

SECOND
ANNUAL REPORT

OF THE

BOSTON SOCIETY

FOR THE

MORAL AND RELIGIOUS INSTRUCTION

OF THE

P O O R.

PRESENTED AT THEIR ANNIVERSARY, OCT. 22, 1818,

BOSTON:

**PRINTED BY PARMENTER AND NORTON, ROGERS' BUILDINGS,
NEAR OF NO. 12, STATE-STREET.**

1818.

REPORT.



THE Committee, to whom was assigned the office of reporting to the Society the operations of the last year, congratulate their Brethren upon the auspicious circumstances attending this anniversary. *The Lord hath done great things for us, whereof we are glad.* Among the tokens of His favour, the following deserve a special notice and a peculiarly grateful recognition.

Two new Schools have been established within the course of the year; one in North-Bennet, the other in Hawkins-street. These, with the additions to the Schools before in operation, have increased the number of pupils under the care of the Society to about a thousand.

Some of these children are the offspring of Christian parents, and therefore are not dependent on our exertions for their moral and religious culture. We only co-operate with those, who are the Heaven appointed guardians of their tender minds, in forming them *to glory and virtue.* A considerable number

more, though less privileged in this respect, were not suffered to live in absolute ignorance of their destiny and obligations.

But a great proportion, when first introduced to our Schools, were almost as ignorant, as they were born, of every thing necessary or desirable to be known. Not a few were unable to read—some of whom, but for the organization of this Society, would probably have remained to the present time, and perhaps through life, in this deplorable state. Many of them were *wise to do evil, though to do good they had no knowledge*. Placed in situations where they had nothing to check, but every thing to quicken the growth of vicious habits, they were advancing as rapidly, as the *enemy of all righteousness* could desire, in preparation for his wretched service, of which *the wages is death*.

How pleasing the change! Instead of dealing out oaths and imprecations with every breath, they are taught to remember and adore that *great and fearful Name, the Lord our God*. Instead of spending the sacred hours, which He claims for His peculiar service and worship, in idleness and sin; to their own ruin, and the disturbance and grief of those, who reverence the day and the institutions of God; they are collected in the school-room and in the church, where they may be made *wise unto salvation, through faith that is in Christ*.

But we have the pleasure of extracting from the reports of superintendents themselves. The gentleman, who has the oversight of the school held in School-street, observes: "The improvement of the children in letters has been as great, as could reasonably have been ex-

pected. Several, who entered the School with little more than a knowledge of the alphabet, are now able to read the New-Testament with tolerable facility; and of these some, who were of sufficient age to have been good readers, when they entered the School. The improvement of the children in religious knowledge has also been encouraging, in general; in some instances it has been striking. And though I do not know that I can state any instance, in which attendance at the School has been blessed to the undoubted conversion of a child; yet there are numerous instances of children whose consciences are tender, and their minds very seriously impressed. Some account of a few of these may not be unacceptable.

“A girl, eight years old. Her teacher, observing to her that her parents were probably pious, asked her how she would feel, if both her parents and herself should die, and she should behold her Judge place her parents on His right hand, while herself, dying with her present wicked heart, should be separated from them, and placed on His left? Looking up in her teacher’s face, she answered, ‘Ought I to think more of being separated from them, than of displeasing a Holy God, and being where I cannot see Him, and see how wicked my heart is?’ This child, in obedience to her teacher’s advice, is in the habit of retirement for prayer before she goes to publick worship.

“Another, nine years old, told her teacher she used to think herself some wicked, before she came to Sunday School—now she thought herself much more so. Her teacher lately observed her crying, and was told by another child, that she wanted to go out. The

teacher told her she need not cry—she might go out. She answered, ‘I am not crying to go out; if other children could only see their wicked hearts, they would all cry.’

“Another, ten years old, rises early to read the Bible, appears very tender and penitent when made sensible of a fault—says she feels sin to be a burden—expressed to her teacher a desire to see and converse with” her minister.

