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PROCEEDINGS
OF A
PUBLIC DELIBERATIVE MEETING

OF THE BOARD AND FRIENDS OF THE
✓
AMERICAN TRACT SOCIETY,

HELD IN THE BROADWAY TABERNACLE, NEW-YORK,

October 25, 26, and 27, 1842;

TOGETHER WITH THE
DOCUMENTS PRESENTED,
AND THE
SERMON PREACHED,
On that occasion.

NEW-YORK :
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1843.



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PROCEEDINGS  
OF THE  
BOARD AND FRIENDS OF THE  
AMERICAN TRACT SOCIETY,

At the Broadway Tabernacle, New-York.

This meeting was called from a conviction that the providence of God, conducting the Society in its career of usefulness, was largely in advance of the general apprehensions of the christian community; and that careful attention to its several spheres of labor, and discussion of the principles involved, would give definiteness to the conceptions of many as to its character and objects, and thus awaken prayer, liberality, and persevering effort to bless the world with these means of grace.

It is believed that every intelligent reader of the following sketch of the proceedings, will perceive that ample foundations were laid for gaining the ends desired. Whether we consider the character of the able documents presented, or the cheering and valuable letters from distinguished individuals who were unable to attend, or the more definite views gained of the great objects before the Society, or the impulse given to the mind of those present, and which, it is hoped, will reach tens of thousands of others, there appears abundant cause of gratitude to God that the Meeting has been held.

We proceed to the history of the proceedings, simply remarking that, for the sake of distinctness of impression, the Documents, reports of Committees, Addresses, and letters read, are given as far as practicable in the natural order of the subjects discussed.

On TUESDAY, 4 P. M. Oct. 25, the meeting assembled.

*Present,* The Hon. THEODORE FRELINGHUYSEN, President, in the chair; William B. Crosby, Esq. of New-York, and John Tappan, Esq. of Boston, Vice-Presidents.

Rev. James Milnor, D. D., Rev. Thomas McAuley, D. D., Rev. John Knox, D. D., Rev. Justin Edwards, D. D., Rev. Charles G. Sommers, John Stearns, M. D.; Moses Allen, R. T. Haines, Edward Richardson, T. C. Doremus, James C. Bliss, M. D., James W. Dominick, William Forrest, *Executive Committee*.

Rev. Messrs. William A. Hallock, O. Eastman, R. S. Cook, *Corresponding Secretaries*.

Rev. Messrs. Baron Stow, Gorham D. Abbott, A. McClure, Seth Bliss, Henry B. Holmes, and George Denney, Esq. Delegates from the Branch American Tract Society at Boston. Rev. J. J. Dana, Canaan, Delegate from Berkshire Co. Mass. Tract Society. Charles Hosmer, Calvin Day, Thomas Smith, and Allen Porter, Esqs. Delegates from the Conn. Branch Tract Society, Hartford. Rev. Messrs. George Potts, D. D., William Patton, D. D., William R. Williams, D. D., John M. Krebs, D. D., M. S. Hutton, D. D., Asa D. Smith, Isaac S. Demund, and Elisha Tucker; William W. Chester, Esq. A. R. Wetmore, Esq. William N. Blakeman, M. D. and John R. Ludlow, Esq. Delegates from the New-York City Tract Society. B. C. Cutler, D. D., Rev. Messrs. William B. Lewis, George Duffield, Jun. A. D. Matthews, J. Roland and S. Backus, Delegates from Brooklyn, N. Y. Tract Society. Rev. Messrs. Murdock and S. B. Willis and Edger B. Day, Esq. Delegates from Catskill, N. Y. Tract Society. Messrs. Day O. Kellogg and Kingsbury Root, Delegates from Auxiliary, Troy, N. Y. William Purves, Esq. Delegate from Philadelphia Tract Society. Rev. Thomas De Witt, D. D., Rev. Isaac Lewis, D. D., Rev. Thomas H. Skinner, D. D., Rev. Erskine Mason, D. D., Rev. William J. Armstrong, D. D., Rev. John A. Vaughan, D. D., Rev. William Adams, D. D., Rev. Spencer H. Cone, D. D., Rev. Messrs. John C. Lowrie, James Harkness, George H. Fisher, J. O. Choules, John C. Guldin, Samuel I. Prime, John Marsh, Milton Badger, N. E. Johnson, Charles Hall, J. J. Ostrom, J. C. Brigham, Ebenezer Mason J. W. Cooke, J. W. McLane, A. Camp, B. Lockwood, Geo. Hatt; and Messrs. D. W. C. Olyphant, Esq. John L. Mason, Esq. Charles Butler, Esq. William Couch, Geo. P. Shipman, Stephen Holt, Timothy Hedges, Esq. H. W. Olcott, Esq. B. L. Woolley, Caleb O. Halsted, Jacob Brouwer, D. H. Winkham, William Shaw, Tilley Allen, Edward Field, Daniel Fanshaw, F. B. Schoales, Nathaniel Gray, J. H. Bulin, J. B. Horton, Charles Starr, and F. S. Gant, New-York City. Mr. Heman Packard, N. Bridgewater, Ms.; J. B. Nichols, Prov. R. I.; Rev. Hiram P. Arms and F. A. Perkins, Esq. Norwich, Con.; Hon. Thomas W. Williams, New London, Con.; Rev. John Smith, Wilton, Rev. Jared Dewing, Fishkill; Rev. Henry Heermance, Kinderhook; Rev. P. Snyder, New Rochelle; Rev. Jacob D. Fonda, Rev. Henry Hurlbut, Utica; Rev. James Romeyn, Catskill; D. W. Ingersoll, Brooklyn; Nathaniel Gardner, Brooklyn; Rev. B. C. Taylor, D. D., Bergen, N. J.; Rev. A. D. Eddy, J. W. Hayes, Esq. and John Taylor, Newark, N. J.; Rev. David Magic, D. D. and Rev. N. Murray, Elizabethtown; Rev. R. K. Rogers, Boundbrook; Samuel E. Woodbridge, Perth-Amboy; Rev. Benjamin H. Rice, D. D., Princeton; Horace Leet, Penn.; Rev. I. G. Hamner, Baltimore; Rev. B. M. Palmer, Charleston, S. C.; William Ropes, Esq. late from St. Petersburg, Russia; Rev. Hiram Bingham, Sandwich Islands. Hun-



ded of other interested individuals were present at the Meetings during the day, and large assemblies participated in the evening exercises with devout and solemn attention.

The exercises were commenced with prayer by Rev. Baron Stow of Boston.

In the absence of Rev. A. Maclay, Recording Secretary, Rev. Elisha Tucker and Rev. Edwin Holt were appointed Secretaries of the Meeting, and Rev. J. O. Choules, Secretary *pro. tem.*

The Document calling the meeting was then read, and the Rev. Drs. Milnor, Edwards and Patton, and Messrs. Hallock, Eastman and Cook, were appointed a Committee of Arrangements.

Letters were read expressing deep interest in the objects of the Meeting and regret for unavoidable absence, from the following gentlemen, together with letters hereafter inserted in the sketch of the proceedings: viz.

Rev. Nehemiah Adams, Boston, Ms.; Hon. Simon Greenleaf, Cambridge; Joseph Otis, Esq. Norwich, Con.; A. W. Butler, Esq. Hartford; Rev. Leonard Bacon, D. D. New Haven; Rev. Wm. B. Sprague, D. D. Albany; Henry Dwight, Esq. Geneva; Rev. James W. Alexander, Princeton, N. J.; Rev. Drs. S. H. Tyng, Geo. M. Bethune and Albert Barnes, Philadelphia; Rev. William Carey Crane, Richmond, Va.; Rev. Edward P. Humphrey, and Wm. H. Bulkeley, Louisville, Ky.; Rev. B. Tappan, D. D. Augusta, Me.; Rev. J. Helfenstein, Germantown, Pa.

*From Rev. E. W. Hooker, D. D. Bennington, Vt.*

"My heart has been, is, and shall be in the great and good enterprise of the American Tract Society, and will be with you in the contemplated meeting. The subjects proposed for consideration are great, and in my view *vital* to the enterprise; and I should love to be present, and render any aid in my power, in the deliberations relative to them. May 'the good Spirit of the Lord' be present to influence, counsel and guide all who shall attend."

*From Hon. Charles Marsh, Woodstock, Vt.*

"The Meeting, I doubt not, will be one of great interest, and I trust and pray that it may be attended and followed by the Divine blessing. I regret that I am obliged to say that my age and infirmities, being now in my seventy-eighth year, forbid my attending on this interesting occasion. I hope that the deliberations will render the path of duty plain, in relation to the important measures to be adopted, and be followed with most happy results.

“The agency of humble and pious *Colporteurs* in carrying Tracts and Volumes to the huts and hovels of the poor, seems to me a most promising mode of distribution.”

*From the Rev. John Codman, D. D. Dorchester, Mass.*

“I regret that a singular combination of arrangements ecclesiastical, parochial and domestic, the present week, must deprive me of the pleasure I should otherwise experience in meeting with so many esteemed friends, and consulting with them on the best method of promoting an enterprise which I consider second to none of the benevolent objects that distinguish the day in which we live.”

*From Rev. L. Bolles D. D. Secretary of the Baptist Foreign Missionary Board, dated at Hartford, Con.*

“I fondly hoped to bewith the managers and friends of the American Tract Society at their meeting this day; and for that purpose left home and came to this city, but my very slender health, and the state of the weather forbid me to proceed. I consider the occasion one of great interest, and pray God to preside over all your deliberations and acts. Hitherto the enterprises of the Society have been conducted in the genuine spirit of the Gospel, and have been signally approved of Heaven, and I have great confidence that they will so continue to be owned.”

*From Rev. Alexander H. Vinton, Boston, Mass.*

“I am at length obliged to say that my engagements, some of them special, will prevent my being present at the meeting of the Board. I regret this the less inasmuch as you have the prospect, if not the promise, of so large a representation from the Episcopal Church. In the devout hope that the cause may receive a new and saving impulse through this meeting, I am &c.”

*From Rev. E. N. Kirk, dated at Andover, Mass.*

“It grieves me to refuse you any thing, but especially this request. Yet I believe I know the Master's will. My duties at present are here, and not there.

“I rejoice that you have adopted the method of calling an extra meeting of the members of the Tract Society, to throw the responsibility of decision on them. Our Executive Committees have acted too much, and have been treated too much as if they were the Societies, and the Church has seemed to act as if it were a great exercise of charity in her to help them when they have brought themselves into a strait. Oh, my dear brother, how little is there of genuine principle in the religion of the Church! Yet there is improvement,

progress, which the course you are now adopting is calculated to advance. Tell the members of Christ's holy Church, bought with his blood, redeemed from hell, on the verge of glory and riches and bliss interminable, tell them that Christ's cause languishes; ask them if it must be so any longer?"

*From Rev. Heman Humphry, D. D. President of Amherst Coll. Mass.*

"Your call will, I doubt not, have the cordial approbation of all the friends and patrons of the American Tract Society. It is meet that they should come together, when they can have more time for prayer and deliberation, than can be allowed at the Anniversaries. I hope there will be a full attendance, and that God will be with you in every deed. I rely more and more upon the gifts of the Holy Ghost, to carry forward the work of the Lord, through the instrumentality of your and other kindred Societies.

"It is exceedingly encouraging and affecting to see how much faster God is opening the world to evangelical efforts, in answer to prayer, than the Church is prepared to take possession. Let any one go back *five and twenty* years, and consider what a small beginning had then been made; let him compare it with what has since been done, and help exclaiming, if he can, 'what hath God wrought! It is the Lord's doing and marvellous in our eyes.' But then, what wide regions of the earth remain yet to be possessed. Shall the churches gird on their armour and go up and take possession, or shall they stay and die by the stuff.

"What might not be done by the *press*, in the four quarters of the globe, if means of employing its mighty agency were furnished. The press never requires a year, nor an hour to get acclimated. It is equally safe under the burning Line and the Arctic circle. The Cholera cannot touch it; the deadly miasmas of Western Africa cannot affect it; it cannot suffer from cold, or hunger, or nakedness. When once abroad on missionary ground, it is never obliged to return with an invalid family, nor to recruit its own exhausted energies. However rapidly the living teachers may follow each other to the grave, the press never dies.

"And then, the Tracts and bound volumes which your Society is sowing broadcast over this great country, and aiding other Societies to print and scatter abroad in a hundred heathen tongues, who can estimate, who could estimate if he had the arithmetic of angels, the amount of good which has already been done: still less, what golden harvests are yet to spring up under this heaven-blessed cultivation. Some of these Tracts may be spurned under foot, but they feel no pain, no discouragement. Many of them may be lost, but how

easily can they be replaced. What though some thousands of your bound volumes should be laid away to sleep quietly upon dusty shelves, how many hundred thousands will be doing their work in the hands of a million of readers.

“Let Home and Foreign Missionaries do all they can. Let their numbers be greatly increased. But if our country is saved, if the world is ever evangelized, it must be, I am persuaded, by the instrumentality of the *religious press*, as much as any other human agency. It is the true Archimedean lever, and the Bible is the *pou sto*. I believe that no Society in the world has done more than the American Tract Society in proportion to its means, to develope the mighty power of the Press, when brought directly to bear upon the highest interests of mankind ; and I look upon this developement as a mere carrat of what may be done ; of what *will* be done under the smiles of gracious Heaven, by scattering ‘ the leaves of the tree of life, for the healing of the nations.’

“I send you this trifle (§5), for foreign distribution. Would that I could add to it a hundred fold. May the Lord vouchsafe such discoveries of his holiness and glory to the meeting, as to make every heart exclaim, ‘ How dreadful is this place ; it is none other than the house of God ; it is the gates of heaven.’ ”

*From Rev. Francis Wayland, D. D. Providence, R. I.*

“It shall be my prayer that the Spirit of God may be with you as on the day of Pentecost ; that it may guide you into all wisdom and energy and holy labor for Christ. The objects which you have suggested for discussion are of the greatest importancc. I am sure that nothing should be allowed to prevent the Church of God from using the Press in every manner and in every place where Providence opens the door. I shall be glad to co-operate with the Society by every means in my power.”

*From Rev. Joseph Hurlbut, New London, Con.*

“I assure you there is no subject that interests me more at present, than that of sending out a phalanx of devoted colporteurs throughout our Western and South-Western States. I hope the time is not far distant when it will be in my power to give you some *evidence* of my interest.”

*From Rev. Chauncey A. Goodrich, Prof. Yale College, Con.*

“It is my fervent prayer that a double portion of that Spirit which has in times past prevailed in your Society, may rest on all of its members who assemble on this occasion. Wielding as you do, in behalf of the churches, the mightiest engine of civilized society, which

has shaken kingdoms, and is destined to shake the whole earth, may aid be given you from on high to turn all its power to the promotion of the Redeemer's kingdom.

"We have reached an interesting and momentous crisis in the progress of our great public institutions. One after another has become encumbered with debt, and crippled in its operations. It is the imperative duty of the friends of Christ to prevent any further recurrence of these evils; and I am glad that your Board have resolved to call upon the public to decide *before hand* what shall be done, to decide whether they will suffer the noble Institution to hesitate or falter in the onward course which Providence has so plainly marked out before her. I trust they will decide right, that the proposed meeting will give an impulse to the zeal and self-denial of all who love the cause of Christ, which shall bear your Society forward with redoubled power, in the widening sphere of action which opens before it."

*From Rev. William J. M'Cord, Dutchess Co. N. York.*

"I have ever felt deeply interested in the Tract cause, for to *religious publications* I owe, under God, almost all that I am, as a christian and a minister. Every department of your enterprise has my cordial approbation, and shall receive my feeble aid."

*From Thomas W. Blatchford, M. D. Troy, N. York.*

"You do not know how glad I was when I saw a few weeks since that you had determined to hold a kind of holy convention, to consult upon the great interests of the Tract Society.

"I had just returned from that holy gathering at Norwich, with my heart bigger than my pocket, and a million times fuller, and my determination fully set in me never to let anything short of 'impossibility itself' *clearly expressed*, prevent my being present at the annual gatherings of the A. B. C. F. M.

"It seems now as though 'I should not lose the relish all my days,' and I don't want to. I feel (as I told my wife when I returned) as if I wanted to roll myself into the Lord's treasury, to be disposed of just where his commissioners should desire. So glorious seems this cause of all causes--and the Tract Society is only one of its most important members--whether it is the *eye*, or the *hand*, or the *foot*, I am not going to determine, though it looks like a little of all. But certain I am that God has so constituted all those members of his Evangelizing machine, that the eye cannot say to the hand, I have no need of thee nor again the head to the foot, I have no need of you; nay, much more those members which *seem* to be feeble are *necessary*.

"The moment I saw your notice of the Meeting, I determined to be

with you, God willing; but whether I shall now be able, is yet a matter of some uncertainty. If I am not, impossibility itself will be clearly expressed; but whether present or absent, I hope ever to be found like the bread tickets our baker leaves with us, 'good for one Loaf.'"

*From E. C. Delavan, Esq. Ballston Centre; N. York.*

"I have always felt a deep interest in the Tract cause. The first donation I ever made of any amount, was to assist in erecting the Society's house. It required a great effort at the time to do what little I did, but I have always looked upon that effort as one that has been greatly blessed to me."

*From Rev. Tryon Edwards, Rochester, N. York.*

"The call for the proposed meeting I cannot but regard as one of the most important steps ever taken by your Society; and the meeting itself, I hope and trust, may be but *the first of a series* which, may annually bring together the friends of the Tract cause to deliberate for its interests, and act to extend its influence and usefulness.

"As I am prevented from being with you, I send the paper which I have prepared, at the request of your Committee, on the relation of your publications to the pastoral office."

*From Hon. Joseph C. Hornblower, Chief Justice of New-Jersey.*

"I have endeavored so to arrange my public duties as to afford me an opportunity of being present at the meeting, but regret to find that it will not be in my power. I must be on the bench. If present with you I could contribute little beyond my best wishes for the success of the enterprise, and these you will have, though absent, accompanied with my sincere prayer that the great Head of the Church will be present with you by his Spirit, and conduct to such results as shall be for his glory and the best interests of the world."

*From Rev. Samuel Miller, D. D. Princeton, N. Jersey.*

"I rejoice to find the Board of your Society convinced that something more than usual ought to be done to rouse the zeal and extend the efforts of your noble Institution. Great and immensely important as is the good which it has been the means of accomplishing already; yet, when we compare what it *has* done with what it *might* do, if the power of the press were properly estimated, and if the zeal of American christians were animated in any thing like the degree which it ought to be,—it appears to me that every pious heart must be ashamed and humbled to think how little we are doing, and must see the

necessity and importance of new and greatly enlarged operations in this wide and daily increasing field of benevolence.

“It does appear to me that several departments of this wide field have been hitherto neither estimated nor improved as they ought to be. The employment of *Colporteurs*—the personal and general co-operation of *private christians*, of *both sexes*, with the ministry, in spreading the knowledge of the Gospel, and that without in the least invading the functions of the sacred office—ought both to be, undoubtedly, carried to a much greater extent than they have hitherto been pursued in our country.

“Will the churches refuse or hesitate to sustain the Board in this extension of its labor? I hope not. In my opinion every friend to the peace and happiness of our beloved country, as well as to the salvation of men;—every *patriot*, as well as every *christian*, ought to feel himself called upon to do *five* if not *ten* times as much as ever before in forwarding this great cause. It is the cause of *God*—of our *country*—of our *children* and our *children's children*—to an extent that no one now can adequately estimate.

“I can only say, my dear sir, that, in my old age, and near my last account, I stand ready to do all in my power to co-operate with your Board in its efforts to promote this precious cause. It would gratify me unspeakably to be present with you—not with the hope of adding anything either to the instruction or the solemnity of the occasion; but to testify my humble zeal in favor of the hallowed work in which you are engaged, and to contribute my mite of influence towards the encouragement of those who are engaged in it.

“May the blessing of the King of Zion rest upon your meeting, and make it productive of rich and glorious results! Cordially yours in the Lord.”

*From Rev. Joseph H. Jones, Philadelphia.*

“I could not expect by my presence to add ‘in conference’ to the wisdom of the enlightened and devout body of clerical and lay brethren whom such an occasion will undoubtedly draw together. Had it been practicable for me to attend, however, I should have found their deliberations greatly serviceable to myself. I shall look, in common with thousands who are not permitted to be there, with lively interest to the result. And though my influence is but limited, and my zeal and love in the cause of our divine and glorious Redeemer too often lamentably small, yet I need not say that any subordinate service which I can render in promoting it, by the help of God, it will give me much pleasure to undertake.”

*From Rev. William Suddards, Philadelphia.*

TO REV. DR. MILNOR,—“Your kind letter covering an invitation to the hospitalities of your house and the interesting meeting at the Tabernacle is duly received; but my duties and the state of my health forbid my engaging at present in those delightful combinations of good men for great and good purposes, as in former years I was wont to do. They have my warmest regards, and I only regret that I cannot render a support in some sort commensurate with my attachment. I am glad to find *you* at your post. We hope to have the ray of your example unbroken in this matter. It will speak to many who shall survive you, in tones from the sepulchre, and men may rush to bear the fallen standard, who stood far away before you fell.”

*From Rev. Joel Parker, D. D. Philadelphia.*

“Somebody has said that ‘what ought to be done can be done.’ I suppose the remark, like most of our sententious sayings, is to be taken with some limitations; but it does appear to me that the cause of the American Tract Society ought to receive a fresh impulse, and that the amount of good which it has already achieved, and the increased facilities which it now possesses for doing good *must* and *will* call forth the resources of the friends of Christ. Shall such a power to bless our country in this interesting forming period of its history, lie dormant in the stereotype-plates of the Tract Society, when a few thousand dollars, rightly applied, would send spiritual light and salvation to every destitute settlement, and almost every cabin in North America! Shall the cry of the heathen be heard, redoubled as it is, without any corresponding redoubling of our exertions.”

*From Rev. William S. Plumer, D. D. Richmond, Va.*

“I fully concur in the importance of increased zeal in the Society’s work. Infidelity has retreated from high places, and has gone into dark corners. I have lately travelled from this place to Christiansburg, which is on the other side of the Alleghany mountains. I went via Charlottesville, Waynesboro, Staunton, Lexington, Fincastle, Big Lick and Salem. In nearly all that country there is at this time a loud call for the Society’s publications. I am much pleased with your recent publications and doings.

“P. S. There is great need of a Tract containing a *summary* of the evidences of Christianity.”

On *Tuesday evening*, at 7, a sermon was preached by the Rev. JAMES ROMEYN, of Catskill, N. Y. from Acts, 26 : 22, 23, “Having therefore obtained help of God, I continue unto



this day, witnessing both to small and great, saying none other things than those which the prophets and Moses did say should come; that Christ should suffer, and that he should be the first that should rise from the dead, and should show light unto the people and to the Gentiles." A copy of this able, appropriate and highly evangelical discourse, was, on motion of Rev. Baron Stow, requested for the press, and the Committee are happy to present it to the reader at the close of this volume. Prayers were offered by Rev. Benjamin H. Rice, D. D. and Rev. R. K. Rodgers.

*Wednesday, 10 A. M.* Prayer by Rev. N. Murray. The Rev. Dr. Milnor, Chairman of the Committee, presented to the meeting the following Document

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## DOCUMENT I.

### The Harmony of the Society's Proceedings.

*"Behold how good and how pleasant a thing it is for brethren to dwell together in unity."*

Among the many interesting topics deserving of notice on this extraordinary assemblage of friends of the American Tract Society, may be eminently ranked that of the very remarkable harmony of feeling and action by which its past history has been distinguished. It would be ungrateful to that Divine Being whose direction in the management of its affairs has been so constantly sought by its conductors, not to recognize, thankfully and devoutly, his special providence, and the benignant guidance of his Holy Spirit in all the way in which he has hitherto brought us.

The Institution had its basis in the principle of brotherly love. It was deemed possible for the disciples of a common Savior, honestly divided from each other on some points of doctrine, discipline and worship, and separated into different communities, cordially to unite in the dissemination of those great truths of their religion in which they harmoniously concur, and which are indissolubly connected with the eternal well-being of the soul. It was not entirely a new experiment. Several small associations had been productive of much good. In Great Britain a similar effort, on a large scale, had been attended with an astonishing measure of success; and it may be added, the great Society by which it has been prosecuted still maintains its harmony, and continues to bless that country and the world, through its numerous publications, with invaluable treasures of spiritual knowledge and practical instruction. Tract Societies, both here and there, owe much of their prosperity, under the Divine favor, to those well-considered principles of action which were adopted at the outset of these undertakings as the basis of christian union.

With whatever delight the christian mind may contemplate the happy period, how distant none can tell but He who "knows the end from the beginning," when on all points the followers of Christ shall see eye to eye, be "perfectly joined together in the same mind, and in the same judgment," and all unite under one congenial banner, it was apparent to every considerate mind that there were existing differences of opinion and practice among Evangelical christians, that in such a combination must be left untouched. It was to be ascertained in what doctrines of faith all of this character were agreed, and an honest understanding was to be had that to such their united endeavors were to be implicitly confined. Happily, little difficulty occurred in settling these. "Man's native sinfulness; the purity and obligation of the law of God; the

true and proper Divinity of our Lord Jesus Christ; the necessity and reality of his atonement and sacrifice; the efficiency of the Holy Spirit in the work of renovation; the free and full offers of the Gospel, and the duty of men to accept it; the necessity of personal holiness, and a state of rewards and punishments beyond the grave,"—doctrines dear to the hearts of all evangelical christians, were the declared basis of our union. They were adopted with much deliberation and fervent prayer, and they have continued to form the inspiring topics of more than a thousand different publications, including upwards of one hundred bound volumes, which it has been our privilege to issue. By a faithful adherence to these original terms of association, has harmony been uninterruptedly preserved for the seventeen years and more through which the labors of this Institution have been so happily conducted.

During this period no Tract or book has been issued but with the unanimous approval of all the members of the Publishing Committee, consisting of a representative from each of six evangelical denominations of christians. To whatever extent any denomination may have thought it a duty to spread abroad a knowledge of its own peculiarities, this has been its own separate and exclusive work; we have scrupulously adhered to the principles on which our union is based, and on which its continuance depends.

One great object, however, it is believed, has been effected by this exhibition of harmonious action. Multitudes have become disposed to look more at the great principles of their blessed religion, in which they are all able conscientiously to concur, and less on those in which they unhappily differ. The discovery has been satisfactorily made of the inferiority in number and magnitude of the latter, compared with the former. The beneficial example of its Divine Author has become more an object of

assiduous imitation. Where discussion has been had on subjects which are still in dispute among christians, less of asperity has been seen in the pages of controversy, and the failure to convince an adversary, has not often been followed by the language of bitterness and denunciation. It has been seen by Protestant churches, that just in proportion as they present a united front to the assaults of infidelity and error, and the machinations of the Man of Sin, will the citadel of their hopes stand firm and uninjured. Just as they spend their strength in mutual contention, will their common enemies gain advantage over them. It was a happy step towards that union, over the continued subsistence and increase of which the present occasion calls upon us so gratefully to rejoice, when that grand association, the British and Foreign Bible Society, originated, whose labors have given to the world more than fourteen million copies of the volume of inspiration, and multiplied the means of conveying its blessed truths to the nations of the earth, by translations into more than 150 of the languages into which they are divided.

\* The establishment of Tract Societies by christians of different denominations, was a further advance in the way to that blessed consummation, when all discord shall cease; when the principles, and objects, and modes of action among christians shall universally coalesce; when the genius and spirit of the Gospel shall unite their hearts in christian love; when God shall be adored as the universal Father; the world become one vast family of brethren, united to Him and one another by the blood of Christ, regenerated by his Spirit, and prepared to cast their crowns before the same Lord, and rend the concave of heaven with one harmonious shout of praise.

In the retrospect of the past doings of this Institution and their results, they who have been most intimately connected with its transactions have reason, with a deep

sense of the imperfections of their own agency therein, to exult in multiplied evident manifestations of divine favor towards it. Especially do they rejoice in the delightful fact to which these remarks are intended to have a special reference—the preservation, thus far, of perfect unity and concord among its officers and members, and the confirmation which this affords of every glowing anticipation of its friends being realized in its future progress.

For the promotion of this end let us improve our present assemblage. For this let our united prayers ascend to heaven, and our best endeavors be exerted. A dutiful spirit should delight to recur to the precepts, and a living faith to lay hold of the promises of God. Where is one to be found among the former which gives countenance to disunion and discord? Where is there one among the latter that assures any recompense of blessing to a contentious and litigious spirit? The religion of Jesus is a religion of love. It was this hallowed principle in which the Gospel originated, and its too partial prevalence has been the chief obstacle to its predicted universal sway. Its final success can never obtain, until the same mind is possessed by his people that was in Christ their illustrious Head, and their combined and unembarrassed efforts are united for his glory and the salvation of mankind. A wide field lies open before us. Millions of heathen implore, in their destitution, the exercise of our benevolence towards them. Other millions of nominal christians, if in their blindness they ask not, we know need our interposition to pour into their minds the light of heavenly truth, and recall them to the simplicity that is in Christ. Still many a waste place of our own land reproaches the narrowness and lassitude of our exertions, while grateful multitudes, in regions which our efforts have availably reached, bless God for that concentrated union of action which has sent them our publications to light them on their way to heaven. Experience has proved that our

plan of union in this work of benevolence is not visionary or utopian. It contemplates no improper interference with any of the departments into which the family of Christ is divided.

Let no means employed by individual churches for the glory of the Redeemer and the salvation of those for whom Christ has died, be disregarded or esteemed of light importance. Let the living ministry be respected as a most honored Institution, a divine appointment, having the promise of the Church's Head to the end of time. Let each distinct branch of the vast household of faith employ the means entrusted to it by a gracious Providence, to promote the great ends contemplated by divine mercy and goodness to our fallen race. But let the broader principle of united action, so sanctioned of God, so blessed in its past results, so in accordance with the long cherished expectation of christian faith and the opening prospects of millennial glory, never be abandoned. O, it would grieve the soul of charity, and throw a gloom over the brightening prospects of futurity, were the sacred union of christians thus happily begun, and thus successfully pursued, to be dissolved, or in any measure lessened or impaired. But it may not be. The sacred bond must not be broken. Withered be the hand that would attempt its severance. Whilst any portion of six hundred millions of unenlightened heathen remain to be brought into submission to the Prince of Peace; while darkness broods over the superstitious churches of the East; while Papal Rome is seeking to extend her despotic sway over the minds of men; and while multitudes, not utterly beyond the influence of Gospel light and truth, are seen crowding the broad road that leadeth to destruction, let christian union be made the means of counteracting these mighty evils. We ask objectors to a plan so consonant with the spirit of the Gospel, what would have been the number of Bibles circulated within the last thirty-eight years, if

sectarian jealousy and rivalry had been successful in preventing the establishment of that magnificent monument of religious enterprise, with the thousands of its progeny, of the vast extent of whose most laudable exertions we have already spoken; and how many precious souls would have gone unblessed to their great account, had not the great Tract Association of Great Britain, with our own and other kindred unions, disseminated through innumerable channels the words of life and salvation in the little pamphlet or the more enlarged volume.

When we look at the details of spiritual good effected by this joint co-operation which stand authenticated and recorded in the annals of our Tract Society alone, and form the most moderate conjecture of cases which have never met the public eye, we are compelled to exclaim, "What hath God wrought!" And when we are mourning over the remaining bitterness of party spirit in the Church or in the world, and are filled with grief that union is not the watchword with all that love their Savior and their fellow-men, and while we also join in the lamentations of our associates, that the means of such extensive good as lies before us are, by so many who profess highly to appreciate our object, injuriously withheld; we may perceive, amidst all our discouragements, sources of pious gratulation for the past, and of inspiring hope for the future, that should silence our complaints, and lead us to trust in God for an issue to our labors for which we shall have reason to praise Him through eternal ages.

This Document was referred to Rev. Dr. Magie, Rev. Baron Stow, and Rev. Dr. Adams, who subsequently presented the following Report, which was adopted by the Meeting, and with the Document was referred to the Executive Committee for publication: viz.

**REPORT.**

We regard the doings of the American Tract Society, as set forth in this paper, with very deep interest. By these doings the fact is established that good men may so coalesce on all substantial points of christian faith and practice, as to labor faithfully and successfully together, without giving up any of their own peculiar views. The various branches of the Church are thus taught to forget the minimum of their differences in the deep conviction they feel of the value of the maximum of their agreement. This Society cannot have operated for seven-tween years, in this harmonious way, without producing results of the happiest kind. It is cheering to the heart of pious benevolence to see that brethren, who are called by different names, and who worship under somewhat different forms, can nevertheless thus dwell together in unity.

Your Committee feel that christians every where will be encouraged by the lovely example of this Society's operations. There is something in this fact which looks like a pledge and a prelude of that day when the watchmen shall all see eye to eye, and when Ephraim shall no longer envy Judah, nor Judah vex Ephraim. We cannot but hope, therefore, that the American Tract Society will go on with its noble work in the same spirit in which the Society had its origin. This blessed work was founded in christian confidence, and it is only by a maintenance of the same spirit that it can expect to meet its full measure of reward.

Rev. Mr. M'CLURE, of Malden, Mass. in moving the adoption of this Report, said that the Document and the Report had struck a keynote which he did not doubt would vibrate in unison in every heart. It was pleasant to see christians of every name and sentiment co-operating in such a work as this, and he had been reminded, while listening to the Report, of one of the earliest efforts made in this cause. Forty years ago, a lady in Boston, a member of the Congregational church, became interested in some of the Tracts written by Hannah More, and called on a bookseller, a deacon in the Baptist church, to publish them. He said that if she would raise the money to buy the paper, he would print them at his own risk. She did so, and the Tracts were published and circulated. Here was a daughter of the Puritans co-operating with a member of the Baptist communion in spreading the writings of one of the daughters of the Church of England.

The operations of this Society seem to be calculated to raise up a race of broad-chested christians, men of big hearts, capable of sympathizing with all that love the Redeemer, with the 144,000, the repre-



sentatives of the entire Church of God. We desire to see more extensive christian union than now prevails, and not merely external union that may be effected by one denomination becoming so strong as to swallow up others; but union that is produced by bringing all nearer to the common centre. This is the only union that is of value in the sight of heaven.

Mr. M. quoted the remark of Leighton, that we ought to inquire if the points in which we agree are not more numerous and important than those in which we differ; and that of Melancthon, In essentials, unity; in non-essentials, liberty; in all things, charity.

With this "bond of perfectness," we are in no danger of any compromises, whereby the truth shall suffer. There flows in these veins the blood of the Covenanters; it is capable of being warmed by the fire of the Puritans, or any warmth imparted by christian love. I love the Church of my fathers—but that implies no reproach or indifference to others. For a man to say he loves his own mother—the being who kindly watched his infancy, blessed his hours of sickness, and has loved him more than any other being, is that a reason for another to take offence? Must there be no preferences in order to be union? Do I love my neighbor less, because I love my family more?

The way to unite the Church is to propose to her various branches *one* glorious commanding object. It is not to be done by the sacrifice of cherished preferences and prepossessions. But when all are pressing toward the same mark, however each may be platooned into different sections, or marshalled under different leaders, the Church will present one solid phalanx to the enemy—the more effective, perhaps, in her efforts, and more certain of success, for the order and discipline of their separate organization.

*Letter from Rev. Daniel Sharp, D. D. Boston, Mass.*

"I cherished the hope for a few days that I should be able to be with you at the expected Meeting; but circumstances have occurred which will not allow me then to visit New-York. I shall, however, be with you in spirit. I have entire sympathy in the enlarged and catholic objects and efforts of the Society; and undiminished confidence in the impartiality and sound views of the Executive Committee. I should have been highly gratified to be present. May the Father of lights guide all your deliberations and control all your decisions."

The following Document, prepared under the direction of the Committee, was read by the Rev. Dr. EDWARDS, approved, and referred for publication.

## DOCUMENT II.

**Providential History of the Society.**

The Society's operations were commenced by issuing a series of Tracts and Children's Tracts; but attention had already been directed both to the issuing of volumes like those of Baxter and Doddridge, and to operations in foreign lands. The question occurred whether its title should not be the American Tract and Book Society, or the American and Foreign Tract Society; but the Institution, formed in London in 1799, had simply the title "Religious Tract Society;" the term Tract [Latin *tractum*, a TREATISE, or thread of discourse drawn out] was equally applicable to a larger or smaller publication; and it was conceived that the term AMERICAN might imply exertion wherever American benevolence should reach. The same views governed the Board in applying in 1841 for the Act of Incorporation.

The Society's first Report recognizes the imperious claims of *pagan lands*, and the second contains the principles on which foreign pecuniary grants should be applied. Those principles were drawn up and presented to the Society by one of its earliest and most steadfast friends, the lamented JEREMIAH EVARTS, Esq. then Secretary of the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions—nor is it now known how far his wide-reaching mind then anticipated the thousand ramifications of influence in favor of foreign missions, which should grow out of the active inlistment of Tract and Bible Institutions as auxiliary to that magnificent enterprise. Appeals from some foreign stations had already been received, and in the two following years the Society's first foreign pecuniary grants were made to the missions of the Board of Commissioners in Malta and Ceylon, the mission of the Protestant Episco-

pal Church in Greece, and the mission of the American Baptist Board in Burmah. These grants have increased to the average of about \$25,000 annually for the last seven years.

In the Society's third year it entered on the *volume circulation*, by stereotyping Doddridge's *Rise and Progress*, which was perpetuated by the donation of \$800 from the lamented Hon. Stephen Van Rensselaer, Col. Varick, Col. Rutgers and Nicholas Brown, Esq.; and was ere long followed by issuing the *Saints' Rest*, *Call to the Unconverted*, *Pilgrim's Progress*, and kindred works. The fathers in the churches cheered the Society in the enterprise. In the Society's eighth year an active friend at the South instituted an extensive correspondence respecting it, and presented its claims at the ensuing Anniversary, when it was Resolved to attempt to reach every accessible family in the Southern Atlantic States with one or more volumes, a design which, one year after, was extended to embrace all our Territories. Individuals were also raised up to give the enterprise their undivided energies, both at the East and West, and seek to supply families not only with a volume, but with the "Evangelical Family Library;" the number of volumes has increased to nearly one hundred; and by all the efforts made, with the co-operation of pastors and christians generally, about 2,000,000 copies have been circulated.

In the Society's fourth year attention was drawn to *systematic Tract distribution*. A deep interest had been awakened in behalf of the destitute of our country, especially in the Western States, and a Meeting of gentlemen convened to raise funds, when one of them, previous to subscribing \$1000, said he wished to give at least *two Tracts to every family* at the West; and as the effort to obtain means was prosecuted by the Secretary, the question occurred, Why not supply the accessible population at the East as well as the West? The work was soon entered

upon by the New-York City Tract Society, and in various places throughout the country.

After two years the attention of some of the laborers, and especially the late HARLAN PAGE, was called to the necessity of connecting with the distribution *faithful personal effort for the souls of men*, which greatly increased the interest and efficiency of these endeavors, and they were prosecuted to some extent in most of our principal towns and villages, and in very numerous congregations. The Society's energies were directed to the extension of these means of grace throughout the country generally, and in its ninth year it employed *twenty-three years of agency*, partly for the raising of funds, but chiefly to *excite the people of God to fidelity to the population around them*. The Societies in New-York City, Philadelphia, and some other important cities, towns and villages, have persevered; the former having now 1000 visitors, and reported the last year, 234 hopeful conversions, besides abundant incidental good. But it is deeply to be lamented that, from various causes, this Society's attention was gradually diverted from these efforts for the destitute of our country, till it lost the vantage-ground it had gained; and the loss to perishing thousands is known only to the Omniscient mind.

If any thing can reconcile us to this loss, it is perhaps the fact that God has now directed the Society to kindred efforts for our destitute population, which promise in many respects still higher good. The prosecution of the volume circulation has shown that *it also* affords the fairest opportunities to labor for the salvation of men, as it has also brought more distinctly to view the boundless moral wants of our country. In May, 1841, the Agent for superintending the volume circulation at the West, spread before the Committee the immense population which his endeavors had not reached. The tear of compassion was already falling over neglected millions within our own borders. Attention had been awakened to the success of *colporteurs*,

plain humble men in France and adjacent countries; and the Society resolved to seek out men of kindred spirit who would labor at small expense, to visit county by county, and with the christian co-operation that may be obtained, supply every accessible family with one or more books, by sale or gift, accompanied with all proper endeavors for their eternal good. A blessing has thus far evidently attended this system, and, so far as known, it has the cordial co-operation of the people of God. Nearly 20 of these Volume Agents for the destitute are now under commission, 15 of them for the Western States, and three for the Germans, whose language they speak.

Thus has God in his providence opened doors of usefulness before the Society, which at his bidding they have humbly endeavored to enter. In each department they have discerned a work which the churches must evidently pursue, and in each the encouragements to labor continually brighten. Who will not pray that God will make the Officers of the Society, its Managers, its Committee, its Agents, its supporters and friends, faithful to the trust, and bless these and other instrumentalities in subduing the nations to himself.

As Dr. EDWARDS proceeded with the reading of the above Document he added remarks on various topics presented; adverting to the early history of the New England (now American) Tract Society, formed at Andover in 1814, twenty-eight years since. It began with obtaining subscriptions of \$20 or more, to be applied to printing Tracts designated by the respective donors, one half of the edition to be received by the donor for gratuitous distribution, and the remaining half to be sold at cost, and the proceeds applied to reprinting the same number of copies, and thus the Tract to be perpetuated. From such beginnings grew the present Institution. He believed it originated from the Fountain of all good, and if its labors were prosecuted in dependence on him, it could never fail. The stream will rise as high as its source; as he had just been reminded by the beautiful fountain from the Croton, that plays in front of the City Hall. Let all have the spirit of Him who, though he was rich, for our sakes became poor, and we shall seek out the destitute at home and abroad; and we

shall approach all, even the deluded Catholic and errorist, with such love in our hearts that we shall not be repulsed. When we circulate Baxter's works it will be with Baxter's spirit, calling on God for a blessing. The two million Volumes issued by the Society, if thus circulated, and accompanied by the Holy Spirit, would seem to contain truth enough for the conversion of "a nation in a day."

In the work of foreign distribution, this Society and the Missionary Boards were not different firms, but joint partners, all seeking, like the great Apostle, by toil and sacrifice, to "fill up that which is behind" of the afflictions of Him, who made the one great propitiation for sin.

In reference to HARLAN PAGE, he well recollected when the Secretary came to him in 1823 or 4, and said we wanted engravings on the Tracts, and there was an ingenious mechanic in Connecticut, a pious devoted man, who could make them. In this way Providence had brought into connection with this Society that man of God, whose example had done so much to awaken the churches to fidelity to the souls of men.

*Letter from Rev. Leonard Woods, D. D. Theol. Sem. Andover, Ms.*

"It gives me pain to think that I cannot be with you, and by my personal presence show what interest I feel in the object of the Meeting. The Tract Society has always been dear to my heart; and the importance of its labors has been increasing, in my view, from year to year. I have been uniformly satisfied, and more than satisfied, with the arrangements by which the principal operations of the Society were removed from Boston to New-York. And I would not cease to bless God that he has been pleased in so high a degree to prosper the Society. I cannot think of what has been accomplished without astonishment. How small was our beginning! How rapid the growth of the Society! And how wide its salutary influence! When, at the outset, I went here and there to induce men to contribute to this object, my heart would have been filled with joy could I have known that a tenth part of the good which has been done would ever have been accomplished.

"The present depression of the Tract cause, I have thought, should not discourage us. It is nothing strange, if the zeal which has been kindled in favor of Foreign Missions, has at the same time turned off the public mind, in some measure, from this and other benevolent objects. But I trust the depression is only for a time. When it comes to be seen and felt that the Tract cause is so intimately associated with the Missionary cause, and with all that is done in other ways for

the spiritual good of our race, I am sure the Tract Society will be sustained, and enabled to continue and enlarge its operations.

