

OUR TEST OF MEMBERSHIP.

Churches do not readily disturb venerable standards. It is well that, amid a world having a passion for change, Christians, at least, should be conservative. We observe that attendance at the class-meeting as a qualification for membership has been again a subject of discussion in Methodist courts, and with the usual results. In England, a few years ago, one of the most animated debates which ever agitated the august British Conference, followed the introduction of resolutions seeking to abolish, or modify, this principle. By a majority so large that the subject must continue at rest for years to come, it was concluded that John Wesley Methodism was still best for the Island of Great Britain.

In the Australasian General Conference, a few weeks ago, it was decided to hold still to the class-meeting as the door to the church. The majority so ruling was nineteen, in a body of ninety-six members. This shows a greater decline in the conservative ranks than we remember to have noticed on any similar occasion. Perhaps it foreshadows a change; if so it is as well that it should come slowly.

Overtures are made from Annual Conferences and District Meetings among ourselves, which must bring this subject before the General Conference to meet soon in Montreal. We anticipate a spirited remonstrance against our present stringent regulation, and as spirited a defence. Much as can be said in support of our present law, it will be found, we imagine, that the arguments of four years ago have gained in force. It is certain that the class-meeting is no longer a test of membership in all our circuits. It may be discovered that, from whatever cause, members have been, here and there, admitted to our church who never attended class. Superintendents by whom this course has been adopted have their own apology, which may or may not be of some value; but, assuredly, either our church should insist upon an absolute attention to the law, or otherwise modify it to suit circumstances. The class-meeting is a means of grace—an admirable aid to the formation of Christian character. Shall we insist upon more than this,—that no one can be recognized as capable of holding a place on our records, especially of occupying an official position in our church, whose name is not upon the class-book? If so, shall we, to be consistent, apply the law to the existing condition of things? Few would vote for this; yet no voter can be consistent who ignores altogether the issues of a principle which he upholds in the abstract, or who decides that a law shall remain upon our statute-book which is not generally observed, and the observance of which would, in many instances, extinguish Methodism where it is most needed. The subject is surrounded with great difficulty.

THE END OF BEING IS TO BLESS.

It is a curious and characteristic circumstance, and one that carries its own significance, that the Bible closes with a blessing. Its last utterance breathes the benediction of God—"The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you." Louder, even, than its counsels, and later than its solemn admonitions, and lingering among the echoes of the world, like the sound of distant music, is this final expression of divine love. Now that the sacred volume is finished, rounding its completeness with a vision, whose vista reveals the consummation of all things, when the sands of Time, and the cycles of the ages shall have ceased to run, one image is made to fill the mind, leaving its impress indelibly fixed, and that image is, a brooding benediction—an overshadowing presence shedding down upon our world an assurance of the goodwill of heaven.

To bless has ever been the aim and end of Incarnate Love; and in its closing expression it reaches its climax. See the great Teacher seated on the slopes of Olivet, surrounded by his dis-

ciples who are ordained to disseminate his sublime doctrines among men! What is his theme? Is it not blessing? See him again centred amidst the children, like a father nestling in the bosom of his family! What is he doing? Is he not blessing them? See him once more at Bethany, whither he has led out his disciples, that they might witness his ascension! What are his parting words? Are they not words of blessing? "And he lifted up his hands and blessed them. And it came to pass while he blessed them, he was parted from them, and carried up into heaven." Observe, "while he blessed them, he was parted from them." Thus his blessing was broken, but he has gone to heaven to finish it. Bethany was not high enough; the eleven are too few, and so he has climbed the starry steep that his vision might encircle the world, and that his voice might reach the entire family of man—belting the universe with his blessing.

The wisdom of goodness shines out in all this. It quiets our fears and inspires the human mind with the happiest emotions. A last impression, as much as a first impression, lingers with us with an indestructible life, attenuating to immortality. For example, let a child cry itself to sleep, and its rest will be broken by sobs and sighs. On the other hand, let it fall asleep, soothed by a mother's smiles, and lulled by her fond caressings, and its rest will be brightened by pleasant dreams. Why is it so? Because the last memory tenaciously lingers, and the last emotion, like a rolling wave, perpetuates itself. Does not the widow's sorrow overwhelm the memory of vanished joys? Like the surges that roll in upon the shore, long after the storm at sea has abated, or like the glistening rain-drops that hang pendant on blade and leaf and flower, long after the black clouds have disappeared from the sky; so last memories of sorrows that people the past, come up and cling to us on and on and still on, as if they would never die. In like manner memories of joy linger too. Hence it is that the affectionate son, far away from home, fondly cherishes the last words of his mother as she gave him her blessing, when the time of parting came. The vivid memory of that moment cheers his solitude in a distant land, it thrills him with the most exquisite pleasure, and in danger as in duty it is the inspiration of his life. Then, are the last words of Incarnate Love a blessing? Peace then, ye stormy elements. Be still, ye troubled waters! Let the disconsolate take heart, for under the benediction of Jesus there shall be a great calm.

