

The Canadian . . .

## Epworth Era

ORGAN OF THE EPWORTH LEAGUES AND  
OTHER YOUNG PEOPLE'S SOCIETIES  
IN THE METHODIST CHURCH.

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## Editorial.

### The New Year.

"Ye have not passed this way heretofore," said Joshua to the children of Israel, when they were ordered to go forward through the untrodden path of the Jordan passage. So it is with us. We find ourselves in facing the New Year starting out on a way over which we have never before travelled. New experiences, new temptations, new trials and sorrows are likely to come to us on this journey.

How necessary it is that we should meet them with strong faith in God, and with a firm determination to use all that may touch our lives in such a way as to minister to our spiritual development! Let us all, young and old, resolve to make this the best year of our lives.

### The Old Minister.

"Shall the old minister be shot?" is the somewhat sensational title of an article by Ian MacLaren, in *The Ladies' Home Journal*, in which he discusses the problem of the old minister, and what to do with him. In other professions age is no barrier; for the old doctor, the old lawyer, the old statesman are always in demand. In the ministry, however, the cry is for young men, and there is a disposition to lay the senior brethren aside. This would not be so bad if adequate provision were made for their support, but when the retiring allowance is such a meagre one, and not even then paid in full, considerable hardship is often involved. In many congregations the supernumerary fund is in great disfavor, whereas it should be the most popular fund of the Church.

It is often said, "Let the preacher provide for old age in the same way as others." This looks plausible enough, but it will not bear examination. Leaving out of the calculation half a dozen or so who occupy prominent pulpits, the average salary of Methodist ministers in Canada

is about \$600, and the average length of service after ordination is twenty-five years. Will some one figure out how much a minister can save on such a salary during this limited time, after providing for, and educating his family? It is simply impossible, under the circumstances, for a man to accumulate a sum sufficient to provide for his necessities after superannuation. When the merchant becomes advanced in life, he lays the heavy burdens of the business on other shoulders, but he still retains his proprietorship; the business goes on and is a source of income. It is the same with the farmer. He may hand over the reins to his son, but the farm is still there, and from it the old man draws a tidy sum every year. With the aged minister, however, when withdrawn from the active work, his only means of support is entirely taken from him, and in many cases he has not even a stick of furniture with which to commence house-keeping. For the Church to thrust its veterans aside without making some provision for them is positive cruelty. If the example of those congregations which refuse to support the Supernumerary Fund, should be followed by the whole Church, many of our worthiest ministers would be left in a condition of destitution and suffering compared with which shooting would be merciful. Let us give our heartiest and most generous support to the Supernumerary Fund, so that its endowment may be greatly strengthened. We trust that a good slice of the Twentieth Century Thanksgiving Fund will go in this direction.

### Loyalty to the Pastor.

A minister related the following experience the other day: Some of the young people of his Endeavor Society came to him and informing him that there was to be a service in the church of another denomination which they were very anxious to attend, requested that he withdraw his own service for that evening. The pastor replied that he could not do this, but those who desired to go to the other church were at perfect liberty to do so, and that he would not feel at all hurt by their going. They immediately responded, "No; if you preach in our church, we will be in our places as usual;" and they were. What an inspiration such young people must be to a minister.

### Sing Good Hymns.

At a recent convention an hour was set apart for the Junior Department and it was decidedly the most interesting feature of the afternoon. The Juniors, about fifty in number, answered a large number of questions concerning the Bible, the history and doctrines of the Church in a manner which reflected great credit upon themselves and their superintendent. Instead of singing about having "Two little hands to work for Jesus," etc., they gave us a couple of majestic hymns from the Church hymn book: "Holy, holy, holy," and "Come thou Almighty King." These were rendered with dignity and fervor, and in perfect time. It was a positive treat, which was enjoyed all the

more because such hymns are so seldom sung at conventions. Why should they not be? Those who think that it is necessary to keep boys and girls constantly singing "tilts" and "jigs" make a serious mistake.

### Humble Workers Needed.

A somewhat bumptious individual who lost no opportunity of keeping himself in the front row, was conversing with a Baptist lady; and expressing his admiration for that denomination, said that he had often thought of becoming a member himself. "O," exclaimed the lady, "you could never be a Baptist, for it would be impossible for you to remain out of sight long enough to be immersed." Sometimes people of this class are met with in our churches, Leagues, and Sunday Schools. In conference assemblies there is always some dear brother who thinks it absolutely necessary that the search-light of his superior wisdom should be turned on every question that may come up for discussion. In the League there are those who work well so long as they are allowed to occupy official positions, but they cannot serve in any other place than that of a leader.

We need capable leaders of course, but we also require a large number of persons who will be satisfied to work anywhere, to remain out of sight altogether if need be, and to perform the most menial tasks in the Master's name, and for His sake.

### The Bible as Literature.

In one of our exchanges we notice the following paragraph:

"A few days ago there was presented in New York a strange illustration of two characteristic ways of regarding the Scriptures. In a church belonging to an evangelical denomination, a learned clergyman was lecturing on 'The Bible as a Literary Work.' A few hundred yards away, in a large hall, an evangelist, noted for his devotional spirit, was preaching to an attentive audience. The congregation of the lecturer, by actual count, numbered seventy-two; the evangelist's hall contained 2,000 sittings, and the aisles and lobby were crowded with persons standing. In other words while seventy-two people were more or less anxious to learn the origin of the books of the Bible, over 2,000 were eager to listen to an exposition of its truths."

It is not altogether a wise thing to make contrasts of this kind, for the tendency is to minimize the importance of the literary study of the Bible. While it may not be as essential as the devotional reading and study of the sacred book, it is nevertheless very important and should be encouraged. The ignorance that exists concerning the Bible as a book is simply appalling.

A few days ago we heard a prominent Christian worker say that he was recently speaking to a company of young men on some obscure character of the Bible. At the close of the address a young man arose and said that the remarks "reminded him of another obscure Bible character named Elijah, whose history we have in the book of Genesis, and who was not, for God took him."

No doubt of it, there is need for instruction on the Bible as a book.