

The experiment relative to artificial Missions is now complete, and the result is uniform; failure is the rule, success the exception; and that exception is always accounted for by circumstances. Under David Nasmyth's own management they would generally have succeeded under any circumstances, and in spite of every obstacle; and so will they in the hands of men of kindred character and like capabilities. The practical lesson, therefore, is, that, as far as practicable, the principle of congregational operation should be carried into every department of Christian agency. A Christian church is an organized body, capable of performing, and designed to perform, all manner of evangelical functions necessary to the spread of the gospel and the salvation of men. Such a church, therefore, is to be considered, not as an individual, but as a system—a compound society, branching forth in every direction where work is to be performed in behalf of religious benevolence. There is not one of these various objects appertaining to the local diffusion of Christian knowledge, for which separate societies have been formed, which might not have been far more easily, cheaply, and effectively accomplished by the churches of Christ acting in their individual, organized capacity. Whether those objects relate to sabbath-school instruction—to the farther culture of young people of both sexes—to Bible and tract distribution—to district visitation of the poor in towns and cities, for Scripture reading and exposition—to cottage lecturing and village preaching—or to any other pursuits of a like nature, they can be effectively and permanently prosecuted only upon one principle—the principle of congregational operation. For all these purposes a Christian church, whether Independent,