

**The Ontario Evangelist.**

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JUNE, 1886.

THE JUNE MEETING.

According to previous announcement, the proceedings in connection with the Annual Meeting began on Friday evening, June 4th, with a sermon. It was expected that Bro. A. P. Cobb, of Decatur, Ill., would have preached, but as he was unfortunately detained in Guelph, by illness, Bro. Sheppard came to the rescue and delivered a fine discourse.

On Saturday morning the delegates assembled to attend to business. It was found that there was a large representation, some coming from the most distant parts of the Province. The names of the delegates and the churches they represented will be found in another place. The meeting was opened by devotional exercises. The annual business meeting of the "Wellington" Co-operation was then held, the President, Hugh Black, in the chair. The Secretary, J. W. Kilgour, read the yearly report of the work done during the past year, calling attention particularly to the work done in Muskoka. Bro. Crewson also made some remarks in regard to his labors in that district. The Evangelists, T. L. Fowler and Geo. Munro, also made short verbal statements. The financial statement was then read, and referred to an auditing committee.

The meeting was then organized to consider the question of uniting the two Co-operations, Hugh Black being appointed Chairman, and Geo. J. Barclay Secretary. As it was then about noon an adjournment was made for an hour. After lunch the business of the Ontario Co-operation was taken up, James Ledard, the President, in the chair. Their Evangelist, C. W. Martz, read his report covering his seven months' labor; he gave a detailed account of his labors and his travels, and made sundry suggestions in regard to the more effective method of carrying on the work in divers places. H. T. Law read the financial report, which having been referred to a committee for examination, Hugh Black resumed the chair, and the question of union was taken up.

It was suggested that a poll of the churches represented should be taken on the question. It was found that all the churches represented, outside of Wellington County, were in favor of the union; only one of the Wellington Churches gave an expression of opinion, and that was adverse. At this stage it seemed to be taken for granted by the large majority of those present, that there was now nothing to be done but to give effect to the amalgamation, and make arrangements for the carrying on of the work for the coming year. The representatives of the old Co-operation, however, held a different view, viz: that they were one party to the matter, and that the general meeting could not decide the question without their consent. There followed a general, and informal, and protracted discussion. A number of motions were presented to the meeting; finally it was proposed that the old Board of Managers of the Ontario Co-operation together with L. Parkinson and H. Black should be the Managers for the ensuing year; this was agreed to, and, after the reports of the auditors had been received, the meeting adjourned.

It was evident, however, that not many, if any, were satisfied; indeed, many were very much disappointed, and felt that nothing had been accomplished. But a very great deal had been accomplished; and the discussion of the afternoon, though seeming to many to be pointless and useless, was really necessary in the circumstances to enable all to understand the true nature of the question, and so to point out the true way of disposing of it.

It was made very plain that there was a common and ardent desire for the advancement of the cause on the part of all present, and, we might say, a universal disposition to unite in supporting Provincial work. Dr. Wood, of Cobourg, was very anxious that an effort should be put forth to establish the cause in our cities. Bro. Sheppard enthusiastically proposed that \$5,000 or even \$10,000 should be raised for missionary purposes during the ensuing year. In brief it may be said, that the feeling was general that the efforts being put forth by us in this country are

not worthy of those who believe in a great cause, and a resolute determination was evinced to do something which might at least testify to our own sincerity. And it cannot be doubted that glorious results will follow this free expression of earnest desires, and resolute purposes on the part of so many brethren.

There was a large congregation on Saturday evening, when Bro Cobb preached; the discourse was suited to the occasion, setting forth three requisites to successful work in spreading the Gospel:—Co-operation, concentration and consecration.

There was a large gathering on Lord's Day, far larger than the Everton meeting-house could accommodate. Overflow meetings were therefore held in the Presbyterian house adjoining, morning, afternoon and evening, at which Bro. Martz, Bro. Sheppard and Bro. Anderson preached. It was a pity that the whole congregation could not have been assembled in one place, as it was trying both to preachers and people who attended the overflow meetings, yet the aforesaid brethren did not disappoint those who went to hear, but delivered such discourses as secured the praises of the hearers.

Bro. Cobb spoke at each service in the Stone House. As he was the preacher of the day, and unknown throughout the Province, it will be proper for us to make more extended reference to him and his discourses than to those other brethren whose style and whose faces are well known. There seemed to be but one opinion regarding Bro. Cobb's preaching: it would be impossible to record here all the expressions of delight that were uttered by enthusiastic admirers. Some who had previously been inclined to regard our American preachers with suspicion generously united in praising the beautiful, eloquent, earnest, Scriptural preacher. It is not our purpose here to attempt anything like a full description of Bro. Cobb's style as a preacher; His gifts are many and varied and great, and so in a high degree calculated to affect and influence his hearers; but we believe that his greatest power is derived from the fact that he impresses you with the conviction that he himself has tasted and seen that the Lord is gracious, and is therefore anxious that others should come to know the Lord. He is "a burning and a shining light," and we "rejoice in his light." We trust that this visit is but his introduction to Ontario, and that hereafter our brethren may all have an opportunity of hearing him.

