

The Wesleyan,

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OUR ENGLISH LETTER.

RELIGIOUS EQUALITY.

DEAR MR. EDITOR.—A meeting of the supporters of the great principles of religious equality has just been held. The object of the gathering was to enquire as to the present position of some important questions, and to confer as to what action ought to be taken during the present session of Parliament. The outlook is not a hopeful one. It will be useless to press for any great reformatory movement in the ecclesiastical world, and the most that can be done, is to act in concert and wisdom to prevent the Government taking any reactionary steps. The Rev. John Bond, one of the Wesleyan ministers in London, was present at this gathering, and said some strong and earnest things as to the feelings of the great body of Wesleyan ministers and laymen upon the

BURIAL LAWS

which yet constitute a grievance of no ordinary magnitude, and for the removal of which we all are prepared for an immediate effort. Week by week the narratives of wrong, and priestly usurpation of power at the graves of Non-conformists, the exclusion of worthy men from the resting-place of their forefathers, because they have not been baptized, are poured from the secular and religious papers; yet the Church of England clings with wonderful tenacity to its hold upon the graveyards. We have at length a promise on the part of Her Majesty's Ministers to introduce a Bill upon the Burial Laws, early in the present session into the House of Lords. It would be presumptuous to expect much from a Bill thus introduced, and the birthplace of which will be that Chamber of dignities and Bishops. Yet the leader is at work, and ere long the nation will obtain some degree of justice upon this burning question.

THE LIBERAL PARTY

can scarcely be called "great" at this present crisis, and we fear that its immediate prospects are the reverse of hopeful. The Liberals are not merely comparatively few in number, but they are divided. In England there is a majority of the Tory government of 124, and not a few of these are nominees of parsons and publicans, from whom little can be expected. In Scotland the ranks of the Liberals continue almost unbroken, but they are not numerically sufficient to turn the scale in favor of their English brethren. The Irish Liberals are not to be depended upon in any great critical test. They avowedly confine their attention to questions of Irish interest and policy. Thus about fifty men are withdrawn from the Liberal ranks, and the determined stand they take for

HOME RULE

creates an impassable barrier between them and the Liberals of other parts of the United Kingdom. Some years must yet elapse before another general election will give evidence as to the feeling of the nation. The time is unpropitious for great movements, and to watch and wait, seems about all that can be done by that party which a few years ago accomplished such wonderful results in removal of inequalities and the bringing in of better laws.

THE PARLIAMENT

the past fortnight has been very quiet and uneventful. The fierce debates of the opening week, have not been repeated. There is a tacit understanding that the Turkish question will not just now admit of a full discussion, and that it is prudent for all parties to be quiet while negotiations are pending and treaties for peace between Turkey and her revolted provinces are in course of formation. The business introduced is simply appalling for variety and magnitude. If Parliament would sit the entire year it could not dispose of the work to be done. There are unseemly scrambles for precedence and contests

between Government and private members for the time of the House. All this while the Upper House has little or nothing to do, it meets for a few minutes, and listens to a few formal notices, then breaks up for sheer want of employment. The session will pass a fair share of public and private bills, but it is not likely that any great Imperial question will be determined.

THE DEATH OF DR. WOOD
of Southport is the one noticeable event in Methodism which calls for record in this letter. He came of a grand old Methodist stock, and has worthily done his work for his native town and the Church of his fathers. A beloved physician, a leading citizen, a scholar of large attainments—prized by men of worth and position as a friend and brother, and with all and above all a true disciple of Christ; he is widely mourned, and it is no wonder that the town of Southport was moved with unusual sorrow when its honoured son was borne to his grave. Faithfully has he served God and his generation, and his works will long live to testify of his enlarged philanthropy and Christian zeal. B.

March 3, 1877.

A CORRESPONDENT sends us, from Grand Lake, N. B., a detailed account of a very sad accident, which was briefly noticed in last week's condensed news:—

The husband was sitting reading in the house after breakfast, and noticed his wife going out with a pail, which was nothing unusual. After a few minutes he went out to water his horses; not seeing her about the barn, he became alarmed, as no neighbors lived near. Returning to the house, he searched, and not finding her, he turned to the door and traced her footsteps to the well, only a few yards distant, in which he found his wife, who had fallen in head foremost. He tried, but was unable, to extricate her. Calling for help, a neighbor came, but the two were unequal to the emergency. They called for more help, this soon came also, and with the combined efforts of three men she was got out of the well, but was quite dead. An inquest was held. Verdict—Accidental death. The well was, as are hundreds of others, exposed, without any protection whatever round it. The ice had formed through the winter, and it is supposed the deceased was clearing out the snow and slipped in. Moral:—See that your wells are properly protected.

GENERAL SUPERINTENDENCY OR AN ANNUAL GENERAL CONFERENCE? WHICH?

