Industrialised Conversion:
The Religious Tract Society and Popular Science Publishing
in Victorian Britain

A dissertation submitted for the degree of Ph.D.

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The book trade was industrialised in the middle of the nineteenth century, and cheap books began to appear in large numbers. The emerging mass market tempted some publishers to minister to what they perceived to be the public taste, and contemporaries began to complain about the rise of unauthorised speculations which were likely to lead readers astray. Men of science were among those complaining, since their authority was shaky and did not extend into the realm of popular publishing. Members of the Christian churches were also vociferous in expressing their fears that industrial technology was removing the religious spirit from print. Christian commentators pointed to the increasing numbers of infidel and secular works, particularly in the sciences, and called upon religious publishers to fight back.

Among those which did so was the evangelical Religious Tract Society, which was committed to using printing technologies to reach the mass audience, and whose committee had become experts in the use of print to effect personal spiritual transformations, particularly conversion. In the 1840s, the Society was beginning to publish popular science works whose Christian tone was intended to counter the separation between science and faith which the secular and infidel publications appeared to be producing. This thesis studies the Religious Tract Society as a way to investigate the rise of popular science publishing in the mid-nineteenth century, and to reassess the relationship between science and faith under industrialisation.

Chapter One introduces the Society and its aims, discusses why it decided to begin publishing popular science, and examines how it reconciled the commercial and spiritual aims of business. The second chapter considers the competition, and asks what the RTS had to do to function effectively. The solutions included the physical appearance of the works, and the ways in which they were marketed and distributed. But the works not only had to reach their readers, they had to be read, and be convincing. Chapter Three considers how the Society's writers constructed Christian tone, and tried to persuade readers of the importance of placing the sciences in a theological framework. Their writing practices are the focus of Chapter Four. In the writing, as in the publishing as a whole, we see again the apparent tension between commercial and spiritual worlds, with writing represented both as working spiritually for Christ, and physically for money.

By considering a publisher which was not associated with practising men of science, but which brought the sciences to an enormous audience, this thesis takes the historical study of popular science publishing beyond existing studies of men of science as popularisers and middle-class readerships. It also reforms our understanding of the relationship between science and religion in nineteenth-century Britain, which has remained relatively untouched by the histories of practice and of popular science.
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<td>BFBS</td>
<td>British and Foreign Bible Society (f.1804)</td>
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<td>CIS</td>
<td>Christian Instruction Society (f.1825)</td>
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<td>CRT</td>
<td>Cheap Repository Tracts (1795-98)</td>
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<td>DVS</td>
<td>District Visiting Society (f.1828)</td>
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<td>LCM</td>
<td>London City Mission (f.1835)</td>
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<td>LMS</td>
<td>London Missionary Society (f.1795)</td>
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<td>RLF</td>
<td>Royal Literary Fund (f.1788)</td>
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<td>RTS</td>
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<td>SDUK</td>
<td>Society for the Diffusion of Useful Knowledge (1826-46)</td>
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<td>SPCK</td>
<td>Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge (f.1698)</td>
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<td>USCL</td>
<td>United Society for Christian Literature (f.1935)</td>
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<td>DNB</td>
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**RTS Archives** (held at the School of Oriental and African Studies, London)

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[Signature]
**Introduction**

The age in which we live, is unprecedented for the cheapness and abundant supply of its literature. The huge costly tomes which were within reach of comparatively few of our ancestors, have given place to the small and low-priced volume which is accessible to all. Speculations... are no longer confined to the upper and more refined classes of society; but they have descended through the many channels opened up by the prolific press, to the reading millions of the present time... The great competition in the press naturally tempts its conductors to minister to the public tastes whatever these be.

The Rev. Thomas Pearson, *Infidelity (1853)*

The mass market in books began to develop in the middle of the nineteenth century. Books became available at a quarter of their previous price, and print runs in the tens of thousands became increasingly common. There were social, commercial and legislative reasons underlying the change, but the most obvious cause was the introduction of mechanisation and steam power, particularly as embodied in the steam printing machine. Simon Eliot's statistical work has pinpointed 1845-55 as the period of most rapid growth, and also the decade in which the annual production of cheap books first out-numbered that of mid-priced and expensive books. These changes affected all areas of publishing. In the sciences, the number of books produced per decade increased from just over 1,750 between 1801-10 to almost 6,000

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2. The mass market is characterised by its inclusion of different social groups, as well as its size. The mid-century market was not as large as it would later become, but it did include the middle, lower-middle and working classes. On this audience, see Anderson, P., *The Printed Image and the Transformation of Popular Culture 1790-1860* (Oxford, 1991) 9; Klancher, J.P., *The Making of English Reading Audiences, 1790-1832* (Madison, 1987), Ch. 3.
5. Although original literary fiction (in the form of the three-decker novel) held out until the 1890s, Sutherland, J., *Victorian Novelists and Publishers*, (London, 1976), 11-19.
in the 1840s, and over 8,250 in the 1850s.\(^6\) Around half of these mid-century works would have cost less than 3s. 6d., whereas in 1800, only a fifth would have been so cheap, and almost a half would have cost over 10s.\(^7\) These changes in the book trade built on the success of steam-printed periodicals in the 1830s, and I shall use the term ‘popular science’ to refer to cheap, high circulation publishing in both formats.\(^8\) Popular science publishing differs quantitatively from the introductory works which were available during the eighteenth century, because ‘popular’ science books were available to thousands of readers, not just a few hundreds.\(^9\)

This transformation of the book trade was not unproblematic, as the second part of the Rev. Thomas Pearson’s observation reveals. By 1850, education and literature for the lower ranks of society were widely recommended, but they had to be properly controlled. While educated middle-class audiences were assumed to be able to distinguish between authoritative publications and those containing ‘speculations’, readers who had acquired their literacy in Sunday or charity schools were believed to lack that discrimination. The opportunities for making profit from this mass audience meant that respectable publishers did not have the market to themselves. Not all cheap literature was sound, wholesome or educational, and, what was worse, some of

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\(^6\) Eliot, *Patterns and NSTC 2*, table E. These figures are based on Dewey classifications, and should be considered only as a rough guide. Science’s market share was 3.47\% at the beginning of the century, and 4.36\% in the 1840s; this change alone would only have increased the number of works on the sciences to around 2,250 in the 1840s.


\(^8\) The term was coined around this time, with the OED’s first record of it in 1841, see ‘popular’ adj. meaning 4.a. On the changing definitions of ‘popular’, see Shiach, M., *Discourse on Popular Culture: class, gender and history in cultural analysis, 1730 to the present* (Cambridge, 1989), 1-34, and especially 32-3, on the development in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries of the sense of ‘popular’ as ‘generally accessible’. This sense of ‘popular science’ should be differentiated from what has been termed ‘science in popular culture’, which relates to the practices of the sciences among people not usually accepted in the scientific elite, and particularly in working-class communities. Current usage of ‘popular science’ among historians frequently conflates these two senses. These issues are discussed in Cooter, R., and S. Pumfrey, ‘Separate spheres and public places: reflections on the history of science popularisation and science in popular culture’ *History of Science* 32 (1994): 237-67.

it was immoral, erroneous, or corrupting. As Pearson continued, 'Every diversity of sentiment and interest is represented by the press, and carried, by its cheap and rapid agency, throughout the length and breadth of the land; and the misfortune is, that so large a proportion of these sentiments and interests, thus spread abroad, are adverse to that interest which is the most noble and precious of all.'

Although all forms of authority could be threatened by the growth of the cheap press, the prevailing influence of Christianity in all walks of Victorian life meant that the maintenance of spiritual authority was of particular concern. This was true for all genres from science to sensational fiction, as well as for explicitly theological works. It did not mean that religious priorities ought to direct investigations in the sciences, but that the sciences should be presented in their spiritual context, in a tone that was suitably Christian. Thus, the best-selling *Vestiges of the Natural History of Creation* (1844), was condemned by men of science for its lack of rigour and its unwarranted cosmic speculations, but also for its suspicious theological position. When the Cambridge geologist Adam Sedgwick memorably condemned it as a 'rank pill of asafoetida and arsenic, covered with gold leaf', he used an image of foul-smelling poison disguised in an attractive coating which could equally have referred to the Mormon propaganda of the period.

Pearson particularly mentioned literature and the sciences as genres in which the spiritual was coming under increased pressure. In some cases, the press was permitting 'the demon of infidelity' to stalk openly abroad. In others, 'Christian truths and principles are ignored when they might have been most fittingly introduced. Judging from many publications..., one could never infer that such a thing as Christianity existed among men.' The first set of publications directly attacked Christianity, while the latter sinned by omission. That both were felt to be so

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10 On these attitudes to cheap literature, see Shiach, *Discourse*, 73-4.
dangerous is indicative of the power and influence that was attributed to the press, particularly over semi-educated readers. The question was, how could authority be exercised in the realm of the cheap press, or, how could faith be maintained through, or despite, industrial technology?

Questions of authority were problematic in the sciences, and there was a developing rift between ordained men of science, and the younger, lay, generation, who thought science ought to be secularised as well as professionalised. Even had there been a consensus, men of science had little experience of making their point to a wider audience, let alone of convincing the enormous audiences that industrialised printing had opened up. The development of a ‘public science’ in the eighteenth century had brought the sciences to more lay-people than before, but the audience reached by public lectures and small runs of books was tiny compared with that of the nineteenth century. Nor were there many organisations to assist in the promotion of the sciences, with the British Association for the Advancement of Science (f.1831) meeting for one week in one town each year, and the Society for the Diffusion of Useful Knowledge (f.1826) in perpetual financial crisis.

In contrast, Protestant Christianity had been dealing with the press since the Reformation, as the churches attempted to control interpretations of the Bible not just among the learned but among entire populations. Ideally, every Protestant should have read and understood the Bible. A successful reading would involve the development of faith, and that faith would ensure that the Bible remained a privileged authority against any competitors, printed or oral. The system of churches, ministers

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and theological writers assisted individuals in the difficult interpretation of the Bible, so that the range of personal interpretations stayed within the existing denominations, rather than venturing into heresy. The system also provided avenues of support if faith wavered, and authority figures whose opinion could be trusted. During the evangelical revival, British Protestants developed a complementary system to target those, particularly the industrial working classes, who seemed beyond the reach of the churches. This included Sunday Schools (and later, day schools) to teach literacy, home missionary societies to take the Christian message to people’s doors, and publishing societies to supply cheap religious reading material, including Bibles.20

In mid-nineteenth century Britain, the ubiquity of ministers, missionaries and tracts meant that a basic religious education was widespread. Those who became (or remained) Christians ought to have been able to encounter dangerous reading material, and escape with their souls intact. Ideally, they would dismiss the contents as contrary to Christian faith, but failing that, respect for the opinion of a church leader ought to have the same effect. In the absence of systems to promulgate scientific authority, it was a more open question whether the same reader would be as safe with a cheap edition of William Lawrence’s Lectures on Comparative Anatomy (1816) or George Combe’s Constitution of Man (1828).21 The churches and religious organisations were much more experienced with material where the theological implications were explicit, rather than subtly hidden as they could be in works of science. But as publishers began to produce large numbers of cheap popular science works, and to do so with a concern for profit rather than for faith (or, indeed, scientific accuracy), the problem of protecting the souls of readers became pressing. So too did the need to counter the separation of the sciences from faith which could be found among the infidel and secular publications.

The mid-nineteenth century has traditionally been presented as the time when natural theology was supposed to be on the wane, and the beginnings of secularisation in science appeared. Both these assumptions, as well as the link between them, are misleading. Historians focused on the problems of science and religion have, perhaps, been slower than others in the field to move away from a historiography dominated by intellectuals, theories and doctrines. Religious faith has become an essential feature to be mentioned in discussions of men of science, but we know very little about the interactions between science and faith outside that small group. One of the consequences of this is that it has been left to historians of popular science to point out that certain sorts of science remained imbued with religious sentiment long after expert science was supposed to have been secularised. A publisher of popular science who remained committed to a Christian presentation was, therefore, far from atypical.

The emphasis on natural theology has also been unfortunate. It has too often been presented as a monolith into which all relations between science and religion ought to be fitted. Recent work has emphasised that natural theology came in 'an infinite variety' of versions, and if the definition were restricted to the demonstrative proof of God's existence, so often labelled 'Paleyan', then natural theology was already on the wane when Paley published. The emphasis on natural theology has also obscured the reactions to the sciences of religious groups, such as evangelicals, who could not accept the privileging of nature over revelation it implied. However, the revised

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22 See, for instance, the predominance of Galileo, Boyle, Newton and Darwin in Brooke, J.H., *Science and Religion: some historical perspectives* (Cambridge, 1991), especially Chs. 2-4, 8. This focus is also true of science and religion studies undertaken from outside history of science, as is clear from the work of Boyd Hilton, see Hilton, B., *The Age of Atonement: the influence of evangelicalism on social and economic thought*, 1795-1865 (Oxford, 1988).


picture of the early nineteenth century, which puts a non-demonstrative ‘theology of nature’ in place of a Paleyan natural theology, leaves plenty of space for evangelicals. The essays in Evangelicals and Science in Historical Perspective (1998) provide a first step towards filling this space. However, such studies will have to be careful not to repeat the focus on intellectual elites. Analyses of the evangelicalism of the geologist Hugh Miller, or of the scientific interests of the famous preacher Thomas Chalmers, cannot be typical of the vast numbers of middle-class evangelicals who were experts on neither science nor theology. One way to surmount this problem is to study some of the many evangelical organisations, in particular those concerned with publishing, which provide rich resources for attitudes to many contemporary issues.

The evangelical revival, which began in the mid-eighteenth century with the preaching of John Wesley and George Whitefield, had become an influential force in British society by the first half of the nineteenth century and remained so until the 1880s. Evangelicals included most of the Baptists, Congregationalists and Methodists, as well as large parties within the Established Churches of England and Scotland. Evangelicalism was also influential among non-evangelicals, due to the extensive efforts in tract distribution and missionary work, and high-profile campaigns for Sabbath observance, temperance and restrictions on fairs and races. Although all evangelicals shared the belief in the centrality of Christ’s atonement, and faith in this (and faith alone) as the route to salvation, the differences between denominations made pan-evangelical co-operation tricky. Church structure was a particularly thorny issue which lay behind arguments over establishments, the extent of episcopal authority, the importance of the parochial system and the use of lay agency in church work. Then there were doctrinal issues (especially baptismal regeneration, in the late 1840s) and political issues (since Anglicans typically took a

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26 On ‘theology of nature’, see Brooke, J.H., and R. Hooykaas, New Interactions between Theology and Natural Science: natural theology in Britain from Boyle to Paley (Milton Keynes, 1974).
27 Livingstone, D.N., D. Hart, and M.A. Noll, eds. Evangelicals and Science in Historical Perspective (Oxford, 1998). Most of the chapters are concerned with America, but for the British situation, see those by Bebbington and Topham.
28 Bebbington, D.W., Evangelicalism in Modern Britain: a history from the 1730s to the 1980s (London, 1989); Hilton, Age of atonement.
29 After 1843, Church of Scotland evangelicals formed the Free Church.
30 Evangelical theology and piety are outlined in Hilton, Age of atonement, 1-25.
The success of pan-evangelical societies was dependent upon the magnitude of the friction amongst their membership. R.H. Martin has argued that although the British and Foreign Bible Society (f.1804) often appeared to be the exemplar of evangelical unity, the Religious Tract Society (f.1799) was actually more successful, due in part to its exclusion of the more theologically distinct Unitarians and Roman Catholics. The 1840s were a good time for evangelical union, however, as the political climate around Peel's repeal of the Corn Laws led most evangelicals to unite on a Whig political line. They were also able to unite in opposition to common foes, firstly Tractarianism and then Roman Catholicism itself. The united evangelical opposition to the Maynooth Grant (1845) was such that the Evangelical Alliance was formed in 1846, and it gained greater support during Papal Aggression and the opposition to the re-establishment of the Roman Catholic hierarchy in Britain (1851).

Evangelicals stressed the importance of an explicit personal acceptance of Christ's offer of salvation, and were determined to help other people to convert, with the ultimate goal of hastening the millennium. Although faith was the way to salvation, works were also important – not as a way of gaining grace, but as a consequence of grace. Part of the effect of being converted was the desire to convert others, and this led to the extensive evangelical involvement in mission work, at home and overseas. In both mission fields, the printing press was an essential instrument, for printed materials could get into more homes than missionaries could visit personally, and could be read long after a missionary had left. While the centrality of evangelicalism makes a study of its relationships with the sciences worthwhile, this connection with popular publishing organisations makes it doubly so.

Although the printing machine was the most obvious symbol of the transformation of the book trade at mid-century, it had been in use since 1814. Paper making machines, (which produced more, and larger, sheets) and stereotyping (which produced replica

31 Martin, R.H., Evangelicals United: ecumenical stirrings in pre-Victorian Britain 1795-1830 (Metuchen NJ, 1983), Ch.8. For conflict in the Bible Society, see Howsam, Cheap Bibles, e.g. 13-15.
32 On evangelical union, see Martin, Evangelicals united (pp.199-200 deal with the post-1830 period); Lewis, Lighten their darkness, Chs. 1 and 8.
33 Hilton divides evangelicals into 'extreme' (pre-millenarian) and 'moderate' (post-millenarian) camps; the evangelicals of the RTS and similar organisations fall into his 'moderate' group, Hilton, Age of atonement, 10-17.
casts of composed type, which could be used for printing) had also been available for several decades. Edition bindings, which were machine-made in advance and attached before publication, allowing books to be sold ‘ready-to-read’, came into limited use in the 1830s. What changed in the 1840s was not the invention of new technologies, but the decision by publishers to use them. Steam-powered printing and stereotyping was economical only for large (or multiple) production runs, so it was first used on the newspapers from the 1810s, on periodicals in the 1830s, and applied to books only in the 1840s and later. Edition bindings had been of little interest while most publishers were still producing expensive books, but they became a crucial part of cheap industrialised books.

At the beginning of the century, a standard octavo volume of an original work would cost at least 10s., which was almost 80% of a rural labourer’s weekly wage, and still a quarter of a week’s income for a curate. But from the 1770s, reprinted works had started to become available at cheaper prices, and by the 1820s, the ‘cheap’ reprint was widely available in almost all genres. These works were ‘cheap’ only in comparison to the gentlemanly octavo, for they typically cost around five or six shillings. Such mid-priced works found a market among the middle classes, for whom books had previously been expensive luxuries, but failed to affect either the lower-middle or the working classes. However, producing very cheap works was a commercially risky business, since questions of literacy and education came into play in addition to price. By the beginning of the nineteenth century, religious organisations believed that the spread of the Sunday school system (from the 1780s) was already paying off, and that bodies like the Religious Tract Society were needed to provide cheap reading material for the ‘thousands who would [otherwise] have

remained grossly illiterate'. But even with the foundation of day school societies in the 1810s, commercial publishers remained wary of the working classes as potential book-buyers. This was not simply because very cheap publications would need enormous circulations to break even. However, the provision of profane education, in contrast to Bible-reading or religious education, was perceived as politically dangerous in the Britain of the Revolutionary and Napoleonic Wars and their aftermath. The introduction or increase of the various 'taxes on knowledge' (on paper, advertisements, and political content), along with a strict adherence to the blasphemy and sedition laws, meant that cheap publishing was economically difficult and legally risky. This remained true until the gradual repeal of the taxes between 1833 and 1861, and the reduction in political tension, particularly after 1848.

Despite the difficulties involved, religious organisations were not the only publishers before mid-century who tried to provide for the growing numbers of working-class readers, and Figure I.1 gives an overview of the attempts. The 'perfect deluge' of philanthropically motivated projects in the late 1820s and early 1830s, of which the series of Archibald Constable and John Murray are the best known, were not commercially successful. Constable and Murray both wished to make original works available to the same audience which was buying mid-priced reprints, but they discovered that this audience was not large enough to cover the increased costs of producing original works. Constable went bankrupt in 1826, and his series was continued with limited success by George Whitaker. Murray remaineded over 140,000 volumes of his series in the mid-1830s. When publishers made another attempt at cheap non-fiction, in the 1840s, most of them used reprints to keep costs down.

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36 'Address of the Religious Tract Society' Evangelical Magazine 7 (1799): 307. Given the difficulty of finding a measure of literacy (as opposed to the ability to sign a marriage register), coupled with regional variations, actual figures for literacy are hard to estimate. Contemporaries clearly believed that working-class literacy was increasing.

37 Finding those larger sales involved more effort from the publisher, which was one reason some publishers were less than keen, see Chapman, J., 'The commerce of literature' Westminster Review ns 1 (1852): 511-54, at 519.

38 On the taxes, see Twyman, Printing, 52.


40 Bennett, 'John Murray's Family Library', 166.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Mid-priced books</th>
<th>Cheap books</th>
<th>Cheap periodicals</th>
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<tr>
<td>1820s</td>
<td>Reprint non-fiction</td>
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<td>1826</td>
<td>Constable: Miscellany of original and selected publications</td>
<td>SDUK: Library of Useful Knowledge</td>
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<td>1827</td>
<td>Murray: Family Library</td>
<td>SDUK: Library of Entertaining Knowledge</td>
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<td>1829</td>
<td>Longman: Lardner’s Cabinet Cyclopaedia</td>
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<td>1832</td>
<td></td>
<td>Chambers: Chambers’s Edinburgh Journal</td>
<td>SDUK/Knight: Penny Magazine</td>
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<td>1833</td>
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<td>Chambers: Information for the People</td>
<td>SPCK: Saturday Magazine</td>
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<td>1834</td>
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<td>SDUK: Penny Cyclopaedia</td>
<td>RTS: Weekly Visitor</td>
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<td>1843</td>
<td>Murray: Home and Colonial Library</td>
<td>Chambers: Miscellany of Usefull and Entertaining Tracts</td>
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<td>1844</td>
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<td>*Knight: Weekly Volumes</td>
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<td>1845</td>
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<td>RTS: Monthly Series</td>
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<td>1846</td>
<td>*Bohn: Standard Library</td>
<td>*Collins: Cheap Series</td>
<td>London Journal</td>
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<td>1847</td>
<td>*Bohn: Scientific Library</td>
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<td>Reynolds’s Miscellany</td>
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<td>1848</td>
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<td>*Chambers: Instructive and Entertaining Library</td>
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<td>1849</td>
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<td>*SDUK: Library of Entertaining Knowledge</td>
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<td>1850</td>
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<td>Cassell: John Cassell’s Library</td>
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<td>1851</td>
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<td>*Longman: Lardner’s Cabinet Cyclopaedia</td>
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<td>1852</td>
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<td>RTS: Leisure Hour</td>
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<td>1853</td>
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<td>Cassell: Cassell’s Illustrated Family Paper</td>
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**Figure I.1** Outline of various schemes for cheap publishing, 1820s-1850s.

Commercially unsuccessful attempts at original works

First generation penny periodicals

Growth of cheap non-fiction, mostly reprints (marked with *)

Second generation penny periodicals (with fiction and current affairs)
Another way of selling literature cheaply was to sell it in parts, so that although a completed work would cost the same as a mid-priced work, the unit price would be cheap enough to reach a much wider audience. This was what the SDUK attempted to do, and why the penny periodicals of the early 1830s were so successful. The SDUK's 'Library of Useful Knowledge' was sold in fortnightly parts of thirty-two closely printed pages, at three ha'pennies each, putting it in the same price-bracket as the Society's weekly *Penny Magazine*. The periodical had an incredible circulation of around 200,000 in its first few years, but it later dropped off to 40,000, while the volumes of the SDUK libraries were still being sold, now at half price, in the late 1840s.\(^41\) The problem faced by the SDUK's publications was the high level of technical literacy they assumed from their readers, which limited their market more than the price. This also became an issue with reprinted works, since they had been written with an educated middle-class audience in mind. In the 1820s, the price of such reprints had kept them within educated circles, but by the 1840s, the reduction in prices made it theoretically possible for such reprints to get much wider circulations. Knight’s Weekly Volumes, for instance, did sell well, but a peak of 5,000 sales shows that they were not managing to reach the audience of the penny periodicals.

The penny periodicals were the most successful of the early attempts at cheap publishing, due to their low unit price and their miscellaneous contents, which made them easier reading than the books and meant that missing an instalment was not such a disaster. The first generation of these periodicals were of the ‘instructive and amusing’ genre, combining articles on history, biography and the natural sciences with an absence of any current political discussion and (except for *Chambers’s Edinburgh Journal*) no fiction. In the 1840s, with the benefit of a more relaxed political situation, a second generation of penny periodicals introduced sensational serialised fiction, current affairs and letters to correspondents. These periodicals regularly sold over 250,000 copies a week by the mid-1850s.\(^42\) The success of these periodicals was essential in demonstrating to book publishers that there really was a


\(^42\) Anderson, *Printed image*, 14, 182.
large audience of literate consumers who would purchase if the prices came down low enough. With that assurance, some publishers in the 1840s began to try reaching the periodical audience with cheap books, and using the industrial technologies of periodical printing to do so.

Since it was publishers who were responsible for the development of cheap popular science publishing, this thesis concentrates on them. This is a much tighter focus than the theses by Guy Kitteringham and David Hinton, which between them dealt with popular science in England between 1800 and 1870, and were unable to do more than provide descriptive overviews. It is also a different focus from most of the studies occasioned by the recent interest in popular science. A few have been text-based, building on the growing recognition of the role of literary techniques in scientific writings. A few have attempted to discover who the readers were, and how they interpreted and appropriated the works. More common are author-based studies, which have the advantage of providing a clear focus for the historical narrative, and offer opportunities to recover the scientific involvement of little-known figures, particularly, though not only, women. Yet the focus on authors tends to accentuate the image of the heroic author with absolute control over their work, and to disguise the power of the publisher, without whose mediation, acceptance of risk and energetic

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43 These studies dealt with long periods of time, with a range of media from books to lectures, and used very inclusive definitions of popular science. Kitteringham, G.S., ‘Studies in the Popularisation of Science in England, 1800-1830’ (Ph.D., University of Kent, 1981); Hinton, D.A., ‘Popular Science in England, 1830-1870’ (Ph.D., Bath University, 1979).
44 There have been studies of publishing carried out by Topham, An infinite variety of arguments; Sheets-Pyenson, S., ‘War and peace in natural history publishing: The Naturalist’s Library, 1833-43’ Isis 72 (1981): 50-72; MacLeod, R.M., ‘Evolutionism, internationalism and commercial enterprise in Victorian Britain: the International Scientific Series 1871-1910’ in The Development of Science Publishing in Europe, ed. A.J. Meadows (Amsterdam, 1980): 63-93. Although these dealt with science publishing for the non-specialist, they are more akin to studies of ‘public science’ than of ‘popular science’. For studies of publishing for scientific specialists, see most of the other essays in Meadows, A.J., ed. The Development of Science Publishing in Europe (Amsterdam, 1980).

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management, the work would never see the light of day. The few studies we do have of publishers of popular science have helped illuminate the constraints placed on both authors and readers by the materiality of books and the processes of their production, and suggest that a study of the crucial mid-century period would be especially rewarding.

Chapter One of this thesis explains how the Religious Tract Society, a volunteer-run charitable society which published small pamphlets for converting the working classes, became a major publisher of cheap non-fiction books at mid-century. It then considers the organisation of the Society, and the apparent tension between the Society's role as commercial publisher and its continuing commitment to evangelical mission and philanthropy. In Chapter Two, I examine the strategies used by the Society to give its new secular publications the best possible chance of reaching working-class readers, and of ousting the competing infidel and secular publications. This involved physical issues of pricing, advertising and distribution, but all this would have been to no effect if the works were bought but not read, or not read in the manner the Society intended. Thus, rhetorical and narrative strategies were an equally necessary part of the package, and these are discussed in Chapter Three, through a close examination of one of the natural history works. This chapter also considers how the balance was managed between mimicking a secular popular science work and providing the essential Christian tone. While the Society could keep a fairly tight control on most of the strategies discussed in Chapter Two, those in Chapter Three were largely the responsibility of the writers. The Society did exercise editorial control, but tended to do so through rejection or acceptance, not revisions, so careful selection of writers was crucial. As Chapter Four shows, despite the Society's image of its writers as possessed of spiritual vocations, money was always an important reason for writing. The ideal image of the Christian writer also disguised the discipline and physical work involved in writing. Finally, in the Conclusion, I consider the importance of the Religious Tract Society's new programme of publishing in the 1840s for the Society and for us, by drawing out the implications my study poses for the historiography of popular science and 'science and religion'.
This thesis is the first study of popular science to take seriously the publishing transformation in the 1840s and 1850s. 48 Popular science is closely linked to the verb ‘to popularise’ and to ‘the people’, both of which were acquiring new meanings around mid-century. 49 Although popularisation is still frequently linked with the concept of passive diffusion of information from the scientific community to the public, the inadequacy of this model has been convincingly shown. 50 Popularisation is not a passive process which happens to some idealised universal knowledge discovered in laboratories, perhaps with a little help from men of science or those working on their behalf. Popularisation involves active engagement, particularly from publishers and journalists, who need not be primarily concerned with increasing public understanding of a scientifically-sanctioned version of natural knowledge, nor need they be assumed to write only about that version of science. 51 This thesis analyses one particular publisher’s efforts to produce and market popular science, and considers why and how these efforts were prosecuted.

However, my study goes deeper than that. Evangelical organisations were originally founded to spread Christianity, and to control readers’ interpretations of theological doctrine. In the 1840s, they turned their expertise in promulgating sacred knowledge to the cause of promoting Christianised profane knowledge. Although all the works continued to contain a call for conversion to evangelical Christianity, the new programme of so-called ‘secular’ publishing was intended to convert readers to a view of the sciences which was in harmony with evangelical faith, to counteract the secular

48 Secord, *Victorian Sensation* will also consider this period, but concentrates almost entirely on the upper end of the market, and on readers rather than publishers. Previously, historians of science have focused on the 1820s and 1830s, for example, Topham, J.R., ‘Science and popular education in the 1830s: the role of the Bridgewater Treatises’, *British Journal for the History of Science* 25 (1992): 397-430; Topham, *An infinite variety of arguments*; Sheets-Pyenson, ‘War and peace’.

49 ‘Popularise’ (with reference to the sciences) came into use in the 1830s, see OED, ‘popularize’ meaning 2.e (1833). See also ‘popularizer’ (1848) and ‘popularization’ (which apparently came into common use only in the 1860s). On the development of the concept of ‘the people’, see Joyce, P., *Visions of the People: industrial England and the question of class, 1848-1918* (Cambridge, 1991), 1-23.


51 This is particularly clear in studies of late twentieth-century science popularisation, for example, Nelkin, D., *Selling Science: how the press covers science and technology* (1987; Revised ed. New York, 1995); Silverstone, R., *Framing Science: the making of a BBC documentary* (London, 1985).
and infidel tendency to separate the two areas. This thesis therefore illustrates not only how industrial popular science publishing developed, but the range of physical and rhetorical techniques that had to be employed in the attempt to promote a particular, Christianised, version of natural knowledge.
Chapter One

The Religious Tract Society

The progress of education in this country, in the colonies, and in the world at large, makes the press an instrument of immense and unspeakable power. Like the tree planted in paradise, it may impart the knowledge of good and evil. It must, then, be the desire of future Committees increasingly to use this great power for the advancement of the gospel.

Secretary of the Religious Tract Society, September 1844.1

At 8 o’clock on a September morning in 1844, a prayer meeting was held at 56 Paternoster Row, in the shadow of St. Paul’s Cathedral, to celebrate the opening of the new Depository of the Religious Tract Society. The size, expense, and solidity of the new building (Figure 1.1), described by the Illustrated London News as a ‘handsome architectural pile’, represented the coming-of-age of the RTS.2 The Society had started by printing a small number of tracts for distribution in Britain by a few keen volunteers and had now become a large publishing concern with over sixty employees. It had a catalogue of more than four thousand items, including books, periodicals, children’s works, handbills and broadsheets as well as tracts. These were available in 110 languages, and were distributed and sold by booksellers, hawkers, and home and foreign missionaries, as well as the volunteers in the auxiliary associations. There were now over four hundred auxiliaries, where none had been planned fifty years earlier. The annual turnover had increased from £500 to £50,000 and the vastly increased income from sales was now sufficient not only to pay all the overheads of tract production, but to enable the Society to make charitable grants far beyond the amount of its benevolent income.

By the 1840s, the RTS was a well-established part of British evangelicalism and of the London publishing scene. But although the new building suggests consolidation, the decades around mid-century were also a time of change, as the Society took on the form which would carry it through the remainder of the nineteenth century. As well

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Figure 1.1 The new Depository of the Religious Tract Society, opened in 1844 and in use by the RTS till 1903. The building was destroyed (along with much of Paternoster Row) in the Blitz. From Green, *Story of the RTS*.
as the new building, there were new members of staff and a major transformation of the publishing programme. The Society’s traditional audience of semi-literate working-class readers in need of conversion was changing, and there was increasing competition from infidel and secular publishers to provide reading material at cheap prices. The Society had to react to the world that was changing around it.

In the late 1840s and early 1850s, the committee turned the RTS from a benevolent organisation with a limited publishing programme of theological works, into a major publisher applying evangelical principles to almost all areas of literature. The big change was the introduction of publications dealing with ‘profane’ rather than ‘sacred’ knowledge – on history, biography and the natural sciences. Some of these subjects had appeared in a few of the Society’s works in the 1830s, but did so as part of a programme of devotional reading for middle-class Christians, such as the subscribers of the Society. Now, these subjects were to be presented to a much wider audience, and not explicitly for either middle-class devotion or working-class conversion, although they could serve both functions.

The effects of this new programme of ‘secular publishing with a Christian tone’ were not obvious on the Society’s finances or circulation figures until the mid-1850s, but they laid the foundation for the Society’s late Victorian success story. The new publishing allowed the Society to try to reach those working-class readers who were being tempted to non-religious reading material by the new wave of cheap publishers, while it also found an audience among the middle and lower-middle classes, whom the RTS had not previously targeted in any extensive way, but whose greater disposable income proved invaluable to the expansion of the Society’s domestic and overseas mission work.

This chapter places the RTS both in its own history and in the publishing trade of the 1840s and 1850s, in order to explain the organisation and influences with which the committee had to work as it turned the Society into a publisher of cheap non-fiction on secular subjects, but still with a Christian tone. W. & R. Chambers had built on the success of their steam-printed journal to become a successful cheap publisher in

3 The evangelical disapproval of fiction remained strong until the second half of the century, wavering first for children, but not till the 1880s and 1890s for adults.
the 1830s. Charles Knight had been trying since the 1820s, but was forced to abandon his dream in the late 1840s to concentrate on more lucrative government printing. New men, like John Cassell, were about to enter the cheap publishing marketplace. The RTS was responding to the early efforts at cheap non-fiction publishing. The process of its transformation shows, more fully than would the establishment of a completely new company, the problems and tensions which publishers faced in trying to sell non-fiction to an audience outside the traditional book-buying middle classes.

**Early History**

*Origins: 1799 to 1820*

The Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge (SPCK) had been producing tracts since the closing years of the seventeenth century, and Hannah More’s Cheap Repository Tracts (CRT) were famous at the end of the eighteenth century. Yet, when the Congregational minister George Burder (1752-1832) came to London for the annual meeting of the London Missionary Society (LMS) in 1799, he was convinced that a new society was needed. He had already written and printed some tracts of his own, but the end of this enterprise through the bankruptcy of his bookseller had convinced him that a larger, more stable organisation was needed than individual effort could hope to supply. Despite her initial success, More had to give up the CRT after three years, exhausted by the effort. The century-old SPCK clearly had stability, but it was the organ of the High Church party of the Church of England, and its views and structure had not materially changed since its formation, as it continued to provide pastoral materials for the priests and parishioners of the Church. Burder and his friends in the predominantly dissenting LMS were conscious that many people did not belong to the established church, and that many who claimed to

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5 Knickerbocker, *Popular religious tracts*, Chs.2 and 5.
belong to a church did so only in name. They wanted to use tracts as non-denominational evangelists, reaching out to the unconverted to teach them about the salvation available through Jesus. Burder knew that the SPCK would not be interested in such an evangelical project, let alone one proposed by a dissenter.

At the meeting of the LMS, therefore, Burder suggested a new society. After a series of early morning meetings in a local coffee house, the new Religious Tract Society was instituted on 10th May 1799, and announced in the non-denominational monthly *Evangelical Magazine* for June (Figure 1.2). The Society began with a treasurer, a secretary, ten committee members, and four rules. The committee was to have tracts printed, which were to be paid for on delivery. There was no mention of auxiliary societies, overseas operations, or any publications other than tracts. In July 1799, an address in the *Evangelical Magazine* explained to potential supporters that the tracts were to provide, in a shortened form, religious truth to all those who had been mentally awoken: ‘Thousands who would have remained grossly illiterate, having through the medium of Sunday-schools been enabled to read, it is an object of growing importance widely to diffuse such publications as are calculated to make that ability an unquestionable privilege.’ Tracts were regarded as ‘silent messengers’, able to convey the message of salvation where human agency could not reach, or was likely to be rebuffed.

The first tract published by the Society was prepared by the Congregational minister David Bogue (1750-1825), and contained seven rules for the Society’s tracts, which were still being quoted at tract-writers half a century later. All tracts were to contain gospel truth, and a statement of the atonement, ‘so that, if a person were to see but one, and never had an opportunity of seeing another book, he might plainly perceive

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of the advantages of such communications determined them to devote more time to the same object, if spared to the present year.

Accordingly, near fifty ministers and others, met on Thursday morning at seven o'clock, at St. Paul's Coffee House, when the following resolutions were agreed to:

1. That it is highly desirable that a general communication be annually made of the proceedings of the Associations in the country for diffusing the knowledge of the Gospel at home.

2. That each Association in the country, and every minister not connected with an Association, be requested to transmit to Thomas Wilton, Esq. Artillery-place, London, one month before the Annual Meeting of the Missionary Society, an account of their or his efforts and success in Village Preaching, in order that a general report may be compiled by a committee, and printed.

RELIGIOUS TRACT SOCIETY.

Another measure of great importance was brought forward, and cordially approved. It is well known, that societies and individuals in various parts of the kingdom have been in the habit of printing and distributing small religious tracts, which have been the instrument of much good, and have proved a powerful instruiment to the spread of truth. But it is evident, that if these efforts could be combined, a much greater advantage might be obtained, and much more good be done at a cheaper rate. After consultation on this subject, it was resolved, (the Rev. R. Hall in the Chair) that a Society be formed for this purpose, and called The Religious Tract Society, the particulars of which will be laid before our readers.

Jof. Reyner, Esq. of Duck's-foot-lane, was appointed Treasurer; and the Rev. Jof. Hughes, of Battersea, Secretary, by whom subscriptions in aid of this benevolent purpose, will be thankfully received.

The ministers and brethren, who met on this occasion, basked together, both on the Thursday and Friday mornings. They have given a brief account of the proceedings of the fifth General Annual Meeting of the Society, in which the congregations were equally large; Visiting Ministers equally numerous; and the difficulties equally appropriate and important with all the former years. The most useful business was provided, and though various and important measures were brought forward for discussion, every thing was determined with the most cordial unanimity. At the close of the whole, the members and friends of the Society dispersed with pleasure and gratitude for the fruits of a gracious God upon their proceedings, and confirmed in the belief that this counsel and work is of his appointment.

ADDRESS TO THE DIRECTORS OF THE Missionary Society.

Written and transmitted by an eminent Divine of Berlin, in the name of many religious Princes, referring to Persia and Arabia.

The Brethren in Germany that adore Jesus Christ as their God and Lord, and love his appearance, to the Directors of the British Missionary Society, grace be with all that love our Lord sincerely.

Dearest and highly respected Brethren,

Blessed be your address to us! It was like the dawn, promising a beautiful day after a dark night; and in the beginning of a new epoch of the kingdom of God upon earth.

We...
This emphasis differed from that of More’s CRT, which had focused less on evangelical doctrine than on strong narratives with clear morals.\textsuperscript{11} The other rules stated that tracts should be plain, striking, entertaining, full of ideas, and adapted to a specific person or situation, rather than aimed at a general, and necessarily impersonal, audience. Several of these points can be seen in action in the mid-century tract reproduced as Figure 1.3. Bogue noted that different skills were needed to write tracts instead of sermons or theological discourses, for while ‘a plain, didactic essay on a religious subject may be read by a Christian with much pleasure... the persons for whom these Tracts are chiefly designed will fall asleep over it’.\textsuperscript{12} Tracts had to be so clear that they could not only be understood, but they could not possibly be misunderstood. The Society remained aware of the difficulties of understanding throughout the century, advising it readers in 1855 that, ‘you cannot understand without consideration and thought... Do your best with every sentence, using your dictionary with discretion. If a passage perplex you too much, don’t boggle over it, but go on to the next; it will come all plain enough in the second reading; or if not in the second, then in the third.’\textsuperscript{13} Unless they could be understood, the Society’s works could not achieve their mission.

The committee met initially in the house of the Treasurer, Joseph Reyner (1754-1837), and latterly in the counting-house (Figure 1.4) of his business partner, Joseph Hardcastle (1752-1819), an RTS committee member and treasurer of the LMS.\textsuperscript{14} By the end of the first year, 200,000 copies of thirty-four tracts had been printed for the Society.\textsuperscript{15} Another twenty-seven tracts appeared in the second year, but only a few more between 1802-05. The total number of tracts issued had already passed one million. The sheer numbers involved indicate the scale on which the committee and its supporters were thinking. In these early years, all the editorial work was done

\textsuperscript{10} [Bogue], Tract No. 1, quoted in Green, \textit{Story of the RTS}, 6.
\textsuperscript{11} Knickerbocker, \textit{Popular religious tracts}, 125.
\textsuperscript{12} [Bogue], Tract No. 1, quoted in Green, \textit{Story of the RTS}, 6.
\textsuperscript{13} ‘On reading for instruction’ \textit{Leisure Hour} 4 (1855): 543-4. The importance of understanding was also central to the fourth chapter (on reading) in the Monthly Volume on \textit{Self-improvement} (1848), although the advice given there was intended for students rather than artisans, and recommended that each sentence and paragraph should be considered carefully, and that the reader should ‘Leave no paragraph till you have the substance of it in your mind’ (75).
\textsuperscript{14} Jones, \textit{Jubilee memorial}, 112-3. Hardcastle also hosted LMS committee meetings.
\textsuperscript{15} The Society never became their own printer, but employed printers based mostly in London and the home counties.
TO RAILWAY LABOURERS.

MY FRIENDS—A deep concern for your welfare in this life and for eternity, leads me to write this short address to you. I have been employed among you as a missionary Scripture-reader for a long time, and my great object has been to seek your happiness. I cannot, therefore, think of the dangers to which you are exposed, both in regard to your bodies and your souls, without much grief and anxiety. Your labours are of so hazardous a nature, that it may be said of you as the apostle said of himself, you are “in deaths oft;” a fall of earth, or many other accidents, may in a few moments destroy any one of you. But

THE RELIGIOUS TRACT SOCIETY, INSTITUTED 1799;
56, PATERNOSTER ROW, AND 65, ST. PAUL'S CHURCHYARD.

Figure 1.3 A mid-nineteenth century RTS tract, addressed specifically to railway labourers.
Figure 1.4 The counting house of Joseph Hardcastle, used for RTS and LMS committee meetings. From Green, *Story of the RTS*. 

Mr. Hardcastle's Warehouse from the River. In the first-floor room the Committee met from 1802 to 1816.
gratuitously by the committee members at their early-morning meetings, and they were beginning to find the effort of examining, selecting, and revising tracts exhausting. The committee’s only paid assistant was the Depositary, who, for £60 a year was expected to ‘undertake the care of receiving correspondence, correcting the press, arranging and delivering the tracts, exhibiting the accounts, and attending the Committee when desired’. As Knickerbocker has pointed out, the survival of the Society in those early years depended largely on the hard work of its committee. From 1806, the Depositary sold tracts from half a shop which the Society rented in Paternoster Row. At this point, the Society issued between five and fifteen new tracts a year. Unable to afford larger premises, the committee eagerly accepted James Nisbet’s 1812 offer to stock the Society’s publications in his bookshop in the West End, thus reaching a wider, and more prosperous, audience. The bulk of the tracts were intended for mass gratuitous distribution among the working classes all over Britain, so although the new outlet helped generous London evangelicals, most subscribers and societies still had to rely on the postal service.

There were relatively few new tracts published between 1802 and 1804, because the committee was occupied with the discussions which led to the foundation of the British and Foreign Bible Society in March 1804. The story of this society has been told elsewhere. It was a significant, if ambiguous, achievement of the RTS. Although undoubtedly seen as a good thing by Tract Society members, the Bible Society competed for the time, energy and resources of individual evangelicals. Many people continued to support both societies, even sitting on both committees, but nevertheless, the resources given to the BFBS were consequently not given to the RTS, and as the Bible Society grew rapidly, the Tract Society began to worry that it was losing out. By the early 1820s, ‘the claims of rival, and more public institutions, nearly eclipsed it. Its own daughter, the British and Foreign Bible Society, had taken

16 Jones, Jubilee memorial, 113.
17 Knickerbocker, Popular religious tracts, 133.
18 Green, Story of the RTS, 7; Jones, Jubilee memorial, 117.
19 Canton, W., A History of the British and Foreign Bible Society, with Portraits and Illustrations, 5 vols. (London, 1904-10), and more recently, and with particular emphasis on publishing, by Howsam, L., Cheap Bibles: nineteenth-century publishing and the British and Foreign Bible Society (Cambridge, 1991). The RTS version of the story is told in Jones, Jubilee memorial, Ch.6, and Green, Story of the RTS, Ch. 10.
away some of its efficient friends.\textsuperscript{20} The centrality of the Bible to evangelical religion meant that the BFBS took precedence over the RTS in the minds of its supporters, and biographies of prominent evangelicals regularly mention their BFBS involvement, but rarely that in the RTS. The RTS also suffered in comparison with the drama and romance attached to the overseas missionary societies.\textsuperscript{21}

The growth of the BFBS also helped its parent, for, although it suffered the same initial suspicion from Churchmen, by taking active steps to dispel this, it soon had support from members of the Church. As the BFBS set an example of how Church and dissent could work together, so the structure of the RTS seemed less concerning to Church evangelicals. The earliest historian of the BFBS claimed that the dissenting members ‘avoided every thing which could be construed into an exhibition of themselves... Resigning the foreground of the Society to [Anglicans] they contentedly occupied less conspicuous stations.\textsuperscript{22} This would hardly have been practical for the young RTS, which had a severe shortage of Churchmen to take prominent positions. The BFBS was able to gain Church support by securing the patronage of eminent Churchmen with offers of honorary positions, and having equal numbers of Churchmen and dissenters on the committee.\textsuperscript{23}

As well as organising tracts and founding the BFBS, the RTS committee tried to promote the new Society among the British evangelical community, by stressing its catholicity of membership and principles. The very first rule in Tract 1 was that a tract should contain ‘pure truth’ and:

\begin{quote}
Nothing to recommend one denomination, or to throw odium on another; nothing of the acrimony of contending parties against those that differ from them; but pure, good-natured Christianity, in which all the followers
\end{quote}

\begin{footnotes}
\item[23] Howsam, \textit{Cheap Bibles}, 21. The first three presidents were Church noblemen, and several bishops were honorary officers.
\end{footnotes}
of the Lamb, who are looking for the mercy of the Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life, can unite with pleasure, as in one great common cause.\textsuperscript{24}

The Society’s founders believed in a common ground that all Protestant evangelicals could share.\textsuperscript{25} Within its first year, the Tract Society’s supporters already included lay and clerical members of the Church of England, the Church of Scotland and the Secession Church, the Baptist, Methodist and Independent churches, and the Countess of Huntington’s Connexion. By 1807, there were also Lutherans and members of the Society of Friends.\textsuperscript{26} The Society’s founders and many of its committee members were from the LMS, which gave it a distinctly dissenting flavour. Some Churchmen feared that the new society was imposing on the SPCK, others did not wish to work with dissenters, and still others disapproved of the use of lay agency which was associated with tract distribution, and which paid no attention to parochial boundaries.\textsuperscript{27} The committee emphasised the catholicity of the Society to encourage more interdenominational support, and especially the financial support associated with the Church.

The success of the BFBS lay in its emphasis on the Bible, which Christians of all denominations could recognise, and it was thus quickly able to gain the Anglican, Wesleyan and Baptist support which had eluded the LMS and the early RTS. By the 1810s, the RTS benefited from the interdenominational activity of the BFBS, as Churchmen and Wesleyans became more willing to work with dissenters. The LMS was unable to benefit to the same extent, as it had to compete with the denominational Baptist (f.1792) and Church (f.1799) Missionary Societies. However, the BFBS tried to be so catholic in spirit that it allowed Roman Catholics and Unitarians to join. The RTS was restricted to Protestant Trinitarians, which avoided some obvious grounds of tension, and supplied an opposition against which all its members could unite.\textsuperscript{28}

\textsuperscript{24} [Bogue], Tract No. 1, quoted in Jones, \textit{Jubilee memorial}, 18-19.
\textsuperscript{25} This is expressed in Jones, \textit{Jubilee memorial}, 20, quoting from a formulation of principles agreed in 1825, and reprinted with slight variations in the Annual Reports. On the grounds for unity among evangelicals, see Martin, \textit{Evangelicals united}, especially Chs.1-2.
\textsuperscript{26} Jones, \textit{Jubilee memorial}, 152-3.
\textsuperscript{27} A clear discussion of the problems facing interdenominational evangelical societies in the early nineteenth century can be found in Lewis, \textit{Lighten their darkness}, Ch. 1-2.
\textsuperscript{28} Martin, \textit{Evangelicals united}. 

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Another thing which brought Church support was the appointment of the Rev. Legh Richmond (1772-1827) as Clerical Secretary in 1812. Although Richmond had been associated with the Society for several years, his appointment to an official position, which was shortly followed by his appointment as chaplain to the Duke of Kent, was decisive for gaining Church support. He expended much time and effort trying to persuade Church of England clergy of the true catholicity of the Society, and encouraging them to set up local auxiliaries. In 1816, the Society decided to institute a rule that future committees would be constituted half Church and half dissent. Richmond himself was actually one of the committee members who opposed this move, on the grounds that it was unnecessary, and might actually prevent suitably enthusiastic men joining the committee if there were no vacancies for their denomination. But many Church clergy needed the assurance of the rule to ensure that they would not be involved with an organisation led by dissenters. Richmond's efforts were extremely successful, and by the 1820s the Society was regarded with respect by evangelicals from Church and dissent alike. Church support also brought funds to the Society, with benevolent income rising to around £2,000 a year in the late 1810s, as Figure 1.5 shows.

The committee had argued that the early tracts were intentionally different from those of Hannah More but, from 1805, the RTS began to issue a series of tracts which looked more like chapbooks, and whose stories appeared to be rather farther from real-life than the stories found in First Series Tracts. This was the series of Hawkers' Tracts (the Second Series Tracts). They were intended to replace the small publications sold by itinerant hawkers, which the committee found 'for the most part, immoral and disgusting in their contents; the best among them were absurd and puerile'. To attempt this successfully, the hawkers' tracts had to imitate the items they were trying to supplant, and so were printed on poor quality paper, and bore titles

29 Richmond's activities for the Society are discussed in Jones, Jubilee memorial, 71-83.
30 This arrangement assuaged the fears of members of the (established) Church of England, but despite (or perhaps because of) the generous support from members of the (also established) Church of Scotland, there was no formal provision for their representation on committee until 1930, RTS Report (1930): 7.
31 Martin, Evangelicals united, 153.
32 The Anglican Christian Observer began to support the RTS in the 1820s, Knickerbocker, Popular religious tracts, 124.
33 For the RTS on More, see Green, Story of the RTS, 10.
34 Jones, Jubilee memorial, 119.
Figure 1.5 Benevolent income and grants, 1800-60.
like 'The Fortune-teller's Conjuring Cap' and 'The Wonderful Cure of General Naaman'. The stories they contained, however, were all supposed to be based on fact, for 'it was held important from the first that the materials of the Tracts should be taken from actual life; and great pains have been taken to verify their most extraordinary narrations'.

Despite these pains, some stories did slip through. In 1850, after correspondence with the American Tract Society and research in the British Museum, a conversion account which had been mentioned in several RTS for many years was shown to be false, and one tract was suspended and another heavily revised.

260,000 of the Hawkers' Tracts were distributed in the first year, with the dual purposes of preventing the distribution of immoral publications, and bringing gospel truth to a class of people untouched by the First Series. Despite the sound arguments for producing the Hawkers' Tracts in a style which seemed to cater to the baser instincts of their readers, the committee felt the need to justify the series repeatedly, urging supporters to remember that 'these Tracts are addressed to the comprehension, the character, the habits, and the feelings of the lower orders of the people'.

A further problem with the Hawkers' Tracts was that, in order to allow them to be sold at the low price of a hawker's typical wares and also bring a small profit to the vendor, they were sold at a 25-30% loss, amounting to around £400 a year. The First Series tracts did not make a surplus, so the deficit, as well as all the overheads of the Society, had to be met from the income intended for benevolent purposes. This continued to be a problem until the reorganisation of the Society in the 1820s, and it was not till the 1830s that the Hawkers' Series paid its way.

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35 Green, Story of the RTS, 10.  
36 RTS CCM, 20/02/1850. In 1839, the writer of a tract protested when the RTS committee initially did not accept the veracity of his story, RTS CCM, 29/01 and 05/02/1839.  
37 Knickerbocker, Popular religious tracts, 163-4; Jones, Jubilee memorial, 120.  
38 Quoted in Green, Story of the RTS, 11. A similar justification was still being made in Jones, Jubilee memorial, 120.  
39 Knickerbocker, Popular religious tracts, 142-3.  
40 Knickerbocker, Popular religious tracts, 145.
In addition to the Hawkers’ Series, the Society printed some tracts specifically for children, amounting to about thirty in the first twenty years. A concern for children’s works can be dated to 1803, but it was not till 1809 that some existing works were recommended as suitable for children, and not till 1814 that tracts were published specifically for them. These were mostly reprints from the Hawkers’ Series, on better paper with neater covers and illustrations, or reprints from classic works, like Isaac Watts’s *Divine Songs* (1715). The few original works were short biographies of particularly pious children, such as the famous *Dairyman’s Daughter* (1809) by Legh Richmond. These works for children, along with the First and Hawkers’ Series, and a small collection of broadsheets for pasting on walls, comprised the activities of the Society’s first twenty years.

Reorganisation: the 1820s and 1830s

By the 1820s, the Society had become a well-established feature of the British religious landscape. The steady growth of its benevolent income through the 1810s indicated support from Church as well as dissent, while its careful dissociation from its LMS background was indicated when its annual meeting was moved from the morning of the day of the LMS meeting, to its own day during the week of evangelical gatherings in London in May (Figure 1.6). During the 1820s and 1830s, the Society regularised its relations with its auxiliary societies, and created more links with other evangelical societies working in Britain and overseas. The most significant change, however, was the reorganisation of the Society, in terms of its personnel, its financial management, and the range of its publishing operations. These changes stimulated the rapid growth which can be seen most clearly in Figures 1.7 and 1.8, and turned the RTS from a primarily benevolent society, with a publishing wing, into a theological publisher founded on evangelical principles, with a benevolent wing.

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42 The *Dairyman’s Daughter* must be one of the few early nineteenth-century tracts to be still in print. An edition was published by Gospel Standard Trust Publications in 1998.

43 Seventeen broadsheets were printed in 1814, Jones, *Jubilee memorial*, 127.

44 Until 1821, its meeting had been at 5am on the day of the LMS meeting, Knickerbocker, *Popular religious tracts*, 137.
Figure 1.6 A May meeting (i.e. the annual meeting of an evangelical society) in Exeter Hall, from the *Illustrated London News*, May 1844.
Figure 1.7 Income from sales of publications, 1800-60.
Figure 1.8  Number of new publications, and new tracts, per year, 1800-60.
The first set of changes concerned the acquisition of full-time, paid staff to assist the committee. In 1819, John Davis (d. 1843) became full-time Assistant Secretary, on £100 pa. He shortly afterwards became Superintendent of the Depository as well, while the agent who had previously combined that duty with collecting subscriptions became the full-time Collector. Davis looked after the accounts and correspondence, and had day-to-day guidance of the Society’s affairs. In 1823, the attorney and Sunday School teacher, William Jones (1795-1855), became the Society’s Corresponding Secretary and Agent for Auxiliaries. He travelled round the country, visiting existing auxiliaries, and areas where it was hoped an auxiliary could be established. In 1825, the secretary of the Sunday School Union, William Freeman Lloyd (1791-1853), gave up his business career to become the Society’s editor. When Davis retired in 1842, Jones became Superintendent of the Society, with William Tarn as assistant secretary and cashier. These men, along with George Stokes (1789-1847), a wealthy Anglican with no profession who was effectively joint-editor with Lloyd, were responsible for forming the Society into the respectable Victorian establishment we find at mid-century (Figure 1.9).

The 1820s and 1830s saw the rise of the domestic missionary organisations, dedicated to using missionary methods on the British industrial working classes. Societies like the Christian Instruction Society (pan-evangelical, although mostly dissenting, 1825), the District Visiting Societies (Anglican, 1828), and the London City Mission (LCM, pan-evangelical, 1835), visited the poor with messages of salvation. Donald Lewis has shown how the LCM initially encountered the same problems as the RTS and BFBS in attracting Church support, but was increasingly successful by the 1840s, despite the challenge of the Scripture Readers’ Association (Church, 1844). By the late 1830s, there were fifty city missionaries in London, who used tracts as a regular part of their work, either giving them away or using them as the basis of a loan

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45 Jones had been approved as an LMS missionary at the age of 18, but his parents refused to let him go overseas. He then worked his way up from attorney’s clerk to certificated attorney-at-law, see Jones, William Jones, Chs. 2 and 3.
46 Stokes joined the committee in 1818, and was made a trustee in 1825. See RTS Report (1848): 81-95.
47 The CIS and DVS used volunteer laymen as their missionary visitors, but often had recruitment problems. The LCM paid their agents. For a discussion of these organisations see Lewis, Lighten their darkness.
48 Lewis, Lighten their darkness, especially Ch. 3, 5 and 6.
Figure 1.9 The 'three-fold cord': George Stokes (top), William Lloyd (left) and William Jones. There are no individual portraits in the *Jubilee Memorial*, and the group portraits are all intertwined with foliage, signifying the collaboration which went on in committee. From Jones, *Jubilee Memorial*. 
system.⁴⁹ The RTS regularly made grants of reduced-price tracts to a long list of societies, including the Christian Instruction Society, the LCM, the Sunday School Union, city missions in Manchester, Leeds and Nottingham and a variety of societies working in Scotland and Ireland.⁵⁰ The RTS also consulted with the LCM on suitable subjects for new tracts, and the two societies formed joint-working committees.⁵¹ LCM agents were major distributors of RTS (and other) tracts in London, distributing, for instance, an RTS grant of 250,000 copies of a temperance tract to ‘every poor family in London’ in 1839.⁵²

The RTS also supplied materials for overseas missionaries, and the Society’s inter-denominationalism allowed it to maintain close links with the LMS, the Baptist Missionary Society, the Church Missionary Society, and the Wesleyan Missionary Society, all of whose secretaries were ex officio members of the RTS committee. The RTS responded to requests from individual missionaries, of these and other societies, as well as dealing with the metropolitan committees. The earliest foreign language tracts had been printed for distribution in Britain to prisoners confined during the Napoleonic Wars. With the cessation of hostilities, the RTS began to learn of foreign societies which had been established to distribute religious tracts and saw the RTS as their model. The ideal system was for societies with local subscribing members, assisted initially by grants from London, but aiming for financial independence. With the exception of the American Tract Society (f.1825), few of the societies gained enough local support. In Europe, it was more usual for a few individuals to form a committee for printing and distributing tracts, substantially funded from London. In India and China, grants were made to the mission-stations, initially in the form of ready-printed tracts, but latterly, once printing presses became more common, as grants of paper, illustrations, or funds for translation. By 1850, the Society claimed to have printed tracts in 110 languages and dialects, and to have provided £155,000 towards their distribution.⁵³ However, committees working in Roman Catholic and

⁴⁹ Lewis, Lighten their darkness, 119. Societies like the LCM needed so many tracts that they used a number of suppliers, of whom the RTS was one of the largest. In the late 1840s, Peter Drummond of Stirling became another large supplier of tracts, see Haines, Am I my brother’s keeper?, 45-55.
⁵⁰ For example, RTS FCM, 09/07/1845.
⁵¹ For example, the 1839 joint committee on tracts on socialism, RTS ECM, 16 and 23/04/1839.
⁵² Haines, Am I my brother’s keeper?, 40.
⁵³ The languages are listed in Appendix III, Jones, Jubilee memorial.
Orthodox countries in Europe suffered continual harassment from the authorities, while those set up in military stations or trading posts in China and India were often short-lived, and missionaries were frequently too busy to translate tracts. The only tract efforts in many other locations were the initiatives of individuals, such as ambassadors, naval captains, and merchants, who contacted the RTS for supplies before setting off.\(^{54}\)

The RTS consolidated its links with its own auxiliary societies, which were local organisations founded with the aim of distributing tracts, but not formally affiliated to the RTS. They did not have to circulate only RTS tracts, nor remit funds to London. The Liverpool Tract Society (f.1815) circulated many RTS tracts, but also those of the CRT, and some from societies in Edinburgh and Glasgow. Its committee was permitted to use excess funds for suitable purposes, which might include remitting to London, or aiding other societies ‘of a similar nature’.\(^{55}\) Repeated appeals that auxiliaries should contribute to London in return for the benefit of receiving tracts at subscribers’ prices, went unheeded by the majority, and assurances that a contribution of a penny a week could entitle one to auxiliary membership were treated as a rule, rather than a minimum recommendation.\(^{56}\) By the 1820s, the relationship was being regularised, and the principle of making contributions to London was recognised, although the contributions were never as large as the London committee would have liked.\(^{57}\) William Jones’s appointment as travelling secretary assisted the auxiliary network, by stirring up isolated and remote members to greater activity and efficiency. He devoted nine months of the year to visiting auxiliaries, speaking at their meetings, inspecting their depositories, and urging the formation of new societies.\(^{58}\) These efforts were helped by the launch of the monthly *Christian Spectator* in 1838, which functioned as a newsletter for members, and included advance notice of new publications, details of grants made, letters to the editor, and discussion of the past and future development of the Society.\(^{59}\) The number of

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\(^{56}\) For example, an 1813 appeal for 25% of funds to be remitted to London, Jones, *Jubilee memorial*, 183; Jones, *William Jones*, 97-8.


\(^{59}\) The *Christian Spectator* had become bimonthly by 1846.
auxiliaries grew from 124 in 1815 to an alleged 400 in 1849. However, according to figures in the annual report for 1850, only 140 of those auxiliaries made any contributions to London. Support had always been strongest in the industrial and predominantly dissenting north of England, as Figure 1.10 shows. The largest contributions from individual auxiliary societies came from Manchester and Leeds, both of which had large working-class populations in need of RTS publications.

The rapid growth of the auxiliary network of the BFBS in the 1810s provided RTS auxiliaries with a model for local non-denominational societies affiliated to a London-based parent, though they may also have drained money and personnel from the tract societies. The BFBS always had a much closer relationship with its auxiliaries than did the RTS, because the importance of the ‘Bible transaction’ meant that the personal involvement of local members was essential to the whole enterprise. Auxiliaries contributed half their funds to London and used the remainder for local purposes. The parent organisation received over 60% of its funds from its auxiliaries, or £55,000 a year in the late 1810s. The RTS, in contrast, received only around 10% of its income (about £500 in the late 1810s) from auxiliaries in the early years, and as income from sales increased in the 1830s, the relative contribution of the auxiliaries fell to less than 3%. At no point in the first fifty years did RTS auxiliary contributions pass £2,500.

The Bible Society was one of the largest religious societies of the 1840s, with an income comparable to the big overseas missionary organisations, as Figure 1.11 shows. Unlike them, the BFBS had a sales income, but its benevolent income was still substantial. The same was true of the other high-income society, the SPCK, whose benevolent income dwarfed its sales income, and demonstrates the financial value of official support from the Church. Compared with these societies, the RTS lagged behind, although it was clearly a long way ahead of the numerous smaller

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60 Jones, Jubilee memorial, 185.
62 Jones, Jubilee memorial, 181-3. The first auxiliary societies were formed at Darlington and Manchester, and the first to contribute to London were Birmingham and Leeds.
63 The contributions from London seem surprisingly low. This is partly a consequence of the separation of ‘London’ from ‘Middlesex’ and ‘Surrey’, but even the total for the three counties comes to less than half the contribution from Yorkshire or Lancashire.
64 On the BFBS auxiliaries, see Howsam, Cheap Bibles, 39-46.
65 Appendix I, Jones, Jubilee memorial. The total benevolent income only rose above £7,500 for the first time in 1850, in response to the plea for a Jubilee Fund.
Figure 1.10  Auxiliary Contributions per county, 1849-50. The total auxiliary contributions were £1,440. Based on figures in the Annual Report (1850).

Note: Scotland is treated as one county.
Figure 1.11 Income in 1844 of some religious and benevolent societies.
Societies represented in black have income from sales as well as benevolent income. Those in grey have only benevolent income.
societies. The RTS’s problem was that most of its income was from sales, and it did not have a large benevolent income in addition. There are no available figures for the numbers of subscribers, but it is possible to estimate an average annual subscription of 15s.6d., which would suggest that there were only around 3,600 subscribers in 1849-50.66 In contrast, the SPCK had 15,000 subscribers.67

The tenfold growth of the income from sales (see Figure 1.7) over the 1820s and 1830s was not due to tract sales. As a tract-only society, the RTS had spent its first twenty years in almost permanent financial crisis, with survival due only to loans from committee members, and the beneficence of the first two Treasurers.68 The income from tract sales covered only the production costs, so running expenses had to be met from benevolent income. The RTS was thus in a similar position to the SDUK, which, by trying to sell its works at cost, was consuming substantial loans from its committee members and its printer, Charles Knight.69 Unlike the SDUK, however, the RTS survived its first shaky twenty years by reorganising its operations. This involved an extension of the publishing programme, and a rationalisation of the Society’s finances.

After the appointment of William Lloyd as editor, he and Stokes launched a range of new types of publication, including children’s works, periodicals and bound books. As Figure 1.8 clearly shows, the number of new titles published each year quadrupled. Not only were these new publications different in format from the older ones, they were also intended for a different purpose. The tracts, handbills and broadsheets that the Society already published were all intended to convert their readers, and they were prepared in a style and format suitable for semi-literate working-class readers, the former students of the Sunday Schools. The new children’s works, the bound books

66 The sub-committee got reports of how many new subscribers had joined in each quarter or year, and how many had lapsed. These numbers were sometimes accompanied by details of their financial implications, from which one can estimate an ‘average’ subscription. RTS FCM, 21/10/1846, 14/07/1847, 19/04/1848, 17/10/1849, 20/03/1850, and 18/10/1854. The income from annual subscriptions in 1849-50 was £2,786, which implies 3,595 ‘average’ subscribers.
68 Jones, William Jones, 110; Jones, Jubilee memorial, 32-3, 63-4.
and some of the periodicals, were aimed instead at middle-class families, and provided devotional reading for Christians.

There were some children’s works on the Society’s catalogue when Lloyd joined the committee, but his experience as a Sunday School teacher and the editor of the *Youth’s Magazine* for Sunday school children (from 1805) probably made him particularly keen to develop this area of publishing. The genre of children’s literature had been growing since the mid-eighteenth century, but there was relatively little available which met evangelical needs. Several of the popular writers, such as Maria Edgeworth and Anna Barbauld, included very little religion in their works, as did the new fairy-tales and imaginative fiction which were the alternative to ‘didactic’ literature.  

The RTS wanted to publish improving literature with a clear evangelical message, and they sought it from well-known writers, including Mary Sherwood and her sister Lucy Cameron, as well as from Lloyd and the other committee members.  

By 1830, Lloyd had increased the number of children’s works published by the Society from ten to 300. He also began to provide graded readers for different age-groups, and improved the quality of the printing, paper and appearance of the works. Some of these children’s works were to benefit from the Society’s early interest in the possibilities of colour printing.

The first RTS periodicals appeared in the mid-1820s, and may also have been Lloyd’s idea, given his prior involvement with religious periodicals. Lloyd edited the *Child’s Companion; or, Sunday scholar’s reward* himself, and entrusted the *Tract Magazine; or Christian miscellany* to Stokes. Both periodicals appeared monthly from January 1824, and cost a penny an issue. The *Tract Magazine* was aimed at the tract audience, and was often used by home missionaries in loan schemes. The periodicals averaged

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74 Some RTS books for children in the 1840s had colour pictures by George Baxter, and the Society was among the earliest employers of Baxter’s licensee J.M. Kronheim, in the 1850s. See Alderson, B., and P. Garrett, eds. *The Religious Tract Society as a Publisher of Children’s Books: catalogue of an exhibition prepared to celebrate the 200th anniversary of the foundation of the RTS presented at a conference at the University of East Anglia, Norwich, 28 July to 1 August 1999* (Hoddesdon, 1999), 25.
monthly sales of 28,250 and 17,000 copies respectively in their first year, which
compares well with the few thousand sold by most of the more upmarket religious
periodicals, and sales kept up over the following decades. 75 In 1828, the Society
amalgamated Esther Copley’s Christian Gleaner into their new quarterly periodical,
the Domestic Visitor. A minister’s wife, Copley (1786-1851) was already well-
known for her works on domestic and religious themes, and she intended the
Domestic Visitor to promote ‘the spiritual instruction of families, particularly
domestic servants’. 76 It was re-launched as the ha’penny Weekly Visitor in 1833, in
response to the 1832 launch of the three well-known penny periodicals. Unlike those
journals, the Weekly Visitor did not survive its first three years, and lapsed into a
monthly format as the three-penny Visitor. In its weekly and monthly incarnations,
the Visitor contained articles on ‘secular’ subjects like history and the natural
sciences, mixed with articles on spiritual and devotional matters. After the mid-
1830s, its circulation was limited to middle-class evangelicals and their families.

The first RTS bound books appeared in 1825, and were expected to be a short-term
experiment. 77 Stokes had the idea of appealing for subscribers to fund the stereotype
plates thus subsidising the cost of the books, and set an example by paying for four
sets of plates himself. 78 The books published by the Society in this period were
reprints, ranging from sermons through theological treatises and scriptural
commentaries to the Bible itself, and they were intended to aid devotions. 79 Even
with the subsidised plates, they were priced for the middle classes, and although the
one-volume works compared well with the mid-priced (5s. or 6s.) ‘classic’ reprints
produced by publishers such as Scott, Webster & Geary and William Milner, many of

75 Green, Story of the RTS, 33, gives annual circulations of 339,000 and 206,000; Jones, Jubilee
memorial, 134. The Evangelical Magazine sold around 24,000 a month in 1841, but the Christian
Observer and Christian Guardian were both below 5,000, as was the literary Eclectic Review.
Circulations for these journals, and others, are given in Topham, J.R., ‘An Infinite Variety of
Arguments’: the Bridgewater Treatises and British natural theology in the 1830s’ (Ph.D., University of
Lancaster, 1993), 287-42.
76 Jones, Jubilee memorial, 135.
78 RTS Report (1848): 83.
79 For a description of these works, see Jones, Jubilee memorial, 128, 129-30, 132. Unlike the BFBS,
the RTS was not restricted to circulating the Authorised Version without note or comment. It produced
annotated editions and commentaries, and its Revised Annotated Paragraph Bible of 1872 anticipated
some of the scholarship of the Revised Authorised Version (1885), see Green, Story of the RTS, 72.
This also meant the RTS was not limited in its choice of printers for Bibles, unlike the BFBS, who had
to deal with the Bible patent-holders, see Howsam, Cheap Bibles, 74-8.
the RTS works were substantial, multi-volume publications. Somewhat to the Society’s surprise, the books sold very well, and the committee realised that book sales might become self-supporting. Thus book publishing continued, with new works funded by the success of the earlier books. The relative expense of the works explains why, although the number of works circulated annually grew only slowly (Figure 1.12), the income from sales increased exponentially (Figure 1.7). Furthermore, unlike tract sales, book sales generated sufficient surplus to cover overheads, and, by the mid-1830s, allowed the Society to devote the entirety of its benevolent income to grants. For the committee to publish for their own peers was a shrewd business decision, since it opened up a section of the market with more disposable income, and it provided another way for evangelicals to support the RTS. Previously, they could subscribe, or get involved with an auxiliary society. By purchasing an RTS publication, they got something for themselves, as well as helping a good cause.

