

ject—especially in recent sessions of that body—evinced its solicitude by revising the courses of study, and by more determinedly insisting that the period of the candidate's university of theological training shall be more extended than was formerly required.

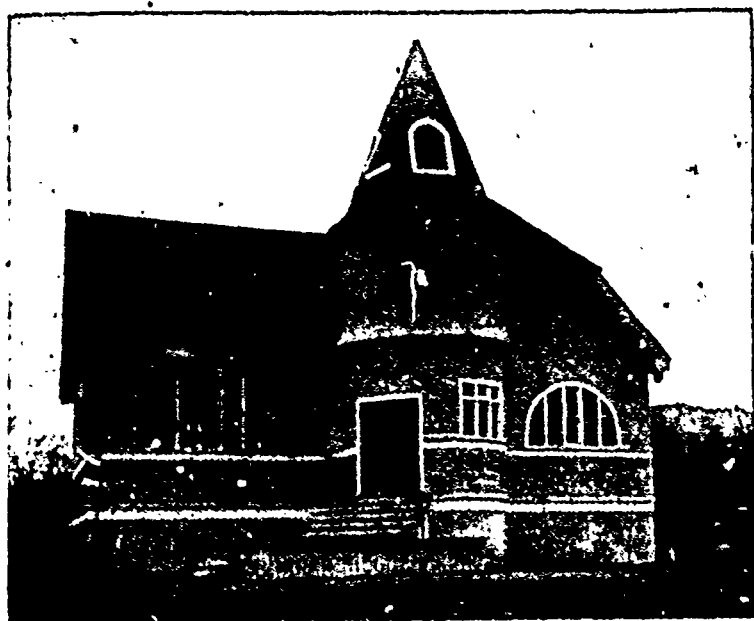
The more serious difficulty in the matter of a suitable supply of well trained ministers lies in another direction, viz., in the candidates or probationers themselves, in an inaptitude for study—an in disposition to bind themselves down to a rigid and honest course of self-drill, by which alone students are made. This self-mastery is made easier by a right use of the advantages which a college course affords. But the history of the personnel of the Methodist ministry at-

the part of some to presume to some extent upon the knowledge they have of the ministerial brethren, that they are kindly and sympathetic, and are unwilling to see a young man seriously embarrassed and kept back in his probation because he has not obtained sufficient marks (if reckoned with the same severe faithfulness which is employed in university examinations) to admit of his being credited with the year on his probation, which he has actually spent in the pastoral work. Is it not due to the church that those who are entrusted with this duty of seeing that men who are being prepared by a course of discipline and training and study to become effective when they shall in future years minister at her altars, shall

unmind, they are not wide in their range, they are explicitly enumerated in the discipline; he has constant access to the standards of our church where those doctrines are fully defined and discussed; is it not disappointing if under these circumstances the probationer is unable to present to the meeting clear statements in his own language of these doctrines which are supposed to be the burden of his teaching in all his pulpit ministrations to his people, and by their affectionate enforcement is expected to bring the sinner to repentance and salvation, and to build up believers in the faith of the Gospel? It is not unreasonable that the senior ministers should feel deep sorrow when young men display unfamiliarity at this point of their progress. It is right too that those who are responsible for recommending probationers to the Conference for continuance on trial should expect those probationers to be ready with those scripture texts by which these doctrines are taught and proven. It has often seemed to us that the usual method of conducting these district examinations might be improved upon. This important part of the ministerial business of the District Meeting should be conducted in a way to make it to be characterized as far as possible by the dignity and seriousness which befits a matter of such solemn moment. Too often, we must confess, we have seen it otherwise. Not that there has been any thought of being other than serious or proper; but questions are sometimes interjected by ministers other than the one who is conducting the examination, which has quite diverted the course of the examination from being such, until it has become a general ministerial discussion, which, though quite proper in the meeting of a ministerial association, involves an expenditure of time that at last makes it necessary that the examination shall be brought to a speedy termination. This may be a relief to the sometimes rather hard pressed probationer, but fails nevertheless to accomplish the purpose of the examination. I would say, let the chairman or some senior minister at his request conduct the examination without a word being spoken by any one but himself and those being examined. When the examination shall have been thus concluded, let any of the ministers who may desire to do so have the privilege of still further satisfying himself as to the familiarity of the probationers with the doctrines indicated in the discipline. I understand that this method obtains in the British Conference. Such examinations properly conducted must have a good effect upon the mind of the persons examined, and lend to the occasion the seriousness and dignity which ought to mark it.

P. S. This paragraph is not meant for those to whom it does not apply.

Ministers must be students, students of the word, constant students, rooted and grounded in the faith, prepared always to contend earnestly for the faith once delivered to the saints. Modern teaching of an erroneous kind is all around us. It is presented in most specious forms, calculated to deceive if possible the very elect. It is possible that these errors may invade the very pulpits of our Methodism unless our ministry is composed of men who with stored minds and well disciplined intellects are thus made proof against the insidious and seductive influences of unsound teaching. I close by quoting again



CARMEM METHODIST CHURCH, NEAR SANDIS, CHILLIWACK

fords numerous instances of men who under every disadvantage have "inter-meddled with all wisdom," have made themselves great, and have left the impress of their greatness upon their own and succeeding generations. Greater than he that taketh a city, is he who ruleth his own spirit. Happy the young man who for the sake of the thrice holy cause he has espoused, in the spirit of unflinching self-denial, and in exemplification of a sublime and unflinching purpose, brings into subjection to his own will all his powers of intellect and heart; but unfortunate to the last degree it is, if an aspirant to the ranks of the ministry does not learn in his course of preparation for his life work, to distinguish between a desultory and indiscriminating mode of study—which is not study at all and that stern and doggedly severe application by which only the mastery of any given subject can be attained. Every examiner knows what a lack of earnest application in the way of study of the books of the probationer's course is betrayed in much of the written answers which the examiners receive from year to year.

It is possible that probationers sometimes allow themselves to think that if they are not well up in the books of their course they will somehow be permitted to pass muster, and that they will not be held too firmly to the re-

quirements of the discipline. Of course candidates and probationers are not told this, but there may be a tendency on be scrupulously and relentlessly faithful in their fulfilment of that trust? Is it not due to the church that candidates and probationers shall be given to understand that here they must expect no mercy, and that unless they are students, and prove that they are such by their clear and discriminating answers to the questions submitted to them upon the books of their course from year to year, they must either be delayed in fulfilling the term of probation until the necessary improvement is made, or they must be dropped, and as Mr. Wesley puts it, "return to their former employment." The time has come when he who believes himself called of God to the work of the ministry must prove to the church his qualifications for that work by making himself intelligent upon the whole range of subjects assigned for his mastery of them, by the law of the church in his case. Not only should this be true in respect of the prescribed course of study upon which written examinations which are required, but also in respect of the oral theological examinations which are held in the District Meetings from year to year. The probationer comes up to this examination knowing that it takes place annually; he knows the subjects on which he is to be ex-