

THE OPERATIONS IN THE OREGON COUNTRY OF THE AMERICAN BIBLE SOCIETY AND THE AMERICAN TRACT SOCIETY BEFORE THE CIVIL WAR

As the first four decades of the nineteenth century saw the rise in Europe and in America of numerous missionary bodies, so they witnessed also the formation on either side of the Atlantic of Bible and Tract societies whose activities are essential to a proper understanding of the modern missionary movement. Such organizations are in the true sense missionary bodies. Dedicated to the task of disseminating the Bible or portions thereof, or of scattering broadcast literature of a religious tenor, such societies are essential parts of the foundation upon which the entire superstructure of Protestant missionary effort is built. Whether facilities for printing the Bible in divers languages be considered; whether grants of money or of literature to missionaries on their several fields of labor be held in view; whether the visits of traveling agents or of colporteurs to regions whose inhabitants are destitute alike of religious instruction and of religious literature be called to mind; whatever be the point of approach to this subject, the operations of Bible and of Tract societies cannot otherwise be regarded than as of the essence of missionary labors. Such bodies, moreover, unlike societies whose chief aim is to make converts and to gather these into particular churches, help to prepare the way for the submergence of denominational differences in a comprehensive program of evangelization. To covenant on one hand to encourage a wider circulation of an accepted version of the Bible, "without note or comment," and on the other "to diffuse a knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ as the Redeemer of sinners, and to promote the interests of vital godliness and sound morality, by the circulation of Religious Tracts, calculated to receive the approbation of all Evangelical Christians," is to state a program for the realization of which Christians of whatever Protestant denomination can strive in unison.¹ Under such covenants were brought into being the American Bible Society, formed in New York in 1816, and the American Tract Society, instituted in New York in 1825.

These societies, products of a missionary revival which began in Great Britain about the close of the eighteenth century and

¹ See the constitution of the American Bible Society in W. P. Strickland, *History of the American Bible Society, From its Organization to the Present Time*, (New York, 1849), p. 31. The constitution of the American Tract Society is published in the *Society's First Annual Report*, 1826, pp. 5-6.

soon thereafter got under way in the New World, were actively engaged in both domestic and foreign missionary operations before the Oregon Country had been entered as a field of labor by any missionary society. National in organization, their outlook was interdenominational and international; their field of operations was the world. Gathering inspiration from the successes of their parent societies, the British and Foreign Bible Society and the Religious Tract Society of London, with which they ever maintained friendly relations, their operations steadily grew larger as their means of support increased. In America the ever-extending frontiers opened fields of labor of particular importance to all who believed, as the Protestant religious community of the Eastern States generally believed, that the cornerstone of the Republic was the Protestant faith. Foreseeing a shifting of the balance of political power as the colonization of the Valley of the Mississippi proceeded with giant strides, the East became vitally concerned that the nascent society in the Great West should repose on the solid foundation of good morals and true religion; in other words, that it should be Protestant. Patriotism thus sharpened the edge of philanthropy. To arrest the spread of infidelity and of "popery" in the Mississippi Valley was believed essential, as many a contemporaneous Protestant utterance attests, to make democracy safe for the Republic.^{1a} In the general concern of the East for the salvation of the West, the directors and the patrons of the American Bible Society and of the American Tract Society participated. And their anxiety for the West extended, to a greater or less degree, to the religiously destitute in whatever part of America they might be.² These societies were in truth "home missionary" societies, and any view of the American home missionary movements which excludes their domestic operations is as incomplete as would be a view which excluded the operations of the American Home Missionary Society. Yet the American Bible Society and the American Tract Society, as we have observed, were not restricted to the home field. They were foreign at the same time that they were domestic missionary societies. In their programs the objects of both domestic and foreign missionary

^{1a} See, as examples, American Home Missionary Society, *Sixteenth Report*, 1842, p. 99; Ladies' Society for the Promotion of Education at the West, *First Report*, 1847, pp. 29-34, 35-37; *The Foreign Missionary Chronicle* (October, 1843), vol. xi, pp. 313-314; Colin B. Goodykoontz, "Protestant Home Missions and Education in the Trans-Mississippi West, 1835-1860," in *The Trans-Mississippi West* (Boulder, Col., 1930), p. 69.

² As early as 1829 the American Bible Society resolved to attempt to make an offer of a copy of the Bible to every destitute household in the United States, "within the space of two years." American Bible Society, *Thirteenth Annual Report*, 1829, in the reprinted *Annual Reports* (New York, 1838), Vol. I, p. 442. In 1832 the American Tract Society adopted a resolution expressing the intention of the Society to "proceed immediately to the work of supplying systematically the entire population of our country with Tracts, . . ." American Tract Society, *Seventh Annual Report*, 1832, p. 4.

societies merged. When their first systematic efforts to supply the inhabitants of the United States with Bibles and religious tracts were well under way, their attention turned as of course toward "providential openings" in foreign and pagan lands. In 1833 the American Bible Society seriously considered a proposal to supply, in co-operation with other national Bible societies, the Bible to all the inhabitants of the earth, accessible to Bible agents, *within a given time*.³ Nor was the American Tract Society at this time less concerned in extending the light of "true religion" to the millions "sitting in darkness" on heathern shores.⁴

When, by the migration thither of American settlers in the 1840's, the serious notice of American philanthropy was for the second time drawn to the Pacific Northwest,⁵ the American Bible Society and the American Tract Society were quite prepared to begin systematic operations beyond the Rockies. That their activities should have followed hard upon the heels of Oregon immigrants is not surprising. Their aspiration to enter every accessible field had been clearly stated and was well understood; their experience acquired both in domestic and foreign operations was large and varied; their business organizations had been tested by and had withstood the severe economic depression of 1837 and of the years immediately following. They had, moreover, even before 1840, as presently we shall see, come into slight relation with the Pacific Northwest as a field of foreign missionary enterprise. As the Oregon Trail with the passing years became increasingly important as a highway to the Far Northwest, the special motives which underlay Protestant missionary efforts in the Mississippi Valley became motives prompting an extension of such efforts westward of the Rocky Mountains. Should infidelity and popery be permitted to blight in its infancy the American society that was forming in the Valley of the Columbia? was a question of no little interest, both to the handful of Protestant missionaries in Oregon and to the Protestant religious community in the East. What many persons undoubtedly were thinking, the Reverend David Greene, one of the secretaries to the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions, expressed in 1846 in this question to a secretary to the American Home Missionary Society: "Why not keep up with the adversary, at least, and not give him time to pre-occupy the ground and fortify himself, and give us all the trouble of dislodging him?" This query was inspired by an "earnest

3 A.B.S., *Annual Reports*, Vol. I, p. 654.

4 A.T.S., *Seventh Annual Report*, 1832, p. 4, and *Tenth Annual Report*, 1835, p. 6.

5 In the 1830's the benevolent spirit of America was stirred in behalf of the Indians in the Pacific Northwest.

appeal" from Dr. Marcus Whitman for home missionaries for Oregon.⁶ On the same day that he had asked this question the Reverend Mr. Greene, again acting on a request from Dr. Whitman, applied to the American Bible Society and to the American Tract Society for grants of Bibles, Testaments, and tracts for settlers in the Oregon Country.⁷ The promptness of the responses to this appeal indicates that the subject was not new to the directing agencies of these National Societies. To them the question in 1846 was not whether to enter this Far Western field, but whether to continue and enlarge a work already begun. The decision of each Society, as the sequel will show, was to press forward. To describe the operations in the Pacific Northwest of these two Societies in the years before the Civil War is the purpose of this paper.

