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NO. I.

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For the Central Presbyterian.

WESTERN THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY,
Allegheny City, Pa., Dec'r. 1855.

Messrs. Editors:—Though I cannot promise you an easy life, nor pecuniary reward for your toils, yet I congratulate you on the work, which you have undertaken. The power of the press is a hackneyed theme. And yet no man has any adequate conception of the influence of every weekly sheet in drivelling or enlarging, in refining or debasing the human mind. I feel very sure that you have some just views of this matter, and will labor with zeal in the work you have undertaken. I wish you great success and much public favor.

The time, when you start your paper, is friendly to your views of kindness and courtesy to all. At present no strife of any embittered kind troubles our branch of the church. Indeed evangelical Christians generally are on good terms with each other. Thus you may give free scope to the generous warmth, which has through life marked your behaviour. Nor will you be without tokens of friendship, which will greatly cheer you. True, you will find a class of querulous friends, who will perhaps annoy you with ill-timed complaints. But never mind them. They are neither numerous, nor powerful. Many of them will have a better mind when they leave this world and go to heaven.

Though no great controversy in religion is now agitating the churches, yet the time may come, even before you leave the editorial chair, when the most virulent assaults will be made on the citadel of truth. The haters of the supreme divinity of our Lord Jesus Christ were never more unbending in their opposition to the foundations of the true Christian doctrines than at present. Should any great conflict arise, I am sure the church will not vainly look to you to quit you like men and to risk every thing for the glory of the Lord Christ, and the integrity of the common salvation. One part of your work will be very pleasant. I refer to the notice you may take of the progress of Christ's kingdom. It is a great privilege to see the walls of Jerusalem going up. It is a great privilege to be permitted as watchmen to point out the first rays of the dawning day, and to cheer God's people with the assurance that Christ's kingdom is coming.

Nor will it be vain that you shall record even short notices of the useful lives and happy deaths of the servants of Christ. Judicious obituary notices are of eminent service in illustrating the power of Divine grace in each generation. Formerly I thought less of them, but now I commonly read them first. I love to see grace triumphing in the last struggle. This feeling has gained much on me of late, especially since I have felt that I had lived my half-century, and that if I should ever live to be seventy years old, more than five sevenths of my life was gone.

I really think your friends and patrons ought to pray for you, that you may be useful in your labors. A great work remains to be done in our whole country. The region, where your paper will mostly circulate, has its full share of responsibility in spreading the truth. Arouse all the churches, if possible, to do their utmost. Give no rest to yourselves or others, while any wise and practicable scheme of usefulness among you languishes for want of efficient co-operation.

The Lord bless you and keep you, send you help from the sanctuary, and strengthen you out of Zion, remember all your offerings and accept your burnt sacrifices, grant you according to your own hearts, fulfill all your counsels, teach your hearts to war and your fingers to fight, and fulfill all your petitions.
Very truly yours,
WM. S. PLUMER.

For the Central Presbyterian.

To the Pastors and Ruling Elders of
Lexington Presbytery.

Dear Brethren:—You are familiar with the general features of the enterprise of our church, to distribute by means of the Board of Publication, valuable religious books, among the people of our own congregations, and as far as practical among the rest of the community.

In 1847 the Synod of Virginia assumed the exclusive management of this enterprise, within its own limits. Its operations were conducted through the instrumentality of a Synodical Committee, located at Staunton, and by the labors of a general visiting agent.

This arrangement existed until the meeting of the Synod at Alexandria in 1854, when by resolution, the several Presbyteries were directed to take charge of the work in the same general manner in which it had been heretofore conducted by the Synod. At the last semi-annual meeting of Lexington Presbytery, we were appointed a Presbyterial Committee charged with the supervision of the work within our bounds, and authorized to extend aid to our brethren beyond them, as we may be able.

At the late meeting of Synod, just closed, the principles of the Presbyterial arrangement were re-affirmed, and the Committees are especially enjoined to secure the active co-operation of pastors and sessions.