“The flood of immoral and infidel publications, to which you advert, is one of the greatest evils of the day. Much is to be done in different ways to check that evil. But I know of nothing which is likely to be so effectual as the wide circulation of the excellent Tracts or excellent Books which you have published.

“I have confidence in the Managers of the Tract business, and in others who will meet with them; and doubt not you will have wisdom from above, directing you to judge and act right in regard to all the subjects which will come before you. I find it hard to deprive myself of the pleasure of joining with you in your deliberations. I assure you, that I shall, through divine help, double my past contributions to the Society, and my endeavors, in all proper ways, to promote the object of your Meeting.

“In my view, the great point is, to get the object of the Tract Society fairly before the community, so as to produce, not an extraordinary and temporary excitement, but a *deep, permanent conviction of the importance of the object, and a steady habit of contributing to the funds of the Society.* The generous charities and the fervent prayers of ministers and christians are indispensable.”

Rev. R. S. Cook, Secretary, presented the following Document.



### DOCUMENT III.

#### The Power of the Press—for Good and for Evil.

##### I. ITS INFLUENCE IN THE REFORMATION.

Just three centuries and a quarter ago, an obscure mendicant monk approached the Castle of Wittemberg, and nailed to the church-door a paper containing ninety-five theological propositions. They would only have served, perhaps, as the death-warrant of their bold author, but for

the wonderful Providence that gave wings to the seeds of truth they contained, by which they were scattered over the whole field of the Church. The press spread these theses with the rapidity of lightning. "In the space of a fortnight," says a cotemporary historian, "they had spread over Germany, and within a month they had run through all christendom, as if angels themselves had been the bearers of them to all men."

Wherever this Tract of Luther's went, "it shook the very foundations of proud Rome; threatened with instant ruin the walls, gates and pillars of the Papacy; stunned and terrified its champions, and at the same time awakened from the slumber of error many thousands of men." It was one of a wide series of triumphs achieved by the truth of God, apprehended by a master mind, and proclaimed through the only channel by which the world could have been aroused from the death-like sleep of centuries.

It is a fact worthy of notice, in passing, that three Reformations are linked together by the mysterious art of writing and printing. An eminent historian (Turner) informs us that "as the writings of Wickliff made John Huss the Reformer of Bohemia, so the writings of John Huss led Martin Luther to be the Reformer of Germany: so extensive and so incalculable are the consequences which sometimes follow from human actions."

Tracing the Reformation beyond these first beginnings, D'Aubigné says, "If we except Switzerland, where the preaching of the Gospel had been already heard, *the arrival of the Doctor of Wittemberg's writings every where forms the first page in the History of the Reformation.*— A printer at Basle scattered the first germs of truth. At the moment when the Roman Pontiff thought to stifle the work in Germany, it began to manifest itself in France, the Low Countries, Italy, Spain, England and Switzerland. Even though the power of Rome should fell the



parent stem, the seeds of truth are henceforth spread abroad in all lands."

When the conflict thickened, Luther's voice resounded far and wide. "Three printing-presses were incessantly employed in multiplying copies of his various writings. His discourses passed from hand to hand, through the whole nation, supporting the agitated penitent in the confessional—giving courage to the faltering convert in the cloister—and asserting the claims of evangelic truth, even in the abodes of princes."

The voice of God was now to be heard. The New Testament, in German, was given to the world, and ten thousand sheets a day, from three presses, were issued. In about ten years, previous to 1553, fifty-eight editions were printed and circulated; and the Old Testament soon followed, issued in Tracts or parts, as the Bible originally was, "to make the purchase easy to the poor, who caught at the sheets given to the world as a letter coming to them from heaven."

In 1521 Melancthon issued his Tract, *Loci Communes*, the design of which was "to present theology as a system of devotion;" and it passed through 67 editions in 74 years, without including translations. "Next to the Bible, this work may have mainly contributed to the establishment of the evangelical doctrine."

The impulse which the Reformation gave to popular literature in Germany was prodigious. Whilst in the year 1517 only 37 publications were issued, in 1523, but six years after, 498 were published, 183 of which were from the pen of Luther alone, incredible as it may seem. "Whatever Luther and his friends composed, others disseminated far and wide. Monks, who were too ignorant to be able themselves to proclaim the word of God, traversed the provinces, and visiting the hamlets and cottages, sold them to the people. Germany was ere long overrun with these enterprising colporteurs. The efforts

to suppress these writings increased the eagerness of the people to possess them; and when bought, they were read with redoubled ardor. By similar means, translations of Luther's works were circulated in France, Spain, England and Italy."

The Swiss Reformers were not slow in learning the power of the press. At an early date, a colporteur named Lucian was employed by Zwingli, on the recommendation of a scholar at Basle, himself "an unwearied propagator of Luther's writings," "to go from city to city, from town to town, from village to village, nay, from house to house, all over Switzerland, carrying with him the writings of Luther. To this expedient was many a Swiss family indebted for the gleam of light that found entrance into their humble dwelling."

If we turn a moment to France, we find the principal Reformer giving her the New Testament in 1524; and when the faithful few were driven from the kingdom, we see them on the borders, consulting on "the importance of scattering the Scriptures and pious writings in their country." "Oh," exclaimed these refugees, "would to God that France were so supplied with Gospel writings, that in cottages and in palaces, in cloisters and in presbyteries, and in the inner sanctuary of all hearts, a powerful witness might be borne for the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ." The presses stationed at Basle were incessantly employed in multiplying French works, which were forwarded to Farel, and by him introduced into France, through *colporteurs*—"poor men, of good character for piety, who, bearing their precious burden, went through towns and villages, from house to house, knocking at every door." Thus, as early as 1524, there existed in Basle, and having France for the field of their operations, a *Bible Society, an Association of Colporteurs, and a RELIGIOUS TRACT SOCIETY.*"

This brief review is sufficient to show the estimate in

which the press was held by the Reformers; and it furnishes some insight into the means by which that amazing Reformation was achieved, in the blessings of which ten generations of men have rejoiced, and which will be the joy and wonder of all succeeding ages.

There is, however, another mode of illustrating the power of this agency as a means of reformation, by a glance at *the efforts made on the part of its enemies to resist and suppress it.*

Tetzel, concerned for the fate of his traffic in indulgences, denounced "punishment and disgrace in this world, and condemnation at the great day, to those who scribbled so many books and Tracts," as well as to those who "took pleasure in their writings, and circulated them among the people and in society." The Emperor Charles V. issued a decree, ratified by the imperial Diet, that the writings of the Reformers should "not merely be rejected, but destroyed." "You will, therefore," said this mandate to all princes and prelates, "burn, or in other ways utterly destroy them." The Pope issued a *bull*, approved by the Sacred College, enjoining upon "the bishops to search diligently for the writings of Martin Luther, and to burn them publicly and solemnly, in the presence of the clergy and of the laity." Even Henry VIII. attempting in vain to put down the influence of Luther's writings by his own royal pen, thought the flames a more effective extinguisher, and proceeded in solemn procession, with Cardinal Wolsey and the dignitaries of England and Rome, to St. Paul's Church, to burn the writings of the poor monk of Wittemberg—and, though "his heart did not mean so," to kindle the fires of the Reformation throughout England! In France, the government of Louis XIV. after the revocation of the Edict of Nantes, sent dragoons through the kingdom to destroy all the evangelical writings to be found; and so successfully did

they prosecute their mission, that they extirpated the christian literature of the French, and with it almost the last vestige of vital piety.

We pause here, without pursuing this mode of illustration through the more familiar history of the Puritan age, when the press came again to the aid of evangelical religion in a period of persecution and oppression, and scattered abroad those spiritual classics which Baxter, Bunyan, Flavel, and their cotemporaries wrote for the common mind, and for universal man.

Has the agency that in the 16th century could wake to life the energies of dormant mind in all the kingdoms of Europe; that excited the alarm and provoked the indignation of Emperors, Popes, and Kings, lest it should end their domination over the consciences of men; that, a century after, enabled a few persecuted men to break again the yoke of semi-papal oppression, give liberty of conscience to England, and bring down the Gospel to the masses of the people; that has ever been the defence of the Church from the assaults of infidelity: has this wonderful engine of light lost its power, now that the trammels of superstition no longer bind its arms, and its arrows, unlike those of a rude age, rough and hastily made, may be the polished shafts chosen from the armories of all ages? In other words, if such wonders were wrought by the press in the infancy of its power, at the darkest period of the dark ages, with only the productions of a few poor monks, and when every thing conspired to diminish its influence, what may not be accomplished by it, under God, with all its improvements, with the productions of the best minds of centuries, with a hundred-fold increase in the number of readers, with nothing to oppose, but every thing to encourage the fullest employment of all its influence for the extension and up-building of the kingdom of Christ? Shame, shame on the man who would place his hand on

the mouth by which the Church may now speak in many more languages than are recorded of the miraculous gift of tongues, and, with more than Reformation power, the words of eternal life, which shall be like the "leaves from the tree of life, for the healing of the nations!"

The Committee derive encouragement in their arduous work from the facts thus developed in the providences of the past, connected with the main instrument of the Society's usefulness. They are not left, however, without a witness of the faithfulness of God in blessing his truth, diffused by a similar agency at the present day. Could the influences going forth from the 60,000,000 Tracts and 2,000,000 books, in our land alone, be gathered up, a record would be furnished as instructive and as cheering as that found on any page of history. Even with the imperfect means of information enjoyed by the Committee, and recent as is the work on a scale at all extended, scarce a day passes without cheering intelligence from some quarter, of individual souls converted, of revivals of religion promoted, of believers edified and strengthened, or of good in some way to particular classes or communities.

Instead of occupying the attention of the Board with a detail of these results, which abound in the Annual Reports and other documents of the Society, the Committee would suggest that a season be devoted, during the present sessions, to a narrative of the results of the volume circulation, as they have come under the eye of the members of the Board, and pastors and others present.

## II. ITS INFLUENCE IN FRANCE.

It were well if the subject might be left here—if there were no illustrations of the power of the press for REVOLUTION, as well as for Reformation. But, unhappily, an

agent so mighty for good has found minds perverse enough to employ it in giving ubiquity and immortality to evil principles, which more than once have poisoned the public mind by degrees, till it was lashed into fury, as the waves of the sea are tossed before the tempest. An author has said that "the people are a vast body, of which men of genius are the hands and the eyes; and *the public mind is the creation of the philosophical writer.*" And the well known proverb, "*scribere est agere*"—**TO WRITE IS TO ACT**, which was decreed by Charles II. when pronouncing death upon Algernon Sydney for manuscripts found in his possession, is to the same point. Paine might have lived and died the drunken infidel that he was, and his memory and influence have perished with him, without dragging down thousands to share his miserable doom, but for the mysterious agent that still heralds his infidelity and his shame.

The French Revolution had never disgraced humanity, but for the preliminary steps of dragooning out of being every vestige of vital piety in the books possessed by the people, and then "*unchaining the tiger,*" and letting him loose on the people, in millions of infidel and atheistical pamphlets and Tracts, (to say nothing of the Encyclopedia, and other works of atheistic science for the learned,) by which the populace were prepared for anarchy and the reign of Terror! And what was it that threatened to inundate England, toward the close of the eighteenth century, with the infidelity of France? Not, surely, the personal presence of Voltaire, Marat, and Rousseau; but their poisonous writings, which, for aught apparent, might have accomplished their diabolical purpose to "crush" Christianity, but for the kind Providence that raised up able champions of the cross, who wrote for the masses as well as the learned, and "lifted up a standard against the enemy when he came in like a flood."

Were other illustrations needed, of the mischievous and

wide-reaching influence of error, when propagated by the press, they might be found in our own times; a single "Tract press," with Papal tendencies, swerving numbers from the faith in a single branch of the Church.

In this country, the source of immediate danger is not so much from an avowedly infidel press, as from a more insidious attack on public morals and private virtue; first, by dissevering the connection between science, literature and religion, in the means of early instruction; and, secondly, by fostering a love for the fictitious and extravagant, interlarded with the profane and licentious.

The great purposes of infidelity are mainly answered, if only religion can be kept out of the popular reading of the mass, and especially of the young. The natural heart will lead far enough away from the cross without any positive evil influences, if only the Gospel can be excluded. But while we rejoice in the amplest diffusion of knowledge, and in all means of early instruction, we cannot but feel the same alarm lest the means of *moral* improvement should not keep pace with the intellectual, that we should at the multiplication of railroads and steamboats, if the propelling agent were under no control. The people of France were not destitute of intelligence; but theirs was not the right kind of knowledge. The heart was untutored, and hence the catastrophe.

### III. FICTITIOUS AND LICENTIOUS PRESS.

One great source of alarm is immediate and imminent. The press teems and the mails groan with fiction and trash. Daily, and weekly, and monthly periodicals are filled with matter, not only worthless, but often positively demoralizing. The injury to mind and morals was sufficiently deplorable, when hundreds of steam-presses were throwing off their thousands of volumes daily of novels and romances; and when circu-

lating libraries served as literary *groceries*, to furnish the means of mental intoxication for the fashionable and the foolish. But now the United States Mail Department is transformed into a great circulating library, by which, at the twentieth part of the cost of transmitting a billet to a friend, enough of the *confection* of literature to derange healthy mental digestion for a month, can be conveyed to the remotest village in the land. The extent of the issues of this kind is as incalculable as the mischief wrought by their indiscriminate and almost universal perusal.

But this evil demands a more solemn and stern rebuke. It is not a light thing that there should be entering all our dwellings, men—or what is worse, their works—with unprincipled morals, giving false views of life, and casting sneers upon the Gospel and its professors, to fill up all the leisure hours of parents, children and domestics with tales, that, if true, should not be read, and the less, since they are false. Every steamship brings “the latest novel”—of an author, who, perhaps, is illustrating in his life the principles of his book, violating one or all the commandments of the Decalogue—while every steamboat carries into the interior mammoth editions to poison the minds and ruin the souls of the multitudes who are eager to devour the precious effusions. O, what havoc of mind and morals results from this wholesale dealing in what is false! Popular fiction invariably gives a disrelish for simple truth; engenders a habit of reading for amusement simply, which destroys all hope of mental improvement; familiarizes the mind with scenes of genteel or vulgar debauchery, and excites a thirst for similar adventures; gives false views of the perfectibility of human nature, and leads to disappointments in the relations of life; undermines the Gospel and the influence of the pulpit, by drawing away the mind from serious things, lessening the probabilities that its truths will take effect on the conscience;



or if they do, furnishing a ready mode of shaking off conviction; and by degrees sapping the foundations of virtue, and leading to crimes which once would have been abhorred.

He must have been a careless observer who has not noticed fruits like these, of the seeds of ruin sown broadcast over our land, in the fictitious publications of which we speak. We have now arrived at the second natural stage of the degenerate tendencies of the press. Grossly licentious papers, without even the concealment of the name which once would have been scouted from the community, are unblushingly circulated in the channels opened by "the polite literature," which has contributed to form the morbid appetite that now cries "give, give." Whether it will end in any thing short of the indecencies, obscenity and infidelity of France, remains to be seen. Laws seem to be inoperative; public sentiment does not correct the evil, and will not, so long as it tolerates and craves a literature that has paved the way for this; and for aught that now appears, the moral sensibilities are to be still farther outraged with the sight and the sound of libidinous papers, even when going to and entering the sanctuary of God.

Is it not a proper subject of discussion and inquiry, on the part of the Board, whether something may not be done to restore a healthy moral tone of feeling on this subject? Whether, by arresting public attention by the pulpit and the press, the tide of evil may not be stayed before every thing that is "pure, and lovely, and of good report" is blighted?

The above document was listened to with deep attention, and its exhibition of the flagrant evils to which we are subjected from this source awakened the most serious reflection.

The following Document, prepared by Rev. JAMES W. ALEXANDER, of Princeton, N. J. who was detained from the meeting, was read by Rev. Dr. PORTS.

## DOCUMENT IV.

## The Evils of an Unsanctified Literature.

It has been common to speak of the books which men read, as their companions; and it is as just to infer the character of men from their reading as from their associates. Men will be like their books, and this for a two-fold reason: first, because the literary productions of a country are the fruit of its intellect and heart; and secondly, because they act with a mighty influence on society. It is therefore by no means uninteresting to the philanthropist to inquire, *What will be the reading of our posterity and countrymen fifty years hence?* If it be pure, healthful, and fraught with wisdom, the generation will be exalted in holiness: if it be frivolous, or false, or corrupting, or godless, the generation will be perverse and abandoned. In the remarks which follow, an attempt will be made to show that an unsanctified literature is threatened, and that it is our duty to avert so dire a calamity; for which purpose a series of observations shall now invite attention, in such method as seems to promise due perspicuity.

I. A CHRISTIAN LITERATURE IS POSSIBLE, AND IS EARNESTLY TO BE SOUGHT. There is nothing incompatible with true religion in the attainments of secular wisdom or the delights of taste. The union of Science, Letters and Art with the revealed truth of God and the sentiments of grace, has been suggested and applauded a thousand times, until, so far as abstract statements are concerned, the topic is already hackneyed. The ever-blessed God, who is the Author of Nature and the Creator of our powers and susceptibilities, is he who gave the

Bible, who provided the great Redemption, and who made the gracious affections of the believer what they are.

This is, however, but a feeble statement of what is intended. Not only does christianity admit of a connection with literature and science, but all literature and science must fail of perfection if they lack this crowning excellency of renewed human nature. And if the public mind is susceptible of great impressions and movements from topics of high moment, it must be granted that language cannot be summoned to convey aught that is more sublime, awakening, or pathetic, than the themes of religion. Let us think of the multitudes who at a given moment are with avidity and delight, availing themselves of the fruits of the press, in the permanent book or the fugitive sheet, which enter every reading household; and then let us ask, What are the topics which, thus presented, should engage the highest affections of these inquisitive and immortal minds? In the expectation of an eternal state, impending so nearly over them and us, what should be the great themes of interest which the parent should lay before his child or read at the fireside, and which a thousand presses should scatter broad-cast over the mind of the nation? The answer requires no delay: it has already arisen to the lips of every sincere christian. Nothing conceivable should or could so awaken these souls, or so mightily prompt them to action, or so excite curiosity, or so purge the soul by means of the passions of fear and love, as the themes of revelation: the mystery of their nature their fall, their peril, their escape; their death, judgment, and eternity; the love of Christ, and the heaven to which it leads. Add to this the records of prophecy, the prospects of the race, as opened in the promise of the latter glory, and the kingdom of Christ, which is to absorb and supersede all other dominions. The language of man can utter nothing loftier or more affecting than these, and whatever impulse or charm can be attached to words by the

discoveries of science, the cogency of reasoning, or the refinements of taste, may well be applied to the work of carrying these tremendous realities home to every human bosom.

These, after all, are the truths for which the soul was made. The heart which has not been reached by them, has susceptibilities as yet altogether latent. These are the subjects which, above all others, will yet agitate society to its remotest fibres. It would be folly to assert, then, that religious considerations cannot be made interesting to the common mind. Compared with these, what are the things which our current literature—if literature it can be called—offers to the myriads of eager readers! What, in such a view, are the fugitive tales, the feigned embarrassments, and escapes, and catastrophes, the unnatural plots, the picture of life high or low, the song and jest, all which are gaped after and hunted out with an avidity which not even the nightly work of the press and the importunity of the newsboy can satisfy! The day has been when masses of the people were convulsed by these very truths. This is the subject, these are the very propositions which broke the sleep of the Gentile world wherever apostolic teaching made its way; which ran through Northern and Middle Europe, in that amazing revival which we call the Reformation; which penetrated every branch of the great Anglo-Saxon tree in the seventeenth century; and which were so familiar and so dear to the settlers of New England, that to this day they are the acknowledged cause of the eminent intelligence and success of that happy land. The reading of the people just mentioned was, at these eras, almost exclusively religious reading. It will be so again, among every people, with all the aids and embellishments of science and learning suited to the progress of the race.

There is not a department of science or a walk of innocent letters which does not claim of us to be wedded

to religion. To dissever the two, is to shut out heaven from earth. Natural philosophy and natural history, in their largest acceptation, stand ready to become religious sciences, by merely turning their face toward God, whose they are, and whom they serve. The history of man, aside from the plan of Providence, is a labyrinth without a clew. Poetry and Music, always claiming to be sacred, miss their proper themes when banished from the sanctuary. And, if we are true to our vocation as christians, we shall be restless and unsatisfied until we shall have secured the teaching of whatever is worth teaching at all, in subserviency to God's grand scheme of civilization, by means of holy Scripture and regenerating grace.

In particular cases, and with various degrees of success, we see how kindly may be the union of Science and Literature with Divine Truth; for we see, on the one hand, a Bacon, a Newton, and a Pascal, and on the other, a Milton and a Cowper. We see it exemplified in the education which every gifted christian gives to a son or a daughter, and this by means of books, or what might be conveyed by books; and the sight should prompt us to diffuse the benefit and promote the sacred union as far as our united strength can reach.

II. NO COUNTRY HAS YET HAD A THOROUGHLY CHRISTIAN LITERATURE. Every christian country has had the blessing for a time, and in a portion of its population; but none has been leavened in the whole mass. Enough has been effected, on a small scale, at seasons of heavenly excitement, to show us what might be done; but thus far the majority of authors and readers have been of the earth, earthy. The world has yet to look for a sanctified literature. The seeming exceptions would not detain us long, even in detail. Individuals there have been who have laid their science and learning at the feet of Christ.

“Philosophy, baptised  
“In the pure fountain of eternal love,

" Has eyes indeed : and viewing all she sees  
 " As meant to indicate a God to man,  
 " Gives him the praise, and forfeits not her own.  
 " Learning has borne such fruit in other days  
 " On all her branches ; piety has found  
 " Friends in the friends of science, and true prayer  
 " Has flowed from lips wet with Castalian dew."

But in no country has the prevailing taste for any length of time been governed by such minds ; and, in most, the religious compositions of the age have flowed in a fertilizing but narrow stream through a land of carnal pleasure and godless learning. The Reformation had giants of literature, but more giants were left within the walls of Rome ; and while the holy scholars of Great Britain were laboring for the Gospel, the liveliest writers of the age of the Charleses were sweetening a cup of poison, to be handed down even to our day.

It is reserved for another era, to see a whole nation drinking with eagerness from the wells of salvation ; and no instructed christian can refrain from praying that God would confer this unspeakable benefit on our own land, and our own generation.

III. THE LITERATURE OF OUR COUNTRY IS IN A FORMING STATE. Not merely, in the strict and accredited use of the word Literature, is this true ; but in regard to the sum of all the reading of our people. There are rapid changes in public taste and habit, which some of us have lived to see ; but there are tendencies of which we descry only the beginning, and the termination of which may be disastrous. The influences which move upon our immense reading public are powerful and innumerable, as we may infer from the very extent of the book-trade, the number of imported works, the presses in every city and town, and the multitude of periodical publications. But these influences are not uniform and homogeneous. The plastic condition of the common mind receives a mould-

ing touch from every great intellect, at home or abroad, whether good or evil, and especially from the fictitious, sportive and periodical compositions of the hour.

That a mass so ductile should be subjected to chance, or to the blind or sinister impulses of those who write from self-interest alone, and who are ready to cater for the vilest appetites and passions of our nature, is what the christian world should not brook for a moment. That the millions who read, and who, in regard to the inner man, live by what they read, should be left a prey to licentious, infidel, or, at best, trifling and carnal authors, is an evil of such injustice as would shock us, if we could see it in its proper colors. And to do this the more fully, it is desirable to inquire how far the general reading of our people deserves the name of christian.

IV. THE LITERATURE OF OUR COUNTRY IS TO A GREAT EXTENT IRRELIGIOUS. Not that it is infidel or anti-christian in a positive degree, but that it is not so imbued with christianity as that wherever it goes it carries with it the savour of divine things. Laying out of view, for a little, those works which inculcate infidelity or vice, it must be acknowledged, of the large number which remains, that religious truth enters into a small portion. This is true of the daily reading of all classes, of the books used in schools, and of those which by thousands form the solace of the leisure hour. The people of the United States are more extensively a reading people than any upon earth. And in estimating the influence of what is read, we are not to confine ourselves to the large volume, but include the magazine, the newspaper, the song-book, the stitched play or tale, and the monosyllabic primer of the child. Our presses are prolific in due proportion to the labor-saving devices of the arts. All censorship of books is absent. Every class of minds is addressed by the teeming periodical press, and publishers vie with each other in affording this luxury of modern times at the lowest possible price.

The statistics of the newspaper press alone are enough to astonish one who comes newly to the calculation. Or, in default of this, a single walk through one populous thoroughfare, or a single hour on a steamboat-wharf, or a Sunday visit to a dozen working-men, will suffice to show how welcome the closely-printed journal is to every class of our people, and how sedulously it is studied, even by the hackney-coachman on his box, the operative on his scaffold, and the poorest wayfaring man who has a penny at command. From being a succinct account of the more important news, the journal has come to embrace every thing which human curiosity can crave, and especially the record of all the crimes of all the convicted felons of the land, with every disgusting detail of evidence, until even children learn not to shudder at bloodshed or blush at uncleanness. The very advertisements of popular newspapers now tell of enormities, and intimate escapes from the ills of vice, at which our fathers would have grown pale. Whole works, of some length, are in this shape spread before multitudes who would not otherwise obtain them; and these, in many cases, works of more than doubtful character. With many this is almost the sole reading; and it would be enough if quantity were all; for it occupies many an hour in the week, and much of the holy Sabbath. And if we are reminded that there are public journals which nobly subserve the cause of morals and religion, we cannot but remember that there are others which as openly do the work of destruction; while, between these extremes, there is an extensive series, which are the too faithful mirror of every folly and every transgression of our sinning people. Of much, then, in this portion of our literature, no christian characteristic can be predicted.

Next in general interest we may name the rapidly increasing class of fictitious works; tales, novels and romances. Without taking that high ground from which



severe moralists have condemned all of this species, we may surely say that, in point of fact, these books are not only void of any religious tendency, but that they cultivate a taste for momentary gratification, distemper the mind in regard to all solid acquirement, and in many instances convey the seductive poison of error and voluptuousness. As the matter now stands, it is to be feared that half the reading of those who most need the improvement of books is confined to this class, and that thousands of the young, in the laboring circles, devour every thing accessible of this sort with an indiscriminating voracity.

Rising from these inferior paths, we shall find to our sorrow, that of what may be called the solid instruction of our age, much is absolutely irreligious. Science, in all its circle, is taught as if the God whose workmanship the objects of science are, were to be studiously disregarded; and a course of thorough scientific study, embracing the very materials of natural theology, might be made out from authors of reputation and ability, which might be perused without finding an allusion to the design and benevolence of an Almighty Creator. The same is true of a great portion of historical literature, both old and new. From whom do we so generally learn the annals of the Roman empire, annals inseparably connected with the rise of the Church, as from Gibbon? To whom is the inquirer concerning the next period oftener directed than to Russell? Who is the most popular and fascinating historian of our own ancestry, if not Hume? Or what general survey of the fortunes of the race at large is in wider circulation than that of Rotteck? Inferior but less sceptical writers abound, who nevertheless have no sentence which lifts the soul to God.

Even where learning is genuine, therefore, and solid, it is irreligious, in the sense of being divorced from religion. The parts of truth, in order to be communicated, are dissected away from their native connection with the great

truth of the system. Where religion is introduced, it is, in a very large class of able and popular works, such religion as will present no foolishness to the Greek and no stumbling-block to the Jew ; such religion as will equally please the Papist and the Socinian ; in a word, a cold Deism, which even Islam would not reject : and this in a land professedly christian, and in books which make no little show of devotion. By such a literature our posterity must be educated, unless we substitute a better. A development of mind, furthered by such discipline, is disproportioned and monstrous ; and the more so, the higher the intellectual attainment. That science which takes no cognizance of God's most valuable revelations can never be wisdom. From such a circle of knowledge, however useful on a petty earthly scale, God is excluded ; and we revel in a godless literature, in a world of which every lineament signifies his presence. So that where this prevails, he who would learn the things of God must go apart, inquire elsewhere, and resort to strictly religious works.

But our reflections become still more melancholy when we find the same studied omission in works deliberately prepared for the instruction of youth in elementary schools. Consider the necessary tendency of training a child, day by day, and year by year, to exclude God ! Contemplate ten thousand schools, and millions of youth perpetually learning, and yet learning nothing which can save their souls ; taught to tread the very ground where God's presence should be felt at every step, with a total absence of the idea of God ! Can such a method fail to promote the habit of excluding God from the thoughts ?

School manuals and school libraries are formed, or are in progress in several of our States. They have been prepared with care, and by men of sound learning. But they have in more than one instance been produced in accordance with the very principle which we deprecate.

Natural religion, that is, so much of truth as may carry the assent of the Mahometan, the Jew, and the Deist, they do sometimes contain; but Christ crucified they do not contain. They teach many things, they teach them well; but they teach nothing as to the great end for which man lives, and without which it were better for him that he had never been born.

Not every book denominated religious contains evangelical and saving truth. The spirit of unscriptural concession is gaining upon us. Even moral and religious works appear, and gain public favor, which exclude the very vitals of piety. The grand central truths are left out. The reader moves in a circle which keeps Christ and Redemption always out of sight. This, though a negation, is one of which the consequences are positive and ruinous. No better scheme could be devised for the introduction of practical infidelity, or for educating a generation of intelligent readers to be the prey of destructive error. And every pious patriot must shrink from the anticipation of a whole people trained by means of a Christless literature.

The field would open too widely for our present limits, if we were to show how fatal is the error of supposing that intellectual discipline and acquisition, however great, can prove a real rational blessing without religion. We can only take time to show the gigantic power of unsanctified learning, by pointing to the great names of unbelievers: to Voltaire in universal literature; to Bentham in jurisprudence and statesmanship; to Lamarck in natural history, and La Place in the highest mathematical analysis. Let the blasphemy and murder of the French Revolution record the malign power of great intelligence abandoned of God.

V. WE MUST HAVE A CHRISTIAN LITERATURE. All that has been said tends to this point. We must have it, lest we become a ruined people. If Knowledge is Power,

it is, when separate from religion, disastrous power ; and forces of this kind are multiplying every day. We must have a christian literature, because our people are increasing with unprecedented rapidity ; because readers are multiplied with every effort in the cause of schools ; because books are more numerous and more accessible as the inventions of art advance ; because our country is to be the theatre of unexampled events ; and because unless we bestir ourselves the enemy will have pre-occupied the ground.

The expectation of a universally prevalent literature such as Christianity demands, may be set aside as chimerical. Yet before admitting the justice of the censure, it is right to say, that, as christians, we are living in the hope of this very thing : "for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea." And we are bound to labor as those who look for such a consummation. We cannot blindfold ourselves to the progress of society, the diffusion of light and freedom, the strides of science, the approximation of continents by means of art, the systematic energy of education ; we behold all this tending to something which the world has not seen ; we tremble to observe these forces, in some seasons and regions, operating towards evil. But in every one of them we behold a mighty weapon, which the Lord will seize, for his own purposed uses, when his time shall have come : and we know of no means within our reach so potent as the communication of divine truth.

Though the public taste is vitiated, and demands an aliment which is noxious, and though the existing literature is supplied in correspondence with this morbid appetite, we are far from despairing. We hope both to correct the taste and to improve the nutriment. Because every thing cannot be done, we will not be content to do nothing. Every good book which goes abroad, does its part towards forming a healthful taste. Every conversion to

God causes a desire for the sincere milk of the word. Every extensive revival of religion enlarges the demand for truth. As holy productions spread themselves, more persons will find what delight may be afforded by compositions which they lately rejected as dry and needless. The tide will turn as it regards popular fiction. The cloyed appetite will crave genuine nourishment. If all who have ever hung with rapture over the Pilgrim's Progress or the Saints' Rest, could be summoned to testify of their satisfaction, even the novel-readers and haunters of the playhouse would learn new pleasures. Thus while suitable works, adapted to every capacity, are produced and disseminated, there will, in an increasing ratio, be a demand for more; and wherever grace strikes in with the effort in its regenerating power, the geometrical progression will be such as to dissipate all our unbelieving fears.

We must have, through the length and breadth of the church, a settled, operative conviction, that the common reading of the nation is not to be left to chance; and that it is of the highest moment for our children and our country, that all which they read should be according to the will of God. It is to public taste and public conscience, and not to the arm of power, that we look for this revolution. We can endure no establishment to enforce a uniformity of creed; we ask no censorship to paralyze the corrupting press; but our hope is to send abroad so much of heavenly truth as shall win and retain the affections which are now wandering. And the work will be so much the easier, if christian parents and teachers will only exercise their prerogative by restraining those entrusted to them from the idle, enervating, and poisoned entertainments afforded by a profligate press; from the foolish fiction, the profane or licentious drama, and, what is no less fearful, the daily print, redolent of vice, pointing the way to unhallowed amusements, chronicling the par-

ticulars of crime, and trumpeting to ten thousand families vices and inventions which should be buried as deeply as the cities of the plain.

VI. IN PROMOTING THIS OBJECT, THERE IS AMPLE GROUND ON WHICH ALL EVANGELICAL CHRISTIANS MAY UNITE. To argue this point, would be to vindicate the fundamental principle of the American Tract Society. Their avowed friends need no such argument. But there is reason to believe that not a few truly benevolent christians are withheld from giving a hearty support to the cause by doubts respecting this very proposition. Even against the common enemy they scruple to wage any warfare but under their peculiar banners. To such it may be right to say, that these humble suggestions proceed from a source which is far from being lukewarm in the cause of the strictest ecclesiastical institutions. It is the excellence of the Tract Society's enterprise, that it trespasses upon no principles of evangelical churches, not even those which are highest and most exclusive in their own sphere; but it cannot go forward, unless the brethren of different persuasions consent to join hands in setting forward that vast portion of truth in which they are agreed. How much this is, may best be learnt from the publications which they have made. The ground is wide enough on which such men meet as Baxter, Bunyan, Mather, Hall, Fuller, Richmond, Wilberforce, Cunningham, De Vinne and Gurney; all speaking the same things, and all reserving to themselves the right of promoting to the utmost, in other connections, the inculcation of their respective tenets. So long as the unconverted millions belong to no sect, great portions of them must be left untouched, unless the true disciples of all sects unite to strike the blow. And the American Tract Society and the American Sunday School Union have been showing, for a course of years, how safe and how effectual is such a guarded association of evangelical effort.

VII. IT IS OUR IMMEDIATE DUTY TO UNITE IN FURNISHING A CHRISTIAN LITERATURE TO OUR COUNTRY. The time of our earthly labor is short, and we are hastening to meet our countrymen at the bar of God. It has been calculated that, within the lifetime of some now living, the territory of our Union will contain a hundred millions. The tide sets so strongly into the unsettled regions as to outstrip all the stated and ordinary means of supply. We have cast on the stream of the present generation sixty millions of Tracts, and two millions of books; under the favor of the Divine Spirit we humbly believe that even this will appear "in that day" to have been saving to a great multitude. But we can do more; we ought to do more; with God helping us, we will do more.

Our beloved land is just the stage on which so great an action may fitly be presented. In all the freshness of unencumbered freedom and the bursting health of exuberant increase, in union and unbroken peace, we find ourselves at the very point where a grand experiment may begin. The genius, and learning, and zeal of the church need only to be concentrated; the latent or diverted talent needs only to be brought into this channel; education and authorship need only to be sworn into the service of Christ, in order to move the mighty population of America. And what heart is not swelling with hope and exultation at the bare prospect of such an effort; in which christians shall unite as christians, and consecrate every endowment of themselves and their sons to the cause of Christ.

The demand is no ordinary one; it calls for such reading for a great nation as shall include the very highest fruits of human reason. But in what cause shall great sacrifices be made, if not in the cause of Him who died for us, and who is going forth to subdue the world? We are called upon, in some way or other, to flood the land with books which shall have a direct bearing on the eternal state. They must be provided, and thrown into every

college, school, and household. The same Spirit who prompts the effort will graciously second it. When the great conversions and mighty revivals of a better day shall be more frequent and nearer together, the reading of our people will be worthier of immortal minds. Will it not be a good day for our blessed country, when the thousands yet unevangelized shall be absorbed in eternal things; when at every fire-side, every group of citizens, and every assembly, the politics of this world shall be less animating than the spread of the truth and the dispensation of the Gospel to the heathen!

There are signs even in the army of the aliens that a change must come. The human soul cannot feed for ever on a hollow, fantastic literature. No extravagance of stimulated invention can avail to slake the thirst of mankind for nobler excitement. Secular fiction has tried its utmost, and falls back upon itself; so that it is more true than when the sainted Cowper penned it, that

" Authors hear at length one general cry,  
 " Tickle and entertain us, or we die.  
 " The loud demand, from year to year the same,  
 " Beggars invention and makes fancy lame,  
 " Till farce itself, most mournfully jejune,  
 " Calls for the kind assistance of a tune;  
 " And novels (witness every month's review)  
 " Belie their name and give us nothing new."

Yet our people are becoming rather more, than less, susceptible of high emotions; and have only to feel the electric awakening of heavenly themes, to find that truth may possess the soul more strongly than fiction; that the glories of humanity are imaginary until the gospel be embraced; and that all the amusements, nay, all the trade, and politics, and warfare of the world, are trifles, when compared with the work of God in bringing back the nations to himself.



Amidst the disheartening moral evils which prevail, and the irruptions of false science and corrupt literature, which wound the church on every side, it is our privilege to go about christian labor under the enthusiasm of a lofty hope derived from prophecy; for we know the time is coming when truth shall drive out error; when "the light of the moon shall be as the light of the sun, and the light of the sun shall be seven-fold as the light of seven days, in the day that Jehovah bindeth up the breach of his people, and healeth the stroke of their wound."

The two Documents above were referred to a Committee, consisting of Rev. Gorham D. Abbott, Rev. Dr. De Witt, Rev. Asa D. Smith, Rev. J. O. Choules, and Hon. Francis Willson. Rev. Mr. Abbott, in behalf of this Committee, subsequently presented the following able and valuable

### R E P O R T .

The Committee to whom were referred the papers entitled "*The Power of the Press for good or for evil*," and "*The Evils of an Unsanctified Literature*," respectfully report:

That the views presented in those Documents respectively, are of a character that deserve the most serious consideration of every christian and patriot. The interesting historical sketch of the progress and achievements of the press since God gave it to our world, and the impressive view of the condition and wants of our country in respect to a sanctified literature, they believe are destined to find a response in ten thousand christian hearts throughout our land; and if they mistake not the signs of our times and the aspect of the christian world, the responsive thrill which they are calculated to awaken in the hearts of the real benefactors of our race will not be confined to this transatlantic portion of christendom.

Your Committee would remark on a few of the topics brought to view in these Documents.

#### THE PRESS IN EUROPE AND AMERICA.

It has been thought it would aid the effect which these papers will produce, to accompany them with some brief details of the condition of the press in our country.

A few years since an investigation was made of the extent and character of the issues of the press, in all its departments. It was found that there were about 140 different publishing houses in various parts of the United States. It was said by extensive booksellers, that there were not far from 8000 different books, foreign and American, on the trade lists, and then circulating in our markets. A tabular view was drawn up, exhibiting the annual issues of volumes from the presses of our own country, of England, France and Germany. From these tables it appears that the average of the annual issues in the United States during the three years, 1833, 1834 and 1835, was not quite *five hundred* different works. In Great Britain there were about 1200; in France, 5000; in Germany, 6000. It was to be considered, however, that a considerable per centage of European publications was in small editions, not intended for general circulation, while in this country no book was a candidate for publication without the prospective circulation of at least 1000 copies. Not a few of our most popular works reached ten times that number. The spirit and enterprise of our publishers were scattering their works with indefatigable industry all over the land. The presses of the city of Hartford alone were pouring forth an annual stream of a million of volumes, and individual houses of other cities, having on their list of publications from 300 to 500 different works, were issuing at least as many hundred thousand volumes a year. The grand total of all the volumes annually manufactured was about equal in number to *half the entire population of the land*.

#### GENERAL CHARACTER OF THE ISSUES OF THE PRESS.

*The character and moral tendencies* of these immense issues from the press were next the subject of inquiry. A comparison of the statistics in the several countries thus brought together, presented many interesting and important facts.

It appeared that in France, during 1834, there were published 5153 different works, in the various branches of Theology, Jurisprudence, Arts and Sciences, History and General Literature. Of this number, 320 works, or one-sixteenth of the whole, were Romances and Tales. In our own country, taking the aggregate of the years 1833, '4 and '5, the total issues were 1201 different works, of which 199, or about one-sixth, were Novels and Tales! One-sixteenth in France! one sixth in America!!

In 1833 also, *one-sixth* of all the Novels and Tales published here were written by American authors; in 1834, *one-fourth*; and in 1835, *one-half* were by our own writers; showing that the pro-

portionate demand for such productions was rapidly on the increase, and the talent of our countrymen was put in requisition to furnish the supply.

It could not have been expected that the statistics and data collected were perfectly accurate and full. They were regarded only as an approximation to the truth, and all deductions from them were received with such allowances as were reasonable in the case. The sources of information, however, from which they were derived, were the best the country afforded. And investigations which have since been made, with perhaps equal care, confirm their general correctness. Any important fact or inference which might have been questioned then, cannot be doubted now.

#### THE INFIDEL PRESS.

The infidel publications of the country were also examined.

It was said that there were more than one hundred different works published and republishing in the country, with the avowed object of undermining public confidence in the Christian religion. The first class of these works was on "Materialism" generally, and "Systems of Nature," and of "Reason." The second was a large class of open and often blasphemous attacks on the evidences of Christianity, and on the sacred writings. The third class was, without discussion or argument, a miscellaneous mass of tracts, pamphlets and papers, full of assaults on holy things.

Moreover, an examination, to some extent, of the character of those productions which were most extensively circulated and read, fastened a painful and deep-seated conviction that there was no source of corruption to the tastes and moral sense of our community more to be deprecated. They were filled with false views of human life, awakening expectations in the young which must end in bitter disappointment when they encounter its inevitable realities, unfitting them to discharge the duties, to bear the trials, or improve the discipline which life lays upon us all. And to say nothing of the absence of correct principles, and of healthful and salutary instruction, which is perfectly compatible with the fullest relaxation and entertainment of rational beings, they abound in positively demoralizing influences. The name, the attributes, the word, the institutions, the ordinances, the ministers and the children of God are often the subjects of profaneness or of ridicule. The oath points the jest, and quotations of Scripture give spice to the blasphemy. Vulgarities of thought and expression, and every indelicacy that can flow from a pen, pollute the pages. Vice and crime are decked in dazzling colors, enlisting the

sympathies of the virtuous in the earthly retributions of the most abandoned profligates. The finest sensibilities of the moral constitution are wounded and blunted. The foundations of purity, truth, honesty, and moral obligation are all undermined. A blank half page at the end of a chapter is all the comment on the darkest deeds of blood. The turn of a leaf introduces the hero to new and exciting scenes of captivating vice, and the end of his career in the protracted outrage of all human and divine laws, is the simple statement of the fall of the turf, or the closing of the wave over the end of a suicide.

#### INFLUENCE OF FICTION.

It became a grave question, how far the increasing catalogue among us of shameless crimes, whose names are "Legion"—of peculation, of fraud, of murder and of suicide, was traceable to the corrupting influences of such publications! Courvoisier, the murderer of Lord William Russell, confessed, and wished the sheriff to let it be known to the world, (and the murderer's dying message has reached our land,) that the *idea* of his work of blood was first suggested to him by reading and seeing the performance of "Jack Sheppard." This book was lent to him by one of the servants of the Duke of Bedford, and he lamented that he had ever seen it. Oxford, too, who sought the Queen's life, it is said, made substantially the same statement respecting the influence upon his mind of the "Bravo of Venice."

It was, and *is now*, a question in which every member of society is interested, how many criminals have the *first idea* of crime "suggested" by the portraiture of crimes and vices in such books as these? How many Courvoisiers and Russells; how many Oxfords and crowned heads; and how many other victims of violence and defalcation, of fraud, forgery and shame, are *the victims* of influences which flow from the novel and the play?

