

THE WESLEYAN.

By reference to our head of Correspondence, "A *Methodist*", will see that his request has been complied with. We will at once state that the character of the *Wesleyan* shall be decidedly *Methodistical*; while we profess to be "the friends of all, the enemies of none," we shall, however, give that prominence to the Wesleyan Theology, its doctrines and discipline, its practical and experimental piety, which we think they deserve. In the prosecution of our duty we shall maintain a firm, yet calm course, ever keeping in view the grand design of Methodism "to spread scriptural holiness over the land;" and in accordance with this profession, to make the *Wesleyan* pleasing and profitable to its readers, and in the best sense of the phrase, "a blessing to the people," will be our unceasing aim,—though we candidly acknowledge, our principal reliance, for the accomplishment of our design, is placed upon the efficient support, which we certainly do expect to receive from the Wesleyan Ministers in both Provinces. They are especially invited to forward original articles on any subject they may deem proper to bring before the Public; and if they will allow us to offer a suggestion, we would say, they would render us the most valuable service, as well as our readers, by favouring us with short Biographical Sketches of the pious members of Society who die in their respective circuits. In the meantime we will endeavour to supply the want of such original Notices, in the best manner we can, with selected Memoirs.

TEMPERANCE FRIEND.—The first number of this interesting periodical reached us a few weeks ago: it promises to be a valuable aid in furtherance of the Temperance reform. It will make its appearance monthly; and from its exceedingly low price, will obtain, we have no doubt, a wide circulation. The *Temperance Friend* is printed by Mr. Jas. A. Pierce, at the Gleaner Office, Chatham, Miramichi: "Terms, single Nos., per annum, 1s. 3l.; to persons ordering 30 copies, 1s. per annum."

THE LAST CONFERENCE ADDRESS
To the Methodist Societies.

The different duties of religion may not have an equal bearing on our spiritual state or final salvation; but as all the precepts found in the Scriptures rest on the same inspired authority, they are of equal obligation. Hence, the domestic and relative duties, being enjoined on this authority, are not to be considered as the result of prudential rules, but of divine precepts. In this view we wish to bring before your attention the great importance and obligation of the religious instruction and government of your families. It has always been, and continues to be a subject of mourning and grief, that any of the children and youth of our people should not only depart from us, but depart from God, and become a prey to ruin and sin. We are aware that no human means can eradicate the seeds of sin from the human heart. We provide no effectual restraints against its principle; but Christian parents possess an instrumentality much greater than human restraints, and it is their indispensable duty wisely and faithfully to employ it. Their children are redeemed of the Lord; the promise of the Spirit is to them; they have been consecrated to God in holy baptism; they are certainly the subjects of a divine influence; they are the objects of the paternal providence and love of God; and they are placed in the covenant of grace and promise. From these provisional advantages, prepared by the merciful economy of God, you may derive great encouragement in your attempts to bring your families under the direct influence of the blessings of religion. We fear one of the great causes of the evil deplored, is the want of this direct attempt to bring children into the real and experimental enjoyment of religion. The indirect influence of Christian piety and truth cannot save the souls of children any more than adults. The renewal of their nature is necessary in order to their preservation from sin, and the spirit of the world; and if they fall to obtain this under the paternal roof, it cannot be matter of surprise, that when they are sent forth into the world, they break

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through the restraints under which the indirect influence of religion has brought them; and that, following the evil propensities of their own hearts, they plunge into a life of sin. We affectionately entreat the heads of families throughout our Connection, to reflect anxiously on this question, and to endeavour to lead their children into the faith of Christ, and the grace of a converted state. In order to secure this it is not only needful to imbue their minds with a general knowledge of the evidences, doctrines, and precepts of the Christian faith, in connection with prayer, and a constant reading of the Holy Scriptures; but also to explain to them the urgent necessity of personal faith, the attainment of pardon, and the blessings of regeneration. It is to be feared that the erroneous notion, that education without religion is sufficient to rear the youth of the age to a virtuous state, may, if unguarded against, weaken the sense of obligation on the part of the parents to instruct their children and domestics in the religion of the Bible. We entreat you, with the firmest resolution, to resist this pernicious principle. If it be admitted, either in whole or in part, as the rule of your domestic management, it will leave you utterly powerless. No principles can be successfully placed in opposition to the awful propensities of your children, no truth can enlighten their minds, no influence can soften and renew their hearts, no mercy can forgive their sins, no blessings can make them happy in life or joyful in death, and no security can shield them against the evil machinations of wicked men, but those which are furnished by the sacred truths of the Bible, in connection with the power of saving grace.