The history of the action of our church in this matter illustrates very clearly two important principles of Presbyterian church government.

1. That all religious enterprises should be conducted by the church in its organized capacity, and

2. That the respective Judicatories are held immediately responsible, each for the territory over which it exercises jurisdiction. Thus the General Assembly, by means of the Board of Publication provides for the whole church, books suitable for distribution, the Synod apportions the work of distribution to its Presbyteries, and supervises them in the execution of it, and each Presbytery, by means of its committee, addresses itself to every one of the sessions within its bounds. With such an arrangement, there can be no failure except from want of fidelity, and if there should be want of fidelity, it can be laid with great distinctness at the proper door.

To us as a committee, the Presbytery has assigned our duty in a series of instructions. We understand that we are required to provide one or more depositories of the books of the Board of Publication, and of other suitable books—to obtain, commission, and direct in their labors, as many suitable Colporteurs as may be found necessary—to see to the collection of the necessary funds from the churches, and especially, to endeavor to secure the personal aid of pastors and elders, in the distribution of books. All this in the name, and by the authority of the Presbytery.

In pursuance of these instructions, we have established a Depository in Lexington, (and will enlarge it as rapidly as practicable) where books can be obtained by congregations, Sabbath Schools, pastors and elders, at the Philadelphia prices. We would advise each congregation to purchase a supply for itself, and let the sale and distribution of them be under the direction of the session.

We have three Colporteurs in the field, and we call upon every young man, who is willing to labor for his master in this way, to let us know it, and we ask for information from pastors and elders, as to the wants of particular sections of the country.

In the church plan of Systematic Benevolence, the month of March is designated for taking up contributions to the Publication cause in our Presbytery, and of course we will make no application before that time. After that time, we shall feel it to be our duty to make special application to every church from which we shall not have received a contribution. In the meantime, if any collections are made in advance of the stated period, we would ask that they should be forwarded to us without delay.

In calling for the personal co-operation of pastors and elders, we would be importunate. Dear brethren of the ministry and eldership, we alone are appointed by the master, as official laborers. There are none below us, and none above us. The session of the feeblest congregation must have its pastor and elders, and the General Assembly has on its roll, none else. Agents, Colporteurs, Editors and others may be used by us as instrumentalities, but upon us alone, devolves the responsibility of feeding and ruling the flock of God. A great honor this is. As it is written, let them that rule will be counted worthy of double honor. But let us not covet the honor, without the labor. The General Assembly, the Synod, and the Presbytery, have each distinctly referred to the individual efforts of pastors and elders, as the prominent feature in the plan, and it is for us now to realize its value.

The plan of Presbyterial action is in successful operation in the cause of education for the ministry and the cause of Domestic Missions. But the work of the Board of Publication, is more difficult to be executed by the Presbyteries than either of these, because it is a work of more detail, and requires therefore, more time and attention. The great fear then is, that it will not be attended to, unless it is made the business of some one who is responsible for it, and is paid for doing it. This difficulty can be obviated only in one way. Every church session must look upon this work as a part of the regular ministrations of the Gospel, and must feel bound to provide for it, as they do for preaching, for prayer-meetings, for Sabbath schools, and for Bible and Catechetical instruction in their several congregations. This does not imply that the distribution of religious books is equally

important with any of the above mentioned means of grace, any more than the enumeration implies that these means themselves, are each of equal importance as compared one with another. But it does imply that there is the same obligation of duty, to provide for all in the manner and degree demanded by each. This idea obviously extends itself further. Not only ought each pastor to promote in his congregation Colportage by others, but he ought himself to act as a permanent distributor of books. He may reasonably be expected to be familiar with the publications of the Board, and certainly he knows better than any stranger can know, what class of books will be seasonable in a given condition of his people. Especially, if he is blessed with a revival, will he have offered to him, an opportunity of doing this work to an almost unlimited extent. At such a time, the minds of all are eager after the truth, not for entertainment, speculation, or debate, but as a guide to action; and then under the influences of the Holy Spirit, young converts, fed upon suitable reading, make such advances in the divine life, as are rarely attainable in less favored seasons. And let every elder, and every earnest Christian feel that he too is called to take a personal share in this work. Almost every intelligent Christian, has in his experience, met with some book which next to the Bible, he considers to have been most promotive of his growth in grace. Let him recommend it to others. It may not suit all, but to some one, it may prove the blessing that it was to him.

