

THE PROBLEM OF THE DOMESTIC MISSIONS.

THE letter which we publish below was sent as a private communication to the Secretary nearly two years ago. The topic is not a new one, and has frequently engaged the attention of the General Board; but how to apply the remedy is the question. Our correspondent's facts and figures have as much force now as when they were written, and although they present only one side of the question, are well worth careful study. The following is the letter:

I feel prompted to write you, and hope you will give the matter of my communication your earnest consideration. In the first place I would say that, while attending a recently held Financial District Meeting in a city, one of the lay representatives spoke in strong opposition to the proposal for a large grant from the Missionary Fund toward the support of a minister of one of the churches, and positively affirmed that the missionary income of the church in the city with which he was connected had decreased last year in consequence, and would again this year. The Superintendent of the Circuit corroborated what was said. The reply made was to the effect that the brother appointed to the charge had a large family, etc. I began to wonder whether similar objections to liberal missionary giving were likely in other quarters. I was cursorily looking over the Bay of Quinte Minutes, and was astonished to find how little was subscribed toward ministers' salary, etc., on many of their Missions, and how large an outlay of the funds of the Society was required each year to support—or partly support—the pastors. I enclose a list of 16 missions, their subscriptions, deficiency, grant from Board, and final deficiency sustained by the brethren on those spheres. The question I ask myself is, Have we not been—and still are—multiplying our Missions too rapidly? During the present year, several new ones have been formed in the Montreal Conference, notwithstanding the large deficiencies the brethren suffer from year to year. Are not the recommendations made by the Stationing Committee, for the most part consisting of men on independent circuits, who never know what deficiency in salary means? Surely it is time to seriously consider this question, and adopt such means as shall prevent the formation of new fields, unless in extremely urgent and necessitous cases, as in the North West. I think, too, that some of the weak missions might be united, and form a strong circuit. As you know, this is the practice in England. As a rule the British Conference will not appoint a second preacher unless the circuit will be prepared for a married man at the end of four years. Could it not be possible for the Mission Board to take the matter up resolutely and have such legislation adopted as shall require the chairman of each District, with some influential laymen, as a deputation to see the officials of the weak missions, and ascertain whether improvement cannot be effected, or whether the Church is justified in spending so much of missionary money on places some of which have been in a state of dependence for many years. Is it a wise policy to insist upon our probationers a high standard of attainment—and, of course, the higher the better—and when received send them to a mission with an insufficient amount of salary, where often discouragement and financial embarrassment are experienced, resulting in many instances that we have known of young men leaving our ministry for the Methodist Episcopal Church of the United States, or some other communion.

Raised on Mission for Salary, Board etc.	Deficiency.	Grant from Missionary Society.	Deficiency of Missionary at end of year.
\$80 00	\$678 00	\$367 00	\$302 00
16 00	301 00	138 00	162 00
50 00	625 00	352 00	272 00
101 00	588 00	227 00	260 00
30 00	634 00	392 00	251 00
53 00	297 00	141 00	155 00
35 00	240 00	131 00	108 00
97 00	590 00	332 00	317 00
60 00	640 00	422 00	267 00
11 00	688 00	380 00	307 00
115 00	565 00	332 00	302 00
100 00	570 00	327 00	247 00
110 00	570 00	352 00	217 00
129 00	527 00	312 00	215 00
116 00	549 00	282 00	266 00
25 00	259 00	145 00	114 00
\$1,028 00	\$8,326 00	\$4,632 00	\$3,762 00

Sixteen missions contributed an average of *sixty-four dollars*.

Sixteen missions received from Society a grant of \$4,632.00, or an average of \$289.00. Do please ponder this, and as an accurate and thorough business man come to a conclusion as to the effect upon our contributors if the matter was placed before them.

"TO EVERY CREATURE."

A HOPEFUL sign in regard to the world's evangelization is found in the fact that the happy-go-lucky style of doing things is less in favor than formerly. The Church is beginning to perceive dimly, it may be, that God has a plan concerning this matter, and that her paramount duty is to find out what that plan is, and harmonize all her methods therewith. Of two things we may be sure: God's plan is not sectional, and it is not a temporary expedient. It takes in the whole Church and the whole world, as Dr. Pierson puts it, and will be carried forward steadily till the close of the dispensation. In the meantime the Church is held responsible for one thing, and only one—the proclamation of the gospel message to "every creature." If this be so, all our methods and efforts should be ruled by one thought—What is the quickest and most direct way to make every creature acquainted with the gospel tidings? Beyond controversy that way is not the one which the Church is using at present. The whole tendency, until quite recently, has been to spend as much money and effort as possible at home, and as little as possible abroad; and although there is some improvement, the Church, at the present rate of advance, will never overtake the world's necessities. What is needed just now is to have this conviction deeply impressed upon the heart of every believer—"I must either go or send." A time is coming—may it come soon—when every Christian congregation worthy of the name will give