

Correspondence.

For the Christian Messenger.

OUR ASSOCIATIONS.

It is late for a review of the facts presented by the last Associational Minutes; but the truth is that we have only recently succeeded in obtaining the materials for making any examination and comparison. Some three thousand copies of the records of our Associations are printed every year; but so far as opportunity for obtaining some satisfactory idea of the condition of all the churches is concerned, one of the Associations might as well meet in Ontario and the other in Manitoba. It is true that the Report on the State of the Denomination, given in the Minutes of the Convention, contains important information; but the statistics, published in those Minutes, are almost always imperfect, from one cause or another, and many valuable facts are necessarily omitted altogether. Why should we have three different publications for our Associations? The annual meetings all occur within the space of four weeks; and, in six weeks from the date of the last meeting, we might have the combined Minutes of the three in one pamphlet. Even if all the matter, that is now printed, should be retained, the expense of the publication in this form could not be much greater than it is on the present plan. But the amount of matter might well be reduced. If the annual reports of the condition and work of our churches could be given in the form that has been suggested, it would promote a more general fellowship between the laborers in different fields—a result much to be desired—and it would help all to work more intelligently for the common cause. If we are to have two or three or more Home Mission organizations, it is the more necessary that their reports should be brought together in some convenient form, if we wish to counteract the effects of isolation and promote acquaintance and sympathy.

But we have been interested in the facts presented in the various records to which allusion has been made, and it will be profitable to call attention to some of them. The Western Association has become a large body,—nearly equal to the other two. It has six churches, each of which reports more than three hundred members, twelve reporting between two and three hundred, and twelve between one and two hundred. The Central has four churches that number each above three hundred, six ranging between two and three hundred, and ten between one and two hundred. In the Eastern there are but two churches, numbering two hundred, and ten ranging between one and two hundred. We find, in all, fifty-two churches reporting more than one hundred members. In these is the strength of the denomination, and its power for aggressive effort.

It is a noteworthy coincidence that there are fifty-three churches, each of which numbers less than fifty members. Every one of our churches that is able to sustain its own interests, finds itself associated with a feeble church that needs the co-operation of others in order to maintain its existence, yet most of our stronger churches think that if they take care of themselves, they are doing well. This caring for self is undoubtedly a chief hindrance to prosperity at home, and growth in new fields. The greatest efforts to maintain the institutions of the gospel are made in the small churches; the larger ones do not feel, as they ought, the obligations that bind them to bear the burdens of the weak.

But a more suggestive fact is that there are only eighty-three ministers to care for one hundred and sixty-three churches. In the last seven years, the number of churches in Nova Scotia has increased by seventeen, and the number of church members has been augmented by about three thousand, but there has been a diminution of seven in the ministry. Seventy-eight churches are reported destitute of pastoral care—about one-half of the entire number. These facts are not easily interpreted; but they certainly call for serious consideration.

If we look to the work reported by the different organizations, we find that the churches connected with the Nova Scotia Home Mission Society sent to its treasury somewhat more than \$1000, and its missionaries collected on their fields \$955. The Western Board reported \$389 raised for Home Missions, and \$104 collected by their missionaries. But it should be remembered that the support of the French Mission, the annual expense of which is given at about \$900, falls principally on

the Western Association. If this fact is considered, the sums raised by the different sections appear somewhat proportionate. The amount contributed for the year to these Home Mission Societies is about \$2300. But surely we ought not to be satisfied with less than one quarter of a dollar a year from every one of our church members, on the average; this would give nearly \$5000 a year to be applied to these objects. No one can doubt that this amount is needed.

Reports are given of three Funds for the aid of disabled ministers, and these funds are managed by three different Boards.—Consolidation would be better in this case. The contributions from the churches for these funds are small. If all the ministers in the Province were interested in the support of one organization, and the accumulation of one fund from which assistance could be received in times of distress or feebleness, there would be more general sympathy in the work of the ministry, and laborers in the more destitute portions of the country would be encouraged by the prospect that, in time of need, their relief would come from the more wealthy and favored districts.

