

Correspondence.

[The following communications will afford gratification to our readers. We were assured that the complaints of "Vox" might be fully met, and satisfactorily explained. We feel the force of Brother Armstrong's remark and agree with him and also Rev. Dr. Tupper that generally such charges against public bodies should not be allowed, except the writer affix his name to what he publishes. For that reason we appended our comments to the letter of "Vox populi." But as we knew not the extent of the complaint and supposed it might magnify and extend itself if it were suppressed, we therefore deemed it better to allow the subject ventilation. Especially, did we prefer this course, seeing that the writer gave us his name and with it the limited restriction, that "when absolutely required" we could insert it. Whilst we hold the opinion that anonymous attacks upon public bodies should be discountenanced, yet we think it well to give as much freedom as possible to the expression of opinion, consistent with the duty of defending the acts of public bodies, especially when those acts are not censurable, but rather to be commended.]

One fact is brought out incidentally in Dr. Tupper's letter, and also in the Rev. Mr. Armstrong's, which will be very gratifying to those of our brethren who may have partially forgotten it, which is, that although for purposes of convenience the denomination in the Province is divided into three separate Associations, yet in its sympathies and operations those three are really one body; and rejoice now as formerly in cooperation where that can be effected. May the union be more and more cemented by such acts as the Central and Eastern aiding the French Mission, while the Western aids the Gaelic and Home Mission! We trust that "Vox Populi" will henceforth use his endeavours to prevent the injury which it is feared his letter would produce. We commend to him the French Mission in particular. It has peculiar claims upon him as well as others. The Home Missionary Board too is worthy of more confidence than he or any one else has placed in it. The only feeling we should cherish is the desire to do more, and give more, in behalf of both these objects than has ever yet been done or given.—Ed. C. M.]

For the Christian Messenger.

Reply to "Vox Populi vox Dei."

MR. EDITOR,

I like neither the communication, nor the name assumed by your correspondent,—"Vox populi vox Dei;" for I regard neither as true. He brings a charge of malversation in the appropriation of monies by the Domestic Mission Board, and censures the Western Association for endorsing the doings of its Board. Not only so, but charges a violation of our principles, and an assumption of power at variance with our professions. He characterizes the conduct of the Board and the Association, as reflecting on the enlightened judgment of the churches, and interfering with their independence,—as being arbitrary and reckless. I think, Sir, you should have refused a place in your columns to such a communication, reflecting so strongly on the character and conduct of public religious bodies, unless accompanied by the writer's name. If a brother feels he ought to make such charges before the public, he ought certainly not to shrink from the responsibility of appending his name to what he publishes.

"V. P." intimates pretty forcibly that the appropriations of which he complains have operated and are operating injuriously by diminishing the contributions to the Domestic Mission funds. I would be willing to let "Vox populi," for his relief, blow his blast, under the sober and gentle correction of your Editorial remarks, did I not think the matter too serious to be thus passed over; and considering that the public expression of even a suspicion that all is not right, is too often laid hold of by the covetousness and selfishness of some Christian professors, and made an excuse for not giving to the cause of Christ, perhaps it will not be deemed out of place for me to add a few observations.

Now look at the cases brought by your correspondent. He complains that monies have been improperly and recklessly appropriated by the Western Board and sanctioned by the Association. Do the facts warrant his injurious charges? I believe not.

1st. The sum of £30 given to aid the Nova Scotia Baptist Home Society is alleged to prove his statements. Let it be remembered that when the old N. S. Association was divided in 1850, and the three present ones formed out of

that venerable body, it was distinctly understood that the Mission ground which the old Association sought to reach and cultivate should be considered common ground, and be open to missionary operations by the three Associations. And as the Mission field lay principally in the Eastern part of the Province, that is, within the limits of the Eastern Association, the other two Associations were at liberty, Nay, I will add, under solemn obligations to Christ and the souls of men to send Missionaries there, or aid those sent by our brethren, or both as our means permitted, and circumstances rendered advisable. Accordingly from the first the Board of the Western Association has sent Missionaries to the Eastern part of the Province, and for some time specially aided Bro. H. Ross in prosecuting the Gaelic Mission in Cape Breton, then under the direction of the Eastern Board; and in 1857 the Western Board paid towards that Mission alone £45. Did any one complain that the Board had done wrong?—that the appropriation was arbitrary and reckless? In 1858 the Gaelic Mission was adopted by the N. S. Baptist H. M. Society. It was felt that as the Board of that Society had more immediate supervision of the Eastern field, and had a better opportunity of knowing its necessities, and also had more missionaries than means, while it was difficult for us to get men to fulfil missions, though we had means to pay them the moment their work was done, it would be better under the circumstances, to transmit a portion of our funds to the Nova Scotia Board to be employed in Home Missions under its direction, than for the Western Board to appoint one or more ministers belonging to the Central or Eastern Association to perform a mission in that field; which last the Board had unquestionably the right and power to do, and would have done, had it been thought best at the time. If the W. Board had withheld help from the Home Mission Society, when in its power to afford it, it might justly have been charged with neglect—the interest it was chosen to watch over and further.

