

type of a primitive Waldensian to be the Bible-reader, who goes from place to place, from village to village, from city to city, carrying with him the pearl of great price. With what fidelity and self-abnegation they fulfilled this humble but sacred mission their enemies even bear witness, for they testify that the men frequently committed whole books of Scripture to memory, and often sealed their testimony with their blood. But of this hereafter.

T. H.

Paris, Dec. 7th, 1883.

SHOULD WE HAVE A PRESBYTERIAN PUBLISHING HOUSE?

MR. EDITOR, In my last letter upon this subject I endeavoured to show the need we have for this institution in connection with our Church. With your permission I shall devote this communication to showing what kinds of work the publishing house if established might be expected to undertake.

In the first place there is a good deal of printing and publishing connected with the running of our ecclesiastical machinery. We have the Assembly Minutes, and the minutes of the various Synods; we have the reports of the different schemes of the Church, and a great many of our congregations are adopting the plan of printing their own annual reports. A large proportion of this work would fall to be executed by the Assembly's Publishing House. True, this work may be as well done by private printing firms; but if there is any profit arising from doing this kind of work there is surely no good reason why the Church should not reap that profit. The establishment of a publishing house would make it possible for the Church to do its own printing and to save whatever profits would be secured by private printers if they did the work. Still further it appears to me that the amount of printing and publishing connected with the working of our Church's schemes might with advantage be greatly increased. In the Home Mission, the French Mission, and the Lumber Mission operations the distribution of tracts and leaflets might be employed to a greater extent than at present; and special tracts for our special fields which would be peculiarly interesting to the people occupying them might profitably be prepared. The pioneers in the new settlements of the Dominion and the numerous winter inhabitants of our pine tree forests are placed in peculiar circumstances; and it is not difficult to see that kinds of pamphlet literature might be prepared specially for these classes of people which would be particularly interesting to them and be the medium of conveying the Gospel so as both to enlighten the mind and reach the heart. This literature, however, belongs rather, to the second class of work to be done by the publishing house, to which I now refer.

The second kind of work to be done by the proposed publishing house might be described as denominational literature. In connection with missionary operations there is need of such literature. Multitudes of our people live in remote parts of the country, are thinly settled, far remote from the ordinary means of grace, or can be reached by those means only at special seasons of the year. To them the printed page might take the place of the spoken sermon. Books of devotion and instruction specially provided for these "regions beyond" might be greatly blessed.

Our Sabbath school literature requires attention. There is a great deal of such literature extant, but, as everyone knows, not always of the highest order. Our Church has already admitted this by the fact of making a selection from current literature of books found to be suitable. The next step in the natural order would be to publish at the cheapest possible paying rates such books as are found suitable, either from already existing literature or from the original productions of Canadian authors, who should be encouraged to write for the benefit of our Sabbath school children.

Not less important is the congregational library, which, however, is at present altogether unprovided for in our ecclesiastical machinery. Especially in country districts where good books cannot easily be got is this necessary. In country and village congregations it appears to me that one of the most important means of cultivating an intelligent Christian life would be to provide a good, well-selected congregational library and establish a system by which the people young and old would be encouraged to read the books. The taste for reading in the country and in small country villages where the sensa-

tional events of city life are unknown is comparatively easily cultivated. And a reading, intelligent congregation is a sphere of labour which any minister should be ambitious to have. In Canada we are particularly deficient in what we may call distinctively Presbyterian literature, and our people need it greatly. I do not believe in cultivating an exclusive bigoted spirit amongst our people—for from it; but it is surely reasonable that Presbyterians should know why they are such, and what has been their past history, and what are their relations to other Christian bodies of different names, and what are the Christian principles which they hold in common with others, and what are the principles which distinguish them from others. And yet how few of the multitudes of Presbyterians in Canada have intelligent conceptions upon these points.

A third class of literature which the publishing house might be the means of bringing into existence in Canada is of a more general kind. It is to be presumed that there are professors, ministers, and members of our Canadian Church, who are capable of producing books which are worth being communicated to the world. I do not know that our general ministry is inferior in average ability and intelligence to that of other Christian countries or bodies. I do not believe that our professoriate is inferior to that which is found elsewhere. And hence I feel justified in concluding that if our publishing facilities were adequate we could contribute our fair share of the living thoughts which are given to the world through the press. Now there are but few private publishers in Canada who are willing to undertake publishing risks, and unless authors are willing to stand the cost themselves they have either to give up the idea of publishing or publish outside of Canada. This is not as it should and might be; but unless our Church undertakes the risks of publishing I fear it will be a long time before our Presbyterian would-be authors will enjoy satisfactory facilities for giving to the world the best results of their labours. If it be asked Can a Church undertake such a task with success? the best way of answering this question is to point to the Methodist Book Room of Toronto and the Presbyterian Board of Publication of Philadelphia.

Finally the musical literature of our Church would form another important class of work to be undertaken. The Psalter and Hymnal of the Church will always require to be printed in great abundance and supplied to the people in varying styles. This work alone if done by the Church would involve a great deal of labour and also secure a great deal of profit.

This letter is my last, I have endeavoured to lay before your readers what I think is an important desideratum. Perhaps soon it may be brought before the Church in a more formal way. ROBERT JARDINE.

