

The Board on the Situation.

To the Editor of the CANADIAN EVANGELIST:

Dear Brother, At a full meeting of the Board of Managers of the Co-operation of Disciples of Christ in Ontario, on July 1st, 1896, matters arising out of recent events came up for consideration. Your article in the June 15th issue of the CANADIAN EVANGELIST, headed, "Parting of the Ways," and a notice as to publication of reports, were there brought to the notice of the Board, and after earnest consideration of the matters in question, the undersigned were commissioned to prepare and tender for publication a statement explaining and making clear the position of the Board. The Board is sensible of the gravity of the situation, and deeply regrets that you, Bro. Editor, at this peculiar juncture should have seen fit to take the course you did at the Convention, and more deeply that after time for deliberation your article, reviewing the situation, should have been of such a nature as, in the interest of truth, to necessitate a reply.

In the notice referred to you observe, in a tone of seeming surprise, the fact that the reports of the Convention had not been sent, as usual, by the officers of the Co-operation for publication, at the same time offering the use of the paper for the purpose, should the Board see fit to use it. Having regard to the course taken by the editor at the close of the Convention in deliberately severing all his relations and connection with the Co-operation, both personally and as editor and publisher of the CANADIAN EVANGELIST, which had hitherto been regarded as, in some sense, the organ of the Co-operation and representative of Disciples of Christ in Ontario, his refusal either to give or receive aid, and the further fact that the editor had not, as in former years, asked for the reports or intimated that he would publish them—the omission to forward the reports requires no further explanation. In view, however, of the editor's offer to publish them and leave his columns open to the Board, the matter was taken into consideration. It was the feeling of the Board that it could not consistently make use of the columns of a paper which was not in sympathy with its work and had misrepresented the action of the Convention. But it was decided that they should be presented for publication, provided that this statement be published in the same or a preceding number.

Aside from the misstatements which appear, a deplorable feature of the

article is the unkindness of feeling which pervades it throughout, and which seems to warp the better judgment of the writer. The bitterness of mind, want of charity and suspicion, evidenced by such expressions as "presumed deliberation," "lightly, cheerfully, triumphantly, etc.," "the other side," "demagogic appeal to the intelligence of the Convention," "jauntily responded to the appeal," "spell of a hypnotist," and many others, are the occasion of much sorrow on the part of your late fellow-workers, who keenly feel the imputations, which are made respecting them. They could pass by the insinuations of want of intelligence, weakness, partisanship and demagogism, but they feel it deeply that one so long connected by ties of friendship and brotherhood should so allow his mind to brood over differences as to steel himself against memories of the past and charge his brethren with being "lightly, cheerfully, triumphantly" and "jauntily" ready to abandon the principles which they have held dear, for the satisfaction of gaining a point. So far from being in an exultant mood, the Convention passed the resolution amid a solemn hush, and tears of sorrow were seen in many eyes.

But the serious and unaccountable feature of the article is that there seems from the first to last to be either a misrepresentation of the facts of the case or a complete misconception of the whole question, which cannot be easily accounted for in one of the well known acumen of the writer. He charges the majority with recommending congregations to receive into their fellowship unimmersed persons, and on the other hand with being ready to recommend Disciples of Christ to take membership with churches which receive unimmersed people into their fellowship. There is absolutely no foundation for this statement, and in fact the report as adopted distinctly and emphatically negatives it. The simple truth is, no such recommendation as the writer charges was at any time made or thought of. The amendment was made *not to conciliate the minority*, but to cover a possible weakness in the framing of the original clause, and to leave no shadow of doubt or ground for objection, it having been understood that no other objection had up to that point been raised. There is not a tittle of evidence to show that the majority or any of them would have been willing to favor any resolution to which an interpretation such as you placed on it could have been reasonably attached. The whole of the discussion clearly showed that such was not meant at any time, and

the amendment was added for the very purpose of making this clear. Having regard to this, your criticism of the report is most unfair and calculated to mislead. You refer your readers to a former criticism of the original report, which you republish. You do not publish the report as amended at all. You discuss and dissect the original report without regard to the explanations which were made, and worse than that, without even referring to the amendment, except towards the end of your article incidentally, and as it would almost seem, contemptuously, putting it in a paraphrase of your own. As you know, the amendment was intended to meet the very objection you raise, and should therefore, in any fair criticism, have been considered with and as part of the report itself, especially, as in this case, it expressed the meaning and interpretation placed by the majority on the original report. Instead of this, you make no reference to it, except as indicated above, and then dismiss as being unintelligible, even to its framer, the amendment in question, which you might have published, had you chosen, for the inspection of your readers themselves. The second recommendation, contained in the fifth paragraph of the report, is: "We recommend the cultivation of a closer fraternal relationship between the two bodies, by each body recommending to isolated members in various communities to take membership, as they have opportunity, with churches of the other body, provided such members and churches are known to be in harmony with each other upon the points of difference above named as regards baptism." It is hard to imagine how the plain and simple meaning of these words could have been expressed more clearly, or how to any one reading them with singleness of mind any doubt could present itself as to their scope and effect.

The second recommendation, as originally understood by the majority, and made clear by the amendment, is, in effect, simply that isolated members of either body, rather than forego the privileges of church-fellowship, should unite with churches of a *common faith and practice*. The recommendation is in each case simply to isolated members, to take membership with churches of the other body of a common faith and practice. It is to be noticed that *no recommendation whatever is, as you charge, made to congregations* of our brethren, nor by the other body to theirs, either to accept or reject any person. Congregational liberty being thus absolutely unfettered, even by a recommendation. "By what principle

known to the laws of language or of logic" can it be suggested that this, which is a recommendation, and a recommendation only, is an infringement of liberty or, to use the writer's own words, the "tyranny of priestcraft," or how can it be said that a recommendation coming from a body of people united in a common cause, with common interests and aspirations, to isolated members thereof, in respect of matters affecting such common interests, is outside its powers? Is not this the spirit of rigid legalism against which the Co-operation of Disciples of Christ has been struggling since its inception half a century ago? Is the question, "Am I my brother's keeper" to be re-opened? Surely it is not at this stage of its history to be argued that the operations of the Co-operation should be confined to money-getting and spending. Is a movement tending to the unity of Christendom, to which the Co-operation can lend its influence without the sacrifice of truth, to be blocked by formal objections or uncharitable suspicions of heresy? Is it becoming of us, as Disciples of Christ whose plea is for the union of God's people, to turn a cold shoulder to advances in that direction, when principle is not at stake? Surely, having put our hands to the plough, we will not now look back, but continue steadfastly to press on towards the goal we have placed before us, never turning aside from the path of truth, and never losing an opportunity to promote the unity of the kingdom of Christ by all lawful means.

We indeed trust with you that "the ways which seem for the present to be parted, may shortly be reunited and lead on together to greater triumphs for the truth and for the honor of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ," and sincerely trust that you, dear brother, may reconsider your position, and if you find that you have unwittingly misapprehended the motives and views of your brethren, will resume your former relations and fellowship with your old fellow-workers, that we may strive together for the faith of the gospel.

(Signed) HUGH BLACK.
J. W. KILGOUR.
P. BAKER.

July 4th, 1894.

Boy's Clothing.

If the boys were to choose what to wear, they would wear the best, and it is so easy to gratify the little fellows' neat ideas at Oak Hall. We commence to sell two-piece suits for \$1.50 and three-piece suits for \$2.50. Immense stocks of clothing to select from. Oak Hall, 10 James Street North, Hamilton