

St. John, December 26, 1839.
NEW BRUNSWICK AUXILIARY
BIBLE SOCIETY.

SAINT JOHN BRANCH.

At a meeting lately held of the friends of this noble Institution in the City of Saint John, which was one of the most interesting ever witnessed on a similar occasion, and attended by many of the most respectable classes in the community, and a number of clergymen of all denominations. We were also highly gratified to see it announced that His Excellency Sir John Harvey had become Patron of this Institution amongst us. We gladly offer our best wishes for its prosperity and advancement.

The collection at the close, was greater than that of any preceding anniversary, being £16 13 8½, exclusive of a liberal donation of £5 from Capt. O'Halloran, 69th Regiment.

The following Speeches were delivered on the occasion:—

Hon. Judge Parker, the President of the Society, rose and said:—

"Ladies and Gentlemen,—Although public meetings have lately become more frequent among us than formerly, I believe there is still none which is looked forward to with greater pleasure, attended with more satisfaction, or which leaves more gratifying reflections behind it, than the Anniversary Meeting of the New Brunswick Auxiliary Bible Society, which has brought us together on the present occasion.

"The crowded assemblage before me satisfies me that there has been no abatement of interest in this so good a cause.

"You will have noticed one change since our last meeting; the highly respected Gentleman who has for so many years occupied this place as President of this Society, and who brought to the discharge of its duties a lively zeal, hearty good feeling, and kindly courtesy, and took so much delight in contemplating from year to year the increasing prosperity of our association, has felt it his duty to retire; but in mentioning the loss we have sustained, it is gratifying to think that it has not been caused by any decay of bodily or mental vigour, or diminution of zeal in the cause of the Bible, and that in the place he has removed to, there will be a new field open to his exertions, which will lead us, I hope, soon to hail at least one new Branch Society from the County of Sunbury.

"It is now thirty five years since the British and Foreign Bible Society was first formed, and twenty years since it was introduced in this Province. It has been continually gaining ground, adding to its numbers and increasing in usefulness; the prejudices which at first beset it have been gradually giving way before the light of truth; and we now see eleven of the Bishops of the English Church among its subscribers; and the Queen herself has recently become a Member, having graciously assented to become the Patroness of the Windsor Ladies' Bible Association.

"I need hardly dwell upon the necessity which existed for founding the Parent Society; but it may be well to take a slight retrospect. There was a very great and general deficiency of the Scriptures in the United Kingdom itself; in several parts of Europe they were scarcely to be procured; in many portions of the world there was a total destitution; and there were various languages into which no part of the Bible had ever been translated. To mention two instances by way of example,—in Iceland there was but fifty copies of the Scriptures among 50,000 inhabitants, and one half of the population of the British Metropolis was without them.

"Something more, it was felt, must be done; men's consciences could not rest easy under such a state of things; and in providing a remedy for the evil, it was the earnest and anxious, and I can thankfully add, the successful wish and endeavour, to form a Society on so broad a ground as might unite all Christians who believe that people ought to read the Bible for themselves.

"They united in this great work, because they agreed in acknowledging the indispensable obligation of supplying the deficiency which existed.

"They united, because they agreed in believing that the Bible alone contains the charter of our eternal salvation.

"They united, because although they could not all agree as to the Missionary who might be sent to teach, they could all join in saying what should be his best, his most constant companion; and that, when asked in foreign lands—What have you most interesting to shew us? what most valuable to give us? each in producing his treasures would exhibit this one book, the Bible, a pearl of great price!

"They united, because they saw how desirable it was, in preparing versions of the Scriptures in foreign tongues, there should be an agreement among all parties at home as to their essential correctness.

"We unite," (to see the words of a highly gifted and much lamented prelate) "because by an admixture of all denominations of Christians we obtain a greater and more concentrated power of inculcating religious knowledge than can be possessed by any separate exertions of those religious parties which compose our union; and we remove all possibility of difference as to the sort of knowledge to be diffused by confining our exertions, as a body, to the dispersion of that one Work, whose authority we all profess to venerate, and to which, as the very throne and circle of truth, we severally make our appeal."

