

THE WESLEYAN DAILY RECORDER.

CONFERENCE OF 1870.

No. 9.]

TORONTO, ONTARIO, MONDAY MORNING, JUNE 6, 1870.

[Vol. II.]

Poetry.

THE SINNER AT THE CROSS.

BY PHOENIX CARY.

Helpless before the cross I lay,
With all to lose, or all to win,
My steps had wandered from the way,
My soul was burdened with her sin;
I spoke no word, I made no plea,
But this, *Be merciful to me!*

To meet His gaze, I could not brook,
Who for my sake accented there;
I could not bear the angry look
My dear, offended Lord must wear;
Remembering how I had denied
His name, my heart within me died.

Almost I heard his awful voice,
Sounding above my head in wrath;
Fixing my everlasting choice,
With such a tread the downward path;
I waited for the words, *Depart*
From me, *as cursed as thou art!*

One moment, all the world was still,
Then, He who saw my anguish, spoke;
I heard, I breathed, my pulses thrilled,
And heart, and brain, and soul, awoke;
No scorn, no wrath, was in that tone,
But pitying love, and love alone!

And dost thou know, and love not Me,
He said, when I have loved thee so;
It was for guilty men like thee,
I came into this world of woe;
To save the lost I lived and died,
For sinners was I crucified.

The fountain of my tears was dried,
My eyes were lifted from the dust—
Jesus! my blessed Lord! I cried,
And in His love, I feared to trust?
And art Thou He, I dared not see?
The Friend to whom I deemed my foe?

How could I shrink from such a Thou,
Divine Redeemer, as Thou art?
I know Thy loving kindness now,
I see Thy wounded, bleeding heart;
I know that Thou didst give me Thine,
And all that Thou dost ask is mine!

My Lord, my God! I know at last
Whose mercy I have dared offend;
I own Thee now, I hold Thee fast,
My Brother, Lover, and my Friend!
Take me and clasp me to Thy breast,
Bless me again, and keep me blest!

Thou art the man, who never refused
With sinful men to sit at meat;
Who spoke to her who was accused,
Of men, and trembling at Thy feet,
As lips had never spoke before,
Go uncondemned, and sin no more.

Dear Lord! not all eternity
Thy image from my heart can move,
When Thou didst turn and look on me,
When first I heard Thy words of love;
Repent, believe, and then shall be,
To-night, in Paradise with me.

Miscellany.

MEMORABLE CONFERENCES IN CANADA.

BY JOHN CARROLL.

THE RATIFYING CONFERENCE.—1833.

This was the second Conference held in our Western Metropolis, down to that time called the town of York. It was purposely placed late in the season, October 2nd, to give time for our Representative to attend the British Conference in mid-summer and to return to Canada. On our arrival in York we found him returned, somewhat refreshed up with his sea-voyage. Accompanying his return were the Rev. George Marsden, one of the Missionary Secretaries, who, in the event of the Union being consummated, was to preside in our Conference; and the Rev. Joseph Stinson, brisk and beautiful, who, on the satisfactory settlement of the same contingency, was to be our superintendent of Missions. Mr. Stinson had all the energy and push required by his prospective office, but there was almost too much dash about him to take at the first blush with Canadian Methodists of that day, who associated a demure deportment, if not a long face, with the ministerial office. Mr. S., however, soon gained upon them. But Mr. Marsden was the very *beau ideal* of a venerable minister in the estimation of all that saw him. Though neat and genteel, he was plain and apostolic in his appearance and manners, while the unpretending and simple beauty and ability of his sermons, joined to their melting pathos and unctious, subdued hostility at once. There was a quaver in his voice that added to the interest of what he said.

There were some earnest discussions on the amendments or modifications of our proposals as returned by the British Conference; but after the explanations of Mr. Marsden, all material hostility gave way, and the ARTICLES OF UNION were finally and formally ratified; and the Minutes say, "unanimously" ratified. This was brought about by the earnest exhortations of some of them who had been most opposed to the measure before the vote was finally taken. I can remember this having been done especially by the Rev. James Richardson, a very influential member of the Conference, and regarded as a very upright man—that we might present an unbroken front to the connexion and the country. All voted in favor but two: Joseph Gatchel, who had been hostile throughout, when he saw the vote about to be put, hastily ran out of the house. Old Mr. Whitehead, who had contended against the measure

"tooth and nail," when the "opposite" was called for, rose, and smoothing down his waist-coat, said, "I am straight up and down." It made a laugh, and was considered so much of a joke that the vote was recorded as *unanimous*. And certain it is that no man more cordially co-operated to carry out the Union than Mr. W. Indeed, the agents of the British Conference within our ranks gave the first opponents of the Union the credit of being conscientious men, and the sturdiest maintainers of the Union after it was formed. If the breaking up of that Union, seven years after, was in any measure due to improprieties of Canadians, those improprieties were not to be found in that section of the Conference I have mentioned.

