

THE WESLEYAN.

SATURDAY, JUNE 1, 1878.

WOMEN PREACHERS.

SHALL THE BAN CONTINUE.

As our race removes farther and farther from a past dispensation, and from the influence and prejudices of creeds and customs affecting the social rights of woman, it persists in bringing forward and discussing the question—Are there, indeed, of divine authority, prohibitions against the most public use of women's gifts, and if so, where are the limits of their privilege? Another reason there is for the frequency with which these enquiries present themselves in the public prints: we are bringing women up to a perfect equality with men in all that results from refinement and education. They are bearing away, here and there, the prizes of excellency in competitive examinations. They accordingly ask, or we ask for them, Does God require that no advantage shall come to the world through all this education—that it shall, indeed, be, contrary to all the order of Nature, unenumerative, save as it shall affect the family or be read in books? It is easily seen that the prejudice against women in relation to other professions has been linked closely with the supposed command of the New Testament, that in the church she is to hold always a subordinate position. But is this actually a command, or have the words of Paul, specially intended to correct a peculiar abuse in the early churches, been unwarrantably employed to the disadvantage of females in every age? Every law that strikes at human freedom will awaken enquiry and resistance on the part of intelligent races; but even though it may appear severe in any respect, if we ascertain that this law of female subordination in the Church is of divine origin and force, it remains for us but to submit, and leave the results to Him who doeth all things in the light of knowledge not yet granted to man. It is insisted upon by those whose training has entitled them to speak with authority, that the apostolic words—the only words capable of being fairly used against the right of woman to preach—viewed in the light of history and tested by the fairest rules of linguistic construction—are not a universal command, but a rebuke called for by a state of things in the church which has now no parallel. If this be true, the Christian world has been long enough under a delusion—a delusion which has retarded the mental growth and the public usefulness of one half of our race—and the sooner it is dispelled the better.

Methodism is specially interested in this subject. In the early history of our church, by that remarkable intuition which led Wesley to step so far ahead of ordinary modes, even when it brought his work into conflict with the warmest prejudices, women were not only encouraged to take much part in public services, but their privilege and duty in this respect were insisted upon from the Scriptures. From whatever cause it is to be feared that, except in the seclusion of the class-meeting, there are but rare instances of female co-operation in our public services now-a-days. Indeed, a worshipper may go in and out among Christian congregations for a year and not listen to three different women either praying or offering testimony on the truth of religion.

Do we see the effect of this drifting into the common current? Methodism may move on respectably with nothing to distinguish it from other churches; but it is pitiful that, when other churches come to adopt our modes, we should give them up to a great degree. Our singing has been taken into the soul of evangelical service everywhere; our own singing is on the decline in many places. Local preachers were called out by Wesley, against the judgment of his own friends and the remonstrance of other churches. Those very churches now employ this class to excellent advantage, while with us the spirit of sacerdotalism is crowding out our local preachers to a considerable extent. Now, before that powerful agency, female talent, has been recognized by other churches, we begin to

yield to the false notions which have all along prevailed in respect to its proprieties. What, then, has Methodism left to contend for in our time? Has it any peculiarity that is not common to some of the other denominations? Granted that it has much to do in the general, glorious work of evangelization; but this has only been one half its work hitherto. It had always some distinct arm or voice which was not seen or heard elsewhere; and if, indeed, it now remain satisfied with having persuaded others to adopt many of its modes, or, failing in this, abandon what remains of its distinguishing peculiarities, its mission will be less comprehensive than its founders were led to believe.

CREEDS AND CHRIST.

Our pulpit discussions of the present day present a marked contrast to those of a quarter of a century ago. At that time the fervour of great disputes between champions of the Calvinistic and Armenian creeds, had not died out. Indeed in many localities a sermon was not thought to be complete without some close rasping of the rougher points of the opposing doctrines. Congregations on the Calvinistic side particularly began to look upon a preacher with distrust when he failed to arraign with emphasis the extravagancies of Arminianism and Wesley. In running out territorial lines, moreover, in a country whose population was still unsettled as to religious convictions, it was a question then of the possible enlightenment of hearers as to the supposed truth of one set of doctrines and the fallacy of the other. A little company might assemble from a radius of twenty miles of country, to hear a pungent attack upon some peculiar doctrine. The effect was not always edifying. Religious animosities were awakened which were not soon allowed to die. Christians of different creeds distrusted one another. Parents left the legacy of distrust to their children. Sometimes by intermarriages sad elements of disagreement entered households.

