

*No. 14 no. 10*

**NEW MISSIONARY FIELD:**

A

**REPORT**

TO THE

**FEMALE MISSIONARY SOCIETY**

FOR

**THE POOR**

OF THE CITY OF NEW-YORK, AND ITS VICINITY,

AT THEIR QUARTERLY PRAYER MEETING,

MARCH, 1817.

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BY WARD STAFFORD, A. M.

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NEW-YORK:

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1817.

### ADVERTISEMENT.

It seems proper to apprise the reader, that only a part of the following report was read to the Society at their quarterly meeting. Most of what was omitted on that occasion is enclosed in brackets.

An apology is due to a large number of respectable individuals, for some delay in complying with their request in relation to the publication of this report. To transcribe it for the press, required more time than the writer could immediately command, without neglecting other important duties.

## REPORT.

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IN compliance with the wishes of the Board of Managers and others, I have drawn up, and shall now lay before you, an account of my labours, accompanied with such observations as the nature and the importance of the subject seem to require.

It is about nine months since I first engaged in the service of the Society. Having had some previous knowledge of the state of the poor, and being fully persuaded, that hundreds of families were destitute of the Bible, as well as of all other means of religious instruction, I determined to devote a considerable part of my time to exploring sections of the city, for the purpose of obtaining further information concerning them, of distributing Bibles and Tracts, and of promoting their spiritual welfare in other ways. By this means, I have had opportunity to address, on the most important subjects of religion, thousands, who had never before seen a minister within their dwellings, and many of whom had never seen one in the house of God.

As in visiting families in connexion, it was impossible not to call on some of every denomination, I thought it my duty to address them exclusively on those great truths in which all real Christians are supposed to agree; such as the necessity of a change of heart, of repentance, of an interest in Christ; the importance of observing the sabbath, of setting a holy example before their children, and of training them up in the fear of God.

To avoid the pain, and the unhappy influence on their minds, of inquiring directly whether they observed the sabbath, I have usually asked them what Church they attended. If it appeared, that they belonged to any denomination, I have invariably urged upon them the necessity of being real Christians, of having their hearts right in the sight of God, reminding them, at the same time, that the inquiry at the day of judgment would not be, whether they belonged to a particular sect, but whether they were members of the "household of faith." Such has been my situation, that it has appeared to be my duty scrupulously to avoid speaking against, or in favour of any denomination of Christians whatever. Whenever the persons, whom I have visited, have ascertained to what denomination I belonged, which has rarely been the case, they have manifested towards me, though bearing a different name, a charity, an affection which has been as gratifying, as it has been singular and unexpected.

In addition to distributing Bibles, I have distributed several thousand religious Tracts. Particular pains has been taken to

select such as were free from sectarian views, and which exhibited the great principles of the gospel of Christ.

It was early discovered, that to prosecute the mission with success, a house for public worship would be indispensable. The Board of Managers, therefore, determined to attempt the erection of a house, which should be free and open to all who were disposed to attend. While a committee of gentlemen were requested to select a suitable place for the building, and superintend the erection of it, the business of raising the necessary funds was principally intrusted to me. A subscription was opened as soon as the necessary arrangements could be made, and the success was much greater than had, on the whole, been expected. After some progress had been made, it was thought adviseable, for reasons which I will not occupy your time to mention, to postpone further solicitation. The subject has recently been taken up again, and we are warranted in the assertion, that the Christian public will not suffer this undertaking to fail of success.

Since I have been in the service of the Society, I have preached as much as the state of my health would permit. During most of the time I have preached once on the Sabbath to a collection of from 400 to 600 children belonging to the Sabbath Schools. They have been collected for this purpose, at the Free School, No. 2, in Henry-street; a part of the city to which my attention has been more particularly directed. Numbers of poor people, who have not been accustomed to go elsewhere to worship, have usually attended at this place. During the summer, I preached at the ship-yards on Manhattan Island, in a room kindly furnished by the Messrs. Browns. At that exercise, it is believed, there were usually about 300 present.

It was impossible, employed as I was, not to observe a large number of Seamen. By associating with them, and appointing some evening lectures in the neighbourhood of their lodgings, it was discovered, that they were deplorably destitute of religious instruction, and that it would be easy to give them that instruction, provided proper measures were adopted. This determined me to open a place of worship for them as soon as circumstances would permit. This has accordingly been done since the last quarterly meeting. What has been the success of this undertaking, will be made known in a subsequent part of the Report.

The sabbath evening lecture which was opened some time ago, I have recently been obliged to relinquish, finding it impossible for me to preach three times on the sabbath, without materially injuring my health. The number who attended that exercise was not large, but evidently owing to the want of other labour in the neighbourhood, such as holding evening meetings, visiting, and preaching from house to house.

In addition to preaching on the sabbath, I have usually had several lectures, during the week, at private houses and other places. These have been well attended.

No small part of my time has been occupied in visiting the sick and dying, in attending funerals, and visiting Sabbath schools. When I have attended a funeral, I have usually appointed, at the house of mourning, an evening lecture, as soon after as I could make it convenient.

My labours have been of such a nature, that their effects will remain in a great measure unknown till the great day of account. It is enough for us that we obey the command of God. The event we may safely leave with him. He is, however, pleased to grant us some tokens of his special favour. We are assured, that we have not laboured altogether in vain.

As an individual and as a Society we have had trials. You and I have felt them. Let them, however, be remembered only to excite emotions of gratitude to Him who has supported us under them, and caused them, as we believe, to work for our best good. Let their recollection make us feel more deeply our dependence on God, and our need of the Holy Spirit to direct and quicken us in all our duty. Though one breach after another should be made, though one difficulty after another should rise—let us persevere in the way of well-doing; knowing, that “we shall reap in due season, if we faint not.” As it respects myself, I have had many encouragements, among which it is my duty and my happiness to acknowledge the uniform kindness and support of the Board of Managers. While they have left me to labour in the manner I thought best, they have given me all the counsel and aid in their power. It has not been among the least of my encouragements, that I have laboured under the immediate inspection of the members of the Society and other Christian friends, who, by their very cheerful and prompt co-operation, have greatly enlarged my sphere of usefulness. I am happy to acknowledge, also, the kindness of several gentlemen, who have accompanied me when visiting in certain sections of the city. Among this number, I cannot forbear mentioning the Rev. Mr. Mills, who, with his well-known missionary zeal, spent several weeks in labouring among the destitute, during the last summer.

It will be gratifying to you to learn, that, although nothing has been published, the object of your Society has attracted the notice of Christians in other places. Since its establishment, similar societies have been formed in Philadelphia, Charleston, S. C. Boston, and Charlestown, Mass. and probably, before this, in one or two other sea-ports.

Having given this general statement respecting my labours, some may think I ought to be silent. But as a considerable part of my time has been occupied in exploring destitute sections of the city, as a new missionary field has opened to my view, I shall be excused if I vary from the ordinary form of such reports, and attempt to show the extent and situation of that field; to point out some of the ways in which it is to be cultivated; and to state some of the reasons why great and persevering efforts should be made.

When we consider, that our large cities constitute the centre of exertions for the salvation of the Heathen, that in them are thousands of Christians, by whose means Bibles and Missionaries are conveyed to every part of the world, it will be thought almost incredible, that in the midst of them there should be immense multitudes who are entirely destitute of religious instruction, and of all the ordinary means of grace. That such is the state of many of our large cities, and particularly of the city of New-York, the following facts most clearly show.

We will first view the state of the city as it respects a preached gospel.

If we allow the population to have increased in the same proportion for the last seven years, as it did for the ten years preceding, it will now exceed 125,000. Several gentlemen have given it as their opinion, that the average increase has been greater. That we may, however, be sure of being within bounds, we will estimate the present population at 120,000.

A single glance at the manner in which this population and the churches are located, will show, that many do not attend public worship on the sabbath. While almost all the churches are in the lower, the great mass of the people are in the upper part of the city. When we find, that in the upper part the houses, which are comparatively small, contain from 4 to 12 families each, and that with these houses, the ground is almost completely covered, we cannot doubt, that there are in that part of the city five times as many people on an area, as there are on an area of equal size in the lower part. In the lower part of the city on an area not one half as large as the seventh ward, there are 16 churches. In the seventh ward, containing a population of not less than 12,000, there is only one. Let it not be supposed, that there are churches in the immediate vicinity. The adjacent wards are far from having a competent supply. In the fourth ward, containing about 13,000 inhabitants, there are only 3 churches. In the sixth ward, containing about 14,000, there are only 4 churches; and the same number with about the same population in the tenth ward. On an area of less than 90 rods square in the seventh ward, it is believed, there are not less than nine thousand souls.

So far as I can ascertain, there are not more than 52 congregations of Christians in the city of all denominations. There may be some small collections of persons, who worship in retired places, that are not included in this estimate. If we allow one minister to a congregation, there will be 52 ministers who stably labour in the city. As some of the congregations, however, have more than one minister, and as there are one or two not connected with any congregation, we will suppose the number of ministers to be sixty. Allowing that one minister ought not to have the immediate charge of more than a thousand souls, there will be 60,000 people destitute of the stated ministry of the gospel, or of proper religious instruction. That there may be one minister and one

church to a thousand people, there must be 60 additional ministers, and 68 new churches.

It is the opinion of several clergymen and others, who may be supposed qualified to judge on the subject, that the number of regular worshippers does not, on an average, exceed 600 to a church. It will be recollected, that while a few of the churches are large and well filled, there are many which are small, and some of them but partially filled. Allowing 600 to a church, the number who regularly attend public worship, will be 31,200, leaving about 89,000 who do not attend. A considerable number must be allowed for children, invalids, and others necessarily detained.

Will it be said, that our churches are sufficiently capacious to hold a much larger number than actually attend? This we readily admit. But it does not in the least alter the case as it respects those who are destitute of seats. The seats in the Presbyterian and in most of the other churches are owned or hired by private persons. One pew is usually allotted to one family, and must, therefore, be at the disposal of that family, though but a small part of it should be occupied at one time. In most of our churches, there are but a small number of pews which are free, and but a small number of the others, which do not rent so high as effectually to exclude the poor.

Lest it should be supposed, that although these people do not attend public worship, they are attached to some congregation, and are, therefore, under the care of some minister of the gospel, we will endeavour to ascertain how many belong to a congregation. The number belonging to congregations generally, is not known. The ministers, however, of the Dutch Reformed Church keep an exact account of the number of families and individuals belonging to their respective charges, and report them to the Synod at their annual meeting. According to the report made at the last meeting of the Synod, it appears, that the average number of souls belonging to four of the congregations in that connexion, viz. Garden-street, the Middle and North Churches, and the Church at Greenwich, is 806. Three of these congregations are ranked among the largest in the city, and the other by no means among the smallest. If we allow the other congregations in the city to be on an average as large as these four, which is far from being the case, there will be 41,912 souls under the care of some spiritual guide or minister of the gospel; leaving 78,088 destitute, or who are not attached to any congregation or denomination of Christians. Some doubtless attend public worship, who do not strictly belong to any congregation. But the number of such, does not equal, it is believed, the number who nominally belong to some congregation, but absent themselves from the house of God. The size of our congregations is greatly increased by strangers, of whom there is always a considerable number in the city, and who usually attend public worship. The whole number of families belonging to the four congregations above named, is 604, and the whole number of souls 3,225. Allowing

the same number to a family, throughout the city, as is found by calculation to belong to these families, there will be about 22,600. The average number of families belonging to these four congregations is 151. Supposing all the congregations in the city to have the same number, there will be 7,852 families attached to the different congregations; leaving 14,796 families which are not attached to any congregation, and, of course, not under the immediate care of any spiritual guide\*.

To the class who do not attend public worship, we must add almost all our Seamen, of whom there are in the city several thousands every Sabbath in the year. In 1815, the port of New-York owned 278,868 tons of shipping. Allowing the same number of men to a 100 tons, as is allowed in England, there were about 14,000 seamen employed by this port. Several gentlemen have given it as their opinion, that there are constantly in this city not less than six or seven thousand. No documents are in my possession by which to determine how many Seamen visit the city during the whole year.

Let it not be imagined, that New-York is more destitute of the stated ordinances of the Gospel than other cities, or that Christians here are more inattentive to this subject, than they are in other parts of Christendom.

The town of Boston contains, it is supposed, about 36,000 inhabitants, and only 23 churches, and at the present time, a less number of established ministers of the Gospel. Allowing one house of worship to a thousand people, and one minister to a house of worship, there will remain 13,000 destitute. Allowing 800 to a congregation, there will be about 18,000 destitute. The town of Boston is but about two thirds as well supplied with houses of public worship and ministers, as the rest of the State of Massachusetts.

New Haven, containing, it is supposed, not less than 7,000 people, has only four congregations and four ministers, independently of the College, leaving 3,000 destitute. In the State of Connecticut, there is one minister to a thousand people: In New Haven there is one minister to 1,750. Hartford is in nearly the same condition.

\* We have ascertained from personal inquiry in different parts of the city, that the proportionate number, who do not belong to any congregation, is considerably larger than this estimate supposes.

It has been estimated, that in the whole State of New-York there are 500,000 people destitute of the stated ordinances of the Gospel, or about one half of the whole population, allowing one minister to a thousand people. Ministers who had not been regularly educated were not included in that estimate. In the present estimate, all of every denomination are included. It is supposed that there are nearly 200 organized congregations in which ministers might probably be settled. According to this estimate, the city is not so well supplied with religious teachers as the rest of the state, a great part of which is considered missionary ground; and there are not two thirds as many organized congregations in proportion to the population.



As we go south of New-York, we find populous places in no better condition.

In Philadelphia and its suburbs, there were in 1810, 35 churches, and 92,000 people, leaving 57,000 destitute. At the present time, the population, it is believed, exceeds 120,000. According to information recently obtained, there are 42 churches. If we allow one minister to a thousand people, there are nearly 80,000 destitute.

Baltimore, with a population of 55 or 60,000, has 23 churches, leaving between 30 and 40,000 destitute.

Washington, in 1810, contained 8,208 inhabitants, and four churches, leaving more than one half unsupplied, without taking into the account the increase of population, during the session of Congress.

Newbern, with a population of 2,467 in 1800, has but one church at the present time.

Richmond, in 1810, with 9,735 inhabitants, had only one church.