MR. EDITOR.—Your able and timely articles on "Looking to General Conference" should have the effect of inducing some of your many readers to publicly discuss those topics that are vital to the well-being of the Methodist Church. Methodism in the Dominion of Canada and Newfoundland is in a transition state. The articles of union have been signed which have constituted the Wesleyan Methodists and New Connection Methodists of Ontario, Quebec and the Maritime Provinces, "The Methodist Church of Canada," and yet it is painfully apparent that we consist of but a string of isolated Conferences, without cohesive power sufficient to bind and weld the whole together, and destitute as a united Church of executive authority that is central, authoritative and easily available.

How can these glaring defects be remedied is one of the great problems that will await solution at the next General Conference. Men of age and standing in the Church will again doubtless advocate that the appointment of three men as General Superintendents will remedy the defects in our system. Will their views be entertained? We think not. For whilst the plan has several manifest advantages the strong objections expressed three years since will be repeated and effectually prevent its acceptance.

The times require and the interests of Methodism at this juncture demand an Annual General Conference.

REASONS FURNISHED.
Our Presbyterian friends notwithstanding their annual synods find since the union of the Presbyterian bodies in the Dominion, that it is necessary to have an

annual representative gathering. The Baptists with their associations in different parts of Nova Scotia, New Brunswick and P. E. Island find it desirable to have an annual convention representing their denomination in the Maritime Provinces. If two of the prominent nonconformist bodies find their interests subserved in this manner, is it not likely that Methodism would be greatly benefitted in learning by their wisdom. To Methodism the advantage of such an arrangement can scarcely be overestimated. The sectionalism that now prevails would soon give place to broad and ennobling views of the greatness of the united Church's work, whilst the advantages of a thorough fusion of our interests growing out of frequent intercourse between our leading ministers and laymen would introduce elements that would quicken and stimulate and excite a spirit of generous rivalry. Moreover nearly every year great questions arise in church and state which can only be met by an annual gathering. A General Conference committee constituted as the present is, is a useless appendage. To note special advantages, it may be fairly claimed that an annual meeting such as we advocate, either as a whole or by a committee could grapple with that "frictional element" indicated by the suggestive word *Transfer*. Let the ministers come frequently together and the wants of the work and of the brethren in different Conferences can be properly considered and that which is undesirable in the matter of appointment will be accepted in the heroic spirit that has ever characterized Methodist preachers, whilst frequent interchanges between the members of the Church will be accepted by all as one of the conditions of a strong and organic union. The Missionary and Educational Funds can be administered in connection with such an arrangement much better than at present, whilst the effect upon our people in giving direct to the many rather than to the select few full information, would be beneficial.

PROSPECTIVE REQUIREMENTS—OTHER REASONS.
Among the pressing wants of the Church is a equitable arrangement for the amalgamation of the Supernumerary Funds of all the Conferences; also a wise and prudent plan that shall involve either giving up entirely the Children's Fund, or the placing it on a broad and connexional basis, forever stamping out the present inequalities between the Conferences; and the organization of a Church extension Fund. On the present basis after the next Quadrennial session we must have at least five annual committees, viz., on Transfer, Missions, Educational, Supernumerary Ministers and Church Extension. These Committees cannot be satisfactorily worked by two representative men from each Conference, but if we have two men to represent each interest in the future as in the past—having six Conferences—we shall have twelve men meeting annually free times for the administration of affairs pertaining to the united Church. Or we may put the same idea in this form, each Conference will have annually ten men on the important General Conference Committees. Now at the last General Conference the Nova Scotia Conference had but eight ministerial representatives, and the same number was sent by the New Brunswick and P. E. Island Conference. How much better the project of an Annual General Conference for Nova Scotia, N. B. and P. E. Island than the Quadrennial arrangement with its annual committees. But it may be objected that such a plan will not be as well suited to the Western Conferences as to those in the East in view of the size of those Conferences and consequently larger number of ministerial representatives. The objection may be met by the fact that the sessions of an Annual General Conference would necessarily be held more frequently in the West than in the East, and with all the advantages of steamboats and railroads no special inconveniences would result.

THE FINANCIAL OUTLOOK.
On the score of expense it can be easily proved that it would be less burdensome in the financial sense to have an annual General Conference than a Quadrennial Conference with five annual committees composing of different men and meeting at different times, for what is now a heavy tax

on the Missionary and Educational funds, and a burden (that sooner or later must be borne) to pay the expenses of the Transfer Committee, besides the prospective demands of a similar character upon the united Supernumerary Fund and Church Extension Fund—all could and would be met as the elected annual General Conference delegates would have their expenses paid by a collection made yearly in all our churches. But suppose for the sake of argument an additional expense would be incurred, would not the advantages of an annual General Conference be so manifold and so great that the Church would be more than recompensed by the outlay.

CONSTITUTIONAL VIEW.
The framers of our constitution expected there would be changes. Our Discipline provides on section II page 28 for changes: "An act of the General Conference involving constitutional changes shall become law only when it secures a majority of three-fourths of the members of the General Conference who may be present and vote thereon." Such a change as we advocate need not necessarily involve the idea of having more at present than each Quadrennial session purely legislative. But this phase of the subject, and in fact the suggestion as a whole, is given to induce earnest and prayerful consideration and discussion.
Yours, &c.,
March, 1877. Z.