This is not the case now, at least to the same extent, in families where a Calvinist marries an Armenian. The doctrines are the same as ever, but they are not so much insisted upon. The pulpit finds work to do more congenial and profitable than keeping up a running fire upon the creeds. And as the preacher calms down, the people notably partake of his spirit.

There are still occasional bugle-notes of war from the pulpits, but the object of strife is less fundamental than in past days—at least points of dispute are reasonably regarded as less serious. A curious sermon one hears betimes on succession—the pretension of claims to direct, unbroken relationship with the Apostles. Hearers of nonconformist churches are charitable enough to overlook this weakness while it refrains from excommunicating themselves. When that ensues the preacher generally learns his mistake from the decline of his congregations. Perhaps the chief agitation of our day in pulpit discussion is ament that vexed baptizo—its signification, its real value as a guide in one of the christian ordinances. We incline to think that the only remaining irreconcilable difficulties which result from intermarrying among denominations, are confined to baptism. It is noticeable that the antagonism does not spring from our side, inasmuch as we concede to Baptists the right of judging for themselves, and are charitable enough to call their modes baptism when they have dipped a convert; if they would allow us equal privilege all would end harmoniously. We can, however, at least continue a good example of forbearance and love.

The strength of the pulpit being thus turned in another direction, what takes the place of controversy? Christ! And herein we do rejoice, yea, and will rejoice. It is a glorious issue this out of distraction. Those old battles, like storms in the heavens, doubtless cleared the atmosphere. We see more eye to eye, as we understand each other's position. We learn that there is no difference of doctrine among real christians which can hinder their union in prayer, in fellowship, in the sympathy of the gospel. And how inspiring the thought that this tremendous Name, this chief-

est among ten thousand, is daily being more and more honored and exalted—that His name is even now above every name, more sacred and potential than our most favorite articles of denominational belief! The world grows. The Church advances.

LICENCES IN HALIFAX.

Mr. Grierson, whose experience as a City Missionary in Halifax, for several years, entitles him to speak with authority, gives, in a letter to the public prints, last week, a fearful picture of the rum traffic. We give one or two extracts:—

Last Monday, May 13th, I walked eighteen miles up and down the streets of our city, determined to count the actual number engaged in selling strong drink, and, remember, list No. 1 include only those that any one can recognize as a liquor store at a glance. I know by the bar-room, or the sign-board, or the bottle in the window:—

Table listing various locations and the number of licenses issued, such as North Park 4, Agricola 1, Marnard 1, etc.

This is bad enough; but the worst does not appear on the surface. Liquor, as the name went years ago, has but little share in the present business of the licenses. A few there may be, carrying their own kind of respectability into the trade, who keep something approaching to a genuine article. To designate the quantities of drinks consumed now, however, by the name of spirituous liquors, is to keep them unfairly recommended before the public. Rich men may have spirits, the poor certainly have not. The madness of the police courts is not the result of drinking spirits. The ingredients producing frenzy, and leading to brawls and murders, are sold in other instances only by trained druggists, who have studied their trade and are held responsible for the effects of false or over-doses. Here they are sold to all classes, the limit being only the money forthcoming. The drug business has gone into the liquor trade, without having the protection of men who understand its effects.

What is the consequence? In Shetland to-day the law is justly grappling with a murder case, brought about, as far as evidence serves, by drugs and drink. There was the additional violence of two blows with an axe; and here only do we find the difference between that form of evil and this in Halifax. Mr. Grierson estimates that 10,000 a year die from the effects of liquor-drinking in our Dominion. Yet there are not, probably, enquiries made in one case of ten—no coroner's inquests, and, consequently, no shock to moral sentiment.

For all the evil effects of liquor-drinking—the gaols, asylums, trials by law, &c., &c., respectable people, sober, industrious people, must pay. It is about time that this latter class had permission to say how far evils for which they are taxed are at all to be permitted. Besides, when any other social trouble with the idle, vicious class comes about, either by civil insurrections, incendiarism or aught else, this liquor-drug element is a very effective weapon in the hands of designing men to be used against the better classes, who have been so indulgent and timorous. Let us learn wisdom!

