

THE
FIRST
ANNUAL REPORT
OF THE
CONGREGATIONAL UNION
OF
NOVA-SCOTIA
AND
NEW-BRUNSWICK;

JULY, 1846, TO JULY, 1847.

SAINT JOHN:

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1847.



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REPORT.

The Committee of the Congregational Union of Nova-Scotia and New-Brunswick, in presenting their first Report to the friends and supporters of this Society, feel themselves fully justified in expressing such sentiments of congratulation as usually introduce documents of this nature. A brief reference to the condition of Congregationalism, prior to the formation of this Union, and a sketch of the operations of the Society during the first year of its existence, will furnish to the friends of our principles, ample reason for thanksgiving and courage.

Congregationalism is no new system of religious faith and practice in these Lower Provinces. It began with the first immigration into these countries from the shores of New England—an immigration which preceded the landing of the Loyalists by several years. The French settlers brought with them the religion of the Romish Church; but the first settlers of British origin in these regions, were men who deeply sympathised with the evangelical faith, the ecclesiastical polity, and the religious freedom of their Puritan ancestors. The Churches at Yarmouth, Liverpool, Cornwallis, Falmouth, and Halifax, in Nova-Scotia, and at Maugerville, or Sheffield, and Keswick Ridge, in New-Brunswick, were of this early origin. Several of the Churches that were originally planted by Congregationalists in these regions have merged into other religious communions; a fact which your Committee are disposed to trace in a great measure to the extreme difficulty which those Churches experienced in securing an educated Ministry. This difficulty must have been great indeed, at a period when no Institution existed in their midst for the education of young men for the Christian Ministry; when the Congregational Churches in England had formed no Colonial Society; and when the Revolution, with its consequences, almost excluded the inhabitants of these Provinces from all intercourse with the Churches and the Institutions of the States. Hence Denominations who enjoyed the fostering care of their Brethren in the Old Country; and others who were less scrupulous in waiting for regularly trained teachers of the Gospel, came in, and took the ground, which was once occupied by the adherents of Congregationalism.

Thus matters continued, till the year 1842, by which time the impression was general that no Congregational Churches existed in the Provinces. In that year, the Rev. H. Wilkes, of

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Montreal, visited these regions, at the request of the Colonial Society in connection with the Congregational Union of England and Wales, which Society had been formed only a few years before. The immediate result of that visit was the arrival of the Rev. James Porter at Sheffield, N. B.—and of the Rev. J. C. Gallaway, A. M., at Saint John, N. B., in the fall of 1843. For a few months after the arrival of these Brethren, they heard of no Congregational Church in either of these Provinces except the one at Sheffield. At length, tidings of the existence of the Churches at Cornwallis, Falmouth, Liverpool and Yarmouth having been conveyed to them; and Mr. Gallaway having paid a visit to these brethren in the year 1845; it was arranged to hold a preparatory meeting at Liverpool, in the summer of 1846, with a view to the formation of a Congregational Union for these two Provinces. The principles and objects of such Association having been fully discussed at Liverpool; every security having been taken that the Union should involve no compromise of principle, and that the full rights and privileges of each Church should be sacredly maintained; it was agreed to adjourn that Meeting till the following October, when the Delegates and the Pastors of the different Churches, who desired such a Union, might, after full investigation, proceed to form it. This adjourned Meeting was held in St. John, N. B. in October, 1846, where and when the Union was formed. The following extracts from the constitution of the Union will at once explain the principles, the objects, and the instrumentality of the Society :—

“The objects shall be the promotion of brotherly affection, the diffusion of Christianity, agreeably to the principles and usages of the Congregationalists, and co-operation with other kindred Associations.

“The means to be adopted shall be prayer, the preaching of the Gospel, and other efforts at the discretion of the Union.

“The regulation of the affairs of the Union shall be vested in the general Meeting, consisting of the Pastors and Delegates of the Associated Churches, and the Missionaries employed by the Society. Each Church shall be entitled to send two or more Delegates.

“The general Meeting, which is always to be open to the public, shall assemble for the despatch of business on the Thursday following the first Sabbath in July, and shall appropriate at least three entire days to the general purposes of the Union.”

At this Meeting in St. John, the Declaration of the faith, church order, and discipline of the Congregationalists was agreed to; and arrangements made for printing 3000 copies.—The Rev. S. Murkland having reported his visit to Musquodoboit, and having sought the advice of the Meeting, was recommended to accept the cordial invitation which he had received, and was promised the special assistance of the Union.

Agreeably to the regulation already specified, and to special invitation, the first annual Meeting of the Union was held in Yarmouth, on the 9th of July, 1847.—The following Pastors and Delegates assembled on that occasion:—Brethren E. Barker and Porter, of Sheffield; Davidson and Gallaway, of St. John; Dunlap, of Sable River; Melvin and Freeman, of Liverpool; J. Whitman, of Falmouth and Cornwallis; Burton, of Halifax; Murkland and Braden, of Musquodoboit; Waterman and Sterling, of Pleasant River; N. Crossby, John Scott, John F. Scott, and T. Hilton, of Yarmouth.

