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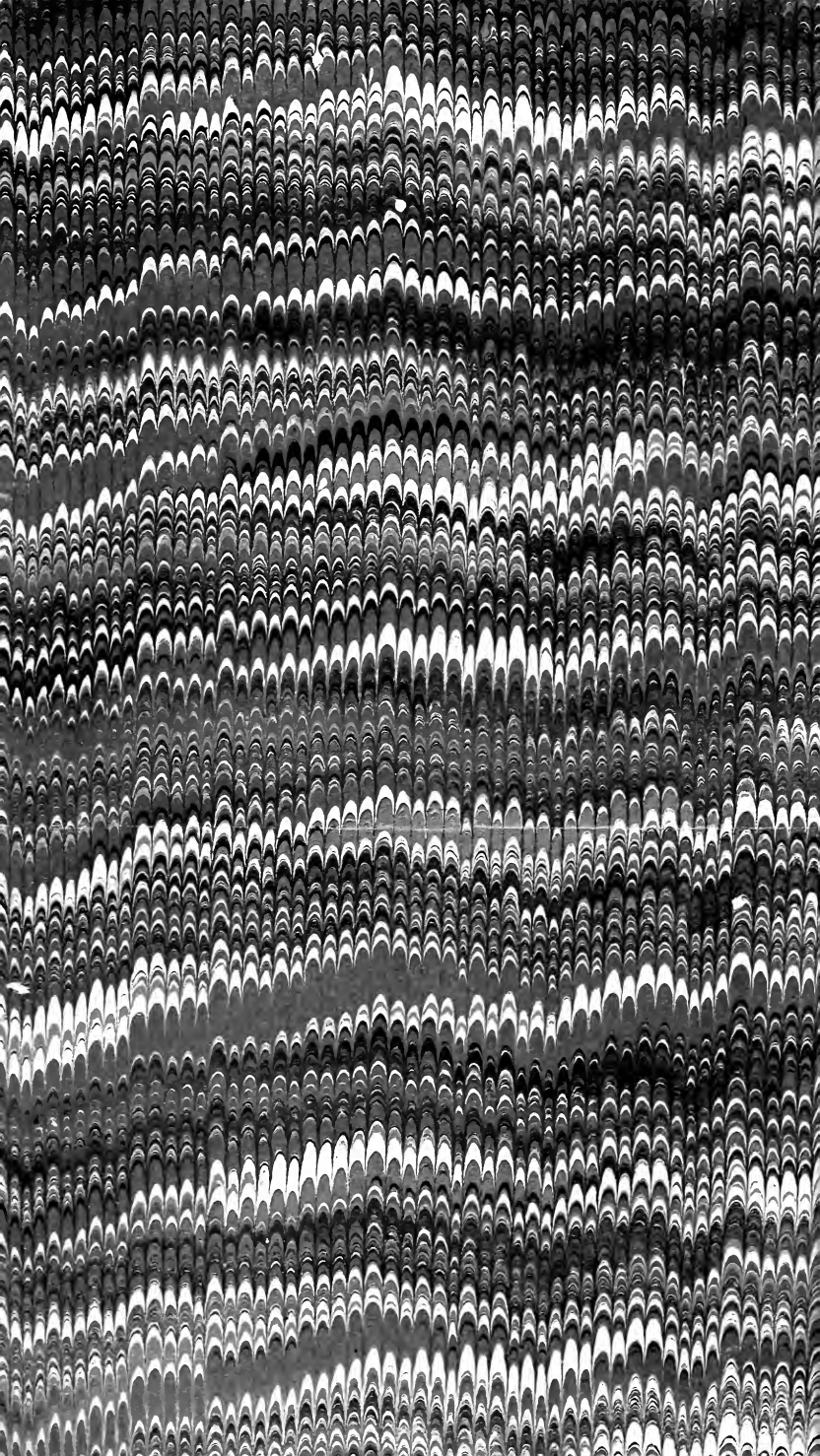


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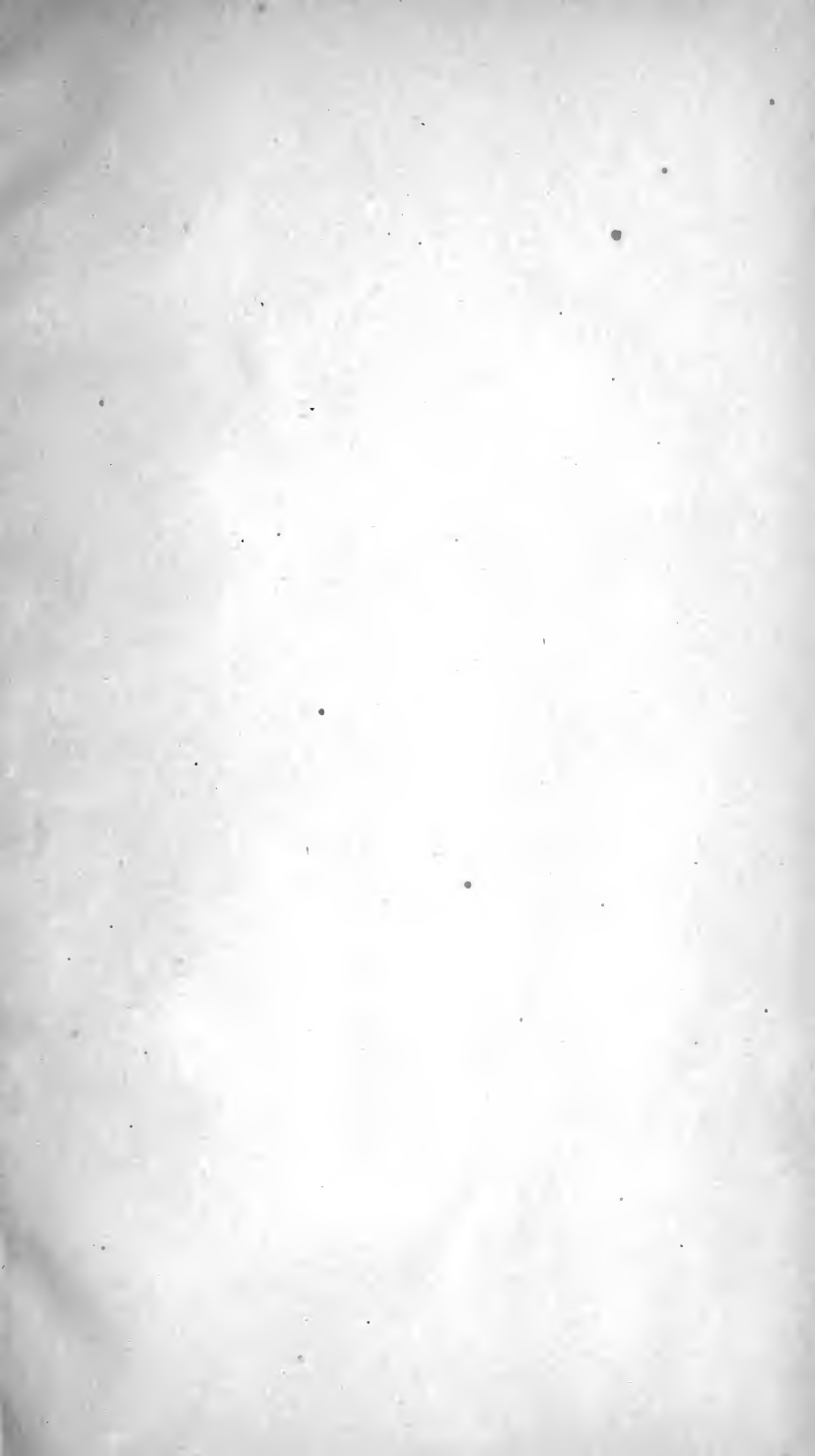
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SOCIETYISM

AND ITS EVILS.

THE INSTRUMENTALITY

OF

INDIVIDUALS AND CHURCHES

IN

THE WORLD'S EVANGELIZATION.

27
BY A CHICAGOAN.

James Leitch Ritchie
" Ritchie

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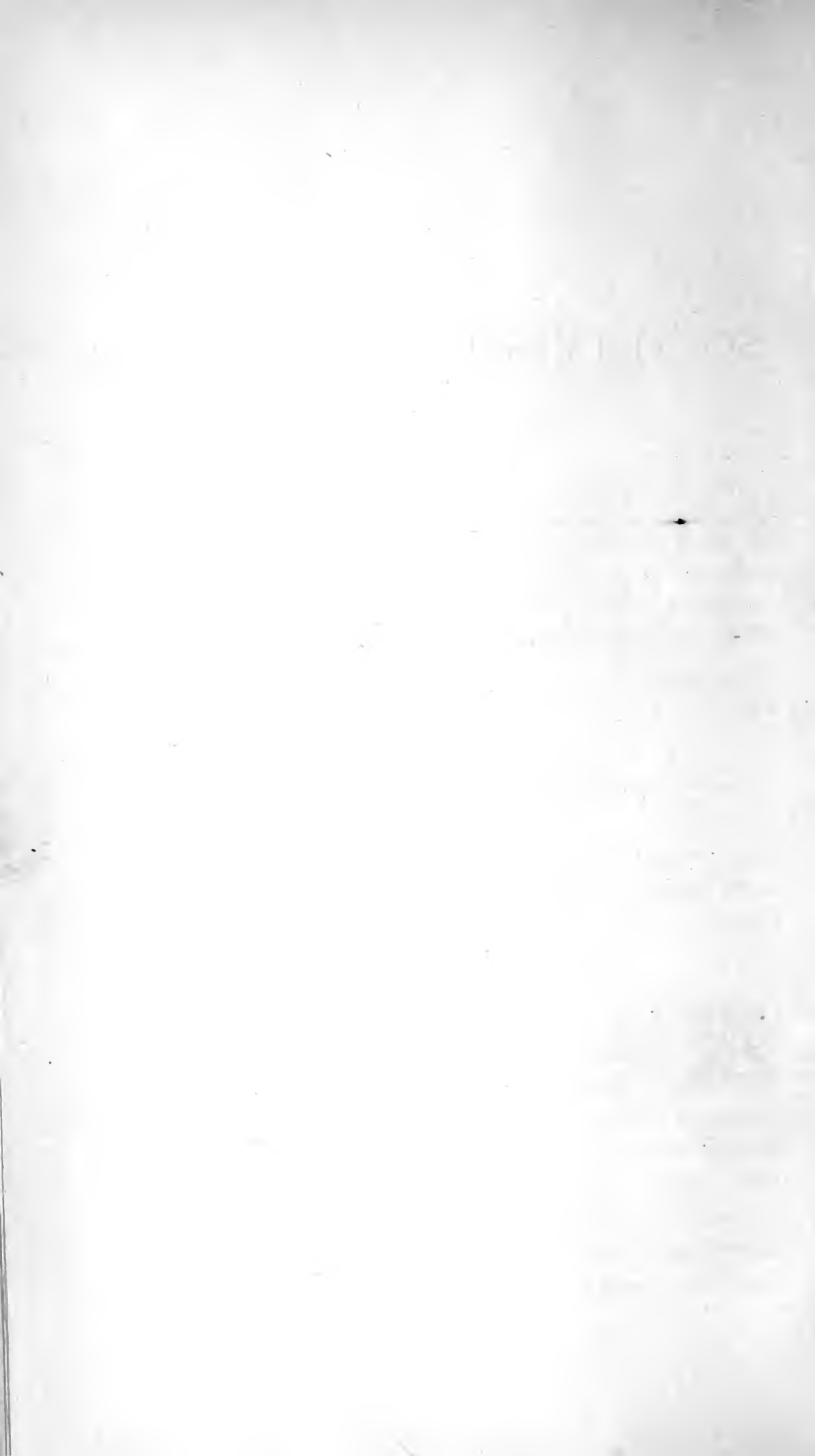


PREFATORY.