Now will any one, except "Vox populi," say that the money was diverted from its proper object? Was it not given by the people and entrusted to the Board to be expended in preaching the Gospel in the Home Mission field by Baptist ministers? Was it not in the utmost strictness so employed? Does not that field—our field, embrace the whole province? And not merely that portion of it within the limits of the W. Association? Is there any foundation then for the bold charge made by "Vox populi"? Never was charge preferred against any public body with so little reason,—never was one more utterly baseless.

2nd. Nor does that brought against the Board and Association in respect to the £30 given to aid the Acadian French Mission rest on any better ground. That Mission is the earliest child of the Association; it originated in the progress, holy sympathies and vows of ministers and delegates in the Association;—it is within the limits, and under the direction of the Association, its Board is annually appointed by that Body, and to it renders a yearly report of its doings. It was once under the immediate direction of the Western Board, and probably would have been so again, as you very properly observed, had not a legal difficulty been supposed to exist in the way. A distinct Board was formed by the Association for the sake of convenience in carrying on the work, and not by way of disowning or casting off the Mission. It would have been a suicidal policy in the D. M. B. and the Association, when in a condition to afford help, to have allowed the French Mission to be crippled, its Missionary starve, or be compelled to leave his chosen work in order to obtain the means of subsistence;—because forsooth, somebody, (not over judicious or benevolent, I imagine, or you would not have called on to publish "Vox populi,") might raise the cry that the Board had acted unfaithfully—had diverted the funds to an object foreign to the interest it was appointed to cherish and advance. A conviction is entertained by very many (I had supposed all, till "Vox populi" sent out his thunder) that the Board and Association acted wisely, faithfully, and righteously in aiding that Mission, and it looks like small work for "Vox populi vox Dei," to endeavour to excite distrust in the people in respect to the management of the D. M. Board, and its approval by the Association.

Can any man within the limits of the Western Association, who has given money to the D. M. fund say—"My money has been misappropriated and mispent because some of it has been given to preach the Gospel in the Eastern part of the Province?" Or can any say, with reason and truth—"My money has been diverted

from its proper object, because some of it has been employed to preach the Gospel to the Acadian French?" Can there be a Baptist or the friend of a Baptist throughout the Western Association, who, in giving his money for the D. Mission, would say—"I love Home Missions, do not therefore, under any circumstances, take the least portion of it to preach the Gospel in the Eastern part of the Province, however great the cry of the people there or pressing the want of means to carry on operations by the Home Mission Society don't give that Society any of it;—also I wish you to employ none of my money to preach the Gospel to the Acadian French, or to aid any who are preaching it among them?" Would not such an one speak and act as if he were blind? Would not his love to Home Missions be at the lowest possible point? Would even "Vox populi" himself speak out thus? I believe not; and yet that is the spirit that underlies his communication.

I will put the whole matter so that a child can understand it. Suppose that the Western Board shall now appoint brother Delong, as they did in 1859 to a mission of four months in the Eastern part of the province. This would cost from £25 to £30. Could any one say that the Board had travelled out of its field—had misappropriated and recklessly squandered the money on a foreign object? Not one. Suppose again that the Board should directly employ some minister who speaks the Gaelic language on a three months mission to Cape Breton, (costing some £20), is there one who would venture to say that the Board had no right to make such an appointment—that it was out of their field—that the proceeding was arbitrary and reckless—that the money was diverted from Home Missions? I think not. Suppose now that the Board should appoint either brother Angell, Martell or Stubbart a mission of four months in Yarmouth County—the principal field of the French Mission, would any one complain that the Board had assumed power,—that they had done any thing not strictly proper? No. Suppose again that the Board should directly appoint bro. Normandy, the French Missionary, to labour four months in Digby and Yarmouth Counties, could any one maintain that the Board did not occupy Home Mission ground? Not one. Instead of thus appointing brother Normandy the Board considering it best under the circumstances, sent £30 to the French Mission Board to support him while labouring in the same field, and doing the same work he would have done had his appointment originated from and been performed under the direction of the W. Board. Will any one say that the result is not precisely the same. Can any reasonable man complain that his money in this last case is not expended in home missions—and that it is not faithfully expended? Not a penny of the money thus appropriated, and about which "Vox populi" raises such a hue and cry was diverted from the people's work,—it was all sacredly devoted to one object—Home Missions.

