

THE WESLEYAN.

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 28, 1878.

THE NEW YEAR.

"Ring out wild bells to the wild sky,  
The flying cloud, the frosty light:  
The year is dying in the night;  
Ring out, wild bells, and let him die."

In a little while Anno Domini, 1878, will have followed the years that have gone before it. O, how very quickly it has flown. It seems but as yesterday since we welcomed its coming, and now we are called to bid it adieu. Truly, Time flies, and flies, too, on noiseless wing. No rustling attends its swift motion, save the mournful rustling of the falling leaves, which reminds us that the year has almost gone. Like the silent planets which speed through space undemonstratively, so the revolving years fulfil their course. Time trends on downy feet; it has no echo, save the beating and the throbbing of the heart. It carries no jingling sleigh-bells to herald its approach. It is here—it is gone. And yet how distinct are its foot-prints. Its work, who cannot discern? Its magic touch has silvered the raven head, lined the marble brow, and bent the erect and stalwart form, transforming rosy youth into wrinkled age, and ripening the green of inexperience into the gold of wisdom.

With the passing year, the wheel of fortune has been revolving, bringing sad changes to some, blighting brightest and fondest hopes. Familiar faces have vanished. Happy voices are hushed. Homes once all astir with merriment are still to-day, save the sobbing of sorrow that refuses to be comforted, for the angel of death has done his work. Thus the flying moments are the slender threads that are ever weaving our winding sheet.

As we stand at the open grave of the departing year, we cannot but reflect what puny creatures we are, and what a tiny thing human life is, and how narrow is the world we live in, when compared to the great Hereafter that awaits us. And yet we ourselves, and our real life, and the sphere we fill, expand with our growth of thought, dilating with the ever-widening circle of our purer affections, until the cherished hope of an immortal life is lost in eternity itself. Indeed, a man determines for himself the magnitude as well as the character of his own life. For example: The little spider draws its thread across the corner of the room, where it weaves its circular web, and hollows out its tiny cell in the centre of its geometrical lines, and that is its world. Now, its world is small, because itself is small. Again: watch the gleeful child as it toddles about its narrow nursery, flourishing its rattle-box, or swinging upon its rocking-horse. That is its world. Now its world is small simply because it knows no other. Further: The thoughtless school-boy goes forth and back from school in the dull monotony of his daily tasks, until holiday times come round, when, in search of some new attraction, or in the sheer vivacity of his flowing spirits, he climbs a neighboring hill, and, lo, he is surprised to find that the world is much bigger than he had ever imagined, and it dawns upon his opening mind that, after all, there is some truth in the geography he has been taught at school. Thus the circle of his mind dilates with his widening knowledge, and to him "the world is more and more." Yet again: take the man of the world, a man selfishly devoted to pleasure and personal aggrandisement. With himself for a centre, he describes a circle, enclosing within its limits his own material interests; and that is his world, measured off by himself, fenced in by his own individual interests, and all outside that circle is nebular vacancy to him, and just as indefinite as the astronomer's milky-way. We next instance the philosopher. Being a man of thought and imagination he takes a broader, a more liberal view of things. He rules the empire of mind; and in his excursions of thought, he traverses an extent of territory that knows no lines of latitude or longitude. And that is his world. But compare with any one of these the Christian man's world, an

O, what a contrast. It is an infinite orb an eternal duration. Immortal in himself, redeemed by an infinite price, he laughs at the fleeting years; he defies the assaults of death; for his world is eternity; his life is immortal, and his centre is God. The material world around him is God's palace—His country seat. The tall mountains are its proud turrets. Its carpeted floor is spread with beauty. Its lofty canopy is filled with music. The sun is its light by day, and at night the clustering stars, like a shimmering chandelier, shine down upon it. Beautiful world! But the Christian only lingers here awhile, enjoying and sharing its good things with its proprietor—God—and then he hies away to another and a better world beyond.

