

The Wesleyan,

201

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. XXVIII

HALIFAX, N.S., JUNE 24, 1876.

NO. 26

WESLEYAN BOOK ROOM,
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HALIFAX, N.S.

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DR. RIGG ON AMERICAN SABBATH
SCHOOLS.

We follow Dr. Rigg with no little interest, as he reports himself in the English papers. His views on a subject of vital importance—the aim and efficiency of Sabbath schools—we give as extracts from the latest Recorder which has reached us—

In passing I described just now American Sunday schools. It is important to English people always to bear in mind the penitentiary to which I adverted. In England the dominant idea of the Sunday school is missionary. It is to gather in children especially from without, who need Christian instruction. This I say, is the dominant idea in England; I do not say it is the only, or the invariable, or the complete idea. But in America, for the most part, no such idea forms any part of the conception of a Sunday school. The school is only missionary in any sense—is only intended for those without and beyond, when the church is a distinctively mission church. There are such churches in the lower parts of New York, Philadelphia, Chicago, and I dare say in a few other places. But such places are few, and such churches and schools are in proportion very few. Except in those few cases—and in by far the majority of cases even in such cities—the Sunday school is organized and conducted with no thought whatever but of the children of the congregation.

In fact the children mostly stay away from church altogether in the morning. Their time is the afternoon, when only for the most part the Sunday school is held. "Where are the children of these good Christian families?" I said at Rhinebeck after the morning service to the courteous and intelligent American gentleman who was with me. "I saw none, or scarcely any at church." "A much to be deplored Americanism" was the reply. This custom has grown up during the last twenty or thirty years. The children consider the afternoon time service, and they dress up for that, and go to school. They do not want I suppose, to go morning to church, and so they are allowed to stay at home." So far has this idea gone, that I have heard the question gravely entertained and discussed, in a distinguished American Methodist company, whether it would not be well for the pastor to give up the evening preaching conducting a prayer meeting instead and give himself to the conduct of the afternoon school, teaching a class perhaps, but at all events superintending the school, and delivering an address. The idea, I find, has during the last three years made some progress here and there. In the fashionable Methodist congregations of the large cities, the evening congregation is a meagre gathering, although in most parts of the Union it continues to be a great popular power. The week-night preachings have already ceased, but I cannot believe that anywhere the Sunday evening preaching will be allowed to come to nothing.

I was speaking, however, of the Sunday schools. Much has been said in England about the superior appointments of American Sunday schools. Certainly English Sunday schools stand greatly in need of being brightened up; not a little of home like comforts and a due proportion of caste but tasteful and attractive ornamentation might with great advantage be added to our English Sunday schools. Many of them are dingy, too many are coarse and rude in their appointments. Still we can hardly expect that they shall strictly resemble American schools, as long as they are intended for different purposes. To furnish a Sunday school in Bethnal-green or the lowest parts of a great London town as luxuriously as a lady's boudoir would hardly be a piece of practical wisdom; the rich carpets, the marble to mantels, the mirrors and the flowers would not be in accordance with the conditions and purpose of the school. In America the church building is the centre of all the social life, as well as the spiritual fellowship of the church and congregation. There is the minister's study and library, there is the church parlour, beautifully furnished, and with its musical instrument for decent entertainment and decoration of the company at the fortnightly "church societies" or on any special occasion, such as a lecture or sewing meeting, or what not, and there is the children's collective home, the gathering room of the children of the church families, furnished in correspondence with what would be found in parlour, or drawing-room, in the best of our homes.

This furnishing varies, accordingly, with the quality of the congregation, with the style and character of the particular church. In America the Methodist churches in the cities have long ceased to be territorial centres. There are no circuit limits, no geographical boundaries, within which each church expects to gather to itself, as a general rule, all Methodist people, whether of a higher or lower grade in society. In New York St. Paul's is the Methodist church of the wealthy and cultivated; from all parts of the city accordingly, to this church the "birds" of more splendid "feather flock together." There are besides, tradesmen's churches of different grades, and there are "free churches" or "tabernacle" and mission churches, and, as I have intimated, mission schools. Of course, each church has its church parlour and its Sunday-school, furnished in conformity with the quality and pretensions of its congregation. Hence the Sunday school room for St. Paul's, New York, or for the suburban Methodist church at Harlem, or for sumptuous Mt. Vernon Church, at Baltimore, is one thing, while those for mission purposes are materially different. They are always, indeed, very comfortable, but matting supercedes the rich carpet, and the fittings throughout are plain.