The decision to broaden the publishing programme of the Society was not unequivocally welcomed by the subscribers. Writing in 1844, Stokes remembered the uproar, when ‘friends looked grave and doubtful, opponents threatened, and there were public and printed declarations that the periodicals of the Tract Society ought not to be encouraged, or even permitted, and the members at large were urged to come forward and stop them!’ He went on to outline the main criticisms (see Figure 1.13): that the Society would be diverted from its primary aim of tract distribution; that subscribers’ money would be used to subsidise the books and periodicals; and that such subsidies would harm booksellers by giving the Society an unfair advantage. In response, the committee argued that there was a need for sound evangelical periodicals and books for adults and children, which was not being met by the commercial book trade. Whether it should be the RTS which met that need could be debated, but the committee justified its actions by showing that tract production had benefited from the new publications. Far from ignoring them, the Society was publishing more tracts per year than before (Figure 1.8), and, between 1818-24, it had

80 [Stokes, G.], ‘The bound publications of the RTS, III’ Christian Spectator (1841): 33-5, at 34.
81 [Stokes, G.], ‘On the union of general and Scriptural knowledge’ Christian Spectator (1844): 89-90, at 89.
Figure 1.12  Annual circulation of publications, and of tracts, 1800-60.
ON THE UNION OF GENERAL AND SCRIPTURAL KNOWLEDGE.

especially among our younger friends; for truly in this matter, as Southey says—

"Twenty years
Have wrought strange alteration."

When the magazines were commenced in 1824, friends looked grave and doubted, opponents threatened, and there were public and printed declarations that the periodicals of the Tract Society ought not to be encouraged or even permitted, and the members of large were urged to come forward and stop "them!" Nor was this merely the voice of an enemy, of those who set at nought the truths of the gospel; this opposition was urged as being a duty to the Christian public, and even to the Society itself! All sorts of evil surmises were brought forward, and many evil results were predicted as sure to occur. The funds of the Society would be perverted, its energies absorbed from more useful efforts; all other religious periodicals, however able and considerable from their bulk and literary execution, would be interfered with; children would be taken off from reading their Bibles; twice the quantity of letter-press which ought to be given for a penny was offered; every bookseller would be more or less injured; a cry of "monopoly" was raised, and a hundred more anticipations equally dolorous and threatening were urged by friends; to say nothing of the proceedings of enemies. Nay, even the contradictory evil anticipation, that a few months would see the stores of the editors exhausted, and the Society committed to what it could not carry on, and disgraced by failure, was urged by an excellent and devoted friend to the cause, and had its influence.

We are now in the year 1844, and, as already said, "Twenty years—have wrought strange alteration." We need now only ask our friends whether any one of these anticipated evils has come to pass? It is not necessary to enter into

Figure 1.13 George Stokes, writing in the Christian Spectator, October 1844, remembers the outcry over the magazines in the 1820s.
completely revised the tract catalogue. The employment of a full-time editor, probably with an assistant, was allowing the Society to deal with several hundred tract manuscripts a year, although fewer than half were ultimately published. Annual tract circulations could also be cited in defence of the tract work, and in 1850, William Jones claimed an increase from 8.3 million a year in 1827 to 13.8 million in 1849. His figures were carefully chosen for maximum effect, since the details available in Figure 1.12 suggest that tract circulations increased relatively slowly during the 1830s and 1840s, especially compared with the growth in non-tract publications. However, it was certainly the case that most of the Society’s charitable grants were for the distribution of tracts, at home and overseas, and that the growth of non-tract publishing increased the funds available.

The committee tried to dispel fears about subscriptions and donations being diverted to non-tract purposes, by explaining the new financial arrangements of the Society, as shown in Figure 1.14. In 1824, the Benevolent Fund was formally separated from the Trade Fund, with the ultimate aim of devoting the benevolent money entirely to charitable grants, although it was not till 1835 that this finally happened. This separation made clear to subscribers where their donations, subscriptions, collections and legacies were going, and relieved booksellers of the fear that the publications were being subsidised by donations. Those who could read between the lines would note that there were subsidies in operation but they were cross-subsidies within the Trade Fund, particularly with the books and periodicals helping the tracts. This was nothing unusual, as publishers frequently relied on the success of some publications to compensate for the poor performance of others. This is what Jones referred to in 1850, when he commented that while the Society could not be accused of failing to

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82 This included adapting some of the Hawkers’ Tracts to make their language even simpler, for those who were not ‘great readers’, see Jones, Jubilee memorial, 121.
83 Knickerbocker, Popular religious tracts, 169, cites 200 as the number of MSS received in 1825.
84 Jones, Jubilee memorial, 133. Jones’s 1849 figure includes children’s books under 1s. as tracts; excluding these gives a tract total of 9.7 million. His use of the 1827 figure, which was around 1 million lower than 1826 and 1828, is also misleading. The year ending in March 1827 included the book trade ‘crash’ of 1826. The Society did not routinely record tract circulations separately from total circulations until the 1870s, when it was again under criticism for concentrating on periodicals rather than tracts. In the twentieth century, tract circulation declined from 14 million (1903) to 1 million (1938), Hewitt, Let the people read, 74.
85 Around one-sixth of the grants made in 1850 were made to provide reduced-price libraries, and these contained books rather than tracts, RTS Report (1850): 143.
Figure 1.14 Financial Organisation of the RTS (after 1824)
fulfil the intentions of its founders, it could be charged with going beyond them.86 The founding rules stated that subscriptions were to be used to reduce the price of tracts, but the new publishing programme meant that the subscriptions did not need to do this any more. By the 1840s and after, there were subsidies from the Trade Fund to the Benevolent Fund. In 1850, this amounted to just over £2,000, which was less than 5% of the sales income, but increased the grant fund by a massive 41%. It was on this substantial benefit to the Society’s benevolent operations that the committee grounded its justification for the expanded publishing programme, and as subscribers began to be more accustomed to the wider range of publications, they began to see the Society as a publisher of Christian literature, rather than just a tract publisher.

**Respectability: the 1840s and 1850s**

The ‘threefold cord’ of Jones, Lloyd and Stokes had spent the 1820s and 1830s turning the Society into a well-run publishing establishment and charitable organisation, but all three died between 1847 and 1855. The Treasurer also died in 1847, and the Cashier in 1859. The 1840s and 1850s were, therefore, a period of management change-over. William Jones, Samuel Hoare and William Tarn were replaced by their sons (as Superintendent, Treasurer, and Cashier). Finding a successor for William Lloyd as Editor was the most difficult task, and took almost seven years before it was satisfactorily accomplished. Against this background of changing staff, the Society made two of the most important moves in its history. One was the building of a new depository, a symbol of the solid interdenominational respectability the RTS had achieved. The other was the decision to further expand the publishing programme, to include ‘secular publishing with a Christian tone’ in addition to wholly religious and theological works. The Society’s second historian wrote that, ‘From a literary point of view the step was the most important that the Society as yet had taken.’87

The new building was a physical necessity, since the houses used by the Society in Paternoster Row were in such a poor state of repair that ‘the principal walls had given way’ and during demolition, it was discovered that ‘the principal timbers were

86 Jones, Jubilee memorial, 131.
87 Green, Story of the RTS, 53-54.
fulfil the intentions of its founders, it could be charged with going beyond them.\textsuperscript{86} The founding rules stated that subscriptions were to be used to reduce the price of tracts, but the new publishing programme meant that the subscriptions did not need to do this any more. By the 1840s and after, there were subsidies \textit{from} the Trade Fund \textit{to} the Benevolent Fund. In 1850, this amounted to just over £2,000, which was less than 5\% of the sales income, but increased the grant fund by a massive 41\%. It was on this substantial benefit to the Society’s benevolent operations that the committee grounded its justification for the expanded publishing programme, and as subscribers began to be more accustomed to the wider range of publications, they began to see the Society as a publisher of Christian literature, rather than just a tract publisher.

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\textsuperscript{86} Jones, \textit{Jubilee memorial}, 131.
\textsuperscript{87} Green, \textit{Story of the RTS}, 53-54.
decayed, and could not have sustained the buildings much longer. \textsuperscript{88} Numbers 56 to 59 Paternoster Row, and four houses in an adjoining courtyard, were replaced by the new Depository. The foundation stone was laid in July 1843, and the building was officially opened a year later. Its neo-classical style eschewed the contemporary fad for Gothic, and its connotations with High Churchmanship. The \textit{Illustrated London News} described the new building (Figure 1.15) as follows:

The interior of the building will be fitted up plainly and substantially, in every respect, as a warehouse. On the ground floor, one continuous room, the entire length of the building [120 feet], will serve as a shop and country department, in which it is important to have a supply of every work on the society's catalogue in all their various bindings; for this purpose, a vast extent of wall room is required; and, in order to render the entire height (about 14 feet) available to this end, there will be a light iron gallery. On each floor, except the shop, there is a small tram-road from end to end, to convey the work from any part of the premises to a hopper at the east-end of the building, which communicates with every floor. \textsuperscript{89}

This description of the vast space needed contrasts with the Society's first Depository, in a small shop shared with a china and earthenware business. By 1851, the annual sales from the new Depository had reached £5,000, in contrast with sales of less than £400 in the 1820s. \textsuperscript{90} Around sixty employees worked in the new Depository. As a comparison, Chambers employed eighty people in 1843, and, unlike the RTS, their business included printing and lithographic departments. Chambers also moved to new premises on the High Street in Edinburgh in the mid-1840s, where there was space for their ten steam-presses as well as the editorial and administrative departments. With the new presses and premises, their staff increased to 168 people by 1850. \textsuperscript{91} The number employed in the non-printing side of the business probably remained roughly equivalent to the RTS establishment. In addition to the warehouse and shop, the new RTS building included a committee room and library, although

\textsuperscript{88} 'The new buildings', \textit{Christian Spectator} (1843): 75.
\textsuperscript{89} \textit{Illustrated London News} (24/02/1844): 118.
\textsuperscript{90} RTS FC, 1/0/1851; Knickerbocker, \textit{Popular religious tracts}, 151, n 97.
\textsuperscript{91} Cooney, S.M., 'Publishers for the People: W. & R. Chambers – the early years, 1832-50' (Ph.D., Ohio State University, 1970), 215.
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90 RTS FCM, 1/01/1851; Knickerbocker, *Popular religious tracts*, 151, n 97.
Figure 1.15  The new Depository, as drawn by the Illustrated London News, February 1844.
much of the administrative work was done in the nearby building of 65 St. Paul’s Churchyard. Since almost all of the cost of the new building was met by the Trade Fund, it well illustrates the solid benefits which had accrued from the success of the wider programme of publishing begun in the 1820s.92

A few years after opening the new Depository, the Society began to consider the possibility of an additional sales outlet in the capital. James Nisbet continued to sell RTS publications, but the committee was finding the arrangement unsatisfactory, as sales had not significantly increased since the 1820s.93 The Society began to seriously consider opening a depository of its own in the West End, which the committee felt would be needed ‘to meet the probable demand for foreign and other publications’ from the visitors to the Great Exhibition.94 The finance sub-committee initially advised against the move, arguing that the depository would not bring in sufficient revenue to cover its expenses – it estimated annual sales of £5,000 would be needed – and that the Society would be better looking for another ‘respectable and enterprising Bookseller’ to stock the Society’s publications.95 However, the committee began investigating premises, and took a 21-year lease on 164 Piccadilly, with the option of terminating after one year.96 Sales in the first quarter amounted to only £158, but at the end of the year the committee decided to keep the shop, for two years in the first instance, and by 1854, its annual sales had increased to £1,948, with which the finance sub-committee declared themselves ‘satisfied’.97

The expansion of the publishing programme may not have been necessary in the same sense as the replacement of dilapidated buildings, but it was an essential foundation to the continued success of the Society later in the century. By the 1840s, the committee realised that the original target audience was changing. When the Society began to publish for the working classes, it was aiming at readers with very basic levels of

92 The Society remained in these buildings until the expiry of the lease in 1903, when it moved to Bouverie Street, off Fleet Street.
93 RTS FCM, 21/01/1846.
94 Jones to Nisbet & Co., 22/02/1851, RTS Corr.
95 RTS FCM, 15/01/1851.
96 The premises cost £210 for the first year, later £170 once the fittings had been purchased for £100. RTS ECM, 18/02/1851.
97 First quarter sales, RTS ECM, 29/07/1851. New lease arrangements, RTS ECM, 30/12/1851. Annual sales, RTS FCM, 18/04/1855.
literacy and education, and the sole purpose of the tracts was conversion. By mid-century, the gradual improvement in school provision and in adult education, along with the 'march of the intellect' and the steam press, had created a working-class audience with better literacy and education and more awareness of print and the information it could convey. Although much of the improvement in child literacy had come through the work of schools run by religious organisations, by the 1840s, there was an increasing amount of cheap literature available, which was more appealing than the tracts offered by the RTS.

When launching the new secular publishing programme, the RTS committee highlighted the multiple targets it had in mind, saying that 'the rapid extension of secular information and the unexampled activity of the sceptical and licentious press call loudly on Christians to abound in the work of the Lord'. Part of the target was secular publishers like Chambers and the SDUK, for although it was a matter 'for sincere congratulation, that many of the works that are now published are of an interesting and instructive manner', the RTS could not ignore the fact that 'Christianity is frequently, if not altogether overlooked'. Another part of the target was the atheistic and sceptical press, such as the French materialistic works printed by radical publishers, which the committee condemned as 'evil', 'debasing', 'pernicious', 'disgusting' and 'soul-destructive'. These publications were immoral as well as sceptical, but there were also increasing amounts of cheap fiction, some in translation from French, which was equally corrupting. This 'licentious' press formed the final target for the RTS, although it was one which they could scarcely hope to engage, as their disapproval of fiction forbade them competing directly.

The Society's response to all these threats was to begin publishing on 'secular subjects with a Christian tone', and to combine 'general information with religious sentiments'. No longer would the RTS be restricted to sacred knowledge, it would act upon the principle that 'all branches of knowledge must be imbued with evangelical sentiment.' The Monthly Series and Leisure Hour periodical, which

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98 RTS Report (1850): 141.  
100 RTS Report (1851): 123.  
102 RTS Report (1850): 141.
were the vanguard of the new publishing programme, will be discussed in Chapter Two, but the programme also included the Educational Series from 1849, and books on the general catalogue. With this programme, the RTS was hoping to take over some of the ground held by the secular and infidel publishers, and to add Christian sentiments to it. It acknowledged that people wished to read things other than works of religious devotion, but hoped that they could at least be persuaded to read about such profane subjects in Christian publications.

In addition to this programme, the Society also overhauled its existing periodicals and continued to produce tracts. The *Child’s Companion* underwent the fewest changes, remaining a monthly publication, but under the care of the chief editorial assistant, John Henry Cross, it acquired a new lease of life and increased its circulation to 39,000 monthly in 1850. The *Penny Tract and Christian Miscellany* was launched in 1846, aimed at the tract audience, but its overlap with the existing *Tract Magazine* was too great to enable it to reach break-even point at 20,000 copies a month, and after a year, the two were merged into the *Penny Tract Magazine*. This continued the work of the older periodical. The biggest change in the periodicals was the discontinuation of the monthly *Visitor* and its replacement with the weekly *Leisure Hour*, followed by the launch of the *Sunday at Home*. Sales of the *Visitor* had fallen (from around 10,000) to under 7,000 a month by 1849. Its successors sold 67,500 and 46,000 respectively each month in 1855. In announcements and advertisements to RTS subscribers, the two periodicals were presented as complementary, with one providing weekday leisure reading, and the other being suitable for the Sabbath. However, the *Leisure Hour* was clearly part of the new programme of secular publishing, and was competing with *Chambers’s Journal* among others. The *Sunday at Home*, on the other hand was clearly devotional in tone, and thus much closer in spirit, although not in appearance, to the old *Visitor*.

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103 RTS FCM, 18/09/1850. Also, RTS CCM, 21/06/1854.
104 RTS Publ., July 1846. The *Penny Tract* made a loss of around £10 a month, RTS FCM, 21/10/1846, 14/07/1847 and 18/09/1850.
105 RTS CCM, 19/09/1849.
106 RTS FCM, 26/09/1855. This total includes parts and numbers.
107 On the difference between *Sunday at Home* and the other journals, see ‘Cheap literature’ *British Quarterly Review* 29 (1859): 313-45, at 344, 329.
As with the earlier decision to publish periodicals and books, there was controversy about the move to ‘secular’ publishing. Subscribers again worried that the Society’s time and attention would be diverted from its ‘primary object... namely, the circulation of Tracts in all parts of the world’. Others doubted whether ‘a miscellany of secular instruction was the proper work of the Society’, or whether ‘anything ought to be provided for Sunday reading, for any class or age, other than purely religious truth’. The committee dealt with these objections much the same way as it had done twenty years earlier. It pointed out that the large sales of the Monthly Series and of the periodicals should be taken as encouragement for the ‘endeavour to diffuse literature and science in connexion with Scripture principles’, and that this ‘fully justifies the Committee in the course they have adopted, and shows that the religious public are prepared to appreciate it.’ The point was driven home by praise from periodicals, ranging from the dissenting British Quarterly Review to the Anglican evangelical monthly Christian Lady’s Magazine, which was reprinted for the edification of subscribers in the Christian Spectator.

The annual reports for the next few years stressed that tract production had not been affected by the new enterprise. Figures 1.8 and 1.12 suggest that this claim had more truth in it in the 1840s than it had had in the late 1820s, with a distinct increase in numbers of new tracts produced and tracts circulated between 1845-50. Perhaps the committee was making sure the Society could be seen to be still active in the tract cause. The late 1840s was also a period when there were numerous contemporary issues on which evangelicals wished to write tracts. In addition to cholera epidemics, mine disasters, shipwrecks and the Great Exhibition, the Society published extensively on the prevalence of socialism, Roman Catholicism and licentiousness, and the necessity of Sabbath observance and temperance. The Society generally avoided all political issues, except when there was a religious point to be made on which all its members could agree. Hence, there were tracts attacking Roman

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108 For example, the Rev. William Carus Wilson, RTS FCM, 20/01/1847.
109 Quoted in Green, Story of the RTS, 74.
110 RTS Report (1846): 103.
Catholicism, but none on church establishments.\textsuperscript{113} By the early 1850s, the tracts too began to show the effects of the new secular publishing programme.\textsuperscript{114} The Biographical Series was issued from 1853, and contained the same kind of historical and biographical information, from some of the same writers, as that found in the Monthly Series or the \textit{Leisure Hour}.\textsuperscript{115}

The new general literature series came at an opportune moment for the Society’s business health.\textsuperscript{116} In the early 1840s, as Figures 1.7 and 1.12 show, sales and circulations had begun to fall back after the growth of the late 1820s and 1830s. This was partly due to the increased competition from other publishers, but it may also have been due to the waning enthusiasm of RTS subscribers for the new periodicals and bound books. The Society gained only two or three hundred new subscribers each year, and while individual subscribers might give strong support to the new publishing at the beginning, this was unlikely to be financially sustainable.\textsuperscript{117} The books were also being sold through the trade, but, despite the committee’s repeated efforts, sales were slow.\textsuperscript{118}

With the new secular works, the annual circulation figures turned upwards again (Figure 1.12). The income from sales began to recover, but slumped between 1848-51, before entering a period of sustained growth. The brief slump might be indicative of the trade depression in 1848-49, although it is prolonged, and Eliot’s figures

\textsuperscript{113} In 1842, the committee discovered that the man it was about to appoint as the Society’s agent for Wales had once written a pamphlet against establishments, and had to write to him explaining that while it would still appreciate any efforts he made as a private individual, it could not employ him as an official representative, see the letters between Jones of Wrexham and Jones of RTS, between May and August 1842, RTS Corr.

\textsuperscript{114} The timing of the change in style of RTS tracts ties in with Sheila Haines’ analysis of changes in the SPCK tracts, which she extends to the RTS. However, Haines was mostly concerned with changes in the ‘traditional’ conversion-narrative tracts, and with the relationship between spiritual and practical well-being, rather than with new genres of tracts. See Haines, \textit{Am I my brother’s keeper?}, Chs. 1, 8 and 9.

\textsuperscript{115} John Kennedy, for instance, wrote on volcanoes in the Monthly Series, on Arctic exploration in the \textit{Leisure Hour}, and on Thomas Chalmers in the ‘Biographical Series’. Kennedy, J., \textit{Old Highland Days: the reminiscences of Dr John Kennedy, with a sketch of his later life by his son, Howard Angus Kennedy, with twenty-two portraits and illustrations} (London, 1901), 249-50.

\textsuperscript{116} Haines has also suggested that they might be a response to the SPCK’s loss of the monopoly for supplying textbooks to the National Schools Society, and that the RTS secular publishing programme might be seen as an attempt to break into the textbook market, see Haines, \textit{Am I my brother’s keeper?}, 30-32. This seems possible, but unlikely to be the main reason.

\textsuperscript{117} In 1846-47, the Society gained 305 new subscribers (and lost 90), and the following year, they gained 260 (and lost 135), RTS FCM, 21/04/1847, and 19/04/1848.

\textsuperscript{118} See, for example, RTS FCM 10/01/1844 and 26/06/1844.
suggest that the so-called depression of 1848-49 was a much smaller affair than the 1826 ‘crash’ which the RTS escaped unscathed.  

Figure 1.8 suggests instead that, after its enthusiasm in 1846-49, the Society did not or could not maintain a high number of new publications per year, returning to previous levels of production for both tracts and non-tracts. In 1848, the finance sub-committee took note of the large increase in the amount of printing the Society had been doing over the previous four years, and decided that ‘that it appears desirable to diminish the issue of New Works in the coming year’. It may simply be this reduced level of production which shows through in the sales income, while the apparent discrepancy between the circulation and income figures could be an artefact of the Society’s Jubilee Fund efforts in 1849-50, which, by circulating many tracts at the expense of the Fund, kept circulation figures relatively high, while not contributing enough to affect the income figures. The Society’s concern with the Jubilee and its associated programmes of charitable activity may also explain the lower production levels in the years immediately after the Jubilee. In any case, the success of the new secular publishing programme was not immediate, but only fully took hold in 1852 and beyond. The late 1840s, then, should be seen as a period in which the RTS worked out how to deal with the changing state of the publishing trade and the readership for cheap non-fiction. It was not self-evident that its secular publishing programme would be competitive enough, or attractive enough. As we shall see in Chapter Two, the Monthly Series should be seen as an experiment, the lessons from which were applied advantageously to later projects, such as the Leisure Hour.

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120 RTS FCM, 23/02/1848.

121 The Jubilee Fund paid the Trade Fund for the tracts it distributed, but the cost involved was small, compared with the income from book or periodical sales.

122 From 1852 onwards, the Society’s income increased every year until the mid-1880s, which is in definite contrast to the book trade as a whole, which Eliot’s figures show as entering a ‘plateau’ period from 1855 till the late 1860s, see figures in Eliot, S., Some Patterns and Trends in British Publishing 1800-1919 (London, 1994).
Relations with the Trade

William Chambers believed that ‘a society cannot, as a rule, compete with private enterprise’. While the RTS was primarily a tract publisher, it came into relatively little conflict with the rest of the trade, there being little profit in tracts and few commercial tract publishers. This began to change when the Society started to publish periodicals and books, but it was still competing only with other religious publishers. With the new secular publishing programme, the RTS was voluntarily and purposefully entering into competition with a larger section of the book trade. It thus became even more important to negotiate the Society’s relationship to the trade. In some aspects, such as the organisational structure and the charitable fund, the Society was clearly different from the trade, while in others, such as relationships with printers and booksellers, it was quite typical. The existence of the charitable fund was a matter of concern to some competitors, who worried about unfair subsidies, while the Society’s engagement with the trade on its own terms caused subscribers to fear that the committee was being too commercial.

Organisation

One of the most obvious differences between the Society and a commercial company, was its organisational structure (Figure 1.16). The Society was run by a committee, which was, at least in theory, responsible to the subscribers, while the day-to-day work of the publishing firm was carried out by paid employees reporting to the committee. This meant that there tended to be more sense of accountability than in the more usual family-owned and run businesses, as new projects had to be justified to the subscribers. The committee met early on weekday mornings, before the ‘professional men and merchants of high respectability’ who were its members had to attend to their own businesses. Meetings were chaired by members of the committee in turn, as there was no position of President. The most active members were the officers, the ordinary members and the trustees, as the honoraries rarely

123 Chambers, W., Memoir of Robert Chambers with Autobiographical Reminiscences (New York, 1872), 213.
124 Although once domestic missionary societies provided a regular market for tracts, commercial tract publishing became more viable, witness the example of Peter Drummond, discussed in Haines, Am I my brother’s keeper?, Ch. 3.
125 Jones, William Jones, 87.
126 The committee appointed a permanent chairman in 1937, Hewitt, Let the people read, 83.
William Jones held three officerships concurrently, and it was only after his death in 1855 that the Superintendent, Corresponding Secretary and Secretary for Auxiliaries became separate posts. This was partly an indication of Jones’s indefatigable efforts, and partly a measure of the increase of business.
attended, and the other ex officio members came only when they had business relating to their own society. There was an incentive for the ordinary members, as the three members with the poorest attendance each year would be replaced by elections at the annual meetings, and resigning members had often attended over forty meetings.\footnote{127} The trustees were former committee members, who provided continuity to the Society's legal identity. In 1850, five of them had been involved with the Society for over twenty years.\footnote{128}

The sub-committees were set up in the 1830s to deal with the detail of specific areas of the Society's concerns, with the executive committee retaining overall responsibility. Correspondence with overseas societies and all matters to do with grants were dealt with directly by the executive committee, but in other areas, it usually accepted the sub-committees' recommendations. Around six committee members sat on the sub-committees for finance and copyright, which met monthly, usually at 5pm.\footnote{129} The sub-committees for children's books and for special needs, like socialism or licentiousness, tended to be smaller and shorter-lasting. The finance sub-committee set the wages and salaries of the Society's employees and negotiated with them over holidays, pay-rises and benefit funds, dealt with the Society's insurance policies and legal affairs, and generally kept an eye on the financial aspects of all the Society's affairs. In some cases, this meant that there was some overlap with the copyright sub-committee, which dealt with all matters concerning the editorial department, including keeping the records of the copyrights assigned to the Society, ordering new manuscripts, and paying for those received. A sample balance sheet, from 1849-50, is given in Figure 1.17 to illustrate the state of the Society's finances. Subtotals for benevolent income and expenditure are listed before those for publishing.

The officers provided the day-to-day supervision of the Society's publishing and retail activities. While they theoretically acted under instructions from the committee, their greater familiarity with the Society's business allowed them to make practical suggestions for changes. Jones and Lloyd had both been committee members before

\footnote{127} Jones, \textit{Jubilee memorial}, 67, n.
\footnote{128} Jones, \textit{Jubilee memorial}, 67-9 gives brief sketches of the trustees.
\footnote{129} RTS CCM, 03/06/1840.
**Figure 1.17** Financial statement of the RTS for the year 1849-50. From the Annual Report (1850).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>INCOME</th>
<th>£</th>
<th>£</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Collection at annual meeting</td>
<td>41</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Auxiliary contributions</td>
<td>1440</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Donations and life subscriptions</td>
<td>622</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Annual subscriptions</td>
<td>2786</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Congregational collections</td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Christmas cards</td>
<td>46</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dividends on stock invested by desire of donors</td>
<td>52</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ground rents</td>
<td>49</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Special Fund for China</td>
<td>121</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>SUBTOTAL</strong></td>
<td><strong>5215</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Legacies</td>
<td>847</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>SUBTOTAL</strong></td>
<td><strong>847</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interest on temporary investments</td>
<td>51</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sale of stock: China Fund</td>
<td>185</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Drawback of duty on publications and paper exported, including grants</td>
<td>371</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Amount received for sales of publications</td>
<td>42394</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transferred from Benevolent Fund for grants of publications</td>
<td>7193</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Balance from last year</td>
<td>2649</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>SUBTOTAL</strong></td>
<td><strong>52843</strong></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td><strong>58905</strong></td>
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</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>EXPENDITURE</th>
<th>£</th>
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<tr>
<td>Money grants to foreign societies</td>
<td>958</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grants of printing paper to foreign societies</td>
<td>1371</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grants of tracts, handbills etc. at home and overseas</td>
<td>4608</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grants in aid of libraries for ministers and teachers</td>
<td>555</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grants in aid of libraries for school libraries</td>
<td>633</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grants in aid of Union House libraries</td>
<td>25</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Special Fund for China</td>
<td>410</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Collector's Poundage</td>
<td>139</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
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<td><strong>SUBTOTAL</strong></td>
<td><strong>8699</strong></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cost of publications: paper, printing, stereotype plates, drawing and engraving, binding, folding and stitching, translating, editing, etc</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Foreign freight, shipping charges, packing cases</td>
<td>372</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marine insurance</td>
<td>64</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fire insurance</td>
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<tr>
<td>Travelling expenses, visiting auxiliaries</td>
<td>187</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Rent and Taxes</td>
<td>812</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Expenses of annual meeting</td>
<td>37</td>
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<tr>
<td>Repairs and fittings</td>
<td>62</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Advertisements</td>
<td>363</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Society's library: repairing books</td>
<td>35</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Salaries and allowances; and wages of warehousemen, clerks, shop-men, porters etc</td>
<td>2700</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Books purchased</td>
<td>77</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stationery purchased</td>
<td>348</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cartage, wharfage and carriage</td>
<td>189</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coals and gas</td>
<td>98</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Postage and stamps</td>
<td>283</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disbursements of various incidentals, petty cash, packing cord and boxes, and sundry other charges</td>
<td>646</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>SUBTOTAL</strong></td>
<td><strong>47506</strong></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td><strong>56205</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Balance in cash</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bills receivable</td>
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<tr>
<td>East India bonds</td>
<td>396</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;CASH IN HAND&quot;</td>
<td><strong>2699</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td><strong>58904</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
being appointed officers, and the officers were generally as long-serving as the committee members and trustees, with William Tarn the Cashier having been involved with the Society for only twenty-three years, in 1850. The officers were assisted by around sixty employees attached to the various departments listed at the bottom of Figure 1.16, some of whom were the sons of committee members, staff or subscribers, getting a start in the publishing business before moving on elsewhere. But some of the ‘Society’s servants’ turned out to be as devoted to the institution as their superiors, and stayed till they retired.

The members of the editorial department and their careers with the RTS are outlined in Figure 1.18. In 1846, Lloyd, still assisted by Stokes, was in charge of a department with four editorial assistants and two in-house readers. Within a year, Stokes had retired and Lloyd decided to follow suit. In the ensuing reorganisation, Williams took over as editor, but, after a disciplinary hearing, the committee dismissed him at six months notice in late 1849. Williams did not take this well, and there followed ‘many painful meetings’, but the committee was conscious of ‘the dissatisfaction, on various grounds, that existed through a considerable period of time’, and stood firm. After Williams had ‘retired’ in spring 1850, he continued to argue his case with the committee, sending a printed statement to every committee member, and prolonging a discussion of an expenses claim until summer 1851. Throughout, the committee maintained that it ‘cannot admit the correctness of Mr Williams's views’, and it seems to have eventually won out. Perhaps as a consequence of this ‘dissatisfaction’, Williams’s tenure as editor was written out of the official history.

The committee hoped that one of the Society’s writers, William Haig Miller, would become the new editor, and persuaded him to join the department part-time, on similar terms to Marshall’s. In late 1850, Miller was asked to become editor, and agreed. However, during the period in which he was transferring his services from

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130 Appendix I of RTS Report (1845) commends long serving members.
131 Youngman the reader (RTS FCM, 18/09/1850) may have been the son of Youngman the commercial traveller.
132 RTS ECM, 26/11/1850.
133 RTS ECM, 12/11/1850; RTS CCM, January to May 1851.
134 RTS ECM, 12/11/1850.
135 RTS CCM, 14/11/1849, 18/12/1850.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>In 1846:</th>
<th>1847</th>
<th>1848</th>
<th>1849</th>
<th>1850</th>
<th>1851</th>
<th>1852</th>
<th>1853</th>
<th>1854</th>
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<tr>
<td>EDITORS</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>William Freeman Lloyd (1791-1853)</td>
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<td>George Stokes (1789-1847)</td>
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<tr>
<td>EDITORIAL ASSISTANTS (full-time)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Rev. Charles Williams (1796-1866)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Bookseller's assistant; Congregational minister.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Joined RTS as editorial assistant in 1838.</td>
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<tr>
<td>James Whitehouse (fl. 1845-62)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Member of RTS committee.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Appointed as Lloyd's assistant 1845.</td>
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<tr>
<td>John Henry Cross (1804-76)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Joined RTS as a reader in 1833.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Responsible for children's works.</td>
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<td>J. A. Quinton (fl. 1850)</td>
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<td>Printer's apprentice, Ipswich; winner of RTS prize essay.</td>
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<td>Joined RTS as assistant to Cross in 1849.</td>
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<td>EDITORIAL ASSISTANTS (part-time)</td>
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<td>Rev. Charles Marshall (fl. 1842-50)</td>
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<td>Teacher at Church Missionary College.</td>
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<td>Offered to work part-time (2.25 hours a day) for RTS in 1842.</td>
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<td>William Haig Miller (1812-91)</td>
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<td>Advance department of National and Provincial Bank.</td>
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<td>Joined RTS as part-time reader and editorial assistant in 1849.</td>
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<td>REaders</td>
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<td>Henry Hall</td>
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<td>Son of a minister.</td>
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<td>Joined RTS as reader in 1844.</td>
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<td>Joined RTS as reader c.1850.</td>
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Figure 1.18 The editorial staff of the RTS, 1846-54.
the National Provincial Bank to the RTS, he changed his mind. Miller continued to work part-time for the RTS, including editing the Leisure Hour, until around 1853. After that, Whitehorne and Cross, who had been effectively running the department for most of the time since Williams's dismissal, became the General and Children's Editors. Cross had acquired a new assistant since the employment of J. A. Quinton in 1849.

In the midst of all these changeovers, the Society was forced to think about what the duties of its editorial staff ought to be, and what qualifications they should possess. The readers needed a sound grasp of the English language and its grammar, to report on completed manuscripts and check proofs. Their reports were supplemented by those of external readers, who had to be 'quite competent to pass an opinion on the subject, whatever it may be'. The department used a range of external readers, since 'different readers are needed for different classes of books' depending on the subject matter, and it was important to find readers who were 'up to the subject'.

While the external readers were primarily responsible for assessing the subject matter of a manuscript, the internal readers and the editor were expected to pay particular attention to its suitability for the Society. Thus, Lloyd read every manuscript with what he called 'my tract-eye', to decide whether to send them on to the readers at all.

As an editorial assistant, Whitehorne had wider duties. He was appointed for the purposes of: 'The examination of Manuscripts - the preparation of Tracts for the Committee - conferring with writers - watching the productions of the Roman Catholic and Tractarian presses - and the examination of new works published in France, Germany and the United States.' Thus, he was not only to be concerned with literary activity in his own organisation, but had to keep a watch on other

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136 RTS CCM, 16/04/1851.
137 RTS FCM, 28/03/1849, 18/04/1849.
138 RTS Add. (23), Lloyd to Jones, 15/09/1847. Lloyd mentions that external readers were supplied with printed copies of the questions which the Society would need answered in a typical report, and that for 'ticklish subjects', special queries could be added.
139 RTS Add. (23), Lloyd to Jones, 15/09/1847.
140 RTS Add. (23), Lloyd to Jones, 15/09/1847; 'Regulations for the Management of the Editorial Department', RTS CCM, 09/02/1848.
141 RTS FCM, 29/10/1845.
publishers, to see what the Society should be reacting to. In the case of the Roman Catholic and Tractarian press, this would allow the Society to respond to these ‘errors’ as swiftly as possible. The new French, German and American works might also be targets for future RTS works, but the more religious publications might be suitable for reprinting or translation in Britain, or might provide the inspiration for a new subject matter, or method of treating it. As the committee remarked, Whitehome would ‘be found very useful in pointing out the works most suitable for publication by the Society, and in a variety of other ways’.  

The role of the editor (later, editors) involved the selection and revision of manuscripts, the editing of the periodicals, the organisation of the book series, and perhaps some original authorship, particularly on the periodicals. With regard to manuscripts submitted, the editor had to decide whether to send them to the readers, and later to collate the readers’ reports and present them to the committee. He was empowered to make revisions regarding ‘any primary objections, particularly in reference to the statement of Religious truth’, and these should be approved with the writer before the editor reported to committee.  

Lloyd was aware that there were some questions the committee was certain to ask the editor about any manuscript, ‘such as the introduction of the way of salvation, and I prepared myself to answer such inquiries before bringing up the M.S.’. Once a work had been approved, the editor was responsible for making sure that ‘the Manuscript be carefully prepared for the printer’, and sent to the printer in good time, while later, ‘the Proof Sheets [must] be also critically read by the Editor’.  

Technically, the copyright sub-committee was responsible for commissioning works, but it was frequently guided by the editor, who came to meetings primed with suggested works, and could be trusted to find suitable writers for a subject the sub-committee felt should be addressed. Since the sub-committee had to agree all the

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142 RTS FCM, 29/10/1845.
143 RTS Add. (23), Lloyd to Jones, 15/09/1847.
144 ‘Regulations for the Management of the Editorial Department’, RTS CCM, 09/02/1848.
145 RTS Add. (23), Lloyd to Jones, 15/09/1847.
146 ‘Regulations for the Management of the Editorial Department’, RTS CCM, 09/02/1848.
works to be commissioned, the minute books provided a record of works ordered.\textsuperscript{147} The sub-committee was responsible for approving the completed work (on the guidance of the editor), and for authorising payment of a variable amount determined by themselves. It was only with respect to the periodicals that the editor had a ‘certain latitude’ in obtaining articles, as the volume of business involved in running three periodicals would otherwise swamp the sub-committee.\textsuperscript{148}

The editor or his assistants also engaged in some original authorship, but the committee was worried lest this take up too much of their time during business hours. When drawing up new regulations for the running of the department in 1848, the committee took care to emphasise to Williams that it was only ‘his remaining time after such duties are discharged’ that might ‘be devoted to original works’.\textsuperscript{149} The regulations also stated that any works prepared by one of the editorial staff had to be approved by another editor, and go through all the usual examination procedures – from which it can be deduced that the committee thought Williams was spending too long on original works which were published without adequate examination.\textsuperscript{150} To give sufficient attention to all this editorial work, the editor was expected to be in the Depository from 10am until 7pm.\textsuperscript{151} This was an hour less than most of the other employees, including his own assistants, who started at 9am. The closing time of the depository had been brought forward from 8pm in July 1845, at the request of employees who had been watching the progress of the early closing movement.\textsuperscript{152} All staff were allowed an hour for lunch and fifteen minutes for tea.\textsuperscript{153}

From these duties, two sets of necessary qualifications emerge. One is concerned with literary and editorial experience, the other with suitable piety. Most of the members of the editorial department were from the middle classes, and although some

\textsuperscript{147} RTS Add. (23), Lloyd to Jones, 15/09/1847, discusses the problems the committee had been having keeping track of the works ordered for the Monthly Series.

\textsuperscript{148} RTS Add. (23), Lloyd to Jones, 15/09/1847.

\textsuperscript{149} ‘Regulations for the Management of the Editorial Department’, RTS CCM, 09/02/1848.

\textsuperscript{150} ‘Regulations for the Management of the Editorial Department’, RTS CCM, 09/02/1848.

\textsuperscript{151} ‘Regulations for the Management of the Editorial Department’, RTS CCM, 09/02/1848.

\textsuperscript{152} RTS FCM, 09/07/1845.

\textsuperscript{153} The assistant superintendent and the head of the binding department could take an hour and a half for lunch, and stop at 6pm once a week. The head of the retail department had been refused a similar privilege, RTS FCM, 09/07, and 17/09/1845. Annual leave allowance was between one and two weeks, depending on seniority, RTS CCM, 15/06/1853.
entered the department young, others had previous professional careers, the ministry in Williams’s case, or banking in Miller’s. With such backgrounds, they could all be assumed to have received enough education to be able to deal with the literary duties, while the skills specific to editing and publishing would have to be picked up on the job. An exception was Cross’s assistant, Quinton. He had been ‘brought up a printer’, and had been employed in the business of Mr Birston of Ipswich, where he became ‘fully acquainted with the Printing business in all its branches’.\(^\text{154}\) He won the Society’s prize-essay, ‘On the Sabbath, by Working Men’. It was the evidence of literary talent found in this essay, rather than any regular educational background, which persuaded the Society to employ him, when they discovered that the young men currently working with Cross ‘were altogether ineligible’ to become his assistant.\(^\text{155}\) Lloyd had read Quinton’s essay, and believed it ‘contained evidence of talent of a superior order’. Jones had met him, and been impressed by his talent. After another interview, and references from his employer and pastor, he was engaged, and given £10 to help his move to London.\(^\text{156}\) He was paid a salary of £180, increasing after a year to £200.\(^\text{157}\) While this made him clearly junior to Whitehorne (on £300), or indeed to Cross (on £225), he was substantially higher in rank than the readers, who received wages of around 34s. a week, the equivalent of £88 a year.\(^\text{158}\)

What Quinton may have lacked in polished literary skills, he made up for with his experience of the practical realities of the printing business. Charles Timperley, in his *Printer’s Manual* (1838), suggested that a training in ‘the mechanical department’ ought to make him particularly good at reading proofs, being ‘better able to detect those manifold errata which, unperceived by men of learning and science, lie lurking, as it were, in a thousand different forms in every sheet’.\(^\text{159}\)

In addition to the skills needed to work in any publisher’s editorial department, the RTS staff also had to be suitably pious Christians. The Society assisted them in this by organising quarterly meetings for ‘prayer and exhortation’, presided over by an

\(^{154}\) RTS FCM, 28/03, and 16/05/1849.

\(^{155}\) RTS FCM, 28/03/1849.

\(^{156}\) RTS FCM, 28/03, 18/04, 16/05, and 17/10/1849.

\(^{157}\) RTS FCM, 18/04/1849, and 18/09/1850.

\(^{158}\) RTS FCM, 18/12/1850 (Whitehorne), 21/06/1848 (Cross), and 20/06/1849 (Hall).

ordained member of the committee. Although little more might be expected of most staff, the editorial staff needed to be able to express their faith articulately, and to recognise when other writers were putting forward unusual views. The editorial department was the gate-keeper of the Society’s principle of publishing only ‘pure, good-natured Christianity’, of eschewing sectarianism, and including the message of salvation in every work. The staff therefore needed a sound understanding of the concepts, and of the significant and less significant differences between their own faith and that of other denominations. In seeking a new editorial assistant, the committee had to find a ‘decidedly pious young man to train up for the Society’s service’. Whitehorne’s piety and character could be judged directly by the committee, since he was one of its members, while for Quinton, references from his pastor were specifically sought to supplement those from his employer, in testifying to both ‘his piety and knowledge of the printing business’. Henry Hall had got his position as reader at the request of his father the minister, whose vocation provided assurances of his son’s faith. And Charles Williams must have seemed ideal for the Society when he first joined it in 1838: he had been principal manager of a bookshop in Piccadilly by the age of 22, had been a Sunday School teacher and lay-preacher, and had subsequently entered the ministry as a Congregationalist. Yet, in the end, he had trouble working under a committee which refused to relinquish ultimate editorial control.

Other societies and publishers had their own ways of ensuring corporate control over their publications. William and, especially, Robert Chambers were closely involved with the editing of their publications, particularly the Journal, and employed their first editorial assistant only in 1840. Throughout that decade, Cooney’s account suggests that they had only one or two assistants, of similar standing to Whitehorne and Cross, if salary is anything to go by. This meant that the Chambers’s publications reflected the opinions of the Chambers brothers much more closely than RTS

160 RTS FCM, 19/01/1848.
161 RTS FCM, 29/10/1845.
162 RTS FCM, 16/05/1849.
164 Cooney, Publishers for the people, 64-70. However, given that Robert Chambers spent a substantial part of the early 1840s in St Andrews writing Festiges, it seems plausible that there was more editorial assistance than Cooney mentions.

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publications could be said to reflect the opinions of any committee member or officer of the Society. In the RTS, the committee assumed the opinions of the subscribers, and created consensus resolutions which could be relayed to the editorial department for implementation. The presence of the editor at meetings ensured that the committee’s recommendations were practicable, but the need to run everything past a committee slowed down decision-making.

This was a problem shared by all the publishing societies, although they dealt with it in different ways. John Kitto reported his experience of publishing with the SDUK:

I find that passing a book through the Committee, must be a great bore to poor authors. Six copies have been sent out to different members of the Committee. Two of them have come back with remarks, corrections, etc. I do not know whether I am to expect the others; but it is understood that the person who does not send back his copy has no objection to the publications, and sees nothing to correct. In giving me the two copies to see if I could make any use of the remarks and suggestion which had been written in the margin, Mr Knight told me I was not bound to adopt the suggestions or corrections they contained, and he hoped I would not be offended at the manner in which some of them might be expressed.165

Kitto’s book had already been put into proof, to generate copies for the committee. But this meant that any revisions which Kitto made, either on his own account or at the behest of the committee members, would incur correction charges from the compositors, which could be hefty if substantial changes were involved. Furthermore, since the six committee members worked individually rather than in co-operation, they could make conflicting suggestions, so that the whole process might not result in any changes at all. Kitto reckoned that the committee review process would slow the publication of his book by three months.166

This system was similar to what the RTS had done prior to the engagement of Lloyd as editor, although the merits of tracts were discussed in committee to reach a consensus. It was also effectively what the SPCK seem to have been still doing in the 1840s, although their system was even more cumbrous. The affiliation of the SPCK with the Church of England meant that its works had to be approved not only by the committee, but also by five bishops, any one of whom could veto the work. Initially, proofs were sent to the bishops, and if approved by all, the work then needed unanimous approval from the monthly general meeting – which was in theory open to all members of the Society. There was no system whereby an editor could make advance revisions in communication with the writer before seeking committee approval, so the SPCK manuscripts had to stand or fall entirely on the merits of their original form. From 1834, a Tract Committee was set up to approve and revise tracts, although new works still needed the Episcopal and general meeting sanctions. The use of the postal service to consult the bishops slowed the whole process down, while the need for unanimous approval meant that the Society’s historian regarded its works as ‘colourless and dull’ well into the late nineteenth century.

The SPCK set up a General Literature Committee in 1832 to publish non-religious books, in response to the first wave of attempts to produce cheap non-fiction. It initially had a much freer hand with selecting and revising works than did the Tract Committee. However, its members came into conflict with the rest of the Society, and by 1837, it had ceased to be a publishing body, and became an approval and editing committee for works published by J.W. Parker bearing the ‘SPCK General Literature Committee’ imprimatur. Under this scheme, the risks and profits were borne by Parker, not by the SPCK – in the same way as the SDUK’s publishing risks were borne by Charles Knight. However, there were no paid editorial staff, and since editing and correcting proofs is not a committee activity, the revision of manuscripts often ended up being done by whomever the warehouse superintendent could find at the time.

167 My discussion is based on Clarke, *History of SPCK*, 172-83.
170 It would be extremely interesting to know whether Parker was as unfortunate financially as Knight, as, indeed, it would be interesting to know how successful (or not) the GLC was at publishing on its own account in the early 1830s.
The RTS thus seem to have stood somewhere between the extremes of the commercial publisher and the benevolent society. Unlike Chambers, it had to work with subscribers and committees. Lloyd admitted that this disadvantaged the Society, since, where a commercial publisher ‘can give an answer at once’ to a potential writer, the RTS had to put it to committee. Moreover, while most publishers incurred ‘no responsibility for the contents of the Work’, as it bore its writer’s name, most RTS publications were anonymous, and bore only the authority of the RTS. The committee thus had to consider not only ‘Is it likely to sell for a profit?’ but whether it was suitable for the Society’s evangelical aims and reputation.\(^1\) However, the committee was comprised of business men who took their duties seriously, turned up regularly every week, and sought to reach consensus. It did not have to wait for responses from far distant bishops, or absent committee members. And the Society had a substantial full-time editorial department to deal with all the practical details, rather than doing everything by committee. In terms of its actual publishing operations, the RTS was much more like Chambers than the SDUK or the SPCK general literature programme, because it did publish on its own account, and did not use the services of a trade publisher to organise the paper, printing and binding of its works. The RTS thus had to become much more directly involved with the trade, and its risks, than the other societies, but this meant it received the profits of its own works, and could use them in charitable works.

*The Society as Part of the Trade: production*

The Society certainly regarded itself as more akin to the publishing companies than to the societies. It routinely kept an eye on what the rest of the trade was doing, not just in terms of their publications, but in their treatment of staff and responses to legal changes. Since the Society combined wholesaling and retailing with its publishing business, it also watched those sections of the trade. The opinions or practices of the ‘leading booksellers’ were important, and the Society followed their example in contributing to the fund for amending the insolvency and bankruptcy laws in 1849, and to that for the Booksellers’ Retreat in 1855.\(^2\) It investigated the claims of the Association of Booksellers’ Assistants for shorter hours in 1844, and set up a

\(^1\) RTS Add. (23), Lloyd to Jones, 15/09/1847.  
\(^2\) RTS FCM, 15/08/1849; 01/08/1855.
contributory benefit fund to cover sick-pay for its employees in 1846. On learning that 'the Publishing Houses were making arrangements for their Assistants to visit the Great Exhibition, and giving them various sums to meet the expence [sic], according to their stations', the RTS decided to do likewise. However, it did not follow the wholesale trade in allowing a Saturday half-holiday in 1853, when it discovered that wholesale assistants started at 7am, rather than the 9am of RTS assistants, and that the half-holiday would be difficult to implement in the retail department.

The few publishers who were mentioned by name in the surviving correspondence and archive material illustrate where the Society positioned itself in the trade. The Society claimed that it had 'much assisted both Publishers and Retailers of books by the dissemination of healthy knowledge, thus encouraging the desire for reading'. Since 'small works have led to a demand for larger ones', the wide circulation of the Society's works should be seen as increasing the market for the publishers of more substantial works, preferably Christian publishers. The RTS cited Nelson, Blackie and Collins as examples of the private publishers who were benefitting from its path-breaking work. When correspondents suggested that the Society's tracts and small works were not as cheap as they might be, the standard response was: 'We furnish our Subscribers and the Trade with 44 pages for each penny we receive, which is far beyond even the popular monthly Tracts of Mr. Chambers.' As respectable publishers with the philanthropic ambition of educating the working classes, the RTS and Chambers had much in common. However, this respect for the efforts and success of Chambers meant that they were the most obvious face of the competition, for the RTS could not ignore the fact that Chambers were secular publishers who paid little more than lip-service to Christianity.

173 RTS FCM, 26/06/1844 and 09/07/1845; 17/06/1846 ff.
174 RTS ECM, 20/05/1851.
175 RTS CCM, 15/06 and 20/07/1853.
176 RTS Corresp., Youngman to Maclehoose, 03/09/1849.
177 RTS Corresp., Jones to Thompson, 01/09/1849.
178 RTS Corresp., Jones to Hall & Co., 30/08/1845. The same example is used in Christian Spectator (1845): 50, and in RTS Corresp., Jones to Dillworth, 06/11/1846.
179 The Society recognised this when it quoted approvingly from Chambers's Journal, for example, on the difficulties of reaching the working classes, Christian Spectator (1847): 209-10.
The formal statement of the Society’s relationship with the book trade, drawn up in the 1820s and re-issued in the 1840s, reiterated the Society’s desire to be seen as a typical publisher:

The RTS does not at all desire to hurt, or even to interfere with, the booksellers… It may be well to add, that in its arrangements with printers, and binders, and other tradesmen, while the necessary attention is given to the fairness of prices and charges, no attempt is ever made to grind down, or cause unfair competition.180

The second comment would have been particularly pertinent in the 1840s, when the Bible Society was in a dispute with the bookbinders about the use of ‘sweated’ female labour. The Bible Society, unlike the SDUK or SPCK, did act as its own publisher, but it was restricted in its choice of printers (to the Oxford and Cambridge University Presses, and the Queen’s Patentees). It also chose to restrict its interaction with the trade distribution networks, by insisting on the importance of the ‘Bible transaction’.181 This minimal interaction with the trade left the Bible Society vulnerable to claims of unfair interference.

Unlike the Bible Society, the RTS could respond to charges of interference by pointing out that they used the services of a wide range of paper merchants, printers, binders, wholesalers and retailers, and conformed to trade practices in doing so. In the late 1840s, they had contacts with 3 paper merchants, 21 printers, and 12 binders, as well as 7 engravers.182 Most of these worked in the area around St. Paul’s cathedral and Fleet Street in London, although John Dickinson & Co. the paper merchants and Jarrold & Sons the printers were based in Norwich, and John Childs & Son the printers were in Bungay, Suffolk. Dickinson & Co. were a large company who were also suppliers to the Bible Society.183 Together with Spicer Brothers, they supplied the majority of the RTS’s paper. The Society occasionally received offers from, or sent tenders to, printers or paper merchants further from London, but the

180 Reprinted in [Stokes], ‘Bound publications III’, 35.
181 Howsam, Cheap Bibles, esp. Ch.4 for the bookbinders’ dispute.
182 These are the firms to whom the RTS paid bills in 1850, RTS ECM.
183 Howsam, Cheap Bibles, 227, note 66.
prices were rarely sufficiently cheap to justify the difficulty of long-distance operations.\textsuperscript{184}

Although a few publishers, including Chambers, were their own printers, most other publishers, including the RTS, had their printing done by a separate firm. The printers who worked for the RTS varied from large, well-known firms, like Childs & Son and William Clowes & Sons, to (presumably) smaller firms that have left no traces other than their imprint, such as W.J. Perry and Edward Gover. By the 1830s, Childs was known as ‘one of the best stereotype and printing establishments in the kingdom’, while Clowes had already installed no fewer than eighteen steam-powered printing machines.\textsuperscript{185} Several of the firms, including Clowes, Childs and Gover, had been printing for the Society since at least the 1830s.\textsuperscript{186}

New names joined the Society’s list when a firm applied for a share of the Society’s work, and was able to quote competitive prices, or when existing partnerships broke up. It was not uncommon for both partners to petition the RTS for a share of the work, which suggests that the RTS was a valued client whose business was well worth having. When John Blackburn and Benjamin Pardon dissolved their partnership in 1848, both men ‘solicit[ed] a continuance of the Society’s business’. It was granted to Blackburn, as he had been with the Society before going into partnership with Pardon.\textsuperscript{187} As printers’ partnerships changed frequently, the Society’s business could end up with firms quite different from those with which it had started.\textsuperscript{188} Since the Society often granted shares to both former partners, and rarely removed their business later, its business became fragmented. However, as the volume of RTS printing had been increasing since the late 1820s, the Society actually

\textsuperscript{184} A tender for paper was sent to Scottish manufacturers, RTS FCM, 18/10/1844; a proposal was received from the ‘Printing and Paper works at Newton, Lancashire’, RTS FCM, 19/1/1848. Childs & Son charged less than London prices, and were at least in the south of England. On their negotiations with the RTS, see FCM 17/12/1845.


\textsuperscript{186} Their names appear in RTS ECM for 1839.

\textsuperscript{187} RTS CCM, 09/02/1848.

\textsuperscript{188} For instance, as a result of the break-up of Ward & Griffiths, RTS business was transferred to a Mr Macintosh, who was Griffiths’s new employer, see RTS FCM, 19/06/1850.
needed all their printers. With the introduction of the new publishing programme in the 1840s, printing increased by almost a quarter.\textsuperscript{189}

A few printers had fixed arrangements to print long-running works, such as John Hill, who printed the \textit{Child's Companion} for twenty years.\textsuperscript{190} Most printers did short-term jobs, such as specific tracts or a particular book, and were invited to submit quotations for new projects. Of the twenty-one printers used by the RTS in 1850, ten were employed for more than four projects, while the others took on occasional work that they could not deal with. The Society employed George Baxter and J.M. Kronheim for five jobs in 1850, which indicates an early and substantial commitment to colour printing. The Society realised that it would make children's works particularly attractive, and that colour pictures could also be used to help 'reach a lower class than the papers of the Society are at present doing'.\textsuperscript{191} It was, however, still very expensive: in 1854, Kronheim quoted the Society 3s. per 100 for handbills printed in five colours, compared to 10d. per 100 in black and white.\textsuperscript{192}

The pattern of a nucleus of regular printers and a longer list of contacts who could be employed if needed, was mirrored with the RTS's binders. The Society reckoned it had three principal binders, John Davison, V.F. Zaba, and James Key, while another three binders were used occasionally, and the remaining six rarely.\textsuperscript{193} From some point in the mid-1840s, perhaps dating from the opening of the new building, the Society also ran its own binding department, under the control of Thomas Dix, who had formerly been in charge of one of the external binding firms.\textsuperscript{194} It may have been

\textsuperscript{189} RTS FCM, 23/02/1848: 'Mr Jones reported the numbers of Sheets printed in the last three years: viz in 1844-5: 305.5 Sheets; 1845-6: 318.5 sheets, and 1846-7: 399.25 Sheets, and up to the 1st Feb' in the present year 342 sheets, without including reprints, the Annual Report, or the reissue of The Commentary and Doctrinal Puritans.' This is presumably a measure of the number of works printed, and their length, rather than of the number of copies printed in total.

\textsuperscript{190} In 1847, it was transferred to George Woodfall, until Hill (or perhaps his son) requested it back, on setting up in business again, see RTS FCM, 14/07/1847, 15/09/1847, and 20/10/1847.

\textsuperscript{191} RTS ECM, 19/09 and 17/10/1849 (children), 15/1/1854 (working classes).

\textsuperscript{192} RTS CCM, 28/11/1854. The committee decided to inquire about the cost of printing in two or three colours.

\textsuperscript{193} Again, I have examined the bill payments found in RTS ECM for 1850. The reference to 'three principal binders' is at RTS ECM, 13/01/1852. Davison and Key had both been in business since the late 1820s, Ramsden, C., \textit{London Bookbinders, 1780-1840} (1956; London, 1987).

\textsuperscript{194} The first mention of Dix in the employ of the Society was in 1845, RTS FCM, 21/05/1845. Dix married the daughter of John Davis, the first Superintendent. His daughter Martha married Richard Jones, son of William Jones, the second Superintendent, and himself the third Superintendent. See RTS Misc., which includes a partial family history of the Jones family.
with the controversy about the BFBS binderies in mind that William Jones, reporting to the committee after personally giving New Year’s gift books to every worker in the three main binders, commented that the books ‘were kindly and thankfully received, and he was much gratified with the general appearance of the workpeople. They appeared to be kindly and liberally treated by their employers. Some of them had been from twenty to nearly forty years in their service.’ In other words, the committee could rest assured that its workers were not being maltreated.

The financial aspect of the Society’s relations with the trade was controlled by the finance sub-committee, which inspected samples of paper and printing, and examined quotations, before deciding where to place a specific piece of Society business. The Society made it a rule to settle bills immediately, in cash, and to expect the same from its debtors, as this would allow it to avoid what William Chambers condemned as a too-common tendency in the publishing trade: ‘the means are not suffered to accumulate in order to allow of ready-money payments. The whole transactions subside into a system of bills... There is great seeming prosperity, but so is there too frequently a great bill-book – dismal record of difficulties and heart-aches.’ By the late 1840s, the RTS had created some exceptions to this rule, as it did so much business with Clowes, Spicer Brothers, and Dickinson, that, to avoid having to pay multiple small bills, and to assist the cash flow of the creditors, it set up three month running accounts with these firms. However, as all the firms involved were large organisations with strong reputations for financial probity, as the accounts were started by a down-payment from the RTS, and were checked every three months, this was a far cry from the potential dangers of individuals or small firms issuing bills with long due dates and no real expectation of being able to meet them. The RTS’s disapproval of bills was graphically illustrated in the first serial story in the Leisure Hour, in which the hero was transported for forging a bill.

The Society also had to keep track of its physical property, not only of the locations of the finished product prior to being distributed, but of the associated materials, like

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195 RTS ECM, 13/01/1852.
196 Chambers, Memoir, 280.
197 On the paper supplier accounts, see RTS FCM, 20/10/1847. Clowes’s account was already in existence at this time.
sereotype plates and engravings, which were generally stored by the printer who made them, at least for the first few years. The storage of the Society’s property on the premises of others raised the worry of fire or flood, or the printer going bankrupt and the Society’s property being ‘misplaced’. Although the Society’s assets could only be seized to the amount owed by the Society and no further, the committee worried that they might be tied up in lengthy bankruptcy proceedings.\textsuperscript{199} Thus, the finance sub-committee authorised William Jones to remove the Society’s stereotype plates from the premises of Ward & Griffiths in February 1852, as that firm was in a ‘deranged state of the affairs’.\textsuperscript{200} The plates were presumably moved to the strong room in the Depository, which had been built for the purpose.\textsuperscript{201}

The Society had insurance for its own premises, and such of its stock and property as was on the premises of others (the insurance payments are listed in Figure 1.17).\textsuperscript{202} The Society’s care paid off when, on the night of Wednesday, January 28th 1852, the premises of James Key, in Oxford Arms Passage, Warwick Lane, less than a block west from the Society’s Depository, caught fire. The report to the RTS committee stated that, ‘the quantity of publications consumed is great’, for Key was the principal stitcher of the Society’s tracts, children’s books, and other small publications which were not being hard-bound.\textsuperscript{203} Fortunately, Key’s loss ‘would be nearly covered by insurance’, while ‘the Society’s loss was covered by the Floating Policies in the Sun + Imperial Offices’.\textsuperscript{204} However, as ‘magazine day’ was the end of the month, and the time when most new publications, not just periodicals, were issued, a fire on the 28th could potentially be more disastrous than mere financial loss. As it happened, most of the publications which were due to be issued for February had already been transferred to Paternoster Row before the conflagration. But among the publications destroyed were many copies of the very first monthly part of the new \textit{Leisure Hour}. The monthly part was essential to the Society’s plan of transferring the readers of the \textit{Visitor} to the new periodical, and it would hardly be a good start if the first part failed

\textsuperscript{199} RTS FCM, 20/12/1854.
\textsuperscript{200} RTS FCM, 20/02/1848.
\textsuperscript{201} RTS FCM, 09/07/1845.
\textsuperscript{202} In 1844, the Society sent someone to inspect the premises at Childs & Son, to check if the insurance was adequate, RTS FCM, 11/09/1844.
\textsuperscript{203} RTS ECM, 03/02/1852.
\textsuperscript{204} RTS ECM, 03/02/1852.
to appear when promised. The report to committee was able to announce that all was not lost: 'In order to make up the deficiency, two of the Printing Offices worked their machines the whole of Thursday night, and a portion of Mr Key’s Workpeople had been since employed on the Society’s premises, in completing the requisite quantity of “Leisure Hour” in Monthly Parts, and other publications ordered.' Through these special measures, the launch of the Leisure Hour as monthly parts went ahead as planned.

*The Society as Part of the Trade: distribution*

The Society could theoretically have chosen not to distribute its publications through the trade, but to use auxiliary societies as local distribution outlets to complement the London Depository. Some auxiliaries did organise local depositories, as well as distributing gratuitous tracts, but these outlets tended to be very small, short-lived, and prone to financial troubles. The Totnes auxiliary was in debt to London for at least three years, while the Liverpool Tract Society had problems for several months in 1845-46, when the member in charge of their depository went bankrupt. The auxiliaries had developed to be fund-raising and tract-distributing organisations, and consequently not a good distribution network for works which had to be sold. Furthermore, as the case of the Bible Society illustrates, such a policy could create tensions not only with other retailers, but with centrally-organised institutions, such as the Sunday School Union and the district visiting societies, who wanted large numbers of publications to be distributed by their own teachers or agents. The RTS seems to have been willing from the very beginning to use any means of distribution which would get its publications to the people who needed them. This included the local auxiliaries and their depositories and other evangelical organisations, but it also included the booksellers, and less usual vendors such as hawkers and market-stall keepers. The annual reports did not analyse the amount of distribution achieved through these various channels, but the fact that ‘the largest portion of our books are sold through Trade channels’ was often mentioned. A rough idea of the importance

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205 RTS ECM, 03/02/1852.
206 RTS FCM, 13/03/1844, 21/01/1846.
207 Howsam, *Cheap Bibles*, 67-8. The BFBS began to use colporteurs in Britain in the mid-1850s (167), and booksellers in 1903 (38 and n 11).
208 Jones to Hall, 30/08/1845, RTS Corr.
of the different methods can be gained from Figure 1.19, which collates the estimates I have been able to make from archival material, which will be discussed in the following section.

To distribute through the trade, the RTS did the same things as other major publishers: it advertised in the trade journal and in more general periodicals; it published a catalogue, and sent out monthly announcements of its new publications; it arranged with publishers in Edinburgh and Dublin to act as regional agents; it hired a commercial traveller to make personal contact with retail booksellers, and encourage them to stock RTS publications; and there were facilities in the Depository for customers to purchase in person or by post.

Advertising was essential, as the absence of a commonly-used system of ‘sale or return’ in Britain meant that booksellers were unwilling to order many (or any) copies of books that might not sell. Advertisements also made potential customers aware of a book’s existence, since they were unlikely to come across it while browsing in a bookshop. However, advertising was expensive and made more so by the continued existence of a tax upon it. In 1852, John Chapman, publisher of the Westminster Review, estimated that the usual cost of advertising a new book was between £20 and £150. With much less than £20, it was impossible to get enough advertising for it to be worth doing. As he pointed out, this made it very difficult to advertise cheap books, as their sales income was highly unlikely to be sufficient to pay for worthwhile advertising. Thus, Chapman claimed, arguing for the repeal of Advertisement Duty, ‘One of the results of the costliness of advertising is the virtual suppression of pamphlets and low-priced books’. The further disadvantage for the RTS was that there were few periodicals in which to advertise if one wished to catch the attention of the working-class reader, rather than the middle-class reader of the monthlies and quarterlies.

Publishers usually advertised to the trade in the Publishers’ Circular, the Literary Gazette and the Athenaeum, but the RTS used only the fortnightly Publishers’

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211 Chapman, ‘Commerce of literature’, 518.
Figure 1.19 Distribution methods of the RTS, and their relative importance, c.1850.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Method of Distribution</th>
<th>Value of publications per year</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Free distribution by auxiliaries and other societies</td>
<td>~£14,000*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Direct sales, of which:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>From the Society’s Depository</td>
<td>~£35,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>From auxiliary society depositories</td>
<td>£5,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Through the book trade</td>
<td>Unknown (under £1,000)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(From the two booksellers in Dublin)</td>
<td>£800</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>From the stall in Soho Bazaar</td>
<td>£200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>From the two London hawkers</td>
<td>£48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL SALES BY ALL METHODS</td>
<td>£49,000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* The RTS benevolent fund paid the trade fund £7,000 for grants of publications. The society or individual receiving the grant usually paid a fraction of the value, up to a half, hence my estimate of £14,000 for 1849-50.
Circular. It placed an advertisement every month in the 1840s, but by the early 1850s, did so less frequently, as its advertisements were being pushed towards the back of the number and over-shadowed by the new style of large advertisements with display fonts. Unlike publishers of expensive books, the Society could not afford to use large advertisements except on very special occasions. For advertising to potential readers, the Society restricted itself to the religious periodical press, including the monthlies and the Patriot and Record newspapers. It also got ‘free’ advertising by inserting mentions of new works in the Christian Spectator, which was received by all subscribers. By the 1850s, the Society began to advertise more widely, and to include provincial newspapers, in an attempt to reach a lower class of reader. Compared with Chapman’s suggestion of spending 20% of sales income on advertising, the RTS figures for 1849-50 (Figure 1.17) reveal that a tiny £363, or 0.7% of sales income, was spent on advertising.

The Society printed a complete catalogue of its works each year, sub-divided into a tract catalogue (Figure 1.20), a catalogue of ‘Books, adapted chiefly for adults’, and a children’s catalogue. Foreign language publications were listed separately at the end. This was bound into the annual report, and sent to all subscribers. Abridged versions were also appended to selected religious annuals, such as the Congregational YearBook, which contained lists of ministers and news of the denomination. The Society also produced a one-page list of new publications every month, concentrating on English-language works with some Welsh, Irish or Gaelic works. This list was sent out to all the booksellers with whom the Society had contacts. It included instructions for sending orders to Paternoster Row, and by the mid-1850s, had developed into an order form (Figure 1.21). The Depository had separate departments for dealing with wholesale orders from other booksellers, and with individual orders from country subscribers, as well as the retail shop. The Society made a point of keeping subscribers up-to-date with changes in the postal service for books, as the charges affected not only postal purchases, but also subscribers wishing

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212 Compare the RTS advertisements in Publishers’ Circular 8 (1845): advert 1210, and 13 (1850): advert 883. (1850): advert 973, is a rare example of a large RTS advertisement.
213 The Cambridge University Library copy of the 1859 Congregational Year Book has an eight-page RTS catalogue still bound in.
214 Perhaps as space-fillers, some monthly listings included non-British language publications.
215 Copies of these monthly lists for 1842-59 can be found in RTS Publ.
TRACTS, HANDBILLS, SERMONS, ETC.
PUBLISHED BY THE
RELIGIOUS TRACT SOCIETY:
AND SOLD BY
WILLIAM JONES,
AT THE DEPOSITORY.
56, PATERNOSTER ROW, AND 65, ST. PAUL'S CHURCHYARD,
ALSO BY J. NISBIT & CO. 21, BERNERS STREET, OXFORD STREET, LONDON,
AND BY OTHER BOOKSELLERS.

All Communications to be addressed to No. 56, Paternoster Row.

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<td>Narrative Series Tracts</td>
<td>Tracts</td>
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<td>Separate Series—Tracts on Egyptianism</td>
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<tr>
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<tr>
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<td>Almanacks</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tracts for Young Men</td>
<td>Burder's Village Sermons</td>
<td>11</td>
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<td>Cottage Sermons</td>
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<td>Tracts in Large Type</td>
<td>Censure's Sermons</td>
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<td>The Gospels and Acts</td>
<td>Sermons to the Aged</td>
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Catalogue C contains Publications for the Young.
Catalogue D contains Welsh and Foreign Tracts and Books.

FIRST SERIES TRACTS.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tract</th>
<th>Price per 100.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 Address on distributing Religious Tracts</td>
<td>4d.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 Vision's Three Dialogues</td>
<td>5d.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 The End of Time, (from Dr. Watts)</td>
<td>5d.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 Death of Lord Hopkinson</td>
<td>5d.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 To a Youth, on Purity</td>
<td>5d.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7 To the Unfortunate Female</td>
<td>10d.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9 The Way to Heaven</td>
<td>10d.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10 Golden Rule, (by Dr. Watts)</td>
<td>1s. 0d.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11 On the God's Day</td>
<td>1s. 0d.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12 Persuasive to Public Worship</td>
<td>2s. 0d.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13 Life of Colonel Gardine</td>
<td>2s. 0d.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14 To a Youth at School</td>
<td>2s. 0d.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15 Life and Sayings of Lord Henry</td>
<td>3s. 0d.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16 Confidence in God</td>
<td>3s. 0d.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17 To the Afflicted</td>
<td>3s. 0d.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18 The Duties and Encouragements of the Poor</td>
<td>3s. 0d.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* * * Tracts ordered in less quantities than 25 of each sort, are charged at a small additional price.

Those marked with * are also kept in Stiff Covers, at 6d. per 100 extra.

* * * Tracts marked with * are also printed in 32pp, neat covers, gilt edges, fine paper and print.

Figure 1.20 The front page of the RTS tract catalogue, 1850.
RELIGIOUS TRACT SOCIETY,
56, PATERNOSTER ROW; 65, ST. PAUL's CHURCHYARD; and 164, PICCADILLY.

NOTICE TO BOOKSELLERS.—Country Booksellers and Depositaries of Societies are respectfully requested to forward their Stock orders, intended to accompany Magazines, not later than the 25th of the Month.

Orders for Periodicals, and alterations of standing orders, must be received at least four days before the last day of the Month (Sunday excepted). Orders arriving on the Booksellers' enclosure day, which is always the last day but one in the Month, cannot be accepted until after the 1st of the Month following. If this notice be borne in mind, the disappointment so often experienced by the non-arrival of parcels will be prevented.

POST-OFFICE ORDERS TO BE MADE PAYABLE TO MR. WILLIAM TARN.

Please affix your Name and Address, should you return this as an order.

NEW PUBLICATIONS, APRIL 1, 1853.

THE IRISH SCHOOLMASTER: By a Clergyman. Narrative Series. No. 932. 3s. per 100.

BIOGRAPHICAL TRACTS.—No. 2. THOMAS CHALMERS, D.D., LL.D. 2d. in neat cover.

EMISSION SERIES.—No. 5. HOMES BEYOND THE SEA. Canada and other Colonies in North America. 18mo. With Frontispiece. 3d. in neat cover.

ESSAYS ON THE EVIDENCES, DOCTRINES, AND PRACTICAL OPERATION OF CHRISTIANITY. By JOSPEH JOHN GURNER. A New Edition. 12mo. 3s. cloth boards.

