

well, depend upon it he will think twice before he lets go. Why, your debt has been a magnificent thing for the committee. The people have felt, why, we must all do something. We should like to see knots of three or four churches having their missionary. It is a well-known thing that the Society's report does not come with the freshness of the letter that is sent home by the missionary himself. We gain immensely for God and His cause when we make every believer begin to cry over souls; and to say, "Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?" If the Society helps you to serve God, as I believe it does, remember it does not take from your individual responsibility. I wonder that more Christians of private income do not devote themselves to the missionary work. I think it would be a blessed thing to do so. Or you may know a young man that is suitable, and, after consulting others whose judgment is better than your own you say to him, "Go and preach; our business or our family keeps us at home, but it shall be our part to keep you; we will stint ourselves sooner than you should want; only you go and preach Christ for us. Mind you preach him faithfully and preach the whole truth, depending on the support of Christ, and we will never leave you." I cannot see why the Association should not thus multiply, or why, instead of having an income of 30,000l., it should not have an income of 100,000l. Another thing we want you to do. We want you to rise into something like a recognition of Divine strength. I believe God does not usually work with us until we become thoroughly incompetent in our own judgment to be instruments of anything. And so, if you have no faith in plans however wise, and systems however methodical, but look altogether by faith to the arm of God, then you will find that by the instrumentality of God's great salvation a nation may be born in a day. Luther and Calvin may yet be born. William Careys and Knibbs are not such rare creations that they are only to bless the world once in a century. Believe that God can at a word shake the nations; and I do not see why in the course of the next fifty years we may not have to rejoice over successes a hundred times as great as anything we have yet seen. We want every one to feel his own place so far as God is concerned. The other day I was talking with a brother, who said that the idea of converting the world was a very erroneous one; that we were not to go into the world at all with that object; but that the object of mission work should be the ingathering of the people that the Lord had chosen, and not the preaching of the Gospel to every creature. Now I think there was truth there, and error too. There was truth, for God's purpose is the gathering in of the people; and there are some of us who think that we shall not live to see the day in which the whole world will be converted to God. But we have nothing whatever to do with that as a rule of action, for our command is not—"Go ye into all the world, and gather out a people," but "Go ye into all the world and preach the Gospel to every creature." Very well then, my post of duty is to go everywhere and preach the Gospel; and mark, this altogether alters the appearance of things and takes away grounds of discouragement, because if I have preached the Gospel and not one soul is saved, yet I have done what I was told to do, and I shall receive my reward; and I have this for my comfort, that though I may not have been a saviour of life unto life, yet I have been a sweet savour of Christ unto God. Suppose next year there should be a mournful report and but few conversions—happy will it be for you if you do mourn; but you will have no reason for slackening your efforts or withdrawing a single missionary, because you will say, "Our place is not to succeed but to work; our business is not to gather the harvest but to scatter the seed." Well my friends, I trust I have said nothing so atrocious after all. (Laughter.) I have not ventured to speak as Edward Irving might have done on our brethren going out without purse or scrip. I do not find fault with Edward Irving for what he said even then, for I imagine there were some that had faith enough to do it. But to ordinary men, and under ordinary circumstances, we must come down somewhat, and adopt methods that are suitable for the moderate faith of our brethren, and if we cannot expect them to do such heroic deeds as Apostles might do, we must assist them to do what are grand deeds after all—deeds of noble self-sacrifice, when they leave their homes and country to go out among ungodly heathens to tell of the Lord Jesus. I wish we had as a Society a little more of that bold daring which we had at first. Carey, Ryland, and Fuller were rash and imprudent in the judgment of cautious people sitting down to reflect. Now there is always a rash period with every man, and afterwards I suppose there comes a wise period, but it is an uncommonly slow period. There has been something like a rash, and something like a wise period in this Society. Of course I have so profound a reverence for wisdom that I would not say a word against wise people, but if by some strange freak there should come a rash period again—a little Quixotism shall I call it?—if our brethren should go raving mad, and some of the subscribers should say they were like drunken men, I should not decry them. If our committee get on fire with enthusiasm we will get water and pump on them, and do our share to save them from combustion, spontaneous or otherwise. (Great laughter.) Yea, if they should do anything absurd, and be arraigned for attempting impossibilities and getting into debt, some of us will come and plead guilty side by side with them, for we shall feel too glad to find them offending—delighted to catch them falling into something like extravagance for God. Oh, for a circular all round to pray for a seven-fold blessing, setting forth the faith of the Society in her God—and then for immediate action, depending upon God. Go forward, brethren, and rely upon it, there are some among us—and

