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Book Steward.
No. 15, 1881.

THE WESLEYAN

FRIDAY, DECEMBER 2, 1881.

OUR PAPER.

The Wesleyan is no private venture. It is published solely in the interests of the Methodist Church of Canada. Its aim is to provide for the families of our Church—in the Maritime Provinces, particularly—such reading of a religious and moral character as shall benefit both youth and age, and instruct our people as to what is being done in practical Christian work by our own and other branches of the Church, while a more than passing glance is given to the prominent events of a busy age.

Hitherto, our work has been in part a failure, simply because our paper has failed to reach a great number of our families. There are Methodist families within our boundaries who never see a Methodist paper; there are Methodist officials who only know by verbal report anything of the work of our Church. To remove this reproach, and encourage increased effort in gaining a place for a Methodist paper in Methodist homes, the Publisher has already offered the Wesleyan from now to the end of 1882 for two dollars to all new subscribers. With the sanction of the Executive Committee he now makes

A FURTHER OFFER.

According to this offer any subscriber, whether new or old, by sending the subscription price and thirty cents additional will receive the paper to the end of 1882, and also a copy of Rev. J. Jackson Wray's best book—Nestleton Magna, a Tale of Yorkshire Methodism. This book, worthy of a place on all our tables, is sold in the same shape and binding at One Dollar. Its popularity may be judged from the fact that the copy before us is one of the twentieth thousand! New subscribers, it will be remembered, will receive our paper from the date at which cash reaches us. The earlier the better, therefore.

Apart from such incentives, our friends, we are persuaded, will use all possible effort to give the Wesleyan a push forward at the beginning of 1882. If the silly, trashy reading of the day is to be prevented from doing its work of weakening the mind and polluting the imagination, it must be crowded out by that which is better. If our youth are to grow up to regard God's work as their own, and to take hold of it as they will take hold of the secular employment which may be their lot, they must grow up in intimate and intelligent acquaintance with it. No Methodist Church, however small its membership, however isolated its position, can grow by ignorance. The Church of the future—that which shall do God's work most gloriously—will be that which uses the press unceasingly, untiringly; which leaves no nook or corner, no home circle without the Church paper. See to it, whether pastor, local preacher, class-leader, steward, Sunday-school teacher, or private member, that your Church paper reaches each home. You have every whit as much interest in its success as has the publisher or editor.

Before leaving England the delegates from the several Methodist Churches in the United States united in commending to their respective Churches the holding of a commemorative centennial meeting in 1884, to be composed of delegates (clerical and lay) from the various bodies.

MISSIONARY ANNIVERSARIES.

The time for holding our annual missionary meetings has again come. A number have already been held, and arrangements have been made for the work to go on until in every circuit of Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, Prince Edward Island, Newfoundland and the Bermudas, our people shall have been reminded of the world's need, of the Saviour's universal grace, and of their obligations to assist in sending the gospel into all the world.

Now, since the formation of our General Conference have the encouragements to enter upon this work been so great as they are now. Business is at least fairly good, and money is not scarce. The debt of the Society has been entirely paid, and out of the balance of the Relief and Extension Fund something has been recently granted to each Conference for aggressive action. There should therefore be no dolorous wailings in regard to the Society's position; no attempt at excuse on the ground that a debt should never have been contracted.

But what we are anxious to impress upon the minds of all our readers, both of the ministry and of the laity, is that the missionary anniversary ought to be looked upon as one of the most important means for the revival of the work of God in all our congregations. It is at once conservative, stimulating, and aggressive. It is adapted to lift us out of the rut of ordinary religious service, and to deepen the sense of personal responsibility by bringing into view the condition of our race lying in wickedness—lost, but ransomed—and waiting to be directed by some instrumentality to the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world. It is adapted to bring us once more to the cross, and to deepen our penitence, quicken our faith and develop our love to the Saviour, whose salvation is spurned or unknown by the largest portion of our race. No better guarantee for the maintenance of sound doctrine among us, or for the permanence of our class-meetings and love-feasts can be given than the prevalence of the missionary spirit in our Churches; and nothing is better suited to this end than a series of rightly conducted missionary meetings.