A COMPLETE CONCORDANCE TO THE HOLY SCRIPTURES. On the Bank of Creuden. Edited by JOHN EADIE, D.D., LL.D., Professor of Biblical Literature to the United Presbyterian Church, etc. A New Edition. 8vo. 5s. cloth boards.

PURGATORY AN UNSCRIPITURAL DOGMA. By the Rev. JOHN ROSS, Author of Penance and the Confessional, etc. 18mo. Class II. 1d. in neat cover.

THE LOST PATH. From the French of the Rev. DR. MALAN. 32mo. No. 123. Three Half-pence each.

MONTLY PUBLICATIONS.

THE MONTHLY VOLUME. Vol. LXXIX. Ditto 10d. cloth boards, gilt edges.

THE INQUIRITION. 6d. fancy paper cover.

THE MONTHLY MESSENGER. No. 104. Things that God hates. 1s. 4d. per 100. Ditto, 2d. per dozen.

THE TRACT MAGAZINE, and Christian Miscellany. New Series. No. 76. 1d.

THE CHILD'S COMPANION, and Juvenile Instructor. New and enlarged edition. With superior Engravings. No. 100. 1d.


A PORTFOLIO, neatly ornamented, with cords for holding Fifty-two numbers, is prepared, price One Shilling.

Covers for the Monthly Parts. 6d. per 100.

THE CHRISTIAN SPECTATOR, and Record of the Religious Tract Society. No. 122. Stamped, to send by post, 3d.

Ditto, unstamped, 2d.

** Please give as much publicity as possible to the enclosed bill of "The Leisure Hour."

(Please turn over.)

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Figure 1.21 Monthly list of publications and order form for April 1853. Note the announcement of the latest Monthly Volume, and the reference to Leisure Hour promotional material.
to send publications to relatives overseas. In 1852, a change to the regulations meant that book parcels were charged by weight, rather than number of items, making it substantially cheaper to send a parcel containing several small books or tracts.

The local bookshop was the usual method of purchasing books, and if the bookseller did not stock a work, he would order it. Persuading booksellers to stock RTS works was crucial, and advertisements were a very impersonal method of doing so. This was why the RTS employed a commercial traveller. He was to travel the country, particularly in Scotland, Ireland and the north of England, meeting individual booksellers and persuading them personally of the merits of stocking RTS publications. William Jones, as travelling secretary, had undertaken part of this role at the same time as visiting auxiliaries, but from 1841 (or earlier), it was made a full-time occupation for Joseph Youngman. In his first three years as traveller, Youngman claimed to have opened 113 new accounts, and secured extra sales of £9,300. During one month in spring 1844, he visited Cork, Limerick, Coleraine, Ballymena, and Londonderry. He convinced ten new booksellers, including four in the predominantly Roman Catholic south of Ireland, and he presumably visited rather more. As well as setting up accounts with the new booksellers, he took orders for publications.

But he was not always so successful. In September 1849, Youngman was in Scotland, and visited a bookseller in Glasgow's Buchanan Street. James MacLehose (1811-85) was a friend of David Livingstone the missionary, and had been apprenticed to a bookseller who specialised in tracts and religious books. When Youngman visited him, his bookshop and circulating library had grown large enough

216 'Books to the colonies by post' Christian Spectator (1851): 594, announced the extension of the book-post to the West Indies, Newfoundland, Hong Kong, Malta and Gibraltar, and encouraged parents to send the Monthly Series to their adult children working abroad.


218 Youngman began in 1841, RTS FCM, 26/06/1844. I do not know for certain that he was the Society's first traveller.

219 RTS FCM, 26/06/1844.

220 RTS FCM, 10/04/1844.

221 The phrase used is that 'He had effected extra sales...'. He may have been carrying a suitcase full of publications, but the Society had 4,000 items on its catalogue, and most were so cheap that the £330 of publications Youngman sold in Ireland would have needed a very large suitcase. It seems more probable that he took orders. RTS FCM, 10/04/1844.
to necessitate an imminent move to St. Vincent Street. MacLehose was presumably not hostile to Christianity, yet, according to Youngman, 'you avowed your strong objections to the Religious Tract Society as a publishing establishment, and affirmed that no private publisher could compete therewith... And you summed up all by expressing your conviction that thus it stood in the way of enterprising publishers, who otherwise would have equally well supplied the market at a fair price.'

MacLehose’s objections were sufficiently strong that Youngman left the interview feeling that he had failed to win his point. He wrote to the bookseller from Edinburgh, with facts and figures from the annual report to 'disabuse' him of 'these misapprehensions, which have only served to prejudice this important Establishment in your esteem'. I have found no record of a response from MacLehose.

When Youngman convinced a bookseller of the Society’s merits, he arranged an account. Trade purchases were at 25% discount, and the RTS offered 13 books as 12 (i.e. a further 8% on bulk orders). A bookseller with an account was sent notification of the Society’s new publications each month, and granted all the trade benefits. He was furthermore allowed a 10% discount for payment of his account in cash every three months. This took his total discount beyond the standard 33.3%, and offered a substantial profit margin if the work was then sold, as it was supposed to be, at its full retail price. This also indicates that cost of an RTS work to its purchaser was not simply a consequence of the cost of production and overheads to the RTS – allowance also had to be made for remuneration for the distributor. Thus, a work which was to be sold at sixpence had to be produced for only three- or fourpence.

222 His business continued to grow, and he became publisher to Glasgow University in the 1870s. On MacLehose, see MacLehose, J., ed. Memoirs and Portraits of One Hundred Glasgow Men, Who Have Died During the Last Thirty Years, and in their Lives Did Much to Make the City What It Now Is, 2 vols. (Glasgow, 1886), ii, 343-6. My thanks to Morag Fyfe for this reference, and for tracking MacLehose’s business through the Post Office Directories.
223 Youngman to J. MacLehose, 03/09/1849, RTS Corr.
224 Jones to E. Thompson, 01/09/1849, RTS Corr. (subscribers received a 20% discount). Most publishers offered '25 as 24', but '13 for 12' (or better) was not uncommon with cheaper books, Chapman, 'Commerce of literature', 530. The '13 for 12' discount was extended in 1851 to apply to assorted books of the same size, style of binding and price, in an attempt to induce booksellers to 'keep a larger and more varied Stock of the Society’s Publications', RTS Publ., April 1851.
225 Jones to E. Thompson, 01/09/1849, RTS Corr.
226 Chapman, 'Commerce of literature', 543, and see 531-49 for Chapman’s arguments against the present system and the publishers’ attempts to prevent booksellers offering their discount on to their customers.
The Society also made arrangements with booksellers in Edinburgh and Dublin to act as agents of the Society. Agents were offered the 10% discount for paying in cash, but were allowed six months to settle their accounts, and would be entitled to further discounts if annual sales passed a certain level. They carried RTS stock on a ‘sale or return’ basis, allowing them to showcase many more publications than they would otherwise have risked doing. In return, they included the Society’s publications on their catalogue, and pressed them through their own commercial travellers and local contacts. The appointment of an agent was a usual practice for British publishers with only one office, although William Chambers pointed to the potential risks of the practice, saying of their own London agent, W.S. Orr, that he ‘had us pretty much at his mercy. Things might be going right or wrong with him, for all we could satisfactorily discover.’ Chambers ultimately withdrew their business from Orr in 1853, and set up a branch office under their own direct control.

The RTS’s Edinburgh agent was Oliver & Boyd, from 1842 till the end of the century. In 1844, the Society decided to set up an Irish agency. While travelling the country, Youngman had visited Messrs. William Curry Junior & Co. of Dublin, who were already agents for Oliver & Boyd and for Longman & Co. They were ‘large publishers, [who] issued a respectable Catalogue, and kept a Traveller who visited every place of importance on Ireland’ and had connections with ‘the pious members of the Church of England’. These credentials appeared excellent, and Curry & Co. became the RTS agents for Ireland, much to the disgruntlement of another Dublin bookseller, John Robertson, who already had a long business connection with the Society, and regularly sold RTS publications worth three times as much as Curry & Co. As Robertson had predicted, the decision to give the agency to Curry & Co. halved his business over the next six months, although the benefit for the Society was that total Dublin sales were substantially increased, despite remaining

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227 The ‘sale or return’ policy is implied by RTS FCM, 11/12/1844, 16/06 and 14/07/1847.
228 RTS FCM, 10/04/1844.
229 Chambers, Memoir, 273.
230 Chambers, Memoir, 279.
231 In 1847, the original five-year arrangement was renewed, RTS FCM, 16/06/1847. Oliver & Boyd were still listed as agents on the 1900 Annual Report.
232 RTS FCM, 10/04/1844.
233 RTS FCM, 01/05, and 11/12/1844.
tiny in real terms, not passing £400 in the first six months. In June 1847, Curry sent promissory notes with due dates several months in the future, as payment for his account which had been due in April. The Society was not amused with this infraction of its ‘cash-only’ rule. It offered to wait for half of the amount, if half was paid in cash immediately, but requested that Curry reduce his stock of RTS publications to £200, from around £600. Curry had gone bankrupt by July, and trustees were appointed to run the business for the benefit of the creditors, of whom the RTS was one. In addition to the stock on Curry’s premises, the Society was owed over £300. Its only hope of receiving payment was if the trustees could run the business successfully, and to that end, the Society kept its agency with the trustees. By January 1848, Curry had recovered from his bankruptcy, but the RTS moved their agency to John Robertson, who could hopefully be better trusted with ‘the Lord’s wealth’.

The oft-cited claim that ‘the largest portion of our books are sold through Trade channels’ indicates how successful the Society was at using the same methods of distribution as the other members of the book trade. However, as Chambers's Journal put it, ‘at present, few of the... [working classes] enter booksellers' shops; and unless a person frequent these establishments, he cannot, according to established usage, become a buyer of books’. What, then, were publishers for the working classes to do? Chambers’s lamented, ‘Our object all along has been to reach the masses, but we cannot get to them. In vain..., do we cheapen literature to the verge of non-productiveness, the persons for whom we write and incur hazards are not those, generally speaking, who become our purchasers.’ Chambers concluded that the

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234 RTS FCM, 11/12/1844.
235 RTS FCM, 16/06/1847. In January 1846, Curry had dissolved his partnership with a Mr McGlashen, and the firm continued as William Curry Jnr only, RTS FCM, 21/01/1846.
236 RTS FCM, 16/06/1847. Curry had originally been sent a stock of £638, of which half was sold within six months, RTS FCM, 11/12/1844.
238 See letters from Jones to Curry & Co., and their trustees, 05/06/1847 and following; also RTS FCM, 14/07/1847.
239 RTS FCM, 19/01/1848. Robertson held the agency until at least 1886, see cover of RTS Report (1886).
240 Jones to Hall & Co., 30/08/1845, see also Jones to E. Thompson, 01/09/1849, RTS Corr.
distribution mechanism was flawed. A large-scale door-to-door sales operation to all the working people of Britain was beyond the scope of any publisher, but the RTS quoted approvingly Chambers’ assertion that, ‘the only sure way to reach the masses is to act aggressively – take the booksellers’ shop to their doors and firesides, and let them see and handle what is going on in the department of literature specially addressed to them.’ The Chambers brothers could cite examples of unemployed individuals who had been enabled to make a living as book and tract hawkers, and they suggested that publishers should be more willing to supply such individuals.

Neither Chambers nor the RTS could tell booksellers to promote their wares more aggressively, but the Society agreed with Chambers that hawkers were a possible solution. Such itinerant vendors sought out working-class readers directly, at their homes or meeting places (Figure 1.22), and made their living on the difference between the trade and retail prices of their publications. They could ‘frequently gain access to places far removed from all other agencies’. When the Society was founded, hawkers had a reputation for selling chapbooks, ballads, and other unsavoury publications, and this had been the reason behind the launch of the Hawks’ Series of tracts, intended to supplant the usual wares of the hawkers, and to reach places where RTS tracts did not normally reach. Until 1850, the Society had not attempted to employ its own hawkers, although it supported the efforts of the few individuals and societies who supplied hawkers with RTS publications.

In 1849, the annual report included details of the sales success of five hawkers employed by the Town Missionary and Scripture Readers’ Society, who had sold no fewer than 68,000 RTS publications and 24,000 Bibles in the past year. Shortly after this, Joseph Gurney, one of the trustees, suggested that the RTS ought to employ hawkers to increase sales in London. Two men began work early in 1851, and by

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242 Cooney has argued that Chambers’s Journal lost out to the Penny Magazine in the 1830s, as the latter could take advantage of the SDUK’s auxiliary network, which Chambers’s London agent W.S. Orr could not hope to match. Chambers would thus be particularly aware of the problems of distribution only through the trade. See Cooney, Publishers for the people, 101.
246 RTS Report (1845), appendix III, item 8.
247 RTS Report (1849), appendix III, item 8.
"Tears of gratitude shed by the mother, struggling with want and neglect to support and educate her offspring, as a Christian Colporteur has threaded his way to her abode, to cheer her heart with pious counsel, and place in her hands the means of instruction for her children and of salvation for her own soul; and the joyous shout of childhood, when assured that the bright new primer held in its hand is its own—its first treasure; such are the best tributes and rewards of Colportage, as it dispenses the blessings of a printed Gospel in our land."—Page 38.

Figure 1.22 The hawker, having gained access to the house of a potential customer, shows off one of the books from his bag. From Fison, Colportage.
summer, were each selling around £2 of publications a month. Although this almost covered their wages, it did not cover their £4 a year hawkers’ licences. There was also a problem finding suitable men, as Rev. William Urwick of Dublin discovered when asked to find ten hawkers to be funded by the Jubilee Fund. Only three men applied for the positions, and after a year, Urwick gave up, citing lack of suitable men, the small wages that could be offered, the poverty of the population, and the lack of a taste for reading. A hawker had to possess ‘strong bodily vigour, so that he may endure the fatigue of constant journeys’, and also be a model of evangelical piety. Even if he failed to sell a publication, he could still, by his character, present a valuable lesson. One of the London hawkers had been recommended by a minister, while the other, a Leicestershire framework knitter, had won the Society’s prize-essay ‘On the Temporal Advantages of the Sabbath to the Labouring Classes’ in 1849. Despite the limited early success, the committee’s belief in hawkers was eventually justified. It was impractical for a central society (or publisher) to organise hawkers all over the country, but unlike Chambers, the RTS had a network of representatives at local level. Through articles in the annual reports, it encouraged subscribers and auxiliaries to employ hawkers, and offered grants on RTS publications for such enterprises. In the late 1850s, specialist societies, such as the Church of England Book-Hawking Association and its auxiliaries, were set up specifically to organise this aspect of religious literature distribution.

In 1850, the RTS committee was informed that ‘great efforts were being made in Manchester and other large Manufacturing Towns, to open small Shops in Poor districts for the sale of cheap and irreligious publications.’ Moreover, ‘these shops are kept open on the Lord’s Day’. The annual report the following year carried a worrying description of the spread of such shops: a Manchester clergyman estimated

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248 Sales after ten weeks, RTS FCM, 16/04/1851; after almost six months, RTS ECM, 29/07/1851.
249 They were being paid 10s. a week on top of the difference between trade and retail prices, RTS CCM, 18/12/1850.
250 RTS FCM, 06/09/1848, 16/01/1850; ECM, 25/06/1850, 29/07/1851.
252 RTS FCM, 19/03/1851; MS note on archive copy of RTS Publ., March 1849.
254 The activities of the East Sussex Book-Hawking Association in the mid-1850s are discussed in Haines, Am I my brother’s keeper?, Ch. 5.
255 RTS ECM, 29/10/1850.
that ‘in his small parish he has at least one [irreligious] shop to each 500 of the population'; and in London, a city missionary reported that ‘there are thirty-eight shops wholly or partially supported by the sale of such trash, in the parishes of St John’s and St Margaret’s, Westminster'. Such shops did not stock RTS publications, and their customers were highly unlikely to enter the regular bookshops which did hold RTS wares. As the annual report concluded, the only solution was ‘the establishment of similar shops conducted by pious persons’ (Figure 1.23).

The committee tried to assist auxiliaries, particularly in Manchester, to set up such shops, and was directly involved in similar plans in London, apparently without the assistance of the London auxiliaries. Between 1843 and 1856, it acquired the use of a stand in the Soho Bazaar in London, and possibly one in the Baker Street Bazaar. The Soho stand was run by Mrs. Stratford, who had ‘passed though much affliction and therefore calls for kindness and sympathy’. For the first few years, the stall sold around £200 of books a year, which the Society believed went ‘into Channels which would not have been otherwise reached’. The stall cleared a profit of around £3 a year. Unfortunately, the Society had not allowed for Mrs Stratford’s inexperience in accounts-keeping, and there were several occasions on which the books did not add up, to the Society’s loss. After the third of these, in 1855, by which time sales had fallen from their original high, the Society decided to discontinue the experiment.

The willingness of the RTS to use not only the usual distribution outlets of the book-trade, but also the unusual ones of auxiliary societies, bazaar stands and hawkers is illustrative both of its willingness to be part of the trade – unlike, say, the BFBS – and of its evangelical dedication to get its publications to as many people as possible. For

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256 RTS Report (1851): 123.
257 RTS Report (1851): 123.
258 On Manchester, RTS ECM, 13/05/1851.
259 On Baker Street, RTS FCM, 20/01 and 02/02/1847. This project disappeared from the minute books after its plans seem to have been finalised.
260 Jones to Capt. Trotter, 29/04/1847, RTS Corr.
261 RTS ECM, 13/03/1844, 20/05/1846; Jones to Capt. Trotter, 29/04/1847, RTS Corr.
262 RTS FCM, 19/12/1855, 12/02/1845. Mrs Stratford was paid 12s. a week and 10% commission on all sales over £4 per fortnight.
263 Jones to Capt. Trotter, 05/05/1847, RTS Corr.; RTS FCM, 19/05/1847, 18/12/1850, 19/12/1855, 16/01/1856.
Figure 1.23 A bookstall 'in a well-frequented thoroughfare', from *The Story of a Pocket Bible* (RTS).
a commercial publisher, profit was the reason for selling books, and the main target audience had to be those with the purchasing power, i.e. the middle classes. For the RTS, on the other hand, selling books was a way of bringing people to salvation (or keeping the converted on the road). This means that the target audience was potentially the whole of society, though the working classes were certainly the group of most concern. Profit was only of secondary importance, as a way to increase charitable work at home and overseas. The RTS aimed, therefore, to avoid making a loss, which it was doing very successfully by the 1840s. This attitude meant that running a distribution outlet like the stand in the Soho bazaar, which barely paid for itself at the best of times, was acceptable as long as it did pay for itself. There was no financial incentive to run the stand, but there was a strong moral imperative, and, for the Society, that was more than enough.

Commerce versus Philanthropy

The balance that the Society had to maintain between the needs of running a commercially-viable publishing house, and the evangelical and philanthropic ambitions of its subscribers, laid it open to criticism from both sides. For one set of critics, the Society was too much like a commercial publisher, for the other, too little. At their most basic, these criticisms centred around the pricing of the Society’s publications.\[264\] Subscribers, and other evangelical commentators, who regarded the Society primarily in the light of a missionary society, suggested its prices were too high and ought to be subsidised from the benevolent funds. Yet some representatives of the book trade believed that the Society was already doing this, and complained that its prices were unfairly and anti-competitively low. These concerns over pricing related to deeper questions about the Society’s operations. Some critics felt that the Society should never have become a publisher at all, and that ‘the whole supply of these works should have been left to the demands of the public.’\[265\] As it was, they claimed, the Society both interfered with the book trade, and simultaneously failed to compete as well as individual enterprise would do. Related beliefs led booksellers to complain that the Society was competing too successfully, and on unfair grounds.

\[264\] [Stokes], ‘Bound publications III’, 34.
\[265\] [Stokes], ‘Bound publications III’, 34.
James Dilworth was a merchant who became suddenly well-known in evangelical circles in 1845-46 by creating an enormous demand for BFBS Bibles in the mills of Manchester. By the time Dilworth’s four-month wonder died down, most of the BFBS committee had decided that he was guilty of excessive religious enthusiasm, and its travelling secretary wrote that, ‘he is more the slave of Personal Vanity than any Christian with whom I ever before came in contact.’ Several months after his encounter with the BFBS, Dilworth wrote to the RTS, threatening to withdraw his subscription because its publications were 25% more expensive than need be. He based this claim on a comparison with the BFBS and with certain commercial publishers of cheap books, implying that the RTS was not doing enough to keep its prices low, and that it was not competing effectively with the trade. In reply, Jones admitted that none of the Society’s publications were as equivalently cheap as a 4d. Bible Society testament. But the comparison was ‘not a fair one’, as Jones was sure that those very cheap works were subsidised, and that ‘such loss is taken out of the general funds’. Moreover, Bible printers had certain advantages as there was ‘no duty on the paper used in the printing of the Scriptures by the Queen’s Patentee’, and Jones noted, ‘no Copyright money’. Since the market for Bibles was apparently unlimited, they could also make better use of the economies of scale made possible by industrial printing technology. With Bibles, ‘if you print 100,000 Copies they are sure to sell’, but there were very few, if any, other books which could command that size of market. Jones added, ‘Only secure for us a circulation of 50,000 and we will let no one beat us’.

The accusation that the Society was not competing effectively with the trade was more concerning, as it challenged a principal axiom of the Society’s raison d’être. Jones argued that Dilworth’s comparison was unfair, as he had ‘compare[d] all our works with the special publications of particular Houses’. Whereas commercial publishers often brought out only a few ‘pet books issued at a very low figure’, with the rest of their publications at regular prices, the RTS tried to bring out all its publications as cheaply as possible. Some of these were on subjects which could only

266 Howsam, Cheap Bibles, 162-6.
267 Quoted in Howsam, Cheap Bibles, 165.
268 Dilworth’s letter does not survive, but its arguments can be deduced from the reply.
269 Jones to Dilworth, 06/11/1846, RTS Corr.
expect a small sale, such as the reprints of classic works in theology. Even though the Society set their price so low that ‘they are a positive loss’, it could not set the price as low as the ‘popular subjects’ chosen by commercial publishers. As for the rest of the Society’s publications, Jones claimed that works like the Monthly Series and the works of the Puritan divines ‘will compete with any books in the Market’, contrary to Dilworth’s claim. And the Society certainly did all it could to keep tract prices down. RTS subscribers got more for their penny ‘than even Chambers and other enterprising publishers give’, because tract prices were cross-subsidised from the Society’s other publications, and did not include the costs of ‘Stereotype plates, sums paid for Copyrights, Editorial expenses etc’. Thus, Jones argued, considered as a whole, the RTS publications were extremely competitive: ‘No one could bring out the 3,000 books on our Catalogue at the same rate.’

In an 1847 pamphlet, ‘The Power of the Press, is it rightly employed?’, an unidentified evangelical made a deeper criticism of the Society’s publishing operations. His concern was not that prices were not low enough, but the related issue, that circulations were not high enough. Admirable as were the operations of the RTS, the circulations of its periodicals and Monthly Series were but drops in the ocean compared to those of infidel and secular works. The pamphleteer argued, contra Jones, that a benevolent society could not compete with individual enterprise, and that, even if it could, it should not: ‘With printing, publishing, correcting, or editing; with large investments in stock, stereotype plates, or copyrights, the author conceives the Religious Tract Society has nothing whatever to do; and by cumbering themselves with such a vast and complicated burden, they retard and prevent the usefulness of the Society.’ His recommendation was that the Society should return to its professed aim of ‘circulation, leaving production to individuals’. The Society might encourage writers and publishers to produce suitably evangelical materials, but

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272 Power of the press, 22.
otherwise it should be limited to circulating as many copies of the finished item as possible. 273

Given the existing commitment of the RTS to stereotype plates and investments, the pamphleteer’s suggestion was impractical, and it is dubious whether, even if the committee’s entire attention was devoted to circulation, it could really have been from the 17 million to the 70 million the pamphleteer believed possible. 274 But his suggestion indicates how seriously concerned some evangelicals were about the Society’s involvement with the commercial book trade, and its connections with profit-making. He argued that due to its committee-based structure, ‘a charitable society must necessarily want the stimulus of personal interest and identity in production’. This would mean that ‘doubtless a large amount of the funds of any society occupying individual ground, will always be absorbed in bad speculations, or indifferently worked good ones; because the first is not felt or does not enter into the experience, while a very moderate result from the second is all that is sought after’. 275

One protection against this was the long service of individual committee members in the RTS, so that the committee as a whole could learn from its experiences. Furthermore, although it was true that the committee could, for specific reasons, accept a ‘very moderate result’ from certain projects, it was not true that this was ‘all that is sought after’.

As pious Christians, the committee members were not profit-seeking, but regarded business acumen as a Christian duty. 276 One of the works in the Monthly Series, Money, explains that the Christian should be grateful to receive wealth with God’s blessing, for with it ‘he knows that he may make war against ignorance, intemperance, ungodliness, and the monster evils that infest society. At home there is disease to heal, modest merit to reward, struggling industry to foster, and, above all, the glorious gospel to diffuse’. 277 All wealth came originally from God, and it was the Christian’s duty to look after it, increase it, and do God’s work with it. Thus ‘man

274 Power of the press, 37.
275 Power of the press, 38.
277 Money, 161-2.
is but the... steward of his bounty'.  

The RTS committee members tried to exemplify this concept of stewardship in their careful management of the Society’s finances, by making investments to preserve and augment its capital, by carefully examining and assessing the risks of potential new projects, and, of course, in the extensive scheme of international grants to spread the truth of the ‘glorious gospel’. As stewards, they believed that it was possible to combine the commercial interests of the publisher with the benevolent interests of the evangelical society.

Although the anonymous pamphleteer would presumably have approved of the concept of stewardship, he still believed that, ‘when a charitable society enters into competition with individual interests... commercial injustice is almost sure to result’. Much as the Society denied unfair interference with the book trade, some booksellers continued to believe that RTS works were too cheap for individual publishers to be able to compete. William Jones wrote responses to Messrs. J.V. Hall & Co. of Maidstone, and to Edward Thompson of Islington, emphasising that the Society’s books were not subsidised, and were ‘published on the fair principles of the Trade’, both as regards their production and their distribution. He used figures from the annual report to show that all benevolent donations were used for grants and not for subsidies, and explained that the Society made all the usual allowances to the trade, ‘to prevent unnecessary interferences’ with trade distribution channels. He refused to be side-tracked by suggestions that the Society should be only concerned with tracts, or that tract publication was suffering. And he protested that the Society’s methods of production were in no ways unusual, and that ‘what we can do others can do’. And it was unlikely that the RTS could interfere with very much of the trade, as there were not many publishers of works ‘for the young and the working

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278 Money, 166.
279 Power of the press, 38.
280 The RTS denied allegations of trade interference in [Stokes], ‘Bound publications III’, 34; [Jones,] ‘New building’, 83; RTS Report (1845): 5-6 (this is mostly a repeat of the article in the Christian Spectator from 1844).
281 Jones to E. Thompson, 01/09/1849, RTS Corr.
282 Jones to J.V. Hall & Co., 30/08/1845, RTS Corr.
283 Jones to J.V. Hall & Co., 30/08/1845, RTS Corr.
classes written with talent but in the spirit of Christian Truth'.\textsuperscript{284} In fact, he suggested, it had been helping the trade by creating a demand for larger works.

A more subtle accusation of unfair competition came from the Glasgow bookseller, James MacLehose. Rather than complaining of subsidies, he began by claiming that the Society paid no rent, and had used subscriptions to build its extensive new premises. In reply, Joseph Youngman admitted that £1,100 of the cost of the new building had been paid for by subscription, but suggested that the subsidy was an insignificant fraction of the £16,000 cost.\textsuperscript{285} He denied outright that the Society paid no rent. As the \textit{Illustrated London News} had reported in their account of the new Depository, the site was leased from the City for sixty-one years. In return for building new premises on the site, the City Authorities charged a ‘considerably reduced rent’, but they did charge rent.\textsuperscript{286} MacLehose also alleged that the Society, ‘as a Religious Institution’, paid no rates or taxes. As Jones’ letter to Dilworth has already shown, the BFBS was exempt from paper duty, but this did not apply to the RTS. Youngman wrote of the RTS: ‘It pays moreover all Taxes and Rates (poor’s rate included) precisely as any other house of business’ (rent and taxes are listed in Figure 1.17). Yet, only a few years previously, the Society had indeed been trying to claim exemption from local rates on the grounds of its charitable status.\textsuperscript{287} This indicates that, despite its claims to be ‘just like the trade’, the committee was quite willing to exploit whatever advantage it could from the Society’s dual identity as publisher and charity.

MacLehose’s final point was that the Society’s system of grants allowed it ‘to work off such portions of stock, as through the ordinary channels would be perfectly unsaleable’, to the amount of £7,000 a year.\textsuperscript{288} Youngman’s response was that the £7,000 related to all grants, the vast majority of which were of tracts, which were being granted to aid their circulation, not to get rid of surplus. However, evidence from the committee minutes shows that the Society did sometimes make grants of

\textsuperscript{284} Jones to E. Thompson, 01/09/1849, RTS Corr.
\textsuperscript{285} Youngman to J. MacLehose, 03/09/1849, RTS Corr.
\textsuperscript{286} \textit{Illustrated London News} (24/02/1844): 117.
\textsuperscript{287} The right to exemption came from 5 Victoria 36. The RTS was granted exemption in 1844, but it was contested, and within a year, the Society had lost its certificate, RTS ECM, 09/07/1844; FCM, 11/12/1844 and 17/12/1845.
\textsuperscript{288} Youngman to J. MacLehose, 03/09/1849, RTS Corr.
otherwise unsold publications, for instance, of 114,000 odd numbers of the *Child’s Companion* in 1845.\textsuperscript{289} Since the benevolent fund presumably paid the trade fund for this grant as usual, the Society accounts would show a greater sales income than would otherwise be the case. Commercial publishers left with unsold copies of books they were unwilling to store usually opted to sell them as waste or to a remainder merchant, but they could expect only a fraction of the retail price. However, the archival evidence suggests that the Society did not make a regular habit of using grants to off-load unsaleable publications. In fact, it was far more likely to decide just to keep them in the expectation of future sales.\textsuperscript{290} Once a publication had broken-even, the Society was in no rush to get profit out of it, and was used to sales which accumulated over years, even decades. It was also more concerned about circulating its works to spread the gospel truth, than in making quick money out of them, and it was that, not the financial motive suggested by MacLehose, which motivated the occasional use of dead books in grants.

In these debates, we see how the committee had to deal with the implications of its decision to get so closely involved in the publishing trade. It had to balance claims that it would not be able to compete effectively, with accusations that it was competing too effectively because of unfair advantages; and it had to defend its publications against accusations of being more expensive than some publishers’ works, and yet being so cheap that commercial publishers could not hope to compete. Some of these accusations came from critics who did not fully understand the Society’s finances, and did not grasp the significance of the separation of the trade and benevolent funds. Some came from supporters who worried about the taint of commercialism which might lead the committee astray from its true mission of circulating tracts. To both these groups, the committee explained that the Society did not interfere with the trade, and that by running the business on efficient commercial terms, the circulation of religious materials was being increased. To the final group of critics who understood the way that the Society tried to play-off its two sides against each other, the committee could make no answer. MacLehose did not approve of the

\textsuperscript{289} RTS FCM, 09/07/1845.  
\textsuperscript{290} That was the eventual outcome of the discussion about what to do with 64,000 copies of thirty-seven books which were considered unsaleable, and were variously going to be offered at half-price, or used in grants, RTS FCM, 21/08, 18/09/1850 and 15/01/1851.
way the Society tried to let its publishing house benefit from its benevolent wing as well as vice versa, and thought it was unfair, although not illegal. The committee saw it as entirely justified in assisting the all-important evangelisation of the country.

Conclusions

The Religious Tract Society began the nineteenth-century as a small evangelical organisation, producing and circulating tracts to convert the semi-literate working classes of Great Britain. By the middle of the century, it had become a Christian publishing house producing literature to meet the devotional needs of middle- and lower-middle-class Christians, and producing ever more sophisticated tracts and periodicals to reach a working-class audience that had become far more familiar with, and demanding of, print over the previous fifty years. Despite the accusations and disapproving remarks discussed above, the committee regarded the Society as a commercial publishing organisation, and aimed to run it as such. The Society published on its own account, and entered contracts with paper merchants, printers and binders just as other publishers did. The editorial work was done by a large department of full-time paid staff, well qualified in literary skills and piety. Once the publications were completed, most of them were distributed through regular booksellers. The only publication subsidies in operation were cross-subsidies within the trade fund, which was not in itself unusual.

Among the differences between the Society and commercial publishers was the role of the committee and sub-committees as discussion fora for new ventures and as sources of final approval. The Society managed to develop a balance between the committee’s desire for oversight and the editorial department’s need for definite decisions followed by the freedom to carry them out. The Society’s willingness to use as many different distribution methods as possible, including trade channels, auxiliary societies and more unusual retail outlets, was unusual, for although Chambers tried to go beyond the trade channels, they were unable to do so on a scale large enough to be significant. The Society’s lack of interest in profit for its own sake gave it more flexibility to experiment with hawkers and stalls in the bazaar. The concept of stewardship forced it to be careful with the Society’s funds, but there was
the choice between making profit to do good later, or forgoing profit to do good in other ways. The potential wealth and profit to be gained from publishing was ultimately of secondary importance compared with the spread of gospel truth which publishing could assist.
Chapter Two

Producing Secular Christianity

But if the press be a powerful agency for good, it is unquestionably a powerful agency for evil also. Out of the same mouth proceedeth blessing and cursing, and this fountain sends forth sweet water and bitter... We can very well hold that the press does more good than evil, and yet maintain that the evil is fearfully great... [It] is powerfully employed on the side of infidelity. It is ceaselessly sending forth publications of almost every shape and character, like the sand by the sea-shore for number, which must be assigned to the account of evil.

The Rev. Thomas Pearson, *Infidelity* (1853)

The flood of cheap books in the 1840s, following on from the penny periodicals of the 1830s, had both good points and bad, as Thomas Pearson pointed out. In 1847, the anonymous pamphlet, 'The Power of the Press: Is it rightly employed?' had produced a stir in evangelical circles, by accusing the Christian churches of failing in their duty towards the working classes they had helped to make literate. 'The writer conceives that, neither in respect to quantity or quality has the Church ever met the requirements of the strong appetite she was bound in justice to satisfy.' He went on to provide quantitative data to assess the struggle between the good and evil sections of the press. By including the output of the several Bible societies, the religious periodical press, and the entire output of the RTS (including foreign publications), he arrived at a 'religious' total of around 24.5 million publications a year. Meanwhile, he calculated the total for the atheistic and corrupting presses at around 28.5 million a year, and that included only the main representatives of the stamped periodical press. He estimated another half million publications of a sort 'so awfully polluting' that the writer wished

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2 The response to this pamphlet was recollected by Rev. J.M. Weir at the RTS annual meeting of 1852, as reported in *Christian Spectator* (1852): 723-5.
4 *Power of the press*, 17.
not to investigate too closely. Furthermore, there were also publishers whose neutrality with respect to religion and morality ‘must be construed into virtual hostility’, and whose publications were effectively agents of the ‘enemy cruising under a neutral flag’. Thus, the output of firms like W.&R. Chambers, Charles Knight, and the recently defunct Society for the Diffusion of Useful Knowledge, had to be added to the total for the opposition, giving it an even greater victory over the religious publishers.

The increasing numbers of secular publications would have been apparent to middle-class evangelicals glancing through the pages of the Publishers’ Circular in the mid-1840s, where they would be bombarded with advertisements for cheap book series, like Figures 2.1 and 2.2. Or, if they read the Eclectic, North British or British Quarterly Reviews, they would find prolonged articles discussing the ‘New and cheap forms of popular literature’, and worrying about the ‘Present aspects and tendencies of literature’. These articles drew attention to the periodical press, particularly those ‘inferior’ publications ‘with the very names of which the higher classes of readers are not acquainted. Every Saturday evening, the news-shops in the poorer quarters of our large towns dispense these cheap periodicals by the gross to their customers. The circulation of some of them is said to be upwards of 200,000 copies every week.’ But in all of this, as the anonymous pamphleteer demanded, ‘Where is the aggressive and defensive literature of the united Church of Christ, issuing periodically?’ – or, indeed, cheaply in large numbers in any format?

The pamphleteer called for the churches and the religious publishers to do more – and he focussed specifically on the Religious Tract Society. This choice was no doubt determined in part by his own evangelicalism, but it was also a logical choice. Since he was concerned only with philanthropic publishers, and not any commercial

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6 He claimed that such pornography was easily obtainable beside cheap periodicals and newspapers, Power of the press, 14.
7 Pearson, Infidelity, 505.
8 ‘Popular serial literature’ North British Review 7 (1847): 110-36, at 177.
10 ‘Aspects of literature,’ 174. The reviewer assumed his readers would be familiar with Chambers’s Journal and Dickens’s Household Words.
THE EUROPEAN LIBRARY:
A Collection of the Best Works of the Best Authors (Foreign and Domestic) at the Lowest possible Price.

The First Volume contains
LIFE OF LORENZO DE MEDICI,
CALLED THE MAGNIFICENT.

BY WILLIAM ROSCOE.

Edited by William Hazlitt, Esq. of the Middle Temple.

Complete in 1 vol. with the Latin and Italian Notes translated, a Life of the Author, and a complete Index.

LONDON: D. BOGUE, 86, FLEET STREET.

THE ECLECTIC REVIEW for November, 2s. 6d.

1. The New German Reformation.
2. Salis's Biographical Writings.
3. Travels of the Baron C. A. de Bode.
5. Rhymes of a Hand-Loose Weaver.
6. Letters of Mary Queen of Scotland.

WARD and Co., 27, Paternoster Row. (1110)

THE COMIC ALMANACK. With 12 humorous Plates illustrative of the Zodiac, by George Cruikshank, and numerous other Illustrations.---In a few days.

A. Country Bookellers are requested to send their orders without delay.

D. Bogue, 86, Fleet Street. (1116)

A BIRTHDAY, BAPTISMAL, OR MARRIAGE GIFT.

This day is published, with the Magazines, complete in One Volume, royal 8vo. price 45s. in rich cloth, or 53s. handsomely bound in morocco or vellum.

The Book of Common Prayer, Illuminated
With 1000 Ornamental Borders, Initials, Titles in Colours and Gold, and Historical Illustrations from the Old Masters.

The following Notice is from THE TIMES Newspaper of October 29th, 1845:

"This splendid volume, the ILLUSTRATED BOOK of COMMON PRAYER, which has been long in preparation, is at length published by Mr. Murray. It is indeed a magnificent production, to be held up as an illustration of the Book of Common Prayer of the Church of England, which has ever been issued from the press. The illuminations partake of the munificence and accuracy of the ancient Roman Missals, at the same time that the decorations of earlier ages are avoided. The colours are peculiarly brilliant, yet well-toned, so that tastfulness of effect is secured, and the shadows of the tints made to harmonize. The illuminations, moreover, are in a purer taste than in the monastic missals, and there is more transparency in the colours. The gilding is bright and very costly, and in some of the sections produces a very rich and gorgeous appearance. The smaller embellishments are well executed. The designs are good, and the various parts elaborately executed. The same observation is applicable to the borders or arabesques of the pages. They are diversified, yet all appropriate, and make the margins fitting frames for the sacred texts and prayers. This is the most elaborate copy of the liturgy of a Protestant church ever executed. It is a noble devotional volume, and a third Christian manual for the members of the established faith, of worship and doctrine."---TIMES, Oct. 29.

JOHN MURRAY, ALBEMARLE STREET.
HENRY BOHN'S STANDARD LIBRARY.

On the First of February, or before, will be published,

IN ONE VOLUME, CROWN OCTAVO,
(Containing upwards of 500 Pages, beautifully printed.)

With a fine Portrait,
Price only 3s. 6d.

THE MISCELLANEOUS WORKS AND REMAINS

OF

THE REV. ROBERT HALL;

Containing all the principal Works which are out of Copyright, and several others:

WITH A SHORT MEMOIR, BY DR. GREGORY;

AND

OBSERVATIONS BY JOHN FOSTER.

This Volume will form the First of a Series to be called HENRY BOHN'S STANDARD LIBRARY; of which further particulars will shortly be given in a Prospectus.

The undertaking has been forced upon the Advertiser by the prospect of having some of his best Copyrights infringed by a cheap Serial Publication. Holding, as he does, many of the most valuable Literary Properties, he sees the propriety of taking into his own hands the republication of them in a popular and attractive form. The best German, French, and Italian Authors, by Translators of undoubted talent, will be included; and the whole produced at a price which nothing but the extraordinary march of printing, and the present very extensive demand for cheap books, would render possible.

HENRY G. BOHN looks with confidence to his numerous Correspondents for support in this undertaking; and pledges himself, in return, to afford them more than usual facilities and advantages.

Figure 2.2 Advertisement for Bohn's 'Standard Library', Publishers' Circular, January 1846.
publishers who happened to have religious lists, the big societies were his main focus. In the 1840s, the RTS was circulating at least six times as many publications a year as the SPCK, making it a far more important player in the fight against the evil sections of the press. However, the pamphleteer thought the RTS would be able to do much more, as we saw in Chapter One, if it confined itself to circulation and did not get involved with production.\footnote{Power of the press, 37.} Even though the suggestion was impractical, that the pamphlet caused such a stir in evangelical circles, and specifically named the RTS as the body which should be doing more, is revealing. It shows how concerned evangelicals were about the uses to which the cheap press was being put, and the important role that the RTS was expected to take in the battle for souls.

In fact, by the time the pamphlet was published, the Society was already in the midst of the first phase of its response. One of the first issues to be considered was the front on which battle should be opened. Both the cheap book series and the periodical came in fiction and non-fiction versions. Although it was the fiction series and periodicals which seemed to have most success with the masses, especially journals like the \textit{Family Herald}, the \textit{London Journal} and \textit{Reynold's Miscellany}, the evangelical objection to fiction was so strong that the possibility of trying to compete in this market was almost certainly never considered. Since the fictional story was obviously an artificial construct, reaching any conclusion the writer wished, any moral it taught could have no power.\footnote{‘Cheap literature,’ 332.} Only true and certain knowledge had the power to convince.

The Society's response was thus going to be based on knowledge. But it was going to venture for the first time into non-fiction, into areas of knowledge which were 'profane' or 'secular' rather than 'sacred', such as history, biography, and the natural sciences. This Christian yet not sacred knowledge was given the apparently oxymoronic title of 'secular Christianity', and should not be confused with the products of the secular information publishers, which were neither Christian nor sacred. By the mid-1840s, the RTS had already published some 'secular' material in articles in the \textit{Visitor} and in individual books, presenting it in a distinctly theological
framework, as a way of broadening one's knowledge of scriptural events and of God's creation. The Visitor's natural history articles were usually imbued with an explicit theology of nature, calling attention to the power and wisdom of the Creator. Simply by being published in the Visitor, which bore scriptural quotations on its title page and contained many articles on spiritual and devotional themes, apparently secular articles took on a devotional light, from the framing achieved by the juxtaposition of articles. This effect can be seen in Figure 2.3, where the article on the hippopotamus follows an article on the importance of seeing the hand of God in every day. The interposed space-fillers are also moral or spiritual in tone. The hippopotamus is followed by an account of the exemplary bad death of Wainewright the poisoner. This framing ensures that the hippopotamus is read in a moral, Christian light.

The Society's few books on 'secular' subjects were, like its other books at this time, mostly reprints, and tended to be substantial works, illustrated, at high prices, aimed at the Society's subscribers rather than the tract audience. Some of these works sold very slowly, with the Natural Histories of reptiles, birds and quadrupeds, for instance, raising regular concern at finance sub-committee meetings. Thus, neither of the Society's existing formats looked promising as a way to respond to the new wave of cheap, large circulation non-fiction. The Society decided to launch two new ventures, both of which could be read for either devotion or conversion, but both presented secular material as if for its own sake.

The first new venture was a series of sixpenny books, the Monthly Series of 1845-55. The second was the launch in 1852 of a new weekly penny periodical, the Leisure Hour, to replace the monthly 3d. Visitor. The suggestion for the Monthly Series appears to have originated from:

a conversation with an intelligent friend of the Society in a large town in the north of England, who spoke of the need of such volumes to meet 'the new development and growing intelligence of the times', and to 'supply a

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14 'Happy days', 'The hippopotamus' and 'End of a man of genius' Visitor ns 18 (1850): 414-23.
15 The Popular History of Reptiles was published in 1842, illustrated with numerous embellishments, and sold at 6s. The matching quadrupeds and birds were published prior to this, and sold at 6s. and 8s. respectively. All of them were mentioned as slow-selling in 1844. Quadrupeds eventually went out of print in 1848. RTS FCM, 26/06/1844, and 19/04/1848. For prices, see advertisement in Patriot (25/09/1845): 649, col. e.
THE HIPPOPOTAMUS.

The news of the arrival of a young hippopotamus, led the writer (and many zoologists and artists) to visit this extraordinary creature, of which no living specimen had been brought to Europe in modern times. We purpose here to enter somewhat at large into the history of the hippopotamus, even at the expense of seeming to be elaborate, inasmuch as the subject is of considerable interest, not only to the zoologist, but to the general reader.

Those who visit the hippopotamus, with imaginations excited by what they have previously gained from writers and travellers, too apt to throw an air of romance over their narratives, or to exaggerate details, will feel somewhat disappointed at the first survey of this animal,—a disappointment similar to that which we ourselves felt on beholding the first orng brought to the menagerie of the Zoological Society, and which arose simply from want of reflection. Dim, vague, and mysterious were the accounts which had reached us of the adult animal, dwelling in seclusion in the vast forests of Borneo and Sumatra; and when we saw the little monstrous caricature of infantile humanity, the illusion vanished, and the calmness of zoological investigation succeeded to the perturbation of excited fancy. Experience has now made us wiser, and in the present instance our expectations were realized. We beheld, as our reader has or may, an uncouth massive creature, sluggish, apathetic, and indolent, reposeing in its apartment, with an Arab seated quietly beside it.

In stature it may be compared to a large hog, but is much more massive in the contour of the body, and the form of its short thick limbs, which serve just to elevate its distended abdomen above the ground as it walks along. The shoulders and neck are very broad; and along the nuchal region (back of the neck) is a double swelling, (duplex torus) resulting from the development of the muscles of the furred ligamentum nuche, destined to support the weight of the ponderous head.

On looking more attentively, we saw its skin sprinkled with innumerable jet-black sparkles (except on the chaffon), each sparkle proving to be a pellicle of sweat, or an unceasing secretion from the hair.

* This article will be found, we believe, to contain one of the most accurate accounts of the hippopotamus which has yet appeared; treated, too, in a manner which we hope will inform the student as well as gratify the general reader. The interest attached to the remarkable animal of which it treats, leads us to devote a greater space than usual to its description.

Figure 2.3 ‘The hippopotamus’. This article was written by William Martin, and is preceded and succeeded by devotional and spiritual articles. From the Visitor, November 1850.
large number of people who could only spare time enough for the perusal of a small volume, and whose means would not allow of a large purchase with works of acknowledged merit and worth on literary or scientific subjects.\textsuperscript{16}

Given that the bulk of the RTS's benevolent financial support came from the industrial north, it is not surprising that it should have paid particular attention to the needs of the area. After executive committee approval, on August 14th 1844 the copyright sub-committee authorised William Lloyd to contact a number of writers, 'in reference to the plan of a Monthly Volume'.\textsuperscript{17} The first number of the series appeared on December 1st 1845.

The need for a weekly periodical was brought before the copyright committee in February 1848, but although it could understand the need, it felt it was not a good time to undertake a project 'requiring so large an outlay and involving so much risk'.\textsuperscript{18} It suggested the issue of a weekly tract instead.\textsuperscript{19} The copyright committee was called upon to discuss a new periodical again in May and September of the same year, but still insisted that the Society should not undertake it, because of 'the large outlay' and 'the Weekly loss that would take place'.\textsuperscript{20} The trade depression of 1848-49 was not an encouraging time for launching new ventures. For the next couple of years, the committee continued to worry about the poor performance of the \textit{Visitor} but, both in October 1849 and August 1850, decided to do nothing. It was not until July 1851 (perhaps not coincidentally the month in which Esther Copley, its founding editor, died) that the copyright committee took the decision to close the \textit{Visitor} at the end of the year. It was to be replaced with a weekly penny periodical, called \textit{Old Humphrey's Journal: or Christian Visitor}. After a brief flirtation with the title \textit{Friend}

\textsuperscript{16} Jones, W.H., \textit{Memorials of William Jones of the Religious Tract Society, Compiled from his Private Papers and Other Authentic Documents} (London, 1857), 124. Notice that the phrases quoted by Jones in this passage are those which appeared in the promotional material for the Monthly Series. It seems highly probable that the account of what the 'friend' said has been shaped by the advertisements, rather than vice versa.

\textsuperscript{17} RTS CCM, 14/08/1844.

\textsuperscript{18} RTS CCM, 23/02/1848.

\textsuperscript{19} This was later cancelled.

\textsuperscript{20} RTS CCM, 20/09/1848.
of the People, it appeared in January 1852 as the Leisure Hour. Evangelicals, most notably Lord Shaftesbury, were active in the early closing movement, and believed that ‘every man should have a leisure hour’. The Leisure Hour was intended to help working men devote their new-found time to ‘to healthful recreation, mental improvement and the duties and enjoyments of domestic life’, and the Society particularly hoped that ‘a regular attendance on the means of religious improvement will never be overlooked’. The new periodical promoted both mental and implicit religious improvement.

While the editor had day-to-day control of all RTS projects, he had much more personal responsibility in the Leisure Hour than with the Monthly Series, as the periodicity of the Leisure Hour was too swift for effective committee involvement in advance of publication. Fortunately, as the Society had been publishing periodicals for the last twenty years, the editorial department was experienced in the genre, as it was not in monthly-issue book series when planning the Monthly Series. This experience, combined with the shorter lead-time for periodicals compared with books, enabled the editors to get the Leisure Hour from drawing board to launch in less than six months, while it had taken sixteen months to start the Monthly Series. The relative lack of committee involvement in the Leisure Hour means that little information about its planning stages survives, so the bulk of this chapter will concentrate on the Monthly Series. Despite the superficially different genres of periodical and book series, the two projects have much in common, as they were both conceived as responses to the expansion of cheap publishing round mid-century, and were both intended to compete with the secular (and perhaps infidel) publications vying for the attention of the working classes. The Leisure Hour should therefore be seen not only in relation to the Visitor it replaced, but to the Monthly Series. Similarly, the lessons learned from the Visitor, and its unsuccessful foray into cheap

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23 This quotation comes from the RTS discussions with its employees in 1845, over the closing of the Depository an hour earlier, at 7pm. The Society agreed, as long as that hour was used worthily, RTS ECM, 09/07/1845.
24 RTS CCM, 16/07/1851.
publishing in the 1830s, informed the Society’s efforts with the Monthly Series. It is thus important not to consider these publications separately, despite the historiographical tendency to treat periodicals separately from books.25

Original and Scriptural

The ‘manifesto’ for the Monthly Series was printed in the Christian Spectator, and at the front of each volume (see Figure 2.4), along with a quotation from Dr. Thomas Arnold: ‘I never wanted articles on religious subjects half so much as articles on common subjects written with a decidedly Christian tone’.26 These statements comprise the Society’s public description of the Series, as regards its content, format and intended audiences. Unlike most of its previous publications, these new works will not be on religious subjects – however, they will be Christian and scriptural in tone. They are to be specially written for the Series, and will be small and cheap. And they are to be ‘popular’, which is taken to mean that they will be accessible to a wide range of people, not just to the working classes. The end of the manifesto is striking for the number of audiences and uses that are to be met by a single product. The same work is to be made to suit the children of middle-class families as well as their poorer peers at the Sunday schools, and to fit equally in the library of an educated family or a mechanic.

What is not made explicit is what these works are intended to do for their various readers. In the announcement of the Series in the Christian Spectator, subscribers were reminded that, ‘it becomes an imperative duty to make new and enlarged exertions, as the great mass of the community is more capable of profiting from instruction [than it was in 1799]’.27 This suggests that the Series was intended to provide instruction in the subjects of history, biography and the sciences. But if this were all, there were publishers other than the RTS able to meet the need. That this

25 Some connections between books and periodicals have been made by Beetham, M., ‘Towards a theory of the periodical as a publishing genre’ in Investigating Victorian Journalism, eds. L. Brake, A. Jones and L. Madden (London, 1990): 19-32; Brake, L., ‘The ‘trepidation of the spheres’: the serial and the book in the nineteenth century’ in Serials and their Readers, 1620-1914, eds. R. Myers and M. Harris (Winchester and Delaware, 1993): 83-101. However, I would go further in arguing that there are connections from the publisher’s point of view, as well as the writer’s.
THE MONTHLY VOLUME,
OCCASIONALLY ILLUSTRATED WITH ENGRAVINGS, AND CONTAINING ONE HUNDRED AND NINETY-TWO PAGES, IN A GOOD, BOLD TYPE.

SIXPENCE, IN FANCY PAPER COVERS.

TENPENCE, IN CLOTH BOARDS, GILT EDGES.

"I never wanted articles on religious subjects half so much as articles on common subjects, written with a decidedly Christian tone."—Dr. Arnold.

This Committee of the Religious Tract Society have resolved to publish a volume every month, adapted to the new development, and growing intelligence of the times. This series, with the exception of a few reprints, will be ORIGINAL; from the pens of authors of ability in their respective departments in literature and science—SCRIPTURAL; in the principles in which they are written—POPULAR; in their style; so that instead of being limited to one class of the community, they may be generally acceptable—PORTABLE; that they may serve as "hand-books" abroad and at home; and ECONOMICAL, the twelve volumes of a year costing less than three half-pence per week. Thus while the MONTHLY SERIES will be fully adapted to the educated FAMILIES of our land, to DAY and SUNDAY SCHOOLS, and to the LIBRARIES of mechanics and others, they will supply interesting and valuable reading to a large number of the people, who can only spare time enough for the perusal of a small volume, and whose means will not allow of a more costly purchase.

1. THE LIFE OF JULIUS CÆSAR.
2. GLIMPSES OF THE DARK AGES.
3. WILD FLOWERS OF THE YEAR.
4. JAMAICA, ENGAGED AND FREE.
5. OUR SONG BIRDS. By W. Mantle, Esq.
6. SOLAR SYSTEM. Part I. By Dr. Dick.
7. THE TASK AND OTHER POEMS. By Wm. Cowper, Esq.
8. SKETCHES OF THE WALDENSEES.
9. SOLAR SYSTEM. Part II. By Dr. Dick.
10. LIFE OF LUTHER.
11. EIGHTH OF THE WHATE. By the Rev. E. Sidney, M.A.
12. ANCIENT JERUSALEM. By Dr. Kitto.
13. PHILOSOPHY OF THE PLAN OF SALVATION.
14. MAN, IN HIS PHYSICAL, INTELLECTUAL, SOCIAL, AND MORAL RELATIONS. By W. Newman, Esq.
15. MODERN JERUSALEM. By Dr. Kitto.
16. LIFE OF CYRUS.
17. GARDEN FLOWERS OF THE YEAR.
18. DAWN OF MODERN CIVILIZATION.

Figure 2.4 Manifesto for the Monthly Series, as printed inside every volume. The volumes for the first three years had a different style of advertisement, but still included the manifesto and the quotation from Dr. Arnold.
was happening was in fact part of the problem, as the annual report of 1850 noted: ‘There is a craving after information, and that craving is met by much literature of a most debasing and pernicious character’, which was ‘infidel and most demoralizing’.\(^{28}\) The Monthly Series could thus be seen as a way to satisfy the craving for information, without opening up the soul to the risks of infidelity.

Yet, infidelity was not the only threat to which the Series responded, as the committee’s fear about ‘the rapid extension of secular information’ makes clear.\(^{29}\) By secular information, the committee had in mind works which appeared to be neutral with regard to religion, but which, by not mentioning Christianity when they should, were sinning by omission.\(^{30}\) Secular works could be more dangerous, for ‘many a domestic circle... would justly repel the organ of an atheistic secularism, or the grossly immoral trash of the Reynolds school, because their irreligion is too palpable’, but they might admit a secular publication ‘for its “recreation and harmless pastime,” while they receive along with it (knowingly or unknowingly) the teachings of an infidel theology.’\(^{31}\) In its public comments on the Monthly Series, the RTS frequently referred to the threats of atheism, secularism and immorality. Although atheism and immorality might seem the worst threats, immorality was most prevalent in fiction, while in non-fiction, atheistic works were probably outnumbered by those of the secular information publishers. Moreover, many of the ‘educated families’ and organisers of Sunday school libraries would have been able to identify and weed out atheistic publications, suggesting that it was the ‘insidious’ threats of publishers like Chambers and Knight with which the RTS was primarily going to compete.

The RTS referred to the material of its new publishing programme as ‘secular’ but was at pains to point out that such subjects were an important part of a Christian’s education, and should be presented in a Christian light. Because of the way that the subjects for the Series were actually chosen, the Series cannot stand as an exemplar of an ideal, complete, evangelical education in profane knowledge, but it does reveal the Society’s attitudes towards different forms of profane knowledge, and the relationship

\(^{28}\) RTS Report (1850): 123.
\(^{29}\) RTS Report (1851): 141.
\(^{30}\) Pearson, *Infidelity*, 505.
\(^{31}\) Pearson, *Infidelity*, 503.
with sacred knowledge. Leslie Howsam has analysed the genres of many nineteenth-century series, and classifies the main groups as ‘standard works’ (often novels), ‘educational books’, ‘modern classics’ (Shakespeare, Milton, Smollett, Scott), ‘religious’, and ‘juvenile’, with ‘science’, ‘travel’, and ‘biographies, histories, artistic works, and books on political and social reform’ among the smaller groups. An analysis in these terms reveals long-term trends, but it is not particularly helpful for the non-fiction series which abounded in the 1840s, the main examples of which are listed in Figure 2.5. They regularly included works from all of Howsam’s last three categories, and in the case of the reprint publishers, might also lay a claim to be ‘standard’ or ‘classic’. The labels attached to series provide illusions of uniformity between the constituent volumes that is often barely merited, as publishers in the 1840s put a variety of subjects into their miscellaneous non-fiction series. This section will consider how the RTS’s subject selection relates to that of its competitors.

When advertising the Monthly Series, in the late 1850s, as a completed library or several mini-libraries, the RTS revealed its own classification scheme (Figure 2.6). Biography and Ecclesiastical Biography come at the head, followed by Geography (which includes the history of Biblical places) and Topography, then by Church History (including that of the French Revolution), and then by six categories which include the natural and moral sciences. The majority of the volumes belong to the categories we know as biography, geography, history and the natural sciences. Figures 2.7 to 2.13 compare the subjects found in the Monthly Series with those of other contemporary series. Few of the other publishers’ libraries had as wide a range of subjects as the Monthly Series. Murray’s was dominated by books of travels, while Collins’s contained many theological works, reflecting the strong faith of the friend of Thomas Chalmers. Bohn’s library was distinctly lacking in books on the sciences and industry, which might be due to the separate existence of his ‘Scientific

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33 RTS advertisement, appended to the Congregational Year Book (1859).
34 The titles of the other series are those listed in Appendix B of Low, S., ed. The English Catalogue of Books published from January 1835 to January 1863: comprising the contents of the ‘London’ and the ‘British’ catalogues (London, 1864). In order to make a fair comparison, I have classified them all by the same system of my own choice. ‘Literature’ includes poetry, drama, and fiction – the two volumes of this in the Monthly Series were Cowper’s poems; ‘Philosophy’ includes the moral sciences and theology; histories, biographies and geographies on church or biblical subjects are not separated from those on profane subjects.

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**Figure 2.5 Cheap non-fiction series of the late 1840s.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Publisher</th>
<th>Dates</th>
<th>Titles</th>
<th>Volumes</th>
<th>Price (usual fraction of a work)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Murray Home and Colonial Library</td>
<td>1843-49</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>37 (76 parts)</td>
<td>6s. per volume (= a whole work)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chambers Miscellany of Useful and Entertaining Tracts</td>
<td>1844-47</td>
<td>177</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>1s. per vol. (= 8 or 9 tracts)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Knight Weekly (later Shilling) Volumes</td>
<td>1844-49</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>186</td>
<td>1s. per vol. (= 1/3 of a work)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bogue (taken over by Bohn) European Library</td>
<td>1845-47</td>
<td>9+</td>
<td>15+</td>
<td>3s.6d. per vol. (= 1/2 of a work)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RTS Monthly Series</td>
<td>1845-55</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>6d. per vol. (= a whole work)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bohn Standard Library</td>
<td>1846-62</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>150</td>
<td>3s.6d. (later 5s.) per vol. (= 1/2 a work)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Collins Cheap Series</td>
<td>1846-</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>1s.6d. (later 2s.) per vol. (= a whole work)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bohn Scientific Library</td>
<td>1847-62</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>5s. per vol. (= a whole work)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chambers Instructive and Entertaining Library</td>
<td>1848-52</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>2s.6d. per vol. (= a whole work)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
THE MONTHLY VOLUME,

Subjects, in fancy paper covers. Tenpence, in cloth boards, gilt edges.

Biography.
- Life of Julius Caesar.
- Life of Herod.
- Life of Octavius.
- Life of Alexander.
- Life of Bonaparte.
- Life of Nelson.
- Life of Alfred the Great.
- Lives of Eminent Anglo-Saxons, Parts I, II.

Ecclesiastical Biography.
- Life of Luther.
- Life of Caxton.
- Martin Roes.
- Dr. Kitto.

Life and Times of Leo X.
- Lives of the Popes. Parts I to IV.

Life of Wycliffe.

Geography.
- Jerusalem, Lebanon, and Persia.
- Arctic Regions. By Capt. Boone.
- The Jordan and the Dead Sea.
- John.
- Ancient Egypt.
- Greece and Asia.
- Babylon and the Banks of the Euphrates.
- Nineveh and the Tigris.
- Tyre: Its Rise, Glory, and Decline.
- Switzerland, Historical and Descriptive.
- Australia: Its Scenery, Natural History, etc.
- Its Settlements, etc.

Topography.
- London in the Olden Time.
- Paris: Ancient and Modern.
- Ancient Jerusalem. By Dr. Kitto.

SUITABLE FOR REWARDS AND PRESENTS.

Of the above Series, the following Double Volumes are formed, with Frontispieces, 1s. 6d. each, cloth boards; 2s. extra boards, gilt edges.

Dr. Kitto's Ancient and Modern Jerusalem.
- Dr. Kitto's Ancient and Modern Persia.
- Dr. Kitto's Ancient and Modern Egypt.
- Dr. Kitto's Ancient and Modern Turkey.
- Dr. Kitto's Ancient and Modern Switzerland.


Remedies. By the Rev. E. Sidney.

Commercial and Political Economy.
- The British Nation: Its Arts and Manufactures.
- Money; Its Nature, Uses, etc.
- Mines and Mining.
- Caxton and the Art of Printing.

Natural Phenomena.
- The Senses and the Mind.
- Volcanoes: Their History, Phenomena, etc.
- The Caves of the Earth.
- Wonders of Organic Life.
- Magic, Fated Events, etc.

Physical and Social Economy,

Moral Phenomena.
- Man, in his Physical, Intellectual, Social, and Moral Relations.
- Good Health—the Possibility, Duty, and Means of Obtaining and Keeping It.
- Self-Improvement.
- Schools of Ancient Philosophy.
- Remarkable Escapes from Peril.
- Remarkable Delusions.

The Bible, Evidences of Christianity, etc.
- Our English Bible.
- The Bible in Many Tongues.
- Philosophy of the Plan of Salvation.
- Life's Last Hours.

Poetry.
- Cowper's Task, and other Poems.
- Cowper's Truth, and other Poems.

THE LITTLE LIBRARY.
- Containing Thirty-two Books, suited for Children in Families and Schools, inclosed in an ornamented gilt Box. Price One Shilling.

Figure 2.6 The RTS's own classification of the volumes of the Monthly Series by subject. From RTS advertisement appended to Congregational Yearbook (1859).
Figure 2.7 RTS Monthly Series, by subject.

Figure 2.8 Murray's Home and Colonial Library, by subject.
Figure 2.9 Collins’s Cheap Series, by subject.

Figure 2.10 Bohn’s Standard Library, by subject.
Figure 2.11  Chambers's Miscellany of Tracts, by subject.

Figure 2.12  Chambers's Instructive and Entertaining Library, by subject.

Figure 2.13  Knight's Shilling Volumes, by subject.
Library’ were it not that his ‘Historical’ and ‘Philological and Philosophical’ Libraries did not limit the appearance of those subjects in the ‘Standard Library’. Chambers’s Miscellany of Tracts and Knight’s Shilling Volumes are the series which come closest to the spread of history, biography, geography and the sciences found in the Monthly Series.

Knight’s Shilling Volumes was the only series where the natural sciences formed the largest category. When the SDUK folded in 1846, Knight tried to continue their work in some of his own publications, including Knight’s Penny Magazine and the Shilling Volumes. This emphasis on the sciences can be seen as following that of the SDUK, and the remnants of their secular policy meant that he did not publish the sorts of church biographies and scripture histories which appeared in the RTS series, and would have made those categories larger. In Chambers’s Tracts, the non-fiction subjects were over-shadowed by literature, as a consequence of the Chambers brothers’ determination here, as in their Journal, to include stories, poems and songs as well as non-fiction. The moral sciences component of the philosophy category also featured more strongly in Chambers than in the others, because of the inclusion of titles like ‘Intelligent negroes’ and ‘Women’s trials in humble life’. Although the Journal had toned down its Scottish-ness to increase its British sales, the geographical and biographical titles in the Tracts often had a distinctly Scottish theme, ranging from ‘A visit to Shetland’ to ‘Rob Roy and the clan McGregor’. This contrasted with the distinctly scriptural theme to these categories in the RTS Series. However, the broad similarity between the contents of the series from Knight, Chambers and the RTS gives further support to the contention that it was the activities of these two publishers which were most important in stimulating the RTS to produce its new series.

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35 If numbers of titles is any measure, however, the Scientific Library was far more successful than the other two.
36 It is the natural sciences which are most often missing from the other series. It appears that philanthropically motivated publishers were more likely to include the sciences than purely commercial houses (John Cassell would be another case in point, from the early 1850s), and further investigation of this phenomenon would be extremely interesting.
37 Cooney, S.M., ‘Publishers for the People: W. & R. Chambers – the early years, 1832-50’ (Ph.D., Ohio State University, 1970), Ch. 2 describes Chambers’s Edinburgh Journal up to 1850.
38 Cooney, Publishers for the people, 54-6.
The RTS volumes were chosen from those offered directly to the committee, whereas the contents of reprint series were chosen by the editor in charge from the immense group of out-of-copyright works, plus works whose copyright was already held by the publisher. This difference in the mode of selection means that there are records of the subjects and titles which the RTS rejected, while it is generally impossible to tell which books were considered for inclusion in other series. The proportions of subjects accepted but not published by the RTS are very similar to those which were published, but there is a distinct difference with the subjects which were rejected (see Figure 2.14). Instead of having biography, history and the sciences as the largest categories, followed by geography, the group of rejected titles contains very few history titles in comparison with the other categories. Combined with the strong representation of history topics in the accepted-but-not-published group, this suggests that the committee was keen to have history and would have been happy to have more histories than biographies or science works, had all the works it approved turned out suitable in the end.

As far as the specific titles accepted and rejected by the committee are concerned, it is difficult to see many patterns. The one hundred volumes which were published in the Monthly Series are listed, by date of publication, in the bibliography. Those which were not published are listed in Figure 2.15. A few of the titles which were published tried to draw on established successes like those of Austen Layard's *Nineveh and its Remains* (1849) and Charles Mackay's *Popular Delusions* (1841). Others responded to the tussle between the publishers Bohn and Bogue over who had the right to offer cheap reprints of William Roscoe's *Life of Leo the Tenth* (1805). Histories of the French Revolution appeared from several series publishers, including the RTS, and were given fresh topicality by the revolution of 1848. A surprising number of the titles which were suggested to the RTS, but not published, are similar to titles in Chambers's Tracts, including: 'Life of Oberlin', 'The Norman Conquest', 'Gustavus Adolphus and the Thirty Years War', 'Spectral Illusions', 'Life of Peter the

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39 There is also a relatively large number of titles in literature, but the actual numbers involved are so small that this may not be significant.
41 See Publishers' *Circular* 9 (1846): adverts 114 and 207.
Figure 2.14  Works accepted and rejected for the Monthly Series, by subject.
Figure 2.15 Titles of works which were proposed for the Monthly Series.

These are the titles which were proposed for, but for various reasons were not published in the Series. Some were rejected, others accepted. Of those accepted, some were never completed, others were found to be unsuitable after they were completed. The titles are listed in the order in which they came before the committee.

a) Titles which were rejected.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>To December 1848</th>
<th>To December 1852</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Light in Dark Places</td>
<td>Scandinavian Literature</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Terrestrial and Meteoric Chemistry</td>
<td>Hieroglyphics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fungi infecting Houses</td>
<td>Heroes of Ecclesiastical History</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ethics of the Gospel</td>
<td>Illustrations of Christian Morals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acts of Providence in the Church</td>
<td>Prose and Poetical Authors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peter the Great and Russia</td>
<td>Galileo and his Discoveries</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Life of Augustus Caesar</td>
<td>Siberia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Life of the Reformer Tyndale</td>
<td>Spanish America</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South Australia</td>
<td>To December 1853</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To December 1850</td>
<td>Miracles</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Beehive</td>
<td>The Blind</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pestilential Disease</td>
<td>Mountains of Scripture</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Life of Lord Cobham</td>
<td>Idiots</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Life of James Melville</td>
<td>Life of Ecolamadius</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>English Freedom</td>
<td>A Tour in Italy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Domestic Life of Cromwell</td>
<td>Poets of the eighteenth century</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To December 1851</td>
<td>The Instincts of Animals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Travels of St. Paul</td>
<td>History of Madagascar</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Iceland</td>
<td>English Railways</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Humming Birds</td>
<td>Life of William the Conqueror</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Birds sculptured on the ruins of Nineveh</td>
<td>To December 1854</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wild Trees and Shrubs</td>
<td>Bee-keeping</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>On the Unity of the Race of Mankind</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Poetry of the Bible</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Life of Thomas More</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
b) Titles which were accepted, but never completed.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>To December 1845</th>
<th>To December 1849</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The Transmission of Evidence</td>
<td>Heathen Mythology</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>To December 1846</strong></td>
<td>Discoveries of the Fifteenth Century</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>British India</td>
<td>The Culdees</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Life of Melanchthon</td>
<td>Chemistry of Nature</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Changes of the Earth</td>
<td>Reason</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Reformation in the Low Countries</td>
<td><strong>To December 1850</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Strangling of the Press in Italy and Spain</td>
<td>Our Forefathers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evidences of Christianity from Existing Monuments</td>
<td>Remarkable Inventions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>To December 1847</strong></td>
<td><strong>To December 1851</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Growing Evidences of Christianity</td>
<td>African Rivers and their Travellers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Great Results from Small Beginnings</td>
<td><strong>To December 1852</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Life of Pastor Oberlin</td>
<td>The British Museum</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Modern Missionaries</td>
<td>Eminent Chemists</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Impostures</td>
<td><strong>To December 1853</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>To December 1848</strong></td>
<td>Life of Benjamin Franklin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fossil Botany</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
c) Titles which were accepted and completed, but were never published by the RTS in any format.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>To December 1845</th>
<th>To December 1848</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Psalmody</td>
<td>Life and Times of Pascal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Influence of Literature on Religion</td>
<td>To December 1849</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Heathen Persecutions</td>
<td>French Emigrants</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Barbados</td>
<td>To December 1850</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>To December 1846</strong></td>
<td>Swis Scenans</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>French Protestants in England</td>
<td>To December 1851</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Life of Gustavus Adolphus</td>
<td>Indian and Chinese Religions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Scottish Covenanters</td>
<td>To December 1852</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>To December 1847</strong></td>
<td>Household Surgery</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Crusades</td>
<td>To December 1854</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Inquisition</td>
<td>Canada</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spectres, Oracles, Dreams and Prophecy</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

d) Titles which were accepted and completed, and were published by the RTS, but not in the Monthly Series.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>To December 1847</th>
<th>To December 1852</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The Philosophy of Food and Nutrition</td>
<td>Christian Martyrs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>To December 1849</strong></td>
<td>To December 1854</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Life of Lord Bacon</td>
<td>Successors to Mohammed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>To December 1851</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Life’s Active Hours</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Great', 'British India' and 'Hindoo superstitions'. Whether this means that such topics were also of great current interest, or that some of the RTS writers sought inspiration for new topics in the publications of a competitor, is an open question. The rest of the selections and rejections seem to follow little pattern. Lives of Augustus Caesar and Galileo were rejected, while those of Julius Caesar and Isaac Newton were accepted. Spanish America and Iceland were rejected, but Switzerland and Canada accepted. And so forth.

