

THE WESLEYAN

FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 29, 1882.

EDITORIAL CORRESPONDENCE

Hamilton, Ont.

On Tuesday evening several speakers addressed a large audience on our mission work. The East was well represented by the Rev. J. Latham and the Hon. J. J. Rogerson, while Mrs. Manly, a noble Fair West came the Hon. J. W. Sison and the Rev. John McDougall—the latter a former visitor to Nova Scotia. With a view to stimulate the growth of a thorough mission work, a list of our Church has authorized our Toronto Book Room to publish a good edition of the life of Alexander Duff, D.D., the eminent Presbyterian missionary to India, a copy of which is to be presented to each minister of the Methodist Church of Canada. Of other public meetings—of all, indeed—none has been more enthusiastic than the Conference Temperance meeting held in Wesley Chapel. Rev. John A. Williams, Vice-President of the Conference, opened with an earnest address. Ten minute speeches were the order of the evening. Revs. J. S. Coffin, and George Boyd, with Hon. J. J. Rogerson and J. N. Freeman, Esq., were in the list of speakers. A choir of Jubilee Singers, trained by Rev. Josephus O'Baayouh, formerly pastor of the African Methodist Church, Halifax, gave some of the sweetest music we have ever heard.

Frequent meetings have been held by the delegates from the three Eastern Conferences, in accordance with the resolution at their recent sessions, in order to adjust certain matters relative to our Supernumerary Fund. The lay delegates as well as the clerical have shown their interest in this matter, though the very numerous committee meetings of the session have rendered attendance on all occasions impossible.

The only important debate yet brought to a close was that upon the literary qualifications to be required of a candidate for our ministry. Several thoughtful and vigorous speeches on this topic were given by clerical and lay delegates. The most highly educated were not in all cases inclined to contend for a high standard, while others, like a venerable minister who had graduated in the school of "tribulation," appeared most deeply anxious that their younger brethren and successors should be thoroughly furnished for their important work. For a year or two a higher rate of average in the present course will be asked, but in 1884 and thenceforward each candidate will be required to produce a certificate of ability to matriculate in some college or university.

With the public the topic of interest is the proposed union of the various Methodist bodies. Several times a question concerning street navigation, indicating my business in Hamilton, has been followed, in Scotch fashion, by another respecting the progress of this movement. Just now the prospect of early consummation is not brilliant. A large committee from our Conference has had several meetings with several committees from other Conferences. These have now reached a point beyond which they can scarcely advance until the Conference shall have had an opportunity to discuss the subject at greater length. Lay representation in all church courts is strongly desired by the Primitives and Bible Christians, who, if I am not mistaken, are inclined to make common cause with the Methodist Episcopal friends in a demand for a General Superintendent to be elected for a term of twelve years. Such a demand, it is evident, is likely to give a breathing-time to all sections.

On Wednesday Dr. Sutherland's resolutions on the "Powers of the President of the General Conference" were brought forward. In the morning they were introduced by the mover with some pleasant remarks respecting his real and reported position on the subject, and in the afternoon they were warmly discussed as a whole by several ministers and laymen before being sent to the Committee on the Government of the Church. Drs. Dewar and Williams, John Macdonald, Esq., Dr. Allison, Judge Jones, J. N. Freeman, Esq., and Rev. J. Graham were the speakers, in the order named. The connexion between this subject and that of Methodist Union will cause it, on its return from the hands of the Committee, to

be again talked about and at far greater length. Yesterday the general address at General Superintendency, seemed to be aimed a little too high. They were, some at least, well directed, but the target was not precisely at that point. Of this some of the speakers seemed partially conscious, hence the pamphlet to which attention has been directed was more prominent in their remarks than were the resolutions under discussion.

During the debate Bishop McTear was announced and briefly introduced. Also the members of the Committee on Union now meeting here. All appeared interested in the several speeches.