Although the Oregon Country before the settlement, in 1846, of the Northwestern Boundary Question was more properly a field for American foreign than for American domestic missionary enterprise, the distinction, in respect of the operations of the American Bible Society and of the American Tract Society, was not important. Neither was confined by the terms of a charter to either one or the other type of endeavor. With missionaries of the Methodist Church and of the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions, as well as with independent missionaries and with Christian laymen, both Societies were free to cooperate, either for the benefit of the Oregon Indians or for the well-being of others then residing in the Far Northwest.

At least two appropriations for Oregon were made by the American Bible Society before 1840. The first of these was reported in 1833. Consisting of sixty-seven English Bibles, 150 English Testaments, five French Bibles, and three Spanish Bibles, it was entrusted to James A. Foster for gratuitous distribution.⁸ Five years later an appropriation to the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions for distribution among the "Flat Head Indians" was reported. This was a donation of eighteen English Bibles, thirty-six English Testaments, and six French Testaments.⁹

⁶ David Greene to the Reverend Milton Badger, March 27, 1846, in American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions, *Domestic Letter Book*, No. 23, pp. 356-357. The attitude of the American Home Missionary Society to this question was publicly expressed in the following statement: "More than once, request[s] for missionaries to Oregon have been made to the Committee; and they have resolved to send at least two, as pioneers, at the earliest practicable moment." A.H.M.S., *Twentieth Report*, 1846, p. 100.

⁷ David Greene to the Reverend J. C. Brigham, corresponding secretary to the American Bible Society, March 27, 1846, in A.B.C.F.M., *Domestic Letter Book*, No. 23, pp. 352-353; David Greene to the Reverend W. A. Hallock, secretary to the American Tract Society, March 27, 1846, *loc. cit.*, pp. 354-355.

⁸ A.B.S., *Annual Reports*, Vol. 1, p. 660.

Beginning with the year 1844, the *Annual Reports* of this Society disclose a record of continuous operations in the Oregon Country. Two grants, reported in 1844, one to the Missionary Society of the Methodist Episcopal Church of 100 Bibles and 100 Testaments for Oregon, the other to the Reverend John S. Griffin of twenty-five Bibles and fifty Testaments,¹⁰ were followed by an appropriation, reported in 1845, to the Methodist Missionary Society of 100 Bibles and 200 Testaments.¹¹ In the appropriations reported in 1846, the result of the appeal of the Reverend David Greene, already mentioned, is clearly to be observed:

"To the Rev. Tho's Griffin [J. S. Griffin], an independent Missionary in the Oregon Territory, have been granted, on request, 25 Bibles and 100 Testaments.

"To the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions, for Missionaries in the same Territory, have been granted 175 Bibles and 160 Testaments.

"To the Methodist Episcopal Missionary Society, for the same Territory, have been granted 375 Bibles and 375 Testaments. (These two latter grants have been made since 1st of April.)"¹²

Strangely enough, the full result of Mr. Greene's appeal is not revealed in the foregoing quotation, which omits mention of an appropriation Greene had requested, and the management of the Society had approved, to be entrusted to the Reverend Harvey Clark, an independent missionary in Oregon. Since Greene's letter to Clark, apprising the latter of the grant to him, discloses the low prices for which Bibles and Testaments were then sold by the American Bible Society, an extensive extract therefrom is herewith reproduced:

"In compliance with the request of Dr. Whitman made in your behalf, I have applied to the Am. Bible Soc. and have obtained for you the following books—

4 Quarto Bibles	\$2.12½ each	\$ 8.50
8 Royal Octavos	1.50	12.00
36 Octavos sm[all] pica	.87½	31.50
50 Bourgeois	.75	37.50
150 Minion	.45	67.50
20 Testmts & Psalms	.50	10.00
20 Pica Tests.	.40	8.00
175 Brevier Tests.	.18¾	32.81
Packing		2.61

\$210.42

"These you are to sell or give away, at your discretion, as I understand, though the letter from the Bible Society's agent says nothing on this subject. What you sell it will be proper to account for to the society, which you can do through Dr. Whitman. These Bibles go to you in two boxes, by way of the Sandwich Islands. A grant has also been made to Dr. Whitman, and also to the Methodist Mission."¹³

Grants of the American Bible Society for emigrants, as reported in 1847, included one to the Jackson County Bible Society of Mississippi, of 200 Bibles and 200 Testaments "for those about to emigrate to Oregon and California," and another of 300 Bibles and 400 Testaments to the Missionary Society of the Methodist Episcopal Church for distribution under the direction of the Reverend William Roberts, superintendent of the Oregon Methodist Mission.¹⁴ Of the benefits derived from the last-named grant, the following report was made:

"The box of Bibles and Testaments given to the Methodist missionary society, and sent by said society to Oregon, was a blessing to the immigrants to that distant land. They were received by these adventurers on the shores of the Pacific, with great thankfulness. Many of these immigrants had lost their Bibles in the rivers, on the way over the mountains; and to find the American Bible Society there with a timely supply of Bibles, was an unexpected and an exceedingly pleasurable event."¹⁵

Between 1848 and 1856 the records of the National Bible Society show several appropriations of Bibles and Testaments for Oregon. In 1848, and again in 1849, there was an "Oregon" grant to the American Home Missionary Society.¹⁶ Also reported in 1849 was an appropriation of seventy-five Bibles and 112 Testaments, granted on the request of the Honorable J. Quinn Thornton for distribution by him in Oregon Territory.^{16a} In March, 1851, there were appropriated to the Reverend Dr. Richmond, for disposal in Oregon, twelve Bibles in various languages.¹⁷ Two years later the *Annual Report* mentions a donation for Oregon of \$300 from the Pennsylvania Bible Society, and, among the specific grants of Bibles and Testaments, one of 104 Bibles to the Rev-

⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 945.

¹⁰ A.B.S., *Twenty-Eighth Annual Report*, 1844, p. 28.

¹¹ A.B.S., *Twenty-Ninth Annual Report*, 1845, p. 66.

¹² A.B.S., *Thirtieth Annual Report*, 1846, p. 59.

¹³ David Greene to Harvey Clark, April 16, 1846, in A.B.C.F.M., *Indian Letter Book*, No. 9, p. 177.

