

Voted, That one thousand copies of the proceedings and Reports of this Convention be printed, and that brethren Allen and Conant, together with the Clergy, be a Committee to superintend the printing and distribution of the same.
The Convention then adjourned.



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FIFTH ANNUAL REPORT.

BELIEVED BRETHREN—

The year has rolled around and brought the period, when, as managers of the bounty of the churches, we are called upon to render an account of our stewardship. We esteem it a privilege to be permitted to serve the cause of God in any way, and contribute our feeble efforts for the advancement of that kingdom which is destined eventually to fill the whole earth, and gladden the hearts of the inhabitants of every quarter of the globe. We feel that it will be a rich reward for all our toils, if we can be instrumental in aiding, in any measure, the march of truth, and accelerating the conversion of the world. We have been exhilarated by the consideration that the cause in which we are engaged is the cause of God; and that though there are many and powerful obstacles in the way of its progress, yet that it must ultimately prevail and become universal. We feel assured, that though devils may rage, wicked men oppose, and cold-hearted professors look on with apathy and indifference, yet the benevolent enterprises of the present day must go on, and ultimate in the complete overthrow of Satan's empire, to the discomfiture of him and all his agents. The blessing of God, which has so manifestly well calculated the efforts of his children for the promotion of his cause, is labors of love, and to inspire them with new zeal and courage in their onward march. Though we are sensible that there are so many hindrances in the way of the prosecution of the grand design of converting the world unto God, that strong confidence in him and the truth of his promises, is necessary to sustain those engaged in the work, yet we are conscious of no inclination to let go our hold, or relax our efforts. With this cause and its prosperity we feel that our highest hopes and dearest interests, as well as the glory of God, and the happiness of a lost world, are identified. We believe that in proportion as the pure flame of genuine piety burns in our hearts, we shall feel an interest in those things which are connected with the advancement of the gospel of Christ. While we have been entrusted with the management of the bounty of the churches, we have not been inensible to the responsibility of the trust reposed in us. We have been solicitous so to employ the limited means intrusted to our disposal as to satisfy every candid contributor, and do the most pos-

sible good. Still we pretend not to infallibility. We are far from being confident, that we have, in no instance erred in judgment. We would therefore bespeak the forbearance and charity of our brethren, hoping they will believe, that whatever errors we may have been guilty of, have not been wilful, but the result of our limited capacities.

It is well known from the last annual report of the Treasurer, that the treasury of the Convention was nearly empty at the commencement of the year of which we are now to render an account. Still the Board did not think the churches would wish them to be so distrustful of their liberality, as to remain inactive till the funds were actually in their hands. They have made appointments for missionary labor, and appropriations to churches, and to foreign missions, which amount to little short of \$1200—relying on the liberality of their brethren to furnish the means for liquidating the debts incurred. The conditions, upon which some of the appropriations were made, have not been complied with, so that the actual demand may fall short of the sum above named. What has been forwarded to the Indian stations during the year is not included in the above estimate.

In entering into a detail of the operations of the Board the last year, we will first lay before you our doings with respect to Domestic Missions. This we esteem an important object of the Convention. There are within the bounds of our State many churches almost entirely destitute of the preaching of the gospel, as well as many places in which there are no churches; where there is a great dearth of religious instruction. It is important that these feeble churches should be cheered and strengthened by the occasional labors of Missionaries till they become able to support the gospel themselves; otherwise they will languish, and the feeble light be extinguished. It is also important to carry the message of mercy to those who are still in the darkness of their natural state. The Board have esteemed it their duty, and are persuaded they have acted in accordance with the wishes of their brethren, in employing a portion of the funds for this object. They made appointments for Missionary labor in various parts of the State and vicinity. Some of the appointments made have been fulfilled, while others have not.

Rev. John Ide received and has fulfilled an appointment of twelve weeks within the bounds of the Danville Association. His report contains an interesting account of his labors. He commenced his mission December 5, 1829, and continued it with partial interruptions till the 19th of March following. He commenced his labors with the church at Trasburgh. With this church he spent three weeks at three different times, preached 14 sermons, visited in different parts of the town, and formed a Primary Society. He remarks, "This church experienced a revival in 1828 and received 27 members. His whole number is 56. It has 3 Sabbath Schools in connexion with other denominations, but no library. Their poverty is great in general. The state of religion is rather encouraging. The Church is united, and are making some efforts to procure preaching. I labor

