

WATCH TOWER BIBLE AND TRACT SOCIETY.

REPORT FOR FISCAL YEAR ENDING DEC. 1, 1897.

AN ANNUAL report of this Society's work is due to our readers, almost all of whom, directly or indirectly, financially or otherwise, are colaborers and associates in this service of the Lord and his truth. It will be encouraging to you to know of the prosperity of the general cause, even as it encourages us, to learn of the progress of the work of grace in your own hearts and in the local churches in various quarters. The Lord's work is *one*, and every feature of it must be of deep interest to all who love him and who recognize that we are living in the "harvest" of the Gospel age, and that the Chief-Reaper is the Superintendent, under whose guidance the sickle of truth is being thrust in, for the gathering of all the true wheat into his Kingdom garner.

Hence, these annual statements should not be construed as *boasting*, nor yet as *solicitations* for further donations. Surely there is no room for boasting; all that we all unitedly have done, or can do, is so little, compared with what we all would like to do, so little in comparison to what we have received of our Lord, the value of which is beyond computation in silver or gold, that we feel regret for its smallness, and realize that we are not profitable servants who bring our Master gain, but are still his debtors to an infinite amount and can only hope to have him say to us, Well done, good, faithful servants, *you have done what you could!*

As for *soliciting*, we have never done it and will never do it. If this is the Lord's work, and as we believe a special "harvest" work, and he, the great Reaper, is in charge, we need not fear that voices and money and all things needful to its successful accomplishment will not be supplied. Our only concern should be lest we should fail to embrace all the opportunities which come our way. Let us fear, lest an

opportunity for service being put within our reach (along any line), any of us should fail to improve such opportunities and be unworthy of the words, "She hath done what she *could*." In the election of the "little flock" for the Kingdom, nothing is more evident than that God has refused to define what *sacrifices* we must make – except that it shall primarily consist of a broken and a contrite heart. The outworking of our consecrated lives will prove to what extent our naturally selfish hearts have been broken and are contrite. He who *loves* the Lord and his cause *much*, will *serve* proportionately, and will know no limit to that service except *ability*; which will be so used as to make the most of it.

Nor are money talents and voice and pen talents the only ones the Lord is pleased to use in the "harvest" work: many are rendering very efficient service to the truth as Colporteurs and tract distributors. Indeed, probably one half of all who now rejoice in the present truth are indebted under God's providence to these efficient colaborers, – whose work in many respects closely resembles that of the twelve and the seventy sent out by our Lord in the Jewish harvest, who went from house to house with the good tidings of the Kingdom. Besides the fruitage already seen, it is not unreasonable to suppose that a wide influence for the truth and against error has been exerted by the DAWNS and TRACTS and TOWERS, far beyond those who have confessed the truth. There are many evidences of this, not only in the increased opposition of the "chief priests and scribes," but also in the many private and anonymous letters received, asking questions, asking for literature and expressing confidence; but as at the first advent "for fear of the Jews" holding back. Many of these of course may never become "overcomers," and may constitute members in the "great company" that will fail to take a *proper* stand for the Lord and his truth until the complete collapse of Babylon and the attendant "great tribulation" shall thoroughly arouse them. Others of these, however, altho timid and fearful and disposed to inquire, "Have any of the chief priests or scribes believed?" will by and by gain strength

and courage from the "meat in due season" and come out bravely on the Lord's side as "overcomers."

We see no reason to think, as some appear to, [R2233 : page 308] that all that can be reached with the truth have already been reached. Quite to the contrary, altho this may be true in some places, it does not seem to be generally the case. We are inclined to believe that the Lord is using certain channels to divert conscientious persons from "Babylon" and to more or less prepare them for the full message of present truth; and from these we expect large results during the next few years. For instance; Socialism, Single-Taxism and Nationalism have attracted some people of excellent intentions who, as they see the impossibility of these systems and theories bringing the Balm of Gilead and real blessings for which the groaning creation waits, will be good subjects for the truth. We have considerable hope for a favorable influence from DAWN, VOL. IV., upon such. We see also among various earnest "come-outers" and amongst Baptists and Mr. Dowie's followers and the Christian Alliance people and Plymouth Brethren and Adventists good fields for active service with tracts, TOWERS and DAWNS, – *meekly, lovingly, wisely* presented, with a word in season, "seasoned with salt."

The work from this standpoint divides itself into the following branches: –

(1) The WATCH TOWER, which as your servant seeks to do you all the good possible, by stirring up your pure minds by way of remembrance, altho you know many of the things which it presents from the Scriptures, and altho its readers are generally established in the present truth. You will be glad to know that its subscription list, which quite generally represents the deeply interested, is gradually increasing. We were greatly surprised, also, that notwithstanding the depression in financial matters the number who get the TOWER free, as *the Lord's poor*, decreased about two thousand, while the *self paid* subscriptions increased about the same number. Our only fear is

that some who cannot afford to pay are neglecting to avail themselves of this feature of the Lord's bounty, which *he provides*, and which we as his servants take pleasure in dispensing.