GOSPEL WORK.

MESSRS. MOODY AND SANKEY IN LONDON.

Perhaps the most noteworthy feature of the Wandsworth meetings was the efforts made to bring in "outsiders." Mr. Moody made strenuous efforts, with the willing help of the workers, to accomplish this, and their efforts have not been without success. Professing Christians, and church or chapel goers generally, were urged to take advantage of the afternoon Bible Readings and to absent themselves from the evening gatherings, thus leaving room for those whose daily avocations prevent their early attendance. The Bible Readings have therefore been larger than during the previous week, and have been times of much spiritual power and refreshing from the presence of the Lord. The half-hour prayer-meeting that follows the address Mr. Moody declares to be the most solemn of all the engagements of the week. All who have any personal burden, or concern for the salvation and sanctification of those dear to them, are encouraged to present their petitions. Certainly, nothing could be more touchingly impressive than the stream of requests that comes from all parts of the assembly at these prayer-meetings. One day Mr. Moody was specially moved by the requests presented by children on behalf of drunken fathers. "We are hearing from all quarters of men being blessed. I believe it is God answering the prayers of His children at these meetings."

Those who wished to secure a seat at the evening meetings favourable for sight and hearing, have had to be on the spot about an hour before the advertised time for commencing. But this, as Mr. Moody well knows and frequently says, is just what cannot or will not be done by the very class he most wishes to reach. Many working men will come dropping into the hall at the last moment, and if all the seats are taken up, probably they do not feel sufficient interest to stand

through the service in a remote corner of the hall. Even if they do, the distance from the preacher is so great that he stands little chance of bringing the truth to bear upon them with effect. To obviate this a plan has been adopted that has evidently worked well. Several rows of seats in the very front of the central section are reserved specially for working men. As they arrive they are passed up by the stewards and seated right under the eye of the speaker. From the appearance of those who filled up these reserved seats at the evening meetings last week, no reasonable doubt could be entertained that they were the very sort wanted. In their every-day working garb, and mostly innocent of all acquaintance with toilet requisites, they were probably in nine cases out of ten those who never darken the door of church or chapel from one year's end to another. The free and easy nature of the preliminary service of song soon sets them at their ease, albeit they look rather awkward and shy at first. A few friendly words from Mr. Moody, or a little bit of musical drill, made them feel quite at home, and secured their attention for the evening.

While these rough, hard-fisted and rather grimy-looking fellows evidently enjoyed the singing of the Gospel hymns, comparatively few of them chimed in—a sure proof that they were not *habituals* of any religious service. Mr. Sankey and his helpers did their best to interest and impress these men. Then Mr. Moody's sturdy, vigorous exhortations and appeals have been such as they could easily grasp and understand; his words did not go over the head of the dullest of them, but struck home with wonderful directness and power. In some of these discourses one could not fail to notice the dexterous way in which the evangelist appealed to the common sense of his hearers, convincing them by the *reductio ad absurdum* process of reasoning. When expatiating one evening on the scripturalness of sudden conversion, or instant salvation, he gave a supposed conversation between an anxious inquirer and one of those "modern philosophers" who object to evangelical views of conversion. To be consistent with the theory of "gradual conversion," this philosopher's advice to a man who had been in the habit of stealing, say £100 a year, would be to reduce the amount by one-half the next year; thus in process of time, he would be converted! These illustrations, if somewhat grotesque, were effective in paving the way for the enforcement of the truth that a man must thoroughly, and at once, break with sin, if he would enter into the kingdom of God.

On Friday evening Mr. Moody preached on "Excuses." His burning words had a wonderful effect in cutting the ground from under the feet of all who seek to postpone their acceptance of God's invitation to be present at the Marriage Supper of the Lamb. During the twelve years of his evangelistic labours he said he had probably heard as many excuses as most men; he could not say that he had ever found one that was more reasonable than those offered by the three men mentioned in the parable of our Lord. One of the popular "excuses" offered by those who are pressed to accept this invitation is that the Christian life is a hard and gloomy one. "I would like," exclaimed Mr. Moody, "to take the most faithful follower of the devil in all London, and place him on this platform alongside of an experienced servant of the Lord Jesus Christ; let the electric light be turned on them, and their very faces would soon tell us who had been serving the hardest master. Those who have never served Jesus Christ are not capable of judging; the men who have known both sides are the men to tell which is the best." I'd like to ask every Christian man here if he has found Christ to be a hard Master." To this challenge there came a good many negative responses. "You seem to say it rather faintly," said the speaker. Whereupon there were stentorian shouts of "No!" "No!" "I have worn Christ's yoke," continued Mr. Moody, "about twenty-five years, and I declare I do not know that I have got it on, it is so light." Another popular "excuse" mentioned was the lack of moral courage to confess Christ. The searching words of the preacher on this point found their mark in one case at least that was unmistakably revealed in the after-meeting. A young person to whom one of the workers spoke, was trembling from head to foot with emotion, inasmuch that she seemed to have lost the power of utterance. The worker ultimately discovered that the way of salvation was perfectly familiar to the one who was so troubled, but she lacked the courage to take a bold stand for Christ before her friends and neighbours. This after-meeting was one of the best and largest of the Wandsworth Mission.