

THE WESLEYAN
FRIDAY, JANUARY 19, 1883.

A BRIGHT OLD AGE.

Our recent passage by another of life's milestones provokes serious thought. It is not time that is passing so much as ourselves. Year by year our comprehension of this fact becomes less difficult. As our children proudly rise above our measurement on the wall; as we cease to guess at the family circle to which the youth whom we meet belong; as familiar dwellings suggest successive chapters in domestic history; as "breaking" voices lead us from the choir to a seat in the pew, and as we rest on a cane the strength of which we have considered, we learn that some much cherished plans must be laid aside, and those worth continuance on our mental list must be carried into effect with all the promptness and diligence possible.

It is when a man begins to lean on his cane that he feels most fully the need of an abiding support for an immortal spirit. It is then that his Christian neighbor more than ever regards an unconverted friend with sympathy, and his less thoughtful neighbor feels that some support, not quite clearly defined, is lacking. Even the man who may hesitate to yield himself up to God will not question that "the heavy head is a crown of glory if it be found in the way of righteousness."

There is a beauty in old age, not of a physical character but derived from an inherent cheerfulness which manifold infirmities cannot affect, and which almost renders associates unconscious of deformities which may repel an esthetic eye. This cheerfulness may be in part natural, but it is rarely wholly so. Unless begotten of that Gospel which has brought life and immortality to light, it is often repellent in its boisterous mirth or unnatural sprightliness.

A fine exhibition of old age was seen in John Wesley. An acquaintance, not a Methodist, said of him:—"His countenance, as well as conversation, expressed an habitual gaiety of heart which nothing but conscious virtue and innocence could have bestowed. He was, in truth, the most perfect specimen of moral happiness whom I ever saw; and my acquaintance with him has done more to teach me what a heaven upon earth is implied in the maturity of Christian piety, than all I have elsewhere seen, or heard, or read, except in the sacred volume." We have never had the pleasure of meeting Mark Trafton, D. D. of New England, but know that his contributions to *Zion's Herald*, always bright and cheery, are a type of the man. The closing words of one of his last letters to that paper strangely impressed us. Only a few months ago his excellent wife passed into the skies, and thus he tells the sequel. "And now, O reader, these crude scribbles have helped to pass some few of my lonely hours, and these last lines are penned in the silence and solitude of what was once my happy home, with my trunks packed by my side, and my house rented. I go out into the world again as I began—alone. 'Good-night; and joy be with you ever; good night!' Who does not feel as he breathes a prayer for the old veteran that that petition seems to go right up!

As we speak of a cheery old age we think of Father Strong, of blessed memory in our Maritime Provinces. A few years before his death the writer was billeted at the same rare home with that venerable minister. As he entered the home after his early morning walk his presence seemed a benediction. "Mr. Strong," said the elect lady who presided in that home, "you don't sing as you once did." "Oh, no," was the reply, without a shade of regretful feeling in his tone of voice, "Oh, no, I found my voice did not quite chord with those of the young folks and I thought I had better leave it all to them." And when again the writer met him in another home he felt that old age could not be feared if it came in that shape in which it beautified the venerable man of God. How infinitely is this nobler cheerfulness above that "awfully jolly" mirthfulness which in the case of the aged man seems but like "whistling in a grave-yard."

Age has its duties and responsibilities. "Aunt Nancy, what does God keep you here for," said a gentleman one day to an aged saint. "Why he keeps me here to pray for the Church."

She understood her relation aright. And very beautiful and far-reaching too is the influence of a sanctified old age. Many a youth, apparently unobedient and unreflecting, has been led by some quiet veteran saint to enter the path of life, and thousands in trial and temptation have looked at such and said, "If God has kept him, He can keep me," and gone forth to battle. Let our aged friends wait and pray as they wait, and so enter heaven by prayer.

UNION NOTES.

