

REPORT OF GENERAL SECRETARY, 1886-7.

When a city is besieged by a common enemy, all distinctions, social or sectarian, all idiosyncrasies of personal character, are lost in an united hostility to a common foe; and the force of this statement is intensified a thousand fold when such a foe assails the unarmed citadel which enwraps the immortal possibilities of a child's nature. There was Divine philosophy no less than Divine simplicity in the act of the blessed Lord who "took a child and set him in the midst" of the incipient controversy of religious pride and unworthy jealousy; and the presence of the "Little Child" in our midst has tended, more than any other factor in these latter years, to Christian unity in purpose and effort; and this spirit in its turn has surrounded the tender susceptibilities of childhood with a phalanx of Christian defence and care which, by God's blessing, is defying more and more the stratagem of the World, the Flesh and the Devil. This issue bespeaks at once the aim, and justifies the existence of the Association, and invests the self-sacrifice involved, whether financial or otherwise, with a promise more radiant than almost any other—that of the talents here employed—the Master shall receive His own *with usury*. Even the Civil Government of the world now recognizes a responsibility to lay its hand on the literature and life of society, so as to minimize the power of evil upon the infancy of its citizenship. But "our sufficiency of God," and as the children of to-day hold in their hands the sceptre of the twentieth century, with its measureless possibilities in the extension of Christ's kingdom, it is meet we should "compass the King round *every man with his weapons in his hand* and be with the King when He goeth out and when He cometh in." The Association has but one end in view, viz., the loyalty of our future men and women to Christ and His cause by an intelligent familiarity with the teaching of the Divine Word of God; and it seeks to secure this result:

1. By sustaining a living, active public sentiment as to the vital importance of this spiritual shepherding of the young, both in the home and Sabbath School.
2. By securing united co-operation of the Church of Christ in this work of tending and feeding with the "sincere milk of the Word," the lambs of Christ's flock.
3. By mutual instruction of Sunday School workers in "the things pertaining to the kingdom of God," involving a clearer and more soul-absorbing acquaintance with the Bible and its teaching, and a knowledge of the psychological principles which underlie the communication of Christian truth.

With this ideal of the purpose of the Association, and of the means by which it could be best attained, viz., Stimulation, Organiza-

321 78
88 00
183 56
3 95