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THE BIBLE ADVOCATE.

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VOL. I.

MONTREAL, FEBRUARY, 1838.

No. 10.

BIBLIA PAUPERUM;

THE BIBLE OF THE POOR.

This is the title of a very curious work that was much in circulation three or four centuries ago. Judging from its name alone, our readers would naturally suppose that it was a cheap edition of the Bible intended expressly for the purchase and accommodation of the lower orders of society; but this would be an incorrect conclusion. It is no edition of the Bible at all, though it relates to biblical subjects; but it is a manual or kind of catechism of the Bible intended for young persons and the use of the common people, as its name in part declares. The art of engraving on wood began to make progress in the fourteenth Century, and, having been much used in the manufactory of playing cards, which were invented a little before for the amusement of a hypocondriac Monarch of France (Charles VI.) was soon applied to a better purpose, that of forming blocks for printing books of amusement and instruction. The professors of the art composed pictures of historical subjects, chiefly

taken from the Scriptures, with a text or explanation engraved on the same blocks. One side of the paper only is printed upon, and the corresponding text is placed below, beside, or proceeding out of the mouth of, the figures introduced. These when placed together in a volume constitute the *Biblia Pauperum*, and from it the people in general were enabled to acquire, at a comparatively low price, an imperfect knowledge of some of the characters and events recorded in Scripture. It generally consists of forty plates, with extracts and sentences analogous to the figures and images represented in them. The whole are printed from wooden blocks on one side only of the leaves of paper, so that when folded they are placed opposite to each other, just in the same manner as Chinese books are now usually printed. As the white sides of the paper may be cemented together, the number of leaves is reduced to twenty. Copies, however, are sometimes found, the leaves of which not having been

pasted on their blank side, are forty in number, like the plates. Each plate or page contains four busts, two at the top and two at the bottom, together with three historical subjects; the two upper busts represent the prophets or other persons whose names are always given beneath them; the two lower busts are without names. The middle of the plates, which are all marked by letters of the alphabet in the centre of the upper compartment (probably the origin of the signatures now used by printers) is occupied by three historical pictures, one of which is taken from the New Testament. This is the type or principal subject, and occupies the centre of the page between the two antitypes or other subjects which allude to it. The inscriptions which occur at the top and bottom of the page, consist of texts of Scripture and Leonine Latin verses.

There have been several editions of this curious work; the fifth contains fifty plates. The figures in general are coarsely formed, as might be expected in the infancy of the art. The texts of Scripture and the Latin verses have many contractions in printing, as was the custom of the age. The plates are supposed to have been executed between the years 1420 and 1435.

How superior are the advantages of the present day to those which our forefathers enjoyed. Instead of block-books, and rude figures, and fanciful interpretations, and legendary tales, we have the word of God in its purity and entireness, so that the *whole* of the sacred volume is *now* the *Bible of the poor*; By the Reformation from Popery its pages were thrown open to general inspection; and by improvements in the art of printing, both with moveable types and in stereotype, aided by the benevolent exertions of Christians of all denominations, the Bible is placed within

the reach of every poor man who desires to possess so great a treasure. "Say not thou...that the former days were better than these."

THE BLESSING OF GOD UPON THE PERUSAL OF HIS WORD.

NO. VII.

Dr. Olinthus Gregory relates the following visit which he paid to a poor man greatly afflicted:—"On entering the cottage, I found him alone; his wife having gone to procure him milk from a kind neighbour. I was startled at the sight of a pale-faced man, a living image of death, fastened up in his chair by a rude mechanism of cords hanging from the ceiling. He had been for four years deprived of the use of his limbs; yet at the same time suffering extreme anguish from swellings at all his joints. As soon as I recovered a little from my surprise at seeing so pitiful an object, I asked, 'Are you left alone, my friend, in this deplorable situation?' 'No, Sir,' replied he, in a touchingly feeble tone of mild resignation, (nothing but his lips and eyes moving while he spake,) 'I am not left alone, for God is with me.' On advancing, I soon found the secret of this striking declaration; for his wife had left on his knees, propped with a cushion formed for the purpose, a BIBLE, lying open at a favourite portion of the Psalms of David. I sat down by him, and conversed with him. On ascertaining that he had a small weekly allowance certain, I inquired how the remainder of his wants were supplied.—'Why,' said he, 'tis true, as you say, seven shillings a week would never support us; but, when it is gone, I rely upon the promise I find in this book, *Bread shall be given him, and his water shall be sure!*' I asked him, if he ever felt tempted to repine under the pressure of so long-continued and heavy a calamity? 'Not

for the last three years,' said he, 'blessed be God for it,' the eye of faith sparkling and giving life to his pallid countenance while he made the declaration: 'for I have learned in this book in whom to believe: and though I am aware of my weakness and unworthiness, I am persuaded he will never leave me nor forsake me. And so it is, that often when my lips are closed with locked jaws, and I cannot speak to the glory of God, he enables me to sing his praises in my heart!'

