

# The Wesleyan,

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## PRESBYTERIAN WORSHIP AS SEEN THROUGH METHODIST EYES.

A single service ought not perhaps to be taken as a type of a church's modes and habits of devotion at any time; but with certain branches of the great Christian family, especially those of positive principles and robust character, it would be difficult to find a preacher occupied among his own people for an hour or two, who would not reveal the characteristics of his sect in many particulars. We have but a limited range of observation from which to draw inferences for this article; yet our impressions are all based upon facts as we have seen them for ourselves. Where we record excellencies, we intend that they shall bring the advantage of example to such Methodist readers as may require their instruction; where we touch upon defects, it is more than probable that our judgment may be considered of so little value that they will not affect materially those with whom we do not agree.

A Methodist hearer in a Presbyterian public service, will be sure to find much that is suggestive; so much there is in common with his own modes of thought and worship, that he feels himself at home. Yet there are peculiarities which awaken no little thought by way of comparison or contrast. We note a few of the more prominent traits as they occur to the mind of a stranger.

There is among our Presbyterian brethren a very marked regard for the Bible. This reveals itself to us in this particular service—for we write of recent observation—in several ways. The Bible is freely used by the people. They follow the lessons and citations of texts for themselves, by turning each in his or her own book to the particular places indicated, and tracing the impression of the Holy Spirit on His own written page. The Scriptures are emphatically dwelt upon by the preacher. In the lesson, he expounds and enforces; in the sermon he "nails" to Scripture, as sung by one of the Scottish poets, though not perhaps in the most devotional connection. We observe even in the elocution of the opening lesson, in this instance, the same tender regard for the Spirit's meaning. While reading "If any man hath an ear," the preacher corrects himself. Common sense would suggest, of course, that the emphasis in that verse is not to be laid upon a word which would indicate that only those possessed of the external organ of hearing, are held responsible for having received a message from God. But do we always seek to ascertain, in reading the word of the Most High, whether we are really conveying the meaning designed, or openly doing violence to the plainest intentions of the Scriptures?

Coming down from the Reformation, cherished as a fundamental doctrine, this connection has adhered to the Presbyterian Church—that God is with the Word, in the Word, when read with the spirit and the understanding. We wish the blessed opinion were more prevalent. Either the Bible is God's message, or it is a huge deception. There can be no middle ground. As the sword of the Spirit it cannot be wielded with too much frequency or force. To that source most if not all converted persons will trace their early and late convictions. All that we have learned of God, of self, of duty, outside of Bible instruction, is not worth estimating. This being so, let us believe in the freest, fullest use of the Scriptures.

The same conscientiousness which brings here to the pulpit the pure word of God, brings also the most careful preparation in the sermon. We only wish it were less studiously adhered to,

though that may be altogether a question of propriety. The manuscript prevails more in the Presbyterian than in the Methodist pulpit by far. Indeed, we doubt whether in the Presbyterian Church itself the manuscript is not gaining greater mastery. This would all be well, if all preachers were good readers. Chalmers read, but Chalmers was specially endowed with reading gifts. A man is justified in using his manuscript only when he can look freely into the countenances of his people, speaking with his eyes as well as with his lips. When he loses this advantage, the hearer loses a principal part of the inspiration.

The Presbyterian Church believes, too, that the Pulpit is the preacher's throne—is the watch-tower of Zion. Religious work begins here, none other compares with it as a vantage ground for persuading men. We admit the conclusion, and sincerely hope every hindrance to the preservation of pulpit efficiency will be taken away.

One rarely hears a genuine Presbyterian prayer that does not take in in some way, the Church's missionary work. This must spring, in part at least, from an intimate relation between agencies in the home and foreign fields. When a people sends away a part of its own life to remote places, it is but natural that strong sympathy should exist between the present and the absent. If, therefore, a brotherhood desires to have missionaries remembered at home, some of themselves must become missionaries. We begin to give and pray in earnest when linked to mission work by ties of kindred and intimate relations. Another cause for these prayers is found in that common Christian instinct which continues to look out through the windows of the temple for Christ's coming. The world is to be one day restored, and the Churches, whether they make it an article of faith or not—continue to expect it.

Methodist ears cannot become reconciled to Presbyterian Psalms. As the voice of a past dispensation—as the cry of a Church that had no Christ except in prophecy—the Psalms do well as far as they go. But they include little of the principal elements which enter into the songs of Christianity as sung by the evangelical Church generally. There was a day, and there were conditions, in which the Psalms must have been amazingly impressive. Among rugged hills, sung by heroes of an unswerving faith, to tunes of slow and solemn majesty, one could long to be present amid the strains of that worship, if only for an hour. We can imagine what the Psalms could be in the mouths of Cameronians, their backs against the eternal hills, their feet upon their native heath, their faces to the foe, while "Mear" or "Dundee" made the mountains echo. But Psalms so rugged, married to the music of our day—fugues, altos, contraltos, tenors and countertenors—are somehow out of their natural element. Either send back the Psalms to their past associations, or bring forward the men and the mountains!

