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ARTICLE I.

GOD'S RIGHTEOUSNESS TO BE UNIVERSALLY CONFESED.*

The pure and unsullied righteousness of God lies at the foundation of all right conceptions of his nature, his word, and his works. God is himself absolute moral perfection. Whatever he speaks is absolute truth; whatever he does is absolute righteousness. It must be so. The God who is infinite, eternal and unchangeable in his being, wisdom and power, must be so no less in his holiness, justice, goodness, and truth. You can more reasonably deny the existence of God altogether, than deny that. An infinite devil is a moral impossibility; our reason revolts at it, no less than our conscience. The heathen, with all their devil-worship, have never imagined, much less believed in, such a monster. The advocates of Dualism never held to such an absurdity; for even in their view, the eternal principle of evil is eternally limited and checked by the eternal principle of good. Consciously or unconsciously, the mind refuses to ascribe infinite attributes to a being even tainted with moral imperfection. Jupiter with all his magnificence

*Some peculiarities of this paper render it proper to state that it embodies the substance of a sermon preached before the late Synod of South Carolina, which has been reduced to writing and prepared for publication in this form, at the particular request of one of the Editors of this REVIEW.

of that thought. But to say that the propositions themselves were the results of the human writer's education and opinions, is simply to say that he had no inspiration. If the sacred writers claimed inspiration, and sufficiently attested the truth of the claim, then this theory of exposition is naught.

R. L. DABNEY.

ARTICLE V.

OUR SCHEMES OF BENEVOLENCE—SHALL THEY
BE REVOLUTIONISED?

Much controversy has been stirred up in the Church of late in relation to the character and management of our schemes of benevolence, brought about chiefly by the Reports submitted to the last Assembly on "Retrenchment and Reform," and now laid before the churches by order of the Assembly for their consideration. As there are great principles, as well as serious misconceptions, involved in the discussion, and as the future welfare of the Church and the cause of truth and righteousness alike are to be affected by its results, it becomes a matter of grave importance to look carefully both into the constitution and the practical working of these schemes.

The following is the form of the constitution adopted by the General Assembly, at the organisation of the Church, for the management of the Foreign Missionary work. The same principles were applied to all the other schemes of benevolence, so that they all rest on the same general basis. The constitution consists of three brief articles with a preamble, and is as follows :

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE OF FOREIGN MISSIONS.

Resolved, 1. That this General Assembly proceed to appoint an Executive Committee with its proper officers, to carry on this work, and that the character and functions of this Committee be comprised in the following articles as its constitution, viz.:

“Art. I. This Committee shall be known as the Executive Committee of Foreign Missions of the Presbyterian Church in the Confederate States of America. It shall consist of a Secretary, who shall be styled the Secretary of Foreign Missions, and who shall be the Committee’s organ of communication with the Assembly and with all portions of the work intrusted to this Committee, a Treasurer, and nine other members, three of whom at least shall be Ruling Elders, or Deacons, or private members of the Church, all appointed annually by the General Assembly, and shall be directly amenable to it for the faithful and efficient discharge of the duties intrusted to its care. Vacancies occurring *ad interim*, it shall fill, if necessary.

“Art. II. It shall meet once a month, or oftener if necessary, at the call of the Chairman or Secretary; five members may constitute a quorum for the transaction of business. It may enact By Laws for its government, the same being subject to the revisal and approval of the General Assembly.

“Art. III. It shall be the duty of the Executive Committee to take direction and control of the Foreign Missionary work, subject to such instructions as may be given by the General Assembly from time to time; to appoint missionaries and assistant missionaries; to designate their fields of labor, and provide for their support; to receive the reports of the Secretary and Treasurer, and to give such directions in relation to their respective duties as may seem necessary; to authorise appropriations and expenditures of money, including the salaries of officers, to communicate to the Churches from time to time such information about the missionary work as may seem important to be known, and to lay before the General Assembly from year to year, a full report of the whole work and of their receipts and expenditures, together with their books of minutes for examination.

“Resolved, 2. That this Committee shall be located at Columbia, S. C.”

Dr. Thornwell, then fresh from a sharp controversy in the old Church about the abuse of Boards, had a share in constructing this constitution, and said at the time, as the writer personally testifies, that he was not only satisfied with it, but that everything had been secured in this constitution which he had ever contended for in the united Church. In reviewing this constitution, after the lapse of years of practical working, it is difficult to conceive how any instrument of the kind could have been made more simple in its structure, more sound in its principles, or better adapted to the circumstances and wants of our beloved Church. In the controversy going on in the Church in

relation to this matter, so far as the writer is aware, no charge has been brought either against the committees or their officers for violating any of the principles of their constitution. So far as conformity to its principles and obedience to the commands of the Assembly are concerned, both stand unchallenged before the Church. We are glad, therefore, that no personal or administrative acts are involved, so that those who are calling for "reform," are not warring with the Committees or their officers, but with the constitution of the schemes themselves.

The Church, at the time of its organisation, saw the necessity of employing committees (or commissions, as they are now more commonly called) to carry on the great work, both at home and abroad, that had devolved upon her in consequence of her new and responsible position. Similar commissions were not only being employed by all other branches of the Presbyterian brotherhood, but something of the kind was absolutely necessary to enable any of them to discharge the solemn behests that rested upon them. It is scarcely possible for a Church to carry on any kind of work outside of her own bounds, or any general work within those bounds, without the intervention of commissions. Nor is this more peculiar to the General Assembly than it is to all the lower courts, inasmuch as all of them employ commissions when it is deemed necessary. A commission has been defined to be the *hand* of the Assembly. What the Assembly does by her *hand*, she does herself. Her *hand* (*i. e.* her commission) is the instrument of executing her will in the same general sense that the human hand is the instrument of executing the human will. When a Church is carrying on a work of evangelisation in a foreign land, through the agency of a commission, she is not only doing it herself, but she is doing it in the only effectual way possible.

Our Church, in prosecuting her appropriate work, both at home and abroad, employs four distinct agencies or commissions, viz., the Executive Committee of Education; the Executive Committee of Publication; the Executive Committee of Home Missions, including its four ramifications of Sustentation, Evangelistic Work, Invalid Fund, and Church Erection; and the Ex-

ecutive Committee of Foreign Missions. These Committees consist respectively of a Secretary, a Treasurer, and nine other members, all of whom are elected annually by the General Assembly; each has a definite work assigned it, and each has to account to the Assembly from year to year for the fidelity and efficiency with which its duties have been discharged. It is evident, therefore, that there is no want of accountability on the part of any of the schemes, whatever else may be said in disparagement of them.

As the first three of the above mentioned commissions carry on all their work within the bounds of the established Church, and as they are strictly inhibited from interfering in any way with duties and functions of the regularly established courts of the Church, they have in themselves no ecclesiastical functions or powers whatever, using the term in its stricter sense.

