Communications.

Reform.

Vast improvement in our work as a church may be secured by a change in the operations of several departments of the same. The conferences in the first place should be more careful and exacting in receiving members, both quarterly and annual. A more judicious selection of men to preach the word of life would be greatly to our advantage; not always in point of talent, but in point of general character and fitness for the work. It requires a well-founded man to make a preacher who will be useful. It requires much more than a well-filled brain or real "smartness" to be successful. Many men of commendable ability as to intelligence are yet sad failures in the work of the ministry. They are made up of glittering generalities, and never amount to anything. I heard an intelligent layman describe a preacher of my knowledge as follows: "He has plenty of sense, but he has no common sense," and to this he attributed his failure as a traveling minister. How are we to remedy this receiving of persons into the ministry who can not or will not make themselves useful in the work? Something must be done to change this aspect of our operations. What shall it be? I can not see any way to remedy it but for the annual conferences to refuse to receive men, especially such as expect to travel until they have thoroughly tried their ability to be useful as traveling preachers. Let the quarterly conference license them and the stationing committee use them, under the care of a judicious presiding elder, and thereby let them show themselves to be workmen who need not to be ashamed. Then they can be received, and the conference will know what they are doing, and not get on their hands those who after a year or two of travel prove themselves to be inefficient, and such as the people do not want. Young men who will not submit pleasantly to this rigid discipline for their own and the church's good will never do the church any good, and ought to be kept out of the work.

In almost all, if not in all, the conferences there is a class of men who are literally a burden, completely worn out, and no field of labor wants them; and the stationing committee knows that when they send them to a field they will not be gratefully received, and will do no good, if not harm. It is a painful task to them to be compelled to send such men out.

Another reform is much needed, and that is, that the quarterly conferences speak out plainly and let the preachers know that they must work or they will be promptly dismissed. This thing of dragging men along, saying in the quarterly conference it is "all right," then only half paying them for their services, because they do not half do their work, and at the end of the first year, if not at the end of six months, say to the presiding elder, "We must have a change next year, it will never do to send this man back, the people will not pay him," must be changed. It is not right to put upon the presiding elder the responsibility which the quarterly conference alone should bear. It is asking one man to bear what twenty or more should bear, and they al[...] the party to whom he is amenable. Let the people speak, their voices being heard in the quarterly conferences, and then the preachers will understand and will not blame their brethren in the ministry as seeking their ruin for selfish motives or with malicious intent. Let this reform begin at once.

When, on the other hand, preachers should not be moved simply to suit the fastidious notion of a few individuals who could hardly stand the preaching of Gabriel, the angel, for a year. This class, who are always seeking for a "new cart," are not the best class of people in any way; and to cross their notion of things will be good for them and profitable to the Church. Preachers must not be changed so frequently, as it is a great expense to them and the Church, and is attended with great labor and annoyance. Horace Greeley is reported to have said, "The way to resume is to resume," and the way to increase the length of pastorate among us is simply to send them back to where they are. Make men know that they must make themselves useful, so that they can stay, or else they must quit, one or the other. Make your own choice; and make the people also feel that they must make the preachers work and be acceptible, or else they will have to keep them, whether they are pleased or not. We must quit harrassing good and useful men simply to make places for some indolent, indifferent lounger whom no circuit wants more than one year, and feel that that is almost an insufferable affliction, the pain of which is excruciating, and only borne as a kind of religious chastening. When this is well understood it will have a wholesome effect, and will teach renegades that their transient, unprofitable services are not wanted, and that they will not be tolerated. Let our motto be, fewer changes, full work and full pay, and good, square doses of ecclesiastical strychnine for all loafers and tramps in the ministry.

B. F. Booth.

New Philadelphia, Ohio.

Last Two Books Read.

While I have been attending annual conferences, the last two months, I have read two books, "A Fool's Errand," written by Judge Tourgee, and "Alaska and Missions of the North Pacific Coast," written by Sheldon Jackson, D. D. These authors have told, in a forcible and interesting manner, much respecting the condition of society in many of the southern states of our Union and Alaska, including the resources of that far-off north-west country, which according to Dr. Jackson's showing are great, and will become highly valuable to the United States at no distant day.