“A Boy, fourteen years old—not serious before he entered school. After some time his teacher observed an appearance of unusual seriousness in him, and taking occasion to inquire particularly into the state of his mind, found it much exercised with a sense of sin, and anxious about his spiritual state. His teacher invited him to call on him the next day, with a view to further and more particular conversation. He called early the next day, and appeared to feel a deep interest in the subjects of conversation. His teacher told him, if he would call at his store in the afternoon, he would lend him a book adapted to the present state of his mind. Punctual to his engagement, he called immediately after dinner. His teacher lent him *Doddrige’s Rise and Progress*—He has since informed his teacher that this book correctly describes the exercises of his mind. Asked by his teacher if he prayed, he answered he did not see how he could live without prayer. Asked if he experienced scoffs and sneers on account of his present state of mind, he answered, with tears, in the affirmative.

“Numerous other instances of children, whose minds are seriously impressed, have come to my knowledge.

The foregoing are presumed sufficient to be mentioned, in the present communication."

The Superintendent then proceeds to remark judiciously, as follows :

"In some Sunday-School reports, which I have seen published, I have observed much notice taken of the diligence of the children in committing to memory portions of Scripture, catechisms, hymns, &c. This branch of instruction has not been neglected in the school, which is the subject of this paper. Many thousands of verses of Scripture, catechisms, hymns and prayers have been committed to memory : still I have no doubt, that the aggregate falls vastly short of what an equal number of children, in other schools, may have committed to memory in the same time. This is not to be attributed to want of fidelity in the teachers, or want of capacity and diligence in the children ; but to the manner in which I have endeavoured to direct the instruction of the school, the object of which has been, rather to enlighten the understandings, and press truth upon the consciences of the children, than to burden their memories."

He afterwards observes—

"From the reports of the teachers, of their visits to the families, to which the children belong, it appears that the school is gaining more and more the esteem and affection of the parents. Some parents, who once received their visits with coldness, now receive them with cordiality. Many parents solicit frequent visits, express much gratitude to the teachers, and appear forward to enter into religious conversation. In their visits, the teachers have held many interesting and very

solemn conversations with the parents, in which they have endeavoured to enlighten the ignorant, arouse the stupid, alarm the secure, correct the erroneous, and point the distressed to *the Lamb of God, who taketh away the sin of the world.*"

In conclusion, addressing the President of the Society, he adds—

I should do violence to my own feelings if I should omit on the present occasion to express my thanks to the teachers for the fidelity, zeal and perseverance, with which they have attended to their arduous duties, requiring much self-denial, and sacrifice of personal comfort; also for the respect and affectionate regard, with which their deportment toward myself has been marked. And you will permit me, Sir, to ask, for them and for myself, a remembrance in your prayers, that God would give us grace to be faithful and successful in the work in which we are engaged."

In the postscript, he says—

"It may not be amiss to add, that a child connected with this school until sickness prevented his attendance, who died the summer past, gave in his last sickness, comfortable evidence of having *passed from death unto life.*"

Into this school three hundred have been admitted since the last anniversary.

The School in North-Bennet-street was opened about seven months since. Two hundred and sixty-nine children have been admitted, and about one hundred usually attend. Nearly one half of these are too young to commit lessons to memory; the others have recited 1,042 hymns, and 5,406 verses of the Sacred Scriptures.

The School in Hawkins-street was commenced on Sunday, April 5th. "The whole number of children admitted," says one of the superintendents, "is *two hundred and ninety-six*, but from various causes, (among others is the establishment of Sunday-Schools in the Religious Societies, with which the parents of the children were connected,) the number now usually attending is about *one hundred*. Most of these are the children of respectable parents; but some are among the most proper subjects of this Charity. Scarcely has a Sabbath passed without adding some new scholars to our number; and we have reason to believe that, as the advantages of the School become more known, many parents, hitherto reluctant, will avail themselves of the privileges offered for their children by the Society.

"One *death* has occurred among the children, which was suitably noticed in an interesting and solemn manner the following Sabbath.

