

THE CONNEXIONAL MINISTRY.

EXAMINATIONS OF CANDIDATES.

AGE OF ADMISSION TO THE MINISTRY.

AFTER the Annual Assembly of 1864, no person who is thirty years old should be admitted on Probation for the Itinerancy, unless his admission be agreed to by two succeeding Annual Assemblies; that in the event of such admission, his probation will be reckoned from the first of the two Assemblies concurring in his admission; but that his name shall not appear on the Minutes as a Probationer until admitted as aforesaid.

I. DISTRICT MEETING EXAMINATION.

This Examination to be left to the District Meeting: but it is recommended that stress be laid upon Personal Piety, Educational Attainments, Soundness of Health, Ability to Preach, and Power to Work; and that no Candidate be allowed to pass at this stage unless the District Meeting be satisfied that he possess the above qualifications.

II. EXAMINATION FOR PROVISIONAL YEAR, OR THEOLOGICAL INSTITUTE.

(The former to be conducted by a Sub-Committee appointed by the Connexional Committee for that purpose, and the latter by the Governors of the Institute.)

1. The Candidate for Circuit work to give a statement of his Educational Attainments, his Conversion, Present Christian Experience, call to the Ministry, and knowledge of the Polity of the United Methodist Free Churches.

2. Examination in Experimental Theology: such as Natural Depravity, Repentance, Faith, Regeneration, Holiness, &c.

3. The Pentateuch, and the Gospel according to St. Matthew. All Candidates are expected to show thorough knowledge of the main events narrated in these books, such as the Days of Creation, the Fall, the Flood, the Call of Abraham, the Call of Moses, the Giving of the Law, the Sermon on the Mount, the Sermon on the Lake, the Crucifixion, and the Resurrection of our Lord.

4. The Examiner shall question Candidates as to methods of study and Church work.

(The following books may be read with profit in preparation for the examination—viz., the Pentateuch, the Gospel according to St. Matthew, Banks' Theology, and the introductory sections of the Free Methodist Manual on the Origin and Constitution of the United Methodist Free Churches.)

III. EXAMINATION FOR PROBATION.

(To be conducted by the Examination Committee.)

1. The Book of Joshua, and the Gospel of St. Luke.

2. The Formation of the Canon, and Evidences for the Genuineness, Authenticity, and Divine Authority of the Holy Scriptures, and Rules of Scripture Interpretation.

3. The Doctrine of the Incarnation.

(Books recommended for study in preparation for this examination:—The Cambridge Bible Commentaries on Joshua and St. Luke, Row's Bampton Lectures, Westcott on the Canon of the New Testament, Ryle on the Canon of the Old Testament, Rules of Scripture Interpretation in Angus' Bible Hand-Book, and Gore on the Incarnation.)

IV. EXAMINATION FOR FULL CONNEXION.

(To be conducted by the Examination Committee.)

1. Theism.

2. The Trinity, the Atonement, Justification by Faith and kindred doctrines, and the doctrine of the Future State.

3. Scripture Exegesis (a considerable portion of Holy Scripture in which the Candidates shall be examined, to be selected by the Connexional Committee twelve months beforehand).

4. Christian Institutions—

(1.) The Constitution of the Christian Church, the Christian Ministry, Baptism, the Lord's Supper, and the Christian Sabbath.

(2.) The Constitution of the Methodist Free Church.

(3.) The Institutions and usages of Methodism.

(Books that may be studied with advantage in preparation for this final examination—viz., Beet's Thro' Christ to God, and Beet's New Life in Christ, the Atonement by Dr. Dale, Flint's Theism, Flint's Antitheistic Theories, Orr's Christian View of God and the World, and the Free Methodist Manual.)

V. EXAMINATION FOR FOREIGN MISSION WORK.

When circumstances are urgent, the Connexional Committee shall arrange for the Examination of brethren who are appointed to Foreign Stations; and the Committee shall decide, in each case, the general outlines on which the Examination shall be conducted—i.e., whether one of the preceding courses shall be adopted, or a more general and comprehensive one.

VI. EXAMINATION COMMITTEE.

1st.—The Examination Committee shall consist of an Examiner,* and a Deputy (who shall, in the absence of the Examiner, conduct the Examination), the Connexional Officers, General Missionary Secretary, together with seven other members of the Connexional Committee, who shall be elected each year by ballot by the Connexional Committee at its Autumnal Session.