The various Meetings of the Union occupied the greater part of four days, including the Sabbath. On the morning and evening of Friday, the morning of Saturday, and the morning and afternoon of Monday, the attention of the Brethren was fully occupied with the business of the Society. On the afternoon of Friday, the annual Sermon was preached by the Rev. J. Porter—the subject being, “Purity and Catholicity of Christian Communion.” A Sermon was preached on Saturday afternoon, and most of the Brethren were engaged in different places on the Sabbath. A Public Missionary Meeting closed these interesting exercises on Monday evening.

During these Meetings, matters of great interest were brought before the attention of the Brethren. Resolutions on the following subjects were unanimously adopted:—

It was resolved that, at present, and until further notice, the one object to which the fund of the Union is to be devoted, is the extension of Missionary labours within the limits of the two Provinces; and that the expense of attending the Annual Meeting be not discharged out of such fund—that the offer of Mrs. Gorham, of Liverpool, to give £1000 towards the erection of a College in that town, in connection with the Congregational Union of Nova-Scotia and New-Brunswick, be accepted; and that measures be immediately taken, by a Committee appointed for the purpose, to carry this plan into execution as early as practicable—that the Union is not responsible for any outlay, in the matter, which it has not expressly sanctioned—that a deputation, consisting of Brethren Murkland and Melvin, visit the Congregational Churches in the Eastern extremity of Nova-Scotia and in Cape Breton, as early as convenient—that the Secretary correspond with the Congregational Union of Scotland, with a view to interest that body in the subject of Missions to these Provinces—that application be made to the Colonial Society in England for further help to these Provinces; and that such assistance be afforded by grants to the Union, in proportion to the exertions of the Union itself—that the next Annual Meeting be held in Sheffield, N. B., at the time appointed in the Rules, and that Mr. Murkland preach the Annual Sermon, “on the nature, the necessity and the means of a revival of genuine religion,”—that Mr. Gallaway be requested to continue the office of Secretary, and Mr. Davidson the office of Treasurer,—that Messrs. Barker and Waterman

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The Churches in Upper, Middle and Lower Musquodoboit, and the Church at Yarmouth, and their respective Pastors, Brethren Murkland and Tomkins, were received into the Union.

The following is a statistical return of Congregational Churches in the two Provinces:—

Churches.	Preaching Stations.	Members.	Children in Sabbath School.	Accommodation
Liverpool, - -	- - - -	125	50	650
	Milton, - - -			
	Herring Cove, -	30		150
	Beach Meadows, -	25	17	150
Pleasant River, -	- - - -	26	30	100
	Brookfield, - -			150
	Caledonia, - -			250
	Kempt, - - -			150
	Maitland, - -			40
Falmouth, - -	- - - -	12		200
Cornwallis, - -	- - - -	24	50	300
	Mount Dentzon, -			100
	Lower Horton, -			40
	Lower Pereaux, -			60
	Scotch Bay, - -			100
Upper Musquodoboit,	- - - -	26		500
Middle Do.	- - - -	50		500
Lower Do.	- - - -	46		400
Yarmouth, - -	- - - -	180	148	650
	Carleton, - - -	20	60	180
Sheffield, - -	- - - -	38	30	400
Grand Lake, - -	- - - -	13		150
Cardigan, - -	- - - -	20		150
Keswick Ridge, -	- - - -			200
Mill Town, - -	- - - -	30	120	400
Saint John, - -	- - - -	45	200	600

In addition to these Churches, your Committee have received written accounts of other Congregational Churches in the Eastern extremity of Nova-Scotia and in Cape Breton, but the date of the communication does not justify the Committee in publishing it as the present condition of those Churches.—According to that statement there were in 1845 six Congregational Churches in that district, averaging in each 20 members. Supposing this to be the present state of the case, and presuming that there is an average of accommodation in connexion with each Church for 150 hearers, your Committee are

enabled to report the following as the total of the statistical returns for the two Provinces:—

20 Churches; 12 Preaching Stations; 830 Members; 705 Children in Sabbath Schools; Accommodation for 7,570 persons.

The friends at Cornwallis have arranged to finish their Church during the Fall. The friends at Pleasant River have determined on the immediate erection of a Church in that Settlement. The friends at Mill Town have also determined on the erection of a Church, as early as practicable, in that locality.

Your Committee cannot present such a Report without expressions of grateful surprise; for small as the general result is, when compared with the returns of other Evangelical Denominations in these Provinces, it is certainly large, and highly encouraging, when compared with what was generally supposed to be the case, by themselves as well as others, no longer than two years ago.

In closing this Report, the Committee would respectfully and earnestly call upon their Brethren of the same faith and order throughout these two Provinces, to be faithful to those obligations which their principles, the state of religion within and around them, the advancement of these Colonies, and the general prospects of the Congregational Union involve.

