

The Christian Messenger.

A RELIGIOUS AND GENERAL FAMILY NEWSPAPER.

NEW SERIES.
Vol. XXII., No. 37.

Halifax, Nova Scotia, Wednesday, September 12, 1877.

WHOLE SERIES.
Vol. XLI., No. 37.

Poetry.

For the Christian Messenger.

Through a Wilderness to our Home.

This world is a wilderness barren and drear;
We totter 'neath burdens, we tremble with fear;
Our heavy hearts languish,
We weep tears of anguish,
And wearily press through the mazes of years.

Far, far in the distance, the desert beyond,
A home, where sweet comforts eternal abound,
Awaits the worn toiler;
And no dread despoiler
Shall terrify those whom these comforts surround.

Worn pilgrims are hastening to reach the blest end;
The mercies of heaven their footsteps attend.
The way may be weary,
The hours be dreary,
But Jesus is near them to help and defend.

Then cheerily marching, though threatened by foes,
We press towards the mansions of endless repose.
The bright fields Elysian,
Will soon to our vision appear,
And forever their beauties disclose.

August 11, 1877.

SYMONDS.

CONVENTION DOCUMENTS.

Ordination of Ministers.

The following is the Report of the Committee appointed by the Convention last year to take into consideration the matter of Licensure and Ordination. It was read by Rev. Dr. Cramp before the Convention at Wolfville:

Every Christian should be a witness for Christ and a pattern of holiness. Our Lord's commission was by no means limited to official instructors. Robert Robinson's title of one of his Village Sermons ("Every person who understands Christianity may teach it") expresses New Testament truth and Christian duty. The method may greatly vary. Some may be particularly useful in praying with or for the unconverted; some can talk with them;—some are gifted for sick-room intercourse; some excel in teaching the young; some are qualified to give public addresses. "As every man hath received the gift, even so minister the same" (1 Pet. iv. 10). All believers in the Lord Jesus should imitate Him as far as qualifications and opportunities exist; and it is said of Him that He "went about doing good."

Those who are employed by Christ are chosen by him for that service. He bestows the necessary gifts, and the desire to use them for the benefit of human souls is imparted by the Holy Spirit. It is the duty of the churches to recognize the gift and the desire, and to encourage all who wish to work for the Lord. Whether the word commonly employed to intimate the encouragement (Licentiate) is wisely chosen may be doubted. It seems to imply an authority which does not exist. No man is dependant on his brethren for permission to preach the gospel. If he can preach, he is bound to preach. If, on trial, his want of ability appears, the sooner he leaves off the better, both for himself and for the people. Still, it is generally admitted among our churches that those who are expected to address public assemblies on religious subjects should receive in some way the approval of their brethren, so that they may be regarded as messengers of the churches. No uniform plan is required; cases and circumstances differ so much, that the brethren should not consider themselves bound by any strict rule, but may be at liberty to signify their approbation of the public services of such of their members as appear gifted, in whatever manner they please, and to announce the same in the neighbourhood, as well as to churches in the vicinity.

But it is indispensably necessary that the apostle's injunction to Timothy (2 Tim. ii. 2.) should be scrupulously observed, both by ministers and churches. Two qualifications are here set before us as essential in the appointment or approval of labourers in the vineyard. In the first place, they must be "faithful men." The reference here is to *conversion and character*. A pastor must be a man of piety; a teacher must be a man taught of God—a man of consecrated heart—a man of consistent, obedient life; and he "must have a good report of them which are without" (1 Tim. iii. 7.) In the second place, he must be "able to teach others also." This implies the gift of intelligent utterance, the art of making things plain. Many a person understands the gospel who cannot teach it. He does not know how to make it reasonably plain. He can define—and reason—and demonstrate—but he cannot explain, and his words make no impression. Such a man should be content with being classed with those who could speak with tongues, but were unable to interpret, as for such a one, the apostle says, "let him keep silence in the church" (1 Cor. xiv. 28). To descend to particulars. In years gone by, any man who could talk fast and loud, and repeat gospel texts fluently, was sure to gain the popular ear, if not to be accounted a great preacher. But we have outgrown all that. The schoolmaster in school, and boys and girls can detect blunders which used to pass unnoticed. No one can now hope to gain the approbation of his brethren as a preacher, or to aspire to a place among Licentiates (if that title is to be retained,) who is not versed in the ordinary branches of a good English education. His spelling must be faultless; his reading clear and impressive; his knowledge of geography and history respectable; otherwise, young persons may ask him questions which he will not be able to answer, and he will occupy a low place in their esteem, which will be a great misfortune.

