

For the Christian Messenger.

DOMESTIC MISSIONS.

In the course of a few weeks the various Associations of the Baptist Churches in this Province will begin to assemble.

In the subject of Domestic Missions, all are deeply interested. Here each Association, each church, and each church member is called to labour. It is second to no object of benevolence among us.

A good deal has been written on the subject, in the Messenger, and the Editorials have been among them ostentatious in their appeals on this important branch of Christian duty. Private correspondence has been carried on also, in the hope, of effecting something more decided and effective.

Something we hope has been done, by these means, it has at least led to more thought upon the subject, which of course is necessary to intelligent action.

I have no intention of propounding to others more experienced in such matters, any plan for their adoption. The true missionary spirit is the great desideratum. Mode of operation will be easily ascertained. Hearts full of love to God, and the souls of our fellow-men, will soon prompt to united endeavours. May we more largely share these!

To me, I confess, it has appeared, as almost necessary to any effective operations, in this department of our common cause, that there be a union of all the Associations, where we may have the combined wisdom, and all other qualifications.

In a communication from Bro. J. W. Barss, some weeks since, my own views in the main were expressed, and in its details also, if generally approved, I should cheerfully concur.

Any plan better than the present I should like to see adopted and improved on as occasion may require.

A Committee last year was appointed by the Central Association, to prepare and present at its coming session, some more effective mode of working this important object. Now as this is a subject that concerns all the Associations, it appears to me that this Committee would subvert the general interests very materially, if its Report or plan be published in the Messenger with as little delay as possible. By this means all might have opportunity to examine, and thus to improve if thought necessary, or otherwise adopted.

Delegates to that Association from the other Associations, will be at once approved as a prudent one.

I do not know indeed that the Committee, intend recommending to its Association any general plan, advising that body to endeavour to engage all the Associations in one Board, but as I know this to be the conviction of many ministering and other brethren, I am led to think if the view entertained by the Committee. Whether that Board is located in Yarmouth or Sydney, does not I think affect the general question—and no material difference would result, whether it were located in Barrington, Truro, or Halifax.

With all deference to the above named Committee, I submit these suggestions, with the desire that the wisdom that cometh from above may be largely shared by us all.

D. W. C. DIMOCK.

Onslow, April '57.

Sydney, C. B., April 23rd, 1857.

MR. EDITOR,

Though various communications have appeared in the C. M., in reference to our Home and Foreign Missions, none have, as yet, taken up the subject in a practical point of view, with the exception of Bro. J. W. Barss. The period is fast approaching when the Associations will meet to deliberate on these and kindred objects, and would it not be well to look the matter fairly in the face previously, and not leave the consideration of it, in all its important details, to be hurriedly decided on at the Associations, with the risk of afterwards ascertaining that the plan adopted was not the best that could be devised. It should be the aim of the Baptists of this Province, now that it is absolutely necessary to take some step to insure the usefulness of our missionary enterprises; to adopt the very best system that can be devised. Will any one say that so important an end can be attained without due consideration—deep anxious thought—and earnest supplications to the source of wisdom, for light and knowledge, rightly and successfully to carry on his own work.

The discussion in your columns about the Australian Mission, so far as it goes, will be of service.

Allow me to suggest a plan for the consideration of your readers. First, let all our Missions be under the control of one Board, and not as now under three. Then adopt Brother Barss's plan of members at 20s. annually, and also as recommended by him let an active man be appointed as Secretary, with a salary, that he may be able to devote his whole time to it.

Let there be Life Members, (say, by payment of \$25, or \$30,) and Life Directors, (by payment of \$80 to \$100,) as in all the religious societies of the United States. Every Annual Member, Life Member, or Director, to have the privilege of specifying to which particular mission his subscription shall be devoted, whether to the Home Mission, the French Mission, the Burman Mission, or any other.

But what I consider of most importance, is the opening in every church of a monthly subscription. Let every one be urged to pay such an amount monthly for missionary purposes as they can afford,—some could give a dollar, some perhaps only a shilling, others possibly only a penny a month; but all ought to give something, adopting the apostolic rule, "As God has prospered them."

Our Wesleyan brethren have an advantage over us in their weekly class meetings, which makes the collection of the subscriptions comparatively easy.