This is one of some thirteen Chapters of an unpublished Book, upon Elements of Power in Christian Life, — specially in the Ministry, illustrated and enforced by such in JESUS. It is issued singly and in advance, as an auxiliary to the sentiment, tending, in some portions of pioneer Sects, to rejection or reconstruction of missionary instrumentalities, hitherto employed outside of Churches to perform their work. Has not the hour arrived for the return of believers to the simplicity of the example of the TEACHER, and His APOSTOLIC DISCIPLES, in the endeavor to execute His Commission ?

THE AUTHOR.

CHICAGO, *Sept.* 15, 1871.



SOCIETYISM AND ITS EVILS


And Jesus having come, spoke to them, saying: All power was given unto me in heaven and on earth. Go, therefore, and disciple all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit; teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you. And, behold, I am with you always, unto the end of the world.—MATTH. XXVIII: 18-20.

He gave to each one according to his individual ability. Be occupied in business till I come.—
MATTH. XXV: 15. LUKE XIX: 13.

And He called to Him the twelve, and began to send them forth by twos.—MARK VI: 7.

And Paul, having selected Silas, departed, having been committed by the brethren unto the grace of God.—ACTS XV: 40.

THE ORIGIN OF THE CHURCH.

HE commission to evangelize the world was given by JESUS to His disciples. Whether, they, who, at the first, were thus impressively addressed, and solemnly charged, were an ecclesiastical organization, through which, successors,—single churches, to the end of time, would come to be like commissioned; or, whether, they were an unorganized company of believers, cannot be determined from the sacred record. It is generally believed, that “the twelve” was a church formally instituted by

JESUS Himself. The specification by Him of the *ἐκκλησία*,—church, assembly, company,—in the eighteenth of Matthew, as the last resort, the ultimate tribunal for investigation and adjustment, when alienation and difficulty had arisen between brethren, and the use of the same term in the declaration to PETER, Matthew xvi., are thought to be confirmatory of this view. Others think, that such technical *ecclesia* was not known until after the Ascension: that, the directions given were merely such general prescriptions as the Great Teacher might naturally give for the regulation of the personal intercourse of His disciples with each other,—having made Love the test of discipleship and the basis of all His requirements: that the term *ecclesia* was not employed by Him in the sense to which it came subsequently to be restricted in the New Testament, but in its loose ordinary acceptation of a company—assembly: that these organized bodies grew spontaneously out of the social and the elective tendencies, the spiritual necessities of renewed natures, rather than from oral or written prescription: that in every community, where the Word of JESUS prevailed, and converts were made, His disciples would, thus prompted, naturally come together to sing His praises, to supplicate His divine direction, and, as a perpetual reminder, to celebrate, as He enjoined, the Memorial Supper: that the inspired apostles found it necessary, for the sake of order and purity, to prescribe rules for the existence and regimen of these bodies of believers.

THE COMMISSION TO INDIVIDUALS AND CHURCHES.

This commission was unquestionably given to disciples, as individuals or as churches,—not to unbelievers—men

in general. Not that, in doing good to the bodies and souls of men, there can be any monopoly claimed, on the part of any sect, society, class, or order of men, or of all combined. JESUS forbade it. Mark ix: 38-39. Luke ix: 49-50. It is forbidden in the nature of Goodness. The privilege is as free as air or sunshine, to believer and unbeliever alike. If any man is philanthropic, he is in sympathy with JESUS to that extent. Nor, does it follow that those who were "without,"—the unevangelized, might not have responsibilities in this work; but, because they would not have heart to take it up in consequence of their unrenewed state,—because, they would be destitute of grace which creates faith,—the basis of all hope of success, originates, impels, and sustains Christian action; because it would be spiritually impossible that such should enter upon it and persevere in it from Christly motives. They are, indeed, responsible for the destitution of that which they might possess, and, therefore, for all the good that might ensue from the possession.

It is evident, that if Christian believers were required to come out of the world, and to organize themselves into ecclesias, the requisition was upon all. Hence, it does not seem probable, that JESUS issued the commission to such individual disciples only as might be impressed that it was their duty to undertake to execute it, and, those, in societies external to those—instituted, as is held, by JESUS Himself, or by His authority. The injunction, then, was, must have been to them, as churches, as well as to them as individuals. There is individual, and there is associate or combined responsibility in the world's evangelization. So far as the commands of JESUS can be comprehended, the latter must be in churches, or bodies

composed altogether of their delegated representatives or messengers, if indeed, such are essential for the prosecution of missions, and are permissible. If the assumption of such work, by such individual members as are moved to combine together without for its prosecution,—not as individuals, but as corporations, in which their individuality is blended, or distinctively lost, and personal responsibility apparently, though not in reality, sunk,—for no man can escape his personal accountability for the sanction given by the use of his name or of his influence in a corporation,—he cannot, in reality, lose it in societies, communities, or nations;—if the assumption of such work by such corporations, not recognized or amenable as churches, is scripturally permissible, then they are not fettered by those regulations which JESUS prescribed for them in ecclesiastical life. They are bound only by their own notions of wisdom or policy. It is easy to perceive, from inevitable tendencies in human nature, abundantly exemplified in history, that there is nothing to hinder them from becoming in time as corrupt as other professedly benevolent organizations external to the churches,—as did the Society of Jesus, inimical to the spiritual freedom of recusant individuals, as well as dangerous to the interests of society at large. No power but divine, enforced through ecclesiastical restriction, can stay them from coming to be wielded by a few,—the ablest, the most sagacious, the aspiring, and self-seeking,—secretaries, boards, executive committees. Of necessity, the keenest in intellect, the subtlest student of human nature, the strongest in will, come to wield them, as by the will of one.

THE ORIGIN OF SOCIETYISM.

IGNATIUS LOYOLA, three centuries since, the founder of modern Societyism, was, so far as men can judge, a sincere Christian ; so were many if not most of his early associates. The end of the means employed was certainly Christly ; it was nothing less than the christianization of the world. These early Jesuits were unquestionably self-denying, heroic. But what a potent enginery for evil the Society subsequently became through its irresponsibility to the churches, its constitutionally-required, as well as naturally-tending subjection to the will of a few or of one !

Doubtless, the origin of these Societies, among Protestants, as among Papists, grew out of the lethargy of the churches with respect to foreign missions, conjoined with the fact that the ambitious, the enterprising, the zealous, the self-seeking, found that they could not manipulate them with the facility that they could external bodies, voluntary, ecclesiastically irresponsible, and untrammelled. But the apathetic churches should have been quickened, purified, stimulated to take hold of their appropriate work, instead of being thus abandoned.

Congregationalists inaugurated the grand foreign missionary movement in the United States, three-score years since, which has been fruitful in such glorious results among the heathen. But, in the construction of instrumentalities therefor, they unfortunately fastened on their churches a system of means, the eradication of whose roots from their ecclesiastical soil, with their interlacing fibres, or, even, their mere loosening, will require the assembling of more than one "National Conference" at Oberlin. To reconstruct, or to take the House of Lords out of the British Constitution, do the Commons find it easy ?

“ Power —

Strong in possession, founded in old custom ;
Power by a thousand tough and stringy roots
Fix'd to the people's pious nursery faith.

— For time consecrates ;

And what is gray with age becomes religion.”*

Baptists in this country, professionally, strict constructionists of New Testament teaching, and practice ; whose spiritual ancestry in the darkest ages of ecclesiastical history flamed out, according to the Waldensian symbol, “ *lux lucet in tenebris* ;” who have ever contended earnestly for the independence of each local church, and its sufficiency to execute whatever was imposed upon it by its “ HEAD ;” — Baptists, instead of beating out a simple track for themselves in the evangelizing work—in the line of their ecclesiastical polity, have been “ followers ” of their Congregational brethren, in that, which is believed, is *not* “ good.” Their delegated foreign missionary organization passed by a questionable *coup d' état* into a voluntary one, and independent of their churches — ecclesiastical metempsychosis, the naturality of which, it never has been easy to comprehend. They have had, successively, also, their Home Mission, Bible and Publication Societies, and last of all, in as quick succession, the “ Woman's Board.” After the same manner was sent a “ Deputation.” Missions were disrupted, and “ crooked sticks ” encountered. “ God may be able to work with him, men cannot,” said one. Timber springing out of such a soil will always be more gnarly than straight-grained and elastic. It is apprehended, that if apostolic brethren at Jerusalem or Antioch

* Schiller's Wallenstein. Coleridge.

had undertaken to lay hands on and to straighten PAUL, they would have found *him* "crooked" also.

These bodies have been composed of the *élite* of the churches,—in ability, culture, and enterprise,—embracing a large amount of their piety. Some of them have become colossal in structure and movement. They are as efficient, as mighty in combination, in resources,—men and means, as ever was their great prototype. No assemblages grander, more impressive, more inspiring, than those of the American Board ever convened. The atmosphere pervading them, at times, has been redolent of Heaven. Their results for the last half-century have been grand; no achievements in the spiritual history of the world since Pentecost have been so wonderful. They enable the Christian to anticipate the glorious consummation of the mission and the work of JESUS, not only through faith, but through sight of what has been achieved.

ITS USURPATION OF THE CHURCH.

But serious evils, gigantic corruptions, have grown up with them,—the natural out-growth of their constitution. They overshadow with baleful influence the great good they have achieved. The hugest are close corporations; they perpetuate themselves; neither churches as such nor the great body of the sustaining people control them; they are chiefly officered and wielded by a class,—the strongest of the clergy, and the co-operating laity led by them; widows and other poor contributors who can only cast in mites,—whose alms and prayers prevail with God, have no potency in them, not even a paper or a sheep-skin certificate of life-membership. True: the Christly-moved need not, desire not such incitements, such ends to their

giving. But the Societies need their prayers, influence, and co-operation. The amount of money annually to be disbursed; the ramified system of agencies to be directed; the multiform issues of the press to be sent out; the direction of so many men and women; are powers too extensive to be intrusted to a select or elect few; for, though they may be highly sanctified, they are ever fallible and frail; and, they will inevitably come in time to be wielded by the one master-minded of them all, or by him who, though he may be intellectually inferior to others of his coadjutors, yet, from the authority vested in his official position, the facilities and opportunities thus afforded to consolidate it, is made more than a match for his associates, if he is disposed to play the master: and there are few with grace sufficient to resist the temptation to use or abuse the power placed within their grasp, especially if they are arbitrarily inclined, and every man, it is said, has a pope in him.* It is not believed that JESUS intended that so much power should be committed into the hands of a few men,—much less the one man who may, by superior intellectual strength, or what is more probable, by the facilities of position and opportunity, have worked his way to the head of his order. It is not believed He contemplated, that so comparatively few of the brotherhood and sisterhood should assume the responsibility of conducting a work which, it is evident, He devolved upon all; that such few should seclude this work to themselves, and entail it to their class and their elect; that the disbursement of the funds contributed by believers in general; the various agencies of persons and the press; above all, that the missionaries and their work should be wielded

* Is thy servant a dog that he should do this great thing?—HAZAEEL.

automatically by the will of boards, committees, secretaries,—the head-centers and ecclesiastical generals of the organizations. It is believed, that He would have every active soldier of His, who is evidently commissioned, go to the battle field, unfettered by the armor with which large-minded or narrow-minded officials would incase him; but equipped with the weapons that nature, discipline, and grace had prepared for him,—left free to war in the way, and at the times, his genius and his sanctified judgment dictate; that, if he could not go formally commissioned by churches of which he may be a member, he might on his individual election and responsibility, as did PAUL, and the earlier disciples, who appreciated the counsels of their brethren, as will all sincere believers; but who, whenever personal convictions pressed, knew no man after the flesh. These primitive disciples, when dispersed through persecution, went everywhere, preaching the Word, as they were individually impressed by natural or supernatural conviction, without waiting for the commission of their fallible brethren, who could not assume and execute responsibilities exclusively personal and obligatory to them as individuals.