with them one-third of the time this season. They need help." Lyndon was the next church he visited. With them he spent two weeks, preached eight times, administered the Lord's supper, visited, &c. He observes, "This church is small and low; has but 14 members; has a Sabbath School and library with other orders, and promised to form a Primary Society when they could get a constitution." Newport was the next church visited by Mr. Ide. This church has a Primary Society, and engaged to form a Sabbath School and Bible Class. State of religion low. Hatley church was also visited. It has about 30 members, scattered about twelve miles on the eastern shore of Lake Memphremagog; has in its bounds three flourishing Sabbath Schools, and Libraries, and a Primary Society from which Mr. Ide received \$21 for the Convention. He spent two Sabbaths with this church besides several week days, broke bread to them, and preached 13 sermons. Wednesday, January 25, he left Hatley for Eaton, L. C. lying to the North East about fifty miles. In reference to this church he says, "I was joyfully received by the church which was starving for the bread of life, having had but one Sabbath's preaching for a whole year. This church has about 30 members; was constituted in December, 1822, by myself when on a Mission from the Massachusetts Missionary Society. It consisted of 13 members; 6 have since died, and some removed. There is no church of our order within fifty miles of this, and no minister within upwards of sixty. They are a loving band of brethren, surrounded with almost every thing but good, and greatly need assistance. The field is great and the prospect very encouraging, if a suitable laborer could spend some months with them. I tarried with them twelve days, tried to preach fourteen times, attended one church meeting, administered the sacramental supper, and left them in tears on Wednesday, 10th of February. Meetings were very full, and continued to increase till I left, though the weather was very severe. Richford church was visited by your Missionary and found involved in difficulty. After preaching with them Saturday evening and three times on Lord's day, he remarks, "Monday 12 o'clock, met with the church and continued the meeting without intermission till 2 o'clock the next morning, and had the happiness of seeing every trial removed, and peace and harmony again restored. This church has 65 members, and has ever walked in harmony except in the case just named." From this place he repaired to Montgomery, preached several lectures, and left. Both of the last named churches have Primary Societies, and Montgomery has a Sabbath School. Mr. Ide closed his mission by spending a week in Craftsbury, where he preached six times and formed a Primary Society. The church here is so broken as not to have a name of a church, and the state of religion is gloomy. After the detail of his labors, Mr. Ide closes his report by remarking, "Thus I have spent twelve weeks in the service of the Board, preached sixty-six times, rode upwards of 500 miles, administered the Lord's Supper four times, formed Primary Societies in Eaton, Irasburgh, and Craftsbury,

encouraged Sabbath Schools and Bible Classes where there were none, and received promises that they should be established. By the foregoing it will appear that the state of religion in this Association is by no means prosperous; laborers are few; only four ordained. Ministers who preach at all, one or two licentiate, and 18 churches. I have spent the 12 weeks with the most destitute."

Rev. N. H. Downs received and has fulfilled an appointment of 12 weeks. He labored in Troy, Potton, Westfield and Jay. He remarks, that while on his mission he preached from 3 to 5 times per week, and attended church, prayer and conference meetings as often as convenient. He represents the state of religion as low in all that region. He says, "There has been no special attention, yet, notwithstanding the coldness, wordly-mindedness and infidelity reigning here, my meetings have been fully, punctually and solemnly attended. My assemblies have been large for a new country. Could I preach as often again, I could not meet my requests. More preaching is greatly needed in this Northern region." The church with which Br. Downs labors, and which is scattered over four towns above named, seems, according to his account, to be exerting itself in midst of poverty to do what it can to support the gospel.

Rev. T. Spaulding has spent 5 weeks 5 days in missionary labor. He labored in Bradford and Thetford. In his returns he remarks, "Assemblies have been full and attentive. There is no special awakening amongst us, but religious feeling is rather low. I have labored to preach the plain pointed truth of Jesus Christ without fear or favor of men. I think the cause of truth is gradually gaining ground. It is expected that a Church will be constituted at Bradford in the course of a few weeks."

Rev. James Parker has spent about 6 weeks as a missionary within the limits of the Barre Association. He labored principally in Randolph, Braintree and Rochester. The church in Randolph had been in so broken a state for four years as not to attend to communion, or represent themselves in the Association. On your missionary's first visit to them he found three candidates for baptism. The few remaining members have renewed travel and are in harmony. Braintree church was also found in a low, broken state. In reference to his visits to this church Mr. Parker observes:—"My visits to this church have, I think, thus far, been attended with happy results. Since, and even a year or two before, the death of Elder Huntington, the former Pastor, they have not had communion, nor for two years has been represented in the Association. The tone of religious feeling has been raised to that degree that the few remaining members have renewed travel." In Rochester a new church has been formed out of the remains of an old one which had lost its visibility. Measures were in a train for its organization previous to your missionary's visit to them, and by him they were recognized as a church of Christ. During his mission he baptized 6 persons, and administered the Lord's Supper 3 times.

Rev. Daniel Sabin has spent 10 weeks as a missionary under the

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Christian. This Board believe that the fullest confidence may be reposed in the wisdom, integrity and discretion of the Board of the General Convention. We sincerely regret that it has not been in our power to afford them more efficient aid in the prosecution of the important enterprise in which they are engaged. We have made an appropriation of \$300, to Foreign Missions, but the state of the Treasury has not been such as to render it consistent to forward it. It must be apparent that the enlarged scale upon which they are prosecuting their labours will call for increased liberality on the part of the churches.

