

A SIGNIFICANT DISCUSSION.

This year's session of the British Conference will long be regarded as one of the accounts a truly memorable one. Several noteworthy features characterized its proceedings. But it was mainly signalized by a remarkable discussion of the educational question.

This report has attracted marked attention from the chief organs of British political sentiment, and no doubt has been thoughtfully read by the Parliamentary leaders of both great parties in the State.

Carefully studying this report, which occupies twenty closely printed columns in the Watchman, we derive manifold impressions therefrom.

We are impressed with the belief that the discussion reproduced therein was, perhaps, the ablest that ever took place in the British Methodist Conference. Every minister that sustained a part in it had something to say worth saying, and said it forcibly and well; and the chief speeches on both sides were noble specimens of manly argumentative eloquence.

We are impressed most favourably by the perfect freedom which marked the discussion. The liberty of prophesying exercised on the subject under consideration was complete. Men said what they thought and declared what felt with the utmost possible frankness. An air of perfect sincerity and earnestness pervaded the entire debate. All this was of good augury. Free discussion of matters fairly open to debate in Church and State is a safety-valve of wondrous power, though many men both saintly and sensible are surprisingly slow of heart to believe the fact.

We note with pleasure that the debate was conducted in the most christian manner. Men put their arguments as strongly and pointedly as they could. But they indulged in no unseemly personalities. There were no unbrotherly insinuations thrown out against each other by the rival disputants—no disparaging remarks, no bitter invective.

We perceive from this discussion that very marked differences of opinion on the educational question of the day in England exist among the leading men in the British Conference; Mr. Arthur, who opened the debate, desired Conference to adopt a resolution approving the policy of gradually merging the denominational primary school system as far as it exists in England, in a more general national system under which the Bible should be used in the schools.

With this desire it was evident that many members of Conference, some of them men of decided mark, were in sympathy. But the adoption of Mr. Arthur's resolution was vehemently resisted by such men as Ex-Presidents Shaw and Osborn, Dr. Rigg, Messrs. Bedford, Oliver, Stephenson, Jenkins, Coley, Simpson and others of note. Yet they deprecated taking a vote on that resolution; and got rid of it by passing an amendment remitting the consideration of the matter to a large joint committee of ministers and laymen, to be appointed in a way that will enable them to express the mind of the whole Connection, on the subject involved.

We conclude from the tenor of the discussion that the introduction of the lay element into the Conference at no distant day must be regarded as a foregone conclusion. The chief ground on which the adoption of the amendment referred to was urged, was that on a subject so nearly concerning the interests of the Methodist laity as that of primary education, Conference ought not even to pronounce an opinion until after the sentiment of that laity has been elicited thereon. To us it is clear that from this ground to the conclusion that the mind of the laity on all matters chiefly concerning it ought to be expressed in Conference itself by its own chosen representatives, is a distance logically measured, is very short indeed.

Finally, a study of this singularly able discussion reveals the fact that the feeling of the ministry of the Parent Methodist body toward the Established Church in England is fast changing. The old feeling of reverence and attachment is passing away. It is in vain that some of the senior ministers appeal to the Methodist traditions or even to the great name of Wesley on this head. The rising ministry in English Methodism is manifestly arriving at the conviction that it has a right to claim in the eye of the law no toleration merely but full and absolute religious equality.

J. R. N.

ENGLISH CORRESPONDENCE.

More notes concerning the London Conference.

DEAR MR. EDITOR.—The Conference protracted its session until late on Friday the 16th inst. The public were admitted into the chapel a little after ten o'clock, P.M. President and Secretary, the passing of the accustomed votes of thanks, and the devotional services which closed the whole proceedings. Plenty of work remained to be done, sufficient business to occupy many more days, but it was imperative that the Conference should close on Friday night, and many matters of prime importance are either referred to special committees, to District meetings, or to the next Conference. Year by year the business of the Confer-

ence increases, and as the present arrangements necessitate so much attention to the purely administrative work in all its varied departments, very little time remains for legislation. The difficulty was felt in no ordinary degree at the close of this Conference and it is plain that some change must be made, either by committing more extensive functions to the District meetings, devising some plan by which time can be saved in the earlier stages of the Conference session.

