

Correspondence.

For the Christian Messenger.

TRI-PROVINCIAL HOME MISSIONARY UNION.

MR. EDITOR,—

To such a union a third objection may be urged to the effect that by committing Home Missions to the management and control of the Convention, or any body of that kind, the Associations would deprive themselves of power; that as by the arrangement contemplated the Associations would have no Home Mission business to transact, they would lose influence and interest, and gradually fall into disuse. This objection has great weight in the minds of some brethren, and on that account, as well as from its own nature, deserves serious consideration. For if of necessity the Associations would be denuded of power, and would have no control in any form over the great and important interest of Home Missions, which they have originated, and hitherto maintained and carried on with much success, we might well pause before we hand over such a great and endeared work to another body. To the Associations belongs the honor of doing the pioneer work in Home Missions, preparing the ground and cultivating the field, though very imperfectly yet with many proofs of divine favor and approval. And it seems proper that our churches and Associations ought to have very reasonable grounds to expect that in handing over Home Missions to the Convention, they themselves shall not be compelled to occupy an essentially inferior position, one less influential and useful in relation to the cause, and that the cause itself also shall be much advanced by the change proposed. I cherish great regard for that combination of churches which we are accustomed to call Associations; and though they are not perfect, and have not always been conducted wisely and to our spiritual growth and power as a denomination, yet have these Associations on the whole been a means of great good to us as a people. I could not therefore regard with favor any measure that would really deprive them of power over any of our great denominational interests, particularly Home Missions. But with the view I entertain as to the *guards* such a union as that contemplated should be made to have, committing the management of Home Missions to a Board appointed by the Convention, would by no means denude the Associations of power and influence in these Missions. Now, what would the Convention be but in effect a larger Association with a different name? Though the Associations would have no power as such to make appointments and enact Home Mission business, yet the churches of the entire denomination in the three provinces would control the whole matter, and could make the organization and the work what they wish.

Each church would have the power and right to send delegates to the Convention, and each of the six Associations in the provinces would have also the power and right to send, say five or more delegates. These delegates would form the controlling power, and would annually appoint the Home Mission Board, would receive and pass upon the annual report of that Board, either with approval and commendation, or without either, as a majority of those delegates shall determine or think best. Thus each church and each Association would have directly or indirectly a part in controlling the entire Home Mission work in three provinces; each would have a close and vital connection with all our Home Missions—French and English—not only as to support, but as to management and success. If this view is correct (and I believe it is) the matter of Home Missions could and should have the same interest for the Associations that they have under the present arrangement; indeed the interest should, and we believe would, increase.

Education and Foreign Missions command and receive grave, earnest, and increasing attention at our Associations, though they are under the control of the Convention, and are placed by that body under Boards of management. These great subjects are brought up every year before our Associations, and by them are fostered, kept alive and vigorous, though the final disposal of the business connected with these great interests has with common consent been entrusted to the Convention. But no Association is without power in respect to either of these great branches of our denominational work. The vote of any Association on any point of management or policy would tell with great force on either

of those Boards, and compel attention. In a similar manner, and with no less force will the vote of any of our Associations on Home Mission matters tell on the management or policy of the Convention, or its Home Mission Board.

The Convention would have a larger interest and work to manage, and would consequently assume a greater responsibility; and those who are particularly interested with the Home Mission business would have to feel the necessity and importance of conducting matters honestly, wisely and truly; or be called to account and bear the consequences. But some, seeing, or imagining that they see a sort of *cliquism* operating in regard to education—favors, influence and position bestowed, or withheld, it may be, from mere caprice, or perhaps something worse, may ask me:

