

tendency, I say, arises in some part the alleged preference for youth in the ministerial office.

There are two classes of ministers which may justifiably be avoided, namely, the dry stick whose main qualifications appears to lie in his well ordered clothes, his dignified assertion of his officiality, his capacity to go through his duties with a formal propriety which lacks nothing but a living soul. Such ministers, and all of like spirit, whose unfitness assumes varied forms, should be relegated to the shelf. And, secondly, the youthful class, who, in defiance of conscience and honor seek in the office only a livelihood and the gratifying of a small ambition, who are found, therefore, using the call of one congregation as a bait with which to obtain an invitation from another, and who thereby demonstrate that they not only have not the principle which fits a man for the ministry, but that they have not the character which fits a man for any place where an upright manhood is required. These should be expelled from an office, which, at the very threshold, they have dishonored. Time forbids enlarging upon or calling attention to many important points suggested by the subject.

Only let me say in conclusion, that I think it is a very important one. Our people are as excellent a people as any in the land; our ministry, with all its defects, a faithful, devoted ministry. Still, habits are ever forming, ideas fall into moulds and take form according to the influences which prevail in the world around us. It is necessary therefore for our safety, and as our only safeguard in this, as in all other lines of Church life, to observe two things: First. To keep as near as possible to the Scripture standard in thinking and speaking of Divine things, and to educate the people on the subject of the Church and the ministry, and indeed of all the institutions of God in which our life grows. Let the people learn what the Scripture conception of the ministry is. Let the ministers teach it. Then it will be held in honor. And, second, it is needful that we should keep our consciences clear, that we should seek first that the kingdom of God should come in our own lives, that our spiritual life should be fresh and bright, so we will be able to impress upon the generation in which we work the spiritual truths we teach, and lead them to see their duties in a spiritual light, so will all our ministry be glorified. Those obnoxious growths of vulgar, worldly and sinful action which we deplore spring from spiritual and intellectual stagnation and putridity.

Our machinery, which has worked through the ages, and which has been well tried in flame and in battle, is sufficient for all our uses. And if we as ministers, whether we be old or young, are found faithful as becometh the stewards of God's household; if we bring to bear on the mind and heart of the people the fresh and ever-living truth of the gospel, our Presbyterianism which is yet young in this land and which comes out of a past with many discords and differences in its thinking, shall grow among us as it has grown in other lands to be the home of a reverent, intelligent people, shall contribute to our country's life the strongest and purest elements. It shall grow in unity of spirit and in breadth and vigor of mind. As it has always been in the front among the nations as the advocate and defender of human freedom and of Christian education, so let it continue to be among us. And as its strength has always been in its spiritual forces and not in its ceremonialism, so let us first have regard to the spirit, which, when it is present in purity and power, will worthily regulate every form. Such I am sure is the aim and desire of all our ministry from the youth fresh from his books, to the veteran worn out in the service; such is the aim as I believe of the great body of our people; and working in such a spirit we may look for the blessing of Almighty God, and our Presbyterian Church shall stand as of old, stately and strong as the cedars of Lebanon, the ornament and shelter of the faith of a great people.

Missionary World.

The Norwegian Missionary Society, which works mainly in Natal, Zululand, and Madagascar, has in Africa 14 main stations and nearly 150 out-stations; in Madagascar some 20 main stations, and upward of 500 out-stations. In Madagascar last year there were nearly 39,000 communicants, and about 60 native missionaries.

The Presbyterian Church of Japan is soon to begin missionary work in Formosa. President Ibuka, of Tokyo, and President Ogimi, of Steel College, Nagasaki, have been appointed to visit the field and report to the Mission Board. Three thousand dollars are to be raised from the Japanese churches to inaugurate and push forward this new work.

The evangelization of Abyssinia was undertaken by the Swedish Missionary Society as early as 1866, but until the Italian occupation the missionaries were unable to get any farther than the island of Massowah and Monkullu on the adjacent mainland. Afterward they were able to go forth into the interior, and now in the district of Hamasen they have 93 converts. They have made endeavors, hitherto unsuccessful, to reach the Gallas.