As matters are now arranged, great and grave questions are hastily talked over, or talked out; discussions arise upon points of absorbing interest, and a large number of the brethren have left their distant homes, and suggestions from Districts, notices of motions, and budding schemes of reform or improvement are ruthlessly set aside, solely for want of time in which to investigate their merits.

This unsatisfactory state of affairs was somewhat intensified at the close of this London Conference, as a day and half had been given up to a great Confederal debate upon the all-absorbing question of elementary education. Several notices bearing upon this topic had been laid before Conference, and urgent requests were made that the business might be fully and fairly discussed at an early date. This was not found to be practicable until Conference was in the third week of its session, and some of the brethren had left. Yet a full and deeply interesting Conference, addressed to itself one of the most thorough and exhaustive debates that have been witnessed for many years. Mr. Arthur opened with an able and argumentative speech delivered, notwithstanding his bodily weakness, with great force and clear demonstration of his positions. It was a tremendous attack upon the Denominational system in its present aspects, and more especially upon the future of Methodism in country villages and small towns.

The effects of the system, upon the education of Ireland were forcibly presented and the Conference was urged to adhere to a grand National scheme in which Bible reading should be included, and money might be left to the State to attend to the work of secular education, and the Churches would be free to discharge their duty to the young without help or hindrance from Government. Dr. Waddy, Mr. J. R. Hargreaves, Mr. Holland and many others delivered addresses on the same side of the question. The venerable W. Shaw moved an amendment to Mr. Arthur's motion, and in a speech of great merit presented the substance of all the arguments advanced on that side of the question. Dr. Rigg and Mr. Oliver as representing the great Training Department, Mr. Bedford, Dr. Osborn, and many others were heard in favor of things as they are, or in favor of delay, or on the impolicy of coming to a decision until the Laity has been invited to express their opinion.

Much anxiety was manifested on the part of the leading men who are committed to the present policy of Methodism, to avoid a formal vote upon the question. Conflicting opinions prevailed as to what would have been the fate of Mr. Arthur's motion, had it been put to a vote. Many were confident of a majority in its favor, whilst others were fully persuaded of its complete defeat. The whole matter resulted in a mixed Committee, to be elected at the ensuing District Meetings in September, and to meet before the assembling of Parliament. So it rests for the present, but there is a compact and increasing body of ministers in opposition to the present Educational policy of Methodism, and this great debate was absolutely necessary, and will prepare the way for some action, and initiate some changes in this great department of our work.

The work of the Stationing Committee appeared to take some time, and to be one of much difficulty. The discussions in the open Conference were protracted upon some special cases, and partook a little too much of a personal character to be quite pleasant. This of course is unavoidable where the consent of the Conference is needed to confirm the stations, and where special appeals are made either by circuits or ministers. At length the important question of the stationing of the brethren began to make quiet preparations for their departure and the Conference is not again so full during any of its remaining sittings.

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A GLANCE AT PROVINCIAL PRESBYTERIANISM.

(Continued.) The minutes of the recent Synod afford evidence that our Presbyterians brethren are not exempt from the trials of ministerial changes, transfers, &c. The distractions caused by an unusual number of removals among ourselves this year, with the exceptional incident to the demands of exceptional circuits, and men, will secure general sympathy for our friends who report six translations, one induction and four receptions from other fields. Even this we assume does not include all the disturbances of pastoral ties which have occurred within their boundaries. The growing, changing tastes of ministers and people, the accidents of health, prudent foresight with some, and ardent ambition with others, will ever militate against the settled pastoral principle. But this is no adverse judg-

ment. We have yet to discover the system whose machinery never grates and never wears. There is as large a proportion of lengthened and honoured pastoral connections among the Presbyterians in this as in any country of the world. And wherever they exist they are almost invariably beautiful as specimens of Christian devotedness and fidelity. Several ordinations took place, indicating we suppose the extension of their pastoral territory.

From a committee appointed to report on the business and duties of the Synod, (an admirable arrangement,) the suggestion was adopted, that a meeting be held for an hour at the commencement of each evening's session. The early prayer meeting was once a notable feature of Methodist Conferences, it requires a forty-horse power sensation to draw a respectable audience now in the early evening of the day. We the Synod and Conference once more, that ministers of both churches might gather for spiritual refreshing once a day in a common house of prayer. Let our Presbyterian friends hold to this custom. If Tyndall denied evidence of our confidence in the Synod and Conference once more, that ministers of both churches might gather for spiritual refreshing once a day in a common house of prayer. Let our Presbyterian friends hold to this custom. If Tyndall denied evidence of our confidence in the Synod and Conference once more, that ministers of both churches might gather for spiritual refreshing once a day in a common house of prayer. Let our Presbyterian friends hold to this custom.