¹⁴ A.B.S., *Thirty-First Annual Report*, 1847, pp. 60, 61.

¹⁵ A.B.S., *Thirty-Second Annual Report*, 1848, p. 67.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 67; A.B.S., *Thirty-Third Annual Report*, 1849, p. 69.

^{16a} A.B.S., *Thirty-Third Annual Report*, 1849, p. 72.

¹⁷ A.B.S., *Thirty-Fifth Annual Report*, 1851, p. 87.

erend George H. Atkinson for two schools in Oregon, and another of fifty Bibles and 200 Testaments to John McCoy, of Independence, Missouri, for emigrants bound to California and Oregon.¹⁸ For the year ending in 1856 two appropriations were made for Oregon: one of 600 Bibles and Testaments to the Missionary Society of the Methodist Church; the other, consisting of 200 Bibles and Testaments, to "Miss Warner, for distribution at Eugene City."¹⁹

Meanwhile, some of the settlers in Oregon had begun to form local Bible societies to facilitate, by alliance with the National Society, the furnishing of Bibles and Testaments to the inhabitants of the territory. In May, 1848, there was organized in Oregon City the pioneer Bible society of the Pacific Coast.²⁰ This was recognized as an auxiliary by the American Bible Society in May, 1850.²¹ To one acquainted with the early history of the Oregon Country, the influence of the Methodists in the formation of this auxiliary will be perceived. Its first officers consisted of the Reverend David Leslie, president; the Reverend William Roberts, corresponding secretary; and George Abernethy, treasurer;²² all of whom had been associated with the Methodist Mission established by Jason Lee in the Willamette Valley in 1834. The Oregon City Bible Society eventually became the Territorial Society, and was assigned the duty of importing most of the Bibles for Oregon.²³ After the admission of Oregon to statehood, in 1859, it became the Oregon State Bible Society, to which, in 1861, ten Bible societies in Oregon were said to be auxiliary.²⁴

Between May, 1850, and March, 1858, five other Oregon Bible societies were recognized as auxiliaries by the American Bible Society. Among the officers of these societies will be recognized the names of several persons more or less prominent in the early history of the Pacific Northwest. The Clatsop County Bible Society, recognized in August, 1851, had for its first officers the Reverend Jas. O. Rayner, president; W. H. Gray, corresponding secretary; and Col. Jas. Taylor, treasurer.²⁵ The Washington County Bible Society was recognized in March, 1855, with the

18 A.B.S., *Thirty-Seventh Annual Report*, 1853, pp. 99, 100, 288.

19 A.B.S., *Fortieth Annual Report*, 1856, pp. 44, 45.

20 This assertion is made on the authority of the Reverend William Roberts. A.B.S., *Forty-Fourth Annual Report*, 1860, p. 99. It is proper, however, to observe that the California Bible Society was recognized as an auxiliary to the American Bible Society in January, 1850, whereas such recognition was not accorded to the Oregon City society until May of that year. *Ibid.*, p. 333.

21 A.B.S., *Thirty-Fifth Annual Report*, 1851, p. 174.

22 A.B.S., *Thirty-Sixth Annual Report*, 1852, p. 175.

23 A.B.S., *Forty-Third Annual Report*, 1859, p. 92.

24 A.B.S., *Forty-Fifth Annual Report*, 1861, p. 79.

25 A.B.S., *Thirty-Sixth Annual Report*, 1852, p. 175.

following officers: the Reverend Cushing Eells, president; the Reverend P. G. Buchanan, corresponding secretary; and Matthew Patten, treasurer.²⁶ The first officers of the Marion County Bible Society, which was recognized in June, 1855, consisted of the Reverend O. Dickinson, president; George Jones, corresponding secretary; and "Mr. Cook," treasurer.²⁷ Recognized as an auxiliary in September, 1855, the Umpqua Valley Bible Society had for its first officers the Reverend James H. Wilbur, president; A. R. Flint, corresponding secretary; and W. Jenkins, treasurer.²⁸ Sixth and last of the Oregon auxiliaries formed within the period of our study was the Jackson County Bible Society, recognized as an auxiliary in March, 1858, with officers as follows: the Reverend M. N. Stearns, president, and William Hoffman, corresponding secretary and treasurer.²⁹

To March 31, 1861, these six societies had sent to the American Bible Society, in payment for Bibles and Testaments, the sum of \$6,397.22.³⁰

North of the Columbia River, in the Territory of Washington, two auxiliary Bible societies were formed between the years 1854 and 1857. The first of these, the Puget Sound Bible Society, was recognized as an auxiliary to the National Society in August, 1854. Its first officers were the Reverend J. F. Devore, president; H. C. Wilson, corresponding secretary; and William D. Van Buren, treasurer.³¹ By 1858 Colonel Silas Casey, commanding the United States troops at Fort Steilacoom, had become president of this society.³² The second of these two organizations, the Cowlitz County Bible Society, was formed in May, 1857, and recognized as an auxiliary in August of that year. Its first officers were A. S. Abernethy, president, and Alex Crawford, corresponding secretary and treasurer.³³

Between 1858 and 1861 the Puget Sound Bible Society sent to the Parent Society, in payment for Bibles and Testaments, the sum of \$526.47.³⁴ During these years there was a remittance of \$15 from the Cowlitz County Society and a donation of \$25.³⁵

Since the American Bible Society relied principally upon its auxiliaries for purposes of distribution, the formation of auxiliary societies in Oregon and in Washington marked a long step for-

26 A.B.S., *Thirty-Ninth Annual Report*, 1855, p. 168.

27 A.B.S., *Fortieth Annual Report*, 1856, p. 170.

28 *Ibid.*, p. 170.

29 A.B.S., *Forty-Second Annual Report*, 1858, p. 159.

30 A.B.S., *Forty-Fifth Annual Report*, 1861 (Appendix), p. 25.

31 A.B.S., *Thirty-Ninth Annual Report*, 1855, p. 169.

32 A.B.S., *Forty-Second Annual Report*, 1858, p. 159.

33 *Ibid.*, p. 159; A.B.S., *Forty-Fourth Annual Report*, 1860, p. 100.

34 A.B.S., *Forty-Fifth Annual Report*, 1861 (Appendix), p. 25.

35 *Ibid.*, p. 25.

ward in the futherance of its objects in the Pacific Northwest. Broadly stated, the duties of these local societies were to raise money, to obtain Bibles and Testaments from the Parent Society, and to see to the distribution of these books, by sale or by gift, within their several areas of operation. To facilitate its operations each society had need of one or more depositories. Aggressive societies, the better to learn the wants and to supply the needs of the inhabitants of the several spheres of jurisdiction, sometimes engaged colporteurs to explore the settlements and to distribute Bibles. In the late 1850's, as the result of the adoption by the National Society in 1856 of a resolution³⁶ expressing the purpose of the Society "to enter on a second exploration of our entire country," with the purpose of placing a copy of the Bible, "as early as practicable, in every destitute household where there is a willingness to receive it," the practice of employing county or district agents or colporteurs became widespread, as presently we shall see, both in Oregon and in Washington.