In the matter of the union of the Methodist Churches of Canada one point has at least been settled. The Methodist Episcopal Church in Canada has decided in favor of union upon the basis proposed by the Committee and recently published in our columns. Bishop Carman's address was able and clear, recognizing the importance of the question and keeping in view its difficulties. "Personally," he remarked, "I had been better satisfied had the agitation not arisen, but I dare not speak against what may be the providence of God. Whether of good or evil, or for good or ill, a mighty movement for the unification of our Methodisms is upon us, and we must meet its issues. Let us prepare to meet them with intelligence, calmness and brotherly love, and in the love and fear of God."

At the meeting commenced on Tuesday, the 9th inst., at Napanee, Ont., Bishop Carman ruled that the wisdom of union was no longer a question for discussion, the vote of the previous session having put that point beyond debate. On Wednesday, Rev. Dr. Gardiner moved a resolution to the effect that "any change or alteration proposed in the basis of union touching the limitation, the omission of consecration to the office, or any variation in the exercise of any function pertaining to the office, does not do away with the episcopacy or destroy the plan of our itinerant general superintendency, and is not subject to the limits and restrictions of the Discipline, (pp. 29 and 30.) Through this resolution and an amendment the whole subject was brought before the gathering, which was large and influential. Dr. Gardiner, in the course of an able and lengthy address, held that episcopacy inhered in the body of the elders of the Church; some others maintained that according to the basis proposed it was wholly destroyed. Dr. Gardiner's resolution was carried by a large majority, forty-five ministers and twenty-nine laymen voting in its favor, and fourteen ministers and six laymen voting in opposition. At a subsequent stage of the meeting the whole basis of union was accepted by a large majority.

The Bridgetown Monitor, in giving some wise advice in reference to Donation Visits, which are frequent in the Annapolis Valley at this season of the year, remarks: "Much might be said in reference to the character and value of these donations, but perhaps we had better not say all we think about the matter. Very frequently the contributions are discreditably small; and then, worst of all, these contributions instead of being a genuine donation to the minister, are merely in payment of salary. To call such a payment a donation is precisely the same as if, after having bought a barrel of flour we should hand the merchant the price of it, saying, 'Please accept a donation.'"

Probably, however, the word is used in an accommodated sense, in lieu of a better one. Be that as it may, one thing is certain—every cent due to a Christian minister for his services should be promptly paid at the end of the year. Clergymen, as a rule, receive the smallest salaries of any class of educated public officials. And those salaries are paid usually with great irregularity, partly in dried apples and cabbages, with an inevitable deficiency of one or two hundred dollars at the end of the year.

Both renewals and New Subscriptions are coming in from private parties. This is complimentary and pleasing. But it sometimes suggests to the Publisher the question whether, especially at some distant points whence our members write to us, the authorized agents are working as far as they can. In spite of all that Publisher or Editor can do, the Church paper cannot improve without the canvass of the Pastor. Work, brethren, in behalf of your paper, and roll up a splendid subscription list. You can do it if you try.

The Forty Second Annual Report of the Associated Alumni of Acadia College has been kindly placed on our table. This interesting pamphlet of ninety pages is worthy of a longer notice than we can give to it. The addresses at the memorial service of the late Dr. Cramp and the notices of the numerous graduates should render it interesting to all Nova Scotians. In its careful preparation we discern the hand of E. D. King, Esq., President of the Associated Alumni.

During the publication of "Union" official documents correspondence accumulated. Our readers hear to-day from the extremes of our work—from the cold North-west and the sunny Bermudas; and yet our pigeon-holes are not emptied. We have not yet learned how to put a quart into a pint measure. Will any impatient contributor tell us how!

We have only space to refer to the tract recently issued by Rev. Dr. Sutherland on the "Basis of Union." It will help to remove objections held in many quarters. The price is almost nominal. Five cents each, or twelve copies for fifty cents, and less in proportion when larger orders are forwarded.

CORRESPONDENCE.