they are the vast majority if not all—who have such faith in God, that if you have faith in Him they will not let you go too far. I look on this Society just as some of the deacons of my church look on me. I made a foolish speculation one day—I mean to do it again—I shall keep on just as long as I live. (Laughter and cheers.) Well, the case came out, one of my youthful irregularities and imprudences; and one of my deacons who spoke for the rest said, "Well sir, if you jump into the ditch in anything you do for God, we will jump in, every one of us, and help you out." (Cheers.) Now, we say to the committee, recognise clearly and distinctly our churches and church action, and let every one of us feel our own responsibility, and then if you will please to jump into the ditch we will jump after you every one of us; and those of us who are now wanting to shove you in the ditch—and we are half afraid you won't get in unless we do—when you are in we will get you out on the right side if possible, and it shall be seen whether of the twain has loved the Society best—he who would stick by its phraseology, and say, "Touch not a single bough," or he who says, "The moment I see you act plainly according to Scriptural principles, I will say, Here, brother, are both hands for you; let us work and fight together, even unto death." (Applause.) Dear friends, when I began, very dull and heavy, I could not help quoting to myself the poet who is after all better than he is thought to be—

"Heavy is the heart that's in a heavy air,  
Every wind that rises blows away despair."

I wanted to say some things about those suffering ones that need our sympathy—our brethren and sisters, but I must stop. Having the opportunity given me—I should have thought it out of place to raise the question—I was really glad to say something on a point of great importance. And now, dear brethren, I would like to see a more thoroughly denominational spirit among us. While our churches are rightly independent, I trust we shall not be quite so isolated as we have been. It is pleasant to see so many here, and now that we are here—some from the north, south, east, and west—let us raise the banner of unity more effectually than we have ever done before. (Loud cheers.)

On the question of individual church or Society action, alluded to by Mr. Spurgeon, the *Freeman* in the following week remarks:—

"We could scarce repress a smile as we heard from Mr. Spurgeon's lips the sentiment, and almost the words, of the closing paragraph of our article of a fortnight ago. Nor do we question for a moment that there is great danger lest the existence and intervention of a great Society should blunt this sense of responsibility in individuals. Nor, again, would we lightly oppose any well-considered plans which should tend to bring our churches closer to the work and the workers. But it is with us a grave question whether the remedy for the admitted evil lies in the direction of substituting separate Church action for the associated action which at present obtains amongst us. The almost certain issue of such a substitution would be the erection of many missionary societies in the place of one, and the ultimate return from the weariness and weakness of isolation to the compactness and strength of union. It is not, we are well convinced, the form of our organisations which needs improvement, so much as our spirit as individual Christians. Why, the very Church of CHRIST itself is liable to the same objection and abuse. Every earnest minister knows to his sorrow how ready individual members are to make "Church" the scapegoat at once of their sins and their obligations. But no one dreams of finding the cure for this in the disintegration of the Church. And we are persuaded that in the case before us the true point for the application of the remedy is the heart and conscience of Christians and churches in their separate capacity. Let ministers and members set themselves in earnest, in humble reliance upon God, to the cultivation of this spirit of individual responsibility and sympathy in themselves and their brethren, and then, with such wise changes in constitution and working as this reawakened life shall demand, and as the experience it brings shall from time to time suggest, we have no fear but that the work will be done with increasing earnestness, and by God's blessing with increasing success.

One great instrument in the hand of our pastors for awakening and sustaining the interest of the Church in missionary work, ought to be, and doubtless in many cases is, the monthly missionary prayer-meeting. It is an opportunity for giving information on the subject, which, wisely and diligently improved, will be more practically effective than many arguments and appeals from the pulpit.

**BAPTIST TRACT SOCIETY.**

The twenty-third annual meeting of the Baptist Tract Society was held at Keppel-street Chapel, Russell-square. John Thwaites, Esq., presided.

The Chairman, in opening the business of the evening, observed:—We are met for the purpose of promoting an Association which will not need much argument to prove its necessity and importance. However numerous our places of worship, a large number of persons will not enter them, and therefore the need of such Societies as this to put the truth in its diversified forms into their hands. I cannot but feel that the Baptist Tract Society is worthy of our hearty support, and especially with respect to its illustration and defence of the ordinances of God's house as they were administered in the Apostolic Church. We require all the ordinances of the Gospel, and in their primitive simplicity, connection, and order.