"The result of union is more than a simple addition of those items which each could separately furnish; not only each individual does more, and does it better when aided by the stimulus of example and fellowship; but works may be undertaken, which, except by the force of numbers, it would have been physically impossible to effect."

"Nor is this all; great bodies have the power and tendency to multiply themselves faster than small. They attract more of the world's attention; they offer more to the eyes of men in a magnetic point, which cannot be overlooked, and with zeal whose contagion is irresistible."

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"Upwards of Two Millions and a half of Pounds Sterling have been collected and expended in publishing and distributing the Scriptures.

"Upwards of Eleven Millions of Bibles and Testaments have been printed and distributed. The Society has printed and distributed the Scriptures, wholly or partially, in one hundred and thirty six different languages and dialects.

"The American Bible Society, formed on the same plan, has distributed more than Two Millions and a half of Bibles and Testaments; and has now engaged in the great work about Nine Hundred Auxiliary and Two Thousand Branch Societies.

"Besides these there are Bible Societies in most parts of Europe. Of all these the British and Foreign Bible Society may be considered the Parent. And furthermore, those persons who retained conscientious scruples as to the comprehensive plan of our Society, felt that they could not be idle; and have instituted other associations, which are actively engaged, though on a smaller scale, in carrying on the great work.

"I shall not attempt to estimate the good that has been done; much we know; more, perhaps, we may not know; let not this trouble us—let us cast our bread upon the waters. We have the assurance of God himself 'that his word will not return unto him void.'"

"But we must never forget, that although much has been done, much remains to be done; although the Bible has been sent to tens of thousands and millions, there are tens of millions and hundreds of millions to whom the blessed truths of the Bible are yet unknown:—There are millions who have lost the knowledge of the one true God amid a multitude of false or evil deities; who bow down to stocks and stones; who propitiate their senseless idols with cruel and bloody sacrifices; who lose sight of their dying friends with no expectation of again beholding them; and who go down to the grave themselves in doubt and trembling ignorance, without light, without hope, without knowledge of a Saviour."

"Let us always, with hearts full of gratitude to the Author of all Good, remember how different our state is from theirs; and while, in our support of this Society, formed for the purpose of extending the light of God's truth to every creature, we are banded together in the unity of object, there is another unity which without any compromise of opinion we may and ought sedulously to cherish and cultivate,—the unity of CHRISTIAN CHARITY."

Moved by Rev. I. W. D. Gray, seconded by Capt. O'Halloran, of the 69th Regiment.

Resolved, That the remarkable success which has attended Bible Society operations abroad, and especially in France, through the means of those humble messengers, the Colporteurs, can for the most fervent expression of gratitude to the Divine Author of the Bible.

The Rev. Mr. Gray spoke as follows:—

Mr. President, Ladies and Gentlemen,—I have listened with great pleasure to the Report which has just been read to us, particularly that portion of it which relates to our domestic concerns. This, Sir, is new to me. The rest of it is not so. Having attended the annual meeting of the Parent Society, in May, I of course have had the general operations of the Society previously brought under my notice. Still I have had much satisfaction in hearing them recurred to this evening. They comprise a variety of delightful topics which will bear to be repeated again and again. It is impossible for the Christian to renew his reflections upon them, without finding fresh cause for rejoicing and thankfulness. And indeed, Ladies and Gentlemen, I shall have to presume upon this being the case, while speaking upon the Resolution, which the Committee have called upon me to move, this evening. I refer to the Foreign operations of the Parent Society. These you have already heard adverted to in the Report, and in the observations that have been made upon it. It will be necessary for me, however, to touch upon them again, in order to impress them upon your memories, and to do justice to the Resolution entrusted to me.

The Resolution speaks of two things—the success which has attended the operations of the Society, and the gratitude we owe to God for that success.