Now, it is because of this expanding life that the passing years are so precious. The sands of Time, falling from the hour-glass of this mortal life, are golden. The shining moments as they flit away shimmer in the sunlight of yonder heavens, like a glistening dew-drop bathed in the beams of morning, and each moment is pregnant with destiny. On the dial at All Souls, Oxford, England, are these words—*Per eunt et imputantur*—The hours perish and are laid to our charge. Hark! Tick, tick, tick! beat the lingering moments of the dying year. But it dies, like good old Simeon, with the Saviour in its embrace, having a blessing on its lips. Can we not read by the fading light of this departing year the bright, red lettered, perfumed memoranda of the Divine mercies? Let our grateful minds run up the columns and calculate, if we can, the sum of them. He has, indeed, crowned the year with His goodness. So that, wiping the involuntary tear-drop from our eye, we would feast upon the opening mercies of a new year. May the old year be the grave of our sins, and may the new year be the cradle of new-born hopes; then will our readers enjoy—*A happy New Year.*

FAREWELLS.

The air is full of good-byes. To the old year we all extend a loving, sympathetic hand, with a lingering kiss upon the fingers. It has been to most a good year; to some a painful, but sanctified year; to a few a ruinous, but suggestive year, whose lessons will help to make future time the brighter. Kindly we help to bury the Old; hopefully we proceed to crown the New.

Specially sad are some of the farewells which come to editors frequently with December. They are so regular as almost to assume the character of an annual circumstance, and thus take away the first regrets that belong to editorial severances. But this year they are more numerous and more sorrowful than usual. One writes that he parts with the WESLEYAN as with a very dear friend; another, that he has paid nearly sixty dollars for this paper, one year with another, and now must relinquish it through necessity; a third declares—a mother she is, too—that the WESLEYAN has helped her and hers,—that she has persisted in holding it up, hoping for better times, but she must stop it now. And so on. Comments, too, come to us on the causes of this depression. A subscriber, giving up, declares he has lost all hope through the recklessness of politicians, the increase of taxes, &c. By the way, this element of taxes seems to be a frequent apology in relation to money payments when they become due. We suppose there is an explanation of the phenomenon.

Oh that we were but rich! A fund to meet the really needy members of the Christian Churches, by way of continuing to them their religious paper, would be a merciful fund. There are already nearly one hundred copies of the WESLEYAN sent out to such persons every week, through the benevolence of those who look for their reward in eternity, and this year we could easily find good use for three times the amount placed at our disposal for this charity. Who will help?

To our readers, from whom now we are to be separated, in this literary way, we extend the most kindly good-bye. Some of them have not closed

their connection with our paper without saying words to the editor which will long dwell in his memory. It is one of the noticeable things to a person who leaves the full work of the ministry for a more retired place, that smiles, and benedictions, and kind words—to say nothing of turkeys and geese!—do not fly so thickly as was their wont. But to us Christmas and New Year have brought gifts better than donations. "God bless you," says one, in closing his letter. We will not add what follows. We simply reciprocate the benediction. God bless thee and with thee, all our readers, going or remaining. Life is our's while it lasts, to improve, to obey and to submit.

THE REPRESENTATIVE PRINCIPLE AND INVITATIONS.

The system of inviting Methodist Ministers has always been considered quite in harmony with the spirit of Methodism and the genius of christianity. Until within the last few years it had several arguments, not one of which can it advance to-day. We have recently added to our constitution a few features which seem to us to conflict so completely with the inviting principle that either one or the other should be given up. We have now these provisions for securing an impartial and thoroughly representative Stationing Committee:—

1. Chairmen of Districts, elected by Ministers in Annual Conference, on the Stationing Committee—*ex officio*.
2. A minister from each District elected by ordained Ministers, Probationers and Laymen.
3. A ruling of General Conference, equivalent to a law, that no minister subject to removal shall be elected by a District Meeting to the Stationing Committee.

Here is as complete a system for securing unselfish and dispassionate action in stationing ministers as can possibly be invented within the limits of our economy. How does this correspond with the system of Invitations?

A minister accepts an invitation. That is one vote. He virtually stations himself. He attends District Meeting and helps to elect a man to the Stationing Committee. That is a second vote. He then goes to Conference and helps to elect a Chairman (or, what is the same thing, he has discharged this duty in the Conference of the previous year); this gives him three votes in relation to stations. By the first vote (accepting an invitation) he excludes all his brethren from voting in his own case. We know this seems to accept the theory that a Stationing Committee has no power over invitations, which we do not admit; but we have seen enough of such cabinet-work to feel convinced that opposing invitations there is a disagreeable duty, and hence, one seldom attempted. But the invited minister, who has shut out the right of his brethren in regard to stationing him, does not refrain from helping to station them by electing representatives to Stationing Committee. He denies their right over him, while he holds to his right over them.