THE BIBLE IN RUSSIA.

Letter from the Rev. Mr. Brown, of St. Petersburg, Russia, to the Secretary of the American Bible Society, at New York, recently received, and communicated for the New York Observer.

HAPPY RESULTS OF THE RE-COMMENCEMENT OF BIBLE DISTRIBUTION IN RUSSIA.

There is in the Baltic sea, an island called Hogland, well known to seafaring people, containing about 500 inhabitants. A pious young Lutheran heard of them; he visited and preached the gospel to them; their attention was excited; they said: "This man talks like an angel! Who sent you with these good tidings? Will you stay with us?" He replied: "I cannot live upon air." "No," said they, "but we will give you fish and oil, and candles."—"I cannot live upon that," said he, "but will go to Petersburg, and see what the servants of Jesus Christ there will do for me; and if they will support me, I will return to you." He came to St. Petersburg and related the circumstance to a lady, the widow of an admiral; adding, "Will you support me?"—"I cannot," was her reply; "but I will speak to Mr. Knill on the subject." She did so, and asked whether his congregation would undertake to send this missionary. Mr. Knill assured her that they would, and he was sent accordingly.

It happened one day, when Mr. Knill was putting up his missionary's boxes, with some medicines, his

clothes, and fifteen Bibles, a peasant called at his house on business. As she passed, he said to her: "Can you read?"—"Yes," said she, "in my own language." "What is that?"—"The Finnish." "Finnish?" said he, "here is a Finnish Bible. Read it." She received it, read in it, and returned the book. "Have you a Bible?"—"No; I never had one. I never had enough to buy one." "How much money have you now?" "Only one ruble." "Well, give me that, and I will give you this Bible." She looked at Mr. Knill with distrust, not thinking he would let her have it for that sum. "I mean what I say," said he; "if you give me that ruble, I will give you this Bible." She gave him the ruble, and he returned her the book; and oh! if you had seen with what joy she received it! She pressed it to her bosom, while tears gushed from her eyes; and she seemed to feel in her heart that she had got a treasure, the lamp of life, to direct her through this wilderness to heaven. Mr. Knill then said: "Go, tell your neighbors, if any of them wish to receive a Bible, they shall have one for a ruble." She went to the hay-market, held up her book and exclaimed: "See! see!" "What is it?"—"The Bible!"—"Where did you get it?"—"I got it from the foreign priest." "What did it cost?"—"A ruble." "No. That is impossible! You could not get that for a ruble?"—"Yes, I did; and the man told me, if any of you wished to have one at the same price, you might." They took the book from her, gave her two rubles, and said: "Now if you can go and bring us two Bibles for that, you shall have your book again. If not, we will keep it for your having deceived us." She came to Mr. Knill, looking very sorrowful, fearing that he would not let her have the books; but he gave her them, and said: "Tell your neighbours it is true; they may have

as many Bibles as they will bring rubles." She went. The tidings circulated; and what was the consequence? In six weeks time, Mr. Knill sold *eight hundred* copies! Some persons came 60 versts to procure them, and were at his house by day-break, that they might not lose the precious opportunity.

About this same time, a young person, who had become pious, called on Mr. Knill, and in the warmth of her feeling, she said: "Next week will be my birth-day, and our people will expect a present. Now it is a remarkable circumstance, that all our servants can read. What can I give them so good as a New Testament? Nothing! nothing!" "Do you think you could get me some Russian Testaments?"—"I do not know. I have not applied for some months, and I always go in fear and trembling; for my friends are gone, and I am left alone." He went, however, and purchased two; and came away with one in each pocket, fearing lest he might be observed. He sent her the books. She gave them to the servants, and soon after came to him again, saying: "The people are delighted with the books; can you get any more?"—"I do not know, but I will try." He did so, and succeeded in procuring a small supply. A friend in Scotland supplied him with the necessary funds, and on application to the British and Foreign Bible Society, liberal assistance was received.