"Do you not think Bro. A., there is serious danger that committing Home Missions to the Convention, and particularly to a Board, which necessarily will be composed of a comparatively small number of brethren, the power thus centralized may come to be used with favoritism to some, and with a sort of proscription in respect to others?" Yes, I do; but it seems to me quite possible to guard against this by securing a proper representation at the Board from each Association, and by frequent correspondence with the members where all cannot be present at its meetings; and besides by faithful and earnest remonstrance, if required, from brethren who see, or imagine they see, evil coming in, or existing among us, in respect to the matter referred to. And then it should be remembered that at every annual meeting of the Convention the doings of the Board must be reported, and that they are open to criticism before the whole body, and that exposure of wrong can then be made, if necessary, and its removal effected, and perhaps the recurrence of wrong prevented. However, should the means employed to secure a remedy for any existing evil fail, any party or parties aggrieved could earnestly and faithfully protest against the wrong; and if still unsuccessful, they could resort to the ultimate remedy in such cases, practically and powerfully assert their independence by *withdrawal*. Baptist churches know well how to assert their independence, and Baptist Associations understand in like manner their own independence; and Baptist ministers, having had such examples, possess, or ought to possess, morally backbone and stamina enough in them to act with a proper, manly independence, such as becomes the ministers of Christ who are under special accountability to Him for what they say, for what they do, and for what they suffer to be done. I would not advise that such things be done unless a remedy cannot otherwise be obtained. A proper forbearance should be practised; but I am showing how apprehended evils could be reached and reached effectually, as I believe. Boards, whether of Education or of Missions, Home or Foreign, will come to understand and feel that they are put in their places by the denomination of the three provinces, and are, in reality, not its masters but *servants*, esteemed and honored highly indeed, yet held accountable as to the way in which they discharge the trust committed to them; and could therefore at any time be dismissed by the voice of the denomination.

We say this much in respect to checks and guards, should necessity require their use. But we hope better things though we thus speak. Home Missionary union among the Baptists in these provinces is, in my opinion, quite practicable, and may be rendered highly profitable, if properly consummated, and faithfully worked. *Prince Edward Island* has, I believe, resolved to come into the Union; and if *New Brunswick* should decide to do it also, we should no longer have a Nova Scotia Home Missionary Union, but what would be much better, a *Home Missionary Union for Nova Scotia, New Brunswick and P. E. Island*—an organization by which the three provinces could perform a work that isolated they cannot do.

And now, dear brethren, the decision lies with you; it is for you to determine as it seems best in your judgment. I have no personal interest to serve in the matter; all I wish is to advance the cause of Christ in common with the Baptist denomination in the Maritime Provinces. Whatever apprehensions may exist as to whether matters will be wisely and well managed, may be held in abeyance; for while the whole Baptist denomination in *Nova Scotia, New Brunswick and P. E. Island* holds, through the Convention, control of the great and vital enterprise of Home Missions I do not think we need entertain very serious fears that

matters will not, on the whole, be rightly and well managed, and great good be accomplished in Home Evangelization. But in order to effect the greatest amount of good the union must be earnest and cordial, and brought about, not by adroit manoeuvrings and a sort of pious intrigue, but fairly, honestly and in a brotherly and christianlike manner. Thus will God be honored in the beginning, progress and consummation; the Gospel of Christ be more widely promulgated in our provinces, and we ourselves become by the efforts required more closely united; and our spiritual strength and power as a denomination be greatly increased and consolidated. May we all have grace to act wisely and promptly for the furtherance of the Gospel, to the utmost, in these our beloved Provinces, and for our own spiritual good, and the glory of God and Christ in all things.

I am, dear brother, yours, in hope of eternal life, through the mercy of God in Christ.

GEORGE ARMSTRONG.

For the Christian Messenger.

HOME MISSIONS.

S. SELDEN, Esq., PRESIDENT OF THE N. S. BAPTIST HOME MISSIONARY SOCIETY.

Sir,—About leaving Halifax to reside at the Spring Circuit of the Supreme Court for the Shore District, and the Home Missionary Society, itself, being about to be superseded *de jure* as it has been for the last twelvemonth *de facto*, in consequence of the action of the several Associations at their last meetings, I prepared, as you are aware, a formal "act of resignation," as Treasurer, which, with my annual account and the debenture Bonds I held, I then placed in your possession. I thought this the proper course, in order that the new organization, the Missionary Union, might not in any way be obstructed or prejudiced in their plans and projects, so far as the old Society was concerned.

Having differed in opinion with others, as to the best *modus operandi*, for successfully carrying on this most desirable enterprise—the evangelization of the destitute within our own Province—the moment the majority decided the question, I felt it was my duty to submit and withdraw,—and I have done so.

It could scarcely be expected however, I apprehend, that one who had so long and so assiduously helped to cultivate this field, could suddenly cease to take an interest in its future successful cultivation.