BONDAGE OF MISSIONARIES.

Many members of these Boards, and some of the Secretaries, have been among the best and the wisest of men,—memories of whom will ever be pleasant and fragrant; while there have been others, the savor of whose doings will not be so sweet-smelling. They may be great and good, but they can never assume the obligations of others, though they may be superior to them in mental or gracious endowments. What is the fact with respect to

those ardent, earnest natures who surrender their bodies and souls, with their convictions, to the will and direction of Boards and Secretaries? Do they not sink their personal responsibility with respect to the kind and mode of their work, much as did a Catholic inferior to the will of his superior? Do they not go forth to the missionary field with intellectual and moral natures, with educational endowments, with spiritual convictions, cramped and trammled? Are they not subject to the espionage of the missionary *coterie* with which they may be associated? If they are self-reliant by original make or through grace; or, if they are conscientiously insubordinate to the cast, direction, and measures of the fallible Board, or still more fallible Secretary, thousands of miles afar; are they not

“It is a great misfortune to an age and to a community to have the young men growing up to understand, that the model men are those who hold *Secretaryships* in such institutions. I hope they will go to heaven. I think many of them will, *so as by fire*,—blessed provision! blessed text! Now there is so much of them, that they could scarcely get in; but when all but the good in them is burned out, *what is left* will not be so much but that they can get it into a *small space*, and so escape into Heaven. But it is an unfortunate thing to have the rising generation think, that they are the model men, and that their *miserable methods of administration* are consistent with and are the out-play and development of *true* Christian manliness. It is a blight and a curse upon any community. A part of the duty of every man who preaches the Gospel is to warn his people against holding up such men and their doings as patterns for their children to follow, and I warn you against it.”

“The church is of no more account than a straw, except for the justice and the truth that are in it. When you have sacrificed real piety for the sake of saving the church, you have killed a man, and got a corpse. When you have sacrificed the moral ends for the accomplishment of which an institution has been established, for the sake of

reported by this *coterie* to the management at home? Will they not, after humbling measures to secure submission and repression have proved ineffectual, —if not summarily recalled and dismissed from the service,—will not their case be prudentially taken under advisement, and, at the proper time, if not peremptorily ordered home, be affectionately decoyed, and then sent into some distant section of the home field, to pine in silence and to die; in fact, officially dishonored, disrobed as missionaries, as recalcitrant, non-conforming priests were formally degraded from their office, by stripping them of their sacerdotal vestments, and by the symbolic erasion of the original anointing? Is not such an end of a trustful and consecrated life very sad? Is it not excruciating to refined sensitive ones, as such devoted men and women are? *

Illustrations of this missionary degradation are abundant

maintaining the institution itself, you have destroyed the fruit, and kept the husk—you have thrown away the kernel, and kept the shell.”

H. W. BEECHER, *Independent*. June 7, 1860.

* “The member of the Society of Jesus was set to watch his comrades, and his comrades are set to watch him. Each must report what he observes of the acts and dispositions of the other; and this mutual espionage does not end with the novitiate, but extends to the close of life. The characteristics of every member of the order are minutely analyzed, and methodically put on record. . . . It not only uses its knowledge to thrust into obscurity or cast out altogether those whom it discovers to be dull, feeble, or unwilling instruments of its purposes, but it assigns to every one the task to which his talents or his disposition may best adapt him. . . . One great aim engrossed their lives. ‘For the greater glory of GOD’—*ad majorem Dei gloriam*—they would act or wait, suffer or die, yet all in unquestioning subjection to the authority of the superiors, in whom they recognized the agent of Divine authority itself.”—*Jesuits in North America*. Parkman.

enough in the secret history of these societies. And such a course is deliberately justified by enlightened defenders, in able and liberal periodicals. With reference to such a case, presented by the sufferer himself, in the columns of such a paper, the editor declares: "We are entirely clear that the Prudential Committee of the Board has a perfect right to call home a missionary, on the mere ground of expediency, and without tabling charges against him, if it is found that there is any practical difficulty in the way of his usefulness. He may be a good and able man, and yet for some reason not accomplish what is desired on a particular field. In one case, it may be poor health; in another, inability to acquire the native language; in a third, an unfortunate temperament; in a fourth, lack of wisdom; in a fifth, a peculiarity of measures or of opinions which prevents harmony in the mission. In such a case, the Prudential Committee, after patient inquiry, lasting sometimes over two years, is accustomed to retire a man from the field, and to do it in the quietest manner, for his own sake. They make no charges against his character, or his orthodoxy, for they have none to make. He simply does not suit them as an agent to do their work, and they drop him as kindly as possible, just as they would one of their agents at home: helping him, it may be, to find new employment. Why should they enter into a controversy with him, even if he is foolish enough to desire it? They may sometimes err in a particular case, and thus lose a good missionary; but the general policy is right." *

* *Chicago Advance.*

THE LIBERTY JESUS GAVE.

The course of the MASTER was somewhat different. He rebuked immediately and effectually where rebuke was needed. He was infallible. Boards are not. He was ever patient, charitable, tolerant with human infirmity. In the realm of the spiritual liberty provided for His followers, there is ample room for the by-play of every natural and gracious endowment, and, it may be added, for the aberrations of believers,—inseparable from their development. Violent eradication or repression by others like fallible and frail,—disposed to play the master or censor,—violent eradication or repression of what is deemed by them abnormal, unsightly, and unlovely in disciples, if it could be achieved, would result only in the destruction of individuality, and the paralysis of usefulness. Let excellency and defect grow together unto their harvest; then, the wheat of the one will be gathered into the garner of its joy; and the tare of the other into the fire of its inevitable sorrow. Time, light, reflection, gracious instruction, and reproof, will rectify the deflection of the consecrated mind and heart, round off the angularities of nature, and symmetrize christian character. Those, which are ever open for the in-dwelling of the SPIRIT, will never fail to be guided by Him into all Truth. Because PETER was presumptuous, and the SONS of ZEBEDEE vengeful, did the MASTER cast them out?—recall their commission?—even suspend them? He dealt with disciples as with children. Thus GOD, the FATHER, deals with all in His providence. Thus, should all earthly and spiritual parents or guardians,—with theirs, and their wards.

When the contention between BARNABAS and PAUL was so sharp, that they departed asunder one from the other, because the former “determined to take with them” his kinsman MARK, and the latter thought it not good to do so, because MARK departed from them from Pamphilia, and went not with them to the work,—an inefficient—or recalcitrant,—“crooked stick,”—“broken tooth,”—“foot out of joint,” in the view of PAUL, did the brethren of the church at Antioch, or at the “head-quarters” of Jerusalem, undertake to declare, that frail MARK should not go at all to the heathen? did PAUL himself, who evidently was the stronger party, and carried with him the majority of the sentiment, and the confidence of the brethren in Antioch, for it is stated, that he departed with SILAS in the place of MARK, “being recommended” literally *having been given over*, or *committed*, “by the brethren unto the grace of GOD,”—*παράδοθη ἐς τῆ χάριτος τοῦ Θεοῦ ὑπο τῶν ἀδελφῶν*;—did PAUL, as the great apostle to the Gentiles, undertake to wield his overshadowing influence with his brethren, to induce them to put the ban upon peccable MARK, and forbid him to depart from Antioch to a mission? PETER and PAUL, also, differed essentially on important topics of faith and practice. It is evident that the apostolic missionaries were a self-reliant, independent class of individuals, as all Godly, Christly-educated men will, must be. The missionary Boards of our time could not have manipulated or repressed such. While they, doubtless, would have respected and given due heed to the counsels of their stay-at-home brethren, they would have given primary and determining heed to the monitions within—through the SPIRIT and the Grace of GOD.

ITS BASIS PECUNIARY.

Some of these Boards are close corporations, self-elected, self-electing, self-perpetuating ; filling their own vacancies, instead of devolving their original construction and subsequent composition upon their constituency of the churches,—the Societies themselves which they arrogantly cap, and the churches which they professedly represent, and in whose name, when they find it necessary, they declare, they act.

The constitutions of the Societies require the payment of a specified amount of money, with or without the possession of Christian character or church membership, as the condition of membership in them. A beautifully engraved certificate of life or annual membership, and the appearance of one's name in the Annual Reports are secured. Unhallowed motives, love of position,—“ chief seats,” right or left hand places,—can but be touched, appealed to, developed, educated, strengthened ;—aspirations which JESUS emphatically rebuked, and strove ever to repress,—to turn them into channels of service, that there they might find satiation.

“ Whosoever will be great among you, let him be your minister : and whosoever will be chief among you, let him be your servant.”—MATTHEW XXV. MARK X.

As certain of these Boards thus declare their independency of, and irresponsibility to the Societies which they head ; so do the Societies to the churches, for the principles of their organization, and for their administration,—the measures employed in the prosecution of their recognized divine ends. Inability to give is a bar to membership. The poor widow who may be rich in faith and good works,

cannot secure to herself the beautiful certificate, if she desire it, though she cast into the missionary treasury all that she pecuniarily has,—her “two mites;” while the Emperor of China, or his chief Mandarin, may purchase with their silver “a good degree” of a life-directorship. They are compelled to stand “without,” who have only a prayer, a word, or a psalm to offer,—a holy life to lay upon the altar.

ITS DESTRUCTION OF INDIVIDUALITY.

They become a terror to independency of thought,—of individual expression, by their power to combine and wield opinion. Their zeal, energy, enterprise, piety, never equal that of the average of their members. The conservative prevail in them through their *vis inertiae*. The centripetal gains upon the centrifugal. The tendency is to a dead center. The individuality of those who would be in good repute in them is lost. Slavishness of opinion, subserviency of spirit, are induced. Only a certain class of minds,—of temperaments; the pliable, the slow-moving, the conservative, or those who choose to be subtle, can rise in them to position or influence. The retiring, the unambitious, the unostentatious, the fearless, the single-minded, and straight-forward, are ignored; the independent by constitution or through grace, the conscientiously recusant, are tabooed. To the first only is the eye directed for official successors by those in power; and they alone are kept in training for the purpose at the anniversaries, in the composition of committees, or in the moving of controlling resolutions previously prepared. Such institutions accord well with the Papacy, from which they sprang, or with Episcopacy—off-shoot of

the same, and, to a certain extent, with Presbyterianism, which, more consistently, prefers the use of church boards elected by assemblies, made up of accredited delegates from churches, synods, and presbyteries, to that of organizations unelected by its churches, and irresponsible to them or it. But they do not accord with Independency and Congregationalism, where the will of the majority is supposed ever to prevail, and which are professedly the the democracy of sects.