Many of the churches report contributions for Ministerial Education; but it is impossible to determine from these documents how much is given annually for this object. Indeed, one needs to have him a large box of pamphlets, and to have considerable leisure, in order to learn how much our churches in Nova Scotia raise annually for some five or six objects of benevolence; and to determine with accuracy from what churches the money actually comes, seems utterly hopeless. It is much to be desired that some simple plan for reporting these things clearly and in full could be adopted. But by turning to the Minutes of the Convention, we find a report of the Nova Scotia Education Board for the year ending in July 1872. It evidently contains items from two financial years; but, even as thus increased, the total is not very flattering—some two hundred and seventy-five dollars. These observations have been extended so far, that this subject cannot receive the consideration which it deserves. But if we allow our Theological students to receive their education by the generosity of aliens, it is absurd for us to complain because their hearts are easily alienated from the land of their birth. We must either give our young men Theological Education at home, or pay their expenses; if they are to be educated abroad.

April 23rd, 1873.

DEKEMAN.

For the Christian Messenger.

MINISTERIAL EDUCATION.

No. 3.

Mr. Editor,—

Referring to the "Report of the Northern Baptist Education Society," and its contents, already drawn upon in my former communication, I find much likely to interest students, as well as patrons, in regard to pulpit preparation.

Among other things, under the heading "Review," there are the following remarks:—

"It has been boldly announced that too many men have already been aided into the ministry—that the beneficiary system has rendered it too easy for men to reach the pulpit, and has produced a large class of weak men, who have leaned on others till they have become incapable of 'enduring hardness as good soldiers'—and that it might be better to leave helping needy candidates for the ministry in obtaining their education to the care of individuals, or the churches to which they belong. And not a few are doubtful concerning the necessity, or the wisdom of any organized effort, for such a purpose."

This view, or these views are combatted in the report, and in the main, I think, successfully. Still, when instead of a beneficiary system, purely *donative* as that of the Northern Baptist Education Society is, and as underlies the project adopted, and in operation in Nova Scotia, which as its treasurer informs us, during the last current year produced \$164.48—about a dollar a year—on an average from 163 churches, I projected "the Loan-in-aid" scheme, I anticipated, as must be manifest from the foregoing extract, the principal objections capable of being urged against the donative principle.

I therefore endeavoured to strike out something like a middle path way; a means, whereby worthy, industrious, and zealous students without too deeply involving themselves might accomplish their object, and yet not entirely exhaust the fund that had served their purpose.

It will be observed by those who have perused my strictures published heretofore, that—while I am not favorable to a purely donative scheme, and if I were, I see but little prospect of stimulating the liberality of the denomination up to the point that would render it practicable, gratuitously to educate the future ministry of the province from a free fund—still I do not coincide with those who would ask, or expect, that it should be left to individuals or to the individual churches to which ministerial students might belong, to provide for their education.

That ministerial students need aid as a general rule, scarcely admits of a doubt. Speaking for the Society, the Corresponding Secretary, Rev. G. W. Boswick, D. D., on this point says:—

"When we were studying with the ministry in view, were we without estate, capital, or income, except what was contained in our own persons? Let us place our worthy President, (Rev. Alva Hovey, D. D.), on the stand—yea, without his leave, let us put in his testimony on this point. He declared before the National Baptist Education Convention in Philadelphia,—"When I commenced my studies, I was old enough certainly—17 years of age—to press through from beginning to end, and I longed to do so. But I was utterly without means, except such as I could procure from month to month, or during the vacations, and it was practically impossible for me, without the assistance of friends, to pursue an uninterrupted course of study." And another member of that Convention said, "There are men, and men in this house, and some of whom have read papers before this Convention, who have supported themselves, Sir, upon *Indian meal and molasses*, week after week, and month after month,"—the President responding—"I am sorry to say, that I was compelled sometimes, to live even in the manner in which my friend on the left says, he has known persons to live."

Upon this the report proceeds thus:— "Resort to such extreme self-denial; is undoubtedly much more rare among students, than formerly. It is less common every where, than it was. But these rare cases aside, the fact is indubitable, that the great majority of those now in the Baptist ministry, were poor and many of them very poor while pursuing their studies for public life."

How like is this, to the condition of things in this Dominion? But our brethren on the other side the boundary, seem to be vastly in advance of us, in regard to the liberality of their churches in view of the future. The Society from the Report of which I am now drawing so largely, be it remembered is more than half a century old. What its early history has been, I know not, but at present, Newton alone has, it seems, fifty-six students in preparation for the ministry.

