

The Wesleyan,

173

Rev. A. W. NICOLSON,
Editor and Publisher.

Published under the direction of the General Conference of the Methodist Church of Canada.

\$2 PER ANNUM IN ADVANCE
Postage Prepaid.

VOL. XXIX

HALIFAX N.S., MARCH 10, 1877.

NO. 10

WESLEYAN BOOK ROOM,
125 GRANVILLE STREET,
HALIFAX, N.S.

DEPOSITORY FOR
ALL METHODIST PUBLICATIONS
AND SALES-ROOM FOR
General Literature, Stationery, Blank Book
AND SCHOOL BOOKS.

Sabbath Schools, Clergymen and Students
purchasing in quantities have
A SPECIAL DISCOUNT

A SAD PROBLEM IN MINIS-
TERIAL LIFE.

THE DIVINE ASPECT.

Treating on this subject two weeks ago, we referred to its human phases merely. Endeavouring to account for the unusual drain upon our ministerial forces from disease and death, we sought to point out certain grave mistakes made by young ministers in the matter of physical government. This week we are brought face to face with an increase of afflictive circumstances. Another death in the ministry, and one or two additional cases of severe illness, lead us to the enquiry—what is the hidden purpose in all this; and how may we best profit by the lessons of an extraordinary sorrow?

While absent last Saturday providing for an immediate change in the pastoral relation of the Avondale Circuit, whereby Mr. Stothard, under Physician's counsel, is relieved entirely for the present of the care of superintendency, we received intimation of Bro. Sargent's death. It is somewhat remarkable that, of the four deaths which have this year occurred in our ministry of the Lower Provinces, three have been in one district of the Nova Scotia Conference. Father Davis, Supernumerary at Bridgewater, was followed by Mr. Desbrisay, Pastor of that Circuit, and now Mr. Sargeant, of Hillsburg, has gone to rest. Three of the four beloved brethren thus called home were young men of special promise. Of Bro. Dixon, enough was said last autumn to exhibit his heroism and devotion as a disciple of the Master. Of Bro. Desbrisay, enough has not been said, and cannot well be said, excepting by some one better acquainted with his life, especially the formative elements of that life, than any we have yet heard from. His was a marvellous genius, a noble intellect, a rare, cultured imagination. Bro. Sargeant was as mature as an octogenarian, and humble as a child. In every instance the invalids of the Nova Scotia Conference—numbering six or seven—are in the very first rank of our honoured and honourable young ministers. Beginning the year with buoyant hope, they strove, perhaps too ardently, for success, until suddenly the hand of God was laid upon them, holding them down and keeping them back. Only their ministerial brethren, and their Master, "who is touched with a feeling of their infirmities" can fully understand their position. The restrained longing for the sanctuary, where, if they reach it at all, they must be content to sit and not minister; the anxiety for the future of a young and precious family, or at least of a beloved partner; the nervous irritation following a peculiar disease; the hope of the morning chased by the dread of the night;—their's is a furnace into which few, even by sympathy, can fully enter.

The voice of this dispensation comes first and chiefly to ministers everywhere. How uncertain is the relation which we hold to this work? How frail and of little security, are our plans for future usefulness and reputation! And "what manner of persons ought we to be" who thus are working perpetually on the verge of eternity! Leading others to the Jordan, we must our-

selves step in also. The guide must be content to be himself guided. Our religion must be to ourselves a blessed verity when thus we are called to rest individually upon a faith we have offered to others. Christ preached must be Christ enjoyed. May we possess all that we insist upon as essential to Christian perfection; exemplify the grace to which we point others.

