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Religious.

THE UNITED STATES CENTENNIAL.

Arrangements are already making for the National Centennial in 1876. The *National Baptist* says:—It will be the endeavor of all concerned to make the event worthy of the occasion and to prepare a fitting memorial of the first hundred years of our national history. Doubtless the aid of able writers will be called in, to tell the story of the nation's progress in politics, agriculture, commerce, manufactures, the industrial arts, science, education, literature, religion, etc. We anticipate the preparation of a number of volumes, which shall be at once the record and the enduring monument of the achievements commemorated on that hundredth anniversary of our national independence. In this connection we would suggest the preparation of a volume of our own denominational history against that day. This is a record which ought now to be made for its own sake, as well as for its relation to the comprehensive history of our national career. The Baptists have done something in the work of evangelization, education, literature, social improvement, public enterprise,—a statement of which should be preserved among ourselves and communicated to the world. There should be, and probably will be, several of these special histories, and we ought to be neither lacking nor improperly represented. Our present suggestion is that a volume of essays should be prepared by competent writers—each essay presenting some particular aspect of our denominational activity and progress in this country from the beginning to the date of the Centennial. One writer will treat of our general denominational growth, with the incidents that have affected and shaped our history; another will show what we have done in foreign evangelization; another, in home evangelization; another, in theological education; another, in collegiate education; another, in literature; with other topics that will present themselves when once the proposition is carefully considered.

AN INDIAN ASSOCIATION.

A correspondent of *The Standard* gives the following account of a Baptist Association held by the Baptists of the Creek nation:

Sunday, yesterday, was the great day of the feast. The usual sun-rise prayer-meeting was held, and then, at an early hour after breakfast, the crowds began to pour into the arbor, coming, not only from the hundred and more families encamped around, but on horseback and in wagons from the country far and near, until it was estimated that full 1,000 people were upon the grounds. Dr. Helm first preached and his discourse was a precious and powerful presentation of truth. It moved the multitude; many asked prayers and several professed hope. A procession was then formed, and, to the stirring music of a Muskokee song, in which hundreds of voices and hearts joined, all marched a short distance to the water, when brother Nelson administered the ordinance of baptism to one elderly and four young Indian women. Again we repaired to the arbor, and while a general chorus was being sung, the whole Christian assembly passed in single file before the newly-baptised and gave to each the hand of fellowship. Brethren Marston and Murrow preached in the afternoon and at night, and to interested audiences. Nor was this all, for a spirit of preaching and of praying and praising was by this time awakened among the Indian Christians that could not be satisfied with services of ordinary length. Their meeting was continued all the night till the full light this morning. At least four sermons were preached during the night, and uncounted prayers were offered and songs sung;

and meanwhile a number of inquirers professed faith, and were received for baptism. As the services were all in the Muskokee language, of which I could not of course, understand a word I early retired to my bed, on the floor of the school house, a few feet away, where, with the other white visitors, we had our quarters during our stay. But I could not sleep; those stirring songs of praise, those earnest tones of prayer and exhortation, ringing in my ears, forbade it. Such melodious, unearthly and enrapturing singing, I am sure I never before had heard, nor do I ever expect again to hear its equal till I gain heaven itself, unless—which I hope I may do—I should again some time visit the Creeks.

BLESSEDNESS OF BEING "PLANTED IN THE LORD'S HOUSE."

It is a matter of great importance for one to have some religious home, a chosen place he can call his "own dear home"; where he can labor in the Lord to advantage and profit, to himself and others. The Psalmist says, "they that be planted in the Lord's house shall flourish in the courts of our God"—and they shall bring forth fruit in old age." And again "Blessed are they who dwell in thy courts." These words not only had an application in David's time but are equally true and important now though spoken two thousand years since. The blessings connected with an earthly home; who can fully set forth? The residence of parents, sisters and brothers; where each is seeking the other's happiness. Who that has had such a home but feels at the mere mention, it may be after long years leaving the paternal roof, a rekindling of his deepest, purest affections, a fresh glow of fondness for "home sweet home," known only to those who have enjoyed its benediction? But the dwelling place of God and the precious Redeemer—and gracious Spirit—and brethren and sisters in Christ, bound together by such unearthly ties, how transcendently precious its privileges—the communion of saints; how allied to heaven. How can a Christian afford to deprive himself of the rich enjoyment found in waiting upon the Lord in his appointed ways, as often as circumstances will allow, of meeting with his brethren and sisters, to offer up united prayers for the prosperity of Zion, and talk of all God's wondrous grace, and praise him in their songs, and encourage one another along their Christian pilgrimage. Here strength is gained to labor on in the cause of Him who left us an example worthy the imitation of all. How allied to heaven is such a place, and "who that knows the worth of the prayer but wishes to be often there." But inconsistent as it may seem, there are those who profess to love the ways of Zion—have taken upon them solemn vows, entered into a covenant sacred as any engagement can be, who are seldom found within the sanctuary; especially when help is most needed; though no other infirmity appears to be their's but a want of disposition. Others continually finding fault with minister or people—there is a want of dignity with the pastor—too unsocial, does not visit some of his flock so often as they think is his duty, or the church members are distant, and hard to become acquainted with. Such as make the last accusation generally are the ones who hurry away at the close of religious gatherings, giving no opportunity for any to become acquainted with them. Others seem not to be planted in any place, but are found where it is supposed, will be the most interesting meeting forgetting their covenant obligations to their own church. Such do not "flourish in the courts of the Lord," such make weakly Christians. The theme reminds me of good Dea. T. with whom I and several young men boarded, at the time of making a public profession of our faith. The good man