Should a few more venerable noblemen perish, and other daring deeds of crying enormity be multiplied, and it be clearly proved that the arts of the novelist, and the scenes of the drama have kindled the passions that direct the blow, the morality of these productions will assume a different aspect in the eyes of the civilized world. We may hope that something will ere long be done in a land where literature, science, intellectual greatness and pure philanthropy are enshrined, to stay the progress of an evil that does its work at home, and then comes to spend its undiminished, pestilential power upon our shores. The writer, the publisher, and the vender of such productions will have an account to render in this world to an outraged community, to the fathers and

mothers around them whose ruined sons and daughters are the price of their gains.

#### THE NEWSPAPER PRESS.

The newspaper and periodical press was then the subject of investigation. In 1832 the political and miscellaneous newspapers of the country numbered about 1200. In 1836 there were about 1500. In the two States of New-York and Massachusetts together, with a population of less than 3,000,000, there were published a greater number of newspapers than in Great Britain, with a population of more than 25,000,000.

The five New England States, together with New-York and Pennsylvania, embracing a population of less than 6,000,000, issued more than 750 newspapers, nearly as many as in all Great Britain and France united, with their population of 56,000,000. In the city of New-York, 30 out of the 40 newspaper establishments circulated annually more than 30,000,000 of papers. And estimating the entire issues from that city, they were found considerably greater than those in the whole United Kingdom of Great Britain.

Our 900 weekly, 40 semi-weekly, 14 tri-weekly, and more than 100 daily papers, allowing to each a subscription list of only 1000 copies, made a grand aggregate of nearly 100,000,000 of sheets a year for our 18,000,000 of people.

Great Britain, according to the returns of the stamp-office in 1836, issued less than 37,000,000 for her 25,000,000 of population.

Our religious newspapers and periodicals, numbering nearly 100, circulated from 8,000,000 to 10,000,000 of copies a year.

Ninety semi-monthly, monthly, and quarterly magazines sent forth annually more than ninety millions of pages. A million of penny papers a month in our large cities, were swelling the tide of influence from the daily press. Some 500 different ballads and songs, floating among the masses that form the substratum of society in our cities and seaboard towns, told full well their tale and sufficiently explained why, in one class at least of our citizens, the Sabbath and the sanctuary, the civil laws and the sanctions of religion impose so little restraint upon the passions and vices of men.

In short, it was perfectly evident from the statistics collected, that our country was most emphatically distinguished among all nations of the earth in the extent of the issues and the all-pervading influence of the press.

In Europe, with a population of 227,000,000, according to statistical tables in the "Annales des Travaux" of the Paris Statistical Society, drawn up by M. Balbi, the distinguished geographer, there were reported to be 2100 periodical publications. And in our own continent, with 39,000,000 of population, there were 2200.

According to these tables, the known number of newspapers and journals issuing for the 900,000,000 of the population of the world, was 4500, of which nearly one-half were appropriated to less than 40,000,000 of the inhabitants of our own continent.

|                                       |            |
|---------------------------------------|------------|
| In Asia there was one paper for every | 14,000,000 |
| In Africa,                            | 5,000,000  |
| In Europe,                            | 106,000    |
| In America,                           | 40,000     |
| In the United States,                 | 10,000     |

From whatever point the subject was viewed, the extent and importance of the power of the press in our country was forced upon the mind. Newspapers and periodicals of every kind, pamphlets, ballads and books of all sorts, were evidently distributed among all classes of our people with a profusion unparalleled in any other country or age.

From 2000 to 3000 editors, together with a large corps of authors, compilers, printers, and publishers, connected with all these operations, were exerting a daily and almost hourly influence over the opinions, the principles, and the conduct of a nation, with which it was not easy to find any thing to compare in the history of the world.

#### THE RELIGIOUS PRESS.

When we are considering the inestimable blessings the press has conferred upon our race, and upon our country, there is danger of our looking unduly at one side of the picture. The greatest blessing may be made, by perversion, the greatest curse. We contemplate the history of the press during about forty years past—since the formation of the British and Foreign Bible Society. Some conception is formed of the 14,000,000 of Bibles in 150 different languages; the mind runs over the operations of the London Tract Society and of the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, and of other kindred institutions abroad; we glance at the origin of Bible, and Tract, and Sunday School Societies here, and dwell on the millions of Bibles and Testaments, and religious Books and Tracts which they have distributed, and add to the aggregate the multiplied publications of Christian publishers, who, moved by the fear of God and love of man, have wielded the press in the cause of humanity and religion,

and we exult in the gift and forget its perversion. But to borrow the figure of the author of the Paper on Unsanctified Literature, we ought to remember, that though there are "giants" wielding the press in our own and other lands, in the cause of God and man, there are more giants still who are employing the same mighty engine in the service of another.

While this blessed Institution that has called us together to-day, has been circulating its 2,000,000 of Books, and 60,000,000 Tracts, during a period of eighteen years, *how many millions* have been pouring forth under altogether different and opposite influences, tending not to purify and bless the land, but to corrupt and destroy it.

A memorial to our general Government, presented at the last Session, stated that the number of persons employed in all the various departments of the publishing business in the United States, was more than 40,000, of whom 25,000 were operative printers of papers and books; that the amount of business annually done was more than \$27,000,000; that there were 12,000,000 of volumes manufactured annually, and the capital invested in these operations was more than \$15,000,000.

How comparatively small, then, must be the influence of the present issues of this Institution, when we consider the gigantic tide of 12,000,000 of books, 3,000,000 of numbers of periodicals, and 300,000,000 of newspaper sheets, which, according to this memorial, are annually doing their work in moulding the minds and hearts, and shaping the destinies of the millions of our countrymen.

No reflecting mind can contemplate the present position of the United States, in this respect alone, without a full conviction that it is without a parallel in the history of nations; that we live in an era pregnant with great events; that the press has for us as yet undeveloped energies, that may in our land, as it has already in others, work reformation or revolution. The whole land is a vast school. The rail car, the steamboat, the manufactory, the work-shop, and the farm-yard, the mines of the Schuylkill and of Galena, are all *schools*. The printer is the daily teacher. Cunard's mail to-day brings the "latest" from London and Liverpool, Paris and Canton; all night the presses of New-York and Boston groan with their labor, and to-morrow the car and the steamer are bearing every description of news, and of moral and pernicious influences towards every point of the compass. The iron horse, whose sinews are steel, and whose provender is fire, "is off" for Washington and Buffalo, St. Louis, and New Orleans. His unceasing clatter echoes among our hills all day, and his fiery train illumines our valleys at

night. In less time than it once took to go from London to John o'Groat's, the news from the other hemisphere is borne over one half of this. The mail-bag with its teeming sheets is dropped in every city and village of a territory 1500 miles square! The columns of the "Chronicle," and the "Times," which are read at Monday's breakfast in London, have but one intervening Sabbath before they enliven the parlors and offices of Boston and New-York; and ere the Acadia sees Holyhead again, they are 1500 miles further on, in the saloons and verandahs of Louisiana.

Everything seems to conspire to arouse and excite the public mind, and reading it will have.

#### LIBRARIES FOR COMMON SCHOOLS.

The school-library system furnishes also a most impressive illustration of the views embodied in the papers before your Committee.

Three years have already passed of the operation of the law of the state of New-York appropriating \$110,000 a year, for five years, to the work of planting a popular library in each of the 10,000 school-houses of the State. Something like \$300,000 have been expended, and probably more than a million of volumes are already distributed in the schools of New-York alone; and perhaps half that number in other parts of the country: a greater work in bringing books before the minds of the present and rising generation than this Institution, on its existing scale of operations, performs in ten years. And when we consider what this system alone is destined to effect in ten years to come, among our 50,000 schools and 3,000,000 of children, the importance of the views in the paper on an "unsanctified literature," and the call upon the wise and good of our land to furnish a *Christian Literature* in its comprehensive and appropriate acceptation, come upon the heart with an emphasis that language can scarcely describe. Millions of dollars are to be expended, and in all human probability, in less time than has elapsed since the organization of this Society, a greater number of volumes will be manufactured and distributed among the common schools of this young nation than are now found in all the venerable public libraries of Europe! When all the States of the Union shall follow the example of New-York, as several have already done, this grand national enterprise will command attention which it has not yet received. The character of these books that are to be multiplied by millions, and perform such a service in forming the intellectual aliment and the moral image of generation after generation, will be a subject of solicitous inquiry among philanthropists and christians.



One other topic in the paper alluded to demands a word—the tendency in our country to banish from the elementary books and systems of popular education the great fundamental truths and saving influences of Christianity. To some extent this is peculiar to us. It is not so in other states of Christendom. England, Scotland, and Ireland, Prussia, Holland, and Rome, pursue a different policy. The educational discussions of other lands show that the disciples of Christ are contending for a *christian education* for their children and the people, with the firmness of a conviction that it is a requirement of the word of God.

A single illustration will exhibit sufficiently the intrinsic importance of this subject, while at the same time it sets forth and corroborates the views of the paper on “The Power of the Press.”

If it were told us, that in some other land a pen had been employed in the preparation of a book which was to be first in the hands of millions of youth, developing their intellectual powers, kindling their first desires after knowledge, storing the memory with thoughts and fixing principles of action, with all the power and permanency of early impressions—that its apothegms and lessons respecting life and duty, time, salvation, and eternity, were interwoven into the very constitution of the plastic minds of millions; that in the space of forty years its author had been privileged to witness 18,000,000 of copies of his work, imprinting its own moral image on as many millions of youth, and following them too, with almost the fidelity of maternal counsel, through all the scenes of life's pilgrimage, from the school-house to the grave; we should quote it as a rare and wonderful exemplification of the power of the pen and the press.

But an American spelling-book has done all this, and the venerable Dr. Noah Webster has lived to see of the fruits of his pen, what we venture to say few writers ever have before him.

This subject itself is a theme for a volume. Is there any other book but the Bible which exerts so universal, so powerful and abiding an influence on each generation as it rises, and yet how little regard does it secure. How little concern, whether it be made a vehicle of truth, a standard of taste and of morals, and a teacher in every hand of “whatsoever things are pure and lovely, and of good report,” and that “accompany salvation.” The school-house stands next to the church, and the school-book is next to the Bible in forming the character and determining the temporal destinies of our country, and the eternal interests of our countrymen.

In 1804 a catalogue was published in Boston, professing to contain all the school-books previously issued in the United States. In 1832,

another similar catalogue appeared. In an interval of 28 years the total number of school-books increased from 93 to 407, while our population had been increasing from 6,000,000 to 13,000,000. And when this investigation of the state of the press was made, there were found on sale 432 works in the various branches of Theological literature, 434 works of fiction, and 736 works on education, comprised in 51 distinct branches of the subject, both English and classical.

It would seem to be a matter of some interest to know what is the real influence these instruments of education exert on the minds they are employed in developing.

The destiny of our country, the hopes of the Church, and the prospect of the world's Redemption are concerned in the influences which are forming the character of the next generation; and if it be true that our Almighty Maker God is, as it were, shut out from the world of human hearts, is not in all their thoughts, is excluded from their affections, and no fitting recognition of him in his works of nature, providence, or grace is found: how important it is, in the work of bringing mankind back to God, *to bring God in* to the world of literature, science, and art, and to incorporate His truth in all the essential elements of influence that move and mould mankind.

#### READING FOR THE YOUNG.

We have reason to thank God for the deep interest he is creating on this vast and important subject, and especially for his kind providence in giving to our country such papers as have lately appeared from the Secretary of State, and Superintendent of Common Schools in New-York, the Hon. Samuel Young, on the use of the New Testament in our schools, and the importance of inculcating its principles of morality with the first lessons of childhood; on the introduction of vocal music as a branch of elementary education; and on the subject of a purer course of reading for our youth.

Mr. Young says: "I regard the New Testament as in all respects a suitable book to be daily read in our Common Schools, and I earnestly recommend its general introduction for this purpose. As a mere reading book, intended to convey a practical knowledge of the English language, it is one of the best text-books in use; but this, although of great utility to the pupils, is of minor importance when the moral influences of the book are duly considered. Education consists of something more than mere instruction. It is that training and discipline of all the faculties of the mind which shall systematically and harmoniously develop the future man for usefulness and for happiness

in sustaining the various relations of life. It must be based upon knowledge and virtue, and its gradual advancement must be strictly subordinated to those cardinal and elementary principles of morality which are nowhere so clearly, distinctly, and beautifully inculcated as in that book from whence we all derive our common faith. The nursery and family fire-side may accomplish much, the institutions of religion may exert a pervading influence ; but what is commenced in the hallowed sanctuary of the domestic circle, and periodically inculcated at the altar, must be daily and hourly recognized in the Common Schools, that it may exert an ever-present influence, enter into and form part of every act of the life, and become thoroughly incorporated with the rapidly expanding character. The same incomparable standard of moral virtue and excellence which is expounded from the pulpit and the altar, and which is daily held up to the admiration and imitation of the family circle, should also be reverently kept before the mind and the heart in the *daily exercise of the School.*"

In his communication on the subject of pernicious fiction, he remarks :—" I am not opposed to the placing of works of imagination, either in poetry or prose, in a distinct library, after it is well filled with useful books of practical knowledge. Such works, if properly selected, may be not only entertaining but instructive, by affording correct delineations of human character. But to put into the hands of the young, works which are replete with recitals of ferocity and bloodshed, with murders and daring outrages, with the sanguinary feats of banditti and robbers, with the atrocities of depraved and brutalized wretches who are the opprobrium of God and man, is, in my judgment, directly calculated to blunt their finer sensibilities, and to render their hearts cold and callous to the claims of humanity, by familiarizing their imaginations with scenes of depravity and blood.

" I am also decidedly opposed to the whole class of high wrought novels and romances. They inspire superstitious fears, delusive hopes and morbid sensibilities, by giving false and sublimated views of human life. In short, they disguise truth and inculcate falsehood."

And in his address before the Convention at Utica, he recommends "*singing*" as " a very efficient branch of moral and intellectual training," and speaks of having been a delighted witness of its power over " the little performers " in a school at Albany, their own spirits harmonizing with the spirit of the song, " as in reverential tones " they sung " the power and goodness of the Creator," " the beauties and harmonies of the moral world," " the

attractions of benevolence," "the obligations of patriotism," and "the captivating loveliness of the moral virtues."

To such sentiments the wisest and best of America and England will respond. Let them be reiterated. Honor to him whose heart thus cherishes the grand interests reposing in his hands. Blessed are the ten thousand schools, and more than half a million of children receiving education under the guidance of such sentiments. Happy for our country, that such are the views of one who presides over the educational interests of a State which is so emphatically taking the lead among all her sisters in this great cause, that the Superintendent of New-York is almost the "Minister of Public Instruction" for the Union.

There are other topics in the papers submitted to your Committee, on which they would gladly remark, did the time and occasion permit. The various points that are treated, speak for themselves. Your Committee would simply add their conviction, that the calling forth of such documents will alone compensate all the labors connected with this Meeting, were no other good accomplished. They hail the call for a sanctified Literature as a most timely and providential event, and a harbinger of better days for our country and the Christian world. And they would respectfully urge the immediate employment of all the undeveloped resources and powers of this Institution, and every other instrumentality that now in the providence of God exists, or may yet be called into being—not directly to oppose the mighty and resistless torrent that flows from an "unsanctified Press," but to cause to flow, side by side, in rich abundance, purer streams, that, if it be possible, the thirsting spirit of the millions now on the stage in our country, and the stupendous succession of generations to follow, may be allured to drink.

*Letter from Hon. William Jay, Bedford, N. York.*

"Your remarks on our periodical press agree perfectly with my own observations and reflections. Almost the entire reading of our whole population is newspapers and fiction; and indeed I may say fiction alone, since truth forms so small a portion of the contents of our political journals.

"The indecency of many of the novels with which the steam-press is inundating our land, and the profligacy and mendacity of our party newspapers, to say nothing of the avowedly obscene publications, cannot fail to influence our manners and our morals. The evil is rendered more grievous by the difficulty of removing it. There are no coercive measures by which the multitude can be weaned from

their love for low excitement, nor the mercenary restrained from catering for their depraved appetite. The obscene press might indeed be instantly put down by our magistrates ; but they are for the most part politicians.

“ I greatly fear that the predominating influence of our press is evil. Even our religious newspapers too often exhibit a bitterness and a sectarian selfishness but little in accordance with the spirit of Christ.

“ In my opinion there is no specific remedy for the profligacy of the press. So long as there is a market for wicked papers and novels, so long will the manufacture of these commodities be continued.

“ While I owe you my acknowledgments for the sentiments you so kindly express for me personally, I am fully persuaded that nothing I could write on the subject would be of any avail. But I beg you to believe that I shall regard it a privilege and a duty to embrace every proper opportunity of advancing the interests of the American Tract Society. It is a truly christian Institution, and founded on principles and conducted in a spirit I peculiarly love. The christians of this nation might exert a predominant influence, but their sectarianism prevents concert of action, and their devotion to party politics secures their support of party men, however irreligious.”

The Rev. WILLIAM R. WILLIAMS, D. D. of New-York, presented the following valuable paper : viz.

## DOCUMENT V.

The Evangelical Character of the Society's Publications, and their adaptation to the present generation of men.

The various publications of the Society in our own land, if we include its issues of every form and size, from the handbill and the broad-sheet, up to the bound volume, already number one thousand. In foreign lands it aids in issuing nearly twice that number, written in some one hundred of the different languages and dialects of the earth. Amongst ourselves, in the seventeen years of its existence, it has already, by sale or gift, scattered broad-cast over the whole face of the land, in our churches and Sabbath-schools, through our towns and villages, among the neglected, in the lanes of our large cities, where misery retires to die, and vice to shelter itself from the eye of day; and amidst the destitute, sparsely sprinkled over our wide frontiers, where the ministry has scarce followed, and the church can scarce gather the scattered inhabitants, some two millions of books and some sixty millions of Tracts. This is no ordinary influence. It must find its way into nearly every vein and artery of the body politic. Whether it be of a pure and healthful character, is an inquiry of grave moment to the churches who sustain this enterprise, and to the country which receives this literature. If baneful, it is a grievous wrong to the community; if merely inert and useless, it is a fraud committed upon the benevolence of the churches.

I. Whether these publications deserve the confidence of christians, may be ascertained by the answer which is given to one question: DO THEY PREACH JESUS CHRIST

AND HIM CRUCIFIED? He must be the theme of every successful ministry, whether preaching from the pulpit or through [the press. The blessing of God's Spirit is promised only to the exaltation of the Son of God, the Savior of the world. "I, if I be lifted up, will draw all men unto me." When Paul describes the peculiarities of his own successful ministry—a ministry that shook the nations—a ministry that carried the blazing torch of its testimony from Illyricum to Spain, he compresses these into a very brief space. He was determined to know nothing but *Christ Jesus and him crucified*. In Christ he found the motive which stimulated all his fervid and untiring activity, and the model upon which was moulded every excellence of his character. "To me to live is Christ." Only so far as the issues of this Society cherish this same principle does it ask, and only so far can it deserve from the churches of our Lord Jesus Christ that cordial support and that large extension of its labors which it solicits at the hands of the religious community.

And not only is it necessary to the success of such ministry of the press, that it should make the crucified Savior the great theme of its teachings; it should also present this theme, as far as possible, in a scriptural manner. By this we mean, not a mere iteration of the words of sacred writ, but that the mind of the writer should be so imbued with the spirit of the Scripture, and so possessed by its doctrines, and so haunted by its imagery and illustrations, as to present, naturally and earnestly, the great truths of the scheme of salvation, in that proportion and with those accompaniments which are found in the inspired volume. His thoughts must all be habited, as far as it may be, in the garb, and breathe the spirit of that only book to which we can ascribe unmingled truth.

That the works of the American Tract Society are thus evangelical in their character, would seem scarce

needing proof, since none, as far as we know, have yet questioned it. Amid the fierce and embittered controversies, from which the church has never been exempt, (and certainly not in our own times,) we know not that any, among the several bodies of christians generally recognized as evangelical, have arisen to impugn in this respect the character of the Society's issues. This has not been because these books have been secretly circulated. They have been found every where, dropped in the highway and lodged in the pastor's study, distributed in the nursery, the rail-car, the steamboat, and the stage-coach, as well as exposed on the shelves of the book-store, and they have challenged the investigation of all into whose hands they have come. Denominations of christians, divided from each other by varying views as to the discipline and polity of the Church of Christ, and even holding opposite sentiments as to some of the more important doctrines of the Gospel, have yet agreed in recognizing in these publications the great paramount truths of that Gospel, and have co-operated long, liberally and harmoniously in their distribution and use.

The names of the authors whose volumes are found in friendly juxtaposition, standing side by side on the shelves of the libraries the Society has provided for the christian household and school, seem to furnish another strong pledge to the same effect. Doddridge, Baxter, Edwards, Owen, Flavel and Bunyan, are names that seem to belong less to any one division of the christian host than to the whole family of Christ. They are the current coin of the church, which have passed so freely from hand to hand, that the minuter superscription of the sects to which they may have belonged, the denominational imprint, seems to have been worn away in the wide, unquestioned circulation they have received. And they have been acknowledged by evangelical believers, wherever the English language and literature have gone, as faith-



ful and most powerful preachers of the Gospel of Christ. They have received higher attestation even than that of having their "praise" thus "in all the churches." The Head of the Church has not withholden his benediction and imprint. The influence of His Spirit has long and largely rested on the written labors of these his servants; and, while the authors themselves have been in the grave, their works are yet following them in lengthening and widening trains of usefulness. Multitudes have been converted, and thousands of others have traced to these books their own growth in christian holiness. Some of these writers were, while upon the earth, not inactive or unsuccessful as preachers with the living voice; yet it may be questioned whether all the seals of their living ministry would equal the tithe of the seals which God has continued to set to their posthumous ministry in the volumes they have bequeathed to the world and the church.

II. But how far are they adapted to the wants of THE PRESENT GENERATION OF MANKIND? We know that in the varying tastes and habits of society, and its ever-shifting currents of feeling, new channels of thought are scooped out, and new forms of expression become popular; and the writer whose compositions present not these forms and move not in these channels, may find himself deserted as obsolete. His works are consigned to the unmolested and dusty shelves of the antiquarian, while other and fresher rivals grasp the sceptre of popularity and usefulness that has passed from his hands. New conditions of society and new institutions also, may require another style of address and another train of instruction than those which, once indeed, were most salutary and seasonable, but are so no longer. If other classes of literature become antiquated, and the old give place to the new, may it not be so with religious literature: may it not be so with much of the literature from which the American Tract Society is seeking to supply the christians of the present age?

1. What then are *the wants of the present age*? Religion, it should be remembered, if true, must be in its great principles unchangeable, and the same in all eras of the world's history.

“ Can length of years on God himself exact,  
“ And make that fiction which was once a fact?”

A revelation, from its source and the nature of its contents, possesses, therefore, a fixedness and constancy that can belong to no science of merely human origin. The Bible stands apart from all the literature of man's devising, as a book never to be superseded—susceptible of no amendment, and never to be made obsolete whilst the world stands. The book of the world's Creator and the world's Governor, the record of the world's history and the world's duty, the world's sin and the world's salvation, it will endure while that world lasts, and continue to claim its present authority long as that government over the present world may continue. Religious works, therefore, the more profoundly they are imbued with the spirit of the Bible, will the more nearly partake of its indestructibility. Hence the Confessions of Augustine, written so many centuries ago, are not yet an obsolete book, nor can be while the human heart and the christian religion continue the same that they now are. In their religious literature, the church and the world in the nineteenth century must, therefore, in most respects, have the same wants as the church and the world in earlier ages.

It will be allowed, however, that there are certain peculiarities in the history and character of an age that may make one form of address and one style of discussion much more useful and reasonable in its religious literature than another. Has our country at this period any such peculiar wants? We might refer to many circumstances in its government and its people, their pursuits and their character, which distinguish and, as it were, individualize our land and our age. But to sum them all in one word,

we suppose the main distinction and boast of our people is, that they are a *practical* race. Others theorize, they act. Visionary reforms and schemes of society, that might in other regions be nursed for centuries in the brains of philosophers, and be deemed practicable only because they have never been reduced to practice, if they find proselytes amongst us, are soon brought to the test of actual experiment; their admirers here *act* upon the theories, which, elsewhere, are but reasoned upon, and the system, exploding in the trial, refutes itself. Our countrymen, the colonists of a wide and fertile territory, the mariners whose keels vex every shore, and whose sails whiten the remotest seas, inherit the solid sense, the sober judgment, the energy, daring, and perseverance of the Anglo-Saxon race; and their political institutions and the broad territory yet to be subdued and peopled, here give full scope to these traits of character. We are as yet, though a nation of readers, not a nation of students; but much more a nation of seamen, farmers and traders. Our very studies are practical; and the cast of character which distinguished the Roman from the Greek mind, and which made the former the masters of the world—the practical character of the mind and its pursuits—belongs, in all climes and on every shore, to the Saxon race. If we, as a nation, have in this era of our history specific wants, we want then a *practical* literature in religion, as in other branches of knowledge—a religious literature, adapted, with practical wisdom, to the peculiar duties and snares, the prevalent errors and the popular institutions of our time. Has this Society furnished such?

That portion of its publications which are of American origin, and which its exertions have been the means of calling out, or of diffusing more widely where they already existed, all its books that are of recent and domestic origin, may be supposed naturally to possess some tolerable degree of adaptation to our own national wants, the pre-

vailing sins and follies of the times, and the peculiar responsibilities and privileges of christian churches in the United States, in the nineteenth century. The writers are of us and wrote for us, and we may suppose that these productions at least are not wanting in such adaptation. Their currency and their usefulness, the souls which, by the blessing of God, they have converted, and their influence on the faith, zeal, and purity of the churches, afford evidence of the same kind. Of the 430 pamphlet Tracts in the English language, issued by the Society, more than one half are of American origin. It was not so in the earlier years of the Society's history. Of the first one hundred Tracts on the lists of this Society, more than two thirds were republications from works of British christians, of the richest character indeed, but they were the siftings of a rich religious literature more than two centuries old. Of the last one hundred of these 430 Tracts, on the other hand, more than three fourths were by American christians. We have not pursued the investigation into the bound volumes of the Society; but we suppose that there a similar result would be reached, although the proportion of American authorship is not yet as large, perhaps, as in the pamphlet Tracts. Here also it is increasing, however, and one third of the volumes may be regarded as of domestic origin. It would be found, we suppose, that the Society, in the brief period of seventeen years, has done much to create a national religious literature.

To effect any literary changes, seventeen years, it should be remembered, is a very brief period. As far then as adaptedness to the special wants of this country can be decided by the domestic or foreign authorship of its publications, it would appear that the Society has, with great rapidity, exerted a most perceptible and powerful influence on the writers and readers of our churches. It has elicited and diffused a literature that is emphatically

for us, inasmuch as it is *from* ourselves. The intelligent christian can never wish to see his denomination or his country confining its sympathies and its studies to the literature of the sect itself, or of that one country, thus shut up in the narrow circle of its own writers. Christianity is free, genial and philanthropic—it loves the race. Christianity is the only true citizenship of the world, and it hails the writings and the history of all lands and all kindreds, when imbued with the spirit of the common Savior. But yet there may be certain evident advantages in having, for some purposes and within certain limits, a denominational and also a national literature in our churches. For this object of a national literature the American Tract Society may claim to have done much, and to have done it well. They have furnished a body of Tracts, popular in style, pungent and faithful, pithy, brief, and striking, that are singularly adapted to the moral wants of our community, and many of which, from their high excellence, would bear transplantation into the literature of almost any other christian country.

2 As to *the adaptedness for usefulness* amongst our churches and people of those volumes and Tracts which the Society has derived from the rich christian literature of Great Britain, it may be deserving of remark that the more distinguished of these works are derived mainly from three memorable eras in the religious history of that country.

The first of these was *the age of the Puritans and Non-conformists*. Into the merits of their controversy with the Established Church of England it is no part of our design here to enter. They were, by the admission of the candid in every party, men of powerful intellect and ardent piety, whose principles had been tried and strengthened in the fierce collisions of their age, and whose character received in consequence an energy it might else have wanted. The measures of government, that threw the Noncon-

formists out of their pulpits, were fitted to produce an admirable class of writings, such as the church has not often enjoyed. Many of these devout men, mighty in the Scriptures and incessant in prayer, had they been left to the quiet discharge of their pastoral duties, would have kept the noiseless tenor of their way, and the world would probably have heard little or nought of their authorship. Preaching would have absorbed their minds and consumed all their strength. The mere preacher has little leisure and often little fitness to be a successful writer. Thus the published remains of Whitfield are of little value compared with the writings of many men far his inferiors in the pulpit and in its immediate results of usefulness. Had then the edicts and policy of the Stuarts left the Nonconformist fathers to their own chosen course, they would, many of them, have died and bequeathed no literary remains; or those remains would have been comparatively meagre and jejune, from the want of leisure in a life of active and unremitted pastoral toil. But, on the other hand, had the rich and varied writings of that class of men, who, from the prison or beside its very gate, sent out their treatises to their peeled and scattered churches, been composed by mere students, men of the lamp and the closet, they would have been deficient in their popular style, their earnestness, and their apt familiar illustrations. None but pastors, acquainted with the people and familiar with the popular modes of communicating religious truth, could thus have informed the deepest truths of theology and morals with a racy vivacity, and surrounded them with such simple and every-day imagery.

Thus, only men who had been bred pastors could have written some of these works. And, on the other hand, had they continued pastors, they could not have written them for want of leisure, inclination, and even perhaps mental power. But when the prison and the pillory shut them in, and the pulpit had shut them out, these resolute

and holy men resorted to the only channel left them for communicating with the hearts and consciences of men. It was the press. Had Baxter been a mere student and not a pastor, he would probably have made all his writings thorny, abstruse, and sterile, as the works of those schoolmen whose writings he seems so fondly to have loved and studied so closely. And, in that case, where had been the usefulness of the *Saints' Rest* and the *Call to the Unconverted*? Had he continued always a pastor, he would have preached much more to the men of the 17th century; but it is very questionable whether he would have preached as well or as much to the men of the 19th century as he now does. Here then is a class of writers, in whose history God seems to have made special provision that they should be trained to become effective as the practical writers of the church, bringing to the experience of the pastor all the leisure of the scholar, and grafting upon the meditations of the study all the unction, the simplicity, and the popular tact of the pulpit.

In addition to these peculiar preparations for general usefulness, the writings of the Puritans and Nonconformists come to us, as Americans, commended by considerations of singular force. The fathers of New-England were of that class of men. The Adam and Eve of those regions were fashioned of Puritan clay; and many of our peculiar institutions and our distinctive traits of national character may be traced, through that New-England ancestry, to the character of the Puritans of England. We have a hereditary right in their works and memory. Their writings are moulded by peculiar influences, that have yet left their traces upon our mental idiosyncrasy as a people. Connected as then the Puritans of the mother country were with our progenitors by every tie of piety and blood, their voice comes upon the ears of American christians like a testimony from the graves of those revered forefathers, who planted upon our rugged northern

shores the germs of our freedom, our knowledge, and our arts, while seeking only in the desert a refuge from persecution, and freedom to worship God; but who left, where they sought merely a shelter, the foundations of a new empire, stretching its territories already from the Atlantic to the Pacific, and shedding the influence of its commerce and its freedom over either continent.

The second of these eras, which have contributed to the christian literature of this Society, is that of *the great revival of religion, under the labors of Whitfield and the Wesleys in England, and the elder Edwards and the Tennants in our own country.* It was a great religious movement, awakening from lethargy and recalling from perilous errors a portion of the English Establishment, infusing a new life of piety into the English Dissenters, as in our own country it supplied the destitute and awakened the formal from Georgia to New-Hampshire. It was an era, both here and in the parent country, of bitter controversy. The truths, recalled from their long concealment and urged with new zeal, were to be defended from the press as well as from the pulpit, or the open field, where so many of those preachers delivered their testimony. To this day it is that we owe the works of Doddridge and Edwards, that work of Venn which the Society has very recently republished, and the memoir of Edwards' disciple and friend, the glowing, suffering David Brainerd. In the necessities of that time we see, though to a less extent, a combination of the same causes which made the Nonconformists' writings what they were. The preacher was grafted on the student. Had not Edwards had the experience of those glorious revivals God permitted him to witness and to record, he could perhaps still have written the work "On the Religious Affections;" but it would have been a very different book. Without the resources of his rich pastoral experience it might have been as profound as the immortal Analogy of



Butler, and as little fitted as that work to be generally popular with the great mass of readers.

The third of these memorable eras may be designated as the era of *modern christian enterprise*. We know no fitter epithet to describe its varied activity, and its aggressive action on the ignorance of nominal christendom and the wide wastes of heathenism. It began shortly after the breaking out of the French Revolution. It was an age when God seemed for a time to allow a new "*hour and power of darkness*," akin to that which brooded over the world when its Redeemer was about to suffer. Then boiled up from the lower deeps of the human heart floods of corruption, that, in ordinary ages, slumber on, dark and unseen, in their quiet concealment. Then steamed up, as it were from the nethermost abysses of hell, strange and hideous errors, that generally avoid the light of day, and the world was aghast at the open appearance of atheism, and the rejection by a great nation, as in mass, of their old ancestral faith. But, as if to illustrate his own government of the universe, then, to meet this revolt, rose up, from quarters the most distant, and some of them the most obscure, designs for good and enterprises of benevolence, of which the world had long seen no parallel. The Foreign Missions of the christian church, the Sabbath-School, the Tract Society itself, and the Bible Society, burst up, as in quick succession, and ere the carnival of the pit was ended, and while Satan seemed yet triumphing in his anticipated conquest of the world to impiety, the christian faith received a fresh impulse, and the cause of the Savior assumed an aggressive energy it has never since lost. To this period belonged Buchanan and Pearce. In this period Wilberforce published that *View of Religion* in the higher classes, which was, in the judgment of the commentator Scott, the noblest protest in favor of the gospel made for centuries—a book that consoled and delighted that eminent statesman Burke on his dying bed,

and that gave to the Church of Christ the lamented and beloved author of that immortal Tract "the Dairyman's Daughter," Legh Richmond. Pelted by Parr with learned Greek, and assailed by the Socinian Belsham, it went on unimpeded and did its work. Its influence was most decisive, under God, in aiding the great work of reform, the effects of which are visible in the middle and higher classes of England. Then, too, wrote and labored Hannah More, and to the same period may be added Henry Martyn.

All these three were periods of conflict. In the first and in the third, political contentions were intermingled with religious controversies. Wars and rumors of wars exasperated the fierce collisions between rival sects, or the strife that was waged between Christianity and those who cast off all fear, and mocked to his face their Maker and Judge. The second was indeed exclusively a period of *religious* controversy; but the points at issue were so momentous, and the zeal exhibited so ardent, that England and America were filled with the noise of inquiry and dispute, as the Gospel went on winning new and glorious triumphs amid fierce opposition. There was, as in the apostolic history, a wide door opened, and there were also "many opposers," and both Whitfield and Wesley were more than once, in christian Britain, on the eve of a summary and ferocious martyrdom.

All these three eras were then eras of moral revolution. It is a familiar fact that revolutions produce great characters. Their great emergencies awaken feeling and develop talent. Some mighty crisis paralyzes the weaker crowd, and summons forth the master spirit who can meet its demands, and reveals thus to the world his merits and his powers. And it is also true, that, although the highest works of science do not issue from such times, the most stirring and popular books are often the progeny of such

an age of turmoil and conflict. These orgasms of feeling, that shoot through the whole frame of a nation, may bring out much that is crude and extravagant, but they also lead to exertions of more than wonted power, and results of more than vulgar splendor. The best efforts of the best writers are sometimes traceable to the excitement of some such stirring era. Pascal's Provincial Letters, in which wit, argument, and eloquence are so splendidly blended, and, leaning on each other, group themselves around the cross of Christ, could not have been produced in the holiday leisure of some peaceful era. It needed the fierce controversies in which Jansenism lay bleeding under the feet of triumphant Jesuitism, and struggling as for its life, while it testified, as from the dust, in behalf of many of the great truths of the Gospel—it needed, we say, such a conflict and such a peril to draw out a production so impassioned and so powerful even from the mighty heart and the massive intellect of a Pascal.

There are works that seemingly can exist only as the birth of the throes and death pangs of some great era of change and moral renovation. Such were the three eras to which we have alluded, and their character was imprinted on many of the works they produced, and which this Society reprints and disseminates. No other age, no lighter emergency could have called forth such intellectual strength and such depth of feeling, and made the volumes so well fitted as they are to tell upon the heart of an entire nation. Works then written have the energy of the conflict and breathe for ever its strong passions. Their words are often battles. Had Bunyan never inhabited a dungeon, we question whether the Pilgrim's Progress would have had its beautiful pictures of the Land of Beulah, a land of freedom, light and beauty, and we doubt whether that allegory had ever existed. Had Baxter never been an army-chaplain, who must talk

strong truths in plain terms, we question whether his works would have had all their passionate energy and their strong simplicity.

With regard, therefore, to those portions of the Society's publications which proceed from American authors, their origin is some evidence in favor of their adaptedness to our peculiar wants. With regard to all those works of *British* origin that came from either of the great eras upon which we have remarked, we have in favor of their influence not only the character of the writers, but the character of the age in which they wrote and did battle for the truth of God as they believed it.

Taking now the literature of the Society, as prepared for this country in mass, we find in it evidently a variety and fulness of subjects that would seem to meet the varied demands of the church and the nation. For missionary literature, it has the memoirs of Brainerd, Buchanan, Schwartz, Henry Martyn, and Harriet Winslow. Does a pastor seek to train his flock to higher devotedness, where could be found a better manual than Baxter's *Saints' Everlasting Rest*, written, as it would seem, under the golden sky of the Delectable Mountains, and in full sight of the Celestial City? Where better companions than the biographies of Leighton, and Payson, and Pearce, and J. Brainerd Taylor? Against infidelity we have Bogue, (the work that was read, and with some considerable impressions of mind, by Napoleon in his last days,) and Morison, and Keith, and the treatises of Leslie and Watson, while others, on the same subject of *Christian Evidences*, commend themselves as the works of writers who were themselves recovered from infidelity, as the writings of Lyttleton, West, Jenyns, and our countryman Nelson. There is provision for every age—for the child, the Society has furnished the touching biographies of Nathan Dickerman, John Mooney Mead, and Mary Lothrop, with the

juvenile works of Gallaudet, and some of those by the Abbots. For those who love profound thought it has Foster, and for the lovers of brilliant imagination and glowing eloquence, the German Krummacher. Of the Nonconformists and of the cotemporaries of Edwards we have already spoken. Few writers of our time have caught so successfully, on some pages, the spirit of Baxter as J. G. Pike, three of whose works the Society republishes. As models of usefulness in the various walks of life, and in either sex, we have the biographies of Normand Smith, the example of the christian tradesman; and of Harlan Page, the private church member laboring for souls; of Kilpin, of Hannah Hobbie, and of Caroline Hyde. The child just tottering from its cradle is met by the Society with the half-cent Scripture Alphabet, while, for the last stages of human life, they have Burder's Sermons to the Aged, printed in type that suits it, for the dimmer eyes of old age. Furnished at every variety of price, and in every form and size, as are the Tracts of the Society, the christian traveller who would scatter the seed of truth as he journey, and the christian father who would furnish his children with a library of devout and wise authors; the christian minister who would train himself and others to higher devotedness and usefulness; the christian mother desiring aid to order her youthful charge aright, and the young disciple requiring a guide to the formation of a character of intelligent and consistent piety—all find their wants met. Against Romanism and intemperance the Society have furnished a quiver of polished arrows in their bound volumes of Tracts on each subject, in addition to the separate volume of Beecher on the one, and of the lamented Nevins on the other. They have Mason's Spiritual Treasury for the family altar and the closet; and for the pilgrim gathering up his feet into his couch to die, they have the Dying Thoughts of Baxter. They

leave behind, after the funeral ceremony has been performed, the Manual of Christian Consolation by Flavel the Nonconformist, and Cecil the Churchman. They instruct the active christian with Cotton Mather's "Essays to do Good," the book that won the praise and aided to form the usefulness of our own Franklin. They assail the covetous and hard-handed professor with the burning energy and eloquence of Harris' Mammon. But the time fails to review separately all the varied themes of their publications and the varied channels through which they are prepared to pour the same great lesson of Christ the only Savior, the Sovereign and the Pattern of his people.

3. But what evidence have we that these volumes are fitted for the present generation of men *in other lands*? Many, then, of this class of publications are written by missionaries abroad, conversant with the field they till, and anxiously and prayerfully addressing themselves to its wants. In Burmah and Siam, in India and in China, the Society is thus assailing the favorite idols and delusions of the heathen, in the manner which men who have given their lives to the work deem most suitable. The Society is thus, at the same time, proclaiming the Gospel before the car of Juggernaut and around the Areopagus where Paul preached; and many of their Tracts have already been blessed, to the conversion of the readers, and to shake, in the minds of thousands besides, the old traditional idolatry received from their forefathers.

Others of these compositions are translations of works written in England or America, and many of them are in the number of the Society's *English* publications. It may to some minds seem very doubtful that any work, prepared originally for the christians of Great Britain, or our own land, can, by any possibility, be intelligible or useful to heathen nations trained under different influences and strangers to our modes of thought and expression.

But it should be remembered that the good effects of

some of these translations have been put beyond doubt by the testimony of missionaries as to the interest they have excited, and even by the conversion of some of the heathen. One of the works of Baxter, we believe it was his *Call*, was translated in his life-time by our own Eliot for the use of his Indian converts; and a youth, the son of one of their chiefs, continued reading the work with tears on his death-bed. The pastor who talked to the carpet-weavers of Kidderminster could, it seems, speak as well to the savage hunters and fishermen of Natick and of Martha's Vineyard. The Dairyman's Daughter was early translated into Russian by a princess of that country, and has been acceptable and useful. The free-born English maiden that lived and died amid the delightful scenery of the Isle of Wight has told her tale effectively to the serfs and amid the snows of Russia. Fuller's *Great Question Answered*, another of the Society's Tracts, was crowned with striking success in a Danish version, and it was found that the pastor of the inland English village of Kettering was still a powerful preacher in the new garb and tongue that had been given him for the inhabitants of Copenhagen. Others have gone yet farther. We name the *Pilgrim's Progress of Bunyan* as an illustration, because none of the religious works of Europe has been so widely translated. In English the Society has printed it not only in the ordinary style but in the raised and tangible characters used by the blind. Little did the tinker of Elstow ever dream that his matchless allegory should be translated into the tongue of the false prophet Mahomet. Yet it has appeared in Arabic; and Joseph Wolff, in his travels in Yemen, distributed copies of the version in that ancient and widely-spoken language. In seven at least, if not in more, of the dialects of India it has made its appearance; in the Oriya, the Tamul, the Hindustani or Urdu, the Mahrathi, the Malay, the Bengali, and very recently in the Burman.

Fears, at the time when an Indian translation was first proposed, that its European ideas and imagery would be unintelligible to the native of the East, led a popular female writer to prepare in its stead her *Pilgrim of India*, with its Hindoo phrases and metaphors. But the original *Pilgrim* has been permitted now to speak, and he has spoken not in vain. The number of the *London Evangelical Magazine* for the present month, (Oct. 1842,) contains the memoir of Daniel, a Hindoo convert, written by himself. From this it appears that the work of Bunyan was a powerful instrument in his conversion: "At this period a gentleman put into my hand a book called the *Pilgrim's Progress*, which I read. Partly by reading this book and partly by the remembrance of all the labor which had been expended on me at Coimbatoor, I began to feel that the christian religion was the only true religion, and that Christ was the only sinless Savior." This was, probably, the *Tamul* version.

A translation was made by the British missionaries into the *Malagasy* language, for the use of the christian converts whom God granted to their labors in the island of Madagascar. Of the hold which the volume took upon their hearts we may judge from the language of the letters addressed by some of these converts to their missionary pastors when expelled from the island:—"We are impressed and delighted when we read the *Pilgrim's Progress*." And at a still later day, when the storm of persecution beat yet more heavily upon them, and some were executed for the profession of their faith, it is said that while awaiting death they felt inexpressible peace and joy, and said one to another, "Now are we in the situation of Christian and Faithful, when they were led to the city of Vanity Fair." An European book, thus quoted by African martyrs when about to die, must be of singular merit.