Our Divine Father, through these visitations, speaks most emphatically to the Church. He removes His shepherds. While the sheep are not left unfed or unguarded, He nevertheless gives them cause for apprehension. Is the Church being rebuked for its unappreciation of the ministry? or being taught that its dependence must be upon the unseen and eternal, more than the present and the perishing? or being disciplined to come more tenderly into sympathy with the servants of God and their benevolent and exalted aims? Every congregation in our Church ought to lay this dispensation closely to heart. Perhaps this is God's chief purpose in sending it. We need not urge the people of the charges particularly afflicted to press very closely now toward the men and women and children of the Parsonage—to comfort them, help them substantially, hold them up before God. Should this awaken a new life of sympathy for good men—set fresh energies to work in the direction of sustaining the ministry, and God's cause in general, our visitation will not be lost upon us.

We do not attempt to pronounce upon the intentions of the Great Head of the Church. We are content with knowing that he is wise and good. Though He slay us, yet will we trust in Him. But the effort of enquiry after God's will in trying circumstances, may beget a helpful habit of looking up, and bring in time a full assurance that troubles spring not from the ground.

OUR ENGLISH LETTER.

A BISHOP ON THE STAGE.

DEAR MR. EDITOR,—During the Mission Week in Manchester a vast number of services were held and attempts were made to bring under the influence of the preached Gospel all sorts and conditions of men. The Bishop of Manchester was in labours more abundant, and in the course of his work, has spoken on the same day, in two theatres, to the "employees" and actors. The addresses were thoroughly earnest and had an infusion of truth in them, which was calculated to be of signal benefit to a class which is not often brought under the sound of the Gospel. Yet to the regret of vast numbers the Bishop eulogized the profession, praised not a few of the great actors whom he had met, and asserted some strange things in reference to attendance at theatres, provided more care was taken in the selection of plays, and more attention given to the proprieties of costume and decorum which at present are not unfrequently neglected. The

EPISCOPAL ADVICE

will be unheeded as far as the reforms are concerned, for this is not the first attempt. The playhouse is always going to be purified, but it never has been, and we fear never will be. Meanwhile the episcopal laudation of the profession and its surroundings, will encourage numbers to continue their patronage, and will induce many others to go and see for themselves those things which a Bishop can so heartily commend and approve.

THE IMPERIAL PARLIAMENT.

The session of 1877 was opened by Her Majesty in person, that is she was present in state, but the speech was read for her by the Lord Chancellor, and the part played by the Sovereign was in solemn silence, and dumb show. Yet it is accounted a great boon, and for the Londoners a great sight. The Queen is in remarkably good health and spirits, able to attend to all the affairs of government, and likely to wield the sceptre of her great realm for many years to come.

THE ROYAL SPEECH

was largely occupied with the Eastern question, narrating fully the various phases through which it has passed since the prorogation of Parliament, but abstaining with extreme caution from any indication of intention or policy in the future.

THE PROMISED LEGISLATION

of the session is very meagre. It is not intended to attempt any great measure, our conservative rulers are not the men for that kind of work; their compact majority will carry them through the session respectfully, unless some new and terrible phase of this entangled Turkish question shall come to the front, and thoroughly arouse the great heart of the English nation, then all present decorous arrangements will be upset, and the real leaders of the people will be summoned to bear the responsibility.

THE EARL OF BEACONSFIELD

"Benjamin Disraeli" was at Her Majesty's side, a titled and belted Earl, the Prime Minister of England, and bearer of the *Sword of State*. He was probably next to Her Majesty, the most observed of all the distinguished throng, but he maintained his quiet imperturbability, and wore his honours with grace and dignity. They say it was a brave sight, and one worthy of remembrance; for in less than forty years he has climbed up to his splendid position, and really deserves all the honours to which he has attained.

MR. GLADSTONE

is in excellent health and has already taken a prominent part in the opening debates of the session. There is a lot of working power in the Liberal leader, he is much feared by his political opponents, they attach much importance to all his speeches and letters, and his friends cherish a hope that he may yet be induced to resume his old place and lead his great party on to future victories.

LAY DELEGATION IN CONFERENCE.

