

here are a great many professors, and preachers, and theological periodicals, which confess frankly that they accept neither the whole of the Lutheran or Reformed doctrinal system, nor the whole of what is common in both.

Unable, therefore, to state the doctrine of the union as a Church, we have to take up the leading parties of the union in succession, to explain their doctrinal peculiarities, and to ascertain their numeric strength. Our readers are already aware of that. At great parties of the Prussian Church, at least as far as they rally around doctrinal differences, correspond to our various American denominations, with this difference only, that our American denominations, resting wholly upon the voluntary consent of their members, can present in official statistical figures the number of their clergymen and members, while the strength of the parties in a state church like the Prussian, remains always a controversial topic, even among the parties themselves. Still more difficult is it for one who does not live in their midst to arrive at any certain conclusion concerning this point. He made for himself with stern impartiality, the statements of all parties, all, of course, inclined to overrate their own faction; he must follow with close attention the proceedings of ecclesiastical assemblies, general and particular, and of the free associations, in order to learn what party is defended by the greater devotion of the mass, and by the greater zeal and activity, he must, in fine, extend his researches to the periodical press of all provinces, for in a hundred cases he finds only there a clew to the religious predilections and tendencies of ministers and congregations. These preparations we have made for some time with unwearied search, and so we feel somewhat hopeful of being able in our next article to give, although not statistical numbers, yet some light on the strength of the various parties which, as soon as Divine Providence will loosen the present disastrous subjection of the Church to the rule of the State, are fully prepared to organize, without further changes, into independent Protestant Churches.—Advocate & Jour.

Provincial Wesleyan

THURSDAY, JUNE 25, 1857.

Communications designed for this paper must be accompanied by the name of the writer in confidence. We do not undertake to return rejected articles. We do not assume responsibility for the opinions of correspondents.

Meeting of Conference.

THE CONFERENCE is now in session at Sackville. The circuits of our Connection are left for a short time without their preachers, and from some of them at least the men of God who have been wont to minister in holy times have taken, or will shortly take, their final departure. The union which several years have been busy in cementing is about to be severed; and perhaps of many of our congregations it may be said that never again on earth will eyes that have glistened with sanctified emotion as the Word has been proclaimed by Christ's ambassador gaze upon him who first taught them to discern the beauty of holiness. The past year has been remarkable for the blessed manifestation of the Spirit's influence in many portions of our Zion. Numbers have been led to flee from the wrath to come and to lay hold upon the hope set before them in Christ; and who will say it is a strange thing if the affections of the young disciple cling to the instrument of his conversion, or pronounce it a sinful weakness if he feels that from his spiritual guide and counsellor and friend 'tis hard to part! And assuredly the fathers in Christ, who through the gospel have begotten these beloved children, will suffer a parental pang as they consign to the care and nurture of others their babes in the Lord. On affecting cases like these there are some who would find an objection to the itinerant system. They are touching incidents of that system indeed, but it by no means follows that they indicate an evil in it. On the contrary, how far may they not go to prove the benefits of this arrangement if these very revivals are the fruits of that itinerancy, establishing the justice of Mr. Wesley's remark, that the people profit less by any one person than by a variety of preachers, while they

"Use the gifts on each bestowed, Tempered by the art of God."

This Conference assembles at a period of profound peace and promising prosperity in all the borders of Methodism. The Parent Body in Great Britain has passed of late years through fiery trials. It has been purged in the furnace; and at this moment the brotherly love, which is its great and glowing characteristic, shines with a purer and brighter flame. British Methodism was stung for a time by the poisoned arrows which treacherous hands aimed at its heart, and stricken in soul when it found them winged with plumage from its own nest, but it never ceased to prosecute the great work appointed it of God, and now that it has recovered from the paralytic blow which Heaven imparted to it grace and strength to sustain, it moves on mightier than before. It has planned the noble purpose of raising its Missionary income from less than one hundred and twenty thousand, to at least one hundred and fifty thousand, pounds per annum. It pours its energies with all its ancient ardour into the work of home evangelization, offering to the world in the zeal it displays in preaching the Gospel to the poor in England conjoined with the anxiety it evinces to fulfil the great commission of the Saviour, "Go ye into all the world and preach the Gospel to every creature," the best comment on the axiom, Charity begins at home,—the best refutation of the idea it is too often employed to defend. It has given birth and sustenance to educational agencies which are spreading their beneficent influence far and wide. Its finances give token in the support they receive of the Christian spirit of its people, and in their management of the wisdom of its officers. The best of all, is the swelling numbers of justified believers who seek admission within its pale proclaim that the labors of its ministers are not in vain in the Lord, but that God of a truth is with them.

