

# ✠The International Missionary Union.✠

1889-90.

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C. P. Jan. 8 1890

My Dear Afflicted Brother:

You certainly have my sincerest sympathy in your various tribulations. If it were not that the Father never mistakes I should say you had more than your share. You are, of course, wholly pardonable, and freely pardoned for all delays under the circumstances.

Perhaps it will hardly be worth while to attempt getting the books into circulation this first year.

I rec'd your two volumes a few days ago, and the pad of paper last week, for all of which many thanks.

I shall be glad to see that mag-

afraid if you send a spare copy that you  
can send. I had wanted to know some-  
thing about the outcome of your meeting,  
but hesitated to burden you with in-  
quiries. I suppose you saw my ac-  
count of an meeting in the Dec. no. of  
the Gospel in All Lands.

I am already laying plans for another  
week this year to shall make the attempt  
to get all the Methodists in N. England  
(six Conferences) united in it, as well as the  
other denominations.

Next week I begin my course of  
scripture lectures at the School of Theology in  
Boston, substantially the same as given last  
year.

I too am having an attack of "la  
grippe," but not in a mild form that has  
not interfered much of any with my  
work.

I sincerely hope you will soon be  
better.

Please remember me to Mrs. C.

Yours very truly  
James Wadge

## WHAT THE CONFERENCE MISSIONARY SOCIETY CAN DO FOR THE CAUSE OF MISSIONS.

REV. JAMES F. MUDGE.

It is very evident that the wise men who framed our most admirable system of Missionary agencies thought that the Conference Missionary Society could do much. They made ample provision for it, as will be seen by consulting Article IX of the Constitution of the Missionary Society, which reads: "It is recommended that within the bounds of each Annual Conference there be established a Conference Missionary Society, auxiliary to this institution, under such regulations as the Conferences shall respectively prescribe."

Paragraph 353 of the Discipline is still stronger, running as follows: "It shall be the duty of each Annual Conference to form within its bounds a Conference Missionary Society, which shall appoint its own officers, fix the terms of membership, and otherwise regulate its own administration. But it shall pay all its funds into the treasury of the Parent Society." Here is not only full authorization for the Society, but its formation is made obligatory, and manifestly much was expected of it.

Has this expectation been realized? No. For in most cases the Conference Missionary Society is a merely nominal affair. What ought to be a

power is simply a form if not a farce. As commonly managed, the Society has no other function than to hold an anniversary at the time of the Conference session. It should, and might, do much more than this if it were really organized for work. We are fully persuaded that its relation to the Conference ought in every case to be speedily changed from supernumerary to effective.

There is a sphere for it to fill which cannot be occupied either by the preachers-in-charge or by the Presiding Elders. The latter should be in the closest relations with the Society, and can do much for it; but as the authority of each Elder is confined to his own district, as his hands are full of a multitude of things, it is plain that something more is necessary if the Conference as a whole is to be kept wide-awake about Missions. It is also plain that the General Secretaries at New York, already greatly overworked, cannot supply information and inspiration in any sufficient degree for each one of a hundred Conferences, much less for each one of twelve thousand ministers and churches.

The labors of these Corresponding Secretaries need to be supplemented by the labors of a body of Conference Secretaries, one in each Conference, who will form a connecting link, a channel of communication between the officials at the center and the local pastors. Such a corps of enthusiastic men, one hundred strong, glad of the opportunity to expend time and strength in the cause they love the best, would be invaluable to the Society, and would easily add one hundred thousand dollars to

its collections. They could do very much to inaugurate and hold local conventions at appropriate centers, not simply here one and there another, but in a series successively, on some definite plan, and with an economical marshalling of all available resources. They could formulate and carry through with fine effect simultaneous meetings in a given week through the whole length and breadth of a Conference, reaching every church with circulars and literature and specially designated speakers. They could arrange a system of missionary deputations, which has done such wonders among our Wesleyan brethren in England and Canada. They could greatly extend the circulation of our excellent missionary periodicals, and could stimulate the missionary organization of the Sunday-schools, which in many places is still so greatly neglected.

All this *has been done* during the past few years by the New England Conference Missionary Society, and possibly by a few others. Enough certainly has been accomplished to demonstrate the feasibility of this proposed utilization of what Bishop Thoburn well called "an unused right arm." Why should not the movement spread? Let each Conference adopt a simple Constitution, elect officers under it, and go to work. We give on a subsequent page as a working model that in use by the New England Conference, simply adding that the sixteen members there provided for have been thus far made up of eight pastors, the four Presiding Elders, and four laymen, one from each district; and the arrangement has worked very well.

Much depends, of course, on the careful selection of the Managers, and the still more careful selection of the chief executive officers, especially the secretary. With the right ones in control, chosen solely for their zeal and efficiency in this particular branch of effort, and with sufficient powers entrusted to them so that they shall not be hampered, there is no reason why great good should not be effected. There is in every Conference, it may be assumed, a group of ministers whose hearts are in this work of Missions and who are ready to make sacrifices to further it. Let them be gotten together occasionally round a council table, and they will soon find ways to do something that will tell on the advancement of the Redeemer's kingdom in the world at large. It ought not to be impossible anywhere to bring this about. Let some one into whose hands this tract may fall and on whose heart God may place the burden move in the matter with vigor at once, and see that his own Conference wheels fully into line.

We cannot afford at this time to lose any agency or let any part of our skillfully devised machinery lie idle. Much larger sums of money must be raised for the cause and for the nations which cry to us so mightily on every hand for help. Our past deficiencies have been due not so much to the poverty of the people or even perhaps to their lack of the requisite consecration, as to the lack of adequate information and its accompanying inspiration. The Conference Missionary Society can greatly aid in supplying this need. It is the

missing link. It is the idle wheel that should be put in working order without delay. So shall the eleven hundred and thirty thousand dollars which we now raise for both Home and Foreign Missions before many years be increased to one million for each, and many a long-neglected wilderness be made to blossom as the rose.

### CONSTITUTION.

ARTICLE I. This Society shall be known as the ..... Conference Missionary Society, and shall be auxiliary to the Missionary Society of the M. E. Church.

ARTICLE II. All members of the Conference shall be members of this Society.

ARTICLE III. The Conference at each annual session shall appoint a Board of sixteen Managers, who shall choose from their own number the other officers of the Society, viz., a president, vice-president, secretary, and treasurer. These latter officers shall perform the duties usually connected with their names, and shall together constitute an Executive Committee.

ARTICLE IV. It shall be the chief duty of the Board of Managers to aid the Presiding Elders and the preachers-in-charge to carry out the directions of the Discipline in the chapter on Missions, so as to diffuse Missionary intelligence, increase the Missionary collections, and promote in all available ways the interests of the Missionary cause. They shall present a report to the Conference at each annual session, this report to include nominations

for a Board of Managers for the ensuing year. They shall have entire charge of the Conference Missionary anniversaries; they shall hold meetings for consultation as often as practicable, and shall be authorized to make all necessary by-laws not inconsistent with this Constitution.

ARTICLE V. This Constitution may be amended at any annual session of the Conference, by two-thirds of those present and voting.

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*On Sale at Mission Rooms, 150 Fifth Ave., New York.*

Price 50 cents per hundred.

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Rev. W. H. Belden  
Bridgeton  
N. J.