Charleston, S. C. had in 1810, 15 churches and 24,711 inhabitants, leaving about 10,000 destitute.

The moral state of Savannah appears to be somewhat better than that of any of the places mentioned above. In 1810, it contained 5215 inhabitants and six churches.

New-Orleans, containing, according to Messrs. Mills and Smith's report, 30,000 inhabitants, has but a single Protestant minister.

Most other populous places, it will be found from examination, are more destitute than the surrounding country.

If we cross the Atlantic and view the cities in Great Britain, and other parts of Christendom, we shall find them in a similar state, as it respects the preaching of the gospel. Even in London, from which so many thousand Bibles, and so many missionaries have been sent to all parts of the world; where are men who have wept and prayed over the heathen, and over the destitute in their own land, and who have made vigorous and successful efforts for their salvation, there are many thousands destitute of the stated ministry of the gospel. The population of London in 1811, was 1,039,000, and at the present time is not less than 1,150,000. The number of houses of worship, of all descriptions, in 1811, was 407. If we allow one minister to a place of worship, and one place of worship to a thousand people, there were in London, in 1811, 632,000 people destitute of proper religious instruction; or, it required 632 additional ministers, and the same number of churches, that there might be one minister and one church to a thousand people\*. When we consider the increase of population, and the fact, that many of the churches are very small, we believe we shall not exceed the truth, when we say, that there are in

\* It has been ascertained by a Committee appointed for the purpose by the House of Commons, that there are now in London, notwithstanding the establishment of Sunday and other schools, between 80 or 90,000 uneducated children.

London between 700,000 and 800,000 souls destitute of a preached gospel.

Liverpool contains in the winter 110,000, and in the summer 130,000 souls, and not over 33 churches, leaving, during a part of the year, 75,000, and during the other part, 95,000 destitute.

It will be found from examination, that most other cities in Great Britain and on the Continent, are in no better, while many of them are in a much worse, condition.

Such is the state of this and other large cities, with respect to a preached gospel.

It may be thought, however, that, as these people who neglect to attend public worship, live in the midst of Christians, ministers, and churches, they are in a condition very different from that of the inhabitants of remote parts of the country, where they are necessarily excluded from Christian society and all the ordinances of the gospel; that if they do not hear the gospel preached, they at least have the Bible in their houses, are enlightened by human knowledge, and are free from gross immoralities. This comparatively delightful hope, we are not permitted to indulge.

The simple fact, that people do not attend public worship when circumstances will permit, is conclusive evidence, that they do not possess the Bible, or do not peruse it in a profitable manner. Of the truth of this declaration, those who have attended our quarterly and other meetings, will not doubt. Lest the subject should be forgotten, however, or lest there should be those who believe, as most Christians among us did a year ago, that there are no families in this city destitute of the Bible, a few facts will be repeated in this place.

Within a few months, I have distributed from 600 to 700 Bibles. Most of these Bibles have been given, not to destitute individuals, but families. It is presumed, that these are but a small portion of the Bibles which have been distributed in the city during that time. The Female Bible Society, which was formed the last spring, has directed its attention almost exclusively to the destitute in this city. But to be more particular:—

It has been ascertained, by personal examination, that in one section of the city, out of 20 families adjoining each other, 16 were destitute of the Bible; in another, out of 115 families, adjoining each other, 70 were destitute; in another, out of 32, 21 were destitute; in another, out of 30, 27 were destitute. Were it necessary, we might extend this enumeration through many pages. Taking the accounts, however, of the different sections which have been examined, or of the seventh ward, and parts of the fourth, sixth, and tenth wards, it appears, that not less than one-third, and probably not less than one-half, of the families are now destitute of the Bible, notwithstanding the hundreds which have, within a short time, been distributed.

Families, which are destitute of the Bible, cannot be supposed

to possess other books of a religious nature, or to have gained much religious knowledge from any other source. Accordingly we have found the people deplorably ignorant as it respects the subject of religion. It is impossible, however, to enter into a particular description of their character—a few prominent facts must serve as a general index.

Since the establishment of Sabbath Schools, there have been admitted to them between five and six thousand adults and children, most of whom were not only unable to read, but ignorant of the first principles of natural and revealed religion. A short time since, a girl 15 years of age, a native of the city, came to one of the Sabbath Schools, who had never been within a church, had never heard of a Bible or a Saviour, knew not that she had a soul, and supposed that when she died it would be the end of her existence. This was not a person of colour. Happy would it be if this were a solitary instance of heathenism in a Christian country, in an enlightened and highly privileged city! But there are not only multitudes of children and youth in a similar condition, but large numbers of people who have arrived to middle, and some even to old age, in a condition but little better. There came to one of the schools a few Sabbaths ago a woman of 30 years of age, who was ignorant that she had a soul! Several other cases of a similar nature have recently been found.

The people of colour, it is known, have been greatly neglected, and generally suffered to grow up in the most absolute ignorance of religion. Let it not be supposed, however, that all, who are thus ignorant, are either people of colour or foreigners: no small proportion of them are white people, who were born and have lived all their days in the city. It is the opinion of those who are best acquainted with the moral state of the city, that not one-fourth part of the adults and children who need to be instructed in Sabbath Schools have yet been collected.

Would the limits of this Report permit, a multitude of facts might be stated of the same general nature. One more, however, as a proof of the superstition, as well as ignorance of many of the people, must suffice. Hundreds of families attempt to exclude, it is presumed, evil spirits from their dwellings, by the ridiculous means of nailing horse-shoes at the bottom of their doors. Any one who walks the streets in certain parts of the city may notice them, though they are more generally concealed from public view.

What must be the state of a people who imagine that evil spirits may be bribed or frightened in this frivolous manner? What the state of a people, where persons may live twenty, or thirty, or forty years, without being conscious that they have souls to be saved or lost; without having any idea of a Redeemer, or of a future state? Surely of some parts of the city it may with

truth be said, "darkness covers the earth, and gross darkness the people."

We are not permitted to stop here : the same reasons which impelled to further examination, impel to a further disclosure. Ignorance is not the mother of devotion : we have passed the threshold, and instead of finding a habitation whose neatness, elegance and beauty were concealed, we have found it a "whited sepulchre full of dead mens' bones and all uncleanness;" instead of the mist which conceals the most splendid cities from the view of the distant beholder, and which becomes transparent as he approaches, we have found the obscurity, which we beheld at a distance, the cloud that issues from the bottomless pit. This colouring may be thought of too deep a hue : let us proceed to the exhibition of facts, which will speak and paint for themselves.

A great proportion of the people are crowded together, as we have seen, from four to twelve families in a house, often two or three in a room, and those of all colours ; are deplorably ignorant and destitute of all the means of grace, and consequently are not under the restraining influence of religion. Such is the natural corruption of the human heart, such the ease with which the vile passions are kindled into a flame, and the whole course of nature set on fire of hell, that the simple fact, that people live together in the manner described, and without the restraints of religion, is strong evidence that they are immoral. But we have other evidence of this painful, this humiliating truth ; a mass of evidence, but a small portion of which can be exhibited in this place.

Among the vices which are most prevalent, which have the most pernicious influence on society, and which are most effectual in destroying the souls of men, is that at which we have already hinted, the **PROFANATION OF THE SABBATH.**

By that great body of people who do not attend public worship, the Sabbath is wholly disregarded, or rather it is observed as a day of recreation, of idleness and drunkenness. In some parts of the city it is impossible for christians to go from the closet and the family altar to the house of God, without being discomposed and pained by the sight of multitudes of the high and the low, the rich and the poor, lounging in their windows or about their houses, strolling the streets and passing, when the season will permit, into the adjacent country.\*

But we must confine our attention more particularly to that class of people, whose poverty is exceeded only by their vices. Many

\* It is estimated by those who live in the immediate vicinity of the place, that 2 or 3000 frequently pass on the Sabbath over the ferry at Corlaer's-Hook, to Long-Island.

of them during the week are scattered throughout the city, and to some extent are employed in various kinds of business. On the Sabbath they are at home, and have nothing to do. While others are assembling for public worship, it is no uncommon thing to find them at breakfast or in bed. On the Sabbath they calculate to have better food and more liquor than on other days; to associate together, and to make of this blessed day, which to the christian is better than a thousand, a day of mirth and rioting. It is easier to conceive than to describe the scene, which people of such a character, and in such circumstances, must exhibit.

Happy would it be for society were this iniquity concealed from public view. This, however, is not the case. As I was the last summer going to a place of worship on Sabbath morning, I observed a large number of tippling and fruit shops which were open; I began to count them, and in passing a short distance counted twenty-six. In most, if not all of them, ardent spirits were kept for sale, and in many of them persons were assembled.

This is a specimen of what has often been seen, and what we fear will often be seen again. Who that has frequently walked the streets in certain sections of the city on the Sabbath, has not seen persons intoxicated even in the early part of the day? Toward the close of the day, those houses which are filled with this class of people become too narrow to contain them. In certain streets hundreds have often been seen engaged in various kinds of iniquity.

INTEMPERANCE is another vice which is making havoc of the best interests of society, and of the present and eternal welfare of thousands. Intemperance, with its attendant vices, is the principal cause of that suffering, which has recently called forth the benevolent exertions of many of the citizens. We are perfectly astonished at the immense number of licensed tippling shops in this city. It appears from a particular examination of the Records, that there are 1489 persons licensed to sell ardent spirits by the small quantity. In the Seventh Ward, where the greater proportion of the people are poor beyond description, there are between 2 and 300. Though there are a few respectable, and some pious grocers, it is known that most of those who retail ardent spirits are of the lowest and most vicious character. We are no longer surprised that whole families, and whole neighbourhoods, are reduced to beggary, wretchedness, and death.

[But there is another vice intimately connected with this, whose influence is still worse; a vice which completely disarms conscience of its sting, withers every generous feeling, and prostrates to the level of the brute the whole moral man: a vice which opens the flood-gates of all iniquity, and which has been a deeper source of corruption in our cities than any other single vice, I had almost said than all other vices together. It is not that we expect to res-

cue from present infamy and wretchedness, and from future and everlasting destruction, a few abandoned creatures, that we submit to the pain of alluding to this subject. We do it, that we may give a faithful representation of the moral condition of the more destitute parts of the city; that, by exposing iniquity, we may stop its progress; and, especially, that we may prevent the rising generation from going in that way which leads "down to the chambers of death." It is a vice universally accompanied by a train of others more or less destructive, and when so openly practised as to leave no doubt of its existence, exerts an influence on the minds of those who are not immediately concerned, and gives a cast to society which is little suspected. It is supposed that there are in the city not less than 6,000 abandoned females. In passing a distance of thirty or forty rods, not less than twenty ball rooms have been counted, in which were assembled hundreds of this class of people, dancing to the sound of the viol.\* That these people should assemble together, is no matter of astonishment; but it is matter of astonishment that they should be permitted to do it in this open manner, six nights out of seven, from week to week, from month to month, from year to year, and we may add, from age to age. It is known, that there is a class of men who keep large numbers of these voluntary slaves for purposes of corruption and gain. They do not hesitate to own it, and speak of it with the most unblushing impudence. They are conscious, that all who are acquainted with them *know* that this business is their only means of support and of acquiring wealth.

In some of the thickly populated parts of the city, there are a considerable number of hacks, which are known to be employed for no other purpose than that of transporting these miserable beings from one haunt of vice to another. Ten or twelve have often been counted standing in a row, where they are forbidden to stand by law, and where on almost every house is inscribed in glaring capitals: *The way to Hell!* And, what is painful to add, numbers of these hacks are thus employed on the Sabbath.

It ought not to be concealed from the public, that many of these females are held by their masters in the most abject slavery, and, to keep them in subjection, are at times scourged in the most cruel manner. Some, who, when wasting with the consumption, have fled from one place to another, where they supposed they should be better treated, have been seized by violence and carried back, and kept, by their old masters, till approaching death had destroyed all hope of further gain. The windows of at least one, and probably of many more of these slaughter-houses, are actually grated with bars of iron. It is known, also, that children, some, their own illegitimate offspring, and some, obtained by various arts of decep-

\* The ball rooms of which we speak are often fitted up in an expensive style, and universally furnished with a bar, or connected with a dram-shop.

tion, from the families of others, are trained up expressly for this polluted traffic, and engage in it at a very early period of life. Some of this description have been found whose age did not exceed eleven years.]

On profanity, lying, theft, gambling, and many other vices, which are prevalent among those who are destitute of the means of grace, we cannot dwell on the present occasion.

We have time to mention only one or two other facts, as indicative of the general state of morals. A respectable Female Association for the relief of the sick and afflicted, some time ago, resolved not to aid those who lived in certain streets, supposing, that no person of decent character would live in such places, and that it would be unsafe for females to visit them.

Since I have been employed in examining parts of the city, the observation has been made to me times almost without number: "We presume you do not venture to go alone." The caution has been a seasonable one. But what, let me ask, must be the state of society, when it is the general impression, that it is unsafe for one to go alone for the purpose of distributing Bibles and Tracts; especially, when it is found from observation and experience, that the impression is correct? A respectable man, not long since, who was distributing Bibles, was attacked, knocked down, and had his clothes literally torn off, and was so beaten as to lose considerable blood; and such was the state of society, that, after much inquiry and consultation, it was judged inexpedient to prosecute for this outrageous conduct, lest it should enrage a herd of such tigers, who would otherwise remain quiet, and cause them to league together, the more effectually to oppose these benevolent exertions.

Let it not be supposed, that all who reside in the parts of the city referred to are thus grossly vicious. There are some who are pious, and who preserve the rest from the fate of Sodom and Gomorrah. There are many industrious people of good morals, who attend public worship. There are others, who, though feeling no particular interest in the subject, would attend, did not poverty or other circumstances prevent. There is, also, a large class who are partially corrupted, or are prepared, for want of proper religious instruction, to receive any impressions which men of superior cunning and wickedness are disposed to make. All these different classes of people live together, often in the same house, and not unfrequently in the same room. We have sometimes discovered, since the great demand for houses, virtuous families compelled to live in places where they have blushed to be seen.