(2) The Correspondence Department, with which is associated the keeping of accounts, attention to your orders for DAWNS, TRACTS, TOWERS, BIBLES, etc. This department handled about twenty-one thousand of your letters, and sent out about fourteen thousand four hundred replies. Thank God for the mail facilities of our favored day. Your welcome letters, some full of joy and rejoicing and telling of successes, and some full of sorrow and trouble, asking our prayers and counsel, are all esteemed a privilege and a part of the service which we rejoice to be privileged to engage in. We trust that we of the TOWER office are also remembered in your prayers, for we have trials and discouragements as well as joys and encouragements.

"Blest be the tie that binds
Our hearts in Christian love,
The fellowship of kindred minds
Is like to that above."

While this love and fellowship extends to all who own our Lord (whether or not they follow with us) yet properly it extends in an especial degree to those who manifest the holy spirit of love, who are striving to walk the narrow way of self-sacrifice and to whom the Lord's favor has been manifested, in the opening of their understanding to the present truth. We have efficient collaborators in this department, and will extend it to meet your demands upon it as far as possible. As frequently as possible, however, we refer to the DAWNS or back TOWERS as replies to questions; because the answers there given are generally more thorough than we could give in the compass of a letter, and besides will save time for other features of the work.

(3) The Colporteur Department. – This department might be termed the Evangel-department in this "harvest" work. Dear, consecrated brethren and sisters devote their time and strength and

talents to house to house visitation to call the attention of fellow Christians to the "meat in due season" now provided by the Lord for all "the household of faith." Largely through the agency of this department nearly a million copies of MILLENNIAL DAWN in its several volumes have been put into the hands of the public, and millions of tracts distributed. Many who read this article owe their knowledge of the truth (under divine providence) largely to the courage, faith and perseverance of the dear children of God who serve in this department. Laboring not for worldly applause or advantage, but at the expense, the loss, of these, they shall surely have a gracious reward from the great Judge when he makes up his jewels. One dear brother, an Express Co.'s agent in a western city, recently interested and very active in the Lord's service, longed to be in the colporteur work or to do something to assist in this department, and finding another brother anxious for the work he became sponsor for his account and started him as a colporteur. His deficit during the year was probably \$120., but he rejoices in this as the next best thing to being a colporteur himself. He has become still more deeply interested, and besides a liberal donation has written promising the proceeds of some property as soon as he can sell it. It is needless to add that he is greatly blessed in heart, and growing in grace and knowledge.

The past year has been one of greater encouragement to these vineyard laborers than several preceding, and very generally they have been able to fully **[R2234 : page 308]** meet their expenses by economy. They were greatly helped and encouraged by the assistance rendered them last year by Bro. Hay's donation. Several new laborers **[R2234 : page 309]** have recently entered this service. The fourth volume of DAWN promises to be specially saleable and an entering wedge for the other volumes and thus an aid to the Colporteurs, some of whom now are making more than their expenses. Let us remember at the throne of grace constantly these whose special service puts them into the forefront of the battle for the truth.

(4) The Tract Distribution Department. – Every WATCH TOWER reader is invited to become an active participant in this branch of the service – by enclosing them in your letter, or by wrapping one in each bundle if you keep store, or by handing them to your fellow passengers if you travel, or by handing special ones to friends and neighbors as you have opportunity, or by street distribution about the hour when prayer meetings, lectures, etc., take in or dismiss – standing at a little distance (say half a block) so as not to give offence as implying that church people need tracts, however much you may be sure that they do need them.

By reference to another column of this report it will be seen that the tract circulation for the past year reached the highest point yet attained – nearly thirty millions of pages. We congratulate you on the faithfulness which this implies. The Lord's blessing surely has been with you as fearlessly and not ashamed to own the Lord and his Word you have done what you could to dispel superstition and darkness from the minds of God's people, and to enable them to worship the Father in spirit and in truth.

All the interested have not the same opportunities for tract distribution, and some who used comparatively few were the most zealous in furnishing the financial means by which these could be supplied *free* in so large quantities: for be it remembered that all tracts are supplied *free*, being published out of *voluntary* contributions to the tract fund. However few and unpopular we are, dear friends, no other tract society can make so favorable a report. The Lord be praised that his free grace shed abroad in our hearts prompts us to the voluntary services. And having done what we could we feel it an offering far too small, and wholly unworthy of divine notice and acceptance, except in and through the merit of our dear Redeemer's sacrifice.