A GRAND OPPORTUNITY.

Newspaper writing is rather out of my line, but I can hardly refrain from having a word on the great question of "Union." I have become very deeply interested from the fact that I sincerely believe it will be, if accomplished, the brightest spot in our church's history. It was my privilege to present, as a member of the "Union Committee" in Toronto, and from the very harmonious and Christian spirit that prevailed from first to last, the almost unanimous force of upwards of seventy representatives of our various churches on the vital points of Union, I could come to no other conclusion than that the Lord was in the movement and that the Basis of Union had been reached under the guidance of an all-wise Providence, and I fully expected it would go down to our Quarterly Boards with little, if any, opposition. If these dear brethren, who from their standpoint see such grave difficulties, had been present, heard the discussion and seen the spirit manifested, they would have just as willingly yielded all they are now asking for, and more too if desired.

In my humble opinion, to effect such a grand and noble object as a "Unit among Methodists of this Dominion," we ought to be willing to make some sacrifice, but our church is not called upon to give up any more than could be reasonably expected. The brethren of "The Methodist Episcopal Church, Primitive Methodist, and Bible Christians, have certainly met us more than half way. And should the much desired object not be obtained, the fault I am sure will be laid at the door of the Methodist Church of Canada, and for reasons many would regret afterwards.

The two great objections appear to be "General Superintendency" and "The Funds." On the first, our last General Conference passed a resolution affirming the principle, providing it did not interfere with the power of Annual Conferences. Now how much does it interfere? Simply that the General Superintendent, when present at the Annual Conference, shall preside the first day, and afterwards alternately, with the President elect. I should think that any brother elected to fill this position, would be glad to have the advice and experience of such an officer, especially should he be as well qualified as was Bishop Carman, the Chairman of the Union Committee. I certainly would rather have him in the chair or beside me than face him in the audience.

The "Financial Question." Now sir, would it not be a stain upon the Methodist Church of Canada that could never be obliterated, should it go forth to the world that union could not be accomplished because of some "monetary consideration." It does seem to me, even if the other uniting bodies had no money at all, as Christians we ought to have faith in our God, to take care of that phase of the question. All things are His. If some few brethren are not provided for just as well, as they are now, through the Church, surely some way will be opened up if they can but exercise a little faith. "My God shall supply all your need out of His riches in glory by Christ Jesus."

I cannot see, however, but what all ministers on dependent circuits and mission stations will be just as well off. There is little doubt but that surplus men will be required. The field is large. Nearly all our Conferences last year wanted men, and it is hard to tell the number that would be needed for the great North West, if the Church is faithful to her trust. These other branches of Methodism are not seeking union for gain, and representatives with whom I conversed said over and over again, they would not enter Union unless they could, as has been said, "level up" on investment funds. What more can we ask? The great saving in expense of

churches and parsonages as well as salaries, will go far towards meeting any deficiency from other sources.

I cannot close, Mr. Editor, without saying a word in regard to some communications from the West, aiming to influence our Quarterly Boards in these Maritime Provinces. They would make us believe that great opposition is manifested. It does seem to me very unwise and injudicious to hold these informal "District Meetings" with a view to influence the vote at Quarterly Meetings. Each minister has a voice there and will have the opportunity to express his views. Mr. Kettlewell or any other brother who expects to decide the question of Union in the Maritime Provinces, will be very much mistaken. We are quite able to discuss as well as give an impartial vote. Let us not take the voice of a few as the voice of the Great West. I am confident from what I heard and saw that the great mass of our people and ministers are strongly in favor of Union, and will go for the Basis as proposed by the Committee. A few opposed to it, unless they can have it all their own way, will do all in their power to defeat it and they are anxious to influence the East.

In conclusion I do earnestly hope and pray that all our Quarterly Boards will speak out with no uncertain sound; "Let us have Union." There is a great work before the Church and we can do it better as One Church than in four divisions. Let us in the Maritime Provinces at least put no barrier in the way of this great movement.