What must be the effect of witnessing such scenes as the people in those parts of the city are, from their very situation, compelled to witness? Crimes which are committed in open day, without the disapprobation of the better part of the community, are readily believed to be of no very aggravated nature. Such scenes,

by frequent exhibition, become familiar, and are witnessed without those feelings of horror which they once excited. They are soon winked at, and ultimately approved. It is surprising to see what effect this exhibition of depravity has on the minds even of Christians. What would once make them sigh, and weep and pray, can now be seen with little feeling, with almost entire indifference. If such is the effect on the minds of Christians, what must it be on the minds of those who are unrestrained by the grace of God? What must be the effect upon the rising generation? Let it be remembered, that notwithstanding all that has been done, there are multitudes of children and youth whose education is entirely neglected, who are obliged to hear from the lips of their parents and others, the most horrid oaths and blasphemies : to see them, under the influence of intoxicating liquors, and their own unhallowed passions, fight and abuse each other, wallow in their own pollution, and engage in other wickedness of which it is unlawful to speak.

To our inquiry the experience of the world furnishes an answer. Considering the natural character of the human heart, we hesitate not to assert, that it is impossible, without the special interposition of God, that children in such circumstances should not grow up to imitate the examples that are set before them, to become pests to society and heirs of perdition. Accordingly we find children practising every kind of iniquity of which their immature faculties are capable. By this means conscience is blunted before it is half formed ; all sense of moral obligation, all dread of sin, all fear of God, all regard to the best interests of society, and their own present and everlasting welfare, is destroyed.

Here, then, we have a great mass of people almost entirely beyond the restraints of religion, among whom are interspersed thousands who are grossly vicious. Multitudes are yet uncontaminated, especially of the rising generation ; but vice is spreading like a contagion ; the leaven of sin is extending to the whole mass, and, if unresisted, will reduce the whole to a mass of corruption.

Let it not be imagined, that the picture has been too highly coloured : I have barely stated a few facts—have given the outlines of a picture, which, if completed and held up to our view, must cover us all with shame and confusion of face. From a regard to my own feelings, and the feelings of others, I have cast a veil over many scenes, which in the discharge of my duty I have been compelled to witness.

Should any doubt the correctness of the representation which has been made, let me remind them, that these people are not in some distant part of the world to which they can have no access, but in the city in which we dwell. Let me request, nay, let me urge and entreat them to examine for themselves—to go out and view the ravages of sin—to pass from one dark corner to another, from one habitation of cruelty to another, from one sink of pollu-



tion to another, till their ears shall be deaf with blasphemies, till their eyes shall be dim with scenes, which language cannot paint, till their hearts bleed and die within them. Could christians be persuaded to examine for themselves, it is not too much to say, that the work of reformation would be half accomplished. They would inquire, with deep concern, what must be done to stem this flood of iniquity, to raise the character, and save the souls of so many thousands of immortal beings.

It may be thought improper by some, that one who has been a labourer in the vineyard for so short a period, should attempt to point out the means by which the temporal and eternal welfare of these people is to be promoted; that having in some measure exhibited their wretched moral condition, the methods of relief should be left to age and experience. This course would be more grateful to my own feelings, and would be pursued, were it not often remarked by persons advanced in life, and even by divines, that as we had established schools, provided bibles, and erected churches and opened the doors, it was difficult to conceive what more could be done. There is another reason also why I ought not to be silent: having been upon the ground, and examined the state of the inhabitants; having visited and conversed with hundreds of families, it is not unreasonable to suppose that I have advantages for judging on this subject not in the possession of others. The hope of aiding in the execution of the measures already adopted, and exciting christians to the adoption of others, and the pledge which I have given to some of the virtuous poor, both encourage and oblige me to proceed to mention some of the ways in which the moral state of the destitute may be improved.

1. So far as respects that class of people, who are most ignorant, whether adults or children, it is evident that they must, in the first place, be taught to read, and have instilled into their minds the first principles of religion. This, it is believed, can be done in no way so effectually as by the establishment and support of Sabbath Schools.

To this institution some pious people, from the best of motives, have been opposed. As there are free schools for the purpose of instructing the children of the poor, it is supposed, that to instruct them on the Sabbath is an unnecessary profanation of that holy day. It has, however, been ascertained, as we all know, that, notwithstanding this generous provision, there are hundreds and thousands of poor children in our large cities, whose education is entirely neglected. It will be asked, perhaps, whether an effort might not be made to instruct them on other days? We believe that the efforts made at present are small, compared with what they might be, and we hope that the day is not distant, when to learn persons to read on the Sabbath, will be neither a work of necessity nor mercy—that period, however, has not yet arrived. Could these children be collected on other days, where should we find

persons to instruct them? Most of those who instruct children on the Sabbath are otherwise employed during the week. Most of the children, also, who are of a sufficient age, are employed either as servants or in some other way, so that they could not be collected. As to adults, we know that they are obliged to labour for their own support, or the support of their families, and have, therefore, no time but the Sabbath to receive instruction. Experience has abundantly proved, that large numbers of children and adults, if not instructed on the Sabbath, will not be instructed at all, and will consequently be ignorant and generally vicious.

There seems to have been some misapprehension as to the manner in which these schools are conducted. Many appear to regard them as schools of mere human learning; whereas the great object is to communicate religious instruction. It is true they are taught to read, but it is to read the Bible. The lessons which are used are selected from that sacred book. The Bible is read and explained to them; they commit portions of it to memory, together with religious hymns and catechisms. The schools are opened and closed with prayer, or some other religious exercise. The great business of the teachers, who are generally pious, is to instil, in various ways, into the minds of the learners, important religious truths. In this manner they spend an hour or two previous to public worship in the morning and afternoon. They are then conducted in order to the house of God, and their teachers see that they behave with propriety during divine service.

By means of this institution, multitudes of children, and others, who would be strolling about the streets, or spend the Sabbath in other ways equally injurious to themselves and to society, and offensive to God, are made to spend it in a most profitable manner; have their minds enriched with the treasures of divine knowledge; are placed under the sound of the gospel, and, though neglected by their parents, are, to some extent, trained up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. Time will not permit me, were it necessary, to point out all the advantages to the teachers, to the scholars, and to their parents and connexions, and to society at large, which result from the institution of Sabbath Schools. We will only add, that many pious people who have been opposed to their establishment, have, after witnessing their operation, become their most cordial and active friends—that it is an institution, which God has owned, by granting the influences of his Holy Spirit—that by it thousands have been rescued from poverty, disgrace and wretchedness in this world, and from everlasting destruction in the world to come—have been made useful members of society and of the church, and prepared for mansions of glory in the heavens.

But Sabbath Schools, however excellent and important, will not of themselves accomplish the object proposed. They are of modern invention—they are not the gospel; and we believe that in

the Millennium they will be unknown, certainly in their present form. We believe, that they are among the means which are to hasten on that glorious day, that they now exert a most powerful and salutary influence. But by being unconnected with other means, their influence is half destroyed. In the Sunday School Teacher's Guide, there is an observation, though made for another purpose, which is full of meaning, and exactly in point. It is the following: "A few hours on the Sabbath, with respect to most of them, (the scholars) is all the time, during which through the whole week, they hear or see any thing like religion." Who does not see, that the good impressions which may be made during these few hours, must be almost entirely effaced by being exposed, during the whole week, to all kinds of iniquity; iniquity practised by their parents and others, whom they are taught to love and obey. Many scholars who have been powerfully affected under the plain preaching of the gospel on the Sabbath, and have retired from the school room in tears, I have found the next day in places where it seemed impossible that serious thoughts should not be almost instantly banished from the mind. Did we not know, that with God all things are possible, we should have no hope that the seeds of grace, which are thus sown, would, in any instance, spring up and grow and bring forth fruit. Let it not be forgotten, also, that many of the scholars, after leaving the school, mingle with the ignorant and vicious, and are beyond the reach of christian influence. We take them and conduct them a short distance, and then leave them to wander. We know the depravity of the human heart, the power of bad example, and of the great adversary of souls too well, not to believe, that most of them will wander in the by-paths of sin.

It is asserted, and generally believed, "that the most effectual mode of approaching the parent is through the medium of the child." That many parents have been successfully approached through the medium of the child, will not be called in question. But that this is the only or the best mode, cannot be known till others have been tried. Why, let me ask, cannot we approach them in other ways as well as in this? Suppose that a number of christians should go forth to the destitute parts of the country and set up Sabbath Schools—would this be furnishing the inhabitants with those means of grace which God has appointed for their salvation? Besides, a considerable proportion of the destitute in this city are not within the reach of Sabbath Schools—some have no children to send—some will not send them, because they are too proud, or too indifferent, or for some other reason. There are others, whose children go to school during the week, and do not, therefore, really need such an institution, provided they are not destitute of other means of obtaining religious knowledge. There is also a numerous class of boys and girls, whose age and habits forbid us to hope, that they will, without exertions of another

kind, ever become members of such schools. On the whole, highly as we think of this institution, we must reject the idea that it will of itself accomplish the great work of reformation, and effect the salvation of these perishing thousands. We proceed, therefore, to mention,

2. The distribution of Bibles, and other religious publications. Upon those who have felt the sacred influence of the written word; whose hearts have burned within them, while perusing the inspired volume; whose tongues, with involuntary rapture, have exclaimed, "How love I thy law! It is my meditation day and night; it is more precious than gold, yea, than much fine gold; it is sweeter to the taste than honey and the honey-comb;" upon such we need not urge the importance of distributing the Bible to those individuals and families that are destitute. How dark must be that habitation where the light of God's word does not shine! How poor would christians feel if deprived of this treasure! The fact that the destitute do not feel their need of such a treasure, does not render them the less poor without it. Equally unnecessary is it to urge the importance of distributing the Bible upon those whose eyes have been open to witness its influence upon the minds of men of every condition in every age. Who that has marked its progress, has not seen ignorance and superstition, vice and immorality, universally retiring at its approach? On the duty and importance, however, of putting into the hands of the destitute the word of God, we need not enlarge. Concerning this subject, a spirit has been excited, which, it is believed, will not abate till every man, woman and child, not only throughout this city, but throughout the world, shall possess this best, this richest of heaven's gifts—a fire has been kindled, whose light and heat will extend throughout this valley of death.

But on the *manner* in which those who are destitute are to be supplied, it may be well to make one or two remarks. It seems to be the opinion of many, that if bible societies are formed, bibles purchased and deposited at some suitable place, and notice of the fact given in the public papers, nothing further is necessary to secure their universal circulation. But if we stop here, the work is but half done. Our efforts may, indeed, prove the existence of christian principles in our own hearts, but they will not be the means of producing them, to any great extent, in the hearts of others.

It will be said, that if people will not take the trouble to walk a short distance to obtain the Bible, it will be of no use for them to have it—that they will not read it, if put into their hands—that we cannot compel them to read, and to become religious. To such objections and remarks, which have sometimes been made even by professing christians, I answer, *First*, that so far as my knowledge extends, and I have visited hundreds of destitute families, not one-half of those who are destitute, and who wish to re-

ceive the Bible, know that there is such an institution as the Bible Society in the world. This will appear strange to those who have not examined the subject, who meet reports of Bible societies, and find Bibles deposited in every book-store they enter, who see notices of them in almost every newspaper they read. But consider the character of these people. They are generally ignorant and poor, they rarely if ever enter a book-store, never see a report, or read a newspaper. They are not in the habit of reading any thing; most of them are entirely separated from the religious community, and know little more what that community is doing for the spread of the gospel, than the inhabitants of Hindoostan.

It is in my power to state, that hundreds in this city have received the Bible with emotions of joy and gratitude, who never heard of a Bible Society. But we have a still more substantial answer to these objections. The Bible has not only been put into the hands of a considerable number of people of this description, but, so far as they have been called on for the purpose of ascertaining what use they have made of it, it has been discovered that they have preserved it with the most sacred care; that they have read it, and that it has been productive of the most happy effects. We have time to mention only one or two cases.

A poor labouring man was called on about five weeks after a Bible had been given him, and was found to have read it through once, and commenced reading it a second time. His wife informed, that he had frequently set up to read till 12 and 1 o'clock at night, and that, since he had been reading it, he had generally accompanied her to church. From questions which were asked him, it was evident, that he had read it with great care, and that it had made a deep impression on his mind. He observed, that he found in that book what he never knew before—he found that he was a sinner. He was left in tears. What the event will be in this and other cases, where the Bible has been given, and made similar impressions, is known only to God.

A Bible was given to a poor woman, soon after she was confined with a consumption, and who had never learned to read. It was read to her daily. Her mind soon became deeply impressed, her sins appeared too great to be forgiven—her heart was broken—she believed in Jesus—she died in triumph. A friend, who witnessed her distress of mind, was awakened by it, and now gives satisfactory evidence of being “a new creature.”

Suppose that some will make either no use at all, or a bad use of the Bibles which are given them—shall this prevent the distribution? Who will venture to assert, that Bibles ought not to be given to such people, provided even one out of a hundred prove a blessing? In answer to these objections, permit me to state another fact, which is, that we have found apparently devoted, heavenly-minded Christians, who have wept, and sometimes

cried aloud, and praised God, when we have informed them of the existence, and pointed out the object, of the Bible Society.

*Secondly*, It may be observed, that if millions of Bibles were provided, and information given, to the destitute, that they could be obtained by simply applying for them, the work of distributing the Bible, to that extent to which it is our duty to carry it, would not be accomplished. Many of these people do not know what the Bible is. It is no uncommon thing for persons, in answer to our inquiries, to assure us, that they have a Bible, and to prove the truth of the declaration, present us with some other book. Sometimes they will stare, and wonder what you mean. They never heard of such a thing as the Bible. Many who know what it is, and have been accustomed in early life to read it, have almost forgotten its contents, and are wholly unacquainted with its value. They see, indeed, that many people are intelligent, moral, respectable, pious, and happy; while others are of a totally different character—that the darkness of heathenism does not rest upon us as a people—that we are not, in every sense, idolators and savages; but never imagine that the Bible has made the difference. Such has been their education, and such are their habits, that many of them have no inclination to read any book whatever, and if they had, the Bible is not the one which they would naturally choose. Shall they be left in this state? Shall we make no effort to show them the importance, the value of the Bible, or to induce them to read? Shall we not so much as carry them the Bible, and ask them to read it? Nay, shall we not go to them again and again, and urge and entreat them to read that blessed book, in which alone “life and immortality are brought to light?” Shall we not study day and night to invent arguments to persuade them to read? Shall we not pourtray in lively colours the misery of hell and the happiness of heaven? Shall we not endeavour to give them some idea of the value of the soul, of the solemnities of eternity; if, by any means, we may induce them to read that book, which is able to save them from hell and fit them for heaven, to make that soul happy, that eternity blessed?