On Saturday last an excursion to Niagara took a large number of the delegates there. Two or three purposes were in view—the opportunity of seeing that noted spot, the prevention of visits there in squads, and the benefit of the trust funds of one of the Hamilton churches. Who could be so near one of the great wonders of the world and not be tempted to steal away from business to look at it? More than once, as we viewed its magnificence from various points, we thought of the aged man who surprised his friends by his strong wish to see it, explaining that in the world to come he would hardly be able to forgive himself for not visiting one of God's great works below. But where there is so much of Conference doings to report one must not let his pencil loose. This rush of the waters of Lake Erie, and of the other immense lakes which lie beyond it, as they tumble madly over rocks and among islands, and finally over immense precipices, in search of an outlet and a level is beyond description. One almost feels, as he views their force from some of the frail bridges which link island to island, as the Indian felt who regarded a leap into the roaring, impetuous waters as a favorite mode of committing one's self into the keeping of the Great Spirit. Just before leaving home a friend who had read a description of the "Cave of the Winds" in *Phoenix Hours* said to me, "of course you will visit the Cave." I did, but failed to see all the rainbows that Dr. Withrow saw. I was trying to find my eyes, which were almost whipped out by the blinding wind and water. Glimpses were indeed caught by us of rainbows, but then he remained there two hours and spent the next two days in bed. Surely he deserved to see the rainbows in all their beauty. After all what is a few hours stay among such wonders? One should visit them again and again, and he would have to confess at the end of a hundred repetitions that with each visit they had grown in impressiveness. This is the case frequently with man's great works; it is always so with those of the Almighty worker.

Wednesday was spent in the discussion of Mr. Bond's resolutions. An effort to press them to a vote was negatived, and the several resolutions and amendments presented in the course of the discussion were sent to a committee which will no doubt talk itself into an accord which the Conference could not reach, and then prepare some proposition which will need little discussion. A question among questions is the Transfer subject. A road seems to lead to it from every topic that comes before the Conference. The action of the General Conference of 1878 on Transfers is now really the point at issue.

Great fault has been found with some of the press reports of Conference proceedings. Any witicism or pleasanry is given with much more care than the solid work actually done. Such reports seem little better than a burlesque. Other and larger papers have done better. And I hear that a part of the reports alluded to has been telegraphed to Halifax!

The weather for a day or two has been very hot. Several former Bermudian pastors think it could scarcely be surpassed at the South. The sight of a thin coat tempted one to "crack" the command against coveting "anything that is thy neighbor's."

My attention has been called to an error in the report of the first days proceedings. The decision of the General Conference Special Committee on an appeal from Dr. Williams against the ruling of the President of the London Conference was upon the *discontinuation of the minister of steward*, not upon their *nomination*.

Sept. 20th.  
The Conference is now steadily at work. Morning, afternoon and evening sessions are being held in

order to close the proceedings by Saturday evening. To accomplish this seems at present almost out of the range of possibilities. Most of the interruptions, however, and pleasant interruptions they have been from the fraternal visitors are over. Since I last wrote Bishop McTear has addressed the Conference in choice words of greeting and farewell. His sermon on Sunday morning will be long remembered for its faithful teaching of simple Gospel truth by effective illustrations and well picked sentences. Sin, as thus presented, was seen to be exceedingly sinful, and its remedy, all efficacious. A pleasing incident occurred on Friday, soon after Bishop McTear had spoken, and the Rev. Wm. Cather of the Irish Methodist Church had been introduced. A Primitive Methodist minister stepped on the platform and informed the delegates that forty years ago he had been led from Roman Catholicism through the ministry of Mr. Cather, to whom he gave a warm grasp of the hand, telling him that there was another William Cather in the person of a son of his. The visit of the Rev. F. W. Briggs, of the British Conference, is for the soliciting of funds for the erection at Birmingham of a church in memory of Francis Asbury, who went from that part of Britain to be the apostle of American Methodism. A meeting of an important Committee prevented the writer from hearing Mr. Briggs' lecture on Asbury.

Last week Revs. Messrs. Griffiths and Antill, excellent brethren of the Primitive Methodist Church, brought eloquent greetings from that body. They hoped that there would be no need of a repetition of that duty and there is reason to expect that their wish will be gratified. The Committee on Union, composed of delegates from the Methodist Episcopal, Primitive Methodist, and Bible Christian branches, has adjourned to meet in Toronto in November. Whatever difficulties may be in the way of union between our own Church and the largest of those just mentioned, there is little on either side to hinder an early connexion with the Primitive Methodists of Canada. We understand that at a meeting of our own Union Committee on Tuesday evening resolutions were passed which indicate the probability of an early and favorable settlement of the whole question.