Beyond the duty of gathering and circulating information in relation to the condition and wants of the different portions of the Church, and especially of the poorer and more destitute parts of it, they are little else than *central financial agencies* for gathering up the gifts of God's people and disbursing them so as to promote the highest interest of the whole Church, it being understood that they always act in concert with the Presbyteries and also with reference to the account of stewardship that must be rendered to the Assembly from year to year. We can think of no kind of agency more simple in its structure, more consistent with the spirit and teaching of God's word, less likely to infringe upon any of our well established ecclesiastical usages, or better adapted to promote the highest interest of the whole Church. One of the great ends of this arrangement, (which, however, seems to have been lost sight of for some years past,) is, that it is calculated to bring together all the different parts of the Church and bind them in the common bonds of unity and brotherhood. In this will be found the strength of any Church, but it is especially so in relation to our Southern Presbyterian Church. Animated by this heaven-born principle, our Church has already passed safely through dark nights and severe afflictions; and, under the guidance of the Divine Spirit, nothing more is wanting to conduct it to the

highest stage of spiritual prosperity. Our schemes of benevolence were intended and are eminently suited to promote this kindly and fraternal feeling among the different parts of the Church; and what is really needed, therefore, as it seems to the writer, is not change, readjustment, or consolidation, but a hearty, earnest, and liberal support of these schemes just as they are. Much of the blame that has been laid at the door of these Committees, is not justly chargeable to them, or to any defect in the constitution under which they act, but to the indifference of those who ought to have given them a heartier and more conscientious support. Whilst the means of efficiency are withheld, they are blamed for not being efficient. It is unreasonable in the last degree to expect a child to grow by withholding from it its necessary nourishment. Give these domestic committees the hearty and the general support which they deserve and ought to have, and which it is perfectly safe for them to have, and the consequence will be that new life, new energy, and a tenfold increase of spiritual power, will soon be imparted to the whole Church.

It was originally intended that these four schemes of benevolence should be entirely separate and independent of each other, and with this view they were located in different parts of the Church. During the war, however, there was such an upturning of affairs, that it became necessary that the four should be consolidated into two, *i. e.*, Home and Foreign Missions were united under one administration, which was located in Columbia, S. C.; whilst Education and Publication were united under another, which was located in Richmond, Va. There was a propriety in this combination at the time, inasmuch as there was but little to be done in any one of these departments during the war; but it was not intended to be a permanent arrangement. After the close of the war, and when partial prosperity was restored to the country, the writer, who was then acting as Secretary both for Home and Foreign Missions, and who had been mainly instrumental in getting the above-mentioned combination effected, insisted that all the Committees should be restored to their primitive and separate condition. The Assembly in an informal way discouraged the proposal, simply on the ground that it was premature. At a

subsequent meeting, the Secretary earnestly urged either that the Home and Foreign work should be separated, or that an associate should be appointed to aid him in carrying on this two-fold work. The latter suggestion was adopted, and a coördinate Secretary was appointed, when Publication and Education were separated and were assigned to different locations. The Secretary insisted upon this measure under the deep conviction, that neither he, nor any other one man, could do full justice to both of these causes. Eight years' subsequent experience has tended only to confirm this impression. Each of these important causes needs the full time and strength of the best man that can be found to occupy the place; and one or both of these causes will certainly languish and become inefficient, if forced under one administration. We hold, at the same time, that it is nearly as important that Publication and Education should be kept distinct and apart. It is admitted that the duties of a Secretary of Education are somewhat of a routine character, and that there would be no impropriety in connecting with them a pastoral charge or some other church work. But it is absolutely necessary to the well-being, if not the permanent existence of our beloved Church, that we have a well ordered and effective system of Education. It is not a question with us now whether there are not inherent evils connected with the whole system, but whether in view of the times and circumstances in which we live it can be safely dispensed with. Some things we are compelled to do in self-defence, which we would not otherwise do. Other evangelical Churches have made ample provision for the education of young men for the ministry; and if we are without such provision, our young men will either be drawn away entirely from us, or will be trained in a way that will unfit them for acceptable and active service in our Church. But how can an effective system of Education be maintained among us? Only, so far as the writer can see, by adhering strictly to the original design of the Assembly, *i. e.*, by having the strong and weak Presbyteries stand shoulder to shoulder, the strong helping the weak, and both acting in the common bonds of brotherhood. The same applies to the cause of Publication. The times demand, as they never did before, that a wholesome religious

literature should be spread over the land, to counteract that flood of immorality and infidelity which threatens to sweep everything before it. It is no time, therefore, for us to relax our efforts in behalf of this cause. A mistake was made, we think, when the publishing department was removed from under the immediate direction of the Executive Committee, and we doubt whether the churches will ever be satisfied until it is restored. When that is done, the Secretary and the Committee will find their hands fully occupied.

But the question will be asked, Can our churches sustain all these schemes in their separate and independent character? We reply that they can; and we doubt whether there is an intelligent Christian man within our bounds who after serious reflection would take the opposite ground. We believe that it is not only possible, but that the very highest spiritual interest of the Church herself is involved in doing this very thing. The sum of \$250,000, contributed annually, would place all her schemes of work on a good and solid foundation. This would be an average contribution of \$2 per member for all of these schemes. Other evangelical churches in the land are giving twice and three times as much for the same objects; and why cannot we, if proper and systematic efforts were made, rise to this humbler standard? And should we not rather aim to stimulate our people to this noble Christ-like liberality, instead of pulling down our schemes to accommodate them to a narrow and selfish avarice?

At the same time we earnestly pray that our beloved Church may not be seduced by any specious plans for simply *saving her money*. What she needs to be taught, and what she ought to practise, is not stern economy, but more cheerful liberality in supporting the cause of her blessed Master. It is this that will bring honor to the Church herself, and will be well pleasing to her great Head. We frankly admit that watchfulness over those who are intrusted with the duty of dispensing the alms of the Church is an important responsibility; but it is equally important that this watchfulness should not degenerate into a mere capricious and fault-finding spirit. If a spirit of innovation becomes dominant among us; if fault-finding becomes a chronic com-

plaint ; if change and readjustment are perpetually insisted upon, then we can see nothing in the future but disaster. More harm may be done by substituting untried experiments in the place of well-tried schemes than can be repaired in fifty years. Our hope is that God may preserve us from all such follies.

The Committee of Foreign Missions rests upon a somewhat different basis from our domestic schemes, and our further remarks will be confined almost exclusively to this particular department of the Church's work.

The work of the Committee of Foreign Missions lying entirely beyond the bounds of the settled Church, and having for its object the establishment of Christianity where it has not before existed, or only in name, it is necessarily clothed with ecclesiastical powers. Its powers or functions, however, are strictly defined, are limited in their nature, and are temporary in duration, inasmuch as they are conferred from year to year. It comes within the scope of its powers to appoint missionaries, to designate their fields of labor, to assign to them the particular department of labor in which they are to engage, to remove them from one post of labor to another in the foreign field when circumstances demand it, make provision for the support of the missionary and his family, and all other duties of a similar character; it being understood, however, that all these functions are to be performed on the part of the Committee with considerate regard to the views and wishes of the missionary himself, and also with reference to the instructions that may be given by the appointing body. A missionary may be recalled for incompetency, for disregard of instructions, for neglect of his proper work, or other causes of a similar nature. On the other hand, the Committee has no power to ordain a man to the work of the ministry, cannot judge or try a minister for heresy or immorality, and still less has it the power to depose a man from the ministry, these being the acknowledged and exclusive functions of the Presbytery. Furthermore, a missionary, if he feels that he has been wronged by the Committee in any administrative act, has the right to appeal to the Assembly, to whom he and the Committee are alike respon-

sible, so far as the general missionary work is concerned. If the Committee fails to discharge any of its duties with efficiency and fidelity, or if it transcends its authority in exercising powers not intrusted to it, it becomes the duty of the appointing body to withdraw its commission and appoint another in its place. In view of this fact, it is hard to see how more perfect accountability could possibly be secured, or how any wrong-doing on the part of the Committee could be more speedily redressed.