There is a very close connection between the Synod and the Presbyteries. The smaller bodies really govern the larger; and the presiding officer of the Synod is pointed out by the Presbyteries. This machinery is required to give proof of his fidelity in the pulpit by preaching an official sermon, which is the first exercise of the assembled body. It may be said that many of the ministers in this country are not through God's direction, with new disposition and purpose to improve the Synod and go out anew for holy service! The hearers of the introductory sermon this year, will not soon forget the retiring reverend for Christ, which was a most interesting feature of the service and so sure a pledge that Socinianism gains no advantage among the wealthy in elevated talents and liberal culture in our land. The church thus fostered may not be ostentatious, but mankind will read some day with admiration of its growth.

The principal discussion in Synod this year was on the question of marriage with a deceased wife's sister. A woman was admitted to membership in one of the churches who was united in marriage to the husband of her deceased half-sister. A formal complaint was presented, and the Synod, hence the discussion. Professor McKnight of Dalhousie College, by his acquaintance with the language and customs of the Hebrews, his mature study of this subject in all its bearings and a happy command of words and temper, was well qualified to present the subject in a clear and convincing manner. He virtually exhausted it for the few who were so imprudent as to attempt a reply, were, moreover, we thought, not quite so tolerant as they might have been. Surely there were so many wise and good men differed from them; where the British Home of the Synod, and travelling brethren, in opposition to their views, and only a few of the learned Bishops of the upper Chambers have prevented the entire abolition of the law as it now exists, men can afford to weigh the doubt. Besides, in this country there is no law against the kind of union alluded to, and the only ground of objection is of a purely legal opinion. In the Methodist Conference this question would not open an hour's debate; and it is more we opine from an implied injunction in the Confession of Faith than any direct expression of the Mosaic law that the opposing champions of the Synod met in a view of the subject. The Synod went back to the affair upon the Presbytery in which the trouble originated, enjoining upon it to sustain the law of the church, without degrading that law or suggesting what was to be done with the woman.

We happened to be present when the subject of Home Missions was under consideration. We have seldom heard speeches more in harmony with the great theme and the occasion. There was no aiming at eloquence, yet we all felt the warm response which alone can pronounce upon eloquence and approve it—the heart's assent. The Church's work is the Church's vitality; but the main consideration is that souls are perishing around us for lack of knowledge. It would pay our Conference to appoint experts who might ascertain the secrets by which the Presbyterian Ministers manage to secure the souls of the heathen. A folio was paid, and \$60 remained in the hands of the Treasurer! It has always been a jubilee with us when we obtained over 50 per cent.

The Delegates to Synod from the United States did not impress us as being superior to our brethren in the Dominion, with a view to their greetings with very respectful attention. There were at least a dozen in the Synod who would awaken far more enthusiasm in speaking of their own land and the obligations of their holy office. McLeod, Baine, Bennet, Sedgewick, Pugh, and others, have adorned the British House of Commons, and our own have been equally successful in the shade. It has always seemed to us that there is something in our climate or the elements of our race which is congenial to oratory; for we have possessed legislative speakers in past years who would have adorned the British House of Commons, and our own have been equally successful in the shade. It has always seemed to us that there is something in our climate or the elements of our race which is congenial to oratory; for we have possessed legislative speakers in past years who would have adorned the British House of Commons, and our own have been equally successful in the shade.

