

# The Wesleyan.

Longworth Israel

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## NOTE AND COMMENT.

A writer in the *Michigan Christian Advocate*, speaking of "the great discipline" course of study, says: "There is such a thing, beloved—some preachers seem not to have found it out."

Between the encroachments of divorce on the one hand, and the close necessities and exactions of modern life on the other, the nation is rapidly becoming a country without homes.—*Boston Herald.*

The *Southwestern Methodist* says: Under the figure of salt, Christ represents your silent influence: under the figure of light, your open influence, but in either case the influence must be powerful enough to season and to illuminate, else your religion is as savorless salt and as a covered light.

Some are always inclined to glorify the past. There are no such sermons now, they say, as were preached by the old time ministers. Nonsense! The world never before had a ministry as able as that which it has now, and the best preaching in human history, so far, is the preaching of today.—*Western Advocate.*

What has become of the old-style definiteness in testimony that used to be the glory of Methodism—the testimonies in the social meetings of assurance, of knowing that the heart was justified—saved from all sin? Occasionally such testimonies are now heard, but from a large majority of the members we hear nothing of them.—*Zion's Herald.*

The editor of a Tennessee paper talks thus about dressy school-girls: "There isn't any sense in it. There was a day when a calico dress and a sun-bonnet were good enough for a school-girl, and if finer togery was put on the wearer was sent home with instructions to change. It is very painful for a little child to go out into company dressed poorly, when the majority are clad in finery."

A writer in *Messiah's Herald*, referring to the religious newspaper, says: "The religious newspaper demands no donation for its support: it only asks the patronage of the people and promises them good value for their money. The way in which all readers can help this important interest is by renewing their own subscription and doing what they can to induce others to subscribe."

A Presbyterian Doctor of Divinity once said to me at a General Assembly: "You newspaper men must have queer views of things. You are always looking on and never taking part. Your knowledge and habits of thought must be very circumferential and superficial. I suppose now your idea of the day of judgment is that you will have a table off at one side, and report the proceedings for the morning paper."—*St. Paul Pioneer.*

The General Term of the U. S. Supreme Court has recently decided that a married woman, doing business on her own account, may employ her husband at a stated salary, and that a creditor of the husband may maintain legal proceedings against the wife to get possession of any unpaid salary due to the husband. This is getting a long distance from the old doctrine of the common law.—*Independent.*

The night before Christmas, not far from the office, the Editor met a matronly-looking woman in middle life. She was very drunk. On passing he said, "How drunk!" She turned, and with a maudlin smile said, "Christmas!" What a perversion! Jesus came to make all women pure as his virgin mother. Here was a woman turning the anniversary of his birth into debauchery.—*N. Y. Advocate.*

The public schools in Boston are to be provided with text-books at public expense. Why not throw in the street car fare while they are about it? There are many children doubtless, that need pocket-handkerchiefs, clean collars, and such like. Fine stationery would be acceptable to pupils in the higher grades. A pocket-knife is indispensable to the well-being of every boy, and no girl can succeed in the pursuit of happiness without a plentiful supply of ribbons. By levying sufficient taxes all these things can be had.—*Living Church.*

The Roman Catholic idea of religious toleration was clearly enough expressed by Archbishop Lynch of Toronto recently. He said: "Toleration is practicable and necessary when one cannot extirpate heresy, but it ceases from the moment that there is a possibility to extirpate heresies." That is it exactly. Where and when the Papal Church has power to make an end of heresy and heretics they feel bound to do so, where and when they have not that power they tolerate their presence.—*Ed. Intelligencer.*

The election of Mr. Cleveland doesn't settle the question which the Brother in Black raises, nor would the election of Mr. Blaine have settled it. Wanted for this solution, the Christianized common sense of men of all parties and both colors. In the meantime the colored man is growing. He has about doubled in population since the war, and has increased in property from about nothing to \$100,000,000.—*Southern Adv.*

One of the tenderest acts of kindness perpetrated by the churches at Christmas time is to feed poor children on candy, bought at eighteen cents a pound and when the little cherubs die with their stomachs full of marble dust—tendered to them by economical pastors as sugar, and eaten by the innocent lambs with all the simple faith and exuberant appetite of their age—they will go aloft carrying with them, as it were, their own tombstones.—*Philadelphia Times.*

Spurgeon quaintly characterizes great preaching, and warns against imitations in the following sentences: "A church with a Luther in every pulpit would be all first; and with a Calvin to fill every parsonage she would be all skull. Blessed be God for one Robert Hall, but let the man be whipped who tries in his own person to make a second. Rowland Hill is admirable for one, but it is quite as well that the mould was broken. There is a great run just now for little Robertsons of Brighton, but there will soon be a glut in the market."

