

with a *condition*. "Yes, he'll see that they all have service twice a day, if they'll help him!" Of course they all agree to this; each one thinking of some *other member*, "who ought to lead the meeting."

"Now," says this wise pastor, "I'll be at one of these three places, to preach, every Lord's Day; and you must make it a part of your proceedings at every monthly business meeting of the members, to provide leaders for the other Sunday service. You must give me Monday for a rest day, and Friday and Saturday for study; and I'll give Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday to visiting in the three neighborhoods respectively, and holding an evening prayer-meeting in each."

Well, the proposition is so eminently fair that it is agreed to at once; each one still hoping that the church will lay hold of some one better "qualified" than himself, (what a convenient word that is! and how the depreciatory use of it for oneself smacks of modesty!) to do the leading. But one use of lights is to kindle other lights; and a brother cannot be active in every good work—getting a blessing to his own soul out of his activity in the meantime—without being pushed forward into other work. And so the best man for the work, but the man who least sought for it or expected it, is voted in as a "preacher." He in his turn we suppose to be a wise man; and he makes *his* conditions! "Well, since you all say so, I'll do it. But I have two conditions; that you all continue to pray for me; and that one brother—and not always the same brother—help me in the devotional exercises." *This* is agreed to; and that church has now its own preachers; and these are often heard of in the other associated churches, and even more appreciated than at home!

But, both in England and here, the trouble is to get them to "take hold." The reason most commonly given for holding back is, that "people don't care to hear them, and don't come out." This is measurably true; and where it is most true there is a reason for it. That reason is that they don't prepare. There is neither the close logical argument that fits and binds some, like an ancient coat of mail; nor the impassioned appeal that moves and stirs others; nor even the pleasing and outward oratorical graces that appeal to all. A brother makes one or two tentative ventures, falls

greatly below his ideal, and refuses to try again. In England, where a very earnest effort is now being made thus to supply preaching in small places, the greatest difficulty is found in getting the right men to take hold of this work. A radical mistake has been, fixing the attention of the church too exclusively on young men. True, they have the most improvement in them. And, true again, it is a good thing to train them. But the church cannot always turn itself into a training-class for young men; it wants, itself, to be fed. And if every thoughtful reader of this article will just turn his mind upon *his own church*, and single out the men of weight and influence, "pillars" in the community, whose voices have never once been heard preaching or expounding God's word—they will know the persons we mean. Every word of such men would carry weight! Hear them on the political platform, on some great moral or national issue, with what force and vehemence they lay down the law of right, justice and expediency, and then, the next Wednesday night at the "church meeting" vote to send a hundred miles to get a young student to come and preach to them on Sunday!

Young men are more tractable than old men; and these we are after to-day may need a little more urging. But they have—with all other qualities—been also cultivating their *conscience*, and it may need the calm, decisive voice of the church, as expressed in a "Resolution," thought over with prayer, and unanimously carried, to bring them to action in the matter. But such a "lay preacher" is worth having! His weight of character, his sound sense, his ripe experience, his earnestness in view of his own setting sun—will all accentuate his appeals. Let the churches rise to their privileges; and let church-members be found, as of old, "everywhere preaching the word!"

WOMEN'S SOCIETIES.

Our columns are always open to every correspondent who has anything to say on any important point, connected with the work or interest of the Congregational Churches in Canada. And all our correspondents do not think alike on all subjects. This would be a dull magazine if they did! Mr. Leet thinks the Union could manage all our