Not every Bible society in the Oregon Country, however, became directly allied with the National Society. When, as a matter of practical convenience, the duty of importing Bibles for Oregon was principally assigned to the Oregon Territorial, later the State, Bible Society, the need of the smaller societies to maintain direct relations with the National Society diminished. Instead, such organizations became auxiliary to the Territorial or State Society. Although between March, 1858, and the spring of 1861 no Oregon society was recognized by the American Bible Society as an auxiliary, there were at least twelve Bible societies in Oregon in the latter year.³⁷ In Washington Territory also the Thurston County Bible Society, though organized as early as 1858,³⁸ had not been recognized in 1861 as an auxiliary by the National Society. Probably it received its supplies through the agency of the Puget Sound Bible Society. All these local societies, however, whether directly or indirectly allied to the National Society, closely resembled one another. Commonly the bounds of a local society coincided with the boundaries of a county, although occasionally expediency might dictate the temporary union of two counties in one society. When sparsely populated, a river valley might form a logical territory for an organization. Of such adjustment to

36 A.B.S., *Fortieth Annual Report*, 1856 (Proceedings), p. 18.

37 In the *Annual Reports* the language used respecting the number of Bible societies in Oregon is not always clear. In 1861 there may have been twelve such societies in addition to the auxiliaries. Cf. A.B.S., *Forty-Sixth Annual Report*, 1862, p. 68.

38 A.B.S., *Forty-Second Annual Report*, 1858, p. 114.

physiographic conditions in the Pacific Northwest, the Umpqua Valley Bible Society is an illustration.³⁹ In respect of objects to be achieved, all such subsidiary bodies were identical.

Co-ordinating and supplementing the activities of the county or regional Bible societies, and acting as general adviser to them, the commissioned agent of the American Bible Society was an important factor in promoting the objects of the Bible Cause in the Oregon Country. Although the general policy of the National Society, as stated in 1850, was not to employ colporteurs to distribute Bibles,⁴⁰ in the Pacific Northwest the duties of the Society's first agent appeared to merge with the duties of a colporteur.⁴¹ This man was both business agent and itinerant minister of the Gospel. Traveling constantly, he endured all the hardships of an unsettled life on the frontier. But though his way was hard, he advanced the objects of the society that employed him by selling Bibles to those willing and able to buy them, and by giving Bibles to those willing to receive but unable to pay for them. And he was building a foundation for the future when he encouraged the formation of subsidiary societies, and, by attending their annual meetings, stimulated their officers and members to continue efforts for the Cause.⁴² But, vital as his salesmanship and his organizing activities undoubtedly were, hardly less important to many a pioneer family on the Far Western frontier were his labors of a ministerial character. To the discouraged immigrant, newly arrived from the "States," he brought words of encouragement and perhaps the gift Bible to replace the one unfortunately lost on the long journey overland. In remote neighborhoods, where there were "no means of grace or Christian institutions," he held meetings, organized Sunday Schools, and supplied the people with Bibles or Testaments. With or for those who so desired, he offered up prayers; and he rejoiced when, as the result of such labors, backsliders confessed their wanderings and resolved to return to God.⁴³ He was, in truth, a Christian missionary abroad on errands of mercy.

During the period of our study two agents of the American Bible Society were employed on the Oregon field. The first of

39 A.B.S., *Forty-Fourth Annual Report*, 1860, p. 99.

40 A.B.S., *Thirty-Fourth Annual Report*, 1850, p. 69.

41 Perhaps the American Bible Society intended that its agent in Oregon should perform some of the duties of a colporteur. In the *Annual Report* of 1853, p. 92, is the following statement: "A Bible colporteur has been solicited by the friends of the Cause there, and one was partially engaged to go thither for that object; circumstances, however, prevented his leaving home, and a correspondence is opened in regard to another individual for that field."

42 See the letters of L. C. Phillips in A.B.S., *Thirty-Ninth Annual Report*, 1855, pp. 99-101; *Fortieth Annual Report*, 1856, pp. 108-109; and *Forty-First Annual Report*, 1857, pp. 103-104.

43 *Ibid.*

these, the Reverend L. C. Phillips, was appointed in 1853 and served for about three year.⁴⁴ He was succeeded by the Reverend William Roberts, whose field of operation comprised both Oregon and Washington. Mr. Roberts continued in this work until 1863.⁴⁵

In passing from the foregoing account of the organization achieved for Bible distribution in Oregon and in Washington before the Civil War to a summary view of Bible circulation as effected by such means, it is proper to observe the difficulties and embarrassments in the way of the realization there of the program of the friends of the Bible Cause. Some of these were of slight, others of major, importance. Besides the problems of the indifference, or even outright opposition, of a portion of the community there was the problem of a dispersed and constantly shifting population. The task of supplying such a people was very discouraging. Obstacles such as these, however, were trivial when compared with the upheaval produced by the Indian War of 1855. Of the devastation wrought in Washington Territory by that struggle, Mr. Roberts wrote: "The late Indian war was very disastrous in its effects upon the population, and every interest of the country suffered most severely. The inhabitants were murdered and driven from their homes, and many left the country. Now that peace is again restored, the Cause of the Bible will again prosper."⁴⁶ On another occasion, in a report on operations in Oregon, he remarked: "The past season has been one of severe financial embarrassment; our imports exceed our exports. The Indian war was an unmitigated calamity, to say nothing of the bloodshed and loss of life. The complete disruption of many of our valuable interests, and the actual outlay of treasure and available means, which amounts to \$100 per head for every man, woman, and child in the country, are enough to make that remarkable compound known as 'hard times.'⁴⁷ Still another embarrassment, operating through the decade of the 1850's with varying degrees of intensity, was the social fermentation resulting from discoveries of gold on the Pacific slope. Since 1848 the drift to the gold fields of California had affected the Pacific Northwest. Discoveries north of California still further unsettled the habits of the people in the Valley of the Columbia, and, what was worse, attracted to the country elements of such character as would test the moral strength of even

44 A.B.S., *Thirty-Eighth Annual Report*, 1854, p. 92; *Forty-First Annual Report*, 1857, p. 103.

45 A.B.S., *Forty-Eighth Annual Report*, 1864, p. 83.

46 A.B.S., *Forty-Second Annual Report*, 1858, p. 114.

47 A.B.S., *Forty-Fourth Annual Report*, 1860, pp. 99-100.

a mature society. Small wonder, then, that the Reverend Mr. Roberts, traveling "not less than four thousand miles a year, on an average," should on his journeys have reflected much on the changing scenes and looked with "deep solicitude" lest the salt should lose its savor, or the light within become darkness.⁴⁸

Despite hindrances and embarrassments, however, the history of Bible circulation in the Oregon Country before the outbreak of the Civil War is a history of substantial progress. This period may be divided into two parts, separated by the resolution of 1856, already referred to, expressing the determination of the National Society to bring the offer of a Bible, as soon as practicable, to every destitute household in the United States. The adoption of this resolution coincided approximately with the beginning of the agency of the Reverend William Roberts.