If there is any despotism more galling to a true man than such party chains we know not where it prevails. The cure is in revolt at all hazards, whatever may be the threatened penalty. Resistance to tyranny is every man's duty. We call on all true men to stand up for their personal rights and assert their manhood. Let no one bow to this yoke which a party would hang around his neck, or wear the collar on any pretense for a single hour. Such intolerance is worse by far than the most tyrannical of an absolute monarchy.—*New York Journal of Commerce.*

The absence of the young from eight to sixteen years of age makes a sad and fearful gap at all the solemn festivals of the Church. But not until parents see the deadly poison lurking in the oft repeated sayings, "Boys must be boys," "Young people must have their fun," "Old heads can't be put on young shoulders," and the like, and address themselves most prayerfully and constantly to the great responsibility God has put upon them to bring up their children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord, will this unnatural and sinful fact cease to exist.—*Alabama Adv.*

The *Spectator* says: The Lords have a further time of grace allowed them, but it is far from certain that they will use it well. The two ideas of democracy and privilege cannot work side by side and privilege expects, with more reason than is customary for Liberals to admit, to find its last stronghold and protection in the House of Lords. The struggle will not arise until the next occasion arises, for it is not in the nature of the English people to foresee difficulties, and for a season the Lords may sun themselves in the light of their own deeds: but we do not believe the occasion can be averted for five years.

The world sometimes teaches the Church. But it seems a shame that upon such a subject as lotteries and raffling at bazaars it should be left for the Mayor of what is supposed to be a not very religious town (Birmingham) to teach the churches their duty. It is stated that the Town-hall there will not in future be allowed for bazaars, except on the understanding that these things shall not be allowed. At a consultation between the magistrates and the Watch Committee it was decided, we read, "to prosecute the promoters of bazaars in the same way as of other gamblers." But what a scandal that such a resolution should be needed!—*London Meth. Rec.*

We live in times of liberty, says the *Civita Evangelica*, (an Italian journal) penetrating all orders, classes, and castes. It might have been supposed that Rome, under the eye of the Pope and the Curia, would be kept in perfect order; but the lower clergy are in rebellion against the enormous revenues of the monsignors, prelates, bishops, and cardinals. In the church of Saint Thomas, Parione, the clergy have united to put forward a demand for an increase in the price of masses and for the conversion to their benefit of prebends now given to the superior clergy. The Papal circles are alarmed, less at the proposition themselves than at the "spirit of the times" which they reveal.

## CHRIST'S BIRTH.

Infancy is forever dignified by the manger of Bethlehem; womanhood is ennobled to its purest ideal in Mary; man, as such, receives abiding honor in the earliest accepted homage to her Son being that of the simplest poor.

A teacher has pointed some striking lessons on the way in which the whole incident was received, as St. Luke relates, by those immediately concerned. The shepherds spread abroad the story with hearts full of grateful adoration; the hearers wonder at it, but Mary ponders in her heart all that had been told her. "There were more virgins in Israel, more even of the tribe of David, than she," says the great preacher; "but she was the chosen of God. It was natural, and it is easy to understand, that when a second appearance of angels, like that which she had already experienced, was seen, she would ponder in her heart their words, which concerned her so nearly. But if we ask ourselves, was this pondering the words in her heart already the true faith that carries the blessing, the truth that need of a personal relation to the Saviour? Did Mary already believe, firmly and immovably, that the Saviour of the world should see the light of life through her? the gospels leave us too clearly to think the opposite. There was a time, long after this, when Christ was already a teacher, when she wavered between him and his brethren, who did not believe in him; when she went out with them to draw him away from his course, and bring him back to her narrower circle of home-life, as one who was hardly in his right mind. Firm, unwavering trust, that knows no passing cloud, is a work of time with all who have an inner personal nearness to the Saviour; and it was so with Mary. She reached it only, like us all, through manifold doubts and struggles of heart, by that grace from above which roused her ever anew, and led her on from step to step."—*Dr. C. Geikie.*

That was what the wise men brought to the infant Jesus, spices and sweet odors; not perhaps a strictly necessary gift, but one well-suited to offer a pure and guileless babe. Does it ever seem strange that these men of learning and wisdom should have opened their treasures to bring forth what might possibly be deemed a superfluous offering? The Babe in the manger was none the wiser for their gifts; why, then, bestow them?

Presumably, it was the best they had. The treasures of the Eastern wise men were as precious in their sight as are our treasures of to-day, and we read "they travelled far" to present their willing tribute to an acknowledged Saviour. And then it is to be noticed they did not send them by others and perhaps less loyal hands; the first, "came where He was," then offered their gifts. At present the religious press all over the country is teeming with reports of revivals which are taking place in various churches. It is no longer the wise men of the far away country coming with thankful offerings to the infant King; but is not the spirit the same when the willing penitent yields himself a living sacrifice to a risen Lord? And it is but a reasonable service.