The committee became more selective with time, partly as a result of some bad experiences with unsuitable writers, partly because there were fewer available spaces in the Series, and partly because it was getting more offers than it needed. The delay of Volume 100 suggests that a Life of Calvin was a major desideratum, while repeated discussions in committee, coupled with attempts to find writers for specific subjects, suggests that a few other topics – namely British India, Good Health, and the Inquisition – were also deemed to be important. There was an emphasis on anti-Catholic works between 1851 to 1853, with Lives of the Popes and The Jesuits, in particular, being promoted in the Christian Spectator as ‘formidable exposure[s] of the arrogance and wickedness of the Romish system’. These works were started during 1850, and published during Papal Aggression. Despite the regular enumeration of the new Monthly Volumes in the annual reports under defined categories, with the implication that there was a plan behind the Series, perhaps the most striking feature was that it did indeed seem as if, ‘Care has been taken to make the contents of the volumes as varied as possible.’

The RTS believed that ‘all branches of knowledge must be imbued with evangelical sentiment’, but when the Monthly Series was announced, biography, history and the sciences were specifically mentioned, perhaps because of the dominance of non-

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42 The progress of Good Health, which was hindered by the ill-health of two doctors, can be found at RTS CCM, 17/11/1847, 19/01/1848, monthly 1849, 20/02/1850 and 19/06/1850. It appeared in July 1850. The saga of the Inquisition volume can be traced through RTS CCM, 16/09/1846, 14/07/1847, 17/11/1847, 15/11/1848, 17/10/1849, 19/06/1850, 21/08/1850, 18/02/1852, 16/06/1852 and 16/03/1853, before being finally published in April 1853. The British India volume never appeared, despite all the discussions at RTS CCM, 12/03/1845, 16/09/1846, 21/05/1851, 19/11/1851, 16/03/1853, and 18/05/1853.
scriptural versions of these subjects in Knight’s and Chambers’s series. Although Knight claimed to be trying to include Christian tone in his series, the RTS was not alone in failing to find his series a great improvement on the SDUK. The evangelical Churchman’s Monthly Review complained of Knight’s reprint of one of Brougham’s works that ‘there is not a line of Christianity in them. His Lordship, too, has almost well-nigh forgotten that there is a “God in History”; and therefore, in our view, his Sketches are not reading for the people’. In making a comparison between the recent volumes of Knight’s series, of Burns’s Fireside Library, and the RTS Monthly Series, the reviewer commended the RTS series as the only one which he was willing to believe suitable and genuinely ‘useful’ for ‘the people’, despite the cheapness of the other volumes. This indicates why Christian tone was so important to the RTS, and we shall see in Chapter Three how its ‘proper’ implementation was achieved.

There were various practical reasons why the works for the Monthly Series had to be written specially, in addition to the need for Christian tone, and this became a selling point for the Series, with ‘Original’ being the first of the five adjectives used for it in the advertisements. However, although the works were original in the sense of being specially written, originality in literature also meant something related to the standard of the writing. The author of ‘The Power of the Press’ doubted that a society could produce original works in the latter sense: ‘the works of a society will seldom bear the stamp of originality, they will usually be copies of some successful individual speculation or idea.’ Part of the problem was that the bulk of contemporary authorship, according to the dissenting British Quarterly Review ‘bewilders all sober contemplation’. This made it difficult to determine what true literature was any more: ‘Where all write, who shall be the authors?’ The reviewer decided that there

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45 RTS Report (1850): 141.
46 For Knight on Arnold and Christian tone, see Knight, C., Passages of a Working Life during Half a Century: with a prelude of early reminiscences, 3 vols. (1864-65; London, 1873), ii, 189-92. Knight published Brougham and Bell’s edition of Paley’s Natural Theology, which had been too potentially controversial for the SDUK, Brougham, H., A Discourse of Natural Theology, Showing the Nature of the Evidence and the Advantage of the Study (1835; London, 1845), i, 8.
47 The review was of Brougham’s Sketches of Statesmen of George III, Churchman’s Monthly Review 6 (1846): 156.
50 ‘Aspects of literature,’ 157.
would always be a few authors who stood out among the rest for their novelty and originality, and that their works would be ‘true, or high literature’. A reviewer in the weekly *Athenaeum* maintained that it should be reprints of this sort which should be provided for the people, and welcomed the launch of Bogue’s ‘European Library’ in 1845, saying that, ‘learning and genius unemasculated’ should ‘take the place of the insipid compilations and useless abridgements’. The *Athenaeum* reviewer criticised those publishers, probably thinking of the SDUK, who were but ‘pseudo-benefactors of the people’, since they ‘have found them ignorant, and left them so’, by giving them only watered-down compilations, with too many facts ‘compressed in one small volume’. Compilations did not deserve the status of ‘original’ works.

Fortunately for the RTS, not all reviewers thought that compilations and small books were worthless. The *British Quarterly* reviewer separated the literature which did not count as ‘high’ into two sorts, ‘wholesome popular literature’ and ‘trash’, both of which could include non-fiction, didactic works. ‘Trash’ comprised ‘unmitigated platitude’ and often ‘error and superstition’, was frequently the result of a second- or third-hand ‘dilution’ from a ‘substantial book’, and generally lacked any ‘certificate in the name of their author’. But while that sort of literature was to be condemned, there was also the wholesome sort, which involved ‘popular treatises and essays without number, and on all subjects – geology, political economy, politics and whatnot; such expository authorship aiming at working down the truths and generalities of the various sciences to the apprehension of the public.’ This sort of authorship was ‘greatly in request’, and its ‘workman’ (note, not ‘author’) might pursue it ‘respectably and honourably’. The religious periodicals generally concurred in counting the RTS Series a good example of ‘wholesome popular literature’, and the *British Quarterly* itself variously recommended the volumes as ‘intrinsically good’, giving an ‘intelligent account’, and being ‘interesting and trustworthy’. The *Christian Lady’s Magazine* commended the series as ‘admirably

51 'Aspects of literature,’ 159-65.
52 'The European Library' *Athenaeum* (13/12/1845): 1192.
53 'The European Library' *Athenaeum* (13/12/1845): 1192.
54 'Aspects of literature', wholesome literature is discussed 165-9, trash 170-76.
55 'Aspects of literature', 170.
56 'Aspects of literature', 166.
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53 ‘The European Library’ *Athenaeum* (13/12/1845): 1192.
54 ‘Aspects of literature’, wholesome literature is discussed 165-9, trash 170-76.
56 ‘Aspects of literature’, 166.
calculated, to supersede some of the trash that inundates the country at a merely nominal price'.

Yet the enthusiasm with which the masses seemed to read 'trash' made it far from clear that a work of 'wholesome popular literature' could effectively supersede it in their affections. The difference between the genres could be seen in the circulations of around 60,000 for Chambers's Journal, compared with the 250,000 sold by Reynolds's Miscellany.

Popular, Portable and Economical

Chambers and Knight were both producing cheap periodicals in the 1840s, but their new projects were cheap book series, and, as Figure 2.5 showed, they were far from alone in this focus. In addition to the series listed, 1847 also saw the launch of 'Burns's Select Library: a series of Entertaining and Instructive Books for general Reading, in Monthly Volumes', 'The London Theological Library', 'Nelson's British Library', and 'The Englishwoman's Family Library', while 'The Christian Family Library' appeared the following year. Fiction publishers were also launching ever cheaper series, with one of the most well-known, George Routledge's Railway Library, starting in 1848. The RTS claimed to be responding to the weekly and monthly series of other publishers, but it was far from being last in the field. The Monthly Series appeared in the month between Bogue's and Bohn's libraries, but well ahead of the spate of short-lived series which appeared in 1847-48. The timing of the RTS Series, with planning beginning in late 1844, gives further credence to the contention that Chambers and Knight were the Society's main targets.

Cheap books were problematic for publishers, as it was necessary to sell a very large number of them, yet advertising them widely cost a large amount of money in proportion to the prices involved. Thus, John Chapman suggested in 1852 that, 'at present, the only chance (and it is a small one) of making low-priced books succeed,
is by publishing them as parts of a series, whereby they, to some extent, advertise each other, and profit also from the feeling of dislike in the purchaser to have an imperfect set of books. Chapman thus outlined two of the advantages that both Richard Altick and Leslie Howsam have connected with series publishing. They suggest that people like to have complete sets, so that, having bought one part of a package, the purchaser will buy the later ones. And the implication of uniformity provided by the series label allows an early volume of the series to be a guarantee for the contents of later volumes – in Chapman’s terms, the volumes advertise each other.

Altick also suggested that the tendency to call series ‘libraries’ appealed to the purchaser who was trying to acquire the accoutrements of a higher status. The RTS, was unusual among its competitors in not calling its series a library, despite the fact that it did promote it as a foundation for institutional libraries and as a library in its own right. Altick and Howsam were primarily concerned with the series as it was issued but the ‘completed library’ concept ought to be particularly important once a series has been completed. The RTS Monthly Series was actually one of the few which was completed and then promoted as a whole. Although issues ceased in 1855, it remained on the catalogue until 1883. Other publishers’ series ran indefinitely, and when they stopped, usually did so unexpectedly, as in the case of Knight’s and Murray’s series, which were hurt by the economic depression of 1849. Both these publishers made last-ditch attempts to sell complete sets, with Charles Cox, now publisher of Knight’s volumes, taking out a three-page advertisement in the Publishers’ Circular to explain that the series had been carried to a triumphant conclusion in 186 volumes. Similarly, Murray claimed that his series had been an ‘unabated success’ and that:

Mr. Murray, anxious to guard against the objection of overloading the subscribers with too large and cumbrous a series of books of one size, has decided on concluding the work with its thirty-seventh volume. He is thus

enabled to offer to the public a compact and portable work, the bulk of
which does not exceed the compass of a single shelf, or of one trunk,
suited for all classes and all climates.\textsuperscript{67}

If the ‘Home and Colonial Library’ had been more successful, Murray would not have
been forced to claim that thirty-seven volumes were just right for an emigrant’s trunk.
The RTS, however, chose to close its series and to begin marketing it as a library
instead. The choice of a round one hundred volumes, even though the final one was
delayed for over a year, appears to indicate an intention to create a ‘complete library’.
None of the other publishers felt any need to stop issuing after a certain number of
volumes. Bohn’s numerous series, for instance, were still running when he retired,
and continued under the management of Bell \& Dalry.\textsuperscript{68}

However, when the Monthly Series began, the committee did not have a clear idea of
its intended length. By 1848, it was thinking in terms of a sixty volume series, to end
in November 1850.\textsuperscript{69} Yet, in 1850, it decided to keep going for another year, and then
for another year, each time making this decision after an inspection of the sales
figures.\textsuperscript{70} Ending in November 1852 would have produced a series of eighty-four
volumes. In 1851, the annual report spoke publicly for the first time of the
completion of the series, and the committee decided to order no further volumes.\textsuperscript{71}
Yet, by early 1852, it had changed its mind, and decided that the series should ‘go on
for the present’, although it is not clear whether this decision was influenced by a
letter received in December 1851, from George King of Aberdeen, ‘strongly urging
the continuance of the series of Monthly Volumes, as a most important portion of the
Society’s publications’.\textsuperscript{72}

It was not until late 1853 that one hundred volumes was suggested as a desirable end-
point, and the committee decided that it should be met even though some volumes had
to be dropped. Thus, four books on martyrs which had been intended for the Series,
the first of which had already been printed early in 1854, were published separately,

\begin{footnotes}
\item[67] Publishers’ Circular 12 (1849): advert 1216.
\item[68] The figures given in Figure 2.5 refer to the period under Bohn’s control.
\item[69] RTS CCM, 19/04/1848.
\item[70] RTS CCM, 20/02/1850, and 18/09/1850.
\item[71] RTS Report (1851): 120. RTS CCM, 18/06/1851.
\item[72] RTS CCM, 21/04/1852; 17/12/1851.
\end{footnotes}
and another volume found to replace the first martyr volume in the Series. Ultimately, the close of the Series was somewhat messy, with Volume 99 appearing a month late, and the hundredth volume being delayed a further seventeen months. Even though the Society appears to have had several completed works in hand, including those on ‘Domestic Surgery’ and ‘Canada’, Volume 100 was reserved for a Life of Calvin, which had originally been ordered as part of a trilogy on aspects of church history. It may be that the completed volumes were problematic in ways not mentioned in the minutes, or it may have been that Calvin was felt to be a particularly fitting conclusion. Luther, after all, had already appeared at Volume 10.

Apart from the delays with the last volumes, the Series appeared regularly at monthly intervals, as advertised. This in itself is impressive, for, as the names of the competing series show, periodicity was not usually a major feature of such ventures. The advertisements, like those for Murray’s Home and Colonial Library, or Bentley’s Modern Literature, might reveal that volumes were to appear at monthly intervals, or that there would be half-volume parts each fortnight, but this was in small print. One strong reason for avoiding any definite commitment to a specific periodicity is illustrated by the name changes of Knight’s series. It began as Weekly Volumes, became Monthly Volumes, and seems to have ended as Shilling Volumes, illustrating that periodicity was more difficult to sustain than Knight had expected. Bohn’s Standard Library, and Murray’s Home and Colonial Library, for instance, were acquiring thirteen and twelve new volumes annually between 1846-48, but both acquired only five more in 1849. The economic situation of that year forced Murray’s library to close, although Bohn’s survived. While the drop in issues in 1849 was unfortunate for Bohn, it did not affect the reputation of his library as much as it would had he promised monthly issues. By calling its series the Monthly Series, the RTS committed itself to a regular issue. Furthermore, it had to achieve this with newly-written works, a more complicated task than selecting another work to reprint, and sending it to the printer. There were times when the Society barely managed to keep to this schedule, but they did succeed.

73 RTS CCM, 18/01 and 19/04/1854.
74 RTS CCM, 16/11/1853, 15/02/1854 and 21/06/1854.
75 Low, English catalogue of books, Appendix B, and DLB 106, ‘Charles Knight’.
76 See annual indexes to Publishers’ Circular, 1846-49.
The format of the RTS's proposed series of non-fiction books was largely determined by the price it wanted to sell them at. As Figure 2.5 showed, other publishers were producing volumes for between one and six shillings, and the volumes involved were not always complete works. The cost of a completed work from Bohn, Bogue and Murray was around 6s., while from Knight, Chambers and Collins, it was around 2s. or 3s., and Chambers's tracts sold at a shilling for a volume of eight or nine tracts. Even the six-shilling works were 'cheap' in comparison to the usual cost of new literary works, as the British Quarterly Review's comments on the launch of Bohn's 'Standard Library' made clear:

Each volume is beautifully printed, handsomely bound in cloth, embellished with a portrait, extended to more than five hundred pages, and is sold for three shillings and sixpence! Mr. Bohn no doubt knows what he is doing, but how he is to manage so as to perpetuate such a combination of quantity, quality, and cheapness, is to us something of a mystery.77

Although this might be cheap for a quarterly reviewer, it was far from cheap enough to be bought on a regular basis by the mechanics and members of the lower middle classes targeted by the RTS. Even works around the two-shilling mark were not really cheap enough for the audience which was just able to pay a penny a week for a periodical. By deciding to sell its volumes at 6d. monthly, the RTS was clearly aiming at that periodical audience, rather than the more affluent audience of Murray and Bohn.

The RTS generally issued its books in more than one binding, usually ranging from cloth-covered boards to sheep, calf and morocco leather, so that the same work could be suitable for the libraries of different classes of readers. In the case of the Monthly Series, the committee initially decided to produce two versions, one in paper covers at sixpence, and one in cloth-covered boards at tenpence. Although cloth-covered boards were usually the cheapest binding, in this case the need for extreme cheapness necessitated paper covers. These were stiff green paper wrappers, printed in black ink

77 'Bohn's Standard Library' British Quarterly Review 3 (1846): 547. Bohn later increased the price to 5s.
(see Figure 2.16). This was described by the catalogue as ‘fancy paper covers’, but reviewers were not so convinced. The monthly Baptist Magazine approved the contents of the first volume, but bemoaned the fact that ‘it should have no covers corresponding better with the character of the interior, than thin glazed paper’. Paper wrappers were unusual on anything larger than a tract or part-issue work, although paper-covered boards became common in the late 1840s and early 1850s for cheap railway novels.

The Society was aware that some of the potential audiences might be repelled by the paper covers, which is why the ten-penny version was produced in a superior binding, including gilt edges and an embossed pattern on the cover (see Figure 2.17). Cloth-covered boards had been introduced in the 1820s, and by the 1840s had become a standard publishers’ binding, especially for the cheap books which were most likely to be issued in an edition binding. If one were to judge a book by its covers, the small size and cloth-covered boards marked the Monthly Series as a product of industrialised, cheap, large-scale publishing. But although they were still cheap in their cloth-boards, the volumes now looked like miniatures of books which were respectable enough to appear in family or institutional libraries. On reviewing a volume in its ten-penny binding, the Baptist Magazine was pleased that now ‘he appears in clothing which will facilitate his reception into good company, and conduce to his preservation from the casualties of the way’. Helping the Series into ‘good company’ was the main aim for the ten-penny binding, clearly indicating that the Series was not only intended for mechanics and skilled artisans.

The preservative effect of hard covers was not necessarily as beneficial as the Baptist Magazine reviewer assumed, however. The Christian Spectator recommended the Series as being ‘so cheap that we need not care if they are destroyed!’ and suggested that, for this reason, ‘we are rather inclined to dislike the finer book bound at tenpence’. By urging the preservation of books over their use, parents and

80 Gaskell, Bibliography, 245-7.
82 ‘Cheap books’ Christian Spectator (1846): 145, 146.
Figure 2.16 The six-penny Monthly Volumes. The covers are stiff paper, printed in black ink on the front. These rare surviving examples are in the Cambridge University Library. The volumes measure 8.5cm by 13.5cm, and are 1cm thick.
Figure 2.17 The ten-penny Monthly Volumes, bound in cloth-covered boards, with gilt edges and spine-titles, and blind embossing on the front. The volumes were usually bound in dark green, but dark blue and mid-brown examples also survive.
organisers of libraries were limiting the good which the books could do. Despite this call for books to be ‘used, worn out, and worn to pieces’, the Society made further concessions to the desire for good-looking books.\textsuperscript{83} Once the Series had been running for a year, a double-volume format was introduced, where the sheets of two volumes were bound together with a frontispiece.\textsuperscript{84} These were sold at 1s.6d. in cloth boards or 2s. in extra boards with gilt edges. Small, thin books, like the single volumes, were often associated with children, who, as small people were expected to read small books.\textsuperscript{85} In double volumes, the Monthly Series became more substantial and suitable for an adult library.

In 1845, however, finding ways of making the Series more attractive to the higher classes was far less of an issue than making it available at sixpence. This was substantially cheaper than competing publishers’ series, and the length of the works was the most significant factor in this. The completed works of Bohn, Murray, and even Knight, were around five or six hundred pages, while the Monthly Volumes were less than two hundred pages. Although the RTS had vast experience in publishing even shorter works (i.e. tracts), the Series definitely contained books.\textsuperscript{86} It was not until the early 1850s that the Society began to produce any tracts on subjects other than conversion – the first being the Biographical Series in 1853. Short books had the further advantage of being suitable for the ‘large number of the people who can only spare time enough for the perusal of a small volume’, as the advertisement put it. As David Vincent has pointed out, finding the time, space and peace to read was a significant challenge for working-class readers, so the RTS’s short books could legitimately be seen as responding to those needs in a way that two fat volumes from

\textsuperscript{83} ‘Cheap books’ \textit{Christian Spectator} (1846): 146.
\textsuperscript{84} The double volumes first appear in RTS Publ., Dec. 1846. By March 1854, there were thirty-six double volumes on offer.
\textsuperscript{85} Children were part of the intended audience of the Series from the beginning, but by the 1860s, they became its main audience, as advertisements for the Series appeared only in the Juvenile section of the RTS Catalogue, as, for example, appended to RTS Report (1863). This was not only because of the binding, however: by this time, the Society was publishing larger, more detailed works for middle-class adults, and shorter, more simple works for working-class adults, thus removing most of the adult market for the Series.
\textsuperscript{86} There is not necessarily any distinction between a tract and a book, apart from the length and the tendency for books to be bound. RTS tracts ranged from four pages to sixteen or thirty-two, and occasionally to sixty-four pages. They were also folded and sewn, whereas books had covers and were bound.
Knight did not. As well as the problems of finding available time, readers who had only a limited experience of reading might lack the stamina to follow an argument for five hundred or more pages. Thus, the short book with clear and concise arguments might be doubly attractive.

One reason for the length of the works in Knight’s Shilling Volumes and in Chambers’ Instructive and Entertaining Library was that they were reprints of works which had previously been published for the mainstream middle-class market. Using such works eliminated payments for copyright, and was easier for the publisher to deal with, since he knew in advance what the finished product was, and how it had already been received. There was no need to find writers, negotiate terms, wait for the manuscript to arrive, and put it through the editorial and revision processes. The early attempts at cheap series, such as Constable’s Miscellany and Murray’s Family Library, had involved original works, and had failed to be commercially viable even at six shillings. In the 1840s, the RTS was virtually alone in producing a series of almost entirely original works.

This decision increased both the expense and editorial effort involved in the Series, but it seemed essential. All the Society’s publications had to contain a clear statement of the Atonement, be written in a manner consistent with evangelical Christianity, and to contain no support for one sect or denomination over another. The number of existing works which met all these criteria was small, as the committee already knew from its experience reprinting theological works, where references to controversial issues, like baptismal regeneration and church establishments, had to be edited out by RTS staff. Finding suitable works on non-theological topics was unlikely to be any easier, and even if they could be found, they would have to be substantially abridged to make them short enough. Thus, from the very beginning, the committee looked for

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88 Chambers’s Tract Miscellany contained original works. There were six reprints/abridgements in the RTS Monthly Series.
89 Jones, W., The Jubilee Memorial of the Religious Tract Society: containing a record of its origin, proceedings, and results. AD 1799 to AD 1849 (London, 1850), 625; for the evangelical Anglican monthly Christian Observer’s criticisms of this practice, see Christian Observer 45 (1846): 579, and also 464-6, 512, 577-86, 595-603, 814.
writers to produce fresh works for the Series, and made the ‘originality’ (rather than the ‘classic’ status) of the Series a selling point.  

In order to make cheap works cover all the fixed costs of their editing, copyright, type-setting and stereotyping, they had to be printed (and sold) in very large numbers. In the typical case of a new literary work from a publisher like Murray, the price could end up over ten shillings because all the fixed costs had to be covered by a small number of copies, often only 750. When works were to be sold at a tiny fraction of that price, correspondingly more of them had to be sold to cover costs. As tract publishers, the RTS was much more familiar than most with printing works at a penny or two, and selling them in hundreds of thousands. The Society was also used to thinking in long runs, since it planned for a continued sale over several years, while most publishers thought in terms of immediate sales. This is one reason why RTS works were almost never dated: purchasers would be unaware whether they were buying a new tract, a new impression of an old tract, or a tract that had been in the warehouse for five years. In 1850, ‘The Swearer’s Prayer’ was the best-selling tract on the catalogue, having sold 1.7 million copies over the previous twenty years, and it was still selling in 1850. The Monthly Series, as a slightly higher-priced product, did not need to be sold in hundreds of thousands, but it needed several thousands. Knight’s Shilling Volumes occasionally sold 5,000 copies, rather to his disappointment, while Chambers’s Miscellany ended at a time when it was said to be selling 80,000, because even those sales were not enough for such cheap tracts. The RTS initially calculated on print runs for the Monthly Series of 10,000, although rapid early sales encouraged the committee to increase that to 15,000 within the first year.

The retail price of the paper-covered volumes was six pence, but this was not what the Society would receive for the majority of the copies. Subscribers and auxiliary societies qualified for a 20% discount, while sales made through the trade were discounted by at least 25%, and sometimes 33% or more. So, for all the 6d. books sold through subscribers or the trade, the Society could not expect to get more than

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90 Four of the abridgements were made under the control of Charles Williams, who was later disciplined as editor for not conducting the Series properly. The two abridgements of William Scoresby’s works were approved by the committee.
91 Jones, Jubilee memorial, appendix V.
4½ d. per copy, and perhaps less. Only on those it sold directly or by post from its own depositories would it receive the full 6d. Sales of 10,000 copies to the trade would bring in £187.10.0, while 15,000 sales would produce £281.5.0.

Figure 2.18 gives some idea of the sorts of costs involved in producing each volume of the Monthly Series. Most of the figures are based on contemporary rates, as those actually charged to the RTS are not available. That the figures are in the right order of magnitude is confirmed by a letter from William Jones, who noted that publishing 15,000 copies of a Monthly Volume had the potential to ‘lose several hundred pounds’ if the work was a failure.93 The estimated printing costs are similar to the actual bills discussed later. The binding of the ten-penny versions was done by John Davison, and he may also have done the paperbacks, although that sort of work was usually done by James Key. Both men did a great deal of work for the Society, so it has been impossible to disentangle payments for the binding of the Monthly Volumes. Without knowing this cost, or the percentage set aside to cover editorial and advertising costs, it is difficult to determine what the break-even point of the Series actually was, but it was somewhere a little below 10,000. Any sales beyond that were making clear surplus, as the fixed costs were already covered, and the copies had only to pay for their own paper and printing, at less than 2d. per copy.94

As the size of the print-run increased into the thousands, paper became the predominant component of the price. Proponents of cheap books were particularly vociferous about the unfairness of the continued existence of the tax on paper. As Chapman put it:

Publishers like Mr Murray, and the readers of his costly books, are scarcely conscious of the restriction [i.e. paper tax] by which they are apparently unaffected; while it presses so injuriously upon the people as to forbid them that instruction which would otherwise be within their reach, and which enterprising men, whose efforts are now virtually paralyzed,

93 RTS Corr, Jones to Copley, 12/12/1845.
**Figure 2.18 Costs of production of a Monthly Volume.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Process</th>
<th>Estimated or Known cost</th>
<th>For 10,000 copies</th>
<th>For 15,000 copies</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Paper</td>
<td>15s. per ream*</td>
<td>£45</td>
<td>£67.10.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Composing</td>
<td>£2.6.0 per sheet†</td>
<td>£6.18.0</td>
<td>£6.18.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stereotypes</td>
<td>£1.10.0 per sheet</td>
<td>£4.10.0</td>
<td>£56.8.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Working-off</td>
<td>10s. per ream</td>
<td>£30</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Folding/stitching</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Copyright</td>
<td>£30†</td>
<td>£30</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Editorial labour</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>£116.8.0 +X+Y</strong></td>
<td><strong>£153.18.0 +X+Y</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Each Monthly Volume was 3 double sheets; 10,000 copies used 60 reams of paper; 15,000 copies used 90 reams.

* In November 1844, the RTS got quotes of 10s. 6d. and 7s. 6d. a ream from their main paper suppliers, John Dickinson and Spicer Brothers, for paper to be sent to India. They accepted the 10s. 6d. tender (RTS FCM, 13/11/1844), but noted a few months later that even Spicer’s paper was ‘quite good enough’ for grants (RTS FCM, 8/01/1845). This suggests that they were willing to use cheaper paper for grants than for home publications. Longman’s in 1846 and Routledge in 1856 both bought paper at 20s. a ream (see Fyfe, A., ‘Copyrights and Competition: producing and protecting children’s books in the nineteenth century’ Publishing History 45 (1999): 35-59, at 49), so I have interpolated an estimate of 15s. a ream for the paper the RTS might have used for home publications like the Monthly Series.

† This rate, and those for stereotypes and working-off, are derived from the rates paid by Longman’s and Routledge in the 1840s and 1850s, as cited in Fyfe, Copyrights and competition, 49. That for working-off is interpolated between Longman’s 17s. and 12s. a ream costs (1846, 1858) and Routledge’s 7s. a ream cost (1856). Routledge had been paying around 7s. from the early 1850s (see Routledge Publication Book 1850-58, pages 1-2, for instance), and he was more geared up to cheap mass publishing than Longman’s.

† Taken as the typical payment, from a range of £25 to £40.
would be eager to furnish in abundance, at a price commensurate with humble means.\textsuperscript{95}

The RTS bought its paper in large quantities, and for a variety of different purposes, so the paper for the Monthly Series cannot be disentangled from the surviving accounts, but it would have come from either of the Society's main suppliers, John Dickinson & Co. of Norwich, or Spicer Brothers. The high price of paper accounted for a large proportion of a publisher's costs: in the first quarter of 1850, the RTS paid almost £5,500 for printing paper, compared with just over £3,000 for printing.\textsuperscript{96} This meant that publishers wishing to produce cheap books tried to use as little paper as possible. Thus, books from Chambers, Knight, and the RTS regularly used small type-faces, small margins, and closely printed lines. This was carried to the extreme in the Chambers's 'People's Editions' of the 1830s, where the type-face was so small that the pages had to be double-columned to be comfortably readable. By the 1840s, however, that format was no longer selling well, and the 'Instructive and Entertaining Library', like its competitors, appeared without columns.\textsuperscript{97}

Other ways of saving paper included avoiding half-empty pages at ends of chapters, which led some publishers to abandon the custom of starting a new chapter on a new page, and on a right-hand page. With the Monthly Series, the chapters still began on fresh pages, but on verso or recto pages as appropriate. It was also more economical for the publisher to extend the work to the end of a printer's sheet, but not to go onto a new sheet, since paper and working were paid per sheet. The Monthly Series works are all 192 pages, and the text always finishes somewhere on the final page. However, the works are not actually all the same length, but have been forced into the same number of sheets. Through the use of different sizes of type, the volumes have from twenty-seven to thirty-seven lines per page (Figure 2.19). Since smaller type allows more words per line, as well as lines per page, these changes represent a

\textsuperscript{95} Chapman, 'Commerce of literature', 514. The tax on paper was repealed in 1861.

\textsuperscript{96} RTS ECM, 1850 passim. Although some of the paper was probably for grants, and was not printed in Britain.

\textsuperscript{97} R. Chambers to G. Combe, 08/03/1847, National Library of Scotland, Add. ms 7283, ff. 123-126, explains that Combe's Constitution of Man was no longer selling so well because of its double-columned format. I am grateful to Jim Secord for this reference.
of the shell of a nut by squeezing it, and we see them strike it with a stone, or hammer it on some hard surface, in order to break it; they will also endeavour to pick a lock by means of a bit of stick; they scratch their fur, and hunt for insects, seizing them with address; whence we at once infer that their hands enjoy this sense. The skin of the palms, moreover, is naked, and the cushion of cellular tissue there is abundantly supplied with nerves. In some of the lower American monkeys, however, the hands more resemble the paws of a squirrel, and perhaps do not possess a higher degree of the sense of touch, than they. This sense, in an imperfect measure, is enjoyed by most quadrupeds that freely use the fore-paws, as the squirrel and the beaver; and is seated in those organs. No one can see the dog scratch himself, or the cat dress her fur with her paws, without feeling that this is the case. Yet in the cat tribe, a far higher sense of touch is placed elsewhere. These animals are nocturnal, prowling by night for prey amidst thickets and dense jungles. On each side of the upper-lip, which is at that part thickened, are seated long bristles, called whiskers; they spring from a bed of closely-set glands under the skin, and

ON READING. 87

thoughts, or at least feeling itself upon many

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of the food which circulates through your veins, that reading is to the mind; and the man who does not devote himself to reading, may despair of ever doing much in the world of mind. You can no more be the "full man" whom Bacon describes, without reading, than you can be vigorous and healthy without fresh nourishment. It would be no more reasonable to expect it, than to suppose that the Mississippi might roll on its flood of water to the ocean, though all its tributary streams were cut off, and it were replenished only by the occasional drops from the clouds.

Some read works of the imagination, or what is called the light literature of the day, while that which embraces solid thought is irksome. Young people are apt—and to this students are continually tempted—to read only for amusement.

The object of reading may be divided into several branches. The student reads for relaxation from more severe studies; he is thus refreshed, and his spirits are revived. He reads facts in the history and experiences of mankind, and sees how they lived and acted under different circumstances. From these facts he draws conclusions; his views are enlarged, his judgment corrected, and the experience of former ages, and of all times, becomes his own. He reads chiefly, probably, for information; to store up knowledge for future use; and he wishes to classify and arrange it, that it may be ready at his call. He reads also for the sake of style—to learn how a strong, nervous, beautiful writer expresses himself. It is obvious, that, in attaining any of these ends, except, perhaps, that of amusement,
substantial difference in the lengths of the works, as shown in Figure 2.20. Most of the works in the Series were between 40,000 and 50,000 words.

All the extant copies of the Monthly Series I have examined are 16mo, containing six signatures. However, when reference was occasionally made to the arrangements for printing the volumes, they were said to involve three sheets, not six.98 This indicates that they were being printed on sheets which were double the usual size. The composed type for a sheet was set up in two formes, one for each side of the perfected sheet, and the formes were impressed separately, with the paper being turned over between impressions. With very large sheets of paper, it was possible to use formes of double (or more) the usual size, so that, for the same number of cycles of the machine, twice as many perfected sheets were produced, with the printed sheet being cut in half afterwards.99 This method of imposition became common only with the introduction of paper-making machines, which could make far larger sheets than ever before, and of steam printing machines which could cope with the large sheets. A printing machine could produce around a thousand impressions an hour, compared with the 250 or so of a traditional hand-press. If the Monthly Volumes had been set in six formes, a single machine would have taken 180 hours to produce the 15,000 copies of the first print run. This was a vast improvement on the 720 hours it would have taken on a hand-press, but not as good as the ninety hours that would be needed if the work was set in three double-sheet formes. The imposition of the Monthly Series, like their edition bindings, reveals them as products of industrial printing.

After seeking quotations from several of its usual printers, the Society chose Tyler & Reed, of Bolt Court, off Fleet Street, printers of the Evangelical Magazine and the Patriot newspaper, to be the printers for the Monthly Series. Given what we already know about the printing of the Series, they must have been steam-printers, probably with more than one machine. They had based their quotation on the assumption that they would be able to introduce a new method of stereotyping, and when that failed, they were forced to apply to the RTS for permission to increase their charges. The committee sought fresh quotations from other printers, but Tyler & Reed kept the

98 RTS FCM, 23/03/1846.
99 Gaskell, Bibliography, 258-60.
project until the dissolution of their partnership in 1849.\textsuperscript{100} There is nothing in the RTS records to indicate what happened to the Monthly Series as a result of this dissolution, but for at least some of the period 1850-55, it was printed by Blackburn & Burt, of Holborn Hill.\textsuperscript{101}

After the break-up of Tyler & Reed, Charles Reed successfully petitioned for RTS business in September 1849, and was granted a share both in the work formerly done by Tyler & Reed, and in new RTS work.\textsuperscript{102} Reed seems to have taken his share of the business with him into the new business of Reed & Pardon, while William Tyler continued to print for the RTS on his own.\textsuperscript{103} Reed’s new partner, Benjamin Pardon, had previously been in business (till February 1848) with one John Blackburn, who had introduced him to the RTS business.\textsuperscript{104} Blackburn’s son or brother Stephen went into partnership with Robert Burt in 1849/50, and their firm became the Monthly Series printer.\textsuperscript{105} This connection through Pardon is the extent of the relationship that Philip Brown has been able to trace between the firms of Tyler & Reed and Blackburn & Burt,\textsuperscript{106} but it suggests that there may have been some other business arrangement between 1849-50, as a result of which Blackburn became involved in the Monthly Series, and which enabled him to get the contract to continue to print it in the subsequent years.

\textsuperscript{100} RTS FCM, 23/03/1846. For details of printers’ addresses and partnerships, see Brown, P.A.H., \textit{London Publishers and Printers c.1800-1870} (London, 1982).

\textsuperscript{101} Although RTS works usually bore the mark of the RTS as their printer, there are many extant copies of Monthly Volumes bearing the mark of Blackburn & Burt on their last page. According to Brown, Publishers and printers, this partnership existed only between 1850-55, suggesting that they were printers to the original Series, rather than to the (presumably many) reprinted impressions.

\textsuperscript{102} RTS FCM, 19/09/1849.

\textsuperscript{103} The names of William Tyler and of Pardon and Reed continue to appear in the list of bill payments made by the RTS in 1850, RTS ECM.

\textsuperscript{104} The break-up of the partnership of John Blackburn and Benjamin Pardon is recorded in RTS CCM, 09/02/1848, where it is also noted that Blackburn had been with the RTS before joining with Pardon.

\textsuperscript{105} Brown, Publishers and printers records the name of Blackburn as ‘John’ before the partnership with Pardon, and ‘Stephen’ afterwards, suggesting that John Blackburn may have died shortly after the partnership was dissolved.

\textsuperscript{106} Brown, Publishers and printers.
Blackburn & Burt were paid around £50 to print each volume, though the bills ranged from £40.12s.6d. to £54.12s.\(^{107}\) This had to cover the costs of composing the type, making stereotypes, and working (i.e. printing), for the 15,000 print run. The variation in price between volumes which were all three double sheets was due to the illustrations in some volumes. In Chambers’s Educational Course, the total costs for each work could vary by as much as £20 or £30 depending on illustrations.\(^ {108}\) When the RTS did use illustrations, it used far fewer than in these textbooks, which is why its printing bills only varied by around £10. Comparing these figures with Figure 2.18, we can see that the estimates are of an appropriate order of magnitude, but that Blackburn & Burt must have been offering a better deal for some aspect of the process than the printers from whom my figures came.

The Society appears to have been using stereotyping for a few projects since the early 1830s, and by 1850 it was either in use, or about to be brought into use, for virtually all its publishing projects.\(^ {109}\) The new method of stereotyping that Tyler & Reed were hoping to introduce may have been the use of flexible paper moulds, which replaced plaster of Paris around mid-century, and made the process of casting much easier and more reliable.\(^ {110}\) Stereotyping was useful for producing massive print runs, for distributing a work to distant locations, and for reprinting more copies at a later date. The issue of reprinting was particularly important for the Society, due to the long shelf-life of its works. If all the copies were printed at once and the type redistributed, thousands of copies had to be stored until eventually sold. This is what the Society originally did, but in 1850, a finance committee report into the state of the warehouse and the stock recommended ‘the importance of Stereotyping all the Society’s publications in order to avoid future accommodation of Stock, and that only in special

\(^{107}\) The bill payments appear in the Executive Committee Minutes, the volume of which for 1844-50 is missing. The Finance Committee Minutes record that Tyler & Reed were allowed to increase their charges by £4.10s. per volume, RTS FCM, 23/03/1846. Payments to Blackburn & Burt appear regularly from 1850, and include quarterly payments and smaller monthly payments. I assume the monthly payments to be the ones for the Monthly Series.


\(^{109}\) The use of stereotyping appears to date from the beginning of the bound publications of the Society, c.1825, when, in an attempt to partially fund these expensive publications, subscribers were invited to pay for the plates. This certainly happened for the *British Reformers* printed from 1832. See Jones, *Jubilee memorial*, 130-33; Green, S.G., *The Story of the Religious Tract Society for One Hundred Years* (London, 1899), 35, 51.

cases Type [alone] should be used and then by previous approval of the Committee. The periodicals also benefited from stereotyping, particularly when the higher-circulation *Leisure Hour* needed multiple presses at work, although it was also useful for printing back numbers.

In the case of the Monthly Series, the existence of stereotype plates allowed volumes to be reprinted as needed for thirty years, although there are unfortunately no records of such reprints. They also permitted the Society to make an arrangement with the American Sunday School Union for distribution of the Series in America. The ASSU agreed to buy copies of such plates as the RTS thought were suitable for American circulation, for the sum of £17.10.0 per volume. The RTS was supposed to ship the plates to America in advance of publication, which would allow the ASSU to reprint them quickly. In the absence of an Anglo-American copyright agreement British publishers were regularly ‘pirated’ by American publishers. The best way around this was to make an arrangement to supply either plates or corrected proofs to an American publisher, who would get the work into print and claim copyright before the ‘pirates’ had a chance. This was the arrangement between the RTS and the ASSU.

However, as Bill Astore has shown with reference to Thomas Dick’s works, making such an arrangement did not mean that only the ASSU would reprint the Monthly Series. Once the ASSU received the stereotype plates, printing the work was straightforward, but it was unable to make any alterations beyond adding a preface. The Methodist Sunday School Union had several of the Monthly Volumes revised by its secretary, and printed revised editions of the *Atmosphere*, the *Telescope and Microscope*, and perhaps the second *Solar System* volume. Messrs Biddle of Philadelphia also reprinted the *Atmosphere* within two years of its first publication.

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111 RTS FCM, 19/06/1850.
112 The *Child’s Companion* was not stereotyped until 1850, and the reprinting of back numbers in 1849-50 cost an amount which would have covered the expense of making stereotype plates, RTS FCM, 18/09/1850.
113 RTS FCM, 13/08/1845.
and paid £20 directly to Dick in thanks, despite the fact that the RTS had bought the (British) copyright for £35.\(^{117}\) Without an international treaty, the RTS had no legal way to protest about these unauthorised revisions and reprintings of its publications, but, given its ever-determined attempts to increase circulations, it was probably more pleased than distressed by the eagerness of American publishers.\(^{118}\) It was also willing to help evangelical societies in other countries reprint the volumes, and responded favourably to a request from the Toulouse Book Society for casts of the cuts from the *Atmosphere*, to be used in a French translation.\(^{119}\) The Society also assisted in the translation of the *Life of Mohammed* into Maráthí and Gujurátí by the Bombay Tract and Book Society.\(^{120}\)

**Dealing with Writers**

Printers and paper merchants were agents the Society was used to dealing with, but its tract and reprint experience had not prepared it for dealing with living writers. The *Visitor* contained a high proportion of excerpted and reprinted matter, and the choice of subjects for original articles was, as with tracts, often left to the discretion of the writer. The Monthly Series was the first time the committee had to commission large numbers of new works, and the experience gained paid off in the *Leisure Hour*, which contained almost entirely original articles.

The first thing the copyright committee did upon being given responsibility for the new series was to ask William Lloyd to canvas for writers.\(^{121}\) He contacted sixteen writers, eleven of whom immediately agreed to contribute, and suggested topics. The Society did not choose the writers to fit its choice of subjects, but had to choose from the subjects offered by its choice of writers. This pattern continued throughout the Series, with only a couple of exceptions. This method of selection made it difficult to keep to any definite plan for the contents of the Series. However, since all knowledge should be presented in a Christian light, there is a sense in which the provision of that

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\(^{117}\) Astore, *Observing God*, 240. RTS CCM, 21/06/1848.

\(^{118}\) It would be interesting to know if the Methodist SSU had sought permission, or consulted with, the ASSU. In Britain, evangelical societies were frequently on sufficiently good terms to assist each other in such ventures, and to permit reprintings, either at no cost or at a nominal charge.

\(^{119}\) RTS ECM, 24/12/1850.


\(^{121}\) RTS CCM, 14/08 and 13/11/1844.
tone was more important than what the details of the profane knowledge it illuminated actually were. Lloyd had been keen to build up a stable of suitable writers, who were up to the Society’s standard.\(^{122}\) In the Monthly Series, these writers were to demonstrate that a whole range of ‘secular’ subjects could be treated with a Christian tone. The more variety of subject matter, the more convincing the assertion that all subjects could be treated in this light.

Of the first batch of writers who were asked to contribute to the Monthly Series, some, including Anne Pratt, William Martin and John Kitto, were already contributors to the *Visitor*, while others, like James Montgomery, John Harris and Thomas Dick, were well-known evangelical writers who do not appear to have had any previous RTS connection.\(^{123}\) As published writers, they all had track-records in evangelical writing, and so were known to be suitable for the RTS. It was not until the Series had been running for a little over a year, that unsolicited offers of manuscripts began to come in. Some of these were from known writers, but others were not. Such offers were helpful for the committee, as they broadened the available subject areas for the Series — since the majority of the Society’s existing writers had originally been tract or other theological writers, it is debatable whether the Series could have reached a hundred volumes without some new writers with new areas of knowledge. The additional offers also allowed the committee to be more selective. At the start, it accepted virtually all the suggestions made by the writers Lloyd had contacted, no doubt feeling obliged to, and needing to get enough works together as quickly as possible. No suggested works were rejected until mid-1847, when ‘Light in Dark Places’ and ‘Terrestrial and Meteooric Chemistry’ had that dubious honour.\(^{124}\) By this time, the Series was well under way, and offers were coming in from both existing and new writers.

However, if the writer was unknown to the Society, how was the committee to evaluate his knowledge of his subject, literary ability, or evangelical piety? One of the first unsolicited offers came from Rev. Henry Christopherson (fl. 1850-1876), of Newcastle-upon-Tyne, who wished to write on the evidences of Christianity. The

\(^{122}\) RTS Add., Lloyd to Jones, 15/09/1847.
\(^{123}\) First batch of writers listed at RTS CCM, 13/11/1844.
\(^{124}\) RTS CCM, 19/05/1847.
committee decided that 'a specimen of the work [should] be obtained from Mr. Christopherson with an outline of the whole'. While his ministerial vocation gave some evidence of his faith, the specimen of written work, plus the outline sketch, would provide some indication both of his style of writing, and his grasp of the subject matter for his work. Christopherson complied, and was asked to proceed with the work. The committee decided to adopt this procedure as a rule, 'that in future such specimens + outline be required of Authors not previously known to the Society'.

In addition, the committee began to ask for personal references from unknown writers. Yet, although a Mr. Scott reported satisfactorily on Rev. Charles Elton of Sidney Sussex College, Cambridge, it turned out that his plan for a work on Iceland was 'quite unsuitable'. Some recommendations were more rewarding, as when John Sheppard, a devotional writer whose works were reprinted by the RTS, and a Mr. Gotch were asked about Rev. Samuel Manning of Frome. The referees gave reports 'quite favourable to Mr. Manning's ability'. Manning's Life of Charlemagne appeared in the Monthly Series, and he went on to write many more works for the RTS, and to become book editor, and later general secretary, of the Society.

As far as I can tell, there were no formal agreements drawn up between writer and publisher, with the sole exception of Thomas Dick – who, as an experienced writer, set out his terms from the beginning. These were presented to the committee, and entered in the minute book on approval. For the other writers, the minutes simply record that their suggestion to write on subject X had been approved. If details such as payment, expected completion date, or length were discussed, this happened

125 RTS CCM, 18/11/1846.  
126 Unfortunately, Christopherson discovered a few months later that he was not as able to write on the subject as he had thought, and informed the committee that he 'had found it necessary to abandon his plan'. He offered to write on something else, but his work on missionaries also failed to materialise. RTS CCM, 17/02/1847 and 19/05/1847.  
127 RTS CCM, 18/11/1846.  
128 RTS CCM, 15/01/1851, and 19/02/1851.  
129 On the RTS link with Sheppard, see RTS Corr., Jones to Sheppard, 28/10/1843.  
130 RTS CCM, 18/12/1850, and 15/01/1851.  
131 RTS CCM, 13/11/1844.  
132 On the development of author-publisher contracts in this period, see Sutherland, Victorian novelists, Ch.4.
in correspondence with the writer. This lack of formality soon led the committee into problems. As the first batch of completed manuscripts began to arrive at Paternoster Row during 1846 and 1847, and were examined by the editor and his readers, it became clear that they were not all suitable for the Series, for unspecified reasons. A few of these completed works were later published by the RTS in a different format, but most languished unpublished, as Figure 2.15 showed. However, the writers still expected to be paid, and this cost the Society £95 in 1845 alone. 133 Beginning in 1847, therefore, the committee adopted the practice of informing writers that their payment was conditional on approval of the final manuscript by the executive committee. Rev. James G. Miall of Bradford appears to have been the first to be told with respect to his ‘Remarkable Death-beds’ that: ‘if on examination it be approved, the sum of £35 be paid him; but if not approved then half that sum, and the Manuscript be returned’. 134 This, or a similar phrase, appears regularly in subsequent minutes. This change of procedure coincided with the increased precautions about getting writing samples, character references and plans. The combined result was that fewer completed manuscripts were rejected in the last seven years of the Series than in the first three, and that they cost the Society less, often only £10 per work. 135

Although Miall’s agreement stated a payment of £35 on approval, this was not a set amount. £30 would have been the payment at the Society’s standard rate, but there was a variety of payments, as Figure 2.21 shows, with £30 and £35 being the most common. £25 was the typical payment for female writers. The writers who got £40 tended to be those, like Kitto and Dick, who were well-known, full-time writers. The reasons for different payments was not usually made explicit, although when Miall became the fourth writer to attempt the work on the Inquisition, but the first to complete it, the committee noted that ‘the preparation of the Manuscript had been attended with extraordinary labor’, and paid him in guineas rather than pounds as thanks. 136

133 RTS CCM, 8/01, 12/03 and 21/05/1845. RTS FCM 21/10/1846.
134 RTS CCM, 17/02/1847.
135 RTS CCM, 20/02 and 18/12/1850.
136 RTS CCM, 16/03/1853.
Figure 2.21 Sums paid for copyright of the Monthly Volumes.

Figure 2.22 Time taken from agreement to completion of Monthly Volumes.
**Figure 2.21** Sums paid for copyright of the Monthly Volumes.

**Figure 2.22** Time taken from agreement to completion of Monthly Volumes.
Any agreements about the length of the completed manuscript were vague at best, since, as we have seen, the published works varied significantly. There also seems to have been little discussion of the time-frame within which the work was to be completed. Although the committee knew how many manuscripts it had ordered, it did not know when, or, indeed if, they would arrive. In November 1847, the new editor, Charles Williams, discovered that some works had been 'in progress' for two and a half years. He was directed to make enquiries, and if the volumes were not to be forthcoming, 'to strike them off the list'. This seems to be the only time when the Society made an attempt to chase its writers, and it was not particularly successful, as several works remained on the list which never appeared. On his retirement, George Stokes planned to write a long list of works for the series, but died after completing only one of them, 'The Scottish Covenanters'.

Rev. Henry Woodward of Bungay, Suffolk, had agreed to produce a geological volume in September 1846, and confirmed that he was still working on it in 1849 and 1851. But by 1852, he wrote to the Society, saying he was 'prevented by circumstances from accomplishing the work'. Woodward’s ‘circumstances’ are the reason why the only geological volumes in the Series are those on Caves, Mines and Volcanoes. Other works arrived after enormous delays – Alfred the Great, for instance, was being written by William Jones’s son, Rev. William H. Jones, and took over four years to reach completion. Jones was probably distracted by moving from an incumbency in Shoreditch, London, to a new living at Bradford-on-Avon, Wiltshire. Fortunately for the RTS, Jones was an extreme case. Almost two-thirds of the manuscripts arrived at Paternoster Row within a year of their subjects being agreed, and 90% within eighteen months (see Figure 2.22). However, the variation between Jamaica’s arrival in three months and the Crusades in twenty-three, made it difficult for the committee to plan ahead.

137 RTS CCM, 17/11/1847.
138 RTS CCM, 17/02/1847.
139 RTS CCM, 16/09/1846. I have been unable to discover any connection between this Woodward and the geologist father and son, Samuel (1790-1838) and Henry Woodward (1832-1921), from Norfolk.
140 RTS CCM, 18/08/1852.
141 Clergy Lists, 1850, 1852.
142 It shows seventy-five volumes, since it relates only to those which were actually published in the series, and only to those whose start and finish dates were recorded. It thus excludes works which were submitted in a completed form, and several of the abridgements.
Initially, the finance sub-committee had recommended that completed manuscripts should be ready twelve months in advance, so that the printers could complete their work at least seven weeks before publication date (to allow time to ship copies of the plates to the American Sunday School Union). If this ideal had been met, at least twelve completed manuscripts would have been constantly in hand. Figure 2.23 is my reconstruction of the progress of the Monthly Series. The number of rejections, and the number of volumes published, are straightforward to determine, but the list of works in progress and works in hand has had to be extrapolated. Given the uncertainty over when, or whether, a manuscript was going to arrive the estimates of ‘works in progress’ are probably too high, especially in the later years of the Series. There were eighteen works still allegedly ‘in progress’ at the end of the Series, so, if we allow for them, it seems that the committee rarely had more than ten or fifteen works in progress at any one time. This is consistent with planning no further than a year ahead. Similarly, although this reconstruction suggests that the committee had between ten and fifteen works ‘in hand’ throughout the duration of the Series, this is misleading, as it includes the completed manuscripts which the Society was never going to publish, of which dozen were still ‘in hand’ at the end. Bearing this in mind, we realise that the Society rarely had more than a couple of publishable works in hand throughout the series.

This is borne out by occasional evidence from the minutes. In February 1848, Williams was reprimanded by the committee for not yet having sent April’s volume to the printers, when it ‘should have been ready two months since’. The History of Protestantism in France, Part I was hurriedly sent to the printers, despite having been completed only a month earlier. Giving up on the ideal of having twelve volumes in hand, the committee recommended that there should always be at least three complete volumes ready for the printer, ‘to prevent any disappointment in the regular appearance of the Series and to secure the careful printing and getting up of the Books’. Yet, in December 1852, the current editor, William Haig Miller, found himself without an available volume for February 1853, and decided to turn a
Figure 2.23 The progress of the Monthly Series.
manuscript on the Greek Church, which had just been approved by its readers, into a Monthly Volume. The committee approved his action retrospectively.146

The job of encouraging writers and dealing with their manuscripts was that of the editorial department, but as we have seen in Chapter One, the early years of the Monthly Series coincided with the period of change-over and dispute, following Lloyd's retirement in March 1847. Within a year of Williams taking over, a special joint meeting of the copyright and finance committees was held, to discuss Williams's position. The meeting concluded that 'both in the Educational Series, The Monthly Volume Series, and other matters, Mr. Williams has inefficiently and negligently attended to the duties entrusted to him, by which they consider that the Society has been materially injured.'147 Although Williams's response was not entirely satisfactory, the committee decided to let him continue, with a new set of regulations setting out his duties more clearly.148 From this material, it seems that Williams had spent too little time attending to the periodical and serial works and that manuscripts had not been carefully prepared for the press, or effectively proof-read afterwards. The new regulations also requested detailed plans of the future volumes intended for the Monthly and Educational series.149

The minutes do not record exactly what was wrong with Williams's handling of the Monthly Series, but in March 1848, just a month after the disciplinary meeting, the Congregationalist monthly Biblical Review decided to assess the Series, and noted that, 'While some of its volumes realize perfectly the idea of the series, there are others [which do not].'150 The reviewer approved of the aims of the Series, but noted inaccuracies, and the 'forcible introduction' of religious reflections. He expressed his concern about the Society's inability to ensure its writers produced uniformly suitable works. While this was always going to be a problem when so many writers were involved, it ought to have been Williams's job as editor to smooth over differences, and make sure all the works met the Society's standard. A year after Williams's

146 RTS CCM, 15/12/1852.
147 RTS CCM, 02/02/1848.
148 RTS CCM, 09/02/1848.
149 RTS CCM, 09/02/1848.
150 'The Tract Society's works' Biblical Review 4 (March 1848), 436.
disciplinary hearing, the Biblical Review was able to report more positively of the Series.\(^{151}\)

The editorial department exercised its control by means of acceptance or rejection, rather than editorial alterations. A manuscript would be rejected if the two readers reported unfavourably on it, and the editor saw no reason to disagree; if the readers disagreed over a work's merit, a third opinion was sought. One writer was assured that the readers of his manuscript were 'thoroughly talented men. One of them has been accustomed to literary pursuits for the last thirty years and is an eminent Classic. – I only mention this that you may feel satisfied that we did not refer your paper to incompetent persons.'\(^{152}\) The names of these external readers suggest that they were the same mixture of ministers and evangelical laymen who wrote for the Society. The editor of the Baptist Magazine, Rev. W. Groser, acted as reader for the Monthly Volume on Iona and for the prize essays on the state of the working classes, as well as writing several tracts for the Society.\(^{153}\) Similarly, the Rev. Thomas Birks acted as reader for the Bible Handbook in the same month as completing his own Astronomy for the Society.\(^{154}\)

Very few readers' reports survive, and the minute-books record only that the reports were 'quite unfavourable to its adoption', or that the work 'did not appear... adapted for publication by the Society'.\(^{155}\) When the work was adopted, the record stated simply that the reports were favourable. William Notcutt's Geography of Plants and John Kennedy's Jordan and the Dead Sea were rare in being recommended by the readers for revisions, and presumably only needed minor changes.\(^{156}\) Discussing a prize essay, Whitehorne reported that 'A few isolated statements would have to be omitted or modified for publication by this Society and this may easily be done'.\(^{157}\) This suggests how minor were the revisions with which the Society would or could

\(^{151}\) The Tract Society's publications' Biblical Review 6 (May 1849), 429.
\(^{152}\) RTS Corr., Jones to Smith, 12/12/1846. Another reader (or perhaps the same one?) was described as 'a celebrated Classical Man who is altogether unacquainted with the writer', RTS Corr., Jones to Copley, 12/12/1846.
\(^{153}\) For example, RTS CCM, 21/08/1850; RTS ECM, 11/03/1851.
\(^{154}\) RTS CCM, 21/06/1854.
\(^{155}\) RTS CCM, 23/02/1848.
\(^{156}\) RTS CCM, 14/11/1849, and 20/03/1850.
\(^{157}\) RTS ECM, 11/03/1851.
work. Major changes would, of course, be very time-consuming with manuscripts written in longhand, and that may be one reason the committee preferred to reject outright any manuscripts needing such significant changes. When this happened to Edwin Sidney, although with the offer of publication in a different format, he volunteered to extensively revise his manuscript (which eventually became *The Field and the Fold*), but this too was rare behaviour. The Society was thus extremely dependent on finding writers who could produce the suitable style, and who would not need extensive revising. Chapter Four will discuss writing practices in more detail.

**Reaching Readers**

Producing a cheap publication on secular subjects for readers in the working and middle classes was, of course, only half the challenge. The product still had to be brought to the attention of the readers, and to be read by them. And although Chapman could vaunt the book series (and the periodical) as a partially self-advertising format, it still needed some help. The RTS claimed to do over half of its business through the book-trade, and if tracts were removed from the calculation, the proportion would be much larger. When it had to market the Monthly Series, therefore, it did so mostly through trade channels. By the time it came to launch the *Leisure Hour*, seven years after the Monthly Series, the committee was conscious of the need to make more effort to reach the working classes, and a comparison between the marketing of the two projects illustrates some of the lessons the Society learned from the launch of the Monthly Series.

The RTS sent out advance specimens of the Series to selected members of the trade, and for the *Leisure Hour*, it also sent out copies of the prospectus, and provided ‘show cards’ for display in booksellers’ shops and in schools. But the main advertising medium within the book trade was the *Publishers’ Circular*. On December 1st 1845, the first volume of the Monthly Series was given top-billing in the RTS advertisement (Figure 2.24). Although this advertisement is not very prominent, the use of display type-faces was only just becoming common, and the advertisement from Bohn

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158 RTS CCM, 28/03/1849. John Owen also offered to revise his MSS, 19/01/1848.

159 RTS CCM, 17/09/1845. An announcement on the Monthly List (June 1854) detailed the promotional material available for the *Sunday at Home*.
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LONDON: CHAPMAN AND HALL, 185, STRAND. (1207)

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Grant and Griffith (successors to "J. Harris", corner of St. Paul's Church Yard. (1215)

Figure 2.24 Advertisement for Monthly Series, Publishers' Circular, December 1845. Notice the lack of sales pitch, and the small type.
illustrated earlier (Figure 2.2) was unusual for the mid-1840s. By the early 1850s, the Publishers’ Circular contained many more large advertisements with display type. The RTS generally stayed with the older, cheaper, style, although for the Leisure Hour, it made an exception (see Figure 2.25).

In this Leisure Hour advertisement, the details of price, publisher and available date were far outnumbered by the words explaining the aim of the periodical, and trying to persuade the reader to buy it. This, then, was an ‘advertisement’ rather than just an ‘announcement’ of a new publication. This change in the style of advertisements coincided with the change in their appearance, and was just beginning at the time when the Monthly Series was launched. Thus, while the RTS had merely announced the arrival of ‘THE MONTHLY VOLUME. – THE LIFE OF JULIUS CAESAR. Containing 192 pages, in a good bold type,’ a month earlier, David Bogue had presented his ‘European Library’, claiming that it was ‘Designed to furnish the highest Literature of the day, consisting of Original Works and Reprints of Popular Publications at the lowest possible price.’ Bohn’s advertisement in January 1846 was similar. It was this new method of selling that the RTS had reacted to by the time it produced the Leisure Hour advertisement in 1851, which talked of the ‘eminent artists’ and ‘able contributors’ on whom ‘no expense will be spared’, and emphasised that it was sold at ‘so low a price’. However, this form of advertisement was itself too expensive for the cheap publications of the RTS, and was reserved for special occasions, such as new product launches.

Although the Monthly Series was merely announced in the Publishers’ Circular, it was more actively promoted in the Christian Spectator and on the monthly list of new publications sent out to individual booksellers. On the list of new publications, (Figure 2.26) the manifesto was printed in a banner across the top of the list, while on the front page of the Christian Spectator (Figure 2.27), it was prefaced by an explanation of the committee’s reasons for deciding to launch a project which was

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160 This change in the style of advertisements seems to be related to the general change to a much more visual style of advertising from the 1830s. Hindley, D., and G. Hindley, Advertising in Victorian Britain, 1837-1901 (London, 1972) is a well-illustrated introduction to the subject.
161 Publishers’ Circular 9 (1845), advert 1210.
162 Publishers’ Circular 9 (1845), advert 1191.
163 Publishers’ Circular 10 (1846), advert 98.
164 Publishers’ Circular 14 (1851), advert 989.

118
The Publishers' Circular. 399

In a few days, in 1 vol. square crown 8vo. with Illustrations, price 10s. 6d. the Third Edition of

The Knights-Templars.

By C. G. Addison, Esq. of the Inner Temple;

BARRISTER-AT-LAW.

London: Longman, Brown, Green, and Longmans, Paternoster Row. (988)

New Weekly Periodical.

On the 1st of January, 1852, will be issued, price One Penny, No. 1 of

The Leisure Hour:

A Family Journal of Instruction and Entertainment:

Illustrated with Engravings by Eminent Artists.

The rapid growth of periodical literature is one of

the characteristic features of the present day. The

weekly journal is adapted to answer ends which are

not attained by books. Materials elsewhere provided

are, by this agency, presented in such quantities, and

with such a regard to adaptation and variety, that

the short and broken intervals of daily toil may be

turned to profit; and the humblest artisan, though

denied access to larger stores of knowledge, may

treasure up during his leisure hours abundant facili-
ties of usefulness and pleasure.

It is impossible for the Christian Church to be

faithful to its duties, and yet leave this powerful

agency unemployed. The various sections of the reli-
gious world have been actively engaged in the cultiva-
tion of a periodical literature suited to their own

wants, and efforts have from time to time been made,

not unsuccessfully, to gain the eye of the masses.

Yet still, in surveying the prodigious volume of

thought which hastes weekly to meet the intellectual

wants of the people, it is startling to observe how

Every Person Should

To assist in garnering this fragment of precious time,

and to supply the fireside circle with a copious fund

of entertaining information, will be the design of the

proposed journal. Avoiding the pernicious principle

of creating a distinct feature for each of the different

sections of society, there will be no ostentatious

parade of condescension in the choice of topics or

the mode of treating them; but animated by feelings

of pure catholicity, "The Leisure Hour" will

seek to utter sentiments which shall meet an equally

quick response in the parlour and the workshop, the

hall and the cottage. While the work will be im-

bued with a religious spirit, it will comprise papers

on every subject which can elevate, gratify, or instruct.

Articles on the more prominent topics of the day

will be mingled with interesting narratives, instruc-
tive sketches from history, visits to places of celebrity

in distant parts of the world, popular dissertations on

small a portion of it has been consecrated by religion
to her own uses. It would not be easy to analyze
the enormous mass. Of much the larger part we
need not speak. Silence is fitted for it.

The Religious Tract Society having had its atten-
tion called to this by many of its supporters,
has determined, as far as practicable, to supply this
deficiency. The projected serial is intended to meet
the requirements of all classes. Its aim will be to
make every vacant moment the means of enriching
the memory with instructive and pleasant thoughts.
In this respect, it will be adapted to meet a common
and growing want. The recent efforts in our cities
and large towns to abridge the hours of business by
means of the Early Closing movement—the tendency
of the Legislature to the same direction, as evinced
by its Act for shortening the period of factory labour—
these, and many other equally significant social
phenomena, seem to indicate, as one of the recognised
principles of the day, that

Have a Leisure Hour.

scientific questions, and the choicest effusions of

poetry; the whole forming a miscellany aiming to

be highly attractive in itself, and one which the
Christian parent and employer may safely place in
the hands of those who are under his influence.

In carrying out this object, no expense will be

spared. The services of able contributors have been
secured, and every thing "will be done to render
"The Leisure Hour" fully commensurate with the
wants of the Legislature. The Committee are aware
that in fixing so low a price, nothing short of a very
extensive sale will avert pecuniary loss. For this
they trust to the intrinsic merit of the publication,
and to the warm cooperation of their friends and
supporters; while they would earnestly supplicate
upon the whole undertaking the effectual blessing of
Almighty God.

The publication will consist of Sixteen large Pages, printed with new and clear type,
on good paper, and illustrated with Engravings.

Weekly Numbers, price One Penny; or, Monthly Parts, in a neat wrapper, Five-pence.

May be had at Booksellers, Stationers, and other Vendors in Town and Country.

Religious Tract Society:—35, Paternoster Row; 65, St. Paul's Churchyard; and 164, Piccadilly. (989)

Figure 2.25 Advertisement for Leisure Hour, Publishers' Circular, December 1851. A rare example of a large, showy RTS advertisement, complete with display fonts and sales pitch.
RELIGIOUS TRACT SOCIETY,
No. 56, PATERNOSTER ROW, AND 65, ST. PAUL'S CHURCHYARD.

MONTHLY VOLUME.

The Committee of the Religious Tract Society have resolved to publish a volume every month, adapted to the new development and growing intelligence of the times. This series, with the exception of a few reprints, will be Original; from the pens of authors of ability in their respective departments in literature and science — Scriptural; in the principles in which they are written — Popular; in their style; so that, instead of being limited to one class of the community, they may be generally acceptable — Portable; in a time-series, with the exception reprint; — useful in the libraries of mechanics and others, they will supply interesting and valuable reading to a large number of the people, who can only spare time enough for the perusal of a small volume, and whose means will not allow of a more costly purchase. — The first Volume of the Series is announced below.

NEW PUBLICATIONS, DECEMBER 1, 1845.

THE MONTHLY VOLUME. The Life of JULIUS CAESAR. Containing one hundred and ninety-two pages, in a good, bold type. 6d. fancy paper cover; 10d. cloth boards, gilt edges.

NOMINAL AND REAL CHRISTIANITY CONTRASTED. By the late William Wilberforce, Esq., M.P. Abridged. First Series. No. 567. 6s. per 100.

ON THE LOVE OF DRESS. Unnumbered Series. 2s. per 100.

THE SABBATH-DAY BOOK: or, Scriptural Meditations for every Lord's Day in the Year. By J. Leechdale, B.D. 15mo. 4s. boards; 6s. half-bound.

THE HISTORY OF FRANCE. 18mo. In two volumes. Illustrated with Maps. 3s. 6d. boards; 7s. 6d. half-bound.

LEARNING TO ACT. 18mo. With Engravings. 1s. 6d. boards; 2s. half-bound.

CALLS OF USEFULNESS. 18mo. 1s. 6d. boards; 2s. half-bound.

THE SEA. 16mo square. With Engravings.

THE WATERS OF THE EARTH. With engraved Frontispiece. 16mo square. 2s. cloth boards, gilt edges. Containing, The Downfall, The Spring, The Lake, The River, and The Sea, which are also published separately.

THE GIFT BOOK FOR THE YOUNG. Royal 32mo. Steel-plate Frontispiece and Title. 2s. cloth boards, gilt edges.

THE INFANTS ILLUMINATED PRIMER. Printed in two colours. 6d. fancy cover.

BEULAH; or, The Rest of Man in the Rest of God. By the Rev. E. I. Yorke, M.A., Rector of Shenfield. 32mo, fine paper and print, gilt edges. 4d.

THE PATH TO THE BUSH. By J. A. James. 32mo, fine paper and print, gilt edges. 3d.

MONTHLY PUBLICATIONS.

THE MONTHLY MESSENGER. No. 18. 1s. 4d. per 100; or 2s. per dozen.

THE TRACT MAGAZINE, and Christian Miscellany. No. 144. 1s.

The Volume for 1845. 1s. 6d. half-bound.


The Volume for 1845. 3s. 6d. boards; 5s. half-bound.

THE CHRISTIAN SPECTATOR, and Record of the Religious Tract Society. No. 78. Price, stamped, to send by post, 3d.; unstamped, 2d.

The Volume for 1845. 3s. 6d. boards; 5s. half-bound.

The Volume for 1845. 1s. 6d. extra boards, gilt.

THE VISITOR, or Monthly Instructor, for December, 1845. 3d.

The Volume for 1845. 3s. 6d. boards; 5s. half-bound.

The Volume for 1845. 3s. 6d. boards; 5s. half-bound.

Figure 2.26 Advertisement for the launch of the Monthly Series, List of New Publications, December 1845. This was the announcement that was sent to booksellers.
THE CHRISTIAN SPECTATOR
AND RECORD
OF THE
RELIGIOUS TRACT SOCIETY.

All the Subscriptions, Donations, and Contributions, WITHOUT ANY DEDUCTION OR CHARGE WHATSOEVER, are applied to the gratuitous circulation of the Society's Publications at home and abroad.

No. 77.] LONDON, WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 17, 1845. [Price 3d.

THE CHRISTIAN SPECTATOR is published on the Third Wednesday of every other month. When it is forwarded without being ordered, the payment is optional. It may be supplied by any Bookseller or Newwoman. Price Threepence stamped, or Two-pence unstamped. Orders received at the Depository.

THE MONTHLY VOLUME.
To commence on the First of December, 1845, each volume complete, in itself, occasionally illustrated with engravings, and containing one hundred and ninety-two pages, in a good bold type.

Price to subscribers, Fourpence-halfpenny; to non-subscribers, Sixpence.

"I never wanted articles on religious subjects half so much as articles on common subjects written with a decidedly Christian tone."—Dr. Arnold. We live, it has frequently been remarked, in "stirring times." Activity, both of body and mind, seems daily more evident, while the sense of new wants, and the necessity for new supplies, are constantly increasing. The call is therefore urgent for every method which can be devised for the public welfare; and never was it so clear that "for the soul to be without knowledge is not good."

The encouragement which the enlarged efforts of the Religious Tract Society has received, requires its conductors to be constantly alive to the changing course of events, especially to those connected with the progress of mind. Called first into action by the augmented number of readers consequent on the increase of knowledge, it becomes an imperative duty to make new and enlarged excursions, as the great mass of the community is more capable of profiting from instruction.

Few, if any, will hesitate to admit, that education, though far too limited, is now not only more widely extended, but of a higher character than at any former period. As the mental appetite is thus stimulated, a proportionate supply of the best nutriment is of the greatest importance. That knowledge may promote the real happiness and usefulness of its possessor, it must have for its basis the inspired word of God. Truth, in the highest sense of the term, is the only means for countering human depravity, and producing what is morally excellent. Most desirable is it, therefore, that it should pervade all our literature; not appearing, indeed, abruptly and offensively, but in accordance with sound judgment and good taste, as well as with the principles of vital godliness. A view of natural objects should be accompanied by a distinct and impressive reference to the perfections of the Almighty, not only as the Creator, but Redeemer; in the details of history there should be a clear recognition of God's moral administration; and in descriptions of character, the true test of commendation and censure should be applied—the test by which the decisions of God are pronounced now, as they will be hereafter.

The Committee of the Religious Tract Society, in furtherance of these views, have resolved to publish a volume every month, adapted to the new developments and growing intelligence of the times. This series, with the exception of a few reprints, will be Original, from the pens of authors of ability in their respective departments in literature and science:—Scriptural, in the principles in which they are written:—Popular, in their style; so that, instead of being limited to one class of the community, they may be generally acceptable:—Portable, that they may serve as "hand-books" abroad and at home:—and Economical; the twelve volumes of a year costing less than three half-pence per week. Thus, while the Monthly Series will be fully adapted to the educated families of our land, they will supply to day and Sunday-schools, and to the libraries of mechanics and others, interesting and valuable reading, thus supplying a large number of the people who can only spare time enough for the perusal of a small volume, and whose means will not allow of a more costly purchase.