Before 1850 Bible circulation in Oregon had largely been entrusted to the early missionaries, who, as the Reverend Mr. Phillips observed, had done much toward disseminating the Scriptures among the first settlers.⁴⁹ By the opening of the decade of the 1850's the way was preparing for more effective distribution by the organization of local Bible societies, which were expressions on the part of their founders and patrons of a growing conviction of a great role Oregon was destined to play in the affairs of the Republic and of a determination to make that role distinctive by bringing the Bible to bear upon the hearts and minds of Oregon's advancing population.⁵⁰ An added impulse was given to the Cause by the appointment, in 1853, of an agent of the National Society to labor in Oregon. During the years of the agency of the Reverend Mr. Phillips the work of organization, of exploration, and of distribution advanced. Several new Bible societies were formed, of which four became auxiliaries to the National Society. Between 1854 and 1856 the receipts from Oregon amounted to \$3,159.25, and the number of books sent to that territory was 5,557. The agent himself received credit for sales totalling \$1,080.50.⁵¹ Upon the retirement of Mr. Phillips, in 1856, events had thus been put in train for his successor to undertake a campaign of Bible circulation looking to the realization in the Pacific Northwest of the program instituted by the National Society.

Of his first year's labors in Oregon Mr. Roberts wrote:

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 100.

⁴⁹ A.B.S., *Thirty-Ninth Annual Report*, 1855, p. 100.

⁵⁰ See the communication from the Clatsop County Bible Society in A.B.S., *Thirty-Sixth Annual Report*, 1852, pp. 103-104.

⁵¹ These figures were derived from the *Annual Reports* for the appropriate years.

"A leading effort made by these [Oregon Bible] societies during the year has been to carry out the resolution of this Society passed in May, 1856, in regard to a general exploration and supply of the entire country. In the accomplishment of this the Agent travelled, almost exclusively by his own conveyance, nearly five thousand miles, and secured, to an encouraging extent, the hearty co-operation with the Parent Society in regard to the exploration and supply of its own bounds, and immediately proceeded to this important work. Up to the first of January but one society had completed its work. This is the Multnomah County Society, and includes the city of Portland. Within this county were visited 448 families, sixty-one of whom were found destitute of a part or the whole of the Bible; forty-one of these families were Catholic. Bibles donated, fourteen, value \$6.55; sold, twenty-seven, value \$103.73; Testaments sold, \$21.59; total value of Scriptures put in circulation, \$131.87."⁵²

Active efforts to achieve the object of the National Society had been begun in Linn and Marion Counties and in the Umpqua Valley. Here colporteurs or distributors had been employed. Elsewhere, it appears, the results had been slighter.⁵³

More encouraging was the report of the next year's efforts.

"The several Bible societies within our bounds, with scarcely an exception are doing good service," wrote Mr. Roberts.

"The Territorial Society of Oregon is chiefly occupied in importing supplies for such portions of the Oregon Territory as lie within its reach; and in addition has special charge of Clakamus [sic] County, in which its depository is located. The exploration and supply of that county is not completed. It was in progress when the autumnal rains commenced....

"The supply of Multnomah County was completed last year. Marion County is nearly completed; so also is Linn County, Washington County, and Umpqua Valley. Wasco County was about half explored and supplied. Bento[n] County is still in the background, but will be thoroughly canvassed early the coming season. Lane County was throughly districted, but the supply reached them too late. The Polk and Lanehill [Yamhill?] County Societies are new, but will get into line the coming season. The Washington County Society has begun its work nobly, and will report the canvass complete by the 1st of June ensuing. The Clatsop County Society

⁵² A.B.S., *Forty-Second Annual Report*, 1858, p. 113.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, pp. 113-114.

I could not visit at the proper time, and the time allotted to it in February was too tremendously stormy for working purposes. In Jackson County the work is fully commenced under favorable auspices.

"What has been done up to this time has mainly been by gratuitous labour. In Marion County two precincts were canvassed by brother A. Taylor, at a small compensation; and Rev. J. M'Kinney has done most of the labour in Linn County. Father [William]Royal was employed in Umpqua. But the secretary of the society remarks, 'Mr. Royal has by his energy and economy completed his work without any pecuniary aid from this society.'"⁵⁴

Though the reports from Oregon for 1860 and 1861 indicate a continuation of the work already begun, notwithstanding the "hard times" and the disturbing effects of the "gold fever," they do not warrant the conclusion that by the spring of 1861 the offer of a Bible had been made to every household in Oregon.⁵⁵ The full realization of such a program, as conditions then were in the Pacific Northwest, was hardly to be expected.

Less important than Oregon itself, but withal a promising portion of the wide field to which Mr. Roberts had been commissioned as agent, was Washington Territory. Here, too, the Bible Cause found friends. But although a Bible society had been formed in the Puget Sound Basin as early as 1854, the first impulse to effective Bible circulation north of the Columbia River was given, near the beginning of the agency of Mr. Roberts, by two donations, one of \$1,000, by a philanthropist whose identity is hidden under the designation of "Zaccheus of the Pacific." Under such stimulation two more organizations, the Cowlitz County Bible Society and the Thurston County Bible Society, had been formed by the spring of 1858.⁵⁶ Of the efforts making in Washington Territory in 1858-59 to realize the object of the National Society, Mr. Roberts reported:

"The work in this Territory is receiving a new impulse. The Puget Sound, or Territorial Society, resolved to explore and supply the entire Territory. This has been but partially accomplished.

"Rev. G. M. Berry undertook to visit and supply every family

⁵⁴ A.B.S., *Forty-Third Annual Report*, 1859, p. 91.

⁵⁵ See the communications from Oregon, and the editorial introductions thereto, in A.B.S., *Forty-Fourth Annual Report*, 1860, pp. 98-100, and *Forty-Fifth Annual Report*, 1861, p. 79.

⁵⁶ A.B.S., *Forty-Second Annual Report*, 1858, p. 114. Although the language of the Reverend William Roberts indicates that "Zaccheus" made two annual donations, each of \$1,000, the published records of the American Bible Society credit him only with two gifts totaling \$1,200, the first of \$1,000 and the second of \$200. A.B.S., *Forty-Second Annual Report*, 1858, p. 323, and *Forty-Third Annual Report*, 1859, p. 300.

in Pierce County, but left for the States late in the season; before going, however, he had supplied about thirty families with the Holy Scriptures.

"Rev. N. S. M'Allister very thoroughly canvassed all of Thurston County, and supplied every destitute family. Col. Casey, the president, a firm friend of the Cause, remarks, 'His zeal and fidelity in the Cause deserve our commendation.'