It shall be the duty of the Examination Committee to examine all Candidates for our Connexional Ministry, for Probation, or Full Connexion, in accordance with the above scheme.

The Examination Committee may annually appoint a

* The Examiner must not be the President of the Annual Assembly, nor the Principal of the Theological Institute.

Secretary to take Minutes, present the Report to the Connexional Committee, and discharge such other duties as may be devolved upon him.

2nd.—Each Candidate shall pass an Examination in the First, Second, or Third Degree of Merit; and the Examination Committee shall determine, in each case, to which of these Degrees the Examination shall be assigned. The Committee shall report the result to the Connexional Committee, with such other remarks as it may deem advisable.

The Connexional Committee shall then, in addition to the Report of the Examination Committee, consider the Ability to Preach, the Pastoral Work, the State of Health, and the General Suitability in other respects of each Candidate for our Connexional Ministry; and if satisfied on these points, shall declare him on Probation, and name the date at which his Probation shall commence.

3rd.—The Formula ordinarily adopted by the Connexional Committee shall be as follows:—

Resolved,—That A. B. having passed an Examination by the Examination Committee, and the Connexional Committee being satisfied as to his Attainments, his Ability to Preach, his Pastoral Work, the State of his Health, and his General Suitability in other respects for our Connexional Ministry, he is hereby declared to be on Probation, his Probation to date from the Annual Assembly of 18 .

4th.—The same method of Procedure shall be adopted in relation to Candidates who are examined for Full Connexion, with a slight variation in the Formula, thus:—

Resolved,—That A. B. having passed an Examination by the Examination Committee, and the Connexional Committee being satisfied as to his Attainments, his Ability to Preach, his Pastoral Work, the State of his Health, and his General Suitability in other respects for our Connexional Ministry, the Annual Assembly is hereby recommended to receive him into Full Connexion.

5th.—If a Candidate, either for Probation or Full Connexion, does not pass an Examination in the First, Second, or Third Degree of Merit, the Examination must be declared a failure; and the Connexional Committee must make such

recommendation to the Annual Assembly as it, in view of all the circumstances of the case, may deem just and expedient.

6th.—The Annual Assembly Formula in receiving Candidates on Probation for our Connexional Ministry shall be as follows:—

Resolved,—That A. B. be received on Probation for our Connexional Ministry, subject to passing the usual Examination before the Examination Committee, and the approval of the Connexional Committee.

ADDITIONAL EXAMINATIONS AND ENQUIRIES.

The Annual Assembly of 1894 *Resolved*,—1. That with a view of securing additional data for forming a more intelligent and accurate judgment of the fitness of Probationers for our Connexional Ministry, the Connexional Committee shall appoint at each Autumnal Session a Sub-Committee or Sub-Committees to hear each Probationer preach during each year of his Probation; and also to make inquiries of the Circuit Officers, and the Probationer himself, as to (a) his State of Health; (b) Pastoral Habits; (c) General Methods of Work, and (d) Attention to Duty; the Inquiries and Answers to be stated in a printed Schedule and signed by the Circuit Officers and Probationer. The report of the Sub-Committee of the Sermon and Answers to be presented to the Connexional Committee when the case of Probationers is under consideration.

2. That the same method of procedure shall be carried out in the case of brethren in their Provisional Year.

3. That the report of brethren who are in the First Year of their Probation shall be presented to the Connexional Committee at its Spring Session.

FINAL EXAMINATION AND PUBLIC RECEPTION.

Itinerant Preachers, on completing their Probation, previous to being received into Full Connexion, shall be examined in reference to their knowledge and belief of Christian Doctrines, and as to their attachment to our Discipline and Government; and if approved by the Annual Assembly, shall be publicly recognised as fully admitted into the Itinerant Ministry.

NAMES OF EXAMINERS.

Year.	Examiner.	Deputy Examiner.
1886-89	Rev. R. Chew.
1890-94	Rev. R. Chew.	Rev. R. Abercrombie, M.A.
1895	Rev. R. Abercrombie, M.A.	Rev. C. Ogden.
1896	Rev. T. Sherwood.	Rev. C. Ogden.
1897-98	Rev. R. Abercrombie, M.A.	Rev. T. W. Townend.

LIMITATION OF PROBATIONERS' APPOINTMENTS.