In view of this brief statement about the nature and functions of the Executive Committee of Foreign Missions, it seems to us that the plan of the Assembly is not only the simplest, the most practicable, and the most scriptural, that could be employed, but is really almost the only way by which the work of foreign evangelisation can be carried on in the present state of the world. The plan, therefore, is not a device of human wisdom, as has been charged, but is the exercise of the highest style of wisdom, inasmuch as it is founded upon the divine authority.

Much has been said of late about going back to the apostolic times for a model; but this we shall consider in the further progress of this article.

There are one or two remarks which we propose to make in relation to the general tenor of the Minority Report, before we proceed to consider some of its more particular suggestions.

And first, the great and controlling idea which seems to pervade this Report from beginning to end is *economy*, or, more properly speaking, *money saving*. No one will raise any question about the propriety or the duty of using public funds, and especially church funds, in a frugal and economical way, a prudent regard being had, of course, to the nature of the object which it is proposed to accomplish. But economy, if permitted to degenerate into parsimony, will prove ruinous to any cause to which it may be applied. We have heard of a ship and cargo that were lost because the owner was too parsimonious to furnish the oil necessary to light the binnacle. Money may be saved by having the General Assembly meet only once in three years; by abolishing the Colored Institute; by consolidating the schemes of benevolence, and by doing away with secretaries. But the ques-

tion naturally presents itself, Will the best interests of the Church, or the best interests of those great objects which it is the chief end of the Church to promote, be thereby secured? One is almost tempted to infer from reading the Report that the writer regards it as the chief duty of the Church to *spare* the money of her people, or, what is substantially the same thing, conduct all her work on the most niggardly scale, in order to save their money, and thus save them from the necessity of giving *cheerfully* to the cause of Christ. If it is best for the General Assembly to meet only once in three years, that \$18,000.00 may thereby be saved, or because more harm than good is sometimes done by her meetings, as is stated in the Minority Report, why not fix the time of meeting at once in ten or twenty years, or, what would seem to be more consistent with the reasoning of the Report, have no meeting at all?

Something of the kind might be said in relation to almost every other item of retrenchment that has been suggested. But apart from these particular suggestions, there is, we think, a vicious principle, but perhaps not so intended by the author, running through the whole of this plan of retrenchment. It aims to conduct the work of the Church on the narrowest and most sordid scale. In other words, that what is done for the Lord must be done in a grudging manner. It takes sides with the avarice and selfishness of the human heart, and it is not surprising, therefore, that it meets with much favor. But if this narrowness becomes the prevailing feeling of the Church, and is encouraged by our Church courts, its influence will not be felt alone in connexion with our schemes of benevolence, but in every possible direction. Ministers' salaries, miserably insufficient as they are at present, will have to be brought down to a corresponding standard. Theological Seminaries will be allowed to languish, if not die out altogether, for the want of proper support. In short, all the streams of Christian benevolence will be dried up by the power of this contracted principle. But where does this narrowness find countenance in the word of God? The great Redeemer bestows all his blessings on the most munificent scale. The air we breathe, the light of the sun which cheers our world, the

showers which water the earth, the products of the soil, are all bestowed with an open and liberal hand. But far above all this the Redeemer gave HIMSELF to ransom a lost and ruined world. Where in all the universe is there such munificence! But not only has He bestowed these rich gifts upon the children of men, thereby furnishing an example for their imitation, but he has most distinctly informed them, in his revealed word, that he loves to witness the same kind of benevolence in them. At the same time we are expressly told that he loves a cheerful giver. The Macedonian disciples were commended because their liberality abounded in the midst of their poverty. The poor widow was commended, not for the littleness, but the greatness of her gift, it being all her living. The woman who broke the alabaster box of ointment on his head was amply defended against the charge of wastefulness.

Nor can there be any doubt as to the Saviour's design in requiring gifts at the hands of his people. It was not surely because he needed any such gifts. But the intention obviously is to repress selfishness, which is the master sin of the human heart, and to develop benevolence in the hearts of his people, which assimilates them to the character of God himself. The great need of the present moment, therefore, is not increased economy or contractedness of any kind, but greater liberality on the part of the people of God. Let them bring such offerings into the store house of the Lord as they are able to make, and such as the circumstances of the case demand, and there will be no occasion for any further call for either retrenchment or reform.

Another general feature about this report, if we have read it aright, is its tendency towards *disintegration*, on which we would bestow a passing notice. We do not suppose that the writer distinctly intended this, but this is the tendency of his reasoning nevertheless. He speaks disparagingly of the powers and functions of the General Assembly; charges the Assembly with usurping prerogatives that belong to the Presbyteries; and indirectly insinuates that an Assembly, as such, is not an essential part of the Presbyterian system. At the same time he seems to regard the Presbyteries as the source and centre of all ecclesias-

tical power, and that they have been thrust out of their proper sphere by the encroachments and usurpations of the General Assembly. We do not intend to put the views of the writer in stronger terms than he himself employs, but we do not see how any one can put a different construction upon his language. Nor have we any idea of going into a general discussion about the relative positions and prerogatives of our different church courts, having neither the time, the space, nor the ability for this. But there are two things that most Presbyterians are ready to admit: first, that there is as clear authority in the word of God for a General Assembly, as there is for a Presbytery; and second, that our constitution defines the prerogatives of the Assembly as distinctly as it does those of the Presbyteries. Now, it is easy, and, in the times in which we live, somewhat popular, to charge the Assembly with exercising powers which do not belong to it. But when that charge is brought forward without sufficient grounds to sustain it, as it seems to us in the present case, its tendency can only be to weaken the bonds that ought to bind us together. If Presbyteries can repudiate the authority of the higher courts, then as a matter of logical consequence, the churches can and will repudiate the authority of the Presbyteries, which plunges us at once into the depths of Congregational Independency, if not into something worse. Certainly if there is danger in our Church of consolidation, or Prelacy, as the writer is pleased to put it, on the one hand, there is equal if not much greater danger of Congregationalism or anarchy, on the other. Our only safety, as a Church, is to steer as near as possible to the constitution, which we all believe to be founded on the word of God.

There is one other matter of a general nature brought out in this Report, that must not be passed over without notice. It is charged upon ministers who have acted as treasurers to some of our benevolent schemes that they have violated their ordination vows in performing the duties that belong exclusively to the diaconate, and they are exhorted to return to their proper work as preachers of the gospel. It is not stated, as it should have been done, that these ministers were devoting only a portion of

their time to this kind of business, and that as a matter both of convenience and economy, whilst the main part of their time was directed to objects that more properly belong to the ministerial office. The writer draws a distinction between what are called the secular and the spiritual functions of the Church, which we believe cannot be maintained under all possible circumstances without subverting the very foundations of our Church system. We admit that deacons exist by divine appointment; that their business is to manage the secular affairs of a particular church; that they are the proper custodians of church property; that they are to collect and disburse the alms of God's people for the benefit of the poor; they are, perhaps, the proper persons for taking up the stated and regular contributions of the churches for the different schemes of benevolence; that the design of their appointment was to relieve ministers from pressing secular cares; that it is a most important office in the Church, and ought to be magnified and utilised to any reasonable extent. All this is cheerfully conceded. But when the cast-iron law is laid down that no officer of the Church, except the deacon, is allowed to handle secular matters, when it is charged that the General Assembly becomes the "temptress" of her own ministers in assigning them to such positions; when ministers are charged with violating their ordination vows in performing certain secular duties that are unavoidably connected with their official position, we revolt against the assumption as opposed to both reason and Scripture. Let the principle be tested by a few practical facts. The writer of the Report himself, if we have been correctly informed, has spent the greater part of his ministerial life in teaching. Was he ever arraigned before his Presbytery for violating his ordination vows? The Presidents of most of our Colleges, who are generally ministers of the gospel, are expected and required to keep a thorough oversight of all the financial affairs of the institutions over which they preside. Have any of them ever been arraigned for violating their ordination vows? Here, at the present moment, Drs. Girardeau and Mack are travelling among the Southern churches to raise money to repair the shattered endowment of the Theological Seminary at Columbia—