Therefore it is, that I have read with attention all that the Home Missionary Union has thought wise or necessary to publish, in reference to their proceedings since they have entered upon their work, covering a period now, of about twelvemonths. Beyond the announcements of prospective operations, and the appointments made, there seems to me but little information to be gathered from all that has as yet been published by the Home Missionary Union. The Board probably has reasons for this, and will supplement all, at the meeting to come off at Parraboro, at the Eastern Association on the 11th July.

It was the practice of the Society of which I was an officer, to publish occasionally, as all are aware, minutes of the proceedings of its Board in the *Christian Messenger*—with receipts of money by its Treasurer, &c., &c., together with other information supposed to be interesting to the denomination. Summing up and recapitulating usually, in their Annual Report so as to furnish a pretty full account of transactions for the previous year. The Missionary Union will doubtless be prepared, in giving an account of their stewardship, to lay before the denomination, a detailed statement of all monies received, and paid, and of all liabilities incurred by them, at the annual meeting about to come off. This may, I assume, be taken for granted.

But what more immediately prompts me to address the denomination through you just now is this,—The spirit and desire of change that prompted the unsettling of Home Missionary organizations in Nova Scotia, as exhibited in the demolition of the Baptist Home Missionary Society, and the erection upon its ruins of the Home Missionary Union, seem as rampant now as ever. Before the first annual report of the Union could be prepared, or submitted, or published, leading advocates of the late change, persons who were active in promoting the Home Missionary Union, as the measure required by the denomination instead of the then existing Societies for some reason or other, appear to be already dissatisfied with their new organization, and are agitating for still

further changes. The ink that printed the Act of Parliament, bringing the Missionary Union into existence, is scarcely dry before the denomination are given to understand that the scheme provided by it, is either unfitted for the purpose for which it was so recently created, or may be improved by enlarging the scope of operations.

Nova Scotia for some reason or other, in the opinion of some of the advocates of the Union, is not a field large enough for the successful display of the agencies and talents at command and which it is supposed, may be brought into action. Those who thought the Eastern and Central Association, a "Union," too "pent up" for the success that might be commanded, if the whole Province were one field and they the husbandmen, seem to have suddenly and recently discovered, that even Nova Scotia is too small, and the Provinces of P. E. Island and New Brunswick could be successfully united and managed by them and their colleagues as a Home Mission field.

Before, as I remarked, the Board of the Union have been permitted to submit their first Annual Report, it does seem to me strange, that dissatisfaction should so soon exist and crop out in reference to its object, its operation, or its administration.

The field is as large as it was when the old Societies were voted down. All the reasons I have seen put forward for the proposed reconstruction, existed then, as now. What new light has been afforded, that ought to weigh with men of judgment so soon and so suddenly, to change their base?

Is it, in order that the Home Mission jurisdiction may be co-extensive with the jurisdiction of the Convention? If that be desirable, would it not have been much better to have deferred action a little and ascertained the views of the denomination on that subject before any change was made?

Some persons, I happen to know, think the Convention has quite as much business to transact now, as it can well attend to. That the fostering, regulating, and controlling, of a Burman, a Karen, a Pwo Karen, and a Siam Mission, separately or conjunctively and the finding of the necessary revenues to meet the requirements of the Missionaries already on its hands—not to speak of the proposed addition to their number, is about as much responsibility, as the Convention should assume outside its Collegiate, and Educational functions—and will be found to be so, before many years pass away. But then the suggestion has already taken form I perceive, that the Home Missionary Union has in contemplation to endow a "Theological Professorship" in Acadia College, and so become a hand-maid to that institution. Well! I suppose we should all be delighted to see that, *un fait accompli*—but would it not be wiser to wait a little and see how much surplus revenue the Union will have on hand, after paying all their missionaries—adding in the amounts for which they will be liable to missionaries on the field, up to the 11th July—the date of their first anniversary?

Much, certainly, ought to depend upon that. For if it be found that after paying all demands up to that date, there is on hand a large surplus—much more than will probably be required for payment of all for which the Union is liable, and more than can be reasonably required for strictly missionary purposes, a plausibility would be afforded for such a project, that at present is not known to exist.