As we have no weekly meeting where subscriptions could be collected with regularity, I recommend (at all events for the present) monthly subscriptions instead of weekly, though the latter if practicable would be preferable. It is an established fact, that the more frequent a christian gives to the cause of God, the more willingly he gives, and fewer complaints are made about "continual calls," &c. While the Word of God assures us that giving to His cause does not impoverish the donor. Call on a man once a year for a donation for religious purposes, and most likely he will tell you of the "continual calls" upon his purse, and somewhat reluctantly gives you his dollar or his pound,—call upon that same individual every month for a small sum, and he will, if not at first, yet before long, give it as a matter of course, and without murmuring. Again, many a church member could give a few pence each month out of their scanty earnings, and not feel it, who perhaps could not at any one time give half-a-dollar without suffering in some respect,—consequently the chief source of revenue, the pennies of the poor, are lost to our various benevolent institutions. There is another evil connected with a dependence on annual subscriptions for the support of our missions and other denominational efforts. The person to whom is left the task of collecting frequently forgets it when the proper time arrives, or puts it off till too late, though many may be willing to pay if called on. It has been so with the Union Society, and likewise with the subscriptions to the College Endowment Fund. The writer subscribed £10 to the latter, to be paid in five annual instalments. The first was called for in 1853, the second in 1854, and since that time no further payment has been asked for—this, by way of illustration. I have no doubt from what acquaintance I have had with such matters, that it is the same everywhere, and that a large amount is annually lost to the support of the gospel, which ought to be, and which might be realized.

A duty which occurs monthly is not apt to be forgotten. This has been fully proved and illustrated in the Order of the Sons of Temperance. As a general rule the members pay their dues monthly, or in some cases quarterly, and very seldom does a member allow himself to get many months in arrears, that it does not end in his expulsion for non-payment of dues. The shilling was easily paid each month, and no inconvenience resulted, but in many cases, it is no easy matter to raise the ten or twelve shillings arrears, which have accumulated, perhaps from mere inattention, and the evil goes on increasing, till finally he does not feel well able to pay the amount due, and allows himself to be excluded.

So has it been in the various efforts made to sustain our denominational enterprises. Special efforts have been made, liberal promises of future aid given, and there it has often ended.

The system of frequent small payments, instead of occasional extraordinary efforts, will be found the only remedy.

It may be said, that the difficulty of collecting every month, and the time required to do so, will prevent the practical working of such a plan. But I think it will prove much easier than those who have not made the experiment may suppose. As said above, after a while the monthly payment would be made almost as a

matter of course, and it would need but a little patience and perseverance on the part of collectors, till the system became established. By adopting another plan, it may be rendered still easier. We have no weekly class meeting, but we may have, and ought to have, a monthly concert of prayer for missions. While residing in the United States, the Baptists there had such a meeting. On a certain evening in every month, each church met to pray for the success of missions,—I believe it was the first Monday of every month, but the particular day is immaterial. By the introduction of such a measure among us, two very desirable ends may be attained at the same time,—prayer and supplication will be ascending to heaven simultaneously, for a blessing upon the efforts made to advance Messiah's Kingdom, and an opportunity will be afforded to show their sincerity, by paying into the Treasury of the Lord, according to their means. Thus the labor of the collector will be in a great measure obviated. The contributions will flow into the mission fund, in a continuous stream, enabling the work to go steadily forward,—not like the mountain torrent which for a short time thunders to the sea and then leaves its channel dry.

C. H. H.

For the Christian Messenger.

Bereaving Providence.

Messrs. Editors.

Mrs. Margaret, the wife of Mr. James Gates, of Melvern Square, Wilmot, having caught the malignant sore throat, through assiduous attendance on a relative who was taken sick with it at their house, died on the 5th day of March, aged 33 years. Their eldest son Benjamin F. died on the 9th, at the age of 13; and the younger, Thaddeus C. who was 11 years old, on the 10th.

As the only surviving children, two daughters, were brought low by the same disease, no funeral sermon was preached till Lord's-day, April 19th, when I addressed a very large and deeply solemn congregation from Ps. lxxvii. 19. "Thy way, O God, is in the sea, and thy path in the great waters, and thy footsteps are not known."

Much sympathy is evinced toward Mr. Gates, who has been suddenly bereft of a very amiable and excellent wife, and his two active and promising sons. There is, however, ground of consolation in the midst of deep affliction. The eldest son especially spoke freely of his approaching dissolution, manifested a desire to know about the Saviour, and expressed hope in Him. Mrs. Gates is known to have been very seriously exercised in her youthful days; and is supposed to have experienced a work of grace. She appeared evidently to possess a strong regard for religion and religious people. In her last illness she earnestly entreated her family to give heed to the Word of God, and their own spiritual interests. She expressed a reliance upon Christ, and remarked, "I love every body; but I love God better."

May the living profit by these impressive visitations!

Ever yours,

C. TUPPER.

Aylesford, April 25, '57.

For the Christian Messenger.

Extract of Letter from Rev. W. Hall.

