

MINISTERIAL SETTLEMENT AND TENURE.

IMPORTANT DISCUSSION BEFORE THE TORONTO PRESBYTERIAL CONFERENCE.

The utility of what has become known as the Presbyterian Conference has been often proved by the helpful discussions which have been freely participated in at these meetings. This week the topics before the Toronto Conference were of more than usual interest, two of them dealing with the system of "calling" ministers to vacancies and the other with the length of the term of service. That improvements will come in the methods now prevailing as to filling vacancies may be taken for granted; but that the well-trying *ad vitam, ad culpam*, rule of tenure will be invaded and upset for an itinerancy is an unlikely thing to happen in so sane a church as the Presbyterian Church in Canada. But without discussing the merits of the case at present, we place before the reader a summary of the remarks made by the several speakers at the Conference.

Rev. J. A. Grant, who has given much attention to the "probationer" question, and Rev. J. A. Brown, M. A., introduced the subject referred to in two able papers, in which it was shown that the present system does not give satisfaction. We desire for evangelistic services, as an auxiliary, or as a relief from the stated services of the church, was touched upon also and it was pointed out that the yielding to this desire has resulted disastrously to some congregations, causing discord and disruption.

Rev. J. A. Brown held that ministers should not touch the Church finances, and should not when settled in a pastorate apply for a new one after a short term. Rev. J. A. Grant said that ministers, congregations, and Presbyteries were equally to blame for the restlessness spoken of. The two former were too eager to change, and the latter too lenient in giving their assent. A real evil was probed by Rev. W. G. Wallace, who said students were not sufficiently impressed with their responsibility. They should understand that they must work and teach as well as preach. "Many ministers come to the end of their tether after two years. They have no more ideas. Thus both they and the congregation want a change," he declared.

This sentiment was followed up by Rev. Principal Caven's statement to the effect that students were sometimes settled in charges before they were sufficiently prepared by thoroughly wide reading and proper knowledge. Thus they were without adequate resources. This evil was intensified by the course of the Home Missions in regard to the North-West, who encouraged students to undertake mission work during their theological course, thus depriving them of their opportunities for study and mental equipment.

As to the restlessness, they must remember that they were in a new era, one of movement and strong impulse. A man was foolish not to recognize this, and to decry the age in which he lived. Regarding evangelism, the reverend speaker declared that ministers should never hand their congregations over to evangelists. It was a great mistake. All pastors should have the zeal of the evangelist, but it should be allied with knowledge. "Avoid the peripatetic evangelist," said Principal Caven, in conclusion. "He has no place in a settled congregation, his work is not in a settled district."

In the same strain spoke Rev. Dr. Parsons, who spoke with no uncertain sound as to the present condition of things; and Rev. Dr. Gray who described some evangelists to a fire passing through a bush "raising a momentary conflagration and leaving nothing but charred embers behind."

A committee composed of Rev. Dr. Parsons, Revs. Messrs. Wallace, Frizzell, Turnbull, Grant and Brown was appointed to formulate a plan which will be dealt with by the Presbytery. The plan, it is understood, suggests that all calls and applications be referred to a committee composed of the Moderator of the Presbytery and three conferees, who will pass favorably or adversely upon the cases before them. The length of a pastor's term, it is suggested, should be limited to a period of say five years, which would mean that the Presbyterian Church would be following the lines laid down by the Methodist Church. It also means that ministers may no longer look upon a congregation as their's for life.

LOOKS INTO BOOKS.

PIERRE AND HIS PEOPLE." By Gilbert Parker. Toronto, Copp, Clark Co., Limited. Price \$1.25.

Our readers will remember that we announced some weeks ago that the enterprising firm of Copp Clark Co., were about issuing at intervals of a few weeks, the works of Gilbert Parker. Of this series, "Pierre and his People" forms the second volume. As this work deals with our own country in the far North and the early history of the Hudson Bay Co., it should meet with a ready sale among our readers.

VARIOUS FRAGMENTS. By Herbert Spencer. Price \$1.25. New York, D. Appleton & Co.

This work contains some eighteen magazine and review articles written by Herbert Spencer from time to time. In his brief preface he explains that some of them may be worthy of more permanent preservation than in their original Magazine form, and that in order to complete the volume he has added some which in his judgment are of lesser value. Certainly the rising generation of book readers must thank Mr. Spencer for the publication of "Various Fragments" as of course the Magazines and Reviews of the fifty's are almost ancient history to the present generation. It is unnecessary to comment upon the excellence and variety of the collection but merely to state in conclusion that lovers of Herbert Spencer's writings will have great pleasure and profit in perusing this book.

KOREA AND HER NEIGHBORS." A Narrative of Travel with an account of the Recent Vicissitudes and Present Position of the Country. Isabella Bird Bishop, F.R.G.S. With a Preface by Sir Walter C. Hillier, K.C.M.G. With Illustrations from Photographs by the Author, and Maps, Appendixes and Index. Price \$2.00. Fleming H. Revell Co. Toronto, New York and Chicago.

Mrs. Bishop needs no introduction to our readers. Her books upon Japan, Persia, the Hawaiian Islands and the Rocky Mountains are known and read throughout the continent. Mrs. Bishop is an indefatigable explorer. Few men have penetrated so far into unexplored portions of many semi-civilized countries. Her Korean experiences were quite out of the ordinary, and they are related in the pleasantly familiar way which has given her former works so wide a reading. In her prefatory notes she says that her four visits to Korea between January, 1894, and March, 1897, were for the purposes of studying the leading characteristics of the Mongolian races. During these visits, however, she became deeply interested in Korea and this volume gives the results of prolonged and careful observation. In her introductory chapter she speaks of the general lack of information in regard to the geographical position and general makeup of this important country. She has not spared toil or hardship in her journeys into the interior of Korea in order to obtain the information which is presented in so simple and attractive a form in this volume. Fortune favored her in the time of her visits, for some of the most important events in Korean history have taken place during the years when Mrs. Bishop was in the Hermit Nation. The book gives full descriptions of the country and its inhabitants, their characteristics, customs, government and relations to other nations. It details the revolutionary period and the assassination of the Queen, the social position of woman education, and foreign trade and gives vivid pictures of Seoul, the Korean Mecca and Song-do, the royal city. Mrs. Bishop has furnished a variety of photographic views of places and habits of living which illustrate the book, and carefully drawn maps show the topography of the country and the routes over which she travelled. To the general reader the book can be commended as a timely and interesting book of travel, and to the Christian student the observations and conclusions respecting missionary work will have more than a passing interest.

The *Expository Times* for February opens with its regular brief and scrappy chat as to some of the more prominent books and discussions of the month and as to some books that are not yet published. We suppose we can hardly blame the editor, Dr. Hastings, for telling us so much about his new Bible Dictionary that is about to appear, but we shall have to wait until some one else sees it before we know what it is really worth. The problem of the "Logia of Jesus" still receives a good deal of attention and also Dr. McIlvett's book on "The History of Christianity in the Apostolic Age." An article by Dr. Van Mavén, of Leiden, shows that the Dutch school of criticism is determined to outdo the Tubingen school in its radical treatment of the New Testament. Baur and his successors left us at least the four great Pauline Epistles as genuine. These writers would sweep away the whole collection. They are not likely to meet with greater success than their predecessors. T. & T. Clark. Price 6s.