On the passing of this vote the Rev. Mr. Marsden took the chair, and our Annual Conference assumed its present double character, legislative as well as administrative, an admixture of powers by no means desirable when a body becomes so large and unwieldy as ours has grown to be. This Conference was memorable for the ordination of a large number of brethren, whom the want of a bishop for five years had left un-ordained, or in partial orders. Twenty-one were admitted to full ministerial orders at once. It was encouraging to any who had any lingering clinging to our old presbyterian episcopacy to hear Mr. Marsden state, as he did in the open Conference, that he was a true Methodist bishop, according to the American notions of it, Dr. Cooke having given him letters of episcopal ordination before his departure to India, to provide against any possible contingency. It is a pleasing reflection that enough of us were episcopally ordained at that time to give validity to all the ordinations that have since taken place!

During the year 1832-33, while matters were pending, parties friendly to the advent of British preachers into the Province had built a chapel on George Street, and by some means obtained a missionary, the Rev. John Barry, a man of great eloquence, who, after the Union was effected, was removed to the Bermudas, and died soon after. We met him and the Rev. Mr. Hetherington in the streets, but neither appeared in our Conference. People of their prejudiced type were much scandalized at the Union—on the terms on which it was effected, and said that "Mr. Ryerson had *Enorized* the British Conference," referring to the settlement that the Rev. John Emory had effected in 1820. That was the first Conference held in Adelaide Street Church, and we are now holding the last.

POWER IN THE PULPIT.

Why has the pulpit no more power? It has a great deal. There is more croaking about this matter than the facts will justify. You would think to hear good men bemoaning and bad men scoffing, that the ministers in a town had just about the influence of a half-dozen solemn-faced owls in the woods. But there are no other men in the town who carry half their personal weight. They cannot turn rakes into saints, it is true; or bring in the millennium at a day's notice. But they are at the head of whatever good thing is getting under way, and it is hard to start a new enterprise that has their faces set against it. There was a case of that kind in New York during the war. The managers of the great Fair for the Sanitary Commission, were to have, as a part of it, a grand raffle. They asked the ministers to support the fair. The ministers hinted that the raffle should be dropped. The managers resolved not to drop it. The ministers resolved that they should. And, though the fight was hard, they had to do it. Ministers are not nobodies, and no man of sense despises them.

But why does not the pulpit carry more power, and draw more hearers? It is easy to answer, because preachers are not heartily enough in earnest. True enough no doubt. But that is too general an answer. Is there any more special reason? Because, then, they do not speak so as to get the ear of the people. But why do they not? Some of them have absurd, fastidious tastes about the use of words—tastes that are as foppish as any dandy's anxiety about the color of his cravat. But far more of them are simply afraid, to use a plain, homely word.

They are bold enough as to some things. But they are cowardly here. Men who, before the war, could face a scowling congregation of hunkers, and preach abolition; men who, now, can look rumsellers in the face and preach temperance, are scared at the apparition of a blunt, old Saxon noun or verb.

The words that common men use every day, in the shops and along the street, are too plain looking to get into the pulpit. As men must change their dress when they go to a king's court, so must ideas when they enter the church. The preacher must keep up his reputation for culture and refinement. It might damage that to call things by the names that every body knows them by. Some college-ephemors in the congregation might shrug his shoulders. Some boarding-school miss might turn up her nose. And so a plain fact or thing must be tricked out in some fine word, in which it figures about as fitly as an organ-grinder's monkey in his blue trousers and red jacket.

Business is "the avocations of life." A man's face is his "countenance." His nose must never be mentioned. A shop is an "emporium of trade." Kitchen work is "culinary cares." Dry goods and groceries are "commodities." Clothes are "raiment." Boots are not to be named. Streets are "thoroughfares." Farm-

ing is "husbandry." A girl is "a young maiden." A locomotive is "the iron horse." New York is "our chief commercial mart." And so on.