Figure 2.27 Announcement of the launch of the Monthly Series to RTS subscribers, Christian Spectator, September 1845.
quite different from anything else it had previously published. The committee emphasised the ‘progress of mind’, that education had become much more ‘widely extended... [and] of a higher character’ than when the Society began, and that knowledge and instruction ‘must have for its basis the inspired word of God’. While the committee was laying plans for the Monthly Series, an article had appeared in the *Christian Spectator* which may have been intended to pave the way for its subsequent launch. The article reminisced about the launch of the periodicals in the 1820s, and noted:

It is, however, rather painful to have to reflect that for many a long month, even for years, the Committee were assailed by statements that they were injuring the cause, which they knew they were benefiting by these efforts. Surely at least these results may now be referred to as presenting strong reasons for confidence in other measures which the conductors may think it their duty to adopt.166

Despite this, the committee received at least one letter from a well-known evangelical, the Rev. William Carus Wilson, which berated it for losing sight of its primary mission of tract circulation – and there were probably more which were not minuted.167

After the launch of the Series, each subsequent volume was announced in the List of New Publications, and given a brief review in the *Christian Spectator*. These entries were usually solely descriptive, as this example (for *Blights of the Wheat*) shows:

This work treats of the different fungi which attack the straw, leaves, chaff-scales, flower and grain of the wheat; also, of the ergot, wheat-midge, fly, and infusorial insects – gives the results of various experiments and suggests antidotes. Its contents are not only of great importance to the agriculturalist, but to the public at large; the author connects the advancement of popular science with its highest and best end

166 [Stokes, G.], ‘On the union of general and Scriptural knowledge’ *Christian Spectator* (1844): 89-90, at 90.
167 RTS FCM, 20/01/1847.
— the manifestation of the Divine glory. The author is the Rev E. Sidney, of Acle.¹⁶⁸

Although most of the Monthly Volumes were initially anonymous, the preface of Blights of the Wheat was signed, so the attribution in the Christian Spectator is unsurprising. Early impressions of Ancient Jerusalem, however, did not bear any name, but the Christian Spectator nevertheless referred to ‘this work, written by Dr Kitto…’¹⁶⁹ Both Sidney’s and Kitto’s works later appeared with their writers acknowledged, as did the works of the few other well-known writers in the Series, suggesting that the committee changed its mind about the relative importance of the Society’s tradition of anonymity, versus the advertising advantage to be gained from named writers.

The Monthly Series was also advertised in the biweekly evangelical newspaper, the Patriot (Figure 2.28), and probably in some of the religious monthlies, but, unlike competitors such as Bogue’s European Library, it was not announced in The Times.¹⁷⁰ The RTS did relatively little advertising in the 1840s, and mostly to the limited audience which comprised the readers of religious periodicals.¹⁷¹ By the early 1850s, payments for advertisements were more frequently listed in the minutes, and included a much wider range of publications, from weekly newspapers, such as the British Banner, Patriot, Record and Nonconformist, to monthly reviews, such as the Evangelical Magazine and the Eclectic Review, as well as the Manchester Examiner, Wesley Banner and Local Preacher Magazine.¹⁷² Most of these periodicals probably carried advertisements for the Leisure Hour, judging by the dates of the payments, which was thus far more heavily advertised than the Monthly Series had been. The Christian Guardian certainly had a Leisure Hour advertisement (Figure 2.29), and it

¹⁷⁰ Patriot (04/12/1845): 809, col. d. The Monthly Series was not announced in The Times during the month around its launch date. Advertisements for Bogue’s library appear at (27/11/1845): 11, col. f and (05/12/1845): 12, col. b.
¹⁷¹ In 1844-45, the RTS spent £100 on newspaper advertisements, £118 on magazine advertisements, and £72 on those in the Patriot and Record, see RTS FCM, 09/07/1845. By the late 1840s, it spent around £350 a year on advertisements, see RTS FCM, 16/06/1847 and 21/08/1850.
¹⁷² RTS ECM, for example, 20/01/1852 and 27/01/1852.
**The Patriot.**

**No. 1253. Vol. XIV. Price 5d.**

- **COMMERCIAL and PRIVATE ADVERTISEMENTS:**
  - **ADDRESSES:**
    - **C. R. & Co., Cornhill, City.**
    - **H. C. & Co., Mansion House.**
    - **J. H. & Co., 10, St. James's Street, London.**

- **BOOTS AND SHOES:**
  - **J. E. H. R., 10, St. James's Street, London.**

- **METCALF'S NEW PATTERN TOOTH BRUSH:**
  - **Description:**
    - **Purpose:** Suitable for all ages, especially for children.
    - **Material:** Metal with a soft bristle.

- **PUBLIC MEETING:**
  - **Location:** DORCHESTER-HALL, DORCHESTER-PLACE, NEWPORT, HORTON. **TUESDAY EVENING, NEXT DEC. 3rd, 1845.**
  - **Purpose:** Special meeting for members and friends.

- **PUBLICATIONS OF THE RELIGIOUS TRACT SOCIETY:**
  - **Newspaper:** THE MONTHLY VOLUME. **THE LIFE OF JULIUS CAESAR.**
  - **Publication Date:** 1845.

- **ADVERTISEMENTS:**
  - **Dr. PRATT'S CHRONIC DISEASES OF THE SKIN.**
  - **Pocket Book.**

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**Figure 2.28** One of the few advertisements in the press for the new Monthly Series. This appeared on the front page of the evangelical biweekly newspaper, the Patriot, December 1845.
Advertisements are received on the following scale of charges:—

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Charge</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Five lines, and under</td>
<td>£0 5 0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Above five lines, per line</td>
<td>0 1 0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The whole page</td>
<td>2 2 0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Bill stitched in.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Charge</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>One or two leaves</td>
<td>0 15 0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Four leaves, or half sheet</td>
<td>1 0 0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Whole sheet</td>
<td>1 10 0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Advertisements, communications, and contributions, are received by J. H. Jackson, Islington Green, and Queen's Head Passage, Paternoster Row; also, by Messrs. Seeley's, Fleet Street.**

**NEW PERIODICAL.**

*Now ready, Part I., Price Fivepence, of*

**THE LEISURE HOUR:**

A FAMILY JOURNAL OF INSTRUCTION AND RECREATION.

**Illustrated with Engravings by Eminent Artists.**

**CONTENTS:**

<table>
<thead>
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<th>No.</th>
<th>Contents</th>
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**Weekly Numbers,** price ONE PENNY, or Monthly Parts, in a neat Wrapper, price FIVEPENCE. May be had of Booksellers, Stationers, and other vendors in town and country.

Religious Tract Society: 56, Paternoster Row; and 166, Piccadilly.

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**Figure 2.29** An advertisement in the press for the Leisure Hour. This appeared in the inside front cover of the Christian Guardian, January 1852.
is noticeably less striking than the one from the Publishers’ Circular.\textsuperscript{173} The evangelical Anglican readers of the Christian Guardian were likely to be already sympathetic to the concept of the Leisure Hour, whereas the trade would need more convincing.

The wider range of publications in which the Leisure Hour was advertised, compared to the Monthly Series, is one way in which the periodical was more heavily promoted than the book series. But although some of the weeklies were undoubtedly more widely read than the monthlies, they were still restricted to the religious part of the population, and both the Monthly Series and the Leisure Hour were aimed more widely than that. The marketing methods considered thus far, therefore, concentrated most on the religious middle-classes, with some attention to the book-buying middle classes more widely, and did very little to promote the RTS works among their intended working-class readers. This was why the RTS and Chambers had begun to experiment with itinerant vendors, who would ‘act aggressively [and] take the booksellers’ shop to their doors and firesides.’\textsuperscript{174} However, such activities were time-consuming and difficult to organise on anything other than a small and local scale. Here, the RTS had an advantage over Chambers, through its network of subscribers and auxiliary societies.

Although the auxiliaries were not organised for selling of books or periodicals, they (and individual subscribers) could be mobilised to promote works on a local level, and to organise book-stalls or hawkers much more effectively than the London committee could hope to do. The committee used the pages of the Christian Spectator to encourage such work, although, again, this is something that they did much more extensively during the Leisure Hour launch than for the Monthly Series. At the beginning of the Series, the Christian Spectator announced and justified the new project, reported on the success of the first volume in selling out 10,000 copies immediately, and reprinted laudatory reviews from the press. The coverage was intended to keep subscribers informed of the progress of the new venture, and to persuade them to recommend it to their servants and local schools.

\textsuperscript{173} Christian Guardian 44 (January 1852), inside front cover. The Cambridge University Library copy retains the covers for this issue.

\textsuperscript{174} Chambers’s Journal ns 7 (06/02/1847): 88.
Two years later, the *Christian Spectator* asked, ‘Do you know the Monthly Volume?’, and commented pessimistically, ‘Were this question proposed to individuals in families and social circles, we are persuaded the answer would most commonly be in the negative.’ It then printed a letter from a subscriber, who wrote, ‘I never travel without a number in my pocket; and many have thanked me for bringing it to their knowledge, and have at once ordered the whole series.’ His example was presented to other subscribers for emulation. The Society used similar methods to promote the *Leisure Hour* from the start. The pages of the *Christian Spectator* did not just advertise and justify the project, but urged subscribers to actively promote it in their neighbourhood. Successful examples were printed for imitation and inspiration.

Both the Edinburgh auxiliary society and a bookseller in Manchester printed their own circular letters promoting the *Leisure Hour*, which they sent to local booksellers, ministers and school teachers. The Edinburgh society enclosed specimen copies of the first number with their letter. Meanwhile, in Birmingham and Liverpool, the auxiliary societies employed agents to make ‘a thorough canvass of the small shops, dining-rooms, coffee-houses, factories etc’, distributing advertisements for the periodical among the customers and employees. In a similar effort, a Derbyshire clergyman requested specimen copies of the first numbers, which he could take round to the ‘three public-houses in this district, which I am informed take in newspapers... and endeavour to persuade them to take in the work for the entertainment of their customers’. Itinerant hawkers and colporteurs sold periodicals as well as books, and one employed by the Liverpool Tract Society in the second half of 1852 managed to sell each month around 2,000 weekly numbers and 270 monthly parts. The contrast between the sales of numbers and parts confirms that hawkers were much better at getting publications to working-class readers than were booksellers.

As well as trying to reach readers in their place of leisure, their employers’ help could be sought, although this had to be carefully managed since the Society did not wish to encourage working men to read when they should be working. The Glasgow society’s secretary made ‘very great and generous efforts’ to encourage the city’s

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175 ‘Do you know the Monthly Volume?’ *Christian Spectator* (1847): 280.
manufacturers to promote the Leisure Hour among their employees. Robert Johnston, the owner of the Oakbank Cotton Spinning and Power Loom Weaving Works, of Garscube Road, gave free copies of the first number to all his workpeople. He, or another manufacturer, purchased 400 copies for this purpose. Johnston also offered to subsidise subsequent issues by half for those of his workforce who wished to receive it. Those who signed up would have it ‘delivered to [them]... every Saturday afternoon, when the engine stops’. Here, Johnston’s concerns ran somewhat counter to those of the Society, as it published the Leisure Hour on a Thursday, rather than the more usual Saturday, in an attempt to prevent the Sabbath being occupied by non-sacred reading material. For Johnston, however, delivering the periodical to his workers on Saturday was intended to reduce the chances of them reading it during working hours. He ended his announcement by saying: ‘Mr Johnston trusts that no one will abuse this privilege, and defraud him, by bringing these or any other books into the mill to read during working hours.’

Apart from the 1847 ‘Do you know the Monthly Volume?’, the RTS made relatively little effort to promote the Monthly Series once it was underway. Announcements continued to appear in the Publishers’ Circular every month, and in the Christian Spectator. Once the Series came to an end, it remained on the Society’s catalogue, advertised as a completed library. The Series was thus still available, but it was not being actively promoted. In contrast, as an on-going periodical, the Leisure Hour benefited from more continuous marketing. There were several renewed attempts to promote the Leisure Hour in its early years, in addition to the regular announcements that continued till its closure in 1906. Actually reaching the working classes continued to be the main concern, and although the initial publicity had produced circulation figures of around 60,000 a week, as with Chambers’s Journal, too many of the sales were in monthly parts to more affluent readers. Within six months of launch, the committee began to advertise more widely, not just in the usual religious periodicals but in ‘the periodicals most read by that [working] class’.

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178 My thanks to Morag and Alastair Fyfe for identifying ‘Mr Johnston, of Oakbank’.
180 The complete series remained available till 1876, and odd volumes were available till 1883, see RTS Reports (1877-1883).
181 RTS ECM, 01/06/1852.
committee also produced a new prospectus for the periodical, which included excerpts from reviews – and chose provincial newspapers, such as the Brechin Advertiser, the Leeds Intelligencer and the Nottingham Journal, rather than the relatively grand London-based reviews, presumably on the basis that their recommendation would be more meaningful to the target audience.  

Another way in which the Leisure Hour was made more attractive was by removing its affiliation to the RTS. The Society was aware that its imprint could impede the circulation of its works, and more than once discussed the possibility of removing it from the title-page of certain classes of works. In 1844, the finance sub-committee recommended removing the imprint from the title-page of some slow-selling natural history works, noting that this method had already been adopted with two other works on the catalogue. It is significant that the works in question were the ‘expensive and scientific’ natural history books ‘and others of the same class’. These were subjects for which, in the 1840s, the imprint of a religious body was no longer widely acknowledged as a stamp of authority. However, if there was to be no acknowledged author, as was the case with the majority of the Monthly Series works, the RTS imprint had to remain to provide what authority it could.

However, when launching the Leisure Hour, the Society kept its name in the background. The actual issues bear no mention of the RTS either in the banner (Figure 2.30), or as an imprint at the foot of the back page. The first advertisement in the Publishers’ Circular, and subsequent ones in the religious periodical press, announced the publisher as the RTS, but by the end of 1852, the Publishers’ Circular carried an advertisement for the Leisure Hour separately from the main RTS advertisement, and gave its publisher as ‘W. Jones, 56 Paternoster Row’ (Figure

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182 RTS ECM, 01/06/1852. Jones had suggested using these reviews on the covers of the monthly parts but the committee suggested putting them into the Christian Spectator, where they appeared in (1852): 698. See RTS ECM, 02/03/1852. A similar tactic was used in the Christian Spectator (1854): 15, where reviews from the Eclectic Review, Baptist Magazine and Evangelical Magazine appeared after those from provincial papers.

183 RTS FCM, 26/06/1844. The executive committee did not approve the measure, ECM, 09/07/1844.

184 The hiding of the link between the Leisure Hour and the RTS was so successful that a twentieth-century historian refused to accept the attribution, on the grounds that there was no evidence in the journal itself, Hinton, D.A., ‘Popular Science in England, 1830-1870’ (Ph.D., Bath University, 1979), 330.
THE FIRST BRITISH STEAM-BOAT.

Many of the younger members of the present generation, accustomed as they are to the daily conveniences attending locomotion by steam-power on sea, river, and rail, must find it difficult to understand how their forefathers, near and remote, managed "to get on" at all, for want of those ready means of transit. The proverb, that "time and tide wait for no man," has certainly grown so "rusty," that few travellers hold either of much account now. At present, the observation is still more true than when it was written, that "all nations seem in a fair way of becoming one nation, separated only by local administrations and provincial dialects."

The earliest imaginings of navigation by steam arose towards the close of the seventeenth century. There was, indeed, a figment published in the year 1825, concerning one Don Blasco de Garay, a Spanish sea captain, having on June 17th, 1534, propelled and manoeuvred a large ship by steam-power, in the harbour of Barcelona; a feat performed, too, in presence of the emperor Charles V and all his court! This incredible story was related, with many accompanying circumstances, in

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Figure 2.30 Front page of an issue of Leisure Hour, April 1852. Notice the absence of RTS imprint either on the banner, or at the foot of the page. Nor is there an RTS imprint at the foot of the final page.
FUNNY LEAVES for the YOUNGER BRANCHES. By the BARON KRAKEMSIDES. Illustrated by Alfred Crowquill. Coloured Plates. 2s. 6d.

FAMILIAR NATURAL HISTORY. With Forty-two Engravings from Original Drawings by Harrison Weir, and Descriptions by Mrs. R. Lee. Super royal 16mo. 3s. 6d. cloth; 6s. coloured, gilt edges.

A Catalogue of Grant and Griffith's Publications may be had on application.

Ready this day, and suitable as a handsome
CHRISTMAS OR NEW YEAR'S PRESENT,
THE FIRST VOLUME OF
"THE LEISURE HOUR,"
Consisting of 832 pp. of Letterpress, and 103 superior Engravings,
Handsomely bound in extra cloth, price 6s.


London: W. Jones, 56, Paternoster Row; and 164, Piccadilly.
And sold by all Booksellers and Periodical Vendors in Town and Country.

Figure 2.31 Advertisement (200%) for the Leisure Hour, from the Publishers' Circular, December 1852. Notice the absence of the RTS imprint, which has been replaced with the name of the Superintendent, and the address of the Depository.
Middle-class evangelicals might recognise the address, or have seen reviews or advertisements in the religious press linking the RTS with the *Leisure Hour*, so the secret was a very ‘open’ one – but the efforts were intended to hide the link from working-class readers, who were thought to be most in need of sound reading material, but also most likely to be repulsed by the appearance of religion.

The committee was happy enough with the *Leisure Hour* to launch a sister-periodical, the *Sunday at Home*, in May 1854, which competed directly with the Sabbath-breaking Sunday papers. But by 1855, it was again concerned about the sale in weekly numbers of both periodicals. It printed a new handbill advertising both periodicals, and distributed almost 300,000. It also employed a travelling agent for a year specifically to promote the periodicals in the north of England, Scotland and Ireland. Another appeal went out in November of 1855, to 5,000 clergy and ministers, 4,000 boarding schools and 1,000 Sunday schools. After this year of determined promotion, the annual report announced that there had been an increase of 10,000 in the circulation of the *Leisure Hour*, and that 100,000 was still seen as being attainable. This aggressive publicity campaign over the first three years of the *Leisure Hour* contrasts strongly with the efforts made to market the *Monthly Series*. The Society seems to have been happy with the newly-discovered lower-middle class audience for cheap non-fiction which was revealed by the *Monthly Series*, and decided not to make more efforts to promote it among the lower ranks of readers as initially intended. The periodical, on the other hand, clearly could get to the working classes, so the mission was to make sure it reached more and more of them.

**With what success?**

The *Monthly Series* had been a new enterprise for the RTS, and it had to learn as it went along. The committee was unused to commissioning new books and dealing with unknown authors. The editorial department was unused to the demands placed on it by having to have a complete book ready each and every month. Both were inexperienced at using publicity to promote their new venture. The attempt to reach

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186 RTS FCM, 18/04/1855.  
187 RTS FCM, 21/11/1855.  
multiple audiences was almost certainly too ambitious to succeed completely. However, despite all these potential problems, the Series was maintained to one hundred volumes, and did sell in large numbers. It was widely welcomed among reviewers as being bringing a much-needed religious tone to secular information, and its launch was followed by informative Christian series from several other publishers, which is, perhaps, the sincerest form of flattery. With the experience gained from the Monthly Series, the RTS was able to apply the new combination of secular information and evangelical religion to the even more successful Leisure Hour.

However, were these the sorts of works that could fulfil the Society’s aim of competing with, and replacing, the secular and infidel publications? Thomas Pearson believed that the Monthly Series was ‘a step in the right direction’, and suggested that it would succeed because, ‘It has too much been forgotten that the people will have entertaining literature. It is by entertaining literature of a depraved kind that the evil is wrought, and it must be by entertaining literature of a healthy Christian tone that the evil must be counteracted.’189 Yet the solidly respectable but unexciting adjectives used by reviewers to describe the Monthly Series question Pearson’s assessment of its entertainment value. The works were variously described as ‘a good sixpenny worth of solid information’, as ‘like most of the books in this series – a far better book than it seems’, and as ‘very interesting and truly instructive’.190 The Leisure Hour, too, received critical praise, being described as ‘cheap and interesting’, a ‘marvel of cheapness’, ‘attractive and... improving’ and ‘more solid, more in earnest in its work, and more trustworthy’.191 The RTS works were classified as valuable contributions to cheap, wholesome literature, which is far from the same thing as ‘entertaining’.

As the British Quarterly Review noted, the Leisure Hour ‘eschews the objectionable or doubtful features that are cultivated by its contemporaries. There are no answers to correspondents, real or fictitious; no contributions to gaping credulity, no bad jokes, no stale anecdotes, no axiomatic philosophy...’192 Yet the jokes, anecdotes and letters

189 Pearson, Infidelity, 509.
192 ‘Cheap literature’, 344.
pages were part of the reason for the success of the second-generation penny periodicals.\textsuperscript{193} The reviewer recommended that:

To attain the influence enjoyed by some of its inferior contemporaries, it must take up part of the ground occupied by them, which may be done without the slightest compromise of its higher aims. By an occasional sprinkling of lighter matter, an excursion now and then into the more ‘primrose paths’ of literature, poetry, criticism, and miscellaneous pictures of society, there is no doubt that the \textit{Leisure Hour} might extend the circle of its readers, and thus materially improve its means of usefulness.\textsuperscript{194}

While Chambers had ventured down those ‘primrose paths’, the RTS was not keen to follow. Its publications had to remain purveyors of knowledge, not of fancy.

The \textit{Leisure Hour} gained praise for the quality of its editing, which formed an exception to the general rule among the cheap periodicals, where editorial work was generally ‘discharged with culpable slovenliness’.\textsuperscript{195} Yet details like this, as well as the determination in the Monthly Series and the \textit{Leisure Hour} to avoid all the defining characteristics of ‘trash’, meant that the RTS publications stood out, and appeared different from those they had to compete with.\textsuperscript{196} The RTS’s principles prevented it from producing a work which really looked like the cheap, corrupting and immoral publications that were part of its target. Its publications were much more effective against those so-called neutral publications, the products of the secular information publishers, which, ‘in all that relates to mechanical or commercial production, whether as to price or style, ... take the acknowledged lead in our periodical literature’.\textsuperscript{197}

In comparison with the secular competitors, the Monthly Series and the \textit{Leisure Hour} were very successful. The available sales figures are given in Figures 2.32, 2.33, and 2.34. Where Knight was fortunate to sell 5,000 copies, the RTS was printing 15,000 copies of their Monthly Volumes in the first instance, and Figures 2.32 and 2.33 show

\textsuperscript{193} Anderson, \textit{Printed image}, Ch.3.
\textsuperscript{194} ‘Cheap literature’, 344.
\textsuperscript{195} ‘Cheap literature’, 330-1, 339.
\textsuperscript{196} ‘Cheap literature’, 344.
\textsuperscript{197} Power of the press, 20.
Figure 2.32 Sales figures for the Monthly Series.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Sales</th>
<th>Volumes</th>
<th>Average sales per volume</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>31/03/1847*</td>
<td>153,469 in last 12 months</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>9,592 in last 12 months</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31/03/1850†</td>
<td>645,622</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>12,416 to date</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31/03/1854‡</td>
<td>148,320 [x 10]</td>
<td>99</td>
<td>14,982 to date</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 2.33 Sales figures for individual Monthly Volumes, to March 1849.

White bars represent sales below 10,000. Based on Jones, *Jubilee memorial*. The best-selling volumes were 13: *Philosophy of the Plan of Salvation*, 6: *Solar System I*, and 3: *Wild Flowers of the Year*.

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† RTS CCM, 18/09/1850. The minutes actually reported the average as 12,106.
‡ RTS CCM, 21/06/1854. This figure is out by a factor of ten, so the average is calculated on an assumed total sales of 1,483,200.
Figure 2.34 Sales figures for the Leisure Hour.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Sales</th>
<th>Source</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>January 1852</td>
<td>At least 50,000</td>
<td><em>Christian Spectator</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>January to February 1852</td>
<td>83,000 for No. 1</td>
<td>ECM†</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>64,500 for No. 4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>54,000 for No. 9</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March 1852</td>
<td>70,000</td>
<td><em>Christian Spectator</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1852</td>
<td>60,000</td>
<td>FCM§</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May 1855</td>
<td>80,000</td>
<td>Annual Report**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>September 1855</td>
<td>67,500</td>
<td>FCM††</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May 1856</td>
<td>77,500</td>
<td>Annual Report‡‡</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* *Christian Spectator*, (January 1852): 682.
† RTS ECM, 02/03/1852.
‡ *Christian Spectator*, (March 1852): 697.
§ RTS FCM, 26/09/1855.
** RTS Report (1855), appendix, xix.
†† RTS FCM, 26/09/1855.
that the print run was being sold, and not just gathering dust in the warehouse. Virtually all the volumes which had been published for twelve months or more had already passed 10,000, although, as Figure 2.33 shows, there was a large amount of variation. Figure 2.32 gives a figure for an ‘average sales per volume’, based on the total number of volumes issued at that date. Clearly, the most recent volumes would not have sold anything approaching that number, while the oldest volumes might be far beyond it. The increase in average sales over the period indicates that sales of the newer volumes were holding up well, while the older volumes were still selling.

Meanwhile, the Leisure Hour sales figures (Figure 2.34) rose from around 60,000 a week in 1852 to almost 80,000 by 1856. As Chambers’s Journal was selling around 64,000 copies in the late 1840s, the Leisure Hour was competing very well. However, neither Chambers nor the RTS could match the 125,000 copies a week sold by the Family Herald, let alone the 450,000 of the London Journal (1855). The RTS was glad to receive news from Southampton that the Leisure Hour was on sale in an infidel bookshop there, and that its pile of copies ordered was three times as thick as the pile of atheistic Reasoners – but one shop in Southampton was not enough to increase circulation to the extent the Society really wanted.

Despite the claim to be combating the secular and infidel presses, particularly for readers from the working classes, the Society discovered that, like so many other attempts, its publications rarely reached more than the few particularly skilled and solvent members of those classes. Instead, it discovered a large and hitherto unprovided for audience – people outside the restricted circle of RTS subscribers for whom the Society had previously provided books, but people who would still be counted among the middle and lower-middle classes. These were the same people that publishers like Chambers and Knight were reaching, as they too mostly failed part to reach the working classes. The publications that had been started primarily to fight the infidel press among the working classes, ended up proving their worth

198 Jones, Jubilee memorial, appendix V.
199 Cooney, Publishers for the people, 98.
200 Cooney, Publishers for the people, 103; Anderson, Printed image, 14.
201 RTS ECM, 13/07/1852 and ‘The Leisure Hour’ Christian Spectator (1852): 733. The correspondent was Rev. Wigram, Archdeacon of Winchester.
against the secular press among the lower-middle classes. That this was so indicates that the RTS began to better understand the multifarious reading audiences of Britain, which it had previously conceived in terms of 'people like us' and 'the working classes'. But it also indicates how difficult it was at mid-century to sell cheap improving non-fiction, such as popular science, to the recently literate working classes who were happily reading fiction and so-called 'trash'.
Chapter Three

Managing Truth

That knowledge may promote the real happiness and usefulness of its possessor, it must have for its basis the inspired word of God. Truth, in the highest sense of the term, is the only means for counteracting human depravity, and producing what is morally excellent. Most desirable is it, therefore, that it should pervade all our literature; not appearing, indeed, abruptly and offensively, but in accordance with sound judgment and good taste, as well as with the principles of vital godliness.

Christian Spectator 1845

Christian works not only had to reach their readers, they had to be read, and read in the manner intended by their publisher. It was not merely books, but interpretations that competed for readers. The message of salvation, and the harmony of science and faith had to replace any alternative versions of the sciences to which readers had previously been exposed. Since readers could not be assumed to be under the supervision of a teacher or minister, the RTS had to use narrative style and rhetorical strategies to persuade readers to accept the Christian message. As we have already seen, the main competitors against which the Society positioned itself were the infidel publications and those which sin ‘in the way of defect rather than in positive statements’. Both sorts of publications were dangerous because they contained unsanctified knowledge, and, as Edward Bickersteth warned, ‘We may boast of the march of intellect... but the diffusion of unsanctified knowledge will prove a great evil to the community.’

Chambers’s Journal, for instance, could be highly praised for its moral tone and instructive material, but it was to be condemned because, ‘we miss the evangelical element – that decidedly Christian tone’. Evangelicals cited scripture to

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2 Pearson, T., Infidelity: its aspects, causes and agencies; being the prize essay of the British Organization of the Evangelical Alliance (London, 1853), 504.
3 Bickersteth, E., Domestic Portraiture: or, the successful application of religious principle in the education of a family, exemplified in the memoirs of three of the deceased children of the Rev Legh Richmond, with introductory remarks (6th ed. London, 1843), 12.
4 Pearson, Infidelity, 510.
the effect that, 'He that is not with me is against me' (Luke 11:23).\(^5\) RTS publications would demonstrate to their readers that all knowledge, including the sciences, was sanctified. The Society achieved this by having all its works written in a 'Christian tone'.

'Tone' refers to a literary style, which reveals the writer's sentiments, and to the mood created by this style. It is particularly linked to issues relating to morality and manners, wherein 'tone' is a measure of the health or fitness of a community (related to its usage in 'muscle tone').\(^6\) 'Christian tone' is therefore a literary style which is intended to create a mood of sound morality and Christian faith. The RTS attributed its use of the term to Dr. Thomas Arnold (1795-1842), who had put great efforts into trying to convince the committee of the SDUK that their publications ought to have not just a 'plain and sensible tone' but 'a decidedly Christian tone'.\(^7\) Arnold had once praised one article in the *Penny Magazine*, saying, 'That article is exactly a specimen of what I wished to see, but done far better than I could do it. I never wanted articles on religious subjects half so much as articles on common subjects written with a decidedly Christian tone.'\(^8\) For Arnold, a work which had Christian tone had 'something of the religious spirit'.\(^9\) Spirit was an important concept for him, as inspiration of the writers – although not dictation by the Holy Spirit of every word – was a way for liberal Anglicans, including Arnold, to preserve the unitary meaning of the Bible in the face of German historical criticism.\(^10\) Although Arnold did not expect the writers of the SDUK or RTS to be inspired in the same sense as the Biblical writers, their faith would prevent them from making errors, and was essential to ensuring that they presented their profane subjects in accordance with God's intentions.

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\(^6\) See 'tone' in the OED, meanings 5, 7 and 9.

\(^7\) Arnold to Tooke, 18/06/1831, quoted in Stanley, *Life of Arnold*, i, 271; Arnold to SDUK member, *ibid.*, i, 253.

\(^8\) Arnold to Tooke, c.1832, quoted in Stanley, *Life of Arnold*, i, 272 n.


The RTS agreed with Arnold about the SDUK, and adopted him as the figure-head of the Monthly Series, using his comment on ‘I never wanted articles on religious subjects…’ as the slogan on all the advertisements. Given that evangelicals were not admirers of German criticism, and that Arnold had referred to them (particularly the Anglicans who ran the Record in the 1830s) as having ‘infinitely little minds’ and no ‘Christian wisdom’, this choice might seem a little unusual. However, Arnold had been even less well-disposed to the Tractarians, writing of the Tracts that, ‘as to Christianity, there is more of it in any one of Mrs Sherwood’s or Mrs Cameron’s, or indeed of any of the Tract Society’s, than in all the two Oxford octavos’. As an evangelical writer put it in 1845, given the choice of whom to spend eternity with, Arnold was far preferable to John Henry Newman. Furthermore, the widespread popularity of Arthur Stanley’s *Life of Arnold* (1844), combined with Arnold’s status within the establishment (as an Anglican, the headmaster of Rugby and the Regius Professor of History at Oxford) meant that at the launch of the Monthly Series in 1845, the choice of Arnold as figurehead was a shrewd publicity move. The inclusiveness of his views could be presented as in tune with moves towards pan-evangelical unity in the 1840s, although Arnold’s inclusiveness extended much further than that of the evangelicals.

As Arnold’s comment on the SDUK article made clear, ‘Christian tone’ did not mean that only religious subjects should be addressed. Thomas Pearson noted that attempts to supply the masses with ‘acceptable and yet wholesome and elevating reading’ by providing ‘purely religious publications, in the form of tracts or biographies’ had largely failed. He recommended the same sort of style that Arnold had suggested, adding that, ‘We do not want the literature… sermonized, nor to be taken up with theological controversies; but we want in it a distinct recognition of the fact that distinctively Christian elements are alone efficacious in radically regenerating the

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11 For example, see ‘The Monthly Volume’ *Christian Spectator* (1846): 98.
13 Sherwood and Cameron were evangelical children’s writers. Arnold to Stanley, 24/05/1836, quoted in Stanley, *Life of Arnold*, ii, 43.
14 *Brief Observations on the Political and Religious Sentiments of the late Rev Dr Arnold, as Contained in his Life by the Rev Arthur Penrhyn Stanley, extracted from the Record newspaper* (London, 1845), 4-5.
world. In general, the Christian tone of the Monthly Volumes was applied subtly to avoid sermonizing. However, Thomas Dick’s volumes were packed full of religious references and reflections. Dick was a well-known and successful evangelical writer, so the fact that none of the other writers made any attempt, nor were encouraged, to imitate his style suggests that it was too devotional for the RTS, and it was his fame, rather than his style, which persuaded the Society to have his works in the Series.

Rather than ‘sermonize’, Arnold often used the term ‘Christianize’. Yet, given the differences between denominations, this was not a straightforward term. Arnold believed there was common ground between all the denominations, including Unitarians and Roman Catholics. The Record newspaper published a savage critique of his religious views, as expressed in the Life of Arnold, which demonstrated that such an inclusive definition of ‘Christian’ could not be shared by evangelicals. This was one of the issues which arose in one of the few extended contemporary analyses of the Monthly Series, which appeared in the Congregationalist Biblical Review in March 1848:

The Monthly Volume proceeds, on the whole, satisfactorily... While some of its volumes realize perfectly the idea of the series, there are others which show that the Society cannot guard too much against the dangers of inaccuracy in the use of authorities, the forcible introduction of religious reflections, instead of the natural and graceful religious spirit in which it is their intention that each subject should be treated, and, above all, the least approach to that species of religious fraud, by which the best ascertained results of human inquiry are treated lightly or unfairly in order to force them into harmony with the writer’s own views on the teaching of revelation on the same subject. As a whole, however, we give our warm and earnest commendation to the series.

17 Pearson, Infidelity, 505.
18 Dick was on the initial list of writers who were asked to contribute to the Series, RTS CCM 13/11/1844.
19 See Stanley, Life of Arnold, 252, 285.
20 Brief observations, especially 13-18.
The range of denominations represented in the RTS, both as members and writers, meant that all its publications were supposed to be non-denominational. As the Biblical reviewer pointed out, however, sometimes 'the writer's own views on the teaching of revelation' appeared too obviously in the works. Yet, there was a sense in which this had to be the case. The RTS did not want merely Christian tone, but evangelical tone. History should reveal the workings of providence, and show 'a clear recognition of God's moral administration', the subjects of biography should be assessed by 'the true test of commendation and censure' which will be applied at the Day of Judgement, and the sciences should demonstrate the 'perfections of the Almighty'. But all these subjects also had to present the Deity 'not only as the Creator, but Redeemer'.

The Word of God had to be at least as prominent as his works, and, as in all other RTS publications, there had to be explicit mention of the doctrine of salvation through faith in Christ crucified. However, since this was a doctrine shared by all evangelicals, it would not have been this particular appearance of a writer's personal views which upset the Biblical Review.

The Biblical reviewer also noted that the 'religious spirit' was not always introduced as naturally and gracefully as could be wished. The forcible introduction of religious reflections could become close to 'sermonizing', and the Society was aware that exhibiting religion 'in a repulsive or a puerile form' might 'occasion levity, or... deter from perusal'. Thomas Dick was also aware of this effect, and firmly believed

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22 'Announcement of the Monthly Volume' Christian Spectator (1845): 65. Arnold particularly recommended history and biography as subjects which would do more good than 'any direct comments on Scripture, or essays on Evidences', Arnold to Tooke, c.1832, quoted in Stanley, Life of Arnold, i, 272 n. He also thought that historical understanding was essential for the interpretation of the Scriptures, see Harding, Coleridge, 102-3. However, he did not regard the sciences very highly, writing, 'If one might wish for impossibilities, I might then wish that my children might be well versed in physical science, but in due subordination to the fullness and freshness of their knowledge on moral subjects. This, however, I believe cannot be, and physical science, if studied at all, seems too great to be studied εν παραστρυ: wherefore, rather than have it the principle thing in my son's mind, I would gladly have him think that the sun went round the earth, and that the stars were so many spangles set in the bright blue firmament.' Arnold to Greenhill, 09/05/1836, quoted in Stanley, Life of Arnold, ii, 37.

23 The works which had just appeared when this review was written were Eminent Medical Men, Life of Martin Boos (a translation from German) and Self-Improvement (an abridgement from an American work). I cannot say what particular aspects of these works may have occasioned the criticism, although the presence of the abridgement in an 'original' series was something which did not meet with RTS committee approval.

24 See also Stanley, Life of Arnold, i, 252.

25 'On the union of general and scientific instruction with Scriptural knowledge' Christian Spectator (1845), 70.
that his own religious reflections flowed naturally, and did not appear forced.26 A year after its initial criticism, the Biblical Review reported that the Series had now been ‘regularly sustained… with great general excellence’, and Pearson in 1853 was able to commend it as a ‘a step in the right direction’, away from sermonizing.27 This suggests that the RTS managed to sort out its early problems so that the Monthly Series acquired a relatively consistent Christian tone.28 Given the number of writers involved, the tone was unlikely to be uniform, but the committee took care in selecting writers, and had no qualms about rejecting manuscripts which failed to measure up. One such manuscript was described (although not to its writer) thus: ‘The style is much too feeble and quite unsuitable in other respects for this subject. It scarcely comes up to the Society’s standard for the most ordinary publications.’29

This chapter will engage closely with debates which are often referred to as ‘science and religion’, but I wish to avoid setting up the issues in those terms. It is not only that ‘science’ and ‘religion’ cannot be considered as two independent entities.30 For evangelicals, religious faith was so pervasive that it was impossible to pick out aspects of their lives which were not religious, let alone to separate ‘religion’ from anything else. Their faith affected every aspect of daily life, from professional duties to leisure activities. Bickersteth, for instance, quoted Moses to support this attitude: ‘These words which I command thee this day shall be in thine heart; and thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up’ (Deuteronomy 6:6-7).31 Given this all-pervading influence, I prefer to talk about a theological framework which included the sciences, as well as organised activities like church-going.32

28 The critical review of March 1848 coincided with the Society’s disciplining of editor Charles Williams.
29 RTS Corr, Jones to Copley, 12/12/1846, regarding G.E. Sargent’s rejected draft of ‘The Crusades’.
31 Bickersteth, Domestic Portraiture, xiv.
In the following analysis, I do not use the works of the Monthly Series to uncover individual writers’ beliefs or attitudes. The majority of the RTS books were anonymous, which means that for contemporary readers the books could not tell their readers anything about individual writers’ theological views because in a very immediate sense the books’ only ‘author’ was the Religious Tract Society. Furthermore, for very few of my writers do I have the volume of personal information that would reveal the extent of their evangelical commitment. It was, for instance, possible to write for the SDUK concurrently with the RTS, and writers were clearly quite capable of producing secular, technical works for one society, and more general works with a Christian tone for the other. Thus, even were the writers’ names known, we would still have to remain careful about what we deduced about their personal views from particular published works.

In contrast to the enormous amount of critical work on the fiction, poetry and drama which form the literary canon, there has been very little attention paid to non-fiction. What there has been, focuses on works which could still claim to belong to a canon, such as *Origin of Species* (1859) and the ‘classic’ works of history or philosophy.\(^{33}\) Such an emphasis means that even when these works have been analysed for the way in which their writers communicate their ideas effectively, it is the originality of those ideas which is paramount. The emphasis on communication in the making of scientific knowledge has led to some analyses of the working materials of science, such as journal papers and seminars, but the attention to rhetorical techniques has yet to be widely applied to popular science works.\(^{34}\) These are frequently considered for information about their writers, or in terms of their relation to expert science, and their

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adoption, or not, of the latest theories. My approach involves analysing how non-literary, non-canonical works tried to inform their readers, and convince them that the natural sciences should be considered in a particular philosophical, in this case Christian, framework. It was through textual strategies of persuasion that readers were encouraged to finish the work, and to accept its presentation of the sciences as the true one.

This chapter considers how Christian tone was made to work, firstly in general terms with regard to the science works in the Monthly Series, and then in more detail, through a close analysis of the work on British Fish. The detailed analysis is preceded by a discussion of the styles used in other works on fish available in the 1840s, so that it will be possible to see how the Series related to existing works on the market, and to compare the techniques used by their writers. The RTS writers had multiple aims, for they had to convince their readers that the sciences were interesting, that they were in harmony with Christian faith, and that evangelical conversion was essential for salvation. Simply getting the books into the hands of potential readers did not automatically achieve these goals. The style of the works had to be carefully constructed so that they fulfilled the end of all the typesetting, printing, distributing and advertising, and their writers had to create a narrative voice which could be authoritative on both science and salvation.


Dealing with God and Nature

Apart from insisting upon the inclusion of the atonement, the RTS offered no specific rules to its writers. The criticism from the *Biblical Review*, quoted above, expressed concern about the Society’s ability to produce a uniform series when working with so many writers, and even after the Series settled down, there continued to be variation among the works accepted, depending on the writer’s faith, style and subject matter. We need to think about Christian tone as a collection of suitable styles, and ways in which natural science and theology could be combined. This section considers how, in general terms, that harmony was to be conveyed to the readers of the Series, and how works of natural science were imbued with Christian tone.

It was only in a few cases that the narrators explicitly addressed the issue of the appropriate relationship between revelation and creation. The narrator of *Blights of the Wheat* admitted that in addition to being a writer, he had a ‘higher calling as a minister of the word of life’ (191), and he used his skills as a sermon writer to explain that:

The wisdom and goodness of God which shone in weaker rays in the morning dawn of nature, break forth with stronger beams in the scheme of redemption, now that the Sun [sic] of righteousness has risen with healing in his wings, and the day hath appeared. We, then, should live as children of the day; and we should remember that we see the things of creation, as the key of knowledge opens them to our view, not in the light of early morn, before the mists had begun to melt, but with the advantages of those on whom the true light shineth (191).

Light had long been used as a metaphor for the grace of God or for Jesus, and the narrator of *Blights* followed the common evangelical analogy between light and the gospel to compare two ways of seeing the Creation. The feeble vision possible in mankind’s early history, in the days before the Revelation of the New Testament, is contrasted with the clearer and more accurate vision of those who live in the daylight.
of the gospel message brought by the Sun/Son of God. This comparison held for individuals as well as mankind, so that those individuals who had yet to accept the Christian message were effectively living in prehistory. The readers of Blights of the Wheat are reminded that the objects of nature, as unlocked by 'the key of knowledge', cannot stand alone but must be viewed through the light of the gospel.

A similar point was made more simply in The Senses and the Mind:

Who by searching can find out God? Unless God graciously reveals himself to us, a true knowledge of him in our fallen state is impossible; the capabilities of our minds are, after all, but limited; and though, through our reflection on the evidences of our senses, we may come to the conclusion that there is an omnipotent Power, we remain in ignorance as to what that Power is, and as to our relationship thereunto (143-4).

In both these passages, the point is made that a revelation is needed for men to understand the nature of God. Studying the sciences is not a way of acquiring belief. Rather, it is something that those who have belief should do, and this could be supported by Bible quotation, for instance, Job 37:14, 'Stand still, and consider the wondrous works of God', as cited in The Atmosphere (7-8). This is in clear contrast to the stance found in Paley, according to whom, 'Were there no example in the world, of contrivance, except that of the eye, it would be alone sufficient to support the conclusion which we draw from it, as to the necessity of an intelligent Creator'.

Here, no revelation is needed to discover God, and the study of nature is independent of Scripture.

Although all the Monthly Series works shared the belief in the priority due to revelation, most did not state it explicitly. Some writers allowed it to shape the form of their work, and emphasised the theological framework from the beginning. In other writers, the framework is more hidden, so that the scientific material becomes more prominent. British Fish lies somewhere in the middle of this spectrum. As an

37 The image of the 'Sun of righteousness' comes from Malachi 4:2, and was also well-known through Wesley's hymn 'Hark, the herald angel' (verse 3).
38 Paley, W., Natural Theology; or evidences of the existence and attributes of the deity, collected from the appearances of nature (1802; Alnwick, 1818), 53.
example of a work with an obvious theological framework, take the opening paragraph of Caves of the Earth:

The ‘earth, given to the children of men’ by the Divine Author of all being, according to revealed announcement, is a lofty and beneficent grant, viewed in itself, and in connexion with the purposes for which the donation has been bestowed... It is in harmony with these views to study the constitution and mark the aspects of the material world (7-9).

God is introduced immediately, and the reader is left in no doubt that the narrator is taking a theological position. Geology is presented as part of a theological way of viewing the world: revelation tells us that God gave the earth to mankind, and geology will tell us what sort of a gift this was. Those works which emphasised the theological framework tended to open and close with explicitly theological material, and to infuse appropriate references or morals into the body of the work.

As an example of the other extreme, where the scientific material is more prominent, take the opening paragraph of James Watt and the Steam Engine:

For the last two hundred years there has been a large class of industrious and intelligent men who have employed themselves in scientific investigations. By them the earth has been explored; they have ascended to the summits of its mountains, and descended into the depths of its cavities... But of all they have done nothing is more strange, nor more important to the human race, than their investigation of steam, which, by an ingenious mechanical contrivance, they have, in THE STEAM ENGINE, employed as a motive force (5-6).

The steam engine is presented in the context of scientific endeavour, and the reader is asked to be awed by the ingenuity of man. In works stressing the theological framework, it is more usual for the ingenuity of God to be emphasised. The stress on man’s ingenuity is not a slur on God as the Divine artificer, however, because the invention of the steam engine is presented as a gift in which ‘we may clearly trace the benevolence of God; while in its provision at a fitting period of the world’s history, his providential care is no less apparent’ (9). This transformation of a narrative which
seems secular into part of a theological framework illustrates a different method of setting up Christian tone.

In addition to the introduction, Christian tone was managed by inserting passing references in the body of the work. These usually came in three varieties: references to God the Creator; references to God the hand of Providence; and the drawing of morals. For instance, the beginning of the ‘May’ chapter in Garden Flowers refers to God as Creator and Sustainer: ‘How has the Almighty’s word been working... in bringing forth the bright verdure and radiant flowers from their wintry darkness’ (63). God’s Providence could be seen in the relative ease with which useful animals were domesticated (Domestic Fowls, 18), or in the rescue of a whaling ship from arctic ice (Whales, 189). The morals were rarely about theological doctrine, but referred more to living a Christian life: not being covetous, avoiding sin, and not being Roman Catholics.\(^{39}\) The narrator of Caves, for instance, noted the ancient use of caves as refuges, but added that it was impossible to hide sin or crime from God, even in the darkest of caves (152). Generally, writers included only a few such references, no more than six or eight per work, and often fewer.

Very few of these passing references were specifically evangelical, rather than Christian. A rare exception occurred in the case of the domestication of fowls, where the Old Testament was explicitly presented as ‘the only history of man in his primeval condition, irrespective of the claim, which its internal evidence justifies, to the pen of inspiration’ (Domestic Fowls, 5). After introducing the Bible as history-book, the narrator placed the domestication of animals in a larger narrative centred on the consequences of the Fall. The swiftness with which man managed to domesticate useful animals indicates that even after the Fall, man was not in a savage state, despite being ‘doomed to “the toil and work of his hands, because of the ground which the Lord had cursed”’ (7). There was nothing in this about salvation, but the reader was made fully aware of the sinful state of mankind, on which an appeal to reconciliation with God could later be grounded.

\(^{39}\) On covetousness, see Whales, 17. On Roman Catholics, see Wild Flowers, 161, and Caves, 92.
Occasionally, the subject matter encouraged references to the Biblical parables, such as the fishers of men (*British Fish*, 17-18), or the good steward harvesting souls for his master (*Blight*, 190-1), but this strategy had limited application, due to the lack of parables about steam-engines or whales. Another option was for the writer to create new parables. As an admitted cleric, the narrator of *Blight* was perhaps better trained than most to use such techniques, and he developed several complex analogies, one of which concerned a New Zealand caterpillar. This caterpillar could become infected by a fungus, whereupon it buried itself in the earth. Meanwhile, the fungus would grow inside the caterpillar, finally emerging as a tapering filament from its neck. Progressions in nature were often used as analogies to the rebirth of the soul, as in *Geography of Plants*, where the narrator exclaims, ‘how beautifully does the approach of spring illustrate the doctrine of the resurrection!’ (190). But rather than becoming a butterfly, this caterpillar regressed to a more corrupt state. The narrator continued:

Can we see no analogy here, comparing things small with great, and things natural with things revealed, of the going down of the ungodly into a state of degradation, and of their coming forth into a state of life far below that in which they now are?... [This] forcibly implies the possibility of those who are to the last under an uncured and unpardoned taint of sin, rising to shame and contempt (*Blight*, 28).

The natural world had to be regarded as a book filled with lessons for the intelligent Christian reader, and these lessons were not just about the benevolence and wisdom of God, as so often presented in natural theologies, but about the typically evangelical concern with the corruption and degradation of the world, and the risk of hell. The use of analogy to interweave the scientific and religious aims of the Monthly Series was also a carefully constructed attempt to follow the *Christian Spectator*’s call for revealed religion to mix with the subject matter ‘in accordance with sound judgment and good taste’, for the narrator hoped that his remarks ‘will be regarded as natural inferences from the subjects before the reader’ (191).

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40 Hilton, *Age of atonement*, 4-5.
All the works had to include a statement of the Atonement. This almost always appeared at the end of the book, where it did not obstruct the flow of the narrative, and had greatest impact as the ‘take-home message’ of the book.\textsuperscript{41} The transition from natural history to salvation could be somewhat abrupt, so the success of the plea for conversion could depend on the extent to which the reader trusted the narrator. Since most of the writers were anonymous, they had to develop this relationship with the reader through careful management of their narrative voice.\textsuperscript{42} The narrator of Whales was an exception, for he was identified with the whaler captain and minister, William Scoresby.\textsuperscript{43} This narrator is much more highly personalised than the others, as he tells about his dangerous and exciting voyages in search of whales, and intersperses his history of whale fishing with tales of derring-do in the arctic seas. Through these tales, and especially the story of one particular voyage in the last chapter, the Scoresby-narrator was able to build a close relationship with the reader. He was the knowledgeable and experienced captain and man of action, someone the reader should trust when he says that ‘to the rude and courageous mariner, as well as to the inhabitants of refined and luxurious homes, God’s message is one and the same...’ (189).

The anonymous narrators in general had a further disadvantage, since what they had to work with was natural history, rather than narratives of exciting voyages. Most of the works made extensive use of anecdotes, which helped to hold the reader’s attention, and gave the narrator a chance to narrate. For instance, the narrator of Caves loses his dry tone when explaining how Bauman’s Höhle, a cavern in Brunswick, was named after ‘a miner, who, in 1670, ventured into it alone, to search for ore, lost his way, wandered about for three days and nights in solitude and darkness, and at length found the entrance, only to die of utter exhaustion from hunger and fatigue, upon extricating himself’ (109-10).

\textsuperscript{41} An exception was Garden Flowers, where the only mention of the atonement appeared in an entry on the knot-flowered fig-marigold, in the chapter for April: ‘As it is in our day, so it was then, man could not atone for past pollution or present sin, and the only means of purification and forgiveness was that which the Holy scriptures reveal’ (59). Not only does this sentence not make clear what the ‘Holy scriptures reveal’, but its burial deep in the book deprives it of effect.

\textsuperscript{42} On the need for more investigation of how anonymous narration affects readers’ interpretations, see Griffin, Anonymity, 882.

\textsuperscript{43} It was actually an edited version of Scoresby’s work, but the editorial hand acted invisibly.
Another way of constructing a narratorial identity was by introducing the personality of the writer. The narrator of *Blight* revealed that, 'The author has more than once shown these corn diseases to the members of a farmers’ club, who viewed them with extreme interest' (46). The same effect comes from remarks in the introductory material about the writer’s aims for the work, for example, ‘A concise, but clear description of the causes and... action of the steam engine is all that can be attempted by the author’ (*Watt*, 10). The reader is reminded that there is such a person as the writer, who sat down and wrote the words the reader is about to encounter. These personal elements give the reader something to pin onto their impression of the narrator, making him less abstract, and thus hopefully more credible.

Despite the claim that these works should be able to convert the unsaved reader, the narrator of *James Watt* was unusual in providing a detailed explanation of the way to salvation:

To have a saving interest in the Lord Jesus Christ; to be born again by the Holy Spirit; to have a true repentance for sin; to be reconciled to God through faith in the blood of his dear Son; and to yield up the heart and life to be sanctified by his grace, and to be conformed to his will (192).

More typical were oblique references, such as ‘that which the Holy Scriptures reveal’ (*Garden Flowers*, 59), ‘that benign arrangement’ (*British Fish*, 192), or ‘repent, believe and live’ (*Whales*, 189). An extreme example comes from the narrator of *Blight*. When he moved from a discussion of the natural antagonists of wheat pests to the following, he was clearly writing for readers who already knew what the point was:

These considerations lead us, by analogy, to look for some such provision against the disease of the heart. We find it in the revelation of mercy God has made to man. There is only this difference, that while the antidotes to the pests which injure the fruit of our labours in the soil are as numerous as the pests themselves, the great remedy for all our moral miseries is but

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44 Equivalent statements were given in *Geography of Plants and Domestic Fowls*. 143
one, but that one is capable of every conceivable modification to suit the
necessities of every case, and the wants of every age of the world (187).

The passage relies upon the reader following the analogy between natural and moral
diseases, and then upon a pre-existing knowledge of what ‘the great remedy for all
our moral miseries’, otherwise known as ‘the revelation of mercy’ actually is, as well
as what one should do with it. The lack of detail about salvation suggests that most
writers had the ‘educated families of our land’ in mind as intended readers, rather than
the unfortunate unsaved, despite following instructions to include the atonement for
this latter group.

Varieties of Fish

There were non-fiction works available in the 1840s which could be considered in
terms of potential models for the Monthly Series, and it will be revealing to analyse
its literary techniques with reference to those used in works aimed at different
audiences, for different purposes. We shall see that none of the potential models were
particularly suitable, although some of the religious periodicals had found a solution
which fitted that particular format. The RTS work which I will analyse in detail in the
next section is British Fish, so I have chosen other works on fish for my comparisons,
as listed in Figure 3.1. Fish make a good choice of study because, as animals, they
expand the existing focus on botany in popular science. There are lots of species of
fish native to Britain, and they could be found and caught relatively easily in lakes,
rivers and by the coast, whether by the sportsman angler, the North Sea fishing boats,
or a child playing with a net. Thus, many readers would have had some personal
experience of fish, in contrast with rarely-seen reptiles and difficult-to-get-close-to
birds. Even those without easy access to live fish might be able to gain an
acquaintance with a range of species from visits to a fish-market, or from their dinner
plate. Certain classes of families had long had goldfish bowls, and the adaptation of

45 The emphasis on botany in studies of popular science contrasts with the centrality of zoology for
nineteenth-century experts, including Cuvier, Darwin and Owen. The position of fish among the other
vertebrate phyla was an important question for the relationships between species. Cuvier and
Valenciennes’s Histoire des Poissons of 1826 was the central work of fish taxonomy, but by the late
1840s and 1850s, it was being challenged by discoveries of new fossil fish species.
Figure 3.1 Works on fish, cited in this section.

**Fish of the Beagle**

The Zoology of the Voyage of HMS Beagle, under the command of Captain Fitzroy, RN, during the years 1832 to 1836. Published with the approval of the Lords Commissioners of her Majesty's Treasury. Edited and superintended by Charles Darwin, Esq, MA, FRS, FGS, Etc, Naturalist to the expedition. Part IV. Fish, by the Rev Leonard Jenyns, MA, FLS &c. (London: Smith, Elder, and Co, 1842. Quarto. 34s.)

**History**

A History of British Fishes, by William Yarrell, FLS, VPZS. Illustrated by 500 wood-engravings. In two volumes. Second edn (London: John van Voorst, 1841. Octavo. 60s. for two volumes.)

**Zoology**

Zoology: A systematic account of the general structure, habits, instincts and uses of the principal families of the animal kingdom, as well as of the chief forms of fossil remains. By William B Carpenter, MD, FRS, FGS, author of “Principles of general and comparative physiology” and of “Principles of Human physiology”. In two volumes. (London: Wm S Orr and Co, 1845-48 [Edinburgh: W&R Chambers, 1842] Octavo. 4s.)

**British Fish**

British Fish and Fisheries, RTS. (London: RTS, n.d. [1849]. 16mo. 6d. or 10d.)

**SPCK Fishes**

Natural History: Fishes, By PH Gosse, ALS. Published under the direction of the committee of general literature and education appointed by the Society for the Promotion of Christian Knowledge. London: (Printed for the SPCK, by Samuel Bentley and Co, 1851. Fcp 16mo. 3s.4d.)

**Wonders of the Waters**


**Scripture Natural History**


**Saturday Magazine**

‘Freshwater Fish’ (introduction, and thirteen articles), Saturday Magazine, volumes 18-21, March 27 1841-Nov 5 1842. (London: John W Parker. 8 pages weekly. 1d.)

**Penny Magazine**

‘Freshwater Fish’ (nine articles), The Penny Magazine of the Society for the Diffusion of Useful Knowledge, volume 11, January 29 1842-December 3 1842. (London. 8 pages weekly. 1d.)
the Wardian case into the aquarium in the early 1850s sparked a new interest in the habits of fish and their relations with other fauna and flora. Finally, given the close associations between Jesus and fishermen, and the abiding symbolism of the χρυσ in Christianity, fish books seem peculiarly appropriate for an analysis of the Christian tone in popular science works.

The most obvious features that distinguish these works on fish is the audience at which they are aimed, and the purpose they were supposed to serve. The intended audience is often clear from the physical format and price of a work, as the contrast between the 34s. quarto volume of Fish of the Beagle, and the 4d. 16mo pamphlet for children, 'The Fish', in Wonders of the Waters makes clear. Yet, although the price of the work tells us something about the audience which could afford to purchase it, it reveals relatively little about who actually did. Articles in the penny periodicals were aimed at a much wider audience than any of the books, but readers who could have afforded more expensive works still bought the penny periodicals – the Darwin family being a well-known example.

The choice of work was not merely determined by price, but by the reader’s level of interest and existing knowledge in the subject.

The periodicals were suited for those with a willingness to learn a little about a range of subjects, and with no great knowledge of any of them. Readers did not choose the Penny Magazine or its competitors specifically for their articles on fish, but for a mixture of introductory-level articles on varied topics. Their articles on natural history tended to concentrate on British species – or on particularly unusual species – and did not attempt to be exhaustive. The aim of a periodical series was to present the highlights rather than the minutiae, as the readers of the periodical could not be assumed to have any existing interest in the subject at hand, but had to have their attention grabbed before they passed on to the next article. The illustrated journals might use pictures as part of the attraction, but interesting quotations or exciting opening sentences were other possible tactics. These were combined in the Saturday Magazine’s article on the char (Figure 3.2), which opened with an illustration and a quotation from Isaac Walton. Although the periodicals came from rather different

spryly, where the bottom is smooth and sandy, and the water warmest. The case char is said to spawn at Michaelmas, and chiefly in the river Brathy, which, uniting with another called the Rowthay, about a quarter of a mile above Winander Mere, fall into the lake both together. The Brathy has a black rocky bottom; that of the Rowthay is a bright sand; and into this the char are observed never to enter. Some of them spawn in the lake; but always in such parts of it as are stony, and resemble the channel of the Brathy: they are supposed to be in the highest excellence about May, and continue in perfection all the summer.

The account of the spawning season of the Westmoreland char, agrees with that of the same fish in Wales. Some have doubted whether the Welsh and English fish are of the same kind, but there appears to be no reason for this doubt. The Welsh name of the fish is ysgoch, or red-belly. The char forms a much admired dish, at fashionable tables in Wales.

Thou, who canst make the loadstone to touch impart
An active virtue to the tempered soul,
Oh let Thy hand rest on us till we feel
A new-born impulse stirring in the heart,
And, springing from surrounding objects free,
Point, with a tremendous confidence, to Thee.

If there be any person in a country enlightened with the
Gospel, who would banish the blessing of the Sabbath from
the world, he must be a stranger to all the feelings of
humanity, as well as to all the principles of religion and
piety.—JONES of NEGLAND.

A farmer of Alsace sent two hundred francs to the Mis-
Sonaries, with this short observation,—"When I was a boy,
being once employed to sow, an experienced farmer
said to me, "Throw the seed out far, my lad." I did so—
since then I have become rich in worldly goods, I therefore
think I ought to do the same in spiritual matters."

Christianity is the very essence of truth; it is the truth
divine, speaking to our whole being: occupying, calling
into action, and satisfying man's every faculty, supplying
the minutest wants of his being, and speaking in one and
the same moment, to his reason, his conscience, and his
heart. It is the light of reason, the life of the heart, and
the strength of the will.—PERRIN's DIScourses.

YEARS rush by us like the wind. We see not whence the
eddy comes, nor whitherward it is tending; and we seem
ourselves to witness their flight without knowing that we
are changed; and yet time is beguiling man of his strength,
as the winds rob the woods of their foliage.—WOODSROCK.

Rezator intrudes upon none of our privileges, invades none of our pleasures; it may indeed sometimes command us to change, but never totally to abjure them.—SOUT.

Though prayer purchaseth blessings, giving praise doth keep
the quiet possession of them.—FULLER.

We are spied by God and observed by angels; we are be-
trayed within, and assaulted without; the devil is our
enemy, and we are fond of his mischief; he is crafty, and
we love to be abused; he is malicious, and we are credulous;
he is powerful, and we are weak; he is too ready of him-
self, and yet we desire to be tempted. The world is allure-
ing, and we consider not its vanity; sin puts on all pleasures,
and yet we take it, though it puts us to pain: in short, we are
vain, and credulous, and sensual, and raving; when we are
tempted, and tempt ourselves, and we sin frequently, and
contract evil habits, and they become second natures, and
bring in a second death miserable and eternal: every man
hath need to fear, because every man hath weakness, and
enemies, and temptations, and dangers, and causes of his
own.—JEREMY TAYLOR.

Withdrow Religion, and you shake all the pillars of mo-
BAIL.

Figure 3.2 ‘The Char’, Saturday Magazine, 1842. Notice the use of theological excerpts to fill the column space at the end of the article.
publishers, their articles on freshwater fish were relatively similar. Each article usually dealt with one species of fish, and recounted its habitat, general appearance, breeding and feeding habits, and a selection of ‘curious antiquarian and anecdotal information’—methods of catching or cooking it, unusual specimens, or its encounters with famous people. The *Penny Magazine* included occasional references to God as Creator, and the *Saturday Magazine* did little more, so that if an article was read out of its context, it would not necessarily be obvious which journal it came from.

In most cases, the editors of the *Saturday Magazine* did not introduce a Christian tone in the natural history articles, but created it by filling the spare column inches with excerpts, some of which were general, while others were explicitly theological. The article on the tench was followed by excerpts on the ‘Commerce of leeches’ and ‘The Alps after sunset’, while that on the char was followed by nine short quotations on the value of the Sabbath and missionaries, on Christianity as truth, the dangers of sin and temptation and the importance of religion to morality (Figure 3.2). The theological framework was also constructed, for those who read the series from the start, by the introductory article, which, in addition to a general account of fish anatomy and physiology, included the reminder that the adaptation of fish to their environment illustrated the foresight of the Creator. This adaptation is ‘a principal charm of natural history’, but it also brings to the mind of the naturalist ‘the gentle monition of the Saviour, that God, who forgetteth not the sparrows, who feedeth the ravens and clotheth the grass of the field, will not discontinue His watchful care over those whom He has declared to be far better than they’. Although the article on the char was very similar to that which appeared a month later in the *Penny Magazine*, the introductory article combined with the juxtaposed excerpts meant that readers of the *Saturday Magazine* would have been encouraged to think about the char in a Christian framework.

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Readers who already had some knowledge or interest, perhaps from periodical articles, might decide to acquire an introductory book on the subject. What sort of book they chose would depend on their reasons for wanting to know more about fish. Some books catered more for the ‘armchair’ naturalist, who wished to know about the general characteristics of fish, but who did not (yet) feel the desire to actively pursue natural history. Children’s books, as well as the RTS *British Fish* and SPCK *Fishes*, would fit in this category. They were more detailed than the periodical articles, but still presented their subject as a passive activity. Unlike reference works, they were written in continuous prose and were intended to be read from cover to cover. This discursive format implicitly provided the reader with ways to converse about fish, as well as information about them, and presented natural history as a form of rational recreation.

In contrast, the *Zoology* in Chambers’s Educational Course was a textbook of anatomy, physiology and the basics of taxonomy, intended for serious study. It lacked the rhetorical touches to the narrative with which the introductory books enticed the reader to continue, and used a much starker, matter-of-fact, presentation. The narrator in the *Zoology* is the authoritative school-teacher, and this impression is enhanced by the division of the text into numbered paragraphs, each containing a point to be learned. There were more illustrations in *Zoology*, and they were more often diagrams. The contrast can be seen between the realistic renderings of fish against background scenery in Figures 3.2 and 3.3, and the line diagrams, in Figure 3.4.

The narrator of the *Zoology* contrasted his ‘scientific’ presentation of natural history with a ‘taxonomical’ presentation which made it appear ‘a Science of names and of intricate classification’. According to the *Zoology*, names ‘are not the objects of the Science, but merely furnish the mechanism (so to speak), by which its true ends are to be attained’ (1). However, identifying specimens was essential for communicating with other naturalists, and for determining whether ‘new’ observations were indeed new. To identify species, the would-be naturalist needed yet another sort of book, such as the *History of British Fishes*. This provided detailed descriptions of all British fish, along with details of where they were to be found, their breeding habits, food sources, and assorted other information relating to their origins, the etymology of
the anterior angle of the orbital cavity to its posterior angle, and thus completes the circle of the orbit. Further inwards is seen also on each side a kind of vertical partition, (Fig. 247 t,) which is suspended to the skull, and which separates the orbits and the cheeks from the mouth. It is formed by bones corresponding with the palatine, pteregoid, and tympanic bones of

the higher Vertebrata. At its under part it gives attachment to the lower jaw; and behind it is prolonged in such a manner, as to form a kind of moveable flap, which protects the respiratory apparatus, and is termed the operculum or gill-cover. The lower-jaw is formed of three pieces on each side. Within the lateral partitions just described, and lying at the bottom of the mouth, is found a framework of very complicated structure,
their name, or their economic importance. At 60s., however, the two volumes of the *History* were only for those who were both seriously interested, and sufficiently well-off to afford them. Other readers with an interest in fish identification might be able to consult the *History* in a library, but would otherwise have to make do with the descriptions provided in the cheaper books, which tended to be detailed enough only for the most common British fish.

For those few who really wished to become ichthyological experts, the *History* would not be enough, for it dealt only with British fish, and was being superseded by new discoveries almost as soon as it was published. They would have to start with the encyclopaedic works of Cuvier, and watch for papers in learned journals like the *Transactions of the Zoological Society*, and monographs, such as the *Fish of the Beagle*, as new species were identified. The quarto format of many of these works, not to mention their thick paper, enormous margins and pages of engraved plates, testified to the expense involved in being an expert, while the technical vocabulary of fish anatomy and the use of Latin for standard descriptions, attested to the amount of prior knowledge needed.

The narrators of the SPCK *Fishes* and the *Zoology* make some theological references in their introductions, mostly to the Creator and his awe-inspiring works, but write the remainder of their works in an essentially secular tone. The *History* and *Fish of the Beagle* make no theological references at all, signalling the supposed independence of expert natural history from theology, notwithstanding the acknowledgement that the author of *Fish of the Beagle* was a clergyman. Works in the natural theology genre would have had a stronger Christian tone, but even those written with devotional rather than demonstrative aims would not have been considered as models for the RTS, due to the lack of emphasis on Jesus and the atonement. As an example of distinct Christian tone, therefore, it would be better to consider the *Scripture Natural History*. In certain respects, this work is very similar to *Fish of the Beagle*, since they

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51 A generation earlier, William Wilberforce and other evangelical reviewers had criticised Paley's *Natural Theology* for its 'untenable and unsafe' similarities to Thomas Paine's deism, which suggested that 'no other religion [than nature] is necessary to their eternal salvation' (see Fyfe, A., 'The reception of William Paley's *Natural Theology* in the University of Cambridge' *British Journal for the History of Science* 30 (1997): 321-35, at 323). In the 1840s, the RTS continued to regard it as 'the device of Satan, to speak of the wonders of creation without notice of those of redemption' (see 'On the union of general and scientific instruction with Scriptural knowledge' *Christian Spectator* (1845): 69.)
were both aimed at relatively expert audiences. Both use a technical vocabulary, both use non-English words without translations, and both make frequent references to the works of other authorities to support their cases. Where they differ most markedly is in the purpose of their natural history. *Fish of the Beagle* presented its 137 new species of fish with the aim of ‘render[ing] all species, whether rightly named or not, easily recognizable; and, however little the science may be advanced by what is brought forward, to make that advance, so far as it goes, sure’ (x). Rather than advancing science, *Scripture Natural History* sought to advance Biblical understanding, for, ‘destitute of a tolerable acquaintance with the natural history of the East, the import of many passages in the Sacred Writings will inevitably elude our search’ (2). *Scripture Natural History* did not attempt to put taxonomic names to species, nor to describe their appearance, habits or physiology, but rather aimed to explain which animals the Hebrew and Greek terms referred to, and why those animals were particularly mentioned. The authorities to which it referred were theologians and Bible translators, rather than the naturalists who filled the pages of *Fish of the Beagle*. *Scripture Natural History* was, then, more an exercise in translation and interpretation than in natural science.

*Scripture Natural History* also differed in its choice of classification system. All the other writers who used any classification at all, chose a taxonomic system based on that of Cuvier. The narrator of *Scripture Natural History*, in contrast, contended that he could not use systems like those of Linnaeus or Cuvier, since his aim was to discuss the species mentioned in the Bible, and the systematic identity of many species intended by the inspired writers remained uncertain. Therefore, *Scripture Natural History* followed another system based on ‘the three-fold arrangement of Moses, in his strictly philosophical, and sublimely beautiful narrative of the creation’ (3). The three classes of geology, botany and zoography, with their members, take their place on a static chain of creation leading up to man. The narrator also promoted Solomon as the first natural historian, in opposition to the pagan Aristotle, but unfortunately, ‘We are not able to trace any further the system of this celebrated

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52 The periodical series on fish, which chose a few of the most well-known British species, and the children’s book *Wonders of the Waters*, which selected particularly unusual species, made no attempt to classify their species. SPCK *Fishes* used an updated version of Cuvier. *Zoology* supplemented Cuvier with Agassiz for fossil fish.
naturalist' (10-11). In its divisions of animal, plant and mineral, Moses/Solomon's system was not unusual, but the animal group comprises man, beasts, birds, fishes, reptiles and insects, and the beasts are divided into Domestic Animals, Ferocious Wild Beasts, Wild Inoffensive Animals, and Dubious Animals (the behemoth, leviathan and unicorn). Within any one of these sub-groupings, the animals are ordered according to their importance to the patriarchs, and the length of the section depends on how often the animal is referred to in the Bible, and how straightforward the identification of its modern counterpart is. The section on fish, therefore, was much shorter than in the other natural histories, because the Biblical writers mentioned no species of fish by name, and only occasionally referred to fish at all, since, 'the Jews being an agricultural people, fish formed no considerable part of their food' (285). Scripture Natural History needed little more than three pages to discuss the main references to fish and fishing in the Bible, with over a page and a half dedicated to the possible identity of Jonah's κητος.

The Scripture Natural History clearly had a Christian tone, but as a work of theological interpretation, it would have had limited appeal to the broad audience targeted for the Monthly Series.53 The model provided by the SPCK Fishes was also unsuitable, due to its lack of evangelical emphasis, and restriction of theological references to the introduction. The effect achieved in the Saturday Magazine was closer to what the RTS needed, but the juxtaposition of secular articles with Christian excerpts would not work in the continuous narrative of a book. The elements of the RTS's Christian tone, as discussed in the previous section, were intended to provide a more thorough and more evangelical tone, and to work in a book. They had to be combined with the subject matter, which was similar in style and level to the periodicals and the other introductory books. The close analysis of British Fish will illustrate how this combination of secular information on the sciences, with passing references, morals, anecdotes, and introductory and concluding passages, created Christian tone.

53 One work of scriptural natural history, Plants and Trees of the Bible, did appear in the Series.
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How the Readers of *British Fish* were Caught

On picking up and opening *British Fish and Fisheries*, the reader would have been struck by the lack of decorative arts, and by the anonymity of the writer. Both the paperback and hardbound versions were plain on the outside, the title page was undecorated (Figure 3.5), and there were only three diagrams (and two tables) in the entire book. It contained far fewer illustrations than any of the other fish works available, particularly compared to the periodicals. The absence of a writer’s name on the title-page was compensated for by the strong presence of the RTS name. The first four pages of the volume contained advertisements for RTS publications, the only name on the title-page was that of the RTS, and, on most copies, the printer’s mark at the foot of the final page was also that of the RTS. Rather than a publication date, the only date was that of the foundation of the Society, which gave the work a timeless quality, implying that the knowledge it contained would last.

