

John Wesley did not set out with the intention of founding a religious sect. He was stirred by no worldly ambition. An unselfish and devoted man, the predominating purpose of his life was to glorify God by seeking the salvation of his fellow-men. He had no desire to leave the Church in which his father and mother lived and died. He did not depart from his Church; in the nature of the case, the Church had departed from the simplicity and earnestness of the Gospel, and it had no place at that time for his fervour and zeal. Methodism has been practical rather than doctrinal in its complexion. With the exception that it accepted Arminianism in preference to the Calvinistic system of doctrine, there is little to distinguish its beliefs from that professed by the other sections of the Evangelical Church. The one aim of Wesley was to preach the Gospel in its freeness and fulness. The organization whose first lines he laid, now so compact, grew out of the conditions amid which he laboured, and have been but little altered down to the present. It was adapted to the circumstances and needs of the time. He was quick to perceive what was required, and did not suffer preconceived ideas to hinder the adoption of the method's best adapted for his purposes.

The growth of Methodism and the indirect influence it has exerted on other bodies has been remarkable. It arose out of the spiritual and moral deadness characteristic of the eighteenth century. As the vivifying breath of spring after a dreary winter, it came and renewed the face of the earth. It may have lost some of the freshness of its youth, its zeal may be tempered by experience and by the altered conditions of modern life, in a word, like other Churches, it may have become a little more ecclesiastical, yet it still seeks to adapt itself to the special requirements of modern conditions. In England, the United States and Canada the Methodist Church is numerically strong. In all forms of Christian activity it takes a prominent part. Its Home and Foreign Missions are on an extensive scale, and have been remarkably successful. Its energies are unimpaired and its aspirations as ardent as ever.

In its progress it did not escape divisions. From various causes dissensions arose, and still there are a number of branches of Methodism in Great Britain and in the United States. Here in Canada they have been gathered into one. The tendency of the time is toward union, and it is highly probable that before larger unions are realized, Churches having the same doctrinal systems and polity will lead the way in securing such measure of unity as is most promising of attainment. The Presbyterian Church can most cordially congratulate her sister Church, and pray for the coming of the time when the bonds of Christian fellowship may be wider and closer than they are now.

PASTORAL RESIGNATIONS.

THE ideal pastorate in the Presbyterian Church involves the life-long relationship of minister and people. In practice, however, it is very different. In the old land there are many who retain to an advanced age the pastorate of a congregation, in some instances, long after they are fit either physically or mentally for discharging with anything like efficiency the important duties of their sacred office. To the kindly indulgence of their people is this state of things due. Age, experience and past services are respected, and undue impatience and desire for change is not so active as in newer countries. There is a custom prevalent there, little known this side the Atlantic, of relieving an aged minister of the more burdensome and onerous duties of the pastorate, by the appointment of an assistant and successor. This arrangement makes provision for the full and satisfactory performance of all the duties of the ministry. It has advantages. The young minister with his fresh zeal and activity can perform all necessary pastoral duties while at the same time he is more likely to be in full sympathy with the hopes and feelings of the younger portion of his charge. He also has the benefit of the counsels derived from the experience of the senior pastor, who, relieved from the pressure of work, can by taking stated or occasional pulpit duty lighten the task and lessen the strain of his young colleague. This arrangement enables the old minister to feel easy in mind in reference to his declining days. Old associations are not rudely and irrevocably snapped. While the affections of the people gather round the younger

and more active minister, their veneration and esteem for the old man usually abides.

This plan followed by a number of the British Churches has also its disadvantages. Only well-to-do congregations can afford to have a co-pastorate. If advancing years and growing infirmities unfit a minister for his work, there is no other alternative but resignation. He must step down and out so that the best interests of the congregation do not suffer. Ministers both old and young are but men and are subject to ordinary human infirmities. Grace may subordinate and subdue these, yet the old Adam is sometimes too strong for the young Melancthon, and the old as well. It is not agreeable to human nature to be superseded. Little jealousies creep in, and people in the congregation come to have personal preferences. Out of these unhappy dissensions sometimes arise and peaceful and prosperous congregations are injuriously disturbed. In large and flourishing Churches in towns and cities co-pastorates might be possible and advantageous, but in the country generally at all events they would not be practical. The insecurity and instability of the pastoral relation has suggested to many the question whether time-pastorates would not be an improvement on the present practice. There is possibly more hardship in the uncertainty that attaches to the tenure of the pastoral office, and the harsh and abrupt way in which it is sometimes terminated, than many are aware of. A time-pastorate would at least do much to lessen many of the serious difficulties that often distress ministers and congregations. Change may often be desirable for both ministers and people and it could readily be secured without the distress and heart-burning it occasionally entails, if at a specified time the relationship could terminate according to mutual understanding. Change need not be made imperative if there was a desire and willingness on both sides for a renewal of the tie.