(5) The "Pilgrim" Preaching Department. – While all of the Lord's people are pilgrims and strangers and pilgrims journeying toward the

heavenly Canaan, and while all also are preachers to the extent of their opportunities and talents, yet we use the above term to describe those who are going about from place to place where as many as four TOWER subscribers reside to meet with and encourage the brethren, both with public and private meetings. Like other departments this one is for your *service* and the Lord's glory, and not for money making. You are not asked to guarantee a salary of one or two hundred dollars per night for the service, but it is *free* – no collections even are taken up, and no money solicited in any manner: not even for traveling expenses. Three brethren are at present giving their entire time to this branch of the service, while twelve give more or less of their time; all of them are very zealous, however, and seeking to be more qualified and used by the Master in his service.

The traveling and other necessary expenses of these ministers (*servants*) are met out of your voluntary donations to the Tract Fund; and they ask no wages, preferring to wait for the rewards which God has promised. Nor are they laggards and drones: when they visit your town or city or village it means business – the King's business, which requires energy. They come to you expecting to hold afternoon and evening meetings daily, while they stay; and their stay will be for one, two or three days as per cards of notification. These are the Lord's servants, and your servants for his sake: receive them as such. Let them receive the love of brethren; show toward them the hospitality you would surely extend to the Lord, for they are "members of his body," and like yourself his representatives.

One very earnest Brother, who for years has been a generous contributor to the work and helpful every way, writes us that being appreciated by his employer he has received a substantial increase in his salary and thereby expects to be able to considerably increase his '98 contributions to the general fund for the spread of the good tidings: and having heard one of the "Pilgrims" he desires to become responsible for the expenses of one of these, after which, if he be able to give more, it shall go to the general work. This dear Brother, who

resides in eastern Pennsylvania, is as modest and meek as he is zealous and unselfish and insists that his name be not mentioned. But he does this unto the Lord, and the Lord knows of it and, we may be sure, appreciates it and will by and by reward. Graciously our Lord has provided that every one that loves him may in some manner manifest that love; – whether by casting two mites into his treasury or by giving even a cup of cold water to one of his disciples. "Where there's a will there's a way."

(6) Through the "Pilgrims" and through leaders and others, we have reports from all over the "harvest" field, continually. We are glad to be able to inform you that while our great adversary, Satan, is permitted by the Lord to trouble and prove and sift his people as heretofore, and in some respects more than ever, yet in our opinion the Church everywhere has been growing in grace during the past year, more than ever before; and consequently is better able to stand [R2234 : page 310] such attacks and get a blessing instead of an injury out of them, even tho the siftings result in the falling away of some, who despite every effort toward "pulling them out of the fire," become "offended."

Many letters have told us of blessings which resulted from following the suggestions of the Aug. 15th TOWER, – that as an assistance in the cultivation of the holy spirit of *love* each should ask help from on high each morning and should review the success or failure of the day before the Lord at evening prayer; and that on alternate Sundays Matt. 5:1-16 and 1 Cor. 13:1-13 be read and pondered. We trust that many more than we have yet heard from have followed this plan and experienced a blessing. There is a blessing in it for all who will practice it we believe and for our own part we will continue it during 1898. Who will join us? Brethren and Sisters, pray for us, as we also pray for you all!

DISTRIBUTION ACCOUNT.

During the year from Dec. 1, 1896, to Dec. 1, 1897,

there has been circulated free the following reading matter, paid for out of the voluntary donations to the Tract Fund, –

Copies of OLD THEOLOGY TRACTS,..... 1,423,010.
" " ZION'S WATCH TOWER,..... 332,212.

Since tracts vary greatly in the number of their pages, it is customary to state their circulation by pages.

Thus stated the foregoing represent a

Total of Tract Pages..... 29,347,838.

The total number of copies of MILLENNIAL DAWN, circulated by the cooperation of this fund (not at its expense), was..... 69,891.

FINANCIAL ACCOUNT.

EXPENDITURES: –

For Tracts and TOWERS sent out free,..... \$7,296.90
Labor, for mailing same,..... 540.00
Postage, freight, wrappers, etc.,..... 760.00
Foreign translations, etc., account,..... 1,341.99
Traveling expenses, "Pilgrims," etc.,..... 1,935.20
Balance cash on hand,..... 191.80

Total,..... \$12,065.89

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RECEIPTS: –

Cash balance on hand, Dec. 1, '96..... \$ 314.35
From "Good Hopes," 8,165.61
" other sources,..... 3,585.93

Total,..... \$12,065.89

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"Good Hopes" blanks go with this issue, as usual; but do not understand them to be *requests*, they are merely notifications of an *opportunity* to join in this service.

The office associates and colaborers join in sending to all the TOWER readers our best wishes, Christian love, and the compliments of the holiday season. May our Lord give us all more and more to abound in all the fruits of the spirit and the service of each other and the truth.
