

Correspondence.

For the Christian Messenger.

HOME MISSIONS AND HOME MISSIONARY OPERATIONS.

Mr. Editor,—

Hitherto in this series of letters, I have not referred to the operations of the Home Missionary Society in connection with the Western Association. Not being provided with reliable statistics, it would be imprudent on my part. I may remark however, that the Counties of Queens, Shelburne, Digby and Annapolis are included within the boundaries of the Western Association, their Home Missionary operations are co-extensive with these limits. The remaining portion of Nova Scotia, thirteen counties in all, are supervised by the Home Missionary Society in connection with the Central and Eastern Associations.

Without enlarging here upon the important changes, and the new features foreshadowed in the constitution of the so-called N. S. Home Missionary Union, as collated with the constitution of the Home Missionary Society of the Central and Eastern Associations what, as already asked, is the complaint preferred against the existing organizations, calling for reconstruction? If a person proposes to erect a new house it is usually because he has none at present, or if he has one, it is old and dilapidated, or too small, or not conveniently arranged or injudiciously located. If the husbandman proposes to enlarge the boundaries of his farm he has usually some good substantial reasons—at least in his own imagination—for his proposed action. His increasing means have not room for that development desired. His flocks and herds have outgrown the narrow limits which once sufficed for pasturage, and the fields that absorbed all the labor at command are no longer adequate to exhaust the supply. So, as a rule, as regards the things of this life, men proverbially "wise in their generation," are thus influenced, before they begin the work of demolition, and enlargement.

Confining my reasoning and its applicability to the eastern side of the Province, what is there to be gained by connecting the two existing Societies under a new name, and attempting a re-organization? Is either of the two fields too small for profitable cultivation? Is either of the Societies defective in its construction? What is it I ask again that prompts the contemplated pulling down projected at Berwick, this enlargement of base and the putting up of something instead? What but a desire to try an experiment? And one of very doubtful results.

Who are the parties to be affected by it? Are not the whole of the one hundred and sixty-three Baptist Churches of the Province, directly and indirectly concerned in the change proposed? How many of this vast aggregate have been consulted? How many of them have voted *yea* or *nay* upon the question of a proposed Missionary Union to supersede the existing Home Missionary Societies? As a rule, Baptists think for themselves—and Baptist Churches, educated and trained upon the *Independent principle* that underlies their Church Government, usually claim the right to be consulted at least, upon any subject in which they are concerned. Of the fifty-six churches of the Eastern Association, with three thousand seven hundred and fifty members, how many of them knew what was being done at Berwick in June 1872? One certainly—and but one if I am not mistaken.

When the Board of Directors for the so-called Missionary Union was appointed for the Eastern Association who selected the eight names reported? Who possessed the required authority, so to do? How many of these eight are willing to-day to strike down the Home Missionary Society now existing, under a constitution in full operation, with a Board in harmony with the churches, successfully occupying the vast field of labor assigned to them? How many of these eight have accepted, or would accept such a directorship on such conditions, at least without the churches of their Association or a majority of them having first sanctioned the Berwick scheme? But, it may be said, why did not these churches send delegates to Berwick to oppose, if they did not approve of this projected abolition of the existing Society, and the creation of a new one? I have no authority to answer for any of them, nor for any individual but myself. I may say from the notice that appeared, I never supposed that the promoters of the Berwick

Conference imagined that they by such a proceeding could acquire authority or power to bind any persons or churches except such persons and churches as voluntarily chose to be bound. Surely no half dozen or more pastors of churches or their delegates can unite and call meetings and transact business affecting the whole denomination—no matter what the extent of notice or invitation to others—and then successfully maintain that all who chose to be absent are bound by the action of those who attended! That would indeed be a dangerous precedent to establish. Not that I contend that there was any thing wrong on the part of those who called the Berwick Conference in convoking as many persons as chose to attend, much less do I question or seek to impugn their motives—but the mistake, as I think, made, was—and this I advance with the utmost respect for all who took part in the Convention, but the mistake was, to attempt to constitute themselves representatives of the absent churches, and the Home Missionary Society—and thereupon, to essay a complete reconstruction of the work of Home Missionary operations for Nova Scotia.