It is impossible to follow every copy of the sacred Scripture to its destination, and there witness its effects; but we know God will not suffer his word to return void. They who go forth weeping, bearing precious seed, shall doubtless come again rejoicing, bringing their sheaves with them. But we must not faint, nor weary of our long waiting—"Behold the husbandman waiteth for the precious fruit of the earth, and hath long

patience for it until it receive the early and latter rain."—"Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone; but though it die, it bringeth forth much fruit." Of the seed sown on the occasion, referred to above, little was heard for a considerable time; I believe nothing was heard, till——, making a short tour in Finland, with the intention of distributing religious books and the Scriptures two years after, met with the following incident:—They passed through a village, calling at every house, and leaving one or other of their books. When they had nearly completed their distribution, they were disturbed by a person running towards them, and calling out: "You have missed my house! You *must* come back." They assured the person that they had been to every house in that district of the village through which they had passed. "No," said the man, "you have been in all the houses but mine, and you *must* visit *mine* too." Being informed that the house of this man stood behind the other houses, they consented to retrace their steps, and found that they had indeed missed his house. They entered, and began to unpack their books; requesting, at the same time, if convenient, that he would supply them with something to eat. The man stood beside them until they had opened the parcel and he had received from them one of their books. It happened to be a Finnish Hymn book. He no sooner saw what it was, than he called out: "Wife! wife! Look—look," he exclaimed, and began to sing with all his might the hymns contained in the tract. His wife soon joined him, and every thing was forgotten but their newly acquired treasure. There they stood (some-what advanced in life,) gazing on the book with eyes filled with tears of joy, each of them having hold of it with one hand, while with the other they marked the time and cadence of the

tune, which they sung in such a way as showed their hearts joined in the song. After singing for some time, the man suddenly stopt; saying, in a tone of regret: "Oh, I had forgotten. You have not had your dinner." In a few minutes, the table was covered with eggs, salt, black bread, and such provision as the cottage could supply. Mean was the fare, but never were strangers made more welcome. Filled with astonishment, my friends proceeded to inquire the reason of all this, and how he had been brought to take such a deep interest in religious matters. "I will soon tell you that," replied the man. "About four years ago, we were at the hay-market in St. Petersburg. A milk-woman came to the market, and holding up a large book, cried out to some of her acquaintances, "See! I have got this for one ruble." I purchased either it or another that she had, at the same price. I brought it home. My wife and I began to read it. We got deeply interested, sat up all night, read and wept—and read and wept—and read on. I was formerly a great drunkard, but I have never tasted spirits since; and see how comfortable we are!" My friends found that their children could all read, and were agreeably surprised to find an article of luxury, not always to be found in a peasant's hut, in the form of a small book case for the children's books. Another friend, Mr. —, visited them about three years since, and found things still in the same state—the pious peasant happy and contented, and teaching his children to remember their Creator in the days of their youth; that wisdom's ways are ways of pleasantness; and that the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom. Such incidents encourage us to go on with the work of the Lord.

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 Bold sinning doth afterwards make faint believing.—Psa. xxxviii. 3-5.—Fleming.

STRIKING APPEAL.

From the 25th Report, Dunmow, England.

The thought, that since the formation of this Society an unborn generation has risen into active life, leads them to invite their young friends to a co-operation in their labours. Your Committee would remind their young friends, that activity in secular life, and activity in the cause of God and of religion, ought to commence together—that at the same time we begin to labour for ourselves, we should begin to labour for God—and that they have the fairest prospect of a happy progress through life, whose views in its commencement are not all centred in themselves, but who are devising the means of honouring Him who is the Author of their being and the source of their comforts, and Him who "came to seek and to save that which was lost."

Your Committee would remind those to whom they now especially address themselves, that by exciting an interest in the Bible Society in the bosoms of their youthful friends, by obtaining contributions towards its funds, by ascertaining the wants of the poor with regard to the Holy Scriptures, and by numberless expedients which a sacred ingenuity can devise, they may materially serve the cause which we have now met to promote.