an enterprise in which every good man gives them his hearty sympathy. But they have, according to the reasoning of the Minority Report, invaded the deacon's office, and ought to be arrested and tried for violating their ordination vows. But there is another still more flagrant violation of this cast-iron law. Paul and Barnabas, in forgetfulness of their solemn ordination vows, actually raised money in Antioch, carried it all the way to Jerusalem, and there, no doubt, rendered as strict an account of their receipts and disbursements as any of our modern missionary secretaries have ever done. Nor is this the only case in which Paul is chargeable with handling money. In his defence before Felix, he distinctly states that he had come to Jerusalem to bring alms and offerings to his nation—offerings that he had carefully gathered up in the churches where he had been preaching. More than this. If any one will turn to the second chapter of Galatians, he will find that when the other Apostles gave him the right hand of fellowship to go and preach to the heathen, they enjoined it upon him to “remember the poor,” which he says he was always forward to do. But why censure these secretaries, and let Paul and Barnabas go unrebuked? But there are illustrations of different kinds that ought to be, at least, noticed. A missionary is sent to the heart of Africa or China; it is not found convenient or practicable to send a ruling elder or a deacon along with him; he is expected, nevertheless, in the prosecution of his mission, to establish the Church of Christ where it has not before existed. Now how can he effect this without exercising the threefold functions of preacher, ruling elder and deacon? Shall he be recalled and censured for mixing up these threefold functions? Still further, and in the last place the Church has appointed a commission with ecclesiastical powers to carry on the work of foreign evangelisation. That commission, made up mainly of elders, soon finds that it has to deal with secular as well as with spiritual matters. It has to provide salaries, build or rent houses, make contracts for carrying missionaries to their fields of labor, etc., etc. Now, if it is sacrilegious, or something approaching that, for a presbyter to handle money, what is to be done in such a case? Must the commission be constituted one

half of elders and the other half of deacons, so as to meet the difficulty? Now, to say nothing about the endless confusion and conflict that would necessarily arise from such an arrangement, where shall we find any Presbyterian usage to justify the Assembly in putting deacons on ecclesiastical commissions? It is a favorite idea with the writer of the Minority Report, that deacons ought to be made treasurers for our different schemes. We have no objection to this. But it would be easy to demonstrate, which, however, we shall not for the want of space undertake to do, that according to the reasoning of the brother himself, it would be utterly unlawful for a deacon to occupy any such position.

We proceed now to consider some of the special recommendations, as well as some of the conclusions at which the writer of the Report arrives. To discuss all the points brought out in the Report would be very much like undertaking a voyage around the world.

We propose to consider the three following propositions as the most important in their general bearing:

1. Will it be found practicable or economical to substitute one central treasurer, to be located in some rural town for the sake of economy, in the place of those local treasurers now employed for this purpose?

2. Can any of our Committees, and especially our Executive Committee of Foreign Missions, carry on its work with system and efficiency without a Secretary?

3. Has the present mode of conducting the Foreign Missionary work proved a failure, and is it necessary therefore to go back to apostolical times for a model upon which to conduct it?

As to the first of these questions, it would be easy to show that the plan of a central treasurer would cost more than twice as much as it does on the present plan to perform the same work. But it would be replied, that the general plan contemplates the abolition of the Secretariat, and thus save these salaries to offset this excess of expense. But as the economy in this case is based entirely upon the practicability of dispensing with Secretaries, it may be held in abeyance until that question is disposed of.

Our first remark about the proposed central treasurer is that it is not new. It has been tried, and undoubtedly with good success, by two branches of the Presbyterian Church in Scotland. But it does not follow that what is practicable in Scotland is also practicable with us. Their plan of a central treasurership is part and parcel of their general scheme of Sustentation, which very few would think of introducing among themselves. Furthermore, this central treasurership is located in the commercial metropolis of the country, where all the necessary banking and commercial advantages may be had.

Nor is the idea new to the Presbyterian churches in this country. It was brought forward at the organisation of our own Church in 1861, by Judge Shepherd, of North Carolina. His plan was to have one grand financial trusteeship established in some central portion of the Southern country, to be composed of Christian gentlemen of high standing from different parts of the Church, by whom all church funds, even those intended for our benevolent schemes, should be managed. The scheme, when first presented, was received with great favor, mainly on account of its apparent simplicity, and at first was advocated by some of the leading members of the Assembly. It required but little discussion, however, to convince that Assembly that our benevolent schemes, and especially the Foreign Missionary work, could not stand the strain that would be imposed upon it of receiving its funds in this indirect and round-about way; while it was argued at the same time that an Executive Committee, judiciously chosen, was just as trustworthy in the management and disbursement of funds as any central trusteeship could possibly be. The main feature of the plan was set aside by a resolution directing that all funds intended for our benevolent schemes should go directly to the Treasurers of the different Committees. At the same time a general trusteeship was established, and in a year or two afterwards located at Charlotte, N. C., which has since been performing its appropriate duties to the entire satisfaction of the Church.

The Northern Presbyterian Church some five years ago appointed what was called, if we remember aright, a *financial commission*, consisting of fifteen or twenty Christian gentlemen

from the city of New York and vicinity, whose business it would be to superintend the raising of all church funds, and of apportioning them to their different schemes of benevolence, according to their own judgment, or according to a rule to be given to them by their General Assembly. This scheme continued for only one year, if, indeed, it can be said to have had an organic existence at all. It was objected to, if we have been correctly informed, mainly on two grounds: 1. That it created needless machinery in carrying on the work of the Church. 2. That the contributors to these causes were unwilling to be placed at so great a distance from the objects to which their benevolence was applied. Very little funds, if any at all, were ever sent to this commission, and at the end of the year it died a quiet, natural death. There are two difficulties in the way of having a central treasurer such as has been proposed by the Minority Report: 1. He would soon find himself surrounded with difficulties, which neither he nor the proposer of the measure had ever thought of. He would soon see, that to carry on his work efficiently and satisfactorily to the Church, he would have to perform the duties of a Secretary as well as those of a Treasurer. A very large proportion of the letters which convey money to the Treasurer contain also inquiries, and make suggestions in relation to almost every department of the missionary work. These inquiries are of a very varied character; as, for example, how much it will take to support a heathen child in a given school; what is the comparative expense of supporting schools in Greece, China, and South America; will a lady teacher be appointed to the Mexican, the Indian, or the Italian Mission, if a certain Ladies' Missionary Association will provide the means of support; what has become of a certain boy that was supported by a certain Sabbath-school, that was named for a certain Doctor of Divinity, that was in a certain Chinese school, a certain number of years ago. These are only specimens of the almost innumerable questions that would be showed upon the central treasurer as soon as his office was in full operation. How are they to be dealt with? It is no part of his business, nor is it possible for him to be particularly acquainted with all the details of the Foreign Missionary

work, or to be able to answer all the letters. His duties are all summed up in keeping his books, and receiving and remitting money. According to the present arrangement, all letters of the kind above referred to are handed over to the Secretary to be answered, and it is no small tax upon his time and strength to discharge this single department of labor. If these questions, as well as the innumerable others of a similar character, are to be cast aside or neglected, then Christian people will very naturally excuse themselves from contributing altogether.