Without any system, or so feeble a one, that it scarce deserves the name—without any vigorous organization adapted to the exigencies of our case, I wonder, as I review the past, how we have at all kept so reasonably abreast the times, with regard to the education of our young men, as we have. But the destitution that now prevails—the great number of churches without pastors, must be a subject of painful interest to every thoughtful well regulated mind.

It may be, that the difficulties to be surmounted by needy young men, have stranded all but the more muscular of those who may have felt it their duty in early life to preach the gospel. If so, and the same causes are left to operate, the same consequences will most likely follow. And then we may have a few men of more than ordinary ability, a select company of able pious, well trained pastors, and a host of pastorless churches.

As in the United States, so it is here. The Report proceeds:—

"Indeed, this is well nigh the uniform rule—*that students for the ministry are poor.* And this is in harmony with another fact, of almost universal prevalence, that *the incumbents of the sacred office are poor.*"

Again. "It is manifest that He (God) has bestowed his ministerial gifts upon the sons of the poor, more frequently than upon the sons of the rich—or that the latter have often refused to receive them—that so large a proportion of Pastors should have been called from the homes of poverty, can hardly have been the effect of chance, or human caprice—it wears the aspect of a divine arrangement. If a rich man can, with difficulty, enter into the kingdom of God, it may be that with difficulty a rich man can act as an ambassador of that

kingdom. And so long as He continues to select so largely the sons of poverty, as candidates for the ministry, the important question remains—have we any thing to do about it?"

I can readily understand how many a good pious worthy christian man as we usually understand the phrase, may reason himself into the pleasant conclusion that he is not called upon to preach the gospel—that his early education and training has not qualified him for the office of religious teacher. And he has not experienced that influence operating upon his mind, which most students for the ministry profess to have realized, embodying itself in the words of an Apostle into a "Woe is me if I preach not the gospel." But I confess I do not understand how such an one enjoying worldly prosperity in an eminent degree, surrounded with flocks and herds, or may be, adding to his means largely from prosperous investments in ships or stock—how he can still his conscience when it keeps suggesting if he cannot preach or teach, he can assist to qualify and send forth such as can. That is it. Can any one of us say to the young man preparing for the arduous duties of a minister's life. I am in the church already. I have no need of thee. This would indeed be, to confute the great Apostle of the Gentiles upon his own ground in summing up 1 Cor. xii. 19, where he says, "But now are they many members, yet but one body."

The rich and wealthy member cannot say to the poor student, I have no need of thee. Neither can the latter say to the former, I have no need of thee.

Riches corrupt and garments become moth eaten, equally now as when James the Apostle addressed his fellow countrymen. And the gold and the silver canker too, but let not the rust be a witness against any of us. He said of them, ye are heaping treasure together for the last days. It may not be an unprofitable question for each of us to ask and ponder over as a closing paragraph of the present letter, for what purpose am I laboring and toiling, and heaping up worldly goods?

J. McCULLY.

Brunswick Place, 20th April, 1873.

For the Christian Messenger.

OUR HOME ABOVE.

"For, oh! there's naught but happiness, In that bright heavenly home And there no farewell tear is shed And sorrows never come."

There is something peculiarly sweet in the word home; rendered so by the many pleasant associations connected with it, so much of interest that is daily transpiring with so many pleasant memories of the bygone and fond anticipation of the future. These all combine to render home a scene of pleasure and attraction. It may be truly affirmed that the home where peace and contentment dwell, where hearts are bound together by the strong chords of Christian love and sympathy is one of the happiest and most sacred spots on earth, yet amidst all the endearments and fond hopes which cluster around it have we not oftentimes an inward longing for a holier, purer and better home? There may be much to mar our happiness here, trials may cross the threshold, the tears of sorrow may be shed, the hand of affliction may be laid upon one or more of the inmates. The stern messenger death who has "all seasons for his own" may enter and sever the closest ties. Parent and children are alike his victims. Husband and wife may be separated, brother and sister may droop and die. Ah, these are bitter renderings of heart-strings but how cheering the thought that far beyond the reach of sorrow, pain and death there is a permanent and glorious home prepared for all the true followers of Jesus, all who have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. How cheering and animating is the thought of the blest reunions that await in that peaceful home where many a loved one dwells. At times how we sigh and long to bid all earth adieu, and leaving these clay tenements, soar away to that sweet unending rest. I lately stood beside the lifeless form of one of my dear friends who was taken from us in life's early morn. I gazed upon her sweet pale face as she lay in her coffin-bed and thought of the wondrously glorious scenes which were opening upon her enraptured vision. What a blessed exchange. Happy for all who, like her are prepared to enter that heavenly home, I almost fancied I could hear her pleasant voice which sang so sweetly here, singing in a far holier, sweeter strain to Him who loved her and gave Himself for her.