Upon the principle which some maintain, viz. that it will do no good to give the Bible to those who are not sufficiently interested to make application for it, we should effectually bar from that sacred treasure the whole Heathen world; we should leave those millions to grope for ever in darkness. Suppose there were a newspaper, which circulated throughout China, and which was read by all its inhabitants, and that it should be published, that all who wished might have the Bible by applying for it, what effect would it have? How many would be supplied?

The value of the Bible is discovered by experiment. We have made this discovery; and if we neglect to make it known to our fellow-men, “how dwelleth the love of God in us?” Let it be

remembered, that where the Bible is known and believed to be the word of God, it is often, and if its humbling truths come home with power to the conscience, is always, hated. It is the sun of the moral world. It is that light to which natural man will not come, "lest their deeds should be reprov'd." We must carry it to them; we must cause it to shine in their dark abodes. If they flee from it into a cavern more dark, we must follow them; till there shall be no place in the city or in the world to which they can retreat. When this is done, we shall have performed our duty, in relation to distributing Bibles, and we may then hope that God, by his Spirit, will open the eyes of the understanding, and purify the heart, so that men shall not only see but love that light, and rejoice in it.\*

The same reasons may be urged for the distribution of religious Tracts. Their light is a borrowed and fainter light, but, generally, it is the true light, reflected from the word of God. By the distribution of such tracts, many sermons have been, and may still be, preached in places inaccessible to a minister of the gospel. They may be thrown into haunts of vice, and produce the most happy effects. They have been thus distributed in New-York, and the vilest persons have been seen reading them with the most fixed attention.

It is not to be supposed, that the Bible, in the present state of society, is to be given to all indiscriminately, and without any evidence that a proper use will be made of it. The following is substantially the mode, which I have thought it my duty to adopt. I have, generally in company with some christian friend, visited all the families adjoining each other in a particular neighbourhood—have endeavoured to discover what families were destitute, and to ascertain by conversing with them, and inquiring of others concerning them, whether they would make a good use of the Bible if put into their hands. Those to whom it was thought best to give Bibles, have been noted, and informed, that we should call again and supply them. By this means, their minds have, in some measure, been prepared for the sacred deposit. Opportunity has been given, also, to address the other families on the subject of religion, and leave tracts in their possession. Soon after this, the Bibles have been given, accompanied with such instructions and admonitions as the nature of the subject naturally suggested. They have been directed to keep them, frequently and

\* The managers and members of the Female Bible Society, we rejoice to state, have actually commenced the work. Not satisfied with aiding, by their funds and approbation, the parent and other Bible institutions, nor with purchasing Bibles, and depositing them in the usual manner, they have entered the habitations of the poor---have sought out the destitute, and, with their own hands, have given them the word of life. We trust their truly christian example will be extensively followed, not only in this, but in other places.

prayerfully to peruse them, and to instruct their children in them. They have been reminded, that, receiving the Bible in this manner, they were under increased obligations to love, reverence, and obey its instructions; that it was the word of the living God, and would prove either "a savour of life unto life, or of death unto death"—that it was the rule by which they would be tried at the last day, and that, if it did not prove a blessing, it would be a swift witness against them. Their names and places of residence have been recorded, and they have been informed, that our anxiety would probably lead us to call at a future time, that we might know whether the Bible had proved a blessing or not.

In addition to giving Bibles and Tracts in this manner, and forming Bible associations, which we hope will soon be done, many may be circulated, by exposing them for sale in parts of the city in which they are most needed. There are Christians who will esteem it a privilege to take charge of them and sell them at the first cost. A show-bill should be hung out to give the information to those who pass. This plan has been suggested by finding many people destitute of the Bible, apparently because it had not come in their way. It has also had the test of experience. Bibles and Tracts have been thus deposited, and several thousands of the latter, and a considerable number of the former, have actually been sold. Christians who are able and disposed to give them to their poor or vicious neighbours, may, by this means, be conveniently supplied. Bibles and Tracts may be circulated, also, by employing suitable persons to go from house to house, for the express purpose of selling them, allowing a reasonable advance on what they dispose of. Several thousands of Tracts have recently been circulated in this way in the destitute parts of the city. Peddlers about the markets and streets may be furnished with such books, instead of those of a corrupting nature, which they too often carry, and of which they too easily dispose.

3. The gospel must be preached. After the Holy Spirit has testified, that it is through the "foolishness of preaching," that God is pleased to "save them that believe," it will not be questioned, that the preaching of the gospel is among the means by which the souls of men are to be redeemed from sin and death—that it is one of the great pillars by which the Church is supported—that it is an institution of God.

But it is said, that you cannot preach the gospel to these people; they will not attend public worship, provided they have the opportunity. In answer to this assertion, which has been reiterated, till it is thread-bare, we observe, that it cannot be known to be true till the attempt has been made. After labourers have been sent into the vineyard, houses of worship erected, the gospel preached, and other appointed means employed, and after all have failed of success, this objection will be in point. It is the opinion of persons, who are best acquainted with the



character and condition of these people, that, if they had the opportunity, many of them would regularly attend upon the preaching of the gospel. In the course of my visits, I have found many, who have testified, that the only reason why they did not go to church was, that they had no seats and were unable to procure them. On this account, many families, that have formerly been accustomed to attend public worship, have been absent so much that the desire and the habit of attending are lost.

Will it be said, that the churches of some denominations are free, and, therefore, that such people could hear the gospel if they were disposed? It is true, that the Methodist churches are free, and I rejoice that it is in my power to state that they are not only free, but *full*. The Presbyterian, the Baptist, and the Episcopal churches in that part of the city to which I refer, are also full.

It is said, also, that in some of the churches in the lower part of the city, there is room for hundreds of poor people, were they disposed to come. This objection has already been answered. It has been shown, that should there be pews which are unoccupied, the poor can neither purchase nor hire them. The objection, however, respects those pews which are owned by the more wealthy, and which, on account of the smallness of the family, or for a worse reason, are either empty, or but partially filled, on the Sabbath. Should the poor be so much engaged as to come from the upper to the lower part of the city to hear the gospel; should they so far overcome their natural diffidence, or, as some would say, be so impudent, as to enter these churches, clad in the manner in which they usually are, and necessarily must be, would the occupants of these pews rise and give them seats? Some who have made this objection, and to whom this question has been put, have already answered, so far as it respected themselves, in the negative. We are persuaded, that poor people might go into churches, might go through them, and go out again, before this class of objectors would give them a seat. Besides, the question is not concerning a few hundreds or a few thousands, but tens of thousands. It is said further, that if these people were properly interested, they would go and stand in the aisles, rather than not hear the gospel. It is undoubtedly true that they would; and it is equally true, that they would climb up at the windows, and that the great inquiry about our streets would be, "What must I do to be saved?" Were this the case, there would be little need of further efforts; but who does not know, that one great object of preaching the gospel is to arouse men from their stupidity, and to excite them to attend to their spiritual concerns? The fact that men are not properly interested in the subject of religion, proves the necessity of more vigorous efforts.

It is not enough, however, that we erect houses of worship, that we open the doors and proclaim, or cause to be proclaimed, the glad tidings of salvation. We must do more. As in distri-

buting the Bible, so in preaching the gospel, if people will not come to us, we must go to them—we must enter their dwellings—we must preach from house to house. For this mode of preaching we have the express command of Christ—“Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature;” “Go out into the highways and hedges, and compel them to come in.” God has in mercy adapted the means of grace to the character and condition of his creatures. Having wandered from the sheep-fold, having forsaken the “fountain of living waters,” he has appointed the means to follow them and bring them back. “The Son of Man is come to *seek* and to save that which was lost.”

In addition to the command, we have the example of Christ. Though the Jews, among whom he laboured, were religiously educated, and accustomed to attend public worship, he did not think it sufficient to preach to them in their synagogues. He went from place to place; he entered their dwellings; he met them in the street, in the garden, in the field, by the sea, on the mountain—wherever he found lost men, there was a pulpit, a sanctuary, a preacher. When he sent out his disciples, he intimated to them, that they were to preach in the same manner. They followed his instructions, they imitated his example. Even while among the Jews, “daily in the temple, and *in every house*, they ceased not to teach and to preach Jesus Christ.” Paul declares, that he taught not only “publicly, but from house to house.” We know, also, that this mode of preaching is often most effectual in our established congregations; that it is always practised in times of revival. In hardly any other situation is it possible to preach so directly to the conscience, to say, with such effect, “Thou art the man.” If the gospel is not to be preached to any except those who are disposed to hear it and to seek after it, when will it be preached to the thousands who are perishing in the destitute parts of our country? When will it be preached to the Heathen nations—“to every creature?”

If the people are visited and instructed in their own dwellings; if, in addition to this, they are assembled together in little circles for social worship; if they are followed from day to day, and week to week; if all is done in a manner so kind, so affectionate so faithful, that they shall be convinced, that you have no object in view but the glory of God, and their own best good, we cannot doubt, that a powerful effect will be produced; that numbers will be converted—that those who are not will be awakened from their stupidity—that they will wish to attend public worship. This leads me to observe,

4. That houses of worship must be erected, and congregations and churches formed. If people are disposed to worship God, in a public manner, it requires no arguments to prove, that they must have suitable places for their accommodation. That such places are needed at the present time, we have already shown:

As to the kind of house, it seems indispensable, when we consider the natural pride of the human heart, in connexion with the fact that these people live in a city, and in the midst of other churches, that it should be a house built expressly for the purpose—that it should be a church. It is unreasonable to expect, that people of this description should go to a school-house or a private room to worship on the Sabbath, unless particularly influenced by the Holy Spirit. Lectures have been sometimes appointed in such places, and because large numbers have not attended, it has been concluded, that all further efforts would be in vain.

Should such houses be provided, and other means which have been mentioned, used, we believe, that some will become pious, and therefore churches and congregations must be formed. That christians may be zealous and active, and grow in grace, they must unite, they must be in such a situation that they can “speak often one to another,” and enjoy the ordinances of the gospel. Christians resemble, in no small degree, coals of fire, which, scattered over a large surface, afford but little light and heat, and are liable to be extinguished; but if collected together, they immediately kindle into a flame, glow, and diffuse light and heat to all around them. Since employed by the Society, I have found many sad proofs of the importance of christian intercourse, and of professors being constantly united to the visible church: I have found many professors from other places, who have lived here for years, and not united themselves to any church; and, in consequence of it, their first love has degenerated into lukewarmness, their zeal into a spirit of conformity to the world. It is important, that christians should unite together, not only for their own benefit, but for the good of others. Their object is not only self-defence, but invasion, not only to retain what they have gained, but to extend the triumphs of the cross. Were they thus to unite, soon would they attach large numbers to their Divine Master.

To commence the work, let suitable men be employed to labour as evangelists; let them be aided by private christians; let houses of worship be erected. Were this method pursued, glorious conquests in the midst of these thousands would, with the blessing of God, soon be made; large churches and congregations would soon be formed.

This general method of proceeding is sanctioned, not only by the authority of God, but by the example of the apostles and primitive christians, and by the experience of the Church in every age. We can only refer to the example of the great apostle of the Gentiles. After calling to mind his qualifications both natural and super-natural, and his unexampled success, no one will doubt, that he selected the best means for the accomplishment of his object. Mark his progress. He goes out into the highways and hedges, or into the midst of the heathen. He preaches from house

to house, and in all other places where he can find any who will hear him. He does not stop here. Wherever God is pleased in any measure to bless his labours, or wherever there are a sufficient number of christians, he forms a church, establishes the regular preaching of the gospel, and the administration of the ordinances. Without going back to past ages, we have abundant proof of the correctness of these remarks from experience in this city. The houses of worship which have been built in the upper part of the city have not been built in vain. Large churches and congregations have been formed, and the state of society greatly improved!

It is a fact worthy of notice, that the further you go from a church, both in the city and in the country, the more ignorant and vicious you find the people. I speak not of individual families, but of the great mass of the population. The very sight of a church will often cause those who are grossly vicious to blush and reform, or retire from its view. It is a perpetual monitor, especially on the Sabbath when people assemble together, and will exert a powerful influence on the surrounding neighbourhood. A brothel cannot exist by the side of a church, unless it have some secret communication with the Theatre, that strong hold of Satan, from which its altars may be supplied with victims. Erect a church, and the moral atmosphere will be purified—the mists of darkness and death will vanish—the harsh gratings of discord and blasphemy will be changed into the sweet songs of Zion---the habitation of cruelty and vice into a Bethel---the sink of pollution into a fountain of life---the desert into the garden of God.

Sufficient attention has not been paid, we believe, to the manner in which provision has hitherto been made for the poor in many of our churches. It will not answer to have PARTICULAR SEATS DESIGNATED AS SEATS FOR THE POOR. The simple fact, that people are marked as poor, will effectually exclude from the sanctuary many who would otherwise attend. To remedy this evil, the churches may be so built, that the pews, or a part of them, shall be disposed of at a low rate. If a poor man wishes for a pew and is not able to pay ten dollars, let him pay two, or one; or if he is not able to pay any thing, let him have one without paying for it. Let him, at all events, have a pew for his family; otherwise the whole house should be free.

Let it not be forgotten, that the work to be performed is so great, that the energies of private christians must be called into action.

Though missionaries or evangelists, who shall be employed, are to take the lead, christians must co-operate, not only by their prayers and their property, but by their active exertions. We would not be understood, however, as intimating that nothing has been done. Individuals have done much to supply the spiritual wants of the poor; but the effect of their labours has been com-

paratively limited for want of system and union. Though single efforts may be great in themselves, they will produce comparatively but little effect; whereas combined, well-directed, persevering efforts, will produce almost any thing. To call into action, to combine, and to direct the energies of christians, it is proposed,

5. To form associations in every ward, and in different sections of the same ward, throughout the city. The first object will be to ascertain the moral state of the people, and the second to improve it: *first*, to ascertain what families are destitute of the Bible---what families or individuals do not attend public worship---what adults and children need instruction---what vices are most prevalent: *secondly*, to distribute Bibles and Tracts, to visit the sick and afflicted, to persuade old and young to attend public worship, Sabbath Schools, and to assemble at other places where they may receive religious instruction; to prevent, by various means, Sabbath breaking, profaneness, intemperance, idleness, and vice of every description.