The missionaries themselves sent out, come, in time, to be of the pliant sort. Those differently constituted or educated are discouraged. If, by some oversight or mistaken judgment of character, unmanageable ones have got into the mission field, as has been previously said; efforts are made to get them home on some pretence, or they are goaded into resignation, unless they are too strong to be crushed out; — then, — it is sad to state, — efforts, sometimes, have been made to destroy their reputation at home. Of one such, a missionary Secretary remarked: "GOD may be able to work with him, but men can't." He should have said: *If God can work with him, MEN CAN, I CAN, AND I OUGHT.* Once home, such unpliant laborers retire to private station, or secular employment, or are exiled through stress of circumstances to some distant portion of the home field, where the beautiful of life to them having vanished; losing heart and hope, they are left to pine and die, as hopelessly, as sadly, as ever did a refractory priest in the dungeons of the Inquisition.

THE MINISTRY ROBBED FOR ITS OFFICERS.

They are chiefly officered by clergymen, and sometimes by returned missionaries, who, if they have been called to

the ministry, and that among the heathen, should have given their lives to it. If they could not find churches to support them, they should do as did PAUL, support themselves by brain work or hand work in some secular avocation, and gird themselves to the work of the LORD as opportunity opens.

Would PAUL have stood so pre-eminently distinguished through the ages for Christian heroism, and have bequeathed to humanity such a sublime example of self-abnegation and disinterestedness for its adornment and christianization, if, after having spent scores of years among the heathen, until he had become acclimated; had acquired such familiarity with their tongue, as to communicate to them in it the wonderful works of God, with the messages of salvation; had measurably overcome the multifarious obstacles that confront a missionary in the daring, and humanly forlorn attempt to eradicate a religious belief of ages, and to substitute therefor an exotic and an antagonistic creed; would he, after a farewell of weeping loved and loving ones, exclaiming: "What mean ye to weep and to break my heart?"—then, flaming through the Eastern hemisphere, with the avowal of being ready for a yoke of service or an altar of sacrifice; would he have continued to be a burning and a shining light through all succeeding times, if he had returned to Jerusalem or Antioch, to spend the balance of his days comfortably as a Secretary or Agent of a Society? "No man, having put his hand to the plough, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of GOD." — LUKE IX: 62.

It is apprehended that the religionists of ELIJAH'S time did not come up with much alacrity, if they came at all,

to his pecuniary support ; nor, is it believed he sought for it, or cared for it, or would have had it on *conditions*,— of keeping back a part of his messages, or of toning them down to suit the average sanctification of his hearers. He confronted kings and queens, unblenchingly, as he would the meanest subject of their reign. He would not be a dumb dog, a time server, or a conservative. He was a radical, as all divinely commissioned preachers will be, though they may speak the Truth in varied tones of Love. Once his heart failed him. He had his hour of weakness and despair, as all men will sometimes have, howe'er intrepid. ELIJAH thought all was lost ; that there was no hope for Israel ; that he, only, of the unseduced, untrifled, remained ; that courage, fidelity, further constancy, were to no purpose. He was no better than his fathers. He was human. He fled, not through cowardice, but through despair. When the pot of herbs failed, God fed him through ravens ; gave him a new vision. All true prophets must live and fare very much as did ELIJAH.

IT BREEDS CORRUPTION.

But their official position educates them to be managers, so that, in time, they become as accomplished in all the subtlety of official craft, as ever did a professional politician. The accumulated funds of Book Concerns, Bible, Tract and Publication Societies, are means of corruption to those who have to do with their disbursement. They unwarrantably interfere with individual enterprises, by their ability to use funds— not contributed for such purpose— to undersell the market, at or below the cost of manufacture, — a violation of the equitable principles of business, to which, it is not believed, the direct executors of

the SAVIOUR'S Commission are ever called. Their strength is from above, not from beneath. It is not so much money that they want, as the invigoration, illumination and guidance of the Holy SPIRIT. GOD will pour money enough into their coffers, if they will trust Him — restrain and concentrate their endeavors, as He has limited and restrained. If money adequate, as they compute, does not come, and with the speed they aspire for, let them wait. GOD waited four thousand years before He sent His SON. They are not responsible for the quick or tardy evangelization of men, only for the faithful discharge of what is committed to their trust. They must go no faster than as He opens the way. They are agents, not principals,—executors, not legislators,—servants, not Master. Their vocation is single, specific. GOD will work, overrulingly, through commercial enterprises, and all the avenues of trade, for the realization of His grand designs,—is combining all things to converge to the glorious end. But the special requisition upon those whom He has called to execute His gospel Commission, is to preach it,—to give themselves to it as they are prepared by nature and grace; some to teach, some to preach, some to pray, some to sing, some to write, the many to give as the LORD has prospered them. They can't serve GOD and MAMMON at the same time. If they would serve MAMMON while they are serving GOD, *for the sake of serving Him*, let them become incorporated under another name. That is not

GOD'S specific, His means, in this His strange work. It is the wisdom of the world, which He will ever confound.*

ITS DANGEROUS POWER OVER CHURCHES.

They have come to wield a dangerous power over the churches — in the selection and retention of their pastors, in the direction of their spiritual forces, and their pecuniary contributions. The Secretaries and Agents “have a passion for” their calling. They are expected to have it in fact, or professionally. They will magnify it, of course; they will not fail to endeavor to obtain a shaping and a controlling influence over the great sources of their material and spiritual prosperity. They will be conscientious in it, and, with their professions, it might be expected, they would be zealous and politic; nor can they be reprehended for it, having such confidence in the absolute as well as relative importance of their societies. Their brethren should not lead them into temptation. To acquire such influence here, there and everywhere, will be their constant study. They will have time for it, while the pastors and the members of their churches are absorbed in their various religious and secular occupations. Secretaries, in large cities particularly, have been known to settle and unsettle pastors, as these pastors have favored or disfavored their pet organizations. Independent and self-reliant, yet devoted and true ministers of the LORD

* Because the foolishness of God is wiser than men; and the weakness of God is stronger than men. For ye see your calling, brethren. . . . God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty: and base things of the world, and things which are despised, hath God chosen, and things which are not, to bring to nought things that are: That no flesh should glory in His presence.—
1 Cor. i. 25-29.

JESUS, have often found it difficult to obtain a foothold in the confidence of churches needing pastors, through the baleful influence of some Secretary or Agent interposed. The churches themselves are drilled to become systematic contributors at stated periods during the year,—inferior auxiliaries to all these exterior instrumentalities,—deemed superior to the New Testament organization. Standing committees are constituted in many churches, to solicit of each individual member a contribution for each of them; and any one who refuses,—save those who are compelled to, from their well-known poverty,—may expect to lose caste with brethren and sisters, notwithstanding they may be conscientious in declining, believing it their privilege, as well as duty, to be the almoners of their own benefactions, at such times, in such unrevealed ways, to such objects or persons—specified or unspecified, as they may choose,—providentially thrust upon their attention with their impressive appeals, as if HEAVEN itself had brought about the junction to bless not only him that takes, but him that gives.

Thus, through this web of influence woven about them, instead of being sovereign instrumentalities themselves in the world's evangelization, under the lead of their Master, the churches come to be inferior and secondary, tributary

They have usurped the commission and powers of the Christian Church; they have invented and imposed new rules and terms of Christian association; they have concentrated Christian influence, to a great extent, in the narrow circle of a few self-created managers; and, in consequence of the new principles they have adopted, and the new modes of association they have prescribed, they have constructed the frame of religious society extensively upon a new basis,—upon a basis which constitutes themselves the source of law, and of all economical measures.—*Protestant Jesuitism. Harper Bros.*

and auxiliary to these exterior ones—offspring of the wisdom of men.

ITS CONTROL OF THE DENOMINATIONAL PRESS.

The denominational “organs” are virtually under their control. Such inducements of a pecuniary and official character, supplemented with the hope of enlarged usefulness, are offered, that ministers having talent for management and skill in finance, are generally employed to officer them. Becoming officially head-centres, generals of their order, their espionage necessarily extends everywhere from the “Rooms” of their Rome. It is in their power to interfere seriously with the weal of any recusant Journal, which refuses to become the willing and subservient instrument of the enterprises they represent. What good man will neglect to wield every potency available to promote the well-being of a cause he believes to be good, and which he has espoused? Ambitious self-seekers, of course, will never fail to do it. The conductors of these “organs” know very well, that it is as much as the life of their enterprises is worth, to dare to question their scriptural authorization, or the wisdom and economy of their measures. There is a constant and unremitting effort to link every other denominational interest as ligaments to their support; above all, as pecuniary ducts to the reser-

By an artful multiplication of societies, devoted apparently to different objects, but all swayed by the same leaders, and all intended to bear against a hated party, as cruel a persecution may be carried on in a free country as in a despotism. Public opinion may be so combined and influenced, and brought to bear on odious individuals or opinions, that it will be as perilous to think and speak with manly freedom, as if an inquisition were open before us. . . . They create tyrants as effectually as standing armies.—*Dr. Channing.*

voirs of their charities. Funerals of distinguished members, belonging rather to humanity and Christianity than to a sect,—to a denomination than to societies,—have been manipulated, so as to be made tributary to such a result. Not long since, in a notice of such a funeral appearing in a distant Journal, after a specification of the pall-bearers, it was added: thus was this, that and the other great interest of the denomination represented on the occasion!

Men don't need any more instrumentalities for their evangelization than divine wisdom has provided. All that is needed, is to fill up roundly, symmetrically, completely, the New Testament Ideal according to the New Testament Real: that every member of these churches be filled with the Holy SPIRIT, charged with energy, zeal, wisdom, love; that he execute with fidelity that which GOD has committed to his trust, in the gift of original endowment, or, of subsequent culture; of providential bestowment, or, in the solemn juncture of opportunity. "To each one according to his individual ability!" *Εξαστῶ κατὰ τὴν ἰδίαν δύναμιν.* "Be occupied in business till I come!" *Πραγματεῦσασθε ἕως ἔρχομαι.*

Associations accumulate power in a few hands; . . . a few men rule, a few do everything; . . . a few leaders can send their voices and spirit far and wide, and, where great funds are accumulated, can league a host of instruments, and, by menace and appeals to interest, can silence opposition . . . An influence is growing up, through widely spread societies, altogether at war with the spirit of our institutions, and which, unless jealously watched, will gradually but surely encroach on freedom of thought, of speech, and of the press —*Dr. Channing,*

THE INSTRUMENTALITY OF INDIVIDUALS.

The propagation of Christianity, through human instrumentality under GOD, is a simple business, as is revealed. His grace is sovereign, and independent of means. But He chooses to employ such means. It is not complicated nor needs any complexity. It lies through the influence, the light, the example, of renewed hearts, of sanctified lives — consistent with the profession made. It is in the consecration and faithful use of all gifts, with whatever a disciple is endowed; the improvement of every opportunity for doing good,—nothing more, nothing less. He has given to each child of His, each Christian disciple, his peculiar sphere of labor, according to his natural and gracious gifts,—his culture and providential circumstances. There is a niche to be filled in the up-rising Temple of GOD by every individual gift however humble. There can be none which is not needed to complete the divine structure, and to make it symmetrical from the massive foundation to the vanishing point of spire; whether of prayer, exhortation, singing, teaching or writing; whether of legislative, administrative, agricultural, mechanical, mercantile, literary, scientific, artistic

The initiation of all wise or noble things, comes, and must come, from individuals; generally at first from some one individual.