In closing this Report the Board beg leave to remark, that they feel that it is cause of gratitude to God that the attention of the churches in this State is, in so great a measure, aroused to the calls of benevolence. We would not despise the day of small things, yet we must believe that the churches have not yet put forth all their energies in the glorious cause of him, who, though he was rich, yet for our sakes became poor, that we through his poverty might be rich. When we compare the exertions of the present period, with those of preceding ages, we are apt to feel that we have done much. And truly it is so. But have we done all that we might have done? We fear not. Much as has been already done, we are persuaded that the minds of christians in this highly favoured land are not yet wrought up to that pitch of holy effort in the cause of benevolence; that full determination to live only for Christ, to which they must be brought ere the world will be converted unto God. Many who profess to love our Lord Jesus Christ are not yet enlisted in the work of evangelizing the world. And probably most of those who do any thing, are not accustomed to do all they might. We are persuaded that were every member of our churches on the first day of the week, to lay by for benevolent purposes, according as God had prospered him, and at the end of the year cast in the amount into the Treasury of the Lord, it would soon be replenished. Few, it is believed, were this course adopted, could find it in their hearts to lay by less than one cent per week, (and how many might, and ought to increase it to one hundred cents per week.) But admitting that the average of the contributions of the members of the Churches in this State was but one cent per week, it is believed that the amount would not fall short of four, and might possibly reach five thousand dollars. We believe, that with proper exertions this might be accomplished. Let every one then who feels an interest in it, engage in the work heart and hand, and it will be done. And let every one remember, that he that soweth bountifully shall reap also bountifully, while he that soweth sparingly shall reap sparingly.

WILLARD KIMBALL, Recording Secretary.

Board.

All which is respectfully submitted by order, and in behalf of the

On the subject of agencies for the promotion of the various objects of Christian enterprise, the directors would indulge in a single remark. All our experience and observations lead us to the conclusion, that the exigencies of the church, of the country and the world, demand at present, the time and energies of judicious, intelligent, and faithful men in all the great departments of Christian enterprise. Settled pastors need the aid of such, and churches need the concentrated light which such agents are enabled by a single effort to pour upon their specific objects. The country and the world stand in need of the increased effort and liberality and prayer thus secured. *Whenever a benevolent society have had the services of a judicious and faithful agent, more has been done for their object than when no such services were rendered.* In our own minds this single fact settles the question of expediency for the present.

In August last, the Corresponding Secretary, by the desire of the Executive Committee, visited a portion of the desolations of the State. His labors were confined mostly to a portion of the state 40 miles long and 30 broad, including the eastern part of Franklin and the western part of Orleans and Washington counties. Here is a field about the dimensions of Orleans county. In it he visited 20 feeble churches, 15 of which are destitute of the stated preaching of the gospel. The remaining five are supplied one half or the whole time by missionaries under our commission. The number of members in these churches varies from 10 to 100. The average number is some less than 50. Most of these churches are in a feeble state, whether we consider their pecuniary resources, or their spiritual energies. The destitute are indeed like sheep without a shepherd. They present mournful evidence that they need some kind hand to lead them nearer the great Centre of holy feeling and holy action. Six of these churches have meeting-houses of their own, ten are at present wholly destitute of such a house, and four are sharing the earthly sanctuary with from one to five other denominations. The inhabitants of these towns who make any pretensions to religion whatever, are divided into different denominations. In some of them there are six distinct and organized sects. And most of them give mournful evidence that they are sects. In the course of the year those who possess "itching ears" have the opportunity of listening occasionally to the preaching of from three to seven different religionists. And generally each one of these is desirous of uttering his shibboleth so distinctly, as that no one will be ignorant to which sect he belongs. As it would naturally be expected, under such circumstances, the great truths of the Bible are exerting much less influence on the understandings, the consciences and conduct of a majority of the population, than in those places favored with a stated, intelligent and faith-

ful administration of the word of life. In these churches, favored with no regular pastoral labors, and destitute of the stated ministrations of that Gospel which is the power of God unto salvation to them that believe, there are a few found "who sigh and who cry for the abominations which are done in the midst of them." There is here and there one who has life and anxieties enough to inquire, "by whom shall Jacob arise, for he is small," and to raise the supplicating cry, "spare thy people O Lord, and give not thine heritage to reproach." The hearts of these were inspired with new hopes and fresh courage when they were assured that they were not forgotten by their more favored brethren. Some of them knew not that there could be any hope of assistance; until apprized of the existence and object of our society. We are fully convinced of the importance and happy influence of such visits to our feeble and destitute churches, when judiciously made. And we hesitate not to announce it as our full conviction, that the Board owe it to themselves, to the desolations of Zion, and to the Christian community, to secure, if possible, such a visit each year to every feeble destitute church in the state. It will do these churches good. And by this means a more definite knowledge of their condition, their difficulties, their wants, and their dangers may be secured to the Directors, and thus furnishing new facilities for the prosecution of their benevolent work.

