

THE COMING MINISTRY OF THE CHURCH.

There can be no doubt that the Methodist Church of Canada is approaching a crisis relative to the question of ministerial demand and supply. From the most reliable official sources, we learn that the ranks of our Conference are full: that the division of circuits and domestic missions has been carried to the utmost limits which a prudent policy can sanction; that the limited resources of our Missionary Society, entailing untold privations amongst our honored missionaries, forbids, at least for the present, any addition to existing missions, always excepting the great North-West, where the foundations of coming empires are being laid with a celerity which challenges the sacrifice and endeavor of the Church; and further, that the pressure on our Stationing Committee for appointments, is forcing men, who might still render years of service, into reluctant retirement on the Superannuated list, thus diminishing the income which rightly belongs to those whose warfare is well-nigh accomplished and whose eventide should be lightened of all temporal anxiety, by the practical sympathy of the Church.

In the light of these facts, which we venture to think will not be controverted, there are certain responsibilities resting on Quarterly and District meetings, which claim immediate attention. Dare we suggest that, under existing circumstances, no young men should be recommended for the ministry who are not gifted with such a power of speech, and marked with such an energy and consecration as give unmistakable promise of effective power in ministerial work.

We trust the time will never come, when our Church will refuse any candidate thus gifted, because of defects in early education, or on the other hand, that educational status will never give a passport to the ministry, where the aforesaid qualities are wanting, but, in the present state of our work, most searching scrutiny is demanded, that the very best men, who offer, may be thus secured. Dare we suggest, further, that our District Meetings should insist that all who become candidates, after having given evidence of adaptation for the work, should be required to avail themselves of the educational advantages that are now offered to the young men of our Methodism.

It is to be regretted that while the Universities of Victoria at Cobourg, McGill at Montreal and Mount Allison at Sackville, open their portals, and welcome to their walls the candidates for the ministry; that while pains-taking tutors are ready to aid them in Theological study, not a few of those who most need such aids are unwilling to accept of offered advantages, and that, too, when there is no special demand for their immediate service in the Church. An unseemly haste to enter the marriage relation; an indisposition to assume the very limited financial burden which many have gladly borne, and which, to a much greater extent, is every day assumed by those who enter the secular professions; and a mistaken zeal which leads some to imagine all time devoted to preparation for the ministry as wasted, are amongst the influences which lead many to forego that opportunity which comes but once, and, when lost, dooms to humiliating limitation and to a life-long regret, augmented by the growing intelligence which is constantly making greater demands for culture and power in the pulpit.

Indeed, it may be safely doubted whether that man should be encouraged to continue in the work, who is unwilling to secure a preparation adequate for the tremendous demands of this portentous age. Senior men there are among us, who plucked opportunity out of the bosom of early disadvantage, and cultured their intellects with an efficiency which holds them still in the front rank against all comers; to their honor be it said, none are more solicitous that our candidates should enjoy every possible advantage for their great life work. This found expression in the resolution of Dr. Elliott, and the support which was given at the last session of the Montreal Conference. In conclusion, let it be said that the Methodist Church of Canada will be recreant to its trust, if it does not give increasing sympathy and aid to the work of culturing those who are to fill her pulpits, command the intelligence of the times, and extend her influence. Numerically, the strongest Church in the Dominion, and educationally, doing a great work, still in the presence of those Churches that have planted their well-endowed institutions in the centres of population throughout the land, we have much yet to accomplish to hold our place of honor in the country.

When a MacMaster generously donates one hundred and twenty thousand dollars to plant a Baptist Theological College in Toronto; when a Mackay and a Morrice give one hundred thousand dollars to strengthen the Presbyterian college in Montreal, and a Redpath adds another one hundred thousand to his former gifts, to establish a scientific museum for McGill, surely the time is not distant when some of Methodism's loyal sons, gifted with means, will do likewise for her institutions and place them in a state of prosperity where all possible advantages, spiritual and intellectual, will be given to the men, who are to carry the triumphal banners of our Church into the coming generation.

April 20th 1881. GEO. DOUGLAS.

For One Dollar—cash with order—the WESLEYAN will be sent from this date to Dec. 31st, 1881—eight months.

BOOK COMMITTEE.

The Annual Meeting of the Eastern Section of the Book Committee will be held in the Book Room (D.V.), on Thursday, May 19th., at 10 a.m. The Executive Committee will meet the previous evening at 7.30.

JOHN McMURRAY, Chairman.

SUPERNUMERARY FUND.

