evolved, and the specially depressed condition of human society when the New Testament was written, the problem still remains unsolved, how out of the least cultivated nation of that inferior age there issued an ideal to which the nineteenth century looks up as still transcending its best attainments.

The conclusion seems fair that some element unexplained and as yet inexplicable enters into the origin of these phenomena. The book did not 'fall down from Jupiter,' like the Ephesian image; it grew on earth; it was not written upon the sky in fire, but in human language in the earthly page; but, though written by 'hand of man,' that hand seems to have been 'under the wing of the cherubim.' Its fruits and its unaccountable origin place it beyond the range of mere human phenomena.

How diversified in authorship, in era, in locality, and in form. Compendious statements of scientific truth, genealogies, state documents like the Chronicles, idyls like Ruth, statutes like Leviticus, epics like Job, lyric and didactic verse in Psalms, concrete earthly wisdom in Proverbs, pessimistic sighs in Ecclesiastes, commingled history, poetry, and oratory as in the Prophets, unstudied memoirs in the Gospels, equally artless records of travel and experience in the Acts—epistles which uncover the social and individual heart-history of the time, and the gorgeous vision of the evening passing through night to morning at the end.

But the record is as comprehensive as it is diverse, and being so comprehensive, how compact and clear in outline. Remember the grim criticism of Carlyle upon the disproportionate verbiage of our time, compared with the severe sententiousness of the Pentateuch. In the hands of our modern chroniclers, he says, 'the account of the burning of a Brunswick theatre takes more space than the creation of a world.'

Yet, again, though so all-embracing, how symmetrically complete. It does not, like the voluble Herodotus, pour an unassorted flood of gossip through its pages. It finds all history vertebrate—and along that line it moves, revealing the whole structure of the typical past. The Gaimite races, the massive Egyptian, Chaldean, and Ninevite civilizations, the various changing fortunes of the world at large are not over-looked, but put in their incidental and subordinate place—and so the perspective of history—unknown to the classic writers of a far later day—is recognised and preserved.

I need scarcely here dwell for a moment upon the further thought so well emphasized in our time—the corner-stone of the system which Mr. Buckle, Sir John Lubbock, and others have wrought to such top-heavy proportion—that our civilization is normally the product of antecedent material and intellectual conditions. It is plain that without telescope and microscope—opening our vision into the two worlds hidden, one by its greatness and the other by its smallness, from our natural vision—the sweepingly inductive conviction of the all-pervading unity would not have naturally arisen. While the boundaries of the earth were unknown, its symmetrical structure could

not be learned. Until, by long preparation, the social soil was fit for the seed, it could not grow. Imperfect statutes alone could befit imperfect Israel. They were not the best, but the best possible, considering 'the hardness of their hearts.'

I think it not inapt, therefore, to conclude that the marvellous insight which penetrated the fluent secret of this mysterious complex of nature and humanity long before such vision could come in the order of natural development—which saw the whole plant, leaf, flower, and fruit in the seed 'before it grew,' was somehow at least touched with an element incommensurate with known and explored causes.

Is it rash to suggest that the eye which gets to-day telescopic help beyond itself to range among the stars may then have been enlarged by Him who 'made the stars also,' and who 'formed the eye?'

THE LATE REV. DR LACHLIN TAYLOR.

Within the last month our Society has lost two of its Vice Presidents, two of its oldest and best friends, by the deaths of the Rev. Dr. Taylor and A. T. McCord Esq. Dr. Taylor had been one of the Society's Vice Presidents for twenty years, having been elected as such in 1861 on his resignation of the office of agent, which he had filled with so much zeal and energy from 1851, when he succeeded the Rev. James Richardson (afterwards Bishop Richardson). In the account of its last meeting on page 7, our readers will see the minute passed by the Board of Directors in reference to his death. It is an interesting coincidence that, when that minute was read and passed, it was almost exactly thirty years from the date of the meeting at which he was appointed agent which was on the 22nd Sept. 1851. Dr. Taylor was born in Argyleshire, on the 18th of June 1815, the day on which the battle of Waterloo was fought. He himself intended for some time to enter the army; but while he was yet quite a lad his family came out and settled near Lachute, in Lower Canada, where he was converted, and two years afterwards entered the ministry in the Methodist Church, in which he laboured with much acceptance up to the time of his entering the service of the Society. It has been claimed for him, and we think with justice, that "though other agents have been equally zealous in their devotion to the interests of the Society, none of them have carried into its service an equal amount of energy, or succeeded in investing it with such a degree of importance in the public estimation." He was indeed an incomparable agent. Perhaps his energy did not surpass that of his predecessor, or of some of his successors; but his enthusiasm and eloquence made it more effective, and in this his Highland blood and Highland tongue were of no small advantage to him. In his first report he bears witness to the value of the labours of his predecessor thus: "For the present prosperous condition, and enlarged operations of the Society in this Province, much praise is due to your former agent, the Rev. James Richardson, who for eleven years discharged the duties of agency with unwearied fidelity and devotedness. There is scarcely a village or settlement from Amherstburg to Kingston,