Another remark which it is important to make in this connexion, is, that it is essential not only that the Treasurer be officially connected with the Executive Committee of Missions, but that both be located in some commercial centre, where banking and commercial facilities can be enjoyed, when necessary. This necessity was not sensibly felt in the earlier periods of the work, when its resources and operations were confined within narrow limits. But as soon as it began to assume broader proportions, the necessity for these increased facilities soon made itself manifest. We need refer only to our own experience to show that this is not a mere theoretical matter. When the Executive Committee of Foreign Missions was transferred something less than five years ago to Baltimore, it carried along with it a debt of \$27,000. This was not owing to any mismanagement on the part of the Committee formerly located at Columbia, but to the unexpected falling off in the ordinary contributions of the churches, and to a debt contracted by the Campinas Institute which was never authorised nor approved by the Committee, but which had to be paid, nevertheless, in order to save a property of three times the amount of the debt. Subsequently a debt of \$3,000 had to be paid on the same property, making the aggregate debt \$30,000. Now the great problem, and one which has cost the Committee no little anxious thought, was how to carry on the general work and liquidate this heavy debt at the same time, and to do this without any material increase in the ordinary contributions of the churches, and in the midst of one of the severest and most prolonged financial crises that the country has ever known. That debt of \$30,000 will be reduced at the close of the present eccle-

siastical year, if nothing unforeseen arises, to something less than \$7,000. Now, how has this been effected? We reply, without going into specifications, that it is owing, in some measure, to the rigid economy that was enforced in every department of the work, to the diminished appropriations made for the Missions, but mainly to the skill, the wisdom, and the financial experience of the Executive Committee, several of whom had had large experience in such matters. The Treasurer, as well as several other members of the Committee, had repeatedly to pledge their personal property as collateral security for money that had to be borrowed in order to keep the wheels of this great enterprise in motion. They did it cheerfully, and they deserve, as we think, the thanks of our entire Church. All of this could not have been done, as it seems to us, and especially during the financial straits through which we have passed, if the Treasurer had not been officially connected with the Committee and both located in an important commercial centre.

But it will be said that the missionary work ought to be carried on without debt, or even the liability of debt. Now we have no hesitation in saying that in view of the work to be done, in view of the condition and circumstances of the Church, and in view of the prevailing modes of transacting commercial business, to which the missionary work is unavoidably related, this proposition is well nigh impossible. There are four indispensable conditions necessary to the successful prosecution of this great work without occasional debt or liability to debt:

1. That the churches shall never fall behind in their regular annual contributions.
2. That there shall be a regular increase in those contributions from year to year, sufficient to meet the growing demands of the work.
3. That these contributions shall be equally distributed over the year, so that the income and outgo of the treasury shall correspond with each other.
4. That no great unforeseen providential contingencies shall arise to make heavy and unavoidable drafts upon the treasury.

Now it may be asked, who is ready to guarantee all or even any one of these conditions?

The fact is, this great work, involving as it necessarily does so much that is secular and temporal, must be conducted, to some extent at least, upon secular principles. The only safe and wise course for the Assembly is to appoint godly, judicious, and practical men to conduct it; and with the guidance of the Holy Spirit, and with the oversight which the Church herself will exercise, we need have no fears about discomfiture or disaster.

Our second inquiry is, whether the Foreign Missionary work can be carried on by a Committee without a Secretary? This is a leading feature in the plan of the Minority Report. No one will deny the claim to originality here, whatever else may be said about the matter. If this suggestion could be made practicable, then the originator of it would deservedly take rank among the wisest men of the age. There is not one of our church courts, from the lowest to the highest, that does not appoint one of its own members as its clerk or secretary, and all of these, except in the sessional court, are paid clerks or secretaries. The functions of this office vary, of course, according to circumstances, and may consist simply in recording the proceedings of the body to which it belongs, or it may include its correspondence at the same time, in which case the officer is usually denominated the Secretary. To attempt to carry on the Foreign Missionary work, with all its varied details of business, without a Secretary whose business it is to keep the Committee informed in relation to its condition and wants, and to make the necessary suggestions for its prosecution, is simply preposterous. The Indians have a saying, that "if you buy a horse, be sure to include in the contract his eyes and feet," by which is implied that a blind or lame horse would be of very little account. Now the Minority Report in separating the Treasurer from the Committee and abolishing the office of Secretary, virtually proposes a committee that would be of no more value than a horse without eyes or feet. This is no disparagement of the noble men who have composed our Committees in the past, or may be chosen to do so in the future. No practical or judicious set of men in the world would allow themselves to be incorporated into such a body. One is almost

tempted to think that the writer really intended a practical joke in making the suggestion.

But what are the duties of a Secretary of Foreign Missions, that they can be so easily dispensed with?

They may be arranged under four heads: 1. To maintain correspondence with the churches at home in all matters relating to the Foreign Missionary work, including visits to Synods, Presbyteries, and also to churches, when this can be done in connexion with these more extended tours. 2. Correspondence with missionaries in the foreign fields, and with candidates desirous of entering upon the work. 3. Editorial labors connected with the management of *The Missionary*, as well as the preparation of articles on the subject of Missions for other papers and magazines. 4. Duties that have to be performed in connexion with all the official acts of the Executive Committee of Foreign Missions. The simple mention of these labors shows at once that the office of Secretary is no sinecure. It is impossible, in our limited space, to give anything like a full or exhaustive account of either one of these departments of labor. In relation to editorial labors connected with *The Missionary*, it is sufficient perhaps, to say, that the American Board of Foreign Missions employs the whole of one man's time to edit the *Missionary Herald*, and that the Presbyterian Board of Foreign Missions in the city of New York, employs the chief part of the time of one of its three Secretaries to edit the *Foreign Missionary*. These magazines are larger somewhat than ours, and are illustrated on a scale that is impossible to us; but the additional labor expended upon them is not materially greater than that demanded by ours. But in addition to these editorial labors, the Secretary, if he would maintain the interests of the foreign missionary cause as it ought to be done, must prepare frequent articles for the weekly religious papers, as well as more elaborate ones for periodical magazines.

Then again, the correspondence which the Secretary has to maintain with ministers of the gospel, with individual members of the Church, with Ladies' Missionary Associations, and with Sabbath-schools, answering questions, giving information, and

making suggestions, is by no means an unimportant department of work, and imposes a heavy tax both of responsibility and labor.

The correspondence which it is necessary to carry on with the missionaries in the field, as well as with candidates for the work, though exceedingly pleasant in itself, is, nevertheless, very laborious. The Secretary is the chief medium of communication between the missionaries in the field and the churches at home. The wants of the missionary, his views of the importance of the work in which he is engaged, the appeals which he sometimes feels himself called upon to make to the people of God for the support of that work, the information that he would lay before the Christian public in relation to the habits and character of the people among whom he lives and for whom he labors, are, as a general thing, brought into the hands of the Secretary and by him pressed upon the attention of the Christian public. This correspondence, with rare exceptions, is always of the most friendly and confidential nature, and it is a comfort and solace to the missionary to remember that he has left one at home, who is not only able to understand his circumstances and wants, but who will do everything in his power to forward the great cause to which he has devoted his life. As a general thing, there is a monthly interchange of letters between the missionaries and the Secretary, amounting to fifty or sixty per month, and it is not often that any of them are short letters. The correspondence between the office and missionary candidates is also a considerable item; but we forbear entering into further details.