The Annual Meeting of the General Committee of the Supernumerary Ministers' and Ministers' Widows' Fund is to be held at the Methodist Book Room, 141 Granville Street, Halifax, Thursday evening, the 19th of May, at 7 o'clock.

H. PICKARD, J. R. INCH.

Sackville, N.B., April 21st., 1881.

THE WESLEYAN

FRIDAY, APRIL 29, 1881.

We invite special attention to the notice at the head of this column. The managers of the WESLEYAN are anxious to place it at once in all Methodist homes in the Lower Provinces. Our paper is published for the spiritual and religious benefit of our people, but because of the lack of support in many quarters can only be furnished at its present price by availing ourselves of a certain amount of advertising patronage. We now, however, offer to send it post-paid during the remaining eight months of 1881 for ONE DOLLAR. A number of our ministers, anxious to benefit their people through its columns, have asked if it cannot be supplied at a lower rate. They have now the wished for opportunity. Through the meeting of the Ecumenical Conference in September next, in London, the general aims and purposes of our Church will pass under special review, and no Methodist worthy of the name should fail to secure the opportunity of making his children familiar with her history and growth. This offer should secure for us at the very lowest estimate One Thousand new subscribers. Let us have the names as early as possible.

A HINT TO PASTORS.

All successful ministers know that the presence of care respecting the future of the youthful portion of the church membership often lessens the joy of harvest. Others have wandered; will these also go away? The churches are weighed down with lifeless members, such as in business circles would be buried; what if these should be hereafter added to the long list who might with advantage to the whole be cast out on the ground of "general worthlessness?" Such a possibility suggests sad thoughts. This beginning in the Spirit and ending in the flesh causes a shudder. Then let every faithful under-shepherd use all possible means to avert such a dreaded result. In doing this he must first seek to aid the development of a deep and strong spiritual life—a life of entire, consciously-accepted consecration to Him who loved us with an everlasting love. But even then the pastor must not forget to repeat and reiterate the Saviour's command: "Go work in my vineyard."

In the morning of the Christian life it is not difficult to teach this lesson. The spontaneous feeling of young converts points out the natural course. Upon tasting the blessedness of forgiving love they at once desire the same enjoyment for others. Timid and trembling they may have been as penitents, but baptized with the influences of the Spirit they grow bolder as did Peter and John upon the day of Pentecost. An English minister tells how during a recent revival in England a young man twenty years of age found peace with God, and how in the prayer-meeting next evening he drew his gray-haired father to the "penitent form," knelt down at his side, and burst out with "God bless this dear old father of mine." This, but one instance of many in which young converts have thrilled congregations through and through, is the natural legitimate fruit of the work of the Holy Spirit.

Here the watchful pastor will find his opportunity, and, taking advantage of the deep interest of his youthful friends, will seek to impress upon their minds that such efforts are not to be undertaken only from the promptings of mere impulse, but are to be continued as the constant duty of the ransomed of the Lord. Full early will discouragements prompt them to diminish their ardor; quite too soon will they learn that "the old Adam is too strong for young

Melancthon." Happy will it be for them, then, if they shall have learned among other lessons that the ever-recurring disposition to persuade others to repentance, is but a result of the teaching of the Holy Spirit, which they can only treat lightly at personal peril. Let that lesson be taught them now. Let them grow up with the conviction that an inactive Christianity is a poor Christianity—that it is gouty or dwarfish. They should go forth to feel that a Christian at work is a soldier at his post; a Christian at rest is a saint in heaven. It will be well to remind them that in the New Testament they will find five commands to give or work where they find one command to pray. There is service for Christ to be done on the feet as well as on the knees. "The school of Christ is as much out-of-doors as in-doors."

Youthful workers should at the same time be taught that work is to be done irrespective of immediate consequences. The recollections of boyhood tell us of the impatience of youth. A like impatience may be manifested by the youthful Christian. It is well to help him to remember that the good wrought by the humblest never dies—that there is "one long, unerring memory in the universe out of which nothing good ever fades." His faith may be strengthened by the example of the light-house keeper who in his lonely work in the midst of the darkness and the storm knows not how many endangered mariners are being gladdened and saved by his faithfulness.

Some one has said "The best pastor for to-day is he who knows best how to keep his people at work." Another—a pastor—has said "Whenever I take a man into the Church, I study to see what use I can make of him." Who will say that this is an unwise course? Then let it be adopted. Teaching and training may be conducted at one and the same time. Space will not permit us to point out the departments in which Christian activity may find employment. It is in the Church as in the watch. There are jewels there. But the sparkling jewels cannot say to the coiled steel beside them, "We have no need of thee;" nor can the main-spring say to the tiniest cog-wheel, "you are not wanted;" for without this works would stand still. The pastor must judge of the capacity of the youth who have entered the Church, and guide them where he deems best.