In respect of school and class arrangement and provision, the Americans like ourselves have very much yet to learn. I have not yet seen a Sunday school in America with more class room provision than infant rooms and two Bible-class rooms, and yet I have seen some of the largest and some of the best school rooms in the country. It is many years since, at Ash-under Lync, I saw a Congregational school for 2000 or 3000 children, magnificently arranged and appointed; to that school there must have been a full score of large and handsome class rooms. I have never heard of anything comparable in this country. I am told, indeed, that at Philadelphia there is a very fine Sunday school, and I mean to seek it out. But the idea of due class room provision seems to be more unfamiliar in America than in England. I know more than a few Methodist Sunday schools in Lancashire, in London, in Wales, excellently organized, and with provision for eight, ten or twelve separate class rooms; but I have not only not seen, I have not heard of any such thing in American Methodism, and have only heard a distant, uncertain report of one school of a similar character, outside of the Methodist Church. Altogether, the ideas prevailing in England as to American Sunday schools seems to me to be much astray. I believe the science and practice of Sunday school organization in England than in America. But the Sunday schools of America are, for the most part, essentially different in idea from those in England.

The Sunday school at Rhinebeck closely resembled others I had seen for middle-class Methodist churches. It is a neat room capable of providing conveniently for 200 children, including infants. The infants have a little recess at the back of the room to themselves, which can be shut off. The two select classes have each a recess on either side in a kind of transept, but are not shut off, cannot be placed apart. The great mass indeed, of Sunday school teaching in the States, as far as I have seen, whether West or East, is done on the floor of school rooms, often overcrowded, and done in the old-fashioned squares, square by square of children, in their classes all over the room. Better methods, however, are beginning, and so quick are the Americans to learn, that they are sure soon to prevail.

From Rhinebeck Mr. Pope went northwards to Canada, while I turned aside to visit Boston, whence I am to return to the Conference at Baltimore, and to Philadelphia to revisit the Centennial, of which, on the occasion of the opening, Mr. Pope and myself, through the courtesy of the British Commissioner and the American authorities, had as good a view as could be obtained. JAMES H. RIGG.

May 17.

DR. EGGLESTON.

It will be remembered by our readers that the celebrated author of "The Circuit Rider," and other books of a similar tone, began life as a Methodist Preacher, and gained much of the knowledge which has brought his works and himself into a questionable notoriety from his own varied experiences and observations in the Western Itinerary. From the following which we clip from the Central Advocate's New York Letter, it will be seen that Dr. Eggleston has wandered considerably from the principles of his fathers—

Dr. Eggleston of the Church of Christian Endeavor, as they call it, which belongs to nothing and nowhere, and especially prides itself on having no creed, yet claims affinity with the orthodox Churches of Brooklyn, is likely to give the question a practical solution. On Sunday last, the Universalist Church of All Souls dedicated their new chapel, and Dr.

Eggleston appeared as one of the prominent speakers. In his address he eulogized the denomination, deprecated what he called their persecution, hailed them as fellow workers, and proclaimed them part and parcel of the great host of Orthodox Christianity. It was announced that, but for previous engagements, both Dr. Porter of the Reformed, and Hyatt Smith of the Baptist Church would have taken part. As these brethren, both towers of strength among their people, with all their well known liberality, have given no such sign of giving up the fundamental principles of their faith, and their absence was due doubtless to weightier reasons. For the difference between the Universalist and the Orthodox creed does not lie alone in the unconditional salvation of the entire race. That is the least point of divergence. The divinity of Christ, justification by faith, together with all the issues that cling about these doctrines often meet with absolute denial. Surely we may live in peace and quiet with our neighbors, share his love for sunlight and flowers, welcome his children to our board and join in festivities where no principle is involved, without giving assent to teachings which practically deny the truth of those which, we believe, lie at the foundation of Christianity and the best interests of humanity. It may seem to some a very slight distinction, but it calls to mind the answer of the Protestant Episcopalian to one who said there was but a sheet of paper between the Church and the Roman Catholic. "Yes," was the reply, "but on that sheet the whole Bible is written." We need not quarrel, but we must not give up the truth.