And now, to bring these reflections to a close, what instinct fails to teach, inspiration illustrates by example:—that the end of being is to bless. Not more essential is the fragrance to the flower, or the echo to the sound, or the streaming light to the fiery comet, than is the benign influence to a well-ordered life. Herein, too, lies our happiness. As Goldsmith, in his "Traveler," says, we may—

"Gather bliss to see our fellows blest."

And this is what he further calls:

"The luxury of doing good."

Our work, therefore, is before us. Let us seek to gain the good by doing good.

CONCERNING CERTAIN OLD ROOTS IN HUMAN CHARACTER.

It may still be remembered that, four years ago, a professor of note gave us, through the *Wesleyan*, a marvelous essay upon a few old roots in the languages. Tracing certain words through the Greek and Latin, and anon through the more modern German, the eccentric French, and the mongrel English, he indicated where, at certain points, the old root seemed to die, but only, in fact, suspended its vitality to appear in some other form. All who have lived to observe anything of this forest country, must have noticed that some species of tree life are exceedingly stubborn in yielding to axe and mattock and fire; for, after the surface even has been plowed over them, and some gay strong crop has grown above them as in triumph, those old roots force their shoots back to the surface once more, and are only hindered from transforming cleared fields into forests, by ruthless and repeated attacks upon their stubborn fibre. This law of life, so quick to operate,

so slow to cease, is found the same everywhere; but of all conditions favourable to vitality there is none in which a steady growth in any direction is more difficult to suppress than in human habits, eccentricities, or mental deformities. In animal rearing it is found exceedingly difficult to breed out any marked peculiarity which has become fairly fixed in a tribe, by time and favouring circumstances. For instance, the fifth toe of the Dorking has only been overcome when blended with some other strain of fowl, after several seasons of experiment; and even some time after it had altogether disappeared, the inveterate fifth member would show itself upon an occasional chicken. So tenacious is this principle of peculiar life in the forms it has been permitted to assume by the great Creator.

All men have their marked characteristics—that is, all men who are worth anything to the world; for the smooth, equable man, like the smooth, equable pond, is apt to become a very stagnant object, and not over sweet. But are men always responsible for their peculiarities? That we should all cultivate character in the right direction is true; and equally true that all should lean strongest against those habits which incline most persistently in an evil direction. The question, though, is still unanswered—Is the fiery spirit to blame for its fire? the stubborn mind for its inflexibility? the cold heart and temples for their absence of glow? the keen, shrewd, calculating intellect for its cunning?

In this new country, races are, in a few instances, so intermingled that all distinctness of nationality is lost. But in the majority of instances we may be able to trace a man's relation to a not very remote origin, which had distinct locality, name, temperament, in short to an original type of humanity beyond the ocean. Thus in this new provincial soil we have a growth of old European roots. The parent tree may have been dead long years; change of soil and climate may have operated against the growth of family peculiarities; but to the surface, assuredly, will come sometimes the growth of an old life in new forms, indicating that character once shaped in a particular direction will not soon perish from the face of the earth.

Our social life in Canada is composed of five original elements—the English, Welsh, Irish, Scotch and German. Never were tribes more strongly marked by distinct character than these. And it is not surprising to find surviving in their descendants, here and there, the old habits and tendencies of disposition. Let us look in upon one of our own Annual Conferences, and mark, among ourselves, whether this be a fair inference. The typical Englishman is sturdy, somewhat autocratic—in short, inheriting the propensities which naturally grow out of a vigorous appetite and abundance of strong food. In "Dame Europa's School" we have the secular side of the Englishman—his love of money, and his ambition to control the trade of the world. But there is another side. In fact there are two classes who typify the John Bull of the past and present—the commercial John and the fighting John.