Nor is the matter of finance an unworthy consideration. The religion which costs us nothing is worth nothing. The Lord and Head of the Church has not left it optional with His people whether they shall contribute of their worldly goods for the extension of His cause in the earth. Does not the command to "preach the Gospel to every creature" make it imperative on all who love Him to give of their substance for this purpose? "How shall they preach except they be sent." Primarily He himself "sends," but in this as in personal salvation He takes no part in the matter which His followers can take, and he therefore entrusts it to them to equip, send forth, and sustain the men whom He calls to this work. This, then, is a means of grace which cannot be neglected without loss of the Divine approval and forfeiture of spiritual power; nor can it be used with self-denial and simple faith, without securing large measures of divine blessing.

Let the determination, then, be to make the Missionary meetings a prelude and a preparation for revival work. Every preaching place ought to have one. The friends should make it a matter of conscience to attend. The speakers should see to it that they are prepared for work. What is demanded is neither elaborate arguments for missionary enterprise, much less apologetic defenses on its behalf, nor witticisms and compliments to fill up an evening's amusement, but facts, well selected, well arranged, bearing upon the recent history of this movement, and upon its present condition and prospects. If, perchance, there has been no preparation made in this respect, the last number of the *Missionary Outlook* will itself supply valuable material for a series of Missionary meetings.

But let the work be thoroughly done. Let very congregation resolve upon an increase in the funds. And, we would suggest one other thing,—let the payments be made at once, or, at least, as soon as possible, and the amounts be remitted to the General Treasurer. This may not only as well be done just now, but even better than by waiting to the end of the Connexional year, when other matters will press upon our finances. Besides, it will prevent the necessity for interest on the expenditure of the Society. If there is one item which we object to in the working expenses of the Society, it is this of interest. But, however unpleasant it is, however much it grieves us to think of so many hundreds of dollars for which there is really no proper return, it is a

most necessary evil, and the subscribers of the Society get into the way of putting money into the hands of the Treasurer at the beginning of the year. Bring us all the tithes into the storehouse, that there may be meat in mine house, and prove me now therewith, saith the Lord of Hosts, if I will not open you the windows of heaven, and pour you out a blessing that shall not be room enough to receive it."

A CONFESSION.

A remarkable letter from the pen of Mr. O. B. Frothingham, recently published in the *New York Evening Post*, has called forth extensive comment from the religious press.

For the last year or two Mr. Frothingham's name has been heard less frequently than during a previous period of some years. The son of a distinguished Congregational pastor of Boston, and an alumnus of Harvard University and Cambridge Divinity School, he entered the Unitarian ministry and occupied the pastorate of several leading churches. American Unitarianism has grouped around its banner men of widely different opinions. William Henry Channing, one of the most eloquent preachers of that denomination, could scarcely have been known as a Unitarian, save by the company he kept. Late in life he protested strongly against the expressed opinions of the majority of his co-religionists, and with his protest combined a modest but firm profession of experience of that "communion with God in Christ of which the saints of all ages in the Church universal bear witness." In that section against which Channing protested, Frothingham was foremost. Later he became known as the leader of the Free Religious Association, and pastor of an independent congregation in New York, to the members of which he furnished essays that charmed the ear, while they altogether failed to instruct the heart. "Hence he went to Europe, remained there some time, and afterwards took up his residence in Boston. Only a few months since, when it was publicly announced that he had retired from the ministry, few were heard to express surprise. As if by common consent the public seemed to admit by their very silence that he who dismisses the Gospel from his teachings makes the pulpit only the scene of a solemn farce.

Men, frequently travel half over the world to get rid of themselves, sometimes to get clear of others. The latter effort is more easy of accomplishment. Frothingham's visit to Europe seems to have been intended to accomplish the two-fold purpose. His surroundings were not of the most satisfactory character. The man who asserts independence of the Gospel soon gathers a crowd whose moral character is light. Such was his experience. "As a radical lecturer," he writes, "I found myself constantly surrounded by radicals of the most extraordinary character, who imagined that as a radical preacher I must also be radical in everything else. I was expected to give moral and material assistance to any one whose ideas of right and wrong differed from those of other people, and my independent Church became a sort of magnet for queer and not altogether pleasant persons." It was natural that he should find in the leaders of such a party a tendency to the materialism which he "abhorred," and a disposition to break down all existing beliefs, a purpose with which he was not at all in sympathy.