We wonder, too, how ever the colloquialisms and the sensationalisms of the modern style ever found their way into Presbyterian pulpits. We fear Talmage has much to account for in this; not that he has dispensed new thought to every brother who admires him, but that he has sent his sacred witticisms abroad stamped with a certain legality, merely because they are fashionable in Brooklyn. Anything bordering on lightness might escape censure among other preachers; but those priding themselves upon being the dragoons and artillerymen of the Church's army, will never appear to

good advantage in the toggery of Robin Hood.

But there! Shall we get credit for all the good that is in the intentions of our article?

FRATER.

## OUR SUPERNUMERARY FUNDS.

ARTICLE IV.

Some time ago the scientific world put forth a great deal of effort to discuss why a live fish, placed in a vessel full of water, would not cause the water to run over. Many ingenious theories were advanced; but, after a time, some one bethought himself of testing the so-called fact, to see whether any theory was needed. He discovered that there was nothing to explain; a discovery that should have been made at the beginning.

We have to some extent been following in the wake of these scientific experiments. The *how* of amalgamation, its difficulties, &c., have been discussed; perhaps it would be as well to enquire, Why all this? Why not let it alone? What necessity for union if it is a question or measure surrounded with so many, and so great obstacles? We acknowledge that we do not see any satisfactory answer to this question. The funds have grown up separated and distinct. Each has its characteristics, its peculiar features, both of accumulation and distribution—its strong points and its weak ones. Is there not danger, nay, almost a certainty, that Union will tend to weaken the strong points in one or both, without a corresponding good? We know that at our last Conference it was customary to say when objections were made to certain schemes,—"Well, what plan will you propose? We must do something!" Now, this propensity to be *doing something* is very good in its place; but is very apt, also, to result in *doing* what one ought not to do. Meddling often means meddling in matters ecclesiastical, as well as national. In this case, of course, the assertion is backed up by reference to Discipline, and Journals of General Conference. We will direct attention, then, first, to the position which the question occupies as seen from this standpoint:

In Journal Gen. Conf., p. 29, we find as follows:—"It is deemed desirable, as soon as legal and other difficulties can be removed to amalgamate the different funds of the United Church, and place them under the management of the Central Board."

This is very definite, and we have immediately following:—"For the present, the Supernumerary Ministers' Fund of the Canada Conferences, and the Supernumerary Ministers' Fund of the Conference of Eastern British America, shall be kept distinct, each department being managed by its own laws."

"The Toronto, London and Montreal Conferences shall, for the present, have one General Contingent Fund, and one General Children's Fund."

Now, these three are all the separate Connexional Funds that we have in our church. Here they are all placed in the same position, in reference to prospective amalgamation, and have, alike, arrangements for management made, simply for the present. We ask, then, why it should be deemed so necessary to amalgamate the one and not the others? Why was a Western Committee appointed to confer with the East in reference to the Supernumerary Fund (Jour. Gen. Conf., p. 184) whilst its two companions, the Children's Fund and the Contingent Fund, were left out in the cold? It cannot be because greater difficulties would surround the question in reference to the two last—the contrary is the case. Indeed, the Children's Fund, as being merely a tax, would be the simplest of all.

There is no question but that the present proposition favours the West far more than a general one would. Amalgamation of the Children's Fund would lift from the Eastern Conferences an annual burden of some five or six thousand dollars, whilst a union of the Contingent Funds would give us a share of their noble endowment of \$33,000—a grant from the Home Missionary Board some years since, as commutation money. It would not be fair, however, to say that this is

the explanation, as our Western brethren have not always shown themselves averse to amalgamation, simply because it was likely to entail financial loss. Whatever the reason may be, however, the measure proposed is one of too piecemeal a character to commend itself to very favorable consideration. The lower Conferences can scarcely be blamed, if, without being at all influenced by narrow or sectional feelings, they should fight shy of a proposal to single out for amalgamation the only fund in which they would be losers, whilst the others receive the go-by. If a measure had been submitted, looking to a complete union of all our Connexional Funds, it would have deserved careful consideration, as possessing, at least, what this does not, the merit of consistency, to say nothing of other merits of a more substantial character, which it is not necessary to mention.

Our position then is simply this:—If union renders amalgamation of the Supernumerary Funds necessary, either because the General Conference deems it desirable for the purpose of cultivating a closer fraternal relationship on any account whatsoever, then union renders necessary, also, the amalgamation of the other two Funds. There can be no argument used in reference to the one, that cannot be used with greater effect in reference to the three. But if, on the other hand, it is not necessary or advisable to amalgamate the two latter Funds, then union does not in itself render amalgamation of any Fund necessary or advisable; nay, it may develop conditions, rendering further subdivision desirable, as in the case of the Children's Fund; and each Fund must be judged from its own standpoint and by its own merits.