The Rev. J. Stock, of Devonport moved the

first resolution. He said I think a crisis is at hand. I am not surprised at what is going on in the Established Church, as I believe that the State-Church is essentially corrupt in principle and tends to corruption. Evil in various forms is common also among Dissenters, and even among the Baptists; and, therefore, this Society was formed to contend for the faith once delivered to the saints, and to maintain the ordinances of the Gospel as administered in the primitive Church. The longer I read my New Testament the more convinced I am that strict communion is there, and therefore we contend earnestly for it in our tracts. We are frequently charged with being narrow-minded, &c.; we reply, not more so than the Scriptures themselves, the only law of the church. We may also appeal to results and facts, to show that open communion is not what it has been represented. It has not converted the Independents; it has not introduced peace and harmony, but discord and division, and rendered many unfaithful to their consciences, to their own brethren, and to the Lord. It has transferred an immense amount of influence and aid from the Baptist to other denominations. The speaker also referred to the fact, that nearly all the Baptists in the United States of America are strict; the same in Wales, and on the continent of Europe, in Denmark, Sweden, and Norway. It is always expedient to do right.

Rev. S. Collins, of Grundsburgh, seconded the resolution, he said: When Christ finished the sacrificial work, which the Father gave him to do, I suppose He fully comprehended all the rest of the work before Him. He laid claim to all power in heaven and on earth, by which to establish His church and kingdom in this world. Every part of Divine truth must be in harmony with the personal perfections of God in Christ. Churchmen, Congregationalists, and Wesleyans, greatly despise immersion; if, however, we were prepared to admit that their sprinkling was also right, their opposition would almost cease. But we are not legislators, only executors of the law of Christ. Catholicism is active; the Established Church is alive to its interests, and money is forthcoming; but I fear we have not realised our obligations. Let us, therefore, preach, publish, and circulate the Gospel as extensively as possible, and God will add His Spirit to His own truth, and success will attend it.

The Rev. J. Stock then introduced to the meeting a beloved American brother, Dr. G. W. Eaton, President of the Madison University, in the State of New York, who supported the resolution. In the course of a long address, he observed:—I do not regret having come to this meeting, though at some sacrifice of feeling, considering the end and scope of this Society, of my own denomination. I am a Baptist on principle—a close-communication Baptist. The speaker here related his long struggles as to immersion, and then more especially with respect to strict communion; but, said he, I ultimately concluded that to be a consistent Baptist, I must be a close-communication Baptist. In order to the visibility and perpetuation of Baptist churches we are strict, and probably less sectarian in our feeling than any other denomination.

**BAPTIST BUILDING FUND.**

The annual meeting of the Baptist Building Fund was held on the 29th of April at the Mission House, Moorgate-street. The report stated that the income of the Society from contributions had increased from about 500l. to 850l. last year and to 1,600l. for the year just closed, that all the instalments on loans had been paid, some of the churches having paid off the balances before they were due; new loans to the amount of 2,200l. had been made during the year. The proposal of Sir S. Morton Peto, Bart., M. P., to erect four chapels in the suburbs of London, and defray one half the entire cost himself, on condition that the other half should be raised by special contributions to the Baptist Building Fund, to be lent on the usual terms, had at present only met with partial success. 1,750l. was required for the first chapel, but only one-half had been received. The report then proceeded to state some interesting particulars about chapel-building in England, and about chapel debts. It was estimated that in the year 1863 the Baptists spent in England above 66,000l. for building purposes, and provided more than 10,000 additional sittings; that the existing debts are always likely to be over 100,000l., the interest on which is felt to be a great burden on the churches, but especially on the pastors, whose limited incomes were sadly curtailed by the annual payment of interest. A new feature was recommended by the committee (and subsequently adopted), viz., that all subscribers and donors of 1l. or upwards for not less than 50l. together, should have the power to nominate any church for a loan to double the amount, thus giving the subscribers themselves the opportunity of determining the case they prefer to assist. The total capital of the Fund is now 10,600l., but as the requirement of the denomination is 100,000l., the committee have boldly determined to adopt vigorous efforts to raise that amount by collections and subscriptions during the next five years.