In reference to the first of these points, I fully agree with the terms of the Resolution.—The success of the Society has been very "remarkable." To prove this it might be sufficient to refer at once to the aggregate statement of their receipts and distributions, during the year. What has been the amount of their Receipts? No less a sum than £105,900 Sterling, being an excess of £8000 over the previous year. And what have their Issues amounted to? To 658,000, being an excess of no less than £3,600 over the previous year. Here, Sir, is an adequate proof of their successful operations.

But their success has extended over a large portion of the globe. It has not only been great in the aggregate, but widely diffused. The compilers of the General Report do not indeed represent their success to have been in every instance co-extensive with their efforts. With their usual caution they tell us of several exceptions. China, for example, is one of these exceptions. With regard to China, we cherished a few years since the most pleasing anticipations. Providence appeared to have opened a door for extensive circulation of the Scriptures amidst the population of that country. But now that door is, for a season, closed. The difficulties that have presented themselves have compelled the Society to withdraw their Agent from it. Yet even, with regard to China, Sir, a gleam of hope still dawns upon us. We are told that at Malacca, a country which is not indeed immediately in contact with the Chinese dominions, but still, I presume, connected with them by commercial transactions, there are, at present, six native Chinese Missionaries, men of zeal and piety and information, truly devoted to the cause of Christ, who are travelling through the interior of the country, and preaching the Gospel and disseminating the Scriptures. On their last excursion, they took with them 7000 volumes for distribution. This circumstance, Sir, appears to me to offer us some encouragement, even at

present, in regard to China.—Spain is another exception adverted to in the Report. From that country the Society have been compelled to withdraw two zealous Agents. But even here again, a ray of hope presents itself, for we find that the past efforts of the Society have kindled a flame in that country which opposition cannot extinguish; and such has been the demand for Bibles, that one of these Agents has been induced to return to the scene of labour. There is indeed, Sir, one country mentioned in the Report, over which an impenetrable cloud appears to hang, and where the impediments to circulating the Scriptures have of late been greatly augmented: and that is Italy. The Report says—"Every opportunity has been embraced of sending the Scriptures to Italy; but your committee grieve to say, in the words of an esteemed correspondent, difficulties and obstacles of every description increase in number and intensity every day." This is a fact, Sir, worthy of attentive consideration. It will be well for the friends of Bible circulation, to whatever denomination of Christians they belong, to note it in their memories.