Of the progress of Methodism in the United States of America; of its progress in the affiliated churches of the continent or colonies—in France, in Australia, in Canada, here; we might write many things, but at present let it suffice for us to add that

in all it prospers,—in most it prospers abundantly. For our own Connection we think we may say that the two years which have elapsed since the Wesleyan districts of Eastern British America were formed into an independent Church have afforded many proofs of the propriety and prudence of that step, and that the vigor of its nascent state indicates the approach of its ascendant maturity. To realize this pleasing anticipation our societies and congregations must labor incessantly in the spirit of consecration and prayer.

The Canada Conference.

THE Christian Guardian of the 10th inst. contains an official report of the opening services and proceedings of the thirty-fourth Annual Conference of the Wesleyan Methodist Church in Canada. It assembled in Richmond-street Church, Toronto, on Wednesday the 3rd inst. The number of Ministers present was over two hundred. There are now, we believe, about three hundred ministers in connexion with the Conference. "Persons not familiar with the ceaseless workings of Wesleyan Methodism in Canada," say the Reporters, "can form but an imperfect idea of the wonderful rapidity with which the number of Ministers is increasing; our societies are multiplying in every direction, and our labours and responsibilities growing on our hands." In addition to the delegate from England, Dr. Stinson, there were present three representatives from the United States, and two, Dr. Knight and Dr. Evans, from our own Conference. "The office of Secretary, the highest in the gift of the Conference, is this year conferred on the Rev. James Spencer; the Rev. John Borland was appointed Assistant Secretary, and the Rev. I. B. Howard, Journal Secretary; the Revs. G. Case and J. Preston were appointed Conference Reporters. Shortly after the appointment of the officers of the Conference, the Rev. Joseph Stinson, D.D., was introduced to the body as the Representative of the British Conference. The visit of Dr. Stinson is peculiarly gratifying to us at the present time, from the fact, that, though the English Conference has, on various occasions appointed members of its body to fill important official positions in our Connection, it has never before honored us by the appointment of one of its number to appear among us as its Representative; and, what makes this matter still more pleasing, is the fact, we believe, that ours is the first of all the affiliated Conferences on which this distinguishing honor has been conferred."

Seventeen brethren were recommended from the various District Meetings to be received into full connexion with the Conference and ordained. The public reception of these young men the editor of the Christian Guardian represents as one of the most impressive and delightful that he ever attended. A deep feeling of religious emotion seemed to pervade the large assembly while the word of Divine grace was proclaimed and the imposing service of ordination performed.

A most important movement has been initiated by the Conference for the purpose of collecting information relative to the early history, past progress and present position of the Wesleyan Methodist Church in Canada. The Rev. J. Spencer, who for six years past has had the editorial management of the Christian Guardian, was by a large majority re-elected to the office whose duties he has so long discharged with tact, temper and ability.

Episcopal Preaching in Exeter Hall.

A pleasing innovation on the practice of prelates and clergymen of the Church of England has lately been the subject of remark in the House of Lords. Exeter Hall has been occupied, and will continue to be occupied for several Sabbath evenings through the Summer, as a preaching place by Ministers of that Church, among whom two bishops and two deans are prominent. This irregularity, as some profess to consider it whose practice leads us to suppose that they deem the salvation of souls a matter of subordinate importance to the preservation of ecclesiastical order and the perpetuity of ancient forms, is justified, we are glad to observe, in clear and emphatic phrase, by the prime of all England, the venerable Archbishop of Canterbury, and by the Bishop of London, in whose diocese the presumed irregularity occurs. The Puseyite section of the Church, startled by conduct in their eyes so strange and scandalous, as preaching in a place not consecrated nor even licensed for the performance of Divine worship," put forward Viscount Duncannon to ask the Bishop of

London in the House of Lords whether this new and singular procedure had his sanction, and was considered by him consistent with the discipline of the church. The bishop replied in a manner, we dare say, not very satisfactory to Lord Duncannon, but certainly most gratifying to the lovers of immortal souls. He showed that the meetings were in strict accordance with the Act for securing liberty of Religious Worship, and stated his belief that they were not only legal, but in the highest degree expedient. He said he believed there were hundreds and thousands of persons in that metropolis who had not entered a place of worship for many years,—he believed that some persons of this class were brought to the meetings by the noble lord had alluded, and he did heartily hope and trust that they did not go there without receiving benefit. Moreover, he believed that those who conducted these meetings had most earnestly at heart the welfare of the labouring classes of the country, and had every reason to hope that by leading them to hear the Word of God preached and the sacred services of the Church read in such a place, they would ultimately make them, what they were not at present, habitual worshippers in churches. The Archbishop of Canterbury added an observation that he could not imagine any greater reproach or disparagement to the church than to suppose it incapable of accommodating itself to the changing necessities of the age.