DEAR BROTHER,

"In my last I unintentionally omitted referring to the labours of my respected Bro. Eagles, who was pastor of the church of Guysborough, during the term of one year, and whose preaching was blessed in the conversion of souls. He is now supplying a large field at St. Mary's, including the flourishing settlement of Isaac's and Indian Harbour, surrounded by a large Presbyterian interest. Our Brother is toiling on, gradually winning souls to Christ."

"We have commenced the erection of another place of worship at a place called 'The Cove.' £100 have been subscribed towards the object, so that Guysborough Church will be amply provided with Meeting-houses, having one in Manchester, one in Town, and one in progress at the Cove."

"The cause of religion is low in this locality. The Holy Spirit is required to revive the droop-grace of God's people, and to convert perishing sinners. I labour on with the humble hope that the seed sown in this hard and sterile soil will ultimately spring up into a Spiritual Harvest. Ministers have laboured some time in certain sections of the Lord's vineyard without seeing any apparent results, and others have entered into their labours."

I remain, Yours in Christ,

WILLIAM HALL.

Guysboro, April 15th, 1857.

For the Christian Messenger.

Letter from the Rev. W. Hobbs.

ANTI-TOBACCO MOVEMENT—RELIGIOUS PROGRESS.

MR. EDITOR,

All who have paid any attention to the habits of the rural or town population of our beloved Province, must have arrived at a deep conviction, that a considerable portion of the hard earnings is spent in a way which ministers neither to peace of mind, health of body, nor their respectability in life.

During my sojourn in this western County, I have been enabled with some degree of accuracy to ascertain the amount expended yearly on the article of tobacco alone, and as the result of my observations I would state that within a very short distance of the spot where I write, there are three hundred and fifty persons, divided into eighty families. This population pays to the revenue £150 annually, as a tax for the use of tobacco. Supposing the first cost of the article to be 25 per cent, and the joint profits of merchant and tradesman to be 25 per cent, this gives an expenditure of £200 annually for these 350 people. Thus we arrive at the conclusion that in this district each family pays to government £1 10s. as a voluntary tax for the privilege of using this emaculating dirty tobacco, which to say the least is anti-vital, and may cut short life ten or twenty years. This £200 would in the first place support a fund which would allow the head of every family 10s weekly, during sickness, 5s. weekly for life after 63 years, and £3 for funeral expenses at death, and the residue by being put out at compound interest would form a very efficient source of relief during any time of scarcity which so frequently occurs in both fishing and agricultural districts.

But Sir, I conceive the practice to be at war with the principles of pure religion.

Religion bids men as stewards of God to make a proper use of money, but the use of tobacco is a fleshly lust, which not only wars against the soul, but dishonours God, it is money for that which is not bread—money needed to raise drooping hearts, and to fill the world with light and love. Religion bids men to use time, strength, and life, to the best purpose. In one of our meetings, last week, one of the speakers maintained that the victims of this narcotic spend one twentieth part of their time,—two years of forty in its indulgence. Is this redeeming time?

Religion bids men give the world a good example. It was also said at the meeting above referred to that ninety-nine in a hundred acquire this habit from infectious example, be this as it may, the example of professors of religion is powerful for good or evil. It has power to sweep away multitudes of young men to death. "Father," said a little boy, "why do you chew tobacco?" Because I love it, was the reply. The son chewed it, learned to love it, ruined his health, and went into a premature grave. "Cure fathers, cure church members, cure men of influence, when they drop it others will follow suit," says a living writer.

Rum and Tobacco are two demons. Tobacco creates an unnatural thirst or appetite, which craves alcoholic stimulants, and the gratification of this leads to drunkenness. Smoke shops and dram shops have usually been identical. Says another, "Temperance can never triumph whilst Tobacco intoxicates the million."

We believe the Messenger will speak out on the subject as it has so frequently done. We were especially pleased to see the manifesto of the Rev. W. Parker, in the Messenger, hoping others will imitate his example, in renouncing the narcotic. Several societies have been formed in this county called Moral Reform Societies, embracing both Alcohol and Tobacco, and the practice of Tobacco using has become beautifully less. The meetings are still kept up with interest, and I do hope that all the members of our churches will shortly abandon the practice in toto.

The church here has long been without the services of a stated pastor, and as a natural consequence religion languishes and it has operated against the general interest of the cause, but during the last year and at present the state of religious feeling is promising, the social religious meetings are well attended in their different localities. The members are well united, and a number of additions have taken place during the year. The congregations on the Lord's-day are always large and interesting. And on the whole the year has been one of signal blessing to the cause. Many around this region have obtained the one thing needful. Over a hundred and twenty have been baptized in this and in the adjoining county since I came west, and the work is but just beginning. The Messenger is highly prized in this part of the country, and we are all much pleased that you did not involve it in the recent political struggle.

Yours truly,

W. HOBBS.

Ragged Islands, April 24th, 1857.