Now what is a man to infer from all this rhetorical starch and backram, but that his every-day duties are too vulgar for God's notice? At least he will conclude that between his work and his worship, there is a great gulf fixed, and that neither of them has any business with the other.

And sacred matters are served in the same way. Nothing gets the name it is known by outside the church. Going to church is "frequenting the sanctuary." The Bible is "the Divine oracles." Ministers are "the ambassadors of the Lord." The spread of religion is "the prospering of Zion." Heaven is "the better world," and hell is "perdition."

Now, if a minister would get the ear of the people, he must call to them in some different language from that. He must use the speech, not of an Old Mortality, with his back toward the nineteenth century, and looking into the dark ages, but of that of a live man of the year of grace 1870. Such a man will feel that he has better business than catering to any literary epicure. As a doctor prepares his medicines not for a patient's palate, but for his vital, so such a preacher will shape his words, not for his hearers' taste, but for their souls. He will not be afraid to come home and down, to things about him. He will, for instance, name a town or street that he has any occasion to mention. He will not talk of "our honored chief magistrate," but of General Grant—not of "a neighboring city," but of New York, or Boston.

When he comes to apply religion to life and to daily business, he will have nothing to say of "our secular concerns." He will speak of farming, or shoemaking, or the dry goods trade, or whatever his people are about through the week. And when he rebukes and warns, you will not hear him going off into any variety of generalities about the exceeding sinfulness of sin. He will go among his people and find out by talking with them how it is men in their special lines of business do their cheating. Then he will take his information into the pulpit and use it in detail.

It is strange that we have never learned from the Master's style of teaching to throw off these pulpit conventionalities. The truth is, the antiquated style of our English Bible gives His words a stiffness that does not belong to them. What homely things he takes for illustrations! Trees, vines, bumble-bushes, sparrows, ravens, lilies, fish-nets, specks in men's eyes, wine bottles, donkeys tumbling into pits, children's squabbles in the market places, pearl-traders, burglars, candles and bushel measures, prognostications of the weather, servants waiting on the table, the patching up of old clothes, to say nothing of child-birth, and other matters never mentioned among us to ears polite—fancy one of our grave divines bringing affairs like these into his pulpit! We are too refined for any such kind of speech as Jesus used. It would shock our sense of propriety.

But—whether ministers know it, or ever will know it, or not—the people are hungering for just this naturalness and plainness in the pulpit. We have a notable instance just now in Brooklyn. Dr. R. S. Storrs, Jr., with a national reputation, has had, till recently, a large, but not extraordinary, audience of highly cultivated hearers. But since his people began repairs on their church, and went into the Academy of Music, he has had a multitude around him every Sabbath, equal to the crowd at Plymouth Church. Why is it? Some say—because he throws away his manuscript, and speaks extempore. No, it is not that; for he did that more than half the time before. The reason is, that he has *changed his style*. He calls plain things by plain names. He puts truth in the concrete instead of the abstract. He makes his hearers feel the hold that religion has on business-affairs and family life. And, while cultured persons are as deeply interested as ever (for *really* cultured persons have some common sense), the common people also hear him gladly. Would to God that every pastor was like him.

GOING TO OUR CHURCH.

Going to our church has so much good in it for some people, and so little benefit for others, that we have often tried to find out the reason of the difference.

It is perhaps more in the people themselves, than in other things. As for instance two persons may take a walk, and both see the same beautiful fields and hills, the same flowers and trees, the same sky and stars; and yet one may be refreshed and the other be as dull as ever.

So in going to church. One may go with a prepared heart, hungry and thirsting for the words of truth, and attentive to the services, of devotion, and prayerfully waiting for God's blessing. Such a one will be refreshed and made better. Another may go with a thoughtless heart, careless in the divine services, and inattentive to the same means which helped the other to become stronger in grace.

Thus some get the good of it, in going to church, while others do not seem to get any benefit at all. It is not the fault of the church or of the divine services, that the grace of the gospel which brings salvation to one, does not to all. It is a savor of life unto some, and a savor of death unto others.