But the weightier and more responsible duties which devolve upon the Secretary are those which he has to perform in connexion with the official acts of the Executive Committee. They expect him, as a necessary qualification for his office, to be thoroughly acquainted with the missionary work in all its varied bearings, and to be able to lay before them all the information that they may need in reference to any particular matter that may be brought before them for their action. It is impossible for a Committee, except to a limited extent, to know all the facts bearing upon any particular case that may be brought under

their notice, and hence the necessity of some one to impart this information, whose special business it is to study out such matters. If, for example, it becomes necessary for the Committee to appoint some one to the missionary work, the Secretary must be prepared to show that the young man has all the qualifications necessary for the work. The question with the Committee is not whether the young man is qualified to preach the gospel, that having been settled by the Presbytery to which he belongs, but whether he is a suitable person to send off on a foreign mission; in other words, whether he has a sound physical constitution, earnest piety, mental training, versatility of character, steadiness of purpose, and capacity for acquiring language, as well as other qualifications of the same kind. It would be very unfortunate for the cause of missions, as well as injurious to the influence of a young man himself, to send him abroad without these necessary qualifications. But how is this information to be obtained? By personal intercourse or correspondence with the young man himself; by inquiries made among his associates in study; by ascertaining the views of his teachers; and, so far as physical soundness is concerned, by procuring the advice of a skillful physician. No member of the Committee, who does not give special attention to the subject, could give this information so necessary to wise action on the part of the Committee.

Again, if it is proposed to establish a new station in some part of the heathen world, the Secretary must be able to set forth the reasons which justify such an undertaking. He must be able to give information in relation to the condition, the character and disposition of the people among whom it is proposed to establish the mission, whether the climate is healthful or otherwise; whether the language is easy or difficult of acquisition; the facilities of intercourse between the proposed mission and the civilised world; the probable cost of maintaining such a mission; the relation of such a mission to the adjoining or surrounding population; whether the occupation of such a position would interfere in any way with the claims of other missionary associations, and various other points of a similar character too numerous to be specified, but too important to be overlooked by any

Committee that would conduct its work wisely and efficiently. But who can give all this information without making the subject a special study?

We must specify another matter in relation to which the Secretary must be thoroughly posted. The Committee makes all of its appropriations at the beginning of the year. Those appropriations are based upon schedules sent up by the different Missions before the close of the previous year. The schedules contain specifications of all the items for which appropriations are asked, and together they amount to several hundred. These items pertain to the salaries of the missionaries, varying, of course, according to the cost of living in different countries; the support of schools and seminaries; the employment of colporteurs; the expense of building or renting houses; the pay for native helpers; the expense of missionary tours; the cost of medical attendance; the cost of translating and circulating religious books and tracts, and various other items, too many even to be enumerated. The missionaries usually send explanations of the various items embraced in their schedules, and ordinarily this would be a sufficient guide for the Committee. But when it becomes necessary to cut down these schedules one-third or one-fourth, as has been the case every year for the last five, how will it be possible for the Executive Committee to apportion out the funds under their control in a just and equitable manner and so as to promote the highest interests of all the different missions under their care, unless there is some one in that Committee who has a minute knowledge of all the affairs and surroundings of each one of these different Missions?

The writer is perfectly aware that the foregoing statements are utterly insufficient to give a just idea of the actual labors of a Secretary of Foreign Missions. If you add to these the sense of responsibility which ever presses upon his mind and heart; the anxieties and perplexities with which he is constantly surrounded; the unmerited censures that are sometimes heaped upon him by persons who do not comprehend the actual condition and demands of the case, the inference would necessarily be that it was not an easy office to discharge, but indispensable,

nevertheless, to the great cause of Missions. If the writer could see any relief, or any improvement, in the suggestions of this Minority Report, he would be first to embrace and utilise them; but seeing, as he does, nothing but failure and discomfiture to result from the experiment, he is shut up to the duty of simply recording his solemn and earnest protest against all such unwarranted innovations.

We come now to consider the twofold question, whether the Foreign Missionary work, conducted as it is at present, has been a failure, and the consequent necessity of going back to apostolic times for a model or pattern by which to conduct it in the future. We will consider these questions in the inverse order in which they are here presented.

The writer of the Minority Report charges that the Church, in prosecuting the work of Missions, has gone astray from the word of God: that "we have been prevented from going up and possessing the land, because God has a controversy with us;" that "we must be restored to the simplicity of the primitive Church," etc. He quotes from a letter received from a venerable minister, "one whom the Church delights to honor," as saying: "It seems to my ignorance that all our schemes are managed at an expense which would be considered monstrous in the business of this world. I can find nothing like it in the Acts of the Apostles, nor anywhere else in the New Testament. I find nothing like it in other great missionary ages of the Church." Nor are these views wholly confined to the writer of the Report and his correspondent. A writer in the July number of the SOUTHERN PRESBYTERIAN REVIEW, in criticising some of the modes of raising funds for the missionary work, remarks, "Better wait on the clearly revealed methods, we think. Better abide by 'the pattern shown in the mount.'"

Now what is that "pattern shown in the mount"? Who can tell us what was the Apostolic plan for carrying on the great work of evangelising the world? Or whether they had anything that could properly be called a plan or "pattern" for carrying on that work? So far as we are informed, the Apostles prosecuted their work of evangelisation under the immediate direction

and inspiration of the Holy Ghost. Paul and Barnabas were set apart for their work by the church at Antioch, but in going from place to place they were not guided by that church, but by the special direction of the Divine Spirit. Philip, who is denominated an evangelist, seems to have been guided in the same way. Timothy and Titus were directed in their plans and measures by Paul. The disciples that were scattered abroad by the persecution that followed the death of Stephen, went everywhere making known the unsearchable riches of Christ. Great blessings attended the labors of these different classes of persons because of the immediate, special presence of the Holy Ghost. But how their temporal wants were supplied, we are not distinctly informed. It was not probably from funds that were sent to the poor saints at Jerusalem; for these were exhausted in meeting their temporal wants. It is possible that the church at Antioch may have furnished money to pay the travelling expenses of Paul and his companions on their different missionary tours, but of this we have no certain account in the Acts of the Apostles. Paul acknowledged his obligations to the church at Philippi for their gifts to him. It is probable that those who were converted at Jerusalem on the day of Pentecost, many of whom were from the distant cities of the Roman Empire, had returned to their homes and were prepared not only to entertain the missionaries in their own houses, but render them help in various other ways. On certain occasions and under special circumstances, Paul wrought with his own hands rather than tax newly-formed churches for the means of his support. Christian women, if we may judge from the frequent allusion which Paul makes to them as his helpers and succorers, no doubt contributed to promote his personal comfort, as well as to meet the necessary expenses of his work. Now these are about all the facts that can be gathered from the New Testament Scriptures as to the mode or plan of the Primitive Church in carrying on the work.