It is thus a fundamental idea in the plan of Presbyterial action in the premises, that there is to be personal effort on the part of pastors, elders, and private members. And this action is to be based upon the deliberate conviction, that the distribution of religious books, is a legitimate, substantive, and important branch of the system of means by which the church seeks to win the world to Christ.

The annals of the church abound in instances showing how much good has been accomplished by this instrumentality, and there are ministers in our Synod, and in our own Presbytery, who are ready to testify that next in efficacy to the preaching of the Gospel by the living voice, they have found to be in their experience, the circulation of religious books. And this may be added, that though the sower of the seed may not see the fruit elsewhere, yet as he casts the seed in liberal handfuls beside all waters, some is sure to drop into his own heart and bring forth gracious comfort there.

The Book Committee of the Synod in their last Report say, "that during the seven years of their labors, there has been contributed for this object, in the Synod, about \$10,000—about 32,000 volumes have been distributed and 22,000 families visited, and many of them conversed and prayed with their Colporteurs."

The Synod by transferring the matter to the Presbyteries, show that they hope that even more than this will be accomplished under the new arrangement. It shall be our prayer and our effort, to realize this hope within the bounds of Lexington Presbytery.

In conclusion we would state that in entrusting this work to the Presbyteries, the Synod had no purpose to sever itself from the Board of Publication. To this organ of the whole church, it purposes to hold the relation of contributor and co-operator. To it, all parts of the church must look for the supply of books, and from it receive much information and general aid, even when the collection of funds and the distribution of books, are accomplished without its direct intervention.

By order of the Committee,
WM. S. WHITE, Chairman.

For the Central Presbyterian.

We are Dead, nevertheless we Live.

How general and how interesting the truth that death is indispensable to life. The plant of to day feeds upon the decomposed elements of the plant of yesterday, and the bodies of man and beast are but the reconstruction of materials which have often lived before. And how striking the analogy in this particular, between material and spiritual things. The blood of Christ is indispensable to the life of the soul and our death to sin is quite as necessary to a life of godliness.

We know from experience that so long as a carnal desire or corrupt propensity is predominant, the corresponding spiritual desire or inclination has no existence.—There cannot be a particle of genuine love to God, if the world be loved supremely. "If any man love the world the love of the Father is not in him;" And the amount of piety in any heart is measured by the amount of sin which it has been able to displace. As rapidly as the anger, the wrath, the malice, the blasphemy and the filthy communication of the natural man are put off, just so rapidly may the bowels of mercies, the kindness, the humbleness of mind, the weakness and long suffering of the spiritual man be put on. Growth in grace is not dependent upon time. A child may die an hundred years old, while an old disciple may have been so engrossed with temporal things as to die in infancy as to spiritual ones.

The life of faith may exist during many a long and dreary winter, but when neither leaf nor flower nor fruit are visible growth is impossible. We grow in grace just in

proportion as the means of grace are properly used—so used as to stimulate that sort of vitality which draws largely from Christ; for the life of Christ is the death of sin in the soul, just as the constant tendency of a healthy action in a diseased limb, is to expel every foreign and corrupt portion. In spiritual things the man who lives does not live, and he who does not live is alive, or as the Apostle expresses it, "I am crucified with Christ; nevertheless I live, yet not I, but Christ liveth in me." Now if our old man is crucified with Christ it is in order that the body of sin might be destroyed that henceforth we should not serve sin. Indeed the great benefit which we derive from a participation in the death of Christ is the subduing of the body of sin in us; it is thereby subdued, and limb by limb it will be certainly and utterly destroyed. Now a right eye is plucked out and now a right hand is cut off and as that body disappears the perfect man in Christ Jesus is more and more developed.

