

SLAVERY QUESTION.

REPORT

OF THE

NEW YORK GENERAL ASSOCIATION,

26TH AUGUST, 1855.

THE object which the subscriber has in having the following "REPORT OF THE NEW YORK GENERAL ASSOCIATION" of 26th August, 1855, printed and circulated in this form, is simply this: to supply the ministers of religion and the public in Canada with *some* information as to the standing of *some* of the religious organizations in the United States, which are more familiarly known, chiefly *by name*, in Canada; and in order that the said information *will* be received, and that no objections on the plea of ignorance may hereafter be taken by religious societies and book-selling establishments, and ministers of religion and the public in Canada, this Report is printed for gratuitous distribution, and will be forwarded by mail to every county, so far as an edition of one thousand copies will extend.

The "Report" refers to five religious societies, viz.:—

- I. The American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions, of Boston, Massachusetts, commonly styled the A. B. C. F. Missions. Organized 1816.

- II. American Missionary Association, of 48, Beekman Street, New York. Instituted in 1846.
- III. The American Home Missionary Society, New York.
- IV. The American Tract Society, 150, Nassau Street, New York. (1825.)
- V. The American Sunday School Union, 316, Chestnut Street, Philadelphia (1824), and combined, too, in the New York and American S. S. Union, of 147, Nassau Street, New York.

The two latter Societies (IV. and V.) are those which are more familiarly known to us in Canada by their issues of books and tracts, and their periodicals—*The American Messenger*, *Child's Paper*, *Sunday School Journal*, and *Youth's Penny Gazette*. The S. S. Union is, however, to be distinguished from the Tract Society in this: that the Union circulates school books, hymn books, catechisms, and Sunday school libraries, and has a *republican basis* (it is since found that the American Tract Society has a stronger republican basis than the Sunday School Union: see "Home Evangelization," a review of the wants of our country) in its system too plainly expressed in words to be disguised, independent of its pro-slavery bearings, and is therefore more sinister and fatal in its designs (beginning with the opening bud of childhood) when its operations are extended beyond its own republican borders. This mark—this alone—should cause its repudiation in our own free, enlightened, and loyal province.

The only one of these five societies which is free and pure of all pro-slavery tendencies, is the "American Missionary Association," which was formed, and still continues separate, on account of the pro-slavery inclinations of the American B. C. F. Missions; and therefore,—to

strangers to their histories, at a distance,—it was most disingenuous and sinful for the New York General Association to amalgamate them, as has been done, in the Report. This is not the place to give a history of each of these societies; but notwithstanding the amiableness of the A. B. C. F. Missions, and the talent which surrounds and labours with it in its operations, and that talent of education and eloquence perhaps the greatest met with in America at one time, at its annual meeting,—and the *gloss* put upon it in Great Britain on account of such talent and labours, extended laudably, we admit, to the “Turkish Missions,”—still it retains the features, the workings, the timorousness of a society involved and carrying in its bosom, and with its prominent supporters, very marked feelings not to discard the cringing sycophancy to the slave power of the United States. It wants the pure and hearty honesty of declaration and brevity of purpose, practically carried out, which is to be expected from a society,—by its self-laudatory praise,—claiming the approbation of Great Britain, and of a whole world for its operations. From the celebrated letter of 1848, of Mr. Treat, one of its managers, and from its reports on its Indian Missions to the Choctaws and Cherokees (U.S.), the many pages written and published appear to be only a history and narration of “tissues”—which only a very patient reader will wait to get through with—and verify, in too many instances, in a heavy clothing of verbiage, the old saying of “searching for a needle in a haystack,” and as like, after all, not find the object looked for! It is not piously warm in principle and action in the anti-slavery cause, nor yet cold to its proslavery actings. This is to be regretted. We write, this, also, after a perusal of the proceedings, including the long report of the Rev. Mr. Wood on the Indian Missions, at its annual meeting, held at Utica, U.S., on 11th September,

1855, and three following days, and at which many hundreds were present, whose *united voice*, if lifted up righteously on behalf of the rights of the slave and his brethren, would cause not only a rejoicing, but its being heard and attended to, in the United States. But *that voice* was wanting!

We have circulated nearly one thousand copies of the "*Unanimous Remonstrance*" of the Fourth Congregational Church, Hartford, Connecticut, 1855, p. 34, which contains, at length, the objections to, and meets all the specious arguments of the American Tract Society; and to a reading of that *Remonstrance*, we earnestly invite all enquiring good men. It can be obtained for \$1½ per 100 copies. It is more full, and, as a literary production, complete than the subjoined "Report," and will bespeak for itself that superiority which it is, by its evangelical bearing, entitled to. But yet that *Remonstrance* does not specially refer to all the expurgations, nor to those of the S. S. Union.

