



BIBLE SOCIETY RECORD,

CONTAINING

CORRESPONDENCE, RECEIPTS, ETC., OF THE AMERICAN BIBLE SOCIETY.

“THY WORD IS A LAMP UNTO MY FEET, AND A LIGHT UNTO MY PATH.”

VOL. II.

NEW YORK, MAY, 1857.

NO. 5.

From the *Christian Observer*, London, March, 1857.

The Knowledge of the Heart in the Study of the Bible.

The connexion between the study of the Scriptures and the knowledge of the heart is of a double kind; for it is a knowledge which that study may be said both to impart and to require. And first I will speak of it as *taught* in those holy pages.

Whatever teaching of this kind it is competent to a book to give, this the Bible affords as no other book can do. “Put me,” says Cecil, “into the deepest dungeon, and give me a Bible and a candle, and I will tell you all that is going on in the world.” He felt, and felt truly, that man is so perfectly depicted there in his motives and his movements, his inward and his outward life, that, making allowance for the difference of names and circumstances, the world presents only a reproduction of the characters, and a repetition of the transactions, which pass before us in the Scriptures. Let us observe with thankfulness the adorable wisdom of God in this characteristic of his Word. It was intended to communicate to man the mind of God, and to embody that communication in a written record. Who could have anticipated the form into which it has been cast? We might have imagined that the revelation would have been brought direct from heaven, passing through some few selected channels, and those as pure as might be from the contamination of earthly passions, and as separate as might be from the coarse strife and common circumstances of the world. It might have been preached by angels, and indited by holy recluses. But, in fact, the revelation was born and grew up in the heart of the crowd. The words were not spoken in secret, and the deeds were not done in a corner. The writers were men of movement and action—rulers, warriors, kings, founders or restorers of nations; or if not clothed with secular office, still living in closest contact with the events of their successive ages, keen observers of the spirit, and sorrowful descanters upon the state of the world. While conducting the Lord’s con-

troversy, they encountered all forms of human error, and stood as opponents of mankind. The sterner prophets felt what the more tender uttered: “Woe is me, my mother, that thou hast borne me a man of strife and a man of contention to the whole earth!” (Jer. 15: 10.)

Nowhere in these pages are we in the region of abstractions; but every where in contact with real events and living characters. It is obvious to remark how large a portion consists of actual history, and how wonderfully that history accomplishes the revealing of men’s hearts by the biographical character which it continually assumes. Even in compositions of another kind we have still the historic tinge. We catch glimpses of the passing occasions to which the greatest prophecies attach themselves, and of the state of mind to which they were originally addressed; and perceive that the song of the Psalmist glows with the reflection of a history which is itself unseen. In the New Testament, the Son of God moves through the throng of human characters; and in the Epistles we perceive the circumstances which drew them forth, the living errors at which they were aimed, and the various states of mind which awoke the anxieties or the thanksgivings of the keenly observant writers. Thus it comes to pass, that we have in this book, not only the mind of God, but the mind of God in its collision with the mind of man; not only Divine truth, but Divine truth in its controversy with human error; not only a revelation from heaven, but a revelation fighting its way through all the oppositions which it meets in the state of human society and the condition of the human heart.

These combined disclosures of God and of man have a reciprocal effect upon each other. Each throws out the other into fuller light. It is plain that the revelation of the human heart brings out the necessity, the suitability, and the living power of the Word as no verbal statements could have done. It is no less plain, that it is the revelation of the mind of God, present through the whole volume, and increasing in clearness from its begin-

free subscriptions, £184 was from Quebec, and £84 from country branches. The progress of the Quebec Auxiliary must be very gratifying to the friends of the Bible Cause in that district, and we trust that future years will witness still greater success. Efforts to establish branches in country settlements, and to supply every family with the Word of the Living God, are highly important, and will, we trust, be persevered in.—*Montreal Witness.*

An interesting Incident.

