

SABBATH-SCHOOL UNION.

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THE

Second Annual Report

OF THE COMMITTEE

OF THE

Nova-Scotia Sabbath School Union.

FOR THE YEAR 1842.

HALIFAX.

PRINTED AT THE CHRIS. MESSENGER OFFICE.

1842.

REPORT.

THE Committee of the Nova Scotia Sabbath School Union, beg to Report as follows:—

In presenting this their second annual Report, your Committee have of necessity but little to say of the actual results of the Society's labours during the short period of its existence. It shall be their main object by reference to kindred Institutions, and by the exhibition of some general considerations of some magnitude, to place before you the various aims, and tendencies, and real susceptibilities, which must be regarded as involved in its constitution. And it will hardly be necessary to caution any who have not apparently apprehended these, or found it easy to discern much present utility in its movements, to suspend their judgment, until some of the measures proposed for securing its more efficient operation are put in execution. If this last should not unfortunately take place, it must still be borne in mind that no fair estimate can then be taken of its character as a benevolent Institution; it can only prove that its designs are not carried out, and its capabilities, none the less real in existence, not developed.

RESULTS.

It is deemed sufficient on the present occasion, to give an abstract merely of the monetary transactions of the society, with the intention of preparing a full account of the same as soon as circumstances admit.

Books have been issued from the Depository to the amount of about £200. These have gone over almost every part of the Province. Beyond which a considerable quantity is now lying at the Depository, and £30 sterling has been expended in England, the returns for which are now anxiously looked for. With much pleasure your Committee have it to state, that the Resolution of the Society at their last meeting has been carried out in making application for grants, and the English S. S. Union kindly sent with the returns received from them, elementary books to the value of £20 sterling, which with our present limited funds it was thought advisable not to dispose of gratuitously, the prices of the whole being lowered in preference. Occasionally, however, trifling presents have been made to the destitute. It is also confidently expected that, an application now made to the London Tract Society, and a renewed application for aid to the S. S. Union, will prove successful. As soon as any interesting facts and statements could be gathered in our progress, to give benevolent Societies in Great Britain and elsewhere a concern for our advancement, we might hope for valuable assistance from such a source.

The number of Life Directors is now four, of Life Members ten.

It is comparatively useless to give the results of what was reported to the Union from the various schools last year, since it was very far from being complete. As far as ascertained the number of scholars was 1126, the number of teachers 160, the number of vols. in libraries 1700. Before any regularity can be secured in these Reports, every school must be properly organized, and furnished with officers who shall see them attended to, and represented, if possible, by delegates. It is upon such statements as these that we can base any application for aid,

or by means of them be sensible of our progress. If the schools were all supplied with minute books, and records preserved of all that is important in their history, and portions of these presented annually to the Union, something more interesting, possibly, than dry details and abstract statements might appear in the present report of your Committee.

It is hardly necessary to assert, that having had almost no agents at work during the year has been a most serious defect in the operations of your Society. It is only reiterating the experience of all similar Societies. Wherever this has been the case, their Reports invariably tell of evil consequences. We must not omit, however, to acknowledge the exertions of several of the students at Horton during their winter vacation, which, for the time spent, were very serviceable, and moreover, in every case gratuitous. In a retrospect of the whole, your Committee feel convinced, that an impulse has been given to the S. S. cause in this country within a very few years, and very considerably through the influence of this society, which cannot easily subside.

MEASURES FOR ADVANCEMENT.

Having now with sufficient fullness as we think laid before you the past transactions of this Society, your Committee next proceed to that, which to them assumes a much greater magnitude, the measures to be adopted for the further enlargement and efficiency of our operations; though it is hoped that what has already been done will not seem altogether insignificant, but, under the very limited circumstances of the case, quite the reverse, and even so full of promise as not to conflict at all with the more expanded views which may in the course of our remarks be taken. And if the suggestions now to be made may seem to have been offered before, the existing demand for them must excuse.

DEPOSITARY.