To any philanthropic mind,—to any one conversant with the subject of the wrongs done to the sons and daughters of Africa,—a country and a people styled heathen, by the civilized Christian nations and people, and more especially by those of the United States of America,—to those who have lived to know, both personally and by history, of the exertions of a Clarkson, a Wilberforce, and a Buxton in the cause of humanity,—to those, in short, who have *attentively* read and studied on the facts as developed in the *Key to Uncle Tom's Cabin*, written and compiled by Mrs. H. B. Stowe, of Boston (Jewett & Co.'s pure edition), it will appear, in this, the latter half of the nineteenth century,—an enlightened era,—as the GREATEST MONUMENT, from our Saviour's time till now, of irreligion, infidelity, inhumanity, and vileness, the attitude of the American Protestant churches and religious organizations in their support of the system of slavery as it exists in the United

States. Well, truly, has one of their own writers—the Hon. James G. Birney—styled the “American churches the bulwark of slavery !”

But this Report embraces merely a tithē—a mere tithē—of the history of the religious literature developments of the religious denominations and societies in the United States in their course of obliquity and sin. The plea of *ignorance* cannot avail them. A list of nearly one hundred *prominent* religious societies can be obtained, of which, perhaps, only five or six are pure on this question in their publications and intentions. There are, it is believed, between *forty and fifty thousand* Protestant ministers of religion scattered over the United States, and they now circulate many *millions* of copies of religious publications and periodicals; but what avails all? The slave system, with its injustice and its horrors, has increased,—the minds of the people, from their childhood (instanced by the *Child's Paper*), have been kept quiet and *silenced* on the sin and system of slavery, and on vital points of our Christian faith,—the “*silent literature*” on the sin of their country is mute !

1. Prominently and so briefly putting the matter as above, before a Canadian people, let us next enquire, as briefly, what have our own Religious societies and ministers of religion in Canada been doing, for the last twenty years, in the cause of the slave's rights, for the freedom of the African. They have, neither more or less, been following,—at however as remote a distance as they themselves will be pleased to put their position,—just in the “wake” of the American organizations. With the exception of the generous and humane Buxton Mission of the (Free) Presbyterian Church, and the exceptions of mere declarations by way of Resolutions proposed, seconded, and carried against slavery, at annual meetings (and these chiefly in summer of 1855) what have our ministers of religion been doing? They have

done this : certain of the American societies named in the *report* have prepared and published religious books and periodicals in the United States, of the pro-slavery tendency referred to, and the religious societies of Canada, aided by the advice and help of ministers of religion therein and thereout, have sold, and are selling, and circulating them !

2. And also, what have our religious periodicals been doing previous to September 1854, in that question of slavery? Did they, any of them, *previous to that date*, point out, and endeavour to enlist public sympathy in the exposition of the errors and faults of these societies and religious bodies in the United States? No, it was reserved for the secular press, the *Globe* and *Examiner* of Toronto, of 25th and 27th September, 1854, to effect this. We were led to investigate the matter and labour less or more for the past twelve months in the cause, solely by the just and spirited remarks of the editors of these papers at that date, and we pray to be spared, and hope to see a proper reform and change, in our religious organizations in Canada, on this subject.

3. From all stores, from the religious book store of John Dougall in Montreal, to the Upper Canada Tract Society at Toronto, (in both of which establishments the books of the pro-slavery societies are sold,) all moral men and religious societies engaged in the trade and philanthropy of religious literature, should expel from their bookshelves and colporteur's packages, every memorial for sale which would tend to shew a fraternity or relationship, with such business transactions with the Tract and Book stores or "book concerns," of all *pro-slavery* religious book establishments in the United States. They act sinfully and are not to be *trusted* in religious literature.

4. As British Colonists, let us turn our plans and means, to obtain our British religious literature in books and tracts

and Sunday school libraries, in an unmutilated and pure form, direct from the British and Irish Religious Societies and Book Establishments,—and such will not militate against obtaining also the books of American *authors* from American book establishments when desired.

5. And this question should be considered by our ministers,—Shall we in our churches *continue* to fraternise, to officially receive and have church fellowship with the ministers and members of the pro-slavery American societies and churches of the Episcopalian, Methodist, Baptist, O. S. and N. S. Presbyterian, and Congregational (South) denominations,—admit their ministers to our pulpits, and act as though they were guiltless of a publicly viewed sin and stain?

JOHN J. E. LINTON.

STRATFORD, C.W., October 15, 1855.

