

THE WESLEYAN FRIDAY, DECEMBER 1, 1882.

TO OUR AGENTS!!

Another year is about to begin. We desire to have a word with you about your Conference paper.

The weekly visits of the WESLEYAN will tell in our families by an increasing interest in our Church affairs.

To encourage agents in a thorough canvass the publisher of the WESLEYAN will send to any old or new subscriber for \$2.30, cash, the paper from the present date till Dec. 31st, 1883.

WISE BENEVOLENCE.

A northern winter calls into active exercise any disposition to be benevolent. That season is at hand, and in spite of the improved state of trade, and the greater measure of employment, there are facts and calls that remind us that yet there are human beings to be helped.

One needs not go back to the days when Paganism had her amphitheatres but not her hospitals, her human sacrifices but not her asylums, to feel that the world is growing better.

Intelligent private benevolence is always in order, but to those who have no time to act the professional expert the various societies under religious and secular auspices furnish agencies to dispense with wisdom such gifts as our plenty may prompt us, our forethought and economy ren-

der possible. Nothing, where these societies exist, should be given to the unknown applicant at the door or in the street. Two or three winters ago a minister in a large Canadian town made inquiries at the reported residences of a large number of applicants for charity, but scarcely one could be found.

Few have not found some difficulty in the ethics of almsgiving. The wisest are sometimes in a dilemma. Let us not put an extra band around our purses because there are deceivers, but remember that the Lord Jesus hath said, "The poor ye have always with you."

Since writing on this subject we have learned from our worthy city missionary, Mr. Theakston, that demands upon his ability to help are likely to be increased by the recent disaster at the Asylum. In saying this he implies no reflection upon the authorities. A certain degree of sensitiveness on the part of the poor should not call forth censure.

THE DECLINE OF CLERICAL AUTHORITY.

On this subject, Prof. George P. Fisher, of Yale College, contributes a thoughtful paper in the latest number of the North American Review. That the power of the clergy is relatively less than it was in former days, and is still on the wane, the author believes to be an indubitable fact.

Facts in support of this view are not wanting. France, Italy and Belgium supply them. In the former country a principality ruled by the Pope for a thousand years and declared by them to be essential to the proper discharge of their spiritual office, has been wrested from them by a sovereign with a nation of Roman Catholics at his back, in spite of protests and anathemas.

Yet this charity should not be indiscriminate in its exercise. He who thrusts a coin into the hand of the unknown beggar, and then closes the door with the feeling that he at least has a clear conscience, may not thereby have done his whole duty. Tomorrow he may learn that he was deceived, and in his vexation he may carelessly pass some man whose case is worthy of immediate care.

The Reformation, though led by theologians and priests, was "a great uprising of the laity." It, with the previous and subsequent conflicts of nations with the Papacy, was a protest against the belief, so long lodged in

the minds of men, that the clergy were "the possessors of a mystic grace," making them the "exclusive almoners of Heaven's bounty," and the possessors of rare spiritual powers. With "the awakening of the intellect, the revival of learning, an eager study of the Bible and of Christian antiquity," came a change. The "proclamation of the universal priesthood of Christian believers was the watchword of the Reformation in all lands where it took root or was preached."

The habit of mind which the sacerdotal theory had bred was not at once removed. It lingered long, lingers yet, revived in part by the Oxford movement of which Dr. Pusey was the nominal leader and Newman the inspiring genius. On the influence of Methodism on the sacerdotal theory Prof. Fisher makes honorable mention. Of the "great Methodist secession" he writes:

The most important religious movement of the last century was the Wesleyan Reformation. The separation of the Methodists from the Church of England was accomplished by a revolt of their leader against Anglican sacerdotalism. John Wesley, after long hesitation, took the step of ordaining superintendents for his societies from beginning to end, the strenuous opposition of his brother, the Melancthon of the Methodist Reform, who lacked the boldness and energy of its principal author. John Wesley had no desire for separation; to the day of his death he never admitted that he had broken away from the Church of England.