Permit us to urge, in the name of our common Master, the absolute necessity of a revived tone of personal godliness in our respective Churches. Such is the nature of our polity, that our very existence and all our efficiency depend entirely upon the state of piety in our own hearts. Aided by no Provincial grants, and destitute of all the influence which an imposing hierarchy, or authoritative ecclesiastical assemblies may convey; our only resource is in the vitality of our godliness. Congregationalism can no more be regularly and efficiently worked without the life of God in the souls of its adherents, than the engine can be impelled without the presence of steam. Without piety, we can do nothing. Let our hearts glow with that love to Christ "which is shed abroad by the Holy Ghost given unto us"—and who can calculate the extent of our labours, or the rapidity of our progress? Be then earnest in prayer for the outpouring of the Spirit, set a watch over your own hearts, cultivate a close conformity to the word of God, and omit no scriptural means by which you may "grow in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ."—Cherishing as strongly as we do the scriptural principle of the self-government of Christian Churches, let it be unceasingly our aim to do justice to this principle by the utmost cultivation of *social* godliness; by fraternal watchfulness over one another; by cherishing brotherly love without dissimulation; by sympathy, mutual advice, and admonition; and by a strenuous "striving together for the faith that was once delivered to the saints." Surrounded as we are by Brethren in Christ of other Denominations, let us lose no

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opportunity of extending to them the right hand of Christian recognition; and wishing them God-speed in their work. Never stipulate for an exact agreement of opinion as the term of religious intercourse. Never be jealous of the spiritual prosperity of other Churches; but rather rejoice in it, not merely for its own sake, and the glory of God; but also for your own; for you are more likely to advance in spiritual things when your neighbours are revived than when they are depressed.—Never forget that there are far higher interests for all of us to consult than the success of Congregationalism. There are certain truths and blessings which are the *common property of the entire Church of Christ*—truths and blessings which will remain on earth when all existing ecclesiastical organizations may be broken up; and which are just so much more valuable than all our “denominational interests,” as the wheat is better than the chaff. While we thus venture to recommend you duly to recognize true religion, in whatever distinctive garb it may appear; you will not suppose us to advocate an absolute latitudinarianism, or an indifference to opinions and practices in other religious communities which are, in your convictions, incompatible with “the truth as it is in Jesus.” Of such character, in our judgment, are the dogmas of sacramental efficacy, apostolical succession, priestly absolution, the merit of good works, or the limitation of the Church of Christ to any particular sect. These dogmas—found in whatever Church they may be—we do not hesitate to pronounce, in the language of scripture, “damnable heresies.” Against them, we trust, that the Congregational Churches of these Provinces will ever raise their earnest, unequivocal, and unyielding protest.—Sustained as these fatal inventions of men are, by the gentleness and refinements of intellectual culture; it will be wise in us, as the Apostle Paul found it in his day, to meet such errors with the aids of sound learning, as well as with the sword of the spirit. We do then heartily congratulate you, on the prospect of special attention being directed to the superior education of our youth, and of candidates for the Christian Ministry. We feel thankful to God, that he has put it into the heart of a pious and wealthy lady, in Liverpool, (N. S.) to appropriate a large portion of her means towards the establishment of a College in connection with our Congregational Union. Let no effort be wanting on our part to help forward this patriotic and Christian design; and remembering that that Institution is to be wholly sustained by the willing offerings of its friends, in addition to the fees of the pupils, let us strive to make it a successful test of the efficiency of the voluntary principle; and thus, with all our other efforts, prove that the Congregationalists of Nova-Scotia and New-Brunswick, as in all other places, are the opponents of all state endowments to religious Institutions—the promoters of liberal education—the advocates of evangelical truth—and the friends of universal Christian Union.

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FINANCIAL STATEMENT
 OF THE
CONGREGATIONAL UNION OF NOVA-SCOTIA AND NEW-BRUNSWICK.

Dr. RECEIPTS. CHARGES. **Cr.**

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By Cash from the Church in Saint John,		July 12.—To Rev. S. Murkland, Musquodoboit,	
.. .. .	424 15 0	436 0 0
.. .. .	Church in Sheffield,	Rev. Geo. Sterling, in aid of itinerant labours
.. .. .	93 0 0	in the neighbourhood of Pleasant River,
.. .. .	Church in Liverpool, N. S.	10 0 0
.. .. .	18 2 6	Rev. J. Whitman, in aid of itinerant labours in
.. .. .	Church in Falmouth, N. S.	Falmouth and Cornwallis,
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.. .. .	Church at Pleasant River,	Mission of Inquiry to Cape Breton,
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.. .. .	July 11.—Collection in Yarmouth,	Printing 3000 copies of the Declaration,
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.. .. .	Ditto	Printing of Annual Report for 1847,
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.. .. .	Sale of 1300 copies of the Declaration,	Balance,
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ROBERT DAVIDSON,
 TREASURER.

ZENAS WATERMAN, } AUDITORS.
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