Publications to be consulted:

1. The "Unanimous Remonstrance" referred to—and this "Report."
 2. The American Churches, the Bulwark of Slavery. By J. G. Birney.
 3. Part 4, of "Key to Uncle Tom's Cabin;" chapters 1, 2, & 3.
 4. Minutes of General Association of Michigan, and Report as to A. Tract Society, May, 1854. Ann Arbor, Mich.
 5. Letters respecting American B. C. F. Missions, and American Tract Society. By Hon. W. Jay, 1853, N. Y.
 6. Gospel Method of Evangelization. Sermon by Rev. H. Peck. (A. Missionary Association,) Sept. 1853, N. Y.
 7. American Slavery, a formidable obstacle to conversion of the world. By W. Goodell, N. Y. 1854.
 8. American Slavery in connection with American Christianity, including Dr. Perkins' sermon. H. B. Knight, N. Y. 1854.
 9. Tracts of American Reform Tract and Book Society, Cincinnati, Ohio. No 1. Separation from Sin and Sinners; and Tracts 3, 14, and 15.
 10. Report of Synod of New York. Dec. 1844, (11 years ago) as to mutilations by A. Tract Society, of D'Aubigne's History of the Reformation, and other books.
 11. An Appeal to Methodist Episcopal Church. By Rev. O. Scott, of Lowell. Boston, 1838, (a most valuable book.)
 12. A brief notice of American Slavery. By J. B. Estlin, F.L. S. Second Edition, London, (Eng.) Tweedie, Strand, (an excellent epitomæ.)
- (These all can be obtained by any bookseller in Canada, and are a mere trifle in expense each.)

NEW YORK GENERAL ASSOCIATION.

REPORT OF THE NEW YORK GENERAL ASSOCIATION
ON THE RELATION OF THE BENEVOLENT SOCIETIES
TO SLAVERY. UNANIMOUSLY ADOPTED, AUGUST 26, 1855.

The Committee appointed at the last meeting of the General Association "to investigate and report to this body, in regard to the course pursued by the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions, the American Missionary Association, the American Home Missionary Society the American Tract Society, and the American Sunday-school Union on the subject of Slavery," respectfully submit the following report:—

The first endeavour of the Committee was to determine accurately the question of *fact* as to the relation of the several societies named in the resolution, to the subject of slavery. In order to do this they have collated with care such acts and documents of these Societies as would serve to indicate their general policy upon this subject; and in submitting the results of this investigation as to matters of fact, the Committee might deem themselves discharged from any further consideration of the question. But since it was obviously the design of the Association to collect facts as the basis of suggestions, the Committee have also added to the statement of facts in each case, such recommendations as seem to them important for the just testimony of this body upon the momentous subject of the resolution. They will therefore submit both the facts and their related suggestions, in the order of the Societies named.

I. THE AMERICAN BOARD AND THE AMERICAN MISSIONARY ASSOCIATION.

The position of the American Board on the subject of slavery was so fully canvassed at the meeting of the Association last year that it would be superfluous to define it here with much detail. The Association then expressed its confidence in the Board, and its "reasonable expectation" that the Board would "soon stand before the world the avowed, uncompromising foe of oppression at home as well as abroad."

This expectation has been in a good measure realized by the action of the Board at Hartford, upon the case of the Choctaw Mission. That action, endorsing the principles of the well-known letter of Mr. Secretary Treat, has placed the Board in a position on the subject of slavery, that should satisfy every reasonable mind. Nothing further can be demanded of the Board as to the *principles* that should govern its missionaries wherever they come in contact with slavery. It only remains that these principles be faithfully applied by the missionaries, and that the application of them be made a *condition* with all who are received or retained in the service of the Board. That these principles will be respected by the missionaries among the Choctaws and Cherokees, the Committee have been assured upon the best authority; and we confidently hope that the approaching session of the Board at Utica, will fulfil the "reasonable expectation" avowed by this body at Madrid.

The principles of the American Missionary Association on the subject of slavery, are clearly defined by its Constitution, and are generally understood. Without entering into a discussion of those features of its Constitution, which are supposed to distinguish it from the American Board, we rejoice in its continued prosperity; but after the very full and cordial recommendation of that Association given by this body last year, the Committee see no occasion for further action.

II. THE AMERICAN HOME MISSIONARY SOCIETY.

The next Society in the order of the resolution, is the American Home Missionary Society.

The principal point at which this Society comes in contact with the system of slavery, is through certain churches which admit slaveholders to their fellowship, whose pastors are in part sustained by funds from the Society. This contact is less direct than is that of the American Board through its Choctaw Missions; for the American Home Missionary Society has not even that virtual control over the churches it assists, which the Board has over its mission churches. The relation of this Society to a church it aids, is in no case ecclesiastical, but pecuniary and to a certain extent moral. *It assists the church to support its pastor.* True the society makes an evangelical faith and discipline—as in the case of churches composed of foreigners—a condition of its aid; and so it might make the exclusion of slaveholders such a condition. But this would be to determine upon abstract grounds, that it is impossible for one who sustains the legal relation of a slaveholder to be a Christian, but surely no *Christian* should be shut out from church-fellowship. Your Committee are not prepared to demand this of any such Society.

