

The Wesleyan.

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S. F. HUESTIS, Publisher.
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Published under the direction of the General Conference of the Methodist Church of Canada.

\$2 PER ANNUM IN ADVANCE
Postage Prepaid.

VOL XXXV.

HALIFAX, NOVA SCOTIA, FRIDAY, DECEMBER 21, 1883.

No. 51

NOTES AND COMMENTS.

Many a grand opportunity has been lost because the laborers stopped to dispute and forgot to resume the work. *Religious Telescope.*

The *Episcopal Register* thinks that the Anglican air of the junior Americans who go abroad and return with a hesitating voice and an altered pronunciation, ought to be made to pay a heavy duty at the Custom House.

The *Christian Intelligencer* says: "The real work of every denomination is performed by a minority, and it will be found that of this minority nearly every family reads the denominational newspapers."

To say that no man can reach Christian perfection, and yet urge men to seek it on the ground that though they cannot reach it the effort will be beneficial to them, is to trifle with words—a thing our Lord never did.—*Nash. Ad.*

The *New York Evening Post* ventures to assert "that a large proportion of the judges on the bench hold railroad passes, and have asked for them, or have, in other words, incurred obligations to railroad companies which ought to disqualify them, but do not, for sitting on any railroad case, and which the law ought to make a punishable and disgraceful offence."

Rev. Joseph Parker, recently speaking before the students of the Baptist Regent's Park College, announced a great truth that many of our preachers are indisposed to accept: "The more learned the congregation," he said, "the less learning the congregation asked for, but for that inner life, that wondrous spiritual mystic power which made the whole world kin."

"Give me a bass drum, or a Chinese gong, rather than our quartet of two youngsters, with their hair parted exactly in the middle, and a pair of young girls with their wool gathered over their eyes like a merino sheep or a Scotch poodle, who troll out something which nobody can understand, and call it the 'praise of God.'"—*Dr. Mark Trafton, in Zion's Herald.*

The *Springfield Republican* says of Matthew Arnold: "He is distinctly and by eminence a literary man, and of that undetermined theology and those pronounced esthetic opinions which are always near to Boston's heart; yet she takes to him somewhat coldly, and eyes him as it were askance; neither overcome by his sweetness, nor quite dazzled by his excess of light."

The custom of singing songs entirely secular and often of little merit seems to be on the increase in missionary and Christian temperance meetings in Cincinnati. One might wish that the better hymns of the Church could be used, especially on Sunday. However, as it is seldom that a word of these songs can be understood by the audience, perhaps the offence may be condoned.—*Western Ad.*

Beware of holiday dissipation. Just as some formalists relegate their religious life to the six weeks of Lent, so many others condense theirs into the Week of Prayer and a few weeks following. Let all December be given to work for God. Let the day that celebrates the Redeemer's birth witness deeper consecration to his service, and let the New Year be ushered in with purpose of new devotion to him and greater diligence in his cause.—*Christian Ad.*

The preacher was relating some touching incident, and dropped his voice to the pathetic pitch, or rather depth. We are sure what he said was good, having confidence in the man, though we heard not. But the sudden elongation of an hundred necks in the rear of the church, and puzzled looks on as many faces, made an impression upon the mind and risible muscles never to be forgotten. As a pantomime it was a success, but as an anecdote it was a failure.—*N. O. Ad.*

The Old Testament intelligently read and interpreted by the New Testament is of great advantage to every Christian, but more especially to every Christian minister. It is an inexhaustible source from which material can be gathered for presenting the gospel in all its phases, and for illustrating the teachings of the New Testament. A converted Jew said, "The New Testament is the Holy Ghost's commentary on the Old Testament."—*Christian Visitor.*

One of our New England churches makes its weekly offering a most impressive service. When the announcement is made, two young men step forward in front of the pulpit, and re-

main there while the pastor reads passages of scripture on the subject of giving. After the boxes have been passed, the young men return to their place in front of the desk, and again stand, while the pastor, in brief prayer, implores the divine blessing upon the offering thus made.—*Congregationalist.*

It was Dudley Warner, we believe, who said that he attempted to worship in a church in which "the reproduction of the old Gothic was so complete that the builders even seemed to have brought over the ancient air from one of the churches of the Middle Ages." This is quoted for the special benefit of the sextons in our churches. Beloved ministers to our comfort, don't give us so much of the Gothic. We want, at least, the air of this nineteenth century.—*Christian Instructor.*

Says the *Living Church* (Protestant Episcopal): "An exchange reports the case of a Methodist minister who has applied for orders, having resigned his charge to escape from itineracy. He will be no acquisition to us, if that is his motive, and he should not be received. He would only 'jump from the frying-pan into the fire,' if he were received. If a clergyman must move every three or four years, he had better be sent out by the proper authority than be driven out by disaffected parishioners."