"Vox populi" asserts pretty strongly that the action of the Board and Association reflects on the enlightened judgment of the churches and interferes with their independence. We respect enlightened judgments and love the Scriptural independence of the churches, but do not perceive that either has been in the least violated. The enlightened judgment of the churches can certainly feel the slight, and perceive that the churches independence is in danger, if either has really been done, without some distorted "Vox populi vox Dei" to sound the alarm. Has any church complained? Not one. Perhaps some may be waked up to do so by the discordant and dolorous notes of "Vox populi." I think however that "Vox populi" may blow his trumpet long and loud before the churches will believe that the D. M. Board and the Association have departed from their duty—have acted unfaithfully—are guilty of reckless and arbitrary conduct—that they are influenced by what he calls a spirit of Episcopacy or Presbyterianism, because they have appropriated £30 out of the D. M. fund to aid the Baptist Home Mission Society in preaching the Gospel in our province; and because they have given a like sum to the French Mission Board to preach Christ and his salvation to the Acadian French within the limits of our Association; and in both cases by our own Ministers, and under the direction of our own brethren. No;—their judgments are too enlightened and their love for Home Missions too strong to allow them to entertain, or act on such conclusions.

If any one besides "Vox populi" feels aggrieved at the expenditure he complains of, and his benevolence, intensely shocked, is in danger of dying an instant death, or withering up beautifully and respectably less by degrees,—I think a little more instruction and reflection

and especially a little more love to Christ and the souls of men would reconcile him to so enormous a wrong; nay, would lead him to approve and support the Board and Association in their endeavours to reach and cultivate the entire home mission ground, as far as their means admit, either by directly sending missionaries to labour there, or by aiding those sent by our brethren of the Home Mission Society, or the French Mission Board. The field is one—the object is one, and if we cannot reach it by one agency, let us employ such as are equally legitimate and efficient.

Instead of doing too much on any part of the home mission field, we do by far too little. Let us not complain of what is done, where there is no real ground for complaint; but let us labour to do more in all departments of the home Mission field and in doing so we will be blessed, and by the grace of God be made a blessing to many who are perishing in their sins.

In conclusion I beg to say that, seeing I know not who "Vox Populi" is, I hope he will pardon any thing he may regard in this communication as disrespectful to his dignity, or wanting in charity to what I hope are his good, though certainly mistaken intentions.

Sorry for troubling you and your readers with so long a communication.

I remain Mr. Editor, yours, in the love and service of Home Missions.

GEORGE ARMSTRONG.

Bridgetown, Sept. 11th, 1860.

For the Christian Messenger.

"Association Appropriations."

MESSRS. EDITORS,

I agree with your correspondent—unknown to me—who has written on this subject, (C. M. Sept. 5th) as to the necessity of appropriating monies contributed for benevolent objects in accordance with the expressed wishes of the donors. He seems, however, to be laboring under some misapprehension when he represents the "Western Association" as being "in the habit" of departing from this course, and refers for the proof to the "Report of the Treasurer of the Home Mission Board, endorsed by a resolution of the Association in Hillsburg, 1860."

Your explanations may be justly considered sufficient. As, however, it is a matter of importance, since a wrong impression made on the public mind in reference to it is liable to do much harm, and my knowledge of the subject enables me to state some facts which may not be generally known, I deem it incumbent on me to offer a few additional remarks.

When the one Baptist Association of Nova Scotia was divided into three, in 1850, the boundaries were fixed according to the plan proposed by me, as suggested in the letter from the Amherst Church, of which I was then Pastor. Both in Committee, and subsequently in the public assembly when this arrangement was adopted, I stated distinctly, that, though it was judged expedient to have separate Boards, yet, as the principal destination existed within the bounds of the Eastern Association, contributions raised in the Western were not to be restricted to its limits, but to be extended to all parts of the Domestic Missionary field, including Cape Breton and Prince Edward Island. This was admitted without a dissenting voice. Accordingly money has been expended from time to time, in agreement with the well understood wishes of the contributors, by sending Missionaries from the Western to the Eastern portion of the field; and when the services of suitable men could not be obtained in the former, funds have been very properly remitted to sustain Missionary Brethren resident in the latter.

Neither have there ever been any restrictions with reference to the language spoken by the people inhabiting this Home Missionary field. While, therefore, special contributions have been made for the Gaelic Mission, some have likewise been furnished in aid of it from the general fund. I am not aware of any reason why the same course should not be adopted in relation to our French Mission. It has indeed been deemed convenient to have a separate Board, located in the neighbourhood of the French people; to manage its affairs more commodiously. But it is obviously a part of our Home Missionary enterprise. Some donations are made expressly for it in connexion with Union Societies; but the papers circulated do not so far as I am aware, usually contain a distinct column for the French Mission, while there is invariably one for the Home Mission, which seems substantially to embrace the whole field. The appropriation, therefore, of twenty pounds, not required at the time for the English department at home, appears to me to have been perfectly consistent and right.