Either of these positions we fear would be fatal to amalgamation. The first would hardly commend itself to our Western brethren, and, even if it did, the question would still remain, whether we have a right to barter away the interests of our supernumeraries for any other advantage to the church, however great. If on the other hand we look at this Fund alone we are confronted, first of all, with the difficulty of finding an "equitable" and satisfactory basis. We confess that we see little hope of accomplishing it. But if it could be done, if a scheme fair to all could be devised, would a union of the two Funds be desirable? This point would deserve most careful consideration. Personally we are of opinion that the answer would be in the negative. Viewed simply in the interest of the Fund it is doubtful whether further subdivision would not be far preferable to amalgamation. Localizing an interest will generally cause it to appeal more strongly to the sympathies of our people; and to no question can this principle be applied with greater force than to the one under discussion. Neither should too much weight be attached to the argument in favour of any such scheme founded upon the supposed necessity of strengthening the bonds of union. The object is good but the means might be questioned. Good division fences are sometimes the best security to brotherly love. Too much union often brings more of discord than of affection. It is not worth while to conquer the territory faster than we can consolidate our rule. What, with our Missionary and our Educational Funds, and our transfer arrangements, we have, at the present, about as much of union on hand as we can conveniently manage. It can scarcely be said that the success attending any of them, as yet, furnishes a very strong argument for attempting more radical changes.

## METHODIST EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS.

ANNUAL MEETING OF EXMOUTH STREET  
AND CENTENARY CHURCHES.

Centenary and Exmouth Street Churches unitedly held their fourth annual educational meeting in the church on Exmouth Street last evening, with but a small attendance, which was, no doubt, in a great measure due to the short notice given of the meeting as well as to the rain storm.

Rev. J. S. Phinney, of Fairville, conducted the opening devotional exercises. Rev. Mr. Hart, who presided, said that he regretted the small number present

but hoped their ardor would be none the less. Rev. Mr. Sprague then read the

ANNUAL REPORT.

Summarized, it states that the Board of the Educational Society express themselves pleased to say that the appeal made last year has not been in vain. An increase of ten per cent. on the gross income of the society is a cause for thankfulness and encouragement, yet the requirements of the work are so pressing that they hope a more liberal effort will be made during the present year. The aggregate deficiency of the four institutions aided by the society last year was \$7,500, toward which grants were made and paid to the amount of \$4,000. In doing this the Board expended the balance on hand from the preceding year, and also all available current income. The present year is commenced without debt but the society is dependent upon current income to meet the grants made to students and also to the institution. These two items amount to \$8,500 to which must be added at least \$1,000 for examinations and expenses of deputation to circuits and districts. If the society is to stand free of debt at the meeting of the General Conference an effort must be made to raise nearly \$10,000. This, however, does not represent the amount necessary to free the educational work from financial embarrassment. The aggregate deficiencies of colleges this year were \$8,033.07, of which the grants in aid supply but 50 per cent. The annual deficiency can only be obviated by an increase of endowments or by enlarged annual grants from the society; the latter was thought the preferable mode.

During the past year there have been 79 young men in training for the ministry in the three Theological schools—47 at Victoria College, Cobourg, Ont.; 17 at Wesley College, Sackville; and 15 at the Wesleyan Theological College, Montreal. Of these, 64 have been received on trial in the various conferences; the remaining 15 have been licensed as local preachers. An analysis of the classes ordained in the three Western Conferences this year shows that out of a total of 32, 19 have enjoyed the advantages of training in the colleges for a period of from two to four years. Out of 36 received on trial eight have received preliminary training for a period of one or two years.

The report next adverted to the work that was being done in the higher training of the youth of both sexes. The prestige of the college in the Maritime Provinces was shown by three gratifying facts: the president of that institution has been appointed Chief Superintendent of Education for Nova Scotia; the professor of Natural Science has been appointed Provincial Assayer for New Brunswick; and a member of the Freshman class, who received his entire preparation at the institution, has carried off the Gilchrist scholarship.

The expenditures were in excess of the receipts, and the deficiency had been provided for by the balance from the preceding year. Of the \$505 contributed by the New Brunswick and P. E. Island Conference, the St. John district had given \$160.61.

PROF. BURWASH

was the first speaker. He thought it spoke well for the interest taken in the society's operations that it had even drawn the number that was present. There was nothing attractive to be presented—nothing but bare facts and figures to give to them, and when such a number was present on so unfavorable an evening, it showed the attention they gave, and the importance of this matter. The Educational Society had two objects—one for sustaining education under the fostering care of the church, and an educated ministry. He spoke of the higher collegiate education in the United States as being principally under the care of the church, and gave statistics to show the large number of colleges controlled by Methodists. He asked what higher aim could be desired than to aid in securing an educated ministry? Referring to the press as one of the great educators of the public, he paid a high compliment to the *Telegraph*, and the efforts it had taken to gather and disseminate news. He compared the present age with those of the past and thought that, in some respects, man was deteriorating. The age certainly was