Says the *English Christian World*: "There appears to be a growing desire in this country on the part of the female portion of the community that the word 'obey' should be struck out of the marriage ceremony. Some clergymen come forward to say that they never insist upon this pledge of obedience to husbands being taken by brides. Away in Canada, where a man may marry his deceased wife's sister, the Methodists, by a full vote in Conference, have formally struck the obnoxious word out of the Marriage Service."

The grounds for the combined attack of the Church of English bishops on the bill authorizing marriage with a deceased wife's sister, may be found in the following utterance of the Bishop of Lincoln: "It was really a bill for the separation of Church and State, and its adoption would have been subversive of purity and the peace of families and disastrous to the safety of the national institutions, and perhaps of the monarchy itself. But we are bound to say that such a statement gives signs of unreasonable prejudice and fright rather than reason and good sense."—*Central Ad.*

The correspondent of an American paper tells the following good story of the new Bishop of New York, Dr. Potter. The altar in the church in which the Convocation was held is so arranged that there is no standing place at the ends. Consequently, when Bishop Potter came to consecrate the elements, he turned square about and did it openly and in sight of the people. So much for trying to force him in the matter of postures. I should like to give the name of another grand and much revered man who said to me, "if these postures mean anything, I won't practice them; if they don't mean anything, I certainly will not."

The *National Temperance Advocate*, published in New York, says: "A liquor-dealer in Brooklyn, N. Y., was recently charged with the violation of the excise laws by selling liquor on Sunday. In selecting a jury the counsel for the liquor-dealer inquired if any were members of temperance organizations. None were found. Subsequently it was ascertained that two of them were members of the Methodist church. They were not permitted to serve. The evidence clearly proved the guilt of the liquor-dealer, but the jury brought in a verdict of 'not guilty.' Methodists hereafter will understand that they are not wanted on juries under 'home rule' in Brooklyn excise cases."

A country merchant visited the city a few days ago, and purchased from a dollar-store a table castor, which he took home with him, and after putting a tag on it marked \$14, made a present of it to a Methodist preacher, whose church his family attended. The reverend gentleman took the package home, opened it and examined its contents. The next day he took the castor to the groceryman, and said to him: "I am too poor in this world's goods to afford to display so valuable a castor on my table, and, if you have no objection, I should like to return it and take \$14 worth of groceries in its stead." The merchant could do nothing but acquiesce, but fancy his feelings.—*Wash. Tower.*

CHRISTMAS BELLS.

Ring, sweet bells of Christendom,
Far and near the tidings tell,
How the Lord to earth did come,
Ring and tell!

Still the Christmas angels sing,
"Glory be to God Most High!"
The eternal echoes ring,
"God Most High!"

Lift your songs in unison,
"Peace on earth, good will to men!"
Mingle song and life in one
Wide "Amen."

WHAT IF THEY HAD NOT TOLD?

Such a wonderful manifestation! One angel suddenly flashing before the drowsy eyes of a few shepherds on a country hill, and then the one angel becomes a multitude of the heavenly host praising God! The single star multiplies, as if all the stars in the heavens had rushed toward that point and here congregated in a constellation of marvellous beauty, in each star a face, and from each face a voice, "Glory to God in the Highest, and on earth peace, good-will toward men!" All that happened not only sustained an important relation as testimony to the fact of the Incarnation, but since that time how it has kindled art into a holy flame, given wings to song, and added new depths of joy and peace to many hearts because bringing heaven close down to earth and brightening this life of shadows.

Between that manifestation and declaration of glory on the one hand, and on the other a world to be so enriched, the connecting wire was that row of shepherds looking up, listening, watching. What if they had not seen the connection? What if they had lacked faith? They might have called it an excitable dream and refused to be fooled by telling it. They might have appreciated it enough to have accepted it as a fact, and yet kept it in their own hearts as the coffers of some sacred, golden mystery. What disposition would they make of this knowledge of the Christmas wonder—conceal it? No; the shepherds went and told what they had seen and heard. What a difference it made to the wondering Mary and Joseph, to others then, and the great Christian world since!