which he did not visit either casually or statedly, to promote the interests of the Society; and his visits will long be remembered by grateful thousands among all classes of the community.' In Bishop Richardson's last report as agent we find that it was his appreciation of Dr. Taylor that enabled him to lay down the work with confidence. He says: "Among the considerations that have led me to retire from the field, nothing of dislike to either the work itself, or its associations is found. A conviction that the cause would be benefited by a change of agency was the principal inducement that governed; and to be succeeded by a person so well qualified and adapted to the work as is the Rev. Lachlin Taylor, strengthens my confidence in the correctness of my judgment." Dr. Taylor had unbounded faith in the Bible Society, and a very useful amount of confidence in his own power to electrify others with the same faith. As an illustration, take the following extract from his speech at the anniversary of our Society in 1858.

Lord Thomas Babington Macaulay had, in an unguarded moment, spoken of the bray of Exeter Hall. He wished Lord Macaulay had been in his (Mr. Taylor's) seat, and if he could not have thawed him out, and electrified him through and through, he would have given him up as either being more or less than a man. (Applause.) He felt strongly tempted to ascend the mount of vision, to take a glimpse of the wide world glory of our institutions, whose conquests were spreading eastward and westward, northward and southward, and whose triumphs should speedily, by the help of God, fill and bless the whole world. (Applause.) Suffice it for him to say, as we looked over this field, we saw that everywhere the glorious light of God's truth was spreading, the signs were rapidly multiplying, doors were everywhere being opened, mountainous obstacles were moving out of the way, and the omens that beckoned us were those of universal conquest. (Applause.) If he were to go on in this way, however, he should inflict a long speech upon them contrary to his intention. (Applause.) He stood there and took a look at the large audience. We might hear of the danger arising from Popery at the other end of the Province, we might hear of interested politicians making use of that fear, as political capital, but when we could get up a real, genuine, combined Protestant movement like this, he argued for Canada a position great, glorious and free—a position worthy the daughter of the magnificent parent empire, which in spite of all the influence of Popery, or any other foe, or of all foes combined, would go on spreading her borders, and strengthening those principles which had placed the proudest diadem of earth on the brow of her world-renowned Queen. (Applause.) The movement would progress, the triumph should proceed, till the record of a world brought back to God should fill up the last remaining blank, and earth's remotest tribes should bring forth the royal diadem and crown Jesus "Lord of all."

He also had great faith in this Canada of ours, and longed to see every soul in her supplied with the Word of God, and every Christian in her heartily supporting the Bible Society. In the same speech he said, referring to the Rev. Mr. Green, agent of the Montreal Bible Society, who was present:

We reciprocate fully his fraternal greetings, and pledge ourselves through him to his Society to assist the work, for we were enlisted under a common banner, baptized by the same spirit, and were resolved to push our conquests and extend our powers, until every tribe, and family, and individual in our beloved Canada; not merely Canada as it is, the Canada of now, but Canada as it will be, the Canada of the great north-west, should each possess in his own tongue the precious word of the everlasting God.

And in his first report we find the following:

I am happy to state that the cause in which we are engaged receives the sympathy and support of a large majority of the Protestants of this country; but I cannot here forbear asking, *But why not of all?* Is there a single argument founded either in reason or religion why every professed follower of the Lord Jesus Christ should not so cooperate to the utmost of his ability in carrying out the object of our noble Institution,

viz : first to supply every inhabitant of our own land with the volume of inspiration, the Revelation of God's will to man, and then to do what in us lies to extend the same blessing in the regions beyond? My heart is set on realizing such a blessed consummation, and I hope to see the day in our beloved Canada when the Bible Society shall number in its ranks every professed Christian throughout the length and breadth of the land. May the Great Head of the Church so overrule the events that are transpiring 'n our day, as to bring the votaries of the truth to see eye to eye in this matter; and may not only in this, but in every department of Christian action and duty, the language of His own prayer be speedily verified "That they all may be one; as thou Father art in me, and I in thee; that they also may be one in us; that the world may believe that thou has sent me."

In 1858 he got leave of absence from the Society, and went on an extended tour through parts of Europe, Palestine, and Egypt. In 1863 great things in the near future were expected for British Columbia, and he was sent there in the interests of the Bible Society. He discharged the duty entrusted to him with his accustomed energy, organizing several Branch Societies, and starting colportage among the miners and gold-diggers. Having great powers of description, he delighted in lecturing on what he had seen in the Holy Land, and it was partly this, and partly the state of his health, which led to his resignation of the Bible Society Agency. In 1865 he became one of the Secretaries of the Methodist Missionary Society, for which he did good service, and remained in that office till 1873. Dr. Taylor never having married, his home latterly was the house of the Rev. T. Stobbs, who married one of his sisters. But, though his health was much shaken by a blow he received from the shaft of a cab in one of the crowded thoroughfares of London, he still indulged his roaming propensity, and up to the last lectured whenever he had the strength and the opportunity. Only a few days before his death, he delivered a lecture on his favourite topic. On Sunday, Sept. 4th, after an illness of about a week, he died at Brackley Point, Prince Edward Island, of heart disease, attended by his nephew, the Rev. John Burwash, of Sackville. His body was brought up to Cobourg, whence the funeral proceeded to Baltimore, where he was buried among some of his nearest relatives, who are there awaiting the glorious resurrection. The funeral service was conducted by the venerable and Rev. Richard Jones, under whose superintendence he first worked in the ministry.

