

MINISTERS' INSTITUTES.

In the January number of the *Methodist Review* Bishop Vincent has a striking article on what he calls "The Itinerants' Club." It contains matter of much interest to every minister in Canada, especially to every young minister. We purpose to quote from Bishop Vincent an account of some of those clubs, as existing in American Methodism, and to make a suggestion as to the adoption of similar institutions in this country.

One of these clubs was held at Lexington, Ky., last April, when about eighty ministers attended for ten days. Dr. Arthur Edwards, of the *Northwestern Advocate*, who was present, says: "The main body of those who attended are undergraduates in the Conference. . . The programme might easily be imagined by those who should hear that for good and sufficient reasons the course in a theological seminary must be pressed into eight days. . . . The enthusiasm rose almost to the shouting point from the first. Never have we seen a convention, class, club, or Conference more a success from the first prayer to the benediction. The club aims to magnify the Conference studies of Conference graduates."

"Another 'club' of the same character was held a month later at Mt. Union College, Alliance, O. It was well attended, and in a series of spirited conversations the following topics were discussed: 'The Conference Course of Study—How Use; How Improve; How Employ by Colleges and Seminaries, by Assemblies and Itinerants' Clubs; 'Post-graduate Reading Courses; 'Church Music; 'The Minister as a Man of Church Business—Keeping Church Records, Making Church Reports, Superintending Church Repairs, Buildings,' etc.; 'Social Meetings of Believers, Class-meetings, Religious Conversations, Cottage Prayer-meetings,' etc."

It resulted in a permanent organization, the object of which was:

"(1) To promote the more thorough prosecution of the Conference course of study; (2) to encourage the more critical study (professional and devotional) of the English Bible; (3) to promote among ministers the more careful and scientific study of the people of all classes—their opinions, habits, perils, needs, how to approach them, how win them to Christ, etc.; (4) to bring the undergraduates of the Conference, and of neighbouring Conferences, together as frequently and for as long a time as possible during the Conference year."

"An Itinerants' Club was advertised to be held in St. Joseph, Mo., December 16-20, 1889. The announcement says:

"'This is to be a school in which all are students. The course in Biblical Introduction and Systematic Theology will be limited to the course for the first and second years for probationers in the Annual Conference. Lessons are announced to be given in Biblical Introduction, in Systematic Theology, in Church History, in Homiletics, in Rhetoric, Logic, etc., with 'Conversations' on 'How to Study,' the 'Pastoral Work,' 'Pulpit Manners,' 'Woman's Work in the Church,' 'How to conduct Prayer and other Social Meetings,' 'Our Benevolences,' etc.'

"A general interest has thus been awakened on the subject of Conference study. The young men clamour for such direction as the Itinerants' Club provides.

"Dr. Fry, of the *Central Christian Advocate*, says, in reporting some of these movements:

"'During the first four years of their ministry, at the very time when, on account of inexperience in ministerial and pastoral work, the greatest demands are made upon them, they must give attention to the Conference studies. The result is, that hardly one of ten has really mastered the Conference course of study, and the greater part fail to