The ultraists of the high Church party, then, took nothing by their motion. They would gladly restrict the preaching of the Word to places ceremonially consecrated or specially licensed for the "performance of Divine worship." They do not seem to consider that the place where that Word is proclaimed in sincerity and truth is consecrated by the fact itself; and that it would be an insufferable stigma that in a professedly Christian country the words which Christ spake from the mountain and by the sea-side should not be iterated save within enclosures specially licensed for "the performance of Divine worship." It is matter of thankfulness that the interests of the National Church are presided over by men who do not hesitate to fulfil the duty of carrying the glad tidings of salvation to the poor wanderers from the pale of the church, even by visiting the highways and hedges, and preaching in places not specially licensed for such a "performance." We are glad that there are bishops who think of something higher in connexion with Divine worship than the performance, and feel that the work to which they are consecrated has concerns of grander moment than adherence to mere usage.

The Theatre and the Race Course.

Two great abominations! It is gratifying to learn that our city authorities have refused to sanction the projected races: we trust they will respond favorably to the memorial against theatrical exhibitions. The Presbyterian Witness has lately contained articles of just severity upon the Theatre, and the following remarks of the Christian Messenger, in noticing a late public meeting, have point and pungency.— "A Public Meeting was held in the Division Room, Temperance Hall, on Saturday evening last, for the purpose of considering the evils to which Halifax is shortly to be exposed by the establishment of a permanent theatre and drinking saloon; and the best means to be used to avert those evils. Addresses were delivered by several gentlemen, who, while they did not lose sight of the arguments often used in support of dramatic performances, yet showed clearly that the immorality and vice invariably associated with the theatre, and especially when accompanied with places for drinking, were a sufficient reason for alarm, and should induce all good citizens to discourage them. A memorial to his Worship the Mayor and City Council was adopted. We think there could not be a more appropriate situation for the theatre than one chosen—next door to the Work-house, the Poor-house, and the Jail. If the records of poverty and crime could be exhibited fully and fairly, we believe that the opinion that many of the future inmates of these institutions would be able distinctly to trace their course from the exhibitions, exposures and imitations of human nature, on the stage of the theatre, to the deplorable experience of its consequences in their full development as seen in themselves. It may be well for heads of families and young men in particular to mark clearly the contiguity of the building and be warned in time of the steps which lead from one to the other. The only safety in this, as in the practice of sobriety, is in Total Abstinence."

Westward Ho!

The Christian Advocate & Journal has an article on Emigration to the West. It opens with the following statements:—"From all directions, and by every avenue of information, comes the intelligence of an unprecedented westward emigration now going forward. That ever receding land of promise never before loomed up so imposingly before the mental vision of the people. The Northeastern and Middle States are thoroughly pervaded and moved by the impulse; and hundreds of thousands of people are either already in motion, or making all possible haste to move. We hear of whole neighborhoods nearly abandoned, and the few lingering inhabitants only waiting to sell purchasers for their lands and houses. Whole towns and villages are more than decimated, religious societies are often greatly enfeebled, and the price of property largely depreciated by this unparalleled exodus. The eastern limits of the 'West' have advanced a few years, and are considerably further toward the setting sun. During the first quarter of the present century a large portion of this state was in the West; and the men are still living in the strength of their manhood, who went out as adventurous pioneers, and settled on the banks of the Mississippi and the Genesee. At a somewhat later date, when the fame of Ohio had fairly reached the Eastern States, the western line of Pennsylvania was conventionally settled as the boundary between East and West. But now Ohio is among the old states; and even Indiana is no longer regarded as nearly abandoned, and the few lingering inhabitants only waiting to sell purchasers for their lands and houses. Whole towns and villages are more than decimated, religious societies are often greatly enfeebled, and the price of property largely depreciated by this unparalleled exodus. The eastern limits of the 'West' have advanced a few years, and are considerably further toward the setting sun. 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