THE LATE MR. ANDREW T. McCORD.

In the death of Mr. McCord, which took place on Monday Sept. 5th, the day after that of Dr. Taylor, the Society not only lost another Vice President but also one of its oldest, most valuable, and valued friends. Notwithstanding his age, he was still a most active, as he had ever been an unswerving, supporter of the Bible Society. Since his retirement from the Treasurership of the city, he had of course more leisure than most business men; but he was far from being an idle man. His time was systematically and conscientiously laid out to glorify God, and to do good to his fellow-men, both temporally and spiritually. As part of this time was devoted to the Bible Society, he

will be very much missed by his fellow-directors, especially at the meetings of the important Standing Committee on Agency and Colportage, where his long experience, as well as the time and thought given to the interests of the Society, was of great value. He will also be greatly missed in connexion with the Ketchum Trust, as he was one of the original Trustees, to whom Mr. Ketchum at first conveyed the property, and he knew the liberal donor's views and wishes so well. As a member of the Joint Committee of the two Societies on the care of the premises, he has for several years been urging upon the Directors the necessity of improvements. When the time comes, as soon it must, that either extensive improvements or a new building must be undertaken, his knowledge of property, his influence with the business men of our city, and his keen interest in the matter would have been of the greatest assistance. But we must not repine; our loss is his gain, and our Heavenly Father cannot make a mistake. He knows the right time to take each of his servants to the heavenly mansions, and it must be the right time not only for that particular saint, but also for every real interest of the church on earth.

Mr. McCord had been a Vice-President of the Society since 1864, and had first become a Director in 1837. But he more than once related to the writer an incident which took place at a public Bible Society meeting, at which he was present, soon after his arrival from the old country, so that it is most likely that he was a member fifty years ago, and probably a contributor to the Parent Society or to the Hibernian Bible Society before leaving Ireland.

He was born in Belfast, on the 12th of July, 1805, and was educated at the Belfast Academical Institution. When twenty-six years of age he came to this country and settled in this city, which, however, did not become a city until about three years after, when he became its first Treasurer, a position which he occupied for over forty years with great credit to himself and benefit to the financial credit of the city. All along he has been a helper and promoter of almost every movement for the physical, moral, or spiritual welfare of the people. He was for seventeen years Secretary of the Upper Canada Tract Society, and himself a practical tract distributor. He was one of the earliest advocates in Toronto of total abstinence. He was one of the first among the older members of the churches to take an interest in, and give hearty encouragement to the Toronto Young Men's Christian Association. He was one of Dr. Wilson's first and most useful supporters in starting the Newsboys' Lodging, and gave much time in helping to find for it a local habitation, when it was in real danger of being strangled by the unwillingness of every body to rent property for such a purpose. He was for years Treasurer of the Evangelical Alliance, and himself one of the happiest examples of its Catholic spirit. To name the Irish Protestant Benevolent Society, the House of Industry and other institutions, of which he was not merely an ornamental committee man, but to which he conscientiously gave time and thought, would be to write a list reminding one of the numerous titles of

some noblemen of the realm. And truly he was one of God's noblemen, and has done more real good for this city, and therefore for this country, and therefore for our Empire than many of our proudest Dukes.

To many, we doubt not, this may appear exaggerated praise, because Mr. McCord had little of those popular gifts which attract attention and public admiration. The words of his Pastor, the Rev. J. Denovan, of Alexander street Baptist church, on the Sunday after his death, bore witness to the esteem in which he was held by his own church. The large attendance at his funeral showed the respect felt for him by members of other churches and by men of the world. But we believe the city is more indebted to him than most people have any idea of, and not the smallest of his benefits is the example of sterling honesty which he has left us. In these days when young men are being led, by the doings and sayings of prominent men, to think that scrupulous honesty is impossible in large matters, it is a grand thing to be able to point to Andrew T. McCord, the first Treasurer of Toronto, retiring after forty years from such an office with such a record. He might well have said :—

“ Yet Heaven, that made me honest, made me more
Than e'er a king did when he made a lord.”

Bible Society Recorder.

TORONTO, 1ST OCTOBER, 1881.

BOARD MEETING.

The Board of Directors met on the evening of Tuesday, September 20th, at 7.30 p. m., the Hon. William McMaster in the chair. A passage of Scripture was read by the Rev. J. M. Cameron, and prayer led by the Rev. H. D. Powis. After the minutes of the last meeting had been read and confirmed, Dr. Hodgins, the senior Honorary Secretary, submitted the following minute in reference to the death of the Rev. Dr. Lachlin Taylor, which was unanimously passed.

