

# The Wesleyan,

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## POETRY.

### NEARER HOME.

I'm nearer to night to the home I seek,  
Than ever I was before,  
I'm nearer the pearly gates of light,  
Nearer the shining shore,  
I'm nearer the city of the saved,  
Though yet it seemeth afar;  
Nearer the place where my loved abide,  
Where God and the angels are

The way is dark I am treading now,  
But away through the mist and gloom,  
Visible only to faith's clear eye,  
Stretch fields of un fading bloom;  
And day by day as I journey on,  
I think what the end will be,  
When the race is run, and I stand with God  
On the shores of the Jasper sea.

I know I am sinful; I cannot walk  
One step to the skies alone;  
But Christ hath given his precious blood  
For sins of the world to atone.  
And through His merits, I trust at length,  
To come to the gate of Day,  
And find forever the shadow and blight  
From my life all passed away.

And so rejoicing I onward press  
Contented my cross to bear;  
Patiently waiting, for by and by  
I shall go my crown to wear,  
And deep in my heart the thought I keep,  
As here through the world I roam,  
I'm nearer each day to my Father's house,  
Nearer my rest and home.

P. A. M.

Shubenacadie, Sept. 3rd 1875.

## THE VALUE OF A GOOD PAPER.

(BY REV. G. O. HUESTIS.)

DEAR BROTHER—I am not about to write a eulogy on the *Wesleyan*, or to indulge in remarks respecting it of a deprecatory character. I desire, with your permission, to express in words, a few thoughts on the value and importance of a good family newspaper.

In the first place, it should be decidedly religious in its character. In order to this it need not exclude all secular matter. Indeed, this can scarcely be done in many cases, for religious movements are often so blended with worldly affairs as to be inseparable. There are few secular papers but are somewhat religious, and but few religious periodicals that are not to some extent secular. The idea that religion requires separation from the secularities of this life is an error which pure Christianity is exploding. The line that is often drawn between secular and religious duties will not stand the test of the divine word. We cannot see why there should not be "On the bells of the horses," "Holiness to the Lord," when going to market as well as when going to meeting or Church? When you give an account of the opening of a Church, there is generally not only a statement of the religious services, but also a description of the size, form and finish of the building, the amount collected and the remaining debt. This is surely somewhat secular, especially the financial part, yet it is not irreligious, and therefore may appear in a religious paper with propriety. Our most devotional hours are associated with the handling of money. Is that wrong? Certainly not. If done to the glory of God, as all things should be done, it will be as acceptable to the Lord, as any other part of worship. A good family paper then should aim in all its articles, to develop and purify man's moral or spiritual nature, arouse his attention to eternal things, and induce him to yield to the claims of God upon him, and to take a deep interest in the cause of Christ on earth. It should be adapted, as far as possible, to the intellectual capacity of its readers. If the style be very lofty and florid, the subjects be very scientific and profoundly philosophical, and the poetry be what in literary circles is called first class, the paper will not be popular, except with a privileged few. And yet, the object should be to cultivate and expand the in-

tellectual powers,—to raise the grovelling to a higher plane of religious thought, to induce men and women to live as human beings ought to live on earth.

As a general thing the articles ought to be short, if, however, very interesting, no matter how long. There is an immense deal of twaddle in our day about lengthy sermons, and newspaper articles; the objection, I fear, oftener arises from the depravity of the heart, than from the dictates of reason and conscience.

It should be, to some extent, adapted to the times, liberal and progressive, yet sufficiently conservative "to cleave unto that which is good," and to denounce even popular errors whether found in theology, science, books, amusements or fashions. Firmness as well as discrimination will be required in its Editor, in order that truth may not be despised, nor what is false flattered.

It ought to be denominational without being strongly sectarian. This is both possible and proper. It may and should give all useful intelligence respecting the interests of that branch of the Church with which it is identified, yet in such a manner as not to be offensive to others. Hence controversy involving collision with other sections of the Church, should be admitted only when some vital truth requires defence, and then should be conducted in a Christian spirit.

It should give due prominence to the temperance question. The matter should not be minced in order to please wine-bibbers, or men engaged in the abominable traffic, whether in the retail, or the not less guilty wholesale business. Our families require constant instruction and warning on this subject.

Now, Mr. Editor, perhaps you are beginning to think that the Schoolmaster for Editors is abroad, and that G. O. H. is becoming quite too officious. Suffer me, however, to proceed a little farther, not to dictate or even suggest in reference to the management of the *Wesleyan*, but to make a few remarks respecting its value and importance.