The *Christian Intelligencer*, a paper published in the interest of the Reformed Church in America, has begun a symposium on the Duty of Resigning a Charge. The first part of it is all that has yet appeared, and the contributors view the subject from a ministerial standpoint. It will likely be followed up from the side of the congregation. The full discussion of the question will be useful. Light may be gained on what is now a practical problem. It may suggest what will lead to a systematic plan by which serious evils may be avoided, and the best interests of congregations promoted. The introductory paper is large-minded and judicious. It takes into consideration the conditions that make ministerial changes both desirable and dutiful. The special fitness of a minister for a larger sphere, if such providentially opens up to him, justifies a change. If a pastor finds that his labours are without spiritual results, he might be better adapted for work elsewhere. The welfare of the Church is more than the welfare of the individual. A minister may get out of touch with his people; in that case it is the opinion of Dr. Suydam in the first paper that the minister should seek a field more congenial to all. When opposition to a minister arises in a congregation, he does not find it so easy to pronounce. He asks: "Shall he resign and get out of the trouble? This may be the easier way; but it may not always be either the Christian or the manly course." The suggestion is that in such circumstances the minister should be governed in his action by what he understands will be best for the congregation. If his departure is the only condition of harmony, then let him depart. If his resigning in charge is most likely to restore tranquillity then let him remain. Dr. Suydam proceeds to say: "But the opposition should be weighed rather than counted. It may be that they will be reduced to a small avoirdupois, or to a few in number. In that case it will be the Christian duty of such persons themselves to resign and retire; and it becomes the duty of the pastor so to instruct them and, if they are wickedly persistent, then to call in the aid of the classis, presbytery or bishop."

Others also send brief papers to the symposium referred to. One is by Dr. Talbot W. Chambers, who expresses his concurrence with the views of the preceding writer. He adds:—

I will only remark that it is a poor method of estimating a minister's usefulness to count the additions made to the communion. He may be edifying the body of Christ when, for sufficient reasons, the additions may be few; and there are cases in which large additions give no increase of strength. As to the resignation of a call, it should always be done in good temper. However unjust the way in which it is brought about, the minister should abstain from severe or unkind remarks, from anything which would make it unpleasant to meet the people again. Let him, even under sore provocation, show a meek, forbearing Christian spirit. This will both honour his Master and promote his own peace.

Books and Magazines

KENNEDY'S "Illustrated Guide for Amateur Gardeners" for 1891, with copious information, good illustrations and a neatly lithographed cover, has been issued.

THE BOOK BUYER. (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons.)—A great amount of useful information is contained in the March number of this very useful monthly.

HARPER'S YOUNG PEOPLE. (New York: Harper & Brothers.)—Good stories, well written and instructive articles, choice poems, and capital pictures make this weekly periodical a welcome guest in thousands of homes.

THE STARLING. A Scotch Story. By Norman Macleod. (Toronto: Upper Canada Tract Society.) Dr. Moffat, secretary of this useful agency, has made arrangements for supplying this delightful story, as well as others by the same author, for circulation at a cheap rate by the colporteurs of the Society.

BABYHOOD. (New York: 5 Beekman Street.)—Among other papers of practical value to mothers may be mentioned, "The Ideal Nursery," "Remedied or Prevented." *Babyhood* has now among its contributors many of the most eminent physicians in the country, and is in every sense the mother's helper—not a juvenile magazine, as many suppose.

THE PULPIT. (Buffalo: The Lakeside Publishing Co.)—The *Pulpit* for this week contains sermons by Revs. Dean Vaughan, on "The Light of the World"; S. H. Robinson, on "A Pastor's Inaugural"; Arthur Mursell, on "A Mile a Minute"; Charles Wadsworth, D.D., on "To Young Men"; Alexander MacLaren, D.D., on "God's Answer to Man's Trust"; Albert Donnell, "A Children's Sermon."