J. E. IRVINE.

St. John, N. B.
Jan'y 10, 1883.

THE NORTH WEST.

DEAR MR. EDITOR: The next town on the Canada Pacific Railway after leaving Winnipeg is Portage la Prairie, sixty-five miles distant. The town lies back about a mile from the railway, and as we have no time to stop we can say nothing of it from personal knowledge, but the business activity at the station would indicate a place of very considerable importance. Sixty-eight miles further on our way we arrive at Brandon, where we stopped an hour for dinner, and had the pleasure of meeting Bro. Lawson, the Methodist minister in charge; also an old acquaintance from Sussex in the person of Mr. Howard Arnold, who was looking well, hopeful and happy. Here also we saw Bro. C. Williams, and Mr. Fred Whiteside who had left us at Crookston, Minn. (Bro. Collwill, who also left us at Crookston, left the C. P. R. at Emmerson, his destination being Beaconsfield.) We took dinner at the dining tent where a "thriving" business was being done.

Brandon is situated among the sand hills and occupies the summit and slopes of one of them. It is prettily situated at the point where the C. P. R. crosses the Assiniboine, and is growing with wonderful rapidity. Indeed one from the older provinces, accustomed to their slow development, is almost stunned by the magical growth of a town in this western country. Brandon is about one and a half years old and has a population of six or seven thousand. Our next stop was at Moosomin, a canvas village on the C. P. R., about 230 miles from Winnipeg. Here we left the rail to make our way as best we could to Birtle, and had our first experience of tent life, having lived under canvas from Tuesday evening until Friday morning. The hotel, for such was the pretentious name given to the large tent, was crowded to its utmost capacity.

On Friday morning, to our great relief, Mr. Joseph Prichard, jr. formerly of St. John, N. B., and now doing business at Birtle, called with a span of horses and a "democrat" to take us across the prairie to our new home. At about eight o'clock we started for our first experience in riding over a northwestern trail. One looks almost instinctively for mountains some where to break the monotony of the scenery, but looks in vain. There stretches out before, behind, and on either hand, a broad expanse of prairie unbroken by any appearance of hill or forest, and bounded by the circle of a perfectly level horizon. Here and there we passed the traveller with his camp-fire and kettle preparing his dinner.

Twenty-eight miles from Moosomin is Fort Ellice, an old trading post of the Hudson Bay Company. The town consists of three stores and about as many dwelling houses, one of which is the hotel, or as they are here called "stopping houses," at which one dined on bacon, eggs, potatoes, and good bread and tea. The family was from Ontario. I asked the good lady in charge if she liked living out here, to which I got the following reply with a strong emphasis on the first word, "Gosh, I would not go back to Ontario for anything, a person can get something for their work here!"

The view of the Valley of the Assiniboine from this point is one of surpassing beauty. The banks are very high and steep and the valley is very regular in its conformation, and the exceedingly tortuous stream looks like a coiled and twisted thread of silver glinting through the thick foliage of the shrubbery. The ferry here is kept by a St. John man whose excellent wife, like good Rebecca of old, kept the tent, on the top of the hill. We arrived at Birtle in the evening and took lodgings at a hotel which was the upper part of the town hall, evidently got up with a view to airiness. Our hostess was attentive to us and so were the musquitoes. Next

morning we began a search for rooms but to no purpose. It was soon evident that all places available for human residence were occupied, and we had to stay where we were until a paragon could be got ready. In two weeks we got moved into the kitchen, which was rough boarded and had a tar-paper roof; but the work has gone on and now we have it all finished inside and are quite comfortable in it. A considerable part of the furniture, however, is the workmanship of my own hands.