“ The Directors of the Upper Canada Bible Society have received with profound regret the news of the sudden demise, in Prince Edward Island, of the Reverend Lachlin Taylor, D.D., a Vice President, and one of the most gifted friends of the Society in the Dominion.

“ In the autumn of 1851, just thirty years ago, the Directors were wisely directed in the choice, as the successor of the venerated Bishop Richardson, of the Rev. Lachlin Taylor—then but 36 years of age and in his prime—

richly endowed, as he was, with the gifts of a persuasive eloquence, a tact, judgment and catholicity which eminently fitted him for the arduous and responsible post of Agent of this Society.

“Many of the present Directors of the Society were personally cognizant of the remarkable success which attended the labours of our beloved friend. These labours gave to the Society a prestige and status in the country as an invaluable public benevolent institution which it had never before enjoyed.

“There are so many loving and pleasant memories connected with the labours of our deceased friend that eulogy *now* on those labours, which ceased 20 years ago, might seem to those personally unacquainted with them somewhat exaggerated. The Directors would therefore prefer to embody in the words of their predecessors, rather than in their own, the estimate formed at the time of the indefatigable labours and indomitable zeal, in the work of the Society, of one so universally esteemed and beloved. In the Annual Report of the Board for the year 1853, the following tribute was paid to these labours :—

““The decided advantages of an active, zealous and untiring Agency were never more apparent than during the past year; and your Committee feel that they will but barely perform a duty to the Reverend Lachlin Taylor in recording their high sense of his valuable services—services which have tended largely to increase both funds and issues, as well as greatly to widen the circle both of the friends and usefulness of the Society.

“In 1855, the Board again made this record, in its Annual Report, of the services of Dr. Taylor :—

““The Rev. Lachlin Taylor—the devoted and indefatigable Travelling Agent, whose name is almost a household word throughout the land—has continued his laborious and energetic labours during the year. He has travelled upwards of 3,700 miles; received directly upwards of \$6,400; organized 17 new Branches; delivered upwards of 90 public addresses; besides preaching almost every Sabbath on the preciousness of the Word, and the duty and privilege of making it known to all the nations of the earth.

“The records of each successive year’s labours are equally strong and graphic in the expression of heartfelt appreciation by the Board of these labours; and on Dr. Taylor’s retirement (from ill-health) from the active service of the Society, in 1861, he was appointed one of its Vice-Presidents. The Board also placed on record their high appreciation of his invaluable services during ten years, in the following resolution :—

““The Directors feel that it is only due to Rev. Mr. Taylor to express here their very high sense of the value of his services, in connection with the Bible Society. His powers of body and mind, his untiring energy, his powerful eloquence have been freely consecrated to the Bible cause. And the present high position which the Bible Society occupies in Canada West may be in no inconsiderable degree traced to his effective agency. As a body, and as individuals, the Directors tender to Mr. Taylor their warmest thanks and

their best wishes for his future happiness and usefulness ; while at the same time they hope they may again soon see him in his former position.'

"Dr. Taylor never returned to his former post, but he was employed on behalf of the parent Society to labour for the Bible cause in British Columbia and its adjacent territory, where he did good service to the cause by his zeal and eloquence.

"The Directors can only add their grateful tribute to those already expressed by their predecessors to the memory of one who was so preëminently distinguished for his love and zeal for the Bible cause, and who was, on behalf of that cause, 'in labours so abundant.'"

The Rev. Mr. Cameron, Honorary Secretary, then moved the following resolution, which was seconded and unanimously carried, and ordered to be communicated to Mrs. McCord.

"That this Board has heard with much regret of the death of A. T. McCord, Esq., one of its Vice-Presidents, and, at its first meeting, the Directors desire to record their deep sense of the loss which the Society has sustained in his removal from among them. Although he had for five years passed the allotted period of three score years and ten, and although nearly the oldest member of the Board, there was until very lately so little apparent sign of any diminution of his wonted vigour and activity, that the Directors little expected to be so soon deprived of his presence, counsel and help.

"Having been elected as a Director of the Society in 1837, and a Vice-President in 1864, he was very nearly the oldest member of the Board, but he was one of the most regular attendants at its meetings, as he had always been one of those most earnestly and actively interested in the Society's operations.

"Whilst recording their own sorrow at the loss of one of the Society's oldest, most constant and most faithful friends, the Directors desire also to express to the family of their late Vice-President their respectful sympathy, mingled with thanksgiving and congratulations that they have such a memory to cherish and such an example to follow.

"That the Secretaries communicate the above resolution to the family of our late Vice-President, Mr. A. T. McCord."

The Secretaries submitted a letter from Mr. J. J. Woodhouse, resigning his appointment as book-keeper, and reported that they had conferred with the Secretaries of the Tract Society, and recommended the continued, though not for the present permanent, employment of Mr. Nesbitt. A letter was read from the Rev. Mr. Reed, Secretary of the British and Foreign Bible Society in reference to the revised version of New Testament. The Depositary's cash account and record of monthly balances were submitted. The senior Secretary reported to the Board the contribution of \$50 from Mr. John Black, of Blenheim, who was thereupon elected a life member of the Society. Schedule and detailed reports were submitted from the Rev. Mr. Manly, giving account of his work in Manitoulin and Algoma—and a letter was read

from the Rev. R. Jamieson, giving account of colportage in British Columbia. A circular was ordered to be sent out to officers of Branches, asking them kindly to give prompt attention to the correspondence of Agents, etc., etc. Gratuities were reported, applications considered, and other routine business attended to, and the meeting closed with prayer, led by the Rev. Dr. Potts.

