

now fourteen, elected by the general conference, on nomination, by the delegates of the annual conferences within each district respectively, also an equal number of persons selected by the board of managers from its own sixty-four members, together with the secretaries and treasurers of the society, and the whole Board of Bishops. This action more than any other gave the final death-blow to the old *society* idea, and made the missionary organization, as it ought to be, an integral part of the work of the whole church.

Dr. Durbin, secretary from 1850 to 1872, had already seen the importance of emphasizing this side of the movement, and in the "Disciplinary Chapter on Missions," recast by him with a large amount of new matter in 1852, he had taken pains to place at the head of all this highly significant sentence: "The support of missions is committed to the churches, congregations and societies *as such*." In other words, the cause was not to be regarded as the concern simply of such separate members of the church as might choose to bind themselves together in local auxiliaries, which at the first, and for a long while, were regarded as the principal feeders of the society, nor of such as were able and willing to contribute twenty dollars at one time, but every church member throughout the nation or the world was by the very fact of his membership pledged to contribute and co-operate according to his ability, nor did he need to be further enrolled in any distinct way to make this pledge more binding. And all the pastors were, as such special agents of the cause, charged with collecting funds for its furtherance and in every way advancing its interests.

The missionary section of the Discipline was again entirely recast in 1876, with a number of new paragraphs, of which the following stands first: "For the better prosecution of missionary work in the United

States and foreign countries there shall be a missionary society, duly incorporated according to law, and having its office in the city of New York; said society being subject to such rules and regulations as the general conference may from time to time prescribe." Singular as it may seem, this was the first issue of the Discipline, fifty-six years after the society had been endorsed by the general conference, containing a direct authorization of its existence. No previous Discipline has any mention of the society, except two or three indirect references or allusions in paragraphs treating of other topics, which shows emphatically in what a very miscellaneous manner the entire legislation of the church on this subject has been thrown together, and how fragmentarily it has arrived at its present excellent condition.

The most recent emendation of the constitution, ordered by the General Conference of 1888, was in the same line with all the previous changes, and provides for the still further emphasizing of the connectional, as opposed to the local, character of the institution, by prescribing that the annual meeting of the General Committee shall be hereafter no longer confined to New York but shall be held at least three times out of four in other cities.

It would seem now that there is nothing left of the *society* or local idea beyond the mere name and the restrictions imposed by the necessity of having a charter from some specific State Legislature in order to hold property, as well as the necessity of having headquarters where certain matters of business can be attended to. This missionary society, still so-called for convenience sake, is now simply and solely the whole church itself acting in its corporate capacity for the establishment and support of missions. It is not an outside organization allied to the church, but distinct from it. Rather is it the right arm of