Birtle is a little town on the Bird Tail Creek, about twelve miles from its confluence with the Assiniboine, the same distance from Fort Ellice, twenty-two from Shoal Lake, and forty from Shell River, and has a population of about one hundred and fifty. It has a laundry, a tailor's shop, a harness-maker, shoe-maker, two butchers, three blacksmiths, drug-store, an Indian Agency, land-office, three hotels, a fine large livery stable with stone basement, a furniture shop, a steam grist mill, steam saw mill, three general stores, a feed and flour store, a tin shop, a town-hall and registry office, a book-store and post office, one doctor, four ministers and a school-master. It has now in course of erection a stone school-house to cost about \$6000, a bridge across the Bird-tail to cost about \$1700, and a grist mill to cost about \$15,000.

Fearing this letter is already too long I stop for the present. The country and its climate shall be the subject of my next. J. F. BETTS.

Birtle, Man., Dec. 16, 1882.

METHODIST UNION.

MR. EDITOR: The Union Scheme which has forced itself so prominently before us as a Church is a subject deserving the most profound as well as prayerful study on all sides ere it comes before us for final adjudication. While great minds throw light upon it, shallow minds should be permitted to ask questions. We are glad to see your columns opened to both sides of the discussion, as indeed they should be, and trust that the whole matter may be conducted with dignity as well as with thoroughness. It may not, perhaps, be out of place to state that even amidst the glaring light of this quarter of the nineteenth century, there are some amongst us who question the wisdom of organic union between the different branches of the churches. We will not say these persons are not behind the age. No doubt they are. But having observed that diversity is God's law in nature, and the higher the grade of life the greater the diversity, they have accepted this as God's law in spiritual as well as in physical life. The present age has developed a tendency for the creation of huge monopolies in the different lines of commerce. Political economists deplore this tendency, and point out the disastrous results which must inevitably ensue. Is it possible that this spirit of the age is at work among the Churches? And would it be going too far to take for granted that a process which works evil in the world will not fail to work evil in the Church?

Passing by this aspect of the matter I wish to notice a point or two brought out by Dr. Stewart in your last issue. Efforts to belittle the deliverance of the ministers and laymen of the Hamilton District cannot succeed. True, that meeting was "merely a convention." It did not claim to be anything more. But those who know how Quarterly Meetings are guided by ministers on these questions, how their opinion is solicited and insisted on, will give this deliverance its due weight; and coming, as it does, just in advance of those meetings, will not think it premature. No one will be surprised if the Quarterly Meetings soon to be held within the Hamilton District take the tone given by that convention. The financial part of the plan, which you denominated a "matter of bread and cheese," is to some of us a matter of bread without the cheese, and is one which will force itself to the front. Dr. Stewart tells us this is a "matter on which the Union Committee had been led to think more than a little." We cannot doubt that. And yet nothing on the surface of the scheme would indicate that such trifles had been mentioned. We are well aware that "salaries above the average will not be levelled down." We will not expect this till the Millennium. And we are just as free from doubt as to the "levelling up" process. But will not a fresh number of claimants be thrown on the Missionary Fund, thus diminishing the grants to circuits where brethren enjoy the privilege of genteel starvation? You, yourself, say, that "God will not be in debt to any man." Of course He will not. Will you venture the same assertion of the Church? One of the great things to be gained by Union is "the setting free of a supply of laborers for the openings in the great North-West." By all means let that ground be occupied at any sacrifice. But will the laborers thus liberated be just the material to send to those important fields? The Presbyterians and other bodies are wisely sending their best men to that country, men of training, education, and culture, called from the best city pulpits in the Dominion. I fear we would make a fatal mistake were we to send to those important positions men for whom it is difficult to find circuits at home. Some one whispers in my ear that certain difficulties can be met by a process of involuntary location. By all means let us have some inkling of our probable fate. Which of the honors shall crown our heads already beginning to turn grey; the honor of

pioneering in the great North West, or that of a living death by location? INQUIRER.

[The above was intended for insertion last week.] Ed.

HAMILTON, BERMUDA.