To get the good of it, either in Sunday-school or church, prepare your heart by thought and prayer for divine grace, as the

farmer prepares his field for the seed. Then use with faithful care the means of grace. Attend with wakeful soul to all the duties of divine worship while at church. Go away with the true seed in your heart. Do not let the thorns choke it, or the birds steal it away. Think and pray before you go. Be devoutly alive while there, and take good care, on your way home, not to lose the good seed until you pray over it again. This is the way to get the good of it, and the Lord Jesus will bless you and save you.

We all feel more interest in "our Church" than in any other. This is right. "Our Church" for each one is the best.

"Mamma, isn't our Church the best in the world?" said a little child one day.

"Yes, my dear, for us it is the best," was the proper reply.

"Should not every body, then, come to our Church?" the child naturally asked.

"No, dear! We would like to see more people come to our Church, but it could not hold every body, and every body would not feel at home there. Besides, some would have to leave their Church, which they love as much as we do ours."

This is no doubt the right spirit. We all may feel that our family is a nice home, and while we may wish that all had such a good place to live so happily, yet we could not, if we would, take every body from their homes and put them into ours. We may find room for some strangers, and rejoice that we can, besides keeping the dear children given to us, give also a home to the destitute, homeless ones, who come to us for such a blessing.

So with our Church. Be it ever so humble, we can still feel that ours is the dearest to us. We may be excused for loving our dear religious home. In it our fathers lived and died in the faith. To us they left the sacred heritage of their piety, zeal, and martyr spirit for the truth. To children and to children's children, has the savor of their names descended as a goodly legacy in the spiritual home where we now dwell. For what it is to them, and for what it is to us, do we love our Church. It is "our Church."

If "our Church" is so much to us, we ought to show our love. It is right to keep all our children in our home. So "our Church" ought to provide for all her children. Teach them to know and love the truth as found in the faith and practice of our fathers. This will not begot bigotry, but a love for holding fast that which is good.

Then, we have some spare room, too, for strangers. The free and genial spirit of our Church invites others to her loving bosom. There is much in our Church which fits her to go into all the world and make disciples. Not only where we have "material," or destitute members, but wherever the gospel is needed, there let "our Church" open her doors and invite the poor, the hungry, the lame, the sick, the blind, the dying sinners, to come to the Gospel feast prepared, and in the Savior's love find room, and rest, and eternal life.

A GRAVE WITHOUT A MONUMENT.

The noblest of the cemeteries is the ocean. Its poetry is, and in human language ever will be, unwritten. Its elements of sublimity are subjects of feeling, not description. Its records, like the reflection mirrored on its waveless bosom, can not be transferred to paper. Its vastness, its eternal heavings, its majestic music in a storm, and its perils, are things which I had endeavored a thousand times to conceive; but until I was on its mighty bosom, looking out upon its moving mountain waves, feeling that eternity was distant from me the thickness of a single plank. I had tried in vain to feel and know the glories and grandeur of the sea. I then first felt what John of Patmos meant when he said of heaven, "There shall be no more sea." But there is one element of sublimity which impressed my mind, and which I should be pleased if I could transfer in all its vividness to the minds of my readers. The sea is the largest of cemeteries, and all its slumberers sleep without a monument. All other graveyards, in all lands, show some symbols of distinction between the great and the small, the rich and the poor; but in that ocean cemetery, the king and the clown, the prince and the peasant, are alike undistinguished. The same wave rolls over all, the same requiem, by the same minstrelsy of the ocean, is sung to their honor. Over their remains the storms beat, and the sun shines; and there unmarked, the weak and the powerful, the plumed and the un-honoured will sleep on until awakened by the same trump, the sea will give up its dead. I thought of sailing over the slumbering but devoted Cookman, who, after his brief but brilliant career, perished in the *President*; over the laughing Power, who went down in the same ill-fated vessel, we may have passed. In that cemetery sleeps the accomplished and pious Fisher; but where he and thousands of others of the noblest spirits of earth lie, no one but God knoweth. No marble rises to point out where their ashes are gathered, or where the lover of the good and wise can go and shed the tears of sympathy. Who can tell where lie the tens of thousands of Africa's sons who perished in the "middle passage" yet that cemetery hath ornaments of which no other can boast. No other are heavenly orbs reflected in such splendour. Over no other is heard such noble melody. In no other are so many inimitable traces of the power of Jehovah. Never can I forget my days and nights as I passed over the noblest of cemeteries without a single human monument.—*British Workman*.