"Rev. W. J. Franklin operated principally in King County. This county is on the waters of Puget Sound, and includes Seattle. His sales amount to \$21.50. From Rev. Homer Dray, who was engaged in the canvass of Lewis County, no report had been received when I was in Olympia, in December. Cowlitz County has been explored pretty thoroughly by Rev. H. C. Rhodes, who has distributed twenty-eight Bibles and fifty Testaments, and ascertained the wants of every family, with scarce any exception. So that our work there is very satisfactorily carried on at present. I visited Skamania County in November, but it was too stormy to commence the work; and I reserved the effort for June next, when on my way to Wasco County in the summer season. In May, D. V. I made a tour down the Sound, in company with brother Franklin, to visit the far famed mills and lumber establishments of the lower counties, on a tour of Bible distribution.

"The exploration in this Territory has been wholly gratuitous, thus far, and bids fair to be quite thorough."⁵⁷

By the spring of 1860 the Washington Territorial Bible Society was reported to have "very nearly completed the exploration and supply of its natural boundaries," in which, however, were not included "the coast at Shoalwater Bay and Gray's Harbour, and the region east of the Cascade Mountains, places far distant and difficult of access."⁵⁸ Still, it was believed that the former of these might be "reached" from the territory of the Clatsop County Bible Society.⁵⁹ As for the wide spaces east of the Cascade Mountains, both in Washington and in Oregon, a major task of organization lay ahead of the friends of the Bible Cause. A study of the operations of Bible societies in that region does not, however, fall within the limits of this article. It remains but to notice the first step of the advance eastward of the Cascades. Late in November, 1857, there was formed at the Dalles of the Columbia the Wasco County Bible Society, the beginning, observed Mr.

57 A.B.S., *Forty-Third Annual Report*, 1859, pp. 92-93.

58 A.B.S., *Forty-Fourth Annual Report*, 1860, p. 100. There is no report from Washington Territory in 1861.

59 *Ibid.*, p. 99

Roberts, "of a series of movements which will connect our work on the Pacific with that on the Atlantic side."⁶⁰

Owing to the inadequacy of the data, an entirely accurate appraisal of the early Bible movement in the Oregon Country, even in terms of money expended and of books distributed, cannot be made. Of the sums remitted by the Oregon and Washington auxiliaries to March 31, 1861, the totals were, as we have observed, \$6,397.22 for the former and \$541.47 for the latter. During the same period there were reported as donations from the Oregon auxiliaries the sum of \$32 and from the Washington the sum of \$25. Between 1853 and 1861 the sum of the annual receipts reported from both Oregon and Washington was \$10,381.59. During the same years it is ascertained that the number of books sent by the National Society to Oregon and Washington was 12,877.⁶¹ The sum of the expenditures of the local societies for the prosecution of their work before 1861 is not known.

The excess of the receipts over the remittances of the auxiliary societies is explained by the growing interest, from 1853 onwards, of individuals and of churches in promoting the objects of the Cause. Apart from the generous donations of "Zaccheus," already mentioned, several individual gifts ranging from \$50 to \$200 were acknowledged in the *Annual Reports* of the National Society. Such contributions were augmented by collections taken at camp meetings and in churches. The Methodist churches led all the congregations in the Pacific Northwest in collections for the Bible Cause.⁶²

The prospect of obtaining a life directorship or a life membership in the American Bible Society furnished an incentive to generous giving. The former was obtainable by a donation of \$150, the latter by a gift of \$30. By 1860 at least four persons⁶³ in the Pacific Northwest had become life directors of the National Bible Society, and a much larger number had become life members.⁶⁴ Such permanent affiliations were pledges of continued ef-

60 A.B.S., *Forty-Second Annual Report*, 1858, p. 114.

61 These totals are my compilations from the *Annual Reports*.

62 See, as an illustration, A.B.S., *Forty-Third Annual Report*, 1859, pp. 301-302.

63 The Reverend George H. Atkinson and Mr. and Mrs. George Abernethy, Oregon City, and R. H. Lansdale, Olympia.

64 Subject to correction, the following is offered as the roll of life members in 1860: Oregon—William Abernethy and Anne Abernethy, Oregon City; the Reverend George H. Atkinson, Oregon City; the Reverend and Mrs. D. E. Blain, Oregon City; Samuel W. Carter, Forest Grove; the Reverend P. B. Chamberlain, Portland; the Reverend and Mrs. Cushing Eells, Hillsboro; the Reverend David Leslie, Oregon City; William Pattison, Oregon; Mrs. Anne P. Pearne, Portland; the Reverend Thomas H. Pearne, Madison; T. W. Powers, Astoria; the Reverend and Mrs. William Roberts, Salem; John Wesley Starr, Starr's Point; Mrs. C. F. Talmage, Oregon City; and Reverend James H. Wilbur, Umpqua; the Reverend James Worth, Willimette Forks; and the Reverend John W. York, Corvallis. Washington—D. R. Bigelow, Mrs. I. B. Devore, the Reverend Isaac Dillon, Mrs. M. C. Dillon, Alfred Hall, and John K. Hall, all of Olympia.

forts to advance the objects of the American Bible Society in the Oregon Country.

Paralleling the National Bible Society's activities in the Pacific Northwest were the operations of the American Tract Society. As channels for the distribution of its literature in that region, the latter organization depended, first, upon the voluntary labors of benevolent persons and organizations; secondly, upon an auxiliary tract society in Oregon City; and, lastly, upon its own system of colportage.

In the accompanying table a view of the appropriations of the National Tract Society for gratuitous distribution in the Oregon Country is given for the period of our study. From this compilation the gifts made by the Society's colporteurs are excluded.

Grants of the American Tract Society for Gratuitous
Distribution in Oregon and in Washington

Oregon Territory

<i>Grantees</i>	<i>Grants in Pages</i>	<i>References</i>
American Mission, Northwest Coast	3,375	<i>An. Rep.</i> , 1838, p. 13.
Rev. John D. Paris	49,590	<i>An. Rep.</i> , 1841, p. 17.
Rev. J. S. Griffin	37,500	<i>An. Rep.</i> , 1843, p. 110.
Rev. L. R. Sunderland	3,000	
George Cary	5,000	<i>An. Rep.</i> , 1844, p. 139.
Rev. J. S. Griffin	15,000	
Dr. Marcus Whitman	30,000	<i>An. Rep.</i> , 1846, p. 80.
Rev. E. Fisher	5,000	
Rev. H. Johnson	5,000	
U.S. Troops for Oregon	18,000	<i>An. Rep.</i> , 1847, pp. 21, 25.
Hon. J. Quinn Thornton	10,000	
Rev. H. Johnson	5,000	
Rev. C. Frisbee	5,000	
*Rev. Messrs. Atkinson & Lyman	25,000	<i>An. Rep.</i> , 1848, p. 28.
Rev. E. Fisher	5,000	
Rev. H. Johnson	5,000	
Rev. V. Snelling	5,000	
*Rev. Mr. Lyman	6,000	
Rev. P. Griffin [<i>sic</i>]	1,500	
J. Q. Thornton, Esq.	37,500	<i>An. Rep.</i> 1849, p. 29.
Rev. E. Fisher	5,000	
Rev. H. Johnson	5,000	