Negotiations with the other Presbyterian bodies in the Dominion, with a view to union, have been progressing for some time; but there is much conflicting with all their courting. The "Standards," Catechisms and Confession of Faith—are perpetually coming up as barriers to amicable decisions in connection with great questions among our neighbours. Two things seem very clear to us who look on calmly at this scene, there is considerable difference of opinion in our day, even among those who profess to subscribe to them; in regard to these standards; and these exponents of Christian doctrine and discipline are creating a great deal of trouble while they clog the wheels of the ecclesiastical machinery. We have two defects, and we say it with all reverence—they are ponderous and antiquated. The world is all the time advancing, and the Truth of God needs less and less of human bolstering as the minds of men become capable of appreciating its very plain import. Commentaries may be useful as aids; but confessions must not continue as fetters upon the Church. Beyond the general purpose of keeping the coming generation to the evangelical doctrines of the scriptures, we have no right to go; and we need not wonder that Christians now deny the force of an argument or the authenticity of a precept simply because our fathers subscribed to them centuries back.

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Although we have already a fine collection of Geological, Mineralogical and other specimens neatly labelled and arranged, still rocks, shells, fossils, dried plants, &c., are always acceptable, as they increase the facilities for instruction. Many of our worthy friends who follow the sea and visit foreign countries, could, we think, without much trouble and expense, obtain for us, specimens of the Gulfweed, tropical seaweeds, plants and flowers, shells, birds, birds' eggs, the skins of birds and small quadrupeds, curiosities, &c., &c. Seaweed can easily be preserved, for some time at least, by sealing it up in a bottle of salt water; leaves and dried plants may be preserved in the same way, by frequently changing; and skins, by sprinkling the inside freely with powdered alum. As stuffed birds can be transported without damage only with difficulty, the skins may be sent unstuffed, preserved with alum as indicated, and folded so as not to soil the paper, in the conchological department a complete collection of the Crustacea and Bivalves of our coasts, which could readily be made by some friend on the seaboard is needed. All donations to the museum and library are gratefully acknowledged in the annual catalogue of the College and Academy.

There is a fine opportunity at present for some wealthy, benevolent friends of education to secure a most interesting and profitable college in the United States. On taking up the catalogue of almost any respectable College in the United States we see the names of founders of chairs prefixed to the titles of the respective professors; as Bassey Professor of Law; Parkman, Prof. of Theology; Perkins, Prof. of Mathematics; McLellan, Prof. of History. (See Harvard catalogue.) Are there not men in these colonies to whom Providence has entrusted more or less wealth, who are fired with a holy ambition to hand down their names to posterity covered with glory? The man who would give \$25,000, or even \$10,000, to found a Chair at Mount Allison, would himself receive the thanks of thousands, would himself see some of the happy results of his philanthropy, and would leave a name that would be held in highest honor through long centuries to come!

Many parents and guardians from the cities and other places, accompanying their charge, have lately visited the Institutions for the first time; and their high admiration of the buildings and appointments has been freely expressed. The operations of the year have commenced most auspiciously. There are more students than there were this time last year, and their industry and good department promise well. In the College and Male Academy President Allison and his coadjutors, and in the Ladies' Academy Principal Inch and Miss Mellich, again, the President and the Faculty are all laboring with the earnestness, the enthusiasm, and the faith that compel success.

At six on Friday evening we met for our last meeting. A short address was given by the President, and the number of persons present was quite a number—about one hundred and twenty. A few more came in afterwards, but I do not think that at any time during the sitting there were more than 150 ministers present. A short address was given by the President, and the number of persons present was quite a number—about one hundred and twenty. A few more came in afterwards, but I do not think that at any time during the sitting there were more than 150 ministers present.

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THE MUSEUM.

Conspicuous among the numerous donations of the friends of education to the museum, is the large and beautiful collection of stuffed birds generally presented last spring by the Rev. W. W. Colpitts, of Powell, P. E. I. Through the efforts of the Professor of Natural Science and others, further additions have been made in the Ornithological department, and at present our native birds are tolerably well represented.

Although we have already a fine collection of Geological, Mineralogical and other specimens neatly labelled and arranged, still rocks, shells, fossils, dried plants, &c., are always acceptable, as they increase the facilities for instruction. Many of our worthy friends who follow the sea and visit foreign countries, could, we think, without much trouble and expense, obtain for us, specimens of the Gulfweed, tropical seaweeds, plants and flowers, shells, birds, birds' eggs, the skins of birds and small quadrupeds, curiosities, &c., &c. Seaweed can easily be preserved, for some time at least, by sealing it up in a bottle of salt water; leaves and dried plants may be preserved in the same way, by frequently changing; and skins, by sprinkling the inside freely with powdered alum. As stuffed birds can be transported without damage only with difficulty, the skins may be sent unstuffed, preserved with alum as indicated, and folded so as not to soil the paper, in the conchological department a complete collection of the Crustacea and Bivalves of our coasts, which could readily be made by some friend on the seaboard is needed. All donations to the museum and library are gratefully acknowledged in the annual catalogue of the College and Academy.

