

PREFACE.

The multiplication of Societies clustering around the Congregational Union, renders such a publication as the YEAR BOOK, to gather up the Reports, and preserve them in a permanent shape, more and more of a necessity. And while, in the conducting of this annual publication, my predecessors and myself have been aiming at perfection—and no healthy mind would aim at less—I am conscious of yet being some distance from it. Three things I keep before me—correctness, promptness, and finish. The first depends on many hands, and brains, and eyes; and it is here I have a right to ask for more co-operation than I have got. Will ministers, and secretaries of churches, and the like, remember that an editor cannot print correctly *names* of people he does not know, except they are written with some attempt at legibility, and correctness of spelling? A very few names will, no doubt, still be found wrong; but will these kindly remember, that many others of their friends and mine have been saved the same annoyance, by the touching up of the careless writing of many a scattered church Secretary?

As to promptness of issue—so large an item in the value of the book—that can be much helped by punctual forwarding of material to the Editor; and having it correct when it is forwarded. The Secretary of a church or Sunday School does not think that *his* neglect to make a little return, or to make a post card reply to the Editor, keeps back the completion of a document; and that, in turn, keeps back the issue of the YEAR BOOK: but so is the fact.

For *finish*, the Editor is generally responsible. And I trust, that year by year, this YEAR BOOK will become more readable and interesting; a welcome friend, constantly at hand for a year, then carefully preserved and bound, as a contemporary