E. Hamilton, Esq.	15,000	<i>An. Rep.</i> , 1850, p. 49.
Rev. J. Marsh	8,000	
Rev. R. Fisher [<i>sic</i>]	5,000	
Rev. H. Johnson	5,000	
Rev. V. Snelling	5,000	
Rev. G. C. Chandler	5,000	
Rev. J. S. Read	5,000	
Rev. J. S. Caulkins	5,000	
Rev. J. P. Miller	5,000	
Rev. J. S. Griffith [<i>sic</i>]	15,000	
Josiah Failings	10,000	
Miss Sarah A. Adams	10,000	
*Rev. H. H. Spaulding [<i>sic</i>]	15,000	<i>An. Rep.</i> , 1851, p. 29.
Rev. Henry Johnson	5,000	
Z. Parkhurst	12,000	
Domestic Missionaries	10,000	<i>An. Rep.</i> , 1852, p. 31.
Rev. G. C. Chandler	5,000	
*Rev. George H. Atkinson	1,650	
J. Hall	2,500	
Rev. Ezra Fisher	5,000	
Rev. James S. Read	15,000	
Rev. Harvey Clark	19,170	
J. H. Dennison	1,500	
*Rev. Thomas Condon	20,000	
*Rev. O. Dickinson	5,000	
Oregon Territory Auxiliary	1,200,000	<i>An. Rep.</i> , 1853, pp. 31, 32.
*Rev. T. Condon	5,000	
Rev. James Farmer	5,000	
Domestic Missionaries	22,500	<i>An. Rep.</i> , 1854, p. 28.
Rev. E. Fisher	5,000	
Rev. J. L. Yantes, D.D.	18,000	<i>An. Rep.</i> , 1855, p. 27.
T. F. Royal	21,991	
Rev. J. M'Cormick	5,000	
Sabbath Schools in Oregon	16,000	
Oregon Territorial Auxiliary	352,510	<i>An. Rep.</i> , 1856, pp. 26-30.
Rev. M. Bayakin	15,000	
E. Clark	5,000	<i>An. Rep.</i> , 1857, p. 25.

Washington Territory

Rev. G. F. Whitworth	75,000
Mrs. A. Miller	4,500

Oregon Territory

Oregon Territory Auxiliary	568,215	<i>An. Rep.</i> , 1858, pp. 25-26.
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Oregon

Aux. Tract Society, Oreg'n City 455,460 *An. Rep.*, 1859, p. 24.

Washington Territory

Home Missionaries 7,500

Oregon

Aux. Tract Society, Oregon City 257,880 *An. Rep.*, 1860, p. 31.

Oregon

U.S. Soldiers in Oregon 7,500

Rev. Samuel Cornelius 7,500

Aux. Tract Society, Oregon City 367,725 *An. Rep.*, 1861, pp. 27-31.

*The men whose names are preceded by an asterisk held, at one time or another, commissions from the American Home Missionary Society. Although the Reverend H. H. Spalding went to Oregon in 1836 as a missionary of the American Board, he was employed for a time, in the 1850's, by the American Home Missionary Society.

The tracts which the foregoing table shows were committed to the care of the Reverend John D. Paris probably never reached the Oregon Country. The Reverend Mr. Paris, accompanied by William H. Rice as assistant missionary, left the United States in 1840 to reinforce the Oregon Mission of the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions.⁶⁵ On their arrival at Honolulu, these missionaries, learning of the dissensions that were then disturbing the Oregon Mission, wrote to the home office of the American Board for further instruction as to the course they should adopt. As the result of this correspondence, the Prudential Committee of the Board assigned them to the mission in the Sandwich Islands.⁶⁶

In addition to the grants disclosed by the preceding table, mention also should be made of an appropriation of tracts obtained from the American Tract Society in 1846 by the Reverend David Greene for distribution in Oregon by the Reverend Harvey Clark. In the accompanying paragraph of a letter from Greene to Clark the conditions governing the disposal of these tracts are revealed.

"From the American Tract Society I have also the pleasure to inform you that a grant of \$100. worth of tracts has been made, which are charged to your account, you being at liberty to sell or give away at your discretion. So far as you sell you will

⁶⁵ *The Missionary Herald*, Vol. XXXVII (April, 1841), p. 186.

⁶⁶ David Greene to John D. Paris, February 26, 1842, in A.B.C.F.M., *Indian Letter Book*, No. 6, pp. 207-209; David Greene to William H. Rice, February 26, 1842, *loc. cit.*, pp. 210-212.

remit the avails to the Society (through our mission, if that be most convenient) with an account both of what you sell & what you give away. Those given away the Society will sanction & cancel the charge."⁶⁷

The second phase of the history of the Oregon operations of the American Tract Society began with the formation in the summer of 1848, of the Oregon Tract Society.^{67a} The Honorable J. Quinn Thornton was its first treasurer. By the spring of 1850 the National Society had recognized this organization as an auxiliary.⁶⁸ From its inception to the end of our period of study the operations of the Oregon City society disclose a continuing record of commendable activity. Between the date of its formation and the first of April, 1861, it transmitted to the Parent Society, apart from a donation of \$1.87,⁶⁹ the sum of \$3,750.43 in payment for tracts.

Besides the foregoing pecuniary record, the following summary statements, descriptive of the years between 1855 and 1859, furnish evidence of initiative and of energy manifested by the Oregon Tract Society.

"The OREGON TRACT SOCIETY, Rev. G. H. Atkinson, Secretary, employed a colporteur part of the year, and issued 475,000 pages of publications from its depository. 'There is a growing need of your publicatins,' says the Secretary, 'not only on account of the increase and greater stability of the population, but of the boldness and spread of error and unbelief, that threatens the foundation of society as well as of religion. We know nothing more efficient to meet both, and remove these evils or check them, than the books you publish.'⁷⁰

"The OREGON TRACT SOCIETY reports that more than 600,000 pages have been put into the hands of readers during the year, and that 400 American Messengers and 760 Child's Papers⁷¹ have been circulated."⁷²

"The OREGON TRACT SOCIETY employ a colporteur, who has distributed more than 700,000 pages, and earnestly request the labors of an agent."⁷³

⁶⁷ David Greene to Harvey Clark, April 16, 1846, in A.B.C.F.M., *Indian Letter Book*, No. 9, p. 177.

^{67a} Extract of a letter from the Reverend George H. Atkinson, in *The Home Missionary* (March, 1849), XXI, 248. The headquarters of the Oregon Tract Society were in Oregon City.