The same book has been translated into *Finnish*, for the use of the region verging on Lapland, and printed in



Dutch for the use of the missions in South Africa. A version has been made into Hawaiian at the Sandwich Islands; and one in Tahitian for the Society Islands, though we do not know that the latter has as yet been published.

A book which could thus interest the fur-clad peasantry of the frozen North in their smoky huts, and the tawny Caffre and Hottentot in the midst of his sandy, sunburnt plains, which delights in the cabins of our own West and in the far Hindustan, must have some elements that fit it for use everywhere. The nature of man is one in all climes. Conscience may be drugged and mutilated, but its entire extirpation seems impossible, and it lives under the pressure of error and amid torpor to witness for truth, and right, and God, in quarters where our unbelief and fear would expect to find it, if not utterly wanting, at least utterly inert. The same heart beats under the tattooed skin of the New Zealander as under the grease and ochre with which the Tambookie of South Africa delights to adorn his person, under the silks of the Chinaman and the furs of the Laplander. It has every where the same depravity, that no grade of civilization or refinement can so adorn as to lift beyond the need of the renewing gospel, and that no brutalism can so degrade as to put below the reach of the same efficacious remedy. Religion, it should be remembered again, is not mere abstract speculation; it is also emotion. With the heart man believeth. Now science and literature (strictly so called) may be an affair of certain civilized nations, and of them only; but poetry and passion are of all lands and of all kindreds of the earth. And how largely do these enter into the structure of the Gospel, of the book revealing that Gospel, and of all christian writings modelled upon that Bible. There are, it must be allowed, in the production of Bunyan's genius, excellencies and peculiarities that do not exist to an equal extent in many of the other publications of the Society, adapting it to interest mankind in

every grade of civilization and under all the varieties of custom and taste that culture or neglect, error or truth may have produced. Yet it will, in all probability, be found, when the trial shall have been made by competent translators, that many other of the favorite books of British and American christians are fitted to become nearly as much the favorites of the converts whom the grace of God shall gather in the ancient East or in the islands of the seas.

Our hope that much of the literature of European or American origin may thus become at once available for the spiritual wants of the converts from heathenism rests not on the peculiar talent of the works so much as on their subject and structure. Their theme is Jesus Christ, the character and the history devised by infinite wisdom, with the express intention of winning its way to the sympathies of man, under all the varieties of complexion, caste, language, laws and literature. This theme has proved its power to exorcise superstitions the most foul and inveterate, and to raise from the deepest and most hopeless degradation. Pervaded and saturated as so many of the Society's works are with this subject, we have confidence that the divine grandeur of the theme will, to some extent, compensate for the defects of the human authorship. The idols of all lands shall totter from their shrines, and yet be broken before its might; and we look for the shattering of all by the faithful and full presentation of this truth—Christ and him crucified—a truth that is to be the great Iconoclast principle of the age; for it is God's own device, and carries with it God's own promise and the irresistible energy of his benediction.

We have reason, again, to expect the adaptation of much of the religious literature of our own country and Britain to the wants of the foreign missionary, from its close assimilation to the character of the Scripture. This is a book carrying one of the evidences of its divine origin

upon it, in its power of interesting all grades of society and all ages of mankind. Far as any religious writer becomes penetrated by its spirit, and transfuses, as many of the Society's authors have done, its imagery and train of thought into his own compositions, so far he prepares them for acceptableness and favor among every tribe of mankind. If the Scriptures look with special favor on any class of our race, it is on the Eastern portion of the world. The Bible is an Oriental book, as far as it is the book of any one region or race. It would have been, in style and imagery, a very different volume had the Anglo-Saxon race been left to prepare it. And as far as it should have partaken of their marked peculiarities it would have been less fitted for one great errand it has in this age to accomplish. The missions of our times are pouring back from the favored West and from the tents of Japheth the light of salvation on the long-neglected habitations of Shem, its original seats, and upon the millions of the East. It is some advantage, then, that we go to them with a book that, if it favor any class, is more Eastern than Western in character; and that we carry with the Bible a biblical literature that, from the book on which it has been founded, has, in many of its specimens, caught a tinge of similar feelings, and imagery, and style.

In that body of religious literature whose evangelical and practical character we have thus imperfectly examined, the Society have done much. But it would be doing them and their objects gross injustice to suppose that they present it as a complete body of religious reading for all the wants of the age. Its publications may have some inequality of merit. What collection is otherwise? The lingering and fitful charities of the churches may forbid their enlarging it as they desire, and as the wants of our own and foreign lands require. The Nonconformist literature has many volumes they would gladly add to their

existing collection. There are two other great eras of religious conflict and effort, from the literature of which the London Tract Society has drawn largely, and this Institution as yet not at all. We allude to the era of the stormy infancy of the Scottish National Church, and the works of its Rutherford, its Guthrie, its Binning, its Andrew Gray, and its Durham. The other greater and earlier era is that of the English Reformation. Of the works of the English reformers our British brethren have published several volumes. As to the present availability of this latter literature we are aware that there is division of opinion; but its history would be valuable, if not its remains.

Nor is the American Tract Society to be judged as if it had completed its own designs, or finished its mission as respects a *native* religious literature. Its power to elicit works drawn up with peculiar reference to our position and habits as a people has as yet been shown but in a small degree. The churches of this country are capable of much more, and need much more; and if duly sustained, the Society may proceed in this work to a point far beyond the limit of its present attainments. Will the churches afford this aid? Here at least they will have—if they choose, by prayer, and effort, and liberality, to secure it—they will have a literature all that they can wish, as to its national adaptation.

And if our country and others that have been long favored with the serene and pure light of the Gospel are yet to know days of dark and stormy controversy with error; if over the once-peaceful encampments of our churches is spreading the hum that betokens an approaching combat; if, as some fear, we are entering in our times upon a stern and close conflict with Romanism or with skepticism, or with both; or are to stand up for our national morals and national existence against the floods of a frivolous and profligate literature that now drowns the minds

of our youth as beneath a rushing deluge of inanity, and filth, and venom, we have little fear as to the result. We cannot distrust the powers and the triumphs of Scripture, the safety and ultimate victories of the church. In the God of the Bible and the Head of the Church we need not fear to place the most unquestioning and imperturbable confidence. He who gave the Bible will guard the gift; and He who built will watch, as with a wall of fire, around the city of his own chosen Jerusalem. And, from all the past history of the church, we augur that out of this or any other conflict that may be awaiting us in the interval between our times and the final glory of Christ's kingdom, there may grow some of the richest productions of that literature which the church is yet to enjoy; a literature as yet unwritten, and which this Institution, we trust, will, with others, aid in educating, diffusing, and perpetuating. Some of the richest legacies which sanctified genius has ever bequeathed to the christian church are like that more cherished portion which the dying patriarch gave to his favorite son, his Joseph, "One portion above thy brethren, which I took out of the hand of the Amorite with my sword and with my bow;" the spoils plucked as out of the very teeth of the Destroyer, the trophies of a late and hard-won victory.

The above paper was referred to Rev. B. C. Cutler, D. D. Rev. George H. Fisher, and Charles Hosmer, Esq. who reported, recommending its adoption and publication, which was sanctioned by the Board.

The Rev. Dr. M'AULEY read the following, prepared by the Rev. TRYON EDWARDS, of Rochester, N. York.

## DOCUMENT VI.

## The Society's Publications an aid to Pastoral Effort.

Some years since a distinguished minister of New England thought within himself, what would be the effect at the present day of the preaching of the great divines of the 17th century. The more he pondered the thought the more it interested his mind, until at last he resolved to test the problem by copying and preaching to his own people a sermon from one of their number. Mentioning to a few individuals his plan and the reasons of it, that he might not be charged with plagiarism, he made the experiment. The Sabbath came; the sermon was preached, and it told with mighty power. His large and intelligent congregation were riveted in breathless attention, and solemn as the grave. They went from the house, a few speaking in under tones of the deep impressiveness and power of the sermon, but most of them giving still higher tribute to its excellence by the thoughtful stillness in which they walked, searching their own hearts and thinking of eternal things.

That sermon was from Richard Baxter, and its influence in that congregation, and through it, will never die; its power may go down from generation to generation, to be known in its fulness only at the judgment. By it "he, being dead," is yet speaking, and the power of his voice may be felt for ever!

Now suppose that on any one Sabbath that same experiment were to be made in every pulpit of our land; that Baxter were to preach on the same Sabbath to the whole of our vastly extended church-going population. Who can tell how blessed the results? Nay further, suppose that not only Baxter, but Doddridge, and Flavel, and Bunyan,

and Edwards, and the whole host of the most eminent and successful of God's servants in every age could all be gathered, and all could at the same time be preaching in every parish of our country, would it not soon make it as the very garden of God? And if any man or body of men had the power to raise these men from their graves, and bring them back for a season to preach as they did while living, would they not, by doing this, render the most important, I had almost said an infinite service to the pastors of our land, and, through them, to the church of God, and to the world?

This very work the American Tract Society has done, and is now doing. Lightly as the momentous fact seems to have impressed the minds of multitudes, it is scarcely a paradox to say that this Society has raised the dead, and is sending them to the help of the living. The mightiest minds, the warmest hearts, the most active, and eminent, and devoted servants of God of every age—these they have summoned back from eternity, and now holding them in commission, are ready to send them to every village and hamlet of our country or the world. Every pastor may call them to his aid in his arduous work. Every people may have the benefit of their labors.

But to drop the figure, we would call the attention of the pastors of our land to the important aid provided for them in the Tracts and especially the bound volumes of the American Tract Society. As to the character of these volumes, it is well known. They are all of tried value, proved to be so by the united testimony of the Church, and by their ever-growing acceptance and usefulness. They are full of the substance and spirit of the Gospel, and aim directly at the conversion of the souls of men. They are also of every variety, embracing in their range every important subject, and fitted to every age. The mere examination of the catalogue of the Society will show that they are fitted alike for the strongest and the weakest minds.

that they are adapted to every spiritual want, and to every exigency of the pastoral work.

And now the question is, will pastors ponder this subject? Will they dwell upon it till they feel its importance? Will they avail themselves to the full of the aid which is ever ready at their call? To illustrate at the same time the importance and the mode of doing this, we would say, let every pastor of our land keep by him the bound volumes of the American Tract Society, and let his people see that he is abundantly furnished with means for doing it. Let him have a shelf in his library appropriated to them, from which he shall, at his discretion, lend or give them to the members of his charge. In the 400 Tracts of the Society he may find the truth prepared and adapted to almost every circumstance and every individual. As he goes to the house of affliction, let him leave a copy of "the Gift for Mourners," filled as it is with the rich thoughts of Flavel and Cecil: every grain of it pure gold. When going, like the Savior at Cana of Galilee, to the festivities of the marriage scene, let him give to those who are there united for life, the excellent "Advice to a Newly Married Couple." It will show them the high responsibilities of the relation they assume, and strongly impress its important duties.

To the sordid, the avaricious, the selfish, and those too much absorbed in the world, he may send "Mammon," with its powerful arguments and rousing appeals, calling to a self-denying benevolence, and pointing for motives to it, to the wants of the world and the day of final judgment. "Normand Smith," and "Harlan Page," the *former* will impress the duty and illustrate the manner of living for God from day to day as a man of business, and the *latter* of individual christian effort for the conversion of the souls of men. By "Doddridge's Rise and Progress" he may arouse the careless, and point the inquiring to the Lamb of God; by "Edwards on the Affections," he may search the hearts and test the hopes of professing christians;



and by the "History of Redemption," expand the minds even of the most intelligent christians to new and vast views of truth, so that they, with a distinguished living divine, may be constrained to say that "it seemed to him, after reading it, as if all his previous life he had been living in a nutshell;" by "Foster" he may "appeal" in almost resistless tones to the intellect and heart of the impenitent; by Pike, he may persuade to "Early Piety," or "Guide the Young Disciple;" by Brainerd or Martyn he may wake the missionary spirit; by Nevins or H. Moore, rouse to a high standard of "Practical Piety;" by Bunyan, point the "Pilgrim" on his way to the Heavenly City, and by Baxter, whisper to him "Dying Thoughts," or tell of that "Rest" that remaineth for the Saint beyond the grave. And by these and the many other volumes of the Society, he may at all times, and especially in revivals of religion, ever be preaching, or rather calling in the mighty and sainted dead to preach, to individuals and from house to house, to all who are about him. Let the pastor do this, and he would deeply interest his own heart in the volumes that he circulates. He would save to himself a vast amount of labor, or rather he would multiply his own labors and usefulness an hundredfold. The mere fact that *he* gives or lends the volume would secure its being read; so that thus, at the same moment, he may be preaching to hundreds, while still he goes on with his personal and private duties. By these volumes he will crowd out the thousand worthless works that otherwise will engage and corrupt his people. He will meet an intellectual and moral want—occupy a vacancy which, "if he does not fill, the devil will." By thus making his people more intelligent, he will the better prepare them to hear and be profited by his own preaching. Thus making them familiar with a variety of most valuable authors, he will be able to preach much and powerfully by allusion; the mere mention of Baxter or

Bunyan calling up all their instructions afresh to impress the heart. With the life, and strength, and talents of but one man, he will accomplish the labor of multitudes: making himself, as it were, the director of the mighty dead, tasking them every day for *his* own work and for the good of his people, and thus in the highest degree blessing them, and aiding on the cause and kingdom of Christ.

Of one pastor we might speak who has availed himself of the aid which the American Tract Society thus offers to all. Its volumes he keeps constantly by him, at any time to be lent or given to his people. And richly has God blessed his effort thus to do good. Many of his people have been roused to reflection or led to the Savior by volumes like Foster's Appeal, or Doddridge's Rise and Progress of Religion; and many of the christians of his church have been edified and built up by works like those of Baxter, Bunyan, or Nevins, or Payson. One, by the perusal of "Mammon," has been led to double his subscriptions to the great objects of benevolence. Many a mourner has found rich and lasting instruction from "the Gift" that he has left them, and very many by the Tracts that he has given have been hopefully guided in the way of life.

In closing we would again repeat, let but every pastor be wise and faithful to avail himself to the full of the aid which here is offered; and let every church and congregation see that its pastor has fully the means of doing it, and both shall have reason to rejoice together in their common improvement and growth in grace, and in the prosperity of the cause of Jesus Christ.

This paper was referred to Rev. B. C. Taylor, D. D. Rev. N. Murray, and Rev. J. W. McLane, and was adopted for publication. The meeting then proceeded to a free discussion and statements illustrative of the principles of the documents presented.

Rev. Dr. M'AULEY spoke of the value of the publications of this Society as an *aid to the pastor*. He knew a pastor who was accustomed to exercise great discrimination in the selection of Tracts and books adapted to the capacity and age of those to whom he gave them; and the conversion even of persons seventy years of age had been the result of his judicious labors. Persons to whom but a single Tract had been given, were led to the Depository for more, and by reading they were led to the sanctuary to hear, and thus were converted to God.

Nothing, he said, was better calculated to impress the mind than the simple statement of truth, leading men to feel that there is an eye to see and search them, to teach them of their souls and the Savior, of heaven and hell. Such a statement of truth do the Tracts of this Society present, and we rejoice to see the day when all may become preachers of righteousness, by bringing the Gospel into every family by their distribution. Dr. M. said that he had derived great benefit from the Tracts himself; often when exhausted in body, but compelled to make preparation for the pulpit, he had been roused to successful exertion by selecting and reading one of them.

Rev. RAVAUD K. RODGERS, of Boundbrook, N. J. thought that, of all the great agencies for advancing the Redeemer's cause, few were more blessed in their results than the system of monthly Tract distribution and the general circulation of the volumes of this Society. From every part of the land most delightful intelligence might be brought of souls converted to Christ by reading the simple truth, and multitudes reclaimed from the ways of sin. In his own congregation he said that the monthly Tract was anticipated almost with as much anxiety as the weekly sermon. When the Agent for volume circulation came among them, they supposed that in that scattered population little could be done; but to prepare the way for an effort, Mr. R. preached a sermon from the text "Give attendance to reading," and the region was then districted, and the work commenced. The box which the agent brought, containing 150 volumes, was soon exhausted, and another procured, and another, until between eight and nine hundred volumes were scattered among the people. Four or five hundred of these Mr. R. distributed himself, and not a single individual to whom he offered them refused to buy one or more. This effort was made four years ago, and its influence is felt to this day, in keeping out a vast deal of the trashy and licentious reading which is so widely spread over the land. The church had been blessed with a general outpouring of the Spirit, and he knew not how

far this blessing had been connected with the reading of the volumes. He mentioned several books which had been especially useful and popular, as Pike's Persuasives to Early Piety and Guide to Young Disciples, Life of Harlan Page, &c. He concluded by assuring the Board that they have every reason to take courage and go forward; and not to be weak or faint in their minds, being confident that their work is not in vain in the Lord. He believed they would find that the interest which pastors feel in their labors is too deep, and too closely allied to the great concerns to which they are called, to allow them ever to suffer it to decline.

Rev. B. C. TAYLOR, D. D. of Bergen, N. J. said that nothing could be more grateful to his feelings than to concur in the testimony of the usefulness of the publications of the Tract Society which had just been given. It was his privilege in early life to be under the instructions of a man whom he tenderly loved, and whose memory he cherished—Rev. Dr. Finley; and whose counsels respecting the influence of books pertaining to godliness he should never forget. During the great revival which took place in his church in 1815, he had witnessed the care and the zeal which that good man exhibited in disseminating light and truth through the medium of a few well-selected volumes, such as Doddridge and Baxter; and there are many still living who can attest the wisdom of his action. Particularly Doddridge's "Rise and Progress," the solemn and tender counsels of which had been blessed, he believed, to the spiritual benefit of his own soul.

In the progress of my ministry, said Dr. T. I have endeavored never to lose sight of this means of influence. I have watched attentively the effect, and have made it an object to have, as far as possible, *every family supplied with a plenty of religious reading*. In the course of a few years I have distributed more than 1500 volumes. This was before the last year. At that time God was pleased to pour out his Spirit, and just as one and another were crying, "What must I do?" your agent came unexpectedly among us. I could not mistake the providence. I felt the way must be opened to the Agent. It was so. A neighboring pastor was called in to assist, and 700 volumes were added to the number already in the possession of my people.

This was in the fall of 1841. Only about two months ago I was called upon by an individual anxious to speak concerning his soul. Doddridge's "Rise and Progress" was again the happy instrument, under God, of awakening his soul to a sense of its peril. In view of

what I have seen, I feel that I have great reason to bless God for the assistance your publications have rendered me. Fourteen years ago there were not more than four religious periodicals of any kind taken in my parish. But now how widely different. The spirit of reading exists among old and young. Religious truth has free and frequent contact with their minds and heart. They are more intelligent, and more ready to act. The truth has greater effect, and every appeal and claim of the Gospel a readier access to their minds. All these efforts have excited a lively gratitude in my heart, and impel me most earnestly and affectionately to bid you, in the strength of the Lord, go forward.

Rev. Mr. COOK, one of the Secretaries, said that he had had the happiness of circulating about 110,000 of the Society's publications in four years, and in all his experience he had met but one pastor who questioned the expediency of the plan of distributing books, and not one who, after having made the experiment, was not willing to say that it was a good work. And as to the silent influences of these volumes, they could never be gathered up till the day of judgment, but the officers of the Society are constantly cheered by hearing of the blessed effects. He mentioned the volume effort in New Haven, Hartford, Boston, Troy, Rochester, Charleston, Savannah, &c. and said that in most of those cities precious and powerful revivals succeeded. How intimate the connection might be between those revivals and that effort it might be difficult to determine, but many have believed that the connection was direct and powerful. One pastor in Boston attributes his own conversion to reading Baxter's Call, another in Troy refers his own to Alleine's Alarm, and the rector of one of the largest Episcopal churches in the West attributes his conversion from the Roman Catholic religion to the perusal of one of these books.

Mr. C. said he would mention the particulars of but a single fact, which he had received a few days before from the lips of a son of the venerable minister alluded to, as an illustration of the benefits which might result from the Society's volume circulation in destitute neighborhoods. It was one of many that might be stated.

In 1807, a gentleman, journeying in the interior of New-York, then regarded as the *far* West, took with him some copies of the "Rise and Progress," and as he stopped at a cabin tavern, he noticed that the woman who waited on him at table was busily engaged in reading. He inquired what book she had, and learned it was "Rise and Progress," which a neighbor had lent to her, and she was copying out passages that peculiarly interested her mind. He gave her a copy of the book, which she received with great delight. In 1839 he

was passing that way, and inquiring for this woman by name, he was pointed to an elegant house as her residence. He called on her, and asked her if she remembered him. She did not. But do you not remember the man who gave you Doddridge's *Rise and Progress* thirty years ago? "Oh yes," said she, "are you the man? Why that book was the means of converting my soul; and it was lent around, and others read it, and we had meetings to read it together; it was read at huskings and bees, and on the Sabbath day, and a revival followed; and by and by we sent for a minister and formed a church." The church of Wyoming is the fruit of that seed. And that book still lives, and who knows but it may be the means of forming other churches, or raising up other writers like Doddridge to bless the world? The influence of books—of truths thus perpetuated—is boundless and incalculable. Baxter wrote—and his pungent truths fell upon the mind of Doddridge, and awakened it to the service of God and mankind. Under its impulse, Doddridge wrote his work, and it converted the soul and kindled the heart of Wilberforce. Wilberforce again wrote his *View*, and that was the means of Legh Richmond's conversion. His *Dairyman's Daughter* has been the means of converting hundreds. In giving a book, we may be lighting a train that may kindle other fires, which shall spread their influence until their blended light shall mingle with the splendors of the Millennial morning.

*Wednesday, 4 P. M.*—Statements by pastors and others continued.

Rev. A. D. SMITH, of New-York, said that he had affecting recollections—some of which were personal—in reference to the publications of this Society. He could look back nearly thirty years, before this Society had existence, when in early boyhood, residing in a village where there was no minister, his mind had been excited and benefited by the small library of religious books which were presented by the Connecticut Missionary Society. After perusing all the books of his father's library, and some even of a professional character, he resorted to this little repository, and there gathered some of his firmest and most useful views of doctrinal and practical religion. One work of a doctrinal character he could well remember, by Dr. Proudfit. He had never seen it since; but its statements and views were still, after the lapse of so many years, unobliterated from his mind. This experience had given him an invincible argument for the propriety of placing in families, books of this character. They may be read as I read these, simply because they are convenient, or

because there are no other. And if the time comes when those impressions shall be deepened and rendered effectual to the conversion of the soul, they will remember those early lessons, and they will have an unequalled force in the formation of christian character and of religious views.

But I wish to speak of the results that have come under my own observation. These Tracts and Books are an invaluable *aid to pastors*. I could occupy hours in particularizing the instances in which I have received much aid from them. My pastoral visits are seldom made without calling in their aid. For the careless and the awakened; for the mourning and the tempted; not only the personal counsels of the pastor, but a perpetuation of them in the form of well-adapted Tracts, are necessary. Into the hands of the convert and the recent professor I love to place these Tracts and Volumes. I have always kept a library of them for lending to my people. Not long since a young merchant, after a season of solicitude, expressed hope in Christ, and was admitted to the church. He came to me for direction. His ideas of religion, though otherwise intelligent, were crude and ill-formed. It gave me unspeakable happiness to be able to put into his hands such worthy guides as Baxter, Doddridge, and Pike. He read, and the expansion of his mind, and the increase of his spiritual knowledge, and his growth were perceptible to all. On a return from a short absence, I learned he had been suddenly called to reside in a destitute settlement in the West. It was a delightful thought to me, that I had been enabled to do so much towards giving a right direction to his religious life.

The benefits of Tract visitation I could descant upon till twilight has deepened around us. An infidel woman, who was the wife of an infidel, was not long ago called upon by a lady with a Tract. At first she indignantly refused to receive it. But the lady talked with her—just as your Colporteurs will do—and at length gained permission barely to *leave* it. It remained for weeks unread; but a rainy Sabbath brought a season of leisure and ennui, and she took it up to while away the time. Its pungent truths fastened upon her unseared conscience, and at length that unbelieving woman was weeping at the foot of the cross.

There are other instances equally demonstrative of the power of these winged arrows—but one will be stated: Not far from my own church there was a family, consisting of a father and three daughters. The father was an infidel, an abandoned profligate and a despiser of God and holy things. So embittered had he become, that the sound of a church bell ever would exasperate him to blasphemy and violence.

His children of course were prohibited to attend church, and for years they were strangers to the sanctuary. At length a Tract visitor called. The father being absent, the Tract was received, and, under God, it was the means of awakening the eldest of the daughters. For fear of the father, she stole away to a religious neighbor to get instruction. She was converted, and united with the church; and I had the satisfaction of remarking the peace with which she recently left the world.

Mr. HEMAN PACKARD, from Massachusetts, stated that for several years his health had obliged him to spend his winters at the South, chiefly at New Orleans, where he found opportunities for doing good among the boatmen and raftmen on the Mississippi. His first attempt was with a boatman, who wept as he said, "You make me think of my mother, who used to lay her hand upon my head and pray for me—you are the first person who for eight years has spoken to me about my soul." This led Mr. P. to devise a way in which to benefit this class of persons. He procured from his native place a quantity of religious Tracts and pamphlets, which had long been laid aside, and proceeded to disperse them with very happy effects. As he returned to the South in successive winters, he increased his supply by similar contributions from towns in the vicinity of his native place. He would get the raftmen, who mostly came from Arkansas, to take bundles of Tracts to carry home and circulate among their neighbors.

Last autumn he had a supply of about *a ton and a quarter* of Bibles and Tracts. He met with some opposition, instigated in some cases by the priests; though many catholics accepted his donations. He sometimes gave to applicants as many books as he could get into the saddle-bags which, after they had ascended the rivers perhaps 1500 miles, they must then carry on their shoulders for many a weary mile before reaching their home. He had repeatedly had reports come back to him of conversions and revivals of religion originating from these simple means. He was once followed for six miles, over an exceedingly rough road, by several raftmen, who were barefoot by reason of extreme poverty, for the purpose of obtaining Tracts. He once proposed to one of this class to go home with him for the same purpose; as they went along, this man invited another, and still others to go with them, till there were five in company. One of these afterwards came again with two more; and in the evening a boy with still two more. These instances must serve as a specimen of the many rehearsed by Mr. P. to show the want of good books at the distant South and West, and the inclination of the destitute to have this want supplied.



Rev. Mr. HOLT, of New-York, stated that while he was a pastor in Portsmouth, an Agent came to circulate the Volumes of the Society. The town was overwhelmed with an Universalist and Unitarian influence—so that even the systematic distribution of Tracts had to be suspended. But the effort was made, and the Volumes were received with altogether an unexpected readiness, and the number of 800 were circulated, where it was thought to be an idle estimate to say that 150 could find purchasers. The effect was most happy. A revival of religion commenced soon after—what agency the Books had in it is not known—which left an impression more deep and pervading than any other movement since the days of Whitfield.

Rev. Mr. ARMS, of Norwich, Ct. added his testimony to the value of these publications. The cause was a favorite one, and had the entire confidence of ministers and christians in that part of the State where he resided. A benevolent individual of his church had just put into his hands fifty dollars for the purchase of the Society's volumes, as a pastoral library to be loaned as individuals had need. Many of the volumes he esteemed as among the most valuable of human productions. He particularized James' Anxious Inquirer, than which for cultivated minds in an anxious state he knew of no better book.

*Letter from Rev. J. Hopkins, Auburn, N. York.*

“I rejoice at your efforts to wake the public mind to the importance of the Society's operations. On several accounts I consider them, and especially the *volume circulation*, as among the most valuable in all the brotherhood of benevolent objects. The seed thus scattered is not liable to be corrupted. If we send the living preacher, he may become an errorist and disseminate tares; but the influence of Baxter, Doddridge, and Edwards will be against irregularity and sin in every form, and the fruit they produce will advance the honor of God and the best interests of men. Send these volumes to the West, and you send the most effectual preventive of error. Send them to the East, and there is no instrumentality like them to breathe life, and permanent life into the dead forms of Protestant Europe. Next to the Bible itself, these Volumes will be the leaven to pervade the whole lump. May the Lord direct your deliberations, and lead to such measures as will effectually awake the churches to the importance of the enterprise.

On *Wednesday evening* Rev. Mr. COOK presented the following paper.

## DOCUMENT VII.

## The Colporteur System.

*I. As adapted to the unevangelized American population.*

The intelligent mind, apprehending the condition of the several classes of society in this land, and the relations of the country to the world, cannot but feel that whatever else is done or neglected, *more must be done for the evangelization of America.* Our very existence as a republic depends, under God, on the intelligence and virtue of the masses of the people; and our influence on other nations can only be for good, in proportion to the prevalence of the Gospel at home. To leave a majority, or a large minority of the people, in ignorance of the Gospel, is not only suicidal, but detracts from the symmetry and depth of that impression, which, as a seal in the hand of God, we are destined to make on the nations of the earth.

There is no one sentiment in which the christian community are more agreed than that an enlightened ministry is an essential instrumentality of evangelization. But the view that regards this as the *only* agency, cuts off all hope in respect to millions of the present generation, to say nothing of the teeming millions of the future; for the men and the means to educate and sustain them are not at hand for the adequate supply of the spiritual wants of a population so vast and scattered as our own; and if they were, the half of the existing generation of the unevangelized must perish before they can be brought into the field.

Is it not then a proper subject of inquiry whether other agencies may not be brought to the aid of the ministry, so

that their lack of service may be supplied, and in some way the present generation be reached with enough of truth to guide them to the cross? Whether humble, pious men in the common walks of life may not engage in seeking out the destitute; and in these fireside conversations and personal entreaties, and the diffusion of appropriate publications which God has so abundantly blessed, gather from the more hopeless classes many who might otherwise perish? And whether the instructions of the pious dead may not be made available where the living preacher has not gone, and perhaps for years will not penetrate?

It is a noticeable fact, that Missionaries occupy successively the more prominent and populous ports, trenching but slowly in a country of rapid growth upon the *desolations* of the country. This is natural and right; but it necessarily leaves the very destitute scattered population almost without a ray of light. Some system is indispensable, that goes out literally into the highways and hedges, and carries the bread of life to the famishing multitude, who either cannot or will not come to the gospel supper. It must be an *itinerating* system; for, especially in the newer settlements, the people live far apart and cannot be brought together stately to hear the word. It is for such a class—the poor, the ignorant, the neglected population of our wide country, that the COLPORTEUR SYSTEM is especially designed. It aims to carry a verbal message from Calvary to the ear, and a printed message to the eye of every one of these wanderers from God and his sanctuary. It would furnish an advance guard, a corps of pioneers for the army of the Lord. It would keep pace with the onward wave of immigration and minister to the spiritual wants of every newly formed household. It seeks to subdue the wild mountaineer by the presence of a Felix Neff, and to leave for his daily companionship a Baxter or a Doddridge. And on what principle is the obligation enforced to send the itinerant missionary to the mountains of Leba-

non or Neilgherry with his load of pious books, that does not demand a *Colporteur* for the mountains of Kentucky? Why to the plains of Siam and not to the barrens of Georgia or the prairies of Missouri?

There is a power of adaptation in the *Colporteur* system, and a capacity for indefinite expansion, which fits it peculiarly for a country like ours. With sufficient discretion in the selection of men, every portion of the country and every class of the population may be approached in the way best suited to the great object. No matter how various the languages or sects, each may be made to hear and read in his own tongue the wonderful story of Redemption. There need be no limit, save that of pecuniary means to the multiplication of men and books, to such an extent as to reach every unevangelized family now on the stage, within a reasonable period, with two of the most effective means of good, *personal religious conversation and the pious counsels of the best authors that have yet lived.*

The importance of the Society's volume circulation in families and congregations enjoying all the other means of grace, has been universally conceded: and it has received the favor and co-operation of pastors and churches in all the more favored parts of the land, to an extent conferred on scarcely any other enterprise of the Church. Can there be any more doubt that an incalculable service is done, by giving to domestic missionaries the aid of pious books in all the families of their congregations? And especially those congregations that enjoy the labors of a missionary only on alternate Sabbaths, or one Sabbath out of four or six. But there are hundreds of newly gathered and feeble churches, of various denominations, scattered over the land, which are without pastors, and for want of men and means must long continue so; is it not a blessed work for the Society to install such men as Baxter, and Flavel and Bunyan in such vacant pulpits, and, by the presence of the *Colporteur*, call into exercise whatever of active piety

there may be in co-operation with his labors for the unevangelized around them? Besides, a considerable portion of all who hear the Gospel in the distant parts of the country, listen to that which is hortatory and uninstructional, from preachers employed in secular pursuits six days of seven in each week. To such the Bible and *religious books*, in simple popular language, constitute an indispensable means of sound *gospel instruction*. Other means of supplying the appropriate books than the Society's traveling Agencies, there are few or none; and if there were, the personal labors of the Colporteur would be needed to form and foster the desire to possess them. Were there no other benefit from the *Colporteur* system than the facilities it affords of furnishing means of grace, and knowledge, and usefulness to professing christians in their dispersion, it would still be one of the most important enterprises in which the Society could engage.

But it has a much wider reach. There are families and individuals here and there, in every part of the land, and especially in the sparsely settled states, existing in total ignorance of Christ and his Salvation. Not a ray of light from above has ever dawned on their spiritual vision. Not a message of mercy has ever reached their ear. The Sabbath brings no blessings to them. The Sanctuary is an unknown place. Heathen in a christian land! It is feared that the aggregate of such souls would equal the entire, unevangelized population abroad, reached directly by the influence of all our Foreign Missionaries. They may be found scattered through the pine barrens of the South, stretching down from the Delaware Bay to the Florida Keys; on the mountain ranges dividing the east from the west, from the northern spire of the Alleghany to the southern slope of the Cumberland; on the sea-like prairies and primitive forests of the boundless West, indeed, in our crowded cities and around all our sanctuaries—millions who fear not God, and to whom the glad tidings of salva-

tion are seldom if ever proclaimed. Shall these scattered millions be sought out, and the oral and printed invitation be given to them to come to Christ? Is there wisdom and benevolence in a system that employs men to incite christians of every name to share in the self-denial of giving to the destitute; or, if this is impracticable, to go themselves to the homes of those who will never seek the light? And on what principles and to what extent shall the Committee prosecute these labors? They respectfully solicit the attention of the Board to the whole subject, and especially to the following questions:

1. Shall the Committee undertake to carry forward the Colporteur system, on a scale sufficiently extended to reach, with all the christian co-operation that can be summoned, the existing generation of the unevangelized?

2. In prosecuting the work, shall the Committee instruct their agents to *give* one of the cheap volumes like Baxter's Call to every family destitute of all religious books except the Bible, but unable or unwilling to purchase? And shall an appropriate Tract be given to every family?

Mr. COOK proceeded to explain the Colporteur system in its adaptation to the wants of the destitute, by a sketch of the labors of a day, in visiting sixty families residing mostly in log-cabins at the West.

Two gentlemen took a light wagon and rode forty miles, calling at the abodes of the neglected and poor. They addressed the gate-keeper, the market-man, and the passing traveller, and gave Tracts to all. Passing a school-house, one of them stepped among the boys gathered before it, and was soon surrounded by the lads all eager for the little children's Tracts held in his hands. After supplying them, he called the larger boys to the wagon and supplied them with Youth's Temperance papers, and from the wagon-wheel preached a sermon to them adapted to their comprehension.

Passing on, they soon came to a log-cabin, where one of them requested a glass of water, in receiving which he expressed a hope that she would have a disciple's reward. This opened the way for personal religious conversation. The children could not read, though the mother could. There were no religious books in the house, and none

attended church. Selling them a copy of Baxter's Call, and pointing them to the Lamb of God, the Colporteur proceeded.

Another cabin contained a sick and dying man, who had not enjoyed the visit of a christian for two years. He knew that he must die, and had no hope. After placing Baxter's Call and appropriate Tracts in his hand, the visiter turned to the wife and inquired tenderly whether she was prepared for the trials that awaited her. She confessed her impenitence, but promised to read the book left for herself, and to her husband, when too feeble to read himself. With earnest and solemn entreaty to attend without delay to their souls' affairs, the Colporteur commended them to God in prayer and left them.

Calling at another cabin, he was met at the bars by a girl eleven years old, who was asked if she could read. She said, No. But don't you go to school? No. Nor to Sabbath school? No. Have you ever heard about God, who made the world? No. Nor of Jesus Christ who redeemed it? No. Do you think you are a sinner? No. Do you know what sin is? No. But don't you know that you have done wrong? I don't think I have. What could be said? There was not a single term that could be used which conveyed any meaning to that dark mind. A heathen in a christian land! And there are others, many of them. The Church ought to know it, and ought to spare no effort to teach them the way of life. Now, where is the consistency of sending forth men to spend long years in acquiring difficult languages, and crossing dangerous seas to preach the Gospel to the benighted, when *here*, in our own land, there are multitudes as uninformed of the way of salvation as the far-off islander or the wandering Malay! I would not lay a straw in the way of efforts to evangelize the heathen; I would rather redouble every energy put forth in the missionary work. But while this is done, for the sake of consistency, for the sake of souls, for the sake of Christ, let us not leave undone the great work of evangelization at home.

The document was referred to Charles Butler, Esq. Rev. Drs. Skinner and Hardenburgh, Rev. R. K. Rogers, and Rev. E. Tucker, who, through Mr. Butler, presented a report, which, after slight amendments suggested by Rev. Dr. Patton, was adopted and referred for publication as follows:

## REPORT.

The subject is one of overwhelming interest to the christian, the philanthropist and patriot, in whatever point of view it may be presented.

The Colporteur system is admirably adapted to meet the need of our widely extended country, and the Committee hail the introduction of it by the American Tract Society with devout gratitude to God. In the opinion of the Committee, it may be employed throughout the land, and particularly in the newer States and Territories, with the prospect of accomplishing the greatest good with comparatively a small expenditure of money.

"THE PULPIT  
Must stand acknowledged, while the world shall stand,  
The most important and effectual guard,  
Support and ornament of virtue's cause."

But then the fact, solemn *as it is true*, is constantly pressed upon us, that "*the Messenger of Truth*" has not been sent to preach the Gospel to the needy and destitute in our land—to restore the weak—reclaim the wanderer—bind up the broken heart, and

" Armed himself in panoply complete,  
Of heavenly temper, furnish with arms  
Bright as his own, and train, by every rule  
Of holy discipline, to glorious war,  
The sacramental host of God's elect."

The living minister, thoroughly furnished for his work, is not supplied to the extent that is needed. Hundreds of thousands of our countrymen are living and dying without the means of grace, without once hearing of the way of salvation. And the entire present generation of our unevangelized population is passing on rapidly and surely to the grave, with scarcely a ray of hope to lighten up the darkness of the tomb, and the numbers are augmenting daily. Can we look upon such a scene with indifference? We know that christian hearts bleed in view of the destitution of our own country; and we know that sympathies are enlisted and efforts are made to send the Gospel to the perishing; but then we feel that all our efforts and agencies are utterly inadequate, and come short of the great object to be effected. A few may be saved by these efforts, but how many are left to perish! "The harvest truly is plenteous, but the laborers are few."

The Committee believe, that in answer to the prayers of the



Church, God in his grace has sent to us this COLPORTEUR SYSTEM, to enable us to supply the needful laborers to work in his harvest-field. The Committee desire to recognize the hand of the great Lord of the harvest in devising a plan (second only to the stated ministry) by which the harvest may be gathered.

The plan is one of practical interest ; and is commended for its efficiency, its cheapness, its directness, and its comprehensiveness. It is suited exactly to the object sought to be attained, and if carried out thoroughly, as it ought to be, every settler upon the boundless and sea-like prairie—every inmate of a log cabin in the densest forest of the West, every wanderer from his own and native land, who has hither directed his steps to a new home—every immigrant, who with his wife, his sons and his daughters, have just planted themselves in some place remote from human habitations, far away from the sound of the churchgoing bell, may find the Colporteur waiting for him there, to welcome him with a message of peace and salvation.

The Colporteurs will be found by the way-side, and in the great thoroughfares, and upon the steamers, and the railroad-cars, and wherever the tide of emigration is setting, distributing the precious seed they bear, as angels of mercy to the weary traveller.

The Colporteur, engaged in his work with the spirit of his Master, appears to us to be an *indispensable* instrument in carrying the Gospel to the unevangelized population of our own country. The Committee can hardly conceive of any other way in which it can all be reached ; and if all the young men now prosecuting their studies for the ministry in all the seminaries of the land, were to be baptized with a fervent missionary spirit, (and God grant they may be,) with the spirit of Paul, and Brainerd, and Martyn, and were to go into the Western field, they would be as a handful of men, and we should yet have to exclaim, "The harvest truly is plenteous, but the laborers are *few* ; pray ye, therefore, the Lord of the harvest, that he will send forth *laborers* into his harvest."

To meet this exigency, the Colporteur system comes to our aid, and carries the cup of Salvation to perishing thousands, who are in a dry and thirsty land, where no water is.

With such views, the Committee respond to the sentiments contained in the Report submitted to them, and they would earnestly and cordially urge upon the Executive Committee,

1. To carry forward as fast as the Providence of God shall seem to direct, the Colporteur system, with the view of reaching, as soon as practicable, the existing generation of the unevangelized in our own country ; and,

2. In the prosecution of the work, to instruct their agents (the Colporteurs) to give one of the cheap volumes, like *Baxter's Call*, to every family destitute of all religious books except the Bible, and who are unable and unwilling to purchase, and to give at least an appropriate Tract to every family.

And the Committee believe, that in the prosecution of a scheme so benevolent, and so divine, the Society may rely upon the blessing of the great Head of the Church, and the sympathies and co-operation of every friend of the Redeemer.

Mr. BUTLER proceeded briefly to present a striking view of the moral condition of the West, drawn from his own observations made during several extensive tours. He adverted to the gigantic efforts now making by the Roman Catholics, and especially to a new though perhaps not very well digested plan for colonizing Irish Catholics in the West; he thought the colporteur system *indispensable* in bringing the Gospel to bear on the West with sufficient particularity and power to counteract opposing influences, and save our destitute population and our country from ruin.

Rev. Dr. MILNOR said that he perfectly accorded with the sentiments of the Report. He had no doubt that the Colporteur system would be attended with great good, not only as the result of the labors of the agents of this Society, but in leading christians of all denominations to take means to enlist a like agency to assist the ministry in various departments of labor. An impression, he said, had prevailed that all effort for the conversion of men must be confined to the ministry alone; and no doubt there are some duties which belong exclusively to those who have been ordained to that work; but he was happy to learn that the idea of employing these assistants to the ministry had been adopted here, and was about to be carried into extensive operation. We have been interested with the working of this system on the continent of Europe. And in Ireland we know they have employed something of the same system in a class of men who are sent out to read the Scriptures to those who cannot read themselves. These men, though uneducated, have the grace of God in their hearts, and are competent to drop a word of counsel and make inquiries as to the spiritual condition of the families they visit. Our laborers being better educated, will doubtless be more useful.

Dr. M. had been exceedingly pleased to see that in Great Britain a large society had been formed, of which Bishops are officers and patrons, and whose funds already amount to 50,000 or 60,000 pounds a year, called the Pastoral Aid Society, the object of which is to afford

Pastors assistance in the care of large and scattered congregations, where their income is small and their labors are great. This is done in some cases by furnishing curates and in others *lay helpers*, who, under the supervision of the pastor, may go from house to house among the cottagers, ascertain their wants, give them a word of useful counsel, and report to the pastor the results of their labors. If we look to the early days of the Church, among the acts of the Apostles, we find that they employed laymen and *lay women* to assist them in the great work of bringing sinners to Christ.

Dr. Milnor read from the London Christian Observer an interesting instance of the effects of the labors of a colporteur in Europe, and concluded with a very earnest commendation of this cause as eminently calculated, under discreet management, to be useful in this country.