EXTRACTS FROM REPORT OF BRITISH AND FOREIGN BIBLE SOCIETY.

INDIA.

LAHORE.—The most interesting effort made by the Punjab Auxiliary during the past year was unhappily checked by the death of the honoured missionary to whom the carrying out of the plan was entrusted. A thousand copies of the Gospels were sent into Afghanistan by the Rev. G. M. Gordon; but many remained undistributed, in consequence of his death while endeavouring to rescue some wounded men on the day of the fatal sortie from Candahar. The Rev. F. A. P. Shirreff, Acting Secretary of this Auxiliary, states that a distinguished officer bought some hundreds of Scripture portions for gifts upon his marches to those who could read. He reported that the people received him everywhere with delight, and treated him with the greatest respect.

The Rev. R. Clark, who has now returned to Umritsur, has resumed his position in connection with the Punjab Society. He writes under date Feb. 9 as follows:—

“I have just received your letter of January to Mr. Shirreff. I am glad to be able to answer it myself, as Secretary of the Punjab Branch of your Society. I have been very ill; but God has been very merciful to me, and has permitted me to return to the work in this land which I love; a work, I am thankful to say, which continues to prosper. Vernacular Scriptures were sold last year to the amount of 1,688, and many copies find their way to Afghanistan.

ALLAHABAD.—The Allahabad Committee first note with renewed thankfulness to Almighty God the marked interest that still prevails on the part of the peasant population of Northern India for the Scriptures in Hindi. From whatever cause this demand may arise, they feel assured that God's Word, which is finding an entrance into so many homes, will not return to Him void, but will accomplish that whereunto He is sending it.

CHANGES FOR THE BETTER.

The colportage work of the Society has been steadily continued. An opportunity presented itself during the year of visiting and examining many of the colporteurs, and the result has been satisfactory. In one large town of Northern India it was found that the colporteur was welcomed by leading Hindu merchants, and invited to take his seat in their shops. Where little more than twenty years ago all who bore the name of Christian were either massacred or for a season driven out by Hindu and Mohammedan in the terrible days of '57, the colporteur formed the centre of groups of the descendants of these same men, listening with marked interest as they heard him read of and dwell upon the Christ who then seemed so powerless to aid His servants. As one looked on, the thought rose at once to the lips, “Ask of Me, and I shall give thee the heathen for thine inheritance.”

From the report of another colportage centre, a missionary tells how in his interesting tour during the last cold weather he found himself welcomed on new ground, and that his message was not quite new. His pioneer had been

the colporteur from another town, who had pressed God's Word upon these villagers, and from what they had read they were prepared to hear more about the matter. One soul has been gathered in; and who can say in the hearts of how many more the ground has been broken up?

CALCUTTA.—The Free Grants included supplies sent up to Peshawar for the soldiers returning from Afghanistan, and books required for house to house visitation in Bhowanipore, conducted by the Rev. J. E. Payne. This gentleman says:—

“Hundreds of requests have been made for Gospels as I have passed along the streets. I have explained that I was presenting a book at each house, and not giving to all comers. A few, on hearing this, have asked to be allowed to purchase Gospels; to this I have acceded. This systematic distribution of books is very different from indiscriminate circulation; it may, in my judgment, be continued side by side with colportage.

“Whenever practicable, I have explained to the recipient the contents of the book. This has led in very many cases to the best opportunities of preaching the Gospel that I have enjoyed during the year. A few neighbours have gathered round to listen as I stood talking about the Gospel of Christ; a chair has been brought, and I have sat in the midst of an attentive company of hearers; an appointment has been made, and I have gone to the same house again and again to discuss religious topics; as I have gone along the street I have been called upon to explain passages in the books I had previously given.

“Many of the books have reached the hands of women. Not a few little girls have been sent to the doors to get a book from me for the ladies in the zenana.”

BOMBAY.—Eight colporteurs have been employed during the year—an increase of two. The Rev. H. J. Bruce, of Satara, who superintends one, named Chandrabhan Salave, gives some interesting cases in which he has done good:—

1. M—— is a village of considerable size. When he first went there, and the people learned that he had the Padre's books for sale, they would not buy his books nor would they listen to his preaching with any interest. But there was a Brahman boy standing near him who listened attentively, and afterwards told him that he thought his words were true. Chandrabhan then told him more of Christ. Some time afterwards Chandrabhan went to that village, and the people began to buy his books. Some said, “Why do you buy the Padre's books?” but others said that they were good books; and a number of copies were sold. The Brahman lad met him, and they had a long conversation. He bought a copy of a Scripture portion, and expressed his conviction that Christianity was true. He said if it were not for his parents he would himself become a Christian. This lad still remains in an interesting state, and it is our prayer that he may be led to receive the Gospel in its fulness.