SUMMER PIETY.

At this season we are accustomed to hear from week to week of the discontinuance of the various religious services whose usual attendants are either "out of town," or out of inclination to engage in public worship. The first suspension of this sort which we find on record this year is that of the preaching at the new-boys' lodging houses. These lively young nomads are no less ready to forsake the assembling of themselves together for purposes of spiritual culture when the weather grows warm than are those denizens of up-town houses who, when they fly to Newport, Saratogo, or "the country," leave their religion and their winter garments "jacked away in a drawer." We are not disposed to regard religion as a mere matter of clothes, but still there is an analogy which it may be profitable to consider. The wearing of fewer and less formal external observances may be justifiable at times, providing the soul maintains an unusual degree of spiritual warmth and activity. If Christians go to church less frequently in summer time than in winter, it should be for the reason that they are able to meet God oftener elsewhere; if they give up the Sunday School class, it should be because they have found unusual opportunities to teach in the house and by the way; if they listen to fewer sermons, and work less in local societies, it should be because they do more preaching themselves, and apply their benevolence more directly to individuals whom they meet in their temporary tabernacles. There will be no real loss from the abandonment of the heavier formalities which help to retain the soul's vital heat if there is a high and steady moral temperature.

But we give seasonable warning that our earthly summers are subject to frequent and sudden changes. Absence from church-homes is certain to increase the danger of "catching cold." To keep out of worldly draughts, to resist the fatal desire to "cool off," will be no easy thing for our emigrating city folks.

Therefore, we say confidently: Take along, at least, your winter underclothing. Even if your attendance on public worship is sometimes interrupted, don't leave private prayer behind. Take along an extra shawl, at the risk of not needing it every day. Have some plan of Christian work, although it may be often broken in upon. Narrowly observe the weather; and watch unto prayer.—*Christian Union*.

HAVE FAITH IN GOD.

The ever present and unyielding demand of the sacred Scriptures is faith in God. Its necessity is such, that without it there can be no salvation. Have faith, therefore, in spite of mystery. A religion without mystery is impossible. Life itself is a mystery, every object around us is involved in mystery. If such is the nature of temporal things, can we expect less of spiritual? "If I have told you of earthly things, and ye understand not, how shall ye understand, if I tell you of Heavenly things."

Have faith in spite of difficulties. Suppose the way is hedged with poverty, temptation, persecution, difficulty and delay?

"Faith, mighty faith, the promise sees,
And looks to that alone;
Laughs at impossibilities,
And cries, it shall be done."

Have faith in God in spite of *abounding wickedness*. This is one of the greatest sources of affliction and trial to the people of God. But remember Daniel! Did he lose his faith in God, because all around him were given to idolatry? No! And God delivered him out of the lions' mouths. Go read the eleventh chapter of Hebrews once more.

In spite of the world, the flesh and the devil, have faith in God. Trust in Him; for in the Lord Jehovah is everlasting strength. Think of past experience of his mercy, recall the many promises of his word. Consider his ability, willingness and truthfulness; and trust him with all your interests for time and eternity. Said a dying sister, who had been very timid in health, "Oh, if I had a thousand souls, I could now trust them all on one single promise of God. But instead thereof I have but one soul, and a thousand promises of the ever truthful God upon which to depend." Such may be our daily victory through faith, over all fears of death, hell and the grave. "Have faith in God."

REMARKABLE USE OF A HYMN.

The late Rev. Hugh Stowell, of Manchester, at a public meeting, related an incident, which very touchingly illustrates this hymn of Cowper—"God moves in a mysterious way." One of the Lancashire mill-owners, who had struggled long to keep his hands employed during the cotton famine arising from the American War, 1865, at last found it impossible to proceed, and, calling his work-people together, told them he should be compelled, after the usual notice, to close his mills. The news was received with sadness and sympathy. To them it meant privation and suffering, to him it might be ruin. None cared to speak in reply, when suddenly arose the voice of song from one of the girls, who was a Sunday-school teacher, and who, feeling it to be an occasion requiring Divine help and guidance, gave out the verse of Cowper's hymn:

Ye fearful saints, fresh courage take,
The clouds ye so much dread
Are big with mercy, and shall break
In blessings on your head.

All the mill-hands joined in singing the verse amidst deep emotion.