They therefore recommend, as regards the Home Missionary Society, the general principles laid down by the Albany Convention. This is expressed in the following resolution of that body:

“Resolved, That, in the opinion of this Convention, it is the tendency of the Gospel, wherever it is preached in its purity, to correct all social evils, and to destroy sin in all its forms; and that it is the duty of Missionary Societies to grant aid to churches in slave-holding States, in the support of such ministers only as shall so preach the Gospel, and inculcate the principles and application of Gospel discipline, that, with the blessing of God, it shall have its full effect in awakening and enlightening the moral sense in regard to slavery, and in bringing to pass the speedy abolition of that stupendous wrong; and that, wherever a Minister is not permitted to preach, he should, in accordance with the directions of Christ in such cases, depart out of that city!”

In the spirit of the foregoing resolution the missionaries of the Home Missionary Society in Missouri, Rev. Messrs.

Starr and Reeve, have recently left their fields of labour in that State, because they could no longer maintain their position of non-complicity with slavery, without peril to their lives. Few churches remain as beneficiaries of the Home Missionary Society, which have any complicity with slavery; and since the incidental connection of that Society with slavery arises wholly from the co-operation of the (N. S.) Presbyterian Church therewith—for no Congregational churches assisted by the Society have any connection with slavery—the manifest drifting of that Church towards separate ecclesiastical action in Home Missions, virtually relieve the Home Missionary Society of all embarrassment upon the subject of slavery.

III. THE AMERICAN TRACT SOCIETY.

The third society enumerated in the resolution is the American Tract Society. The question as to the course of this Society upon the subject of slavery has reference mainly to the policy of its Publishing Committee. The fact has of late elicited extensive comment, that in the two thousand distinct publications of the Tract Society, there is not to be found one pointed condemnation of American Slavery as a system of iniquity or a hindrance to the success of the Gospel; but that, on the contrary, there is a studious *avoidance* of this topic, and in some cases has been a *suppression* or *alteration* of phrases originally penned by pure and holy minds to condemn a system at war with every principle of humanity and every dictate of the Gospel.

The fact of suppression has been made conspicuous in two or three prominent examples.

ALTERATION AND SUPPRESSION.

The first example of the suppression and alteration of sentiments on the subject of slavery, is in the reprint of Cotton Mather's "*Essays to Dr. Good.*" The preface to the Tract Society's edition states that "in this edition, such portions of the original essays are omitted, and such changes have been made in the phraseology, as might be expected after the lapse of more than a century since the work was written."

In Cotton Mather's book, as he wrote it, occurs this sentence :—

“ O, that the souls of our slaves were more regarded by us ! that we might give a better demonstration that we despise not our own souls, by doing what we can for the souls of our slaves, [and not using them as if they had no souls ! That the poor slaves and blacks which live with us, may by our means be made the candidates of the heavenly life !] How can we pretend to Christianity, when we do no more to Christianize our slaves ?”

The edition of the Tract Society omits the sentences in brackets, and substitutes “servants” for “slaves.” It reads as follows :

“ O, that the souls of our servants were more regarded by us ! that we might give a better demonstration that we despise not our own souls, by doing what we can for the souls of our servants. How can we pretend to Christianity, when we do no more to Christianize our servants ?”

“ The following paragraph, which Mather wrote in the same connection, is *suppressed* in the Tract Society's edition :

“ But if any servant of God may be so honored by him as to be made the successful instrument of obtaining from a British Parliament “ an Act for the Christianizing of the Slaves in the Plantations,” then it may be hoped that something more may be done than has yet been done, that the blood of souls may not be found in the skirts of our nation ; controversy of heaven with our colonies may be removed, and prosperity may be restored ; or, however, the honorable instruments will have unspeakable peace and joy in the remembrance of his endeavors. In the mean time, the slave-trade is a spectacle that shocks humanity.

“ The harmless natives basely they trepan,
And barter baubles for the souls of men ;
The wretches they to Christian climes bring o'er
To serve worse heathens than they did before !”

Such are the “ changes in *phraseology*, which might be expected after the lapse of more than a century.”

Another example of such alterations is found in the Society's reprint of Joseph John Gurney's “ *Habitual Exer-*

cise of love to God." The original edition reads, page 142 :
 "If this love had always prevailed among professing Christians, where would have been the sword of the crusader? Where the African slave-trade? Where the odious system which permits to man a property in his fellow-men, and converts rational beings into marketable chattels?"