Notwithstanding the large number of delegates and visitors, the Everton Church had no difficulty, and appeared not to consider it any trouble, to entertain them all. The strangers were loud in their praises of the hospitality received. The Everton people appeared to enter into the matter in the proper spirit—esteeming it a part of the Lord's work; and such, no doubt, it is.

For who shall estimate the good influences received at, and carried away from, this great gathering? Who shall measure the increase of zeal, the revival of hope, the renewed resolve, produced by associating with brethren for a few days whose homes are widely scattered, yet whose "hearts and aims are one?" So we do not look upon this "Big Meeting" as a huge religious picnic, but rather as "a holy convocation" of Christians met to consider and devise means for "the furtherance of the Gospel." It was therefore delightful to observe the hearty way in which the Everton people entered into the matter of entertainment; we doubt not that they realized the truth of the Saviour's words, "It is more blessed to give than to receive."

And as for those who, at considerable expense, and some at the sacrifice of time from their business, came to the meeting, we are sure that none of them went away without feeling that they were amply repaid; we do not believe there would be one who would regret his coming, or think that his time and money had been squandered. Indeed, it is to be questioned whether there is any other way in which money can be expended which will more immediately, more largely, and more healthfully advance the Saviour's cause.

A business session was held on Monday morning to reconsider the action taken on Saturday. The matter having been referred to a committee consisting of the Boards of the two Co-operations, it was proposed by them, and adopted with great unanimity and enthusiasm by the delegates, that the Board of Managers of the "Wellington" Co-operation together with three brethren to be chosen by the meeting, should constitute the Board of Managers of the Ontario Co-operation for the ensuing year. A committee was appointed to nominate the three additional managers; they proposed Jas. Ledard, Geo. J. Barclay and H. T. Law; these were then elected, and after votes of thanks to the Chairmen the meeting adjourned. And so the Annual Meeting of 1886 closed amid rejoicing and congratulation. Special services

were continued throughout the week, of which an account will be given elsewhere.

G. M.

THE CAUSE IN ONTARIO.

II.

When we say there has been very little general progress during the past years, we do not mean to make the impression that nothing has been done or that the cause we represent is in a hopeless condition. That we have maintained our position, and are ready now for an onward movement, imply that not a little earnest work has been accomplished. Yet we, like Paul, should not be satisfied with past attainments, but, "leaving the things which are behind," should press forward to the accomplishment of greater things in the future. The husband-man would not be satisfied if the trees he planted did not grow, neither should we in reference to the work committed to us, unless it enlarges upon our hands.

It is our aim to notice a few of the many obstacles which retard the advancement of the cause of Christ as plead by us.

It was resumed in the previous article that our progress was in proportion to the amount of proper work done. That being true, as we believe, the only inference is:

(1) *We have not labored sufficiently in the vineyard of the Lord.*

It is proper to state, however, that our preachers have not been idle, and some of the churches have been doing almost to the extent of their ability, but we reach the limit when we say *some of them*, for it is also true that many, yea, the most of them, are doing only a small fraction of the amount of work which should fall to their lot; and is it not a little remarkable that we, who say so much about works, fail so sadly to show, as we should, our "faith by our works?" Yet such is manifestly the case, and the sooner we know it the better for us.

While we are sound on "first principles," we have largely failed to grasp the idea that the religion of Jesus Christ is aggressive in its nature, and requires not only obedience to the positive commands, but also work and self-denial.

Greater activity in the churches is needed, badly needed. The prosperity of the cause depends upon it. Let *work* then in the future be the watchword. It will kindle new life, produce spiritual growth, and make the church a power for good in the community.

(2) *There has been a lack of unanimity.* Just why a people, the chief characteristic of whose plea is the union of all believers, and who have so much to say about the advantages of Christian union, are not unanimous themselves is somewhat remarkable, yet it is only another evidence that theory and practice are distinct, and that we, even *we*, have not reached the maximum of consistency.

It is a favorite idea with many, and should be with all, that Christ should have all the glory *through the church*. Then the church should feel her responsibility in the matter, and do the work. If we desire to be Scriptural—to follow the example of the apostolic churches—we must be willing to perform a two-fold work, to build up the cause both at *home* and *abroad*. We may, under favorable circumstances, succeed in doing the former without the sympathy and co-operation of the sister churches, but to succeed in the latter in the highest sense the greatest unanimity is required.