Thirteen missionaries are about to sail for Manchuria, sent by the United Presbyterian Church of Scotland, which has a very promising mission field there. The work was interrupted by the late war between China and Japan, and one young missionary fell a martyr to Chinese bigotry, but it is being resumed under most hopeful conditions. Six missionaries are also expected to leave shortly for Old Calabar, the oldest foreign mission field of the United Presbyterian Church, which has suffered sadly of late years through loss of life on account of the dangerous climate.

So far as known, the American Mission High School in Bombay is the only high school in India where co-education exists. By taking so many of the pupils while very young, Mr. and Mrs. Hume have succeeded in creating a public sentiment which, with unceasing vigilance on their part, has done away with supposed evils in mixed schools. These are day schools composed entirely of children from heathen families. "I have had two most interesting mornings visiting two of them, and the homes from which they come, with Mrs. Hume and the Bible women, Balubal and Kash'bal."

Thirty years ago there was no organized evangelical church or school in Mexico; the statistical results of twenty-five years' systematic work is as follows: Centers of operation, ninety; congregations, 615; ordained missionaries, sixty; assistant missionaries and wives of ordained and assistant missionaries, sixty; lady teachers, sixty-seven; native preachers, ordained, 111; native preachers, unordained, 164; native teachers, 177; other native helpers, ninety-four; grand total of foreign and native workers, 732; churches organized, 444; communicants, 17,000; probable adherents, 50,000.

Alexander M. Mackay, of Uganda, was in the opinion of Mr. Stanley "the best missionary since Livingston." Lord Rosebery spoke of him as "that Christian Bayard, whose reputation will always be dear." His favorite saying was: "If Christianity is worth anything, it is worth everything." Referring to his remarkable success, Stanley wrote: "I take this powerful body of native Christians in the heart of Africa, who prefer exile for the sake of their faith to serving a monarch indifferent or hostile to their faith, who have endured the most deadly persecutions, and yet are staunch in their beliefs, firm in their convictions, as most substantial evidence of the work of Mackay."

Young People's Societies.

CONDUCTED BY A MEMBER OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY'S COMMITTEE.

AN UNDEVELOPED FORCE.

No more fruitful topic can possibly engage the attention of the General Assembly than how to develop the unused force that lies in the young life of the Church. How the young people may better help one another to a deeper, stronger and more aggressive spiritual life; how they may most efficiently serve their congregation and their Church, and their heavenly Lord, in the upbuilding and spread of the kingdom; these are the problems of the hour. That church has the patent to the future which shall find a solution to them. Our Synods and Presbyteries, our pastors and sessions, the General Assembly's Committee on Young People's Societies, and not less earnestly, the young people themselves have been working at the question during the year. Every successful method devised is a forward step. The Assembly is confidently looked to now for a sympathetic consideration of the work of the young people and for wise suggestion and counsel.

THEIR OWN CHURCH.

Rev. Dr. MacKay, of Woodstock, gave a stirring address as President of the Paris Presbyterian Young People's Society at its late convention in Brantford. He insisted on a thorough training of the young in loyalty to their own Church. "We have," said the speaker, "so many denominational and interdenominational conventions that there is some danger of overlooking the distinctive reasons for our own existence. The Presbyterian Church has a history of thrilling interest. Let our young people only be acquainted with the history, government, doctrines and work of our Church and they will never be ashamed of that Church. Dr. McKay urged increased effort along the three following lines:—1. The attainment of a better knowledge of the doctrines of the Presbyterian Church, using the shorter catechism as the text book; 2. Study of the constitution and policy of the Church (Dr. Gregg's history of the Church in Canada); 3. A more extended acquaintance with and interest in the missionary and other schemes of the Church.

ON ITS ROUNDS.

Mr. Camp's letter is now on its rounds amongst the Young People's Societies of the Presbytery of Whitby. These Societies unite in supporting, through the Presbyterian Society, a missionary in the North-west. This is now the third season. The letters come through the Presbytery's Home Mission Convener and are passed on from society to society until the circuit has been completed. They are always heard with interest and profit. Mr. Camp writes from Mariapolls, Manitoba, and speaks encouragingly of the present state of the field. One of the stations, Glenora, has been dropped, as the most of the people connected with it had moved away. A service every Sabbath in each of the three remaining stations has thus been made possible, greatly to their advantage. The work amongst the young the missionary mentions as especially cheering.