1.—A matter of prime importance in any such society always is, to have the Depository well controlled. Very possibly the extent of the duties which belong to it are very imperfectly apprehended. Be this as it may, until some person of suitable qualifications is found who can devote a large share of his time and thoughts to the business of the society, it can never prosper much. The present incumbent finds his other calls to interfere, and his services, as being rendered gratuitously could not be looked upon as permanent. It is true of every important enterprise, and true of this, and true of this emphatically, as being a new thing in a new country, that no considerable magnitude can ever attach to it, unless more than a small amount of reflection is bestowed upon it. No one at all conversant with such matters can be at a loss to apprehend the force of this remark. And in our present position there is probably more depending on the individual who holds this office than upon any other.

PLACE FOR DEPOSITORY.

2.—It is also submitted whether a more suitable place for the issue of books could not be found, since any thing to secure despatch and safety in this particular is of high consequence.

NEED OF FUNDS.

3.—The demand for funds in such a Society as the present is so obvious that your Committee might suppose it quite unnecessary to attempt to establish this point in full (particularly as the same thing has been done before, and the reiteration of it is not in every respect agreeable) were it not the fact, that this question is not unfrequently asked still, what need is there of funds. We shall once more enumerate these claims.

PAY OF OFFICERS.

1.—To carry out the measures proposed for the efficient management of the Depository, it cannot be supposed longer possible to induce any person, suitable for the office, to devote the amount of attention which is demanded for it, even in the existing posture of affairs, without remuneration. At least your Committee are assured, that the labour thus far bestowed in that Department must now cease. And a complete barrier to advancement is set up, unless some compensation is provided for the future occupant, which shall enable him to throw himself into the undertaking with all necessary freedom, and diligence, and ardour. It is useless to go into particulars for the sake of exhibiting in full the duties which are required. Suffice it to say that they are known to be of such a character as will justify the utmost extent of what has been urged on this head. The pay of Agents also is a similar claim and needs no urging.

PURCHASE OF BOOKS.

2.—It is very well known that it is quite impossible to keep such a supply of books in the Depository as will admit of satisfactory selection, and promptness in issuing without funds to a considerable extent; and unless satisfaction can be afforded in this department, the whole undertaking must be decried and left to neglect.

REDUCTION OF PRICES.

3.—The charges accruing in the purchase of books often make it desirable to reduce the price below cost and charges, which makes a loss to the Union of course.

PROCURING OF GRANTS.

4.—No grants can be expected from other societies unless we show some disposition to help ourselves, and first advance to some extent.

SUPPLIES FOR THE DESTITUTE.

5.—Neither without funds have we it in our power to aid the destitute among ourselves, which must be extremely desirable even now, and is becoming more and more so.

PUBLISHING OPERATIONS.

6.—All idea of publishing operations must be abandoned, either for reprints, or the publication of original works, than which, ultimately, few things of more consequence to our interests can be attempted by us. Beside the cheapness which may thus be secured for our books, and the value of copy rights, what more interesting, or conducive to give an impulse to the S. S. cause, than to call forth native talent in its furtherance, and preserve all the essential S. S. occurrences among us for the benefit of the world? indeed we owe our share to the great mass of S. S. intelligence.

CALL FOR AGENTS.

4.—If such is the demand for funds in the undertaking to which we have now set our hands, the question which ever treads upon the heel of this is, in what manner shall they be obtained. And the answer is at hand, by efficient agents. And if it is asserted that agents without pay can be found to act in different places, the reply again is, when any thing is consigned to so many hands, their exertions cannot be depended upon; which fact the experience of all such societies has again and again testified, if any were necessary to corroborate it in our own history. Local Agents, nevertheless, to co-operate with one or more general agents, and subject to their supervision and direction, are highly useful, and particularly so when the sums to be collected are so small as in the present case, and the number of applications consequently increased. Beside the collection of funds, an efficient agency is designed to disseminate information

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on the subject of S. Schools, and assist in their formation and establishment. A person independent may often interpose in such cases, and set a Sab. School on foot, which might not otherwise, from want of requisite knowledge, or from prevailing apathy, or from the absence of unanimity, have existence.