The Supernumerary Fund of the Western Conference, which has not been in a very satisfactory state, has occupied some time. It is hoped that the prospects of those who will have to lean heavily upon it will grow brighter through recent legislation. Our own Fund, so successfully managed by Dr. Pickard, has occupied a large share of attention from Eastern delegates. Recent changes in its constitution, formally sanctioned by the General Conference, are likely to increase its efficiency. We erred in a previous letter in saying that Dr. Pickard visited Hamilton in connexion with this Fund; he came as a member of the General Conference Special Committee.

Publishing interests have come in for a share of attention. The revised Catechism is to be published, but with proof-texts from the authorized version of the Scriptures. Strong arguments were advanced in behalf of proofs from the revised New Testament, but they were urged in vain. A favorable reception has been given to the Hymn-Tune Book, for some time in course of preparation by certain gentlemen in the East. The former officials in the Book Room and Editorial Department have all been re-elected—the Editors of the *Guardian* and *Messenger* by good majorities; the Book Stewards of the Toronto and Halifax Book Rooms and the Editor of the *Wesleyan*, by acclamation. The several departments of our Collegiate and Academic work have been under review. General satisfaction has been expressed. Our Eastern Institutions have had a good share of honorable mention, and Western brethren are not unwilling to admit that, in spite of rare gifts made in the West, the generosity of the friends of education in the East has been worthy of special remark. The only educational institution of our own church at Hamilton is the Ladies' College, of which Dr. Burns is the successful principal. At his invitation the delegates, or those of them who were off duty, spent a pleasant evening last week.

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The Gilchrist scholarship for 1882 has been taken by Wm. M. Tweedie, a graduate of Mount Allison. Mr. Tweedie took a higher rank than has ever been taken by any Canadian competitor, standing second out of all the matriculants all the world over. The scholarship gives the holder one hundred pounds annually for three years, conditional on taking a degree at London University or the University of Edinburgh. Mr. Tweedie's fellow competitors were McLeod of Dalhousie who stood fifth in honour, Johnston and Carnon of the University of N.B., the first forty-ninth in honours, the second not in honours, but in the first class division, and Fifth and Alexander of King's College both in the first division also. While we feel an honest pride in the success of Mount Allison, far be it from us to indulge in anything like boasting. The statement given above speaks for itself. Mr. Tweedie is the only son of the Rev. William Tweedie of Hampton, King's Co., N.B., who was himself a student of Mount Allison the first year, we understand, the old Academy was opened.

The Editor informs us that Mr. Tweedie's success was announced at General Conference as follows:

Just after Rev. Dr. Oraniston (Presbyterian) of New York had concluded an eloquent address, in which he spoke lovingly of the late Dr. Ryerson, and charged strongly in favor of Victoria University, President Inch of Mount Allison read a despatch announcing the very marked success of Wm. M. Tweedie, a Mount Allison graduate, in the Gilchrist scholarship competition. The announcement was received with applause and hearty congratulations were tendered to Dr. Inch.

Believing that our readers are all just now deeply interested in the proceedings of the General Conference, we give a large portion of our space this week to the reports. A synopsis of the address of Dr. Studley, fraternal delegate of the M. E. Church, of the United States, is given on our sixth page. The union question is one of the most important now occupying the attention of the Conference, and we are pleased to report that difficulties are disappearing, and that the prospects for an early consummation of the wish for a united Methodism in Canada, are cheering. The *Christian Guardian* in its last issue says:

Considerable progress has been made in Hamilton in the direction of Methodist union. For some time past there has been a silent but powerful tendency in that direction. The spirit of all the negotiating parties was liberal and brotherly. Nothing could exceed the frankness and earnestness with which the representatives of Primitive and Episcopal Methodism to our Conference spoke in favor of unity. Indeed, so strong is the feeling for union, that the movement is not out of danger of being injured by too great a precipitancy in hurrying forward organic unity, before all the practical difficulties have been overcome. The result largely turns upon the answers to two questions: (1.) How shall all the ministers be advantageously stationed and properly supported? (2.) How far will our own Church be willing to seriously derange and alter her present carefully adjusted constitution, in order to meet the wishes of the different bodies which may unite. In view of the numerous congregations of our Church which would not be at all affected by a union it can hardly be expected that important changes can be made in the principles of our present constitution to accommodate the wishes of the different bodies, unless these changes are believed to be improvements. At any rate, the matter must be submitted to the Quarterly Meetings before the final decision. We trust that divine wisdom and grace will be given to guide to such conclusions as may be best adapted to promote the progress of the work of God throughout Canadian Methodism.