The first two chapters focus on the domestic and industrial importance of fish. While an interest in British species is assumed from the book’s publication in Britain, the narrator defends his focus on fish. One defence is based on the economic importance of the fisheries of modern Britain. The narrator of the *History* used this justification in his introduction, and it forms the focus of the second chapter of *British Fish*, as well as the *raison d’être* of several articles on fisheries in the *Leisure Hour* in the 1850s (see Figure 3.6). Chapter one of *British Fish* uses a different, though related, justification, as is clear from the opening paragraph:

> The use of fish as an article of food is of remote antiquity. The Israelites, in their journey through the wilderness, when pressed by scarcity of provisions, exclaimed, ‘We remember the fish which we did eat in Egypt freely, the cucumbers and the melons, and the leeks, and the onions, and the garlic;’ and it is recorded, that among the plagues brought upon the Egyptians by Moses and Aaron, at the command of God, one was the turning of the water of the river Nile into blood, and the consequent destruction of the fish, Exod. vii. 19-21 (7).

The opening sentence immediately sets out the antiquity of man’s relations with fish, and implies that fish are worthy of study for having been a major food source for so long. The rest of the paragraph presents evidence for this claim: two Old Testament
Figure 3.5 Title-page of RTS British Fish. Notice the absence of decoration, and the lack of a writer's name.
THE HERRING FISHERY OF YARMOUTH.

On a fine, clear, bracing morning in the month of October, nothing can be more pleasant to a person in robust health than to stroll down to the broad beach at Yarmouth, and witness the landing of the fish. The visitor unacquainted with the town, when he first reaches the jetty, perceives few indications that mercantile transactions of any importance are about to take place. He probably sees here and there a few stragglers, indolently pacing up and down indulging in familiar chat, while his olfactory nerves will be regaled by fumes from what Cowper calls "the noxious weed," but which is too commonly regarded as redolent with fragrance by those who inhale it in the teeth of a north-easter. While peering about in search of adventure, our visitor's attention is attracted by the anxious gaze of some weather-beaten tar, whose spy-glass is in frequent requisition, sweeping the horizon. On the beach he may see here and there a heap of "swills," so carelessly placed that they look as if they had been left there by the preceding tide. Presently he discovers that the tall post, which only a few minutes ago looked like the dismantled spar of some sunken vessel, has now the British flag flying from its top, and an inquiry he learns that it is hoisted for the purpose of indicating that a sale of fish will shortly take place. The ferry-boats are about to be launched, and the sturdy beachmen, leaving the watching-rooms, are wending their way across the sands, each to his proper place. With the strength of an ox, each man bears his part, and the heavy ferry-boat, quitting the beach, soon makes her way through the surf, and, being pulled alongside the fishing-lugger that has just arrived in the roadstead, the first anxious inquiry is, "What fish have you got?" It may be that few boats have come in, and that the catch is but slight. A signal is telegraphed ashore, intelligible enough to those who are in the secret, but of no import to the uninitiated.

Our stranger now begins to think that at last something is about to take place, and is not in the least degree inexpressible to the fact that the wind has made its way through his broad-cloth wrappers, which he finds by no means warm enough for the climate, especially should he not happen to have broken his morning's fast. His ear at length catches the sound of a bell, which he had not before noticed, in obedience to which the stragglers are all wending towards the spot thus indicated. A quantity of wash-tubs, accompanied, too, by several women, induces the gentleman to think that instead of a fish sale, he is going to witness a grand washing file, or perhaps it is about to be decided who shall be the queen of the sands. But while...
passages, from Numbers (11:5) and Exodus, both confirming that fish were eaten in ancient Egypt. Later paragraphs provide more Biblical and Classical evidence to this effect, citing paintings, ‘the mosaic pavement of Praeneste’, Herodotus and Arabic writers, as well as more Biblical passages (7-11). The narrator is presented as someone with knowledge of a wide range of sources, both sacred and profane. Thus, the Bible is presented as one source, among many, for information respecting early human history, but no comment is made respecting the Bible’s claim to divine inspiration.

On pages eleven through twenty-one, the Bible is given far more prominence, as the narrator recounts most of the notable episodes involving fish. This starts with a discussion of the Levitical laws respecting what foods may or may not be eaten: ‘fishes with scales were decidedly allowed, and evidently constituted a considerable portion of the food of the Israelites’ (12). Piscine edibility is central to the book’s justification, and this discussion of Israelite attitudes prefigures the later accounts of British fish, which regularly include comments on whether particular species are edible, how tasty they are, and (occasionally) recommended methods of cooking. Most of this section of the work, however, concerns the Gospel accounts of the occasions on which ‘our Saviour condescended to exercise his miraculous powers upon these creatures, thereby demonstrating that the laws of matter were subject to his control’ (15). These include the feeding of the five thousand, the finding of the tribute money in the mouth of a fish, and two episodes of bountiful fishing on the Sea of Galilee. These accounts play a different role from the Old Testament ones, for they directly involve theology rather than history or natural history. The Gospels cannot be considered only as history books, for they present the life and actions of the Son of God. That such matters are presented in British Fish, and with no sense of narrative incongruity, indicates that the work is being narrated in a firmly Christian framework. That Jesus is referred to as ‘our’ Saviour suggests that the narrator and his reader share, or ought to share, this framework, while the choice of ‘Saviour’, and later of ‘Redeemer’ (17, passim) in preference to ‘Jesus’, ‘Lord’, or ‘Christ’, brings the issue of the atonement subtly before the reader’s consciousness.

Not only did Jesus perform miracles with fish, but four of his disciples were fishermen, which, the narrator suggests, means that fish and fishermen might be
particularly important to Christians. Unlike scribes or money-changers, fishermen had an honourable employment, and ‘the hearts of such men, by nature, were fitted for quietness and contemplation – men of mild, and sweet, and peaceable spirits’ (20). Thus, perhaps, those who studied or caught fish might be peculiarly able to grasp the ‘new way to everlasting life’ offered by Jesus. The narrator also makes use of the analogy between fishing for fish and for the souls of men, as justified by Jesus’s choice of disciples, and his charge to them ‘from henceforth thou shalt catch men’ (Luke 5:10). The narrator continues:

> These humble fishers were hereafter to throw the net of the gospel, which must ever be the work of their faithful successors; and thus are they enjoined to draw men from the depths of sin and destruction to the glorious light of that revelation, sent in mercy to beam upon the path which leadeth to the kingdom of heaven, where He who bore our sins in his own body on the cross ever liveth to intercede in behalf of all who come unto God through him (17-18).

The fishing metaphor is used to illustrate how men can be brought out of ‘the depths of sin and destruction’, and by reading the gospels, ‘the glorious light of that revelation’, they can start on the path to salvation. This pathway is belief in the doctrine of the atonement, that Jesus bore the sins of mankind ‘in his own body on the cross’ and that those who believe in him and his sacrifice will find heaven, for they ‘come unto God through him’. Thus, the narrator introduces the atonement, as he will do again at the conclusion of the work. Its introduction through metaphor was a way to avoid being abrupt or in poor taste.

The SPCK Fishes has an introduction whose second half bears some similarity to the opening chapter of British Fish. The first half is an introduction to fish anatomy and physiology, while the second half discusses the economic importance of and methods for catching fish. The transition from physiology to fish as foodstuffs is made via the remark that:

54 British Fish is unusual in having the atonement explicitly mentioned twice.
We have briefly alluded to the value of Fishes as human food, a value which was appreciated in very early times... Still earlier than this, the paintings which so copiously illustrate the manners of the ancient Egyptians, combine with the Holy Scriptures, to prove the fact that fish, both in a fresh and salted state, formed a large part of [the diet of] that industrious people [the Israelites] (30-31).

Several of the Biblical passages involving fish are mentioned in the following pages, but whereas in British Fish they were presented as a sequence and given a prominence in their own right, especially the miracles, in the SPCK Fishes the main thread of the discussion is the methods of catching fish, with Biblical passages presented as evidence of the long history of the use of nets, or of hooks and lines. Relatively greater prominence is given to the Egyptian paintings, with several of them being reproduced to illustrate ancient methods of catching fish, as, for example, in Figure 3.7. The SPCK narrator shares with his RTS counterpart the belief that the Bible can and should be used as a source of history, but he seems less concerned to tell the story of Jesus as well as of fish. The SPCK shared the RTS's belief in the value of a Christian tone for 'secular' publications, but not the evangelical drive which emphasised the New Testament. The SPCK volume does not have a discussion of the atonement at all, and tends to refer to God the Creator, rather than to Christ the Redeemer. The first chapter of British Fish ends with a brief account of Greek and Roman attitudes to fish. These civilisations are dealt with in a mere three pages, and the last paragraph notes that 'we need not extend our review to other nations of antiquity, among whom, as in the present day, fishes were of more or less importance as an article of food' (23), an assessment which calls attention to the comparatively vast amount of space devoted to the Israelite nation. Their importance is commensurate with their status as the Chosen people.

The next chapter continues the concern with fish as food: 'To come to modern days, there are few nations, it may be observed, which do not make use of fishes as food... So important to a nation, indeed, are its fisheries, that they are made the subjects of legislation' (24). Having established this importance, the narrator begins his account of the fisheries of Great Britain with those in 'more distant places', like Newfoundland and Labrador, then moving on to those on 'our own shores'. This
Figure 3.7 One of the Egyptian pictures reproduced in SPCK *Fishes*, illustrating ancient methods of catching fish.
latter group are dealt with according to species, such as cod, pilchard, sole, mackerel and eel, with one of the longest accounts being allocated to the herring. This includes a history of the fishery and the government attempts to encourage herring fishing by paying bounty, the locations where herring are caught, and the number of ships and people involved in catching and curing almost 400,000 barrels of herrings a year (27-36). The chapter ends with the observation that the fisheries are almost all concerned with saltwater fish. This is not to say that freshwater fish are not caught or eaten, but that ‘with regard to the consumption of these fishes we have no statistical data; it is far larger in proportion in the rural districts of our islands than in London, or in the chief towns’ (51). The lack of statistical data is a problem for the narrator, because the preceding accounts have contained a lot of numerical data, including, in one case, a table. The narrator, it seems has a certain conception of what is needed in order to properly describe a fishery – and we shall see shortly that the same is true of descriptions of species.

The remainder of the work describes the fish of the British isles, or at least ‘such as are most likely to come under the observation of the general reader, or have more than ordinary interest’ (52). The writer, after all, has less than two hundred 16mo pages to deal with British fish, in contrast to the thousand octavo pages of the History. The fish are divided into five chapters according to ‘a scientific arrangement’, following Cuvier, although English translations are given for the Latin taxonomic terms. British Fish is unusual for having preceded the first taxonomic chapter with two chapters on the importance of fish. Both the History and the SPCK Fishes contained introductory remarks on economic importance of fish and general fish anatomy, but these were made distinct from the main texts by being placed in a section labelled ‘Introduction’. The main text then began with the first order, Acanthopterygii, and the perch family.

The beginning of the first of British Fish’s taxonomic chapters contains some of the material that History and SPCK Fishes put in their introductions, but in more compact form. The narrator apologises for this material, but announces his intention to ‘forbear from entering into details which are rather more proper for purely scientific works than popular treatises’. However, ‘it is necessary that the reader should know the names of the fins’, since it is by their ‘structure, position and number’ that the orders and families of fish can be determined (52-3). The first diagram of the book is
introduced at this point to illustrate the positions of the fins (Figure 3.8), and the formula for expressing the number of fins is explained. This explanation is important, for throughout the rest of the book, the fin formula will be part of the full description of a fish. The introductory section also describes the so-called ‘lateral line’, the structure (although not the function) of the gills, and gives a brief account of the variety of teeth arrangements. These features are all used later to distinguish similar fish from one another.

The History, SPCK Fishes, introductory article in the Saturday Magazine, and especially the Zoology, all discussed physiology as well as anatomy, describing the circulatory and respiratory systems, the method of propulsion, the effectiveness of the senses and the state of development of the neural system. The absence of any physiological discussion in British Fish suggests that the main aim of the work is to describe fish, not to explain how they function. It is a work of natural history, rather than a work in the relatively new sciences of comparative anatomy or physiology.

After the preliminary remarks on anatomy for identification purposes, the narrator of British Fish begins to move from the general to the specific:

Fish are divided into two great primary sections, namely, the osseous and the cartilaginous... These two sections are resolved into several orders...

The first order of the osseous series is termed the acanthopterygious, (Acanthopterygii) which, in plain English, means ‘fishes with the fin-rays of their dorsal fin spinous, or at least, mostly spinous’. Of this order the perch family (Percidae) is very conspicuous (55-6).

The choice of the Acanthopterygii as the first order is standard. However, both British Fish and the History differ from the Zoology and SPCK Fishes in the selection of fish which are discussed. The SPCK narrator introduces every order, then describes the families within that order, and gives full descriptions of one typical genus per family, usually with one typical species per genus. The aim is to give a general overview of the whole of Class Pisces. The Zoology takes a similar approach, but the descriptions are less detailed, and several representative species are named per

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CHAPTER III.

FISHES WITH THE RAYS OF THE DORSAL FIN SPINOUS.

From these details, let us next proceed to notice some of the fishes of the British Islands. It must be evident, that in a discursive sketch like the present, we shall be able only to make a selection of such as are most likely to come under the observation of the general reader, or have more than ordinary interest. Of these some are river fishes, others are exclusively confined to the sea, while others, again, inhabit both salt and fresh water. Without respect to these particulars, we shall follow a scientific arrangement, but, at the same time, forbear from entering into details, which are rather more proper for purely scientific works than popular treatises. A few brief preliminary observations, however, may be permitted.

It is necessary that the reader should know the names of the fins, which are not only important organs, but afford, by their structure, position, and number, definite characters for the establishment of orders, families, and genera. They are supported by bony or by cartilaginous rays; they are thus designated:

Dorsal fins, on the back, D-D. Pectoral fins, P. Ventral fins, V. Anal fin, A. Caudal fin, C.

The formula for expressing the number of fins, the number of fin-rays and their condition, taking the perch by way of example, is thus written, D 15. 1 + 13, P 14. V 1 + 5. A 2 + 8. C 17. The meaning is as follows: D, dorsal fin, has fifteen rays, all spinous; the second dorsal fin has one ray spinous + 13 that are soft. P, pectoral fin, with 14 rays soft. V, ventral fin with one ray spinous + 5 soft. A, anal fin, with 2 rays spinous + 8 soft. C, caudal fin, with 17 rays.

Along the sides of fishes is a row of scales.

Figure 3.8 One of the three illustrations in British Fish, naming the fins which will later be used to identify different species.
genus. In contrast, *British Fish* and the *History* deal only with those fish commonly found in Britain (though not only native species). Thus some families are more numerously represented than others, and the reader gets a more specific and localised overview of Class Pisces. It so happens that Cuvier’s first fish, the perch, is found in Britain, so all the books begin with the same fish.

After announcing the perch, *British Fish* continues with two pages of textual description of this species, followed by similar descriptions of its close relatives, and then of members of other families in the same order. These are written in continuous prose, with one following from the other with nothing more than a paragraph break, as illustrated for the barbel, gudgeon and tench in Figure 3.9. This contrasts with those books which are intended as reference works. The *History*, for instance, starts the entry for each fish on a new page, with its name in capitals, an illustration, and details of those naturalists who had previously described it (Figure 3.10). Although there is also an index of general and systematic names to help find entries for specific fish, this clear demarcation of each entry makes it easier to skim through the book to find a fish whose name is not known already. Such a task would be difficult in *British Fish*, which has no index, and where the only easy way to skim through the continuous text is to use the running heads at the top of each page, or to look for the use of italics when the systematic name of a species is mentioned, usually near the beginning of its description. The use of continuous prose is also in contrast to comparable cheap books, such as those in series from Knight and Chambers, one of which is illustrated in Figure 3.11. Their natural history works adapted the reference style used in *History*, keeping the picture and some distinctive typography (numbering, or the practice of putting the name at the beginning, in capitals), but starting new entries wherever on the page they came, to save paper. In contrast to these works, *British Fish* belongs to a discursive genre.

In *British Fish*, there is no concluding passage at the end of the first taxonomic chapter, just the end of the section on the last fish. The next chapter begins, ‘The second order of osseous fishes is termed *Malacopterygii*...’ (89), thus indicating the logic behind the chapter divisions. In each of the later chapters, another order of fish is described. As an example of the way in which species are described, I shall take the tench (Figure 3.9). It is a member of the *Cyprinidae* family, which also includes
eggs in the gravel. Though very shy, they are said to be extremely sportive, darting with the utmost ease up the most rapid current. Worms, the larvae of insects, and small fishes, are their ordinary food, and they love to lurk among weeds, digging in the mud with their nose, probably in quest of prey. On the approach of winter they seek the deeper parts of the river, and shelter themselves in holes under the bank, or the woof-work of locks, dams, or weirs, and similar situations. In severely cold weather, they sink into a state of partial torpidity, and may be captured by means of a landing-net, without attempting to escape.

The colour of the barbel above is olive brown, passing into yellowish green on the sides; the gill-covers are tinged with bronze, the fins of the lower parts are flesh colour.

Among the smaller fishes of our sandy, or gravelly streams and rivers, we may notice that pretty little fish the gudgeon, which, were its size equal to the delicacy of its flesh, would be in considerable request. As it is, numbers are taken in nets by the Thames fishermen, and kept alive in well-boats for sale. They may also be frequently seen alive in stone or leaden tanks in the shops of the fishmongers.

**Figure 3.9** Description of the barbel, gudgeon and tench, in *British Fish*. Notice the lack of breaks between descriptions, and the different information that is presented for each fish.
THE TENCH.

Tinca vulgaris, Cuvier, Règne Anim. i. ii. p. 373.


... Tinca, Willughby, p. 251, Q. 5, fig. 1.

Cyprinidae tinca, Bloch, pt. i. pl. 14.


... ... Bos. Brit. Fish. pl. 113.

... ... Jenyns, Brit. Vert. p. 405.

Tinca. Generic Characters.—To those common to the Gudgeons (Gobio), may be added, that the scales are very small, the mucous secretion on the surface of the body abundant, the barbules or cirri very small.

The Tench was known to the older writers, but was not held in much estimation. In the present day it inhabits most of the lakes of the European continent. In this country, though frequent in ornamental waters and ponds, it is but sparingly found in the generality of our rivers. There is some doubt whether, like the Carp, its origin be not foreign, and whether those rivers that can now boast of it are not indebted for it to the accidental escape of fish from the preserved waters of neighbouring gentlemen. In rivers it is mostly in those which are slow and deep,

Figure 3.10 Description of the tench in the History. Contrast this ‘reference work’ style with the previous figure.
to Dr. Fothergill, and are stated to have come from some of the most northern provinces in China. Hardwick's Iris-peacock (polyplectrum Hardwickii, Gray, in Illust. of Ind. Zool.) was also in the collection. This species was only known as Indian. Mr. Gray's figures were taken from General Hardwick's drawings by native artists. Among the parrots was the rose-ringed parakeet of India (palaeornis tovornius). The list is well worth the ornithologist's consideration, as showing the geographical extent of many birds common, some to Europe and Asia, others the distribution of which had always been regarded by naturalists as limited either to continental India or the Indian islands. We know less of Chinese zoology than of Australian, African, or Brazilian.

3. SONNERAT'S JUNGLE-FOWL. C2g sonneratii of Sonnerat; Jungle-Cock of the English sportsmen in India; Rahul konraok of the Mahra'tas (Gallus Sonneratii, Temminck).

4. STANLEY'S JUNGLE-FOWL (Gallus Stanleyi, Gray in Illustrations).

Under the term "Sonnerat's jungle-fowl," two species of jungle-fowl appear to have been confounded together—process, by most naturalists—although there can be no doubt of their real distinctness. Colonel Sykes, speaking in reference to the gallus Stanleyi, says, "Very abundant in the woods of the western Ghauts, where there are either two species, or two very strongly marked varieties. In the valleys, at 2,000 feet above the sea, Sonnerat's species is found slender, standing high on the legs, and with the yellow cartilaginous spots on the feathers even in the female.

In the belts of wood on the sides of the mountains, at 4,000 feet above the sea, there is a short-legged variety. The male has a great deal of red in his plumage, which Sonnerat's has not; the female is of a reddish-brown colour, and is without cartilaginous spots at all; in fact, the female of this variety is the gallus Stanleyi of Mr. Gray's Illustrations." It is apparently to both species that the following observations apply:—"Eggs exactly like those of the domestic fowl in form and colour, but less in size. The wild hen would appear to sit on a much smaller number of eggs than the domestic. As Col. Sykes shot a hen upon her nest in which were only three eggs, and the process of incubation had evidently commenced some days (we must not deduce a rule from an isolated fact). In the crop and stomach of many birds nothing whatever was found excepting the seeds of a stone-like hardness, called Job's tears (coix barbata). Irises, deep orange. The crow or call of this species (both species?) is like that of the Bantam cock." To this is added, "The domestic fowl is so abundant in the Dukhun, that in parts of the country not much frequented by Europeans, Colonel Sykes has bought from sight to twelve full-grown fowls for two shillings. Many of the hens, particularly in the villages of the Ghauts, are not to be distinguished from the wild bird, excepting only in the want of the cartilaginous spot on the wing coverns."—Proceed. Zool. Soc. 1853.

In the female of the gallus Stanleyi of Mr. Gray, as Colonel Sykes himself has shown, these cartilaginous spots are wanting, and red (as in so many of our domestic fowls) predominates in the plumage of the males. Yet looking among the jungle-fowls for one of the wild types of our domestic varieties, we would not lay great stress on these points. Knowing how soon plumage becomes modified by extrinsic causes, we see something of this in the silk fowl and in the frizzled fowl. Nor will this surprise us when we consider that one well-known domestic race is destitute of the tail and caudal vertebrae, and that another has the skin and periosseous black.

The male of gallus Sonneratii may be described as follows. Size intermediate between that of a Bantam and a game cock; but its general contour is peculiarly light and graceful, and vigour and alertness are displayed in every action. The comb is large, with a sub-serrated ridge, that is the ridge is but slightly dentated, in comparison with the comb of the gallus Bankiva. The wattles are large and double. The hackles of the neck, the wing covers on the shoulders, and the tail covets are dark greyish, with bright golden orange shafts, dilating in the centre and towards the tip into a flat, horny, and very glossy plate. In some of these feathers the shaft takes an elliptical or ear-like shape; in others it puts on the appearance of a long inverted cone, from the centre of the base of which a battledore-like process arises. The substance and appearance of these plates, have been, not
carp, and belongs to the order *Malacopterygii*, or fish with soft fin-rays. Its account takes up three pages, ending with the comment that, 'The tench is too well-known to require a particular description' (98). Whatever it is, then, the contents of those three pages are not deemed to be a 'description'. The narrator here uses 'description' in a strict zoological sense, to mean that definition which ties a specimen to its systematic name in the taxonomic system. These were the descriptions published in learned journals and monographs like *Fish of the Beagle*. An example is illustrated in Figure 3.12. Such a description included details of order, family, class and genus, a list of defining characteristics by which this species differed from other members of its genus, and a fin formula. This section was usually in Latin, which, combined with the abstract nature of the fin formula, conveys the impression of remote, technical knowledge. The description then continues in the vernacular, with a standardised description of the creature's appearance, usually accompanied by a detailed illustration and a note of its geographical location. It might end with a discussion of the origin of the specimen, and the naturalist's reasons for assigning it as a new species, as in the case of the *Lebias multidentata* newly described by Jenyns in *Fish of the Beagle*.

The 'descriptions' that were then used by other writers drew on these definition-descriptions, generally using the vernacular throughout, and giving as many or as few details as needed for their purpose. The narrator of the *History* gave very detailed descriptions that were close to the definitions, to enable his readers to positively identify fish, while the narrator of *Zoology* barely described the fish at all, merely citing them in illustration of the sorts of fish in each family. *British Fish* and the periodical articles fall between these extremes, partly because their readers were unlikely to be trying to identify specimens, but also because their focus on British fish meant that some species, such as the salmon or perch, could be assumed to be well-known. Such a claim might be backed up by a reference to the places it is found in the wild, but equally, by its common appearance in the fish-market in Billingsgate (Figure 3.13), or on the dinner plate. The gudgeon, for instance, is reported in *British Fish* to be 'taken in nets by the Thames fishermen, and kept alive in well-boats for sale. They may also be frequently seen alive in stone or leaden tanks in the shops of the fishmongers' (94). Those fish which are given fuller descriptions and their fin formulae in *British Fish* are those with which the reader is expected to be less
2. LEBIAS MULTIDENTATA. Jen.
PLATE XXII. Fig. 9.
L. corpore subelongato, subcompresso, viridevenato-fusco; lateribus fasciis angustis pannic longitudinibus aliis obscurioribus: dentibus seriebus plurimis dispositis, annulis tricuspidatis: caudali rotundata.

D. 9; A. 9; C. 20, brevibus inclusis; P. 13; Y. 6.

FORM.—The general form and proportions of this species are extremely similar to those of the last; but it differs very remarkably in having behind the anterior row of tricuspid teeth, a band of minuter teeth above and below, all of which are also tricuspid, and similarly formed to those in front. Head one-fifth of the entire length; flattened on the crown. Jaws nearly equal; upper jaw very protractile. Scales large; about thirty-two in a longitudinal line, and eight in the depth; covering all the pieces of the opercle; similar in form to those of the last species, but with the rows on the free portion finer and more numerous, the deep-set based series also rather more numerous, amounting to about fourteen, and of unequal lengths, gradually increasing from the outermost to the middle ones. Lateral line similar; also the same pores on the lower jaw. Pinn and finny-formula similar: in both species the first and last rays of the dorsal and anal are simple, and shorter than the others. The anal perhaps terminates a little nearer the caudal than the dorsal does.

COLOUR.—(In spirit.) Greenish-brown, with very little appearance of markings in its present state. There is, however, some indication of an irregular scattered row of small black spots on each side, a little below the ridge of the back; also of two or three pale longitudinal narrow bands along the middle of the sides, which were probably more conspicuous in the living fish. The belly is yellow, and very tumid; but these are evidently characters merely indicative of the female sex.

Habitat, Monte Video.

This is another new species of Lebias taken by Mr. Darwin in fresh-water at Monte Video, if indeed it strictly belong to the genus; but the circumstance of the teeth being in several rows, and in fact forming a complete band, is at variance with the generic characters as given by Cuvier. The teeth however being exactly of the same form as in the other species, and the general characters of the whole similar, I have not thought it expedient to erect it into a new genus. There is but one specimen in the collection, which appears to be a large female big with young.
A MORNING PEEP AT BILLINGSGATE,

It wants a quarter to five o'clock on a February morning. The wind, which since midnight has blown almost a gale, is moderating a little, and the driving rain is abating, when we pull the street door after us and emerge from our warm quarters near London-bridge, to pay a visit to Billingsgate. Five minutes' walk brings us to the huge sky-lighted shed which shelters the old market. It is abundantly lighted with flaring gas-burners, which the wind blows into streamers of all shapes. The flame flickers upon busy dusty forms, moving rapidly about hither and yon, arranging planks, benches, baskets, barrels, and temporary rostrums, and clearing the labyrinthine passages which intersect the numerous stalls of the dealers. There is "an ancient and fish-like smell" in the atmosphere, but comparatively few fish yet glitter on the stall-boards. The company is yet in, but thin, although the numbers are increasing fast from fresh arrivals.

Figure 3.13 The fish-market at Billingsgate, from the Leisure Hour, May 1852. This fish-market was mentioned several times in British Fish as a place to see specimens (either alive or dead) of many of the fish discussed. This description of the market could serve as a guide for those who were unfamiliar with it.
familiar, for which a 'particular description' might be necessary. Although this might suggest that the accounts of fish are presented to help the reader identify unknown fish, the layout of the book, as already discussed, in addition to the variation between the accounts, suggests otherwise. Rather, they seem to be intended to add to the reader's stock of information.

The readers of *British Fish* are told a little about the appearance of the fish, but also about its habitat, habits, food, breeding season, and suitability for eating. The longer descriptions contain anecdotes, often quoted directly from other writers, about particularly large fish, fish that were difficult to catch, the history of the introduction of the species into Britain, or proverbs and historical incidents involving fish. This range of information is apparent in the very first sentence on the tench:

> The deep pits, ponds, lakes and still, sluggish rivers of England, (and also some few parts of Scotland and Ireland,) present us with the tench (*Tenca vulgaris,* a deep-bodied slimy fish, with minute scales, and decidedly superior for the table to the carp (95).

In this one sentence, the reader is informed of the geographical distribution and preferred habitats of the tench, given a brief physical description, and told that it is better eating than the carp (which was dismissed a few pages earlier as 'in our opinion, anything but agreeable', 90). The narrator continues by noting that the tench is not indigenous to the British isles, before giving a fuller description of its favourite habitat, as:

> Deep drainage ponds of soft water, with a muddy bottom, having a luxuriant border of aquatic plants, with abundance of pond-weed throughout. In such pits or ponds, it thrives and multiplies greatly, often attaining to a considerable size, and the weight of two or three pounds. Occasionally it is said to taste rankly of some kind of weed or mud; but specimens of this fish, from some of the muddiest ponds in Essex, which a few months since were placed before the writer at table, were of very superior flavour, and finely grown. Their colour, for he saw them when alive, was very dark, with a pink tinge about and under the pectoral fins (95-6).
Just as the opening sentence contained a variety of different pieces of information, so, in this later passage, the reader is taken to and fro between different aspects of the tench: from habitat to size, to edibility, to colour. Later sentences describe the breeding season, tench’s superiority over carp as food, how to stock a pond with tench, what tench themselves eat (‘worms, larvae, and various vegetable matters’, 96), and their method of surviving the winter. This mixture of information, and the movement back and forth, is a way of providing variety between the account of one fish and that of the next. A reference work with a standard format for its descriptions becomes a tedious read after a few entries, but British Fish was supposed to be read from cover to cover, and had to guard against dullness.

The introduction of the character of the writer towards the end of the passage just quoted is another way of keeping the reader’s attention, by bringing in a personal element. The majority of the work is in the third person, with a narrator who is almost invisible except for a few remarks made in the first person plural. Although the discreet narrator was typical of natural history reference books, creating a narrator-reader relationship was an important way for British Fish to encourage the reader to read the whole book. The third-person mention of the writer at his dinner table reminds the reader that the narrative voice is connected to an actual writer, who needs to eat just like other men. The personality of the narrator is otherwise only to be deduced from his comments (‘in our opinion’) on the taste of certain fish, so the glimpse of his daily routine makes him seem more human.

Although the regular inclusion of textual or footnote references to authorities, especially the History, bolsters the credibility of the work, the personal authority of the narrator is just as important. The most usual way for demonstrating such authority was the writer’s name and credentials on the title-page of the book, as used in the History itself (see Figure 3.14), but that was something which British Fish lacked. Its only avowed ‘author’ was the Religious Tract Society, not a widely recognised ichthyological authority. The fact that the narrator informs his reader that he saw the fish when they were alive, and can testify personally to their colour, helps to create the authority of the narrator as fish-expert. Similarly, at other places in the work, the narrator stresses that ‘we have had the opportunity of seeing’ (123), and ‘we have ourselves seen’ (120) certain characteristics of trout. Some of these observations
Figure 3.14 Title-page of History of British Fishes. Notice the large coat of arms (of the Company of Fishmongers), and the name and credentials of the writer.
were made in the fish-markets of London, and are thus similar to the dinner-table observation above, but others were made by rivers and at the coast, of fish in the wild. Such ‘field’ observations are even more effective at creating the authority of the narrator than ‘domesticated’ observations could be.

The use of the first person plural is in contrast to the occasional use of the first person singular in the History, for example, in the account of the tench: ‘So engrossed are they at this time..., that I have frequently dipped out all three fish by a sudden plunge of a landing net’ (380). The use of the plural was not uncommon in anonymous writing, especially in periodicals, where the lack of an explicit author to whom the singular pronoun could be linked meant that authority came from the editorial staff and the publisher. This particular passage from the History has a stronger narrative authority than British Fish, partly through the use of ‘I’, and partly because of the action involved in catching, rather than passively seeing, the fish. However, some usages of the plural pronoun in British Fish have the advantage of including the reader in the narrative. For instance, in the opening sentence of the account of the tench, the narrator writes that ‘the rivers of England... present us with the tench’ (95, my italics); and later, ‘of its fecundity we may form some estimate, when we learn from Bloch that...’ (96, my italics). In these instances, the narrator invites the reader to join him, to explore the rivers of England and to make deductions together. Thus, the use of the first-person plural here helps to create a narrator-reader relationship that is both closer and more equal than that suggested by the authoritative ‘I’ in the History.

The inclusion of anecdotes in British Fish illustrates another method of keeping the reader’s interest, at the same time as forging the narrator-reader relationship. In the case of the tench, the narrator moves from a discussion of the fish’s winter habits, when they ‘retire to holes and snug recesses’, to their ability to survive even when ‘blocked up in their retreats... as long as they are bedewed with water and their gills kept wet’ (96-7). This is followed by a page-long anecdote about some people clearing out a pond, who discovered a trapped tench ‘of most singular form, having literally assumed the shape of the hole in which... he had been for many years confined’ (97). Such anecdotes enliven the narrative. However, not all of the anecdotes were witnessed directly by the narrator. The story of the strange-shaped
tench occurred in no fewer than four of the works on fish. In *British Fish*, it is attributed to ‘Daniel, in his Rural Sports,… quoted by Mr. Yarrell’ (97). In Yarrell’s *History* and the *Saturday Magazine*, the episode is attributed to Daniel.\textsuperscript{56} The story appears again, paraphrased, in the *Penny Magazine*, where it is used as a filler after an article on ‘Domestic economy: boiling food’.\textsuperscript{57} The excerpt is attributed only to Yarrell’s *History*. Although Daniel was the original authority for the episode, Yarrell’s repetition gave it additional authority.

Anecdotes can allow another narrative voice to speak to the reader, as when the tench episode is recounted in *British Fish* as a direct quotation.\textsuperscript{58} This gives the reader some variety, and perhaps a brief respite from the main narration, and the primary narrator gets the credit for introducing the reader to the sub-narrator. Assuming the anecdote is relevant and amusing, the primary narrator may be able to increase the reader’s trust in his selection of facts and sources, thus improving the narrator-reader relationship. Most of the anecdotes which are narrated directly by the primary narrator are conducted in the third person – unlike some of the first person comments testifying to having seen fish of an unusual size, or colour – but they nevertheless contribute to the reader’s image of the narrator as a knowledgeable man with a range of interesting information at his pen-nib. These anecdotes include accounts of how fish are caught, by line or net, from ship or shore, as well as the origins of their names. The John Dory is a fish which comes in for special attention. The French call it *jaune dorée* (gilded yellow), while its Italian name is *II janitore* (gatekeeper), and John Dory could be a corruption of either. The Italian choice of name occasions a footnote from the narrator:

> This name is an allusion to St. Peter, who took the tribute money from the fish at the command of our Lord, and who, in Roman Catholic countries, is supposed to bear the keys of heaven; a black spot on each side the fish is superstitiously imagined to indicate the pressure of the apostle’s thumb and finger – but the haddock may on this account put in a claim (79).

\textsuperscript{56} Yarrell, *British Fishers*, 377; ‘Freshwater fish VIII: the tench’ *Saturday Magazine* 19 (02/10/1841): 132-3, on 133.

\textsuperscript{57} ‘Tenacity of life in a tench’ *Penny Magazine* 11 (29/01/1842): 36.

\textsuperscript{58} In the *Saturday Magazine*, the same words are used, but they are not acknowledged as a quotation.
We have already seen how the Scriptures were given prominence in the first chapter, and we shall see the Atonement brought in again as the climax to the work, but this is an example of one of the few theological allusions in the body of the work. By introducing this subject at all, the narrator is reiterating the Christian tone which is intended to pervade the whole work. Accusing Roman Catholics of superstition was a common device among evangelicals, and the remark about the haddock’s claim to St. Peter’s touch is intended to illustrate the ridiculousness of the belief. In addition, the simple reference to Jesus as ‘our Lord’ brings the redeemer back to the reader’s attention.

The final chapter of British Fish addresses the cartilaginous family, including the sturgeon, dog-fish, sharks, rays and lampreys. This chapter is much like the preceding ones until we reach the last fish, the myxine (Gastrobranchus coecus). Linnaeus had classed it as a worm, but it is to be given a place among the British fish, albeit as ‘one of the lowest in structural organization’ (189). Its under-developed appearance and curious habits provide one last gruesome anecdote. It is often found inside the bodies of other fish, and Cuvier claimed that it attacks and pierces these fish. The narrator ends his description with the observation that ‘on some parts of our eastern coast it is called the borer’:

Here terminates our sketch of the fish and fisheries of our British islands – a sketch, indeed, for our limited space will allow no more. Yet we trust that the reader, desirous of some general information on the subject, will not be altogether disappointed. To those who wish to make this portion of zoology a study, Mr Yarrell’s work on British Fishes is indispensable (190).

Although the description of fish does finish there, the book clearly does not, as Figure 3.15 shows, despite the seeming appropriateness of ending with a recommendation, almost an encouragement, for further study.

Announcing the end of the book is itself unusual in natural history works, but continuing for a further two pages of concluding remarks is even more so. The History, the SPCK Fishes and the Zoology all stop dead at the end of the last entry. Such a sudden termination fits the format of a reference work with discrete entries, as
myxine, or glutinous hag, (Gastrobrachus oculus.) It is a deadly foe to fish, into the bodies of which it enters, in some way not well understood, and devours the whole of the flesh. Nilsson says, that several have been found in the body of a single haddock, which was all eaten away internally. The cod-fishers of Scarborough and Berwick often capture this fish in the bodies of cod or haddock drawn up by their lines, and some believe it enters their mouth while they are held by the hook. But Cuvier says, it attacks and pierces the fish; aided, perhaps, by the sense of touch implanted in its feeders, it may have the power of suddenly fixing itself by means of its hooked palatal teeth, and then boring and rasping with its lingual teeth, insinuate itself beneath the skin, and gradually work its way into the very body of its victim. Indeed, on some parts of our eastern coast it is called the borer.

Here terminates our sketch of the fish and fisheries of our British islands—a sketch, indeed, for our limited space will allow no more. Yet we trust that the reader, desirous of some general information on the subject, will not be altogether disappointed. To those who wish to make this portion of zoology a study, Mr. Yarrell's work on British Fishes is indispensable.

CONCLUSION.

We ought not to conclude, however, without a thankful recognition of that adorable Being who made "the seas and all that is therein." How true it is that "God is love!" Every examination of his works, as the Creator, furnishes illustrations of this fact, and may prepare us to acknowledge with gratitude that pre-eminent exhibition of his kindness, which he made in the gift of an Almighty Saviour. "In this was manifested the love of God toward us, because that God sent his only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through him. Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins," 1 John iv. 9, 10.

The same gracious disposition which was evinced in this gift—a gift which the apostasy of our race had rendered necessary—had been previously displayed in the multiplication of objects adapted to promote man's earthly happiness. How wonderfully conducive to our welfare are the qualities which the Creator has imparted to the raining tenants of the waters! The amount of nutritious food, agreeable to the palate and diversified in flavour, some adapted for the digestive powers of the robust, and some for the delicate stomach of the invalid, derivable from rivers, lakes, and seas, is incalculable; while the convenience of man is promoted by the employment, in useful manufactures, of kinds and parts of fish which are not suitable for food. The contemplative mind may see in all this man's obligations to the Creator and Preserver of the universe. Alas, that we should have rebelled against so much goodness! Alas, that any should be inattentive to the message of reconciliation! Is the reader one who has hitherto preferred distance from God to that communion with him which is to be enjoyed through the mediation of his Son? Let him hearken to the invitations of mercy, and in the spirit of the repentant prodigal say, "I will arise and go to my father." Let him avail himself without delay of that benign arrangement, by which the renewing influences of the Holy Ghost are imparted to every believer, and guilty outcasts are accepted, through the righteousness of our Lord and Saviour, in a way consistent with the integrity of the Divine character and the supremacy of the Divine law.
there is no continued narrative that needs to be wound up. The main text of the
*History*, for instance, has no progressive narrative structure – no beginning, middle or
end of the narration – and no climax. Nor would a reader expect this from a work of
reference, which was unlikely to be read as a whole. *British Fish*, however, does have
narrative movement, from the history of fish, through modern fisheries, to the
description of species. In completing this movement with concluding remarks and a
theological climax, the narrator closes his work, indicating yet again that he is
working in a different genre to that of the reference work or textbook. The SPCK
writer had combined aspects of the continuous prose of the RTS narrator, and the
model of the reference work, to produce a work with narration around its descriptions.
Yet there is no conclusion to the SPCK *Fishes*, which ends the with the comment:
‘There are one or two other species of the genus [lampreys] found in our waters, but
they are small, and of no importance’ (324). The lack of conclusion is potentially
unsettling for the reader, who has followed the narrator through the book for, it seems,
no purpose beyond learning about fish. The reader of the RTS work, on the other
hand, is given a conclusion, so that the work is clearly finished off in a way that the
SPCK one is not. The reader gains a sense of achievement for having made it to the
end, and discovering that there is a greater purpose to the book than listing facts.

Immediately following his recommendation of Yarrell’s *History*, the narrator of
*British Fish* begins a new paragraph and a new page: ‘We ought not to conclude,
however, without a thankful recognition of that adorable Being who made “the seas
and all that is therein”. How true it is that “God is love!”’(191) The last two pages of
the work complete the framing that was begun in the first chapter, by bringing the
reader back to the subject of religion. But where in the first chapter the narrator set up
his theological framework and mentioned the atonement, but made no attempt at
conversion, he is far more explicit in the final pages. This is the ‘moral’ to the rest of
the work, and the narrator takes on quite a different tone, becoming more dogmatic
and awe-struck (‘How true...!’, ‘How wonderful...!’), and ultimately appealing
directly to the reader to save his soul. Despite the claim in the preceding paragraph
that the sketch ‘here terminates’, the acknowledgement of God’s love and the call to
salvation which follows it, was a crucial part of the work for the RTS – as it was not
for the SPCK. But, having announced the end of the work on p190 and produced a
suitable closing paragraph, the writer had to ensure that his reader kept reading until
To do this, the writer had to rely on the relationship he had created between narrator and reader throughout the preceding chapters of the book. Given a sufficiently strong relationship, in which the reader has grown to trust the narrator as a reliable, interesting and authoritative voice, the reader should be willing to treat the last two pages as integral to the work simply because the narrator says they are: 'We *ought not* to conclude... without...' (my italics). This transition may seem rather abrupt, but throughout the work, the reader has become accustomed to the narrator introducing anecdotes and moving from one subject to another and back again. If the final transition is any more abrupt, it is because evangelical conversion was supposed to be a life-changing moment, often precipitated by a surprise, or a forced change of viewpoint.

The narrative which leads to the call to salvation is predicated on the evidences that 'God is love' provided by the natural world. 'Every examination of his works, as the Creator, furnishes illustrations of this fact, and may prepare us to acknowledge with gratitude that pre-eminent exhibition of his kindness, which he made in the gift of an Almighty Saviour' (191). Nature is not called upon to prove the existence of God, but to prove his benevolence, which the reader must accept to be able to understand how Christ's death could become an atonement for the sins of mankind. The nature of the 'gift' is explained in a direct quote from I John 4:9-10 ('God sent his only begotten Son that we might live through him...'), and the narrator adds parenthetically that the gift had been 'rendered necessary' by 'the apostasy of our race'. This comment prefigures the emphasis on man's rebellion which will be the motive force behind the call for salvation on the final page.

Before moving on, however, the narrator again emphasises God's concern for 'man's earthly happiness', and relates this to the subject matter of *British Fish* (see Figure 3.15, foot of page 191). In contrast to many works in the natural theology genre, where every example of the benevolence of God mentioned in the main text would have been flagged and emphasised, *British Fish* leaves this all to the end. The edibility and taste of fish, as well as their uses to man, have been mentioned throughout the work, but not until this point is the reader asked to regard them as evidences of divine benevolence. In this way, the point is not over-stressed, and comes as a logical conclusion. And on this rests the final passage of the book:
Alas, that we should have rebelled against so much goodness! Alas, that any should be inattentive to the message of reconciliation! Is the reader one who has hitherto preferred distance from God to that communion with him which is to be enjoyed through the mediation of his Son? Let him hearken to the invitations of mercy, and in the spirit of the repentant prodigal say, 'I will arise and go to my father.' Let him avail himself without delay of that benign arrangement, by which the renewing influences of the Holy Ghost are imparted to every believer, and guilty outcasts are accepted, through the righteousness of our Lord and Saviour, in a way consistent with the integrity of the Divine character and the supremacy of the Divine law (192).

This is the climax of the work. For the first time, the narrator appeals directly to the reader in a series of imperative statements, and urges him 'without delay' to renew his soul in the mercy of God. At the beginning of this passage, the narrator continues the use of the first-person plural, and puts himself in the same group, mankind, as the reader, deploring that 'we should have rebelled' (my italics). However, as the next sentence implies, mankind is in fact divided into two groups, the saved and the unsaved. The narrator is clearly placed in the first group, but the question is, where is the reader? Here, the writer has to tread a thin line – the books of the Monthly Series were, like all RTS publications, to contain the message of conversion for those who needed it, but, unlike most other RTS publications, they were also to be suitable for 'the educated families of our land', who may be assumed to be already converted. The reader, therefore, may be in either the saved or unsaved group of men, and the conclusion to British Fish must be read in (at least) two ways.

The narrator asks the question 'Is the reader one who has hitherto preferred distance from God...?', and the rest of the conclusion appears to be addressed to the reader who has answered positively to this question, in other words, the reader who is not an evangelical Christian. The narrator urges this reader to take note of the 'invitations of mercy', and to return to God as the prodigal finally returned to his father's welcome. And lest he prevaricate, he is reminded that this welcome is assured to 'every believer', even the 'guilty outcasts', for God has said that Jesus died for all men's sins, and God is 'righteous' and 'consistent'. The repetition of the imperative 'Let
him...' emphasises the urgency with which this reconciliation should be effected, for although it is never too late in life to return to the fold, the risk of dying without God's grace should be avoided. This shift from the objective narrative tone used to discuss species of fish to a direct and impassioned plea to the reader to save himself gains in impact from its placement at the very end of the book, as the message the reader takes away.

However, although the passage refers to 'the mediation of his Son', 'the invitations of mercy' and 'that benign arrangement', it does not actually say what the reader should do to be saved. There is no set of instructions for action. This suggests that the writer was perhaps thinking more of his second group of readers, those who were already close to God. Such readers have already accepted the mediation of Christ, and might be thought not to need the reminder contained in this passage. However, one of the characteristics of justification through faith, rather than through works, was that it was difficult for evangelicals to be secure in their belief in being saved. They expected and received no sign of approbation, but had to trust their faith. Thus, a reminder that God had promised to save all who believed in him, even the extreme cases of guilty outcasts, could come as a timely reassurance for the reader whose faith was wavering, and would not be taken amiss by those of strong faith.

Conclusions

Although the Monthly Series works were not to be secular, they had to be superficially similar to secular works in order to reach their targets. Rather than producing scriptural natural histories, natural theologies or works with an obvious devotional tone, the RTS developed a style with many similarities to the secular works, but with the addition of a theological framework at beginning and end, and occasional references designed to maintain Christian tone in the body of the work. The theology was thus clearly present, but not so over-powering as to discourage the casual reader. Where many of its competitors were praised for being 'instructive and entertaining', the Monthly Series was praised by its reviewers for containing 'an almost inexhaustible store of entertaining, instructive, and, above all, Christian
him...’ emphasises the urgency with which this reconciliation should be effected, for although it is never too late in life to return to the fold, the risk of dying without God’s grace should be avoided. This shift from the objective narrative tone used to discuss species of fish to a direct and impassioned plea to the reader to save himself gains in impact from its placement at the very end of the book, as the message the reader takes away.

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Although the Monthly Series works were not to be secular, they had to be superficially similar to secular works in order to reach their targets. Rather than producing scriptural natural histories, natural theologies or works with an obvious devotional tone, the RTS developed a style with many similarities to the secular works, but with the addition of a theological framework at beginning and end, and occasional references designed to maintain Christian tone in the body of the work. The theology was thus clearly present, but not so over-powering as to discourage the casual reader. Where many of its competitors were praised for being ‘instructive and entertaining’, the Monthly Series was praised by its reviewers for containing ‘an almost inexhaustible store of entertaining, instructive, and, above all, Christian
This set of adjectives is a good description of how the RTS wished the Monthly Series to be seen.

By putting the hundred separate works into a series and marketing them together, the Society was trying to create a uniform identity for them. This ought to encourage someone who had read one to read another, while as a whole, the respectable Christian reputation would recommend the Series to families, schools and parish libraries. But packaging or marketing would not have sold the Series if the contents did not meet expectations. As one reviewer acknowledged, the interdenominational membership of the Society, and the wide audience at which their works were aimed made it 'absolutely impossible that it should... please them all'. Despite this difficulty, and the variation among their writers' personal styles, the Society did succeed in creating a regular, dependable and trustworthy style, such that reviewers were willing to remark of a new volume in the Series, that 'It might be a sufficient recommendation of this publication to say, that it is one of the excellent series of Monthly Volumes published by the Religious Tract Society.'

I have used the example of British Fish to show how its writer created a narrative voice which led the reader through natural history, God the creator, his revelation, and the atonement. The RTS committee asked the writer of British Fish to write six of the works in the Series, which suggests that his version of Christian tone met with their approval. The Christian tone of the narrative voice was intended to control readers, to encourage them to read on, and to consider the theological framework as integral. By the end of British Fish, readers would have learnt general information about fish species in Britain, as would be suitable for use in conversation, been told where to go to find out more, and had the relevance and importance of Christian faith brought to their attention. The non-Christian reader should have grown to trust the narrator during their exploration together of the habits and haunts of British fish, and would be forcibly struck by the message of the atonement. Ideally, such a 'word in season'

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60 'The Leisure Hour' The Baptist Magazine 44 (1852): 229.
would lead to the reader's conversion, or failing that, to the beginnings of some serious spiritual enquiry. Meanwhile, the Christian reader would understand how fish should be fitted with faith, and would henceforth be able to judge secular works as wanting, and infidel works as corrupt.
Chapter Four

Writing for Christ

I would enter into a long train of events which have tried me sadly; some connected with the failure of Publishers..., others with domestic transactions I would willingly forget were it possible. In addition to these, I could explain to you how, for months and months, I have received no order of any great importance from any publisher – how my days have been spent in restless anxiety, and my nights in mental agony.

William Martin, 1853

The condition of writers was much debated in the 1840s and 1850s, for thanks to the growth of the periodicals, ‘writers were never so numerous as at the present time’, yet relations between writers and publishers were strained, with both groups citing examples of the lack of respect with which they were treated by the other. Despite the great success of a few, there were still large numbers of poverty-stricken writers. Some commentators celebrated the fact that, ‘Literature has become a profession. It is a means of subsistence, almost as certain as the bar or the church.’ But others countered that, ‘It is much worse than nonsense for Mr. Thackeray to stand up at a Literary-Fund club dinner, and tell us that all authors might be comfortable and independent if they pleased.’ Between the poles of the wealthy and the impoverished was the growing number of writers who were just making a respectable living. Most of those who wrote for the RTS came from this group. They could get by, but it was difficult, and commentators disagreed whether the blame lay with the publishers, the book-buying public, the government, or the writers themselves.

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1 RLF 1315.3 Martin to RLF, 11/04/1853.
2 Advice to Authors, Inexperienced Writers, and Possessors of Manuscripts, on the Publication of Books intended for General Circulation or Private Distribution, with Select Specimens of Printing (London, c1853), [i].
3 [Lewes, G.H.], ‘The condition of authors in England, Germany and France’ Fraser’s Magazine 35 (1847): 285-95, at 285.
4 ‘Authors and publishers [1],’ New Quarterly Review 3 (1854): 9-17, at 10.
5 Authors and publishers [1] blamed the publishers; ‘Condition of authors’ implicated the government; ‘Pendennis: the literary profession’ North British Review 13 (1850): 335-72, blamed the authors’ moral habits, but gave some responsibility to the public for the poor remuneration of unknown authors, 355.
Although authorship was often referred to as a profession, this status was still problematic. Unlike other professions, there were no entrance requirements for literary work, 'no articles to be subscribed – no probationary dinners to be eaten – no examinations to be undergone – no qualifications to be tested – no degrees to be taken – no diplomas to be granted'. In the absence of gate-keeping qualifications, the membership of the nascent 'profession' could not be tightly defined. As well as those writers who hoped to make their living from literature, authorship was open to 'barristers with scarce briefs, and physicians with few patients, clergymen on small livings, idle women, rich men, and a large crop of aspiring noodles'. This meant that there was little group identity among writers, and that unlike the lawyer or the physician, 'the professional author is surrounded with rivals, not only as hungry as himself, but willing and able to work for lower wages, because they are not, as he is, solely dependent upon literature'. Those arguing for the professionalisation of science also wished to exclude part-time practitioners of the sciences, and to insist on expertise, to be demonstrated by new university courses in the sciences, as an entry requirement. In contrast, there was no obvious way to exclude literate people from authorship.

For the RTS, however, the range of people involved in authorship was a benefit. It needed not just competent writers, but competent Christian writers. Henry Curwen argued in his *History of the Booksellers* (1873) that 'talent certainly, if not genius, is only the product of the requirements of the time and place', and that as soon as writers for cheap books were in demand, 'men thoroughly competent and thoroughly earnest, came forward to supply the want'. These men were 'acted upon invisibly, insensibly, and inevitably, by the true, if word-worn, laws of supply and demand'. But the relatively small demand from publishers for Christian writers, compared with the growth areas of secular, infidel and immoral publishing, meant that there were relatively few professional Christian writers. Without clergymen, physicians, and

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7 'Pendennis', 369-70.
8 'Condition of authors', 285.
9 'Condition of authors', 294-5.
women working part-time, the RTS would have had trouble recruiting enough writers to put its secular publishing programme into action.

Nigel Cross estimated that there were around 20,000 persistent writers during the nineteenth century, where that term describes 'book writers who attempted to sustain their literary activity over a number of years', either full-time or part-time. Of these, he suggested that fewer than 1,000 have received any serious study, since most existing studies of authorship focus on the English literary canon, sometimes extended to include a few 'great' non-fiction writers. Attempts to uncover the body of writers as a whole have tended to be institutionally rather than individually focused, examining in particular the development of professional bodies, such as the Society of Authors. Cross used the files of the Royal Literary Fund (1788), a benevolent organisation for the relief of authors in distress, to seek out the individual 'common writer'. However, since he selected as his subjects those who 'were relatively well known at the time and whose work is above the run of the mill', the relatively unknown writers of textbooks, encyclopaedias, popular science, and popular non-fiction in general, remain neglected.

This chapter investigates the realities of writing for a living, with particular emphasis on the combination of writing and evangelism needed for the RTS. This involves bringing studies of authorship to bear on the lives of a group of non-fiction writers whose works influenced thousands of readers without receiving literary praise. Writers are often presented as the driving force behind published works, but by leaving my discussion of them until now, I hope to have emphasised the power of the publisher and the commercial marketplace over what any individual writer wrote. An analysis of the way in which the Society perceived and represented its writers, will provide a revealing foil to the subsequent discussion of why writers chose to work for the RTS, how writing was fitted around other demands on their time and pens.

14 Bonham-Carter, *Authors*.
15 Cross, Common writer, 4-5.
In 1850, the *North British Review* presented writing as a moral and spiritual occupation, saying, ‘It is no small thing to influence public opinion – to guide men to light from darkness, to truth from error – to inform the ignorant, to solace the unhappy, to afford high intellectual enjoyment to the few, or healthy recreation to the many. Of all professions, worthily pursued, it is the least selfish.’

The reviewer’s vision of the writer leading his readers ‘to light from darkness, to truth from error’ could be taken as a description of enlightenment through education in profane knowledge, but it was also meant to apply to sacred knowledge. Direct benefits to the writers themselves were dismissed as ‘mere worldly gains’, of far less eternal importance. Thus, the ideal Christian writer was like the minister in having a vocation for spreading the gospel, albeit through the medium of print rather than the pulpit or the personal visit. Writing was a ‘ministry of the press’ or a ‘literary labour in the cause of Christian truth’. John Kennedy’s son expressed this in his account of his father’s writing:

> Few, if any, of his books, as he clearly saw and said, are likely to be remembered long after he is forgotten; but they have served their purpose, they have been useful in their own day; they have strengthened many in weakness, enlightened many in darkness, comforted many in grief. With this he was content, as well he might be.

Biographies and obituaries emphasised the Christian vocation of their subjects. The *Visitor* editor, Esther Copley was ‘early in life… brought to a knowledge of Christ as the only and all-sufficient Saviour; and was constrained by love to him, to devote her talents to his service’. As a woman, she was unable to consider being ordained, so she played her part through her writing, and through her role as a minister’s wife. Her contemporary, George Mogridge, known to RTS readers as ‘Old Humphrey’, was also

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16 ‘Pendennis’, 371.
17 ‘Pendennis’, 371.
19 Kennedy, J., *Old Highland Days: the reminiscences of Dr John Kennedy, with a sketch of his later life by his son, Howard Angus Kennedy, with twenty-two portraits and illustrations* (London, 1901), 246.
brought to a literary career 'under the evident leadings of Divine Providence'. He had been apprenticed, but gave up prospects of a business career for Christian writing, 'for which the qualities of his heart and peculiar talents so eminently qualified him'.

For evangelical lay people, serving Christ through their life was a serious issue. It could be done by giving money to the big evangelical organisations, by joining the committee of a local society for domestic mission work, by teaching in a Sunday School, or by visiting the poor and the sick. Such activities usually had to be combined with another occupation which earned money to support the Christian and his family during their earthly life. Married women could devote significant proportions of their time to Christian works without worrying about remuneration, but ministers and writers were among the very few who could combine Christian works with earning potential. The financial dimension of Christian writing was rarely mentioned in accounts which emphasised devotion to faith and to serving others. The ambivalent nature of Christian writing made it widely attractive, and only a small proportion of all Christian writers were solely dependent on it. Starving curates could write for money while remaining true to their vocation and increasing their reputation as men of godly learning. Evangelicals in other professions, with little money to spare, could write for the cause. Wealthy men could find in writing a worthy way to spend their hours, and might even waive the payment as it was 'all for a good cause'.

The RTS ‘stable’ of writers included all these groups, whose common characteristics were commitment to evangelical faith and the ability to express themselves well in writing.

Faith alone was not enough to make a successful Christian writer, as the committee was well aware, due to the vast number of unsolicited manuscripts received which were not up to the Society’s standard. This standard required works to be well written, not just in their use of English, but in the manner in which they introduced non-denominational Christianity. They had to be ‘put together in a comprehensive and orderly manner’. Each topic should have ‘its proper place, and... [be] fully and satisfactorily discussed, nothing material... being omitted’. The examples and facts introduced should be ‘beautiful and striking’, yet ‘backed with sound reasoning’. But

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21 ‘The last hours of Old Humphrey’ Christian Spectator (1854): 82.
in addition, the arguments should be made ‘on the sound basis of Christian principles’, and the works had to be entirely ‘free from anything that could be deemed objectionable by any class of the Society’s friends’.\(^{22}\) When the Society advertised a prize essay on the state of the working classes, it received 176 submissions.\(^{23}\) Of these, forty were deemed worth reading in detail, and only ten were considered for the prizes.\(^{24}\) No doubt a prize essay competition attracted a wider range of potential writers than the Society would normally deal with, but the numbers give some idea of how few writers could meet the Society’s standard.

The Christian writer was also required to produce good copy, i.e. clear handwriting, on regular sheets of paper. Legible copy was always a wise move for an aspiring writer who needed to catch the attention of an over-burdened editor, but it was presented to the Christian as a duty to the compositor. An article in the *Leisure Hour* urged potential contributors to remember that the compositor was paid by piece work, and thus needed to be able to work rapidly. ‘He has, therefore, a right to legible copy, and those who set before him a scrawl of puzzling hieroglyphics, whatever they may intend, do virtually pick his pocket by diminishing his wages.’\(^{25}\) This also entailed the use of only one side of fresh paper, as those writers who tried to save money by using ‘torn and angular fragments of letters and notes, of covers of periodicals, grey, drab or green, written in thick round hand over the small print’ were just as guilty of starving the compositor as those with poor handwriting.\(^{26}\)

Underlying these requirements was an assumption of ability in writing *per se*. Whereas the Christian writing for vocation was supposed to be above questions of money, the portrayal of the secular writer as a professional, essentially similar to other members of the learned professions, meant that he or she was assumed to be making an income from writing.\(^{27}\) But ideally, the professional writer also had an ‘unmistakable vocation’ to enlighten and provide recreation, which helped to make

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\(^{22}\) RTS ECM, 11/03/1851.
\(^{23}\) RTS Report (1851): 90.
\(^{24}\) RTS ECM, 14/01, 04/03, and 13/05/1851.
\(^{25}\) ‘Hints to our contributors’ *Leisure Hour* 4 (1854): 317.
\(^{26}\) ‘Hints to our contributors’ *Leisure Hour* 4 (1854): 318, 317.
\(^{27}\) For instance, [Lewes], ‘Condition of authors’, and ‘Pendennis’, where the predominant, although not only, image for authorship is as a profession.
his work a profession, in contradistinction to a trade.\textsuperscript{28} Publishing, for instance, was 'a trade, and, like all other trades, undertaken with the one object of making money by it.'\textsuperscript{29} Writers who were too close to the trade, who produced 'mere compilations, ...hack-work, and are paid for as such', were seen as menial, and represented as 'mere composing machines', producing unoriginal works, purely for money.\textsuperscript{30} Without vocation, they could not hope to be creative or original. Unlike the representations of the professional writer, those of the hack were likely to include references to the physical conditions of production, particularly living conditions in 'the attic, the broken teacup as an inkstand, and the blanket for all covering'.\textsuperscript{31} While the hack toiled, the identification of authorship with the learned professions linked the writer with mental, not physical work.

An alternative image was presented in \textit{Chambers's Journal}, which used the term 'authorcraft'.\textsuperscript{32} This recognised the manual effort and labour involved in authorship, while allowing it to retain the status of a highly skilled occupation. The Rev. Thomas Binney also stressed the hard work involved in literature, when he made the central lesson of his Exeter Hall lecture to the YMCA in 1854, that the writer must 'work and toil – toil and work'.\textsuperscript{33} However, since most writers were from the middle classes, the manual work involved was usually glossed over, and authorship was only rarely presented as a craft. Thus, like money and commerce, the labour involved in writing was omitted from the picture of the ideal Christian writer.

\textsuperscript{28} [Lewes], 'Condition of authors', 285.
\textsuperscript{29} 'Pendennis', 349.
\textsuperscript{30} [Lewes], 'Condition of authors', 290; 'Pendennis', n, 335. On the eighteenth-century distinction between the author as above financial concerns and the Grub Street hack, see Brewer, J., \textit{The Pleasures of the Imagination: English culture in the eighteenth century} (London, 1997), 144-51.
\textsuperscript{31} [Lewes], 'Condition of authors', 293.
\textsuperscript{32} 'The authors of calamities' \textit{Chambers's Journal} ns 7 (1847): 129-31, at 129.
\textsuperscript{33} Binney, T., 'Authorship' \textit{Exeter Hall Lectures on behalf of the YMCA} 9 (1854), 14-15.
The RTS Writers

When the first impressions of the Monthly Series were issued, only four writers' names appeared on title-pages. Later impressions revealed the names of three more writers, but the majority of the volumes remained completely anonymous. Through archival work, I have been able to identify all of the writers, with at least a name. There were forty-four of them, although my focus for the rest of this chapter will be on the forty who wrote original works for the Series. For some I have little more than a name; a few, mostly ministers, were made the subject of memoirs after their deaths; others, mostly professional writers, wrote letters of appeal to the Royal Literary Fund seeking help during illness or old age. Clearly, therefore, the following discussion will focus most on those writers for whom more information is available. A summary of biographical information is provided in the appendix.

Before focusing on specific examples, I want to give some idea of the composition of the group as a whole. There were five women, and thirty-five men. Of the women, four were unmarried and one of these supported herself solely by writing. Of the men, twenty-three were ordained, two were physicians, one was a banker, two were science lecturers and writers, five made a living from writing alone (including two of the ordained34), and the other three appear to have had independent means. There was a clear majority of men, and particularly of ordained men, among these writers – and three of the women were closely related to ordained men.35 Despite the numerous denominations represented by the Society's subscribers, most writers whose denominations are known (Figure 4.1) were Baptists, Congregationalists or members of the Church of England, in relatively equal proportions – thus giving dissent a 2:1 majority over the Church, in contrast to the half-and-half rule for committee membership. A similar proportion holds true among the ordained writers, although in this case, the Congregationalists significantly outnumber the Baptists. In 1850, the average age of the group was 46 years, although the ordained writers were generally younger than the lay writers, by almost five years. Among the ordained writers, the

34 Thomas Milner's health forced him to resign his pulpit; Charles Williams was the RTS editor. Both remained ministers, but without charge.
35 Despite the large printed output of nineteenth-century ministers and clergy, there has as yet been no detailed study of this group as writers.
Figure 4.1 The denominations, where known, of the RTS writers, and specifically of the ordained writers.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Denomination</th>
<th>Number of writers</th>
<th>Number of ordained men</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Church of England</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Baptist</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Congregationalist</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Secession Church of Scotland</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unknown</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 4.2 Dates of birth, where known, of ordained writers. Notice the contrast between the denominations.
Congregationalists were mostly in their forties, while the Baptists were around 15 years younger. The Anglicans were either young, or nearing retirement (see Figure 4.2). This strongly suggests that the RTS writers were not simply those who needed money, as this would have produced a predominance of curates and young ministers.

Many of the writers came to the RTS through personal connections, either directly with committee members or through acquaintances who were already RTS writers. The connection could spread through families. Two of the women writers were the daughters of RTS committee members, and one of the young Anglican clergymen was the son of the Superintendent. Selina Bunbury wrote extensively for the RTS herself, and was probably responsible for encouraging her brother and her cousin, both of whom were clergymen, to write occasionally. Evangelicalism also provided networks of connections, particularly within denominations and through involvement in the major interdenominational societies. These networks were especially strong in London, as so many organisations were run from London and needed committee members. Provincial evangelicals could tap into these networks, especially if they came to London for the May meetings, and visited prominent members of their denomination, perhaps recommended by a ‘friend of a friend’. Evangelicals who were active in their local denominational union, or their Bible Society auxiliary, could also come into contact with the London-based evangelicals, and hence be invited to write for the RTS.

The connections between Congregationalist ministers and laymen provide a good example of this. John Kennedy had met John Stoughton before moving to London, through the Congregational Union. Both Stoughton and Kennedy were active in the BFBS, the LMS and the Evangelical Alliance, and they were both members of Sub Rosa, a monthly lunch-meeting for select London-based ministers. One of Stoughton’s friends in his congregation was Thomas Coombs, a member of the RTS committee. George Smith was a friend and neighbour of Kennedy’s, as well as

36 Thalia Henderson was the daughter of the Honorary Secretary, Ebeneezer Henderson; Miss Stokes was the daughter of George Stokes, co-editor.
37 Kennedy, Old Highland days, 152.
38 See Kennedy, Old Highland days and Lewis, G.K., John Stoughton DD: A short record of a long life (London, 1898).
being on the LMS committee. Another of Kennedy’s friends was the Baptist minister Joseph Angus, and Angus was the brother-in-law of another RTS committee member, Joseph Gurney. Kennedy, as minister to the Stepney meeting house, would also have known John Cox, the curate at Stepney, who had been writing for the RTS for two years before Kennedy’s arrival in London.

The evangelicals who formed these networks tended to be of roughly the same age and background, and this helps to explain the predominance of Congregationalists in their forties among the writers – the RTS committee had a similar structure. Of those copyright committee members whose denominations can be determined, there were four dissenters to one Anglican (and three unknowns), suggesting that the RTS was similar to the BFBS, in that, despite the half-and-half rule for executive committee membership, the dissenting members were more active behind the scenes. These personal links also explain why, although the initial list of writers who were asked to contribute to the Monthly Series was roughly half Church and half dissent, those writers who were asked at a later stage were predominantly dissenting.

Not all RTS writers, of course, had personal connections. Of the Baptist ministers, we have already seen that the oldest, Angus, was related to a copyright committee member, but two others were completely unknown to the RTS. Samuel Manning wrote to offer a Monthly Volume, and Henry Dunckley entered a prize essay competition. Not only were these two ministers a decade or more younger than the Stoughton-Kennedy group, they were not based in London. In their cases, it was the name and reputation of the RTS which encouraged them to submit works. For Manning, at least, the RTS was his entry into national evangelical circles, rather than vice versa.

In addition to the ordained writers, the other distinct sub-group among the RTS writers is those trying to make a living from full-time writing. Most in this group had had previous careers, which, for various reasons they had exchanged for authorship.

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41 Kennedy, *Old Highland days*, 249.
42 Howsam notes that membership of the general and print committees in the BFBS was equally split between Church and dissent, but that Anglicans were more numerous in the more visible audit committee, Howsam, L., *Cheap Bibles: nineteenth-century publishing and the British and Foreign Bible Society* (Cambridge, 1991), 28.
One of these professional writers was Charles Williams, the RTS editor, but since his position gave him a regular salary, and removed him from the vicissitudes of making a living by freelance writing, my discussion of professional writers will focus on the other six. Of these, three wrote mostly on the sciences, which, coupled with the two writers who were also science lecturers, constitutes a significant attention to the sciences among the non-ordained writers. Given the traditional link between the country parson and natural history, this is surprising. Of all the actively ordained writers, only two wrote on the sciences. Kennedy was a London minister, who wrote on volcanoes. Edwin Sidney, however, did indeed have a country living, in Norfolk, and wrote on natural history. Despite his distance from London, he was able to play a moderately active role in scientific circles, corresponding with Cambridge botany professor John Stevens Henslow, presenting Friday evening discourses at the Royal Institution throughout the 1840s, and assisting Michael Faraday with ozone measurements.

In a narrative based on the historiography of professionalisation and secularisation in the nineteenth century, this tendency for the science-writers not to be ordained might be pointed to as an early example of the developing conflict between men of science and the clergy, with Sidney as a surviving representative of the older school. But there are more immediate reasons why most of the RTS’s ordained writers did not take an active role in the sciences. The traditional country parson was not an evangelical. Evangelical ministers gave more than one sermon a week, and visited their congregations and the local poor, organised Sunday Schools and day schools, and addressed and/or ran local benevolent organisations. Consequently, they had little time for any additional interests, least of all ones that could not be indulged in their study in the snatches of spare time they might find at the end of a day. Furthermore, many evangelical ministers worked in industrial urban environments, such as the East End of London. Living in such locations, and with so little spare

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43 This is slightly complicated by the fact that Thomas Milner was a former minister. Although ordained, I am counting him as a professional writer, as he made his living from writing.

time, it is hardly surprising that few evangelical ministers were able to participate in
the sciences.

It could be argued that writers did not need to be active participants in order to be able
to write about a subject. Kennedy, for instance, must have gained his information
about volcanoes from books. For the purposes of writing short introductory works,
the sciences could be just as amenable to book-based research as history and
biography. Yet most ordained men had been educated, both at school and at their
training college, in classics and theology, which included some literature and history.
In their limited spare time, those subjects, rather than the unfamiliar sciences, would
be the ones to which they would turn, and the ones on which they would be most
likely to feel competent to write.

As a group, the RTS writers were mostly male, and mostly ordained, with a small
number of women, other professionals, and full-time writers. Many had personal
connections to the RTS, indicating that they were from a similar professional middle-
class background as the committee members. The two writers of whom this was most
obviously not true, William Martin the former apothecary’s apprentice and John Kitto
the former shoemaker’s apprentice, were full-time writers who wrote for several
publishers of whom the RTS was but one.

Deciding to Write

The ideal Christian writer was one who wrote in the cause of evangelisation, and did
so primarily from a sense of vocation. While there can be little doubt that such
spiritual aims explained why writers chose to write for the RTS in particular, for most
of them it was only a minor part of their decision to write in the first place. When
discussing their work, writers did acknowledge the spiritual aspect. Selina Bunbury
regarded her novels and travel stories ‘as helps to the cause of morals and religion’, and
William Martin aimed to inculcate ‘a healthy love of nature & of Nature’s God, in
the minds of “general readers”’. John Kitto’s works were more immediately
scriptural than most, dealing with the geography and history of the Bible lands, and he
explicitly described them as aiding ‘the diffusion of scriptural knowledge’, and that it

45 RLF 1089.18, Bunbury to RLF, 23/10/1848; RLF 1315.11, Martin to RLF, 16/04/1853.
was 'my proper vocation'. These writers were all making a living from their literary work, but they would still have agreed with John Stoughton that, 'To lead men and women to Christ, is one of the highest honours God can bestow upon His children'.