With this disgust for materialism and a wish to sever his connection with it seems to have been united a serious doubt lest he himself were in error, and in opposition to the right. It was something to have reached this conclusion:

As to the fact that revealed religion, as we called it, is stronger to-day than it was twenty years ago, I have no doubt; it is stronger here and in Europe, notwithstanding the much talked of German materialism, and the religion of to-day is all the stronger than that of twenty years ago, in that it is throwing off the accretions of ignorance, and presents fewer features incompatible with good sense and charity. Looking back over the last twenty years, no careful student of such matters can deny this steadfast process, and I who have stood aloof from all revealed religion during that time, cannot but acknowledge that its opponents have made no headway whatever. Consider for a moment the present condition of the materialist movement, and you will see that it is the man, and not the truth behind the man, which keeps the movement alive at present among the people.

We have not room for further comment. But some doubting soul may be strengthened, or some youth moving towards the dark swamps of infidelity may be drawn back towards the rock of truth by the concluding paragraph of a letter from one who feels he cannot resume his place as President of an in-

THE WESLEYAN ON "FREE THOUGHT."

But looking back over the history of the last quarter of a century, whatever has been made, with the exception that unbridled free thought leads only to a dreary negation, called materialism, there has been a growing suspicion in me that there might be something behind or below what we call revealed religion, which the scientific thinkers of our time are beginning vaguely to distinguish as an influence that cannot be accounted for at present, but, which, nevertheless exists. I said a moment ago, let scientific investigation go on, by all means; not only it can do no harm, but I am sure that the further it goes the more clearly will scientific men recognize a power not yet defined, but distinctly felt by some of the ablest of them. This question has presented itself to me many times in the last few years: What is the power behind these ignorant men, who find dignity and comfort in religion? I cannot undertake to say. But it is there, and it may be that those persons who deny the essential truths of revealed religion are all wrong. At any rate, I for one, do not care to go on denying the existence of such a force.

To my old friends and followers, who may feel grieved at such an admission on my part, I would say that I am no more a believer in revealed religion to-day than I was ten years ago. But, as I said before, I have doubts which I had not then. The creeds of to-day do not seem, in my eyes, to be so wholly groundless as they were then; and while I believe that the next hundred years will see great changes in them, I do not think they are destined to disappear. To sum up the whole matter, the work which I have been doing appears to lead to nothing, and may be grounded upon mistaken premises. Therefore, it is better to stop. But I do not want to give the impression that I recant anything. I simply stop denying and wait for more light.

A DANGEROUS STEP.

Several persons have called our attention to a scheme now before the public which must have, if persisted in, a seriously injurious effect upon public morals. A contemporary, disposed to call a spade a spade, wisely calls it a "Grand Lottery." Whatever may be urged in its behalf on the ground of necessity or charity, it is simply this and nothing less. What we most deeply regret is that behind it, and apparently committed to it, is the large Masonic fraternity in this Province—a body of men whose numbers and wealth and character should have prevented them, under any circumstances, from becoming the patrons of a scheme calculated to weaken regard for law or to sap the foundation of moral principle.

Of late, legal effort has scarcely been necessary to stamp the lottery an evil. The thing, with rope enough, would soon hang itself. Fraudulent dealing and gross deception have been so frequently practiced in connection with it as to be regarded in the popular mind as part and parcel of it. Its use on a smaller scale, in bazaars for religious purposes, has been so frowned upon by Protestant churches generally that the argument drawn from that use has happily ceased to be worth much. And now, just when the evil is dying out, it is to receive the sanction of a large and influential body, whose adoption of it may be expected to give it a respectability which it had long since lost! We entreat the gentlemen concerned to reconsider their action. Corporations may have no souls, but Omniscience analyzes individual responsibility. There are probably a thousand men in the Province whose relation to depreciated property might tempt them to a similar course from reasons equally urgent, some of whom by this precedent may be carried over the boundary of honesty and right, never to find their way back. The cost of the Masonic Hall, estimated in view of its influence upon the future of our youth, will be, if this plan is pursued, something which human arithmetic cannot estimate.