Similarly, a Quarterly-meeting, by inviting a minister, excludes all representatives from the right of appointing to its pulpits. It, however, elects to District Meeting, men who in turn are to elect representatives to fill the pulpits of other circuits. Thus it claims for itself a double right; while it knows that two of every three circuits are debared through weakness from exercising the principle of invitation, it still sends representatives to station their ministers after it has decided matters in regard to its own.

This preference to strong circuits is another glaring inconsistency in our economy. Ten men in one Quarterly-meeting may invite because they have the means of paying their minister. Ten men in an adjoining Quarterly-meeting, with the same wisdom, piety and loyalty to the church, are prohibited from inviting, because they receive a grant. Here is an organization, professing to be connexional, which yet accords to one-half of its officials a congregational form of government, as relates to ministerial calls, and denies it to the other half. It favours

the rich;—its customs of appointments (we will not say its laws, for there is no law favouring invitations) are against the poor. These are hard inferences; but, then, logic is always hard.

To be consistent, therefore, as we see it, one of three things ought to be done:—

1. Abolish the system of electing representatives to the Stationing Committee; or
2. Let inviting circuits and ministers refrain from taking part in such elections. (In that case we would see a piece of machinery with every other wheel idle); or
3. Dispense with invitations altogether.

In this latter case we apprehend the calamity would not be so serious as some imagine. Men who are great now would be as great then. Circuits rich, and fond of good preaching and administration, would be as frequently satisfied as under the present arrangement. If applications came regularly to the Stationing Committee, that masterful thing the Telegraph would keep matters well subordinated to the interests of our best circuits. So the London Conference thought when it resolved to pay no attention to invitations, and so it finds by practical experiment.

We say nothing of the advantages or disadvantages of the present system. The former are apparent enough from one stand-point; the latter do not diminish with the passing years.

To preserve this little article from the danger of failing in its mission through any suspicion of jealousy or interested motives, we may add that the writer has had his full share of invitations—that he has accepted some and declined others. As a tribute to the validity of his own arguments, however, he may say, that his soul has been quite as happy and his labours as prosperous when stationed in the connexional way as when settled by invitation. He attempts no judgment for others. There are doubtless experiences the opposite, and they deserve all respect. But we desire to see our economy consistent. At present we are legislating perpetually in the direction of a purely democratic form of government, while one-third or one-half of our circuits and ministers hold to a self-governing system. Let us either go back or go forward. Work out the new representative principle in all its details, and accept its inevitable outcome, or take up the threads of government as our fathers left them, weaving out an order of things which shall subject every case of stationing not fixed in advance to a purely Confederal judgment.

EDITORIAL NOTES.

A MONTREAL dispatch states that the case of the Church of Scotland against the Temporalities fund of the Presbyterian Church of Canada, has been dismissed in Court of Appeal.

BAYARD TAYLOR, the distinguished American traveller, one of the chief of American writers, a lecturer of wide repute, a diplomatist and a man of benevolent disposition, died at Berlin last week. He was American minister in that country.

We were in error last week in regard to the sceptical lecturer at the St. John, N. B., Mechanic's Institute. It was a Mr. Dole from Boston, not the President of the Institute, who detailed second-hand suggestions as to Christian fallacies. The President we are glad to hear is a devout Episcopalian.

FAILURES are still announced on both sides of the Atlantic. In parts of Scotland, Glasgow particularly, the poverty, resulting from the breaking up of the bank of that name, is unparalleled. Our own local papers give weekly records of compromises and bankruptcies. A west of England Bank, with forty-two branches, has suspended. Its liabilities are \$17,500,000.

A PUBLIC meeting was held last week in Fredericton, N. B., managed entirely by women. They sold tickets and changed the cash, examined tickets at the entrance, took charge of the gallery, filled the chair, held the President's and ex-President's offices, flanked the lecturer—a man—on right and left of the platform, announced the lecturer and his subject, in fact worked things generally. It is declared the experiment succeeded remarkably.