The united committee has met and the movement has advanced another stage. The recommendation of the September District meetings upon the proposals submitted to them by the Conference, were fully discussed and on the main agreed to. There were a few frivolous suggestions among the many, but it was an occasion of joy to find a wonderful unanimity upon the question, and now a few more siftings and a little more trimming ere we have the plan complete. The May District meetings have one more opportunity to suggest and criticise, and then the scheme will be put by Conference into final shape.

Feb. 19, 1877.

The "Sword and Trowel," as well as several other of Mr. Spurgeon's productions, are noted for raciness, but I think his most humorous book is "Lectures to my Students. In the midst of truths that are weighty and statements that are remarkable for their common sense, there runs a vein of pleasantry like a streak of silver. On the "Voice," he says—(and after "California Taylor's" visit the remarks would have been specially applicable to one or two young ministers I could mention)—"Moreover, brethren, avoid the use of the nose as an organ of speech, for the best authorities are agreed that it is intended to smell with. Time was when the nasal twang was the correct thing; but in this degenerate age you had better obey the evident suggestion of nature, and let the mouth keep to its work without the interference of the olfactory instrument." Again he says—"Abhor the practice of some men who will not bring out the letter 'r'; such a habit is 'very wincous and widoulous, vewy wetchid and wewehensible.'" Speaking of cant phrases in prayer, he suggests that "Go from heart to heart, as oil from vessel to vessel," is probably a quotation from the nursery romance of *Ali Baba and the Forty Thieves*, but as destitute of sense, Scripture and poetry as ever sentence could be conceived to be. He had heard of a good man who, in praying for his children and grandchildren, was so completely beclouded in the blinding influence of the expression, "Thy poor

uncorrupt dust," that he exclaimed— "O Lord, save Thy dust, and Thy dust's dust's dust." There are many good things too on the subject of preaching and sermons, some of the latter, he remarks, being "like Mr. Bright's Skye-terrier, whose head and tail were both alike."—*Meibourne Times*.

SOUL SUNLIGHT FROM A DARK-
ENED LIFE.

The Wesleyans have given Plymouth a rich treat by inviting blind Dr. Millburn to preach in their Ebenezer Chapel, and thousands have gladly availed themselves of the opportunity of hearing this cultured, eloquent, whole-souled orator from across the Atlantic.

Dr. Millburn made his advent in Plymouth on Tuesday, the 30th ult., when, in passing through, he came to the annual meeting of our Blind Institution, and poured forth an impassioned appeal on behalf of his "brethren in darkness," as well as sympathising, encouraging words to his less gifted fellow-sufferers themselves, which were like a trumpet-call to duty and self-reliance, and hopeful, earnest toil.

The sight of his fine intellectual face, the tones of his grand musical ringing voice, the well-chosen and poetic language in which he then clothed his thoughts, just served to whet our appetites for more.

Sunday, February, 4, he preached both morning and evening in the largest Wesleyan chapel in the town, capable of holding, when crowded as at these services, over two thousand people. In the morning, after the prayers had been impressively read by one of the ministers, Rev. H. Jenkin, Dr. Millburn gave out that beautiful hymn—

"O for a thousand tongues to sing," with exquisite intonation, repeating it from memory. His text was, "Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace," &c. Few present will forget the marvellous manner in which he pictured for us the position and appearance of the Jewish Temple, and the ceremonies and service of the Day of Atonement. For ourselves we had never before so realised that touching episode of the kid of the goats burdened with "the sins of the people" being carried ignominiously and almost stealthily along by its appointed bearer, through the crowds of kneeling people prostrate before the awful majesty of an offended God, out from the temple, away from Jerusalem into the wilderness. In that wondrous word-picture which he painted in characters of light, we beheld the venerable high priest enter in his simple white garment tremblingly the holiest of holies and come back rejoicing, radiant with the glory of the Shekinah; when the great choir of twenty-four thousand, twelve thousand singing at once, echoed and re-echoed by alternate verses the majestic strains of the Psalm, "Bless the Lord, oh my soul, and forget not all His benefits."