The change which has taken place in the influence of the Protestant clergy is also worthy of note. Many causes may be assigned for it. In the middle ages the clergy were the trained and intelligent class. They held to a great extent in their hands the key of knowledge. Even in the early settlement of New England "the one hundred ministers who had been trained in the English universities were the controlling power."

In this decline of clerical influence we see with the writer of the article, no ill omen. Infidelity may possess some temporary influence upon "certain eminent representatives of science and literature," but the transition to a less clearly-defined type of ecclesiasticism is not to be "confounded with a lapse from Christian belief into infidelity."

The fear that, with the vanishing of sacerdotalism, the value and importance of the Christian ministry will be lost, may be dispelled by the reflection that this change is simply a return to the primitive condition of the Church. The sacerdotal theory is first broached by Tertullian at the end of the second century. It is not held uniformly or consistently by him. It was not until half a century later that, under the auspices of men like Cyprian, this idea, borrowed from the analogies of the Old Testament system, took deep root in the mind of the Church.

Christianity will lose nothing, and the ministry themselves will lose nothing by returning to the primitive conception of the clerical office. When this retrogression has been fairly made, the disputes about church organization and grades of the ministry will be vastly simplified, and may be adjusted with comparative ease.

There was a time when ministers presumed upon the "dignity of the cloth." That day is past and gone. The minister is to-day what he, a free moral agent, yields himself to be made. Respect for the ministry has not passed from the world. Never was a true, pure-hearted, devoted, Christian minister more highly esteemed than at the present time.

THE M. E. CHURCH AND WM. TAYLOR.

At the recent meeting of the General Missionary Committee of the M. E. Church, the work of Rev. William Taylor came under consideration. Some remarks in Mr. Taylor's recent book on his work in India and South America were regarded as reflections upon the policy of the parent Society, and these, in connection with Bishop Harris's report upon the South American field, led to a conference between a sub-committee and Mr. Taylor.

Mr Taylor plans his own work abroad, selects his workers, and has sought ordination for his appointees in fields not under jurisdiction of our Missionary society. The bishops have declined to ordain some of Mr. Taylor's men simply because they are not to labor in our regular fields, and therefore our law does not permit such ordination.

The church will therefore understand that, while Mr. Taylor is a brother beloved and has done great work in many parts of the world, he and his work in South America have no legal relations to our regular Missionary society.

A pastor writes to one of our exchanges: "I preached yesterday on the text, 'My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge' and at the close presented the claims of our paper and the result is 20 new subscribers." Have our pastors tried this?

The development of Ritualism has been aided very greatly by the influence of universities and colleges. In some cases evangelical Episcopalians have seen this, and have not unwisely withheld needed financial support. A better way has been found by the Evangelical section of the English Church, who, at an expense of £40,000 have opened Ridley Hall, near Cambridge, to enable young candidates for "holy orders" to pursue theological studies under evangelical auspices in connection with that University.

A "commercial traveller" spending the Lord's day in London, Ont. went in the evening to the Metropolitan Methodist Church. His impressions of the service led by the pastor, whose name many will see with pleasure, are given in the Toronto Citizen: "I know of no combination of circumstances in any church more calculated to bring about true devotion than here,—large congregation, good singing, and earnest, intellectual preaching. The minister who occupies such a pulpit has a solemn responsibility resting upon him, and the people who are privileged to sit under the ministrations of the Rev. Leonard Gaetz without becoming Christians, will have an awful account to give in the great day.

An important meeting has just been held in Centenary Church, Hamilton, Ont., the first, we trust, of many. The object was to bid a hearty God-speed to Miss Martha Cartmell, who goes out to Japan under the auspices of the Woman's Missionary Society of the Methodist Church of Canada.