Writers also considered their sales figures in this light, for the greater the circulation, the more people could be brought to a knowledge of Christ. When Kitto discussed with an Edinburgh publisher whether to produce 'popular (as distinguished from scholastic) books', he decided that popular was better, as this would permit him 'an extended measure of usefulness'. Although Kitto suggested that he might also get more financial remuneration for a popular work, this would not have been true of most writers, as they sold their copyrights outright and had no financial interest in the sales. Thus, Bunbury welcomed the news that one of her works had sold 100,000 copies as good news for evangelicalism.

Another intangible benefit from writing was a degree of personal fame, or reputation. The anonymity of the Monthly Series volumes did not necessarily prevent them contributing to their writer's reputation. Firstly, the deep anonymity of Vestiges (1844) was exceptionally rare. The names of anonymous writers were often known within the trade, and if the book gained any literary success, the secret was usually widely known within a few months. The Pictorial Bible appeared anonymously in 1838, and although it did not achieve the great fame of Vestiges or become common after-dinner conversation, Kitto's identity as editor was soon known to interested parties, including Biblical scholars and publishers of theological works on the watch for future projects. In addition, some writers were able to build up reputations despite anonymity. Bunbury, for example, began writing anonymously in the 1820s.

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46 Ryland, J., Memoirs of John Kitto, DD, FSA, Compiled Chiefly from his Letters and Journals. With a critical estimate of Dr Kitto's Life and Writings by Professor Eadie, DD, LLD, Glasgow (Edinburgh, 1856), 603.
47 Lewis, John Stoughton, 217.
48 Ryland, John Kitto, 603.
49 RLF 1089.18, Bunbury to RLF, 23/10/1848.
51 Eadie, J., Life of John Kitto, DD, FSA (Edinburgh, 1857), 297-300.
52 Griffin, R.J., 'Anonymity and authorship' New Literary History 30 (1999): 877-95, especially 877-83.
when ‘an authoress was a curiosity’, but she eventually gained sufficient reputation as
‘The author of A Visit to my Birthplace etc’ to put her name on her works.53

Although intangible, a reputation could help to bring worldly rewards. For a
professional writer, it would improve their chances of getting new commissions and
being paid more for future works. Thus, Bunbury’s Rides in the Pyrenees (1844),
yielded her ‘more fame than pecuniary remuneration’, but by doing so it had ‘done
me service, having been so well received by the public press.’54 Similarly, Kitto
counted his fame as one of the reasons for optimism about the future, writing that,
‘my resources for such occupation [literature] are unexhausted, my publishing
connections good, and my standing with the public much higher now than it has been
at any former period of my career.’55 Ministers could benefit in this way, but they
might also find that a reputation as a writer would aid their ‘promotion’ to a more
valuable living, or a more wealthy congregation, since published works brought their
name to the attention of patrons and congregations.

Published works could also bring a reputation, not just as a writer, but as a scholar,
which again could increase one’s literary engagements, or improve one’s chances of
being invited to become a professor at a theological college. However, as Kitto’s
distinction between popular and scholarly books indicates, the RTS Monthly
Volumes, were unlikely to help a scholarly reputation. This is illustrated by the
absence of the volumes, or their relegation to the small print, in the published
memoirs of the minister-writers, many of whom became known in later life as
theological scholars. Although a successful Monthly Volume might commend its
writer to a publisher seeking a ‘popular’ volume, it was not equal commendation to
the experts. This applied in the natural sciences as well as theology, as is particularly
clear in the case of William Martin. Martin had been a curator at the Museum of the
Zoological Society and a contributor to the Society’s Transactions. After losing his
job during financial cutbacks in 1838, he felt relegated to the fringes of natural history
circles. His former colleagues included Richard Owen, the comparative anatomist,
John Gould, the ornithologist, and George Waterhouse, later the British Museum

53 RLF 1089.86, Bunbury to RLF, 01/07/1878.
54 RLF 1089.11, Bunbury to RLF, 05/03/1845.
55 RLF 1115.2, Kitto to RLF, 27/10/1845.
keeper of minerals and fossils. All of these men held paid positions in natural history museums in London, and their expertise had been recognised by Charles Darwin when he sought their help to classify specimens from his *Beagle* voyage.\(^56\) They all wrote references for Martin to the Royal Literary Fund extolling his services to natural history.\(^57\) Gould explained that his works were ‘duly estimated by Professor Owen, Dr. Gray, and indeed everyone in the same walk of science who may be considered competent judges of their merit.’\(^58\) Owen, himself an RLF committee member, wrote that Martin ‘has been most industriously and honorably occupied in diffusing sound scientific information, in Zoology.’\(^59\) Those solid adjectives were mirrored by Martin himself, when he claimed to have been uncertain as to whether his works merited reward, and referred to them as ‘not brilliant’ and having a ‘plain utility’.\(^60\)

Martin’s publications were deemed to have merit, but as popular works, not as original contributions to natural history, such as those of Owen or Gould. Martin recognised the introductory status of his works when he described his aim as ‘to teach the principles of zoology *popularly* yet on a *truthful basis*, and, avoiding the “clap-trap” style, to impart some degree of information relative to the laws of organic structure and the thence-deduced rules on which the system of Zoology as a science is founded.’\(^61\) Even in the early 1850s, over a decade after leaving the Zoological Museum, he still hoped to find another museum-based job, or some other position where his ‘scientific knowledge would render my services advantageous’, rather than remain a popular science writer.\(^62\) However, his health declined, he became more depressed about his financial situation, and he found that scientific jobs eluded him.\(^63\) It was small comfort to discover ‘that my labours were not unappreciated, even by the

\(^57\) Cross, *Common writer*, 58, discusses the men of science who were involved in the RLF.
\(^58\) RLF 1315.23, Gould to RLF, 02/02/1859.
\(^59\) RLF 1315.4, Owen to RLF, 11/04/1853.
\(^60\) RLF 1315.11, Martin to RLF, 16/04/1853.
\(^61\) RLF 1315.11, Martin to RLF, 16/04/1853.
\(^62\) RLF 1315.11, Martin to RLF, 16/04/1853.
\(^63\) RLF 1315.11, Martin to RLF, 16/04/1853; 1315.14, Martin to RLF, 01/06/1854, and thereafter.

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learned'. The reputation that Martin gained as a popular writer was not equivalent to that he had hoped for as a man of science.

Most of the RTS writers were writing for money, as well as for reputation and their faith. This is most obvious in the case of the six who made their sole living from literary work, but it was true of ministers as well, who might at any age find it difficult to live on the income from their profession. Recently ordained men were likely to be curates or to have small congregations, and be unable to support a wife or family. By the time they moved on to better positions, they had usually got married and had a young family to look after. And once the family had grown up, the minister was starting to think about old age. Unless he had been fortunate enough to save regularly, in the absence of a pension he either had to keep working till he died, or was prevented by ill-health, or he had to find another source of income. Furthermore, at all times, as a person of considerable standing in the community, he had charitable drains upon his income that were not shared by other men earning similar salaries. Frances Knight suggests that assistant clerks in the civil service, earning from £350 to £600, were on a similar income, but were effectively better off, as they did not share the professional responsibilities.

In the Church of England, curates were notoriously poorly paid, on £50 to £100 a year, and often had lengthy waits before a living became vacant. Several of the Anglicans who wrote for the Monthly Series had just moved to their first living, after around ten years as curate. Anglican livings could vary enormously in value, and bore little relation to their location, size, or the seniority of the incumbent. Knight has shown that 49% of livings were valued at over £300, and 4% were worth over £1,000, a sum unthinkable in the dissenting churches. Despite the large proportion of livings worth less, John Kaye, bishop of Lincoln in the 1830s and 1840s, suggested

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64 RLF 1315.11, Martin to RLF, 16/04/1853.
65 Urwick gave 'at least one-tenth of his income to religious and philanthropic objects', through 'subscriptions to religious societies and charitable institutions' (see Urwick, W., The Life and Letters of William Urwick, DD of Dublin (London, 1870), 370). Kennedy also responded to begging letters and personal applicants for relief, giving to all but the most 'improbable stories' (see Kennedy, Old Highland days, 180).
67 Curate incomes are analysed in Knight, Nineteenth-century church, 127-29.
68 Knight, Nineteenth-century church, 131-2.
that £200 was the absolute minimum for a clergyman to discharge his parish duties respectably. Knight suggests that this was optimistic, and that £500 was not lavish.\textsuperscript{69}

Of the RTS Anglicans, Cox’s first living was worth £269 a year, Jones’s was £400, and Sidney’s was £509.\textsuperscript{70} Cox and Jones held London livings, while Sidney’s was in Suffolk, but Cox and Sidney both had parishes of under 700 souls, while Jones’s contained over 10,000. Within a few years, Jones had moved to a smaller, richer living in Wiltshire.\textsuperscript{71} All three of these young clergy were earning more than John Owen, who moved to a Leicester living worth only £240 a year, at the age of 57.

In the dissenting churches, a ministerial stipend depended upon congregational numbers and wealth, not upon endowments. As there were no curates or bishops, the range of stipends was smaller than that for clergymen, so although there were fewer very poor stipends, there were also fewer rich ones. Young ministers usually started with smaller congregations, often in poorer locations. When Kennedy accepted his first call, to Blackfriars Aberdeen, his congregation could afford to pay him only £80 a year.\textsuperscript{72} Alexander started in Edinburgh on £130, although he was aware that if he had been willing to accept an English call, he could have had a higher stipend.\textsuperscript{73} These incomes were marginally better than curates’, but poorer than those of the clergymen who had just accepted their first livings. Since being called to another congregation depended on becoming known to other congregations, public speaking, supply preaching and writing were important. Kennedy, Alexander, and Stoughton (who was initially at Windsor) were all offered churches in London as a consequence of their preaching, and William Urwick was able to move from rural Sligo to Dublin for similar reasons. Since Alexander did not accept the call to Stepney meeting house, Kennedy became its minister a few years later.\textsuperscript{74} There, he earned from £400 to £600 a year, including his literary earnings. His Aberdeen stipend had been just adequate to support himself, his sister and a family servant, but his Stepney stipend

\textsuperscript{69} Kaye cited in Knight, \textit{Nineteenth-century church}, 132.

\textsuperscript{70} The value of livings is given in the Clergy Lists. Cox became vicar of St. Helen’s Bishopsgate, in 1849; Jones became incumbent of St James Curtain Road, Shoreditch, between 1845 and 1850; Sidney became rector of Little Cornard, Suffolk, in 1847.

\textsuperscript{71} As vicar of Bradford with Westwood, he received £590. The Bradford population was 3,259, and that of Westwood was 356. Clergy List (1852).

\textsuperscript{72} Kennedy, \textit{Old Highland days}, 114-5.

\textsuperscript{73} Ross, J., \textit{W. Lindsay Alexander, DD, LLD: his life and work, with illustrations of his teaching} (London, 1887), 63.

\textsuperscript{74} Ross, \textit{WL Alexander}, 124; Kennedy, \textit{Old Highland days}, 166-7.
was barely sufficient for himself, his wife, seven children, and a servant. Since the stipend depended on the financial health of the congregation, its value could go down as well as up, as Urwick discovered in Dublin. When he first arrived, he received £300 a year, but after some years, it fell to £250, due to falling numbers or to the economic problems of the mid-1840s.

A problem which ministers shared with clergy was that their income did not arrive regularly. The income of livings was frequently dependent on land-rents, which might be due at five- or seven-year intervals, so that the ‘annual value’ cited in sources like the Clergy Lists was actually an ideal average. Kennedy’s son explained the problem for ministers: ‘Perhaps the worst of it is that that prosperous Church, loving him as it does, has a very unbusiness-like way of crystallising its affection. Not only is his ministerial stipend uncertain in amount, but it arrives at irregular intervals, and often in mere driblets.’ Although Kennedy did not attempt to live in luxury, he occasionally found himself having ‘to borrow from a friend when heavy school and college bills come in’.

While ministers and clergymen were hardly alone in wishing to maintain a respectable place in society, their profession made it more necessary than for less public figures. Not only did their families have to appear well-dressed and their homes tidy and respectable, but they were expected to respond to appeals for charity. The reduction of Urwick’s stipend, and the erosion of his small capital ‘in meeting necessary and increasing demands upon the family exchequer’ meant that he could not afford to move to a house which was large enough for his growing family, and would be in a more healthy location for his ill wife. Fortunately for him, the move did take place, thanks to ‘the kindness of a few ladies in the congregation’. Church livings often came with houses, but the incumbent was expected to maintain the property, and by the mid-nineteenth century, decades of neglect had brought many such properties into

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75 Kennedy, *Old Highland days*, 180, 146.
78 Kennedy, *Old Highland days*, 180.
79 Knight, *Nineteenth-century church*, 132. They might also bear the bulk of the cost of the Sunday or day school.
80 Urwick, *William Urwick*, 230, 234. The ladies bought the lease, which allowed them to charge the minister a reduced rent.
very poor condition, necessitating expensive repairs.\textsuperscript{81} Under such conditions, Kennedy reckoned that ‘no income conceivable to... [a] minister would enable him to keep his family in luxury, not to speak of saving money’.\textsuperscript{82}

If he could not save money, then a minister or clergyman would have no source of income during a retirement entered from choice or ill-health. Anglicans could keep their livings until they died if they could work, or afford a curate to replace them. Dissenting ministers did not have the option of a curate, and many worked well into their seventies. However, their profession did supply ministers with a large number of well-wishers who knew them personally and might assist a frail, elderly or impoverished minister, as already illustrated in the case of Urwick’s house. Knight has suggested that similar support networks helped to disguise the actual poverty of many elderly Anglican incumbents.\textsuperscript{83} Several of the Congregationalist ministers were able to retire thanks to the generosity of their congregations. Kennedy was paid an unspecified retirement allowance by his congregation, while Urwick and Stoughton received purses, containing £2,000 and £3,000 respectively, amid the speeches at their jubilee celebrations.\textsuperscript{84} Once invested, those sums would provide an annual income of around £150 for the years of retirement.

The meagre and unreliable income of ministers and clergy, combined with the particular demands on their purses, meant that the financial remuneration available from writing could be very useful. But while the ordained could choose to write, as a way of making their incomes more comfortable, professional writers were usually forced to write for mere subsistence. Professional writers shared several of the problems of ministers, as they had to live on small and irregular incomes, and found it very difficult to save for old age. Theoretically writers did not have to keep up respectable appearances to the same extent as ministers, but in practice many of them did try to keep up their position, even when their incomes did not allow it. Unlike the ministers, they had fewer demands from charity cases, but they also lacked the

\textsuperscript{81} Knight, \textit{Nineteenth-century church}, 136-8.
\textsuperscript{82} Kennedy, \textit{Old Highland days}, 180.
\textsuperscript{83} Knight, \textit{Nineteenth-century church}, 130.
support of a wide circle of well-wishers, and thus found it much more difficult to get out of financial trouble.

Before he had decided to make the ministry his profession, William Alexander had considered a literary career. He wrote to Adam Black, the Edinburgh publisher, mentioning that ‘a friend’ (i.e. Alexander) was considering settling in Edinburgh to write for the periodicals, and he got the following discouraging reply:

He must be a very young man indeed, and unacquainted with the difficulties in his way. Besides, I do not know any one who writes for the periodicals but who has something else to trust to, except Dr B., who is very clever, but who after all is starving. Any young man who thinks of such a thing would require to bring with him a good purse, as he would get very little for any of his papers until he acquired a name, and even then he could not live by it. Advise your friend to think of something else.\(^{85}\)

Black’s response made clear both the value of a ‘name’, or reputation, as a writer, and of an alternative source of income even once established. By the 1840s, it began to be possible for that alternative source of income to be a literary one, as the growth of the periodical press opened up opportunities for salaried, as well as freelance, journalists and editorial assistants. The RTS’s own editorial department offered opportunities of this sort, with full-time salaries of £200 or £300. Although such positions provided a steady salary for writing, they restricted the writer’s subject matter and genre. Only in his spare time would he be able to work on his own projects, but his day-job protected him from the vagaries of the publishing trade, and made it possible to live by the pen. Occasionally, sufficient success might allow journalists and editors to give up their salaries to concentrate on their own creative writing. Dickens, for instance, gave up his post as political journalist, although he still took on salaried editorial positions.\(^{86}\) Similarly, part-time writers from other professions, if they were successful enough to put money in the bank to provide a source of income for the future, might become full-time writers. Thomas Dick gave up his school-teaching job to concentrate on

\(^{85}\) Black to Alexander, c1831, quoted in Ross, *WL Alexander*, 42-3.

\(^{86}\) Bonham-Carter, *Authors*, 69-70; Cross, *Common writer*, Ch. 3.
writing when he was 53 years old and had amassed savings from his teaching and his two successful books. 87

Except for the few who gave up other sources of income after proven success in literature, the majority of full-time writers had acquired their profession from necessity. Writing was an especially likely option for single women on the death of their father, brother or other male relative. Given the education most women received, they had few options. School-teaching or becoming a governess, and writing were virtually the only genteel options available. Although women are estimated to have made up around fifth of authors, they almost all wrote novels, children’s books or poetry, genres where an advanced education was less necessary. 88

In the Monthly Series, women accounted for an eighth of the writers. Despite the prose non-fiction needed for the Series, the works were all to be popular in style, to be generally comprehensible, and thus, like children’s books, could potentially be written by women.

Anne Pratt began to write towards the end of her father’s life, and after his death in the mid-1840s, she made her living from school-teaching and botany writing until her marriage twenty years later. 89 Selina Bunbury began writing while still living with her family, because, when she was seventeen (c1820), her clergyman father lost his ‘large estates in Ireland’ after ‘a ruinous Chancery suit, of about forty years’ duration. 90 Although Bunbury had apparently not shown ‘any previous inclination or talent for writing’, it was through writing that she did her bit to help the family finances. For the next twenty years she wrote ‘anonymously, and successfully, in periodicals and otherwise, for the alleviation of family distress.’ 91 When her parents died in the mid-1840s, she expected to be supported by her brother Robert, an evangelical clergyman, who had just received his first living at Swansea (£291), and her first cousin, Walter Shirley, the newly-translated evangelical Bishop of Sodor and

88 Cross, Common writer, 167.
90 RLF 1089.12, Printed appeal for Bunbury.
91 RLF 1089.1, Application Form, 04/01/1844.

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Man. Unfortunately, as she explained to the Royal Literary Fund in 1848, ‘In a brief space of time, my Father, Mother, brother and cousin have gone to the grave.’ She had inherited some money from her mother, but it was ‘insecurely vested’, and lost. From this point on, writing became Bunbury’s main source of income, rather than the additional aid it had previously been. She managed to support herself and several family members for the remaining thirty-five years of her life.

Yet women were not alone in being forced to write for a living. John Kitto’s deafness precluded most jobs, and after being at various times a shoe-maker, a librarian and missionary-station printer, when he returned from an expedition to Persia, at the age of twenty-nine (1833), he was employed on a salary of £192 a year as an editorial assistant to Charles Knight, to help with Sduk publications. In 1841-42, Knight suffered financial trouble, and Kitto lost his job. Writing seemed like his best option for supporting his family, and he struggled to do so for the next twelve years. Thomas Milner was a Congregational minister till the age of forty, and had been writing works of theology and natural science for the previous fifteen years. However in 1847, ill health compelled him to resign his charge. Again, his previous experience with writing made it seem like a viable alternate profession, and so it proved, albeit with some sticky patches, for the next thirty-five years. William Martin, as we have seen, had been employed by the Museum of the Zoological Society from the age of 32 years (1830), and began his writing career in natural history while working there. After the museum cutbacks in the late 1830s, his colleague Waterhouse got a position at the British Museum, thanks to a reference from Darwin. Martin was employed on an annual salary by the publishers Baldwin, Cradock & Joy to produce an extensive work on quadrupeds. Unfortunately, Baldwin & Co. went bankrupt almost immediately afterwards, leaving Martin to become a freelance natural history writer for the remaining twenty-five years of his life.

92 RLF 1089.18, Bunbury to RLF, 23/10/1848.
93 RLF 1089.12, Printed appeal for Bunbury.
94 Ryland, John Kitto, 530-8.
95 Ryland, John Kitto, 580.
96 RLF 1385.2, Milner to RLF, n.d. [1855].
97 RLF 1315.7, Waterhouse to RLF, 13/04/1853. On Waterhouse, see Desmond and Moore, Darwin, 309.
98 On Martin, see RLF 1315.3, Martin to RLF, 11/04/1853 and 1315.7, Waterhouse to RLF, 13/04/1853.
These writers all managed to survive on their literary income for substantial lengths of time. Yet their degree of satisfaction with writing as a sole source of income may be gauged by their frequent hopes of finding an additional regular income, however small. Such a resource would relieve much of the stress of being an writer, by providing, as Kitto put it, something ‘on which I may be able to fall back in time of need; and which may be to me as a staff to rest on in my sufficiently perilous career.’99 One of Kitto’s plans was to be appointed warden to the new cemetery being established at Woking, where he had moved for the cheaper rents in the late 1840s.100 Martin’s hopes centred on the London museums of natural history, where he wished ‘to obtain some official situation, humble though the salary might be.’101 Bunbury’s plan was to take a house in Cheltenham where she would act as a companion to elderly ladies, but she was unable to find the money to rent the house.102 Nor were Kitto or Martin any more successful.

There was no doubt in the minds of these minister-writers and professional writers that literary work could produce worthwhile financial benefits. For the part-time writer, the actual amount was perhaps not that important – the £30 or £35 received for a Monthly Volume was simply a welcome addition, however much it happened to be. But for the professional writers, the issue was more urgent, although they had different assessments of how much they needed to earn. Bunbury felt she had had a good year in 1848, when she earned £150 from her two Monthly Volumes, several SPCK works and various contributions to periodicals.103 While Bunbury had only herself and a sister to support, Kitto had a wife and six children in 1845. He thought that £660 a year would be ‘fair’, but that £330 was ‘a miserable pittance’.104 That his estimate was not unreasonable can be seen from the North British Review’s suggestion in 1850 that a writer with a wife and six children might need to earn £600 a year.105 The extremes of the single Bunbury and the family man Kitto indicate the

99 RLF 1115.6, Kitto to RLF, 13/12/184(9?).
100 Ryland, John Kitto, 685.
101 RFL 1315.11, Martin to RLF, 16/04/1853.
102 RLF 1089.22, Bunbury to RLF, 04/02/1851.
103 RLF 1089.18, Bunbury to RLF, 23/10/1848.
104 He had received £1000 for the Cyclopaedia of Biblical Literature (1845), which ought to have taken him 18 months, rather than 3 years, Eadie, John Kitto, 335; RLF 115.2, Kitto to RLF, 27/10/1845.
105 ‘Pendennis’, 360.
range of incomes that a writer might be trying to achieve, and put them in the same
income bracket as the ministers already discussed.\(^{106}\)

The incomes of writers like Dickens and Thackeray seemed to illustrate that literature
could be as secure a source of income as any other profession. *Fraser’s Magazine*
argued that even in the ‘ordinary current’ of writers, ‘we find able literary men in
England, making incomes *averaging* 300l. a-year, some less, of course, some more’,
whereas in France or Germany, writers were far less fortunate.\(^{107}\) *Fraser’s* estimated
the range of realistic incomes for a writer at £200 to £1,000 a year, and the *North
British Review* concurred with this, claiming that ‘many men... in London,
Edinburgh, and other parts of the country’ earn from £300 to £1,000 a year, and that
‘some, with very little effort, earn... considerably more’.\(^{108}\) Estimates like these
encouraged potential writers by countering what *Chambers’s Journal* called the
‘general sense of the wretched nature of a purely literary life’.\(^{109}\)

In reality, what any individual writer, outside the select group of famous novelists,
could earn was enormously variable, and dependent on numerous factors apart from
the amount of writing they produced. Writing was paid at a ‘per sheet’ rate, which
was usually sixteen printed octavo pages, although for short articles in the popular
periodicals, this might be translated into a ‘per page’, or a ‘per column’ rate.
However, this rate varied between publishers and periodicals, and with the editor’s
assessment of the writer’s reputation and ability. The literary journals, particularly
the quarterlies, paid more per sheet than most weekly or monthly periodicals. Well-
known writers were paid more, with Thackeray receiving twice as much per sheet
after the success of *Vanity Fair* (1847-48) as he had done before.\(^{110}\) The RTS
standard rate was £10 a sheet for all its publications, including its periodicals, which
put it in the same bracket as *Chambers’s Journal, Bentley’s Miscellany, and the

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\(^{106}\) Both writers and ministers were clearly in the middle classes, and far better off than people like
agricultural labourers, earning around £26 a year (see Daunton, M., *Progress and Poverty: an
economic and social history of Britain, 1700-1850* (Oxford, 1995), table 16.1). For a writer, Charles
Dickens was enormously wealthy. He earned around £2,900 a year from his writings, not including the
editorial work he undertook (see Bonham-Carter, *Authors*, 69-70).

\(^{107}\) [Lewes], ‘Condition of authors’, 286.

\(^{108}\) *Pendennis*, 348.

\(^{109}\) ‘Authors of calamities’, 129.

\(^{110}\) Bonham-Carter, *Authors*, 61.
The Society might increase this to twelve guineas for famous preachers, or in recognition of particular effort, while it could also reduce it for RTS employees who wrote for publication in their spare time.\(^{112}\)

In book publishing, most publishers were willing to pay higher rates to attract more famous writers, and this meant that although the RTS's £10 a sheet rate compared well with the other periodicals, it was less impressive as a book rate. Both the SDUK and John Murray paid substantially more per sheet for the volumes of their libraries than the RTS did for the Monthly Series. The RTS writers were also paid less per word, because while Murray's printed sheet was composed of sixteen octavo pages, the RTS tended to use smaller formats, with more pages per sheet. Yet, since the Society also used smaller type, there was an equivalent number of words on each smaller page. Thus, the difference between the £30 payments for the Monthly Volumes, and those of £180 for the SDUK and £220 for Murray, is only partly to be explained by the difference in length.\(^{113}\) The RTS rarely paid over £120 for the longest works it published, and its payment structure was much more similar to that of Chambers, who were also aiming to publish cheap books in small formats, and employed similarly mid-ranking writers (although in Chambers case, they were more likely to be school-teachers than ministers).\(^{114}\) These sliding rates and variations between publishers meant that writers who were less-known had to produce more words to match the incomes of the better-known. Since they were also working for periodicals which took shorter articles, or publishers who wanted small works, they had to write more separate items, which means spending proportionately more time doing research.

\(^{111}\) Chambers's Journal paid between 10s. and 15s. a column, with 16 columns per number, while Bentley's Miscellany paid 12 guineas a sheet (and the Dublin University Magazine paid £7 for two sheets), Cooney, S.M., 'Publishers for the People: W. & R. Chambers – the early years, 1832-50' (Ph.D., Ohio State University, 1970), 94-5. The Penny Magazine paid £1.11.0 a page, Ryland, John Kitto, 528. The RTS usually paid £10 a sheet, RTS CCM 20/01/1847.

\(^{112}\) Twelve guineas a sheet were paid to Rev. Hugh Stowell, and Dr. Moore, see RTS CCM 22/07/1840, and 17/10/1849. On rates for RTS staff, and their relatives, see RTS CCM 17/03/1847, and 01/06/1842. On the rates at Chambers's, see Cooney, Publishers for the people, 94-5.


\(^{114}\) Cooney, Publishers for the people, 196-7.
The RTS did not usually find it problematic to pay its writers less than other book publishers. Unlike commercial publishers, who competed with each other to catch or keep popular writers, the RTS rarely sought new writers. Offers of works came to the committee, and it assumed writers would keep writing for the Society because of their dedication to the evangelical cause. The majority of its writers were not dependent on writing for money, and most had close personal connections with the RTS. Thus, the payments made by the Society were not intended to attract writers, and the need for the published works to be as cheap as possible mitigated against higher payments. However, the relatively low remuneration available from the RTS meant that it would be well-nigh impossible to make a living as a professional writer by writing for the RTS (or similar organisations) alone.

Choosing What to Write

Someone who had decided to become a writer had to decide what sort of works to write. This entailed decisions about subject matter, genre and format, and depended whether the writer was aiming for a book or periodical, or a popular or scholarly work. Most of the writing a minister or clergyman did was in some way related to his profession, as he wrote sermons, lectures, and addresses for his congregation and the public, and perhaps lecture courses for theological students. Published works frequently derived from some of these writings, such as volumes of sermons, tracts on contemporary problems, reviews of recent theological works, printed versions of lectures, or textbooks based on college teaching. Tracts and periodical articles were a usual starting point for ministers seeking publication, as they were short, and relatively easy to find a publisher for. These small works, such as Alexander’s pamphlet on the cholera outbreak, or Urwick’s tracts on the evils of intemperance, were unlikely to be financially profitable, but they might bring the writer’s name to the attention of the religious world.117

115 Although, later in the century, at least one bestselling writer was willing to argue the case, see Rickard, S.L.G., “Living by the pen”: Hesba Stretton’s moral earnings’ Women’s History Review 5 (1996): 219-38.
116 Urwick, Stowell and Angus were heads of theological colleges in the 1840s, and Kennedy and Stoughton were professors at New College in the 1870s. East was appointed head of Calabar College, Jamaica in 1852.
117 Ross, WL Alexander, 55; Urwick, William Urwick, 118-9.
Many of the editors of the religious periodicals were ministers, and so the denominational networks helped ministers who were new to periodical writing to get started. Alexander and Kennedy both wrote for the *Scottish Congregational Magazine*, and Alexander later edited the *Congregational Magazine*. Kennedy also wrote for the *Nonconformist* and the *Sunday School Chronicle*, and he later edited the *Christian Witness* and the *Evangelical Magazine*. Stoughton was also a sometime editor of the *Evangelical Magazine*, while Ferguson and Stowell were sometime editors of the *Eclectic Review*. Stowell contributed to a range of periodicals, including the *Congregational Magazine*, the *Eclectic Review*, the *Christian Times*, the *Biblical Review* and the *British Quarterly Review*. All of these periodicals had dissenting editorial policies, although the *Eclectic* and the *British Quarterly* were literary rather than religious journals.

Tracts were usually published at the writer’s own expense, except when an organisation like the RTS offered a few pounds for them. This was also true of sermons and most theological works except where the writer was known, and was fortunate enough to find an interested publisher. Friends or members of the congregation often encouraged ministers to publish their sermons and lectures, which was why Stoughton’s first three works were published. He was fortunate that in one case, a friend was so keen that he offered to cover the cost of publication. Due to the ephemeral nature of tracts and periodical articles, books were better at making their writer’s reputation, and it was thanks to the ‘wide and lasting esteem among his brethren in various sections of the church’, as a consequence of his first book, that Stowell was appointed president of Rotherham College.

Many ministers lacked the time or inclination to pursue any writing beyond this immediately theological material. Benjamin Luckock, for instance, published a volume of sermons, and a poem called ‘Faith’, as well as the *Monthly Volume on Jamaica*. When his widow applied to the Royal Literary Fund for a grant, she did not mention *Jamaica*, presumably considering it too small a work to be worth citing, even

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118 [Lewes], ‘Condition of authors’, 290.
though its existence put Luckock’s literary contribution a little beyond the usual for ministers. Presented only with his other two works, the RLF committee decided that the ‘Literary merit of his works [was] not sufficient to establish a claim’. Luckock was able to write on Jamaica because, although he was existing on a meagre curate’s stipend in London, he had spent twenty years as a missionary in the West Indies. Most of the other ministers who wrote for the Monthly Series had to draw on their libraries and leisure interests for their subject matter. Several first got involved in writing on non-theological topics because of the dissenting habit of giving a weekday evening lecture to the congregation, in addition to the Sunday sermon. There was a literary society at the Stepney meeting house with which Kennedy soon became involved, while the young Stoughton had joined the newly-founded Windsor and Eton Literary and Scientific Institute. Both these organisations gave the ministers further opportunities to produce extended pieces of writing on secular topics. Kennedy lectured to his society on ‘the Holy Land, arctic exploration, volcanic phenomena, and ethnology, with special reference to the unity of the race and the primitive condition of mankind’. As a consequence of these lectures he was invited to address the students at the nearby Baptist college, on the subject of the river Jordan. At that lecture Joseph Gurney, of the RTS committee, was ‘so struck by the valuable information contained in the lecture, and the lucidity with which it was conveyed, that the young minister was asked to write on The Jordan and the Dead Sea’ (and subsequently on Idumaea and Volcanoes) for the Monthly Series, and he became one of the first contributors to the Leisure Hour.

Edwin Sidney also turned lectures into Monthly Volumes, but in his case the transition was less easy. His interest in natural history led him to develop ‘the habit of examining in my walks the various blights of the corn plants in all their stages’, and he addressed the Royal Institution on the subject in 1844. This later became his Monthly Volume on Blights of the Wheat. Sidney offered the RTS two more volumes

121 She was not alone in this view. Milner listed his works for the RLF, but stated at the end, ‘the Minor Volumes of the Religious Tract Society omitted’, RLF 1385.6, Milner’s application form, 25/06/1868.
122 RLF 1153.1, Luckock’s application form, and MS annotation, 19/10/1846.
123 Kennedy, Old Highland days, 249; Lewis, John Stoughton, 48.
124 Kennedy, Old Highland days, 249.
125 Kennedy, Old Highland days, 249-50.
based on Royal Institution discourses, one of which it accepted – although when the manuscript arrived, it was so full of diagrams and technical language that it could not be published in the Monthly Series. Sidney did get another work published in the Series, but only after extensive revisions made it appropriate for the readers of the RTS, rather than the auditors at Friday evening discourses at the RI.126

For most of the ministers, ‘secular’ writing was an occasional occupation. Kennedy and Stoughton, for example, published many more books, including many with the RTS, but the majority were on subjects connected with religion and theology. Stoughton became the major historian of his denomination, while Kennedy wrote on apologetics. Charles Williams and Samuel Manning were unusual in giving up their charges to become full-time editors for the RTS, but both remained ordained and saw their work for the RTS as a different way of carrying out their Christian vocation. In contrast, the Baptist, Henry Dunckley, commenced his ministry in Salford in 1848 and wrote his first work for the 1851 RTS prize essay competition on ‘The Condition and Claims of the Working Classes, together with the means of securing elevation’. He won the first prize, and went on to write two Monthly Volumes. He then began writing for the local newspaper and won another prize essay, set by the Anti-Corn Law League. By 1855, he had decided to give up his ministry, and become editor of the Manchester Examiner and Times. He became a well-respected journalist, but working for Christ had ceased to be his sole vocation.127 For the other ordained writers, their Christian vocation meant that they always wrote in a Christian tone, even when on secular subjects, and they tried to be selective about the publishers they worked for, preferring those with sound religious credentials, such as the RTS and SPCK, or William Collins and John Cassell. Both Kennedy and Ferguson wrote volumes for ‘Cassell’s Library’ (1850-) as well as for the RTS Monthly Series.128 As far as I know, none of the ordained writers wrote for the SDUK or Chambers.

For the professional writers, the need to make an income meant that they could not afford to be so selective of topics or publishers. Some, like Milner, always wrote in a

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126 RTS CCM, 14/07/1847. The work which was too technical was published as The Philosophy of Food and Nutrition in Plants etc (RTS, 1849).
127 DNB; BBA; Baptist Handbook (1897): 168-70.
128 Kennedy, Old Highland days, 251; Congregational Year Book (1876): 333.
Christian tone, while others, like Martin, adapted their style to suit the publisher, producing Christian works for the RTS and secular ones for the SDUK. The professional writers published in quite different journals from the ordained writers. Bunbury wrote for the literary Fraser’s and later for the Cornhill, while Kitto wrote for the Penny Magazine and later edited the Journal of Sacred Literature, and Milner contributed variously to the Leisure Hour, the SPCK People’s Magazine, the Christian Witness and the Christian World Magazine. Martin was able to place his natural history articles in a wide range of journals, principally the Penny Magazine, and the Visitor and Leisure Hour, but at various times he also wrote for the National Cyclopaedia, Hogg’s Instructor, the Home Companion, the Illustrated London News, and Recreative Science. Hogg’s and Recreative Science both had religious affiliations, as, of course, did the SPCK and RTS periodicals. But professional writers needed more outlets for their work. Martin had also written for the SDUK’s ‘Library of Entertaining Knowledge’ and for Knight’s ‘Farmer’s Library’. And although Bunbury recorded in 1851 that she had published forty-six (presumably short) works with the SPCK over the last year, she was also writing ‘numerous’ small works for Chambers throughout the 1850s.

In choosing subjects to write on, Martin and Kitto drew endlessly on their experiences from life before they became professional writers. Martin wrote on almost any aspect of vertebrate zoology, while Kitto produced book after book on the history, geography, and peoples of the Holy Land, where he had worked as a missionary printer. Dick and Milner had both studied for the ministry, which gave them material for theological writings. Dick was a keen amateur astronomer, which provided another source for his writings, while Milner’s interests lay in geology and geography, on which he published extensively. Bunbury’s particular forte was the high-toned novel and the travel narrative, although both she and Milner also wrote history for the RTS. Bunbury’s travel books were all based on her own journeys, but as her finances grew more fragile, it became difficult to gather fresh material. In 1856, she appealed to the RLF for a grant, explaining that, ‘my abode in Sweden, and rather hasty visit to

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129 These are listed on the several application forms the writers submitted to the RLF.
130 RLF 1315.27, Martin’s application form, 04/06/1860.
131 RLF 1089.21, Bunbury’s application form, 04/02/1851. 1089.72, Bunbury’s application form, 24/10/1871.
Finland, have proved very profitable to me in affording new and interesting matter', and if she could now visit Finland properly, and perhaps Russia, she would have something new to write about.\textsuperscript{132}

Bunbury and Milner produced on average one book a year, while Martin and Dick wrote one every two years. In addition, they all wrote shorter works, such as those for the RTS and SPCK, and periodical articles. Martin wrote over a thousand articles during his literary career, making an average of forty a year although, since this includes the period of his illness, during health he must have been producing close to one a week.\textsuperscript{133} Dick, Kitto, Milner and Martin all wrote four or more Monthly Volumes for the RTS. In contrast, the ordained writers generally wrote only one or two. In the 1840s, most of the dissenting ministers were only just getting started in book-publishing. Even the older clergyman, Edward Grinfield, with more experience of publishing, wrote only a couple of books a decade. In the 1820s, he had produced almost a work a year, but that work was likely to be a letter, sermon, or a pamphlet of ‘reflections’ or ‘observations’ on recent publications, including William Lawrence’s Lectures in Physiology (1819) and Henry Brougham’s Practical Observations upon the Education of the People (1825).\textsuperscript{134}

Ministers usually started their writing career with smaller works, of the sort Grinfield had published, or for organisations like the RTS and SPCK. These publications brought in only a little (or no) money, but they helped to make the minister’s name, and, with RTS publications, they allowed him to participate in the evangelical cause on a scale larger than his own locality. Once they had discovered that they could write, ministers might think about the larger work. Kennedy and Stoughton both started their scholarly work in connection with teaching appointments at New College, the London training college for Congregational ministers. This involved preparing lecture courses, and forced them to think at a more expert level than previously.\textsuperscript{135} Scholarly works were much more effective at garnering respect for

\textsuperscript{132} RLF 1089.34, Bunbury to RLF, 01/04/1856.
\textsuperscript{133} RLF 1315.27, Martin’s application form, 04/06/1860.
\textsuperscript{134} Grinfield, E., Cursory Observations upon the Lectures in Physiology, Zoology, and Natural History of Man, by Mr. Laurence (2nd ed. London, 1819); Grinfield, E., A Reply to Mr. Brougham’s Practical Observations upon the Education of the People (1825).
\textsuperscript{135} Kennedy, Old Highland days, 226; Stoughton, Recollections, 163-93.
their writers, but they were almost always the product of later life, particularly when ministers might have ceased to be as actively involved in their myriad pastoral duties as they had been when younger.\textsuperscript{136}

For the professional writer, a long book was tempting, as it would bring a higher sum for copyright. But they took longer to produce, which meant longer until any money was forthcoming for them. In 1844, Bunbury was worried about the state of the trade, and felt that it was not a good time to be trying to dispose of small works. She was therefore ‘anxious to devote my time and thoughts to the publication of longer and more prepared works’. However, ‘all the money I received for my last and longest work, \textit{Coombe Abbey}, was necessarily expended [in medical fees], and... I have absolutely \textit{none} until I can prepare and dispose of another.’\textsuperscript{137} She hoped the RLF would give her a grant which would enable her to survive until the book was completed. She could then use the payment from it to live on while writing her next book. Until she built up a small reserve of capital, she was ‘obliged by my circumstances to write for money small works, but as I have no other sources of income I cannot help it’.\textsuperscript{138} Short books (and periodical articles) allowed a writer to live, but it could seem like a hand-to-mouth existence.

Around the same time as Bunbury’s dilemma, Kitto was making the opposite decision. He had tended to write longer works, relying on advances from his publisher until they were complete. His problem was that his latest work, the \textit{Cyclopaedia of Biblical Literature} (1845), turned out to involve ‘\textit{twice} the time and labour which I had supposed sufficient for it, and... that which might have been a fair remuneration for the labour of 18 months became a miserable pittance when spread over three years’.\textsuperscript{139} Since he had received most or all of his payment in advance, he was no better off when the work was finished than when he had begun. His plans for the future were the opposite of Bunbury’s: ‘It is my hope that by giving part of my

\textsuperscript{136} Several Monthly Volumes were later expanded into lengthier works, including Grinfield’s \textit{Jesuits} (1853) and Stoughton’s \textit{Shades and Echoes of Old London} (1864).
\textsuperscript{137} RLF 1089.2, Bunbury to RLF, 04/01/1844.
\textsuperscript{138} RLF 1089.18, Bunbury to RLF, 23/10/1848.
\textsuperscript{139} RLF 1115.2, Kitto to RLF, 27/10/1845.
attention to less ponderous works than have hitherto occupied my time... I may yet be able to bring up my family in comfort.  

These cases would seem to support Chambers's Journal's assertion that the professional writer 'aspire[d] to labours of a higher kind than those to which he devotes himself', wishing to write speculative systems or laborious historical works, but that, 'the necessity of bread forbids', and the writer was forced to write on subjects and in formats which 'are not according to the first intention of his mind'. The North British Review noted that in this the writer was 'no worse than any other daily toilers', for many professionals found their work tedious and far removed from what they would ideally do. However, Bunbury and Kitto were not always conscious of the fortune with which Chambers's and the North British credited them when asserting that, 'Perhaps few enjoy the good fortune of the literary man in having daily labours so near akin to those on which they would spend themselves.

Kitto and Bunbury were frustrated in their desires to write longer works, as in the absence of any savings on which to live, they had either to rely on publishers' advances or the benevolence of the RLF, or write short works instead. RLF grants were not large, of the order of £25, and while that might keep Bunbury for two months, it would be gone within two weeks in Kitto's household. Publishers did not like giving advances, for, according to Chambers's Journal, they regarded 'the poorer [writers] as unscrupulous in taking advances, and careless in discharging obligations'. In fact, as John Sutherland notes, it was not just the lowest ranks of writers who requested advances and ran up debts with their publishers, but with writers like Thackeray, the publisher was more willing to help, in the expectation of benefiting from the writer's future works. Publishers agreed to give advances only if they trusted the writer to produce the work. The RTS gave advances on Monthly Volumes to Kitto, Milner, Dick and Martin, all of whom were known to the Society as productive writers. If the writer received his payment in one or more advances, he...
was unlikely to receive much or anything when the work was finished. The promise of a substantial sum in one lump thus rarely materialised, and the writer of longer books was not necessarily any better off financially than the writer of short books, except for the hope that his reputation was being made.

As the *North British Review* explained, ‘the needy author is at a great disadvantage; for whilst the publisher is sure of being able to obtain an abundance of manuscripts, a manuscript is anything but sure of obtaining a publisher at all’.\(^{146}\) Thus, professional writers would not be well-advised to start a major new project without first obtaining a commission with a publisher (which was essential for living off advances). Some forms of shorter works, such as periodical articles, children’s books and religious tracts, could be written ‘on spec’, because publishers were constantly looking for such works. The RTS and SPCK regularly published large numbers of very small works, selected from those sent in, rather than specially commissioned. Writers who could produce the appropriate style could rely on the societies to take numerous small works. Thus, although inexperienced writers might start their careers with the RTS or SPCK as a gentle introduction to the commercial publishing world, experienced writers continued to write for the societies, as they were like the periodicals in providing a useful outlet for short works when commissions for larger works were unforthcoming. However, works like those in the Monthly Series, although short as books, were too long for any professional writer to write ‘on spec’. Although many publishers were producing cheap series of short popular non-fiction works, the widespread use of reprints in the 1840s restricted the opportunities for writers. It was not till the 1850s and beyond that the market in original popular non-fiction became large enough for writers to be able to rely on it the way they could on periodicals.

The *New Quarterly Review* outlined three possible relationships between writers and publishers. The options for the publisher were: *First*, to print, publish and advertise the work at the author’s expense, and to account to him for the proceeds, if there should be any. *Second*, to produce it at their own expense, and to account to the author for one-half or perhaps two-fifths of the profits. *Third*, to buy the manuscript

\(^{146}\) ‘Pendennis’, 356.
out and out.\textsuperscript{147} Although the first method was often used of necessity for sermons, it was not to be recommended to writers, as the publisher had little incentive to promote the work, and there was unlikely to be any profits. The \textit{New Quarterly} reported that although the shared-profits system was most common, ‘every author’ would prefer the outright purchase of copyright system. The argument was that under shared profits, it was too easy for the publisher to make up the account books so that there were no profits to share, as the novelist Charles Lever accused the Dublin publisher (and RTS agent) William Curry of doing, shortly before Curry’s bankruptcy.\textsuperscript{148} Under purchase of copyright, the writer got a clear payment, and would also be able to see his book being ‘well pushed’, as it was ‘the publisher’s absolute property’.\textsuperscript{149} The \textit{New Quarterly} reviewer claimed that the only works which were purchased outright were those of writers whose ‘favour is so high with the public, that there is no risk whatever in the transaction’ – in other words, he was discussing transactions such as the £1,200 George Smith paid Thackeray for \textit{Henry Esmond}.\textsuperscript{150}

The reviewer neglected a different, and much larger, class of writers who sold their copyrights outright. The RTS always bought copyrights, as did Chambers for their Educational Series. This was simpler for the publisher, since it got the transaction over, and did not require the publisher to keep accounts for all their writers until their books sold out. It also gave the publisher the power to do whatever he wanted with the work including revisions and later editions in different formats. Literary writers might be uncomfortable with that, but non-fiction writers could be more practical. One of the contributors to \textit{Chambers’s Journal} explained that, ‘In writing for you, as I said before, one works for money, & not for fame; and if you purchase my wares, I think you have a right to do what you please with them.’\textsuperscript{151} Selling the copyright allowed the writer instant and definite payment, and made it possible to make a living. However, writers whose works sold well might later regret the decision. Thomas Dick had sold his copyrights outright, and was slipping into poverty although his books continued to sell. He explained to the RLF that although \textit{The Christian

\textsuperscript{147} ‘Authors and publishers [1]’, 12.
\textsuperscript{149} ‘Authors and publishers [1]’, 16.
\textsuperscript{150} Sutherland, \textit{Victorian novelists}, 104-11.
\textsuperscript{151} Catherine Crowe, quoted in Cooney, \textit{Publishers for the people}, 62, n2.
Philosopher had reached its 12th edition, and his Solar System had sold over 80,000 copies, ‘I derive no pecuniary benefit whatsoever from the sale of my works however extensive it may be’. Occasionaly, publishers made discretionary payments to writers whose works had sold particularly well, and some of Dick’s American publishers did this, but such generosity was rare.

The Practices of Writing

Writing had to be balanced with research, correspondence and checking proofs, as well as family life and, in some cases, the demands of another profession. Time-management, or, as Chambers’s Journal put it, ‘steady industry and unfailing fidelity’, was thus an essential skill. The North British Review suggested that too many people became full-time writers after trying another profession, because ‘they have not had patience sufficient to give them fair chances of eventual success’ in the initial choice of profession. The reviewer claimed this was why literary men were so often disorganised, and recommended that those considering literature as a profession should do so ‘more advisedly and deliberately... It should be pursued with as much consistency and regularity as any other learned profession.’ Discipline was needed to combat the ‘irregular social and moral habits’ which might result from the ‘irregular distribution of time’ necessitated by ‘the absolute requirements of literary labour’, particularly that on the daily and weekly periodicals. Writers were expected to be as disciplined as factory-workers, save that they were presumed to be capable of exerting self-discipline, without a bell or steam-whistle.

In order to write undisturbed, Bunbury, like many writers, started work early in the morning, usually before seven o’clock, although we do not know when she stopped. Kitto had initially tried staying up late, but after ‘having twice exposed himself and his family to the risk of conflagration by his nocturnal slumbers in the library’, he too decided to opt for early mornings. This was more problematic for
Kitto than for most writers, as he was deaf, and thus slept through alarm clocks and the night watchman's bell. His wife, Annabella, had to respond to one of these alarms, usually around 4am, and rouse her husband before going back to sleep. Kitto's day was then strictly organised, with allotted periods for dealing with correspondence, writing, and spending time with his family. On first rising, he made a cup of tea, and then wrote, in his study, until 'the rest of the family were ready for breakfast'. He worked in the garden for a while, and then, after dressing, retired to his library for reading until dinner at one o'clock. Tea was at five o'clock, and the interval was 'generally given to answering correspondents, and correcting proofs'. During tea, he read aloud to his wife. Afterwards, he went back to his study, and 'worked at his desk till between nine and ten, and then read till eleven'. He thus felt able to promise punctuality to his publisher, for, 'My working day is twice the usual length – from four AM to nine PM, with little interruption – hard work enough, but necessary'. During those seventeen hours, he had spent no more than three with his family, over meals, another three hours doing proofs and correspondence, and the remaining eleven either writing or reading. Much of this reading was research for new works. Kitto was fortunate in having a personal library of around 3,500 books in his library, which came close to rivalling Anthony Trollope's 5,000 volumes. Yet even with this library, Kitto did not have the resources for all his new works. He had been in the habit of using the British Museum library when he began working for Knight, but he found that it took too long to walk there and back, and he could not spare the time from his writing. Annabella Kitto went to the British Museum on his behalf, so that research and writing could be carried on simultaneously.

Perhaps even more than the professionals, writers with other careers had to plan their day particularly carefully. Trollope was one of the most dedicated, having determined to write something every day. To do this, he usually rose at 5.30am to write before starting his work for the Post Office, and occasionally started at 4am when under

160 Ryland, John Kitto, 552.
161 Ryland, John Kitto, 552-3.
162 Ryland, John Kitto, 606.
163 Charles Knight had helped Kitto gather this library, to assist his research, see Ryland, John Kitto, 616, 550-1. On Trollope's library, see Glendinning, V., Trollope (London, 1992), 431.
164 Ryland, John Kitto, 536, 551.
pressure of a deadline. He also learned how to write on a portable desk which he could use during all the hours he spent travelling on Post Office business in trains, and on steam-boats.

Few of the ministers who wrote for the RTS were as organised or as determined as Trollope, and since they did not work office hours, found it difficult to keep to a regular timetable for writing. The professional demand for sermons meant that ministers and clergy already had to find time every week for writing, before works for publication were taken into account. Sermons were expected to take an hour to deliver orally, making them around 8,000 words long. Although ministers might think about their sermons all week, most reserved Friday or Saturday for writing them. Most needed two sermons for Sunday, and might be expected to deliver a lecture to their congregation on a week-day evening. Thus, when Alexander accepted the call to North College Street, Edinburgh in 1834, he was expected to write and deliver three discourses every week. In addition to their duties with their own congregations, many of the ministers preached on other occasions during the week, perhaps in neighbouring villages, or gave lectures to students or the YMCA, or addressed Bible Society meetings. Kennedy’s son remembered how his father never had a free evening:

He is off to preside over some of the multitudinous organisations clustering at the meeting-house, or to take his week-night service; or to address some special gathering – of policemen, or journeymen bakers, or sweeps and scavengers; or to preach or lecture at some other Church in the neighbourhood – or in any other neighbourhood, for that matter.

Some of the preaching might be extempore, but most of the lectures, sermons and addresses on special occasions were likely to be prepared in writing in advance.

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165 Glendinning, Trollope, 265, 351-2. Morning writing became such a habit that even after his retirement from the Post Office, he continued to do his daily writing before breakfast – but breakfast took place much later, 431.
166 Glendinning, Trollope, 218.
167 This is the length of one of Stowell’s sermons, see those appended to Stowell, William Stowell. The BBC allows for 140 spoken words a minute, which amounts to 8,400 an hour.
168 Ross, WL Alexander, 69.
169 Kennedy, Old Highland days, 196.
170 On Alexander, see Ross, WL Alexander, 82-3. On Kennedy, see Kennedy, Old Highland days, 119-20, 198. The ministers varied as to whether they prepared notes or full text, and changed their practice with age, or depending on the importance of the occasion.
Accepting invitations to deliver lectures thus involved a greater time commitment than just the duration of the lecture. Any other writing had to be fitted into whatever spare time was available.

The biographies of urban evangelical ministers and clergymen commonly detailed the busy and complex timetables of their week, in which it is almost incredible that they found time to write anything other than their essential sermons and lectures. The following account of ministerial life in Edinburgh was Alexander's response to a suggestion that he should spend more time in pastoral visiting. It equally illustrates the difficulty of finding time to write:

Now, when it is considered that I have three discourses a week to prepare and deliver, that I am often called besides to preach, sometimes at home, sometimes at a distance; that I have church meetings, prayer meetings, deacons' meetings, committee meetings, and public meetings to attend; that I have baptisms to perform in the houses of members, funerals to attend; that I have to converse with numerous applicants for church fellowship; and that I have many calls on my time besides which I cannot prevent, — I leave it to the good sense of any candid man to say whether, even supposing I never were to enjoy the luxury of reading a book, or to occupy myself in literary exertion, or to spend an hour with my family and friends, it be possible for me [to do more visiting].

Alexander's defence reveals that ministers' families, like those of the professional writers, had to be fitted into tightly-defined short periods of time, while reading and writing for personal interest or pleasure was a luxury. Stoughton described books as his 'only extravagance', and tried to find at least a short space in each day 'for steady reading'. Despite this, most ministers did gather libraries, and find time to use them, while the biographies reveal their efforts to get access to books they did not own. Like Kitto, both Kennedy and Stoughton used the British Museum library, and they also had access to the dissenting Dr. Williams's Library, and those of the several

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171 Ross, WL Alexander, 137.
172 Lewis, John Stoughton, 64, 213.
denominational training colleges. Kennedy was also known to borrow from Mudie's circulating library for his researches. Furthermore, through their network of personal connections, they could use the shelves of friends and colleagues. Stoughton recorded being delighted to find 'a large collection of books' under the 'hospitable roof' of his friend, congregation member and RTS committee member, Thomas Coombs. This access to a network of private scholarly resources, and the learned conversation that went with it, provided an encouragement for literary activity that professional writers could rarely match.

Time pressure was a serious problem for the minister-writers, although since they were not seeking to make a living by their writings, failure to write did not matter as much as it would have done for professional writers. About six years into his ministry, Alexander's heavy workload, described above, brought on ill-health, and the doctors feared consumption. He was forced to abandon some of his activities. Kennedy felt that the other demands on his time meant that he could not aim to be a great scholar; He concentrated instead on 'drawing from other men's accumulations of knowledge; he digested what he got, and he produced works scholarly, logical, clear, and full of nervous force; and no one could ever say that he was slipshod or unworkmanlike in his literary style'. This sort of work — scholarly in style, but mostly derivative — was all that most busy ministers could hope to produce, and it was also what the RTS was interested in. Original scholarly works would be sent to a publisher better used to promoting such publications among a learned audience.

Given all the other calls on their time, we would expect the ministers and clergy to take longer to complete a work than the professional writers. Since ministers' writing hours were so erratic, it is difficult to estimate an average rate of production for them. Trollope wrote at least twenty pages (5,000 words in his handwriting) a week and sometimes five times that. Since he was a particularly prolific part-time writer, we might take his least productive weeks as rough estimates for the minister-writers. In

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173 Lewis, John Stoughton, 100.  
174 Kennedy, Old Highland days, 269.  
175 Stoughton, Recollections, 81.  
176 Ross, WL Alexander, 99-100, 158.  
177 Kennedy, Old Highland days, 247.  
178 Glendinning, Trollope, 240.
contrast, Bunbury, writing full-time, produced more than Trollope in his most productive weeks, usually writing fifty pages or more a day (7,500 words in her handwriting), which is over seven times as much as the ministers, assuming she only worked a five-day week (which is unlikely). At those rates, a Monthly Volume of 50,000 words would take Bunbury almost seven days, while a minister would take nearer to ten weeks. Figure 2.22 has already shown that it took a year for two-thirds of the Monthly Volumes to be completed. The average time taken was eleven months for professionals, and twelve and a half months for ordained writers. It is clear that neither group was writing their Monthly Volumes constantly from the time they agreed to do them, and that the professionals were not significantly faster than the ministers. This is partly because both groups had to do research before they could start writing. They may also have had current projects to complete before starting a new one. It is also likely that although professionals wrote more words per week, they were not all for the same project. In particular, writers produced periodical articles at the same time as working on a longer work, in order to keep some money flowing in. Hence, their rate of progress on the longer work would be slower than expected.

From the discussion of rates of work, it becomes obvious that writing was not just an intellectual exercise. It involved the physical work of moving the pen across the page, and between the page and the ink-well. Although Bunbury said that she ‘usually’ wrote ‘as many as from 40 to 50 pages daily’, she could, if pressed, write more. During a particularly abrupt shortage of money, she reported that ‘I have written at one time 72 pages of large paper in the day, and indeed have worked hard.’

Biographies rarely record the physical practices of writing, but it is possible to deduce some general points from the recommendations of contemporary manuals for writers, which were presumably responding to actual practices.

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179 RLF 1089.2, Bunbury to RLF, 04/01/1844; 1089.11, Bunbury to RLF, 05/03/1845.
180 RLF 1089.2, Bunbury to RLF, 04/01/1844; 1089.11, Bunbury to RLF, 05/03/1845.
181 RLF 1089.18, Bunbury to RLF, 23/10/1848. See also RLF 1089.12, Appeal on behalf of Bunbury, n.d., which claims she often wrote 70 to 80 large pages a day.
182 Trollope’s practices are particularly well-known in comparison to those of most other writers, see Glendinning, Trollope. Allen Dooley made extensive use of writers’ manuals in Dooley, Author and printer.
Advice to writers usually included the recommendation to write on one side of separate clean sheets of paper, preferably all the same size.\textsuperscript{183} Common writing paper was said to be the most convenient size, as foolscap was too large for either writer or compositor to work with happily.\textsuperscript{184} The worst of the alternatives, according to an anonymous pamphlet writer, was ‘the fashion much cherished by ladies, of writing in pretty copy-books, which are all very well in their way, but which must be torn to pieces before they are put upon the compositors’ cases’.\textsuperscript{185} As an experienced writer, Bunbury wrote on separate sheets. Another unfortunate habit was that of some poverty-stricken writers who ‘recycled’ paper to save buying fresh sheets. This made their copy extremely difficult for editors, publishers’ readers, and compositors to read. Alexander may have been guilty in this respect, for the paper he used for sermons ‘was of all sizes, from a broad quarto page to one not larger than an ordinary envelope, and of all kinds – the back of a circular or blank page of a letter, or any scrap of paper that came readily to hand’.\textsuperscript{186} If he emulated Alexander Pope by sending his copy for publication in such a form, it would not have been popular. The anonymous writer remarked of Pope that, ‘It would have been better economy in him to have laid out a little money upon decent writing-paper, instead of using dirty parings and savings’, as the cost of paying for corrections in proof would outweigh that of buying new paper.\textsuperscript{187}

Writers were also urged to write a clear hand – or if they could not, to have their manuscript copied before sending it to the publisher.\textsuperscript{188} Although Stowell was said to produce ‘beautifully-penned manuscript’, Alexander exhibited a ‘somewhat loose and careless penmanship’.\textsuperscript{189} Combined with his idiosyncratic use of paper, this cannot have helped the legibility of his copy. The necessity of making a fair copy also applied ‘whenever a manuscript is roughly written, and full of emendations or alterations, erasures and interlineations’, in other words, whenever a work was significantly revised.\textsuperscript{190} Thus, although Stowell’s manuscripts were clearly written,

\textsuperscript{183}Hints to our contributors’ Leisure Hour 3 (1854): 316-18, at 318; Advice to authors, 7.
\textsuperscript{184}Advice to authors, 10.
\textsuperscript{185}Advice to authors, 7.
\textsuperscript{186}Ross, WL Alexander, 290.
\textsuperscript{187}Advice to authors, 8-9.
\textsuperscript{188}Dooley, Author and printer, Ch.1; Hints, 317; Advice to authors, 5.
\textsuperscript{189}Stowell, William Stowell, 214; Ross, WL Alexander, 290.
\textsuperscript{190}Advice to authors, 5.
he regularly got to the stage where he needed to write them out all over again, just so that the fair copy could be ‘blurred, blotted, interlined, supplemented, and patched, till it was absolutely necessary to have it written again’.\footnote{191}

Writers had different ways of working: Kitto sat at his desk, but Alexander worked ‘standing’ at his high desk (for it was only in the very latest years that he sat).\footnote{192} For professional writers, the necessity of working even when they felt ‘so unwell as to feel scarcely able to do so’, meant that they sometimes worked from more unusual places.\footnote{193} Bunbury was able to ‘write a little, and correct for the press, sitting up in bed’ while suffering from bronchitis.\footnote{194} Martin, however, was so disabled during the final years of his illness that he was able to keep working only by ‘dictat[ing] from his bed of suffering’\footnote{195} These times of illness apart, writers usually worked in a space dedicated to literary activities. Kitto had his ‘drawing room... completely fitted up with bookshelves, and an Arnott’s stove’, as well as a spirit lamp, so that he could make his cup of tea and work in comfort in the cold early hours.\footnote{196} Alexander’s desk was in ‘his own library, with books to right of him, books to left of him’.\footnote{197} However organised his thoughts may have been, his working area resembled the confusion of his untidy copy for, ‘he was by no means methodical in dealing with things he had to handle, such as his books, papers, &c., which often got into such a state of confusion that he required the aid of others to bring them into something like order’.\footnote{198} It seems unlikely that Alexander would have been successful at his youthful dream of being a professional writer.

The subordination of family life to literary work would be no different from most professional men, were it not that ministers and professional writers worked in the home, and did not stop at the end of an office day. Alexander’s relationship with his family was recorded by one of his children’s friends:

\footnote{191}{Stowell, William Stowell, 214.}
\footnote{192}{Ross, WL Alexander, 240.}
\footnote{193}{RLF 1089.11, Bunbury to RLF, 05/03/1845.}
\footnote{194}{RLF 1089.22, Bunbury to RLF, 04/02/1851.}
\footnote{195}{RLF 1315.28, MJ Martin to RLF, May 1860.}
\footnote{196}{Ryland, John Kitto, 552.}
\footnote{197}{Ross, WL Alexander, 240.}
\footnote{198}{Ross, WL Alexander, 290.}
Though spending his time almost entirely at home, [he] was not day by day a central figure in the home life. He was known ‘to be in the study’, ‘to be making sermons’. He appeared at prayer time and at meals, when there was lively talk, and he took kindly but brief notice of his children and their friends, but he did not linger in the sitting-room. His own library... was his distinctive place. He was then known to be at his work.\(^{199}\)

A young family could be a nuisance for a writer seeking peace and quiet for focussed work, which is why it was so important to have a separate room dedicated to study. However, wives and older children, particularly daughters, could be called into service as assistants. As we have already seen, Annabella Kitto went to the British Museum for her husband. Once Stowell’s eldest daughter was old enough ‘to act as his amanuensis’ it became her job to copy out his manuscript for him to revise yet again.\(^{200}\) Female relatives also took dictation from the sickbed of an enfeebled writer, as Mary Jane Martin did for her husband, and as a niece almost certainly did for the elderly and blind Bunbury.\(^{201}\) The importance of female help was noted by the *North British Review*, which referred not only to copying, but to the importance of thrift and careful housewifery to make ends meet on the irregular and perhaps insufficient income the writer would produce. The reviewer commented that writers ‘would often do better if they were more fortunate in their wives; but literary men sometimes make very strange alliances, and have little housewifely help at home to balance their own irregularities’.\(^{202}\)

The woman’s role as housewife, helpmate and nurse became complicated when the woman was also a writer. A married woman could not, by definition, be a professional writer while her husband was alive, so her writing was always subservient to her domestic roles. But a single woman forced to support herself as a writer could still have family responsibilities to bear. At various stages in her life,

\(^{199}\) Ross, *W. L. Alexander*, 240.


\(^{201}\) RLF 1089.59, Bunbury to RLF, n.d.; 1089.67, Bunbury to RLF, 03/07/1867.

\(^{202}\) ‘*Pendennis*’, 361-2. The reviewer went on the accuse writers of being ‘men of impulse – of ardent, hasty temperament; and the enthusiasm of the moment often determines the future tenor of their domestic lives’, 362.
Bunbury supported either wholly or partially her brother, a school-teacher sister, two orphaned nephews, a widowed and ill sister, and an orphaned niece. The sisters and niece lived with her, but were able to contribute little to the domestic economy, while one sister needed active nursing. Bunbury was also expected to act as nurse to other members of her extended family. In 1843, she spent almost the entire year ‘attending a case of consumption’ which prevented her ‘from doing anything for myself’. Similar attendance on sickbeds occupied no fewer than nine months of 1855-56. While nursing was exclusively a female preserve, male writers did have responsibilities to their extended family, as when Dick took care of his widowed sister, and his five orphaned grandchildren. However, the married male writer could leave the actual domestic care to his wife, so that although he might have to write more to support the extra mouths, he would not be prevented from writing by their presence.

Literature and the Domestic Economy

For observers watching the success of Dickens or Thackeray, the potential rewards of literature might appear to be great, but for most writers, the financial gains were small and irregular. It was difficult to maintain a household, and virtually impossible to save for the future, so relatively small upsets could destroy the fragile financial equilibrium of a moderately successful writer. Writers generally came from the middling classes of society, and frequently felt they had to keep up at least the appearance of this status even when their income barely allowed it. Martin conceded to the RLF that, ‘Hard indeed for some time has been the struggle to maintain that respectability of appearance which my position requires.’ One of the consequences of ‘keeping up appearances’ was that, although the Martins had been struggling from the early 1850s, it was not until his final illness at the end of the decade that his friends and RLF referees realised how badly off the couple were. Only one referee had commented, in 1854, that ‘I know he has long struggled to maintain his

203 RLF 1089 ff.
204 RLF 1089.2, Bunbury to RLF, 04/01/1844.
205 RLF 1089.34, Bunbury to RLF, 01/04/1856.
206 RLF 1241.2, Dick to RLF, n.d. [January 1850].
207 RLF 1315.2, Martin to RLF, 08/04/1853. His wife also noted the need, and the effort involved, ‘to keep our position’, 1315.28, MJ Martin to RLF, May 1860.
208 RLF 1315.22, Owen to RLF, 20/01/1859; 1215.23, Gould to RLF, 02/02/1859.
Being an editorial assistant himself (to Charles Knight), Andrew Ramsay was perhaps more aware of the realities of a literary life than the natural history men could be.

The income needed to maintain a writer’s household depended upon the size of the family in it. Martin’s lack of children made it easier for him to support his wife and mother by writing, but meant that there were no grown children to help, either physically or financially, later in life. Kitto fell ill in his forties, when his children were still young, and his widow was left with a much greater burden than was Martin’s. Parents could still end up having to help adult children, and when one of Milner’s sons emigrated to New Zealand, he was assisted by his brother and father. He subsequently did well enough that, when his sister was widowed with three children, both brothers sent support. Otherwise, the burden would have fallen on Milner. This happened to Dick when one of his married daughters and her husband died, and the care of their children fell to the grandparents. The savings Dick had put aside for his old age rapidly disappeared with five young children to care for.

There was no way that unexpected deaths could be planned for, and their financial implications could be severe on those who were left to cope. Bunbury looked after a seemingly regular stream of dependent family members, who were the cause of her regular applications to the Royal Literary Fund. Yet, since the grants she received amounted to only £375 over forty years, i.e. less than £10 a year, she was doing remarkably well in the long run. It was usually at the points of sudden change in the family, such as deaths or illnesses, that her economy was over-stretched.

*Fraser’s Magazine* claimed that a writer had to be ‘very unlucky or very “impracticable”, if he do not earn an income which will support him and his family’. Like other people, writers occasionally made bad financial investments, or acted as security for unreliable friends. Milner’s ‘confidence misplaced in another’

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209 RLF 1315.16, Ramsay to RLF, 21/06/1854.
210 RLF 1385.16, Milner to RLF, 25/06/1868; 1385.22, Milner to RLF, 05/02/1881.
211 RLF 1241.2, Dick to RLF, n.d. [1850].
212 RLF 1089.18, Bunbury to RLF, 23/10/1848; 1089.67, Bunbury to RLF, 03/07/1867; 1089.88, Jebb to RLF, [1878]; 1089.92, Bunbury to RLF, 31/05/1881.
213 [Lewes], ‘Condition of authors’, 288.
214 On the mis-investment of Bunbury’s legacy from her mother, see RLF 1089.12, Printed appeal on behalf of Bunbury, n.d.
cost him dearly, and it took him eighteen months of ‘incessant literary labour’ during 1852 and 1853 to clear his responsibilities to point when he felt able to ‘hold up my head in society as owing no man anything’.

Bunbury encountered bad luck in 1848, when she was living with a sister in Liverpool. Her sister had just had to close her school, due to the economic depression. Bunbury herself had had a fairly successful year, and in August she went to the Bank of England to withdraw enough funds to see herself and her sister through the winter. She told the Royal Literary Fund that, ‘on returning [I] was beset by four thieves and robbed in a moment of the entire. The notes were stopped at the Bank, but I have had many letters [Illegible in MS – perhaps ‘of credit’] and from time to time they were presented in a total and paid’. She and her sister were forced to borrow money from a ‘kind lady’ in order to live.

Bad luck could not be avoided, but Fraser’s charge of impracticality was a different matter. The New Quarterly Review believed that writers needed a sounder grasp of the financial details of their profession, to avoid being duped by unscrupulous publishers, and the review devoted two articles, intended as ‘a sort of confidential communication to our brethren of the pen’, to educating them. More common, however, was the North British Review’s assertion that, ‘It is not so much that authors do not know how to make money, as that they do not know how to spend it’. The reviewer went on to claim that writers were ‘desperately bad arithmeticians. They are not clever at £:s:d. We believe them to be as honest as their neighbours, but they are certainly more careless... The same pen will rarely write articles and square accounts.’ He believed that this explained why literary men seemed to be so much worse off than other professionals with similar incomes. Few of the RTS writers

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215 RLF 1385.1, Milner’s application form, 07/07/1855; 1385.2, Milner to RLF, n.d. [July 1855].
216 RLF 1089.18, Bunbury to RLF, 23/10/1848.
217 In a later recollection, Bunbury mentioned the loss of £400, although this seems a generous amount for the subsistence of two single women for a winter, RLF 1089.92, Bunbury to RLF, 32/05/1881.
219 ‘Pendennis’, 357. Chambers’s Journal suggested that this belief, that writers were frivolous with money, accounted for the distrust of publishers towards writers, ‘Authors of calamities’, 129.
220 ‘Pendennis’, 360-1. See also 357.
221 ‘Pendennis’, 357.
ever had enough money to even think about being reckless with it. Carelessness, or lack of arithmetical knowledge was possible, although most writers came from backgrounds in which education would have included basic arithmetic alongside literary skills.

Without being reckless, Bunbury admitted that, 'I was not able to lay up any part of the sums I received', because she was 'obliged to write generally for the moment'. Kitto was forced to live off advances, due to his 'want of capital'. This meant that they could not save for the future, let alone follow Chambers's Journal's advice to set up a literary firm, in which writers would be their own employers. Writers had no way to accurately predict their income, so advance budgeting was difficult, and most seem to have barely survived from one payment to the next. This meant that if bad luck did befall them, they had few or no resources on which to draw. Kitto and Milner both sold parts of their libraries in attempts to raise money. This was a desperate measure for, as Kitto noted, 'the books... are most essential to my future labours, which it has taken me many long years to get... together, and which once lost I may not hope to recover.' Dick sold his best telescope for similar reasons. Shortly thereafter, 'necessity... compelled the Doctor to let, on a rent, the principal part of the house that he has occupied and to retire with his family to the Attics'.