Through all these years since Christ was born it has been told, and for all ages to come it will be told, how men of learning and wisdom sought out the little Child in the manger, and presented him with frankincense and myrrh. He came to give, to bestow, to sacrifice. All that can be given him will be but meagre show, compared with what he has given us. But he will accept and bless the gift, if, like the wise men of the East, we give of our treasures the best we have.

This means not only a so-called Christian service or life; it means a hearty, generous, spontaneous yielding up of all that is worth offering to the Lord of glory.

It was truly refreshing to read recently of a wealthy young Christian lady, who, intending to send a present to a struggling minister and his family, said she did not mean to send one really necessary article. For once they should receive luxuries. Bread and meat they must have; now something besides the actual usual fare should be set before them. So unusual things appeared to their astonished eyes. Garments they could have done without, food they rarely enjoyed. And yet every gift was actually needed. So if we bring our best talents, our most active service into the vineyard of the Lord, there will be nothing superfluous, and what shame, what unworthiness would it be to bring other than the best to such a Saviour! And often the most acceptable service, the real frankincense and myrrh of our hearts, consists in simply accepting our every-day life as the will of God concerning us, and yielding a calm, submissive heart as our daily and acceptable offering.

## SOUND THE TRUMPET!

In the life of Dr. Cesar Malan, of Geneva, as given by his friend Ostertag, is the following:

A company were returning to Geneva on a steamer. It was "full of strangers of every kind." While Ostertag was enjoying conversation with his friends, he perceived "that Malan had just seated himself by the side of a foreign lady, and had, in the most serious manner, exchanged a few words with her. The conversation became increasingly animated. In her features there appeared, by turns, the expression of surprise or the smile of contempt. Her face reddened and paled alternately. Evidently she was a prey to the conflict of most opposite sentiments. Frequently might she have been seen speaking and gestulating in great excitement: it might have been conjectured that she was seeking to defend herself against unjust attacks. Then she set herself to listen attentively, silently, with her eyes bent down. By degrees these intervals of silence became more frequent. At length she gave up speaking entirely. Malan, on the other hand, appeared to grow increasingly serious and earnest, and more and more confident of success. Tears were soon seen coursing one another down her cheeks, while she applied her handkerchief to her eyes."

"For a long time," Ostertag continues, "I watched this scene, from a distance, with the liveliest interest; for it was plain that Malan was seeking to bring that soul to Christ. Had I not already heard him spoken of as one, not only filled with the most ardent zeal to gain hearts to the kingdom of God, but as one possessing, moreover, an extraordinary aptitude for winning souls? Many and many a glorious instance could I recall, going far back, of what God had thus wrought by his means. I had heard how, during his walks, in the diligence, at hotels, and among people of every class, he had been enabled at times to fix in the heart, by a single word, an arrow impalpable of being extricated. And now, for the first time, I saw him at this work. Whilst the rest of us were scattered about doing nothing—looking about us, and chatting on subjects more or less trifling—he was preaching the Gospel with indefatigable zeal and ardent love."

Ostertag adds, "About half an hour afterward, as I was standing by a young German of my acquaintance, Malan passed close to me, and whispered in my ear, 'Another soul gained over to the Lord.' A quarter of an hour afterward, while I was in the same place and just as a young theologian from the north of Germany joined us, he passed again, touched me on the shoulder, and said in a

low voice, 'Preach the Gospel—sound trumpet.' Through the whole of the my after life—that sentence has resounded in my ears, and never did I faithfully obey it and repent of doing so."

## A SINGHALESSE CONVERT.

A Singhaless painter, at work at a Wesleyan church in Ceylon, after repeated conversations with the minister, attended a service at which he listened to an earnest address on the subject of prayer, illustrated largely by a reproduction in Singhaless of the touching story that has moved so many hearts—"Jessica's First Prayer." During the week following the minister called to see him at work in the chapel, when he made a joyful disclosure, of which the substance runs thus:—

"Last Sunday night was the first time I ever attended a Christian service, or heard the Gospel of Jesus preached, but what I learnt and felt then has been enough to change my life. For years I have studied Buddhism hard, having had recourse to books and to priests; and, if anyone is qualified to bear testimony against it, surely it is I. How to attain Nirvana was at once my unquenchable longing and unsolved perplexity. Neither books or priests could help me. In fact, it is the reproach of Buddhism that the system provides no help for those who would fain achieve the highest good. According to Buddhism itself, when one of Buddha's relatives became the victim of an awful catastrophe, and cried to his friend for aid; Buddha neither dropped one tear of pity, nor felt one pang of sympathy. Whereas in the Gospel I heard you preach I learn that Jesus prayed for those who put Him to death, and forgave the thief who hung on the cross beside Him."