The idea which runs through the gospel, however, is not that sin is something which can of itself die, but that there is in every heart a natural proneness to evil which must be destroyed. Sin shall no longer have the dominion over you.

This then must be the grand ruling idea in every Christian heart. My former self is crucified with Christ. Those views and affections which swayed me must no longer have power. I am a new creature a new creation. I have been planted in the likeness of Christ's death and now am risen with Christ and seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God.

Now if we be dead with Christ to the world and to sin, we know that we shall live with him in holiness and heaven. Our death to the law as a rule of justification has made us alive to it as a rule of life. Christ raised us from that legal death that we might bring forth fruit unto God.

It must be true that many who have a name to live are dead, for how shall we that are dead to sin live any longer therein.

N. C.

For the Central Presbyterian.

The Sunday School Successful Amid
Opposition.

A missionary of the American Sunday School Union who labored in a destitute county in Virginia the past summer, sends the following pleasing intelligence of success where it was least hoped for.

It had just occurred to me to send you an abstract from a letter which I received in July from the superintendent of the most unpromising school, I think, which I organized in Virginia. It was in the very midst of the "Hard Shells," in a place where I met the greatest opposition. It was the stronghold of that denomination in F— county, and you may judge from what I have told you, that they are not weak in their endeavors to frustrate any good influence in any part of the county. But to the letter.

"You were apprized of the opposition we looked for, but it was even greater than our expectations. Mr. M. (the hard shell preacher) has made it the chief object of his pulpit denunciation ever since you were here, and the attacks are still continued with incessant violence, but we let it pass altogether unnoticed, looking to the Lord for help and resting in the Scripture promise "my grace shall be sufficient for thee." I believe one school is now established on a secure basis. We have forty scholars and eight teachers, and the school increases every Sabbath. We expect to number not less than sixty by the end of the Summer. The opposition is yielding and the children of the Hard Shells are joining every Sabbath. We are looking for the day when Mr. M. will stand alone in his opposition to Sunday Schools, temperance and the missionary cause.

We are glad, my dear brother, that you visited our neighborhood. We will remember you with gratitude, and we believe your labors in F— will be rewarded with at least one permanent school. We are well pleased with our Library and intend to increase it from time to time as we are able. Both children and teachers manifest much interest in the school. The older people visit the school often and lend a helping hand. I believe the Lord is with us, and I do believe we shall succeed."

The writer of this letter, who has taught the district school in that neighborhood for twelve or fourteen years, and who is a very excellent member of the Methodist church, told me at the outset that there was no use in making any effort there, as he said the attempt had been frequently made without any success. He said unless I had some patent mode of doing that work, he was quite sure it would not be done. I told him I was the man who would try, and this school is the result of the attempt. In this letter to me he said that the school is called by its enemies, "a Yankee notion," an "Abolition school," the "golden calf which Aaron made" &c. &c., to the end of the chapter. I should have been slow to make any effort in this place if I had known beforehand the character of the place, but when I found myself there I determined to drive the matter through. The result of this experiment has satisfied me that there is nothing like going right among the enemy and if you can gain a footing, attacking them in the midst of their strong-holds.

Yours
H. N. B.

De Quincey on Bishop Middleton.