WORDS OF CHEER.

Here and there, in some spots where our numbers are small, the occasional departure of one of that class which floats with the tide may cause brief depression. Let it be remembered that while some go others come. Here are words from the lips of Dr. Douglas, of Montreal, which are worth a place in your scrap-book:—

When we go back one hundred and fifty years, and think of the six men met in the University at Oxford; when we think how the influence of their spirit has gone out, and over all the earth; when we think that almost one out of every four of the English-speaking population of this earth writes himself down as Methodist, with a multitude of alien tongues, I think we must rise to the conviction that the grandest spiritual phenomenon which any age has ever witnessed stands connected with the Church with which we have the honor to be connected. And this was the testimony of the London press. It came like a new revelation to many

OF US WITHIN, AS WELL AS THOSE BEYOND, THE PALE OF METHODISM.

Our English brethren are feeling the force of such facts. The London correspondent of one of our Methodist exchanges writes thus:

We are bracing up ourselves for a successful winter campaign, and go forth to our work full of hope. As far as one observer can judge, we should say that there has seldom been a more hopeful feeling among our people and ministers. Every one feels the impulse of the great gatherings held in London. We are only now beginning to realize our strength. Those who have mourned over the decline of Methodism, or have readily volunteered to act as undertakers, are struck dumb. Clearly there has been a great victory on all the line. The future, also, is as emphatically our own as the past. The hosts of God encamp around about his people.

THE OUTLOOK.

There is little to call for special notice in political circles at home. After a somewhat busy season, political leaders, both in the Government and out of it, are enjoying a season of comparative quiet, preparatory to the contests of the approaching session. The Governor-General is announced to return to Canada in January, to be accompanied by the Princess, should her health permit.

The inhabitants of the Maritime Provinces, so many of whose sons "go down to the sea in ships," cannot listen unmoved to the tidings of disaster and death on the deep which reach us day after day. The loss of life to both man and beast—for the development of trade has made the animal a voyager—has been heavy. In not a few Provincial homes the approaching festival season will only serve by way of contrast to render sorrow more intense, and to give to the wintry blast a more suggestive tone. In spite, however, of sad events on sea and shore, business moves on the upward grade. There ought not, with the many enterprises announced through the daily press, to be a repetition of the want of previous winters, yet while one part of the community rejoices over prices much higher than in the past, another part must feel in some degree the pinch of want. Through this cause, and in the presence of the dire evil of drunkenness, the philanthropist is likely to have little leisure during the ensuing winter.

The gaze of our American neighbors is concentrated upon the court-room at Washington. In the contemplation of the life and death of the assassinated President the nation grew nobler; in its gaze upon the assassin it becomes disgusted. It will be well if no unworthy citizen regard himself as called upon to act the part of an avenger, and thus become in turn an assassin. The judge and jury, and in fact all concerned in the trial, have a most unenviable position. What can a judge do with such a prisoner? To expel him from the court room would be illegal; to keep him quiet is impossible; to repress a smile extremely difficult where such a rare criminal appears on trial, even as the murderer of a dead President. But a more difficult task awaits the jury, how- ever intelligent they may be. To decide whether the man on trial for his life be sane or irresponsible, to decide this altogether apart from the high position of his victim, and from the universal feeling of loathing in which even the Nihilist professes to share, is a task so difficult that few would care to face it. Insanity as a plea for escape from justice has so often been abused that a reaction might well be expected under such circumstances. It cannot be denied that Scoville has proved himself to be something more than a backwoods lawyer. Sometime may yet elapse before a decision is reached.