In the Tract Society's edition, page 142, we read :—

"If this love had always prevailed among professing Christians, where would have been the sword of the crusader? Where the tortures of the Inquisition? Where every system of oppression and wrong by which he who has the power revels in luxury and ease at the expense of his fellow-men?"

For the "slave trade," which in this country is a real, palpable horror, is substituted the "Inquisition," which is known to us only from the pages of history; and the thought of the reader is transferred from the present crimes of Virginia to the obsolete crimes of Spain. And instead of "*that odious system which permits to man a property in his fellow men, and converts rational beings into marketable chattels,*" we have a vague and feeble generalization about "every system of oppression and wrong."

It helps the matter not at all, as regards the position of the Tract Society, that Mr. Gurney was induced to consent to these alterations in the hope of a wider circulation of his book. The responsibility of the change rests with those who made this a condition of publishing the book in this country.

Still another example of such alterations is found in the Society's edition of the *Memoir of Mary Luidie Duncan*. In the preface we are told that "a few pages which the Committee deemed of less interest to the general reader, or which alluded to *points of disagreement among Evangelical Christians,* have been dropped." The following is a specimen of this expurgation. In the original diary we find this entry under date of August 1st :

"Freedom has dawned this morning on the British colonies. [*No more degraded lower than the brutes—no more bowed down with suffering from which there is no redress,*] the sons of Africa have obtained the rights of fellow subjects—

the rights of man, the immortal creation of God. *Now they may seek the sanctuary fearless of the lash—they may call their children their own.*) Hope will animate their hearts, and give vigor to their efforts. Oh! for more holy men to show them the way of salvation! The Lord keep them from riot and idleness! They have been so little taught that HE only can avert confusion and tumult as the result of their joy.”

The lines in brackets and italicized are omitted in the Society's edition. The fact that slaves are degraded, that they fear the lash, that they cannot call their children their own, are *suppressed*; the prayer that they may be kept from riot and idleness is *retained*. Such are the examples of suppression and alteration:

AVOIDANCE OF THE SUBJECT.

Not less evident is the studious *avoidance* of this topic, in all the later publications of this Society. Some of the earlier publications of the Tract Society contain incidental allusions to slavery as an evil and a sin. But these allusions are only occasional—for the sake of illustrating some other topic; and they were made at a time when the conscience of the South was not as yet so far debased upon this subject as to attempt to vindicate slavery from the Bible; when slavery was generally conceded to be an evil to be abolished, and before it had become the great commercial and political interest of the country, to be extended and perpetuated by the sanction of Congress and the patronage of the federal executive.

Of late years the subject of slavery has either been avoided altogether in the publications of the Society, or has been alluded to with a measured circumlocution that betrays a timid mind and renders nugatory the passing reference.

This avoidance of the topic of slavery in the publications of the Tract Society, is not dictated by any intelligent Christian principle. The plea of its defenders is, “that the Catholic basis” of the Society forbids the discussion of a subject upon which there is such diversity of opinion among good men. The first article of the constitution of the Tract Society is as follows: “This Society shall be

denominated the American Tract Society, the object of which shall be to diffuse a knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ as the Redeemer of sinners, and to promote the interests of vital Godliness, and sound morality by the circulation of religious tracts, calculated to receive the approbation of all evangelical Christians."

THE CATHOLIC BASIS.

The Catholic basis so much referred to, is one of doctrinal belief, rather than of practical morals. This Catholic basis did not forbid occasional references to slavery in the earlier publications of the Society. It does not preclude the publication of tracts upon wine drinking and dancing, about which there are diversities of opinion and practice among Christians. Between twenty and thirty of the tracts published by the Society are devoted to the subject of intemperance in various relations. But, however Evangelical Christians are agreed in their estimate of the sin of drunkenness and the evils of intemperance, there is among them a notorious diversity of opinions as to the remedy of these evils, and as to the principles and measures upon which the temperance reform should be conducted. Yet this does not deter the Society from publishing tracts upon *one* side of this now political and agitating question. Nay the Society itself rebukes the apathy and the opposition of some professing Christians to its own view of the temperance reform, in this unmeasured language :—

"Our next opposition is from a band clothed in *white*, professors of our holy religion, enlisted soldiers of the Church, engaged to every good work of benevolence ; they come to intercede for the Monster (moderate drinking) and oppose our enterprise. What can be the meaning of this ? Oh ! where lies this astonishing witchery ? What has put the Church to sleep ? What has made her angry at the call to come forth from the embrace of her deadliest foe ?"

Here the Catholic basis of the Society does not hinder a strong expression of opinion, on a point of morals upon which there is much diversity of opinion and practice among Evangelical Christians.

The same is true of *dancing*, upon which the Tract So-

ciety has published tracts condemning saltatory motions in unmeasured terms, regardless of the diversities of opinion and practice among Evangelical Christians.