A Mr. DAVIS has been establishing libraries in the Annapolis Valley, professing to hold connection with the Harper Bros., of New York. In the face of the absurdity that such a rich and flourishing House could descend to run a circulating library business, the man actually succeeds in carrying away some hundreds of dollars. Harpers have written in answer to applications, saying they know nothing of this man or his business, and employ no agents. There is immense credulity in these Provinces for plausible cash theories.

How little is thought of the quaint expressions of childhood. For instance, one little girl asked her father a few days ago—"Papa, who are our forefathers?" "Well," was the reply, "your father and your grandfather and your great-grandfather." "Who else," she persisted, "that is only three?" Another, a four years-old, calls to her mother—"I do believe I have a heart in my tooth!" What a conceit! Are these the deductions of the young brain in its first processes of reasoning? Are they not simply the natural first conclusions of philosophy? Children are worthy of more study than we usually give them.

A SMALL attendance came last week, to the Halifax Bible Society Anniversary. This seems to be an annual occurrence. What is the secret? The branch is well officered. Hon. S. L. Shannon, himself a host, is its president. There are ministers enough on the Committee—only two Methodist, by the way, while every pastor and professor of the Presbyterian Church is on—to make the institution a power. It is a Protestant cause, essentially a bond of union between the churches, and a mighty agency of light and wisdom. Yet, while the Society prospers financially, it is met with beggarly houses. Who shall solve this riddle?

GOLD AT PAR! This is the Christmas-box of the Finance Minister of the United States to Uncle Sam. For the most of twenty years, Bulls and Bears—the one goring or tossing gold up, the other tearing it down—have held a central fighting arena in New York. Much good was done there in one way, but vast evil also to the nation's life. Fortunes were quickly made—novices, even shrewd men, were as quickly beggared. Scenes there sometimes were appalling for excitement and passion. Now the Gold-ma'ket is to be abolished! A great mystery and a most curious centre of study drops out of that nation's life, never again to be restored except—which God forbid!—the days of the nation's agony may come back again.

JUDGE MARSHALL gives in another column his judgment on the philosophy of "Parson Brown," noticed by us recently as a pamphlet hailing from Charlottetown. The Judge received a copy accompanied by a Postal Card, intimating that the pamphlet was being largely circulated, was of dangerous teaching, &c., and urging him to "expose it." Curiously enough, Postal Cards came, in the same handwriting, to this office and other places in this city, commending Parson Brown. The Parson we assume is a youthful wag; but he ought to be careful with all his freshness of style and undoubted ability, in playing with edge-tools. Great men have handled theological scymitars before now much to the injury of others. The Word is a piercing two-edged sword when properly used—to slay sin; it is possible to handle it so that it may wound both the religious teacher and the religious learner.

IN fighting the battles of morality the religious papers get small sympathy, as a common thing, from the secular, political dailies. Once in a while these journals get into a controversy which happens to have a moral feature or two, in which case they wax indignant because the religious papers do not come to their help. Such a contest is now going on in this city between a man named Baker and the Editor of the Reporter. The contest has its personal aspects. So far we have no interest in their quarrel. As to the moral element, we can only say that the WESLEYAN has not shunned its duty in regard to the vile publication of Baker, which the Reporter professes now to be anxious to suppress. According to the estimate which is made of the circulation of the infamous fortnightly over which the Reporter is in good working indignation, something nearly ten reams of paper have been devoted, at one time and another, to the abuse of the Editor of the WESLEYAN. We are glad to see the Reporter at work fairly on this line and hope it will fight it out. Our grievance is not half so much with the bad man who publishes the bad paper, as with the good people who read and buy it, and with the guardians of our civic interests who wink at it, while it is polluting our youth. No man making any pretensions to decency will be caught in the act of handing it without making an apology; no woman having a right to the name will read it at all. Yet it is sold, circulated through the country, and called

in the inst... coup... very... Fr... aw... than... liter... pulp... duty... on as... work... tide... he cal... perha... help... deem... than... when... sleep...  
Circuit... report... pers... scrip... paper... please...  
O U...  
Rev... Bernu...  
We along... our god... ness on... good... our bes... Bro. J... acquaint... but dil... and wa... of frien... her is...  
Rev... ago let...  
I am... as I can... age is... The to... The co... shore... land... sav... than it... very w...  
YAR... given... day ev... The el... gram... mirabl... which... way a...  
Seve... held i... Metho... very... Passag... Robert...  
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