

us that "there is nothing new under the sun," and unquestionably much of the knowledge which now prevails upon comparatively indifferent subjects was possessed by the ancients. We have gathered the first rudiments of vast and varied information from the records handed down to us from them. In literature the learned heathen of old were certainly our equals, if not our superiors, and in their writings still extant, we trace talents of the most transcendent order. But in all these instances "knowledge" was confined to the few. The many lived and died in degradation. A mental, not less than a political serfdom enchained the vast proportion of mankind, and extension of information to the masses never came within the idea of their superiors, as either right or possible. And after all, what was the "knowledge" even these possessed. With the realities of life, with the prospects of the endless future it was perfectly unacquainted. It never advanced a step beyond the ideal and the fanciful. Not until the "knowledge of Christ" was sent forth was anything really serviceable taught, or a single truth of importance, speaking relatively, proclaimed. But even this knowledge only at first blazed up with brilliant lustre to be dimmed and hidden too soon by the "traditions of men." Those who claimed to be its teachers gradually degenerated till, at length, not only did religion become a farce, but science itself declined, and philosophy died out. None but the "clergy" could so much as read and still fewer write, and these instead of preaching Christ confined themselves to fabulous and superstitious legends. The Sacred Oracle was hidden—buried deep beneath the musty manuscripts of the "fathers," and engulfed beyond the apparent power of recovery.

But, passing from those dark and gloomy mediæval days to the present, how vast the change we behold! The time is now come when knowledge will be had; when it is happily a rare occurrence to find a grown-up man who cannot read. Education, which expands the intellect and fits it for the acquisition of greater "knowledge," is no longer the privilege of the few but the possession of the many. And it is a significant and noteworthy fact that till within the last half century no vast progress in this direction had been ven-

tured—the poor were, comparatively, still left untaught. But it is not in the advancement of mere secular learning, that we recognize the fulfilment of prophecy. There is another and broader fact which meets us everywhere, and which demonstrates that "knowledge" is upon the increase. *Divine* knowledge is circulated, and is producing a mighty moral influence, and although, alas, in too numerous cases, it is but preached and taught "for a witness" amongst men, yet wherever it pierces it opens the way for the diffusion and growth of active human intelligence.

These facts speak for themselves. They force themselves upon the thoughtful mind, as the heralds of the coming end, the fore-runners of that on-speeding day, when "Israel and Judah shall dwell safely," "When the kingdoms of the world shall become the kingdoms of our Lord and of his Christ, and he shall reign forever and ever."

#### BAPTIST "MAY MEETINGS" IN CLEVELAND.

The American Baptist National Convention was held in the "Forest City" in the last week of last month. The attendance was unusually large—at least so we were informed by "some who know." Three great Societies held their anniversaries, and the amount of business done in as many days was something remarkable. First came the meeting of the Publication Society, introduced by a fresh and vigorous sermon on Christian Beneficence from Rev. H. F. Colby, of Ohio. The text (2 Cor. 8:7) was regarded as suggesting the thought that Christ's call for his people's money is a test of their discipleship: It gives them (1) An opportunity of showing their love for him, (2) An opportunity to glorify him, (3) An opportunity of bringing good to their own souls. We were glad to learn that the Society requested the sermon for publication. The Society's income for the year was, in round numbers, \$305,000. Decidedly the most striking feature of the Report was the statement that owing to a princely act of generosity on the part of Mr. Wm. Bucknell, a mortgage of \$50,000 on the building in Philadelphia had been paid at maturity, thus freeing the property from debt. In these "hard times" the effect of such

an announcement is little less than startling. The meetings of the Publication Society were full of interest throughout. We were particularly pleased with the proceedings of the closing session, the addresses of breth. Dr. Hewitt of Ill., Z. Grenell of Mich., and Dr. Anderson of Chicago University,—on the press in its relation (1) to denominational growth, (2) to denominational unity, (3) to the development of christian character—being all that could be desired. A very high place was assigned, in all these respects, to the religious periodical press.

Then followed the Anniversary of the Home Mission Society, occupying the whole of Wednesday. In one sense the meetings of this body were the *highlight* of all. Decided differences of opinion existed on more than one point, and these were expressed with "great plainness of speech." A paragraph in the Report of the Board, "reflecting", in courteous terms, upon the action of the Woman's Home Mission Society in declaring themselves independent, led to more than one brief but vigorous debate, strong men saying their strong things on both sides. But,—and this is noteworthy and praiseworthy—there were no personalities, or displays of temper, such as we have too often witnessed elsewhere. The brethren acted the part of christian gentlemen, honestly differing, respecting each other, and carefully abstaining from speaking a single wounding word. Another stirring episode was brought about by Dr. J. D. Fulton, who took exception to the policy of the Society in its work among the Freedmen at the south. In this case a colored brother entered the lists, and the doughy doctor was routed "horse and foot," to the—for some reason—*peculiar* satisfaction of the spectators. The Freedmen and Indians appear to be objects of special interest to the Society at the present time. It is greatly to be regretted that its debt has increased, and now amounts to more than \$45,000. During the day and evening excellent addresses were made by several brethren.

We have hardly left ourselves room to say a word concerning the Foreign Missionary Union. The proceedings of this noble society opened with a telling speech by the President, Rev. Dr. Robinson of Brown University, in the course of which