Coming to the point of his conversion, the minister closely searched him with question upon question, eliciting a joyful reassurance of the thoroughness of the man's change. Then he instructed him further by exposition and illustration of Scripture in the things pertaining to salvation. Pointing to the doors and window-frames, he said, "Just as you with soap and other things entirely remove from the wood the old marks and stains, so the Holy Spirit applies the efficacy of Christ's blood to cleanse you from all your sins, and afterwards just as you put on the varnish to make the woodwork shine, the same Spirit adorns you with all the graces of the Christian character. The old things pass away, and all things become new." "O!" exclaimed the man in joy of an experience answering to what he had heard, "What a blessing this is! God called me to beautify this chapel, and now He has beautified my heart and life!" It was a privilege past all telling to hear that man near his testimony before 170 people in the Seodua Chapel at his baptism a fortnight ago. At the close of the Sunday morning service, after I had been preaching on heavenly wisdom, he stepped to the communion-rail, and with a clear bold voice rang out the following in Singhaless: "I have tried Buddhism, and it has failed to satisfy my need. Assuming it to be true, it has no power to change the heart and life, and save the immortal soul, but in point of fact it is a preposterous lie! I believe in the power of God, who in Christ His Son, and through His Holy Spirit, saves from all sin and brings the pardoned sinner to Himself at last." As a proof of this man's sincerity he had entered into a contract to beautify a Buddhist temple, gild the images, &c., and had done half of the work, and received half of the money, shortly before his wonderful conversion to Christianity; and he now declares that he is prepared to return the money or make any sacrifice rather than lend a hand to what he has come to regard as an awful iniquity.—*Watchman.*

## NO SNAPPER.

This reminds me of a story which I know to be genuine; for I had it from Dr. Beecher's own lips: While I was in Boston my health failed, and the doctors sent me out on a fishing smack to get rest and sea air. One Sunday morning the fishermen went into port, and just as we landed I heard the church bells ringing. It was a small village, and though I was covered all over with fish scales and looked like a fright, I thought I would go up to the church and slip into a corner near the door and hear the sermon. Well I did so; and tried to bury my face in my cloak so as not to be recognized. But the preacher, whom I had met at association meetings, knew me and came down and urged me to preach for him. I told him no; that I was forbidden to preach by my physician, and he went back to the pulpit. He read a first rate essay on Repentance, gave all the philosophy of it and some fine illustrations, and then stopped. He didn't put on any snapper; he didn't tell his hearers that they were sinners and ought to repent. I could not stand that, so I started up the aisle, forgot even to throw off my cloak. I flung the fish scales from it all over the congregation. They thought that I was a crazy man. But before they could stop me I was on the pulpit stairs, and began to talk. I preached repentance as a personal duty for fifteen minutes with all my might. I guess they found out pretty soon that I wasn't crazy. As soon as I got through my application I dismissed the congregation and turning to the young minister, I said: "Sir, you ought to be hung." "Why, Dr. Beecher, what do you mean?" "Mean! This is what I mean; that any man who would preach a sermon about repentance, as you did this morning, and not put any snapper at the end of it—not exhort his hearers to repent—ought to be hung." The young man excused himself by saying that he intended to extemporize an application, but the Doctor's presence embarrassed him so that it was all driven out of his head. And the Doctor replied that since he drove one application out of the preacher's head, it was right and proper for him to drive an other into the people's hearts. So they shook hands and made friends. But the Dr., having told the story, expatiated in his happiest vein upon the application as an essential part of the sermon. He ended by turning to me, the only theologian present, and saying: "Whatever you leave out of or off from your sermons, always be sure to have a good snapper at the end. Don't wind up with a nice story, or some beautiful illustration, but with an earnest appeal to the conscience and to the heart." That was good advice. I have never forgotten it. I trust that I profited by it, and recall it here and now, that it may help the brethren who read this letter to carry out in their preaching Nathan's and Dr. Beecher's ideal of a finished sermon.—*W.*

And so it is that Mary's Son brings us all back to his lowly birth-place once a year, and on this spot the humble shepherds and the Eastern Magi render their adorations, voice-following voice, heart answering to heart, in responsive salutation and intensest accord. "No room for them in the inn." There is room now everywhere for Christmas, nor can palaces and cottages afford compass for the overflowing joy. A long, long way from that manger in Bethlehem to our homes in this Western Hemisphere; a long, a long way from that bed of straw to the crown and sceptre of the Throne of Heaven. Aye, indeed, impossibly long except for Him who traveled in the greatness of his strength, and,

"Bearing his cross up royal Calvary," made his Heaven our Heaven, home of the heart, His and ours ever more

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