After attempts like these had been made, as Kitto explained, 'I had no resource for the subsistence of my household but the contracting of some debts, the pressure of which now lies heavily upon me, and threatens to break up my domestic establishment.' Tradesmen would give credit, but not for ever, and not without limit. This was one reason Mary Jane Martin particularly welcomed the RLF grants, for 'ready money in hand giv[es] great advantage in every kind of purchase'. Writers who ran up debts could usually avoid the debtor's prison only by finding a benevolent friend, relative or

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222 On well-known writers who frittered away their earnings, see, for instance, Sutherland, Victorian novelists, 112 (on G.A. Lawrence at the gaming tables).
223 RLF 1089.2, Bunbury to RLF, 04/01/1844.
224 RLF 1115.8, Kitto to RLF, 03/02/1849.
225 'Authors of calamities', 130.
226 RLF 1115.8, Kitto to RLF, 03/02/1849.
227 Astore, Observing God, 51.
228 RLF 1241.15, Meffan to RLF, 14/07/1853.
229 RLF 1115.8, Kitto to RLF, 03/02/1849.
230 RLF 1315.47, MJ Martin to RLF, 30/10/1853.
institution to pay off the creditors, and unlike ministers and clergy, their profession did not provide an automatic circle of well-wishers. Friends of the writer could advertise his poverty to try and raise a public subscription for his relief, but the necessary publicity meant that it was a last resort. The subscriptions for Dick and Kitto happened in the final years of their lives, and were intended as much to provide future support for the bereaved dependants as for the writer himself. Kitto’s subscription raised £1,800, which paid his debts and funeral expenses, and left enough to secure an income of around £60 a year for his family.

The Royal Literary Fund was the best known of the charitable organisations to which writers could apply before the public subscription was needed. It is their files that have been so illuminating on the condition of some of the RTS writers. There were also other charitable organisations on which writers might be able to make a claim. Bunbury, for instance, eventually discovered that she could receive a £40 a year pension as the daughter of a deceased clergyman of the Church of England. Pensions, of between £25 and £300, could also be sought from the Civil List, and carried an aura of deserved reward that grants from charitable foundations did not. Applicants to the RLF frequently felt themselves to be begging, and as one referee noted, ‘It is always painful to solicit alms.’ Without savings invested in stocks or an annuity, a pension was the only way in which a writer could retire, or at least reduce their workload in their later years. However, the pensions were hard to get. Kitto got one of £100 a year, but it took three attempts before Dick received one of £50. Fraser’s complained that in the distribution of Civil List pensions, too ‘little falls to the share of real merit’, and too much to those with the right friends. The article closed with a call, laden with military metaphors, for a change to the system of

\[\text{231} \text{ See Cross, } \textit{Common writer}, \text{ Ch.2, on writers and debt.}\]
\[\text{232} \text{ Eadie, } \textit{John Kitto}, \text{ 372, note. I estimate the £60 pa from investing the £1,200 in 5 percents. For Dick’s subscription, see } \textit{RLF} 1241.10, \text{ Lowe to } \textit{RLF}, \text{ 27/03/1851.}\]
\[\text{233} \text{ RLF 1089.66, Application Form, 03/07/1867.}\]
\[\text{234} \text{ On Civil List pensions for writers, see Cross, } \textit{Common writer}, \textit{82ff.}\]
\[\text{235} \text{ RLF 1315.23, Gould to } \textit{RLF}, \text{ 02/02/1859.}\]
\[\text{236} \text{ RLF 1115.14, Press-cutting with Kitto’s application form, 01/03/1854; 1241.17, Press-cuttings with Dick’s application form, 08/11/1854; 1241.19, Petition to Lord Aberdeen, n.d. [1854?].}\]
\[\text{237} \text{ [Lewes], } \textit{‘Condition of authors’}, \text{ 285.}\]
pensions, so that the claim of the ‘veteran writer, battered in long and hard-fought service’ would be recognised as much as that of the soldier.\textsuperscript{238}

Saving and the related problems of bad luck and getting a pension, were problems for all writers, as, indeed, for all those with low, irregular incomes. Ministers tended to have slightly more financial security than professional writers, with a rough expectation of their income from year to year. They would also have the support of their entire congregations in illness or old age, rather than just their personal friends, and relatives. This meant that, while all writers would be affected by the occupational hazards of literature, professional writers were likely to be hit harder. The main hazards were publishers’ bankruptcies and work-related illnesses.

Publisher’s bankruptcy might seem as improbable as being beset by robbers, but it was a not uncommon event in the mid-nineteenth century. In 1841 Kitto recorded, ‘the only publishing house with which I had up to that time become connected [i.e. Knight], fell into difficulties, which brought to a most unexpected close an arrangement then recently formed which had promised me a fair income for some years.’\textsuperscript{239} Martin suffered two publishers’ bankruptcies in the early part of his career as a professional writer, firstly that of Baldwin, Cradock & Joy in 1837/8, and then that of Whitehead & Co. in 1840. Whitehead had engaged him on an annual salary to write a \textit{Natural History of Quadrupeds}.\textsuperscript{240} Unfortunately, ‘One volume of the work was scarcely completed when the firm became insolvent and Mr. Martin was again left without resources.’\textsuperscript{241} It happened to Milner an unfortunate three times: W.S. Orr in 1854, Freeman of Fleet Street in 1857/8, and W.&R. McPhun of Glasgow in the mid-1870s.\textsuperscript{242}

During 1853-54, Milner was working particularly hard to make up for the debts of the friend for whom he had stood as security. He received several advance payments
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238 [Lewes], ‘Condition of authors’, 295.
239 RLF 1115.2, Kitto to RLF, 27/10/1845.
240 RLF 1315.3, Martin to RLF, 11/04/1853.
241 RLF 1315.7, Waterhouse to RLF, 13/04/1853.
242 RLF 1385.12, Quinton to RLF, 06/05/1858; 1385.22, Milner’s application form, 05/02/1881.

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from the RTS to assist him, including an unusually large one of £100. Milner reported that, in early 1854:

I then accepted a commission from Messrs. Orr to produce a ‘Natural History of the British Isles’, as an introductory volume to a series of six, to be called the British Naturalist, in which McGillivray’s Birds were to reappear. I spent eight months upon the work – never received a sixpence in advance upon it – contracted a heavy debt for books – went with the knowledge of Mr. Orr into the country to recruit my health and finish my task as to be ready for publication by 1855 – and within ten days of my leaving London early in October, that house failed, and I was ruinously impoverished.

Milner had undertaken a substantial amount of research and writing on a work for which he had not yet been paid, and suddenly had no expectation of being paid. The unfortunate events of the previous year had left him without any savings to fall back on. His own estimate of the effects of Orr’s bankruptcy was as follows:

The consequence to me has been, that instead of receiving as I expected about £250 for the volume, with the commencement of this year, I have not had a farthing, and must wait three years for what the winding up of the business will bring. – I have the expenses to meet – and I have endeavoured to meet them by depriving myself of the bread that perisheth.

Not only was Milner left unpaid for his work, but he had debts to pay for the purchase of specialist books for his research, and he was starving himself to meet them. Although there were legal procedures for the payment of creditors after a bankruptcy, as Milner was aware, they were extremely slow and unlikely to yield full payment.

Just before leaving London, Milner had placed a plan for an extensive new work on ‘Our Island Home’ before the RTS committee, which would involve him writing four

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243 RTS CCM 15/02/1854.
244 RLF 1385.2, Milner to RLF, n.d. [July 1855]. Orr’s bankruptcy is discussed in Chambers, W., Memoir of Robert Chambers with Autobiographical Reminiscences (New York, 1872), Ch. 13.
245 RLF 1385.2, Milner to RLF, n.d. [July 1855].
volumes, each twice the length of a Monthly Volume, with the possibility of another four to come.\textsuperscript{246} This was intended to provide Milner with a definite source of income for the next year or two, once he had finished with Orr’s ‘Natural History’ and the other RTS works he was already committed to. The RTS copyright committee approved the plan in mid-October.\textsuperscript{247} Despite his sudden impoverishment as a consequence of Orr’s failure, Milner threw himself into his work for the RTS, although he needed another £100 advance in February 1855. But by the end of that year, the strain and the additional work were having their effect. In December, John Henry Cross, of the RTS editorial department, went to visit Milner and reported that he had been ‘incapacitated... for literary work’ as a result of his recent ‘pecuniary trials’.\textsuperscript{248} As well as nervous stress, he was suffering from paralysis of his arm.\textsuperscript{249}

Publishers’ bankruptcies had clear financial implications for writers, and Milner’s case shows that they could also injure health. But they could affect publisher-writer relations in a more general way. A spate of bankruptcies, as in 1847-48 or again in 1853, affected perceptions of the state of the trade, even though available data suggests that the trade continued to grow throughout both ‘crises’.\textsuperscript{250} Publishers became more careful about taking on new projects, something that writers often bemoaned when unable to place their works. According to the perceptions of writers, the state of trade was bad throughout the 1840s. Kitto referred to ‘the generally bad state of their [publishers’] business’ in 1840, and to ‘a time of such depression in the book trade’ in early 1849.\textsuperscript{251} Just four months earlier, Bunbury had remarked on ‘all the adverse circumstances of this year’.\textsuperscript{252} Again, in 1853, Martin found the state of the trade such that ‘for months and months, I have received no order of any great importance from any publisher’.\textsuperscript{253} As well as disinclining publishers to take on new projects, bankruptcies deprived writers of their trade connections just as much as

\textsuperscript{246} RTS CCM, 20/09/1854.
\textsuperscript{247} RTS CCM, 18/10/1854.
\textsuperscript{248} RTS CCM, 19/12/1855.
\textsuperscript{249} RLF 1385.2, Milner to RLF, n.d. [July 1855]. Milner did manage to complete some work by January the next year, but the RTS had to send it to more ‘competent hands’ for revision, RTS CCM, 19/03/1856.
\textsuperscript{251} RLF 1115.2, Kitto to RLF, 27/10/1845; 1115.8, Kitto to RLF, 03/02/1849.
\textsuperscript{252} RLF 1089.18, Bunbury to RLF, 23/10/1848.
\textsuperscript{253} RLF 1315.3, Martin to RLF, 11/04/1853.
deaths. Kitto had reckoned his connections as one of the few positive things about his position in 1845.²⁵⁴

Illness was the other major cause of financial trouble reported by the RTS writers, for medical, and perhaps funeral, bills were expensive, and writers could be prevented from earning. Even when they were not personally ill, the writers’ opportunities to work might be severely restricted by the presence of illness, particularly in the case of women writers, who were expected to attend in the sickroom. If writers themselves became ill, they were generally prevented from working, although dictation from the sickbed might be an option. Martin’s wife performed this help for him, but Milner’s wife was herself an invalid, forcing him to employ an amanuensis, at a cost he found ‘very crippling’.²⁵⁵ The amount of work that could be carried out depended upon the nature and severity of the illness, and as long as the invalid remained clear-headed and conscious, they could work if an assistant was available. But work of any sort was unlikely if they suffered, as Milner did in his seventies, from ‘a seizure of an apoplectic kind [which] threw me headlong from the top of the stairs to the bottom, with the usual result of perfect insensibility and complete helplessness on my part.’²⁵⁶

Apoplexy was (probably) not an occupational hazard for writers, but nervous illnesses and eye-strain could result from over-long hours of reading and writing. Milner, Martin and Bunbury all had problems with their hands and wrists as a consequence of the repetitive effort involved in continual writing. In 1844, Bunbury reported that her continued writing ‘brought on an affection of the nerve of the right arm, which renders its use at all times rather difficult, and sometimes deprives me of that use for a couple of months at a time’.²⁵⁷ She used her left hand to write some of her shorter works, but by 1853, she had to report ‘the loss, I fear permanently, of the use of the right arm. I trust to acquire more facility in writing with the left.’ The doctor reported that ‘the nerve of the arm [was] injured by the constant action of writing, [and] the pain is at times most acute’.²⁵⁸ Since she was still complaining of an injured right arm a decade later, one suspects that she kept trying to use it, and thus

²⁵⁴ RLF 1115.2, Kitto to RLF, 27/10/1845.
²⁵⁵ RLF 1385.1, Application Form, 07/07/1855; 1385.2, Milner to RLF, n.d. [July 1855].
²⁵⁶ RLF 1385.23, Milner to RLF, 04/02/1881. He only partially recovered, and died the following year.
²⁵⁷ RLF 1089.2, Bunbury to RLF, 04/01/1844.
²⁵⁸ RLF 1089.27, Bunbury to RLF, 01/11/1853.
aggravated the injury so that, unlike Milner, she did not recover fully. Bunbury became able to write quite legibly with her left hand (compare Figures 4.3 and 4.4), but she complained that 'I cannot accomplish the amount of work I have hitherto done.' This had serious ramifications for her income.

The *North British Review* noted that, 'Rest and recreation, fresh air and bodily exercise, are essential to an author, and he will do well never to neglect them.' However, long hours indoors at the desk were necessary to make a living, and health would be sacrificed to that end. The *North British* reckoned that it was this unhealthy lifestyle that made writers prematurely old, adding that, 'At an age when other men are in the possession of vigorous faculties of mind and strength of body, they are often used-up, enfeebled, and only capable of effort under the influence of strong stimulants.' When he began life as a writer, Kitto walked from his house in Islington to Knight's offices near St. Paul's, and back, each day. But by the mid-1840s, he was working at home all day. After several years of this, he began to suffer from severe headaches and 'neuralgic affection', as well as being very overweight. His doctor ordered two hours, or six miles, of walking as his daily exercise. Kitto commented to a friend, 'Think of that for a man who has almost lost the power of putting one leg before another!' While Kitto was merely obese, Martin suffered from 'complicated disorders' which included, as well as 'heart disease' and asthma, 'gouty affection of the whole system, the head and stomach alternately with the limbs'. He was often unable to hold a pen, since his hands 'discharge[d] portions of chalk attended with ulceration.' The chalky discharges were another symptom of gout. Although gout was usually associated with a patrician lifestyle, a significant causal factor was lack of exercise.

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259 RLF 1089.27, Bunbury to RLF, 01/11/1853.
260 ‘Pendennis’, 359.
261 ‘Pendennis’, 359.
264 RLF 1315.28, MJ Martin to RLF, May 1860.
265 RLF 1315.42, MJ Martin to RLF, 18/11/1862. Milner also had medical problems arising from his lifestyle, see RLF 1385.3, Aspray to RLF, 9/07/1855.
Figure 4.3 Selina Bunbury’s handwriting in 1844, using her right hand. A letter to the Royal Literary Fund.

Figure 4.4 Selina Bunbury’s handwriting in 1853, using her left hand. A letter to the Royal Literary Fund. Bunbury complained that it took her longer to write this way, but the improved neatness may have been popular with the compositors.
Few writers could afford to stop working to recuperate, so when Milner wanted to convalesce on the North Yorkshire coast, he sought an RLF grant. Writers felt forced to work through an illness, or to start work before they were fully recovered. This often led to a relapse, as one of Kitto’s referees explained: ‘Nine months ago he informed me that his physician had ordered him to abstain altogether from literary work, for some time. But he could not and did not: and the result is, that he is now prostrated.’ Annabella Kitto explained that this pattern had occurred several times over the previous three years, with Kitto struggling to complete a work, and just managing it before ‘he is overtaken by utter prostration thus leaving his family without the means of support, until, by the blessing of God, health be re-established’.

If he recovered from his current illness, she planned ‘to get him from home’.

A long illness was expensive and exhausting, and might leave the survivors unable to fend for themselves. Letters from Mary Jane Martin and her referees detail the final stages of Martin’s illness, and its effect on her. In 1860, when Martin was ‘completely prostrated by illness’ and ‘in the greatest agony’, Mary Jane wrote to the RLF that:

Unless some kind and generous hand can be found to aid us, [we] must end in utter destitution, since a guinea or two now and then, as health permits, with the help afforded by the Royal Literary Fund, and my own earnest but weak and most inadequate struggles as a woman to keep our position and supply the sufferer’s wants, alone interferes, to prevent [this].

His condition did not improve, and by 1863, she had admitted to giving up ‘a hope (long clung to) of more than solace and alleviation’. When he died the following year, leaving her ‘destitute of present supplies and future support’, Mary Jane was worn out by almost three years of constant sick-room attendance. Her referee

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266 RLF 1385.24, Milner to RLF, n.d. [c. Sept. 1880].
267 RLF 1115.16, Home to RLF, 04/03/1854.
268 RLF 1115.15, A Kitto to RLF, 06/03/1854. They went to the spa town of Cannstadt, but he died there six months later, of a ‘neuralgic affection’, RLF 1115.19, Press-cuttings from The Times.
269 RLF 1315.28, MJ Martin to RLF, May 1860.
270 RLF 1315.47, MJ Martin to RLF, 30/10/1863.
271 RLF 1315.54, MJ Martin to RLF, n.d. [March 1864].
wrote to the RLF that ‘Mrs. Martin herself professes considerable literary abilities but, from her increasing years and diminished health consequent upon her husband’s long illness it is not to be expected that for the present at least these can be in any way available to her.’ They had received £120 in grants during his illness, and Mary Jane Martin was allowed a further £50 on his death, £15 of which was to defray funeral expenses and the rest to help support her. In 1867, her friends tried to get her a civil list pension, but what happened to that attempt, or to her, is unrecorded.

Martin was sixty-six years old when he died, which was almost exactly the average age at death for writers reported by William Guy to the Statistical Society in 1859. This was at a time when the average life expectancy among the British population as a whole was around thirty-seven years. Guy’s figures showed that writers were shorter-lived than other professionals, especially ministers, by three or four years. He attributed the reduced life expectancy to the sedentary lifestyle of the literary profession, and he also noted that married (male) writers lived for five or six years longer than their unmarried counterparts, thus bearing out the importance of female assistance. In fact, apart from Kitto and Martin, most of the RTS professional writers lived rather longer than Guy would have predicted. Milner died at 75, Bunbury at 79, and Dick at 83 years. The minister-writers encompassed relatively early deaths, such as Stowell’s at the age of 58, as well as exceptional longevity, such as Kennedy, Stoughton and Angus, who all passed 86 years. The long lives of some of these writers and minister-writers emphasise how important it was to provide for old age. All three of the long-living ministers were able to retire in their last years through the generosity of their congregations and their grown-up families. But Milner, Bunbury and Dick were all writing till the very ends of their lives, under the increasing infirmities of old age. Bunbury discovered that it was not just failing eye-

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272 RLF 1315.55, Gould to RLF, 27/02/1864.
273 RLF 1315.59, Murray to Blewitt, 27/11/1867.
274 Guy, W.A., ‘On the duration of life as affected by the pursuits of literature, science and art: with a summary view of the duration of life among the upper and middle classes of society’ Journal of the Statistical Society 22 (1859): 337-61, at 343. This figure was based on the members of Guy’s sample who were born in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries only. Almost half of his sample were from earlier centuries.
275 Daunton, Progress and poverty, 575, Table 1.c.
276 Guy, On the duration of life, 359-60.
277 Guy, On the duration of life.
278 Angus died at 86, Kennedy at 87, and Stoughton at 90.
sight and a paralysed right arm that hindered an elderly writer from earning a living, for the tastes of the publishers and the reading public had changed over the course of her writing career. She had specialised all her life in high-toned novels and travel books, but by the 1860s, sensational novels were in demand. Bunbury could not or would not write such works. Her reputation as a novelist had dwindled away, and many of her earlier publishers had died. She was still writing in the early 1880s, but felt uncertain of making her way with new publishers amid 'the multitude of present writers'.

Conclusions

Until this chapter, my discussion of the production of cheap popular science works has been one in which publishers are central, with writers being present in the same manner as paper-merchants and printers, as agents who do work for the publisher and are paid for it. Writers differed from the other agents in the relative complexity of their tasks, and hence the amount of oversight placed on them. The editorial and committee procedures existed to ensure that the writers' works came up to the Society's standard, yet the nature of literary work meant that a standard could not be defined as exactly as the quality of paper, or the size of type and number of lines of text per page. The writer had theoretically more creative freedom than the printer, and the editorial procedures were there to keep that freedom in check. Finding writers who could reliably produce works in the requisite Christian tone helped to reduce the amount of revision and alteration needed at the editorial stage.

Just as all the Society's operations were balanced between commercial and philanthropic aims, so their relations with writers had two facets. In the pages of the committee minutes, writers do appear as paid agents, yet this has to be contrasted with the image of the ideal Christian writer which appeared in the obituaries and similar materials. The ideal Christian writer was above the mercenary 'trade' aspects of publishing, and pursued literature rather as a spiritual vocation. This was an extrapolation of the image of the secular writer as a learned professional, in contrast

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279 Harrison Ainsworth was an active writer for sixty years, which Sutherland suggests gave him one of the longest literary careers of the nineteenth century. Bunbury's career lasted sixty-three years. On Ainsworth, see Sutherland, *Victorian novelists*, 153-9.
280 1089.92, Bunbury to RLF, 31/05/1881.
to a ‘mere’ tradesman’s hack. Yet while the potential for earning an income was frequently central to discussions of the professionalisation of authorship, spiritual vocation meant that money was supposed to be irrelevant to the Christian writer. Furthermore, like the secular professional, the Christian writer was presented as engaging in intellectual work, rather than the manual labour of a hack.

The image of the ideal Christian writer was thus clearly misleading in two ways, by ignoring both the importance of money in the writer’s decision to write, and the physical work involved. Even for part-time writers, like the ministers and clergymen discussed in this chapter, financial remuneration was a much appreciated side-effect of writing for Christ. For the professionals, the payments were essential for survival, and writing only for Christ was unlikely to generate enough. The less tangible benefit was the increase of personal reputation, which could subsequently lead to more financial reward. Writers were often presented as being hopeless with money, yet when those I have discussed fell into financial trouble, it was rarely from personal ineptitude or recklessness. The financial equilibrium which could be maintained solely through writing was a fragile one. It did not allow for long-term budgeting, and it prevented writers with familial demands from saving. This lack of savings meant that publishers’ bankruptcies and personal or family illness could be disastrous, and even if such obstacles could be surmounted, there was no hope of retirement for the veteran writer.

The representation of authorship as a mental rather than physical activity has been continued by modern studies of nineteenth-century authorship which concentrate more on the works produced by great authors than on the processes of production. Unlike most professionals, writers worked at home, and this meant that time-management and self-discipline were essential for professional as well as part-time writers. But working in the home also had its advantages, and the presence of female helpers, doing research, taking dictation or making fair copy, indicates that authorship was not always a solitary activity, pursued alone at the desk. It could become a collective family activity.281

281 On the Taylor family’s collective efforts, see Davidoff and Hall, Family fortunes.
In the 1840s and 1850s, the RTS was one of the few publishers engaged in cheap non-fiction publishing to actually use the services of writers. Most of the other series, as discussed in Chapter Two, involved reprinted works. Those publishers were thus able to treat the words of their books as raw materials in the same way as paper and ink. The RTS's emphasis on Christianised popular science, and its desire for short books, prevented it taking the reprint option. The Society had to find writers, and commission them to produce specific works, written in a suitable tone. It had to be particularly careful as most of the works were published anonymously, so that the RTS was the sole authority for their contents, and bore all responsibility for them. Within a decade of the period I have been examining, many more publishers were commissioning original works for their cheap series of non-fiction. This forced publishers to deal with the ambiguities in the status of the writer, and decide whether they were respectable professionals or people of vocation, or whether they should be regarded as 'if they were mere composing machines, without any everyday life of their own apart from the work of composition'.

282 'Pendennis', 336 n.
Conclusions

The scope of the Society has gradually widened, in accord with the requirements of the time, but with constant reference to the one purpose of connecting all topics of human interest with the principles and teaching of Christianity. Popular science has had a prominent place.

Samuel G. Green,

The Story of the Religious Tract Society
for One Hundred Years (1899)

The Religious Tract Society’s mission was to affect individuals at a personal and spiritual level, using modern methods of industrial mass technology. This in itself was a problematic ambition. The Bible Society, for instance, had decided that personal interaction through the ‘Bible transaction’ was the only way such an effect could be achieved. But the Tract Society wished to operate on a much larger scale than even the most extensive scheme of personal visits could hope to achieve, and it believed that there were some cases where a printed messenger would be more effective, because more subtle, than a personal visitor. In its tract work, it came to realise that tracts written for specific groups were more effective than those aimed at large swathes of the population, as the message could be more carefully targeted to its audience. The same realisation came to be made about the secular programme of publishing, but not immediately. In the 1840s, the RTS had not yet identified the different audiences for these works. Although the Monthly Series was aimed at artisans and educated families, and at children and adults, the same mass-produced work was assumed to be suitable for all. Later in the century, as the reading audiences changed, and became better understood, the Society’s secular publishing became much more tightly targeted. This was the compromise between the large-

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1 Green, S.G., The Story of the Religious Tract Society for One Hundred Years (London, 1899), 125.
scale demands of industrial technology, and the individual needs of readers who could not simply be treated as a homogeneous mass.³

The new secular publishing programme of the 1840s did embody the Society’s central mission of conversion to evangelical Christianity, but it also had a more specific aim. The committee of the RTS believed that too many of the new cheap works of profane non-fiction promoted a separation of the sciences from Christianity, by linking them either to secularism or outright atheism. This was a separation with which evangelicals could not agree, and the secular publishing programme was intended to demonstrate to its readers how harmony should be achieved. The evangelical emphasis meant that nature could not be privileged over revelation, as happened in natural theologies or in devotional works which borrowed their style. Thus, the call to conversion which was included in every work was based on the power of the story of Christ’s sacrifice, not on a natural theological proof. The rest of the work demonstrated that there was nothing about the sciences which was contradictory to Christianity, when both were properly interpreted, and that there were times where a study of nature provided visible demonstrations of the tenets of religion, often through analogies. The sciences were presented as a useful part of a Christian education because they helped the reader both to learn more about the Creation, and to understand the scriptures, by identifying plants, animals or minerals mentioned by the inspired writers. In this latter sense, the sciences could be made part of scriptural studies, alongside histories of the Biblical civilisations and biographies of their kings and military commanders. However, most of these theological justifications for studying the sciences were not explicit in the works themselves. They were used by the RTS committee when justifying the new programme to its subscribers. In the works themselves, the theology was muted, being presented in the tone, rather than the explicit content.

Evangelical popular science works had to compete on an open market with other reading material targeted at the same audience. The name and reputation of the RTS

would provide an entry for its works into most faithful households and organisations, so the challenge lay in getting the works into other places, particularly into the hands of the industrial working classes. The Society’s fear was that these groups were reading secular and infidel works, although it seems more likely that fiction, especially in the cheap periodicals, was the reading material with which the RTS actually had to compete. In either case, the existing material presented risks to the reader’s soul, whether by outright explication of infidel doctrine, or by the insidiously corrupting effects of secularism and immoral fiction. The RTS needed to replace one sort of reading material with another. Doing this through the marketplace depended upon the replacement being similar enough to be preferred over, or mistaken for, the existing material. Yet for the spiritual aims of the Society’s works to have their effect, its works had to be distinctly different from those of its competitors. Out of the attempt to resolve this conundrum came the necessity of low prices, the small mass-produced format, and attempts to use non-middle-class channels for distribution, as well as the need to devise a style which was both typical of secular popular science works and yet Christian. The way this compromise worked out meant that the RTS works were likely to be more effective against the secular non-fiction in the middle and lower-middle classes than against either infidel non-fiction or immoral fiction amongst the working-classes. This is borne out by the sales figures, which were large, but nothing like large enough to have included a significant proportion of working-class readers.

One of the main problems with the flood of cheap publications lay in disciplining readers. When works were read in the middle-class home, in the parish library, or the Sunday school, there were existing systems of authority to ensure that readers interpreted the works ‘correctly’ — as well as censorship which would have kept out many potentially corrupting works in the first place. In such a setting, evangelical works provided a safe medium for reading about profane subjects, and relieved the

\[\text{\footnotesize 4 For attempts to discover what the common reader might actually have been reading, see Webb, R., The British Working Class Reader, 1790-1848: literacy and social tension (London, 1955); Altick, R.D., The English Common Reader; a social history of the mass reading public, 1800-1900 (London, 1957); James, L., ed. Print and the People 1819-1851 (Harmondsworth, 1976); Vincent, D., Bread, Knowledge and Freedom: a study of nineteenth-century working class autobiography (London, 1982).}\]
reader from having to actively work to resist anti-Christian sentiments. Beyond such systems of authority, among the readers with whom evangelicals were most concerned, it was the Christian tone which had to try to control readers’ interpretations. While it could not function as effectively as a teacher’s supervision, it limited the range of interpretations open to the reader, by making it more difficult to read an infidel message against the Christian tone. What the reader would do with a ‘correct’ Christian reading of the sciences was not discussed. It was assumed that having once seen the proper way of viewing the sciences, it would be difficult or impossible to return to a non-Christian perspective. In other words, although the press could lend its power both to Good and Evil, when given a fair chance, Good would vanquish Evil.

As we have seen, the Society and its writers had to negotiate the tension between this spiritual mission and the commercial world of publishing, or between the spiritual and temporal worlds. The Society itself embodied both these facets in its structure, with the separate benevolent and publishing wings. As with the Bible Society, the subscribers generally saw, and were presented with, the benevolent activities. For them, the RTS was a religious organisation dedicated to evangelisation throughout Britain and the world. That it carried out this mission through a publishing business was secondary. For the committee and staff in Paternoster Row, the Society was a commercial publishing operation that had to respond to market demands and contemporary trends within the book trade, just like any other publisher. The committee members knew that the purpose of their organisation was evangelisation, and that they were stewards of the Lord’s wealth, but they also believed that the best way to achieve their aims was by being careful businessmen, not enthusiastic amateurs. Yet although this attitude grounded their actions on the Society’s behalf, the annual reports and the Christian Spectator hid the commercial reality behind the appearance of a religious society, in order to gain support from the evangelical community. The same tension can be seen with the writers, who were presented, by

5 On the creativity of readers, see Fish, S., Is There a Text in This Class? the authority of interpretive communities (London, 1980); on the constraints placed on readers, see Jauss, H.R., Toward an Aesthetic of Reception (Minneapolis, 1982); Eagleton, T., Literary Theory: an introduction (Oxford, 1983), Ch. 2.
both the RTS and themselves, as people with a spiritual vocation to write for Christ. This image hid the important role that such writing played in the domestic economy of the writers, and disguised the physical labour involved.

When the committee justified its new publishing programme, it played upon the threats posed by cheap publishing, and the theological aims of its own response. These explanations certainly had a basis in fact, but it is also the case that the new publications came at an opportune moment for the Society. Not only did its income recover from the slump of the late 1830s and early 1840s, but it entered a period of sustained growth, as Figure C.1 clearly shows. When the sales income peaked in 1885, it stood at over £180,000 a year. It had barely come close to £60,000 prior to 1850. Such a massive increase in sales was made possible by the new publishing programme, with its broader appeal particularly among the middle and lower-middle classes with spending power. The zenith of the programme was arguably the Boy's Own and Girl's Own Papers, launched in 1879 and 1880, which were voted the most popular periodicals among adolescents in 1888, and which boosted the sales income to heady heights.7 Although the benevolent income of the Society did double over the same period (to around £12,000 in 1885), it was still dwarfed by the sales income, and it was the latter which made possible the vastly expanded system of charitable grants to tract and Christian literature societies all over the world. The annual value of these grants grew from around £10,000 in the 1850s to over £40,000 in the 1880s. Over the course of this period, the RTS reformulated itself from a middle-class society evangelising the working-classes, to a national organisation bringing Christianity and literacy to the world. As before, the fact that the extensive overseas activities were substantially funded by the commercial success of the British publishing operation, was hidden behind the success of the mission.8

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7 Salmon, E., Juvenile Literature as It Is (London, 1888), 15, 23. The stories of the papers are told in Cox, J., Take a Cold Tub, Sir! the story of the Boy's Own Paper (Guildford, 1982), and Forrester, W., Great-grandmama's Weekly: a celebration of the 'Girl's Own Paper', 1880-1901 (Guildford, 1980).

8 When sales incomes began to fall in the 1890s (and continued to do so into the twentieth century), the grant programme was threatened. The committee initially tried to get through what it thought was a brief bad spell by using funds from the capital reserves (e.g. RTS Report (1896): 2; (1897): 16), but by the early 1900s, it was forced to curtail the grant programme. It was tied much more closely to the benevolent income, with contributions from the trade fund when possible (as had been the case prior to the post-1850 expansion), and more attention was devoted to encouraging the auxiliaries in their fund-raising efforts (e.g. RTS Report (1910): 143-89, especially 181-9). The decline can be attributed in
Figure C.1 Sales and benevolent income of the RTS, 1800-1900.
The sciences made up almost a third of the titles in the Society’s first venture into secular publishing, and they continued to appear in large numbers on its catalogues throughout the century, as my epigraph makes clear. This would provide another blow, were one needed, against the conflict thesis that has dominated the historiography of science and religion since the late nineteenth century. Studies of natural theology in the early nineteenth century have done much to show the inadequacy of the conflict thesis, as have studies of some of the alleged exemplars of conflict. For instance, Darwin has been shown to have lost his faith through family bereavement, not as a consequence of his evolutionary theory, and we now know that there was no single unified response to natural selection from ‘religion’, but rather, a whole host of individual responses, from theists just as from non-theists. What these studies have not, as yet, done, is help us understand the relations between science and faith in that large community of people who were experts in neither science nor theology. Given that the focus in history of science more generally has moved from elite to non-elite groups, and from theories and doctrines towards practices, it is time that our analyses of science and religion did likewise.

One of the problems has been identifying the groups and practices for study. This thesis has demonstrated that religious publishing can provide a suitable focus. Writing, publishing and reading about Christianised sciences were practical activities in both science and religion. Through them, we can see how an interest in the sciences interacted with faith on a practical, everyday level, rather than the theoretical, more intellectual level that is usually studied. Related studies of


missionaries who collected natural history specimens, or of ministers who combined pastoral visiting with agricultural observations, would also contribute to such an effort. In addition, the publications recommended to their readers a practical way of approaching the natural world, by suggesting that it be considered a source of analogies for the spiritual world, as well as evidence for divine benevolence and foresight.

As subjects for study, the committee, staff and writers of the RTS form a fairly homogenous group, characterised by their middle-class, usually professional or commercial, backgrounds and their evangelical Christianity. They were all sufficiently motivated by their faith to actively get involved in evangelism. They also represent a subset of a much larger body, for these seventy or so people could stand for the 3,600 subscribers of the Tract Society, and indeed for a substantial proportion of the members of the much larger Bible Society. There are few names among them that are still well-known, but in their day, committee members (in particular) of the big pan-evangelical societies were notable figures in the social milieu of evangelicalism. These people were also enormously influential. Their publishing programme was intended to change the lives of its readers, to make some into evangelicals, and to provide existing evangelicals with ways of thinking about contemporary issues which reflected the beliefs of the writers and committee. Examining their publishing, therefore, tells us not only about the ways in which those particular evangelicals combined faith and the sciences, but about how all their readers were encouraged to think about the issue.

My thesis has not addressed the question of how successful evangelicals were in their conversion attempts, but this does not undermine my argument. It does not matter whether readers of the Monthly Series were instantly converted to evangelicalism. Probably, few were. More may have been convinced by its argument against the separation of science and faith. But for many more readers, that Series was influential for being the cheapest, most widely distributed source of introductory treatises on the sciences (and other profane knowledge) available in the 1840s and 1850s. It therefore reached places and readers that other series did not, and presented them with a particular version of Christian natural knowledge. As modern studies of media effects reveal, the press may not affect its readers as directly as writers or publishers might
wish, but it does affect what they know and how they think about it. Thus readers of evangelical popular science did not have to accept its messages wholeheartedly, but its mere presence, as one of few sources of information on the sciences, made its particular presentation influential.

Surviving copies of Monthly Volumes occasionally bear evidence that they were used. In 1852, 'I. Henderson, Esq, with J. Burton' were given a copy of Money, with 'sincere regards', which came from the shop of one G. Lovejoy, 'bookseller and publisher'. Someone else bought a copy of Successful Men of Modern Times from G. Hope, 'stationer and dealer in paper hangings' of York. Both these booksellers had marked the books with their stamps. A copy of the double-volume of the Solar System seems to have been intended for the circulating library of Robert Peddie, for which it bears a label, although the volume's identification number was never filled in. Once the books were sold or borrowed, readers frequently marked them. The Rev. S.J. Austwinter, of the Scottish Church in Pimlico, clearly read his copy of The Task with a pencil in hand, under-lining the text, and adding crosses and words in the margin. However, he appears to have stopped reading at page 120. Evereld Hustler of Acklew Hall was given a copy of Ancient Jerusalem by 'her affectionate cousin, George Pollard Mills' in March 1849, and she too added lines to mark particular passages. The reader of an early copy of Animal Structure, which ended up in the Co-operative Stores, Harden, in the mid-1880s, paid particular attention to the illustrations, adding labels to the diagram illustrating the spinal column of quadrupeds, and re-drawing the cross-section of a bird spinal column to demonstrate its flexibility, as discussed in the accompanying text.

Of course, not all the copies were so fortunate. Most of those in Leeds University library were bound in pairs in marbled boards, with leather spines and corners, and gilt detail. The edges of the pages were decorated with a speckled red pattern, and look as if the Rev. Dr. V. Kenna, B.A Litt.D., never opened them. One of the

11 Curran and Seaton, Power without responsibility, 263.
12 Copies in private collection.
13 Copy in Special Collection at Leeds University, at shelf-mark ‘Geog 4-3.KIT’.
14 Copy in private collection. The marked illustrations are the ones at pp.127 and 151.
15 He owned (at least) 34 volumes of the Series. They are in the Special Collection at Leeds University, at shelf-mark ‘Early Education REL’.

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problems of trying to write histories of actual readings is that records are more likely to be left by educated readers than by the semi-educated working class readers who would be of particular interest. So, we know that William Buckland, the Oxford geologist, was a keen reader of the Leisure Hour, but he can hardly be said to have needed its call for harmonising the sciences with faith.\textsuperscript{16} However, a Welsh labourer, John Jones, found a copy of the Welsh translation of Dick’s Solar System in his preacher’s library, and recollected that, ‘It was comparatively easy to understand’. Its writer and publishers would have been pleased to know that it gave him ‘many a sublime thought’, and that he later bought his own copy.\textsuperscript{17}

The role of print in conveying information and affecting attitudes about the sciences has become increasingly clear in recent historical studies of science, and historians of science have turned to the new field of book history for inspiration. Recent and forthcoming publications testifying to this interest include Adrian Johns’s The Nature of the Book (1998), James Secord’s Victorian Sensation (2000), Marina Frasca-Spada and Nicholas Jardine’s edited volume Books and the Sciences in History (2000), a special ‘book history’ issue of the British Journal for the History of Science (summer 2000), and essay reviews of the field by Adrian Johns and Jonathan Topham.\textsuperscript{18} Johns has written that, ‘The history of the book is consequential because it addresses the conditions in which knowledge has been made and utilized. All of its further implications may be derived from this.’\textsuperscript{19} In noting the importance of books in securing acceptance for novel facts about nature, Johns draws upon sociologically-inspired historical studies of the sciences, such as those of Steven Shapin and Simon Schaffer, which have placed communicative practices at the heart of histories of

\textsuperscript{16} Gordon, Mrs, The Life and Correspondence of William Buckland, DD FRS (London, 1894), 269.
\textsuperscript{17} Quoted in Astore, W.J., ‘Observing God: Thomas Dick (1774-1857), evangelicalism and popular science in Victorian Britain and Antebellum America’ (D.Phil., University of Oxford, 1995), 231, and from information from Anne Secord.
\textsuperscript{19} Johns, Nature of the book, 623.
science because of their role in moving knowledge beyond the site in which it was first made.\textsuperscript{20}

This suggests that popularisation ought to be a central aspect of such histories.\textsuperscript{21} In his recent \textit{Making Natural Knowledge} (1998), Jan Golinski mentions popularisation several times, as, for instance, when discussing Ludwik Fleck, he writes, ‘As facts are translated from the language in which they are represented among specialists to language appropriate for a lay audience, they become consolidated as knowledge.’\textsuperscript{22} But although Golinski includes several other tantalising references, he takes the issue no further. The recent sociological work has been important in undermining the still-dominant ‘diffusion’ model, by making popularisation part of the construction of knowledge, rather than the diffusion of an already-constructed knowledge.\textsuperscript{23} But despite this, most studies have remained focused on scientific practitioners as popularisers and on relatively small communities. Analyses of popular science need to be freed from these artefacts of the study of expert science, to examine the activities of other sorts of popularisers, and enormous audiences.\textsuperscript{24} The present focus means that the activities of science journalists and professional popularisers are considered primarily in the light of their assistance in the making of knowledge fashioned by the scientific community, and that the possibility of other sources of knowledge for society at large are not considered. Despite the lip-service paid to popularisation, both the historical studies of seventeenth-century natural philosophy

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\textsuperscript{24} Although Latour could be said to have done part of this, by studying an entire country, the restriction of his focus to Pasteur and his followers privileges the scientific laboratory, Latour, B., \textit{The Pasteurization of France} (Cambridge MA, 1988). This would still have been true had he paid equal attention to Koch, as Schaffer has recommended, Schaffer, S., ‘The eighteenth brumaire of Bruno Latour’ \textit{Studies in History and Philosophy of Science} 22 (1991): 174-92.
\end{flushright}
and the sociological studies of twentieth-century science continue to imply that it is only the knowledge made in and by the scientific community which matters.

This is in contrast to another recent growth area in history of science, which might be called 'science in popular culture'. Studies in this area are more concerned with studying science from below, by examining how groups of artisans, for instance, actually practised science, and how their natural knowledge was constructed. Sometimes this involves an overlap with the knowledge of the scientific community, but it is not necessarily straight-forward assimilation. Adrian Desmond and Anne Secord have both shown that artisans could appropriate elite knowledge for their own political or social purposes. This suggests that the construction of natural knowledge in non-elite groups (which need not only mean working-class groups, but may equally include middle-class groups) needs to be more carefully studied for its own benefit, rather than as an adjunct to studies of elite science. It also means that studies of popularisation need to become more complex. It is not just that constructivist histories point to the importance of popularisation in making knowledge, but have yet to investigate this beyond a few small-scale privileged sites. We need to take more seriously the dialectical struggle involved in popularisation, and the creativity with which readers or auditors may interpret the 'facts' presented to them. We also need to remember that scientific practitioners are not the only agents involved in popularisation, and that their presentations compete with others. This transforms the study of popularisation from the investigation of the apparently passive diffusion of natural knowledge from the scientific community to 'the public', into a dynamic study of several purveyors of 'knowledge' struggling to grab the attention and understanding of their audience, while all the time the myriad groups within the audience interpret and appropriate selectively for their own ends.

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25 This is the sense of 'popular science' that Cooter and Pumfrey seem most interested in, Cooter and Pumfrey, 'Separate spheres', 247-53.
26 On the struggle between 'popular' and 'dominant' culture, see Bourdieu, P., 'The uses of the people,' in In Other Words: essays towards a reflexive sociology (Cambridge, 1990): 150-5.
Given the complexity of popularisation, and the lack of control exercised over it by the scientific community, we should not expect the historiography of popular science to follow that of professional science. One of the most obvious ways in which this is true is with respect to the relations between the natural sciences and religion. In the 1840s, the cheap popular press provided opportunities for secular and infidel presentations of the sciences, as well as the more typical Christian presentations. But while secularising professionals gained the upper-hand in the scientific community over the next few decades, they did not have the authority nor the organisational resources to influence popular science publishing. Evangelicals did have relevant organisations and a certain authority, and used them to defend the links between science and faith. These links remained intact well into the late nineteenth century.  

My study has used evangelical popular science publishers to illustrate the extremely active engagement involved in popularisation, by focusing on the manipulation of physical strategies of production, marketing and distribution as well as rhetorical strategies for controlling interpretations. Evangelicals were particularly keen to reach working-class readers, but most of their practices were typical of the commercial houses. No matter whether the publisher was philanthropic or purely commercial, few were publishing popular science with the sole aim of improving the public understanding of the knowledge made in scientific laboratories or museums. Although expert men of science could have been employed as writers, in general they were not. The ones who were, particularly from the late nineteenth century onwards, tended to write for the educated middle classes, rather than the enormous working-class audiences. In order to secure widespread assent for their version of natural knowledge, men of science would have had to learn the same techniques as the religious publishing societies, which already knew how to use the press to promote their own version of knowledge.

28 The Lutterworth Press, the descendent of the RTS, published the works of the astronomer Patrick Moore and the natural history writer David Attenborough in the mid-twentieth century.

29 For example, the late nineteenth-century International Scientific Series was written by men of science, see MacLeod, R.M., 'Evolutionism, internationalism and commercial enterprise in Victorian Britain: the International Scientific Series 1871-1910' in The Development of Science Publishing in Europe, ed. A.J. Meadows, (Amsterdam, 1980): 63-93.
Now that scientists have become particularly concerned with the issue of public understanding of science, by virtue of its presumed link with public approval and hence government funding of science, they are starting to become aware of the importance of these issues. As one science ‘scare’ after another hits the headlines, scientists worry that the public will be unable to interpret the information correctly, and that unauthorised speculations will prove too influential. The organisations set up to promote the public understanding of science are, despite their claims, just as much interested parties as were the evangelicals I have been discussing. With all the resources and experience the nineteenth-century publishers possessed, they were only partially successful in reaching the audience they sought, let alone in convincing them. Whether the modern popularisers will have any more success remains to be seen.
Biographical Appendix

This appendix gives brief biographical details of the forty writers actively involved in the Monthly Series. The information is drawn from the Dictionary of National Biography (ed. L. Stephen), Modern Biography (ed. F. Boase), and the sources collated in the British Biographical Archive (ed. L. Baillie); from the files of the Royal Literary Fund; from entries in the Clergy Lists, Baptist Handbooks and Congregational Yearbooks; and from biographies and obituaries. It takes the form:

Name
Birth and death dates. (Date of marriage(s), number of children)
Location at time of writing Monthly Volumes; denomination; occupation
List of Monthly Volumes

Alexander, William Lindsay
1808-1884 (m. 1837, 8 surviving children)
Edinburgh; Congregational; minister and theological college tutor
Monthly Volume(s)
Aug. 1850  57. Iona
Mar. 1852  76. The Ancient British Church: being an inquiry into the history of Christianity in Britain previous to the establishment of the heptarchy

Angus, Joseph
1816-1902 (m.1841, 10 children)
Stepney College, London; Baptist; minister
Monthly Volume(s)
July 1853  92. The Bible in Many Tongues

Bell, Charles D
1819-1898
Hastings; Anglican; minister
Monthly Volume(s)
Aug. 1855  100. The Life of Calvin

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Bunbury, Selina
1803-1882 (unmarried)
Liverpool and Cheltenham; Anglican; novelist and travel writer, daughter of Church of Ireland clergyman, and sister of Anglican clergyman;
Monthly Volume(s)
Apr. 1848  29. History of Protestantism in France to the Reign of Charles IX
Jan. 1849  38. The History of Protestantism in France, from the End of the Reign of Charles IX to the Revocation of the Edict of Nantes

Copley, Esther
1786-1851 (née Beuzeville, m.(1) Hewlett, m.(2) Copley, 1827)
Eythorne, Kent; Baptist; wife of minister, and writer
Monthly Volume(s)
June 1847  19. The Life of Lady Russell

Cox, John Edmund
1812-1890
Bishopsgate, London; Anglican; minister
Monthly Volume(s)
Sept. 1846  10. The Life of Luther
Aug. 1848  33. The Life of Cranmer, the First Protestant Archbishop of Canterbury

Dick, Thomas
1774-1857 (m.(1) 1804, 3 surviving children, m.(2) 1830, m.(3) 1841)
Broughty Ferry near Dundee; Secession Church of Scotland; retired school teacher, writer on theology, astronomy and education
Monthly Volume(s)
June 1848  31. The Atmosphere, and Atmospheric Phenomena
June 1851  67. The Telescope and Microscope
Dunckley, Henry
1823-1896 (m.1848, 5 children)
Salford near Manchester; Baptist; minister, journalist, later editor
Monthly Volume(s)
Nov. 1852  84. *Money: a popular treatise on its nature, history and uses*
Nov. 1853  96. *Successful Men of Modern Times*

East, David Jonathan
d.1903
Waltham Abbey; Baptist; minister, later theological college tutor in Jamaica
Monthly Volume(s)
May 1849  42. *The Crusades*

Ferguson, Robert
1806-1875
Ryde; Congregational; minister
Monthly Volume(s)
Oct. 1851  71. *Life and Times of John de Wycliffe*

Grinfield, Edward William
1785-1864
Brighton; Anglican; retired minister
Monthly Volume(s)
July 1851  68. *The Jesuits: an historical sketch*

Henderson, Thalia Susannah
Dates unknown (born post-1818).
Sheen Vale; Independent; daughter of Ebeneezer Henderson, DD (1784-1858), missionary and missionary trainer.
Monthly Volume(s)
Feb. 1853  87. *The Greek and Eastern Churches*
Higgins, William Mullinger
Dates unknown.
Denomination unknown; lecturer and writer on the sciences.
Monthly Volume(s)
Feb. 1852 75. James Watt and the Steam Engine

Jones, William Henry
1817-1885 (twice married, 4 children)
Shoreditch, London, then Bradford-upon-Avon; Anglican; minister
Monthly Volume(s)
Sept. 1849 46. The Life of Alfred the Great

Kennedy, John
1813-1900 (m.1846, 7 children)
Stepney, London; Congregational; minister
Monthly Volume(s)
June 1850 55. The Jordan and the Dead Sea
Dec. 1850 61. Idumaea; with a survey of Arabia and the Arabians
Jan. 1852 74. Volcanoes: their history, phenomena, and causes

Kitto, John
1804-1854 (m.1833, 9 children)
Islington, London and Woking; Anglican, formerly Brethren; former missionary
printer, now writer and editor on theological subjects
Monthly Volume(s)
Nov. 1846 12. Ancient Jerusalem
Feb. 1847 15. Modern Jerusalem
Nov. 1848 36. The Tahtar Tribes
Mar. 1849 40. The Court of Persia
Aug. 1849 45. The People of Persia
Luckock, Benjamin
1792-1846 (twice married, 2? children)
London; Anglican; missionary chaplain and minister
Monthly Volume(s)
Mar. 1846  4. Jamaica, Enslaved and Free

Manning, Samuel
1822-1881
Frome, Somerset; Baptist; Minister
Monthly Volume(s)
May 1852  78. Life and Times of Charlemagne
May 1853  90. Remarkable Escapes from Peril

Martin, William Charles Linnaeus
1798-15/02/1864 (m.1825, no children)
Hammersmith, then Lewisham, London; denomination unknown; zoologist, former museum assistant, writer on natural history
Monthly Volume(s)
Apr. 1846  5. Our Song Birds
July 1847  20. Our Domestic Fowls
Mar. 1848  28. Comparisons of Structure in Animals: the hand and the arm
Dec. 1849  49. British Fish and Fisheries
Feb. 1850  51. The Senses and the Mind
June 1852  79. Wonders of Organic Life

Miall, James Goodeve
1805-1896 (m. c1832, 7 children)
Bradford, Yorkshire; Congregational; minister
Monthly Volume(s)
July 1849  44. Life's Last Hours: or, the final testimony
Nov. 1851  72. Remarkable Delusions; or, illustrations of popular errors
Apr. 1853  89. *The Inquisition*

**Millard, James Henry**
c.1825-after 1881
Huntingdon; Baptist; minister

Monthly Volume(s)
May 1850  54. *Life and Times of Leo X*
Mar. 1851  64. *Lives of the Popes, from the Rise of the Roman Church to the Age of Gregory VII*
Dec. 1851  73. *Lives of the Popes, from the Age of Gregory VII to the Dawn of the Reformation*
Aug. 1852  81. *Lives of the Popes, Part III*
Dec. 1852  85. *Lives of the Popes, Part IV*

**Miller, William Haig**
1812-14/09/1891
Islington, London; denomination unknown; banker and sometime RTS editor

Monthly Volume(s)
Dec. 1848  37. *Life of Napoleon Bonaparte*

**Milner, Thomas**
1808-1882/3 (married, 3 children)
Northampton, then Norwood, London; Congregational; retired minister and writer on geology and geography

Monthly Volume(s)
Mar. 1847  16. *The Life of Cyrus*
Nov. 1847  24. *The Caves of the Earth: their natural history, features, and incidents*
Apr. 1850  53. Lives of Eminent Anglo-Saxons, Illustrating the Dawn of Christianity and Civilization in Great Britain, Part I

Sept. 1850  58. Lives of Eminent Anglo-Saxons, Illustrating the Dawn of Christianity and Civilization in Great Britain, Part II


Feb. 1851  63. Nineveh and the Tigris

May 1851  66. Mines and Mining

Aug. 1853  93. Australia: its scenery, natural history, and resources; with a glance at its gold fields

Sept. 1853  94. The Life of Alexander the Great

Oct. 1853  95. Australia and its Settlements

Newnham, William
1790-1865 (m.(1) 1812, m.(2) 1821, 6 surviving children)
Farnham, Surrey; denomination unknown; physician, and writer
Monthly Volume(s)

Notcutt, William Lowndes
d. Before 1871
Fakenham; denomination unknown; botanist
Monthly Volume(s)
Mar. 1850  52. The Geography of Plants
Apr. 1852  77. The Palm Tribes and their Varieties

Owen, John (D?)
1788-1867
Leicester; Anglican; minister
Monthly Volume(s)
July 1848  32. Schools of Ancient Philosophy
Pratt, Anne
1806-1893 (m. Pearless 1866)
Chatham, then Dover; denomination unknown; daughter of a grocer, writer on botany and teacher
Monthly Volume(s)
Feb. 1846 3. *Wild Flowers of the Year*
Apr. 1847 17. *Garden Flowers of the Year*
Oct. 1849 47. *Plants and Trees of Scripture*

Pryce, Edward Smith
Dates unknown.
Gravesend; denomination unknown; minister
Monthly Volume(s)
Oct. 1850 59. *Ancient Egypt: its monuments and history*
July 1852 80. *Tyre: its rise, glory and desolation, with notices of the Phoenicians generally*

Ryland, Jonathan Edwards
1798-1866 (m. 1828)
Northampton; Baptist; writer, and editor of *Eclectic Review*
Monthly Volume(s)
Jan. 1848 26. *Life of Martin Boos, a Roman Catholic Clergyman in Germany*
June 1849 43. *Life of John Kaspar Lavater*

Sidney, Edwin
1798?-1872
Acle, Norfolk and Cornard Parva, Suffolk; Anglican; minister and naturalist
Monthly Volume(s)
Jan. 1854 98. *The Field and the Fold*
Smith, George
1803-1870 (married with children)
Poplar, London; Congregational; minister
Monthly Volume(s)
Sept. 1848 34. The Origin and Progress of Language

Stokes, Miss (probably Emily, but maybe Jane)
Dates unknown.
Cheltenham(?); Anglican; daughter of George Stokes (1789-1847) of RTS committee, a wealthy Anglican layman.
Monthly Volume(s)
July 1846 8. Sketches of the Waldenses

Stoughton, John
1807-1897 (m. 1836, 4 surviving children)
Kensington, London; Congregational; minister and theological college tutor
Monthly Volume(s)
Jan. 1846 2. Glimpses of the Dark Ages; or, sketches of the social condition of Europe, from the fifth to the twelfth century
May 1847 18. The Dawn of Modern Civilization; or, sketches of the social condition of Europe, from the twelfth to the sixteenth century
Oct. 1848 35. Our English Bible
Nov. 1850 60. London in the Olden Time; or, sketches of the great metropolis, from its origin to the end of the sixteenth century
Apr. 1851 65. London in Modern Times: or, sketches of the great metropolis during the last two centuries
Mar. 1853 88. Venice: past and present
June 1853 91. Switzerland: historical and descriptive
Stowell, William Hendry
1800-1858 (m. 1821, ‘several’ children)
Rotherham, Yorkshire; Congregational; minister and theological college tutor
Monthly Volume(s)
Dec. 1845 1. *The Life of Julius Caesar*
Sept. 1847 22. *The Life of Mohammed*
Aug. 1851 69. *The Life of Sir Isaac Newton*

Tomlinson, Charles
1808-1897 (married)
London; denomination unknown; lecturer and writer on the sciences
Monthly Volume(s)
Sept. 1851 70. *The British Nation: its arts and manufactures*

Urwick, William
1791-1868 (m. 1818, 5 surviving children)
Dublin; Congregational; minister and theological college tutor
Monthly Volume(s)
Sept. 1852 82. *Dublin*

Westwood, Alfred
Dates unknown.
London(?); denomination unknown; not minister or doctor
Monthly Volume(s)
July 1850 56. *Good Health: the possibility, duty and means of obtaining and keeping it*

Wilkinson, Dr.
1812-1899
Islington; denomination unknown; physician
Monthly Volume(s)
Dec. 1847 25. *Eminent Medical Men*
Williams, Charles

1796-1866 (m. c1827, at least 2 children)

London; Congregational; minister and RTS editor

Monthly Volume(s)

May 1848  30. Magic, Pretended Miracles, and Remarkable Natural Phenomena

Nov. 1849  48. Characters, Scenes, and Incidents of the Reformation, from the Rise of the Culdees to the Times of Luther

Jan. 1850  50. Characters, Scenes, and Incidents of the Reformation, from the Times of Luther to the Close of the Sixteenth Century

Oct. 1852  83. Caxton, and the Art of Printing

Wilson, Daniel (Sir)

1816-1892 (m.1840, 1 child)

Edinburgh; Baptist, later Anglican; antiquary, later professor of History at Toronto

Monthly Volume(s)

Jan. 1853  86. Old Edinburgh

Dec. 1853  97. Modern Edinburgh
Bibliography

RTS Archival Material

The benevolent wing of the RTS is now part of the United Society for Christian Literature (which works through Feed the Minds, Albany House, 67 Sydenham Road, Guildford, GU1 3RY. http://194.202.158.48/feedtheminds/). The USCL has a few RTS publications, but the archives have been deposited.

The publishing wing is now the Lutterworth Press (PO Box 60, Cambridge, CB1 2NT. http://www.lutterworth.com/), and holds some archival material relating to publishing, from the very late nineteenth century and beyond.

The archives of the Religious Tract Society are held at the School for Oriental and African Studies (University of London, Thornhaugh Street, Russell Square, London, WC1H 0XG. http://www.soas.ac.uk/).

The holdings include an almost complete run of minute books, but very little additional material prior to the 1870s. Cash books and financial ledgers are available only from the late 1850s. The archives were only partially evacuated during the Blitz, and some surviving items still bear the scars. The RTS editor reported to a descendent of William Jones, in 1941, that, 'unfortunately, all the earliest publications (Child’s Companion and Tract Magazine, 1824 included), some bound in leather, with Pilgrim’s Progress in 141 languages and dialects, and hundreds of file copies of books in 300 languages and dialects became ashes' (Waters to Jones, 21/10/1941, RTS Misc.).

The majority of the original deposit has been microfiched, and visitors to SOAS are asked to consult this version rather than the originals. The microfiches are available for purchase from IDC (IDC Order Department, PO Box 11205, 2301 EE Leiden, The Netherlands), as part of the USCL archives.

This thesis has drawn upon the following materials from the RTS archives:
Original deposit:

Executive Committee Minutes, 1838-54 (the volume for 09/07/1844 to 01/01/1850 was lost in 1972)

Copyright Committee Minutes, 1835-56

Finance Committee Minutes, 1844-56

Domestic Correspondence, 1843-52 (this is a volume of draft outgoing letters, and contains very little pre-1860. Its companion volumes and the incoming letters are missing.)

Miscellaneous Publications (the draft of Jones, Jubilee Memorial, and material relating to the Jones family).

Additional Deposit:

Item 23: four letters re publications, including Lloyd to Jones, 1847.

Item 26: correspondence between Jones of Wrexham and Jones of RTS, 1842.

Item 39: Listings of Publications, with annotations, 1842-59 (this volume contains the monthly lists sent out to booksellers, with annotations identifying the writers of anonymous works. I am compiling for publication a checklist of all RTS publications between these dates, with writers, publications dates, prices and formats).

Printed materials:

Annual Reports, 1840-1900 (SOAS holds only 1830-1, 1833, 1836-7, 1839, 1843-49, and 1922-; Cambridge University Library holds 1850, 1863-4, and 1877-; the British Library has a more complete set, at shelf-mark P.P.927.)

Christian Spectator, 1841-55 (not held at SOAS; the British Library holds it at P.P.928.)

RLF Archival Material

The files of the Royal Literary Fund have been microfilmed by World Microfilms, and their contents are described and indexed in Cross, N., The Royal Literary Fund

I have used the following files:

Selina Bunbury (file 1089); Thomas Dick (file 1241); Edward Farr’s widow (file 1755); John Kitto (file 1115); Benjamin Luckock’s widow (file 1153); William Martin (file 1315); Thomas Milner (file 1385); Sarah Stent (file 1338).

**The volumes of RTS Monthly Series**

When published, the volumes were undated and almost all anonymous. The Listing of Publications, with annotations (illustrated in Figures 1.21 and 2.26) makes it possible to identify publication dates and writers. What follows is based on this listing. Text in capitals is the printed text from the list of publications; text in lowercase indicates a transcription of the writer’s name as annotated on the listing.

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<th>Date</th>
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<td>Apr. 1846</td>
<td>5. OUR SONG BIRDS by Mr. Martin, Hammersmith</td>
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<td>May 1846</td>
<td>6. SOLAR SYSTEM PART I by Thomas Dick, LL.D., Broughty Ferry, near Dundee.</td>
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<td>June 1846</td>
<td>7. THE TASK, AND OTHER POEMS BY WILLIAM COWPER, ESQ.</td>
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<td>July 1846</td>
<td>8. SKETCHES OF THE WALDENSES by Miss Stokes.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Aug. 1846</td>
<td>9. SOLAR SYSTEM PART II by Dr. Dick, Broughty Ferry</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sept. 1846</td>
<td>10. THE LIFE OF LUTHER by Rev. J.E. Cox, Oliver’s Terrace, Mile End</td>
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Nov. 1846 12. ANCIENT JERUSALEM by Dr. Kitto, Woking

Dec. 1846 13. PHILOSOPHY OF THE PLAN OF SALVATION BY AN AMERICAN CITIZEN [i.e. James Barr Walker]

Jan. 1847 14. MAN, IN HIS PHYSICAL, INTELLECTUAL, SOCIAL, AND MORAL RELATIONS by W. Newnham, Esq. of Farnham, Surrey

Feb. 1847 15. MODERN JERUSALEM by Dr. Kitto, Woking

Mar. 1847 16. THE LIFE OF CYRUS by Rev. T. Milner, Northampton

Apr. 1847 17. GARDEN FLOWERS OF THE YEAR by Miss Pratt, Chatham


June 1847 19. LIFE OF LADY RUSSELL by Mrs. Copley, Eythorne

July 1847 20. OUR DOMESTIC FOWLS by Mr. W. Martin, Zoological Society

Aug. 1847 21. TRUTH, AND OTHER POEMS BY WM. COWPER, ESQ.

Sept. 1847 22. THE LIFE OF MOHAMMED by Rev. W.H. Stowell, Rotherham

Oct. 1847 23. THE FRENCH REVOLUTION: SKETCHES OF ITS HISTORY by Mr. W.H. Miller, Islington


Dec. 1847 25. EMINENT MEDICAL MEN by Dr. Wilkinson, Islington

Jan. 1848 26. LIFE OF MARTIN BOOS. A ROMAN CATHOLIC CLERGYMAN IN GERMANY translated by Mr. Ryland, Northampton

Feb. 1848 27. SELF-IMPROVEMENT from Todd’s Student’s Guide

Mar. 1848 28. COMPARISONS OF STRUCTURE IN ANIMALS – THE HAND AND THE ARM by Mr. Martin, Hammersmith

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Apr. 1848 29. HISTORY OF PROTESTANTISM IN FRANCE TO THE REIGN OF CHARLES IX by Miss Bunbury, Faulkner St., Liverpool

May 1848 30. MAGIC, PRETENDED MIRACLES, AND REMARKABLE NATURAL PHENOMENA by Rev. C. Williams

June 1848 31. THE ATMOSPHERE, AND ATMOSPHERIC PHENOMENA by Dr. Thomas Dick, Broughty Ferry, near Dundee

July 1848 32. SCHOOLS OF ANCIENT PHILOSOPHY by Rev. J. Owen, Vicarage of St. Mary’s, Leicester


Sept. 1848 34. THE ORIGIN AND PROGRESS OF LANGUAGE by Rev. G. Smith, Poplar

Oct. 1848 35. OUR ENGLISH BIBLE by Rev. J. Stoughton, Kensington

Nov. 1848 36. THE TAHTAR TRIBES by Dr. Kitto, Woking

Dec. 1848 37. LIFE OF NAPOLEON BONAPARTE by Mr. W.H. Miller, Islington

Jan. 1849 38. THE HISTORY OF PROTESTANTISM IN FRANCE, FROM THE END OF THE REIGN OF CHARLES IX TO THE REVOCATION OF THE EDICT OF NANTES by Miss S. Bunbury, Liverpool

Feb. 1849 39. THE ARCTIC REGIONS: THEIR SITUATION, APPEARANCES, CLIMATE AND ZOOLOGY BY CAPTAIN SCORESBY FRSE, condensed by Rev. S. Pryce, Gravesend

Mar. 1849 40. THE COURT OF PERSIA BY J. KITTO, D.D.

Apr. 1849 41. THE NORTHERN WHALE-FISHERY BY CAPTAIN (NOW REV. DR.) SCORESBY FRSE, prepared by Rev. S. Pryce, Gravesend.

May 1849 42. THE CRUSADES by Rev. D.J. East, Waltham Abbey

June 1849 43. LIFE OF JOHN KASPAR LAVATER, translated from several works by Mr. Ryland, Northampton
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<th>Date</th>
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<th>Author, Location</th>
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<tr>
<td>July 1849</td>
<td>44. LIFE’S LAST HOURS; OR, THE FINAL TESTIMONY</td>
<td>Rev. J.G. Miall, Bradford, York</td>
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<td>Aug. 1849</td>
<td>45. THE PEOPLE OF PERSIA</td>
<td>J. Kitto, D.D., FSA</td>
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<td>Sept. 1849</td>
<td>46. THE LIFE OF ALFRED THE GREAT</td>
<td>Rev. W.H. Jones, Hoxton Square</td>
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<td>Oct. 1849</td>
<td>47. PLANTS AND TREES OF SCRIPTURE</td>
<td>Miss Pratt, Dover, Castle House Academy</td>
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<td>RISE OF THE CULDEES TO THE TIMES OF LUTHER</td>
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<td>Dec. 1849</td>
<td>49. BRITISH FISH AND FISHERIES</td>
<td>Mr. Martin, Hammersmith</td>
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<td>TIMES OF LUTHER TO THE CLOSE OF THE SIXTEENTH CENTURY</td>
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<td>Feb. 1850</td>
<td>51. THE SENSES AND THE MIND</td>
<td>Mr. Martin, Lewisham, late of Hammersmith</td>
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<td>Mar. 1850</td>
<td>52. THE GEOGRAPHY OF PLANTS</td>
<td>Mr. Notcutt, Fakenham</td>
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<td>Apr. 1850</td>
<td>53. LIVES OF EMINENT ANGLO-SAXONS, ILLUSTRATING THE DAWN OF CHRISTIANITY AND CIVILIZATION IN GREAT BRITAIN. PART I</td>
<td>Rev. T. Milner, Norwood</td>
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<td>May 1850</td>
<td>54. LIFE AND TIMES OF LEO X</td>
<td>Rev. J.H. Millard, Huntingdon</td>
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<td>June 1850</td>
<td>55. THE JORDAN AND THE DEAD SEA</td>
<td>Rev. J. Kennedy, Stepney</td>
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<td>July 1850</td>
<td>56. GOOD HEALTH: THE POSSIBILITY, DUTY AND MEANS OF OBTAINING AND KEEPING IT</td>
<td>Alfred Westwood, Esq., through Dr. Bull [an RTS committee member]</td>
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<tr>
<td>Aug. 1850</td>
<td>57. IONA BY THE REV. DR. W. LINDSAY ALEXANDER, D.D., FELLOW OF THE SOCIETY OF SCOTTISH ANTIQUARIES OF EDINBURGH</td>
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Sept. 1850  58. LIVES OF EMINENT ANGLO-SAXONS, ILLUSTRATING THE DAWN OF CHRISTIANITY AND CIVILIZATION IN GREAT BRITAIN. PART II by Rev. T. Milner

Oct. 1850  59. ANCIENT EGYPT: ITS MONUMENTS AND HISTORY by Rev. S. Pryce, Gravesend

Nov. 1850  60. LONDON IN THE OLDEN TIME OR, SKETCHES OF THE GREAT METROPOLIS, FROM ITS ORIGIN TO THE END OF THE SIXTEENTH CENTURY by Rev. J. Stoughton, Kensington

Dec. 1850  61. IDUMAEA; WITH A SURVEY OF ARABIA AND THE ARABIANS by Rev. J. Kennedy, Stepney


Feb. 1851  63. NINEVEH AND THE TIGRIS by Rev. T. Milner, Norwood


Apr. 1851  65. LONDON IN MODERN TIMES: OR, SKETCHES OF THE GREAT METROPOLIS DURING THE LAST TWO CENTURIES by Rev. J. Stoughton, Kensington

May 1851  66. MINES AND MINING by Rev. T. Milner, Norwood

June 1851  67. THE TELESCOPE AND MICROSCOPE by Dr. Dick, Broughty Ferry

July 1851  68. THE JESUITS: AN HISTORICAL SKETCH by Rev. E. Grinfield, Brighton

Aug. 1851  69. THE LIFE OF SIR ISAAC NEWTON by Rev. Dr. Stowell, Cheshunt

Sept. 1851  70. THE BRITISH NATION: ITS ARTS AND MANUFACTURES, by Mr. C. Tomlinson, 12 Bedford Place, Hampstead Rd

Oct. 1851  71. LIFE AND TIMES OF JOHN DE WYCLIFFE by Rev. Dr. Ferguson, Ryde
Nov. 1851  72. REMARKABLE DELUSIONS; OR, ILLUSTRATIONS OF POPULAR ERRORS by Rev. J. Miall, Bradford


Jan. 1852  74. VOLCANOES: THEIR HISTORY, PHENOMENA, AND CAUSES by Rev. J. Kennedy, Stepney

Feb. 1852  75. JAMES WATT AND THE STEAM ENGINE by Mr. Higgins, Cheshunt

Mar. 1852  76. THE ANCIENT BRITISH CHURCH: BEING AN INQUIRY INTO THE HISTORY OF CHRISTIANITY IN BRITAIN PREVIOUS TO THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE HEPTARCHY. BY WILLIAM LINDSAY ALEXANDER, D.D. FSAS, OF EDINBURGH

Apr. 1852  77. THE PALM TRIBES AND THEIR VARIETIES by Mr. Notcutt, Fakenham

May 1852  78. LIFE AND TIMES OF CHARLEMAGNE by Rev. S. Manning, Frome

June 1852  79. WONDERS OF ORGANIC LIFE by Mr. W. Martin, Lewisham Rd., Greenwich

July 1852  80. TYRE: ITS RISE, GLORY AND DESOLATION. WITH NOTICES OF THE PHOENICIANS GENERALLY by Rev S. Pryce, Gravesend


Sept. 1852  82. DUBLIN by Rev. Dr. Urwick, Dublin

Oct. 1852  83. CAXTON, AND THE ART OF PRINTING by Rev. C. Williams, St. John’s Wood

Nov. 1852  84. MONEY: A POPULAR TREATISE ON ITS NATURE, HISTORY AND USES by Rev. H. Dunckley, Salford


Jan. 1853  86. OLD EDINBURGH by Mr. D. Wilson, 12 Graham St., Edinburgh

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Feb. 1853  87. THE GREEK AND EASTERN CHURCHES by Miss Henderson, East Sheen, late of Highbury
Mar. 1853  88. VENICE: PAST AND PRESENT by Rev. J. Stoughton, Kensington
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July 1853  92. THE BIBLE IN MANY TONGUES by Rev. Dr. Angus, Stepney College
Aug. 1853  93. AUSTRALIA: ITS SCENERY, ITS SCENERY, NATURAL HISTORY, AND RESOURCES; WITH A GLANCE AT ITS GOLD FIELDS by Rev. T. Milner
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