The Rev. F. R. Goulding, writing to the Southern Presbyterian from Darien, Georgia, says :

Early in January it was my privilege to hold a very interesting sacramental meeting at the almost extinct church at Harris' Neck, where we received twenty-two coloured members, fruits of the faithful labours of Joseph Williams, a licensed coloured preacher in connexion with the Presbyterian Church. One of the most interesting incidents, connected with this last meeting, was a conversation I held with a negro, who has been confined to his bed for the last thirty years. He seems to be a man of unusual attainments in grace. Shortly after his affliction he was taught to read; and from that time until about three years since the Bible has been his chosen companion. The well-worn volume is still kept within arm's reach; but, alas for poor Lancaster! his eyes can no longer discern its much loved lines—he is blind. You may judge of the nature of the hour's conversation I had with him from the following specimen :

Said I, "Lancaster, it must be a very great trial to you to be confined to your bed for thirty years, and now to be deprived of your sight." "Yes, sir," he replied, in a low, sweet voice; uttering his words very slowly, and with expressive eloquence, "it is hard, and it sometimes troubles me to think of it. But it is the Lord's work, it must be good; and I try to look upon it not only with fortitude, but with gratitude too. He has said, 'Let not your heart be troubled; ye believe in God, believe also in me;'" and so he went on, with a recitative superior to that of two thirds of the ministers of our, or any other Church, that I have ever heard, to quote about half the fourteenth chapter of John. I left him convinced that Lancaster was the happiest man I had met for many a day, and wishing that I had lived as near heaven as he appeared to be.

His language I have quoted nearly word for word, and I understand that he was almost equally well acquainted with all parts of the Scripture.

Arkansas.

From a recent Report of Rev. A. Hunter, Agent.

In taking a view of the whole ground you will discover that we labour under many difficulties in many portions of this field, on account of the obstacles in the way of getting books. In many places we have to get the supply just at a certain time, or we fail to get them at all that year. In other places the books have to be hauled from one hundred to two hundred miles, the consequence is that the expense is considerable, and it falls on those societies least able to bear it. To obviate some of the difficulties, I have induced some of the stronger societies to order large supplies, so that, if necessary, the societies in the back country might procure books without delay. This has been done by the

Camden, Little Rock, and Washington societies, so that during this season there will be more Bibles in South Arkansas than ever before. I think the good Cause is gaining rapidly. The auxiliaries in my field all approve of the purpose of the Parent Society to resupply the whole country, and God in his providence is raising up pious men to engage in the work. But a few days since one of my neighbours came, asking if I had not something for him to do. I told him I was very much in need of some one to engage as a distributor of the Bible in the county. Said he, "I feel that I am not doing enough—that is the very thing, for when we are distributing the Word of God, we know we are sowing good seed." This brother is a local preacher in the Methodist Episcopal Church South, a man of considerable property, and I felt reproved for my want of faith, when he came voluntarily, soliciting something more to do in the Master's Cause. I had been praying that God would put it into the heart of some one, but when my mind settled on him, the conclusion always was, "He is too rich, and would think it too small a business." Yet so it is. "Where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty." This brother has more time than almost any one else, and is as able as any one else to make the sacrifices necessary to the undertaking. He will be in the field in a few weeks. "Have faith in God." I start in a few days to try to engage a brother to canvass Hot Spring County. I hope I shall succeed. At least I shall not fail to ask him, and to urge it upon him. I hope during this present summer to see at least one dozen active men in the field, scattering the precious Volume of God's inspiration among the destitute. When I look at the improvement made in the Bible work in South Arkansas in the space of two and a half years, I am constrained to say, "What hath God wrought?" "God gave the increase;" to his name be the praise. Let us thank him, "and take courage."

As ever, yours,
ANDREW HUNTER,
Agent-American Bible Society, South Arkansas.

South Africa.

We have recently received the Tenth Report of the South African Auxiliary Bible Society, and give from it an extract in relation to a contemplated project for an extensive preparation and supply of the Scriptures to the African tribes. Our American missionaries among the Zulus refer to the same movement.

Your committee, anticipating the sanction of the Committee of the Parent Society, which has since been obtained, undertook the responsibility of complying with the above urgent application, and the work will be executed at the Parent Society's expense. It would have been already completed, had not an unexpected delay occurred in getting the sheets conveyed to Cape Town.

Your committee have now to state that, in accordance with a suggestion thrown out in last year's report, they have given much attention to an important subject therein referred to, viz.; the best means of providing the native tribes of South Africa, and especially those of Kaffraria, with a good and cheap translation of the Word of God in their own language. It may be proper to remind you that so early as the year 1853 an inquiry was