2. Chandrabhan went to the village of K——. A number of people gladly purchased some of his books, and afterwards he preached to them. The next day a young Brahman came to him and said, “I believe that what you say is true. There is but one Saviour, and besides Him there is no God. I love to read the Christian Scriptures, but my people will not let me read them. This sometimes makes me very sad. What shall I do? I have no confidence in the Hindu religion.” How many there are who are kept back by the bonds of caste and the fear of their friends!

3. In one place there is a Burud (bamboo maker) who sometimes detains the colporteur for a day, and if he has not leisure in the daytime, he will call a number of people together in his house at night to listen to the Word.

The Rev. G. Shirt, of Hyderabad, writes:—“With regard to the sale of the Scriptures, it is still the day of small things with us; but sometimes in our preaching excursions we come across people who have obtained portions of God's Word and read them. When this is the case, there is always an oppor-

tunity of speaking about the Word. In this way the work of the Bible Society and that of the Missionaries of the Cross mutually assist each other.

BANGALORE.—Among the colporteur incidents occurs the following, given by Rev. P. Bildaingingappa, of Belgaum :—

“An old man about ninety years of age, an inhabitant of Bail Hongul, died a month ago. He used to come to our Mission House, and I read to him now and then portions of Scripture and talked to him about religion. In his latter days he could not hear well unless we talked to him with a very loud voice. His deafness was caused by a long-standing ulcer in his ear, so that it was not an easy thing to speak to him. Though he could not hear, he could read. He got some of our books, which his grandson had bought with a view to find fault with the Christian religion, and he felt an interest in reading them. Sometimes he told me their contents, and gave vent to his convictions, and said, ‘There is only one true God in the world. The worship of the Linga and of Jangams is all vain ; but if I walk according to my convictions, the people would say, “This man got mad in his old age ;” therefore I cannot make an open profession of Christianity.’

“Jewanna, a Christian bookseller, not a recognised colporteur, says that the head-man of the village, Hoonasikatty, and the head-master of the school therein, have each of them a Bible. They read them, and sometimes tell the villagers their contents. And at all times when he goes there they help him in his work, and encourage both the young and old to buy his books, telling them that they teach useful things.

“Thus our books do what we sometimes are not able to do. Those who possess them and read them, have been silently taught those things that pertain to their eternal welfare. May the Spirit of God attend the colporteurs’ work for the accomplishment of the end designed by it !”

MADRAS.—Testimony comes from various and unimpeachable sources of the influence of the Bible in this Presidency. Thus a lady whose work lies among high caste Hindu females in Madras says, “I know there is an evident desire to become acquainted with the Scriptures amongst some natives of this country who are able to read.” A gentleman labouring among the lads who come to Madras for higher education says, “I scarcely meet a Hindu who does not admit that the Bible teaches the highest morals of any book within the range of his knowledge ;” and a missionary who has large experience of the educated natives says, ‘I am convinced that the Bible, as circulated and read among the young men and students, is moulding the minds of not a few, and that there is springing up in Madras a class of men who are letting idolatry slip away from them . . . a class of men who feel a greater sympathy with missionaries and the truth they teach than with anything which has come down from their ancestors.’”

In the Teluga country one missionary mentions the gratifying fact that he knows of a dozen cases of conversion through the reading of the Scriptures, and others speak, though not so decidedly, of the good accomplished by the same means in their respective fields.

Last year 500 Testaments were given to those of the Famine Orphan children who could read.

In acknowledging the gift, many missionaries speak of the delight with which the books were received, and of the good likely to result from this distribution of the Word of God.

The Rev. G. T. Washburn says : “I can assure you that the children will value them not only as the Word of God, but as gifts from your Society to them as children saved from the famine, and many of them from heathenism. One of the benefits of having the books, and one which I think very important, is that they will begin reading them through in order. Some of the children have obtained an extraordinarily good knowledge of the parts of the Bible they have studied. It will interest you, I think, to know that one of the Pasumalai orphan boys got the first prize in a competitive written examination at our Mission Schools last March. This boy was found in a famish-

ing condition in a gentleman's horse-stable in Madura three years ago. He is now in the Tirunangalam Boarding School, with four others whom we sent there."

The editorial and printing work done at Madras is upon a very large scale. Last year there were printed six editions in Tamil, comprising 50,000 copies, seven in Telugu, comprising 31,000, and one of 8,000 copies in Malayalam. The most important work in hand is a reprint of the Telugu Bible, which has been out of print for six years. As the revision of the Scriptures in this language, though actively carried on, is by no means yet complete, it has been found essential to provide an *ad interim* supply, and towards this the Parent Society has made a special grant of £300, in addition to £1,500 for colportage, with a supply of printing paper, binding materials and Scriptures to the value of £798 16s 1d.

CHINA.