* * * * *

Of this greatly increased support, the Society is, on every account, worthy. It is worthy of it, as suited to the times in which we live, and as adapted to diminish evils of which all complain. The course of events, during the last few years, has tended to produce painful collision betwixt different branches of the Church. Whatever be his opinions on minor points, such a state of things will be deplored by every one who is accustomed to derive pleasure from the thought, that all true Christians are destined to spend an eternity to-

gether, in a world where there will be no jarring of opinions, no opposition of interests. The union of Christians belonging to different sections of the Church in this Society is powerfully adapted to recal this idea, when circumstances may seem adapted to banish it from the mind; and, by recalling it, to fan the dying embers of charity. And may not the Bible Society have been designed by the Providence of God with a view to the state of things into which we have fallen? Man is compelled to multiply his efforts in order to produce one result; but God by one means accomplishes many ends.—While, therefore, the Bible Society was designed, primarily, by its Divine Author, to spread Revealed Truth throughout the world, may it not have also been designed by Him, to whom there can be no surprise, and who provides beforehand for the moral as well as the natural wants of men, to soften the asperities of these times, and to call the attention of Christians to the period, when, in the highest and most delightful sense, they shall be “gathered together in one?” Ought we not, then, to cling around this Institution, and zealously to promote its interests; not only with a view to the good of others, but also as a discipline for our own spirits, eminently required by the circumstances in which we are placed?—*Monthly Extracts.*

THE JEWS.

From the Rev. T. Stockfield.

COLOGNE, Aug. 28, 1837.

Within the last fortnight, I have received very pleasant accounts respecting the circulation of God's word among the Jews in Bavaria. A faithful and very active Minister of the Gospel informs me, that in the course of a few weeks his whole store has been exhausted, and yet many more

copies are wanted. Accordingly, he has requested me to furnish him, without delay, with another considerable supply of the Hebrew and German Pentateuchs, and of the Prophets and Psalms. Respecting the copies already circulated in that country, he writes thus:—“The Jews here are so anxious to read their Thorah, that I am told you can scarcely enter into a Jewish family without finding the inmates assembled around one of your beautiful copies. They express their gratitude that there are those who, out of affection to them, furnish them with the books of their Law at so moderate a price. Although they are mostly poor, and obliged to maintain their school and the master out of their own private funds, yet not one of them has solicited a copy gratis, but has cheerfully, and with thanks, paid the price asked.” In compliance with the above request, I lost no time in forwarding to the writer a case, containing seventy-five copies of the Hebrew and German Pentateuch, and as many of the Prophets and Psalms.

From my beloved friends in Nürnberg; and Erlangen I have also received, very recently, similar pleasing accounts. Their stock is also nearly exhausted; and they have authorised me to draw upon them for sixty dollars, being the amount which they have received for copies sold among the Jews in their respective neighbourhoods. In accordance with their wishes, I shall, by the first opportunity, transmit to them 240 copies of the Hebrew and German Pentateuch, and 91 copies of the Prophets and Psalms. May it please the Lord, in His infinite mercy, to give an abundant increase to this good seed!—*Ibid.*

“SEARCH THE SCRIPTURES.”

A tradesman, residing on the borders of Devonshire and Cornwall, became the slave of liquor, and companion of many worthless persons.

His business failed, and he soon found himself a prisoner on the debtor's side of Exeter Castle. Not being able to procure his favourite drink, his mind became very low. He was induced to read one of the Bibles provided for the prisoners, and was so interested in its contents, that, during his imprisonment, he read it entirely through. His mind was deeply affected, and he came to the solemn determination that he would never go into sin again, should he obtain his liberty. In due time he procured his discharge, and returned with great joy to his friends. Several of his old companions called upon him, to congratulate him on his deliverance, and one glass followed another, so that the first night did not pass away without witnessing this poor creature again overpowered with liquor. The reading of the Scriptures had taught him his danger, and he became the subject of considerable despondency. He had broken the solemn vow, which he had made in his own strength, and he thought there could be no hope of mercy. Just at this time, when his mind appeared to be in a state of indecision, he received the tract, "SEARCH THE SCRIPTURES." It pleased God to make this small book the means of reviving all the impressions produced by the reading of the Scriptures in prison, and he became a consistent follower of the Lord Jesus Christ. Thus we see that scriptural tracts lead the sinner to the source from whence they derive all their own light and glory.

THE BIBLE ON A DESERT ISLAND.