But success, Sir, notwithstanding these exceptions, has widely attended their efforts. On our own Continent and the adjoining countries, much has been effected. In the West Indies we have some delightful proofs that the land so lately emancipated from temporal slavery, is beginning, through the instrumentality of Bible circulation, as well as Missionary exertions, to participate in the spiritual freedom of the Gospel. Among the French Roman Catholics in Canada, we find that the Bible is beginning to be welcomed. The Montreal Auxiliary has circulated more than 4000 copies in the past year. "Upon the cheerless coast of Labrador, we are told, the converts from Heathenism find the Word of God truly a lamp unto their feet and a light unto their path. It is the cherished inmate of their rude dwellings; the favorite companion of their peculiar journeys; the source of daily comfort and edification to them, while absent from their spiritual instructors; the greatest treasure which they carry with them into their remote huts, of the still less enduring snow-huts, which are occasionally their places of shelter."—But passing by a variety of interesting details that regard America, let us glance for a moment at what has been effected in Asia. The anniversary meeting at Calcutta was full of interest. "The Lord Bishop, we are told, presided, and advocated the cause of the Society with his usual ability. The Report contained details of operations which display a zeal and activity, equal if not surpassing the best days of the Bible Society in heathen India." At Madras, 50,000 copies of the Scriptures have been distributed, which is double the number that have been circulated in any previous year. But the important testimony in regard to that country, is summed up in a few emphatic words—"The people are prepared to receive the Word of God, and are disposed to hear it. Men of talent and learning are found ready to afford their aid in forming acceptable versions. Agents are not wanting to distribute wisely and judiciously. Missionaries are rising up on every side to explain the written word and enforce it on the conscience. Nothing is now required but a simultaneous effort on the part of those who possess the silver and the gold." Such is the testimony in regard to that country, and shall the silver and the gold be wanting, my friends, while the professed followers of Christ have them at their disposal?—Some gratifying intelligence is given us in regard to Africa. We hear of 5000 copies of the Scriptures being circulated in Egypt, and along the coast of the Mediterranean to Algiers and Morocco, of which more than 4000 have been sold. But it is in Europe that we are to look for the principal scene of the Society's operations. And what is the fact in regard to Europe? We are not authorized to say that every country in Europe is cordially receiving the Scriptures, for I have already pointed your attention to some exceptions that must be made upon this point. But we are warranted in asserting that all the different classes of Europe's inhabitants, that all the different denominations of men within its limits, whatever religion they may profess, are, in some part or other of their possessions, affording it a hearty welcome. It is received among the followers of Mahomet. More than 8000 copies have been circulated at Constantinople, Smyrna, and other places; circulated not gratuitously, but the sum of £739 stg. has been received in return for them. It is welcomed among the members of the Greek Church. The Agents of the British and Foreign Bible Society, as well as of the American Bible Society, are labouring with great success in Greece. "Learn for your joy (one of them remarks), that with the strength of God I have opened the way into the mountainous districts of the Peloponnesus, so that above 5000 copies of the Holy Scriptures will hereafter be distributed among Christians who have never before in their lives seen a translation of the Word of God. And I venture to say with certainty that they do not know what the words Old and New Testament mean." Similar exertions are making in other parts of the Greek Church. At Petersburg 11,000 copies of the Scriptures have been distributed, and we are told that there is an immediate demand for 80,000 Testaments to be circulated in Finland alone. In Germany too, where Neological doctrines have lately gained such a footing, where human reason has been exalted in opposition to Revelation, until the great fundamentals of revealed Religion have been explained away by an unhalloved criticism, the Bible is regaining its influence. The central Society at Frankfurt alone, has issued 48,000 copies of the Scriptures, 11,000 of which were for Roman Catholics, and members of the Greek Church, and 2000 for Jews and other denominations. But, Sir, it is in France that the most interesting scene of Bible circulation presents itself. And is it not a delightful reflection that such should be the case; that we can now take our stand in the midst of that country, which for so many years has been the centre, the stronghold, the garrison, the very citadel of Infidelity, and see on every hand springing up and flourishing around us, associations for disseminating the Scriptures? Yes, Sir, strange as it may appear, such is the case.

The Agent of this Society has distributed in the past year in that country, 121,000 copies of the Scriptures, being an increase of 31,000 over the preceding. From the single depot at Paris, in one month, more than 12,000 copies were issued; and this is entirely independent of the large circulation of the French Bible Society and the Evangelical Society, which are formed for the same express object. And it is worthy of attention that the greater part of these distributions has been among the Roman Catholic population of that country, and to shew the value they attach to these books, the important fact is noted, that "they are not given away, but sold at a gradually increasing price." It appears, Sir, that out of 84 departments, into which France is divided, 52 are now visited and blessed by the Agents of this Society, and the remaining departments, it is hoped, will be brought under the same influence in the course of the ensuing year.

But the question here presents itself, what are the apparent effects of this distribution of the Scriptures? What are the present results of it? Some persons are in the habit of telling us, there is no utility in all these efforts; that the Bible thus circulated will do no good, without Missionaries or commentaries to expound it, that it will be laid upon the shelf and left to moulder in oblivion. But, Sir, we have the refutation at hand. The Report before us this year affords demonstrative proof of the contrary. We find there most interesting details of its powerful and blessed effects. In some parts, as in Greece, it has given rise to warm discussions upon vitally important subjects, respecting the paramount authority of the Scriptures as the rule of faith. In other places it has been attended with opposition, which has been overruled to increase the circulation, and called into exercise the patience and fortitude of believers. In others, it has been found that numerous conversions have followed the reading of it; conversions, Sir, not merely from one creed to another, not merely from one class of professed Christians to another, but "from darkness to light, from sin to holiness, and from the power of Satan unto God." In answer to Mr. De Fressence, the Society's agent in France, he remarks, "The Colporteurs not only serve to convey the Bible into places, where without them it would not have arrived, at least so soon; but also, in the hands of God, they are the instruments of very numerous conversions to the Divine doctrines of the Book of life." In another, speaking of two of the Colporteurs, he remarks, "their simple addresses were so much blessed by the Lord, that ten persons were induced to read the sacred volume, and to the glory of God be it said, the perusal has been made instrumental to their conversion. This is a delightful proof of the efficacy of the Holy Scriptures." Yes, Sir, it is indeed a delightful proof of that efficacy, and were it not for the fear of detaining the meeting too long, I could appeal to many other proofs of it, from the same Report.