*Letter from Hon. Roger Minot Sherman, Fairfield, Conn.*

“ We cannot neglect our country’s highest interests without incurring aggravated guilt. In one important respect we differ from other nations. We are in our infancy, and apparently appointed to higher destinies than any other people. A vast proportion of the immense regions between the Atlantic and Pacific, the Lakes and the Gulf of Mexico, is still in a state of nature ; presenting, with the portions already occupied, the noblest theatre for men of any part of the globe. And such is our government, that the millions of this population are to sway the sceptre, and by them its immense power is to be wielded, and its influence exerted for good and for evil, both over their own and other nations of the earth.

“ The importance of *early* influences in forming the character of such a people surpasses estimation. Their numbers, *now*, are comparatively few. The moral force of the settled portions of the United States, if put in operation, can *now* mould the character of those interesting settlements, in their rapid progress from a few log cabins to a populous town or great commercial city. Without these influences christian character is never formed, either in individuals or nations.

“ When these already numerous settlements are multiplied ; when they become robust in principles and habits adverse to the influences of morals and piety, they will not only resist all means for their own reformation, but exert a counter influence on future infant settlements which will baffle the benevolent efforts of those who come after us. When we compare each ten years census with that which preceded it, (the population of the West nearly doubling every ten years,) when we look upon the vast fields now occupied by a busy and prosperous population, which but yesterday were the lonely habitations of beasts

and savage men; when from this we foresee the advancements which the next half century is to make, and consider the prevalence of recklessness and infidelity, and of a superstition more corrupting in its tendencies and less susceptible of remedy than infidelity itself, sustained by wealth and power, can we doubt the supremacy of our obligations to our own country? Do not its wants greatly exceed the means hitherto applied? Is not the field enlarging in a ratio to which the provisions for its culture bear no just proportion? The Bible, the Minister, the Schoolmaster, the Volume, the Tract, every appropriate means for enlightening and evangelizing our Western population should be bountifully supplied, as a primary duty of American christians.

*Letter from Rt. Rev. B. B. Smith, Kalorama, Ken.*

“It is one of the great privations of my position and my duties, that I cannot share in the precious influences of such animating Assemblies. Yet every such occasion for special intercession is most welcome to me, and on Tuesday of next week I shall be present with you in spirit. May He whose spiritual presence is really good for something, much more be present with you.

“Any further communication from my pen will be better through the press. Yet I cannot refrain, should this letter reach you in season, to reiterate the plea for the poor mountaineers, and the specific form in which I present it, is, cannot you send us one of your most self-sacrificing and devoted Colporteurs with a small pious family, to devote himself to the valley of the head waters of the Cumberland, returning on his own track once in three months, for a series of years? Thank God, my printed appeal has stirred up a teacher and lady in Middletown, Md. to correspond with me on the subject. What it will lead to, and whether they have really counted the cost remains yet to be seen. The only hope of a lost world is, that the Savior lives, and loves souls with an intensity of which our most fervent zeal is but a cold scintillation.”

*Letter from Rev. J. T. Brook, Cincinnati, Ohio.*

“I have only time to express my regret that I cannot attend your meeting, and my deep interest in the object for which it has been called. You know my high estimation of the Tract cause, both as an efficient agency for promoting the Gospel and as a public bond of union among christians. And I should esteem it a high privilege to be permitted to stand upon your platform with representatives from different

branches of the Christian Church and unite my feeble voice with theirs in advancing the 'common Salvation.'

"What is to become of a large portion of the population of this immense valley unless faithful *colporteurs* are sent to their doors, leaving your publications? Many of them must perish in heathenish darkness in the midst of a christian land! and who will have to answer for it? Let every professed christian see to it that he have a good excuse for withholding his hand from such an opportunity of doing good unto all men, and bearing his part in the duty of preaching the Gospel to every creature."

*Letter from William H. Bulkley, President of the Young Men's Tract Society, Louisville, Ken.*

"The voice of the West ought to be heard,' and it will be heard, in a very few years, for good or for evil, speaking out in *thunder tones* to this great nation. It is no vain boast that the West is soon to govern this country. The more I reflect upon Western character and upon the influences which are at work here for evil, the more important do I consider the effort of your Society to evangelize this mighty mass of minds.

"I can assure you, my dear brother, that in this work you shall have not only my hearty co-operation, but also that of the Society over which I have the honor to preside.

"Our Society is increasing in numbers and widening its field of usefulness. We have it in contemplation to establish several district prayer meetings in the more destitute portions of our city. It is gratifying to know that the influence of our Society has already been felt in starting into existence a *Youth's Tract Society*."

Rev. Mr. EASTMAN, one of the Secretaries, read a continuation of the document on the Colporteur system, as adapted to

## II. Our German Population.

The attention of the Board is requested to the *German population*, whose rapid immigration, if not an occasion of alarm to the patriot, is at least one of deep interest to the christian.

The number of Germans in this country is variously estimated at from 1,500,000 to 3,000,000. They constitute nearly one-fourth of the population of the cities at the West, and not less than one-tenth of the entire population of the land, with an unprecedented increase the present year. The abundance and cheapness of land; the com-

paratively high price of labor and freedom from taxation, will continue to swell the tide.

We leave to others to canvass the probable bearings on our political institutions of the influx of a foreign population, sufficiently large already to hold the balance of power between parties; a portion of whom owe allegiance to a foreign despotism; necessarily ignorant of our government and its laws; having a public sentiment of their own, which, by difference of language, is slowly affected by American public sentiment; exercising the right of suffrage at a very early period of their residence; liable to be made the prey of designing demagogues; jealous of newly acquired rights, which may be poorly understood, and which may be contested by an equally jealous native population. There may be danger from these sources, neither unreal nor remote. But with all this we have nothing to do, only as there is an inseparable coincidence between the means of enlightening and saving the souls of a people, and their preparation for enjoying and perpetuating our free institutions. If the apprehension of danger be not groundless, *the only way to avert it is to give the Gospel in their own language and its blessed institutions to the whole population.* And if it is, still motives of infinitely greater weight press upon us, in view of dangers that take hold on eternity, to give the Gospel to the Germans. *If American christians do not provide for their spiritual wants, who will?*

Discouraging as are many of the aspects in which the rapid increase of this population may be viewed, and little as is now done for their improvement, who can resist the conviction that *God has sent them to our shores to be evangelized*—to have conferred upon them blessings which either could not or would not have been given them at home. Wo be to us if we misinterpret or disregard this gracious behest of Providence!

#### THE GERMANS ARE INTELLIGENT.

It is a memorable fact—indicating, perhaps, the principal agency to be employed for their benefit—that *all, or nearly all the Germans can read.* Providence has so ordered it, that throughout Prussia and most of Germany parents are compelled to send their children to school, from the age of four to twelve; and if a recruit enters the Prussian army who cannot read, he is at once instructed. But while this is true, and while Germany has “nearly as many authors as readers,” few of the books of this century are either free from rationalistic sentiment, or written in a style for popular circulation;

and very few who emigrate are supplied with profitable reading. Here and there "Arndt's True Christianity," or the works of Stilling may be found; but the great mass of Germans are destitute of books, and will be, unless the hand of christian philanthropy supplies them. The taste for reading is kept alive, to some extent, by the periodical press; but, with some honorable exceptions, the political papers in the German language do not favor, while many openly oppose a spiritual religion. Few, if any, *books for the young*, of a religious character, are published here, or imported from abroad.

From this statement it will be seen how vast and encouraging a field is open before this Society. On it rests peculiarly the responsibility of furnishing *an evangelical German literature for young and old*, suited to the wants of a million of readers now inhabiting the West, to say nothing of the hundreds of thousands in Pennsylvania and the Eastern States, or of the millions that will soon follow their friends and fellow-countrymen to this "land of the free." The long and tedious process of reducing a language to writing, or acquiring it when written, has not to be gone through with before a beginning can be made; nor have you to wait for a generation of readers to grow up under the culture of mission-schools, at vast expense. *The whole process of elementary instruction is performed to our hand by their former governments; BUT IF WE WAIT TILL THIS GENERATION PASSES FROM THE STAGE, THIS PROCESS MUST BE REPEATED BEFORE THEY CAN BE BROUGHT INTO AS FAVORABLE A POSITION FOR EVANGELIZATION AS WE NOW FIND THEM.* Shall we forego this advantage, when the cost of elementary instruction for the next generation will be ten times as great as that of providing the existing population with the means of salvation? Adequate means for the instruction of children are neglected in their efforts to acquire property for them; and what motive will there be for parents to employ these means, if they have not *books* for their own and their children's use? *Delay will be ruin.*

The Society's books and Tracts are admirably suited to the popular German mind. They are solemn, fervid and practical. In the German language and dress they will be read by Romanists and Protestants. A gentleman who is familiar with the German character said that "he had lent a copy of *Pilgrim's Progress* until it was literally *read up*; and if he had twenty copies they would be read up." "Put these books," said he, "in a popular form, and there is not a family that will not take and read them."

But it is not enough to publish them: they must be carried to every German family. *Colporteurs*, speaking their language and understanding their character, must be employed to accomplish for

that population what we are attempting for our own. A few such laborers have been found; and God will raise up others in sufficient numbers, and of suitable qualifications, to carry forward this work on any scale that you may project, or the christian community sustain. If attempted in the right spirit, and by the right men, it will be welcomed by many as the beginning of brighter days; it will receive the divine benediction; it will lead the way for other enterprises in their behalf; and our country may ultimately rejoice in the accession to her population of millions of industrious, sober, intelligent, Americanized, *christian* Germans.

O, had Luther and his compeers enjoyed such facilities as we possess of giving the Germans a pure and uncorrupted Gospel, how speedy, and bloodless, and complete would have been the great Reformation! With the light of the successes and mistakes of the Reformers before us, and the subsequent history of the church to instruct us; with the accumulated treasures of the knowledge and piety of centuries in our possession, and abundant means for their diffusion; with every motive of patriotism, philanthropy and benevolence impelling us, what should prevent the speedy evangelization of this interesting people?

The Committee regard this subject as one worthy of the profound consideration of the Board; and they solicit for it the attention its importance demands.

Rev. Dr. DE WITT, of New-York, said that he thought the subject presented by the paper demanded careful and interested attention. The living preacher, however superior in his influence, was not all that was needed to spread the Gospel in a country like our own. Pastoral labor is not adequate to our wants. There are souls beyond the reach of the pastor's voice, and in regions where this expensive agency cannot be supported. In this system there is a happy combination of the living ministry and preaching by means of the press. Avenues are opened, the word is distributed, and the blessing of the Spirit sought to rest upon it.

The great and vital cause of domestic missions requires such an auxiliary as this proposed system of Colporteurs. Unlike the physical nature, where hunger is created by deprivation, the hunger of the soul is least felt where the destitution is greatest. As these pioneers go into the sparse settlements of the West, they awaken this appetite for the word, and their efforts are preparing the way for the living ministry.

The interesting class of our population referred to in the paper differ from us in language, but are one with us in citizenship and social



and political destiny. As the leaven in the meal leavens the whole lump till it becomes homogeneous, so in this country the various kinds and tongues, interests and prejudices, are all to be brought into harmony and concord only by the power of the same Gospel preached unto all. This system is adapted to the Germans particularly. They generally settle in little neighborhoods, the early character of which gives tone and character to all the after-increase of population. How shall we reach those who differ from us so widely? Only by bringing the Gospel into contact with them, in all its simplicity and power, in their own language. There is every reason to hope that it will be attended with success.

Dr. De Wilt made an affecting allusion to the lamented *Rudy*, pastor of the German church, New-York, and introduced his successor,

Rev. Mr. GULDIN, who remarked that this department of the Society's operations had a special interest to him. He was a German himself, raised in the German church, and for twenty-two years a minister among them. He first remarked upon the field itself which the Society proposed to occupy. It was one of great importance and promise. And this for several reasons. Take their numbers. It is estimated that there are at least ONE MILLION of Germans in this country. This is unquestionably much below the reality, to say nothing of the old settlers, and this number is increased by the constant flood of immigration.

Their spiritual condition renders them worthy objects of sympathy and attention. True religion, in its vital, saving power, is but too little known among them. They are a half century in the rear of their English neighbors.

Consider the moral influence which the conversion and the zealous devotion of this immense mass would exert in the cause of Christ—even upon Germany itself—and upon our own land. Where is there a people among all the millions of the Gentiles which will sooner or more surely repay the effort to save them—or where is the island of the sea which presents a more important field than this?

Now is the most important and favorable period to exert a religious influence among the Germans. The character of the new settlements they are forming so rapidly at the West must soon be determined. There are men among them—men of mind and powerful influence—who will be certain to lead them to infidelity, if there be no counter-acting influence exerted. The West is full of soul-destroying errors. Universalism, Catholicism, Mormonism, Campbellism, all lie in

wait to decoy, mislead, and ruin the poor Germans. They are now just in that excitable, plastic, moulding state, produced by their residence in a new country, in the midst of strange customs, languages and habits; and the impress now left upon them will probably be permanent. The present state of things cannot last long. The German character will soon be formed. If the Church suffers error to go in advance of her efforts, they will be almost unavoidably drawn into the meshes of ruin.

The plan of reaching this vast population by means of a system of Colporteurs is admirably adapted. The Germans are lamentably destitute of competent ministers. In Pennsylvania, ministers are obliged to preach to several congregations—five, six, and sometimes even ten—reaching the different churches once in three, four, or six weeks. Of course, this leaves a vast number with little or no means of religious instruction. If they are not reached by some such itinerating scheme as this, it is difficult to imagine how they can be.

The above Document was referred to Rev. Dr. De Witt, Rev. Mr. Guldin, and Rev. James W. Cooke.

*Letter from Rev. B. Sears, Prof. Theol. Sem. Newton, Mass.*

“ Allow me to express the great confidence I feel that the *German* population, both of this and the mother country, may be reached and essentially benefited by the method which you propose. The Germans are a serious people, and very accessible, and have minds not only of great simplicity, but of depth of feeling. True, if you directly assail their religious system, as taught in the symbolical books written by the Reformers themselves, they will appear to be unsusceptible of impression. And who can have a heart to complain of the veneration, even of those tainted with Rationalism, for a system of evangelical religion, which, in the sixteenth century, was the great light of christendom? Does not the very fact of a remaining attachment to the old religion of their fathers as better than their own, and the additional fact that the German language is rich in old as well as more recent works of a standard character on practical religion, go far to show that there are peculiar facilities for the operation of just such a system of effort as you contemplate? I have taken some special interest in the religious state of the German residents in this vicinity, and have always found them very eager for *German* religious books. I have this very day received a request of the kind for *any thing* in the shape of an old German book. I sympathize most deeply with

you in your whole enterprise, and particularly in this branch of it I shall always stand ready to do any thing in my power to aid you."

*Letter from Rev. John W. Nevin, Prof. Marshall (German Ref.)  
College, Mercersburg, Pa.*

#### CLAIMS OF THE DESTITUTE OF OUR COUNTRY.

"I have read your Circular with attention, and also your 'Report of a Western Tour.' No one at all acquainted with the condition and prosperity of our country can fail to feel that the work contemplated in this movement is one of vast incalculable importance. The value of the *Colporteur system* has been abundantly tested in other lands, and there is no reason why it should not be brought to bear with equal effect on the destitutions of this country. We have wide districts, in the very heart of the land, which cannot be effectually reached with evangelical instruction in any other way, to say nothing of the whole States in the far West, fast springing into importance, for whose wants the system might seem to have been expressly contrived.

"I am glad to find that so much attention is likely to be directed, in this enterprise, to the wants of *the German population*. The system proposed is eminently suited to their case, and if extended on a scale commensurate with its demands, cannot fail to yield a rich harvest. This population is already very great, and is destined to swell to a vastly greater volume still by yearly emigration from the father land. Scattered, without a ministry to a great extent, and without ecclesiastical connection, confounding the idea of religious liberty with that of an entire independence of Church control, and more or less occupied with errors subversive of the Gospel itself, thousands of these foreigners seem cut off from the hope of religious improvement altogether, unless they can be reached in some such way as that which is here proposed. It will not do to leave such a mass of mind in the bosom of the country to take care of itself. It will not do to wait till the partition-wall of its language shall have fallen away. To a christian people who are willing, at vast expense, to send the Gospel across the ocean to nations of strange lip and tongue, it should be a light thing surely to break through the barriers of the German language at home, in order to reach a field so full of interest and promise as that which here courts their missionary zeal.

"The German interest in this country is destined to exert in time a great influence on Germany itself. It forms the medium by which mainly America is to be held in communication with that section of

Europe, and to be felt on its spirit and life ; as it is the medium also by which, in spite of ourselves, we must as a people come more and more into living contact with the force of this foreign spirit, as a moulding agency in the formation of our own character."

*Letter from Rev. Professor C. E. Stowe, Cincinnati, Ohio.*

"The accompanying letters of our German brethren, Messrs. Schmucker and Nast, will inform you as to what has already been done in the way of Colportage among the Germans in this city. The attempt succeeds beyond my most sanguine expectations. The German Lutheran ministers encourage it from their pulpits, and the Catholic priests denounce it ; and both seem thus far to help the work forward. We had a meeting at Rev. Mr. Brook's church last evening, at which many interesting statements were made, especially from L. R., whom God has raised up, I trust, to do a great work among the Germans. Mr. Brook told us he had that day learned the fact, that a whole family of Germans, father, mother, daughter, and two sons, had been hopefully converted to God, partly at least through the instrumentality of this Colportage ; and like instances are multiplying. It is almost the *first ray of hope I have seen for the spiritual welfare of our Germans*. Is this a time for the Society to relax its efforts ? No, it cannot be."

Rev. WILLIAM ADAMS, D. D. read the following additional Document on the Colporteur system, as adapted to

### III. THE CONVERSION OF ERRORISTS.

The Committee would solicit the attention of the Board to a class, for whose spiritual improvement little is directly attempted, viz. *Roman Catholics and other Errorists*. -

While the Committee are not unaware of the danger to our institutions, civil and religious, from the increase and prevalence of sects that in their nature and history have always been opposed to freedom, they do not sympathise with the spirit of denunciation that has too often characterized the controversies with them. They are immortal beings, and the soul of each is of priceless value. We believe that the great mass of them are deluded, and that unless they are undeceived and led in true penitence to the cross, they must eternally perish. And though the work of reclaiming an errorist may be a difficult one, through the blessing of the Holy Spirit, it is not an impossible one—else the Church had still been enveloped in the darkness

of the 15th century. The idea that the whole generation of the adherents of a false faith in this country must be left to a common doom, is abhorrent alike to the benevolence of the Gospel and to common humanity.

If, however, any thing is to be done to save them, it must be done individual by individual, family by family, by the fire-side or in the street; for they do not, and will not come to our churches, or place themselves within the reach of the ordinary modes of instruction. And they need to be approached as other men are—not as partizans, but as men, and as sinners needing a Savior—with tenderness and affection, and a real and manifest desire to do them good. They may and will resist a harsh, indiscriminate condemnation of them and their errors; but it remains to be shown that Christ-like compassion, and humble, prayerful, persevering effort will avail nothing in subduing the prejudice and winning the souls that know nothing experimentally of pardoned sin, and the fulness and freeness of the love of Christ. Has the great truth which unlocked the fetters of superstition, by which the soul of Luther was bound when in the monastery of Erfurth; which severed the last cord that attached him to the Papacy, when climbing the holy stairs at Rome on his bare knees! which was the burden and watchword of the Reformation and of Paul—“*the just shall live by faith* ;”—has this glorious truth lost its power?

The partial and yet successful efforts in Papal Europe for the conversion of Errorists, show that they are not irreclaimable, even where civil power and priestly domination are combined to strengthen the bands of error. Then why should indifference to this subject exist *here*, where the operation of our free institutions, the more general diffusion of light, and the ascendancy of a spiritual religion, all favor the abandonment of useless forms; and where, as no where else, every man is free to exert his fullest influence over his fellow-man!

Wherever efforts have been successful for the conversion of Errorists, whether in the time of the great Reformation, or at the present day on the Continent, *colporteurs with Books and Tracts have constituted the principal agency*. So it must be here. When practicable, as in the Temperance Reform, men must be employed who have themselves borne the galling yoke from which they would free others, and who can speak from bitter experience of the mischiefs and dangers of the system they would demolish. These men should speak the language of the people they approach, whether French, German, or English, and go to the people *at their homes*, commending to them the love of Christ and the completeness of his salvation.

The *colporteurs* already in the service of the Society are expected to approach the families of Errorists within their respective fields in this way. It is for the Board to consider whether there is encouragement or necessity for a class of laborers to be especially devoted to this portion of our population. If the importance of this general subject were more universally felt by the christian community, and each christian would exert his influence on those he could reach around him, the Board might be relieved of a large share of the responsibility which now manifestly rests upon them.

Dr. ADAMS proceeded to say that there was a time when he had but little sympathy with the incessant cry of evil to be apprehended from the power and influence of Papists among us. But he was compelled to say that sober reflection had brought him to feel that our dangers from this source had never been overstated. One thing is certain: Catholics are making desperate efforts to acquire influence, and are making a progress towards the consummation of their desires which greatly animates and encourages them. It is but three months ago since Saltzbeechee, the Prebendary of St. Stephens, in Vienna, left this city for Europe, after having completed a tour of inspection and exploration through the United States. He passed from city to city, and made his observations without being known to scarcely a single Protestant. The reports he carried back to the Leopold Society cannot be otherwise than most cheering to them. What if we should learn from our missionaries that they had obtained possession of one temple after another, which had formerly been devoted to the worship of idols—as Catholics can say of temples devoted to Protestant worship—would it not awaken a thrill of enthusiasm in our hearts? We need not go to the West—the Catholics are making their strides here, in the midst of us, sufficiently fast to alarm and arouse every Protestant and every American. Yes, in this city, churches, once devoted to the pure worship of God, are now every Sabbath thronged with the votaries of the Catholic faith. I say this not in the spirit of denunciation, but with feelings of real alarm. I love the spirit of the paper I have read—it suggests the only proper mode—the only successful, authorized mode of reaching those whom it proposes to make the objects of faithful christian effort.

There seems to be great incredulity in reference to the conversion of Catholics. But why should there be? As christians, we should be staunch in the faith that no form of error can withstand the Gospel and the influences with which it is accompanied. Have we forgotten what the Gospel has already achieved? Do we not remember the

Reformation—when, in the face of every disadvantage, the simple word of God wrought its conquests upon the Rhine, pervaded Germany, and crossing over to England, awakened thousands of just such deluded Catholics as those in our streets? Let us cherish faith in the power of the Gospel.

But this is not all. It is a faith in the Gospel, comparatively unimpeded in its influence, that we are called to exercise. Catholics are necessarily much more accessible in this country than they were in Luther's time. Then they had to apostatize from their religion when it was propped up by the civil power, and when the denunciations of the church could be enforced by pains and penalties. But here the Gospel meets them where every thing is free. They cannot be chained to their errors by any overawing power. The light of the Truth cannot be shut out from their minds.

Catholics are here divested of all those associations which have grown from century to century, and which exert so much influence in other lands. The venerable antiquity of the relics, the cathedrals, the service, the hierarchy—circumstances which have been woven with their earliest impressions and most solemn and awful conceptions, have there an incalculable power in keeping the conscience fast to the errors with which they are connected. But here there are no old fanes, no venerable priesthood, no gorgeous display, no time-hallowed associations. Their religion is divested of every ascititious influence. It is left in its unaided, native power, to grapple with the Truth.

Look, too, at the favorable influence which education must exert. It seems like mockery to talk of the continuance or progress of Popery, when accompanied by education, intelligence, and freedom. The true keys of St. Peter are those which open the book of knowledge, not those which pretend to hold the access to heaven. In Papal countries learning is nothing but a name. The libraries of the Vatican are splendid, but they are locked up. But here, every son of that church is brought within the reach of education. Here he is surrounded by an atmosphere of intelligence. He cannot but acquire information. Knowledge will force itself upon his mind, and no ghostly power can lock him up so tightly but the perception of their delusion, deceit, absurdity and error will reach him in some degree.

It is under all these favorable circumstances that we go forth to convert the Catholics. If there are any circumstances which render their conversion possible, are they not those into which their immigration to this country introduces them? Let them be met with the

Gospel, in the spirit of the Gospel, and who shall say they will be found inaccessible, or impregnable in their errors? The spirit of this Paper is that of kindness. I never yet met the man who could not be approached by kindness. He might repel you at first, but unwearied kindness would prove too strong for him. Christ comes to us in the spirit of love. His is the Spirit in which we should approach these followers of a false faith.

We are all unaware of the stealthily rapid strides with which the Catholics are over-running us. We have no adequate idea of the numbers that are daily pouring in upon us. And more are on their way. The whole old world seems to be in commotion, disgorging her over-abundant pauper population. How shall we save ourselves, our beloved institutions, or the religion of our fathers? We cannot send them back. We cannot shut up the gates. Come they must and will. What shall we do? I will tell you. As the gallant Emmet said of the enemies of his country, he would meet them on the beach with a torch in one hand and a sword in the other, to dispute the soil with them inch by inch: so would we meet these upon the beach, with the Bible in one hand and the grasp of love in the other. We would bid them welcome to our freedom, our knowledge, and our religion; and the result shall be, that they will settle among us, not as enemies, but as friends; and from the subverters of our freedom they will become its sure and strong defence.

Rev. Mr. COOK announced some cheering facts in respect to the progress of the labors of colporteurs at the West, particularly among the Germans. A letter received but the day previous, stated that 1200 families had been visited in Cincinnati, and 700 German books and 25,000 pages of German Tracts had been distributed, and about fifty days of personal labor performed among the most hopeless classes. The result had been that a German church, which even at its dedication had been but thinly attended, was now filled to overflowing, and a considerable number of conversions had taken place among Romanists—among others, one entire family, father, mother, son and daughter! It was just such intelligence that cheered Luther in the dawn of the Reformation.

The paper read by Rev. Dr. Adams was referred to the same Committee as the preceding, who, through Rev. Mr. Guldin, reported as follows:

The Committee to whom were referred the Documents relating to "the *Colporteur System*, in its application to the German population," and to "Romanists and other errorists," respectfully



**REPORT,**

That having given the subject prayerful consideration, they are prepared to approve the system as one wisely adapted, under existing circumstances, to the spiritual wants of these neglected classes. They constitute a large and rapidly increasing portion of our population, and afford one of the widest and most promising fields for evangelical effort. And the present is a momentous period in their history, calling loudly for the utmost exertions for their salvation.

The Committee will only add some of the reasons for their full and deep conviction, not only of the propriety of the system of *colportage* in general, but of its peculiar adaptation to the classes named, and the incalculable importance of carrying it out as fully and as speedily as possible.

1. There is a great want of German ministers, even to supply the churches already formed. It is impossible to occupy and do justice to half the ground, with only the German preachers now in the field.

2. There are many places, even in Pennsylvania, Maryland, Virginia, and Ohio, to say nothing of the Far West, where there are no churches, and where an evangelical German minister is scarcely ever found; and though the Institutions of the German Churches are rapidly rising, and promise to do much in preparing a pious ministry, it will require years before an adequate supply can be furnished.

3. This system will be a most powerful auxiliary to the evangelical German ministry. A better day is dawning upon the German churches; a pious and laborious ministry exists in many places; a deeper interest is beginning to be felt in the cause of benevolence, and revivals of religion have been enjoyed in different sections. But the amount of evangelical instruction is totally inadequate. Pious ministers, then, so far as any thing is known of this system, do and will regard it as an inestimable blessing from God, and hail it as one of their greatest and best auxiliaries.

4. Where there are no churches or ministers—and there are many and extensive sections of country where there are none—the system of *colportage* seems indispensable. There are thousands of German families who very seldom, if ever, get to the house of God. Perhaps they live ten, fifteen or twenty miles from a place of worship. Into these destitute families your *Colporteur* enters; he leaves among them your Volumes and Tracts in the German language. When he is gone the publications are read again and again; and on the Sabbath they supply in a measure the want of preaching.

5. The system is admirably calculated to prepare these waste places for the institutions of the Gospel. It is like John the Baptist, "preparing the way of the Lord." If ministers are sent forth, as they must and will be, to organize churches in what are now desolations, will they not be aided, and bless God for the agency of your Society, in placing Baxter, Bunyan, Doddridge, Page, &c. among the families, with the fruits that will be manifest in souls converted and believers strengthened?

For the foregoing and other reasons the Committee would urge a rapid increase in the number of colporteurs for the German population, that the millions of that people who have come and are coming to this christian land may be blessed with the personal influence of godly men, and the light that shines from the pages of Gospel writings.

*Conversion of Romanists and other Errorists.*

The other topic referred to the Committee, claims a moment's attention. The Committee believe that the Colporteur System has a decided advantage over almost every other mode of doing good to "Romanists and other errorists." In some respects it has an advantage even over the pulpit: for prejudices against it as a sectarian effort can hardly be awakened. The Books and Tracts are in the true sense "Catholic," and exhibit the peculiarities of no denomination. They will be read by those who cannot be induced to hear Protestant preachers of any denomination. Romanists, too, will read these publications when they cannot read the Bible, which their priests may prohibit.

There can be no doubt that thousands of errorists may be reached in this way, who can be reached in no other. And if we may judge from the blessed results of even the limited efforts made by the Society thus far, the conclusion is a safe one, that great numbers of a class hitherto little cared for may be reclaimed, and, by the blessing of God, saved through the system under consideration.

*Thursday, 10 A. M.*—The Rev. Dr. Milnor in the chair. Prayer by Rev. Mr. Bingham, of the Sandwich Islands. The morning was wholly occupied with Documents and Reports, which have been inserted above, in the order of the subjects.

*Thursday, 4 P. M.*—After prayer by Rev. Dr. PATTON, the following paper was presented by Rev. Mr. Cook, and referred to the Executive Committee for publication.

## DOCUMENT VIII.

## Every Christian a Missionary.

*What does the Church expect of her Missionary to the Heathen?* She expects him, in a word, to be a living "Epistle of Christ, known and read of all men." She sends him forth among those who have no knowledge of a Savior, or of the purifying power of his salvation; the missionary is to teach the one and exemplify the other. She sends him to those who are hastening to death and the judgment, yet ignorant of their danger, and unprepared to meet it: the missionary is to labor with untiring zeal to "snatch them as brands from the burning." He is to be content, provided only "his bread be given him and his water be sure," without a care for the superfluities of life; he is to rise above weakness and weariness, to trust God in the midst of discouragements, to submit cheerfully to self-denial in all the varied forms which it may assume to one who is self-exiled among a heathen population, and to "count not his life dear to himself," unto the end. He is not only to be "blameless and harmless, without rebuke," but to "hold forth the word of life," to labor in season and out of season for the salvation of the perishing, and to cease not, while life remains, to "warn every one night and day with tears."

Such is the standard which the Church sets up for her missionary; and although she knows that oppressed as he is by the infirmities and imperfections of his nature, he does not in all things fully attain to it, she would yet pronounce him unworthy of his station should he aim at any thing less. She would be shocked to hear of his devoting his time and energies to the accumulation of property, even though it were to be professedly consecrated to Christ; or of his living in the midst of the perishing without the most

strenuous, systematic, persevering effort to bring every soul, accessible to his influence, to the Savior. The Church is right in this; the word of God sanctions it all.

*Has the Church adopted the same standard for her own piety as that to which she expects her missionary to attain?* We do but propose the question; let individual observation and individual conscience answer. Who and how many in the whole American Church have consecrated all they have and are to the cause of Christ with such simplicity and entireness of devotion as they expect from the foreign missionary? Who and how many feel and manifest such interest for the welfare of individual souls, in the daily intercourse of life, as they expect the missionary to show for every poor heathen whom his kind exhortation may in any way be made to reach? Who and how many live habitually in such faithful discharge of christian duty to the souls of men, that a call to a foreign field of labor would not send them to their closets with the mournful confession and lamentation, "*Mine own vineyard have I not kept?*" The eye of God doubtless sees some—it is to be hoped, many such; but is it not a serious question how far this is the *prevailing spirit* of the Church of Christ?

*Why should there not be one and the same standard of consecration for the christian abroad and the christian at home?* Each professes to be actuated by the spirit of Christ; without it, they "are none of his;" but "is Christ divided?" Is the cross to rest unequally upon those who claim to be following in his footsteps of humility and suffering? Are the souls of men less precious because they live and die within the very shadow of our churches, or people the forests and prairies of our own native land? Is there small need to care for those who, if they perish, will sink under a weight of condemnation which the heathen can never suffer—that of living where they might have heard the Gospel, and yet neglecting it?

Two or three reasons may be mentioned why *the standard of christian effort for every follower of the Savior should be the highest ever proposed to the foreign missionary.*

1. It will bring peculiar glory to Christ, and bear an unan-

swerable witness for him in the hearts of men. He is not honored by mere external acts of devotion ; the veriest Pharisee may excel in these ; nor by deeds of splendid beneficence—mere vanity may prompt them ; nor by outward acts of self-denial and austerity—the poor pagan can show as good ; but the test which he himself proposes is this, “ Herein is my Father glorified, *that ye bear much fruit ; so shall ye be my disciples.*” There is a daily beauty in the consecrated life of a consistent christian when the love and compassion of Christ beam from the eye and modulate the voice, and prompt to sincerely kind efforts for the good of every being within the sphere of his influence, which the world can neither gainsay nor resist.

2. It will pre-eminently fit the soul for the enjoyment of heaven. What a diminution of happiness must there be to him who is *just* saved—“ so as by fire ! ”—to him who enters the pearly gates *alone*—none there to welcome him, saved by his instrumentality ; none to follow him, led thither by his efforts and prayers ! Blessed will be the eternity of a Whitefield or a Doddridge—as its rolling ages continually swell the accumulating tide of hallowed influences exerted by them on earth, and which must flow on for ever in a widening, deepening, brightening current. To those who have “ *turned many to righteousness* ” is that jewelled promise given, “ They shall shine as the stars for ever and ever.”

3. By such instrumentality is the world to be converted to God. It is his appointed agency, owned and blessed of him in all past time, and to be employed hereafter with a universality of application and a mighty efficacy, through God, for the salvation of souls, of which the Church has as yet scarcely a conception. The pen of prophecy has recorded, “ And they shall teach no more every man his neighbor, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord ; for all shall know him from the least of them unto the greatest of them.” Does not this declaration recognize the agency of which we speak—employed through all future time, until, by the blessing of God upon the seed “ sown beside all waters,” the harvest of the world shall have been gathered unto Christ ?

Blessed and glorious will be that consummation; the Lord hasten it in His time!

The principle involved in this paper is one that runs through all the departments of effort in which the Society is engaged. The *Colporteur System* is but its embodiment, in endeavors to reach the population beyond the pale of influence from organized churches, and in waste places where no professing christians are found, or where, through lack of vital piety, they are but as salt having lost its savor. The *Volume Circulation* has called out at least 25,000 christians in different parts of the country, to exemplify this principle and prove its blessedness by their own experience in temporary missionary service. The same principle is recognized in *Foreign Distribution* as carried forward by the missionaries and their native helpers; a beautiful illustration of which is furnished in a recent letter of Rev. Mr. Dwight at Constantinople. Speaking of the converted Armenians, he says, "Every man here who comes to the knowledge of the truth, *becomes himself at once a missionary*, and his influence is very important."

The system of *Tract Visitation* also carries this principle into most effective operation, and affords peculiar facilities for its systematic adaptation to the wants of the destitute and neglected in the vicinity of all our organized churches. It is of easy application in every place where there are christians who can unite in efforts to save their fellow-men. It places the responsibility of visiting personally a given number of families, on some one individual, who is expected, in connection with the distribution of appropriate Tracts, to do all that may be done by religious conversation and prayer, gathering children into Sabbath Schools, and every other suitable means which his heart can devise, to bring his part of the field under complete moral cultivation. The energies of the Church thus developed, the influence of active piety thus diffused, would by the blessing of God do much, in addition to the labors of the ministry, towards rendering these desolate regions as the garden of the Lord.

There is a demonstration of the feasibility and power of this agency in the history of the New-York City Tract Mission, and other efforts of the kind in various cities and

towns throughout the land. It is worthy the inquiry of the Board whether the more general extension of this system through the country might not aid greatly in conveying the knowledge of Christ to thousands of destitute and unevangelized families, who, without the intervention of some such agency, must perish for lack of vision.

F. A. PERKINS, Esq. of Norwich, Conn. paid an instructive and interesting tribute to the memory of Sarah Lanman Huntington, afterwards wife of Rev. Eli Smith, missionary to Syria, who, he said, exhibited more perfectly than any other christian that he had ever known, the symmetry of christian character. All the powers of her mind and the affections of her heart were employed in efforts to do good until she ceased to breathe. Before she indulged a hope in Christ, she was active as a Sabbath-school teacher, and when she made a profession of religion she seemed to make an entire consecration of herself to the cause of Christ. When the system of Tract distribution was introduced, she was one of the first to engage in it, and though the amount of good she accomplished may never be known, there are results which may be told. Mr. P. knew of one man, a skeptic, to whom she gave Tracts, which she always accompanied with a word of advice and prayer *for*, and if permitted, *with* those to whom they were given. In this case the result was the conversion of the man and his wife. In these labors she was untiring and faithful. It was this spirit that led her for years to devote herself to the instruction of the children of the Mohegan village; submitting to great self-denials to prosecute her work; thus becoming a christian missionary in fact, long before she was one in name; until the door was opened for her to go out to a foreign land. We all know how she labored there, and how she died. The same principle that prompted her efforts here, inspired her there, until her physical powers were exhausted under the impulses of her mind and heart. And can we doubt the effect if every christian female would take up the cross and follow her as she followed Christ?

*Letter from Rev. John C. Backus, Baltimore, Md.*

"I regret that it will not be in my power to attend the meeting called to consult on the best means of promoting the Tract cause. I feel the deepest interest in the whole enterprise—especially the volume circulation and Tract distribution at home. Having witnessed the effects of these efforts, I feel convinced that, while they afford a most *useful and sanctifying employment* to church members, they are

most important *auxiliaries* to the christian ministry; one of the best *substitutes* where the ministry of the word cannot be enjoyed; and invaluable *pioncers* to the living preacher in destitute places. I feel truly anxious that you should be guided aright, and should be happy to be present and listen to the suggestions and counsels of fathers and brethren who have been called together. I will hope to catch something of the spirit of the meeting, and pray that a fresh impulse may be given to the cause."

Rev. Mr. Hallock, Secretary, presented the following paper:



## DOCUMENT IX.

### Relations of the Society to Foreign Lands.

The primary inquiry in this connection is perhaps, What are the *Divinely appointed methods* of spreading the Gospel?

Not to extend remarks to topics foreign to the present occasion, *three* of these methods lie upon the very face of the New Testament: the *public heralding* of the Gospel; *Evangelizing* by other means, as in labors from house to house; and truth *written and read*—all to be accompanied with prayer, and efficacious only through the blessing of the Holy Spirit.

1. That the *public heralding* of the Gospel, so often practised by Christ and the Apostles, and so prominent a means by which the Gospel is now diffused in all christian lands, is one of the Divinely appointed methods, requires no confirmation; while there is occasion for unbounded thanksgiving that the pulpit is so ably supplied,



and the devout wish that the Gospel, so faithfully proclaimed, may bring forth more fruit in the active devoted lives of them who hear.

2. That other methods of *Evangelizing*, or making known the Gospel "from house to house," by the way side, and wherever individuals are to be met, have equally the Divine sanction, is plain to every attentive reader of the New Testament, especially in the original, where *evangelizo*, the prevalent term for publishing the joyful message, or "Glad tidings," has not the restricted meaning now usually attached to the term *preach*; but is applicable to the means employed by all the followers of Christ, each in his proper sphere, in bringing men to the knowledge of his name. How far the neglect of this divinely enjoined co-operation with the ministry brings a blight upon the churches; and what blessings might be expected were all their members to imitate the fidelity of primitive days, are questions worthy of attention by all to whom the interests of the churches are especially committed.

That much of the labors of our Lord when on earth, of the seventy disciples, the twelve apostles and the eloquent Paul were of this less public, evangelizing character, every attentive reader of the Bible well knows.

That *others besides the apostles* took part in spreading the great Salvation is equally clear. The first spreading of the Gospel of the ascended Redeemer was by "the church at Jerusalem" as they were "all scattered abroad except the Apostles," "and went every where preaching the word." "The saints at Philippi" "shone as light in the world, holding forth the word of life." Whosoever "heareth" is enjoined to repeat the message and "say, Come."

Indeed it is clear that the New Testament (surely without intrenching on the prerogatives of the public ministry) devolves on every *individual christian* a solemn re-

sponsibility, both to exemplify and exert a personal influence upon others for the Gospel of Christ, in every relation he can sustain. He must "let his light shine before men," and be himself "an Epistle" of Christ; talking of him "as he sitteth in the house, or walketh by the way, or lieth down, or riseth up." The Scriptures are full of injunctions to fidelity to the souls of men, and to be "always abounding" in the work of the Lord. In the decisions of the judgment day, he that has buried his one talent and has not visited Christ in his members, must hear the sentence, "Depart, ye cursed." The example of all Scripture saints rebukes our prevailing sluggishness: the Marys and the Lydias were "helpers in Christ Jesus;" the woman of Samaria could not refrain from saying, "Come see the man that told me all things that ever I did; is not this the Christ?" and blind Bartimeus and little children could shout his praise.

3. That *truth written and read* is a Divinely authorized means, the very parchment that contains all other Divine injunctions, speaks as with a thousand tongues, even if the finger of God had never written on tables of stone, or there were no assertion that "all Scripture is profitable," and no command to "give attendance to reading" and dig as for hid treasures in these sacred mines. And if such was the value thus Divinely attached to this means of grace, when to obtain copies was so difficult, what is now the obligation to employ **THE PRESS** with its thousand tongues and facilities passing belief to them of old—the first printed copies exhibited by Mentz at Paris in 1457, having well nigh cost him his life for the sin of witchcraft.

*All these means* of diffusing the Gospel must doubtless be employed, whether in our own or pagan lands, if we would gain the highest success. We have not only the warrant, but *the solemn obligation* laid on us, as we have opportunity, to use them all; and we can omit or overlook no one but at peril. It is the glory of our day that

the churches recognize all these means, and are in some measure employing them, both for their own edification and communicating the light of life to every creature. The commissioned minister not only lifts up his voice in the pulpit, but preaches the Gospel in the catechetical class, in the pastoral visit, by personal example, and through the press. Other officers of the church co-operate in these latter methods; and the conscience of christians generally is waking to the duty of being individually useful. Our great benevolent Institutions are founded on these principles: planting the ministry at home and abroad; rearing men called to the sacred office; and diffusing the Bible and truth in every form on the printed page, accompanied by the prayerful efforts of the christian and *colporteur*.

The providing of an adequate *ministry* for all the present generation of men appears to be, under the ordinary dispensations of Providence and grace, impossible. A large portion of all on earth must go down to death without ever hearing of Christ by this means; and it becomes a serious question how far the churches are bound to employ other divinely authorized means in co-operation with the ministry where it exists, and to prepare the way for it where it does not, and in some degree meet the spiritual wants of the perishing. What can be done by **THE PRESS**—already pouring out its floods of licentiousness and sin—by **THE EVANGELICAL PRESS**, accompanied by the labors of christians, and where necessary, by *Colporteurs*, or distributing Agents?

Consideration has elsewhere been given to this subject as applicable to our own country—how far may it apply to **PAGAN LANDS**, where there is yet scarcely one ordained preacher to a million souls?

In *commencing* foreign missionary operations at any station, there can be of course, even were the language acquired, no regular public heralding of the Gospel to

great congregations; for pagans love their darkness and will not assemble to hear. The labors must of necessity be of the other classes above described—from house to house, with individual by individual, by the wayside or in places of public resort, with children in schools, in any and every way, till prejudices are subdued and congregations can be assembled.

The same must be true of all joining a mission as reinforcements until the language is thoroughly acquired, whether it be for one year, or five, or during life; and equally true of all native converts and native preachers, who though they know the language, have yet imperfectly learned the Gospel. That to all these, well-written and clear exhibitions of Gospel truth are an indispensable aid, is the united testimony of experience in the Missionary work.