METHODIST TABLE-TALK

The mortality this year among ministers seems to have been very heavy. One or two more have been added to the roll of the dead this last week; among the rest the Rev. George Blanchflower, who was laid in his grave in Warrington Cemetery on Saturday last. Mr. Blanchflower was one of the quiet, earnest, plodding men who do an immense amount of the real work of Methodism, without ever becoming very widely known through the Connexion. In his circuits he has left many friends, and his memory will be held by them very tenderly.

I regret to hear that several other ministers are seriously unwell, and that some younger ones have quite broken down in health and retired from the work. There is perhaps too much pressure put upon such. The vicious system of competitive examination, tabulating results, &c., is doing its work even among Methodist preachers. Men who have to be reported upon in the district meetings naturally work hard for good marks; sometimes perhaps they suffer, having in addition to examination work to prepare many sermons; and if they suffer, the circuits suffer too. Men cannot do well at high pressure. It becomes a question of some importance as to whether more is not exacted from probationers than should be. The man and the preacher must not be sacrificed to the student and the cram.

The Special Home Mission Committee is sitting this week. Those of us who are outsiders will look anxiously for indications of the future action of this most important and popular branch of Methodism. It has done well in the past, but it is expected to "go forward" and lead others to advance. Such expectations are sure to be realised. It is splendidly officered, and capable of great achievements.

Another Methodist preacher has been "presented" to the Queen; but to Rev. Josiah Henson, "Uncle Tom," was accorded the great honour of an actual interview and conversation with Her Majesty. The Queen also gave the good old man her photograph and autograph. This graciousness will be appreciated as heartily in America as in England. No wonder that Victoria I. is the most popular monarch in the world!

The Edinburgh University has offered the degree of Doctor in Divinity to Rev. William B. Pope, and probably he will visit the northern Athens next month in order to be capped and gowned. Both the University and the recipient may be congratulated.

The first number of the first Welsh Wesleyan newspaper appeared on March 2, called *Y Gwyliedydd*, published by laymen and ministers.—[London Methodist.

FIRST SUNDAY IN WASHINGTON.

Dr. Newman, the pastor of the Metropolitan Church, of course has been anxious that President Hayes and family should belong to the flock of whose spiritual welfare he has charge. This anxiety has been shared by the whole church membership and by the excellent gentlemen who contributed to its erection, and who now support it. It was feared that President Hayes might have some delicacy in using the pew while ex-President Grant was in the city, and to obviate any embarrassment which might arise in that respect, the arrangement was made that the President should sit in the Vice-President's pew that day, and he and Pres. Hayes were so notified. Other influences were quietly brought to bear upon the President's family to secure their attendance. But, as the result shows, they were all of no avail. The President and Mrs. Hayes settled the question by quietly, and without notice to any one, going to a less prominent and more unobtrusive house of worship, the Fourdry Methodist Episcopal Church, which is about five minutes walk from the Executive's Mansion. Mrs. Hayes, it seems, has conscientious scruples about riding or driving on Sunday, and accordingly, when the hired carriage, which the President is compelled to use until his own is brought from Ohio next week, reported at the White House, the coachman was told that it would not be needed for the day. The morning was deliciously bright and beautiful, and a few minutes before 11 o'clock, the President and Mrs. Hayes walked through the White House grounds to Pennsylvania avenue, where they joined the procession of church-goers. They were followed a few minutes later by Miss Foote, who was escorted by Col. Corbin and Mr. Webb Hayes, son of the President. Not one in a hundred of those on the sidewalk who saw them recognized the party, and the President received but two or three salutations. His arrival at the church which was unexpected, created quite a little flutter of excitement among the ushers, who, however, retained presence of mind enough to escort the party to one of the central or body pews two or three rows back from the first tier of seats. The fact that the Presidential party was present spread through the congregation in a few minutes, and during the five or ten minutes that elapsed before the services began every eye was turned towards where they sat. The services were conducted by the Rev. Dr. Duncan, President of Randolph College, Macon, Ga. When the first hymn, beginning with the line,

O Thou, whom all Thy saints adore,
had been read the President devoutly opened the hymn book, and Mrs. Hayes joined in the singing which followed. The first lesson was taken from Psalms cxlii., and the second from John I.

In the beginning was the word,
The 142nd hymn was then sung, and Mr. Duncan preached from that portion of the Gospel according to Saint Luke, where the first sermon of the Saviour is described. The sermon was exceedingly able and eloquent, and did not contain a single political allusion. When the basket was handed around the President made his contribution, and when the last prayer had been finished and the blessings pronounced made his way out through the throng as quickly as he could. The desire to see him was very great, and a large crowd collected in front of the church as he passed out. The rest of the day was spent at the White House. In the afternoon Vice-President Wheeler, Secretary Sherman and "Bob" Ingersoll dined with the President and Mrs. Hayes, and remained at the Executive Mansion until nearly 8 o'clock. There were no other visitors during that day.—[Boston Globe.

Carlton Mrs C O