"The *improvement* which has been made by the scholars, has been on the whole encouraging. Though some have pained our hearts by their negligence and stupidity; many others of both sexes have applied to their studies with diligence, and made great progress; and their behaviour on the Sabbath, and at home, has been a "credit to Sunday-Schools." Some have been instructed in the first principles, who are now able to read in the New Testament, in which all the Classes, except those composed of the smaller children, are exercised by reading and by questions. They also commit to memory much of the Testament, many hymns, and the Evangelical and Mothers' Catechisms. An account of the acquirements of the Scholars has been kept by the

Teachers, which has been recorded in a proper manner by the Secretary. These accounts have been read aloud as they were received, about once a month, in the hearing of the Scholars, and sometimes of their Parents, who have occasionally been present; after which, in some cases, a word of exhortation has been addressed to the children, and we hope not without some effect.

“In *Teachers* the School has been highly favoured. Though some have *run well for a season* only, others have persevered, and are still disposed to devote their time and strength in the cause. Of the latter not a few are *Daughters of Zion*.

“During the season, the School has been visited by many persons, who have expressed great satisfaction—and by the kindness of the Society worshipping in Brattle-street, a part of their gallery has been appropriated to the accommodation of the children,* about forty of whom attend publick worship there under the care of two or more Teachers.”

He concludes the communication by saying,

“On the whole, we are of opinion that this School has been useful, and will continue to be so; and in due time the Society will reap an abundant harvest for all their labours.”

The number of children admitted into the School in Mason-street since the last anniversary is 330. The average attendance amounts to about 160. By these pupils have been committed to memory since the first of February, 54,029 verses of the Sacred Scripture, 1,899 hymns, 17,779 answers to questions in the Catechism,

* A similar accommodation has been afforded by other religious Societies in the vicinity of the Sabbath Schools.

and 234 have learned prayers. One boy in this School has committed to memory since March, the whole of Matthew, Mark, and John, and a considerable part of Luke's Gospel. His sister since January has committed the four gospels entire; and both of them, in addition, the Smaller Catechism, the Mother's Catechism, and a large number of hymns.

The Committee appointed by the Board of Directors to prepare and circulate an Address to the principal towns in the State and elsewhere, as they should judge expedient, recommending the establishment of Sabbath-Schools and furnishing, as helps and encouragements to their undertaking, such books and papers as are necessary to the purpose, have acted accordingly. About 250 were sent abroad. There is reason to believe that much good has resulted from this measure. Information more or less direct and particular, of the establishment of Schools for religious instruction on the Sabbath has been received from many places, to which our circulars were sent.

The first written communication received was from the town of Abington, in the county of Plymouth. This letter unhappily has been mislaid; so that nothing more can be stated at present respecting that town, than that a Sabbath School was opened there with very flattering prospects during the past season.

From Marlborough we are gratified to learn that, "in consequence of the circular received" from us, a Sabbath School was immediately established, and is now in a very flourishing state. "On Sabbath noon, the last day of May," says our obliging correspondent, "we first met for its establishment. But we found

many obstacles to surmount. Being unacquainted with the tendency and design of Sabbath Schools, serious apprehensions were felt by many, lest it was a concerted plan secretly to propagate the opinions of a party. Every effort was made to obviate these objections. Parents were assured that it was not the design to teach particular creeds, but to aid their children in obtaining a knowledge of the Scriptures, and of those fundamental doctrines, which immediately concern their salvation. Still, however, it was viewed by many as a matter of *prudence* to prohibit their children's attendance, until they should learn, by personal observation, what character the school did in reality possess. Of course scholars have been dropping in gradually, from its commencement to the present time. At first there were but twenty-seven scholars under the care of five instructors, and they met together in the centre school house. About the middle of July it was thought expedient to remove to the meeting house, and provide more instructors ; and it has since continued to increase, until we have now one hundred and twenty scholars, under the care of fourteen instructors.