A little leisure has permitted us to look carefully at the first ten numbers of Picturesque Canada, now in course of publication by the Art Publishing Company of Toronto. The issue of a work involving such an immense cost is at once a proof of the development of Canada enterprise and of the progress of art and literature in "this Canada of ours."

ed to the cities, and rural and lumbering districts of the Upper Provinces, but succeeding issues will, no doubt, do full justice to the many points of interest in the Maritime Provinces. The extensive patronage which the work is receiving is no more than it merits.

From various quarters statements unfavorable to the working of the Canada Temperance Act find publication. We admit that temperance men talk more than they act, and by their apathy endanger the existence of the legal means provided to stamp out a villainous traffic, but are these reports not too readily accepted? On this subject the Guelph (Ont.) Mercury remarks:

From the most trustworthy parties living in the trusty following facts in regard to the working of the Scott Act can be relied upon: First, the treating system is totally destroyed; second, strangers and men addicted to drink find it almost impossible to obtain liquor, the former because they are not known, the latter for fear they should get drunk and tell where they obtained the liquor.

In answer to numerous correspondents who ask the meaning of the "Closure" discussion in the British Parliament, the Independent replies: "It would be tedious to explain all the propositions and amendments offered, which number hundreds. But the principle is a very simple one. It is simply the French Closure and our power of the previous question by which a sufficient majority has power, after discussion has reached a reasonable length, to order the vote to be taken, and to prevent a factious minority, as in the case of the Irish obstructions, from continuing the debate indefinitely by talking against time, and by motions offered simply for obstruction, so as to prevent a vote being taken. It is simply a reasonable proposition to give the power without which a parliament or congress becomes a nullity, to a legislative body to come to a decisive vote at last."

Mr. T. M. Lewis writes:—You will see by the Watchman the character and extent of our work. It may be further added that last Sabbath evening we stirred the public mind in regard to the subject in the Baptist church at Middleton, and last night I lectured in the basement of our church, after which the G. W. P., Bro. Burrell, organized a new Division, with 40 Charter members, the G. W. A., Bro. Rev. Thos. Rogers, co-operating. It embraces the first people, includes Rev. Messrs. Porter and Robbins, Baptist ministers.

THE ASYLUM DISASTER.

The Halifax editor of the Christian Visitor gives to that paper some incidents of the terrible scene at the Poor's Asylum:

On arriving home, we hastened to the Penitentiary building. There we found among the saved Jeremiah Crawley, an old colored man. Crawley had lost, or nearly so, the use of one arm and one leg before going into the Poor House. He was in the Hospital ward. It took him a long time to put on his clothes. He groped his way through the smoke and darkness on his hands and knees through the long room to the door. When he had made his way down two flights of stairs his strength failed. Before starting he had committed himself to God. He lay at the bottom of the steps, perfectly conscious but completely helpless. In a little time two brave firemen came through the blinding, choking smoke, bearing above their heads blazing torches. "Here is our old friend, Crawley," said one of the firemen, as he turned the light of his torch on the face of the exhausted man. "we must save him. Then the old man's senses failed him. He knew no more for a time, but he was saved."

I enquired, did you see Isaac Hubley or speak to him before you left the ward? "Yes, I did," replied Crawley. Isaac had passed middle life. He had lost one of his legs. The amputation was made above the knee. I seem to see him now, as he lay in his bed in that high room, his very countenance beaming with the heavenly peace that reigned like a perpetual summer in his soul. Isaac was not able on account of partial paralysis to leave his bed. "What did he say to you?" I enquired of Crawley. "He told me," said the old man, "to make an effort to save myself, but if the building was burnt he must perish." "Good-bye," said Isaac to old Jerry as he crawled away through the smoke and darkness. "Good-bye," said Jerry in reply. Thus, these two companions in poverty parted to meet no more till Jerry throws off his enfeebled mortal form and goes to join Isaac whose ransomed spirit mounted from the earth in a chariot of fire, and was borne by angels to the paradise of God. "Did Isaac express any fear?" I further enquired of Jerry. "Not a bit, was Jerry's prompt response. I believe

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