To scarcely any part of the world have your Committee given greater attention during the past year than to China. They are thankful that the work so long and ably superintended by Mr. Wylie should have passed into the hands of one who, by devoutness of spirit, by accuracy of detail and breadth of aim, together with the cultivation of cordial relations with all bodies of Christian workers, bids fair to render invaluable service. But no Agent, however well qualified, could succeed in China without the co-operation of the missionaries. When it is recollected that the distance between Peking and Hongkong is about 1,250 miles, or as far as from London to Odessa, and that from Shanghai to the Snowy Mountains on the border of Tibet, the distance is equally great, it must be evident that local committees and itinerant workers are essential to any adequate provision.

Both these agencies are in course of satisfactory development. Mr. Dyer enumerates ten centres at which committees are organized for the superintendence of colportage, and seven other centres at which the same friendly office is filled by single missionaries.

At the New Year a letter of inquiry was received from a generous friend who has previously helped the Society's work in China; and when the reports being taken had been described to him, a further note came in which he said he was so convinced that these efforts most nearly resembled our Lord's walks in Galilee, and were best fitted to promote the evangelization of the Chinese Empire, that he begged the Society's acceptance of a donation of £1,500. Encouraged by this and other signs of growing interest, the Committee have appointed a sub-committee to consider what steps may wisely be taken with a view to extending Bible work in China.

Though the prices of Chinese Scriptures are very low, often scarcely a third of what the books cost to produce, there is abundant evidence that to sell is wiser and kinder than to give. On this subject important testimony is borne by one of the missionaries.

"I fully approve the plan of selling the Scriptures to a people like the Chinese. I believe this practice ensures the reading of the Book. The Chinese attach little value to gifts which are really disinterested, because they do not understand them. Their own giving is usually with the expectation of an adequate return. Frequently the people remark:—'Writings intended to exhort and convert the world ought to be given away as works of merit, and not sold.' The answer given seldom fails to gain their assent:—'We do not sell these books for gain, but that they may reach those who will value and read them. The books are too precious to be used for shoe-leather or any other purpose than that of instructing men.'"

Of course in the famine districts, and in cases of extreme poverty, this rule is relaxed, but for the most part adherence to it is felt to be the only way of undoing the harm which in earlier years has been caused by the system of gratuitous distribution.

The Peking Committee make the following handsome acknowledgment:—

“ We have to acknowledge our deep obligations to the British and Foreign Bible Society for the important aid it renders us in our missionary work. It enables the poorest of our converts to possess a copy of the Word of God, and enables us to circulate among this spiritually dark people that Word whose entrance giveth light. In the work of modern Christian missions our Bible Society occupies a prominent place, and it will be found at last that it has contributed no small part towards the world's enlightenment and salvation.”

Mr. Cameron traversed, between November, 1879, and the following May, the peninsula east of the Liantung Gulf, visited the Corean Gate, and then passed northwards into Manchuria, and west to Peking. During this time he sold more than 11,000 books, these being in addition to what he had sold on his previous journey from Tientsin to Newchwang. Mr. Parrott, of the same mission, travelling in Shansi, sold 1,600 Gospels in sixty-nine days. Successes like these may be quoted in answer to those who say that the Chinese do not want the Bible.

Instances are numerous in which persons have at first refused to purchase from ignorance of the nature of the volume, when a few words of explanation have aroused an earnest desire to possess it. “ Give me a book, if it will teach me how to break off opium and keep right,” exclaimed a victim of the drug. “ Give me a Testament,” said a Mohammedan; “ to be able to buy the words of Jesus in Chinese is a very good thing.”

2. CENTRAL CHINA; THE YANGTSE RIVER AND THE WEST.—At *Chinkian* the colporteur, superintended by Dr. White, has sold over 8,000 Portions during the year. Any lack of incident from some of the centres of work is compensated by the highly interesting report sent in by Mr. Adams, of Nanking, who has directed the colporteur *Lieu-tch-iong*, and accompanied him in some of his journeys. He writes to Mr. Dyer as follows:—

“ I am anxious to express my sympathy with the Society you represent, and my appreciation of the valuable service rendered by it in the effort to win China for Christ. I regret that some of our fellow-labourers have been led to express an opinion unfavourable to the circulation of the Scriptures without note or comment; because our brief experience this year has led me to embrace a decidedly opposite idea. The following incidents show that the light of God's Word has been the means of illuminating some minds. They have mostly come under my own observation when out with your colporteur.

“ THE ANXIOUS TAOTAI.

“ On the steamer from Nanking to Shanghai, I met a high official, a Taotai, from the province of Sze-chuen, in which the Society's head colporteur *Mollmann* has done a good deal of work. He was taking his daughter to be married to the Taotai of a place in the north of China. His son, also a Taotai, accompanied the party which, with servants, was a very large one. The elder gentleman saw me and asked me to come to his cabin. At first I was occupied, and did not comply. But the Mandarin sending a servant to invite me to drink wine with him and have a chat, I went to the cabin, and declined the wine, but had a most interesting conversation with him.

“ The whole subject was how to be saved. He was very much in earnest about the matter, and anxious about his soul. It is a rare thing to see a Chinaman so anxious on the subject.