It appears quite desirable that young preachers should be for a time, say two years under trial; and that during that period they should enjoy the watch-care of pastors. This arrangement would give opportunity for friendly advice, observation of faults or errors, if any should appear, correction of mistakes in the interpretation of the scriptures, and helps in general study. The apostles' admonition is suitable at all times, "Till I come, give attendance to reading, to exhortation, to doctrine—neglect not the gift that is in thee. Meditate upon these things; give thyself wholly to them; that thy profiting may appear to all" (1 Tim. iv. 13-15). These young preachers should be considered as a distinct class, and treated accordingly. When two years have been spent in this way, the candidate for the ministry may engage in studies directly and exclusively relating to that office; or if he should not be able to avail himself of such advantages he may find it conducive to profit in many respects if he can secure a situation as assistant to a pastor, from whom he may receive instruction, and whose modes of pastoral labour he may observe and imitate. It is believed that such a course will be in many cases preferable to studies of a more strictly collegiate character, particularly when the candidate has but little time at command.

We come now to the question of Ordination. This was originally appointment to a place: it is now the performance of a ceremony by which a candidate is set apart to the ministerial office, and is entitled to undertake those services which are generally performed by ordained ministers only, such as the ordinances of baptism and the Lord's supper, marriages, &c. The limitation of these exercises to ordained ministers rests on no scriptural authority, and can only plead usage in its favour, although, as regards the ordinances of Christianity, it will be generally acknowledged that there is propriety in restricting the administration to ordained men. Exceptional cases rarely occur. The mode of ordination is now settled

by denominational usage, and requires no remark. Slight changes are no doubt permissible, as circumstances may dictate, and will not affect the validity of the act; but in general the method now adopted may be regarded as sanctioned by experience, though they cannot claim direct and exclusive authority.

In the judgement of your Committee, the ordination of very young men should be avoided. There is an incongruity in the assumption of authority over churches which will strike most persons of intelligence and reflection. Not that the age of a minister at ordination can be specifically fixed; for some men are better for office at twenty-five than others at forty; but due weight should be allowed to considerations of caution and discretion, and no one should be placed in a position in which men would be naturally tempted to "despise his youth."

The qualifications necessary for the efficient discharge of the duties of the pastoral office have been already briefly adverted to. As far as education is concerned, our denomination, it is submitted, should be prepared to take a forward step. The literary character of our ministry requires to be raised. Certain bishops in the Church of England, in the days of Cowper, so far forgot the proprieties of things as to "lay hands on sculls that could not teach, and would not learn." In some instances they might plead necessity; they used the best materials they could get. But there is no excuse in this nineteenth century for the ordination of unqualified men. The churches should not be committed to the care of those who are stunted in general knowledge; unpractised in study, destitute of governmental skill. The ordaining Councils should carefully examine the candidates placed before them—that examination including an exegesis of some passage of scripture—the preparation of a sermon—and an extended inquiry into the candidate's knowledge of doctrines and facts. It is desirable that the ordination should occupy two days, the first day being given to examination, the second to religious exercises.

Another suggestion may be offered. Ordinations should be generally conducted by men of knowledge and experience. It would be well if in all cases the majority of the ordaining ministers should be men of mature age and well-tried judgment. A mixture of younger men in the Council is proper, as it will train them for the discharge of important duties; but the stress of the examination should be laid on experienced elders.

In closing this report we have only to observe further, that in filling up the ranks of the christian ministry the greatest solicitude should be exercised, in order to prevent the introduction of imperfectly qualified individuals, and to employ in service of the church the best and most useful gifts. Cultivated and sanctified mind being more than ever required in the christian community, as education advances and religion is better understood, it is of the highest importance that public instructors should be thoroughly prepared for the positions they are to occupy, and it is desirable that the preparation should be conducted, as far as possible, within our own borders, and carried on in the midst of the churches which are expected to enjoy the benefits. There is a specialty in the state of society in every country, and particularly in the state of religious society, which it is not prudent or safe to ignore. It will be peculiarly unfortunate if our candidates for the ministry who seek theological education in another country should become unfitted or unwilling to supply the wants of the congregations at home, or lose sympathy with them. It is much to be desired that in completing the Endowment of Acadia College, adequate arrangement should be made for the Theological Department, so that no candidate for the ministry shall be under the necessity of quitting his native shores in order to be prepared for his life-work.

Respectfully submitted,

J. M. CRAMP, Chairman.

The Foreign Missionary Report.

Our readers will be much interested in the Report of the Foreign Missionary Board, which shows the operations at home and abroad during the past year. A few extracts in advance of the publication of the YEAR BOOK, which is in course of preparation, will awaken a keener relish for the Report, as a whole, when it shall reach them in the book form:—

FOREIGN DEPARTMENT.

The territory occupied by your missionaries is mainly comprised in the Ganjam and Vizagapatam Collectorates of the Madras Presidency of India, lying in the neighborhood of 18. S. and 82. E. The stations are four, viz.: Bimlipatam, Vizianagram, Kimedy, and Kotopardy.

Rev. R. Sanford is stationed at Bimlipatam. Rev. G. Churchill has been associated with him since the beginning of the year, when he returned from Australia with recovered health, and resumed missionary work. The greater part of the year has been employed by him in perfecting his knowledge of the language, and other preparatory labour; while Mrs. Churchill has diligently sought to become acquainted with the female branch of the Telugu population, with a view to their enlightenment and their elevation from the degraded state into which paganism has sunk them. The effort seems well nigh hopeless, and would be entirely so, were it not that "with God all things are possible," and that "the Gospel of Christ" is "the power of God unto salvation."