The union Committee has presented a report strongly favoring union, and recommending our discipline to be so amended, as to admit lay representation in the Annual Conferences, and an Itinerant General Superintendent in some form. It further recommended that a mixed Committee be appointed to meet the Committee of other bodies in the City of Toronto on the last Tuesday of November. The plan of union to be submitted to the Quarterly Boards for approval, or otherwise in February next; their decision to be immediately sent to the Secretary of the General Conference, and if it be found that two-thirds declare in favor of union the President shall convene the General Conference in order to give effect to the proposed union. A full report will appear in our next issue.

The *Christian Guardian* is greatly exercised over the reproach and "protestation" which took place in the Centenary Church St. John, recently in dispraise of the press. We had prepared a note on this subject for our last issue, but our columns were crowded with Conference reports, and we were obliged to withhold it. We may say however that the *Guardian* has never been, is not now, and we fear never will be a reliable authority on Methodist ideas or Methodist news. In its issue containing the strictures on the Centenary, it has the following taken from the *Church Times*: "The Methodists are soon to hold an ecumenical conference in London. On account of the differences between the various kinds of Methodists it has been decided to exclude all doctrinal subjects from consideration, else it is feared the pan-conference would become a pan-demonium."

We called attention to this blunder of the *Times* in a former issue; but our Halifax contemporary is even behind the *Times*. The Methodist Ecumenical Conference was held in the city of London, just one year ago, and almost every religious paper in Christendom had something to say about it.

GENERAL CONFERENCE.

Continued from first page.

I should be met by my opponents with the reply, "Well, that is just as we would have it; we don't want a President with authority." But, to my surprise, I was met by a chorus of denials, and statements that the President possessed enormous powers, even beyond those which I propose to confer upon him. I thought to myself, well, if this is our position, it is high time that the prerogatives and powers of the President of the Conference should be defined by the Discipline of the Church; that we should not leave to anybody this immense power without some safeguard. I may say frankly, that if there are any in the Conference who hold the views that the President of the Conference should have no authority, I do not agree with them. I think he should have authority in matters of law and Discipline—or rather, my idea is that the President of the General Conference should have authority along the line of legislation, and the authority of the Annual Conferences, and the Presidents thereof should lie along the line of the pastoral relation. The only thing we don't define now is the powers and duties of the President of the General Conference, and we seem to shut out the whole thing by that one clause of Discipline which declares that he shall exercise no superintendence whatever over the work of the Connexion. That is, we put a man in the most responsible position which the Church could place him, and where he ought to do a grand work for the Church, and ought to do it in disciplinary lines, and then we leave him like Paul's ship in the Adriatic, firmly anchor him, so that he cannot move at all. We should remedy this strange anomaly, and either say clearly that the President has no powers, and is not intended to have any, or else define his duties and let him go forward in God's name and discharge them. For this general supervision he shall be held responsible, and methods provided for calling him to account if he acts in an unconstitutional or tyrannical manner. I have proposed first to affirm this principle thus:

"Whereas it is highly important in order to the efficient working of the Methodist system, that there should be not only harmonious adjustment of its various parts, but also that the same fundamental principles should pervade its entire economy. This principle may be assumed, unless some persons suppose it snacks of revolution, which I am unable to see. Secondly, And whereas, the principle of supervision has been recognized from the beginning, has been an essential factor in our circuit, district, and Conference organizations. This is a position which, I think, nobody will call in question."