It cannot be in the city, in every respect, as it is in the country, where the character and circumstances of every family are almost necessarily known. In the city there are, strictly speaking, no neighbourhoods; and were it desirable, we do not expect that all who live near each other should enter into habits of intimacy. But were those who are pious and in comfortable circumstances to become so much acquainted with those who live near them, as to ascertain their character and condition, both as it respects temporal and spiritual things, it would produce the most salutary effects.

Such a system would directly promote the temporal, and in that way indirectly, the spiritual welfare of the poor. The respectable poor often suffer for the necessaries of life. The reason why they will not make known their situation, is, that, as most persons who beg are vicious, they would endanger their character, and rather than do this they will endure extreme sufferings, and sometimes even death itself. It is necessary not only to visit, but often to make an effort to ascertain the wants of this class of the poor. Many, both of the virtuous and vicious, suffer extremely in sickness; not because there are none to afford relief, for it is not uncommon for the benevolent to go from one extremity of the city to the other to visit and relieve the sick; but because their situation is unknown. More may, sometimes, visit a sick person than is really beneficial, while at the very next door, there may be another equally needy and equally worthy of assistance, to whom no assistance is afforded. Such cases have often occurred.

It is known, that, during the late inclement season, a number of persons have perished in this city with hunger and cold. Had there been such associations, their untimely death would most certainly have been prevented. It may be said, that this was a very

unusual time, and cannot be expected to occur again. Be this as it may, christians, we trust, feel no small degree of regret, that even a few immortal souls should, in this manner, be hurried into eternity. It is a fact, however, that people die at other times for want of attention. A respectable lady, a few weeks ago, went into the house of a poor neighbour, and found, to her great surprise, a woman lying sick, and, in the cradle by her side, the remains of a lovely child. On inquiry she learned, that the woman had been reduced so low, that she could not go out to obtain relief, or make known her situation. The child had died with hunger, and would, doubtless, soon have been followed by its mother to the world of spirits, had it not been for this providential discovery. Those who are acquainted with the circumstances of the poor, know that occurrences of the same general nature are not uncommon. With such facts in view, who will pretend that some system like the one proposed, is not indispensable? It would not only prevent the poor from suffering and dying for want of timely aid, but it would prevent the necessity of that aid. To manage their temporal concerns to advantage, many need information, advice, and direction, which, without the least difficulty, might be given by a kind and judicious neighbour. This remark is more especially applicable to strangers, who are unacquainted with the customs of the city. In consequence of disappointment or misfortune, many are disheartened, and settle down into a state of gloom and sloth, which are the precursors of personal and family vice, disgrace, and ruin. This might frequently be prevented, should some friend take them by the hand, assist them in finding employment, and encourage them to make an effort. Their characters being known, there would be no difficulty in obtaining employment, and other necessary aid, for the respectable poor. But, at present, they are mixed with the vicious, are regarded in the same light, and are treated in the same manner.

Such associations would greatly aid the Sabbath Schools. Those who are not immediately connected with that institution, can recommend it with a degree of influence which is not at the command of the teachers. Poor children might be supplied with clothes. That some assistance of this kind is necessary, will not be doubted. But experience has taught, that it is unwise to have it afforded, by those to whom the immediate management of the schools is intrusted.

But such associations are principally important on account of their more direct moral influence. Many people resort to our large cities, that they may live with less restraint, and still retain their standing in society. If a family, in a well regulated country village, does not attend public worship, it is known, and the moral character of that family receives a wound. The same is true of the neglect of other duties, or the practice of other sins.

This operates as a strong motive to restrain those who are not under the influence of the gospel, and to induce them to attend at least to the outward forms of religion. How different in the city! People may here neglect public worship for years, and, because it is unknown, may be as much respected by those who are not intimately acquainted with them, as if they strictly observed the Sabbath. Let every man's character and conduct be known to the moral and pious, and a change in the state of society will be effected; for there are but few, who are insensible to the opinion of their fellow men, however they may disregard the command of God. The very sight of the moral and pious is a check to the wicked. Should respectable persons simply pass through particular streets every day, and look at those who now exhibit in those streets all the degradation of their character, it would soon cause them to hide their heads. The voice of the pious awakes the internal monitor, and their presence encourages him to do his duty. Christians may greatly promote the spiritual welfare of the poor, by holding small meetings among them, for the purpose of prayer and reading the scriptures. The exertions of such associations would induce many to attend public worship, particularly those who are not grossly vicious, and strangers who have been accustomed to attend previous to their residence in the city. When they first come, they generally wander from place to place. Having no seat of their own, and being frequently unable to find one, it becomes unpleasant. They occasionally stay at home; it agrees with the practice of many around them; it gratifies the natural heart, and soon, instead of the old and good habit, a new and bad one is formed. This is not true merely of the poorer class of people, but also of a large class in comfortable circumstances.

Professing christians, who come into the city and live here for a long time, without connecting themselves with any church or congregation, would by this means be discovered and brought to the enjoyment of the ordinances of the gospel. The number of such is not small; and what is still more surprising, pious people have been found, who have lived here for years and have formed no religious acquaintance; not because they did not value christian intercourse, but because they were strangers, modest strangers, whose views of propriety would not permit them to introduce themselves. They have pined and mourned in solitude, their graces have withered, and their usefulness has been comparatively limited. Tears have sometimes testified the joy they felt at being delivered from this unhappy state.

Such associations would greatly encourage and aid our poor brethren who live in the midst of the most vicious, and who are "vexed with their filthy conversation," who like "righteous Lot dwelling in the midst of them, and seeing and hearing, vex their righteous souls from day to day with their unlawful deeds." Be-

ing on the same level with their neighbours, as to worldly circumstances, and being alone, they can do little more than mourn and pray in secret. But if they could associate with people more respectable in the eyes of the world, they would, from their situation be powerful auxiliaries in this holy warfare.

Particular pains should be taken to approach the destitute, especially the vicious, in times of affliction. Places inaccessible to christians at other times, are then approached with perfect ease. By afflictions God prepares the way before his people: he opens the ears, restrains the passions, and softens the hearts of the most profligate and hardened. There is one other fact which must not be omitted. There is not the least doubt, that hundreds of people every year are sick and die, and are buried without the presence of a minister, and a large number without the presence of a private christian. "These things ought not so to be."

When we take into view the considerations which have been, and others which might be suggested, we cannot but hope, that christians will feel it their duty to unite together, to inquire into the state of the destitute, to "go about doing good:" and that the efforts of this nature which have already been made, will soon be followed by others more systematic, vigorous, and successful.\*

These, it is believed, are among the means which are to be used for the instruction, the reformation, and the salvation of the destitute, who constantly reside in the city.

But there is another class of the destitute, whom it is more difficult to supply. I refer particularly to our seamen, who in consequence of their character and circumstances, have been regarded as almost beyond the reach of hope. The principal difficulty arises from their having no permanent place of residence. Should any particular number of them unite together and establish a school, or erect a church, or should this be done for them by their friends, who live on shore, they could not enjoy the benefit. Their employment obliges them soon to be at the distance of hundreds and perhaps thousands of miles. They are constantly moving in different directions, constantly changing associates. While at sea they are in such small companies, that they cannot ordinarily, either supply themselves with a preached gospel, or be supplied by their employers. Even in the Millennium we cannot suppose that the gospel will, to any great extent, be preached on the ocean. This renders it indispensable that the principal attention should be paid to them while in port. God has kindly adapted the dispensations of his grace to the condition of his creatures. At sea they do not need the same

\* A considerable number of christians have engaged, and appear much interested in this benevolent work. They see and feel its importance; are greatly encouraged, and determined to persevere. They meet together at stated times, and are much refreshed while they communicate intelligence, and with united hearts surround the throne of grace.



attention. They are then removed from many of those temptations to which they are exposed while on shore. Considering, therefore, their character and circumstances, it is evident, that the means of grace with which they are supplied must, in a sense, be common property, to which all seamen shall have an equal claim. In order to their improvement and salvation, it is proposed,

FIRST, That in every seaport there should be a Marine School, by which seamen may be instructed, in reading, writing, arithmetic, geography, navigation, and other branches of learning. Strange as it may seem, a large number of them are unable to read. This is not, however, generally the case in respect of those, who come from parts of the country and of the world, where particular attention is paid to the education of the rising generation. But seamen are from all parts of the country, and from all parts of the world. Though their stay in a single port, at one time, is but short, yet all the time which they spend in all the ports they enter, is very considerable. It is estimated, that they are in port one fourth part of the year, or three months out of twelve. During a considerable part of this time they are wholly unemployed. Were schools established, and proper efforts made to interest them in the subject, we believe they would gladly embrace the opportunity. Those, who needed it, would soon learn to read, while the more enterprising would wish to attend to other branches, particularly to navigation, if for no other reason, that they might be promoted to higher stations. Were they thus instructed on the land, they might by the aid of books and their more knowing companions, pursue their studies while at sea. Observations on the manner in which a school of this description should be conducted, must be omitted. A Library also should be connected with the school. Most seamen are destitute not only of the Bible, but of all other books. Many who have carried books to sea with them have lost them, by shipwreck or in some other way. Were a library established to which seamen, under proper restrictions, could have access, numbers would employ at least a part of their time in reading. If by these and other means they can be furnished with employment while in port, much towards their reformation will be accomplished; for we are confident, that the want of employment is one great reason why so many of them resort to haunts of vice.

SECONDLY, as another means of benefiting our seamen, Bible Societies should be established, of which they shall be the active members. Every person acquainted with their moral state, knows, that most of them are destitute of the Bible, and that those who are not destitute, are supplied in a manner by no means the best. Human nature is such, that it is almost impossible, that a seaman should take the same interest in the Bible where he has it in common with a whole crew, compared with what he would, provided he had a copy of his own, obtained by his own industry, and from his own society. By means of such a society, a record also may be kept,

and testimonials may be given, which will gain them employment in preference to the profligate. As the Bible is almost the only means of instruction with which they can be supplied when out of port, we trust, that they will not be permitted to leave our shores without this compass, this pole star, to direct them to the haven of eternal rest.\*

If it be important, that their minds should be enlightened by human knowledge, and that the Bible should be put into their hands, it is still more important, that the gospel should be preached to them. In what manner can it be done? In answer to this inquiry, which has occasioned great and tender solicitude in the minds of some, who have thought of seamen, who have wept over them, and prayed for them, it is proposed,

THIRDLY, That in large sea-ports churches be erected expressly for their accommodation. This it is conceived is the only way in which they can extensively enjoy a preached gospel. It is said, that they may be accommodated in other churches, and in them may hear the gospel. In answer to this, it may be observed, in the first place, that there is no provision for them. The few seats which are not occupied by private families, are occupied by the poor, whom we always have with us. No provision whatever has been made for seamen as a class of men by themselves. They have been forgotten, or entirely neglected.

But, in the second place, were provision made for them in our churches, it would not remove the difficulty. They regard themselves, and they are regarded by others, as an entirely separate class of the community. They do not mingle with other people. Their very mode of life excludes them from all society, except that of their companions. With them they necessarily and exclusively associate while at sea. When in port they have no other acquaintance, and have but little occasion or inducement to form any, except it be that, which, though very limited in its duration, is extremely pernicious in its consequences. They have no places of resort, except those which frequently become the grave of their property, their morals, their happiness, and their souls. They are most of the time strangers in a strange place. As they have generally become vicious in consequence of being neglected, and as no distinction is made between the sober and the profligate, they are strangers whom all feel at liberty to despise. Those of them who are respectable, and such there are, notwithstanding all the disadvantages under which they labour, have a high sense of propriety, and will not be guilty of intrusion: hence they have a natural aversion to enter our churches. Another barrier is their dress. Their dress is almost universally different from that of

\* Since this report was read, a Marine Bible Society has been organized, and the subject discussed more at large in the Addresses to Merchants and Masters of vessels, and to Seamen, which are before the public.

other people. When they enter a church, they are known and marked as sailors; they attract the notice of no small part of the congregation; and most of them would sooner face the cannon's mouth than that thoughtless, supercilious gaze, which betrays equally a want of civility to the stranger, and of reverence in the house of God. Many have told me, with strong emotions, that they supposed people thought they went to church to mock at religion, or from some other improper motive.

There is another reason why they do not more frequently go to church. It is a fact, and one at the recital of which the persons concerned ought to blush, that they have been turned out of our churches when they have entered! They have received no invitation to take seats—the pews have been closed against them—and they, in some cases, have been informed, that there was no room for sailors. Such was not the manner in which they were treated by the Son of God. On account of this treatment, many have not been to church for years. When one is thus treated, it influences a whole circle of his companions: consequently seamen are impressed with the idea, that there is no room for them in our churches, and that their presence is not desired. By the testimony of masters of vessels, and sailors themselves, this impression is almost universal. This is the reason which they generally assign for not attending public worship.

Will it be said, that this impression may be removed by making provision for them, and inviting them to attend? Suppose, that in every church in the city, there was provision for a certain number of seamen, so that in all the churches, all the seamen who come to the port might be accommodated; how could they be distributed according to the provision made in each church? They are strangers: they usually remain in port but a very short time. Should they be disposed to go at all, under such circumstances, the probability is, that most of them would go to but few places. They love to be together, they go to church in companies. In this case a part of them would find no accommodation. They might spend a considerable portion of the time of divine service in wandering from one place to another. Should they enter a church and not find a seat, they would be mortified. These considerations, with the fact, that they have a strong reluctance to go to a church to which others resort, would effectually close against them the doors of the sanctuary. But such provision is not made for them; and we confidently assert, that it will not be made, till that day when all shall feel, and love, and act as brethren. Further, it is the opinion of a large number of masters of vessels and seamen, who have been consulted during the past year, not only in this, but in some other ports, that this is the only way in which the gospel can be effectually preached to seamen. Almost every individual, to whom it has been made known, has appeared highly gratified with the plan, and expressed a strong de-

sire, that it might go into effect. The plan has received the approbation, not only of seafaring people, but of a considerable number of respectable merchants, clergymen, and others. Were it known to seamen, that, whenever they entered a large sea-port, they would find a church, many would be induced to attend, by the influence of early education, by curiosity, a desire to see their companions and to be like other people, or the pride which they would take in an institution of their own. Though drawn by such motives, the preaching of the gospel might, nevertheless, become to them "the wisdom of God and the power of God unto salvation." Many, we trust, would be influenced by higher motives, a desire to worship God in obedience to his command, to hear the glad tidings of salvation, and learn the way to heaven.