In Europe no abatement of previous symptoms of unrest can be reported. Another attempt to destroy the Imperial family of Russia has been defeated, and scores of conspirators have been seized who await an early trial. In the meanwhile Russia presses her aggressive policy in Asia. Merv, the point of her aim for a long period, is all but reached. The illness of the aged Frederick William of Prussia is ominous of change, which may, however, through the popularity of the Prince Royal, be less feared than under other circumstances. At a period when Gambetta has appeared at the front as the leader of the French Government, any Prussian perplexity might be regarded as France's opportunity, in spite of the assurances of unchangeable policy, already given by the new leader.

Latest advices from Ireland are not reassuring. The Land Court is almost overwhelmed with work; and in many cases landlord and tenant are reaching an agreement without its aid, but in spite of all measures sections of the country continue to be sadly disturbed.

A late despatch says that "more efficient measures must be found to restore order, unless the Government is prepared to let the country drift into absolute anarchy and revolution." It is also claimed that the daily accounts of outrages in various districts are below the truth. Who can doubt that the teachings of Roman Catholicism have much to do with placing the people of that beautiful island in unhappy contrast with their English and Scotch neighbors. Protestant Irishmen at home and abroad are second to none.

The *North-western Advocate* truthfully says: "No woman in all history has occupied the proud pre-eminence of Queen Victoria to-day. She has just surpassed in time the long rule of Queen Elizabeth—forty-five years and one hundred and twenty-eight days. No woman ever before ruled over so many people, or so powerful a nation, or by constitutional methods which left the people so free. Queen Victoria's rule has been moral rather than authoritative. She is as greatly beloved in the United States as she is in England. Her example as well as her influence has always been on the side of humanity, peace and morality. Among the great women of the world Victoria will stand supreme. We hope the last sands of her beneficent life may long linger in the hour-glass of Providence."

Our Book Room, with its finely selected and tastefully displayed assortment of Christmas books and cards and various novelties for the season, is a most attractive place. Pay it a visit. The "sight of the eye" is free to all. Any orders that may be forwarded will be attended to with good judgment and prompt despatch. Valuable additions have of late been made to the stock of general theological and literary works, which are worthy of the inspection of readers, whether for personal use or as gifts to thoughtful friends.

Our Episcopal contemporary last week informed its readers that "Rev. R. J. Walker, Methodist minister in Clyde, Kansas, who has been for over a year corresponding with the bishop on the subject of applying to enter our ministry, has prepared his papers of application to become a candidate for orders." This wandering brother has somewhat perplexed the editor of the *Richmond Advocate*, who concludes thus:—"It takes him a long time. He is living on the Methodists all this time! He ought to pay board if he is."

The prospectus of Littell's *Living Age* appears elsewhere this week. After an existence of nearly forty years it maintains an undisputed character as a thorough compendium of the best thought and literary work of the time. Few in this busy age can read more than a small proportion of what is published: the better way therefore is to secure such a compilation as is here provided from the best periodical literature of the world. Persons subscribing for 1882 will receive intervening numbers.

In reference to the recent attack on Christianity in the columns of the *North American Review*, an exchange says, "The public conscience is still on the side of Christ and his Gospel." It is now said that Messrs. Appleton & Co. refuse to allow their imprint to go upon it any longer than the present year.

In accordance with the winter timetable on the Intercolonial, mails at the Halifax post office are made up several hours earlier on Thursday afternoon than during the summer. As a natural consequence our paper cannot reach subscribers whose papers go by that route quite as promptly as before.

The *St. John Globe* says: "It is understood that the Canada Temperance Act will not be argued before the British Privy Council until February."

PERSONAL.

Rev. Thos. Crosby and family, of British Columbia, have reached Ontario, where they will spend the winter. Mr. Crosby expects to be busily engaged in addressing Missionary meetings.

Rev. J. G. Hennigar sends this message:—"I wish to inform my many inquiring friends that though I have been very low, I am now better, and trust that I may yet be permitted in some measure to prosecute my great work." The marriage of a gentleman long connected with the press—Geo. Johnson Esq., now one of the editorial staff of the *Toronto Mail*, appears in our list to-day. Mr. and Mrs. Johnson have our best wishes for their future happiness.

The American press in preparation for the G. I. This Gospel International large preparatory publishers with all the tracts. The mentary of

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