OTHER SOCIETIES.

In pursuance of their present duty, your Committee should take much pleasure in detailing at some length the plans of procedure, and the results of labour, in the S. S. Institutions of other countries; but this, they regret to say, the failing to obtain any late intelligence, though often sought, prevents their doing. The object chiefly aimed at in this, however, would be to give the impression with regard to the society the claims of which we are now met to advocate, that so far from its being a needless undertaking, or a scheme of narrow limits, and hence insignificant, or a project untried, and hence hazardous, or chimerical, it is directly the reverse of all this, and bears on its front the marks of real utility, and substantial greatness. Though its pigmy dimensions may seem paltry indeed when compared with the giant stature of kindred compacts, and possibly our own efforts may be regarded as a hopeless imitation of others which is destined to fail, yet it is much desired that the day of small things should not be despised, and confidently believed that it actually stretches forward in its scope and tendencies into what is equally or more imposing, since they in like manner, may point back to a beginning of humble pretensions. At least it might establish this conviction, that S. S. Unions are not to be assailed or argued against with propriety, and also have the effect of cautioning any who may be so disposed, lest, in so doing, they discover entire ignorance of the great religious enterprises of the present day.

GENERAL CONSIDERATIONS.

Your Committee have also thought that it might be productive of some good, if now, at the close of what is more strictly their report, some general considerations should be offered on one or two topics of importance which lead off at different points from the subject in hand to more extended fields of observation. And they feel persuaded that in the comparative infancy and freshness of the whole S. S. undertaking in this country, the indulgence will be granted them to occupy somewhat further the time of the Society. They shall make it their aim to be as brief as possible, and present with effect several matters of absorbing interest, such as can be introduced in a S. S. Report. For allowing ourselves some scope for reflection, nothing of more extended or commanding importance could be entered upon than is found in the appropriate fields of our investigation. If void of interest, the defect cannot consist in any degree in the nature of the subjects themselves.

This Society having in view, mainly, the religious instruction of the young, first of all your attention is invited to a consideration of the *immense value of enlightened piety*. The position that religious persons should be men of intelligence is really so obvious as to need no proof; it addresses itself to the plainest dictates of our reason and of common sense. No part of truth admits of wider range of thought or scope of action than religion, and to present only the darkest understandings and meanest intellects from the human race to creation's Lord would be an insult to his majesty, and the foulest libel on man himself. It may serve to enhance our estimation of its worth, if the advantages resulting from enlightened piety are formally stated.

1. It is of vital consequence that men should be taught plainly the way of salvation. This cannot be too clear-

ly set before them. Multitudes are prevented from embracing the gospel of peace from ignorance of its character. Especially in this world of spiritual darkness, where error and delusion so much abound, and men's minds are so ready to yield to them, it is of infinite moment that the plain unvarnished declarations of the Bible should be every where made known.

2. It follows directly from this, that in order to effect the object just stated, that of imparting the truths of the gospel to others when embraced, a wide diffusion of Christian knowledge is desirable. That teachers of divine truth should themselves be well furnished therewith, is abundantly manifest. Apart from the ruinous consequences of leading men into error in matters of so much moment, who could calculate the immense accession which would accrue to the cause of truth, if all who avow it were able to contend earnestly for the faith once delivered to the saints? If any one measure is of more consequence than another for the universal prevalence of the Christian religion, it is that of having every member of Christ's kingdom so established in the doctrines of revelation, and impregnated with their truth, as to be a constant witness to their reality. Whereas many are now almost blanks in the world, and move only in the narrow dark circle of their own ignorance, with such improvement as Christian instruction can impart, they might be sources of light, life and joy, to multitudes around them. Every mind is susceptible of expansion, every man is capable of improvement, and he who refuses to fill as large a sphere of usefulness in the world as possible, is sinning against his Creator. The obligation resting on the preacher of the Gospel, and that which devolves on every private member of the church, may differ in degree but not in kind; they are both bound to make known the truth, some in one way, some in another,

some directly, some more frequently through the medium of others, but all are bound to some extent. The immense ignorance of the Scriptures which actually prevails among professed believers of the Bible, their consequent want of qualifications to defend or disseminate its truths, and the comparative uselessness of their lives, almost reduces their position to a nullity, brings discredit on the whole christian body, and imparts untold seriousness to what we are saying.