"What about those doubts, Dr.?" said a friend of his early days to Dr. Marshman, when he visited England after long missionary service in India. "Oh, I haven't had time for them," was the suggestive reply. The moral lies on the surface. The Christian worker obeys his Lord's command, he sets influences in motion which make men happy on earth and prepare them for the grand gathering of the redeemed, and yet none are more blessed than himself, for doubt, fear, and sin, are crowded out by active service. He has no time for them.

May we not urge all our brethren to teach and train our youths for Christian workers. In so doing they will at once bless them and make them a blessing. A minister in reviewing twenty-three years of his life said, "My ministerial life has been a failure in some of its qualities. I believe I was a tolerably good recruiting agent but a very poor drill-master. I brought about as many to the communion of the Church as most clergymen, but there is something more to be done than this." And he added that if he had but been careful to train all he had received "to be Christian workers there would have been a very different state of things in the parish which he had served for twenty-three years." Who by figures can estimate the extent of that ministerial failure?

THE PRESIDENT'S LETTER.

An article from the President of the General Conference—the Rev. Dr. Douglas, appears in another column. A paper from so able a pen, and upon a question which threatens embarrassment and demands immediate attention, will, we are persuaded, both please and profit every thoughtful reader.

It is evident that we have reached a point at which we must pause, or from which we must advance with the utmost caution. Through request after request from circuit boards, frequently advocated with energy by the retiring or overworked pastor, we have advanced too far beyond our base of supplies. Devoted men, who in many cases have left positions of no small degree of financial promise, are working to-day under a pressure of need which cannot long be borne by themselves or their families. Our people must develop an increased measure of liberality, or retrenchment—such retrenchment

as means dishonorable retirement, must become the policy of our Conferences.

The cautions thrown out by Dr. Douglas respecting the reception of young men as candidates for our ministry will commend themselves to that rapidly increasing class who deem the minister's proper place to be at the van and not at the rear of educational movements, and who feel that in mental vigor and practical sagacity the pastor should be not one whit behind the men who occupy the highest positions in political and business life. Of that class of senior ministers to which he refers we have had some most worthy representatives, who have been among the foremost in providing and sustaining for their successors such privileges as they themselves did not possess. On the other hand it is but fair to our young men in the Maritime Provinces to say that their absence from our Collegiate and Theological Institutions has been, with several at least, a matter of public necessity, not personal choice. We mean public necessity—as judged by the majority of our Conference members. There are young men in our circuits to day, whom earlier marriage did not hold back, nor cost of education deter from the pursuit of a thorough educational course, but who were simply held back by the hand of authority, for the supply of some vacant post. With these we sympathize most deeply. A few months since we were asked to sanction the withdrawal of a young man from Mount Allison, and persisted in refusal until refusal was in vain. Yet we suppose ministers will continue to clamor for supplies for vacant posts, and the men withdrawn, conscious of inability to take a proper position in this age of widely-diffused educational advantages, will strive at once to do their full circuit work and make up for lack of preparation, and break down in the attempt. We have wandered, it may be, from our subject, but only because next to the spirit of deep, thorough, and renewed consecration on the part of our rising ministry, we desire for them the highest educational preparation possible.

To our laymen, those of them especially to whom God has given power to get wealth, belongs the concluding topic of Dr. Douglas's most suggestive letter. We do not wish to judge for them, but think it probable that a calm consideration of the subject would take the support of our educational work out of the sphere of choice and place it within the range of duty. If England supports her military schools, if Americans maintain West Point for their youth who seek military service, if our Dominion is justified in her annual grants to schools of gunnery, it seems but reasonable that the Church should aid in the maintenance of Educational Institutions where the rising ministry and laity may, with moral safety, be prepared for their life service. We thank Dr. Douglas for having brought forward these gifts of the wealthy men of other Churches. May their gifts and his words act as a happy stimulus to equal liberality in our own honored branch of the Church.

AN EXPLANATION.

The timidity with which the members of the Eastern Section of the Committee of the Ecumenical Conference have regarded any disposition on the part of their Western brethren to allude to "points of doctrine, discipline or Church government" has excited some surprise among the latter. The Watchman having deemed it necessary to utter "some words of explanation and caution," and to remind all parties of the "distinct guards and conditions" which accompanied the consent of the British Conference to welcome the proposed gathering at City Road Chapel, the Secretary of the Western Section—Dr. A. C. George, of Chicago—has thought fit to make some explanations in the columns of the Christian Advocate.