. . . the individual's own mode of laying out his existence is the best, not because it is the best in itself, but because it is his own mode . . . different persons also require different conditions for their spiritual development; and can no more exist healthily in the same moral, than all the variety of plants can in the same physical atmosphere and climate. The same things, which are helps to one person towards the cultivation of his higher nature, are hindrances to another.

Mill on Liberty.

or financial skill. Did each one know his gift, apprehend his mission, find his sphere of activity, and occupy with fidelity, encroaching never upon the sphere of any other, there would be as much order, harmony and efficiency in spiritual movements among men as there is in the material heavens,—noiseless, harmonious, ever moving on in their sublime unity to the accomplishment of the divine end. As there would be no necessity for civil governments, if every individual was self-governed; so in the Kingdom of GRACE, there would be no need for societies external to the churches, certainly not for close corporations, self-elect and self-electing, for the execution of the Commission. They might be useful to stimulate, combine, concentrate and intensify individual zeal, to induce liberal benefactions to the common object of Love,—since men naturally incline to the use of the huge, the intricate, the complicate, the pretentious, and the ostentatious in attempting to do good,—for they strike the imagination, instead of the simple ways of the LORD, as prescribed. They have more faith in the grand or mystic flourish of some distinguished prophet's hand over the leprous sin of the world, than in the direct and immediate execution of the simple prescription of the ALMIGHTY Himself: "Go wash in Jordan seven times and thou shalt be clean." Numbers are magnetic and potent. Individualism — indi-

It is not by wearing down into uniformity all that is individual in themselves, but by cultivating it and calling it forth, within the limits imposed by the rights and interests of others, that human beings become noble and beautiful objects of contemplation.

Mill on Liberty.

Self-assertion is one of the elements of human worth, as well as self-denial.—*Sterling.*

vidual action, varied as the diversity of gifts and spheres of activity, it is believed, is more in accordance with the constitution of men and with the teachings of JESUS, who imposed personal obligations, and most impressively conjoined with them their consequent responsibility. He, indeed, never proscribed union for the prosecution of His divine work; nor did He ever prescribe it to the supersession of individual freedom. He devolved that work on each and every one of His disciples, and then sent them out, saying to them, as such, "freely ye have received, freely give." Societyism comes, in time, to say: "I give you thus much; don't you give any more." Who shall dare to restrain and to limit the gifts, the grace, and the providences of GOD, otherwise, than He has limited and restrained?

Every Christian, then, has some gift to use, some call to heed. If he is called, as he believes, to the heathen, it is his privilege to go, with or without the consent of others. Their judgments are not the rule of his conscience, or of his conduct, in the last decision. True, the fact that he is not able to secure the approval of his brethren of the same church, as to his intellectual, educational and spiritual fitness for such mission, should lead him to prayerful re-examination and close scrutiny of his supposed qualifications and motives. If he goes with the approval of the church of which he is a member, let it formally commission him, if it will, but let it not fetter him by arbitrary restrictions, positive requirements and prohibitions, other-

Whatever crushes individuality is despotism, by whatever name it may be called.

. . . It is only the cultivation of individuality which produces, or can produce, well-developed human beings.—*Mill on Liberty.*

wise than those which JESUS prescribed. He is called to liberty, as each and every one of it is called to his. His Master is his lawgiver. He, in conscience, in grace, through the SPIRIT, is a law unto himself. There must be trust. Trust in GOD, in His SPIRIT, His GRACE, His PROVIDENCE, working through the mind and heart of the brother, to guide him. If the formal commission of a Board, or a committee in or out of churches, be essential to constitute one a missionary, authorized to preach the Gospel at home or abroad, which, it is believed, is not; let that Board be satisfied, first, as to his qualifications, before it sends him forth; but, if satisfied: who has authorized it to trammel him in the use of that liberty which his MASTER gave him when he first became His disciple, before the consecrating hands of men were laid upon him? It should trust some, at least, to the influences of the HOLY SPIRIT, and the promised presence of the MASTER Himself, conjoined with the providences of GOD to move and guide him wisely. If he be a man of GOD, he will give due heed to the suggestions and the advice of brethren, proportionate to their gifts, experience, and knowledge of his circumstances. But, it is again urged, who has authorized any to fetter his mind, or heart, or conscience, or judgment by arbitrary restrictions? Would members of these Boards — pastors of churches at home, think it just, wise or expedient to be thus fettered by their deacons or elders, or by committees afar off, because originally they were sent out into the

—One good action, springing from our own minds, performed from a principle within, performed without the excitement of an urging and approving voice from abroad, is worth more than hundreds which grow from mechanical imitation, or from the heat and impulse which numbers give us.—*Dr. Channing.*

harvest field under their advisement? They — churches or their representatives, can counsel, can pray, can rebuke in brotherly love, when he manifestly errs or sins; withdraw their fellowship, when he is irreclaimable from dangerous error, or from immoral life. Thus, there is a limit to their responsibility, and there it ends.

The missionary must

— “ alone determine for himself
 What he himself alone doth understand !
 Well, therein he does right, and will persist in't,
 Heaven never meant him for that passive thing
 That can be struck, and hammer'd out to suit
 Another's taste and fancy.

* * * * *

It goes against his nature — he can't do it.
 He is possessed by a commanding spirit,
 And his too is the station of command,
 And well for us it is so ! There exist
 Few fit to rule themselves, but few that use
 Their interests intelligently.—Then
 Well for the whole, if there be found a man
 Who makes himself what nature destined him.

The uncommon, the sublime, must seem and be
 Like things of everyday. But in the field,
 Ay, there the Present Being makes itself felt
 The personal must command, the actual eye
 Examine. If to be the chieftain asks
 All that is great in nature, let it be
 Likewise his privilege to move and act
 In all the correspondencies of greatness.
 The oracle within him, that which lives,
 He must invoke and question — not dead books,
 Not ordinances, not mould-rotted papers.” *

* Schiller's *Wallenstein*. *Coleridge*.

When members of a church are impressed that it is their duty to devote themselves to Christian labor among the heathen, and they desire to secure, in advance, the approval of their brethren, with their pledge of material support,—not having confidence to go into the field solely on their individual motion, and to cast themselves on the providence of GOD for sustenance and preservation, as did the Apostles; those who are called to purely secular avocations, and have confidence in the character and qualifications of the candidate for missionary service, can give directly to his maintenance without any intermediate agency; the church itself, if it will, can commission and send forth, and pledge itself, to more or less of a material sustenance. Many prospered ones in the churches could each support a missionary, send and receive correspondence, remit their own contributions, or employ some trustworthy brother at a financial center to do it for them, without any discount for his service. Two or three in the same church, two or three churches, if necessary, could unite, for the support of one missionary. Over this bond of union between the missionary and his supporters, would pass and repass the electric fire of Love. Would it ever cease to burn, at either extremity, if grace through JESUS CHRIST was there? Never! If the individual supporters were willing to honor the instrumentality

—Generally speaking, we can do most good by individual action, and our own virtue is incomparably more improved by it. It is vastly better that we should give our own money with our own hands, from our own judgment, and through personal interest in the distresses of others, than that we should send it by a substitute. Second-hand charity is not as good to the giver or receiver, as immediate.

Dr. Channing.

which JESUS and His APOSTLES, at the first, employed, they could give to the church, for the special missionary purpose, as the LORD had prospered them; the church could consecrate and send forth to the harvest field the man of GOD evidently called to it, and remit the support—as before; so that, the widow who had only “two mites,” or he who had still less,—nothing of a pecuniary value, “*only a prayer*,” could jointly participate; each would stand over against the other,—the mites over the larger gift; the prayer over the munificent bequest. Curious questioners and ambitious self-seekers could afford to wait until the revelations of the eternal world, to learn which proved the most effectual,—“*only a prayer*” of a poverty-stricken one, the mites of the widow, or the “*ten talents*” of the “*good and faithful servant*.” “*Having, then, gifts, differing according to the grace that is given us; “ as every man hath received the gift, let him minister the same one to another as good stewards of the manifold grace of GOD.*”—Romans xii. 1 Peter iv.

But, brethren desire to come together from afar, to see each other in the flesh, to take each other by the hand, to sing, pray, and stimulate each other to love and good works. Let them come every year and have a Pentecostal season. Let them be simple assemblages of brethren, mass meetings of believers—delegated or undelegated,—annual or semi-annual, for prayer, praise, and exhortation; needing only a presiding officer, a secretary, and a treasurer, *pro tempore*. These might take the form of local

—Only through diversity of opinion is there, in the existing state of human intellect, a chance of fair play to all sides of the truth. . . . Truth would lose something by the silence of dissentients.

Mill on Liberty.

Associations, of State Conventions, of National Conferences, without any legislation, or assumption of the work devolved upon the churches. Committees might be needed to express orally, or in writing, the sentiments or the emotions of the assemblage, as one might be selected on special seasons during the progress of the meetings, to offer prayer to GOD on its behalf. If it was not expedient or economic, for each individual contributor to remit his offering to the person or the cause,—object of benefaction; or,—in the case of foreign missions, to purchase and to forward a draft to the distant field of labor, which, it is believed, would be far more expedient and economic, more blessed in reflex influence on the donor,—bringing the giver and the given to, in the closest possible contact, than to employ others to do it; some competent and reliable brother might be entrusted, at financial centers, thus to remit, and to report therefor, directly to each individual or church contributor; and not to intermediate societies. Where would be the necessity for the creation of Boards, Executive Committees, and Secretaries, to trammel the individuality of missionary laborers,—still more, their individual consciences? When individual Christians were impressed that it was their duty to go to the heathen, and they went forth, sustained by the promises and the providences of GOD, with the co-operating assistance of their friends who had faith in them, what concern would it be of any or of all,—only to bid them GOD-speed, and to help them? If individual churches, single or com-

—Unity of opinion, unless resulting from the fullest and freest comparison of opposite opinions, is not desirable, and diversity not an evil, but a good, until mankind are much more capable than at present of recognizing all sides of the truth.—*Mill on Liberty.*

bined, should, on their sole instance, commission and send forth into the harvest field laborers, and sustain them in it; what other churches, or what societies, great or little, should undertake to frustrate the grace of GOD in it? Would not such development of the missionary spirit and action be more in accordance with the precepts and practice of JESUS and His APOSTLES? If churches could so trust candidates for missionary service, as to be induced to set them apart, consecrate, and officially send them forth, they ought to trust them,—the overruling GOD, and the guiding SPIRIT,—while they are in the harvest field. If the missionaries are men of GOD, they will crave the prayers of their brethren at home, and seek their counsel when they feel the need of it. Why should they be supervised by a few, thousands of miles afar,—ignorant of their circumstances,—with temperaments, mental structure, mental and spiritual habits,—diverse from theirs? Why should they be compelled to run the evangelizing car in ruts,—effete, it may be, pedantically prescribed by ecclesiastical superiors? * Can't brethren at home trust GOD to guide His chosen ones whom He has sent forth? Can't they pray for these missionaries, and thus relieve their personal anxieties about them? Can't they write affectionate letters of solicitude, of warning, of brotherly counsel, and admonition, if need be,—unauthoritative and unofficial, except when they have been sent out and are sustained by churches? Having done all this, have they not reached the limits of their responsibility? Did the church in Jerusalem, or that in Antioch, trammel PAUL