3. Enlightened piety is valuable, that plans of conduct and principles of action may be correct. The general importance of this no one can dispute. Dismissing all other considerations, we shall only institute a comparison between impulse and sound principle as motives to religious action. There can be little doubt that a vast number of individuals in the christian church act mainly from impulse, and since the application of this is very wide, and it affects very largely all of our religious movements, this point will merit your attentive consideration.

To state it in few words, those who act from impulse are influenced very much by present feeling in their line of conduct, without reference to the fixed requirements of the Bible. Now we are not going to object to feeling, be assured; there cannot be too much of it, with the grand proviso that it is right feeling; and religion is susceptible of the highest possible intensity of feeling. It is a sea of feeling, where the sensibilities of the soul may unfurl all their canvass to the breeze. But what we wish to insist upon, and most strenuously, is, that there is something superior to feeling, which is expected to purify, and sustain, and control it. That is a reasoning conscience, guided by the Word of God. In other words, some unchanging principle is present to the mind. The liability of impulse, as being a movement of our own

minds, is to be uncertain, either totally wrong in its nature, or, if right, irregular in degree, too strong or too weak for the occasion, and so leading persons to extremes, or entirely absent, all of which particulars if enlarged upon would show any character which is based upon it as a ground of action, to be radically deficient in most of the substantial elements of greatness, or certainly of usefulness. Of principle this cannot be asserted; if correct, the reverse exists. It is a prime characteristic of truth, to be immutable, and he who is guided by it without any reference to existing feelings, and conforms to its dictates with the most unbending uniformity, whatever consequences may threaten to come out of it, has an unflinching dependence for his own stability, and must inevitably cast his mind in such a mould, and form himself upon such a model, as will give a definite and fixed shape to his whole character. The one indeed may sometimes blaze up with much brightness, and the sparks of his kindling burn loud and high, while for the time the other may scarcely put on more than the humble glowworm's light; but in a little time that of the former goes out in total darkness, leaving the other to shine on "brighter and brighter unto the perfect day." The one may sometimes do great feats, but as easily neutralize their useful effects by a reverse plunge, with this addition, that the resulting effect is far worse than if no effort had been made. The other, in a noiseless, unostentatious career, is demonstrating to the world that what he sets his hand to is growing broader and higher in genuine utility. The character of the one is tottering to its base, or composed of fragments scattered here and there in the greatest confusion; that of the other is laid together in a substantial structure of increasing greatness and durability. In cases where any considerable fixedness of conduct is called for, as steady patient

planning, and plodding industry, and long continued regularity, the former will invariably falter, commit some egregious blunders, and leave confusion behind him.— To the latter, as of tried steadfastness, is confided the “marshalling of affairs,” the conduct of all trying emergencies, and the melting down of long protracted difficulties.