There are many to whom Christ has revealed Himself. No visible angel has accompanied that revelation, and yet it has hung a Christmas sky above them, not once a year, but every day. Have we no duty as message-bearers? We tell the story in our lives, it is true. Submission to the will of God, that is the Christ-story. Forgiveness of injuries, that is the Christ-story. The denial of appetite for another's sake, that is the Christ-story. If we do not give this testimony of the life, all other witnessing is vain. But let that life be a voice as well as a spectacle. The angels did not stand and in silence look at this weary, old, sin-cursed world. The first declared the Incarnation; and then around that declaration gathered the magnificent chorus of the "Gloria in Excelsis." Tell what Christ has been to you. Whisper His strength in the ear of that young man, weak through the temptation of strong drink. Write to some one far from home, and tell what Christ has been to you, stranger and sojourner on the earth. In some poor, unattractive home break the alabaster-box of your faith and let the fragrance of the King's ointment there be diffused. In the sick room tell of Him who can heal, and in the prison speak of Him who can break the chains of evil habit. Do not aim simply to be in character an angel, standing before all as a spectacle, but let life be speech sweet even as the Bethlehem song, telling of the Christ who has been so much to you. Though an angel be a wonder, a still greater wonder is a human soul, man or woman, redeemed through Christ and now telling of His love. You may be to some single heart just as much of a blessing as the shepherds were to the world, when,

having seen the Christmas glory and heard the Christmas anthem, they turned and told of it.—*E. A. Rand, in Zion's Herald.*

THE SECRET.

The *Pall Mall Gazette* has been trying to learn the secret of the power which attracts such multitudes to the meetings of Moody and Sankey. A reporter of that journal interviewed Mr. Sankey, and the following conversation took place: "Tell me," I said, "what is the secret of this impression?" "We have no secret," he replied. "But," I asked, "why all this feeling? I seldom if ever heard a sermon so singularly unimpressive. I can understand people being touched by your singing and the inspiration of a great assembly uniting in praise and prayers, but that any mortal man should be stirred by Mr. Moody's discourse is to me an inscrutable mystery." "Yet," said Mr. Sankey, "it is a fact." "So I see, but what is the meaning of it? Why does such a result follow, when appeals apparently infinitely more effective leave hearts untouched? What is the rationale of it? Where is the clue to this disproportionate effect produced by such inadequate means?" Mr. Sankey answered, "I cannot explain it; nor can you. Behind all instrumentalities, feeble or mighty, there lies an inscrutable something which influences the soul of man. We call it the Spirit of God. Beyond that we cannot go." "But its laws, its secret?" "The Spirit, wherever it listeth," said Mr. Sankey, "and with that answer I am content."

CHURCH EXTENSION.

At the Church Extension Anniversary in Philadelphia, Dr. C. C. McCabe gave a very interesting account of a trip to Dakota, made some weeks since, dedicating some churches that had been commenced a few months ago, and inaugurating new enterprises. He spoke of the dedication of a church at Mitchell, built by Church Extension plan No. 6, at a cost of \$5,600. It would seat 500 people, and on the day of dedication was "full inside and out;" people were there in crowds. A grand service of dedication was held at which \$2,000, the remainder needed to cover the indebtedness of the church, was subscribed. This enterprise had been inaugurated by a donation of \$250, and a loan of \$750, from the board of Church Extension. That \$1000 put it on the way to the grand result realized. Next day after this dedication, he traveled seventy miles by private conveyance to another town, arriving late at night, and the day following took his stand on the corner, and began to sing "Behold the bridegroom cometh." The people came together, and were soon made to understand that the "bridegroom" was the Lord Jesus coming into his church. He distributed his books, and kept on singing until 500 people had gathered around him. "Now," said he, "we will take up a collection to build a Methodist church. The board of Church Extension will help you." One man in the crowd pledged \$500, others followed, until \$4,100 were pledged. Then he gave them a free lecture at night, and told them of the close that he had charged them nothing to get in, but would charge them \$900 to go out. In a few minutes that amount was raised, making \$5,000 toward a new church. Recently he saw Bishop Simpson presiding over the Dakota Mission Conference in that same church, though still unfinished. He gave an instance of a meeting held in New York state some months ago, in which he had urged the claims of this work, hoping to impress some rich men who were present. At the close of the service a woman came to him and said, "Hold out your hand, Chaplain;" he held his hand out, and she counted fifteen \$10 bills and placed them in his hand. He said, "You ought not to give so much;" she

said, "That is not all," and brought out a check for \$100 and placed it on the bills, and said, "I must build one of those frontier churches. It is not what you said this time that led me to do it, but what you said when here before. I have taken boarders and have done my own work to earn this money in order to build this church, and you must take it." The result is there is now on the frontier, secured by the money this poor woman earned, a church that will seat 340 people costing about \$1,800.

THE HIGHLANDER'S PRAYER.

A Scotch Highlander, who served in the first disastrous war with the American colonies, was brought before the commanding officer one evening, charged with the capital offence of being in communication with the enemy. The charge could not well be preferred at a more dangerous time. Only a few weeks had elapsed since the execution of Major Andre, and the indignation of the British, exasperated almost to madness by the event, had not cooled down. There was, however, no direct proof against the Highlander. He had been seen in the gray of the twilight stealing out from a clump of underwood that bordered on one of the huge forests which at that period covered the greater part of the United Provinces, and which, in the immediate neighborhood of the British, swarmed with the troops of Washington. All the rest was mere inference and conjecture. The poor man's defence was summed up in a very few words. He had stolen away from his fellows, he said, to spend his home or time in secret prayer.