* A bureaucracy always tends to become a pedantocracy.—*Mill on Representative Government.*

and SILAS, or PAUL and BARNABAS, by arbitrary directions, restrictive or permissive, as they went from place to place? Did they not commit the apostles, their work and the modes of doing it, as became necessary, to the supervisory, overruling, and directing Grace of GOD? Did they not expect, and were they not content, that it should be so; that the Apostles should use the liberty of plan and achievement, to which, as the children of GOD, and the disciples of JESUS, they were called? All the instructions they received, that are on record, were: "They departed;" — "being recommended," literally, as has been before noted, *having been given over*,—"committed" "by the brethren unto the grace of GOD." The language is significant, and the example authoritative. When the lord of the servants distributed among them his talents for use, or the nobleman his pounds, did either of them appoint any number of their fellow servants to prescribe the modes in which each should use them? Did they not commit to each as individuals, and thus intimate, that they would hold them to strict personal individual account for the use of the trust? Were not all the declarations and illustrations of JESUS so constructed and directed, as to give the greatest emphasis and effectiveness possible to this teaching? *Did He purpose to evangelize the world by corporations?* Admitting, as all must admit, that these societies, during the last half-century, have done a grand kind and amount of work, — the grandest since the Apostles,—must it not also be admitted, that it has been

—The object "toward which every human being must ceaselessly direct his efforts, and on which especially those who design to influence their fellow men must ever keep their eyes, is the individuality of power and development."—*Humboldt. Quoted in Mill on Liberty.*

thus done, much to the cost and to the absorption of the individuality of participants? and, what is more serious and detrimental, to the loss of the recognition and education of individual responsibility? True: MARK represents JESUS, as sending forth His disciples, at the first, in pairs; and the Apostles subsequent to His death thus went together; still, they went forth as individuals, though in couples; neither their individuality, nor personal responsibility, were blended and distinctively lost in the unity of the participated work. Provision was thus made to meet their social necessities, that strength, comfort, and stimulation might be mutually imparted under the inevitable difficulties, dangers, and discouragements of the way.

There being no necessity, as has been urged, let the disciples of JESUS no longer come together in the complication of machinery,—wheels within wheels of annual and life members; of boards, executive committees and secretaries; of synods, and presbyteries, and judicatories; to fritter away time in the discussion of overtures, and deliverances, canons, and endless questions of ecclesiastical law; to destroy spirituality, weary souls, engender strife, breed jealousy, stimulate unhallowed ambition; more than all, to fatally insulate the assemblages from the reception and pervasion of the HOLY SPIRIT; but let them, on their coming, give themselves exclusively to prayer, praise and exhortation, interspersed with addresses from returned missionaries present, or with the reading of communications from them on the field, recapitulating the work of the Grace of GOD on it. Having had the good time;

—There are two requisites for individuality of power and development, freedom and variety of situations.—*Mill on Liberty.*

having been refreshed by the presence of the HOLY SPIRIT in their individual hearts ; having seen their brethren in the flesh ; having joined hands, thanked GOD, and taken courage ; having their faith strengthened ; what remains for them but to go on their way home rejoicing to their respective churches and fields of labor ; to communicate the good, the divine impulses they have received ; to come unto a higher plane in the divine life. If anything more is authorized by Scripture, and a sanctified common sense, let the authority be cited.

THE REMAINING ALTERNATIVE.

But, if it has been effectually and conclusively demonstrated, by the experiences of eighteen centuries, that this work cannot be adequately done by churches immediately or mediately through their committees or messengers—most rigidly restricted to do only what they are commissioned to do ; if their efficient employment is hopeless ; *then it is feared, Christendom has been mistaken in supposing, that they were designed to continue permanent instrumentalities for the spread of the Gospel to the end of time,—not merely a temporary arrangement for the purpose during the apostolic era.*

There is only one escape from this conclusion, as is seen, and that is, in enlarging the interpretation of the Christian ecclesia, if facts and philology will allow, as to include any assembly of Christian believers, near or afar, baptized or unbaptized, who have been drawn together by

—In the human mind, one-sidedness has always been the rule, and many-sidedness the exception. Hence, even in revolutions of opinion, one part of the truth usually sets, while another rises.—*Mill on Liberty.*

the common love of JESUS, and by the affinities of religious tastes and opinions, for the spread of the Gospel, at home or abroad; and, consequently, for their individual development and growth in grace. In such a comprehending sense, every Young Men's Christian Association would be a Christian church, and would be bound by the precepts prescribed for its regimen and conduct in ecclesiastical life. It might require, on admission, assent to certain expressed fundamental principles of belief, or to the teachings of JESUS CHRIST undefined, and to a covenant—oral for each time, or verbally prescribed; it might labor with and discipline unworthy members; it might celebrate the memorial SUPPER as the silent *sacramentum* of allegiance to their MASTER. By the same enlarged apprehension of the New Testament Ideal and Real; an Association, a State Convention, a National Conference might be a Christian church or assembly,—being constituted and regulated by the same inspired directions,—reminding themselves, from time to time, of their perpetual obligations to JESUS, by the same memorial observance. Upon such an exegesis, all such assemblies might, properly, be held to be Christian churches, and undertake to execute the Gospel commission, in sending out missionaries from their numbers, and in sustaining them; but remembering to limit themselves, as did the brethren of the church at Antioch, with regard to PAUL and SILAS, “giving them over to the grace of GOD;” and they would be bound, in all their procedures, by the principles and prescriptions for the constitution and

—If all mankind, minus one, were of one opinion, and only one person were of the contrary opinion, mankind would be no more justified in silencing that one person, than he, if he had the power, would be justified in silencing mankind.—*Mill on Liberty.*

regimen of such bodies of Christ,—the New Testament ecclesiæ. Assuredly, then, all such distinctions and classifications of life or annual members upon the payment of specified amounts of money; all odious and unscriptural assumptions and seclusions of positions of power and trust; all principles and practice of close corporations; all unnecessary Boards, Executive Committees, and Secretaryships; all aristocratic, class, and anti-democratic features would cease to exist and to be employed in the LORD'S *service*. The missionary being commended, *given over* to the grace of GOD; there would be no more for these assemblages to do, than to create interest on his behalf, and in his mission; to raise funds for his and its support; to pray for him ever, and to send him, often, as they had opportunity, words of cheer. All this would be enough to occupy their time and attention,—to develop and absorb their Christian zeal and energy. “Ye know, that they which are accounted to rule over the GENTILES *exercise lordship over them, and their great ones exercise authority over them: but so it shall not be among you; but, whosoever of you will be chiefest, shall be servant of all.* For even the SON OF MAN came not to be ministered unto,

In truth, all great actions are solitary ones. All the great works of genius come from deep, lonely thoughts. The writings which have quickened, electrified, regenerated the human mind, did not spring from associations. That is most valuable which is individual; which is marked by what is peculiar and characteristic in him who accomplishes it. In truth, associations are chiefly useful by giving means and opportunities to gifted individuals to act out their own minds. A missionary society achieves little good, except when it can send forth an individual who wants no teaching or training from the society, but who carries his commission and chief power in his own soul.

Dr. Channing.

but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many." Mark x: 42—45; Luke xxii: 25. And this decisive and emphatic utterance of HIM—the recognized infallible TEACHER of all, is deemed elucidatory of, and conclusive upon, the whole subject.

But the question remains, can such bodies, upon incontrovertible exegesis, be held to be churches in Gospel order? More light is needed to break forth from GOD'S Word to convince some that they could be thus regarded.

SOCIETIES TRANSIENT—CHURCHES PERPETUAL.

Churches, it is said, change, are revolutionized, die. On what, or on whom, can the missionary rely, after the lapse of years?

Whether, are the most enduring, which have passed through the conflicts of eighteen centuries; against which, as fore-declared, the GATES OF HELL should not prevail; or those, which are changeable as is public opinion, and which, by the measure of the centuries, have been tran-

All organic development is a change from a state of homogeneity to a state of heterogeneity.

The multiplication of sects, the preaching that identity of opinion should not be the bond of union,—the universal tendency to separate thus exhibited, is simply one of the ways in which a growing assertion of individuality comes out. Ultimately, by continued subdivision, what we call sects will disappear; and in place of the artificial uniformity, obtained by stamping men after an authorized pattern, there will arise one of nature's uniformities—a general similarity, with infinitesimal differences, that condition in which the individuality of each may be unfolded, without limit, save the like individuality of others; that condition toward which, as we have just seen, mankind are progressing; is a condition towards which the whole creation tends.—*Social Statics.* *Herbert Spencer.*

sient ; developing in antagonism to the simplicity of the Gospel, and, running in their seed to corruption, as they always will ; reconstructed, but to come again to be unsatisfying and impracticable ; never able to retain to their end, the confidence of the people represented.

Churches die. Yes, they do,—as races die, and are swept into oblivion. “ One generation passeth away, and another generation cometh : but the earth abideth forever.” Many of them have survived successive dynasties of the nations out of whom they were gathered. The line of their succession has been unbroken. The children of the mother have found a name and place, somewhere, in every Christian century. As Continental rivers disappear sometimes beneath the surface—to re-appear in some distant locality, so churches have disappeared to be visible again, through the nucleus of some wandering son or daughter in some section of the earth. Thus it has ever been. Societies are of modern origin. They have been reconstructed. They have always wasted power in the necessary and unavoidable friction ;—absorbed, disproportionately, funds for the divine end, in the running gear of means. Though the excellent of the sects have been prominent in their management and direction, they have been commonly officered and wielded, as have been old insurance offices, by men of a past generation, who had failed in everything else they had previously undertaken ; men, who, pedantic and self-sufficient, if not self-seeking, could not discern the signs of the future ; or, if they did, obstinately refused to profit by the vision, and to take a new departure ; men who did not keep step with PROVIDENCE, because they were too busy in the conservation of machinery ; as if the evangelization of the world could not be wrought without

its preservation; men who clung with the tenacity of death to their policies and places; till, SOCIETY having advanced, laggard CHRISTENDOM itself many a league; these professedly pioneers in the world's redemption were left behind, forced to their dissolution or reconstruction.

What days are these! What enterprises! What energies and activities! It's time for the people of GOD to be up and doing. It's time for Christian men to have confidence in their MASTER, to cease leaning to their own understanding, and, to trust in the living GOD.

Individuals and churches change, are revolutionized, and die. Yes, and the missionary himself might die a thousand times, ere they would, who sent him out,—pledged to remember, to pray for, and to materially sustain him. This work, on which the Christian embarks, is not one of calculation, as men ponder whether they shall succeed in this or that material enterprise; cold, material calculation is against all spiritual success; but purely one of FAITH, with the pledge of all the forces and potencies of OMNIPOTENCE to guide, sustain, and to lead to ultimate triumph,—not demonstrable on the surface, or visible to the naked eye; but, as GOD is true, to be realized. It must come at last, and, to be recognized as wholly this one of FAITH, though the undertaking was inaugurated with the acclaim and "GOD-speed" of millions, and pushed on with the treasures of earth.

Individuals and churches die. Yes. But GOD does not. Nor HE that shall sit on the WHITE THRONE. Nor the spirits of the JUST made perfect; nor ANGELS, nor PRINCIPALITIES, nor POWERS; nor all the seen and unseen potencies of GOD ALMIGHTY; nor have, even, apostolic successors,—those weak things of the world, which GOD hath chosen to confound the mighty.