“ The School occupies an hour each intermission. Immediately after divine service, A. M. they assemble in the centre of the house for prayer. The instructors then severally retire with their respective classes to separate pews for the recitation. Since the school commenced they have recited 7,697 Cummings' questions, 12,839 answers in Emerson's and the Assembly's Catechism, 2,460 verses of Hymns, and 534 verses in the Bible. We have a school fund raised by subscription, from which the children receive compen-

sation for whatever they learn. The class in Cummings are entitled to a cent for every twenty-five answers, and the other classes in proportion to their age and capacity. Tickets are delivered to them each Sabbath specifying the sum they have already earned, which are exchanged the next Sabbath. One half of their little earnings in this way is to be appropriated for the education of a heathen child at Ceylon, named *Sylvester F. Bucklin*, out of respect to our Pastor, and the other to be delivered to them in books. This we find an effectual stimulus, and one which deeply interests their feelings. The good ultimately resulting from such a fund, thus appropriated, is incalculable. While their little bosoms are taught to swell with pity for those who have no Catechisms, no Bibles, no Sabbath Schools, surely they must learn more highly to prize their own. I do ardently wish that a plan similar to this might be more generally adopted.

“I am happy,” he adds, “to say, that the prejudices against the School, which at first existed, have, in a great measure subsided, and it is now going forward under flourishing circumstances.”

A letter from Hingham informs us of the opening of a Sabbath School there on the 28th of April. This is confined to females, and has only female instructors. Seventy scholars, from five to sixteen years of age have been admitted to the School, between forty and fifty of whom regularly attend, and cheer the hearts of their instructors “by their good conduct” and “rapid improvement.” They have committed to memory 400 chapters of the Bible, and 266 Hymns, beside questions in the Catechism not enumerated.

We have also received an interesting communication

dated at Catskill, N. Y. Sept. 12, giving an account of a Sabbath School established in Randolph, Vermont, on a broader scale, than has yet come to our knowledge. The following extract will serve at once to show the manner in which it is conducted, and to corroborate the testimony furnished from so many other sources, that nothing is necessary to the successful operation of Sabbath Schools, but zeal and perseverance on the part of those who undertake them.

“About six weeks since, after a consultation among some of the brethren and other respectable citizens, a Sabbath School was announced, to commence at the meeting house on the following Sabbath. We expected from former appearances, but a *very few* scholars, especially at the commencement; but when the hour arrived, to our joyful surprise, no less than seventy youth appeared, and gave in their names as attendants—and on the following Sabbath, between one and two hundred—the number constantly increasing since. Those who attend are of various ages, from 4 to 25 or 30 years. On account of this disparity of age, and of consequent capacity, we have found it necessary to separate the scholars into three departments; the youngest department, which is again subdivided into eight divisions or classes for convenience of instruction, to commit Scripture, Hymns, minor Catechisms, &c.—the next to commit Scripture, according to Wilbur’s system of questions—and the third, or oldest, to write, or discourse verbally on certain theological questions, &c. previously given out; the same as are answered from Scripture by the Wilbur class.

“There appears to be a hopeful degree of engaged

ness and solemn attention to the exercise. I can certainly say, with respect to the Wilbur class, that I have had more satisfaction in instructing it, than in any other instruction I ever gave. God certainly smiles upon our feeble endeavours."

The Committee are happy to state, that an important design of the Society, unavoidably delayed for a considerable time, has been carried into operation since the last anniversary. This is, the employment of a domestic Missionary or Evangelist, for the gratuitous benefit of those, who are by poverty or otherwise excluded from our houses of worship on the Sabbath.

The Rev. Elijah Waterman of Bridgeport, laboured in the service of the Society between two and three weeks. His addresses to the parents and children of the Sabbath Schools were heard with great attention, and we trust in many instances with profit, and he left us, to return to the people of his charge, with a strong conviction that the fields were whitening to the harvest.

The Rev. Mr. Osborne soon entered into the labours assigned him, and, as far as his health and previous engagements would allow, devoted himself several weeks to the spiritual improvement of the poor. He was a *son of thunder* to the stupid and secure, and a *son of consolation* to the anxious and desponding.