When Mr. Sanford took up his residence at Bimlipatam his attention was at first wholly given to the study of the language. He has now entered on direct missionary labour and goes among the people declaring to them in their own tongue the wonderful works of God, and especially the greatest work of all, that of redemption. Writing to the Foreign Secretary on the 18th of April last, he refers to this fact in the following terms:—"On the 7th inst. my thirty-fifth year was completed. It seems as though my life-work is only begun, for on the following Sabbath I entered upon the public ministrations of the word in Telugu. My reading, writing, speaking, and singing in Telugu have made sufficient progress to induce me to strike out upon this broad sea with the determination—'live or die, sink or swim, survive or perish, I will endeavour to swim this sea."

"My experience shows that for me there is no royal road to the acquisition of this tongue. Letter by letter, and word by word, line upon line, practice upon practice is the method which gives me full assurance of ultimate triumph. Indeed, I never gained anything yet worth having without working for it. But I have not had a favorable opportunity for study. Our early settlement at this station, the care of the interest at Vizianagram, and also of that at Jeypore, imposed a burden upon me which would have been more fitting for a missionary of five or six years' standing. Besides this, most of those in my employ have a fair knowledge of English, and this is not favorable to the acquisition of the native medium of communication. However, persisting in one object will under the Divine blessing overcome very great obstacles.

"It is not an easy matter to become master of Telugu. The spoken language is very different from the written. The former must be acquired largely through intercourse with the people. Then again, the lower classes speak very differently from those who are educated. The language possesses a rich store of synonyms somewhat confusing to the learner. Perhaps this arises largely from the fact that several other languages have contributed to its development."

Mr. Sanford remarks, in the same letter, "It is my desire to be able to preach the gospel freely and successfully to all classes. I am impressed with

the thought that my business in this land is *preaching*. It seems to be the expectation in these parts that missionaries will spend most of their time in school work, and that this is the only way to work successfully among the Hindoos. The London Mission, following this course during the last seventy years, has not met with brilliant success."

Our missionaries are fully agreed on this point. They hold to the commission—"Preach the gospel to every creature." The "preaching of the cross" is the grand specific for diseased souls. Success cannot be looked for in any other connection. At the same time it must be borne in mind that there is a peculiar adaptation of the native constitution and habits to the missionary field. There was a large amount of truth in the position taken by the late J. C. Marshman; he was accustomed to maintain that "India would never be converted by Europeans, and that the business of missionaries was to raise up *native apostles*." Our brethren who have been labouring so many years in Burmah are fully convinced of the correctness of these assertions, and devote much of their time and attention to the training of native preachers.

The church at Bimlipatam is steadily working its way. The usual services are well sustained, both in Telugu and English. The discipline enjoined in the New Testament is kept up, two cases of exclusion for disorderly walking having occurred; subsequently, however, one of the excluded gave satisfactory proof of repentance, and was restored. Maintenance of discipline in its strictness is as important in India as it was at Corinth in the time of the Apostle Paul, and for similar reasons.

Our brethren at Vizianagram are holding on vigorously. Though they have not an ordained pastor, they have no difficulty in carrying on religious exercises among themselves; the brethren at Bimlipatam visit them; and the fullest concord exists between them and the native church in the regiment of the Madras Infantry, stationed at Vizianagram, and presided over by Anthravady, who is represented as a "splendid preacher," and a diligent and skilful pastor. The two churches unite in the monthly celebration of the Lord's Supper.

Rev. W. F. Armstrong and wife are stationed at Kimedy. A plot of ground being procured on which to build a "mission bungalow for temporary occupation" till a larger house could be erected, W. D. Ansley Esq., kindly allowed them to occupy rooms in his house while the building was going on. They thankfully accepted the offer, and at the end of three months entered into the new mud house where mission work has been going on ever since. Mr. Armstrong is assisted by two native preachers, and Mrs. A. has the general supervision of the school department. On the tenth of last June three candidates were baptized; two others, husbands of two of the baptized, were to have joined them but were prevented by their friends, who by dint of entreaties and threatenings succeeded in hindering for a time the profession of their faith. The account of this transaction, as furnished by the missionaries, offered a striking illustration of the cross-bearing that has sometimes to be endured, even in this nineteenth century, for the sake of Christ.

"Two men, who were fully determined to unite themselves with our church here, and who gave satisfactory evidence of change of heart, offered themselves for baptism three weeks ago (June 28). After relating their experience they sat down and took breakfast with the native christians. That act excluded them from all Hindoo society ever after, and they meant that it should. Soon the news spread through the village that they had been seen eating with the Christians. When their friends heard of it they lamented them more than though they were dead. They surrounded the house and besought them to go no