The Tract Society condemns sleeping in Church as a sin though certainly there is a diversity of practice among Evangelical Christians in that particular.

The Committee have just published a tract against the use of *tobacco*. Upon no point of minor morals, probably, is there a greater diversity of practice among Christians than on this. Some staid supporters of the Tract Society have not wholly foreswore the pipe ; others are hardly less particular as to the flavor of a cigar than as to the apostolicity of ordination; some large ecclesiastical bodies still give occasion for the remonstrance of parishes against defiling the house of God with the juice of the weed ; some theologians are wrapped in the fogs of German pipes as well as of German metaphysics ; and to come nearer home, there are among ourselves most Orthodox smokers and chewers as well as violent haters of the weed. What right, then, has the Tract Society to meddle with such a theme? Moreover, since tobacco is a staple of Virginia, an assault upon it is an assault upon a "local" or "sectional" institution, looking toward the possible abolition of slave-labor.

The Tract Society has repeatedly denounced *novel-reading* in the most sweeping terms. But there is a great diversity of opinion among Christians, as to the comparative advantages of the reading of the *American Messenger*, and the reading of such works of fiction as *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, as a means of grace. The Catholic basis of the Society is surely invaded by the indiscriminate denunciation of works of fiction, so frequent in the *Messenger*.

We are sorry to say also, that there is some diversity of practice among Christians who sustain the Tract Society as to the propriety of attendance upon the *opera* ; but this does not restrain the Publishing Committee from issuing a tract condemning the opera as an Anti-Christian institution which cannot be countenanced without sin.

The ground taken by the Committee of the Tract Society that its Catholic basis precludes it from "publications involving subjects of controversy among evangelical Chris-

tians," is inconsistent with its own action in many cases, and would at once sweep from its list some twenty standard tracts upon points of Christian morality.

This Catholic basis does not forbid the occasional mention of slavery in other lands. Nay, whenever the books of the Society do allude to the existence of slavery, it is as to a system unknown to the people of the United States, but existing somewhere as a phenomenon in other parts of the world.

Thus in one of the books of the Society where a passing allusion is made to a state of servitude, a foot-note explains that in some countries of the *East*, men are bought and sold and held in bondage. In some of the tracts on Temperance, arguments and illustrations are drawn from the slave-trade as this exists in Brazil and in Africa. Thus in reply to the objection of the distiller that he cannot sacrifice his property, it is said :—

"Suppose you were now in *Brazil*, and the owner of a large establishment to fit out slave-traders with handcuffs for the coast of *Africa*, and could not change your business without considerable pecuniary sacrifice, would you make the sacrifice, or would you keep your fires and hammers going?" And again : "If a man lives only to make a descent on the peaceful abodes of *Africa*, and to tear away parents from their weeping children, and husbands from their wives and homes, where is the man that will deem this a moral business?" "Other men will prey on unoffending *Africa*, and bear human sinews across the ocean to be sold. Have you a right to do it?" (No. 305.)

Once more, speaking of the duty of rescuing the drunkard, it is asked. "What would you not do to pull a neighbor out of the water, or out of the fire, or to deliver him from *Algerine* captivity?" (No. 422.)

It is only with reference to slavery in the *United States* that the Society holds its peace. This studious avoidance of the subject, where alone the candid discussion of it can be of any moment, is a sad evidence of that fatal spell which the great dragon of the South has cast over many good men in the land.

THE COMMITTEE'S DEFENCE.

Most humiliating, too, is the defence of its policy which the officers of the Tract Society have lately issued. Several churches, associations, religious journals, and private individuals, members of the Society and contributors to its funds, having remonstrated with the Executive Committee upon their policy on the subject of slavery, the Committee have at length issued a document by way of vindication, entitled "Principles and Facts of the American Tract Society." This reply is a beautiful specimen of typography, embellished with a very pretty picture of the Tract House. But the document itself is a most remarkable illustration of the timid policy of the Committee upon the subject of slavery. It ignores the very question at issue. Only by the most remote allusion does it recognize any dissatisfaction with the the course of the Committee upon slavery—a system which it does not so much as name in a tract of 16 pages. That allusion is in the following terms: "This Society was formed by Christians of various denominations, to publish the great evangelical truths in which they are agreed. It is thus precluded from publications involving subjects of controversy among evangelical Christians. Nor can topics of a local or sectional character be expected in the issues of a national Catholic institution."

It occurs to your Committee in this connection to suggest, that the crime of polygamy will soon become "a topic of a local or sectional character," through the political relations of the Mormon community to the United States. On the principle of this Catholic basis, as interpreted by this statement, the Society could not publish a tract upon the sanctity of marriage.