This typical Englishman is, in our Methodist ministry, preserved in purest character in many instances. You find him inclined to fight out a principle to its fair issue—what seems at least a fair issue to him. And should any compromise be made, he has a deplorable eye to the conditions; when these are violated, a determined voice he has once more for war.

Welsh roots are but few in the soil of this new world. Where they do exist, however, they are tenacious of life. The habit of illustrating profusely, of looking at things from the imaginative side, clothing the most practical subjects with poetry, with a little glamour, together with a perversity of religious feeling—these mark the Welsh extraction.

Of all nationalities, perhaps the most strongly marked, the most difficult to eradicate in its habits, is the Scotch. Yet there are here again two types as unlike as possible. The lowlander has, during recent generations, been developing mechanism and commerce, as well as indulging liberally in learning, especially logic and metaphysics. The representative of this class looks studiously at a resolution, points out its defective phrases, and insists upon a reconstruction of words. His delight is in driving a good bargain, and, next to this, in a regular field-day of controversy. The highlander, on the other hand, sprang from a race divided into many tribes, these tribes distinct in their traditions, and always vain of their great deeds. They were, moreover, deadly in their feuds. When two men of different tribes met on a mountain path, which admitted of only one traveller passing a precipice, either one must lie down to admit of the other walking over his body, which was the worst form of disgrace, or they must lock in an embrace which was sure to end in one or both being hurled into the depths below. When the national pride was affronted, however, they made com-

mon cause, each tribe in turn bearing aloft the fiery cross, till every heart palpitated with a passion for revenge. Can we find traces of all this in the debater who insists upon so many "points of honour," and in the champion who, when he has himself espoused a cause, imagines all the world should side with him?

Our Irish descendants are also of two kinds,—those who came from the North, so like the Scotch that of them little more need be said; and those from the South, the most volatile and free-hearted, the least serious in a hand-to-hand encounter of any people on the face of the earth. It would help us to understand how some men can go, bare armed (metaphorically), and with flushed cheek, into a hot discussion, to come out with both eyes twinkling in mischief, and scattering witticisms like dew-drops, if we would remember that, somewhere far back in the ages their forefathers' motto was—"For love knock him down!"

One more type remains—the German. We have only Dutch roots from this great national tree; but these are wonderfully well developed, considering they are transplanted, and come surely to the surface with every annual spring-tide.

It is never difficult to call up the image of the original Dutchman. Goldsmith, 150 years ago, gave this description:—

"The downright Hollander is one of the oddest figures in nature. Upon a lank head of hair he wears a half-cocked narrow hat, laced with black ribbon, no coat, but seven vests and nine pairs of breeches, so that his hips reach up almost to his armpits. This well clothed vegetable is now fit to make love. But what a pleasing creature is the object of his appetite! Why, he wears a large fur cap, with a deal of Flanders lace, and for every pair of breeches he carries, she puts on two petticoats."

Add to this his habit of sitting at the front door with his mug of beer, and a long pipe, scolding at his neighbours—and you have his picture.

His descendants who remain with us are temperate, so far as the lager goes, at least; but they are quite as emphatic as their great grandfather, as brusque in right-down honesty, and as noisy, too. This type of European is always Protestant, and never forgets that Alva and Alma tried to subdue the Dutch for the Pope, but were driven back by floods brought in from the ocean, and the courage of dogs that could both swim and fight. You may trust him to defend the Bible!

GENERAL READING.

A young Minister, just ordained, writes us on the subject of general reading. He is anxious to have some direction, entering as he is upon a more public life, as regards the best authors and the most suitable selections for the instruction of one in his sphere and at his years. We may say that his views as to possible advantages which might follow from any experience of which we may be possessed, took rise in pursuing a list of books furnished some time ago in the *Wesleyan* as ground work for general reading. He moreover, suggests that our remarks might appear in the columns of this paper, with a view to others' advantage as well as his own.

We are far from thinking that our young friend is correct in his conclusions in every particular. Reading is so much a matter of taste and inclination, that not many intelligent religious men can be found to agree in all respects as to how a young Minister should be directed in seeking to furnish his mind. Standards of reading vary among students, according to their peculiar inclinations. We may, however, venture thus far:—A knowledge of certain authors is deemed essential to entitle one to the verdict of being considered intelligent, as well as to qualify one to enter with pleasure the circles of refined discussion or conversation. We have made arrangements for the contribution, therefore, to these columns of a few articles bearing upon this interesting subject. The writer of these articles (to commence next week) will disclaim any intention of advising a particular course of reading to young ministers, any farther than his suggestions—which shall be based upon his own experience—may contribute to the aid of any who may be looking for hints in regard to books.