The necessity of the human and Divine mediation of Christ between the spotless purity of God and the sinful hearts of men was strikingly illustrated. Christ made the awful throne of God a throne of mercy and of grace for us.

In the evening, to a congregation which "thronged him," for even the pulpit stairs were full, Dr. Millburn recited the beautiful chapter on charity, and preached from two texts in Eccles.—"Vanity of Vanities, all is vanity;" and "Cast thy bread upon the waters;" for thou shalt find it after many days."

His description of Solomon's life and reign was as vivid as that of the Temple, and very beautiful too was his other picture of the sowing on the Nile-undated delta of the "pearl-like grains

of rice," and the rejoicing sowers singing as they sowed, "Cast thy bread upon the waters; for thou shalt find it after many days."

The secret of Solomon's dissatisfaction with the manifold pursuits—science, literature, sensual and aesthetic pleasures, and the exercise of power and study of government,—was all summed up in the one word "selfishness." Had he used all these rightly as means to an end, to give pleasure, knowledge, delight, and profit to others, and to glorify God, instead of to please himself, he would not have condemned all in those bitter words, "Vanity, vanity, all is vanity," and we, like Solomon, could only find rest when every talent was used as "bread cast in faith upon the waters." Dr. Millburn's action is extremely graceful, and one of his chief charms is his self-forgetfulness, and remembrance of the noble theme which he has in mind. "Flowers of poetry" and "gems of thought" are profusely scattered over his sermons, but they never hide the great truths he is teaching.—*From a correspondent to the Christian World*.

The *Central Presbyterian* gets a lance-point between the joints of the harness of the *Religious Herald*. The Baptist Journal boasted on this wise:—

"Baptists have great confidence that their views of baptism are plainly presented in the Scriptures. It is quite common for them to refer young converts to the Bible to learn their duty in regard to baptism. Do the advocates of sprinkling ever direct enquirers for information on the subject of baptism to read the Scriptures?"

"If it were, as the *Herald* affirms, that Baptist have so much more confidence in the plain teachings of the Scriptures than others have, how are we to account for the undeniable fact that their pulpits and their press are so constantly teeming with discussions on this subject? Take up a Baptist newspaper, examine the basket of a Baptist colporteur, go into a Baptist church and it is a moderate statement to say that you meet these themes, in their controversial aspects, ten times oftener than among other denominations. An observation of many years as an editor gives the most positive confirmation to this in regard to religious newspapers. There is hardly one on the Baptist side which is not habitually bristling with this debate. In the others it is but seldom presented, and then commonly in defence against assaults. In fact, this peculiarity is so marked as often to remind us of the account the Irishman gave us of his sickness from fever: He just lay entirely spaychless sax long wakes in the long month of August, doing nothing in the world but crying, all the time, 'Wather, wather, wather!' Does the perpetual cry of our Baptist brethren, from pulpit and press, indicate that they above all the dwellers on the face of the earth, have confidence in the naked testimony of the Bible? Does it not indicate rather the reverse of this—that there is after all at the bottom a secret misgiving that readers of the Scriptures will fail to find out by themselves the 'distinctive Baptist principle' which our brother, the senior editor places at the head of his article, viz: That only immersion is baptism.—*Central Pres.*

As for the ills of life, if there was no silence there would be no music. Ignorance is a spur to knowledge. Darkness is a pavilion for the Almighty, a foil to the painter to make his shadows.—*George Macdonald*.

The longer I live, the less is my faith in the genuineness of a death-bed repentance. God will save a man in the dying hour, if the man repents, but does a sinner truly repent at a time like that? There is a sorrow for sin which springs from a cowardly fear of dying, and when that fear is removed and the man is rescued and restored to health, there is the same sinful life as before. He who seemed to be so peaceful and resigned comes back to health, and is a hardened, unrepentant sinner still.—*J. I. Boswell*.