And the application of this to the progress of Christianity is easy. The man of unbending integrity and unwavering uniformity in the Christian course, is invaluable. No one, on the other hand, is a more deadly foe to religion, than the man who mixes up in himself the extremes of intense ardour at one time, and utter inactivity at another; nothing has a stronger tendency to make men feel that religion is a fiction. The stronger the fervour first shown, the more pernicious the succeeding coldness; the higher the ascent, the greater the downfall; the more flattering the first appearances, the more fatal the reaction. The steady streams of benevolence, insignificant or half concealed as they may be, are those which accumulate far the most. Indeed, if the charities of any christian body are brought to play in one incessant flow on any given object, we know not where to set a limit to their power. Nothing finally spreads a surer blasting and mildew over any part of christian conduct than the habit of sitting down in perfect listlessness till the impulse from some source comes along. This has the most direct tendency to obliterate all feeling, and perpetuate the contrary; while the surest way to have feeling is to engage at once in the desired course of action. What, for instance, would become of christianity if the appointments of the pulpit were left to vary with the feeling of the minister? and what desolation pervades a prayer meeting when one, another, and another, refuses to act his part! It is most devoutly to be

desired that all revivals of religion, and temporary efforts for its promotion in occasional religious meetings, should be carefully watched, and wisely controlled, lest their tendency should be to foster the fitfulness of character which we are aiming to condemn. Let the impression be most anxiously cherished, as the very hope of piety, that every day of our existence is as much a day of christian profession as the day of our public baptism into Jesus Christ. This unvarying steadfastness it is which diffuses order, life, and efficiency, throughout the entire system of christian effort; the contrary, as certainly, will engender universal stagnation, and spread the darkness of death over the whole scene.

II.—If enlightened piety be thus desirable as we have shown, our next proposition must be, that the instruction of youth is the only certain means of creating and diffusing it in the christian church. This is demonstrated in several important particulars.

I.—Impressions are most readily received in youth.—In the infancy of our being the character is comparatively unformed, and in imparting an influence there is but little to undo, but few of the obstacles of riper years to struggle with and remove, no long seated prejudices and deeply rooted habits to encounter, so that the mind is more open to conviction, and willing to yield to salutary impressions. It is the age of simplicity, and candour, and confiding submission. The influence produced may refer to that which results in conversion to God, or to all additional impressions which go to develope and perfect the christian character. We well know that the number of conversions in youth is far greater than at any other season. While God is acknowledged as the author in every case, we find that his operations are more common when human circumstances conspire therewith.—

The seeds in like manner of every christian grace can then be sown, and the elements of all moral excellence implanted.

2.—Early impressions are more surely retained as well as more readily received. In the freshness of youth, and novelty of life's incidents, there is greater vividness of conception, and liveliness of feeling, and that which is retained with advancing years soon acquires strength which later tendencies are not likely to overcome. They who are established in truth have some ability to confront error as they meet it on going out into the world, and are not swept away with the tide of delusion. This foundation for advancement it is which affords encouragement for the careful training of youth in the ways of godliness. There is no desirable religious knowledge, or principle of action, or mode of conduct, into which they may not with more or less success be led.

If now the hopefulness of exertions for the conversion and improvement of those in more advanced years is considered, the previous statements will only receive additional confirmation. The number of conversions among them is well known to be limited, and as to the amount of good which they shall effect in the world, the hope of this is ordinarily very inconsiderable. Indeed the various false notions which may have pre-occupied their minds, and the inveterate pernicious habits which may have got dominion over them, often make it questionable whether very many, alas! too many, who profess religion after positive worldliness had settled upon them in any form, are in reality an acquisition to piety, or even not decidedly injurious to its interests. Can it not be attributed to this in a great measure that so much decided immorality disfigures the fair form of the church of Christ, and that even among many in some repute as professors of christianity there is a certain laxity of sen-

timent, and want of thorough integrity of heart, in this respect? It is far too commonly the case that practices positively immoral are connived at, or trifled with, or openly pursued, when at the same time religious pretensions are maintained, and duties performed. Good morals test the value of any man's religion. If he fail here, and those accounted worldly do not, the latter stands higher in the estimation of those around, to whatever lengths the former may go in his religious performances. There is no genuineness in religion where morality is wanting, though this statement is often departed from. The consequence, in fine, of early religious instruction is, that a greater number become pious, and that number is better fitted for usefulness in the cause of God.