The expense of such an establishment would, at first, be considerable. But when we consider the number of seamen, and their unparalleled liberality, we cannot doubt, that they would, in the end, amply support, by their contributions, the preaching of the gospel. When we take into view the importance of the subject in all its relations, and the interest\* which has already been manifested, we believe, that the time is not far distant, when in every large sea-port, the sanctuary will unfold its doors, and welcome to its blessings our brethren, "who go down to the sea in ships, who do business in great waters;" that, as they "see the wonders" of the Lord "in the deep," they may, in his earthly courts, behold the greater wonders of redeeming love.

But all human efforts for the salvation of the destitute will be of no avail without the blessing of God. Means in themselves are powerless. In a field like this, "a Paul may plant and an Apollos water" in vain: God alone can give the increase; God alone can raise to spiritual life these multitudes, who are "dead in trespasses and sins." We mention, therefore, as an indispensable requisite to the accomplishment of this work,

6 CONTINUAL AND EARNEST PRAYER TO GOD. From what God has revealed in his word, as well as from his dealings with his church, we have reason to believe, that prayer is the great medium, through which the influences of the Holy Spirit descend. Though "the Lord promises to build the ruined places and plant that which was desolate," he assures us that he "will be inquired of by the house of Israel to do it for them." With the commands of God on this subject, every Christian must be familiar. On the precious promises which he has made to support and encourage his people in their labours, and which are scattered throughout the sacred pages, as glowing gems in the midst of others of inferior lustre, all must have dwelt with peculiar delight—with lively emo-

\* A subscription for a Seaman's Church was sometime ago opened in this city. How much has been subscribed, it is not in my power to state; enough, however, to justify the belief, that such a church will be erected.

tions of hope and joy. It is our Saviour who hath said, "That if two of you shall agree on earth, as touching any thing that they shall ask, it shall be done for them of my Father who is in heaven." It is He who has assured his people, that their heavenly Father is more ready to give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him, than parents are to give good gifts to their children.

The examples of Moses, of Abraham, of Jacob, of David, of Daniel, and of a host of ancient worthies, urge and encourage us to the performance of this duty. Though Christ "spake as never man spake;" though he had power to turn the "hearts of the children of men, even as the rivers of waters are turned," he did not neglect to pray; he did not think of accomplishing his work without prayer. On that consecrated mount by the devoted city of Jerusalem, he spent whole nights in holy wrestling with his Father. In this, as in other things, he has left us an example, that we should follow his steps. The efficacy of prayer is strikingly illustrated in the case of the disciples soon after they had beheld their divine Master ascend into heaven. From Olivet, they returned into the city; "they went up into an upper room," and there they "all continued with one accord in prayer and supplication, with the women, and Mary the mother of Jesus, and with his brethren." Immediately after this, Peter goes out and preaches to the hardened Jews. The windows of heaven are opened; the influences of the Spirit descend—in a single day, thousands are converted and added to the church. Similar has been the effect of prayer in every age. Never, I believe, have we as a Society, or in smaller companies, set apart a season for prayer, which has not been followed by more or less of the operations of the Holy Spirit; some have been awakened; serious impressions, which have been previously made on the minds of others, have been deepened, and individuals have been brought into the kingdom of Christ. "The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness." Let us, like the disciples, *continue* in prayer; let us, also, like them, be *of one accord*. Respecting union in prayer, we have much reason to be encouraged. Our brethren in other places unite their prayers with ours on occasions like this.\*

Let us then be deeply impressed with the sentiment, that the work in which we are engaged, is the work of God; that without his blessing it can never be accomplished. Let us remember, that it is in our closets that we are to gird on the armour—that it is there, we must gain strength to wield the weapons, to fight the battles of the Lord.

\* The Societies which have been formed for the same object in Boston and in Charlestown, Mass., and, it is believed, the one in Charleston, S. C. have their quarterly prayer meetings on the same day with the Society in New-York. Should other Societies be formed, it is hoped that the prayers of all will at the same time ascend as incense, and mingle before the throne.

“ Satan trembles when he sees  
The weakest saint upon his knees.”

If we can engage God to be with us, we need not fear. “ More are they that are with us than they that are against us.” Though the enemy should come in like a flood, “ the Lord will lift up a standard against him.” Before we, in any way, engage in this holy warfare; especially, before we visit the habitations of the poor and vicious, let us, with our Bibles and Tracts, retire to our closets, and there endeavour to gain some idea of the magnitude of the work—of the wretched state of those, whom we are about to visit; and, in view of their present misery and that to which they are approaching; in view of that great day, when we shall meet them at the bar of God, and in view of our own insufficiency, let us lift up our hearts to God for his Spirit to prepare the way before us, and render the means effectual: There let rivers of waters run down because of the slain of the daughter of God’s people—there let us mourn over the ravages of sin, the desolations of Zion; and while we look around upon the slain, and ask, with heartfelt solicitude,

“ And can these mould’ring corpses live,  
And can these perish’d bones revive—”

Let us, with holy importunate resignation, exclaim:

“ That mighty God to thee is known,  
That mighty work is all thine own.

—if thy Spirit deign to breathe,  
Life spreads through all the realms of death,  
Dry bones obey thy powerful voice,  
They move, they waken, they rejoice.”

We have now given some account of this new missionary field, and pointed out some of the ways in which it is to be cultivated. Many considerations present themselves as motives to urge us to great and persevering efforts.

1. The command of God. The parable usually styled the GOSPEL SUPPER, represents the great plan of redeeming mercy. When those, who were first bidden, refused to come, the servants were commanded by Christ, the master of the feast, to go out into the highways and hedges, and compel those who were found there to come in. The servants doubtless represent those who are employed in extending the blessings of the Gospel to the destitute; and the destitute, especially the poor, are represented by those who are in the highways and hedges. “ Go out quickly into the highways and hedges and compel them to come in.” Here we have a plain absolute command of Christ, addressed directly to his people. Obedience is a test of Christian character. “ If ye love me,” says Christ, “ keep my commandments.” That man deceives himself with a name to live while he is dead, who does

not esteem it his duty, his privilege, his glory to obey. We might here show how that other command of Christ, "Go into all the world and preach the Gospel to every creature," bears directly on this subject, and can never be obeyed till the Gospel is preached to the poor. We might mention other commands of the same import; but with Christians one command is sufficient: a "thus saith the Lord," cannot fail to bow the will, to reach the heart, and call into action the energies of every child of God.

Intimately connected with this, preaching the Gospel to the poor is an essential part of the Christian religion. When John sent his disciples to Christ, that they might be convinced, that he was the true Messiah, he points them to certain parts of his system as evidences that it was divine. After informing them, "that the blind receive their sight; the lame walk; the lepers are cleansed; the deaf hear; the dead are raised up;" he completes the climax by adding, "and the poor have the Gospel preached to them." Glorious system, worthy of its divine Author! Those systems of pride and self-aggrandizement of the Scribes and Pharisees, and of the Heathen, are shrouded in darkness, while this is surrounded with the splendour of heaven.

If the account here given of the religion of Jesus, is correct, then that religion, which does not provide means for the salvation of the poor, is not the religion of Christ. These two evidences, the working of miracles and the preaching of the Gospel to the poor, were at that time sufficient to satisfy men of serious inquiry, that the religion of Christ was divine. These evidences were given by our Saviour himself. Miracles have ceased, but as we always have the poor with us, we may always be able to convince the inquiring, and stop the mouths of gain-sayers, by showing them that the poor have the Gospel preached to them.

The religion of the Gospel is designed for the world. It is therefore designed for the poor; for a great portion of the world are poor. It is the religion of the soul, and the souls of the poor are as valuable as those of the rich. Do we need any thing to give greater authority and glory to this system; we have the example of our blessed Redeemer. His life was a comment on his system, which sheds about it a divine lustre. It was among the poor that he delighted to labour,—it was to them, that he continually preached the Gospel. Their wants he delighted to supply; their diseases to heal; their souls to save.

On reviewing the commands, the precepts, and the example of our Saviour, in relation to the poor, will it not appear that they have been too much neglected by Christians? Is not this a stain on our religion! Are not the evidences of its divinity obscured? When, from some distant part of our country and of the world, our fellow men shall come to inquire concerning our religion, can we say, that the poor generally have the gospel preached to them? Have we been into

the highways and hedges? Have we, in this respect, followed the example of our Redeemer? Has not God placed the poor of this city particularly under our care,—and does not a regard to our Christian character—do not our covenant vows require, that we should share with them the rich, the heavenly treasures, which we have so freely and so abundantly received.

2. The Christian's own happiness and growth in grace. The spirit of God has testified, that "it is more blessed to give than to receive," to do good to others than to gain it at their hands. There is a pleasure in doing good, which can be known only to him by whom it is felt. To enjoy religion in their own souls, Christians must do the will of God; they must find their pleasure in the same way in which He found it, whom they profess to follow, whose meat and drink it was to do the will of his Father. So far as we are employed in doing good from right motives, so far we resemble Christ, and no further—so much do we possess of the spirit of the gospel, and so much may we expect of its consolations, and no more. It is the consciousness of doing good to the bodies and souls of men, from a desire to glorify God, that fills and swells the soul. Compared with this, what are the pleasures of sense? All the titles and honours which men can bestow, nay the praise, the admiration of the world is poor, when compared with the "God bless you!" that vibrates upon the ear, and penetrates the heart, as you retire from the abodes of poverty and wretchedness, conscious that no one with whom you are acquainted sees you, but your God, and that what you have done will be unknown till the great day of account.

It is a glorious principle of our religion, that the more the possessor imparts to others, the more his own stock is increased. "Cast thy bread upon the waters and thou shalt find it after many days." "He that watereth, shall himself be watered." "Sell what thou hast and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven." Go, Christians, spread abroad those treasures which God has given you; convert them into Bibles and Tracts, and other means of grace; convey them, with your own hands, to your neighbours, who are perishing for them, and let your prayers ascend to the throne of grace for the influences of the Spirit; and those treasures, like the widow's oil and flour, will increase; those influences, will, like the gentle dew, descend upon your own soul; the Sun of righteousness will shine, in all his quickening power; the seeds of grace will spring up and flourish, and blossom and bear fruit more abundantly to the glory of God. Accordingly, all who have been eminent for piety, have been eminent for doing good, for active benevolence, or, have manifested the spirit which would have prompted them to act, if circumstances had permitted. A narrow, contracted, selfish spirit is not the spirit of the gospel, and wherever it exists it blights the Christian graces.

Wealth and influence ought not to prove, as they often do, the



means of lukewarmness and declension ; but, on the contrary, the means of growth in grace, of the increase of holiness and happiness, both in this, and in the world to come. These things will enable the Christian more extensively to imitate the example of his Saviour. Though he cannot create bread, he can feed the hungry ; though he cannot cause the wool and the flax to grow, he can clothe the naked ; though he cannot heal the sick, he can contribute to their comfort, can, by his sympathy and his kind offices, diminish their sufferings, can point them to the great Physician, and to the " balm of Gilead ;"—though he cannot snatch from the jaws of death, he may be the instrument of smoothing " the passage to the tomb," may bend over the dying body, may whisper the consolations of the gospel, may commend the departing spirit to the Saviour of sinners. What is all the happiness which this world can afford, compared with one heavenly smile from that poor departing soul, who feels, and blesses God, that you have been the instrument of converting him from the " error of his ways," of supporting him under his trials, of directing him to the blood of Jesus, of opening to his view the bright prospects of immortal glory ! Visiting the poor, the ignorant, the vicious, the afflicted, and the dying, will make the Christian contented with the allotments of providence in respect of himself—will afford him striking evidence of the depravity of the human heart ; and cause him to exclaim, with his soul glowing with gratitude to God, " Who maketh" me " to differ ?" " By the grace of God I am what I am."

How many Christians, when casting their eyes over some pagan field whitened with the bones of devoted victims ; when reading the history of some self-denying missionary ; when tracing the footsteps of a Brainerd, a Buchanan, a Newell, have desired to share with them the trials, the joy, and the glory of their work ! But Providence has so ordered their circumstances, that they cannot go. They need not go. They are already in a field which is " white to the harvest." They may engage in the same glorious work, and still enjoy all the sweets of HOME.

3. The interests of civil society require that these efforts should be made. We trust that it is not to be determined, at this day, whether good morals and the best interests of society are inseparably connected, or whether good morals are the genuine, the certain, fruit of the christian religion, and of that only. We will then suppose, that according to the influence exerted by the gospel, sound morals will exist, and, consequently, the best interests of civil society be promoted.

Almost all the sufferings of the poor in this, and other cities, are the immediate effect of ignorance or vice. Of the truth of this assertion any one may be satisfied, by becoming acquainted with the state of the poor as they reside among other people, or by visiting hospitals, prisons, and alms-houses. An alms-house, in another

city, was sometime since visited, and from a particular inquiry into the former circumstances and character of its inhabitants, it was ascertained, that not less than nine-tenths of them came to that place in consequence of their own ignorance or vice; and of the remaining tenth, the greater part, in consequence of the wickedness of others. The same is probably true of this city.

It is not an opinion hastily formed, nor is it altogether singular, that many charitable institutions, or institutions for affording pecuniary or other equivalent aid to the indigent, exert, on the whole, an unhappy influence on society. Is it not true, that, by these institutions, designed for the best of purposes, provision is in fact made for idleness and other vices? If people believe, that they shall be relieved when in distress, they will not generally make exertions, will not labour when they are able and have the opportunity. According to their views of things, they have no inducement to labour, or make provision for a time of need. This induces idleness, and idleness is the parent of vice. In Scotland there are no alms-houses, no poor-rates. The consequence is, the poor are a hardy, industrious, and, generally, a moral, class of people. Man is naturally idle. It is by making continual efforts that industry becomes habitual and pleasant. It is certain, that it would be better for many of those who are relieved by charity, if no provision were made for them. Let it be known, that death or extreme suffering will be the consequence of idleness, or profligacy, and the number of the idle and the profligate will soon be diminished. Will it be said, that there are many of the poor who are excellent characters, and who have been reduced to a state of want by misfortune? That there are many such there is no doubt; and it is equally clear, that they ought to be relieved; still it will be found, that most of them are in that state, in consequence of the immorality of their connexions, or of the general immoral state of society. Make society such as it should be, and such as it may be with the use of those means which God has appointed, and the relatives of respectable persons in distress would be able and disposed, in most cases, to afford them all the assistance which they would need. Let me not be understood to speak against charitable institutions of this nature, or to intimate, that the afflicted, of whatever character they may be, ought not to be relieved. Many such institutions are noble monuments of christian benevolence. It is only necessary, that they should be so managed that they shall not be made the occasion of sin and of greater misery.