Every *Wesleyan* has had twenty-eight and (will have forty) columns of reading matter; one-fourth of these are filled with advertisements. The remaining columns are occupied with literary matter, devotional, instructive, and entertaining. The amount of reading thus furnished every year is much larger than we would suppose, unless we examine the subject. Those Columns, are equal to about fifty pages of an ordinary sized book. Thus furnishing the reader with 2,500 pages yearly of useful reading. That would be a very cheap book, even unbound, for *Two Dollars*. Then the variety of this reading is worthy of a passing notice. A recent number had forty different pieces, besides the summary of news, which consisted of sixty items. Now when we bear in mind the amount of human labor required to prepare this matter, and connect therewith the weekly handling of at least 120,000 types or letters, twice over, we can easily perceive that printing is a costly affair. If some other papers with more reading matter than the *Wesleyan* are obtained at a cheaper rate, it is because of the large number of their subscribers. I venture the assertion, and you will correct me if wrong, that if we had ten thousand paying subscribers, the paper could be published at \$1.50 per year, and the profits realized be greater than now, with less than half that number.

Newspapers have become so common in our day that they are frequently undervalued. True, some are not worth much, while others are worse than nothing. A good Editor will not fail to select from every available source, the best thoughts of the wisest men living, that find their way to the press, and also, from the departed, who being dead, yet speak through their writings. Often an article in a Newspaper contains the chief thoughts of a large volume, thus saving the reader the time required to read that volume through.

Every family should have a weekly paper not only to obtain the secular news, but to keep attention awake to the interests of the Redeemer's Kingdom on earth.

As Methodists we have such a paper. It is worthy of a more liberal patronage. It pays well in a family. One man remarked to me "That the *Wesleyan* was worth a

quarter's schooling to his children." Mark the difference in conversing with those families that take a paper and those who do not.

During the period when the war between Germany and France was drawing to a close, and the subject was talked over in almost every house, I remember overtaking a man apparently about sixty years of age; after inviting him to a seat in the carriage, I began to speak of the terrible struggle, but my words did not seem to interest him. He was utterly surprised, had never heard a breath about the war. Poor ignorant man; he took no Newspaper.

Cornwall, Sept. 1875.

## STRUGGLING COUNTRY CIRCUITS

(BY REV. ROBT. McARTHUR.)

Five years ago the Conference of E. B. A. inaugurated a scheme for the promotion and extension of the work of God in the more needy and remote parts of the Provinces. Anxious fears for its success were entertained at the launching forth of the Home Mission movement, only to give place at the end of its first year's history, to expressions of gratitude to God who had so eminently honoured the faith of its promoters, and crowned the labours of its agents with immortal gain. The experience and achievements of subsequent years have more than justified the wisdom and religious enterprise connected therewith. In the multiplication of believers another blessed and most happy exposition of the words "Them that honour me will I honour," has been witnessed to the church. In various parts of our land, where populations more or less numerous were hitherto left either wholly, or in great measure unprovided with the ministrations of a vital christianity, they are now turning to the Lord. Souls have been saved, the morals of communities greatly altered for the better, churches built and habits formed in which the elements of industry, prudence and deep devotion to God illustriously shine forth.

But these signal triumphs bestowed upon our Zion have entailed upon her sons and daughters grave responsibilities. When several individuals in any community have embraced the love of Christ their first religious care is to make provision for a settled pastor in their midst. The spiritual oversight of themselves and neighbors presses heavily upon them, engaging their deep solicitude. At this juncture the Home Mission Fund, or, as the Constitution of our Church now enacts, the exchequer of the Missionary Board, comes in to their aid. So far as its revenue allows it makes up—in connection with the circuit receipts,—the salary of the settled minister. So far good; and with a succession of godly pastors, and an effusion of the Divine Spirit attending their labours, such a circuit enjoys the normal conditions of the apostolic age, and is in the fair way for further success.

Meanwhile, a suitable building is required in which to worship. The general fixtures of a country school house are not usually compatible with the comfort of an adult congregation, while its dimensions are no less inadequate to the proper growth of the charge. Arrived at this stage the persons most deeply interested are now left exclusively to their own resources. Nor is this to be regretted since it tends to awaken and sustain a spirit of self-reliance; and yet further, is no mean test of their religious principles. Whether they will acknowledge, and to what extent, admit the Divine claim upon their means, may now most correctly be ascertained. Seldom, let us hope, has the active response come below the standard of moral indebtedness.

But on many such Home Mission Stations the most strenuous, untiring, and vigilant efforts prove unequal to

the task. And here lies the issue of our remarks.—For such cases is outside connexional aid available, and if so under what conditions?

To meet this, or a very similar exigency, upwards of fifty years ago, the British Wesleyan Conference instituted its Chapel Building Fund. Any one conversant with the history of that church during the period indicated is doubtless aware of the incalculable benefit derived from that source. So far as at present we know nothing analogous to this exists in the ecclesiastical structure of Canadian Methodism. Whether or not this be a defect it remains for our Annual Conferences to decide, and our General Conference to legislate upon.

Without depreciating the partial solution of the above problem in the shape of well-conducted bazaars, tea-meetings and other irregular auxiliaries, are not the dignity of Christian aims and principles, and the sacredness of the Master's cause more than sufficient motive to insure the most careful attention, and most practical conclusions of the entire church? At the present moment, and in our highly favoured land, there are localities in which Methodism is struggling, and in which buildings erected or being erected are threatened with the deadly incubus of mortgage for years to come. It is a notable fact that in several places which might be named, Christ's cause has been successfully planted, but the number of the people and their circumstances render the erection of a church costing from five hundred to eight hundred dollars as formidable an undertaking as the building of some central church in a more affluent circuit costing ten times the amount.