Would that the eyes of all who are enlisted in any degree, and the eyes of all who should be enlisted in the cause of Domestic Missions, could behold these wastes. If they have not hearts of adamant they would then need no arguments, no speeches, and no agents from us to secure immediate and vigorous efforts for their moral cultivation. We would repeat the declaration quoted from the report of an agent, "the people do not know the state of these feeble churches," and they do not know the moral state of the population around them. And this doubtless is one reason why Vermont comes so far short of her sister states in New England in the work of Home Missions. Means have been furnished for repairing the desolations of Zion just about in proportion to the effort made to make the community acquainted with their condition.

Let it be known then, that in this one state there are sixty churches of our order destitute of the stated administration of the gospel ordinances. And speedily as possible, let the particular condition of these flocks be made known to all the more favored ones. Some of these churches, though they retain an existence, are languishing and ready to die. And what must we expect the state of religious sentiments, and of morals, to be in a community, in the midst of which a gospel church is left to languish until it ceases to exert any restraining and healthful influ-

office. More deplorable, we fully believe, than in places where no such church ever existed.

While therefore we would exercise devout thankfulness to Almighty God for the forfeited privilege of living to see the return of this anniversary, of having been permitted, during another year, to do something for Domestic Missions, and of knowing that more has been done by this Society during the past, than any former year, we would still remember, and we would lay it to heart, and would entreat all to feel that this blessed work is only commenced. And the Directors would, this day, with a louder voice, with more hope, stronger faith, and more unshaken resolution than ever before, utter the inspired language of Nehemiah: "Come, and let us build up the walls of Jerusalem, that we be no more a reproach." And will not every pious heart respond, "The God of Heaven, he will prosper us, therefore we his servants will arise and build."

One topic more and we have done. The Society, whose anniversary we now celebrate, has for its direct and primary object, in connexion with the efforts of other Christian denominations, the salvation of all the dwellers in Vermont. But this does not limit our duty, our efforts, or our desires. And by the blessing of Heaven we trust this will not limit our success. We are auxiliary to the American Home Missionary Society, whose direct object is the salvation of our country. Now it surely becomes us, as stewards of the manifold grace of God, to enquire what price there is in our hands to aid this extended, this important enterprise. Of money, probably, we have less in proportion to our population than our sister New England states. But we have that which is of more importance. We have physical and intellectual energies; we have the spirit of wakeful, untiring enterprise, equal in proportion to our population, to any people on the face of the globe. We would not say this in the spirit of vain boasting. We know who it is that hath made us to differ. And we know that there is therefore no grounds for such boasting. But the fact we are all concerned to know, and the obligations resting on us in consequence of this fact, we are all bound to feel. The region of the "Green Mountains," a considerable portion of which is in Vermont, contains a population distinguished by hardy constitutions, by habits of industry and frugality, general intelligence and mental vigor. From this region there have been raised up more ministers of the New Testament than in any other region on the earth of the same population. These ministers are scattered far and near. They are found in our cities, their influence is felt in every state, and their voices in proclaiming the messages of salvation, have been heard on every continent, among the islands of the sea, and to the ends of the earth. But these streams which have been sent out from us,

have not exhausted the fountain. No—it is still full, and as rich in health, and intellect, and enterprise, as ever. And let it be sanctified through a preached word and by prayer; let it be redeemed unto God by the mighty power of the Gospel; let it be consecrated to Christ and his Church; and it will still send forth every where its streams. "And the wilderness and the solitary place will be glad for them, and the desert shall rejoice and blossom as the rose." How can we answer for it, if we neglect to use the means by which this, under the economy of grace, may be effected? Let all then this day, who love the Lord Jesus Christ and the souls for whom he died, make a new consecration of their all to him. Let us all gird ourselves anew to this work, and taking hold by prayer and Almighty strength, we may ere long hear the song of salvation, as it fills every valley and echoes from every mountain top of the "Verdant State." Then, and not till then, will Vermont have her full share of the toil; then may she experience her full proportion of the joy in the salvation of our country and the conversion of the world. And with our faith resting upon the immutable promises of Jehovah, let us all adopt heartily and practically, the words of the prophet, "For Zion's sake we will not hold our peace, and for Jerusalem's sake we will not rest, until the righteousness thereof go forth as brightness, and the salvation thereof as a lamp that burneth."

In behalf of the Directors,

I. INGRAHAM, *Cor. Sec. of the V. D. M. S.*