MEETINGS OF ALUMNI OF BAPTIST COLLEGES.—Instead of the usual *soirée* held at Regent's Park College in previous years, there was this year a large gathering of old and present students. About a hundred sat down to dinner, and in the afternoon addresses were delivered by Rev. S. Brown, Rev. D. Wassell, Rev. W. Brock, Rev. Dr. Thomas, Rev. C. Vince, Rev. H. C. Leonard, and Rev. C. O. Munroe. Among the visitors present were Dr. Eaton, E. B. Underhill, LL. D., Rev. D. Katters, Rev. E. White, and the Rev. Dr. Patterson. All found it to be a very pleasant gathering, and the hope was generally expressed that it might be repeated in

future years. Similar gatherings were held by the old students of the colleges at Bristol and at Rawdon.

**Correspondence.**

For the Christian Messenger.

**INTEMPERANCE.**

Do we not see the effects of it almost everywhere? We may turn, even at this enlightened period of man's existence, when education and art and all the various improvements of the present age lend their aid to embellish and set forth to view the mental powers of our intellect, which prior to their advancement lay dormant within the hidden chambers of the mind, but now kindled into life and vigor, the reasoning powers are expanded, and we hold converse with a more exalted nature; the aspirations of the soul spring upward to a nobler existence. Even in the midst of all these endowments, man made in the image of his great Creator, allows his prevailing appetite to gain the ascendancy over the promptings of his better nature, and every thing that characterizes manhood and esteem are sacrificed for a baneful beverage. What hopes and prospects for the future of wealth, fame, and glory, are treasured in the heart of youth, but, alas, as it too often proves, these hopes are cast into the dark abyss of oblivion! He no longer finds entertainment in the mutual intercourse of the home circle, or pleasure in the contemplation of some grand design, some high and lofty purpose, which, before his mind became corrupted with the polluting influence of his immoral associations, was dwelt upon with all the ardour of a buoyant spirit; even though the silent tear of some loved members of the household band may cast a feeling of sadness over the soul, as he contemplates the heart-breaking agony with which they endure his waywardness and folly, and for a moment his feelings will rise in opposition to the temptation that surrounds his path as he contrasts his present associations in life with the past. On one hand Fancy leads him far back into the dim and shadowy memories of the past, and paints out in glowing colors the innocent pastimes of his childhood; or perchance she may lead him to the spot where in the dim twilight he breathed his evening devotion at his mother's knee, he recalls the expression of each feature as her pure soul went up in a supplicating prayer that her child should be shielded from the temptations of the world, and the contaminating influences that would surround his path. Then how free and unrestrained was every pleasure; the heart beat gaily, for no shadow of guilt rested on, or marred his youthful enjoyment; but now that mother's heart has ceased its earthly throbbing, and the weary head is forever at rest. All this passes before his mental vision like a living moving panorama; but this recedes from view, and the scene is changed. He views the realities of his present life! he is bound with the galling chain of intemperance. His brow is stamped with the iron weight of misery and sin. What being is there possessed of one spark of generous, pitying sympathy whose heart would not bleed over this wreck of manhood? Every hope and prospect is blasted, and he mourns over his misspent hours. Position and influence have been cast aside, the counsels of a fond father neglected; but the past can never be recalled: the years of his misspent life but add a drop to the great and boundless ocean of eternity. He looks forward as if to scan his future: he sees nothing but a desert waste, over which the billows of remorse must forever roll. Not a single ray of light or hope illumines his pathway. He is weary of life; he fain would seek some retreat from the hills and sorrows that gather round his way, enveloping him as it were in the darkness of despair. If he seeks for repose in slumber, his dreams are haunted with horrid visions; his sleep is not the sweet repose of an untroubled conscience; dark and terrible fiends haunt his imagination, the upbraiding serpent of guilt is ever before him, ready to coil its deadly fangs about his heart; again he dreams he is standing on the verge of a frowning precipice, the shelving rocks are already crumbling beneath the weight of his footsteps; below him rolls a toiling, surging abyss of blackest darkness; sheets of flame shoot up from its murky depths, which tell him that below the blackened surface is a sea of eternal fire; the sky is overcast with clouds of ebony hue, and from their shadowy depths gleam the forked lightnings, and the thunders mutter like the voice of some spirit of darkness; a warm breath sweeps up from the abyss, he feels it on his brow as a presentment that ere long they will claim him as their own, and consign him forever to their dark