

*Address of the Executive Committee of the British American Book & Tract Society to the Christian Public.*

#### ORIGIN OF THE SOCIETY.

A society bearing the above name, has been recently formed for the purpose of disseminating religious truth throughout our land. The *American Tract Society* extended its operations into this Province in July 1863, employing that year one colporteur; the next, eight; the next, twelve; this year (1867) ten, beside the Superintendent. More than twenty thousand dollars worth of its publications were circulated, a considerable part of which were in grants to the destitute. In the prosecution of its work many waste places were explored, and numerous facts revealed, of families and neighborhoods living without the gospel. A deeper interest was thus awakened in Missionary Colportage, and the circulation of Religious Books and Tracts as a means of spreading the gospel among the unevangelized masses. In 1866 the churches of Halifax agreed to co-operate with the Society in its benevolent work, by contributing one thousand dollars in support of six additional colporteurs. Early in this year (1867) the Society intimated, that at the termination of its engagement with the churches and the colporteurs employed, its work in this Province would be closed, the wide and destitute field in the South and West requiring all their means. The committee and officers proposed that the churches here should organize a society, to continue the same work, wisely suggesting that an institution of the kind, owned and conducted by the Christian community of the Provinces, would command more general sympathy and co-operation, and thus be more extensively useful. This proposal was acted upon. Several preliminary meetings have been held, and a constitution prepared, the Society was fully organized August 2, 1867.

#### OBJECTS OF THE SOCIETY.

Its object, as defined in the constitution, is to "diffuse a knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ, as the Redeemer of sinners and to promote the interests of vital godliness and sound morality, by the circulation,—through colportage and other means,—of Religious Books and Tracts, calculated to receive the approbation of all evangelical christians."

#### PLAN OF OPERATIONS.

The Society's publications will be circulated—

1. From their Depository, as a central source of supply, for clergymen, Sabbath-schools, families, local Tract Societies, voluntary tract distributors, and colporteurs.

2. By Colporteurs,—men of earnest active piety and prudence, of love to Christ and souls, seeking out the destitute, carrying the gospel to them in the printed truth, and by personal prayerful effort.

3. By Local Tract Societies,—wherever Christians will unite in forming them,—and by the voluntary efforts of Christians in behalf of the perishing around them.

#### CHARACTER AND PRINCIPLES.

It is a *Union Society*; combining the efforts and enlisting the co-operation of Christians of every name, for the dissemination of those fundamental and soul-saving truths on which they are agreed, such as, "man's native sinfulness,—the purity and obligation of the law of God,—the true and proper Divinity of our Lord Jesus Christ,—the necessity and reality of His atonement and sacrifice,—the efficiency of the Holy Spirit in the work of renovation,—the free and full offers of the gospel and the duty of men to accept it,—the necessity of personal holiness—as well as an everlasting state of rewards and punishment beyond the grave."

Its work is *missionary* in its nature, striving to do good to all men as it shall have opportunity, but carrying the gospel to the perishing as its special object. seeking them out in the highways and hedges, not waiting for them to come for it. *It is benevolent in principle and aim*, seeking simply to do good to souls, supplying the needy gratuitously with saving truth, calling out the voluntary efforts of Christians,—its colporteur work and grants sustained by Christian beneficence, and its publications sold as nearly as possible at cost. It is a combination of the great instrumentalities, printed truth and prayerful personal effort for souls. Either of these, singly, with the Divine blessing, has great influence for good. But united the one helping the other, their power is vastly increased.

#### NEED FOR SUCH AN INSTITUTION.

That such a work, as is thus undertaken, is *necessary*, must be obvious to every Christian who will consider such facts as these;—There are many neighborhoods in our land that are very destitute with respect to the public ordinances of religion. One such had no Sabbath service for a period of eleven years. There are numbers of families in almost every christian community, who do not avail themselves of these means of grace, when within their reach. Hundreds of families are found living without the word of God. In one neighborhood eleven out of twenty families had no part of the Bible. There are thousands of families that have almost no religious reading. There is a sad state of ignorance in the minds of multitudes respecting the only way of salvation. There are great numbers of children and youth growing up without any adequate religious instruction. There are thousands of impenitent ones around us treading in the "broad road," who too often have reason to say, "No man careth for my soul." Such facts show the absolute necessity there is for united earnest Christian effort, co-operating with the ministry, in disseminating the truth, seeking to