Change is not always improvement. A great change has already been effected by the calling into existence of the Union.—Would it not be wise to let that institution work for a few years, on its present basis before confederating with other Provinces?

A paid Provincial Agent, is now required to travel, (how many will three Provinces employ), and there is a rumor abroad, that the present Secretary either must be paid, or he is not likely to continue his services. Nor need that perhaps be matter of much surprise. How far the denomination, in addition to present burdens can be expected to assume other and additional ones, is an element, which, I think, ought to be taken into serious account in these projected schemes, and frequent and repeated changes.

I may be quite alone in my views, but sincerely entertaining them—at best they will only pass for what they are worth.

If the arguments in favour of "Confederation," apply to the subject of "Home Missions" why not include Quebec, Ontario, Manitoba and British Columbia in the projected enlargement of the sphere of action? And then let Ottawa be the home of the Board. To argue on such a basis or

from such a standpoint would I apprehend, be considered as trifling with Baptist sentiments in the Province.

Perhaps there are those, who may question the prudence of addressing the denomination through their organ, and submitting opinions publicly not in harmony with those of the majority of your readers. From such I differ. If remarks or comments bearing on the interests of the denomination, thus put forth, commend themselves to the good sense of those who peruse them, they will give them just what weight they deserve. And may it not be just possible, that some who gave their assent to a scheme that superinduced an entire reconstruction of our Home Missionary efforts, when they find the scheme brought into operation, so soon requiring in its promoters' opinions, alterations and modifications, and reconstructions—is it not just possible, that they may even now conclude, that perhaps it would have been as well, not to have disturbed an organization that had not been a failure, and substituting another, that so soon proves itself unequal to the emergency. Be that as it may.

It is not without some hesitancy I prepare this letter for publication, lest it should be construed into opposition to the Union. But it has occurred to me, that if others, and those who were forward in procuring the change, are to be heard in favor of still more changes, I for one, ought to be pardoned if I should caution the thinking burden-bearing portion of the denomination, and invite them to pause before they lend their influence to sustain the counsels of those whose views to say the least seem liable to yearly fluctuations.

Yours truly,

June 1874.

J. McCULLY.

For the Christian Messenger.

MR. EDITOR,

I have been reading in your good paper several communications teaching a Union of the Maritime Provinces in Home Mission work. Some of the arguments seem plausible, some of them are not worth a pinch of snuff; and after having revolved the matter for some time, my opinion is, that we are by no means ripe for such a Union. Had we not better give our present Missionary Union of Nova Scotia a fair trial before permitting it to spread its wings over New Brunswick and P. E. Island? I submit that it is a little hasty to strike out so soon—before the new organization has been fairly going for a single year.

It may be that "other things being equal," the Convention is the real place for Home Missions, but "other things are not equal," by a good deal. For example the representation from the different Provinces in the Convention is far from being equal. When that body meets in the heart of New Brunswick, where do two thirds of the delegates hail from? The contributions towards the different objects of the Convention are not by any means equal. These two things show pretty clearly that the interest manifested by the Provinces is not at all equal, in the two great objects at present under the control of the Convention, whether New Brunswick might not possibly take a greater interest in Home Missions as more nearly related to themselves, is a fair question. I am sorry to say, I doubt it.

I am not an obstructionist. I am ready to advance when I see the way clear, and I do not make these observations from a spirit of contention or of opposition, but because I believe that the best way to promote real denominational unanimity, is not to get up a little sentiment occasionally, nor to make flowery speeches at our annual gatherings, nor yet to record on the Minutes long-winded resolutions, but to have a fair square talk all round. There, I've spoken right out in meeting, and I hope some abler brother will do the same.

ACIER.

For the Christian Messenger.

FROM SHELburne.

The address of our general missionary at Lockeport recently contained deeply interesting reference to the progress of the Lord's cause in Annapolis Royal—the Old Shire Town of Annapolis County, and Kentville, the shire town of King's Co. A few words about the Lord's doings in this ancient town of Shelburne may be encouraging to some.

The opening of our New House. On Sabbath, the 21st inst., our house of worship was formally dedicated by the voice of song and prayer, and the proclamation of the Gospel. Rev. T. P. Gallaher, preached at 11 o'clock; Dr. Day at 3, and Rev. I.