Having now shown somewhat fully the value of enlightened piety, and the fitness of youth as a season of religious instruction, the appropriateness of the instrumentality employed to effect this in S. School training shall be referred to in few words. It cannot be necessary here to enlarge on the peculiar excellence of this system of religious effort. In the living teacher, and the written volume, we have an array of talent and piety of the first order in close contact with the ten thousands of their race who are destined to be the very hope of the world. The cheapness of the means employed, their wide diffusion, the sacredness of the occasion, the strong bond of union created between teacher and pupils, and their near access to their deepest springs of action, together invest the enterprise with most absorbing interest, and imposing magnitude. Let a child become a member of a thoroughly conducted Sab. School, and he enters a sphere of influence which is likely to determine in a great degree his whole future character. It is a region of thought and inquiry, a place of prayer and pious la-

bour. Unless unusually heedless and stupid, his mind will be stirred, and his soul put in action, and from this rising movement of his powers he will be likely to make for himself a larger place in the world, and occupy a wider range of existence. All this additional mental activity thus aroused, and perpetuating and multiplying itself as it moves from scene to scene in future life, if only consecrated and directed into a sacred channel, speaks volumes for the growing power of the christian church. But its first awakening is among holy objects and pure reflections, and the prayer of the pious teacher ever is, "Blessed Saviour renew this young heart entrusted to my care," and his direct effort constantly is to lead him to the cross. Multitudes are thereby converted, and in listening to the precepts of the faithful teacher or reading the weekly visitor of the lending library, an immense amount of information is secured, and a strength of moral habit engendered, which is incessantly bringing a rich harvest of spiritual wealth into the kingdom of our Lord and Saviour.

The labours of your Committee on the present occasion might be supposed more properly to terminate here; but taking their stand at the point which they have now reached, they cannot persuade themselves to turn away from the scene which is rising up before them, growing, as it does, wider and wider in extent, and becoming studded with objects of increasing interest. Restricted to the instruction of the young as its object, this society is confined in its efforts within the boundaries expressed by its name "S. S. Union," at least as Sab. Schools are conducted in this Province, but to any one intent on the religious education of his country, and possessed in any measure of discernment as to the mode of pursuing it, the enquiry at once arises as he sees one, and another,

and another, vacating his seat in the Sab. School to enter on the active duties of life, "these, where shall they go?" Now that they have been watched over with untiring assiduity through all the inexperience of childhood, and the perils of youth, and are just ready to sever themselves from the guardianship of a Sab. School to step over the threshold of the wide world before them, destined for its toils, and responsibilities, and dangers, at this the most critical juncture of life as they are just ripening into manhood, he asks with no unnatural concern, not simply, what shall be the fruit of past labours in their future career, but what shall be done to perpetuate and carry out what is now begun? to what training shall they be committed which shall form a continuation of this, adapted to maturer age and its corresponding duties?

In taking such a survey, he will in like manner discover a large number who have never participated in the advantages of Sab. Schools, and are beyond the sphere of its influence. For these also he is anxious, and is ready to enquire, can no system of operation be set on foot to provide for their enlightening? must they be left to grope in comparative ignorance of the truths of religion? or shall they be furnished with knowledge to prepare them for usefulness? The parental oversight of the minister of the gospel, and the instructions of the the pulpit and the Bible Class, might be supposed to supply what we are now in quest of, but to this we reply, while we recognize the ministry of the word as the grand means which God has designed for the conversion of the world, it must be borne in mind that "the harvest truly is plenteous, but the labourers are few," as the blessed Saviour declared; and moreover, that the ministry itself is comparatively inefficient if unattended by the Press.