PERSONALS.

A pleasing occurrence took place during the Sunday School service at the C. M. Church last Sunday. This was nothing less than the presentation of a beautiful Bible to Mr. J. E. Starr, formerly of Nova Scotia, as a token of the respect in which he was held by the Sunday School teachers. The presentation was made by the

Superintendent—J. W. Benyon, Esq.—in a short speech, to which Mr. Starr replied in a suitable manner. — *Conservator, Brampton, Ont.*

The same paper adds:—

Mr. J. E. Starr left for Scarborough this morning where he will enter upon the work of the ministry under the auspices of the C. M. Church. He will be greatly missed in Brampton, where his services in connection with the church with which he was associated, and the Y. M. C. A., together with his eminent social qualities, have endeared him to all his friends and acquaintances. But while regretting his departure we trust that he may be still more useful in the higher sphere of labor to which he has been called. His position in the Sheriff's office will be filled by Mr. Thos. Duggan. [We presume this refers to a son of Rev. J. Herbert Starr.—Ed. Wes.]

Rev. Mr. Ogden is in Windsor, supplying during the absence on vacation, of Rev. B. Brecken, A.M.

Rev. S. C. Fulton, Oxford, N. Y., (Wyoming Conference), completed the four years' course of study prescribed by the Illinois Wesleyan University, and received the degree of Ph. B., at its recent Commencement. He is a native of Wallace, N. S.

EDITORIAL NOTES.

THE HIGHER EDUCATION IN HALIFAX has entered upon a new and welcome enterprise. Though a High School has been in successful operation for some months, a building was still required suited to this work. Last week the corner-stone of a High School, to be of magnificent proportions and appearance, was laid by the Freemasons, whose appearance on the occasion was very imposing.

ANNIE PARKER is being cross-examined with great severity in court, as to the McCarthy murder. It is all required. So much depends on the testimony of this girl, that every expression of hers should be sifted. Her story is a most remarkable one, whether true or false; yet we hope to see more light thrown upon the case, otherwise the jury will have difficult and delicate work to do in reaching a decision.

THE UNIFICATION OF METHODISM seems to be looming up in the near future. The great event of the recent Irish Conference, an event which will make it historical, was the formal consummation of the Union between the Primitive Methodists and the Wesleyan Methodist Church, which are henceforth to be known as the Methodist Church of Ireland.

NEWFOUNDLAND CONFERENCE 1878.

(SECOND ARTICLE.)  
The Conference Missionary meeting was held in the Gower Street Church, on the 13th of June. The chair was occupied by the President of the Conference, while eloquent and effective addresses were given by brethren George Boyd, G. J. Bond, A. B., Henry Lewis and G. P. Story.

The Educational meeting was held in George St. Church, on the 14th, and was presided over by the ex-President. The Report was read by the Secretary—Bro. G. J. Bond, A. B.

The following topics were then spoken to:—I. "Culture in its effects on ministerial character and work," by Bro. Simeon B. Dunn.

II. Ministerial Duty and Responsibility," Bro. G. H. Bryant.

III. "Self Improvement, and the best way of securing it," Bro. J. Dove, Secretary of Conference.

IV. "The relation of liberality in the pew to efficiency in the pulpit," Bro. G. S. Milligan, M. A., President.

The meeting was a most interesting and profitable one, and closed with the Doxology.

The pulpits of both churches on Sabbath, June 16, were occupied as under:—*George Street*,—Bro. Thomas H. James, at 11 a. m., and Bro. Dove, at 6.30 p. m.

*Gower Street*,—Bro. J. Nurse, at 11 a. m., and Bro. S. B. Dunn, at 6.30 p. m., who preached his "farewell sermon" to a very crowded congregation. In the afternoon the Conference *Love Feast* was held, and proved a "season of grace and sweet delight" to the large number present. Our venerable and beloved Father Shennstone, conducted the proceedings.

Bro. J. P. Bowell supplied the pulpit of the Congregational church on this day.

The reports from the different circuits and missions, show great progress in the acquisition of Connexional property, such as churches and parsonages. Very cheer-