It is not in the power of man to change the heart; but it is in his power to use those means, which, with the ordinary blessing of God, will change the state of society; which will make people in general, so intelligent, so industrious, so moral, that they will have but little need of the hand of charity to relieve them, or of the arm of the civil law to restrain or protect them. It is not

a little surprising that civil rulers, after witnessing the effects of the gospel, have not discovered, that the most economical, as well as the most effectual, mode of providing for the wants of a community, is to supply its members with those institutions, the object of which is to make men intelligent, moral, and pious. There are but few, who have not sufficient physical strength and natural abilities to enable them to support themselves in this country, provided that strength and those abilities were properly directed. The following calculations will place the subject in a clearer light. The poor rates in Philadelphia will amount this year, it is said, to 150,000 dollars. If we take into the account the fact, that there are between 12 and 13 hundred more persons licensed to sell ardent spirits by the small quantity, in this city than in Philadelphia, and, also, that the population is probably greater, it is not unreasonable to suppose, that the poor rates of New-York will amount to 200,000 dollars. Allowing a minister of the gospel a salary of 1000 dollars, and a teacher a salary of 500 dollars, this sum would support 200 ministers and 400 teachers. But what are styled the *poor-rates*, is but a small part of the expense of supporting the poor. The committee appointed to supply the wants of the poor, during the late inclement season, estimated, that there were 15,000 citizens supported by charity. If each individual should have an annual allowance of 50 dollars, the whole expense of the 15,000 would be 750,000 dollars. This, allowing the above salaries, would support 750 ministers and 1500 teachers. Allowing each pauper 100 dollars, the whole expense of the poor would be 1,500,000 dollars, which would support 1500 ministers and 3000 teachers. Allowing a bible to cost 75 cents, and tracts to cost at the rate of 1 cent for every ten pages, it would purchase 1,875,000 bibles, and 1,500,000,000 pages of tracts for charitable distribution. The annual expense of the Alms-House is about 80,000 dollars. This would annually build four churches, at 20,000 dollars each, or eight at 10,000 dollars each. Allowing a minister 1000 dollars, it would support 80 ministers of the gospel.

In the Seventh Ward there are between 2 and 300 persons licensed to sell ardent spirits by the small quantity: we will suppose there are 220. Supposing each one to sell every day to the amount of two dollars and fifty cents, the ardent spirits annually sold in the Seventh Ward will amount to 200,750 dollars. This would employ in that ward, 200 ministers, or 400 teachers. It would annually build twenty decent churches—purchase 267,666 bibles—and 200,750,000 pages of tracts. All the ardent spirits sold in the city, would, at this rate, build annually 135 churches—support 1358 ministers—2716 teachers—purchase 1,811,616 bibles—or 1,358,712,500 pages of tracts. No one will doubt that such a number of faithful ministers or teachers employed—such a number of churches built—such a num-

ber of bibles or tracts distributed, would produce a great change in the moral state of the city. But intemperance is but one vice. We must take into the account idleness, gambling, profligacy, and other vices, which consume property, and which would be removed, were the people enlightened, industrious, and moral.

It is an opinion, which has been formed and confirmed by the observation of facts, that christians have erred with respect to the subject of charity. The great object seems to have been, to relieve existing distress, instead of *preventing* it. But we never can make our fellow men happy till the cause of their sufferings is removed. If we would make the fruit good, we must make the tree good. If we can make a profligate man sober and industrious, we more effectually provide for his family, than we should by bestowing thousands of gold and silver. Let there be a great effort to change the moral character of mankind, to remove the cause of their sufferings; let them be supplied with those means of reformation and salvation, which God has appointed; let the proper influence of the gospel be exerted, and, if prisons, and hospitals, and alms-houses, do not cease to exist, their dimensions will be small, their inhabitants few.

As another motive to these exertions, we mention,

4. The interests of the church. That field at which we have glanced is of great extent; it is covered with thorns and briars; it has hitherto brought forth the "grapes of Sodom and the clusters of Gomorrah." Is it not for the interests of the church that it should be cultivated; that the seeds of grace should be sown; that trees of righteousness should spring up and bear fruit; that it should become as Eden? Is it not important, that, in the midst of these 70 or 80 thousand souls, 70 or 80 temples to the living God should rise; 70 or 80 new congregations and churches be formed; that, to those already employed, 60 or 70 faithful ministers of the gospel should be added?

It is not, however, the salvation of the present generation merely, which is concerned; but that of thousands of their posterity. Should the population increase in the same proportion for twenty years to come, as it did between 1800 and 1810, the increase alone will be 136,000, and will require therefore 136 additional churches, that there may be one church to a thousand. If we suppose that 60 churches are now wanting, there must be erected within twenty years 196 churches, that there may be in this city one church to a thousand souls. But our cities have an extensive influence on the surrounding country. We have already stated, that they afford a place of resort for those who wish to live without restraint. It is not uncommon for those who have lived in the city to return into the country, carrying with them vices, which taint the morals of a whole neighbourhood. There are some towns where the inhabitants have been corrupted by their intercourse with some of our large cities, in such a manner

as to make it evident to all who are acquainted with them. Young persons frequently come to this city, and are destroyed by their exposure to temptation. It is notorious, that there are certain villages not far distant, which supply a considerable number of victims to that vice, which has caused the heart of many a parent to bleed.

Cities exert an influence on the people of the country, who are not so immediately connected with them. The single subject of fashions will show the correctness of this remark. In things of greater consequence, cities are looked up to as examples, and give character to the country. How immensely important, that they should be free from ignorance, error, and immorality! that they should set an example of holiness and of every good work!

As we advance, however, the subject rises in importance. We must extend our views beyond the limits of the city and of our own country. The subject is peculiarly important, on account of its connexion with the great Missionary cause. Among the obstacles which have hitherto prevented the universal spread of the gospel, we find that the prejudices which the Heathen entertain against it, hold a conspicuous place.

The number of heathen who visit our cities is not large. A few, however, are sufficient to bear evil tidings to millions of their countrymen. A few months since, a vessel came to this port from Calcutta, which was manned by more than 40 of the natives of Hindoostan, a part of the world where missionaries are now stationed. Some, and perhaps all of them, had heard of christianity; had been informed, that it was the best religion in the world; that it made men good and happy. What did they witness? they fell in company with the vilest class of people—they were conducted to haunts of vice, even on the Sabbath—they engaged, with those whom they supposed to be christians, in the most abominable wickedness—they probably did not see an act of religious worship rendered to the true God, or hear the name of Jesus, except from the lips of the profane. Judging, as the heathen do, of a religion from the effects which they witness, with what views of christianity must they have retired from our shores? When they mingle with their countrymen, what intelligence will they communicate? What will they exhibit as the fruits of the “land of promise?” Is it not morally certain, that they, as well as their countrymen, will regard our missionaries as impostors? that their prejudices against christianity and in favour of idolatry, will be strengthened and confirmed? On the contrary, suppose this city had been, at that time, a city of righteousness—that all with whom they associated had been pious, or even moral—that they had witnessed the genuine effects of the gospel; with what different impressions and tidings would they have returned to their own country? If they had not loved, they

would have respected christians ; if they had not embraced, they would have revered the religion of Christ. Could our missionaries appeal to some of the heathen, to testify to the blessed effects of the gospel, with what increased force could they exhibit its claims on their belief, their love, and their obedience ! Pagans from other parts of the world visit our cities—witness similar scenes, and return, doubtless, with similar impressions and intelligence.

Our cities have an intimate connexion with the heathen, by means of our seamen. At present they are a barrier to the spread of the gospel ; a screen which intercepts the rays of the Sun of righteousness. When they visit pagan countries, as thousands of them do every year, they not only join in all the wickedness of the heathen, but teach them new vices. To their superior cunning the heathen become an easy prey, and are not unfrequently robbed of their property, their children and friends. Sailors sometimes take up their abode in pagan countries, that they may acquire wealth and be free from the restraints of the gospel. A part of the crew of the ship, which transported the first missionaries to the South Sea Islands, settled there, and are supposed to have been the principal reason why their efforts were, for so long a time, attended with no more success. Several gentlemen, who have visited the Sandwich Islands, and some, who have for a time resided there, are of opinion, that opposition from wicked English and American settlers, and the prejudices which they have excited, would constitute the principal obstacle in the way of introducing christianity among the natives. It is owing in a great measure to the same cause, that the efforts to christianize the aborigines of our own country have proved so ineffectual. Let our seamen and others who visit the heathen become pious ; and instead of contradicting the glad tidings which our missionaries publish ; instead of destroying the effect of their labours, they will become a powerful weapon in their hands. It is through the medium of christian example that the heathen discern the light of the gospel. The influence of our seamen is not unknown to the men of the world. A master of a vessel which recently arrived, and which had visited one of our missionary stations, triumphantly observed, that his sailors could, in a few days, undo all the work of our missionaries. Though we do not believe this representation to be strictly correct, it is not without meaning. Let our sailors continue vicious, and wherever christians send one missionary, Satan will send a hundred to oppose his efforts.

Should our seamen become pious, not only would a great obstacle be removed, but the number of hands employed, and the amount of labour performed in the great missionary field, would be augmented. Should a crew land on a heathen shore, all pious ; all deeply concerned for the salvation of their pagan brethren ; all anxious to tell them of that Saviour, who is the only

hope of lost men—to impart to them those treasures of knowledge and grace which they had received, how would the darkness retire before them!

That property, of which our seamen earn and receive no small quantity, and which is now squandered away, would, doubtless, be consecrated to the spread of the gospel. No men are so liberal; none, whose hearts and hands are so easily opened; none, who have such a strong fellow-feeling; none, who are less careful to preserve their lives. Were all consecrated to God, what sacrifices would they not make; what hardships would they not endure; to what dangers would they not expose themselves, for the salvation of their fellow-men? While, in consequence of actually witnessing the wretched state of the heathen, they would feel more deeply interested than other christians, they would communicate the same feeling to their brethren; they would become heralds, publishing glad tidings in every direction. Every vessel, which arrived, would add new fuel to the flame, and cause that flame to spread from our cities into the surrounding country. Who does not see, that thousands and tens of thousands of pious men constantly passing, and repassing, throughout the world: mingling, now with christians, now with the heathen, would give a new and powerful and lasting impulse to that great machine, which is to diffuse abroad the blessings of the gospel? They form the connecting link between the christian and the heathen world; the channel through which the water of life must flow; the medium through which the light of the gospel must shine.

Cities are necessarily the center of all the great operations for the salvation of the heathen—the main spring of the mighty machine—the heart of the world. If the main spring be disordered, the whole machine is affected; if the heart's blood be corrupted, the whole system is enfeebled. It is from our cities, also, that most of the property, which is to accomplish the great work, must be derived; and may we not hope, that from the destitute some will be qualified and sent to preach the gospel? It was this attention to the destitute, which, with the blessing of God, sent Buchanan to the ends of the earth. While these exertions will increase a missionary spirit, they will unite the hearts of christians and ministers. Not only will seafaring men, and others, who pass from one port to another, associate with christians of different denominations; but, in such a work, christians who constantly reside in the same place, must come in contact; must see each other's faces; must "speak often one to another." This will destroy those narrow, contracted views, which compress the church of God into a sect, and mar its beauty; it will break down the walls of separation, and cause the church to look forth fair "as the morning, and terrible as an army with banners." Every christian feels that it would be desirable, that all this should

be accomplished : of its practicability some may doubt. We will, therefore, endeavour to show,

5. That our efforts will be successful. From the facts which have been stated, it will be seen, that there are thousands of people here of the same character, and, as it respects spiritual things, in the same condition, with those on our frontiers. Will it be said, that these discover greater hardness of heart, because they might enjoy the blessings of the gospel were they disposed? This is precisely the case with the destitute in other parts of the country. It is not on account of their poverty, or any other natural difficulty, that they are thus destitute. In a county not far from this, there are thousands in this situation, and yet the people are comparatively wealthy ; and, had they been disposed, might long since have enjoyed all the blessings of the gospel. It is not poverty, it is not any natural, but a moral obstruction, which has kept so great a part of the world, for so many centuries, ignorant of the Saviour. The awful stupidity and depravity of the human heart, form the mountain, the cavern, the gulf, which have prevented the heralds of the cross from running to and fro through the earth. If we adopt the sentiment, that we are under no obligation, and that it will be of no use, to supply, with the ordinances of the gospel, those who are not disposed to supply themselves, we ought to remand the missionaries, who are scattered throughout the destitute parts of our country. We have the same reasons for believing, that success will attend missionary efforts in the city, as we have, that it will attend them in the country : we have more, we have advantages which are peculiar.

That missionaries may labour with permanent success in remote parts of the country, many things are necessary, which it will require much time, and trouble, and property to supply. Schools must be established and supported ; teachers, bibles, and other suitable books, must be obtained from a distance. Other difficulties will suggest themselves to every reflecting mind ; all of which will be removed, when we come to supply our neighbours and fellow-citizens. Schools are already established ; Bibles and tracts and other useful books, at all times, and to any amount, may easily be procured.