And *the able disciplined Missionary*, who has mastered the language, needs the press at every step of his progress. In it he perpetuates the exposition of truth, which otherwise, at his death, could never be gathered up. He thus places in the hands of Missionaries who have not acquired the language, and of native preachers, teachers, catechists and inquirers, the best helps to their own acquisitions, and what in their endeavors for others they may read and explain or give, in connection with the stammering words they speak. Many a pagan has felt, when first taking into his hands a portion of the word of God, that he had now a *pou sto*—something definite and tangible that he could study and investigate as to the true religion. The Mission Schools must be taught, like all our seminaries, from the highest to the lowest, chiefly through the press. Every visit and tour for extending the operations of the mission needs this accompaniment, and by it the Missionary gives a portion of truth to thousands whom his voice cannot reach—thus creating a moral atmosphere, and preparing the way of the Lord. In-

dispensable then as is the press at the outset of missionary labors, its influence *accumulates*, as in christian lands, with every advance of the great work, and must go on accumulating till all shall know the Lord.

Does any one say that "the Missionary is sent forth, not to print, but to 'preach the Gospel?'" Let the objection be intelligently made. Did not Paul "preach the Gospel" in his Epistle to the Romans; and may not the Missionary, in translating it into another tongue? And when he multiplies the best sermon he has preached in ten thousand copies, is he not preaching the Gospel in the sense of the New Testament? Let us not be wise above what is written. Yea, he is *bound* to use all the appropriate means which the providence and Spirit of God have pointed out.

But may not the Missionary give the press a *disproportionate* attention? Doubtless; and thus his error be as great as to neglect it, or to confine himself to public preaching, or labors by the wayside, to the neglect of both.

It is believed that the import of the objection, if distinctly stated, would be this: "that the Missionary is not *spiritual* enough, and does not bring his efforts to bear *directly on individual souls*"—alas, that any who make the objection should all their lives have neglected the same duty. We believe that no class of labors, abroad or at home, so benefit the heart as personal endeavors for individual souls; and it is also true that the press, while its care may engross some precious hours, may be the greatest *incitement and help* to hundreds in this particular class of labor. The Tract is their letter of introduction; it furnishes the occasion for going to men, and the topic of conversation, and is often itself blessed. All experience in christian, and papal, and pagan lands, shows that Tracts and Books are the best auxiliary to personal effort for the souls of men. Take care, then, lest by stopping the press you quench the very spark which you would fan into a flame.

The question of *the proportion of attention* to be given to the press at each foreign Mission station, this Society refers wholly to the wisdom of the great and beloved Missionary Institutions with which it is its privilege to cooperate—consulting them as to the amount needed, remitting through their hands, and conforming to their wishes; that the direction of each mission may be one and unembarrassed, while this Society, in collecting its funds, fans the missionary flame, and then pours its tributary streams in a hundred channels as the Lord has need of them.

Each mission proceeds to issue whatever it deems best adapted to the people, *never requested by this Society to withhold even its denominational peculiarities*. But the foreign missionary leaves home and country mainly that he may oppose idolatry and sin, and preach “Christ crucified;” and probably nine-tenths of all the Tracts and Books that have been issued, accord with the principles of this Society. To these, as reported on and approved by the Publishing Committee, this Society’s pecuniary grants are applied—about 1700 publications, including nearly 150 volumes, having been already approved abroad in nearly 100 languages and dialects; and of \$236,000, the total sum remitted, about \$200,000 having been already reported as used for approved publications.

Pursuing these principles, questions pertaining to the ordinances or church government do not prevent the harmony of the Institution. If any publication contains a denominational sentiment or term, the expense of it is borne by others, while the Society’s grants are applied to those in which the Committee agree. These grants, too, are dispersed on the broadest principle of benevolence, as if they were, what they claim to be, the Treasury of the Lord, and to be used just where the wants of the perishing and the glory of the Redeemer seem most urgently to demand.

It should be remarked in closing, that *nominally christian countries* make large demands on this Society;

as Russia, where no Missionary is allowed to preach in the native tongue, and on the other hand no infidel book escapes the censor's hand, but a cordial welcome is given to the evangelical press; Sweden and Finland, where none who cannot read are permitted to approach the rite of marriage; and Germany, France and Switzerland, where some American Missionaries and the Foreign Evangelical Society are assisting feeble churches, pastors, evangelists and Colporteurs in their struggles to rekindle the expiring light of the Reformation, and to restore an evangelical literature, which the rage of popery and infidelity so nearly exterminated. Some feeble efforts also extend to unhappy Spain, Portugal, Italy, South America and other foreign fields, while the Society pray the Lord of the harvest to open doors of access to these nations, and "overturn, and overturn, until He shall come whose right it is."

This Document was referred to a Committee consisting of Rev. William J. Armstrong, D. D. Rev. John A. Vaughan, D. D. Rev. John C. Lowrie, and Rev. E. Tucker, who reported a recommendation that it be adopted and published under the direction of the Executive Committee, which was sanctioned by the Board.

In presenting the Report Dr. Armstrong expressed his sense of the propriety and importance of this enterprise, and gave utterance to the warm emotions of his heart in behalf of the press and every other department of labor for the perishing millions of our lost world.

*Letter from Rev. S. Peck, Secretary of the Baptist Missionary Board, Boston.*

"I am sorry not to be with you in your approaching meeting. My heart will be with you, and my best prayers that you may devise and execute worthily. The noble liberality of your Society to our Board claims our hearty gratitude; and aside from this, your aims and measures, and all that we know of you, command our confidence and warm approval, and are entitled to our cordial co-operation."

tion. I feel a special interest in behalf of the home department. What will save our country if the instrumentality of your Society fail or slacken?"

*Letter from Rev. Rufus Anderson, D. D. Secretary of the Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions, Boston.*

"I need not say that I feel an increasing interest in your great department of christian charity. The *Volume distribution* alone is of immense importance to our country—an auxiliary of inconceivable value to the living ministry of the word. The more I think of it, the more do I desire to see the whole body of our christian people engaged in efforts to place the Society's Volumes in every family that will receive them.

"But it becomes me rather to speak of *foreign lands*. The letter from Rev. Mr. Adger, written at Constantinople, which you probably received on Saturday, is a very striking exhibition of the call for religious Tracts and Books in one of our missions. I think the necessity for such helps is steadily increasing in most of the missions—the difficulty is to multiply the missionaries fast enough to supply the *also increasing* demand for the preaching of the Gospel, and yet have time enough for preparing the Books and Tracts for the press. On these and all other points vital to the spiritual illumination of the world, let us cry aloud, and spare not, and lift up our voices like trumpets.

"I trust you will have a numerous attendance, and what will be far better, and indeed of indispensable necessity, the presence and blessing of the Holy Spirit."

*Letter from Rev. Justin Perkins, Missionary from the Nestorians.*

"I trust I need not assure you of our deep interest in the success of your Society. We are too deeply indebted for its past aid, and too dependent on its future beneficence, to look with indifference on its general prosperity and the result of the special meeting in prospect. The operations of the Press, at our Mission, and most other Missions under the care of the American Board, and more or less of other Boards, must of course be crippled, should your pecuniary appropriations be cut off; and what a calamity a general interruption of that kind would bring upon the Missions—and what darkness and death shade upon the famishing heathen among whom the leaves of the tree of life have just began to fall, I need not attempt



to describe. I much regret that both the Bishop and myself cannot be with you to bear our feeble testimony to the momentous importance of your operations in foreign lands. We will at least try to help you by our prayers. He who has graven Zion upon the palms of his hands will, we trust, be with you and preside in your meeting; and knowing as He does the value of Tract instrumentality at home and abroad in the advancement of his kingdom, we believe he will crown your meeting with a manifest blessing.

"I am greatly encouraged with the success of Mr. Homan Hallock in preparing our *Syriac* (or Nestorian) type. He astonishes me by the perfectness of his execution. I am occasionally with him to aid him as he needs assistance."

*Letter from Rev. H. R. Hoisington, Missionary from Ceylon.*

"I feel that I could enter into your cause with all my heart; and perhaps could say something on the point of foreign distribution; but the state of my family detains me, and the Lord's ways are the best."

*Letter from Rev. John Scudder, missionary from Madras, dated New-York, Oct. 25.*

"It has pleased my heavenly Father to lay me aside from all active duty for the present. Of course I shall be unable to render you any assistance at your approaching meetings. Indeed I shall be prevented from attending them altogether. This, as you may suppose, is a severe trial, since no missionary of the Cross is perhaps under greater obligations to your noble Society than myself. Perhaps few have distributed so many of your publications. For several years, as you know, after going to Madras, I took long tours among the people, one design of which was to distribute these publications, and every year confirmed me in the belief that the work was a blessed work.

"The grand object of the missionary is to preach the Gospel. But he does not find an enlightened people, who from earliest childhood have been familiar with the truths which he proclaims. He preaches to men of benighted minds, who are at first but little able to comprehend what they hear. Hence the necessity of some means to bring it again and again to their minds, to make the Tract the companion of their solitary hours, to furnish themes for their meditations and social conversations, and thus to secure a constant remembrance of what they have heard, which God's Spirit may render effectual to their salvation.

"In a heathen land the people do not flock to us to hear the Gospel: we must go to them, we must seek them out in the highways and the hedges, in the lanes and in the streets, we must speak a word here and a word there. And often at their temple festivals we meet those who come from distant parts of the country, and who may never hear the Gospel but once. These we may never see again, but we can give them a Tract which silently shall impart truths, over which while they ponder, they may learn the Gospel scheme of Salvation.

"Your publications prove a great *comfort* to your missionaries in their labors. If after preaching the Gospel to the heathen, they are able to leave one of them in their possession, their hopes are greatly strengthened that their labors will not be in vain. The missionary often blesses God for your Society, and prays for its enlarged action. When his voice fails, and his strength wanes, still he can distribute the printed word, and he knows by experience the might of the press in battling with the institutions of idolatry. He knows its energies and the vast controlling instrumentality which it exerts. Your publications also prove a great stimulus to him to go forward in his tours. I must say that could I not have availed myself of them, as well as those of the Bible Society, I think I should have taken but comparatively few of these tours."

Dr. Scudder proceeds to state a number of interesting facts, showing that Tracts have been evidently blessed in the conversion of many souls.

*Thursday, 7 P. M.* The closing meeting was one of deep and solemn interest. After prayer by Rev. Mr. Holmes, Mr. Hallock, Secretary, presented the following document, which was adopted, and referred for publication, *viz.*

## DOCUMENT X.

**The Financial Condition and Necessities of the Society.**

This Society, in all its principles, and it is believed, in its proceedings, has been truly a *benevolent* Institution. From the first, it adopted the principle of making no profit on its sales; and an examination of the actual results for fifteen years has shown that the total receipts for publications sold did not equal the total cost of issuing the same by  $1\frac{1}{2}$  per cent. Applications for grants of publications for the destitute, where there seemed a reasonable prospect of usefulness, have never been denied; and these gratuitous issues now amount to about \$10,000 annually. The Society has also struggled to meet the calls of Providence from foreign and pagan lands; its foreign pecuniary grants amounting in all to \$236,500.

The Institution is still endeavoring to promote both miscellaneous and systematic Tract distribution, according to all the wants of men, within our own borders, on the ocean, or at the most distant port and island of the globe. It is attempting to supply all our accessible, and especially our more destitute population with volumes; to arouse christians to faithful effort for the souls of men in connection with the dispersion of both volumes and Tracts; and to effect the object by sending into the more destitute countries the faithful *colporteur* to call out the co-operation of christians, and seek to convey to every family one or more of the Society's publications by sale or gift. It is aiding the feeble churches of Europe in their struggles to revive a pure christianity; and lends a compassionate ear to

every call for the perishing—in the countries around the Mediterranean; in Africa; in India; in China—in whatever land or clime men are found who may thus be blessed.

#### THE SOCIETY'S WANTS.

It was estimated in the resolutions of the Society at the last Anniversary, that it would need to employ at least \$40,000 for our own country, and \$40,000 for foreign and pagan lands during the current year. Its operations are in progress both at home and abroad, with evidence perhaps never before equalled of the smiles and blessing of God;—and shall it be told that the total donations received during the first half of the Society's current year were but \$9533 32 exclusive of legacies, the latter having in the kind providence of God amounted to nearly an equal sum; that the total receipts for foreign distribution in the same period were but \$1510 86; and that the Society's receipts are short of meeting dues to the present time by upwards of \$5000.

Nor is this merely a sudden or transient diminution of receipts. The donations to the Society which for five years ending in 1839 had averaged \$56,000 annually, fell in the two succeeding years to \$41,000; and the last year to \$35,000; and the Society's foreign grants, which for seven years had averaged upwards of \$26,000, fell the last year to \$15,000.

The Committee need not speak of the pain it has given them thus to curtail the amounts expected by our self-denying and devoted missionaries and other laborers abroad. To Rev. Mr. Rule in Spain, who expected \$300, and has expended the whole, the Committee were able to remit nothing. To the Society at Toulouse, intimately associated with friends constituting the American Swiss Committee in Geneva, and who are laboring to supply France

with evangelical volumes, they were able to send but \$500, instead of \$1000 expected. To the Paris Religious Tract Society; the Societies at Strasbourg, Calw, and Barmen; and to the Prussian Tract Society who labor for Hungary, the Bohemians, Wendes and Poles, all of whom expected \$1300, the Committee were able to send nothing. To friends in Russia who expected \$2000, they were able to send but \$1000. To the three missions in Greece \$1000 instead of 2300. To the mission in Turkey \$1500 instead of \$2500. To the missions among the Mahrattas, only the small sum of \$600. To Madura and Madras \$1300 instead of \$2500. To Orissa but \$500, one half of the sum proposed. To the General Assembly's Missions in Northern India and to China \$2000 instead of \$3000. To Burmah \$800 instead of \$1500. To the missions in Siam \$1200 instead of 1800. To Java and Borneo nothing. To the Sandwich Islands \$1000 instead of \$1500. In all but \$15,000, where \$30,000 were evidently needed.

The missions to the Mahrattas, nearly one year since, had used all the funds committed to them, and stopped their presses. The mission to Turkey, occupying stations at Smyrna, Constantinople, Broosa, Trebizond, and Erzeroum, in August last, had exceeded the total grants from the Society by about \$1500; and their affecting plea for immediate remittances, that they may go on preparing alimment, especially for the Armenians, whom God is so much blessing by his Spirit, will be laid before the Board. But the Society has no means to meet the claims of either. The sum of \$300, voted for the Lower Saxony Tract Society at Hamburg, whose Depôt and stereotype plates were consumed in the late conflagration in that city, the Society have been unable yet to remit.

The Committee ask the Board and friends assembled if these requests shall still be denied? and how the Society shall obtain means to meet them? Are we, as a people, de-

prived of every comfort, and every luxury, and even the means of subsistence, that the spread of the Gospel of our dying Lord must thus be hindered? Shall our benevolence thus cease to flow, and our ears be closed to the cry of the perishing? Cannot something be done? Must we appear before God in judgment with garments thus red with the blood of souls?

A full view of the subject requires the Committee to state, that while they believe the Society never had more fully the confidence of Evangelical pastors, churches, and christians generally—a thousand streams which once cherished the Society have ceased to flow. Of eleven or twelve hundred *Auxiliaries* which once contributed to the Society, only *sixty-four* remitted a donation during the last year. In all the States west of the Alleghany and north of the Ohio, but *one* Auxiliary remitted a donation. In all the South-western States but *one*. In all the Southern Atlantic States but *one*. In all the country west and south of Pennsylvania but *four*. Many *churches* which annually gladdened the Society by their contributions have allowed one, two, or three years to pass and remitted nothing. Many *ladies* and *others* who made and remitted collections have paused in their exertions. Many *individuals* who voluntarily sent in their own donations have failed so to do; and many wealthy friends who on an emergency gave by hundreds and thousands, are now unable to give by tens.

It should be further distinctly stated, that in the view of the Committee this deficiency is not to be attributed wholly to the financial embarrassments of the country, though they have had and still have their influence. Nor in their view is it to be ascribed mainly to the diversion of funds to other objects of benevolence. *The want of steady systematic individual exertion by those more immediately connected with the Society, and by the Pastors and members of the churches generally, is doubtless the chief ground of the present depression.* When the Secre-

tary or Agent has publicly presented the Society's claims, contributions have been made; but *the voluntary efforts* of Pastors, Churches, Auxiliaries and individuals have too nearly ceased. There is the same deficiency of voluntary christian co-operation in *distributing* Tracts and books, and speaking to men of the Great Salvation. Yet who does not know that whether in obtaining funds, or endeavors for the souls of men, the work cannot be done wholly or chiefly by *paid* laborers? The men cannot be found, nor could the churches support them. The piety of members of the church who excuse themselves from self-denying personal exertion will wither; and how shall the self-moved benevolence of the Gospel appear to all men, if none labor but those who are paid?

Is it a fact that we send our missionaries abroad, and employ Pastors and Agents at home, to do a work from which Christ's redeemed people are wholly to excuse themselves? Thou bleeding Lamb of God! who didst *thyself* come down to die, and hast commanded us to bear the cross and follow thee, and be "always abounding" in thy work—shall we render no *voluntary* service for the souls of men, and to spread the knowledge of thy blessed name!

The Committee are persuaded that here mainly lies the evil to be remedied. Let all the respected Pastors of the churches, and every member, do something, yea, do much for the cause of benevolence—let every one, bought by the price of blood, consecrate his cheerful, self-moved, self-denying prayerful efforts to God and the spread of the Gospel,—and the great work of man's Salvation will not be hindered. God is showing us *how* we may labor, if we consecrate to him the willing heart and active, liberal hand. This consecration to Him will remove our grief for these deficiencies, and turn our lamentation into praise.

We shall not then be found coolly sitting down to calculate what department of benevolence can best be desert-

ed—what schools disbanded—what presses stopped. Rather shall we hold the present generation of men at home and abroad distinctly before our vision, and seek to give all whom we can approach the knowledge of Salvation before they die.

The Committee solemnly avow their purpose to do what they can, by all means within their influence, discreetly and systematically, to gain the co-operation of the people of God. Four devoted men they have just commissioned as General Agents for the distant West and South, who will there seek to gain the same result. And the Committee earnestly and affectionately ask the Board, the Pastors and the individuals present, male and female—not whether these labors of love shall go on—for we must listen to the voice of God's word, and providence, and Spirit; yea, "wo is unto us" if we publish not by ten thousand tongues the Gospel of our crucified Lord—but will the members of the Board, will the Pastors, will all give their counsel, their active, individual, prayerful, self-denying efforts to raise the Society from its halting, and carry these means of grace to millions ready to perish?

Rev. Mr. EASTMAN, Secretary, then presented letters as above, from Rev. Mr. Perkins, missionary from Ooromiah; Rev. Mr. Hoisington, missionary from Ceylon, who were providentially detained from the meeting; and also from Rev. Dr. Scudder, who was confined by sickness in New-York, but convalescing, who has labored twenty-two years in Southern India, and has probably performed more labor in tours for Tract distribution than any other missionary.

Mr. Eastman also read a highly interesting letter from Rev. Mr. Adger, of the mission to Turkey, in which he shows the inquiring state of the minds of the Armenians, the publications in progress and called for, and the painful fact that all the Society's grants had been expended, and a debt of near \$1500 incurred by the mission; entreating the Society to give them the



means of going forward in their work so evidently owned by the presence and blessing of the Spirit of God. The various considerations and statements contained in these letters and in the above document on the pecuniary wants of the Society were urged by Mr. E. with great earnestness, and anxious appeals for the liberality and prompt and persevering effort necessary to enable the Society to go on without faltering in the various departments of labor to which, in the successive preceding meetings, attention had been given.

**WILLIAM ROPES**, Esq. a christian merchant, who has long and successfully labored in St. Petersburg, Russia, in connection with his family and a choice circle of friends, then presented a view of Tract operations among the 60,000,000 of that empire. No laborers in this work have been more evidently blessed from on high. When he arrived there almost nothing was attempted in this department; but God had opened the way and given them favor with the censor of the press and all in authority; and friends in almost all parts of the Empire, in Estonia, Finland, Sweden, on the shores of the Black Sea, and even in Siberia and on the borders of China had actively engaged in the distribution, and had sent them communications of the most cheering character, twenty or more of which he had in possession, and would gladly have read them to the meeting had time allowed.

At an early stage of their operations, Mr. R. had opportunity to lay the subject before the Grand Duchess Helen, wife of the Grand Duke Michael, the Emperor's brother, and a woman of exalted worth. From that day they proceeded boldly in their operations. They knew the Emperor would prohibit nothing which he judged to be for the real good of his people. They established a Dépôt. The Tracts became popular. They were read in the palace. Some were handsomely bound and sent there. The Emperor and his sister gave them their approbation. From that time they have gone on prosperously. The Minister of Public Instruction reports very favorably of the Tracts and of the friends by whom they are supplied. They print in the five languages spoken in Russia, and purchase from abroad in ten languages, for the use of the numerous foreigners congregated there. Every convict exiled to Siberia is invariably furnished with a Bible and Tracts. Noblemen from the interior have in many instances purchased quantities of books for the use of their peasantry, to whom they have proved highly beneficial. A convict in Siberia, when on the point of committing suicide, had a Tract brought to him, and it was the means of his conversion. He has become a preacher of righteousness.

There were some very pious Germans in St. Petersburg. Two hundred or three hundred meet for prayer. This they might have done without molestation, by notifying the police. This was neglected, and their enemies entered a complaint. An officer was sent to put down the meeting. He had in the house where it was held a very pious sister. He told her of his errand, and she most earnestly dissuaded him from performing it, if he could avoid it. He returned to the Emperor, and reported that the people so assembled did nothing but pray. "Pray!" exclaimed that august personage, "let them pray. We need all their prayers. Let no one venture to disturb them."

One lady, converted through a Tract from the good Princess Metchersky, is, perhaps, the most devoted laborer in the Tract cause to be found any where in the world. She enjoys direct tokens of the imperial approbation of her benevolent weekly visits to distribute Bibles and Tracts in the immense hospitals.

Great numbers of Tracts are sent to the annual fair. Some are bought by merchants from Ahkta, a town on the frontiers of China, and they have found their way even to the "great wall." There is a vast field for Tract operations in the Russian empire. The wonder and gratitude of the people is intensely excited by the liberality of their distant friends, who thus send them the word of life.

The total issues at St. Petersburg the last year were 215,000 publications; and the total issues in ten years, 2,400,000, all decidedly evangelical in their character.

*Letter from Rev. Archibald Alexander, D. D. Princeton, N. J.*

"After a full survey of all the plans of doing good to the souls of men, which are now in operation, it is my deliberate opinion, that, with the exception of the preaching of the Gospel and circulating the Holy Scriptures, there is none which promises to be more efficient, and more extensively useful, in promoting the spiritual and eternal interests of men, than the publication and wide circulation of sound evangelical books and Tracts. And if I were to undertake to select a set of volumes, which, in my judgment, it would be most beneficial to circulate, I should undoubtedly make choice of a large proportion of the volumes which have been published by the American Tract Society. No books that were ever written by uninspired men are better adapted to promote true religion among the people, and none were ever more successful in the conversion of sinners and the edification of the people of God, than many of those on your list, and

which are now in the course of rapid circulation. Many of these authors have received the approbation and sanction of the judicious and pious for two hundred years, and their value is as highly appreciated now as it ever was. When I reflect on the number of these pious and excellent works which, within a few years, have been scattered through the length and breadth of this land, I cannot but rejoice and give thanks to God that so much precious seed has been sown, which there is every reason to hope will in due time spring up and bring forth a rich harvest when the present generation shall have passed away.

“Two millions of volumes and sixty millions of smaller treatises have been put into the hands of our reading population. And the bound volumes possess this advantage over even the preaching of the Gospel, that they furnish permanent lessons of instruction. The book may be perused again and again by the same person, and the same book may be read, before it perishes by the lapse of time, by some hundreds of individuals—for many of these precious volumes will be preserved for centuries, and will descend as a valued legacy from father to son, and from the mother to the daughter. There are now in good preservation, many books which have been in common use for more than two hundred years, and which have been read by some half dozen successive generations, and by many others beside the owners. The writer can well recollect when such books as Alleine’s *Alarm*, Baxter’s *Saints’ Rest and Call to the Unconverted*, and the excellent treatises of Owen and Flavel, passed through the hands of most families in the neighborhood. He has known more instances than one, in which aged men of piety made it a practice to borrow such books and carry them to persons who stood in particular need of them. Let the person who contributes enough to pay the expense of publishing a single volume, reflect that he is providing spiritual nutriment, not only for the present generation, but for generations yet to be born. And if, instead of giving circulation to one, he contributes funds sufficient for a hundred or a thousand volumes, who can calculate the amount of good which a christian in moderate circumstances may accomplish?

“But this brings me to a very painful part of my subject. In the circular of the Committee calling a public meeting of the Board, the mortifying fact is brought to light, that after the lapse of five months no more than \$1500 had been received for foreign distribution, when the sum urgently demanded for this field alone is \$40,000. And that of \$40,000 needed for home distribution, no more than \$7000, exclusive of legacies, had been paid into the treasury. What does this mean? Have the christian public lost sight of this enterprise, so

intimately connected with the Salvation of men at home and abroad! Or is it the hardness of the times which has thus dried up the streams which should have flowed into the treasury of the Lord? But christians have not been prevented by the hardness of the times from expending large sums in mere luxuries. There is not an article of luxury in common use which does not cost the christian public more than all the contributions to every benevolent Society and religious Institution in the land. For Christ's sake, and for the sake of perishing immortals, let not the curtailment of expenses begin with the treasury of the Lord. I do hope that upon reflection many, even of those who are in embarrassed circumstances, will be induced first to part with superfluous ornaments and furniture, and lessen the expenses of their richly spread tables before they abstract any thing from the sum which they have been accustomed to lay upon the altar of the Lord. That money is best invested, and will ultimately bring in the richest harvest, which is lent to the Lord. Even in this world none of our expenses bear reflection like those which were incurred to aid in advancing the kingdom of the Redeemer. The times are indeed hard, and most men are environed with difficulties. Every thing relating to currency and trade is out of joint. The curse of the Almighty has fallen on our pecuniary Institutions. Confusion, failure, disappointment and ruin have been visited on those things which among men were considered the most stable. But to what should the christian attribute this unhappy state of things? Ought he not to see the hand of God in all these matters? Jehovah is vindicating his own right, and while he punishes grasping avarice, he sends a blast on that property which has not been sanctified by the consecration of the first fruits to Him. Let christians be assured that these hard times will not come to an end until they learn to bring in literally and fully their tithes, first fruits, and free-will offerings to the treasury of the Lord. And when we have returned to our duty, then may we hope that the Lord will return to us. He calls upon his people to put him to the proof, by complying with all his requisitions. 'Bring ye all the tithes into the storehouse, and prove me now herewith, saith the Lord of Hosts, if I will not open the windows of heaven and pour you out a blessing that there shall not be room enough to receive it.' "

*Letter from Hon. Herman Camp, Trumansburg, N. York.*

"All the counsel I could give were I to attend, would be to advise a systematic effort among all the churches: I mean an annual subscription on paper by each church member, however small some of the subscriptions might be. By this means I have found that the contributions are doubled, and in some cases trebled."

*Letter from Rev. Elisha Yale, D. D. Kingsboro', N. York.*

“I was much pleased at the proposal for the Meeting, and especially that one topic of consultation was, the expediency of attempting to give at least one Tract to all of this generation of the unevangelized before they die. I think the expense of travelling to the Meeting laid out in Tracts may do more good than my presence; and this sum I intend to consecrate to the work.

“Allow me to suggest, with all deference, the propriety of *holding a Special Meeting in each congregation as soon as your doings can be sent out to encourage us.* I intend to have such a Meeting in my church, and let the people know what you are doing, and invite them to co-operate in the good work.”

The Hon. Mr. FRELINGHUYSEN, President of the Society, who had been expected to prepare a Document, presented the substance of the same in a most solemn and eloquent appeal, which produced a subduing effect on the audience, and caused them to feel that in very deed the presence of God was among them, and that it was good to be there. It was in substance as follows:

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## DOCUMENT XL

### **The Necessity of a higher Standard of Christian Consecration.**

Mr. F. said: I deeply regret that the pressure of other duties which could not be postponed, has prevented the preparation of the Document assigned to me by the Executive Committee as my part in these interesting services. And I have still greater cause to regret a necessary absence from so many of your sessions. It is refreshing to meet with such christian convocations, and consult on the great concerns of Zion and her prosperity. The interest

of such conventions is increased, when God in his providence brings his people into straits and trials, and constrains them to look away from an arm of flesh and all human sympathy, and shuts them up to a simple and absolute reliance on Himself. Such a crisis meets us now, in this department of benevolence. And if we can, with a pious king of Israel beset by formidable enemies, lift the heart to God—and like him, in view of the whole field of enterprise, the energies for evil of an irreligious press and the prevalence of error, the earnest cries of a perishing world, and the declining faith and zeal of the churches—if we can exclaim, “We cannot meet this great company, neither know we what to do, but our eyes are upon Thee;”—a deliverance will come and our fears be relieved. The pious Jehoshaphat saw the enemies of his people scattered like the chaff of the summer threshing-floor, and the Hearer of prayer will grant to the same spirit now equally glorious manifestations. It is good to meet these exigencies; whatever brings us to the deep conviction that help can come from God alone is profitable for us. Then the soul looks away to the mercy-seat, and takes firmer hold of the faithful promise of a covenant-God. The subject that was particularly assigned to me, is the necessity of a higher standard of christian consecration, and every heart feels that there is an urgent need of this temper. A careful observer of Providence must have perceived in the last few years the clear indications of an approaching crisis, when the Church would be called to larger measures of liberality than she has been accustomed to extend.

God seemed of design to arrange his dispensations so that this duty should press upon the heart with unwonted claims. He has been abridging the means of his people. He has dashed many a promising scheme of wealth, cut off resources and diminished the returns of business; and during the same time He has opened new and extensive

fields for moral cultivation; obstacles have been removed, the progress of the truth all over the earth is in hopeful motion, and never before have such encouragements been afforded to the highest efforts of christian philanthropy. If we draw back now, if we fail to sustain the past contributions, these sacred charities will not only pause, but most fatally decline. And who can calmly contemplate such a consequence?

It is to be feared that the friends of the Redeemer are in sad mistake with regard to this subject. It was intimated in the correspondence read on the first afternoon of our meeting, that christians were generally prone to refer the whole responsibility of these enterprises to the immediate conductors, the Secretaries and other prominent Agents. Probably the misapprehension is still more vital. There is a view of divine sovereignty, which although it may not rise to a distinct expression, yet I fear does exist and impair the vigor of faith and hope. The thought is, that God will carry on the work of conversion, and because He must interpose by his Almighty Spirit, if it moves at all, we are too apt to ascribe the whole to his sovereign good pleasure, and come very slowly to the persuasion that our agency is needed or required. Now it is a blessed Gospel truth that God is sovereign, but let us not forget that it is a sovereignty exerted according to established laws ascertained and fixed as his throne—a sovereignty that connects the feeblest causes with the mightiest results—that ordains the means with the end, the prayer with the answer, the diligence with the blessing. Zion has sent up her constant supplications, "Thy kingdom come;" and the Lord has given the response as clearly as if He had written it on the face of the whole heavens, "My kingdom shall come certainly and gloriously, but only by this mode: when my people plead for its advent with fervent desire, attended by faithful labors; when they show by their self-denying and holy

consecration that they prize its coming better than thousands of silver and gold." We have met the exigency, my friends, when the Savior expects of his people to give more decided and costly proofs than ever before of their attachment to his kingdom. The remark was once ventured, that the time would arrive when christians would fear to die rich, unless in good works. I firmly believe that it is at the door, that the hour is knocking at the heart of the wealthy christian; and as he repairs to the cross and surveys its unutterable mysteries of crucified love, and then looks over his treasures, he will put the affecting inquiry to his own heart, "Shall I longer keep my hold of these to aggrandize myself and exalt my children to the high places of the world, or shall I lay them all down at the feet of Him who bought me with his blood?" It is an honest question, and must have an honest answer, by the light and under the responsibilities of the eternal world. I trust that this momentous question will be held up to the minds of the rich until it shall rest upon their hearts with the weight of christian obligation. Where is the wealthy christian that can consent to die worth hundreds of thousand dollars, and leave six hundred millions of his fellow-men perishing for want of the Gospel; to die rich in those means, for the want of which afflicted Zion is bleeding at every pore?

And to all conditions I would urge, that, as a general law of providence, poverty is not the fruit of a judicious liberality to the cause of Christ. According to his administration, they who give bountifully shall reap also bountifully. But suppose it should issue otherwise, what a precious memorial it would be for children, and what lasting honor to the parent, to have the record run in such bright lines as these: He was rich in worldly possessions, but such was his estimate of the heavenly treasures, that he wore out his life and his fortune in doing good. The poor, the wandering, and thousands ready to perish, em-



balm his memory. He parted with the riches of time, and has gone to the rewards that will never deceive his hopes, nor fail in enjoyment.

Some years ago (and the incident will not suffer because this will be a repetition) one of our missionaries from Malta on a visit to this country, was presenting the claims of benevolence in a neighboring town, and he assumed as the basis of his plea, that christian liberality seldom led to poverty; that God would take care of his people; that He who gives to causes their efficiency, who knows and controls all the secret springs of enterprise and success, would vindicate by his providence the blessedness of doing good even for time. But, said he, should it so happen that a special case comes up, where a christian is impoverished by reason of his charities, I should rejoice in the privilege of an interview with him. I would take him by the hand, and as I grasped it, with a full heart I would say to him, dear brother, you are the first disciple of your heavenly Master I have ever seen who has faithfully copied his example. He was rich in the treasures of the universe, and became poor, that by his poverty we might become rich.

I will detain you with only one other incident. When the Executive Committee of this Society were lately deliberating on the expediency of this meeting, the inquiry was anxiously going round the table, by what means we should awaken the churches to their measure of consecration. One excellent brother, the Senior Secretary, when the question reached him, replied, "I have often been affected with the fact, that when our Society in past years has encountered difficulties, whatever feeling was moved at this Board, and deeply cherished here, went abroad. I found it among the churches. I cannot tell, said he, how it was conveyed—a bird took it—I don't know the philosophy of it—but the interesting fact I know—and I fear the feeling is not strong enough in our own hearts." The

remark, I perceived, thrilled on every spirit there. I could see emotion kindling as he spoke; and it is all true. This is the little leaven that quickens, we cannot tell how, but it spreads and pervades the mass, until the whole is leavened. So, my christian friends, let that blessed influence live to-night in this place, and it will soon expand beyond these walls, and whether it go forth from a small assembly or a great congregation, it will tell with power on the heart of Zion. We may not trace its operation in the rending of the rocks or the falling of the forests, but we shall certainly hear of it, in the sweet whispers of the Spirit's still small voice, and in the rich returns of His love.

The Rev. Dr. RICE, of Princeton, begged permission to utter the emotions of his heart on the subject of a higher standard of christian consecration. Christians must practice more *self-denial* for Christ. We must diminish the expenses of our table and our wardrobe. We were as a people extravagant. He believed God's hand was abroad among us to bring us to such *self-denial* as shall prove the means of our own growth in grace and preparation for heaven, and the only means by which our institutions of benevolence can now be supported without faltering.

An aged widow responded to these appeals by voluntarily offering \$20, one half for Foreign Distribution, and one half for Colporteurs; and one of the eloquent speakers testified his sincerity by requesting to be called upon for a donation of \$100.

## RESOLUTIONS.

The following Resolutions, submitted by Rev. Dr. MILNOR, were unanimously adopted:

*Resolved*, That the deliberations of this Meeting, continued during its sessions of two days, have deepened the impression on our minds, that the Press, while its powerful agency in the promotion of frivolity, error, infidelity and corruption is to be greatly deplored, is fitted to exert a counteracting influence equally powerful, and that its purifying

issues, when connected with christian conversation and efforts for the Salvation of men, may aid the ministry effectually in spreading the Gospel at home and abroad.

*Resolved*, That this Meeting rejoice in the high evangelical character of the Society's publications, and their adaptation to the wants of the present generation of men; and in what the Society has done and is doing to withstand the influence of a corrupt press, and to aid in furnishing for our own and foreign lands, a practical evangelical literature.

*Resolved*, That the Providence of God seems evidently calling on the Society for renewed vigor in supplying the present generation of men with Tracts and Volumes, distributed both systematically and miscellaneously, as opportunities are afforded, and that the more destitute portions of our country, including the German population, and all who have embraced dangerous error, have peculiar claims to be supplied with these publications and the labors of Colporteurs.

*Resolved*, That in view of the work before the Society, as brought under the consideration of this Meeting, the sum of \$40,000 proposed at the Society's last Anniversary as needed for our own country, and the further sum of \$40,000 for foreign and pagan lands, are, in the opinion of this Meeting, evidently called for in the providence of God; and that in the present alarming deficiency of pecuniary means, all pastors, churches, auxiliaries and individuals, male and female, friendly to the Society, are hereby earnestly requested to adopt the means within their power to relieve this want, and to give the Society their steady and systematic support.

*Resolved*, That while this Meeting regret that so many esteemed and venerated officers and friends have been detained from their sessions, they are cheered by the full and unanimous expressions of confidence and deep interest in the Society in their respective communications; and that the entire harmony which has characterized all our proceedings, be acknowledged with unfeigned gratitude to God.

*Resolved*, That the thanks of the Meeting be tendered to the gentlemen who, at the request of the Committee, have prepared for this occasion valuable Documents, in which the great principles of our association have been ably unfolded, and our duty impressively enforced.

*Resolved*, That the thanks of the Meeting be tendered to the choir of the Broadway Tabernacle for their presence and aid on this occasion.

On motion of Rev. Mr. Romeyn, it was further

*Resolved*, That the Documents presented on this occasion be commended to the special consideration of pastors and of all who have

influence on the public mind and the training of the young ; and that the solemnity and weight of the pulpit be especially solicited in behalf of the principles maintained.

A deep and solemn impression of the presence of God and the responsibilities he has devolved upon the churches evidently pervaded the Meeting, which was throughout one of entire harmony, and was closed by singing the Doxology, and the Benediction pronounced by Dr. Milnor.

Who, in reviewing these exercises, can fail to be affected at the exhibition of *christian confidence* uniting members of so many denominations in one grand design for evangelizing a benighted world ; or at the evidence that true religion is one and the same, though associated with various external distinctions ? Who can but notice the providential dispensations that have called the Society to so many departments of labor at home and abroad, or fail to see both in the written word and in the labors of christians generally, divinely appointed aids to the ministry ?

Who does not both rejoice and tremble in view of the power of the Press for good and for evil, as here exhibited ; and who will not bless God for the sound Evangelical character of the Society's one thousand publications, and one hundred volumes, and their adaptation to aid the Pastor in his work, to strengthen the christian, alarm the unconverted, and promote the revival of the work of God ?

Who will not see in the summoning of christian cooperation, and the raising up and sending forth of *Colporteurs* to visit those beyond the reach of the ministry, a great duty devolving on the followers of Christ generally, and a means graciously provided, whereby the millions dispersed throughout the desolations of our own and other lands, may receive the message of salvation ? Whose compassion will not be awakened for the million of German emigrants on our own shores, and for deluded and neglected Errorists of every name ?

Who will not extend his vision to the millions struggling

with persecution and oppression on the continent of Europe, and the hundreds of millions in pagan lands; and join in the endeavor to extend these various means of grace to all, as far as our noblest efforts can reach?

Who will not lament the limited pecuniary means of the Society for supplying the destitute with publications, or supporting the Colporteurs whom God is raising up, and keeping the presses at foreign mission stations in motion; and who will not practice some *self-denial* both in contributions and in efforts, that this work, and the cause of benevolence generally, may be carried forward without halting?

If some of the suggestions in the above valuable *letters* sent to the Board were carried out, the desired ends might be gained: especially the suggestions, (1) that every congregation do *something without delay*, and continue its contributions annually; and (2) that every individual, not excluding children, be induced annually to *subscribe a sum on paper* which is willingly consecrated to this object.

This whole work, if what it professes to be, is the Lord's. The united prayer of those who love Zion he will answer; and their devoted efforts he will make successful. Yielding to indolence and the spirit of the world, no promise is with us; but acting for Him, and in view of a hastening eternity, it shall finally appear that His grace abounded in blessing our endeavors.



PLEA  
FOR THE  
EVANGELICAL PRESS:

A DISCOURSE

DELIVERED IN THE BROADWAY TABERNACLE, N. YORK,

BEFORE THE BOARD AND FRIENDS OF THE

AMERICAN TRACT SOCIETY,

AT THE

OPENING OF THEIR PUBLIC DELIBERATIVE MEETING,

October 25, 1842.

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BY JAMES ROMEYN,
LATE PASTOR OF THE REFORMED DUTCH CHURCH, CATSKILL.

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1843.

At the Public Meeting of the Board, October 26, on motion of the Rev. BARON STOW, of Boston, it was unanimously

*Resolved*, That the thanks of the meeting be presented to the Rev. Mr. ROMEXN for the able and appropriate Sermon preached by him the last evening, and that a copy be requested for the press."

*Extract from the Minutes*



# A DISCOURSE

DELIVERED IN THE

BROADWAY TABERNACLE,

NEW-YORK.

*"Having therefore obtained help of God, I continue unto this day, witnessing both to small and great, saying none other things than those which the prophets and Moses did say should come: that Christ should suffer, and that he should be the first that should rise from the dead, and should show light unto the people, and to the Gentiles."—Acts, 26: 22, 23.*

These are the words of the great Apostle of the Gentiles, under trying circumstances. Scarcely had he entered the school of Christ before he encountered suspicion and distrust from professed brethren, and persecution and bonds from enemies. He was now in more imminent danger from his own countrymen, who "had crucified the Lord Jesus," than from the heathen themselves; and he was compelled, in order to escape certain condemnation at Jerusalem, to appeal to Cæsar at Rome. He was now arraigned before the bar of a judge, who suffered an appeal, involving delay and suffering, to be taken; and who rendered it a necessary alternative by his own act, because he refused to release the prisoner when the power of decision was his own, though he confessed himself persuaded that he had done nothing worthy of condemnation—who knew no more of religion than to confound the claims of "the Son of God with power by his resurrection from the dead," with "certain questions of Jewish superstitions;" and who had studied no farther into the great

principles of justice than to have caught a glimmering of the conclusion, that it seemed unreasonable to send a man away a prisoner without signifying also the charge alleged against him.

There he stands, an apostle, a chosen vessel, in soul "free indeed," a man of mighty mind, of kindled affections, of indomitable energy, before such a tribunal! and "for the hope of Israel bound with a chain!"

But though bonds and afflictions awaited him, how did he demean himself? Did grief dim to his eye the brightness of the crown of glory? Did he stand back from the bold avowal or dangerous service of a Savior whose name was "every where spoken against?" Did his heart fail, or his cheek blanch, because he became from the hour of his conversion a "man of strife?" To obtain an answer to these inquiries, analyze his defence. He stirs up his soul to uncompromising faithfulness by recalling the affecting scene of his conversion to God—he *yet* sees the light, he *yet* hears the voice, "Why persecutest thou me?" and he strengthens the steadfastness of his purpose by repeating his own inquiry, made in the honest hour of alarm, submission and first love, "Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?" His high commission, as it came from the lips of the Lord Jesus himself, who thus appeared to him in the way, is distinctly recollected and recited. He reviews his labors and the way the Lord had brought him, and feels a reviving influence from the deepened conviction, that he continued unto that day because he had "obtained help from God." His impressive eloquence attained its highest power when he adverted to his glorious *theme and work*, witnessing to both small and great the grand and central subject of revelation, "that Christ should suffer, and should rise from the dead, and should show light to the people and to the Gentiles."