A suggestion of Dr. Summers in respect to "written standards," and a misconception of the official value of the paper read by him before the Committee of the Western Section, seems to have excited the fears of certain brethren at home, and to have prompted the publication of the Watchman's words of "explanation and caution." On this point Dr. George says:

Dr. Summers is a man of years, experience, ripe culture; in high official position in his Church; of large resources and unquestioned piety; and withal, I believe, an Englishman. He read a paper which did not pretend to be a programme or order of exercises, but which was properly entitled "Suggestions of topics for discussion," etc. The paper contained many valuable hints, together with some things which, perhaps, very few would "sanction," and only proper respect was shown to its author when, on Bishop Simpson's motion, his paper was approved and referred, not to the Eastern Section of the Executive Committee, but to the Business Committee of the Ecumenical Conference, which Com-

mittee will represent all sections, and will report back to the Conference only such papers, or such parts of papers as it may judge worthy of the consideration of the main body. Dr. Summers, who, by the way, was not, as the Watchman states, a member of the Cincinnati Joint Committee, was given liberty, if he desired, to print his document prior to the meeting of the Ecumenical Conference, as it was presumed that it was originally designed for the Southern Quarterly Review, of which Dr. Summers is editor, and in the columns of which periodical it has since appeared.

While prepared for himself and colleagues to accept "the programme as finally shaped by the Eastern Section and to carry it out in good faith," Dr. George asks a question or two and adds a statement by way of gentle protest. Respecting the "guards and conditions" which the British Wesleyan Committee sought to impose upon the General Council he asks,—and his question is pertinent:

Did it mean that the doctrines which all Methodists hold in common should not be stated, should not be shown to be in harmony with the best biblical exegesis, should not be historically vindicated, and should not be set forth as the grandest inspiration to religious activities for the conversion of the world? If they did mean that, then they have been greatly misapprehended on this side of the Atlantic. What the Committee asked was the exclusion of "all points of doctrine, discipline, or Church government, regarded as fundamental by any of the bodies that are to come together, and as to which any one of such bodies differs from any of the others." The Western Section has stood firmly on this platform. It has excluded from the programme "all points" of difference in doctrine, discipline, and Church government. But does the exclusion of differences demand the exclusion of agreements also? The Watchman itself said, in its issue for Oct. 18, 1878, "On the vital truths embraced in the experimental theology of Methodism, there is far more than merely substantial agreement." Is there any harm in asserting this substantial agreement before the world? The Joint Committee at Cincinnati, over which Mr. Arthur presided, declared that the Ecumenical Conference "is not for doctrinal controversies, for Methodism has no doctrinal differences." The matters, then, to be avoided were chiefly those relating to the different politics of the different Methodist bodies. Now the simple fact is, that every thing which the American Section has suggested in regard to "doctrine," in a programme of exercises, is that Methodism is in harmony with the best biblical exegesis; that this fact is historic; that it may be philosophically maintained, and that it has been an inspiration to Christian activity in order to secure growth in grace and the salvation of lost men. To this extent, and no further, the American Section is involved, and to this extent it is willing to go on the record for the judgment of those who will come after us.

If there be any suspicions entertained in the Watchman office, or in the British Wesleyan Conference, or in the Eastern Section of the Executive Committee, that the American Methodists are not firm adherents to Wesleyan doctrine, it is a needless and grievous mistake. On the contrary, their chief desire was to proclaim their faith in these doctrines—in their Pauline origin, in their historic completeness, in their philosophic consistency, and in their beneficent influence over the world. If the Ecumenical Conference shall meet and part with no consideration of the grand distinctive doctrines of Methodism, it will be very much like an English dinner with the traditional roast beef excluded; nevertheless, it may prove a right royal feast, for Methodist history, experience and labor are rich in resources. The programme of exercises, as finally shaped by the Eastern Section, will be accepted on this side, and carried out in good faith; but we are making history in these days, and the Western Section of the Executive Committee desires that its exact relations to this whole matter be understood by the men of to-day, and by the future generations of Methodists.