The Rev. Mr. Sabine, late of St. John's, Newfoundland, has since been engaged, for the term of three months, to labour among the poor and destitute.

The Rev. Mr. Rossiter, who had been a year or more in the service of the Female Missionary Society, has also received an appointment of three months, to commence the first of November. His tried diligence

and zeal, and the gratitude and attachment of multitudes, among whom he has gone *preaching the kingdom of God*, authorize the hope, that his future labours will not be in vain.

It is with much satisfaction the Committee are able to add, that a convenient and eligibly situated place has been procured for the accommodation of Seamen on the Sabbath, and that sufficient funds have been raised to furnish this very useful portion of the community with the ministry of reconciliation on the morning of every Lord's day.

The Reverend Gentleman, whose deep and lively interest in their welfare has induced him to undertake the office of their spiritual teacher and guide, feels much encouraged by the respect and solemn attention, with which his services have been received.

The following extract of a letter just received from him by one of the Committee, will show something of the success, which has hitherto attended this measure, and suggest some thoughts in prospective not unworthy the attention of the Society.

With respect to the room, he observes, "It is, I think, peculiarly appropriate to the object, at present. And many thanks are due to the gentlemen, Merchants, on Central-Wharf, and Proprietors, for the spirit of accommodation and kindness they have uniformly shown. Much benefit, I cannot but hope, will be derived to them, and to our Merchants at large, from the ultimate success of the measure.

"I think but of one objection to the place—and that respects the formation of a Church among our seafaring friends. If a Church be formed, it should grow out

of the family relation, or consist with it, and must hence admit both males and females, as they appear qualified. But the wharf is not a fit place for females—and on this account a house for public worship seems desirable. One seaman I noticed with pleasure, the last Lord's day, leading his two little sons into our assembly.

“With respect to the success of the plan, it becomes me at this period to speak with caution and diffidence, at least as far as my own instrumentality is concerned. Of duty in the case I have not a shadow of doubt. And most willingly do I testify to the uniformly serious deportment and deep attention of the audience hitherto, an appearance, which encourages me to hope that some precious seeds may be sown, which, under the blessing of God shall produce valuable fruit.

“As it is a new and interesting field, however, perhaps mere novelty may influence several in their attendance ; still I cannot but hope a favourable result, if it be only from the distribution of the Religious Tracts, which have been invariably received with apparent eagerness, at the close of public worship. At that time also, I have had the pleasure and privilege of distributing a few copies of “Ryther's Seaman's Preacher,” of an edition not long since published by the Society for promoting Christian Knowledge, and furnished me by Dea. Hilliard of Cambridge.

“I have not held any meeting in the afternoon as yet, not knowing in what manner the Society might choose to conduct the establishment ; nor have I, from the nature of my engagements during the week, had opportunities of private conference with my hearers. It is obvious, that on such opportunities much of a minister's usefulness must depend.

“ In two instances I have been addressed by letters, one of which expressed in a very interesting manner the writer’s feelings on being present at a religious meeting of his “ brother-seamen.” The other was from a young mechanic, hopefully pious, covering thirty dollars “ to be employed for missionary and other religious purposes.” On a private interview, in which he specified his wishes, I found that he had in this donation devoted the tenth, or ‘ tithed,’ of all he found himself possessed of at commencing in this town the business of a Sail-maker. The Lord reward him !

“ On the whole, I think we have no reason to regret that the attempt has been made, and hope that prayers for its success will be offered by the members of the Society with those of,” &c.

In the review of the past year we find great cause for gratitude, and a powerful stimulus to exertion. The smiles of Heaven appear to have attended the efforts, which have thus far been made by the Society. Already has the public attention in some measure been roused to contemplate, among other benevolent designs, the important object of giving religious instruction on the Sabbath to the children of the poor. The results of labour already bestowed warrant the hope of future and increasing benefit. In many instances the gloom of poverty has been dispelled, and hope arisen in the hearts of disconsolate parents. While their language has been, *our flesh is as the flesh of our brethren, our children as their children*, this Society has recognized the claim, and extended the advantages of Christian beneficence, not to perishable bodies indeed, but to im-

mortal souls ; and has exerted its efforts in seconding the designs of Infinite Mercy, to rescue from sin and moral wretchedness many, who, though long neglected, are yet capable, through Divine Grace, of being heirs to a glorious and imperishable inheritance, and of shining as stars in the kingdom of God.