"Have you been in the habit of spending hours in secret prayer?" sternly asked the officer, himself a Scotchman.

The Highlander answered in the affirmative.

"Then," said the officer, drawing out his watch, "never in all your life had you more need of prayer than now; kneel down, sir, and pray aloud that we may hear you."

The Highlander, in the expectation of instant death, knelt down. His prayer was that of one long acquainted with the appropriate language in which the Christian addressed his God. It breathed an imminent peril, and earnestly implored the divine interposition in the threatened danger—the help of him who, in times of extremity, is strong to deliver. It exhibited, in short, a man who was thoroughly conversant with the scheme of redemption, and fully impressed with the necessity of a personal interest in the advantages it secures, had made the business of salvation the work of many a solitary hour, and had in consequence, acquired much fluency in expressing all his various wants as they occurred, and his thoughts and wishes as they arose.

"You may go, sir," said the officer, when he concluded, "you have, I dare say, not been in correspondence with the enemy to-night."

"His statement," he continued, addressing himself to the officers, "is undoubtedly correct. No one could have prayed so without a long apprenticeship; fellows who never attend drill always get ill at review."—*Hugh Miller.*

MAKE MEN THINK.

It is not always slow work to make men think. One sermon, exhortation, or prayer, backed with truth, pressed home with earnestness, delivered with that blending of authority and sympathy and humility which the best men get only in their best moments, which is the fruit of secret prayer and travail of soul, may set one or many to thinking. A remarkable man has just died on the continent of Europe, the story of whose conversion shows what thinking may do in raising a soul from the dead. It was a famous pastor of the Confession of

Augsburg, by the name of Jean Mairé. At the time of his conversion he was a private tutor in a family of the house of Hohenlohe, and was himself an unbelieving rationalist. He was a man of education and ability, a good public speaker, and entirely destitute of personal religion. One of the neighboring ministers asked him to speak for him in his absence. He said,

"How can I preach what I do not believe?" "What," said the pastor, "do you not believe in God?" "Yes, I do that."

"And surely you believe that men should love him?" "Doubtless."

"Well, then, preach on the words of Jesus, 'Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart and mind and strength.'"

He said, "I will try just to oblige you."

He thought over the words, and made notes as follows:

1. We must love God, and the reasons thereof.

2. We must love him with all our powers in very truth. Nothing short of this could satisfy God.

3. But do we thus love God? No.

"Then," as he afterward told his friends, "without any previously formed plan, I was brought to see that we need a Saviour. At that moment a new light broke upon my soul. I understood that I had not loved God, that I needed a Saviour, and I loved him and clung to him at once. On the morrow I preached the sermon, and the third head was the chief, namely, the need of Jesus, and the necessity of trusting to such a Saviour."

Here a man had lived an intelligent and studious life, supposing himself to be a rationalist, and had never done any real thinking about his relations to God. Thinking precedes all genuine feeling. Feeling that begins and ends without thought will make a goodness which goeth away as a morning cloud and as the early dew. Said the late Dr. Durbin to the writer: "When you try to make a man feel, put a thought into his mind, and the thought will rekindle the feeling long after the voice of the preacher has died away." The thing for the pastor, the Sunday school teacher, and the class leaders to seek after is to set the people to thinking, not abstractly, but in the concrete: Who am I? Why was I made? Whether am I drifting? What will the end be? A vast moral upheaval would result in all our churches and congregations if, in these autumnal months, the people could be made to think.—*Christian Ad.*

We can never reach the anniversary days closing the year, like Thanksgiving and Christmas, but that we think tenderly of those who once wore with us on the earth. There is a hush in our hearts, and we feel that the dead are tenderly looking down. It is the stilling of the waters of this restless life that the image of the stars above us may be more distinctly reflected. Sorrow always depresses us and makes us lose sight of God, or it lifts us till we commune with His own blessed presence, and seem to mingle with the departed. In these anniversary hours may there be such an elevating of every soul in its grief. In thought may we rise into the purer, the larger, the more loving life transfigured on those heavenly hills to which we daily lift our eyes.—*Christian at Work.*

At the Advent, the world was like a raft becalmed in the tropics; some of its freight dead and baking in the sun, some as kin: as if for moisture from dried oak, and some sadly, faintly looking for a sail. Christ's coming to that world was as life to the dead, imparting new impulse to human heart and human nature. It was like rain and wind coming to that bark—once more it cuts the sea, guided by a living hand. *Robertson.*