When one reads a Resolution like the one now cited, touching a matter which has for its object the subverting of the existing Missionary organizations of the entire denomination, I know not how it may appear to others, but to me it is passing strange! It is as follows: "Resolved, That other brethren present, be accepted as members of this Convention"—whereupon some sixteen gentlemen walk into the ecclesiastical Council, without,—so far as the official report of the meeting appears—without a shadow of authority or other qualification for the position except the *polite invitation* of their friends and associates, and thereupon they all begin to speak, to vote, and to decide!

But having already elsewhere commented on this novel, and to me unprecedented method of constituting a "Convention," and qualifying delegates, I have no desire to repeat what I have advanced.

I was engaged in discussing the absence of all reason afforded for the proposed new organization instead of the present existing ones when I was tempted to digress a little, and I now return. The only reason given or pretended for the action taken, so far as the records of the "Convention" show, was a Resolution contained in a Report of one of its Committees appointed for the occasion. It is in "these words," "That the consolidation of our Home Missionary Organizations both English and French, would in the estimation of this Convention tend to the more rapid advancement of the Redeemer's kingdom in this Province."

In what way? How? Why? Perhaps the delegates to the Convention and their invited friends, who were not delegates, had reasons presented to them which they considered entirely satisfactory. But what were they?

In these remarks I have no desire to ignore the force, if any, or the arguments deducible for the proceedings adopted at the Eastern Association, where they, in 1871 decided to send "a delegate to the Western Association—to confer with their Home Mission Board, on the desirableness of an early union, &c."—which if done, was, to say the least, very informally accomplished. Nor yet to pass by unnoticed what occurred at the Western, or the Eastern Association of 1872 held subsequently to the Convention, upon which I have already commented.

When the friends of Temperance desire to promote that grand Reform, instead of one organization, a society in an extreme county or elsewhere, they plant their principles wherever they can find soil in which they will take root, and create as many independent societies as possible each working out the common principle, with a common object in view. When recently the Baptist denomination wished to enlist the sympathies of the female portion of our community in the object of sustaining Missionaries in the Foreign field, the plan adopted was, to organize as many local societies, as possible, and thus create a spirit of rivalry and enthusiasm, as wide-spread and as general as practicable. Each Society independent of the other and yet all having a common object in view. I wish from my heart that instead of one, two or three Missionary Societies, working within the Province, each Church, or where weak and scattered, two or three churches, were organized into so many distinct Home Missionary Societies.

Take any one of a number of the various Counties into which the Province is divided, and let the churches of that county

combine, organize and cultivate, the sterile neglected fields around, how much deeper the interest—how much more likely to engage the sympathies of church members, and secure material aid and labor, to be expended in localities were they were familiar with the people, and know them by face and by name!

A forward move, would be, I maintain, to multiply Home Missionary Societies, instead of facing in the opposite direction. Perhaps, some counties where our denominational interests were weak, might advantageously co-operate with an adjoining county, and so promote the desired object. In that case where Missionaries could not be obtained to keep the field supplied, and in other cases also, Pastors might perhaps be induced, and their churches inclined to permit them to spend a week or so occasionally in the outskirts of their fields of labour—the local board contributing the usual allowance additional to their annual stipends.

With an Executive Board of a Provincial Missionary Union at Yarmouth, at one extremity of Nova Scotia, or at Sydney at the other, or at each alternately, I much fear, that the sympathies and co-operation of the great majority of the churches, would dwindle, and be speedily dwarfed. That, it may be said, is a mere matter of opinion. I grant it. But my reasons for it are, because, among other things, the Board and its place of meeting would be at such a distance, geographically speaking, from the centres of labor, that the desirable kindly, social, and fraternal relations, could not so well be maintained.

We are all doubtless glad and cheered to hear of the prosperity of the good cause, however distant the scene. But a great religious awakening in Ontario would have more interest for most persons here than one in Australia. One in New Brunswick still more than one in Ontario, and one in Nova Scotia more than one without. One in the county where we reside, in the church with which we worship much more than one elsewhere. At least so it would be with many. But I must bring this long letter to a close.

J. McCULLY.

Brunswick Place, 11th March 1873.

For the Christian Messenger.

OUR HOME MISSIONS.