These authors were pre-eminently qualified to produce such books, and give full and accurate statements respecting the subjects upon which they write. Dr. Jackson being superintendent of Presbyterian missions of the Rocky Mountains and Pacific Coast, and going to Alaska, and in company with others founding a mission there, meantime exploring that country somewhat extensively, Judge Tourgee being an officer in the Union army for four years, then settling in the South at the close of the war, and living there ever since, were well qualified to write the aforesaid books; and they did their work well.

It is not my purpose to show the excellences of these books other than to say that they treat of a country and people with whom we ought to be more intimately acquainted than the large majority of the people in the North are. The southern states and Alaska are parts of the United States of America, and are destined to exert a great influence for weal or woe upon the other portions of this country. In Alaska there are about 60,000 people as truly heathen as are the unenlightened tribes of western Africa, and the polygamy, slavery, witchcraft, gross devilish worship, buying, selling, and killing wives; yea, selling, burning to death and otherwise killing by piecemeal for the crime of witchcraft; yea, where all the horrors of heathenism are found destroying the bodies and souls of the people. Suicides, especially among females, are quite common in Alaska; and not unfrequently do they kill their girl babies to save them from suffering the cruelties which they endure. We ought to send a few missionaries to Alaska without delay. They are willing and anxious to have school-teachers and missionaries to labor in their midst.

"A Fool's Errand" shows the terrible condition of society in many of the southern states; also, that missionary labor is much needed there. Both of these books may be had at our own bookstore, Dayton, Ohio.

The following extracts found in Dr. Jackson's book show the deep degradation of the people of Alaska: "These Indians regard their women as slaves, and compel them to do the work. They are inferior in looks and fewer in number than the men. Many a poor mother assured me that she had killed her child to save it from suffering the misery she had herself endured. * * * No fewer than thirteen women confessed to having slain their infant girls, some in the most cruel and heathenish manner. * * * * * The men captured in war are usually killed, but the women are kept as beasts of burden, and often treated with great inhumanity. The master's power over them is unlimited. He can torture or put them to death at will. * * * Polygamy with all its attendant evils is common among many tribes. These wives are often sisters. Sometimes a man's own mother or daughter is among his wives. Sometimes they are traded off by the husband for something he may desire. * * * * * * * Their lives are in their hands. At Fort Wrangell, in 1879, an Indian killed his wife and brought her body into the village for a funeral. No one could interfere. He had bought her as he would buy a dog, and if he chose he could kill her as a dog. * * * When a man dies his widow is compelled to ascend the burning pile, throw herself upon the body and remain there until the hair is burned from her head. She is then allowed to stagger from the pile, but must frequently thrust her hand through the flame and place it upon his bosom to show her devotion to him. If through pain or faintness she fails to perform her duties she is held up and pressed forward by others. The old and feeble are sometimes destroyed. Among some tribes the bodies of good men are burned and the ashes carefully preserved, but where wood is scarce the bodies of women are not considered worth the wood that would be consumed in the burning, and they are left to become food for dogs, foxes, crows, or cast into the sea."

Well may Dr. Jackson say, as he does, the following respecting the sad condition of these Indian women: "Despised by their fathers, sold by their mothers, imposed upon by their brothers, ill-treated by their husbands, cast out in their widowhood, living lives of toil and low sensual pleasure, untaught and uncared for, with no true enjoyment in this world and no hope for the world to come, crushed by a cruel heathenism, it is no wonder that many of them end their earthly miseries and wretchedness with suicide."

A few more extracts respecting cannibalism as given by Dr. Sheldon will show how exceedingly degraded these people are. "An old chief in cold blood ordered a slave to be dragged to the beach, murdered and thrown into the water. His orders were quickly obeyed. The victim was a poor woman. She was dragged out of the water and laid on the beach, where they commenced tearing it to pieces with their teeth. In a few minutes two naked cannibals appeared having half of the body each, and amid horrid yells they commenced their still more horrid feast of eating the raw body. There are three divisions, as follows, those that eat human bodies, dog-eaters, and those who have no customs respecting these things. Cannibals failing to find a dead body when seeking human flesh will seize the first living one that comes in their way. Some of them appear as bears while others wear masks. They pretend to murder and then to restore to life again. A single cannibal on such occasions is generally supplied with two, three, or four human bodies, which he tears to pieces before his audience. Persons from bravado or as a charm present their arms for him to bite. I have seen several whom he had thus bitten and heard of two who died from the effects."