Was it a natural sequence of this action that led Dr. Eggleston, in the evening, to preach a sermon in defense of Darwinism? At any rate he did so, and gave in at least a partial adherence to the doctrine of Evolution, and made the Bible secondary to the so-called discoveries of science. Does he not know that the advocates of that theory unhesitatingly reject the Bible, and class it with the fabled books of the sages that have passed into oblivion? It would be hardly worth while to take up the readers time with such matter but for the moral it clearly points. The good doctor has swung himself clear of all authority, and bids fair to land on the rocks that have wrecked so many noble minds. The steps are not many, not very far asunder, that lead to the plane of a Deism as bare of Christian fruit as that of Gibbon or Soltaire. Once loosened from the sphere, none can tell where the frail baquet of man's intellect will drift; and the only chain that can hold it is the authority and creed of a Christian church. Let us rejoice amid all these sargings which distract so many, that "nevertheless, the foundation of God standeth sure."

June 2, 1876.

Lux.

The comparison of the tables with the Minutes of Conference for some years past reveals some interesting facts, and suggests some important reflections. As we stated a fortnight since, the number of members in Church-fellowship with us is higher than any previously recorded. The highest figure ever before attained was reached in 1850, when it was 358,277, therefore the number now reported is 14,652 in advance—or about 19,000 inclusive of the increase on mission stations—a cause of devout thankfulness to the GREAT HEAD of the Church, who still favours us with manifestations of his presence. The ratio of progress is worthy of notice. During the last twenty years—from 1856—we have added to our societies upwards of 110,000 members, after filling the vacancies occasioned by those who, for various reasons, ceased to be recognised amongst us,—amounting on an average, taking the last year as a criterion,—to more than 20,000 persons, as well as by those who, having finished their course on earth, have joined "the spirits of just men made perfect." In the same period of twenty years, we find that our annual increase has been but twice in advance of that of the present year—namely, in 1859, when it was 15,704; and in 1860, when it reached the number of 17,516. In three years only there appears a slight deficiency of about sixteen hundred members. These numbers cannot fail to impress us with the vitality of Methodism. Without alluding now to the great progress made in other departments of work, and taking membership alone as our guide, we are convinced of the hold it has on the public mind. Notwithstanding the severe storms which have passed over it, and the numbers which have been separated from us, it never in the providence of God seemed so flourishing as at present, as evidenced by the reported addition during the past year of 50,000 members—for Manchester is not given—and the admission on trial in the March quarter of upwards of 33,000 persons. These facts are instructive,

and suggest the propriety of great caution and deliberation before venturing upon changes in our constitution, which, though apparently in accordance with the spirit of the times, may in their practical working be found rather to retard than advance the interests we all have so much at heart. The system which, under God, has been handed down to us by WESLEY, after all the assaults made upon it, presents the pleasing spectacle of a harmonious and united ministerial brotherhood, and a happy and prosperous people.—*Watchman London.*

DEPARTURE OF DR. RIGG.

Rev. Dr. James H. Rigg, fraternal delegate from the British Conference to our recent General Conference, embarked on Saturday evening last for his home in London. He went out in the good ship *Adriatic*, of the White Star Line, bound for Liverpool. In company with Bishop James, Dr. Crawford, and others, we were permitted to say farewell to him on shipboard, and to wish him a safe, speedy, and pleasant voyage, and a delightful re-union with his home friends. Rev. Professor Pope, his associate and senior fraternal delegate, sailed about the same time from Boston.

Of the genial manner in which these distinguished brethren have mingled with our people in social life, and of the reciprocal good-feeling which such intercourse has begotten, we have written in a previous number. The appreciation by the General Conference of the manner in which they performed the official work assigned them is indicated by the following resolution, which was adopted by the Conference on the occasion of their saying goodbye, by a unanimous and rising vote:

Resolved, That we have enjoyed with profound satisfaction the visit to this General Conference of the distinguished representatives of the British Wesleyan Conference, the Rev. William B. Pope and his associate, the Rev. James H. Rigg, D. D., and we take pleasure in expressing our high appreciation of their personal character, the dignified manner in which they have fulfilled their mission, and their utterances, both in their addresses to the Conference and their pulpit discourses; and now, in their departure from us, we devoutly implore for them a safe return to their homes and fields of labor.—*N. Y. Advocate.*

DR. CUMMING AGAIN PROPHECYING.