There is a fine opportunity at present for some wealthy, benevolent friends of education to secure a most interesting and profitable college in the United States. On taking up the catalogue of almost any respectable College in the United States we see the names of founders of chairs prefixed to the titles of the respective professors; as Bassey Professor of Law; Parkman, Prof. of Theology; Perkins, Prof. of Mathematics; McLellan, Prof. of History. (See Harvard catalogue.) Are there not men in these colonies to whom Providence has entrusted more or less wealth, who are fired with a holy ambition to hand down their names to posterity covered with glory? The man who would give \$25,000, or even \$10,000, to found a Chair at Mount Allison, would himself receive the thanks of thousands, would himself see some of the happy results of his philanthropy, and would leave a name that would be held in highest honor through long centuries to come!

Many parents and guardians from the cities and other places, accompanying their charge, have lately visited the Institutions for the first time; and their high admiration of the buildings and appointments has been freely expressed. The operations of the year have commenced most auspiciously. There are more students than there were this time last year, and their industry and good department promise well. In the College and Male Academy President Allison and his coadjutors, and in the Ladies' Academy Principal Inch and Miss Mellich, again, the President and the Faculty are all laboring with the earnestness, the enthusiasm, and the faith that compel success.

At six on Friday evening we met for our last meeting. A short address was given by the President, and the number of persons present was quite a number—about one hundred and twenty. A few more came in afterwards, but I do not think that at any time during the sitting there were more than 150 ministers present. A short address was given by the President, and the number of persons present was quite a number—about one hundred and twenty. A few more came in afterwards, but I do not think that at any time during the sitting there were more than 150 ministers present.

THE OPENING YEAR.

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CONFERENCE SKETCHES.

FRIDAY, MIDNIGHT.

The report of the Memorial Committee always opens up conversation on many interesting subjects. There is no saying beforehand what subjects will be presented, and the Synod is not prepared to meet the extent to which they will grow. An uninteresting item may awaken a man with a crocheted and a conscience, and we are presently into a hearty talk, and find good metal in the unpromising ore. A memorial for a column in a schedule; the Church's work is the Church's vitality; but the main consideration is that souls are perishing around us for lack of knowledge. It would pay our Conference to appoint experts who might ascertain the secrets by which the Presbyterian Ministers manage to secure the souls of the heathen. A folio was paid, and \$60 remained in the hands of the Treasurer! It has always been a jubilee with us when we obtained over 50 per cent.

The Delegates to Synod from the United States did not impress us as being superior to our brethren in the Dominion, with a view to their greetings with very respectful attention. There were at least a dozen in the Synod who would awaken far more enthusiasm in speaking of their own land and the obligations of their holy office. McLeod, Baine, Bennet, Sedgewick, Pugh, and others, have adorned the British House of Commons, and our own have been equally successful in the shade. It has always seemed to us that there is something in our climate or the elements of our race which is congenial to oratory; for we have possessed legislative speakers in past years who would have adorned the British House of Commons, and our own have been equally successful in the shade.

Negotiations with the other Presbyterian bodies in the Dominion, with a view to union, have been progressing for some time; but there is much conflicting with all their courting. The "Standards," Catechisms and Confession of Faith—are perpetually coming up as barriers to amicable decisions in connection with great questions among our neighbours. Two things seem very clear to us who look on calmly at this scene, there is considerable difference of opinion in our day, even among those who profess to subscribe to them; in regard to these standards; and these exponents of Christian doctrine and discipline are creating a great deal of trouble while they clog the wheels of the ecclesiastical machinery. We have two defects, and we say it with all reverence—they are ponderous and antiquated. The world is all the time advancing, and the Truth of God needs less and less of human bolstering as the minds of men become capable of appreciating its very plain import. Commentaries may be useful as aids; but confessions must not continue as fetters upon the Church. Beyond the general purpose of keeping the coming generation to the evangelical doctrines of the scriptures, we have no right to go; and we need not wonder that Christians