Surely these people, now a part of the population of the United States, ought to have missionaries sent among them; and United Brethren in Christ ought to bear a share in this work.

D. K. Flickinger.

The Model Christian.

1. His home-life is good, such as to win the respect and confidence of his family and neighbors. It is a bad sign when a man's own family and the majority of his neighbors discredit his profession and look upon him as a counterfeit. This explains why some neglect their religious duties at home. They live so badly that family prayer or anything they might say to their children, brothers, or sisters, fail to impress them with the importance of salvation.

2. He prays in secret. He ever remembers the injunction, "But thou, when thou prayest, enter into thy closet; and when thou hast shut thy door, pray to the Father which is in secret; and thy Father which seeth in secret shall reward thee openly." Jesus prayed in secret, and thus set an example to be imitated by his followers to the end of time. No man without secret devotion can have power with God.

3. He attends prayer and class meetings when practicable. He loves to be with his brethren and sisters in the house of prayer. From their prayers and experiences he derives strength and encouragement such as he can get nowhere else. Show me a church-member who is utterly neglectful of these duties and I will show you one who is not very warm in religion.

4. He pays liberally to the support of the gospel. His pocket-book is sanctified. It seems that some people get stingy as soon as they join the church. They vainly imagine that their relation to the church places God under obligations to prosper them in this world's goods, and if in any way they are induced to give a pittance it is done with the expectation that God will give it back and as much more. It is a matter of speculation with them. Not so with the model Christian. Greatfully remembering the precious sacrifice made for him, he is ready and willing to sacrifice all for Christ. He keeps his property continually upon the altar to be used as God may direct. It is downright folly for a man to pray for the success of the church and then by consummate stinginess clip the wings of that prayer before it rises above his head.

"That man may last, but never lives,
Who much receives, but nothing gives;
Whom none can love, whom none can thank,
Creation's blot, creation's blank."

5. He stands by his preacher. Taking the place of an Aaron or a Hur, he holds up his hands till the going down of the sun. Instead of talking about him and furnishing food for those who gloat themselves on scandal, he takes the place of an attorney and pleads his cause. He never fails to attend preaching, and on all occasions cheerfully extends to him a hearty brotherly fellowship. A pastor who does his duty should be highly esteemed by his people; and such as do not thus esteem him, absenting themselves from preaching and refusing to take counsel of him as their spiritual leader, are absolutely of no account and ought to be unto the church as heathen men and as publicans. Much of the failure of to-day may be attributed to a lack of co-operation with the preacher on the part of his members. Instead of holding up his hands they bind them and render him helpless.

6. He is true to his church. On this point many fail. They hold it as a kind of subordinate institution, which exists to subserve the purposes of men. Consequently when they take offense at any thing (and this they often do) they threaten to leave the church, as if its existence depended altogether upon their connection with it. Such men can not be trusted. Then there are others who are forever talking about their church, magnifying what they regard as faults, and telling what the church will have to do and be before it amounts to anything. And this they do in the presence of the enemies of Christ, which is simply putting a cudgel in their hands and telling them where to strike. It is just as much out of place for a man to talk about his church as it is for him to go around among his neighbors and abuse his family. We want true men in the United Brethren Church—men who have its iterests at heart to the extent that they will talk, pray, and sacrifice for it.

W. M. Weekley.

Cottageville, West Virginia.

The Telescope.

Mr. Editor:—I think your noble paper is not excelled by any paper in America for its deep spirituality and good theology and sound doctrine, and its adaptation to the wants of its readers. You have quite a number of noble correspondents to your paper. Those dear brethren are sowing the good seed in thousands of minds. Perhaps they do not realize how much good they are doing. I remember of reading an article in the Telescope several years ago, and it does me good yet. The subject of the article was, "Accept the Situation." I do not know who wrote it, but have pondered over it many times; and it has helped me to accept the situation, however trying. May God bless the author.

Oh, how the poor, toiling, doubting pilgrims relishes such articles as are often found from these dear brethren. Send us more words of cheer, brethren. Often when I read articles in the Telescope they inspire me with new hope, new ener-