Sufficient unto the day.—Why take ye thought for the morrow? “O, ye of little FAITH”! Cannot the missionaries and their friends trust GOD?—If they be His children, they will be driven to it at the last. He will take away all their props, bring to nought all their confidences, prove vain all their earthly reliances, and swing them out into the eternities of FAITH to be supported. To such extremity every chosen soul will be brought at last, whether in the working out of its individual rescue, or in that of others through CHRIST. Then, when naked, defenceless, trusting and trustful, it will prevail. As it is with the individual, so it will be with the “two or three,” or more united in His name; having FAITH, and, in His means, they shall triumph.

How firm a foundation, ye saints of the LORD,
Is laid for your FAITH in His excellent WORD!
What more can He say than to you He hath said,
Who unto the SAVIOUR for refuge have fled?

The soul that on JESUS hath leaned for repose,
I will not, I will not desert to his foes;
That soul, though all HELL should endeavor to shake,
I’LL NEVER,—NO, NEVER,—NO, NEVER FORSAKE!

A P P E N D I X .

“The growing and tremendous energy with which certain of these combinations have brought their associated influence to bear on private character and rights, and on the interests of individuals, to their prejudice, for having used the right of private judgment, not in opposing, but simply for not falling in with and abetting these plans, when in any case they have seemed to be of questionable utility. . . . Nobody feels it his duty to oppose, for the cause is good ; every one believes, because every body does ; credit in all statements goes by authority, not by conviction. . . .”

“It is reasonable and philosophical to conclude, that a man of the purest spirit might enter as a leader and governor into the service of these societies, and, in five years time, turn out a managing, skilful politician in that specific province. From the love of doing good, he may have passed entirely to the desire of power and influence, and be principally occupied in contrivances peculiar to the policies of earth. . .”

“The process of corruption . . . in these high officers, and in the societies under their control, is always gradual. The men come into these places ordinarily under the influence of very pure designs ; . . . they are transplanted from a circumscribed to a wide sphere of action and influence ; . . . they are ever concerting schemes for the attainment of their objects ; the economy of social organization for these purposes becomes a study, and themselves adepts ; practice makes perfect ; . . . they attain, finally, not only a high, commanding position in society, but an almost unlimited influence ; and “who,” think they, at last, “can govern the world better than we ? . . . we think it will be safest in our hands.” And they set themselves about it, on the principle that all men have a right to that influence which they can command. They have no scruples ; they have found out that the world must be governed by a few ; that it is all effected by schem-

ing; that perfect honesty and openness are inconsistent with such an art, and impolitic; that the secrets of government must be in the keeping of governors; that the wide public are to be informed only on points which concern them to know, and as they may be convenient instruments of power; that, in view of rival institutions, sects, or parties, all plans are to be formed and executed on principles of policy; and policy becomes, at last, the reigning principle. In spite of themselves, they and their work are transformed; they are not the things they were when they first set out. It is the unavoidable, the irresistible tendency of such organizations in such relations. It can no more be prevented than the course of nature, because it is identical with that course. These men will as necessarily become ambitious and aspiring, grasping at power and loving to wield it, and will as certainly scheme for themselves, as the infant will come to be a man; and observing the scope, and feeling the motives, of the wide field before him, will make the most of it. . . . A few . . . societies, with a few men at their head, govern this land in all that relates to our moral and religious interests; . . . such is the ascendancy of their influence, that their will is irresistible. It is a revival of Jesuitism adapted to our time and circumstances, . . . no man can openly oppose them without the risk of being crushed by their influence. Their eyes are everywhere; they see and understand all movements; and not a whisper of discontent can be breathed, but that the bold remonstrant will feel the weight of their displeasure. The whole community, on whom they rely, are marshalled and disciplined to their will . . . "Is thy servant a dog that he should do such a thing?" Men do not know what they will do when they shall have acquired influence, and, therefore, it is never safe to intrust them with power beyond what is necessary for the best ends of society. . . ."

"JESUS CHRIST gave a commission to a select society, by the principles of which, in their hands, and through their instrumentality, accompanied by the efficacious grace of the Holy Spirit, He designed to bring the world in subjection to Himself."

"The plan and organization of modern Protestant missions are to a great extent defective, and require to be corrected and placed upon the basis of the primitive commission for the conversion of the world . . . the church of CHRIST, as a society, in its own proper organization,

is the only and the very society, under the commission given by JESUS CHRIST, which He has authorized to be employed by His professed disciples for the reformation of morals and manners in the world, and for the gradual and ultimate subjection of all mankind to the laws and principles of the Bible. . . . Christians of our day are disregarding the law of CHRIST, and running into multiform associations of a purely extemporaneous character, detracting from and annihilating the appropriate influence of the church, and intrusting powers in the hands of small associations of individuals, which, till human nature shall be greatly improved, cannot fail to tempt them to tread in the footsteps of the Jesuitical school, as far as they can conveniently go without being the objects of suspicion a power so all-pervading, and so formidable, that nothing, apparently, but some special interference of Providence, can arrest its overwhelming career. It has literally bound the public mind of this country in chains; and there are few that will dare to think for themselves, or to speak what they think The press, with all its various powers, is ever active in the circulation of just such information as may suit the designs of those who govern all Are they aware that CHRIST has but one institution—one organized society on earth—and that is His church,—that He has designed and commissioned this institution to take the lead in the renovation of the world?—that He has reserved the honors of these triumphs for this society alone?—that all the zeal and all the moral power that has been thrown into these other and new organizations, so far as it is pure and good, might and ought to have been invested in the church, under her own proper forms, to give vitality and energy to her operations?—and that this diversion is casting contempt on the Divine commission? Everything of good that can be effected by these organizations could be done in the church; it is setting up other institutions opposed to His; it is employing means which CHRIST has never authorized; it is tasking human invention for novelties, in contempt of Divine appointments; it is introducing a system of man's device, to the prejudice and weakening of GOD'S commissioned agencies; it is tempting the servants of CHRIST by the allurements of power, and leading the hosts of GOD'S elect into fields of political encounter, one against another, by creating a system of operations essentially political; and the end of the whole is, that it degenerates into Jesuitical

maneuverings, and must necessarily bring a painful and calamitous catastrophe on the cause of Christianity. . . . There is no knowing what they will come to; they have in them the elements of perpetual change and of usurpation; those who are fortunate enough to get the lead may keep it, and do what they please, until, peradventure, they shall have got to the end of their race by some public exposure of their misdoings. All history shows that societies of this class are unsafe; at the head of which the first Jesuitical organization of the sixteenth century is a notable and admonitory example. . . .”

“By the existence of these societies, . . . the church is necessarily prevented from acting in this field as a church. Her commission is usurped, and her duties transferred. . . . It cannot be supposed that CHRIST has given to His church a defective commission? And, if any body of Christians calling themselves a church should find themselves deficient in this particular, it behooves them to inquire whether they are properly organized; whether they are upon the true foundation; whether, indeed, they are acting under the primitive and Divine commission.”—*Protestant Jesuitism. Harper Bros.*

An Eastern correspondent of *The Advance*, the Chicago Congregational paper, thus refers to the form of the popular missionary organizations:

“This form is, first, to have a Society, consisting of some thousands of members created by donations of twenty dollars each. But the Society never meets, and in the nature of the case can't meet. And if even, under some excitement, it tries to meet, as in the case of the N. Y. Tract Society, the country members find that the room has been packed by the New York city Ring, or, as in the case of the Bible Society, that all remarks and motions are ruled out of order by the chair, as a security against agitators. Next in rank is a Board of Directors, supposed to be responsible to the Society which never meets, but really a close corporation filling its own vacancies, by a sham election of the Society. Even of the Board of Directors, the majority are dummies, who rarely or never attend the meetings, but whose names and titles are wanted ‘for glory and for beauty;’ so that practically the Society is run by the Secretaries and a little handful of advisers. If now you add what to my knowledge is common law in one of these corporations,

—that each Director is held to be under a sort of Masonic obligation to divulge no abuse in the corporation, however grave, under penalty of “ostracism”—you have as comfortable a nest for hatching of corruptions as could well be contrived.

* * * * *

We have, centered at New York, a great series of societies constructed after the model of the Bible Society, the only constitutional check upon whose managers is in an annual public meeting to hear their reports and elect their successors. This public meeting of the society is not held. In the nature of the case it cannot be held. Each Board of Directors is one of the closest of close corporations, and one of the most odious, for it is an irresponsible, self-perpetuated body under the false pretense of being elected by a great constituency, and accountable thereto. When abuses are discovered, the pressure of the corporate influence to keep them hushed up is too strong to be wholesome. I have known the case of one of the most prominent of these societies, in whose Board of Directors it was held that there was a sort of Masonic obligation on the part of an individual Director to keep secret an abuse which he was unable to get remedied in the Board; and a combined attempt was made to enforce this obligation by social and other penalties.

But I ask, whether it would be possible for the foolishness of the children of light, to contrive a form of organization better fitted to engender, conceal and maintain abuses, than the one commonly adopted for our large charities? A little history of the working of them for fifty years, would contain many sad illustrations of this matter.

The question is, what should be done about it? In the course of time, there will have to be a complete reconstruction.”

Another correspondent of the same paper contributes the following :

“How is the A. H. M. S. governed? If I understand it, there must be some six hundred thousand members of the society.

The payment of a hundred dollars constitutes a Life Director.

Honesty in paying over a bequest of a thousand dollars, without stealing it, also constitutes a Life Director!

The six hundred thousand members assemble annually in (Steinway's Hall, N. Y.!) and there select a President; any number of Vice

Presidents, Treasurer, Auditor, four Secretaries, and fifty Directors, in addition to a multitude of Life Directors who have paid for their office. The number of Life Directors is so large that the catalogue is too expensive to publish. From fifty to a hundred are appointed each year.

The elected Directors (50), and the paid-for Life Directors (say 1,000, or more), together with the officers (about 50), constitute a Board. The quorum of this august and numerous body is, seven members! (*i. e.* upon occasion, six paid officers and one director—an *honest executor*, perhaps, may constitute a quorum!)

This Board then meets and elects an Executive Committee of fourteen, with whom the authority of the whole concern is lodged. Of these fourteen, five are paid officers, and the rest must reside in or near New York.

Let us illustrate by a supposed case :

There are, say, six millions of citizens of the Union by birth.

Any foreigner, by paying a small sum of money can become a citizen, or for a moderate amount, a *Congressman for life*. Any citizen can buy a seat in Congress for life at the same price. In consequence there are, say, 10,000 Congressmen for life.

On the 10th of May annually, the Nation meets in the Senate chamber at Washington and elects, in addition to the 10,000, three hundred annual Congressmen, and a President, and other annual officers.

The three hundred, in addition to the 10,000, and the annual officers, constitute a Board.

The function of this Board is to elect a cabinet (of which the annual officers are *ex-officio* members) who fill their own vacancies and—govern the country!

Here's equal representation for you, and a simple scheme of government.

Yet such a system, if we do not misunderstand the constitution, is that which we call the American Home Missionary Society,—a system in which the vast membership has really no more voice than in the government of Russia.

That it has not killed itself long ago, is due to Divine grace alone. Is it not time, that some steps were taken to reduce this huge and cumbrous farce to something like reason and order?"



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And its Evils.