There was much here that was calculated

to render her life joyous and happy. Blest with christian parents, loving brothers and sisters, with a large circle of friends, to all of whom she was strongly attached. Her consistent, christian character and gentle unassuming manner won the hearts of all.

"None knew her but to love her. None named her but to praise." But, ah, disease had fastened upon her, and day by day her lovely form withered under the fell stroke, but with what patient resignation did she bear her sufferings. Never was a murmur heard to escape her lips, but with a firm confiding trust in her Saviour she looked forward to the hour when death would give a sweet release from all her trials, and her happy spirit find a home in the mansions of the blest. May God comfort all who mourn her early removal and prepare us all for a happy meeting in that home above, where the "inhabitants shall never say I am sick." "Where they shall hunger no more neither thirst any more, neither shall the sun light on them nor any heat." "For the Lamb shall feed them and lead them to living fountains of waters, and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes." L.

For the Christian Messenger.

SHOULD BAPTIST MEETING-HOUSES BE CALLED 'CHURCHES'?

It has long been the practice of Episcopalians to give this designation to their houses for public worship. With them I am not disposed to contend on this point. Of late, however, some Baptists are adopting this course. This has always appeared to me inexpedient and improper.

From an elaborate and valuable article on this subject, by Prof. G. Rogers, Theological Tutor in Mr. Spurgeon's College, (Sword and Trowel, May, 1871, p. 229.) I request the insertion of a few extracts.

1. "The term *church* when applied to buildings is *inappropriate*. The Greek word (*ecclesia*) signifies an assembly of persons gathered together in obedience to a certain call. The wide difference between a church of regenerated individuals, purely of a spiritual formation, and a mass of wood and stone, makes the application of one and the same appellation to both a gross perversion of the first principles of language. For a building to be styled "A Baptist Church" is absurd.

2. "It is *unscriptural*. The Greek word occurs 115 times in the New Testament; in 109 of which it is applied in its spiritual sense to a body of believers; in two instances to the church in its heavenly state. (Eph. v. 27. Heb. xii. 23.) (The four references to other assemblies are all in the Acts, (vii. 38, xix. 32, 39, 40).)—There are two instances in the 109 which we claim for its spiritual signification, which have been supposed to refer to a building, or the place in which Christians assembled. One of these is Acts xi. 26, and reads thus, "And it came to pass, that a whole year they assembled themselves with the church." This refers to Barnabas and Saul at Antioch. The marginal reading is *in the church*, but as the allusion is to two individuals only, the common sense interpretation is, not that these two ministers assembled in the building, but with the company of believers; since the word "assembled" applies to none but these two. It is not very likely, indeed, that the church in that city at so early a period would have a building erected for their use. Where the phrase "robbers of churches" occurs, the term for churches is not in the original. The other instance pleaded for this use of the word is in 1 Cor. xi. 18,—"When ye come together in the church"—Almost immediately after, the place of assembling is spoken of not as a church, but in these words; "When ye come together into one place;" and the word church is used just before thus, "We have no such custom, neither the churches of God;" and just afterwards, "Despise ye the church of God." It surely can not mean despising a building. We maintain, then, there is no single instance in which the term church is applied to a building in the Scriptures.

3. The application of this title to buildings is *deceptive*. It is calculated to mislead, and to foster erroneous ideas, upon a subject of great importance. Whatever tends to preserve the distinctive meaning of words, in a technical and specific sense, in the New Testament, should be carefully attended to by us. Errors often have their commencement in the perversion of terms."

Of this the writer gives examples from the misapplication of the word church.

4. "It is *inconsistent*. It is peculiarly