BYE-LAWS AND PROGRAMME OF THE EXECUTIVE BOARD OF THE UNION.

Soon after the meeting of the Home Missionary Union at Berwick, its Executive Board met in the vestry of the First Yarmouth Baptist Church, and adopted the following Bye-Laws, founded on those of the Nova Scotia Baptist Home Missionary Society.

BYE-LAWS.

Article I.—This Board shall meet for the despatch of business at 2 o'clock, P.M., on the 1st Tuesday of each month. Also, at such other times as duly called by the Chairman Secretaries, or three members of the Board.

Article II.—Each meeting of the Board shall be opened and closed with prayer, and the minutes of the preceding meeting read and approved.

Article III.—None but Licentiates from regular Baptist Churches, and ordained Ministers, recognized as such by a regular Baptist Association, shall be employed as Agents or Missionaries for the Union.

Article IV.—The Board will not bind itself to pay any Agent, Missionary, or Colporteur, who changes his field of labor or extends the time of his service beyond appointment without consent of the Board.

Article V.—The compensation allowed, generally, for married and ordained Missionaries shall be \$10 per week, for married Licentiates and unmarried ordained Missionaries \$9, and for unmarried Licentiates \$8.

Article VI.—All persons employed by the Board are empowered and expected to make all reasonable effort during the time of their service to collect funds for the Board, and transmit the same forthwith to its Treasurer, or report to the Board to be credited towards labor performed.

Article VII.—On the expiration of each four weeks' service, or oftener if called for by the Board, reports shall be made to the Board by persons employed by the same, of the number of sermons preached, visits made, miles travelled, pages of tracts distributed, books sold, baptisms performed, Sabbath schools visited, other meetings attended, churches, Sabbath schools, prayer meetings and temperance societies organized; amounts by collection or otherwise, with the names of the donors, and such other

information in reference to their labors as may be of general interest.

Article VIII.—The Recording Secretary of the Board shall furnish for the *Christian Messenger*, monthly, an account of the meetings of the Board, the names of the members present, the appointments made, the business of the Board, and the work of its agents, with any other information in connection therewith, that he or the Corresponding Secretary may think desirable or that the Board may direct.

Article IX.—No money shall be paid by the Treasurer, except on an order signed by the Chairman and Corresponding Secretary.

Article X.—The Chairman and Corresponding Secretary shall sign no order for money from the Treasury unless for accounts checked by the Auditors.

Article XI.—The Board shall not accept and submit accounts to the Auditors unless presenting full particulars as stated in Art. VII.

Article XII.—No account shall be audited until ordered by the Board.

Article XIII.—A copy of these Bye-Laws shall be furnished by the Corresponding Secretary to each person employed by the Board.

Article XIV.—Schedules shall be furnished by the Board to each person employed by it to aid him in preparing his reports.

Article XV.—No change shall be made in these Bye-Laws except by a two-third vote of the members present at a regular meeting; notice of the intended change having been presented in writing at a previous meeting.

It was the intention of the Board of the Union, if the members of the other Boards united with us, to carry out the following PROGRAMME.

1. Select and send forth a General Agent.

We expect this Agent to traverse carefully the whole Province, and visit every church and destitute field therein—with the consent of pastors and churches, to hold Missionary meetings, take collections and subscriptions, and form an Auxiliary Home Missionary Society in each church, with the design of awakening an increased interest in our denominational enterprises—to use his influence towards removing unhappy differences that may exist in any of the churches—to try to group small and feeble churches, and give them advice about the settlement of pastors—to hold series of special religious services where the circumstances seem to demand them—to advise with pastors about the formation of Ministerial Conferences in each county—to encourage young men to aim at obtaining a higher education—to take collections and subscriptions for our denominational papers and institutions—and to report monthly to the Board, and give information and advice.

2. Send out Colporteurs

We intended to employ two or more Colporteurs as soon as circumstances would permit. It was our design to furnish them with tracts, papers, and books that were unobjectionable, in their teachings, and Baptist tracts, papers and books, with Bibles and Testaments for sale and gratuitous distribution. We should expect of these agents of the Board, in addition to their selling papers and books, to obtain subscribers for our denominational papers and donations for the Union.

