

ignorant of—children brought up in the haunts of sin and misery. Or, what is still more sad, the children of respectable widows who were left, as the saying is, with a “heavy handfull” of seven or eight children, the poor husband who had been taken from them being perhaps a labourer with 15s. a week. What could that man do for his children? What is the widow to do? Send them to school? Then who is to take care of the younger children? Where shall they be put? She goes to the workhouse and asks assistance, and the answer is—“Oh, certainly; come into the house.” They can say so by law; but this woman cannot go into the house, and perhaps she may screw out of them eighteen-pence a week. What is she to do?—for they must have food. She sends the boys to some factory—to the lucifer match factory, where children get 2s. 6d. a week; and I presume you and I would do the same thing precisely in the same circumstances. Now, the Home Mission in its very nature must interest itself in a vast variety of questions. You cannot deal with one bit of it without dealing with a great number of bits. You cannot deal with ignorance without referring to education, and you cannot deal with education unless you give these children a knowledge of Bible facts. Let these, if you will, be told as drily as you would give to a man going out to India a knowledge of Mahomedism, or as you would give a man the teachings of the tenets of Bhuddism, or as you would give your boys at school a knowledge of classical mythology. They may sit and hear sermons for years, and yet not have any conception of facts. The man I spoke of heard me preach every Sunday for three years, and had not the most distant glimmer of comprehension. You spoke of Moses or Abraham, and he heard the words, but who in the wide earth was Abraham or Moses he had no idea. (Laughter.) It is important that we should try and secure the teaching of facts, at least, in our schools. The first point, then, we have to deal with is extreme ignorance, an ignorance in which the preaching of the minister and the teaching of the missionary are of no avail unless you get hold of them, and instruct them in the A B C of the Bible and religion, and this requires a large agency. What I would suggest to the ministers of large towns and others, is to develop, if possible, such agencies. When the attempt was made with us in Glasgow we found it at first impossible. We assembled meetings of poor working men. I assured those people that they need not be ashamed of past ignorance, for they were not to blame for it. The only thing they had to be ashamed of was that when education was offered, to refuse it. Then I asked every man who could not read to come to the other side of the house; and they all went over. There were more than forty or fifty of them beginning to write for the first time, and they obtained knowledge far more rapidly in reading and writing, and in knowing the Word of God, than if they had been children. And this was done at exceedingly little expense. Even schools for adults fail from two sources. You bring in young boys and girls and you cannot amalgamate them. You must have a distinct school. Then you send to teach the school some old stupid fog—(Laughter)—of a teacher, who has nothing to do. If you would have adult schools to succeed, you must have the crackest teachers, and you must have one teacher to every twenty-five pupils. But that implies pay, and then you are landed on the old story—money.

The next source of our difficulty in the cities that we have to deal with is our extreme poverty. Now, how does this tell? What is the origin of this poverty? I grant you that in many cases it arises from vice—it is the child of vice as well as the parent of vice; but I beg you to notice that there are a very great number in our great cities that come from your country parishes, and that come with honest pride, and industrious and earnest. It is because they have come in health and strength, and have not become accustomed to the strange and shocking atmosphere of the place in which they are compelled, from their small wages, to live, that very often they fall into fever. The father is laid down on a bed of sickness and dies, and perhaps the oldest brother, who is