Whilst on this subject, the Conference takes the opportunity of expressing its anxious desire to promote, by every means in its power, the scriptural instruction of the children of their people, by means of well-conducted day and infant schools. For the want of these institutions, generations of children from within the pale of Methodism have been left to the precarious and scanty assistance which their parents have been enabled to give them; to depend altogether on Sabbath instruction, whilst through the week their morals have been exposed to hazard for the want of care; have been driven to seek instruction in connection with other systems of religion; or, which is most to be deplored, have been left to wander untaught. The Conference ventures to indulge the hope, that the time is not distant when, by the united exertions of the Preachers and the people, it will be possible to establish and maintain in the larger Circuits of the Connection, schools which shall embrace a purely scriptural and Wesleyan system of education. In some few places this has been done, to the great advantage of the rising generation; and although many difficulties must present themselves to such a project in the beginning, yet, no doubt, much assistance may be afforded. But we remind you that, even if such assistance as we have adverted to should not be given, it cannot in the slightest degree lessen the obligation which rests on every parent himself to bring up his children "in the nurture and admonition of the Lord." This duty can never be delegated to others.

In commending to your attention a strict and conscientious observance of the ordinances of religion, we remind you of their divine appointment, and of your obligation on that account. Some of the means of grace are prudential; but the Lord's Supper, being instituted by our redeeming Saviour himself, to be observed by his disciples till his appearing again, becomes binding on the consciences of all his followers. From the solemn manner in which the Apostle Paul speaks of eating and drinking the holy supper "unworthily," and of the "condemnation" which he describes as the consequence, it is obvious that serious preparation, devout feeling, and humble faith are requisite. It is greatly to be regretted that this service is neglected by many of the members of our societies; and it is to be feared is not observed with due solemnity by others. The practice of communicants retiring from the chapel in a disorderly manner, one after another, as soon as they have received the sacred elements, and leaving the officiating Minister to conclude the service almost alone, marks either a thoughtless or an irreverent state of mind. This evil, as well as that of neglect, ought to be diligently and universally avoided. Surely when the service is to commemorate the sacrifice of our dying Lord, to feast the soul on his death, and to proclaim our affection towards his church, and in obedience to his command, we ought to be prepared gladly and profitably to attend on such an ordinance. We earnestly recommend to you diligence in this duty, as one of the means of spiritual edification. Are not some of you "weak and sickly" by reason of neglect? Your spiritual health and life must be recovered by a diligent observance of this, amongst other means of grace.

The ordinance of baptism is also to be considered as one of the two sacraments established on divine authority, and regarded by all Christians as such. A recent Act of Parliament having made provision for the legal registration of children, independently of baptism, now places that sacred rite on its own purely religious footing, and may lead some inadvertently to lose sight of its peculiar religious sanction. On this account, it becomes necessary that you should well consider your obligations to consecrate your children to God in this sacrament, from those motives which Christianity supplies. Assuming that you admit the divine institution of this ordinance, together with the scriptural right of the children of Christian parents to enjoy it, we remind you that you cannot neglect it without evidently disregarding the appointment of God, and depriving your offspring of a most valuable privilege. Although your children are redeemed by the death of Christ, and in consequence of that redemption are placed in a virtual state of acceptance, as well as made the subjects of the Holy Spirit's visitation and influence, yet it is evidently your duty to place them under the bond of the covenant, by consecrating them to God in his visible church. This must affect their spiritual interests, as well as impose on yourselves new and peculiar obligations. By baptism you place your children within the pale of the visible church, and give them a right to all its privileges, the pastoral care of its Ministers, and, as far as their age and capacity will allow, the enjoyment of its ordinances and means of grace. These children are not offshoots of the church, enjoying only a distant relation to it; but they are of it as a part; they are grafted into the body of Christ's disciples; they are partakers of an initiatory and provisional state of acceptance with God, and can forfeit their right to a state of fellowship of the saints only by a course of sin. Besides, when this sacred ordinance is regarded by parents in the spirit of prayer and faith, it cannot be unaccompanied with the divine blessing. Grace is connected with every institution of the Christian church; and when children are constituted a part of the fold of Christ by being placed within the fold, they have a peculiar claim on the care of that good Shepherd who "gathereth the lambs with his arms, and carries them in his bosom;" and they will receive instruction, spiritual influence, tender care, and the exercise of mer-

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