

has been a vexed question during the entire period since the formation of the Convention, and the problem is still unsolved. It is to be hoped that before long some suitable system may be put in operation by which the righteous obligations of the churches in regard to these objects may be in some good measure discharged. If there could be joined with this the administration of a sustentation fund by which every pastor laboring in an approved field should be assured of a minimum sum that would equalize somewhat the financial condition of men engaging for the sake of the churches in a common service, a large number of our ministers would be lifted out of the depressing circumstances in which they are now toiling, and, by reason of the added vigor and courage thus imparted to them, would become much more effective and useful as teachers and leaders of the churches.

This review of the various departments of the business of the Convention seems to me to disclose evidences of a good degree of spiritual health and normal growth. It might be thought pertinent to make a reference to the statistics of the relative dates. But this in itself would be misleading. If our records show that nearly one hundred ministers have been ordained in the last twelve years, they do not reveal the fact that a large number of candidates for the ministry, converted and educated among our people, have gone to the south and the west and are giving their strength to build up churches in strange lands. If our records show an increase of ten thousand in our membership in the last twelve years, they omit the fact that thousands of our church-members have gone from their native land and are scattered in almost all lands. We are eminently a missionary people, sending forth an almost unbroken current of christian men and women, some of whom in their new experiences of life may lose their spirituality, but multitudes of whom become elements of strength and success in communities where such helpers are needed. A partial view of this fact may awaken discouragement. We labor and struggle for the benefit of others at a distance from us. But after all this is the highest kind of life, if only our vision could be purified to see things as they are. Whether the world takes account of what we are doing or not, by the force of character and the earnest spirituality of these representatives who go forth from us, we may exert a power in behalf of truth and righteousness that shall be felt in the busy centres of commerce and on the prairies of the west where the vanguard of civilization are laying the foundations of christian states. If, notwithstanding this priceless contribution to the good of distant lands, there has been steady and