Conyers Middleton is a name that cannot be mentioned without an expression of disgust. We sit down in perfect charity, at the same table, with sceptics in every degree. To us, simply in his social character, and supposing him sincere, a sceptic is as agreeable as another. Anyhow he is better than a craniologist, than a punster, than a St. Simonian, than a Jeremy Bentham-cock, or an anti-corn-law lecturer. What signifies a name? Free-thinker he calls himself? Good—let him 'free think' as fast as he can; but let him obey the ordinary laws of good faith. No sneering in the first place, because, though it is untrue that sneer cannot be answered, the answer is often imposed circumlocution. As upon a subject which makes wise men grave, a sneer argues so much perversion of heart that it cannot be thought uncaudid to infer some corresponding perversion of intellect. Perfect sincerity never existed in a professional sneerer; secondly, no treachery, no betrayal of the cause which the man is sworn and paid to support. Conyers Middleton held considerable preferment in the church of England. Long after he had become an enemy to that church, (not separately for itself, but generally as a strong form of Christianity,) he continued to receive large quarterly cheques upon a bank in Lombard-street, of which the original condition had been that he should defend Christianity 'with all his soul and with all his strength.' Yet such was his perfidy to this sacred engagement, that even his private or personal feuds grew out of his capital feud with the Christian faith. From the church he drew his bread; and the labor of his life was to bring the church into contempt. He hated Bentley, he hated Warburton, he hated Waterland; and why? all alike as powerful champions of that religion which he himself daily betrayed; and Waterland, as the strongest of these champions, he hated most. But all these by-currents of malignity emptied themselves into one vast *clava maxima* of rancorous animosity to the mere spirit, temper, and tendencies, of Christianity. Even in treason there is room for courage; but Middleton, in the manner, was as cowardly as he was treacherous in the matter. He wished to have it whispered about that he was worse than he seemed, and that he would be a *fort esprit* of a high cast, but for the bigotry of his church. It was a fine thing, he fancied, to have the credit of infidelity, without paying for a license; to sport over those manors without a qualification. As a scholar, meantime, he was trivial and incapable of labor. Even the Roman antiquities, political or juristic, he had studied neither by research and erudition, nor by meditation on their value and analogies. Lastly, his English style, for which at one time he obtained some credit through the caprice of a fashionable critic, is such, that by weeding away from it whatever is colloquial, you would strip it of all that is characteristic; removing its idiomatic vulgarisms, you would remove its principle of animation.

FROM THE LUTHERAN OBSERVER.

THERE IS WORK TO BE DONE.

By Rev. T. T. Titus.

There is work to be done in this world of ours,
This world of sorrow and sin:—
There is work for the hands with their wonderful powers,
And work for the spirit within.

There is work for the beggar and work for the prince,
There is work for the old and the young:—
The merchant with millions, the cripple with pence,
The learned with pen and with tongue.

The statesman, the newsboy, the preacher, the muse,
Physicians, and printers, and all,
May work with their head, or their hands, or their purse,
In kitchen, or workshop, or hall!

There is work in the by-ways and alleys at home,
Where suffering and want hold their throne,—
There's work far away 'mid the thousands who roam
Where the best lamp of life never shone!

There are tears to be dried, there are wounds to be healed,
Earth's wrongs and oppressions redressed,
Faint hearts to be cheered, and proud brows made to yield,
And a sin-stricken world to be blessed!

The fatherless babes to be nurtured and fed,
And the brow of old age to be soothed,
The wayward and erring to virtue be led,
And the pillow of sickness be smoothed.

Then rouse ye, my soul! to thy labor away!
Since Jesus for this mission is given;
Like Jesus, thy Master, while yet it is day,
Work the will of thy Father in heaven!

Go forth in the morning, at noon and at night,
Seek the dwelling of age and of youth:—
Uproot error's weeds with the ploughshare of right,
And scatter the bright seeds of truth!

Bring hope to the fainting and joy to the sad,
And Christ to the penitent soul:—
Fill earth with rejoicing—bid deserts be glad—
And streams through the wilderness roll!

WALNUT BOTTOM, PA.

The Niagara railroad suspension bridge—that triumph of engineering—is now completed. When first projected it was declared by no less an authority than Robert Stephenson to be impracticable. Had the same principle of construction been applied a few years ago, the Britannia tubular bridge over the Straits of Menai, in England, by Stephenson, might have been dispensed with, and the end be accomplished at one-third the cost.

Christmas Tree in the Crimea.