On Sunday, the 8th inst., the Rev. Dr. Cumming, of London, speaking on Christ's second coming said, that according to the authority of Mr. Moody (the Preacher) Christ's advent was almost at our doors. All the great epochs were exhausted, he had stated the same for years, and he had received therefore the sneers of silly people, which had been most gratifying to such persons. All the students of prophecy feel that the great "prophetic periods" were about being exhausted, and when they were exhausted then Christ would come. They could not doubt that. The apocalypse of St. John stated that He would come in the clouds, and that every eye should see Him. If they were to look around them they would see the very startling condition of the world from Constantinople to St. Petersburg, from France to England, and thence to India; they would see upon the authority of the newspapers that the world was on the eve of the greatest conflicts. How far distant it would be he could not say, but it would be the greatest conflict that had ever visited the earth. Eminent statesmen had pointed out the danger, and other statesmen had made the greatest preparations for the conflict. Christ might come in the midst of the nation-warring. He would not prophecy in the matter.

President Porter, of Yale, gave the following advice to the students of that institution: "Young men, you are the architects of your own fortunes. Rely upon your own strength of body and soul. Take for your star, self-reliance. Subscribe on your banner, 'Luck is a fool, Pluck is a hero.' Don't take too much advice; keep at your helm and steer your own ship, and remember that the great art of commanding is to take a fair share of the work. Think well of yourself. Strike out. Assume your own position. Put potatoes in a cart, over a rough road, and the small ones go to the bottom. Rise above the envious and jealous. Fire above the mark you intend to hit. Energy, invincible determination, with a right motive, are the levers that move the world."

METHODIST TABLE-TALK.

The President of the Conference is said to be progressing favourably, though the statement in some of our contemporaries last week was most misleading. He certainly is not likely to resume his public labours for some weeks, and it is to be hoped that energetic caterers for anniversaries and other public services will not suppose he will be able to preach or speak again in public yet awhile. Let them show mercy, and abstain from asking him for help. The rage of modern days for pressing the President of the year to take part in the opening services of every new chapel in the land should be curbed. The demand on the strength of the chief officer of our Church is excessive, and the urgent persuasions of good people have become positive cruelty.

How irrepressible some excellent folks are! How in discreet, too! A Wesleyan at Kensworth has addressed a request to the "Empress Victoria" to patronise a bazaar on behalf of a village chapel. A suitable reproof was quickly administered, and it is satisfactory to know officially that the common sense of the Queen has not failed her, even though the wisdom of Parliament may be doubted. The unknown Wesleyan is informed, and through him all others who would set aside the national sentiment about this Imperial title, that it is inappropriate to address Her Majesty in such a manner.

The above well-merited reproof does not relate merely to the offensive use of the title. It gives a snub to the fussy applications made by people for money for all sorts of chapel, school, and other schemes. If a layman is liberal, or a minister is not wholly dependent on his circuit stipend, he is pounced upon by men and women of whom he never heard before, for objects of which he knows nothing, and in places of whose existence he is totally ignorant. These beggars are great letter writers, they enclose stamped envelopes for a reply, they are very persistent and great nuisances. It is hoped this disagreeable intrusiveness will be checked. One gentleman said the other day that he frequently received from twenty to thirty such applications for help by a single morning's post.

Mr. Sankey's songs have been published in Chinese.

I received a lithographed letter this week from a person near the Crystal Palace to the effect—

Lower Norwood, S.E. May, 1876.
DEAR SIR,—We were very anxious to secure £1,000 before Michaelmas, to enable us to begin a Mission to a large and poor population who are sunk in infidelity and dissent here. Will you kindly send us at least £1 toward this much needed work, which has the sanction and support of our diocesan?

Yours truly,
C. A. W. READE.

The italics are our own. The writer is a clergyman of the Church of England. He gives us another amusing instance of clerical thought. It should be preserved for use by his biographer. It is a short letter, but it tells much about its writer. As daylight can be seen through very small holes, so little things illustrate a person's character. Some men may be thankful if their own works and letters are seldom quoted; better for their reputation if others write about them. If saints were their own sculptors, they would soon cut their fingers. An indiscreet person is like most unsealed letters, and particularly like the above, not worth reading.

There is a rumour that the Church of England is likely to have a bishopric of Fiji. Other men have laboured; the Anglicans enter into their labours. But "yet there is room."

The American papers speak of the Rev. W. B. Pope, D. D. Any academic degree will be well sustained by Doctor Pope, and any University may be proud of him as one of its sons. If the selection of persons for degrees had always been as judicious as in this and a few other instances, it would have been well. But it seems as though there is always nanna in the wilderness, and all may get it if they or their immediate familiar friends will go into the wilderness.—*London Methodist.*