THE INSTRUMENTALITY

OF

INDIVIDUALS AND CHURCHES

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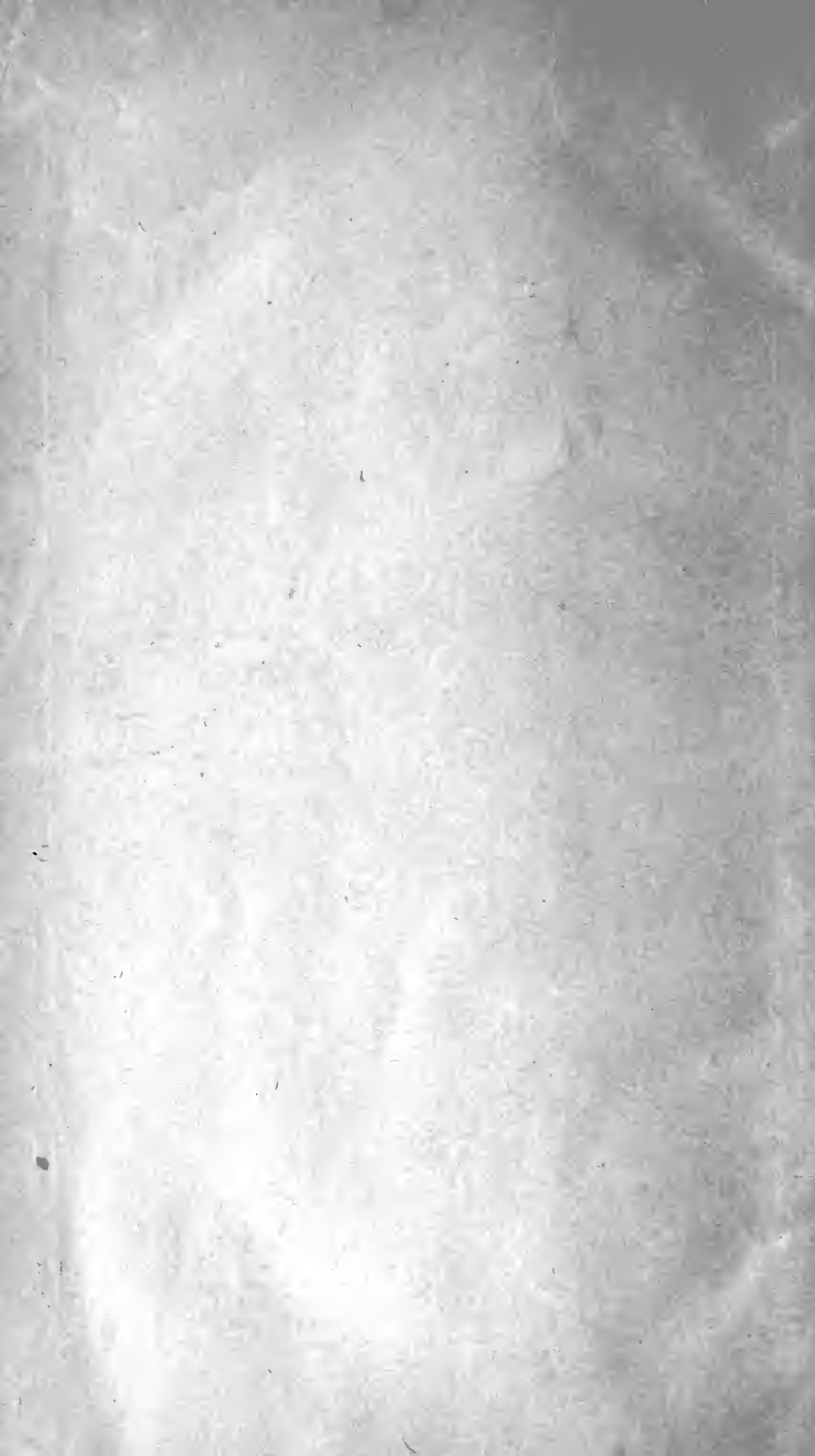
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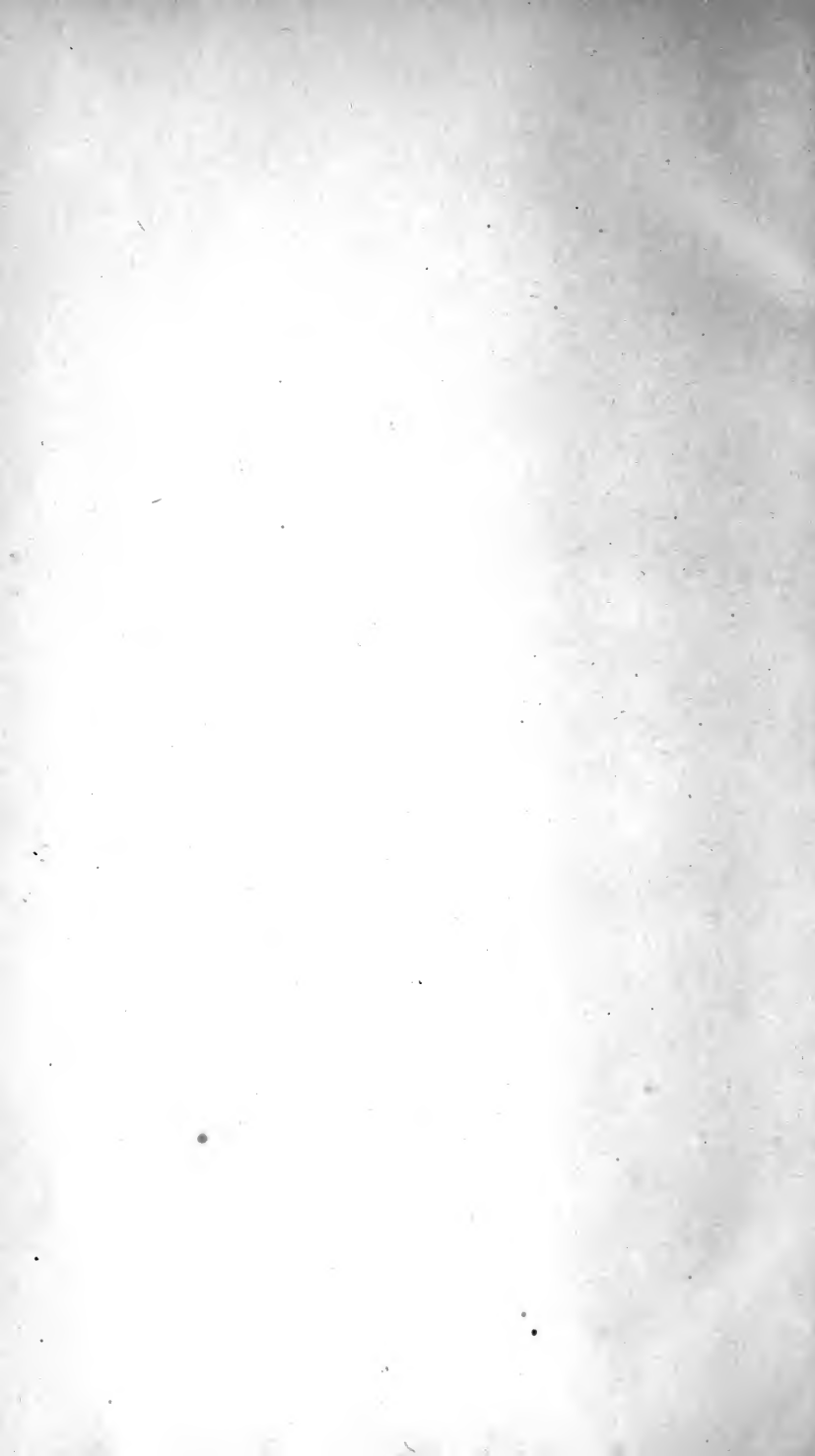
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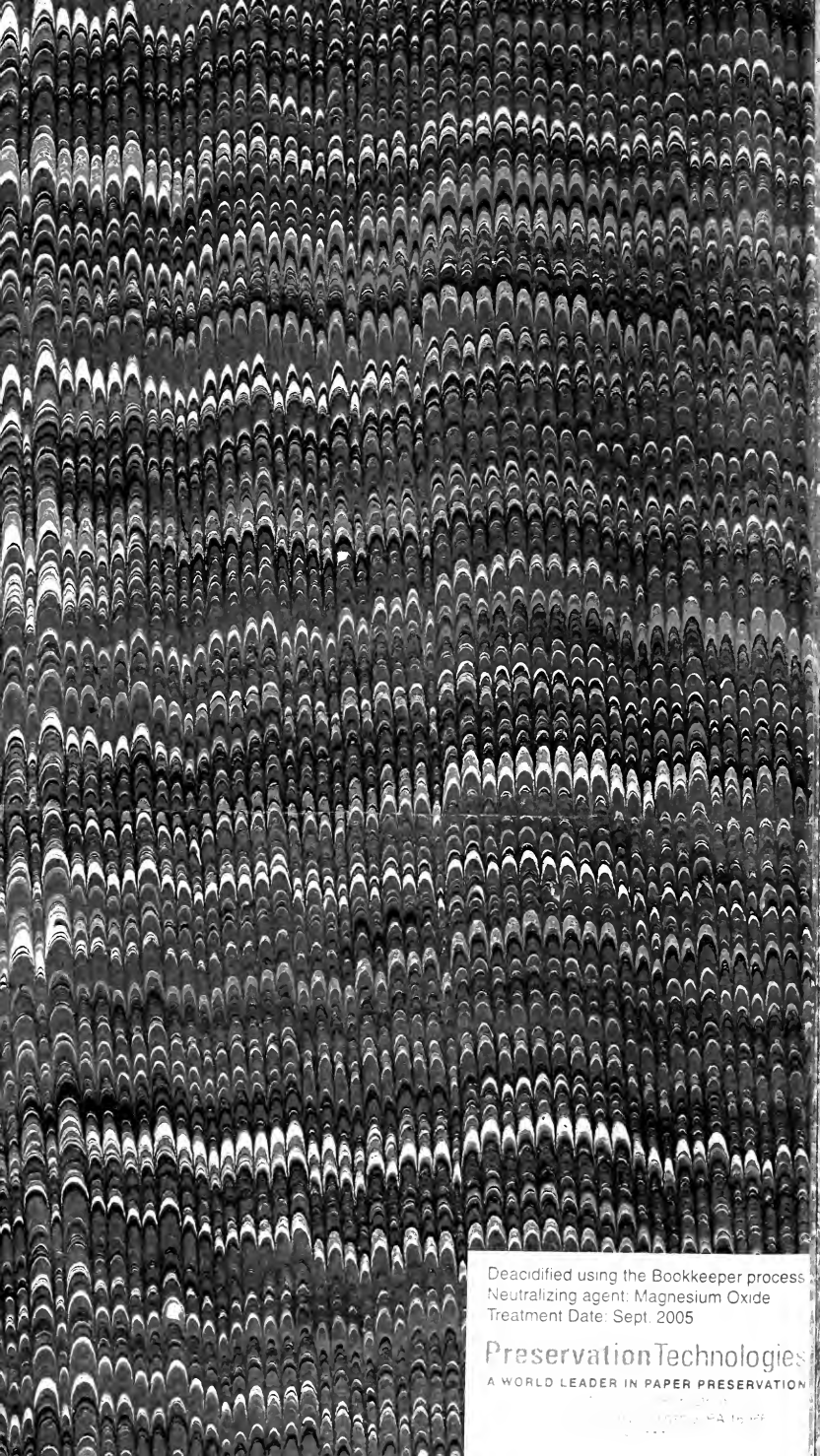








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