And it is instructive to mark the instrumentality by which God is effecting these important results. In some instances it is the Rich and Powerful. We have mentioned made of the King and Queen of Wurtemberg; of the late venerable Landgrave of Hesse; and of a Gentleman, Sir, whom you as well as others in this community, remember with feelings of regard. I refer to Lieut. Col. Gawler, who during his residence in this Province, was respected, not only as an officer in the British army, but as a soldier of Christ, and who has gone to his new Government in South Australia, laden with Bibles, to disseminate among the subjects of that rising colony. But, in general, Sir, it has been "the poor of this world," that have been the chosen instruments of this beneficial effect. The Colporteurs, who are employed in circulating the Scriptures in France and in other parts of Europe, are indeed humble instruments, they are taken from the lower walks of life, but they are patient and persevering instruments, they are highly honoured and successful instruments—after commenting in beautiful terms upon the faith and zeal and devotedness and wisdom and prudence, by which they are distinguished, Mr. De Fressence remarks—"Nor is it a degree of vain glory which leads these our agents to embrace the calling of a Colporteur, for they are all Christian men, who have emanated it may be from some ignorant little village, with no other idea than that of prosecuting their work, never dreaming of being mentioned in a printed Report. Only let the Word of God, the Gospel of my Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ be disseminated received and believed, and I care for nothing else, is the language of one of my Colporteurs, in which his fellow-workers would cheerfully join, for it is the same spring of action which arouses all these humble servants of the Lord."

So true is it, Sir, that "God has chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise, and weak things of the world to confound the mighty, and base things of the world, and things which are despised, has God chosen, to bring to nought things that are." And why? To teach us that "no flesh should glory in his presence;" that is, that none should glory in an arm of flesh, but that all should glory in the arm of God.

And hence we see the propriety of the concluding words of the resolution before us, which call upon us while tracing the useful labours of these humble instruments, to offer a fervent expression of gratitude to God. This, Sir, is undoubtedly our bounden duty upon such an occasion. For any temporal blessing upon ourselves or others, we who are miserable and fallen sinners, without any claim whatever upon the bounty of heaven, owe our thanksgivings to the author of our happiness; how much more then for blessings which elevate the soul to God, and make us happy in Eternity! And we are it only a single society of a single individual that had received these spiritual mercies, that should call forth our warm expressions of gratitude. How much more then, when it is not a single individual, or a single society, or a single nation, or a single quarter of the world, but the World itself, almost every nation and kindred and tongue and people under heaven? We should be grateful, Sir, for the powerful encouragement thus afforded us to go forward in this cause. We see abundant proofs that God

is with us. We see the agency of this Society, opposition it meets with, the important results, to carry the Gospel to the ends of the earth, lay the foundation for the millennial glory of his Church. And seeing all this, shall we withhold our grateful acknowledgements, or stay our hands from supporting this Institution? No, Sir! we will bless God for its establishment, bless Him for its increase, bless Him for its preservation and usefulness, and pray Him to enrich and extend it, till every nation and every tribe and every family and every individual of our species shall possess the treasure of God's Word.