3. Place Missionaries at prominent points, and keep them there, and, as far as possible, supply the most destitute fields.

Hitherto the more prominent points have been greatly neglected. They may have been occupied, but it has only been for a few weeks at a time. Hence the results have not been encouraging. The means to support missionaries have as yet been but scantily supplied, and therefore some of the most destitute places in the Province are still without the means of grace. We hoped by using the agencies we intended to put in the field, to raise more means and meet more extensively than has been done the wants of the needy.

4. Gain all possible information.

About the destitution that prevails. In addition to the intelligence which the General Agent, Colporteurs and Missionaries would furnish, the Corresponding Secretary would solicit information from the Secretaries of the present Missionary Boards, the Secretaries of the County Ministerial Conferences, the clerks of feeble churches, and prominent persons in destitute fields. In this way, we think the true state of the existing destitute a could be laid before the Board. And with such information before them, they would be well prepared to meet intelligently the wants of the different localities in regard to ministerial labor.

5. Supply the public with information about our Missionary operations, and the wants of the Mission field.

The lack of interest in our Home Missionary and Educational work is largely due to the lack of information in regard to these subjects. To meet in part this deficiency, our Agents would be instructed to use their efforts to increase the number of subscribers for the *Christian Messenger*.

In addition to this, we think it well that a little sheet, devoted entirely to the interests of Education and Home Missions, should be published monthly. Issued at 25 or 50 cents a copy per year, it would likely find subscribers enough to pay all expenses. We believe it would not interfere with the circulation of the *Messenger*, but would rather increase it. For the information the little paper might contain would but increase the desire for more denominational intelligence, which can be found only in the *Messenger*. The Educational matter for the little sheet would probably be furnished chiefly by our educators at Wolfville, and the missionary items could be supplied by the Board. It is our opinion that such a paper would do much good.

With the above programme well carried out, we believe, that in five years from this date, the working power of our denomination would be twice as great as it is to-day. Whether this plan would not be an improvement on the present system of carrying on Home Missionary operations, we are willing for the public to decide.

G. E. DAY,

Cor. Sec. of Union.

(To be Continued.)

For the Christian Messenger.

LOCKPORT, March 5th, 1873.

Dear Brother,—

We are about to form a new Church. Members of the 1st Ragged Island Church, residing on the Island will withdraw, to form what will be designated the Lockeport Church. The change we have in contemplation has been unanimously agreed upon by both sections of the Parent Churches, and will be brought about at an early day. Its desirability has long been apparent, and at present seems indispensable to the spiritual well-being of both sections of the Church. Lockeport has become of so much consequence that the regular services of a minister, not only are needed, but loudly called for—morning and evening services on the Lord's day, is the general demand. This demand, it is presumed, is nothing unusual; scattered up and down our Province are many whose longings for spiritual food remain unsatisfied,—the community of Lockeport however, not only long for regular supplies of the Bread of Life and the constant enjoyment of pastoral service, but they evince a willingness in proportion to their unquestionable ability to pay for their privileges. A liberal salary is paid in regular instalments—not in promises and apologies, but in that form which even ministers find indispensable to the temporal well-being of their families. It may be supposed by some that we are religiously unfashionable, because we have not reported through the *Messenger* the gathering of a donation party, and showing in dollars and cents, the estimated value of the sympathy between people and pastor. Be it so, I am sure our friends will be no longer anxious. It is not usual to report donations until they have ended. Ours began soon after assuming the care of the church—have continued until to-day, and the future is even more promising. We are thankful to our donors for all gifts received up to date, and equally thankful for the very encouraging prospect. But this is not all—anticipating the wants of a settled minister a very commodious and comfortable parsonage is being built—this, not only bears witness to the hopeful state of religion among us, but is also a tangible proof of the high estimation in which the Baptist Church is held by the people of Lockeport, at least three fourths of the amount expended for the various purposes in connection with the Church, is contributed by non-professors. In the midst of these favorable and encouraging indications, the work of the Lord must go forward. The people will have "the Word," are attentive hearers of the word, and the word is "the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth," and, as "faith cometh by hearing" we are disposed to hope that many sons and daughters will be born to God.

EDW. WHITMAN.

Trust him little who praises all; him less who censures all; and him least who is indifferent about all.