The Press then, the Press, must be wielded for the support of christianity. It is an engine of hell by divine sufferance, and is devastating mankind with its fury; let it be also an engine of heaven, to rebuild the barren wastes, and make the deserts rejoice. It is of untold consequence, beyond all that language can utter, that the whole extent of our country should be covered with substantial religious publications, such as are adapted for persons emerged from youth, and of maturer years, whether to awaken the careless, or instruct and edify the body of Christ. Many may still persist in wasting hours and hours of their time which might be devoted to useful reading, but not so, as a general thing with those who have left the Sab. School. A taste for it is engendered, and must be gratified. There is no hope of any deep, and wide spread, and permanent advances of the cause of truth among any people, until they become a reading people. This is altogether necessary to disseminate enlightened piety, and without this, whatever show there may be of feeling, midnight darkness in reality broods over the land. Religious periodicals and Tracts are of the first importance, and play an important part in this great work. Looking upon the union as taking within its limits objects of no less magnitude than those proposed, it enlarges itself into a great christian publication society.

Your Committee had it in view, did time permit, to assign several reasons why Nova Scotia must be considered an universally attractive field for such exertions, but they cannot. Suffice it to say, that on the most mature deliberation, your Committee have come to the conclusion that it is a country uncommonly destitute of such a train of means as that described, and that consequently the amount of religious reading among the great mass of

the people is, to say the least, far too inconsiderable, that nevertheless they conceive, that much is to be placed to the account of the actual absence of such books from the country; and the demand for them would be very extensive if persons were once aware of their character, and had them easy of access. The number of the really pious among us, and of those who love the truth, will justify this remark. And we cannot forbear adding that we must believe such a movement to lie very much at the foundation of most others in which we are engaged. Unless the habit of reading is more widely established, efforts in the cause of education will not be appreciated and encouraged.

One more topic of consideration, and we have done, and that is the importance of employing the Press in the forwarding of denominational interests. While this society is intended to be open to all denominations of Christians, and is ready to meet their wishes with all cheerfulness, only without conflicting with Baptist views and measures, yet, as organized by Baptists, and almost altogether sustained by them, your Committee feel no hesitation in introducing the particular which is just presented. As a denomination, we most solemnly believe that we have the faith once delivered to the saints, and in some important respects singular from all other bodies of believers, that for instance, our conditions of church membership are those alone which can *secure* a separation of the church from the world, and the support of vital religion among mankind. Believing this, how can we justify ourselves in not employing the Press more extensively for the dissemination of truth, as we hold it? Of what prodigious moment it is that in our revivals of religion every young professor should be well established in truth, and under careful training, that they

may advance in knowledge and piety, and be a valuable accession to their brethren, able manfully to hold up their hands in conflict with the Prince of darkness. How many there are, even of our own body, uninformed in many of the main points of our faith and practice; how little is known of our history also, and how frequently do those detached from us desire information in these particulars which they now search for in vain. The number of works of this description, is rapidly increasing, and they are much needed throughout the body. Making this additional provision for the wants of our own denomination, the Union would virtually take the name of the Nova Scotia Baptist Publication and Sabbath School Society. And it may be interesting to you to know that there is a Society in the United States of this character, which was styled first the Baptist General Tract Society, and not long since expanded itself into its present form.

It is certainly a consoling reflection, dear brethren, to all of us, that by some instrumentality or other the kingdom of the Saviour must advance. The work is great. It constitutes a holy bond of Union among the followers of Messiah, that his kingdom in extent stretches over all ages, and all nations, and countries, and requires for its advancement from its first appearance to ultimate and universal triumph, the co-operation of them all. Simultaneously in parts of the earth the most remote from each other, the work is advancing, while millions of happy labourers can be at once engaged without fear of collision. And while human hands faint and decay, what those hands are set to is imperishable; human labourers in the vineyard of the Lord die, but they can leave their works behind them. The great building is still rising, and the work which one begins another can resume, and

that from which he is called away, another can still enter into. One sows and another reaps. One individual, it is true, of the Christian church, may set wave after wave in motion, which shall lave the most distant heathen shore, or extend their circles to the end of time far over eternity's deep sea,—but, after all, it is a small measure indeed of the vast extent, which human beings compass,—so true is it that one all-pervading mind must control the whole, and so magnificent is the scale on which the Creator's movements are conducted in his spiritual kingdom.