The Doctor closes with appropriate words respecting the "unity in diversity" which obtains among Methodists the world over. They are worthy of consideration by those who seek to conceal their own wider differences under a common name, by magnifying those of others:

The truth is, that our differences are few and of minor importance; our agreements are many, radical, and of first consequence; and this harmony of doctrine, life and usage has been the strength and glory of Methodism. It ought, on every notable occasion, to be magnified. May we not expect that when the representatives of a world-wide Methodism shall clasp hands around the tomb of the venerable Wesley, that, recalling a common origin, contemplating a common work, engaging in a common worship, and anticipating common triumphs in the future, they will grow more and more into the likeness and life of our one common Lord and Saviour!

EDITORIAL NOTES.

The Religious Intelligencer complains that, in spite of its rule against the publication of poetry at the end of death notices, scarcely a week passes in which that rule is not forgotten by some of its friends. Our contemporary is not singular in his experience. The general wisdom of the rule alone has prevented some others, under the pressure of deep sympathy, from making exceptions to it.

English Methodist papers, received by the last steamer, were printed previous to the death of Dr. Punshon, and therefore furnish no further information respecting that sad event. We only learn from them that "great anxiety" was then being entertained respecting not only the condition of Dr. Punshon, but also of that of his school-fellow and life-long friend, Dr. Gervase Smith. Dr. Punshon's health, had been failing during the winter, which had suffered a heavy additional strain through the death of his eldest son and the delicate health of his youngest boy. He leaves a wife and two sons to mourn his loss. A daughter, the wife of Prof. Rayner, of Victoria University, Cobourg, died in 1873. Dr. Punshon's remains were interred on the 19th inst., in the Lower Norwood cemetery, on the Surrey side of the Thames. Most of the Methodist ministers in and around London were present at the funeral. The services both at the late residence of the deceased minister and at the grave are said to have been very impressive. The Christian Guardian of the 25th inst., announced a memorial service to be held on Monday evening last in the Metropolitan Church, Toronto, in the erection of which Dr. Punshon took such a lively interest. Addresses were to be delivered by several Methodist ministers and laymen, and also, it was expected, by one or more representatives from other Churches.

A meeting of the Executive Committee of the Western Section of the Ecumenical Conference Committee was held on the 19th inst. at Cincinnati. A majority of the members were present, and succeeded in making satisfactory arrangements. In the absence of Dr. Allison, or any representative from the Methodist Church of Canada, full justice, to say the least, was done to the delegates from our Church, both East and West. Dr. Douglas, President of the General Conference, is to be associated with Bishop Warren, of the Methodist Episcopal Church, and Bishop M. Tyeire of the Methodist Episcopal Church—South, in replying to the addresses of welcome. Dr. Dewart, of the Christian Guardian, whose health at present precludes any unnecessary mental effort, is placed on the Business Committee,—an important body, since the various presiding officers are chosen by it, and any additional papers must pass under its review for acceptance. Papers on Topics 15, 27 and 38 have also been assigned to ministers and laymen of our Church, but as arrangements have yet to be made between the persons named and their alternates no names are given.

It seems but the other day that some of our readers, who would object to be placed on the old folks' list, were reading in the Missionary Notices and Quarterly Papers of the missions in the Friendly and Fiji Islands, and shuddering over the cannibalism practised in the latter group. Yet a missionary, whose words are quoted on our first page, tells us that this disgusting thing is now a matter of the past; and an Australian minister writes that at the recent Melbourne Conference it was agreed to detach "The Friendly Islands District" from the control of the Missionary Executive in Sydney, and to erect it into a separate district, with power to manage its own financial affairs, the same as any of the colonial districts do at present, in connection with their respective Conferences." Verily the world moves—and missions move with it.

That story of the Baptist Church being the largest religious body in the United States has been started off once more on its all-summer travels. The error arises from the fact that the Methodist Episcopal Church alone is taken into the comparison, to the exclusion of the large M. E. Church, South, and other branches of Methodism. All these reach the immense total of 3,752,600 communicants, while the Baptist exchanges base their claim to the foremost position upon a return of only 2,374,339 communicants. Nevertheless this erroneous statement will be likely to find its way on the wings of the press into every nook and corner of the Dominion.

The London Times, in writing of the demolition of Surrey Chapel, makes some remarks respecting the eccentric Rowland Hill, whose long ministry there made the locality of world-wide interest. The elements of success in the pulpit are well described by the Times: "His hold on the congregation was that which never has been found to fail yet. He seemed to believe what he said, to think it very important, and to be resolved to act up to it. . . . He acted as one who had seen a heavenly vision and received an apostolic mission, and who could not but deliver what he had seen, known and felt."

On Monday will be removed more convenient to the village Street. Removal may in appearance of

Mr. W. A. Prater, is at present

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Rev. Dr. C. L. Church, St. C.

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