The Annual Assembly of 1895 *Resolved*,—That no Probationer shall remain in the same Circuit or Church for more than two years in succession, but it shall nevertheless be competent for the Connexional Committee and Annual Assembly to suspend the operation of the regulation in cases where (a) a new chapel is to be immediately built or is in course of erection; or (b) where a new mission or society is being formed and developed.

MISCELLANEOUS REGULATIONS.

SENIOR AND JUNIOR MINISTERS.

Those Preachers whose names stand first on the list of appointments to the respective Circuits are held responsible to the Annual Assembly for the carrying out of the Connexional and Society's Regulations; the colleagues of such Preachers are expected cordially and affectionately to co-operate, under their direction, in the discharge of those important duties, and also to render them such subordination as is reasonable, and not inconsistent with the Holy Scriptures. It is also required of those Preachers whose names are placed first on the list of appointments to Circuits, to advise their brethren as to their course of reading and study.

DUTIES OF MINISTERS TO CIRCUITS AND TO THEIR COLLEAGUES.

Adopted in 1891.

Resolved,—1. That this Annual Assembly is deeply concerned that so many Preaching-rooms have, from time to time, been discontinued in different parts of the Connexion without Chapels being substituted for them, and that so many small places have been given up, while others are seriously imperilled; and this Assembly is apprehensive that in many instances such places have suffered from neglect. This Assembly would, moreover, remind the Ministers that they are generally appointed to a Circuit as such, and are expected to render all possible aid to the small churches in it, and they (especially the Superintendents) are held responsible by the Assembly for the efficient oversight of all the places included in the Circuit to which they are appointed.

Resolved,—2. That for duly sustaining the Connexional principle among us, and for the efficient working of Circuits, it is essential that close fraternal feeling and confidence should be maintained between ministerial colleagues, that the Superintendent should advise with and counsel his juniors, and that the juniors should report to him all matters relating to their own work, and seek his guidance thereon; and that in all Circuits to which two or more Ministers are appointed, especially those which are worked sectionally, frequent meetings, under the direction of the Superintendent, should be held by the brethren among themselves for consultation and cordial co-operation in the working of the Circuit. And the Assembly hereby declares that in accepting and appointing Ministers it expects and requires conformity to the principles and practices set forth or recognised in this and the preceding resolution. And this Assembly hereby affirms, in reference to the sectional working of Circuits, that no arrangement can be deemed satisfactory which leaves any Church or Society without ministerial oversight.

MINISTERS AND CIRCUIT REGISTERS.

That there be provided a Circuit Register, in which a list of the classes and members shall be regularly entered, and that the Preachers on the Circuit shall be responsible to the Annual Assembly for this being attended to.

MINISTERS WITHOUT CHARGE.

Adopted in 1896.

1. That brethren desiring to retire from active work of the regular Itinerant Ministry and not applying to be made Supernumeraries, temporary or permanent, while anxious to retain their association with the ministry of the Connexion, may by a special vote of the Assembly be classed as Ministers without Charge.

2. That a Minister Without Charge as such shall not be entitled to the benefits of the Preachers' Children's Fund.

3. That the years during which he shall remain as a Minister without Charge shall not count in the number of years of service in relation to the Superannuation Fund, and that Rule 21 of the Printed Regulations of the Fund shall be held fully to apply to him.*

4. That a Minister Without Charge shall retain his membership with one of our Churches in the neighbourhood in which he resides, and shall render some Ministerial service, if able, to that and other Churches of the Connexion, and that he shall communicate with the Annual Assembly year by year, and that his case shall be annually considered.

5. That each application be considered on its own merits.

6. That when the request of a brother to be placed as a Minister without Charge is complied with by the Annual Assembly, such Minister shall have no claim to be restored to Circuit work; but on application by him, or by its own act, the Annual Assembly may, at its discretion, appoint him to a Circuit.

MINISTERS UNDER ACCUSATION.

In the event of an Itinerant Preacher being placed upon his trial, it is usual for him to have at least seven clear days'.

* When any Minister becomes a Supernumerary for one or more years for any cause other than that of personal ill-health, such year or years shall not (unless otherwise determined by special vote of the Annual Assembly) be reckoned as those of Ministerial Service in calculating the annuity to which he or his widow shall become entitled; and during such time of temporary retirement from active service his annual subscription shall not be payable.