The remainder of this document treats entirely of the material interests of the Tract Society, of its mechanical arrangements, its evangelical character, and its general work; repeating the common places, of every annual report, of every sermon by Secretary or Agent, and of almost every number of the *American Messenger*.

Good men, men of standing in the church and in society whole churches and associations, the religious press, all ask of the Society: *Why do you not, in some of your many*

thousand publications, condemn that systematic wrong which defrauds the laborer of his hire!

The Committee answer—"The Tract House, at 150 Nassau-street, is eighty feet by ninety-four, and five stories high, besides basement for storing paper, and cellar for coal." [p. 1.]

The inquirers ask, *Why do you not, in some of your many thousand publications, maintain the sanctity of the marriage institution, and condemn that system which forcibly separates husband and wife, which encourages concubinage and licentiousness, and which makes the most sacred of all unions a mere commercial expedient for increasing marketable stock?*

The Committee answer—"The machinery of the Tract House is propelled, and the entire building is also heated by steam. The central court is excavated and forms a boiler room." [p. 1.]

The inquirers ask, *Why do you not, in some of your fifty thousand daily issues apply the Gospel to the stupendous wrong of holding in bondage three millions of people upon the soil of this free Christian country?*

The Committee answer—"The *American Messenger* has obtained a circulation of more than two hundred thousand copies. The Society has issued publications in 117 languages and dialects. Dr. Duff said he had attempted to analyze the Society's list of publications, but found them so varied as to excite his wonder and admiration. [pp. 9 10, and 21.]

The inquirers ask, *Why do you not in some of your varied publications, enforce the duty of teaching all men to read, of giving to all men the Bible; and condemn the crime of keeping from any the light of God's word?*

The Committee answer—"The society employs 619 colporteurs and publishes more than 200,000 copies of the *Family Christian Almanac*." (p. 9.)

The inquirers ask, *Why do you not in some of your thousand publications condemn the traffic in human flesh, and show that "men-stealers" as well as "drunkards" and "covetous persons" are shut out from the kingdom of God?*

The Committee answer, "The following is a form of a bequest to the American Tract Society." (p. 16.)

We have not caricatured the document issued from the Tract House as a virtual reply to the inquiries and remonstrances of thousands of the friends of the Society, as to its policy on the subject of slavery. It is humiliating to find, that the Committee of a great institution for spreading the Gospel of Christ, have neither the courage to apply the Gospel to the system of slavery, nor the magnanimity to give a reason for their silence. Such an answer as is given in this pamphlet to the respectful inquiries of thousands of the supporters of the Society, however well meant, is little less than an insult to the understanding of the Christian public.

EFFECTS OF THIS POLICY.

This policy of omission, suppression, and evasive silence on the subject of slavery, which may be fairly said to characterize the present administration of the Tract Society, tends to degrade the moral sense of Christians at the South with reference to that system of iniquity, which *they* should labor continually to abolish.

Mr. Gurney, who was widely known and beloved as a sincere, humble, intelligent and devoted follower of the Lord Jesus Christ, declared that the habitual exercise of love to God by professing Christians, would do away with the African slave-trade, and with the "odious system which permits to man a property in his fellow-men, and converts rational beings into marketable chattels." The Publishing Committee of the Tract Society so alter this passage, as to take away the author's testimony against slaveholding and the slave-trade. The natural effect of this change upon the conscience of a Southern Christian, is an impression that his fellow Christians who support the Tract Society, did not agree with Mr. Gurney in the opinion that holding men as "marketable chattels" is contrary to the love of God.

That devoted young Christian, Mary Lundie Duncan, expressed her thanksgiving to God that the sons of Africa in the British colonies are "no more degraded lower than the brutes; that they may seek the sanctuary fearless of the lash, and may call their children their own." This thanksgiving was retained in an edition of her memoirs published

by the Messrs. Carter, of New York, which was widely circulated at the South, and it was never objected to by the Southern press. But the Committee of the Tract Society, unsolicited by its Southern patrons, and against the sacred remonstrance of Mrs. Duncan—who never gave even a forced consent till long after the change was made—canceled this thanksgiving of a heart that remembered the poor before the cross, and thus declared to the South that Mary Lundie Duncan had exaggerated views of the evils of slavery and of the benefits of emancipation; and *now* the edition of the Messrs. Carter, before unquestioned, is challenged at the South as infected with “abolitionism.”

The timid policy of the Committee of the Tract Society has debased the moral sense of Southern Christians upon the subject of slavery, and thus has helped to create that vicious and arrogant public sentiment *for* slavery, before which this great Society of evangelical Christians now bow in humiliating silence.

THE REMEDY.