Christians will take a deeper interest in such a mission than it is possible for them to do in one at a distance. They have the destitute before them—their feelings will be excited—they will contribute more liberally ; and, what is all important, they will pray more fervently. Could we be transported to the plains of India ; be stationed by the Funeral Pile, the Altar of Moloch, or the Car of Juggernaut, how differently should we feel from what we do now ? With how much more fervour should we pray ? With how much more zeal should we labour ? But if we view this subject in its proper light, we shall daily witness what ought as sensibly to affect our hearts. It is not more affecting, or ought not to be to



christians, to see their fellow-creatures consuming on the funeral pile, than in the flame of their own passions; to see them sacrificed on the altars of Moloch, than to see them slain by intemperance; to see children thrown into the Ganges, than to see thousands of them growing up to be cast into the gulf of perdition. Here are funeral piles—here are altars of Moloch—here is Satan's invisible car, constantly rolling and crushing thousands beneath its weight, and causing our streets to flow with the blood of souls. Let us remember, also, the more aggravated doom of these victims. In a greater or less degree, they have enjoyed the blessings of the gospel; they live where they might enjoy them in all their fulness. They have rejected the Saviour—they must sink to the lowest hell. With such a prospect before him, what christian will not wrestle day and night at the throne of grace? what christian will not consecrate his property, his time, his talents, his life, to this glorious work?—But the principal advantage arises from the number who may be employed. The number of professing christians, in some of the denominations, I have been able to ascertain. If we allow all the other congregations to have, on an average, the same number of professors as those congregations which have been examined, there will be, in the city, about 13,000 professing christians.\* Suppose these all properly engaged in the service of God; all employed in doing good; how much might be accomplished! We will suppose that every one of these professors spends two hours every week in visiting the ignorant, vicious and afflicted, for the purpose of distributing Bibles and Tracts, and doing good in other ways: and suppose that during these two hours six families were visited, every professor would visit, during the year, 312 families, or make 312 visits; all of them together would make 4,560,000. Supposing that at each visit a tract were given, 4,560,000 tracts would be distributed. Surely this will not be thought an unreasonable calculation. What christian is there who cannot devote two hours in a week, or two hours out of one hundred and sixty-eight, in “going about doing

\* To ascertain precisely the number of professors has not been in the power of the writer. It will be seen that a few of the other statements are of the same general nature. It would be singular, if, in so many particulars, there should be no error. It is the opinion, however, of respectable gentlemen, who have accompanied him, and others acquainted with the situation of the destitute, that the statement, so far from being exaggerated, is moderate. While it was his intention to perform this painful duty, which God, in his providence, assigned to him, in a faithful manner, his inclination led him to err on that side, where every feeling of the benevolent mind would wish the error to be found. He wishes it not to be forgotten, that the destitute are in a situation in which they may be examined. If it shall be found, from a similar, or more faithful examination, that the moral state of the city is better than has been represented, it will give him unspeakable joy. Most of the facts concerning other places are taken from Morse's Geography, Mills and Smith's Report, Picture of London, Address of the Connecticut Charitable Society, &c.

good," directly to his fellow-men? Will it be said, that those in the humble walks of life cannot engage in this work? Let me ask, what christian so humble, so ignorant, so poor, that he cannot give to a neighbour a word of good advice; set before that neighbour a holy example; or invite that neighbour to go to a sanctuary or a religious meeting; or give a Bible or a Tract, when furnished to his hands? What christian cannot pray? What child cannot give to another child a Catechism, or lead him to a Sabbath School, or to the house of God?

There is another consideration, which every one must have anticipated. In this field we have the advantage of a numerous class of christians, who will regard this work as among the domestic concerns which claim their attention. Their leisure, their characteristic sensibility, and the successful efforts which they have already made, need no remark: it is sufficient to say, that in this good work, may be employed thousands of *PIOUS FEMALES*.—Instead of being scattered over a wide extent of country, these people live together; and may, therefore, be approached without loss of time, and expense, and all employed, may act in *CONCERT*.

We have reason to believe success will attend our efforts, from what is said in the word of God. The parable of the Great Supper exhibits our Saviour's views on this subject. The rich refused the invitation; but the poor, those in the highways and hedges, were brought in. Lazarus is in heaven, Dives in hell. "It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of heaven." It was among the poor that our Saviour laboured, and it was the poor, "the common people," that heard him gladly. Such has been the success of the gospel among the poor in every age of the church.

There is another reason why we should hope for success, which ought not to be overlooked. It is, that there appears to be a preparation of the heart, a general desire, to receive religious instruction. It has not been unusual to find persons, who have not been under the care of any spiritual teacher, or attached to any denomination of christians, deeply exercised in mind. Numbers of such have actually been brought, as we trust, into the kingdom, and joined themselves to the visible church, of Christ. Several cases of hopeful conversion have recently come to my knowledge. May these be the first fruits of an abundant harvest! Though I have visited many hundred families, I have not been unkindly treated, as I recollect, in a single instance; but, on the contrary, have generally been received with apparent gratitude; often urged and entreated to call again, and often followed into the street with such exclamations as these, "May God bless you!" "May God reward you!" Those of the most vicious character have listened to instruction and exhortation, not only with fixed attention, but often with weeping. Perhaps it would not exceed the truth, were I to affirm, that one half of the families, which have

been thus visited, and particularly conversed with, have been left in tears. It is a fact worthy of notice, that all the congregations in that part of the city, have, of late, rapidly increased. While exploring parts of the city, I have often indulged the animating hope, that the Spirit was moving "upon the face of the waters," that God was preparing the way for those Christ-like efforts, which we earnestly pray he may excite his people to make. No such effort at this day is unblest. Who can doubt whether that which Christ has so expressly commanded, and sanctioned by his own example, will prove successful?

[Though most persons may allow, that exertions to enlighten the ignorant and reform the vicious, generally, may be successful, yet there will remain certain classes of the vicious, of whom they will believe there is no hope. It is true, that without help from God we can do nothing. But with that help, we "can do all things." We do not hesitate to say, that the receptacles of vice referred to can be broken up, and that God has appointed the means by which it may be done, and that it is the duty of Christians to use them. There is a remedy.—But do not imagine that it is some new discovery, which has not been divulged. The remedy has long since been prepared in heaven—it has been divulged by the Holy Ghost—it is the Gospel of Christ.

Antiquity is the greatest supporter of that vice, which is yearly slaying its thousands. It is said, that it has always been so in our large cities; that they have always, from time immemorial, been thus corrupted. And this seems to have satisfied the minds of Christians. These places have been regarded as a necessary evil. Christians have seen and deplored this state of things; but do not seem to have ever imagined that it could be changed.

That we may put a stop to the progress of this corruption, there must be a general united effort. Those men who keep these houses must be openly attacked. This will be a hazardous undertaking. But are we to tremble before those who bear the mark of the beast in their foreheads; "whose sins are open before hand, going before to judgment;" who are known to be in close alliance with Satan; whose very dwellings are the avenues to his dominions? With such men we are to declare open war. We are to seize with holy violence the sword of the civil law and the sword of the Spirit. We are to follow them to their abodes of darkness, and bring them forth to the light;—we are to carry destruction into their camp. That much may be done by the civil law is certain. A magistrate, a few years since, assisted by only one of his associates, drove hundreds of these vile persons to a distant part of the city. Many of them know him to this day, and tremble when they see him. If one or two individual magistrates could effect this, what might not all united accomplish, especially, if supported and aided by the whole moral and religious community.

An asylum must be provided, to which those who are disposed

may resort. It will perhaps be said, that such an asylum was once provided in this city, and found ineffectual. With the management of that institution I am wholly unacquainted. But to be successful, an asylum must be conducted in such a manner, that those who resort to it shall not feel themselves to be in a prison. It must be as comfortable as it can be made, both for body and mind. It must be an asylum from disgrace as well as wretchedness. Of those who have resided for years in these abodes of darkness, we have not so much hope : but of persons as young as some of them are ; of those who have fled to such places as a refuge from disgrace, we think there is much hope, even from such an institution. In England, many, by this means, have been rescued from infamy and death ; have been restored to their friends, and lived, and ultimately died, respected.

We must not only provide for them a pleasant retreat, but we must make the places of their resort unpleasant. If they flee from the asylum and from one house to another, or from one city to another, they must be followed. While engaged in this wickedness, give them no peace. Plant thorns and daggers before them, which shall pierce them every step they take in this highway to hell. But if at any time they manifest a disposition to retrace their steps, strew their paths with flowers.—But this is not sufficient. The same means are to be used with them as with other classes of the destitute. The Bible and Tracts must be put into their hands, and the Gospel must be preached to them. Some may smile at the idea of preaching the Gospel to such creatures. But why not preach the Gospel to them ? We preach it to the rich worldling and to the self-righteous Pharisee, and do we not read, that “ publicans and harlots shall go into the kingdom of heaven” before such ? Did not Christ preach the Gospel to persons of this description ? Is not a Mary Magdalene in heaven ?—When labouring in parts of the city where they reside, we have been called to visit them when sick and dying, and never have we witnessed such scenes of distress of mind. We have frequently addressed a room full on such an occasion, and never without seeing much tenderness ; frequently almost all have been drowned in tears, and some of them have cried out in the most affecting manner.

By the influence of the magistrate above alluded to, a ball-room was, about a year ago, obtained in a neighbourhood where there were supposed to be several hundreds of such persons, for the purpose of preaching to them on the sabbath. The number that attended, constantly increased till the room was closed by the owner. We have since learned, that his neighbours of the same craft complained of him and obliged him to close his room, lest the hope of their gain should be taken away. We are not without evidence, that one or two have become true penitents on a dying bed, have been washed in the blood of the Lamb, and are now joined to better society in a better world.

There are those who, on another account, regard this vice as a necessary evil; who feel, that were those places of resort broken up, their dearest friends would be in danger. Has it then come to this, that we must endanger what is dearer than life, by putting a stop to the grossest and most daring iniquity? Must these sinks of pollution remain, or must we have wolves and tigers prowling our streets? Must we let go and suffer the flood to pour in upon us without opposition? Is an evil of this kind, to be lessened by giving it the sanction of public opinion, by removing all restraints and presenting every possible temptation\*? The objection is founded in ignorance of human nature. A thousand are now destroyed where one would be, provided such places were unknown. One fact on this subject.—As the worthy gentleman above referred to and myself were one Sabbath in the upper part of the city, a person came out of a house, apparently in great haste, and entreated us to go in and see one of her friends, who she said was dying. As we entered the door, we observed a middle aged lady genteelly dressed and of very respectable appearance, whom we at first supposed to be a Manager of some charitable institution, that had come there to afford relief to the distressed. She retired and sat down in another part of the room, while we addressed those who surrounded the sick person, who at that time was deprived of her reason. After addressing them for some time and praying with them, I turned to a young man who stood at the foot of the bed, and spoke to him, in a low tone of voice, on the subject of religion. The lady, who before had appeared much distressed, unable to contain herself any longer, arose, and clasping her hands, cried out in the most heart-rending manner, O! that's my son! my son! my dear son!—The son had become a companion of the vile, —the mother had followed him to this house of death, to persuade him to return to the bosom of his friends. A list of additional facts might be recited, which would make the ears of parents and friends to tingle. Let us not forget, that in destroying these habitations of cruelty, we must have help from God—“this kind goeth not out but by prayer and fasting.” Let all who feel for the welfare of the rising generation and the spread of the Gospel, awake to this subject. Let it no more be reiterated, that our cities have always been thus corrupt. If this is to be repeated from generation to generation, and to have its palsyng influence, our cities must, according to the ordinary providence of God, remain corrupt till they are purified by the flames of the last day.]

It is a painful consideration, that this subject is intimately connected with the spiritual welfare of our seamen, another class of the destitute, who have, also, been regarded as in a condition al-

\* How different the advertisements in some of our Newspapers and the inscriptions on the corners of our streets, and sometimes on the fences which surround our churches, from what they will be “in that day,” when “there shall be upon the bells of the horses, HOLINESS UNTO THE LORD.”

most hopeless. But, notwithstanding this, and all other unfavourable circumstances, I know of no class of men, with whom we have greater encouragement to labour. When we consider, that they are evidently vicious, because they have been neglected; when we recollect the interesting traits in their character—the station in which God has placed them—the opportunity of doing good, which he has put into their hands, we must believe, that there is in store for them a rich blessing.

In a former part of this report, I informed the society, that I had, for some time past, spent part of the Sabbath in preaching to seamen. With gratitude to Him, “whose way is in the sea and whose path is in the great waters,” it is in my power to state, that my most sanguine expectations have been more than realized. According to a printed notice, put up at some of their boarding houses and elsewhere, numbers of them have attended; and, though, in consequence of their short continuance in port, almost every Sabbath has presented me with a new collection of them, they have universally behaved with the most strict propriety—they have listened to the preaching of the gospel with fixed attention—many of them have been melted into tears. One circumstance, as a testimony of their sensibility and their gratitude, ought not to be omitted. A few Sabbaths ago, I informed them, after divine service, that it was contemplated to build a church and to form a Bible Society for seamen.\* At the bare mention of this fact, many of them wept. Similar interest has been manifested at other times. Of those, who have attended public worship, numbers have come to my lodgings to inquire, apparently with deep concern, what they should do to be saved. Though, in consequence of their being scattered over the world, the effect of labours in this, or in any other ports, should not be known, may we not hope, that we shall see many of them at the last day on the right hand of Christ? May we not hope, that soon, every flag will become a standard of the cross—every ship a temple, from which “incense and a pure offering” shall ascend to God—every seaman a herald of salvation; and that this long neglected class of men will be eminently instrumental in hastening on that period, when “the knowledge of the Lord shall cover the earth as the waters do the seas?” The Son of God, the Great Captain of our salvation, selected seamen to be his immediate followers, and commissioned them to publish the gospel to the gentile nations.

There is still stronger evidence, that the good work in which you are engaged will be crowned with glorious success. It is a work in which our blessed Saviour, while on earth, took a particular interest—a work in which he spent his life. If he be for us, who can be against us? But while we thus deliberate, me-

\* Since the Bible Society was formed, a very considerable number of seamen have become members of it, and by it have been supplied with Bibles.

thinks I hear him saying, “ *Go out quickly into the highways and hedges.*” Souls are perishing in the midst of us. The work has been too long delayed. Even during the last year more than twenty-seven hundred immortal beings have taken their departure from this city to the eternal world. Considering how comparatively small is the number, who even profess to know any thing of experimental religion, and that of these, many appear to be dead while they have a name to live, how many hundreds have descended from the midst of us to the regions of despair! We must meet them at the bar of God. Let us then work while the day lasts; let us cry mightily unto God, to hasten the time when “ the inhabitants of one city shall go to another, saying, Let us go speedily to pray before the Lord, and to seek the Lord of hosts.” Whenever that blessed time shall come, we are assured, that **‘MANY PEOPLE and STRONG NATIONS shall come to seek the Lord of hosts in Jerusalem, and to pray before the Lord.’**