There are two absolutely necessary conditions to be observed in this work, and they are these, *Commence and Continue*, and the most difficult, and by far the most important of these, is the latter. We have in our mind at the present time several points where the cause was begun, and where it prospered for a time, but not receiving the support necessary, the efforts failed. The work in the places referred to was undertaken by individuals, and carried on successfully until the means were exhausted, and then the cause went down. It is not difficult to *begin*. One church or even an individual can do much of that kind of work to little or no profit, but to *continue* we need all the strength arising from the unity of all the members. "In union there is strength," is just as true in the Church of Jesus Christ as it is in reference to the nations of the world.

That many of the churches see this matter in its true light is manifest from the number of delegates which attended the annual meeting last week. The brethren seem dissatisfied with the past condition of things, and are exceedingly anxious for an onward movement. Growing out of our lack of unanimity is our failure in attempting great things for the Lord.

The towns and cities have, as a result, been neglected, and the efforts confined chiefly to the cross-roads, where the leaders can farm for a living, and edify the brethren on the Lord's Day. As far as our observation goes, we find that nearly all of the young people who go into the

cities to engage in business as well as many of the older brethren who retire to the towns and cities, are lost to the cause on this account. But we are told it takes money to build up churches in the cities. That is very true, and hence the necessity of perfect unanimity in the matter. We have been unscriptural, and consequently unwise in avoiding the cities. From one chapter, Acts xvii, we learn something of the apostolic method. Paul, after passing through Amphipolis and Apollonia, went not to the sparsely inhabited region of northern Macedonia, nor even to the more fertile plains of the interior, but to an important sea-port town, and when driven away by the mob, he directed his course at once to Berea, and from thence to the celebrated city of Athens. "Wisdom crieth without, she uttereth her voice in the streets, she crieth in the chief place of course, in the openings of the gates, in the city she uttereth her voice." Divine wisdom in these things should not be disregarded.

T. L. F.

THE AMERICAN CONGRESS OF CHURCHES.

The first meeting of the American Congress of Churches was held in Hartford Conn., about the middle of May last year, the second meeting in Cleveland, Ohio, May 25-27 last. For the benefit of those of our readers who do not take any of our large religious weeklies, we give some account here of the origin and purposes, as well as of the success; of this Congress. We gather our information from the address of the Rev. Joseph Anderson D. D., delivered before the late Congress, and also from the letter of B. B. Tyler, in the *Standard* of June 5th. We know that the Disciples of Christ will be particularly interested in all that is attempted to be done to bring about Christian union. We are told, "that the American Congress of churches originated in the mind, or heart, rather, of an Episcopal clergyman, and that Episcopalians, notwithstanding their reputation for exclusiveness, have shown a special interest in the enterprise."

We are also informed that "the American Congress of Churches was established on a basis very different from that of the Evangelical Alliance, for it was proposed by its founders, instead of thrusting ecclesiastical and theological differences out of sight, as is done in that organization, to bring them into full-view, and make them the subject of free discussion."

It is evident that the adoption of free discussion was a great step in advance; and the fact that it was not only suggested and adopted, but successfully carried out on the two occasions referred to above, is perhaps the most significant indication that we see in these days that the spirit of Christ is prevailing more and more in the hearts of those who profess to be His followers. We have often heard it said, that if a church member could match old stove pipes without getting angry and profane, he might be considered a good Christian. But we think there is a severer test still, and that is, to discuss religious differences freely, fully and *publicly*, without showing temper, and making offensive remarks. We understand that in the Congress, so far, unkind speeches have been almost, if not entirely unknown.

Our brethren have been represented on the programmes of both meetings. Gen. F. M. Drake of Iowa presided at the last meeting, he is a leading man among the Disciples in the West. Indeed we are becoming quite popular in many parts of the States, and are being more or less courted by the other religious people over there. Some may regard this as a bad sign, and it undoubtedly would be, if it indicated that our brethren were becoming less Scriptural than were the pioneers. But, if, as we believe, the Disciples have now a clearer and more comprehensive view of the truth than they had 50 years ago, and more faithfully represent in practice the religion of the N. T. than their fore-fathers did, then all this increase of association is neither discreditable to us, nor to our religious neighbors.

Perhaps we cannot do better than give here a speech delivered at the late Congress, which we are told "was cheered to the echo."

It will indicate better than anything we can say the spirit of the Congress. We cannot give the name of the speaker, though we have our suspicions.

"The Rev. Joseph Cook said from the platform of Tremont Temple, in Boston a short time since: What saves and why? I propose to change Cook's conundrum from What saves, and why? to Who saves and how? It is not faith in statements of belief neither ancient, medieval, nor modern, that brings salvation from sin; not faith in articles of religion, nor theological dogmas, however true, which unites the soul in a living fellowship with Christ. It is not even the belief concerning Jesus, but faith in Him. We must not lose sight of this important fact and distinc-