DEAR BRO. SMITH,—For the information of those brethren in the Provinces who must ever look lovingly and inquiringly back to these Islands, let me report the results of our first year's operations in the new church of Hamilton.

On Wednesday evening last we held a meeting of the congregation, to review the year just coming to a close. Reports were presented from the three principal officials: the Recording Steward (our faithful A. M. Oudney, Esq., who occupied the chair at the meeting), the Chapel Steward, Jer. Harnett, Esq., and the Trustees' Treasurer, W. T. James, Esq. There was a fine attendance. Much interest seemed to be taken in the proceedings by all present.

A few items will suffice to show the result of the experiment which seemed at one time so hazardous, if not actually hopeless, on the part of the trustees, in building what is regarded here as an immense public edifice for Methodism.

The debt on the 1st of January, 1882, was within a fraction of \$12,500. The expenditure for the year was about \$1000 for interest, running expenses and other contingencies. From various sources, chiefly from weekly envelopes and rents from the old property, the receipts of the year amounted to about \$1,600; thus turning \$600 into the sinking fund.

This old property, placed at a low value, is worth \$10,000. The cost of the new building and land, deducting of course the debt against it, may be added to this valuation, making an actual asset of the congregation in real estate, about \$17,500. When the debt shall have been extinguished, both properties will be worth in the vicinity of \$30,000. The first year's debt can be handled easily while the other interests need not suffer.

The Chapel Steward reported that of the 94 pews in the church, a few being reserved for the poor, there remained not one unrented, while sittings were constantly being asked for. The congregation had contributed, for various purposes, £550, (about \$2,730.) The envelope system had been working admirably, leaving only a very small per centage of waste, owing to contingencies in the families of a few pewholders. The young people had contributed by entertainments greatly to the pleasure and profit of the congregation and its fund.

From the Recording Steward and the pastor's reports, it was learned that all the expenses of the year had been met, besides paying from Hamilton alone £130 (\$650) to the funds of the church and the poor of the congregation. (This in fact omits several little benevolent expenses, of which it does not become me to speak but amounting to a considerable in the aggregate.) There are connected with the congregation proper 95 families. Several pews are taken by the military, who insist on paying their proportion for all the schemes of the church. Their fine appearance and hearty singing, are a valuable adjunct to the choir, near whom they sit. The choir itself continues to earn warm commendations.

We were favored with excellent speeches from Bro. Wier, and Bro. McKee, the Presbyterian pastor here. After singing the National Anthem, (which by the way, our people were surprised and gratified to find in the new Hymn Book) and giving us a collection of about sixteen dollars for the Sackville Institutions, the meeting broke up.

Nothing has been said of the spiritual results of the year. We infer from the other circumstances reported that there cannot be a dearth of religious matters; while there must be always hidden from the pastor's view much that the "Great Day" will reveal. There is enough revealed, however, to comfort us.

There has been no little excitement over our general election. One-third of the old members have been defeated at the polls. There was therefore a loss on both sides of politics, and a gain on both sides. Our own Church lost a representative and gained one. The Presbyterians lost four; the Catholics gained two (for the first time in the Assembly.) At first it seemed as if there had been a reaction against the Dissenters; but the opponents of exclusive legislation are said to be quite as numerous in the new House as they were in the old. At all events Dissenters, who have always been placed on their own resources here, have not much to gain or to lose either way. While religious grants are continued we can use our share of them to advantage; should they drop out, we can stand it as well as our neighbors.

The winter thus far has been changeable—windy, rainy, and in turns pleasant enough for anybody. One can dispense with an overcoat, generally, and enjoy a fire occasionally. The brethren are very well, and at their work. Bro. F. W. Harrison is with us, the guest of parishioners of eighteen years ago. His throat gains strength enough to let us hear his voice briefly at long intervals. We hope to send him back better than he came. I wish I could send you a bag full of flowers and sunshine.

Yours, &c., A. W. N.

Dec. 29th, 1882.

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