A Virginia lady, travelling in Germany, translates and sends home a letter to the "Hamburger Correspondent," from one of the German soldiers in the Crimea. It is published in the Staunton Vindicator. We extract the following touching description of "a Christmas tree in the Crimea:"

"We were disappointed about spending Christmas in Sebastopol; so a handful of us Germans, out of different regiments, determined to pass our Christmas tide in the trenches. Unfortunately only about half our number were able to join; the others were on distant guard, and could not obtain leave. We had our rendezvous behind a high embankment, and as soon as it was quite dark, we reared our Christmas Tree—a half-withered little fir—decked with little pitch torches, which we had made ourselves, for wax tapers we had none, and with a few parti-coloured paper-lanterns. Close under it, each one deposited whatever morsels of the often scanty ration he had been able to spare during the past few days—chiefly crackers and boiled mess beef. We had hung on the tree some biscuits of better quality, in lieu of the confections of home; but the grand treasures were two fine apples. We had also purchased some betteccates, not to be despised in camp, for the generous sum of three florins.

"So down we sat, men smitten by fortune, in those trenches, under the Christmas Tree, sign of eternal peace. Officers and privates forgot for the hour all distinction of rank; we were only brothers. A few Englishmen joined us, but only as spectators. At a given signal the lights were kindled, and our fir tree shone in wonderful beauty. We shouted, leaped for joy, and exulted like children. But the mirth lasted only a short time, and we became very serious. Our thoughts wandered away to our homes, and the circles of our loved ones, now perhaps fighting under the Christmas eve and thinking of us. O, that we could have flown to them!

"One of our comrades here broke silence, and gave utterance, to what we all had in our hearts. He was a brave, soldierly fellow, Sergeant Neumann. In short, artificial words, which came from the bottom of the heart, he spoke of the past, when we were all there at home in our German fatherland. He spoke of the bloody present; he spoke of the eternal future, concerning which in our actual peril of death we all had good cause to think. 'But Christ our Lord' said he, 'for this cause, became man, and as on this day became a babe, that he might rescue us from eternal death. And we are here like the Shepherds, who once on that first Christmas eve lay as we do in the open field; and the heavenly messengers bring to us the message of joy which they then brought to them.' In conclusion, the Sergeant knelt down, and said the Lord's Prayer.

"No sermon," the letter goes on to say, "ever moved us so deeply, as these short and earnest words resounding through the night. In silence we clasped each other's hands and were unable to refrain from tears. Two Turkish adjutants came by, and pointing to the tree, uttered something like displeasure. We paid them no attention, pondering on our hard lot. Having obtained leave to light a camp-fire, we allowed the fir branches, now that the lights were gone, to burn freely, and as we had saved our billets all the week, it made a grand blaze. The heat was pleasant, for the night was cold; and now our banquet began and we gave healths, to sweethearts and friends. The last sticks were still glowing, when the sky suddenly became clear, and the stars above flamed like the tapers of a heavenly Christmas Tree. We joined hands in a silent 'Good Night,' and sought the way to our barracks, where things look very different from under the fir tree. From Sebastopol the cannon shots roared suddenly over our heads; and I have just heard, that one of the comrades, who celebrated the season with us, was on his way to quarters mortally wounded by a shell. He kept his last Christmas in the trenches."

GLUE IMPERVIOUS TO WATER.—If a coating of glue or size be brushed over with a decoction of one part of powdered gall nuts in twelve of water, reduced to eight parts and strained, it becomes hard, and as solid and impervious to water as a coat of oil paint; in fact, a kind of leather is formed.

MEDALS TO SCIENTIFIC MEN.—The Council of the Royal Society, London, has awarded the Copley Medal this year to M. Leon Foucault, for his various researches in Experimental Physics; and the two Royal Medals to Mr. John Russell Hind, for his discovery of ten Planets, the computation of their orbits, and various other astronomical discoveries; and to J. O. Westwood, Esq., President of the Entomological Society, for his various Monographs and papers on Entomology.

The depth to which volcanoes penetrate has been approximately estimated, upon good data, and found not to exceed seven or eight miles; and, while the eruptions of the latter are derived solely from materials that do not exceed 25 times that of water, it must follow that for far below the volcanic sources the density of the compounds must at least be 75 times that of water.