A MAGAZINE of the size of *The Ladies' Home Journal*, which has just reached a monthly circulation of 600,000 copies, requires a good deal of room; another four-storey building is to be occupied next month in addition to the two now in use. The growing popularity of the *Journal* has also overtaken the capacity of its nine large presses and twelve new ones of latest improved pattern are awaiting the completion of the new quarters.

PASTOR PASTORUM: or, the Schooling of the Apostles by our Lord. By the Rev. Henry Latham, Master of Trinity Hall, Cambridge. (New York: James Pott & Co.)—The sub-title of this book characterizes with great accuracy its exclusive purpose. The successor at Trinity of the famous Dr. Whewell, though a theologian of ripe scholarship, allows himself nowhere to be diverted from his single object of showing the methods through which the apostles of the Gospel were transformed into those very different beings—the Apostles of the Acts.

THE METHODIST MAGAZINE. Edited by Rev. W. H. Withrow, D.D. (Toronto: William Briggs.)—The March number, as might be expected, is devoted chiefly to literature relating to the centenary of John Wesley's death. While there are a number of excellent papers on this theme, there are others of much interest. The "Vagabond Vignettes" are continued. To the "Symposium on Methodism" Rev. W. T. McMullen, D.D., Professor Goldwin Smith, Rev. John Burton, M.A., Rev. George M. Milligan, M.A., Sir S. L. Tilley, C.B., the Hon. G. W. Allan and others contribute.

THE OLD TESTAMENT STUDENT. (Hartford, Conn.: The Student Publishing Co.)—The new number of this valuable monthly opens with editorial reflections on questions of much present interest, such as prophetic inspiration and methods of Scripture Criticism. Professor Burton writes on "The Study of New Testament Words." Professor Ladd continues his suggestive series on "The Biblical and the Philosophical Conception of God." Rev. Silas P. Cook discusses "Bible Study in the Colleges of New England." The other contents of the number will be serviceable and instructive to students of Scripture.

THE ANDOVER REVIEW. (Boston: Houghton, Mifflin and Co.)—"The Proximate Causes of the Crucifixion" by Rev. Thomas Hill, D.D., is the opening paper of this month's issue of the *Andover*. Mr. Robert Woods discusses "University Extension in England," and Mrs. Helen Bigelow Merriam presents from an artistic point of view "Some Philosophical Aspects of the School of 1830." Rev. Francis H. Johnson continues the series of papers on "What is Reality?" This time he considers "Creative Intelligence." Among other subjects of interest discussed editorially there is one on "Professor Briggs' Inaugural," in which the writer manifests his admiration for the critical methods of the Union professor. The Book Reviews and Notices possess their usual value and completeness.

THE HOMILETIC REVIEW. (New York and Toronto: Funk & Wagnalls.)—In the March number Dr. W. W. McLane contributes a paper, "Regeneration," which will prove interesting. "The Divine Authority of Scripture versus Rationalistic Criticism," by Dr. D. S. Gregory, fitly concludes the series. "The Ethical Spirit of Chaucer's Writings," by Professor T. W. Hunt, shows an often unobserved side of the old poet's character—his humble piety. Dr. Pierson gives some new suggestions in vigorous style in behalf of a thorough "Study of the English Bible" in our colleges and seminaries. "Pastoral Visiting," by Dr. John Hall, ably sets forth the benefits of this work to both pastor and flock. The Sermonic, Exegetical and Expository Sections contain interesting, useful and suggestive papers by eminent contributors.

THE CRITICAL REVIEW. Edited by Professor S. D. F. Salmond D.D. (Edinburgh: T. and T. Clark.)—The second number of this most admirable and useful quarterly more than sustains the high expectations raised by the appearance of the first. It deals exclusively with all the most noteworthy new works in theological and philosophical literature. The critical papers are written by competent men, mostly, though not exclusively, scholarly Scotchmen. The opening paper is on Cardinal Newman, based on the recent biographical and critical works relating to the distinguished churchman, by Principal Fairbairn. Among other contributors to the current number are Principals Cave and Simon, Professors Sayce, A. B. Bruce and Marcus Dods. At the end there is a Record of Select Literature, giving the titles and price of all new and important works in the special field embraced in the *Review*.