Objections, Sir, to this Society, I often hear, but the simple statement of its operation is the best answer to them all. They tell me the machinery is imperfect. I say, look how it moves. They tell me it is useless. I say, look at its effects. They tell me we must send out Missionaries. Sir, I agree to the proposal. We ought to send out Missionaries, and to send in far greater numbers than we ever yet have done. We cannot however send them, unless God disposes their hearts to go. Most sincerely do I pray that He who has at his disposal the hearts of all, may prepare many for this arduous work, and incline their hearts to enter upon it. But in the mean time, send them the Bible. Send them the Missionary that is at all times prepared for the world. Send them the Missionary that can encounter all climates without injury to the constitution, that can tread the burning sands of Africa without being scorched, and traverse the Polar snows without being congealed. Send them the Missionary that now speaks all languages of the earth, and speaks them with effect, because it speaks to the heart and speaks with the power of God. Send them the Missionary that can associate with every form of human government, without interfering with the political rights of any; associate with the limited Monarchy of France, the Imperial power of Russia, and the Republican Institutions of Greece and America. Send them the Missionary, that without ceding one principle of truth, can wend its way among the people of all religions, telling the Pagan to renounce his idols; the Mahomedan to give up his false Prophet and his Koran; the Jew to turn to the despised Messiah; the Greek to relinquish his Images; the Roman to trust in the only Mediator; ave, and the Protestant, not to think it sufficient to protest against error, but to embrace and exemplify "the truth as it is in Jesus." Send them, I say, the Missionary, that can thus traverse the length and breadth of this fallen world, speaking to every class of men, the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth; that can do all this, without ceding one essential principle, or renouncing one valuable principle, but remaining, like his glorious Author, unchangeable and unchangeable, "the same yesterday, to-day, and forever."

May God, Sir, bless the Institution that sends forth such a Missionary! May the people of this community, and the people of our nation universally, be willing to contribute their labour, their money, and their prayers, for the promotion of this exalted object!

Capt. O'Halloran, 69th Regt. in seconding the Resolution, said:—

Sir,—In giving my support to the resolution of the eminently pious and eminently talented gentleman, who has just preceded me, permit me in palliation of what may appear forwardness, to remark, that I would gladly have avoided the conspicuous position of a speaker, feeling in all humility, how little my profession and habits as a Soldier qualify me for such a task, and being loth to occupy a place that might be so much more advantageously filled by another; but it has been requested of me as a favour, that I would consent to take an active part in this night's proceedings, and having sincerely at heart the furtherance of the object for which we are met, and relying upon His blessing whose strength is made perfect in weakness, (and whose servant I feel it a great privilege to be permitted thus publicly to avow myself,) I have ventured upon these grounds and considerations to meet the wishes of the Committee, and it only remains for me to add, that the few observations which I have to offer, will apply rather to the general question of the diffusion of the Gospel, and our obligation as professing Christians to take a lively interest in the work, than to the particular resolution, which it has devolved upon me to have the honor of seconding, and which has been so eloquently, feelingly, and fully considered by the Rev. Mr. Gray.

Christianity, Sir, in all ages, has called her professors to a state of active services. The important and instructive admonition, "Give an account of thy stewardship," cannot be too frequently in our thoughts; and it must not be lost sight of, that the more exalted and influential our station in society, the more eminent our abilities, and affluent our fortunes, there will undoubtedly attach to us a corresponding degree of responsibility for the application we make of these our respective talents, as instruments of usefulness in promoting the glory of God. Honored indeed, and privileged above their fellow-men should they account themselves, who are permitted to be fellow-workers with the Lord Himself in the advancement of his Kingdom. For such a purpose, Sir, such a rational, exalted and holy station are we this night assembled, and it is earnest prayer that He who disposes the hearts of men as it pleases him, will so dispose our hearts to his service, not in glowing words and unprofitable assertions, but in silent, grateful, effectual deeds, that the funds collected on the present occasion, may give new vigour to the exertions of this benevolent Society, and furnish an example worthy of imitation to our Christian Brethren in other parts of New Brunswick and the Sister Province.

We are met, Sir, to advance His sacred