in giving his fatherly advice, would speak to us of the importance of being at all the appointments of the church and taking some part in making the meetings interesting. His precept was always backed up by his worthy example as long as strength of body was afforded, even down to a ripe old age. Very few there were, having the amount of business cares pressing upon them, who could be equally depended on; at the evening meeting his place was sure to be filled, if circumstances would allow in any way, he made no other engagements for the regular weekly prayer meeting, this stood first. Even if compelled to be late he would be there to unite in the songs and prayers, and add his testimony to the importance of an interest in the great Atoning Sacrifice. Great was his satisfaction, and great his growth in grace. His heart was not only fixed, but his spiritual home was fixed; he was "planted" and he "flourished" down to old age. He was a member of the Sabbath School for forty years, never outgrew it in years.

Others I have in mind who honored their profession in a similar way, by carrying out their covenant obligations, and forsook not the assembling of themselves together; they did not divide their services and affections between religion and the world, as the manner of some is, but served the Lord with singleness of purpose, and the Lord blessed them according to his promise. These all died in faith, leaving an abundant evidence at death of having entered on an eternal Sabbath. The memory of such is blessed, their works do follow them.—*Ch. Era.*

Correspondence.

For the Christian Messenger.

THE NOVA SCOTIA BAPTIST HOME MISSIONARY SOCIETY.

(No. 2.)

In further discussion of this subject and the recent proceedings in reference thereto, I have to remark,—That the action taken at the Eastern Association at Sydney in 1871, was nothing more than to "appoint a delegate to the Western Association to meet in Sept. for the special purpose of conferring with their Home Mission Board, on the desirableness of an early union with the Board of the two other Associations."—Rev. D. W. C. Dimock was appointed for this purpose and his expenses ordered to be paid by the Association. (See Minutes of Eastern Association, 1871, p. 9.)

This is the origin of the Union movement. The Eastern Association do not appear to have had in contemplation, any such project, as that which was started at Berwick in June last. Mark the language of their resolution. The duty and functions of their delegate were clear, and well defined. It was to attend the Western Association "for the special purpose of conferring with the Home Mission Board on the desirableness of an early union with the Board of the two other Associations." Now observe what follows: In the afternoon Session of the Western Association at Nictaux, Monday Oct. 3 the Secretary of the Home Mission Board read his annual report, which was adopted. Then "Rev. D. W. C. Dimock—the Eastern delegate—being called upon, presented on behalf of the Eastern Nova Scotia Baptist Association, the fraternal greetings of that body, and in the course of a deeply interesting speech which met a hearty response, urged a closer affiliation in Home Missionary efforts between the churches of the Eastern and Western portions of the Province." Discussion followed, the names of the several speakers are given, and at the close of this discussion the following Resolution was unanimously adopted—"Having heard brother Dimock's interesting Report of the operations in the Eastern Association, the brethren present hereby affectionately express their warm sym-

pathy with the trials and labours of that Association, and Resolve that the following brethren be appointed a Committee, to consider in what way a more intimate and effective union of the Baptists of this Province for Home mission and other purpose, can be accomplished." See Minutes of Western Association for 1871, pages 7 and 8.

Now the first thing noticeable here is, that while the delegate's duty was limited to the special purpose of conferring with the Home Missionary Board of the Western Association, a body duly incorporated by law. (See chap. 59. Acts of the Legislature for 1865, page 134.) it does not appear by the Associational Minutes that he ever had any conference whatever with the body to whom he was delegated. He seems by these Minutes, to have addressed himself, not to the Board, but to the Association. Then the proceedings as printed in the preamble to the Resolution which passed, refer to an "interesting Report (Query-Account) of the operations of the Home Mission in the Eastern Association." I am apt to think that some correction is needed here. Or thus "the operations of the H. M. (within the limits) of the Eastern Association, because, as is well known, there is but one Home Mission Board for both the Central and Eastern Associations, and they had made no other than their usual Annual Report. It may possibly be a typical error.