⁶⁸ A.T.S., *Twenty-Fifth Annual Report*, 1850, pp. 113, 159.

⁶⁹ Other donations to the National Tract Society from Oregon and Washington, between 1853 and 1860, amounted to \$232.22.

⁷⁰ A.T.S., *Thirtieth Annual Report*, 1855, p. 36.

⁷¹ *The American Messenger* and the *Child's Paper* were monthly periodicals of the American Tract Society. The Society also published a German edition of the former, *Amerikanischer Botschafter*.

⁷² A.T.S., *Thirty-First Annual Report*, 1856, p. 36.

⁷³ A.T.S., *Thirty-Second Annual Report*, 1857, p. 32.

"The OREGON TRACT SOCIETY in its ninth year circulated 789,720 pages, besides 612 Messengers and 585 Child's Papers."⁷⁴

"The OREGON TRACT SOCIETY in its tenth year circulated 1,149,740 pages, and several hundred Messengers and Child's Papers."⁷⁵

But through an active auxiliary, assisted by the occasional labors of ministers and of philanthropic laymen, might do much for the promotion of "vital godliness" and of sound morals in Oregon, the inadequacy of such agencies to the needs of a frontier society was obvious. To facilitate the distribution of its literature the American Tract Society, in 1841, had instituted a system of colportage. This had proved to be an effective agency to promote the objects of the Society.⁷⁶ Its extension to the Oregon Country was a logical step to take.

In 1846 the Reverend David Greene, in a letter requesting a grant of tracts for the Oregon settlers, had recommended to a secretary of the American Tract Society the appointment of the Reverend Harvey Clark as a colporteur for Oregon.⁷⁷ Apparently no action was taken upon this recommendation. Soon after the formation of the Oregon Tract Society, however, its officers sought of the National Society the employment of "one or more" colporteurs for Oregon Territory, and with the prayer of this petition the Parent Society showed a willingness to comply.⁷⁸ But though the Reverend Wilson Blair⁷⁹ and the Reverend M. Resner⁸⁰ were commissioned colporteurs for Oregon before April 1, 1855, there is no record that either entered upon such labors. The first colporteur of the American Tract Society actually to enter that field was Thomas Judkins, whose commission became effective after April 1, 1855.⁸¹

For three months of the year ending March 1, 1856, Mr. Judkins labored as colporteur on the Oregon field. During this time he sold 924 volumes and gave away 494. Of the 125 families he visited, he found 120 destitute of religious books and ten without the Bible.⁸²

During an employment of six months and twenty-three days

74 A.T.S., *Thirty-Third Annual Report*, 1858, p. 31.

75 A.T.S., *Thirty-Fourth Annual Report*, 1858, p. 32.

76 "Ten Years of Colportage in America," in A.T.S., *Twenty-Sixth Annual Report*, 1851, pp. 45-72.

77 David Greene to W. A. Hallock, March 27, 1846, in A.B.C.F.M., *Domestic Letter Book*, No. 23, pp. 354-355.

78 A.T.S., *Twenty-Fifth Annual Report*, 1850, p. 114.

79 A.T.S., *Twenty-Seventh Annual Report*, 1852, p. 76.

80 A.T.S., *Thirtieth Annual Report*, 1855, p. 61.

81 *Ibid.*, p. 61.

82 A.T.S., *Thirty-First Annual Report*, 1856, p. 57.

of the year ending March 1, 1857, Mr. Judkins sold 3,003 volumes and gave away 537. Of the 288 families he visited, nine were Roman Catholic; sixteen "habitually" neglected evangelical preaching. Only two of the families visited were without the Bible.⁸³

Sometime before the first of March, 1857, Daniel Bagley was appointed by the National Tract Society as its colporteur for Oregon. By March 1, 1858, he had reported fourteen months of employment, during which time he had sold 4,546 volumes and given away 972. Of the 668 families he visited, two were destitute of religious books, thirteen had no Bible, fourteen were Roman Catholic, and thirty-two habitually neglected evangelical preaching.⁸⁴ In each of the three succeeding years he was employed for a brief term of service: four months of the year ending March 1, 1859; three months of the year ending March 1, 1860; and one month of the year ending March 1, 1861. During this time he sold 2,327 volumes, gave away 861, and visited 888 families.⁸⁵

In addition to their sales and gifts of books, both Mr. Judkins and Mr. Bagley annually reported duties performed of a ministerial character. To hold or attend public prayer meetings and to pray or to converse on religious topics with the families he visited were not the least significant of the labors of a colporteur. Such services the Christian layman no less than the ordained minister of the Gospel could perform. Like the agent of the American Bible Society, the colporteur of the American Tract Society combined some of the ministrations of an itinerant missionary with the functions of a sales agent of a benevolent publishing society. Such ministerial labors enhanced the value of the early operations in the Pacific Northwest of both the National Bible and the National Tract societies.

By the activities in the Oregon Country of the American Tract Society and of the American Bible Society in the years traversed by this study influences that may be denominated religious, educational, and patriotic were put in motion. Tracts comprising scores of thousands of pages had been disseminated by the agency of the former; Bibles and Testaments by the hundred had been circulated by the agency of the latter. Ministerial services performed by agents and colporteurs had been, one may presume, productive of much good. In that vast region also the American

⁸³ A.T.S., *Thirty-Second Annual Report*, 1857, p. 54. The American Tract Society published books as well as tracts.

⁸⁴ A.T.S., *Thirty-Third Annual Report*, 1858, p. 56.

⁸⁵ A.T.S., *Thirty-Fourth Annual Report*, 1859, p. 55; *Thirty-Fifth Annual Report*, 1860, p. 57; *Thirty-Sixth Annual Report*, 1861, p. 59.

Bible Society had achieved an organization that promised well for future efforts. Here is evidence of wholesome religious influences at work. Into the operations of these National Societies, moreover, had been drawn ministers of several denominations. Members of the Oregon Methodist Mission, representatives of the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions, ministers sent out by the American Home Missionary Society, as well as ministers unconnected with missionary societies—all had lent their efforts to the Cause. Here is significant contemporaneous testimony of the religious value of these enterprises. And to the strictly religious may be added the educational influences resulting from the furnishing of reading matter to hundreds of families living in a frontier society where books and periodicals were scarce and expensive. Lastly, the effect upon the patriotic sentiments of the early settlers in the Far Northwest of their being brought within the scope of national benevolent movements should not lightly be regarded. Here was evidence to persuade these pioneers that by crossing the Great Plains and the Rocky Mountains they had not completely deprived themselves of every religious comfort enjoyed in the communities whence they had emigrated. Here was evidence to convince them that Eastern benevolence was striving to keep them within the field of one of the main cultural forces of American life. Here was the subtlest of ties binding the people of the Far Northwest to the people of the East.

J. ORIN OLIPHANT