In these circumstances your Committee see but one feasible mode, in which the Christian sentiment of the supporters of the Tract Society on the subject of slavery can find a just expression. Reports, resolutions, memorials, remonstrances are of no avail. These meet only with studied silence or casuistic replies. It is in vain also to attempt to cripple the resources of an institution, which, through the benefactions of the Christian public, has obtained a position of wealth and independence equal to that of the largest publishing houses. Nothing is to be accomplished by a divisive movement, or by the organization and support of an anti-slavery Tract Society. What we need is not another anti-slavery Society, but the AMERICAN TRACT SOCIETY, with its tried and established character for usefulness with its Catholic evangelical basis, with its rich catalogue of publications, with its efficient system of colportage, with its hallowed memories, with its well husbanded resources, NOT turned into a machinery of anti-slavery propagandism, NOT made distinctly or prominently an anti-Slavery Society, but brought to bear with its legitimate influence, in the or-

dinary and natural course of its publications, upon the system of slavery as antagonistic to the Gospel of Christ and destined to be done away through the progress of that Gospel.

In order to this result, the MEMBERS of the Society must labor directly with its Executive Committee and its Secretaries. There is no reason why an officer of any benevolent society, however valuable his services, or however estimable his character, should have a life-lease of his office, or should be continued in that office for form's sake, when he is unwilling to conform the policy of the institution to the known wishes of the great body of his constituents. Every *life-member* of the American Tract Society—made such by the payment of twenty dollars—is entitled to VOTE in the election of its directors. Every *life-director* is entitled to VOTE in the Board of Directors at the election of Secretaries and the Executive Committee. Let then the members of the Society, severally or in companies, address to each member of the Publishing Committee, and to the Secretaries the simple inquiry: *Are you in favour of bringing the influence of the American Tract Society, through its ordinary publications to bear against the system of American Slavery, as sinful and hostile to the Gospel of Christ?*

If this question shall be answered in the affirmative, the course of the Society in future will be plain. If in the negative, on the part of any or all the members of the Committee or of the Secretaries, let there be at the annual election of the Board of Directors a *vote* equivalent to a vote in the British Parliament of "*want of confidence*" in the existing ministry. Whenever the constituents of the Society shall make it apparent to its officers, that they intend to apply the principle of the responsibility of representatives to the management of that Institution, the policy of the Society upon the subject of slavery will be made to conform to an enlightened Christian sentiment.

IV. AMERICAN SUNDAY SCHOOL UNION.

The last society upon the list is the American Sunday School Union.

The policy of this Society upon the subject of slavery is

identical with that of the American Tract Society. This was first made manifest in the year 1848 through the suppression of a book which contained a description of the condition of slaves. This book was prepared from an edition of the London Tract Society, by the late Rev. Thos. H. Gallaudet of Hartford, and after his careful revision was published with the approval of the Committee of the S. S. Union. But on the representation of an officer of the Society at the South, it was suppressed. The book is the story of "*Jacob and his Sons*," and the offensive passage is as follows.

"What is a slave, mother?" asked Mary, "is it a servant?"

"Yes," replied her mother, "slaves are servants; for they work for their masters and wait on them; but they are not hired servants; but they are bought and sold like beasts, and have nothing but what their masters choose to give them. They are obliged to work very hard, and sometimes their masters use them cruelly, beat them, and starve them, and kill them; for they have nobody to help them. Sometimes they are chained together and driven about like beasts."

"Poor things!" said Mary; "but why do not they leave their masters when they use them ill? The other day Margaret left you, mother, because she was tired of living here, though you never treated her unkindly: I wonder that the slaves live with their masters who are not kind to them."

"They do not like to be slaves," answered her mother; "but they are not permitted to leave their masters whenever they wish. Servants are paid for working for their masters and mistresses, and, if they do not like to stay, they may go and live somewhere else. But the poor unhappy slaves are obliged to stay with their master as long as he chooses to keep them. And if the master is tired of his slaves, then he may sell them to another if he wishes to."

The reason the Committee gives for suppressing the book is as follows:—

"It appears that the book in question was reprinted from an English copy, nearly twenty years since, when the state of public feeling on this subject was very different from what it is at present, and when such a passage (though as

indefensible then as now) might have easily escaped observation."

"The Committee do not consider the exciting subject of slavery as at all involved in these proceedings. With that subject it is not the province of the Society to intermeddle; nor can we do so without a palpable violation of the original and fundamental principles on which the Society was organized, and has uniformly acted."

The Sunday-School Union still adheres to the policy thus defined; and your Committee would recommend that the same means of reform be adopted with respect to this Society that have been recommended toward the Tract Society. In conclusion the Committee would suggest the comprehensive principle, that all societies, whose Secretaries and agents are accustomed to seek the pulpits of our churches for the collection of funds, be urged to give more prominence to the idea of the strict responsibility of their Executive officers to the general Christian sentiment of their constituents upon the subject of slavery.