Then at page 9, of the Minutes in the afternoon Session—not of the Home Mission Board, to whom Rev. Mr. Dimock was deputed—but of the Western Association, the following appears:

"Committee appointed to consider in what way a more intimate and effective Union of the Baptists of this Province may be accomplished" (the words for Home Mission, and other purposes, as on the Resolution, are omitted it will be observed)—"beg to recommend the formation of a N. S. Provincial Baptist Convention, for the better prosecution of Home Missions. And that for this purpose each church in this Province be requested to send a delegate to meet at Berwick, the day before the meeting of the Central Association in A. D. 1872, at 10 o'clock. And we further recommend that the Chairman and Secretary of our Home Mission Board, be requested to correspond with the Board of the Nova Scotia Home Missionary Society on this subject."

And thereupon, the Report was adopted.

I pause here for a moment, to enquire how this resolution can legitimately arise out of, or connect itself with, the action of the Eastern Association at Sydney? That Body seems to have been fully aware of the existence of a Western Home Mission Board, and that as an incorporated body it had a legal existence and was the proper body to confer with. Created it is true by the action and appointment of the Western Association but not exactly a myth nevertheless. Then again the Eastern Association never seem to have contemplated the abolition and extinction of the existing Board appointed by the Central and Eastern Association, also duly incorporated by an Act, passed in the year 1865 to be found at page 153. of the Laws of that year, chap. 68. They wanted, a conference to be held with the Western Board on the desirableness of an early Union (on their part, with the Board of the two other Associations) instead of which, action is taken by the Western Association itself, the object and effect of which, if carried out as intended, would be to supersede all the existing Boards, and construct an entirely new and different organization, with another—if not other objects in view, to be located within the limits of that Association. Are the Baptists of Nova Scotia prepared as a body, for this project so unexpectedly sprung upon them? Not the project contemplated at the Eastern Association of 1871, certainly, for that was a proposition, in view of a Union of

the two Boards, and, having no reference at all to the French Mission, which has a Board of Managers also duly incorporated under the auspices of the Western Association. See page 54 of the Acts of 1868 chap. 47. nor "to the dissemination of Baptist Literature."

With these three several bodies, duly incorporated—that is to say, the Home Missionary Society of the Central and Eastern Association—the Home, or "Domestic Missionary Board" of the Western Association, (as it is styled in the Act) and the "Board of Managers of the French Mission," one would have supposed that the first-step, in view of abolishing, or superseding them, in order to substitute some other organization would have been to consult them. Each of these several corporations, possess funds, more or less, invested. I know not what others may think, but to me it does appear one of the most extraordinary steps that could well be contrived, for either of these three Associations, of its own mere motion, to call a Convention of the Baptist churches of Nova Scotia, detail five of its own number as delegates,—neither of the other two Associations being represented, as such, at all, and with a fraction of sixteen delegates, responding for sixteen churches out of ONE HUNDRED AND SIXTY ONE, the aggregate number of Baptist churches in Nova Scotia, undertake to re-cast the whole Home Mission polity of the denomination. I do not here reckon the five persons appointed by the Western Association, it will be observed, as having any proper status, at such a meeting, as that held at Berwick. Simply because neither of the other Associations were so represented, and they had none. Much less could this assemblage confer upon bystanders, a right to discuss and vote upon a subject, upon which they, a portion of them at least, if not the whole, had no right themselves, delegate or inherent, in my humble opinion to consider, or control—over which they had no jurisdiction.

Well, the sixteen delegates so representing sixteen churches, in response to the action of the Western Association held at Nictaux having met at Berwick, as recommended, nine from churches of the Western Association, seven from churches of the Central, and one from the Eastern, as already remarked, in conjunction with five others, not invited by the Resolution at Nictaux, but deputed by the Western Association, at its recent meeting at Brookfield, June 15, 1872, by virtue of a Resolution as follows:—

"Moved and adopted, That the brethren present who may be present at the Home Missionary Convention, at Berwick on Friday, who have not been appointed as delegates by their churches be appointed delegates by this body"—these sixteen and five I remark,—twenty-one in all, then gravely selected a chairman, and two secretaries, and proceeded to business. Five members of Baptist Churches of the Western Association, not appointed as delegates by churches having put up their appearance, were all recognized by the fifteen, as possessing proper credentials, and entitled to seats. Had fifty happened to be present; they could all have asserted an equal right. Thus dissected, I submit it to the Churches of Nova Scotia, to Baptists at home and abroad, to the readers of the *Messenger*, was this a wise, a discreet or a proper proceeding? Assuming all that had been done in calling this meeting, to be regular and proper, which I am far from admitting, what right, I ask, with all respect, had the Western Association, to pass any such resolution, as the above? Why were not the other two Associations to be represented each with five deputies? Why were they ignored and left unrepresented? If this Convention, was to be composed of delegates from churches, as provided by the Nictaux resolution, by what authority, could the next Western Association at Brookfield, at a time when it would