Nor must we lose sight of the circumstance that very much of the preacher's time and energy is necessarily diverted from the more spiritual department of his work, in devising ways and means whereby to place the trust properly on a secure financial basis. If called to serve tables, the ministry of the word must proportionately suffer, but if, on the other hand, the collective wisdom and liberality of the church are equal to the prevention or lessening of these evils, in the same ratio its ministry is left untrammelled to pursue its proper calling and to hasten the evangelization of the masses.

## A TOUCHING INCIDENT.

Dr. Alexander Clarke, in an Editorial letter to the Pittsburgh Methodist Recorder, says:—

After leaving Bureau, where we parted with our good friend Edwards, we were touched on the shoulder by the conductor, who said, "Are you a physician, sir?"

"No, sir."

"There is a dying child in the palace car to the rear, and I am looking for a physician," he added, by way of explanation.

A dying child! And we ventured to go and see. A mother, with her six children, was on her way from Buffalo to San Francisco, to meet her husband. At Chicago, the youngest, (a year old), was taken suddenly ill, and was now far gone. A stranger took the little sufferer in his arms for the mother was worn down with watching and weak with her weeping! How hot those little white temples! How cold the tiny feet and hands! Another friendly stranger came, and putting the feet in her own warm palms, tried to restore the obstructed circulation. The icy little hands, too, were clasped in the mother's own. But the bright eyes, already growing dim, were set in a wild stare as if the throbbing pain had done its worst. How pitiful the face of the young sufferer! Presently, by cooling

the head and warming the extremities, the circulation was improved, and the child looked into its mother's face, oh, so pleadingly! Could there be anything in this world more touching than the pleading look of a dying child? The little lips quivered as if the heart were hurt,—as if something might be done; but the Destroyer was relentless. What cares death for beauty, or for conditions? A physician was telegraphed to, come aboard at the next station. He came, looked, said there was no hope, and stepped out upon the platform. Another physician was summoned to meet the train at Genesee. Presently we were there. How anxiously the mother looked into his kind face! It was Dr. Wells.

"A hopeless case," he said. "This family must stop here." The conductor was attentive as a brother. We carried our little burden out to the waiting conveyance, the mother and five little ones circled round, and passing the precious darling to her rested arms we were hurried away, leaving the strange family in a strange place, but in the keeping of a gracious God who always hears his children when they cry.

It was a Jewish family. The mother evidently prayed. We saw her clasped hands, at different times, and could almost hear her whispered words that went up from the prairies to the God of Abraham and Isaac and Jacob. She did not pray in the name of Jesus already come, but Messiah expected yet to come. Did God hear her? Was there not room for the little dying Hebrew now, as there was for David's child of whom he said, "He can not return to me, but I shall go to him?"

Doubtless there is a fresh little mound in the Genesee churchyard, to day,\* where the child Freddie sleeps more restfully than upon his mother's arms; and a sad mother and wondering children five, have together told "papa" the story away yonder by the sunset sea.

A. C.

\*A subsequent inquiry addressed to Genesee, brought the following reply:

GENESEE, ILL., Sept. 6, 1875.  
"DEAR SIR: The child is dead and buried, and the family left next day for California."  
"A. MILLER,  
"Proprietor of the Genesee House."

## STAYING FROM CHURCH TO READ.

Some stay from church to read. They say they can find better religious thinking and teaching in their books than in any of the pulpits near them. Suppose they can. Do they get better teaching? Are they really at home for the purpose of religious culture? Are they actually growing better, more godly, by this reading which keeps them from church? Let them be honest with themselves, and see if this is not a flimsy excuse for spending their Sabbaths, not in mere religious reading but over all sorts of books. Even if they give their Sabbaths up wholly to religious reading, they have greatly mistaken the aim of public Sabbath services if they think it can be thus met at home.

God expressly commands us to "reverence his sanctuary, to lift up our hands in his sanctuary," and promises to come unto us and bless us there. We should go to church to worship; to worship publicly and unitedly, as well as to receive instruction from the preacher. Would an Israelite have been held blameless who never went to the temple to worship, because he had a roll of the law at home? But the church service is, in a sense, our temple worship. No other appliance of religious culture can take its place. Abolish all church services and you abolish Christianity. He who stays regularly away from church is doing what little he can to introduce heathenism. He is contributing his influence toward secularizing his community. If his way was universal, irreligion would be dominant, and the nation would slowly sink back into atheistic barbarism.

—Parish Visitor.

\*The highest obedience in the spiritual life is to be able always and in all things to say, "Thy will be done."

This is a threefold mystery: A gospel published in the midst of an ungodly world; a little church preserved in the midst of devils; and a little grace kept alive in the midst of corruption.