SACKVILLE ANNIVERSARIES. RETURN TICKETS. Arrangements have been made with the I. C. R. authorities, for the issue of free return tickets to visitors to commencement exercises at Sackville. Time extended from 27th May to 7th June. Certificates of attendance are given at the Institutions to secure free returns.

The Editor has been absent this week, attending Educational Anniversaries in Charlottetown, P. E. I.

The JOURNALS AND LEAVES for June were sent out on Wednesday last a week beyond the usual time. This delay was unavoidable, as the New York boat was a week out of the way.

N. B. and P. E. Island Conference.

To be held in the Methodist Church at Sackville, N.B., commencing THURSDAY, June 27th, 1878. PLAN OF RELIGIOUS SERVICES.

- Conference dates: Tuesday, June 25th; Wednesday, June 26th; Thursday, June 27th; Friday, June 29th; Saturday, June 30th; Sabbath, June 29th. Lists of speakers and times for various services.

NOVA SCOTIA CONFERENCE.

Plan of Conference Appointments. AMHERST. Tuesday 25th, 8 p.m. Rev. G. O. Huestis. Wednesday 26th, 3 p.m. Rev. W. G. Lane.

NAPPAN. Friday, 28 7.30 p.m. Rev. R. Wasson. AMHERST. Saturday, 29th, 6.30 a.m. Rev. R. Williams.

WARREN.

Warren Anniversaries: 11 a.m. Rev. R. Brecken, A.M.; 7 p.m. Rev. Wm. Ainley.

AMHERST HEAD.

AMHERST HEAD. 2.30 p.m. Rev. Arthur Hockin. SHINIMICAS. 6.30 p.m. Rev. Arthur Hockin.

NAPPAN. 11 a.m. Rev. Caleb Parker; 3 p.m. Sabbath School; 7 p.m. Rev. F. H. W. Pickles.

SPRINGHILL. 11 a.m. & 7 p.m. Rev. J. Cassidy. ATHOL. 11 a.m. Rev. A. S. Tuttle.

OXFORD. 11 a.m. Rev. Jos. Gaetz.

WEST LEICESTER. 3 p.m. Rev. Richard Smith. AMHERST. Monday July 1st. 3 p.m. Rev. James Tweedy; 8 p.m. Ordination Service.

WARREN. 7.30 p.m. Rev. John Johnson. AMHERST. Wednesday 3rd. 3 p.m. Rev. J. S. Addy; 8 p.m. Temperance Meeting.

OUR ENGLISH LETTER. FOREIGN TROOPS. DEAR MR. EDITOR.—Immediately after Parliament had broken up for the Easter holidays, the surprising announcement was made public that the Government had given orders for the immediate despatch of troops from India, to undertake military duty in Malta, and other garrisons in the Mediterranean.

THE PARIS EXHIBITION. was formally opened on the 1st of May, amidst much rejoicing. It speaks well for the courage, wealth and industry of our neighbors that so soon after their heavy disasters they have rallied in such an extraordinary manner, and are now in a position to invite the world to visit their splendid Exhibition. It is not yet fully complete, and some weeks must elapse before the building is in perfect order, and the whole of the articles properly displayed.

THE MAY MEETINGS.

have to the present, been quite as numerous as joyous and enthusiastic of old. The fierce conflict between nations and the heated controversies between contending schools of thought and theologians, have in no wise diminished the deep interest taken in the great work of the churches. The commercial depression so wide spread and heavy has told in not a few cases upon the income of the societies, and the special appeals necessitated in the course of the year for India and for North Wales, have diverted into other channels some portion of money otherwise designated for the Lord's treasury, but yet in the midst of all these things, there has been no serious diminution of income, and no arrest for want of means of any of the great enterprises of evangelism or philanthropy.

OUR METHODIST ANNIVERSARIES.

have been well sustained—the speaking has been of a very high order, full of practical suggestions, and holy courage. Of the various meetings I need not attempt to write more fully. Are they not copiously reported in the columns of the three Wesleyan or Methodist papers? The more important of our great meetings, are, first THE MISSIONARY ANNIVERSARY which takes the lead in interest and power—then follows—secondly THE HOME MISSIONARY ANNIVERSARY which is year by year, becoming more popular and interesting, and thirdly, we have the METROPOLITAN CHAPEL FUND which is accomplishing a grand work in London, and receives a goodly share of support.