The occasion and object of our present convocation are well understood. *Our* relations, duties, resources and hopes are the same as the apostle's were; and, perhaps, after setting forth Paul, and calling upon you "to follow them who through faith and patience inherit the promises," I ought here to pause. Were I to obey my sense of inadequacy to the subject in hand I would "Silver of eloquence," and gold of truth refined and curiously wrought, I have none. Fragmentary outlines and dim images are all that present themselves to a wearied mind at a necessarily hasty glance. "Such as I have, give I unto you." And since the privilege of silence is denied me, I desire to hide myself behind my subject. I am but "the voice of one crying in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord;" and I shall be content, with John, to decrease, if Christ may increase; and like "a voice," to die away and be lost to your farther notice, if I may only reach your ear, and wake your heart, and set in motion and rouse to appropriate action this important detachment of God's sacramental host.

Our text presents two points for consideration:

I. AN OCCASION awakening sympathy and calling for benevolent action.

II. THE MEANS AND MANNER OF MEETING ITS RESPONSIBILITIES.

I. AN OCCASION. In the case of both the apostle and ourselves, there is presented before us *the spiritual destitution of a fallen race; a state of investment by evil influences; and without relief, exposure to eternal perdition.*

1. *On the general subject.* The theology of a nation gives character to their principles of action, their worship, and their hopes. After the perfections of the

Godhead are ascertained, the question next in order and importance, is, what is the actual condition of those who are his creatures and subjects? what their relation to his law, its rewards or penalties, and their prospects? This broad principle has been as generally overlooked as it is obviously true. It is for want of attention to it that the unsanctified sinner hears with indifference the warning to flee; and the professed believer, though "his eyes have seen the King, the Lord of Glory, and though he dwell among a people of unclean lips," feels not half his obligations.

This is a lost world. Unless this be so, the Bible is a riddle; the errand of Christ superfluous; the scenes of Calvary a pageant; and the phrases "marvellous light," "unsearchable riches," "great salvation," "depth of the riches of the wisdom and knowledge of God," mere oratorical hyperbole. In order to understand the Bible, to judge of its character, to appreciate the wisdom of its adaptations and the riches of its grace; to enter into its spirit and carry out intelligently its designs, we must place ourselves where He stood who looked upon our race in their hopelessness when he made the provisions of the Gospel. If you show me the picture of a landscape, I shall differ from the artist and pronounce his work a failure, unless I plant myself *precisely* where he did when he executed the work. The relations and bearings of the different objects it presents will otherwise be greatly changed, if not entirely reversed, and its character of beauty, and wisdom of design, fail to be discovered. Let us apply the illustration.

When God looked down from heaven upon the children of men, to see if there were any that did understand and seek God, they had all gone aside, they were altogether become filthy, there was none that did good, no, not one. The thoughts and imaginations of their hearts were evil, only evil, and that continually; "they

hated the light, and did not like to retain God in their knowledge."

There is in the heart of man *a specific repulsion* against the claims of God *as such*. No chemical test is surer of detecting a latent ingredient or property, than the religion of Christ the "enmity of the carnal mind" when it would control by its authority or woo by its love. Like the spear of Ithuriel, its touch disrobes of disguise and reveals the true character of what is hidden under it. There is a hand for a friend, and a heart for kindred, and love of country, and provision for our own; exposure of life at the very cannon's mouth, and millions of treasure for defence; efforts on the part of statesmen to bless the land with plenty and peace, and a compensating return if they may but "read their history in a nation's eyes"—but when we claim these same affections and efforts for God, they are at once arrested in their exercise and refused. The natural perfections of God, men will admire and speak of; but from the very contemplation of his moral perfections and government they shrink; and in the spirit of him who drew down a third part of the stars of heaven after him, they say,

"O thou, who, with surpassing glory crowned,  
 "Look'st from thy sole dominion—to thee I call,  
 "But with no friendly voice, and add thy name,  
 "To tell thee how I hate thy beams."

Your own Wilberforce (for you have his invaluable Practical View among your publications) has demonstrated this, and shown inadequate conceptions on this point to lie at the root of shallow conviction, and worthless, heartless profession. The Savior declared to an objecting Pharisee: "To whom little is forgiven, the same loveth little."

There is originality and point in the declaration, that

the "very arts and sciences would require divine power to teach them effectually, if they involved as much holiness and devotion as the Gospel. Yes, did *mathematics* demonstrate the evil of sin and necessity of holiness just as the cross of Christ does, *problems* would soon be as unpopular as the doctrines of the cross. Were there no progress made in astronomy, without as much *prayer* as *watching*, there would be but few astronomical students. If *geology* and *botany* required, as Mount Zion does, 'clean hands and a pure heart' from all who ascended their hills, neither the strata nor the flowers of the earth would have many visitants. And if *music* could never be well played but when there was 'melody in the heart unto the Lord,' or when worship was its only object, music, with all its charms, would have but few votaries. Even place and power in the state would not be the objects of general ambition if they could only be obtained by spirituality of mind, and only retained by consecration to the glory of God. In a word, were the practical and devotional requisitions of the Gospel transferred from the Gospel to any trade or science, there would be just as much aversion to that trade or science as there now is to the Gospel; and as much necessity for divine influence to enforce their claims." These illustrations are novel, and may be deemed bold, but they are incontrovertible.

Terrible charge! a race without God—our species up in arms! Amid blessings unwon. Amid terrors unalarmed. If the great master of the English drama stirs up emotion by the exhibition of fallen royalty, and none crying as it passed, "God save;" what amazement, horror, zeal, become us at the sight of Deity incarnate coming to save, and met, not by mere cold indifference, but resolute repulse—the sum of his history this: "He came unto his own, and his own received him not."

"Fools make a mock at sin." He who adopts God's estimate of it will not hesitate on the great questions which are all in apposition with it, the necessity of atoning blood and renewing grace. The Gospel, the Gospel alone, lifts in our view the pall from a dead world ; and he to whom Christ has given light resembles, in the affecting and inciting character of his situation, the man who should awake to consciousness underground, confined and shrouded, and who should be able to look, under a sense of his indebtedness to distinguishing mercy, upon the wide extended empire of desolation around him, where God is not named, nor praised, nor celebrated ; where corruption alone, in various degrees and forms, exhibits motion ; where all life is dead, and "death" only "lives." You will pardon me for dwelling so long on this point. I am laying a cornerstone, and adjusting to its place a pivot on which the mighty scheme of Redemption and all its agencies turn.

2. These are the views which may be said to constitute *a distinct and large class of the doctrines the apostle puts forth, and which governed him in his preaching and action.* If he does not teach the hopeless and entire alienation of man from God, by nature, then words have no meaning, and are good for nothing but to conceal our sentiments and produce false impressions of the subjects on which we employ them. Instead of claiming, under the overweening influence of Jewish arrogance, that they were "better than the Gentiles," he disclaims the sentiment, and labors to prove from Moses and the prophets, in whom they trusted, that there was no difference, that all were "justified freely by grace." He "concludes all under sin, that the promise by faith of Christ might be given to them that believe." He declares that "by the deeds of the law there can no flesh living be justified ;" and proposes, as the exclusive and sufficient refuge, Christ as a "propitiation for sin,

through faith in his blood." Read his dark and appalling indictment of our nature in Romans 1. He tells the Corinthians that he "determined to know nothing among them save Jesus Christ and him crucified." He congratulates the Ephesians, "You hath he quickened who were dead in trespasses and sins." He assures the Galatians that "Christ was of none effect" to any who were of the works of the law; and stirs up the gratitude of the Colossians by reminding them, "You being dead in your sins, and the uncircumcision of the flesh, hath he quickened together with him, having forgiven you all trespasses, blotting out the handwriting that was against them, and nailing it to the cross." His testimony every where is, man is dead in sin. Christ is "our life." "*Christ in us, the hope of glory.*"

We have a most striking display of the boldness and zeal, the love and pity it inspired, in Acts 17. He comes to ATHENS, the "Eye of Greece" and self-esteemed light of the world. A man of diminutive stature, plain garb, unpretending appearance, a seeming outcast and unattended Jew, might be seen upon the heights, where he stands gazing, now upon the cultivated fields and gardens around, now upon the bright sky and blue heavens overhead, and now forth upon the broad Ægean sea, dotted with its beautiful islands, its rippled waters sporting with the sun-beams, or reflecting like a mirror the smiles and beauty of the Lord. As he walks the streets, he is seen lifting his sight to the top of the monumental column, and directing it along the massive and rich colonnade, he looks into the doors of their temples, and seems to scan intently every scene and object. He lingers also around the places where philosophy gave instruction on wisdom, and is seen on the outer verge of admiring groups, and while he listens displays impatient disapprobation. Though in the nation where Socrates was condemned to die for his opinions, he may



be found in the market-place disputing with the Gentile, and in the synagogue with the resident Jew; and both quail before the power and are startled by the character of his words.

*Why did he speak thus, and whence this daring course of action?* That sea, those hills, that sun had failed to lead to a discovery of Eternal power and a *Godhead*. Those temples had altars inscribed to *the unknown God*, and were the resort of worshippers whose hearts were as cold as the marble of which they were constructed. Athens was the home of thirty thousand deities. The intellect that reared those splendid structures and the zeal that maintained their services were all unsanctified. The men he met were living corpses, dead while they lived. There was there no God, no Savior, no hope. " 'Twas Greece, but living Greece no more," and justified in a spiritual and religious view the poet's impassioned comparison of her modern with her ancient state, when he likened the former to a beautiful corpse, whose material, symmetrical organization remained, while the beauty and charm of "life" had fled, and which was just in the stage

"Before Decay's effacing fingers

"Had swept the lines where beauty lingers."

Arts, arms, science, philosophy, government, every thing barely intellectual flourished at Athens. But it was, though the proudest production of human effort, to a spiritual eye nothing but an affecting, self-reared monument, unconsciously, undesignedly testifying that "the world by wisdom knew not God."

And when the "philosophers" encountered him as they came to the rescue of their several schemes, and after they had tumultuously hurried him along to Mars-Hill, amid the conjectures of some and the jeers of others at the "babbling," he rebuked, he reasoned, he thunder-

ed, he commanded repentance in the name of the God he declared to them. He pointed to the judgment, and showed them the Crucified coming in the glory of the Father with his holy angels, "no more to bleed, no more to die;" and displayed a "spirit stirred" by Gospel pity, zeal and hope. He held the light of truth over their idols, and exposed their nothingness.

It requires but little effort of imagination to conceive how contemptible even to the eye of reason, in the light from heaven which streamed in upon those dark temples of idolatry during the apostle's speech, those senseless images appeared, compared with the "living throne, the sapphire blaze" which he unveiled before their astonished minds; and that he did, *in effect*, by the word of truth, what Josiah did *literally* at the time of his reformation, when he ground the idols of the land to powder, and scattered their dust, broad-cast, in contempt and indignation upon the persons of their living dupes, and the graves of their departed worshippers. 2 Kings, 23; 2 Chron. 34. He assailed their pride; he braved their power; he defied their divinities; and *the implication running through all he said and did was this: their enmity to God and their danger in view of "the day of the perdition of ungodly men."* On the present occasion he says, rehearsing his commission: "I have appeared to thee for this purpose, to make thee a minister and a witness both of those things which thou hast seen, and of those things in the which I will appear unto thee; delivering thee from the people and from the Gentiles, to open their eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan to God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and an inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith that is in me."

3. *The same occasion yet remains.* Corruption will never heal itself; nor have its heavings and fermenta-

tions, like chaos when the Spirit brooded upon it, an inward tendency to, or a certain issue in a finished work and a fair creation. We are called upon to maintain the same agency the apostle left when he was summoned to his rest, and to enter into the same labors. This is still what it was, and what it will remain till He that sits upon the throne shall make all things new, a *world lying in wickedness*.

In surveying the field of labor, the distinction made by the apostle still exists: light and healing are needed by "*the people, and by the Gentiles.*"

*As to the Gentiles*, we read, "where there is no vision the people perish." "As many as have sinned without law shall also perish without law;" and the same apostle who declares that "without faith it is impossible to please God," significantly in another place asks, "how shall they believe on him of whom they have not heard?" It requires only a knowledge of their character to perceive at once the utter incongruity of supposing that they can in their debased condition enter the kingdom of God. Notwithstanding all that infidels have said in praise of the "simple virtues" of the heathen, they would be loth indeed to exchange the security and elevation of Christendom for all the "loveliness" of pagan society. What say your Missionaries are the grand features of their condition as they strike the mind, even on a first view? Henry Martyn said that the associations in his mind, on beholding the celebration of their rites, were with the "vestibule of hell." The recent rapid and vivid description before the Foreign Missionary Board by a brother (Rev. Dr. Scudder) lately returned after twenty-two years' residence and labors among the heathen, makes the ears to tingle and the heart grow sick. He must have a stout heart who can remain unaffected in perusing the Tract entitled the "Horrors of Heathenism" as it groups its evils and lets fall in passing a ray upon each.

As to the other class "*the people*," who need to have light shown them in contradistinction to the Gentiles—the half civilized, half christianized parts of the world, together with the masses who, though under the full blaze of the Gospel, are living without God—their condition is not less deplorable, while it is more guilty; and appeals with peculiar power to our christian sensibilities. Of every man born of woman it is true that except he be born again he cannot enter into the kingdom of God—that except he repent he must perish.

Now in both of these cases there is no difficulty in discovering general reasons why men thus depraved cleave to their idolatries, and why the Gospel, when it comes, should be treated as an intruder on their joys. We may name the moulding influence of education, pride of opinion, a natural jealousy of innovation, together with objections to its inconvenience—self-interest, inasmuch as many "have their living by this craft"—a fear of ridicule, or of loss of caste—the control of the passions—while the torpor of ignorance constitutes so much dead weight that must be lifted out of the way. These are the tyrants who parcel out the soul and body of man among themselves, when he ceases to be free indeed.

But there is *one great influence* which fortifies all the rest; puts a spell upon the soul; precludes inquiry, and denies Truth a hearing, and thus keeps the goods in peace. I mean *a false and corrupt Theology and Literature*. Satan beguiled Eve—duped her understanding—before he destroyed her by a lie. Heathenism has its wise men, writers, apologists, oracles, books, revelations, defences, and miracles.

It was the remark of the late Dr. Mason, that the *disposition* of Satan makes him a devil: in *intellect* he is an angel; that he never enlists fools, as such, in his service; and that those who are thus employed are

most assuredly volunteers. Intellect! Some of the mightiest minds that ever existed among our fallen race have been under the sway of infidelity. The veriest wretches that ever lived will not avow the folly of acting without a reason, even though it be so weak a one that a child might explode it. In the controversy of Martyn with the Mahometan doctors, who is not reminded of the struggle of ancient wrestlers, or the clash, and sparks, and intentness of swordsmen in deadly conflict? The web of sophistry need not be very strong to entangle, and at last enwrap and tie down the powers of the ordinary mind. Amid the errors of our day we have employ for the whole armor of light. Men who cannot repeat the Lord's prayer, nor the ten commandments, nor the creed, are familiar with Pope's sentiment, "He can't be wrong, whose life is in the right;" and this false maxim, and others like it, "having a show of wisdom," constitute their *vade mecum*.

The very physical sciences among the heathen were concealed from the common people, that they might be turned to the account of a designing priesthood. And a late writer on hydraulics has exposed, in the construction of heathen altars the secret yet simple machinery by which a knowledge of the laws of fluids, and of the action of steam were employed to produce their "lying wonders." Here then is a weapon we must wrest from the hands of enemies and turn against them, or they will employ it to destroy us. We must make our selection, we must use it, or fall by it.

It is undeniable that, among the masses, error and vice are on a crusade for the purpose of subjugation. Robert Hall remarked forty years ago, that one of the alarming symptoms of the "times" was, that infidelity was seeking diffusion among the common people, and had grown condescending; and that, instead of being employed as the instrument of mere literary vanity, it

had been adopted as the organ of political convulsion. To this we may now add, as a means of personal promotion, and, what is more debasing still, of sheer pecuniary interest.

The *multiplication of cheap publications* is a feature of the day as distinct and novel, as that steam is the means of motion, and powder of warfare. We have Universalist, Deistical, Roman Catholic "book concerns." We have newspapers, pamphlets, magazines, handbills, tracts, for every class of sentiments, "clean and unclean." On the Sabbath, and during the week, the influence continually rolls on like water from a lake into the sea, and is distributed, as blood from the heart through the frame, by systematic, regular pulsation, at the almost hourly departure of conveyances for the interior. To stimulate the exhausted, and aid the unlettered, and retain its hold over the hurried, the *licentious print* is hung forth, and obtrudes itself from the retired yet promiscuously frequented barber-shop of the steamboat and the keeping-room of the hotel, to the show-windows of Broadway. The half-naked or dimly veiled human form may be seen depicted in splendid volumes, adorning the centre-tables of fashion, and in the hands of the young, whose fears for the safety of their principles or morals are suspended amid a trance of admiration at the skill of the execution; and who, while they contemplate the palpable, are not aware of what passion may soon clamor for importunately, or roving, gloating imagination supply.

I have said that man is alienated from God, and have shown you one class of dangerous influences that invest him. We are now prepared to *trace this influence in its processes and forms* in sealing his ruin.

*First* comes the mighty power of a *defective domestic education*. If the trumpet give an uncertain sound, who will gird himself for the battle? Parents, the natural

and sworn guardians of their children, are either off their guard, or positive corrupters. There is a denial of native depravity, or an undervaluation of its "desperate" character; and there is resistance *even to the theory* of duty as it respects picking off the buds and germs of the apples of Sodom and clusters of Gomorrah, and beating down to the ground and suppressing the growth of the thorn and thistle.

Until the recent efforts made to furnish it, there has been a lamentable want, nay, almost a dearth of what might be deemed suitable and adapted *reading for the young*; while of works designed for mature minds, copies were scarce and dear, and no direct effort was made to give them circulation. Till we sit down to the calculation, we can form but a miserable, inadequate estimate of what is implied both on the score of method and responsibility in training up a child in the way he should go; and if the light that is in us be darkness, the effect cannot but be disastrous.

*Next*, a youth, thus ill freighted and ballasted, leaves his home, and commences the acquisition of a liberal education. *The first opening of his eyes is amid the productions of pagan minds and hearts.* His literary tastes, so far as the forms and drapery of thought are concerned, are formed after models highly and exquisitely wrought; but his sentiments, his moral tastes, are correspondingly perverted and vitiated. His views of the Deity are debased, and his feelings familiarized with lust and abomination under another name. Let me present you with the testimony of St. Augustine, in his confessions on this subject. A more competent witness, a more affecting and striking illustration cannot be found.

"What miseries, Lord, did I experience when I was directed in the plan of my education to acquire the knowledge that might be subservient to the attainment of false riches and honor. The uses of reading, writing

and arithmetic are obvious. Not so the study of the undoing of Eneas, while I forgot my own. Of what use was it to deplore the self-murdering Dido, while yet I could bear unmoved the death of my own soul alienated from Thee, during the course of these pursuits, from thee, my God and my life ! I loved thee not—and such is the spirit of the world, that I was applauded with '*well done,*' on every side. This is the kind of literature that has arrogated to itself the name of polite and liberal. That two and two make four, was to me an odious sing song ; but the wooden horse, the burning of Troy, the ghost of Creusa, were to me enchanting spectacles. Alas, thou torrent of human custom, who shall resist thee ! How long shall it be ere thou art dried up—how long wilt thou roll the sons of Eve into a great and tempestuous sea, which even those who have fled for refuge to the cross can hardly escape. Have I not read at once of Jove, the *thunderer and adulterer*. What is this but to teach men to call their crimes no crimes, while they have the sanction of gods whom they imitate ? Terence introduces a profligate young man justifying his lewdness by the example of Jove, while he beholds on the wall a picture of Jupiter and Danae, and excites himself to lust by divine tuition. ' Shall he who shakes heaven by his thunder do this, and may not I, a poor mortal, do the same ? ' Yet I, my God, now indulged by thy grace to behold thee in peace, learned these things with pleasure, was delighted with them, and was called a boy of promising genius ! But what wonder that I departed from thee, my God, when men were proposed to me as objects of imitation, who would blush to be detected in a barbarism or solecism in reciting their own actions though they were innocent, and who at the same time might recite the story of their own lewdness not only with impunity, but even with commendation, provided they did so with a copious and elegant flow of diction."



Thus far his direct confession.\* The fruit was worthy of the tree and the kind of cultivation bestowed upon it. He ran to excess of riot; was unhappy through the conflict of conscience; lived some years in adultery; became a Manichean in principle; and was equally an adept in sin, superstition, eloquence and learning. In tracing the progress of corruption and the consequences that resulted to the world from this mistaken course, he says, "I deceived, by innumerable falsehoods, master and parents, through the love of play and amusements. I robbed the storehouse of my parents through gluttony, and to bestow things agreeable on my playmates. In my plays I sought to obtain fraudulent victories, overcome by the desire of vain excellence. Is this puerile innocence? Far from it, O Lord! Change only the scene from pedagogues and masters, from nuts, and shells, and sparrows, to Prefects, Kings, and gold, and estates, and we see the *vices of men*."

But enough. If this be not cultivating the thorn and thistle of the natural heart, then there is no such thing possible. Is not the person saved under such circumstances, a brand plucked out of the fire? There can be, of course, no objection to the Classics on the score of *literary* taste and mere intellectual power, nor do I set up as a reformer; but under these obvious influences and tendencies, and in view of the occasion before us, I am bold to say, that christian purity and zeal may at least demand Expurgated Editions; and an ability and heart, on the part of instructors of christian youth, to comment on the sentiment and principles as well as instruct in the grammatical construction of the language that sets them forth, and to vindicate and compare, and exalt by the comparison, "the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus our Lord."

\* See his Confessions, as quoted by Milner in his History of the Church.

Your educated youth now becomes *embarked in commercial, literary, professional or political pursuits*. His mind having received its cast and color, stiffens into a particular form and becomes set. In the pursuits of after life he mainly enlarges his views and reapplies his already acquired principles. Even though his time is not fully occupied by his business, the selfishness of trade, the trickery of politics, and deference to public opinion and taste on questions of the learned and elegant, confirm his errors, wither his remaining sensibilities, and unfit him for attention to "sublimier thmes." Except among the professional and the devout, the "true worshippers," there is but little time occupied in reading works that directly "mend the conscience and raise the heart." Our foreign relations are diversified, our form of government peculiar and new, and absorbing questions continually arise. When an hour of leisure comes, the mind seeks relaxation, and is ill qualified and little disposed to do more than sport with the light and fantastic. Hence superficiality, save on absorbing topics, has become a national characteristic. The American mind is as limpid as the water of our inland seas, agitated by a zephyr and losing impressions as readily as it receives them. First thoughts satisfy; misleading analogies produce "confirmation strong;" appearances deceive; error becomes patronized simply because men are unwilling to take the trouble *to think* on what is "a great thing" involving "their life." And multitudes, who, for general intelligence, wealth and influence, ought to be cedars in Lebanon, are seen to "leave their fatness and put their trust in the bramble."

Such being the depraved nature of man, "drinking in iniquity like water," and such the depraving influences under which a radically diseased mental constitution is fostered and matured, let us now glance at what is *the actual, main staple of the popular press, and the*

*principal aliment of the great majority of mind in the reading world.* It is not denied, nay, it is with gratitude and hope conceded, that science and art are making rapid advances. The results of protracted and laborious effort are beginning to bless the world more largely. The pure ore, refined and ready for use, is brought to the surface and bespeaks the character of the treasures within, long hid in depths of darkness, amid "the bars of the earth." But we are now speaking of what affects *sentiments and morals.* The press, instead of leading in right sentiment and forming it, merely *reflects it as it is,* and too generally is a base pander to a vile and corrupting appetite. If the public taste be wrong, the press with its indescribable power perpetuates and extends the injury thus inflicted on vital interests. The question is, *what will sell?* and as in other shambles and markets, so here, supply responds to demand, although souls are included in the traffic, and patriotism and piety cannot fail to ask, aghast, what will the end be?

Shall I speak of Scott? for a long time the "Great Unknown," receiving homage high and pure, because paid to the character of the writings and not the person of the man. What amazing fertility of genius! What deep lines! What delicate shading! What bold outline; consistent keeping; vivid coloring! He had only to cast the light of his mind, with its penetrating power, on a subject, and it stood forth before the admiring spectator, distinct and wondrous as the creations of the photographic art. O! had that genius been to Mount Zion, and caught the inspiration of the temple, and the cross, and the kingdom of the Savior, and diffused their savor throughout the wide sphere he filled and the subjects at his command, he might now, and till the end of time, have been seen in giant form standing over Scotia, that "land of misty lakes and hoary mountains," and all lands that feel her influence, in the attitude in

which David, from the threshing-floor of Ornan, saw the angel of the Lord "as he stood between heaven and earth over Jerusalem, with a drawn sword in his hand stretched over it," but not, like him, *for destruction*, but *for defence*.

The christian, however, cannot worship at his shrine, but must remain erect and resolute amid admiring multitudes, as Mordecai before Haman, though he was a man whom kings delight to honor. Though an elder in the kirk, he travestied her history, if he did not quite alter the record. He spoke lightly of her martyrs. Not content with the creations of fancy, or to catch the living manners as they rise, he drew largely from materials consecrated by the most hallowed associations. A literary Napoleon, he made the spoils of even sanctuaries the ornaments of his capitol. While God turns sin to the account of reverence by taking the censers of "sinners against their own souls," and forming of them broad plates for the altar, (Numbers, 16 : 38,) that they might be a perpetual memorial, he took down the gold of the temple to fit out a variety shop. He traversed without reverential associations the land that had been the battle-field of religious liberty, and which contained in its bosom the ashes of Knox. Confounding peculiarities of form with essential moral ingredients of character, he trampled scornfully on the dust of those whose spirits, while he was writing, were with God ; and to the fruit of whose suffering he owed his freedom from molestation in the very act of awakening ridicule or pouring contempt upon their persons and principles ! The rebuke of England's sweetest poet applies to Scotland's favorite, yet recreant son :

" Their ashes flew

" No marble tells us whither. With their names

" No bard embalms and sanctifies his song :

" And history, so warm on meaner themes,

" Is cold on this."

Nor can the qualified praise of the succeeding lines be extended to the writer named :

“ She execrates indeed  
 “ The tyranny that doomed them to the fire,  
 “ But gives the glorious sufferers little praise.”

What is the character of the impression made upon the mind of the general reader on the subject of a minister of the everlasting Gospel, an ambassador “ to negotiate between God and man the high concerns of an eternal state ” by the so-called good-natured and benevolent priest of “ Jack Hinton ? ” What but a blight on the garden of God can be expected when an east-wind of the desert, such as Bulwer’s productions in the main are, comes over it at regular intervals. What is the sterling and permanent value of another class of writers, who, though free from the charge of wilfully “ removing landmarks,” yet are mere worldly moral men themselves, and present, when they bring up the subject at all, *radically defective views* of religion and of all that is necessary to form and guide the conscience and make meet for heaven ? If “ Jacob Faithful,” and “ Oliver Twist,” and “ Nicholas Nickleby,” possess the charm of sentiment ; if they are endeared because they are “ short and simple annals of the poor ; ” if they appeal to a different class of feelings in the breast of the reader, their writers having chosen “ soft pity’s muse ; ” if they have fearlessly laid open the abuses of the poor-house and boarding-school, and thus subserved the cause of philanthropy—’tis well in its place,—“ they have their reward,”—but it is not such as, nor all that the welfare of man, as an intelligent, accountable, depraved and immortal being, requires.

What is the amount of virtues depicted ? Submission, honesty, simplicity, fidelity—a Deist’s religion will recommend all these, however destitute it may be of “ sure testimony,” “ a perfect law,” of efficient help,

of constraining motive, of pardoned sin, and eternal hope. They suggest not a thought beyond what is available for the purposes of the life that now is, and what they present are only *somewhat purer specimens out of a corrupt mass*. What is their value, save to amuse the public and secure literary reputation and bread to their authors? Suppose all they say to be true, what doth it profit? Do they *cure* the evils they portray? Do they bring "healing waters over these miry places?" Wickedness is an "unblushing mask." You may fray away the vulture from one carcass, but he will light upon the next. You stay the act, but you leave the appetite. What are they all, I ask, *as correctives of wrong*? Will a *picture* of a conflagration, or the mere *detection* of an incendiary stay the progress of the flames? They resemble a representation in wax of a diseased part; we derive pleasure in contemplating it, and our admiration at the skill displayed overcomes our nausea at the offensiveness of the subject. To expect relief from this quarter is like expecting to be benefited under sickness or injury, by an artist skilfully depicting us to the life amid the pallor and languor of a sickbed, or falling under the club of an assailant. I allow them tact, genius, interest; but what are they to the great object we propose—the one thing needful, "Lord, heal my soul?" Their defects alone condemn them.

And what shall I say of another popular class of writings which consists of *tales, anecdotes, and sentimental poetry*? among whose writers we sometimes find the names of commissioned preachers of righteousness, which display command of language, beauty of imagery; and which exhibit their readers in a condition not unlike Anthony and Cleopatra, as they gently floated on the Nile, amid soft music and in a perfumed atmosphere, their sails silken and their zephyrs gentle; and which aid in whiling pleasantly away the weariness of the

hours as we almost imperceptibly accomplish the voyage of life—but which, so far as the value of the sentiment is concerned, is only embalming butterflies and wasting amber on preserving insects promiscuously caught, only for the sake of having a subject—"a lover's doleful ditty to his mistress' eye-brows."

And what of another class still, which, because of their pernicious bearings on social as well as moral order, are the more to be deprecated for their intellectual power; *a code of blasting, poisonous principles, embellished with all the graces of rhetoric and the skill of art*—"apples of Sodom" in pictures of silver; and moral volcanos, whose every heaving, in an additional number, is a new eruption of scorching, desolating lava; each one an *Ætna* amid a garden more precious than Sicily's? These light and noxious publications flood the land, and they constitute a swarm; like miasmatic exhalations their influence is deadly, and their amount almost darkens the light of day.

We cannot allow the force of one argument generally urged in defence of these writings, that they lay open *human nature* and teach a knowledge of the world. I deny that there is any true knowledge of man, his character, constitution, duties, hopes, but what comes from Him who made man, who searches the heart, and who has "shown us what is good." I deny that all the books in the world put together, on the subject of prudential maxims and disclosures of the workings of human nature, equal the one Book of Proverbs, a part of God's revelation. It would indeed be a pitiable view of the nature whose dignity and self-sufficiency are maintained so strenuously, that its advocates call the Gospel a libel, and repulse the Savior, if the views of it presented in those publications are to "end the matter." Their heroes are whited sepulchres, their virtues a mere mask for selfishness. "God is not in all their thoughts."

The sentiment of Young is pregnant with meaning, that "No man can underrate his merits, or overrate his nature." O! what a miracle to man is man! He speaks of "vast extremes" centring in us—of "different natures marvellously mixed." Pope caught a view of the same feature of his nature, when he calls man

"A being darkly wise and rudely great,  
"The glory, jest and riddle of the world."

'Tis here the value of the Gospel is seen and becomes endeared. It discloses his high original, his guilty fall, his gracious recovery; and all the phases his character presents may be explained by viewing them, either as the operations of an immortal spirit out of its element, and counteracting the design of a high, original destination, or that same spirit renewed, conscious, panting after God and struggling to rise from earth and shake off the weight and fetters that encumber his motions—the one class gaining "resolution from despair," the other "reinforcement from hope."

As to the corruption these writers would expose—is to know *that, a knowledge of human nature?* What is its amount? Mere morbid dissection, the exhibition of the offensiveness of disease and corruption from the crown of the head to the sole of the foot. And as the moral operator puts in his knife and lays open the putrid mass and turns it over and around, displaying at each motion additional loathsomeness, *is this man the living, accountable, intelligent agent?* Is this the extent of your knowledge and art, ye physicians of no value? Do you leave us here amid putrefaction and death? Must we go to the dissecting-room to learn the value, power and uses of this mortal frame in its true character and highest application? Supposing your views true, not only, (which they are in part,) but the whole truth,



(which we deny,) what do you propose? To govern the world by police, and let society move on indefinitely as a sickly person under the operation of a disease of which he must die at last, and in the meanwhile be harassed incessantly by the necessity of watching and attempts at baffling its slow yet certain advances. "Thou fool, will thy discovery of the cause suspend the effect, or heal it?"

This knowledge then can do nothing more, *on its own principles*, than make a man an expert fencer, and teach him how to take care of himself by understanding how to parry and thrust, to act on the aggressive and repel assault. Such knowledge fills the mind with suspicion; it depraves, for we are transformed into what we gaze upon and are conversant with continually. To deem me a villain is the way to provoke me to acts of villany.

Society, under this influence, would become like Spain amid their civil wars. Force and artifice are ever at work. Brigands and ruffians lie in wait at every step. There are secluded castles, and dark glens and mountain passes. We need a shield ever over our hearts and a weapon in our hand; to move by stealth and sleep upon a watch. Set features, intent looks and braced sinews will become characteristics, and all the bonds of brotherhood be severed like flax before the flame. Society would be dissolved, and though the forms of intercourse might of necessity be retained, all would be heartless as a courtier's smile. Man's nature, susceptible of and craving "some better thing," would only render him pre-eminent in misery, even as Dryden's king was known to be one by his peculiar air of discontent. If we were wise and true to our instincts we should look out for a way of escape from a world which would be a hell in spirit, and in every thing but the name. "Help, Lord, for the godly man ceaseth, for the faithful fail from among the children of men!"

What we need is something that will hold in check these tendencies, apply healing medicines, and restrain these passions; that will kindle anew the fire of love on these desecrated altars; pour light through the secrecies of action, and health through the "hidden parts" of the soul; that will clear up these thickets, expel the bat and the owl from these deserted palaces, and gladden them with the light of day, and consecrate them for a heavenly visitant that will cast up a highway for the people, and restore the dominion of order, and peace, and love. Where is your help? "I see him even now: I behold him nigh: there comes a Star out of Jacob, and a Sceptre rises out of Israel that shall smite the corners of Moab. And Edom shall be a possession. How goodly are thy tents, O Jacob, and thy tabernacles, O Israel. Blessed is he that blesseth thee, and cursed is he that curseth thee." "I will make the wilderness pools of water." "I will plant in the wilderness the cedar, the myrtle, and the oil tree together." "I will bring the blind by a way they know not of. I will lead them in paths they have not known." "O Zion, that bringest good tidings, get thee up into the high mountain: O Jerusalem, that bringest good tidings, lift up thy voice with strength; lift it up, be not afraid; say unto the cities of Judah, behold your God!" "How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him that bringeth good tidings, that publisheth peace; that bringeth good tidings of good things, that publisheth salvation; that saith unto Zion, thy God reigneth. Break forth into joy, sing together, ye waste places, for the Lord hath comforted Zion. He will build Jerusalem. He shall sprinkle many nations. Kings shall shut their mouths at him, for that which had not been told them shall they see, and that which they had not heard shall they consider." Numbers, 24: Isaiah, chapters 41, 42, 52, and 40: 9.

## II. THE MEANS AND MANNER OF MEETING THESE RESPONSIBILITIES.

1. The example of the apostle in the case before us is highly instructive and conclusive. It presents, 1. *personal consecration*—a distinct and direct reference to the design of his creation and commission. 2. The form that consecration assumed. "I showed—witnessed"—he held forth testimony—a light. 3. *The subject* of his testimony was the great, general, leading, peculiar truths and hopes of christianity, as the sum of the Old and New Testament Scriptures; "that Christ should suffer and rise from the dead." 4. *The extent* of this testimony—to *all classes*, "small and great," ministering, of necessity, adapted truth, and to *all nations*, both Jew and Gentiles. 5. He did it with laborious effort, painful endurance and great risk. God gave him "help," was his shield and strength in a peculiar manner and degree. 6. He displayed a spirit of untiring perseverance and unflinching boldness; notwithstanding all opposition, "I continue." And, 7. I may add that he was so intent upon his work that Festus for this, among other things connected with his ministry and hope, thought him "beside himself."

These points need not be dwelt upon. They present, however, *one great feature* in God's moral government, viz. that He *accomplishes his purposes by agencies*. The very battle wavered according as the hands of Moses rose or fell. If the rock is to pour out water, it must be smitten, though it be only by a rod. If the first-born of Egypt are to die, it must be by the angel's sword. If "Jacob is to arise when he is small," it must be "by" some one. The weakness of the instrumentality proves that "the excellency of the power is from God," and weak things "confound the mighty."

This, however, is not the place to establish a principle which is recognized so distinctly as the obligation

of a redeemed sinner to follow Christ in "doing good." And with all due deference for the spirit of reverence avowed for the sovereignty of God; with an explicit acknowledgment that the "times and seasons" are hidden in his own knowledge, and reserved for his own power; and with a deep sense of the nothingness of man, being but the "saw in the hand of him that shaketh it, and the axe in the hand of him that heweth therewith"—we cannot but deem it as inconsistent now to refuse methods and means of aid to the cause of Christ, involving, though they may, sacrifice, endurance, and resistance even unto blood, as it would have been, had those who ministered to Him in the days of his flesh, turned him away from their doors and denied him a supply for his wants, in the spirit and with the words of the tempter, who would have thrown him back on the *bare power of his Divinity*, when he said, "If thou be the Son of God, command that these stones be made bread." If no agency be admissible, why do they build churches and support a ministry for their own accommodation; and if these be, how can they consistently stop there? If we only provide for ourselves, "do not even the publicans the same?" "What do ye more than others?" What is it but the *Dagon of selfishness* sitting in dark enthronement in the temple of the God of the Covenant? To allow it, is to install an abomination that maketh desolate in the holy place.

*The form* which the believer's agency is to assume is the illustration, defence, and propagation of the truth of God in every variety of method—in the living characters of the life; by upholding the ministry and the ordinances of religion; by the diffusion of religious intelligence in the newspaper and periodical; by putting forth the preventive influence of the Sabbath-school and christian education; by sending the Bible where the bestowal of the whole volume at once would not be wasted; by

equipping and sustaining the missionary, the living teacher, wherever he can gain a hearing, or dare venture in person ; by the Tract, the smaller portion or more enlarged and specific treatise or volume on a select point ; pertinent, seasonable, plain, that can go where the living teacher cannot go, and can stay when he must depart ; and embodies and perpetuates the truths he uttered in fugitive words, and which *in its character as truth* is mighty, and is comprehended within the broad promise : " My word shall not return to me void."

*Our more particular and chosen instrumentality is this latter* ; and the object of my remaining remarks shall be to commend its claims to your understanding and hearts. If they should appear to be somewhat urgent and vindictory, " is there not a cause " in the fact that its importance seems to have been somewhat lost sight of, and that with increased demands, and opening and inviting fields of labor, there is a decreased supply of the sinews of action ?

*I would preface the discussion of this part of my subject* by one general remark, that although many of my arguments and illustrations refer to TRACTS, as they are technically and popularly denominated, viz. religious treatises in their smaller forms ; yet I do not design by any means to limit my plea to them. What I advocate is *Evangelical Truth in a permanent form and calculated for general circulation*. The argument in behalf of VOLUME CIRCULATION becomes, under given circumstances and the force of the principles adduced, *cumulative*—" the feeble as David and the house of David as an angel of God." That plain, slow-moving, colporteur's wagon, carrying from house to house the Gospel of the kingdom, in its spiritual associations is not unlike the cart on which the Ark of the Testimony was conveyed to the house of Obed-Edom, where it be

came a source of blessing and an occasion of joy ; before which even a king with a priest's ephod danced with all his might ; whose reproach he bound as a garland about his brow, and the only effect of which was to stimulate the purpose—if this was vileness, to become even "more vile." 2 Sam. 6.

1. TRACTS, in their essential character as *Divine truth*, are entitled to our regard, and warrant hope in their use. Let me ask on what rests our expectation of success in any form of attempt at "instruction in righteousness," from the mother with her child upon her lap, to the preacher conscious of his awful charge ; or the missionary believing that they "that dwell in the wilderness shall bow before Him?"

You will quote the promises and assurances : "The words that I speak are spirit and life." "The engrafted word which is able to save." "Of his own will begat he us with the word of truth." "He that goeth forth weeping, bearing precious seed, shall return with joy, bringing his sheaves with him." "The hand of the diligent maketh rich." Enough, grant it, grant it ; but why is not all this my encouragement as well as yours ? If you speak of the unpretending form of these instructions, so is the Bible a silent, unobtrusive volume, the work of many holy men, and gradually increased to its present size. So is every book powerless, and dumb, and inoperative till you consult it. So also the Author of all truth was deemed a root out of dry ground. So Paul was weak in bodily presence ; but we assuredly do not need to be reminded that the very filings of gold are precious ; that every single ray of light comes from the sun ; and that there is not a crumb that falls from our tables but it is the gift of God ; and that the quality of truth more than the amount is its recommendation.

It takes but a very *small portion of truth* to convert the soul, if it only receives application from above ;

and without this opening of the eyes to "behold wondrous things out of God's law," you would in vain concentrate the light of seven days upon one sightless eyeball. A single summons, consisting of only two words, "follow me," severed the connection between the heart of Matthew and his place at the money changers' table. One sentence brings Zaccheus joyfully down the tree to the feet of Christ. One declaration uttered in a breath sent away the woman that was a sinner, penitent and relieved, from the house of the Pharisee. The greatest results had a beginning. The arrow that does execution enters with a point. There is not a triumph you can claim for truth, in any form of dispensation, that cannot be claimed for this. "The blind receive their sight, the lame walk, the deaf hear." Our cause has sympathetic joy with the shepherd bearing homeward a recovered sheep. It exults in bearing its humble part in producing and sustaining the revival, where the Spirit of God moves mighty assemblies by a common impulse, as the trees of the forest are moved by the winds, coming down in answer to prayer and exhibiting his reviving influence in hearts in which the seed of his truth has been deposited.

Before this revelation came, systems of philosophy, falsely so called, were the only guides of men on moral subjects and eternal hopes, as a writer declares, "In this region and shadow of death the learned and illiterate sat for ages looking at each other in despair or scorn. From time to time some have started up after profound study and perambulated the valley, parading a new theory of mind, matter, or morals; and for a time the hopeless spectators forgot their misery in a discussion of the mystery, but they discussed only to discard."\* Of each one in succession it proved true, that their lights went out.

\* Philip's Manly Piety in its Principles.

Every thing but the Gospel, as a "guide to happiness on high," in the God it reveals, the view of man it furnishes, the great features of God's moral government it exhibits, and the foundation of hope it points out, is a *stupendous lie*—a lie, because Christ declares, "I am the light of the world." Stupendous in view of the solemnity of the subject, the boldness of the pretence, the character and permanence of the effect and the scale of its operations, and because involving the wreck of immortal hopes. "Error," said Hume, "can never produce the effect of truth;" and his and our Judge has said, "No lie is of the truth." *In truth is our hope*. Call then, if you please, our agency diminutive. Shall one of the younger members of the family and sisterhood of truth be proscribed or neglected because she is little? 'Tis a ray, at least, of the Day-spring from on high—would you arrest its progress, or attempt its extinguishment? Wherever a TRACT is conveyed, there is "set up a banner for the truth" in a deluded world. At our peril we either advance to take it down, or fail to improve its conquest or rally around and advance it.

2. These publications are commended by their character as *Catholic Truth*; and associated effort in regard to them is the *harbinger and means of promoting unity in views and harmony in action*. The kingdom of the Lord Jesus is the only true universal empire; and in its establishment alone this sublime conception (a phantom when projected or attempted by earthly monarchs) will be realized. "As yet we see not all things put under" Christ; but within his acknowledged dominions there are diversities of administration and action. Mere denominational differences maintained in the exercise of intelligent and conscientious preference, and in the spirit of love, are perhaps not quite so much to be deplored as some at first sight might imagine; while the spirit of sect, in its exclusive claims and into-



lerant action, stands rebuked by the sight this platform presents. The only "fire" here called down from heaven on each other is that influence of the "Holy One" (Isaiah, 10 : 17) which "consumeth the chaff" remaining in our christian character; which hath a "most vehement flame;" which sat in the form of cloven tongues on the disciples at Pentecost, and is our hope that all nations will yet speak in their own tongues the wonderful works of God. We receive each other in the person of Christ. We avow a common salvation. (Jude, 3.) We are one in Christ our Head—our bond is truth, our spirit, love.