Therefore, in the judgment of this Conference, it is expedient and desirable that the same principle should be so extended as that, without trenching on the rights of Annual Conferences, it may embrace the whole Connexion. Here it becomes a matter of opinion, and there is room for an expression of judgment as to whether this principle of supervision should reach over the whole Connexion, or be limited in its scope and application. Resolved, that the President of the General Conference shall *ex-officio* possess the powers and exercise the duties herein expressed and defined. 1. He shall hold office during the quadrennial period following his election. 2. He shall preside over all sessions of the General Conference during his term of office, and shall be *ex-officio* chairman of the Stationing Committees during the same period. There is here a change of the existing law of the Church. He shall travel at large throughout the Connexion as the General Conference may direct, and to this end shall be relieved from circuit duties. The first part of this clause is the usage now. The latter part involves a change, which will, I think commend itself to the judgment of all. The President ought to be relieved from

may be given to some other interests. Presided, however, that in the oversight of the work are also to be the prerogatives of the Annual Conferences, or of the Standing Committees. In that case the work would be liable to misapprehension as to the extent of powers attached to different offices. In putting that question I am not thinking of a President of the President of the Conference with oversight in matters past and present rather in matters legislative, in matters pertaining to our great national associations, in matters of international and foreign relations, and so on, more than to the work of the Connexion in their several and various branches. It is not to infringe upon the prerogatives of the officers of the Annual Conferences.

He shall attend as many Annual Conferences as possible. This was put in our Discipline in 1878, now I have added a little, making the thing more definite, and showing what he is to go to the Conference for, and what he is supposed to do.

To bring before them any matter of connexional interest. It shall be his duty to call the attention to such Conferences to any case in which the Discipline of the Church has not been duly observed, or the law of the Church contravened, and in case the matter cannot be adjusted, it shall be his duty to refer it to the Court of Appeal, whose decision shall be final.

I for one don't like the idea of the President of this General Conference going to an Annual Conference, barely as a visitor who may be tolerated and received as any ordinary visitor, but who has no recognized business there. So I have defined a little what his duties shall be there. To bring before them any matter of connexional interest. I think this could sometimes be done by the President of the General Conference with better effect than even by heads of the departments or the officers appointed by the various departments. For instance, if any great missionary scheme is to be inaugurated it would be for the recognized, must appropriate official head of the Connexion to bring the matter before the Annual Conferences in their sessions, not to declare "we have decided so and so, and you may carry it out," but to lay it before them and ask their co-operation. Then I go on in this way. "It shall be his duty to call the attention of such Conferences to any case in which the Discipline of the Church has not been duly observed, or the law of the Church contravened, etc." As things now exist, any man may call attention to a contravention of the Discipline, but he is not responsible if he does not do so, and it is not a pleasant thing for a man to do. I propose to make it then the duty of the President of the General Conference to call the attention of an Annual Conference to any case in which the law or discipline of the Church has not been duly observed or in which the law of the Church has been contravened. Suppose he brings it to the notice of any Annual Conference and that Conference does not take any action in the case and nothing is done, I want to provide some means of reaching such cases, and so I say that it shall not be optional but the duty of the President of the General Conference to refer it to the duly constituted court of appeal where it may have a fair trial upon its merits and receive a fair legal decision, making, of course, the decision of that court final on the question of law.

5. "He shall have authority to rule in any question of law submitted to him, provided, however, that if the Annual Conference or any member thereof dissent from the ruling they may appeal the case to the General Conference Special Committee, whose decision shall be final." This simply provides that any question of law or appeal may be referred to the man who by the appointment of this Conference represents, shall I say, the legislative functions of the Church, the legal aspect of our Church economy. He may be asked for his ruling provided also that an Annual Conference or any member thereof may dissent from his ruling and appeal to the duly constituted court of appeal, and their decision shall be final in such case.

6. "He shall have authority to arrange by consultation with the Presidents of the Annual Conferences concerned for the transfer of ministers from one Conference to another, provided, however, that any brother whom it is proposed to transfer shall be notified at least one month before the transfer is made, and shall, if he think himself aggrieved, have the right to appeal to the Special Committee of his own Conference, who shall determine finally whether the transfer shall take effect."

Suffer a word of explanation here which may relieve some misapprehensions with regard to our present law of transfers. I know that there is a strong objection in the minds of some to the law as it now stands on the statute book, and that they think it was framed by a small number with a view of taking from the Annual Conference some of their rights. Let me say, to throw light on this subject, that in the Conference of 1878 the Committee on Itinerancy brought in a report on transfers which seemed as undesirable and unworkable as I desired to re-arrange together as a Connexion. So when I saw this report consulting a literary individual, knowing what any man's opinion was on the subject, I thought of the question which stand upon the subject today. I am perfectly willing to take the same the responsibility for them, they