The explicitness of the last year's report, however, on this subject, renders further remark unnecessary. The field has this year been enlarged. Not only children, but many adults have reason, we trust, to be grateful to the Giver of all wisdom, and of every good gift, that He hath put it into the hearts of any of the stewards of His bounty to *devise liberal things*, in regard to them. At the last anniversary, no one had been employed by the Society, as a Missionary among the sick and destitute poor ; but now that great object has received and is receiving the efficient attention of the Board of Directors. May the great Head of the Church abundantly bless such efforts !

At the last anniversary also, nothing had been done in this commercial Town toward supplying with the ministry of the Gospel that interesting and neglected class of men, who *go down to the sea in ships*. But now, *through the good hand of our God upon us*, they can hear as well, as we, *the glad tidings of salvation*.

Yet though much has already been done, there is much more still to be effected before the design of our institution will be fully accomplished. And shall any of us, after *having put our hand to the plough, look back* ? Let us rather be animated by the success, which has hitherto attended the Society's labours, to go forward with increased resolution and zeal. Difficulties we

must indeed expect, for what object of importance was ever effected without? But the cause is God's. Though the discouragements, therefore, were tenfold greater, than they are, there would be no reason for despondency. In the blessing, then, already bestowed even on partial and comparatively feeble exertions, let us acknowledge the goodness and condescension of God, and hear in it the voice of the Prophet of old, *not by might nor by power, but by My Spirit, saith the Lord of Hosts. Who art thou, O great mountain? Before Zerubbabel thou shalt become a plain : and he shall bring forth the headstone thereof with shoutings, crying, GRACE, GRACE, unto it.*

STATEMENT

Of the Permanent Fund, and of Money received by the Treasurer of this Society, during the year ending October, 1818.

<i>Treasurer,</i>	<i>Dr.</i>
To cash received for life subscriptions, constituting a permanent fund - - - - -	\$660 00
To do. " " subscriptions for the support of a missionary Boston - - - - -	745 00
To do. " towards building a place of worship for the Poor, &c. - - - - -	203 26
To do. " for the support of a preacher to the seamen	240 63
To do. proceeds of annual subscriptions, contributions, donations, interest, &c. including balance of last year's acc't.	530 21
	\$2,379 11

<i>Contra,</i>	<i>Cr.</i>
By cash paid for missionary services - - - - -	\$100 00
By do paid for furnishing a place of worship for the seamen, &c. - - - - -	148 95
By do. paid for support of Sunday-Schools, viz.	
Printing	137 82
Books	191 77
Shoes and Clothing	142 79
Wood, and incidental	20 28
	\$492 66
Deduct, received for books sold	226 50
	266 16
For balance, cash, and Notes on interest	1,864 05
	\$2,379 11

*Account of Books sold, and delivered for the use of Sunday
Schools.*

- 2000 Address to Parents.
- 2500 Rules and Regulations.
- 4000 Evangelical Catechism.
- 3000 Sheets of Hymns and Prayers
- 500 Mothers' Catechism.
- 200 Evangelical Primer.
- 1500 Spelling-books for Sunday-Schools.
- 1050 Watts' Divine Songs.
- 100 Monitor.
- 100 Guide for Sunday-School Teachers.
- 100 Hints for do.
- 50 Young Cottager.
- 50 Two Lambs.
- 50 Barbauld's Hymns.
- 50 Prize Bibles.
- 50 Rewards No. 2.
- 50 Visit to Sabbath Schools.
- 50 Lessons on the Lord's Prayer.

Besides which a considerable number of tracts have been given for
rewards and prizes.