The fundamental principles of the constitution of the Church are distinctly set forth in the word of God, in relation to which there can be no controversy. But many of the powers and functions involved in that constitution were not carried into effect in

the days of the Apostles. They were left to be developed by the Church under the guidance of the Holy Ghost as their situation and circumstances would seem to demand. No particular form of outward worship existed in the Primitive Church. She had no creed, certainly none formulated after the manner of our Confession of Faith and Catechisms. She had no distinct system of discipline established for the government of the Church, and she had no Book of Church Order by which her powers could be distributed among different church courts. And so no particular plan was adopted by which all the energies of the Church could be concentrated on the great work of evangelising the world. The times did not favor anything of the kind. The brotherhood were miserably poor. The world was in open hostility to the cause of Christ. The fires of persecution were raging around, so that it was utterly impossible for the primitive Christians to have adopted any well developed plan for carrying on their work. The Apostles acted under the immediate inspiration of the Holy Ghost. But since their office has ceased, the Church in her organised capacity becomes the controlling power; and it is by her direction that the great work of evangelisation is to be carried on. Of course her authority will be valid only so far as it is consistent with the principles of her own constitution and with the teachings of God's word. Now if the Church has power to formulate her creed, which no one denies; if she may establish a system of discipline; if she may institute a Book of Church Order; and if she may adopt a Directory for Public Worship, all of these being founded upon the authority of God's word, why may she not adopt some general plan for evangelising the world, provided that plan is also consonant with the teachings of God's word? The altered condition of the world, the wonderful changes that have been brought about in human affairs by the providence of God, the greatly increased resources and power of the Church herself, all call for some plan of conducting the work suited to the circumstances and demands of the case. It would have been utterly impossible for the Primitive Church to have carried on her work as we do; and quite as impossible for us to carry ours on according to their plan, if indeed they had

anything that could be called a plan. Why, then, is the plan adopted in our day to be denounced because no exact counterpart can be found in the Acts of the Apostles?

Furthermore, it would be well for those who call for the exact "pattern shown in the mount," to look well to what their principles lead. If the Committee of Foreign Missions is to be sacrificed because it is not strictly conformed to the "pattern shown in the mount," what becomes of our Theological Seminaries? Who will point out a "pattern" for them in the Acts of the Apostles? More than this. These Seminaries are very expensive. It takes more money to operate one of them than to conduct all our schemes of benevolence joined together. Worse still, these institutions have large invested funds, which, according to the reasoning of the Minority Report, is a scandal to the Church. If justifiable to hold invested funds in one case, why may it not be done in another?

Still again. We have Bible Societies, which are engaged in printing the word of God in all the languages of the world, for the grand and glorious purpose of carrying the knowledge of salvation to every human being on the face of the earth. Yet we have no "pattern" for even this in the New Testament Scriptures. But who believes that Paul would have rejected the printing press as an auxiliary in the great work of evangelising the world? And so in relation to the Tract Society, the publishing agencies of the Church, Sabbath-school organisations, and numberless other agencies of a similar character, all of which must be condemned because there is no exact "pattern" for them in the Acts of the Apostles.*

*We confess that we do not comprehend the spirit that animates this crusade against our schemes of benevolence. The officers are charged with receiving high and wasteful salaries, when in reality those salaries are not much more than half of what is paid to settled ministers in the same cities; very much less than what is paid to the officers of similar institutions in the country; and, rightly viewed, they are receiving less than the Professors of our Theological Seminaries, whilst those Professors labor only nine months out of the year, but the Secretaries have no vacation at all. In connexion with the "Relief Fund," it is regarded almost as a scandal for the Church to have invested funds. And yet one

We do not know what method would be suggested for prosecuting the Foreign Missionary work by those who object to our present modes. If it is claimed that individual Christians, or voluntary associations of persons, should go abroad on their own motion, laboring among men as the way might be opened up before them, and living upon their personal resources or depending upon Divine Providence for the means of their support, as more consonant with the plan pursued by early Christians—we have only to reply that this course, so far as it relates to the saints that were scattered abroad by persecution, was the only one that was possible to them, in their condition; and it would be equally so for us, if we were forced into similar circumstances. But this is not the plan contemplated by our Church system. Here concerted action is the prominent idea. One of the great ends of the organisation of the Church itself undoubtedly was that all the resources of God's people might be more effectually brought to bear upon the conversion of the world. Union is strength in Church as well as in other matters. All independent action, except under special circumstances, is disorganising and weakening, and ought to be avoided.

Furthermore, all efforts that have been made to promote the Foreign Missionary cause apart from and independent of Church organisations, have, so far as is known to the writer, terminated in one of three things, viz.: 1. The undertaking has been found impracticable, and has been given up. 2. The members of such

of our Theological Seminaries has twice as large an invested fund as was ever contemplated by the Relief Fund, whilst the other Seminary is laboring, might and main, to bring her investment up to the same notch. We do not object to this, but we do object to this one-sided warfare waged against our benevolent schemes. We are told in the Report that during the last fourteen years it has cost \$160,000 to operate our four different schemes of benevolence. This big sum is so presented as to schok the sensibilities of unthinking men. Why not have stated at the same time that it cost a good deal more than twice this sum to operate our two Theological Seminaries during the same time? Or why not have mentioned that it cost more than one-half of this amount to operate one single city church? Perhaps it will be said that we attack you first as the most assailable, and will then follow up the attack upon the Seminaries and rich churches. Be it so. But let us know at once all that you propose to do.

associations have been compelled to betake themselves to secular employments for the means of support, and have thus been able to do very little in the proper missionary work. 3. Or have been compelled to resort to organisations of some kind, in order to secure the means of living as well as for carrying on the general work.

This latter result was particularly the case with the China Inland Mission, which determined to carry on its work independently of Church oversight, and without any expense of machinery. Whether it has been the gainer or loser by the former, we shall not undertake to decide. But it soon found itself necessarily entangled with as much machinery as any Church organisation whatever. We do not deny that there are individuals in the foreign field, acting upon their own authority and sustained by private means, who may have done much good. We only doubt the practical wisdom of the plan. Certain it is that Apostolic methods cannot be divorced from Apostolic men. The two must go together.

We come now, in the third place, to consider the question whether the missionary work, conducted in a way so much disapproved by the Minority Report, has been a failure. That such is the belief of the writer is not only distinctly implied in the paper itself but without which there would be no force or argument in it whatever. In replying to this assumption of failure, we shall not confine ourselves to our own missionary operations, though that would be sufficient of itself, but take a wider range, bringing into review the operations of all the great evangelical Churches of the day. All of these Churches conduct their work, with some unimportant modifications, on the same plan with ours; or, to speak perhaps more correctly, our plan is virtually a copy of theirs. If theirs has been a failure, then we might expect ours to be a failure also; but if they have been successful, it is safe for us to walk in their footsteps.

In considering the success or the want of success in connexion with any enterprise of the kind under consideration, we cannot always be governed simply by the number of converts. The Holy Ghost is sovereign in the dispensation of converting grace,

and he works when and where he chooses. Nevertheless the people of God may confidently expect him to crown their efforts in the conversion of men where they act in obedience to the divine command and reliance upon his presence and blessing. In this view of the matter, it is entirely proper, in order to settle the question of the success or failure of modern Missions, to compare the results of the missionary labors of the present century with those of the first, which we have always looked upon as the time of the Church's greatest spiritual power, and which may be taken, therefore, as a proper standard for gauging the spiritual power of any subsequent age.* There were certain advantages, as also disadvantages, attending both periods, which it is proper to notice.