He asked numerous questions about the way of deliverance from sin, etc. In order to be perfectly certain that he was correct in his apprehension of my meaning, he frequently described a Chinese character on the palm of my hand. Much surprised at the extent of the man's knowledge of the truth, I asked him who had instructed him in these things. He said no one, but he received, when at home in Sze-chuen, a present from some native of a New Testament, which he had read with much care and frequently. He had often talked with his friends about this way of salvation, but no one seemed to

have any knowledge of it. His son, as I have said, also a Taotai, stood silently behind his father's chair during the conversation, listening with deep attention.

"As the party was going up the Grand Canal, they disembarked at Chinkiang, and I arranged for an interview the next day to have further talk on the subject.

"The father, owing perhaps to his age and also to the fact that next day the whole party were proceeding on, could not come, but he sent his son, a man of about thirty years of age, to visit me and hear more. It was found that he also, though silent on the previous evening, was anxious about his soul, and most eager to get precise information. For three hours the conversation lasted with me and another missionary, and afterwards with an experienced native evangelist; and during that time there was no divergence from the one grand theme.

"Particular instructions were given for the guidance of these inquiring Mandarins, that they might find the Gospel Halls in the cities they might visit.

"A CHINAMAN'S RECOMMENDATION.

"Pek-ho-K'eo is built on the slopes of a hill which rises up from the banks of the Yang-tse river, ten miles below Nanking—a busy place, with large shops and a large boating population. The colporteur stood in one of the busy streets calling out, 'I have a book that will teach you to obtain wealth which nobody can steal, and will never disappear.' 'Come and buy a book which will tell you how to obtain the reward of virtue; come! sinners all, though deserving the punishment of vice, you may yet receive the happiness of virtue,' etc. A crowd came round, but not an individual would buy. Quite willing to listen to its praises, they seemed to fear the book had some mysterious power for evil. A young man coming out of a rice shop joined the company, saying, 'What's the business?' 'Sell-book man come.' 'Sell what book?' 'Holy books.' 'Let me see one: I know a holy book when I see it.' After a brief examination he said, 'No mistake! This is a holy book. You may buy these books; they exhort and reform men, and have no evil meaning in them.'

"Drawing the young man aside, I entered into conversation with him, while the colporteur was busily engaged selling the books, for which a sudden demand had arisen.

'How do you know that these books are good?' 'I've got one at home—Ma-tai [Matthew] Gospel Book.' 'Where did you get it?' 'From a foreigner who came in a boat months gone by.' 'Did you read the whole?' 'Yes, but I don't understand many characters, so I think I must have missed its meanings.'

"After a cross examination I found he knew that the book taught about Jesus, that His teachings exhorted men and taught them to be pure in life; and that those who erred the religion got peace, and finally reached Heaven's Hall, but how he did not seem to know. He said he had not heard the doctrine explained.

"WE HAVE NO RELIGION AT PRESENT.

"On the banks of the river Yang-tse, five miles north of Nanking lies Puk'eo, sometimes called Little Nanking: it is such a busy town. The following dialogue took place between myself and a schoolboy of some fifteen years. 'Oh, you are here again; what are you doing now?' said the boy. 'We are selling the whole books of the Bible,' I replied. 'Of course; and where's Mr. Mollmann?' 'I cannot say. Do you know Mr. Mollmann?' I asked. 'Yes, you came together, and I bought a Ma-kó [Mark] happy-sound-hall.' 'Where is it now?' I said. 'At home.' 'Did you understand it?' I inquired again. 'Of course; I can read the classics. Ma-kó is very easy. Do you know Mr. Ma-kó?' he inquired suddenly. 'Yes, I know something

about Mr. Mark, but I would like to know what you have learned from his book.' Standing on one foot and looking puzzled—'Well, he wrote about Jesus.' 'And who was Jesus?' 'Oh! he was Ma-kó's teacher, and when Ma-kó heard Him talking he learned it all and put it in a book.' 'But what did Jesus do?' 'He made a blind man to see, and'—here he stopped and rebuked a companion for pushing and interrupting us with the inquiry as to who I was. I was gratified to hear him explain. 'This is a native foreign devil who came here with real foreign devil, selling books. I bought one written by a Mr. Ma-kó, who is a distant relative of this man!' The distinction between Mr. Mollmann and myself arose from the fact that he wore the English dress and I the Chinese. (Dialogue continued.) Boy suddenly: 'Where's Mr. Ma-kó now?' 'He is not.' Boy: 'Then he has gone to the happy-sound kingdom?' 'Yes. Mark lived many years ago, when Jesus taught men to be holy, and he became the follower of this teacher, who was the Son of the God who created the beautiful hills and everything else. He died to redeem you and all of us from sin. If we believe and trust in Him to teach us through this holy book, we shall go to be with Mark and with all holy men in the kingdom of the happy sound, as you call it—the Kingdom of Heaven.' Boy (quietly): 'We've got no religion at present; father has just left the Mohammedan religion; it's very offensive. When I see you again I'll tell you what religion we are going to enter. Yours is very good: let me have a Mathew and a John—cheap.'"

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