The most valuable thing we preserved from the wreck was our Bible; and I must here state that some portion of time each day was set apart for reading it; and by nothing, perhaps, could I better exemplify its benefits, even in a temporal point of view, than by stating, that to its in-

fluence we were indebted for an almost unparalleled unanimity during the whole time we were on the island. The welfare of the community was the individual endeavour of all; and whatever was recommended by the most experienced, was joyfully acquiesced in by the rest. If ever a difference of opinion arose, a majority of voices decided the measure, and individual wishes always gave way to the proposals that obtained the largest suffrages. Peace reigned among us, for the precepts of Him who was the harbinger of peace and good-will towards men, were daily inculcated, and daily practised. If ever there was a fulfilment of the promise, as contained in Ecclesiastes xi. 1. "Cast thy bread upon the waters, and thou shall find it after many days;" this simple fact must bring it home to every one, even to the least contributor to that most valuable of all institutions, the Seamen's Bible Society; for it was fulfilled even to the very letter. The Bible, when bestowed, was thrown by unheeded—it traversed wide oceans—it was scattered with the wreck of our frail bark—and was in deed and in truth found upon the waters after many days, and not only was the mere book found, but its value was also discovered, and its blessings, so long neglected, were now made apparent to us. Cast away on a desert island, in the midst of an immense ocean, without a hope of deliverance, lost to all human sympathy, mourned as dead by our kindred; in this invaluable book we found the herald of hope, the balm of consolation, the dispenser of peace, the soother of our sorrows, and a pilot to the harbour of eternal happiness.—*From the Shipwreck of the Princess of Wales, by C. M. Goodridge.*

THE BIBLE LEAF.

In a town in Providence, North America, lived two young men who were intimate. The one truly pious,

the other (a shopman) paid no due regard to religion. He one day took up a leaf of the bible, and was about to tear it in pieces, and use it in packing up small parcels in the shop, when the other said, "Do not tear it, it contains the words of eternal life." Though he did not relish the reproof of his kind friend, yet he folded up the leaf, and put it in his pocket. A while after this he said within himself, "Now I will see of what kind of life it is of which this leaf speaks." On unfolding it, the first words that caught his eye were, "But go thy way till the end be, for thou shalt rest, and stand in thy lot at the end of the days." He began immediately to inquire what his lot would be at the end of his days; and from this occurrence conviction was wrought upon his mind by the Holy Spirit, and he became truly pious. How important is it for pious persons to improve opportunities of saying "A word in season;" the wisest of men said, "How good is it!" BERTHA.

VANITY OF EARTHLY THINGS.

Seeing all things shall be quickly at an end, even the frame of heaven and earth, why should we, knowing this, and having higher hopes, lay out so much of our desires and endeavours upon those things that are posting to ruin? It is no hard notion, to be sober and watchful to prayer, to be trading that way, and seeking higher things, and to be very moderate in these, which are of so short a date. As in themselves and and their utmost term, they are of short duration, so more evidently to each of us in particular, who are so "soon cut off, and flee away."

THE MONTREAL AUXILIARY BIBLE SOCIETY

Held its Seventeenth Anniversary on Monday the 5th instant, at the

Methodist Chapel in this city. It was very respectably attended, though not so numerous as on some former occasions, owing probably to the necessary attendance of many of the inhabitants on military duties. It was highly gratifying to find so many lay gentlemen taking a prominent part in support of a cause which ought never to be left exclusively to Ministers. The Report was extremely interesting, particularly with reference to the progress which had been made in the great work of supplying every family in the Province with a Bible; the appeals of the speakers were very strong and encouraging, and the whole impression of the meeting such as to justify the hope that the object in view will be speedily accomplished. A more particular account of the meeting, with some reflections in reference to it, will be inserted in the following number. The collection amounted to £14 19 2.

Poetry.

CONSOLATION FROM THE GOD OF THE BIBLE.

Oh! Thou who driest the mourner's tear,
How dark this world would be,
If, when deceived and wounded here,
We could not fly to Thee!
The friends who in our sunshine live,
When winter comes, are flown;
And he who has but tears to give,
Must weep those tears alone:
But Thou wilt heal that broken heart,
Which, like the plants that throw
Their fragrance from the wounded part,
Breathes sweetness out of woe.

When joy no longer soothes or cheers,
And e'en the hope that threw
A moment's sparkle o'er our tears,
Is dimmed and vanished too—
Oh, who could bear life's stormy doom,
Did not thy wing of love
Come brightly wafting through the gloom,
One peace-branch from above!
Then sorrow touched by Thee, grows bright
With more than rapture's ray;
As darkness shows us worlds of light
We never saw by day. MOORE.

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