THE PRESBYTERIAL SOCIETY.

We believe the time has come when every Presbytery in our Church should take action, with the view of having a Presbyterian union formed of the Young People's Societies within their bounds, and have them distinctly pledged to some line of work.—Rev. John Somerville, D.D., in *Knox College Monthly*.

DOUBTS AND DIFFICULTIES.

BY REV. W. S. M'TAVISH, B.D., DEERBONTO.

(A question-box meeting suggested.)

June 21.—Ps. xl. 1-17.

Many a Christian has been sorely troubled with doubts and difficulties. Some of the best Christians have had to pass through seasons of gloom and perplexity; they have fallen into the horrible pit and miry clay, and, for a time, it seemed as if all their efforts to extricate themselves only resulted in floundering. Moses was certainly a man of great faith, and yet on one occasion, he seemed to be sorely disheartened for, looking up to God, he asked "What shall I do unto this people? they be almost ready to stone me" (Ex. xvii. 4). David, the sweet Psalmist of Israel and a man after God's own heart, was once so oppressed with a feeling of loneliness that he cried out "Why standest Thou afar off, O Lord? Why hidest Thou Thy face in times of trouble?" (Ps. x. 1). Elijah was once so utterly cast down that he besought God to take away his life, for he considered it better that he should die than live (1 Kings xix. 10). Asaph was another sweet singer in Israel, and yet he, too, was once almost overwhelmed with doubt and difficulty (Ps. lxxiii). Jeremiah was anything but faint-hearted and yet he was so perplexed with questions arising out of God's moral government that he asked, "Wherefore doth the way of the wicked prosper? Wherefore are all they happy that deal very treacherously?" (Jer. xii. 1, 2). John the Baptist one day when looking at Christ could say, "Behold the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world!" and yet John was once so perplexed with doubt that he sent two of his disciples to Jesus to ask, "Art Thou He that should come, or look we for another?" It is not unusual for the Christian to find himself for a while in doubting castle. Perhaps a quotation from Archdeacon Farrar might be introduced here. "Savonarola, and Jerome of Prague, and Luther were men whose courage, like that of the Baptist, had enabled them to stand, unquailing, before angry councils and threatening kings; will anyone in forming an estimate of their goodness and their greatness add one shade of condemnation because of the wavering of the first and of the second in the prison cells of Florence and Constance, or the fantasies of incipient madness which agitated in the castle at Wartburg, the ardent spirit of the third?"

What are the causes of doubt and despondency? Frequently our physical condition is the source of trouble. It has been said that it takes more religion to make a dyspeptic smile than a perfectly healthy person to rejoice in Pisgah glories. Doubtless Elijah's discouragement was due to the reaction which set in after that exciting scene on Mount Carmel and his long run before the chariot of Ahab. He was exhausted and the exhaustion produced such depression of spirit that he looked at everything through blue spectacles. Doubts and difficulties often succeed a time of special spiritual exaltation. A most blessed communion season may be followed by doubts which assault us with amazing persistency.

What is the cure? Attention should be paid to the physical condition and if anything can be done to improve the bodily health it should be done. Returning health may put doubts to flight. In the meantime let allowance be made for the physical condition and let us not write hard things against ourselves, against others or against God even if the sun be behind a cloud. In all probability things are in a far more satisfactory state than we suppose. Elijah thought he was the only one to honor God in all Israel, but he learned—and no doubt was both astonished and pleased to learn—that there were still seven thousand men who had not bowed the knee to Baal. Sometimes our doubts and difficulties are most effectively removed by our trying to extend a helping hand to others. A young man who was sorely troubled with doubts went out to the foreign mission field. When he returned on furlough, some one said to him, "Well, what about your doubts now?" "Why," said he, "I haven't had time to think about them!" Elijah was told to go and anoint Elisha as prophet and Jehu and Hazael as kings, and no doubt when the work was done his despondency was gone. Let us remember what Carlyle says, "He who never turns back, but manfully faces all his doubts, will find on the other side of the howling sands, the crystalline springs out of which proceed waters for the quenching of the thirst of all the nations."