On the side of apostolical and primitive Christians, there was the freshness of the impression made upon the world by the life and the death of the Lord Jesus Christ; the undeniable proofs of his resurrection and ascension to heaven; the extraordinary outpouring of the Holy Ghost on the day of Pentecost; the gift of tongues, and the power of working miracles bestowed upon the first heralds of the cross; the special preparation, both of the Jewish and Gentile mind, to listen to the claims of the gospel, and the nuclei for the establishment of Christian churches in most of the great cities of the Roman Empire by the Pentecostal converts.

On the side of modern Christianity, there is the power of greater numbers; thorough organisation for Christian work; greater pecuniary resources; extraordinary facilities for travelling; easy access to all the benighted nations of the earth; the printing press, by which copies of the Scriptures may be almost indefinitely multiplied; the full energies of a thoroughly educated Christian ministry; the subordination of the languages of the world to the cause of Christ; the rapid progress of science and civilisation; the waning power of heathen systems, and the awakening desire in many parts of the world to know the truth. The difficulties and discouragements attending the propagating of the gospel in these two different periods would probably constitute a similar parallel, but need not be mentioned.

Now, in the first place, what have been the results of missionary labor, so far as the conversion of men is concerned, in these two distant and different periods of the Christian Church? It is impossible to arrive at anything like a certain knowledge, or even at a very close approximation to it, of the number of conversions that took place during the first century of the Christian era. By those, however, who have made the subject a matter of special study, it is supposed that the number of converts of the first century did not exceed 100,000. The number possibly might have been twice as great. The results of modern Missions are ascertained with greater certainty. According to Dr. Christlieb, whose authority no one will feel disposed to question, the number of converts in connexion with the Missions in various parts of the unevangelised world, at the present day, is something more than 1,600,000, to say nothing about the number of conversions that have taken place in the Christian world at the same time. But the great mass of these have been gathered into the fold of Christ within the last twenty-five years. So that during the last twenty-five years there have been more than fifteen times as many as in the whole of the first century. More than this. If the work of conversion goes on among the benighted nations of the earth as rapidly during the next twenty years as it has been during the last twenty, the number of converts at the end of this century will be scarcely less than 5,000,000, or fifty times as many as those of the whole of the first century.

This is not only great increase over the converts of the Christian world during the same length of time, but is something greatly in advance of anything that has ever been known in the history of the Christian Church.

But what kind of human agency has been employed in the promotion of this great work? Just that which has been so sweepingly denounced a failure. Is it possible for the writer of the Minority Report or any one else, to propose any plan that will be likely to bring about more glorious results?

But there are other matters that must be brought to view, if we would fully understand all that is being done for the evangelisation of the world. At the beginning of the present cen-

tury, there were 170 ordained missionaries in the whole of the unevangelised world. At the present time, there are 2,500 ordained missionaries, as many more male and female assistant missionaries, and about 25,000 native laborers, making an aggregate force of 30,000 laborers. In all institutions of learning connected with the various Missions, there are at the present time 400,000 native youth being specially trained for the same work. Now, if these schools turn out annually one-eighth of their number as sufficiently educated to engage in the work, and if only one-half of these should be regarded as worthy to take part in the work, still there will be at the close of the present century an army of 500,000 workers. Who can form any adequate conception of what may be achieved by such a force as this during the first half of the twentieth century?

In the next place, let us look at the expansion of the work during the last fifty years. At the beginning of the century, all the missionary stations in the unevangelised world, as has been truly and forcibly stated, could be numbered on the fingers of the two hands. At the present day, it might be asked what considerable portion of the heathen world is there in which there are not now representatives of the Cross. They may be found among every considerable tribe of Indians in either North or South America; in almost every group of islands in the broad Pacific; along the eastern and western shores of South America; on the shores of eastern and western Africa; and along the banks of the Nile, the Niger, the Zambesi, and the Congo Rivers; and on the shores of all the great lakes of that continent; in eastern Europe and western Asia; in central and eastern Turkey; in Syria and Mesopotamia; in Armenia and Persia; in every portion of the great Empire of India; in Burmah and Siam; in eastern and central China; in Japan; and in almost every other portion of the heathen world. Of course the number of missionaries occupying these out posts is very insufficient, but they are, nevertheless, occupying these various countries in the name of their rightful Sovereign; and before the lapse of a very long period they will, with the blessing of Almighty God, be in full possession of all these lands.

One more fact must be brought to view. During the present century, the word of God, in part or whole, has been translated into more than 250 different languages and dialects, many of which have been reduced to writing for the first time. In this way a channel has been provided for conveying the knowledge of salvation to the minds of hundreds of millions of the most ignorant and debased of the human race. Not only have the Scriptures been translated into all of these varied languages, but it is estimated that there are now in circulation as many as 150,000,000 copies of the Bible—about one for every ten persons in the world—undoubtedly a larger number than was ever possessed by the human race from the times of Moses to the beginning of the present century. Now if the circulation is increased as much in the next twenty years as it has been during the last twenty, then there will be in circulation as many as 200,000,000 copies of the Scriptures, which will be nearly equivalent to one copy for every family on the face of the earth.

Now if the Holy Ghost, in the exercise of his sovereign power, should make each copy the instrument of one conversion, then our converts would not be numbered by tens of thousands, or hundreds of thousands, or even by millions, but by hundreds of millions.

Here is success, both present and prospective, that has no parallel in the history of Christianity. If what has thus been achieved is almost as nothing compared with what remains to be done, nevertheless, it is clear that, with the blessing of God, the task laid upon the Church by her great Head, of making known the gospel to every human being on the face of the earth, is not only possible, but may be fully realised in a comparatively short time. And now by whose instrumentality were these plans bearing such undeniable proof of the divine approval, which have already been productive of so much good, and which promise still greater results in the near future, devised and carried into execution? Every intelligent Christian man replies at once, It was the Lowries, the Andersons, the Venns, the Stidmans, the Duffs, the Mullens, and other living men of kindred views, who were mainly instrumental in proposing and carrying them into

effect. If the world has produced men whose lives have been productive of grander or mightier results, we know not who they are. And yet the author of the Minority Report regards such men as mere dispensable appendages, if not excrescences on the missionary work.

J. LEIGHTON WILSON.

ARTICLE VI.

THE SECOND GENERAL COUNCIL OF THE PRESBYTERIAN ALLIANCE.

Report of the Proceedings of the Second General Council of the Presbyterian Alliance, convened at Philadelphia, September, 1880. Printed by direction of the Council. Edited by JOHN B. DALES, D. D., and R. M. PATTERSON, D. D. Presbyterian Journal Company, Philadelphia; and J. C. McCurdy & Co., Philadelphia, Cincinnati, Chicago, and St. Louis. 1,154 pp. 8vo.

We have had special reasons for sympathising in the general impatience for the appearance of this volume. But now that we have actually seen it, have felt its weight, have looked into its 1,154 pages of closely printed matter, impatience gives place to wonder that it has appeared so soon, or that it should have ever come at all. And when, by some effort of the imagination, we try to realise that the larger portion of this volume was really delivered before one audience within the space of less than nine working days, we believe more than ever in Presbyterian pluck and endurance. To our own humble share in the proceedings, which, for the most part, consisted in the effort to hear, "mark, and inwardly digest" this Noachian deluge of learning, we feel like applying the urchin's translation of the well known lines of Horace—

Exegi monumentum ære perennius.

Regali situ Pyramidum altius, etc.

"I have eaten a mountain tougher than brass, and taller than