Whatever tributes our remaining infirmities of feeling or defective views, or our ignorance how to combine practically our respective forms and opinions in one system, may receive in our maintained peculiarities within our respective sanctuaries and denominational lines, we are not content without a united tribute also to the doctrine of a unity of faith and of a holy Catholic Church, and an *implied protest* against the inferences these fruits of our remaining infirmities might seem to warrant. The Tract Society exhibit this more prominently than the Bible Society, for we do not here, as there, merely receive revelation *en masse*, without note or comment, but we agree on the question what are its distinguishing features, its saving and essential truths; and we make, in the very spirit and form of our organization, a much nearer approximation to seeing "eye to eye."

We act also without the risk of collision attending united missionary operations. Where men, as is there necessarily the case, are agents with discretionary and somewhat undefined powers, they will always leave the imprint of their mental biases on their work. The noise of axes and hammers, and sometimes the strife of tongues is heard in the erection of the temple, and of ten the scaffolding enlists more interest than the pile

But the Tract league is a perfectly defined one, offensive and defensive. The types we employ are mutes till we bid them speak, and they can speak nothing but what we all agree they shall utter. Our publications are truths also in such form as generalizes the views and liberalizes the feelings.

The whole field appears like land to the mariner yet far off at sea, though in sight. He sees not the fences, hedges and lines which indicate individual proprietorship; but what he does see is the place of his friends, his country, his home. From this position we catch the broad and distinctive features of christianity, in contrast with every other hope ever brought in, such as they appear to be and are necessarily set forth by the missionary, who, from the sickening scenes that surround him, turns to rest his eye upon the spot where God "commands the blessing," and his "tabernacle is with men." All who may warrantably hope to meet in heaven, may and should meet somewhere on earth; and here is one unexceptionable place and work. A strong conviction of common danger, an oppressive sense of obligation, will stir up and reveal the hitherto deep-laid, hidden and dormant elements of character; the features of the soul will strike through, and the lines be strengthened by action, even as patriots may differ about politics at home, but are found side by side, and shoulder to shoulder to repel invasion and meet the enemy on the shore, because they both love their country. "There," said an officer who had received a challenge to the man who gave it, when the alarm-gun was fired and the drum beat to arms, "*there is the foe*, let us give proof in the conflict at hand who is the bravest man." In the pause here created amid the clashing interests, and sentiments, and jarring movements of the religious world, how appropriate and sweet the words of Adam to Eve, as portrayed by the most sublime of uninspired poets:

“ But rise, let us no more contend, nor blame  
“ Each other, blained enough elsewhere, but strive  
“ In offices of love, how we may lighten  
“ Each other’s burden in our share of wo.”

I love the Tract cause, because, without sacrificing one distinctive principle, it is the truth, “ the truth in Jesus,” without the encumbering influence of a given form, or the repelling aspect of one we do not prefer. Who can tell, of the numerous hands, hearts and heads that wrote the contents of these volumes, what was their name, save disciples of Christ? The conflict they create is between the conscience of the reader and the power of truth, and this is the effect they aimed at. They operate with the vigorous and pervading power of a process, and not the superficiality and attractions of a mere mode. What they effect, they effect noiselessly, yet before their penetrating, melting, refining influence the power of iniquity is broken and disappears as the bands of winter are dissolved before the breath of spring, and here is the “ hiding of their power.”

As in the case of feudal tenures before the march of order, and light, and truth, the weaker became merged in the more powerful; as the independence of the barons gradually yielded and the lines of demarcation claimed by them faded away, until at length *central imperial power* swayed its sceptre over the whole territory, combined all these separate interests in one, and blended the whole mass of population under one law, name and jurisdiction; even so the cautious, conservative spirit of denominational attachment, necessary and honorable under existing circumstances, will gradually yield to the confiding spirit and enlarged measure of christian love; the whole mass of spiritual material will be melted down under the assimilating and blending influence of the experience and love of the truth, until the promise shall be fulfilled: the Lord shall be King over all the earth. “ In that day there shall

be one Lord, and his name one." And of this, though we have not yet the sum, *we have the pledge and its first fruits*, for in this blessed work of doing good and communicating we are all made "to drink in one spirit."

3. I love the Tract, because while it is Catholic essential truth, a light kindled at the altar of God, it is *characteristic in its form*.

It is *cheap*—the widow's mite can purchase it and aid its distribution, and the very miser hardly dare refuse to dispense what is, as nearly as possible, of all the works of men's hands, as free as God's gift of vital air and rejoicing light. It is portable, and like a good conscience, is a pleasant companion, a continual remembrancer, and is easily carried.

It is *seasonable and adapted truth*. A Tract Volume is a quiver full of arrows, and we may select such a one as we need. The Bible is the storehouse, or rather the exhaustless mine; here are portions prepared for our use, and we may lay our hand at once on what we may judge available. It is not the quiver and its contents bodily discharged that we employ in execution; but the single, selected, well-aimed arrow. Such arrows, shaped and suited for every variety of occasion by masters of assemblies, the Tract Society places within our reach, labelled and with directions. Their publications combine a peculiar adaptation to the conviction of both the philosophic and common mind. Philosophy would be ashamed to reject induction, and nothing strikes the ordinary intellect like a fact.

It has doubtless been observed how largely they consist of *great principles applied and illustrated by actual occurrences*; how much narrative and incident are found in them, while it is a fixed and avowed rule to exclude every thing fictitious and unauthenticated. Now what is the reason that the great majority of christians read the Gospels and historical parts of the Scriptures

most? Why, when we circulate pure revelation, do we begin with portions from them for the heathen, but because they exhibit truth applied to character and circumstances, pertinent and convincing, and perceived in its value and bearings by one who knew what was in man, and who detected, warned, convinced or comforted, as the case might require. It is this character of incident, a crowded stage, busy action and stirring scenes, that give interest to the novel and romance.

While the pulpit is pre-eminently the place for holding forth the word of life, the Tract is the appropriate means of gathering up and improving much that would otherwise be lost; and is supplemental, in an inferior and warrantable sense, to the Gospel. We follow the Gospel in its course through the world, as the first disciples did its Divine Author. We hear its lessons, observe its influence, and record, in familiar forms, scenes and occurrences that arise from it. What is *written* of the words and actions of the Savior is but a small part of what he *said* and *did*. We have a specimen of one of his till then omitted sayings incidentally named by Paul, that "it is more blessed to give than to receive." And I see not why revivals now may not be recorded and rejoiced over as well as when the disciples said in holy gratulation, "Then hath God also to the Gentiles granted repentance unto life," and were interested and took action when they heard "that Samaria had received the word of God." I cannot see why striking, hopeful and undeniable conversions now, may not call up adoring wonder as well as when Saul of Tarsus breathed no longer in threatenings but in prayer. I need hardly say that we, of course, disclaim for these records the authority or rank of revelation; but are they not the Lord's doings, and should they not be marvellous in our eyes? Are they not in keeping with what he did while yet with us? Do they not illustrate his

promises and furnish "infallible proof" that Jesus is yet alive? And may not objectors be met with the reply of Peter on the day of Pentecost, to those who said these men are full of new wine, that this is what God has promised: "I will pour out my Spirit on all flesh?"

To be consistent in rejecting what is so peculiarly the business, the charm, and the efficacy of the Tract, viz. to gather facts, and illustrate and apply principles, we must cast aside the lessons of our own personal experience; but can we do so and be innocent? What is important *to me as truth*, is also important *to others*. What is true in my experience, and may warrantably influence, does not become false or unimportant because it is printed and circulated. Are we not obligated to cry, "Come and hear, all ye that fear God, and I will declare what he has done for my soul," and to "magnify his works which men behold?"

4. These publications seem to be essential to *complete the assortment* of the desirable instrumentalities of righteousness. We need the "whole armor of God." The breastplate, however important, without the helmet would leave us sorely exposed; and the shield without the sword might secure personal safety, but we should not be able to put forth aggressive action. Apply the illustration. We are not warranted, because our dependence is on the excellency of God's power, merely to stand still and wait for his salvation.

We have, confessedly from God, the Bible, "mighty through God," its pathway through the empire of darkness traceable by the desolation of its strongholds. *Who* executed the first writing on earth? What was written, and *for what purposes?* In the fact that God *wrote* his law and laid it up for reference by his people, and that in it we have something palpable addressed to human eyes and put in human hands, we have what at once destroys the foundation of those who would fain dissuade

from action because of the impiety and presumption involved in the idea of being "co-workers with God."

But is this, the bestowal of a revelation, *the only agency* permitted, required, necessary? The paper and ink of the Bible, like the material parts of all other books, is of the earth, earthy. That volume, though it has cherubim shading it with their wings, and bending over it in study of its mysteries, has not the wings of the cherubim appended, by means of which it may fly instinct with life and love to the relief of the dwellers in dark places. The "gates of hell" would never multiply it or give it circulation; but would rather see, as was once the case, a solitary copy for an entire region of earth and that chained fast in some dark cloister, than the tons weight of it which strain the timbers of your depositories, and are ready for diffusion. No. Man has an agency, "holding forth the word of life."

But is *this* all? Is the circulation of that blessed volume the "whole duty of man?" Who sent Aaron to Pharaoh to enforce his command by Moses? Who placed Ezra in his pulpit of wood? Who said to the prophet, "Run, speak?" Who asks, "Whom shall we send, and who will go for us?" Who told the disciples I send you forth, "as my Father hath sent me, even so send I you?" The angel flying through the midst of heaven having the everlasting Gospel to preach, is but the august symbol of men proclaiming to the astonished nations, "Behold your God!"

While Christ then has settled the *Constitution* of his church—by-laws and incidental forms and instrumentalities are all committed to our judgment, zeal and love. For want of this obvious distinction many are sorely distressed at the sin of Sabbath-schools and other forms of benevolent action, because they do not find a regularly drawn constitution in the Bible. They might as reasonably have refused aid to the man who fell among

thieves, because the prescription of *the surgery and the very salve* the case required are not presented in the law of love. The disciple of Jesus, the "new man," has a head and heart and two hands, and they are all "the Lord's." These are his furniture for good words and works; and in this wretched world he need not take two steps before he can find occasion and a place to begin. What I contend for, then, is not only *warrant* but THE OBLIGATION of providing what may seem to be desirable and important auxiliaries in carrying out the duties of our stewardship.

From the question of *principle* I now come to the question of *fact*: *Is the Tract cause such an agency?* Amid the neglect of the Bible and the utter thoughtlessness of men, the Tract fluttering in mid heaven and crossing the field of vision, a flying roll, though inscribed with mercy as well as wo, catches attention; *the subject at least comes up*; and if one reads, with Balaam when the angel met him—he will find his path *somehow* obstructed, and he cannot get on without an awakened sense of guilt and humbling confession. With catechisms and other formularies, it contains elementary truths, outlines, specimens; and in its relation to the great system, it stands like an inviting gateway to the field of promise and eternal hope.

It *aids* attention as well as arrests it, and fixes impressions. Foster has exhibited, in a striking point of view, the strange and affecting waywardness of the heart of man in the fact, that when the preacher "comes in the name of God," rehearses his law, and arraigns his audience, great and small, before the "great white throne," and in ideal presence places them there,—the sound of a retiring footstep, the slamming of a pew-door, or the fall of a hat from a peg, can arrest and divert attention, and interrupt if not break the spell which truth has momentarily thrown over their minds. By means of the



Tract, the minister, in retiring from the inquiry meeting or the sick room, may thus leave his memorial behind him. His words indeed have vanished into thin air; but here is their substance, and while held before or applied to the heart and conscience, the impression becomes transferred. The missionary also utters a few plain truths and then leaves the child of darkness to hold converse with the "talking leaf," and he thus stations an unbribeable guard, a stern sentinel, wherever he can get a foothold or a hearing. It is a grappling-iron by means of which we retain a control over those with whom we come in contact, and to go forth without it is to go to a field of conflict without an important weapon to wield when we get there. Who feels above confessing the aid derived from such pointed, coherent, impressive exhibitions of Gospel truth as they contain?

Besides, we have hereby a hold on men by *the power of association*. If we simply deliver a message, our words are only breath, and if one hears respectfully, though "he does them not," there is nothing that rouses a sense of guilt; and men will excuse themselves for rejecting the message by reflecting on at least their patient and passive reception of the messenger. But the very act of *thrusting aside* a Tract is an outward startling *putting away* of the word of truth, and stands in an obvious and appalling relation to an "evil heart of unbelief," and a man's confirmed, public, formal rejection by Christ. If the Tract is received, and he feels resentful, it would be poor satisfaction to vent his rage on an inanimate and harmless piece of paper; and whether he neglect or destroy it, he must offer violence to his conscience, and have a struggle on the occasion. If perused, when our words of warning no longer sound in the ear they are heard in disturbing echoes from the Tract; and we leave him alone, his conscience and the truth

confronted. Nay, the very capitals in a Tract, ETERNITY, have been known to catch the eye of a lover of pleasure, and convey the word, with its overwhelming solemnities, to the soul. With the impious king who saw a handwriting on the wall, she trembled, her sin was continually before her, nor did her anxieties cease till she found peace in believing, and could say, "My soul doth magnify the Lord and my spirit rejoiceth in God my Savior," and she exchanged her trembling on the verge of eternal wo for the character of "heir of eternal life, which God, who cannot lie," hath promised in Christ Jesus.

5. We claim regard to these publications, because of their *varied character, direct bearing, and powerful and attractive* exhibition of Gospel truth. Did I propose to disturb the ease of a careless sinner, I would put into his hand "The Barren Fig-tree." Was he to reform in a few particulars, and ask, "What lack I yet?" I would bring forth the balance of the sanctuary, and show him "The Moral Man Tried," and convince him that "Every Man is the Friend or Enemy of Christ." Should he be startled, I would hold him to his position by pressing on him the "Worth of the Soul" and the horrors of "Heaven Lost." Should refuge fail him, and should he cry out in despair, I would answer the "Great Question," and hold before him the "Cross of Christ," and bid him "Come, and Welcome." Should he be discouraged by the day of small things in his soul, I would instruct him in the "Progress of Grace," and the nature of "Walking by Faith." When drooping through sorrow, I would give him "'Tis all for the best," and relight the fires of his languid eye by hope in the Lord. Had he a family, "Advice to a Married Couple," "Christian Education" and "Family Worship" should be my chosen "words in season." Did gray hairs appear upon him here and there, and strangers devour his strength,

I would warn him of the danger of the "Decay of Spiritual Affections," and "The Sin and Danger of neglecting the Savior." I would relieve that sinking of spirit which ensues when the enemy comes in like a flood, by the stirring exhibition of the "Church Safe;" and rouse the fearful soul that tires, and faints, and walks the ways of God no more, by showing him "A Forty Years' Prayer-meeting." The path of the young should have waymarks, in the exposures here made of Debauchery, Intemperance and Gambling, surmounted by the inscription, "My son, if sinners entice thee, consent thou not." I would also explode in their view, with more than electro-magnetic power, the "Objections of the Infidel" by the Tract that bears that name. I would rebuke the worldling and cheer the saint by inviting them respectively to take their station with me at the bedside of Payson in the "Land of Beulah," and showing them the consistent keeping between the life and death of the righteous. Yes, to help me both "Keep my Heart" and "Teach my hands to war," next to the Bible, ever foremost *give me the Tract Volumes*. He has missed much who has not visited this garden of plants from "Paradise Regained," in the midst of which, diffusing savor and giving character to all around, stands the Tree of Life, its fruit varied and monthly, and its leaves for the healing of the nations. And he has reason to question the soundness of his spiritual health who does not relish it and rove through it "with ever new delight."

Talk of your Annuals and holiday presents! The price of one of them will purchase a dozen or a score of these publications, whose is the rare property of value *in the contents* and not the form, and on every one of which may be written: "The testimony of the Lord is sure, making wise the simple. More to be desired are they than gold, yea, than much fine gold, sweeter also than honey and the honey-comb."

But these publications are not, as many erroneously suppose, calculated only for the young, the devout, the afflicted, or the simply well meaning. We fear not to put them forth for premiums at the *literary* fair, and to recommend them as not to be disdained even by lips "wet with Castalian dews." Can you on any subject show a clearer piece of tracery than the outline of the way from hell's dark door to a throne of light in "James' Anxious Inquirer?" Had earth ever a more rapt spirit than Baxter? or one whose writings do more to fill the whole scene with light, and in the perusal of which heaven more readily "comes down our souls to greet?" Can you produce more exquisite and touching simplicity than is presented in the "Dairyman's Daughter," whose author paints the scene in a believer's death-chamber with a pencil dipped in the varied and blended colors of the Rainbow of the covenant? And what need I say in recommendation of Bunyan,

"Ingenious dreamer! in whose well-told tale  
"Sweet fiction and sweet truth alike prevail—"

whose Pilgrim's Progress even England's Poet Laureate pronounced a literary wonder, and exalted himself by editing. Can mortal hand rend the veil away from the face of infidelity more effectually than Keith has done, who in his work on prophecy, amid the ruins of empires, awakes a voice and renders legible the inscription, "Verily there is a God that judgeth in the earth." Have you read the "Village Funeral?" Then you have beheld (in its own touching language) the whole scenery of death glittering in the light of immortality. Can the Universalist *say* otherwise, on a candid perusal of the Tracts that expose his cause, than this: I have a lie in my right hand, and my hope is like the giving up of the ghost? Can the lovers of the dance *feel* otherwise than that they make themselves vile? If you wish to see the Rock of Ages, "the only Refuge," invitingly set

forth with the clouds about its base and the sunshine on its head, read "the General's Widow." And there too are the productions of that master mind, whose gigantic dimensions and mighty action none can contemplate without the homage of reverence approaching awe; that could stoop and could soar, and proved its possessor a "son of thunder" and "of consolation," as its power is put forth in the "Contrast of the Death of Hume and Finley," and "Conversation with a Young Traveller." Only master the facts and principles there set forth, and you will have ever at hand an effectual quietus to that part of shortsighted and shallow, yet babbling and plausible infidel philosophy, and may say respecting it, as Moses respecting the Egyptians, "Ye shall see them no more." But time would fail me to pursue the analysis. Cast your eye along the whole array of this armory, which, though thus replete, is but just begun. The place is Mahanaim, and these are God's hosts. Genesis, 32: 2.

6. The last plea we urge is the *providential character and the results of this mighty and blessed agency*. It is an important maxim, "God is in history."\* There is an unseen yet almighty hand behind the scenes of Providence, that brings them forward, adjusts, removes them, and carries on, towards its finished stage, the work of Redemption, by means of providential arrangements and events which he has linked in with it, and caused to be subservient to it. In the birth of Moses and Samson God *raised up deliverers*, and did not merely employ what was somehow, but not by him, adapted to the emergency and ready to his hand. God turned the scale of battles which made Rome the mistress of the world. He gave fury to the war-horse, and strength and aim to the warrior's arm, and preserved the spear and sword

\* See the magnificent preface to D'Aubigné's History of the Reformation.

and shield unbroken, because he was preparing, by the hushing and subjugation of the nations, a fulness of time and a mighty stage for introducing into the world the Prince of Peace. In the subserviency of steam and other physical agents to moral uses we see "the finger of God" as clearly as in the qualification of Bezaleel, by the spirit of wisdom and understanding, to "devise cunning works" in gold, and silver, and brass, and in cutting of stones and carving of timber, and all manner of workmanship for the construction of the tabernacle, and the ark of testimony, and the altar of burnt-offering. Exodus, 31: 2, 11. We cannot, therefore, regard the *invention of Printing*, rapidly perfecting as the Reformation arose, otherwise than as a chosen part of *God's instrumentality*.

I have already alluded to the divine origin of *recording* truth and law. As a substitute for writing, and as a means of perpetuating acts and sentiments, we see nations renowned for arts resorting to the clumsy hieroglyphic, or rearing the costly monument for a single event. It will aid our estimate of the value of this agency to inquire how the Church, when she was struggling for restoration from her captivity in modern Babylon, could possibly have dispensed with it, and to observe what advantages she would have lost had not this help been at hand. The pen and the press are simply means of conveying and perpetuating knowledge. They are to a cause what wings are to a bird and feet to a man, *the means of locomotion*. They are a substitute for personal presence and instruction; and nothing can be said in commendation of their *general power* which does not equally commend them in application to our cause, and so much the more entitle them to your liberal support, as our object is the pre-eminently important one to witness, to both small and great, words whereby they may be saved. The apostle, who had no rest in his spirit day

or night, and but little in his person, went where he could: where he could not go, or where he had been and could not go again, he *wrote*. The hand that penned the epistles to the Philippians and Timothy was encumbered with a chain, and he makes a distinction between restraint laid on the preacher, and the continued extension of truth: "the word of God is not bound."

On the invention of printing, the Classics were brought forth from the retirement of libraries, were illustrated and circulated. A new zeal for learning was thus enkindled. The public mind became roused and excited to quickened action, and was thus qualified to "hear and inwardly digest" the weighty discussions at hand. Speaking of Luther's theses, the historian says: "The Head of the Church, who sits in the heavens, and to whom all power is given, had himself prepared the soil and committed the seed to the hand of his servant. He gave wings to these seeds of truth, and scattered them in a moment over the whole field of the Church." Do you ask how? "The Reformer had hardly nailed them to the doors of the church of the castle of Wittemberg, when the feeble taps of his hammer are succeeded by a thunder-clap which shook the very foundations of proud Rome." It was the sound of the going of THE PRESS—"for they spread with the rapidity of lightning. In a fortnight they spread over Saxony—in a month they had run through all christendom, as if angels had been their bearers instead of men."\*

Luther published several popular Tracts and Sermons—on the Ten Commandments, Explanation of the Lord's Prayer, &c. The Beast felt the goadings of the spear, and Tetzal very naturally disapproved of "scribbling so many Books and Tracts." The Reformer's voice was heard beyond the confines of Germany, and in many regions they were the morning star that ushered in the

\* D'Aubigné, vol. 1, page 248.

auspicious day of Gospel light.\* The Colporteurs lighted up the fires of the Reformation in the very cottages of the peasants. Three presses were at work on the New Testament alone, striking off ten thousand sheets per day. In a few years *seventeen editions* proceeded from the press at Wittenberg alone. Of Melancthon's *Loci Communes*, in about seventy years there were sixty-seven editions. Luther, alone, wrote about 183 Tracts, short treatises, such as the "times required," each one a nail fastened in a sure place by a master's hand. In France, Le Fèvre employed the same agency, and in 1524, 318 years ago, there existed at Basle, having France for its field of operation, a Bible Society, an association of Colporteurs, and a religious Tract Society.

These efforts do not date therefore from our age; they go far back and are a tried instrumentality. They gave the Reformers a sort of ubiquity, and proved like the rod of Moses to God's Israel. It was lifted by direction received from the cloudy pillar and tabernacle, and when lifted led their march. As these sparks fell in showers over the nations, prohibitory decrees were issued, and the powers of darkness strove to put them out; but each one proved to be fire from heaven, and became a separate centre of light and heat, until at length, extending and blending, the glory of the Lord filled the land, and the people no longer stumbled on in their darkness, but rejoiced among the "nations of the saved."

It is but turning over the same principle in illustration to tell how Baxter and Flavel in troublous times, and Bunyan from Bedford jail, wielded the pen when they could not officiate in person, and that too with a spirit and power which told upon the kingdom of darkness. Nor should the fruits of Tract operations in this

\* D'Aubigné, vol. 2, pp. 21, 22.



city by missionaries and distributors be overlooked. These former have long and effectively pursued their self-denying labors in this department on means barely sufficient to keep vitality in the silver cord; and none but those who will stop and examine, can estimate the value of their work. The Tract House furnishes a more effective and desirable police than the City Hall. The records of the Association I speak of, tell not of committals to the penitentiary, but introduction to the prayer-meeting and sanctuary. Their proposed remedy for vagrancy is to bring back the wanderer to the Shepherd and Bishop of souls. They thunder not at the door of offenders with the authority of "the judge or the officer," but in meekness they instruct those who oppose. In the name of Jesus of Nazareth they visit the abodes of wretchedness and guilt, to seek and save; and the guilty inmates need not run to hide themselves, for they bring salvation on their tongues, and words of peace reveal. They care for those whom others care not for but hunt after. They seek out the cause they know not. Their weapons are prayer, and truth, and love, and every month you hear some say: Rejoice with us, for we have found the sheep that was lost. God is not unmindful, and will not forget your work of faith and labor of love. The church blesses you in the name of the Lord. We offer you our congratulations and breathe upon you our prayers as you pass in review. You have witnesses on earth and a record on high.

We have testimony also to the efficacy of this form of instrumentality *in the history of darkness* as well as light. Of Tracts, Books, Encyclopedias, there are other than religious ones. Poison instead of health was infused into the fountain of knowledge by the French philosophers. The press laid the train whose explosion shook down the throne of France, prepared the grave of myriads, deranged and convulsed the civilized world,

and has opened, on the very spot where the anti-christian conspiracy was carried on, a volcano whose portentous heavings even now constrain us with the prophet to exclaim, "Wo is me! my soul is weary because of murderers, and my sighs are many and my heart is faint."

THE PRESS—it is adapted to do wonders—it can do wonders—it has done wonders. With its power of multiplication, it is a moral and intellectual repeating rifle—one can chase a thousand as easily as a material one can defend an individual against the assaults of a gang. All we ask is, *allow us the instrumentality and do not cripple us in its use—hand on the truth and furnish us the means of discharging it*, and, with God's blessing, we fear not for the issue.

Although the two causes which stand opposed employ the same methods of warfare, we have hope that we shall prevail, because *wickedness is selfish*, and has no heart and feels no bands. To the extent of personal interest, or under temporary impulses, it may do much and act vigorously; yet it will not sustain apostles, nor institute missions, nor inspire martyrdom. Righteousness, on the other hand, is liberal, principled, has hope, contends for all, is incorruptible, and sustains this and all needed additional instrumentalities. Wickedness is false. Ours is the cause of truth. We speak to the conscience, whereas till men reach a certain point in iniquity, they find it hard to kick against the pricks—a traitor always fights faintly. Wickedness has the assurance of going into perdition, but with us is "the mighty God." If the Tract be not an original sun, a light-bearer "in the beginning," it may at least perform the office of the Star of Bethlehem, which was a creation for a particular occasion, and yielded a light so peculiar that it attracted notice and fixed the gaze and gently drew on even *magi*, until it paused over the per-

son of Immanuel, and having performed its office in bringing them there, it disappeared and left them to wonder and adore.

Having thus exhibited the ground on which we rest our claim on your attention and liberality, allow me, in the conclusion of this discourse, to urge the importance of putting forth NEW VIGOR IN THIS DEPARTMENT OF CHRISTIAN BENEVOLENCE.

*First*, then, I ask what shall be the effect of this combined review of facts, and principles, and circumstances? We have caught a view of the genius and influence of the Gospel of the ever-blessed God. We have traced the course of evangelical literature, like the Nile through the sands of Egypt, by its fertility, and have read its history in the light of His smiles. He who has the key of the house of David has set before us an open door. We have looked upon the slain and wounded and exposed, and *now what is our decision?* Have we felt compassion rise, or shall we pass by on the other side? May we not hope for something allied to what ensued in Israel, when Hilkiah the priest brought to Josiah the book of the long-lost and neglected law; a book, a record, a rule in permanent form, that had not degenerated, though the priests handled not the law, though the princes had become vain and their judges were like evening wolves—when light flashed, and a sense of obligation startled, and conviction was felt, and confession was made, and reform ensued, and idols tottered and fell. I know not how to estimate the comparative value of the talents entrusted to us, but among the most precious is personal influence and wealth, and their burial and abuse are among the heaviest items in our account—what we have omitted to do when it was in the power of our hand to do it—"ye gave me no meat—ye gave me no drink—ye took me not in." To

be consistent, we must either abandon or maintain the cause—are you prepared for a decision? Would any here dare to loosen the first stone as the commencement of a process of dismantling? Would you not fear the fate of him, who, though a king, had the arm withered which he dared to put forth with unhallowed design toward the altar? And if mistaken zeal in supporting the ark when it trembled and was in appearance nigh to falling, met with death, of how much sorer punishment shall he be thought worthy who would touch it with a view to its arrest. If, like the younger son, you have said, I will not, like him, repent and go—and having said, I go, sir, beware of drawing back.

Call, if you please, our cause a little one—recollect we do not allow this to be its character, we protest against the thought—*yet if you will call it so*, then hear me when I ask, *Whose cause is it?* and ponder what he saith, “He that is unfaithful in the least, is unfaithful also in much.” When you came to Christ you made no reserve in or selection of duty. Your inquiry was, “Lord, *what wilt thou have me to do?*” Any thing but indifference. Give, though it be the widow’s mite, but pronounce on us also your blessing, *only let both come from the heart.*

Call, if you please, my argument weak—but honor the cause as mighty. We only claim proportionate regard, and this recently it has not been our privilege to receive. We are one of a family of interests. We dare not indulge or express, neither do we ask a preference. We cannot say which one we would relinquish, more than a father could say which, out of a numerous and even cumbersome family, he would be willing to spare for conscription or death. Be it Joseph, or Simeon, or Benjamin, *if evil befall*, it will wring a father’s heart. The Savior is not here in person. The only opportunity of thus glorifying him is during our stay on earth, and

though you may call this the least of all methods—call us dogs—yet the dogs eat the crumbs that fall from their Master's table. And there is an encouraging assurance to help it forward even on your own principles and views: "Inasmuch as ye have done it unto the least of one of these, ye have done it unto me."

Come, brethren, let us be candid and come to the light. Cold hearts and carnal affections lie back of all our excuses and reluctance. Come, let us catch the glow of the sentiment, "I am not my own, I am bought with a price. No man liveth to himself, and no man dieth to himself; for whether we live, we live to the Lord, and whether we die, we die unto the Lord; so that whether we live or die, we are the Lord's." Nay more, let us not limit our efforts by the prospect of dying, but catch the spirit of Peter, who endeavored to stir up pure minds and perpetuate the remembrance of truth beyond the time of his own decease; and of Payson, who believing that Christ might be magnified by the extension of his testimony, directed that there should be a paper pinned on the bosom of his very shroud, reminding all who came to take a last look, of the "words he had spoken being yet present with them," and who thus preached from his coffin, and spoke, though dead.

I shrink within myself at the thought of the place I occupy on the present occasion. I would stir you to ennobling and appropriate action by reminding each one of the honor of belonging to a council of deliberation such as this—not like Napoleon's staff, haggard and aghast, consulting, amid the frowning horrors of the Kremlin, by the glare of conflagration lighting up the darkness of the surrounding scenery, how they might safely retreat—not like them on the field of Borodino or Waterloo, where amid the flash and roar of artillery and rolling clouds of smoke, dense columns might be seen rapidly moving to support a flagging line in the

fiendlike work of mutual destruction—but with pity in heart and hope in the promises, we have come together to devise liberal things, to arrange a decisive movement in behalf of a kingdom of righteousness, peace and joy; to spread, as Hezekiah did, the letter of the king of a warring host before the Lord; and with the disciples, when gathered with “their own company,” to lift our voice to God with one accord and say, “Lord, thou art God, which hast made heaven and earth, and the sea, and all that in them is; who by the mouth of thy servant David hast said, Why did the heathen rage, and the people imagine vain things? The kings of the earth stood up, and the rulers were gathered together against the Lord, and against his Christ. And now, Lord, behold their threatenings; and grant to thy servants that with all boldness they may speak thy word.” Acts, 4.

*Secondly.* Let us take encouragement from *the certainty of the issue*. Christ “must reign.” “Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever.” Our agency is directly in the line of the revealed purposes of God, and as naturally bears on this result as the sowing of seed on the luxuriance of the harvest. “Truth *shall* spring out of the earth, and righteousness look down from heaven.” God will not make void his covenant, nor profane the crown of Immanuel by casting it down to the ground. The efforts of earth and hell against the church shall no more avail for her destruction, than the weight of the shadow of a passing cloud can shatter a pyramid. The agency by which God will effect this is as undeniable as the end is sure and will be glorious. “Thou art, O Israel, my servant, by whom I will be glorified. Is it a light thing that thou shouldst be my servant to raise up the tribes of Jacob and to restore the preserved of Israel? I will also give thee for a light to the Gentiles, that thou mayest be my salvation to the ends of the earth.” “These are they that war with the Lamb, but the

Lamb shall overcome ; because he is King of kings, and Lord of lords ; and his people are called, and chosen, and faithful.”

To us first has God given the injunction and opportunity. He has not come to us because he is at a loss for instrumentality. If even a Moses die, Joshua stands prepared to introduce to Canaan ; and if Judas becomes a traitor, a Matthias is at hand to take his bishopric and perform the work of an apostle. The emergency I have attempted to delineate happens in our day. Our personal interest and the welfare of Zion are deeply involved. We feel a sense of obligation, and incitements and suggestions, which being interpreted are the whispers of the Spirit to our hearts. I would make to you the emphatic and thrilling appeal of Mordecai to Esther, when she hesitated to go in to the king, though the decree of destruction was signed, and Haman waited impatiently and confidently to hear the burst of wailing that would proceed from a whole nation doomed and dying, “Think not with thyself that *thou shalt escape* in the king’s house, more than all the Jews. For if thou altogether holdest thy peace at this time, then shall there enlargement and deliverance *arise from another place* ; but thou and thy father’s house shall be destroyed, and who knoweth whether thou art come to the kingdom for such a time as this.”

*Thirdly.* A powerful and constraining consideration is, that our benevolence reacts on ourselves in our dearest *earthly* as well as spiritual and eternal interests ; and that in promoting the cause of Christ in this form, *we are performing an act of self-preservation*. There are few of the numerous travellers who swarm our land, who understand the mechanism by which they are carried forward, or who are aware that danger impends, until it is upon them, and they find themselves disabled and amid a wreck. It is with nations as with

individuals: God girds them though they have not known him. We know not the spring of our blessings; and but few undertake in public affairs, deliberately and dispassionately to trace effects to their causes, or are willing to apply a correcting hand.

Ours is a government, not of force, but of law. Laws (it is a trite remark) are but the index and reflection of public sentiment. The jars and commotions we see and feel, show that there is something out of place: *that something is the public conscience*. Wisdom and knowledge are the only sources of stable times—the fear of the Lord is our treasure. The collisions of truth and error in our day are not mere “strivings after masteries;” they are a struggle for life. There has been an onset studiously made—what you witness is the reaction of healthful and conservative influences.

Demagogueism is *our* curse, as it has proved the blight of all republics. The *materiel* it wields, and by which it hopes to triumph, is what we strive to purify, and enlighten, and elevate: viz. *the common mind*. There are men in every land, and there are men in this, who would build their greatness even on their country's ruin, who would dig the grave of this republic, if they could but obtain the elevation afforded by its mound. We have reached that appalling stage of corruption in which we see “dwarfish virtues and gigantic crimes and occasional eruptions of anarchy and crime.”

The mere sentimentalities of religion, however touching and true, are not sufficient to counteract the pressure of evil we sustain: such as the deceitfulness of riches; the emptiness of grandeur; the vanity of the world—Leviathan is not so tamed. We need to carry applied truth to the bench, the bar, the jury-room, the ballot-box, the conclave of the politician, the hall of the legislator, the counter of the merchant, and the shop of the mechanic. The ministry need a double portion of



the spirit that rested on Elias to speak intelligently and fearlessly "the testimonies of God before kings." If the people are incorruptible their representatives must be honest; for our rulers, if we only made them know it, are not our masters, but our servants. It is a conclusion deliberately and firmly held and demonstrably true, that the only safety of this mighty nation from civil war, dissolution of our political union, religious error, anarchy and final despotism, is to be found in the sobering, self-denying influence of the religion of the Son of God. The Church must stand in the breach. Speedy "running," unsparing exertions, uncounted treasures, smoking censers, elevation above partizanship and personal considerations, a regard to principle above policy, and personal consecration—these are the remedies on which hope depends. It was but a few years ago that a statesman of France, pressed out of strength by the weight, and bewildered by the complexity of national affairs, and appalled by the refractory and insubordinate spirit of the nation, made the chamber of his confinement and death ring with shrieks and the outcry, "France wants a religion! France wants a religion!" Give us only the power and prevalence of truth and righteousness, and the true national policy will speedily and easily be discerned, and when discerned, followed with one heart and one mind. Yes, put a Bible and an evangelical literature and secure the worship of God in the humbler dwellings of the land, and I fear not the efforts of force from without or corruption within. "From scenes like these our country's grandeur springs—this makes her loved at home, revered abroad," and will plant a "virtuous populace," to stand like "a wall of fire" around our institutions and interests.

*Fourthly.* Is there a plea of the *hardness of the times* and commercial revulsions and embarrassments? These

are the very circumstances to try the integrity and strength of our faith. God will shew himself strong in our behalf in the day of trouble. As if to contrast the spirit of the world and the spirit that is of God, at the very time when the nations of Europe were drained of treasure and yet covered with the smoke of numerous battlefields, the august form of the British and Foreign Bible Society rose before their view, allied in its cheering influences to the appearance of the Savior himself to the disciples when benighted and tossing on stormy Tiberias. The American Bible Society came into vigorous existence immediately after the exhaustion, tumult and blood of the last war, as a blessed instrumentality to bind up the wounds that had been inflicted, and to hold in check the corruption naturally engendered. And now seems to be a *set and appropriate time* for the church to make even her deep poverty abound to the riches of her liberality, and to exhibit the strength and peculiarity of her principles, by emerging from the deep and bitter waters in which she has struggled and been steeped so long, with a song of praise on her lips and a thank-offering in her hands.

We might consistently plead embarrassment if we carried retrenchment through all our departments of expenditure, and if our *cannot* were one we expected or could dare to use in the day of account. *Cannot!* do we arrest *our* substantial interests, or business, or the education of our families, and decrease our own comforts from this cause? and if not, do we mean, when God corrects us for our iniquity, that the blows of his providence shall give us only a glancing stroke and shall fall with their heaviest effects on *his own* cause? *Cannot!* that single stick of confectionary with which you have just indulged your child has robbed the world of fifteen pages of evangelical light; and that well-flavored cigar with which you regale yourself in reclining attitude,

arrayed in purple and fine linen, and after "daily sumptuous fare," stands over on God's book against you for ninety pages of his truth, if you make *cannot* your plea and turn away his cause unassisted from your door *Cannot!* Give me the crumbs that fall from your tables, the value of what you waste; and in the Savior's service five small loaves shall feed as many thousands. *Cannot!* *We can if we are in earnest.* A blood-bought sinner talk so! when a dancing courtesan pockets thirty or forty thousand dollars a year, and when the damages of a single breach of engagement are laid at twelve thousand dollars, and all this merely because men love their pleasures, and *bestow their treasure where they have placed their heart*—when on a brutal prize-fight poor men will stake their hundreds—when the water of your city of three hundred thousand inhabitants has cost its millions—cannot we spare a little for the conveyance of a rill of the river of life through the weary heritage of twice as many millions ready to perish? When the nation has expended one hundred millions to recover a region of uninhabitable everglade from a horde of savages, shall this great land refuse for the aggregate of all her annual charities the comparative pittance of half a million to give to Jesus the crown of earth? *Cannot!* You will think otherwise of the value of earthly treasures when the fires of the judgment shall melt down gold and silver as it does the rocks. *Cannot!* take back that word, for you must answer for it at the day of judgment. It is not true. There is not one here but that "lies to the Holy Ghost" when he says so, if he means to be understood *literally*. Is there one here who has not "kept back part of the price," *who has done what he could?* and shall we not henceforth tremblingly forbear refusal to appropriate any thing of which confessedly "the Lord has need."

*Finally.* What is wished is, without permanent funds

or interest arising from investments, to render the AMERICAN TRACT SOCIETY a permanent Institution, to raise it from the character of a mere contingency, a floating beacon, subject to the influence of neglect, and the action of the winds and waves, to that of a *fixed star* that shall shine *equably, brightly, ever*, to which the wanderer on the world of waves may look with full persuasion of sure guidance and friendly aid. To effect this we need not the impulses of excited feeling, but the steady influence of principled and intelligent attachment. These results may be secured if the Church will be systematically benevolent; if she will send forth constant supplies from a full spring; if men will in the main be the executors of their own charities, and prove, in their sphere and daily course, like the sun, dispensing genial influence—if like a “fine setting sun” they will become richer and shine brighter and loom larger in the grace of christian benevolence as they approach the horizon, and if they will also “bless the world when they go out of it, with a parting smile.”

Let us also form ennobling ideas of the great design of life and of true elevation of character, and hand over to the Church, when we are gone, a generation who shall better serve the Lord. Adam says that a poor country minister, resisting the devil as he goes the rounds of his parish, has nobler ideas of true glory than Alexander had. Cecil carries out the sentiment by saying that “the aged woman who rises at two o’clock in the morning, lights her farthing candle, stands all day over her wash-tub, at night throws around her her threadbare and faded cloak, and steals out to some place of worship, hears the truth of the Gospel, mingled it may be with ignorant yet honest zeal, but drawing in good into an honest and prepared heart, is a heroine, has a noble mind, an elevated soul, compared with the greatest of men, considered as mere men of the world.”

Whether Constantine the great saw a cross and an inscription over it in the sky, or not, the sentiment conveyed is true, and to gather inspiration from it is our privilege. Yes, blessed Savior, by thee we shall be made conquerors, and more than conquerors. *One of the most affecting features of our present condition is this, that while we delay we are mocking the hopes and fail to satisfy the appetite ourselves have excited.* Are you willing that your Institution, a stately vessel, on its eighteenth annual voyage in a circumnavigation of charity, after her form is becoming known to the nations, her merchandise "more precious than rubies," and her return watched for and hailed, should, with the white flag at her mast head and the banner of the cross at her peak, and a consignment of all on board to the glory of the Lord, just come (as we have done) within view of the perishing, and for want of canvass to catch the breezes that favor, or fuel to keep alive her fires, or even zeal to warp her along, should slack her motion, and merely drift and toss about lazily at the mercy of the elements, instead of causing the sound of her going to be heard, and the "deep in her wake to be hoary?"

If in the conflict with Amalek, the heart of Israel was strengthened, and their blows fell thicker, heavier, heartier, as they glanced at Horeb's hoary summit, and saw in bold relief against the sky, the form of Moses with lifted hands and imploring look, for your encouragement in your present enterprise, turn your eye "to the everlasting hills." There, there stands the great High Priest of our profession, everliving to intercede. The crown of the universe is on his head, the tear of pity trembles in his eye, his hands are lifted—his prayers are prevalent—we fight under his inspection, and victory is sure. See what a bright crown he holds forth to those who "turn many to righteous-

ness." Listen to his assurance: "They that be wise shall shine." "To him that overcometh will I give to sit with me on my throne; even as I also have overcome, and am seated with my Father on his throne."

O the power, the rapture of the thought that we have peace on earth, that we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ—that peace is preached to them that are afar off, and to them that are nigh; that the worst days of this suffering world are over; that "the night is far spent and the day is at hand" in which the clouds that hide the face of God from our view will retire; when the rainbow of the covenant, once spread over them, shall have for its only ground the darkness of the mystery and grandeur of the Godhead, and will be arched and fixed forever over the very throne of judgment; when there will henceforth be nothing to shade the brightness of our heritage, and when our world shall revolve in the full light of Jehovah's reconciled countenance, and as it "rolls burningly along" shall send up its shouts of salvation loud as his thunder and lofty as his throne.

It is an impressive sentiment that we shall soon leave the region where so much is in rebellion against God, but we shall go where all that pass from our world must present themselves as from a battle, or be denied the privilege of mingling in the eternal joys and triumphs of conquerors.

Our force is on the field, the lines are drawn, the standards are raised, the trumpet sounds the onset—and unless it can be shown that this agency is not connected with this glorious consummation, there is no alternative, and there is no admissible discharge from the service of this holy war. "Speak to the children of Israel that they GO FORWARD." Amen.













