

**THE MINISTER IN
THE
ITINERANT SYSTEM**

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BY

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"South America," etc., etc.



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SHE (Copy of the book)
N. J. ...

PREFACE

AMONG the practical problems the Christian Church has had to consider has been the best way to secure ministers for churches and churches for ministers.

Looking over Christendom at large, or limiting the view merely to the United States of America, one is impressed by the fact that a large number of ministers are without churches and that many churches are without pastors.

Hence, one of the pressing questions is: How shall the idle preachers be given employment, and how shall all the vacant pulpits be supplied and kept supplied with ministers, and, further, how can this be done in the most prompt and effective way?

In some denominations the church itself must secure its own pastor and the minister himself must find his own place; but, with this liberty, there continue to be very many vacant churches and a large number of unemployed ministers.

In other denominations there is a power above the local church and the individual

preacher to which the church and the minister must look in the matter of effecting or dissolving a pastoral relation.

Another method is to have the minister assigned and moved by a central authority, with pastoral adjustments presumably for a year at a time, but which may be continued from year to year indefinitely or up to a certain limit, as the law of the denomination may provide.

This is the itinerant appointive system of pastoral supply and change which is in use in many denominations and in many different countries.

It is found in the Wesleyan Methodist Church in Great Britain and the various Methodist churches elsewhere in the British Empire. In the United States of America it is found in the Methodist Episcopal Church; in the Methodist Episcopal Church, South; in the other Methodist Episcopal Churches, white and coloured; in the Methodist Protestant Church; in the United Brethren Churches; in the Evangelical Association; in the United Evangelical Church; and in various bodies too numerous to mention in this Preface, some of which bear and some of which do not bear the Methodist title.

In this system are about fifty thousand itinerant preachers, and under this system are

eight to nine millions of communicant members, and about twenty-four millions of adherents more or less closely attached to the different denominations having the appointive system. Thus it is wide-spread and in many lands, and also has been thoroughly tested in many parts of the world and among diverse peoples during a long period of time, which may in round numbers be called one hundred and seventy-five years.

All these classes--ministers, members, and adherents—are very directly concerned in this system and in its proper working, and should study existing conditions and consider the possible or probable outcome of certain tendencies if they are continued.

This book is a brief study of the itinerant appointive system of pastoral supply, and, particularly, of the minister in the system—how it affects him and how it should be affected by him,—and also the relation of the layman and the local churches to this system.

What is said in these pages elucidating the system and pointing out its tendencies and needs, has an equal application to the ministry and membership of all denominations that use the system in any form, and the book is intended for all, though here and there some readers may need to substitute a few phrases and technical titles, because the titles of au-

thority in different bodies vary, while the functions are essentially the same.

The basis of this work was a paper by the author read before the Methodist Episcopal Preachers' Meeting of New York City and vicinity. After the delivery of the address, the meeting unanimously requested its publication that it might be circulated among laymen as well as preachers. The matter is now offered to the public in the hope that it may help both preachers and people in the various bodies using this system, and also those who use some other method.

THOMAS B. NEELY.

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