

We have heard but from very few... We have heard but from very few...

THE WESLEYAN.

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 21, 1878.

A CHRISTMAS CAROL.

BY DR. J. G. HOLLAND.

There's a song in the air! There's a star in the sky! There's a mother's deep prayer...

There's a tumult of joy! O'er the wonderful birth, For the virgin's sweet boy...

In the light of that star Lie the ages unpearled; And that song from afar...

We rejoice in the light, And we echo the song: 'Tis the coming of the King...

CHRISTMAS.

The season of the Nativity—the Nativity—is again upon us. Are there any causes why it should not be observed as reverently, gratefully, sincerely as before?

Within the past twenty years there have been more than that number of lives of Christ written and sent out among the world of readers.

And why have those books failed to set the subject at rest? Are they not eloquent, learned and exhaustive? Surely less than twenty biographers would have wearied the world, and drained the market, with their descriptions of any other character, or leader, or philosophy.

What, then, is the secret of this perpetual freshness in Christ as an object of study? Surely, the Divine in Him—a supernatural something, which defies the philosophers and scholar's pen to-day, as it has eluded the painter's brush in ages gone by.

As with Christ's character, so with His teachings. Instead of wearying of them, the hungry-hearted multitudes continue to listen to them and live by them.

tes, brought down, as Cicero said, "from the heavens to the earth" has ceased to charm, or if its charm, ceased to astonish and move mankind. The Platonic dialogues are dead. Christ's words alone, of all the wisdom of the past, continues to influence the human mind in the sense of controlling it.

Our Christmas may well be joyous, inasmuch as it takes us by a pathway of mediation and confidence which leads from the manger to a Throne;—from the cradle to a universal and united kingdom and conquest. Christ reigns, shall reign, "must reign till he hath put all enemies under His feet."

CAPTIVITY TO THE OBEDIENCE OF CHRIST.

"The noblest study of mankind is God," and not man; for while "other men are lenses through which we read our own minds," the human manifestation of the Deity, in the person of Jesus Christ, is both a picture and a prophecy of what we ought to be.

Now, it is the sublime character of our Pattern which gives to his person a matchless pre-eminence, lifting him up above all that is merely human, and magnetizing him before the vision of the mind. It is his character that lifts him up from the earth and that draws all men unto him.

There is a tradition in the Northern Highlands of Scotland of a saintly old elder, the admiration of the parish for humble, consistent godliness, one of the typical men whose lives preach to the ages sermons more convincing than whole treatises on Christian evidences.

It follows, therefore, that all growth of soul is simply a conformity and subordination to the character of Christ. It is a "bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ."

Christ, whose service is freedom. It still wears a yoke, but the yoke is easy and the burden is light. And why should not the soul be subject to law? Now, the fact is, there can be no true development or activity without respect to some superior law.

And is not this "captivity of obedience," as the Apostle phrases it, the very soul of piety? We are Christs. Our life is hid with Christ in God. Each can say: "I live, yet not I, but Christ liveth in me."

A HOMILY ON DREAMING IN CHURCH.

There are churches which predispose to dreams. To a contemplative mind there are endless suggestions in the play of variegated light, as it streams from stained windows over pillars and alcoves and cornices, especially if the sonorous notes of an organ sink and swell in muffled echoes among the recesses overhead.

The truth is, the spirit of trade is all the time crowding out the spirit of devotion, and only the presence and power of Christ shall drive it away. There are causes for this Sunday reverie. It will be found that it varies with the constitution of individuals, with their position in life, their mental habits, but particularly with their religious character.

1. Church dreams are often due to distractions of business. When commerce is agitated as it is now, stunned and baffled in its favorite pursuits, it makes stouter efforts to maintain its hold upon the minds of men.

Reader, have you ever found yourself pondering over that seeming anomalous circumstance in the life-work of our Lord—the expulsion of buyers and sellers from the Temple! There is, firstly, the amazing contradiction which such an event appears to offer to all that we have ever read of Jewish habits and inclinations as regards the house of God.

stand. Every possible means was used, by instruction and example, to communicate from parent to child a supreme regard for the Deity, and for the Temple as His chief dwelling-place. So deeply has this principle sunk into the minds of the race, that a photograph of the ruins of that sacred edifice is said by Madame de Gasparin to have drawn tears and cries of mingled sorrow and admiration from wandering Jews in Poland within a few years past.

But is not that same bit of history being repeated in all the ages and in all the churches of Christendom? What marvel, when the same laws are at work, and the same elements are operated upon? Good man or woman, having anything to do with worldly responsibilities, what is thine own experience? Has it never happened to thee that, sitting in the sanctuary, dressed in most respectable Sunday wear, and brought hither with the best possible intentions, the preacher was scarcely fairly launched on his second proposition, when thy soul and intellect went back in the business of the past, or forward in the plans of the coming week?

Flatter not thyself, complacent preacher, that all the fixedness of gaze, the quiet, meditative demeanour of the congregation, is solely due to the sermon—is a compliment to thy eloquence! Much of it may be. Thank God there is a charm in the Gospel. That which could woo the martyrs from their pain, can guide the mercenary from their worldly plans to sit in heavenly places with Christ Jesus.

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2. Dreaming in church is a temptation to some minds. They are bound down to trade, to the love of money, which is "the root of all evil." They are never at liberty, and do not particularly desire to be. All of pleasure to them in life is comprehended in the rules of addition and multiplication.

outside of actual commercial affairs have but faint ideas of the reality. Every second or third sermon now, and every alternate paragraph in the other forms of discourse, ought to aim at helping them to meet their difficulties and overcome them.

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3. It is quite possible for Sunday dreams to become a sort of dissipation even with good Christians. The exhilaration of wine, the mental stimulus of tobacco, the yawning indulgence of a novel, these passive flights of the mind into Sabbath cloud-land—what are they all but elements in our modern habits of dissipation? They betray an absence of vigour. They could be effectually driven from the soul by a firm Christian will.

EDITORIAL NOTES.

PRINCESS ALICE, we intimated last week, was lying dangerously ill of Diphtheria. Last Saturday she died. The blow must have fallen heavily on the Queen, who loved all her children devotedly, but this Princess with special affection.

PANSIES growing in the open air of Nova Scotia in the middle of December! That wonder have we seen this very week.

As to the New Discipline. We are informed that nothing has yet been done to prepare it for the press. This intelligence comes from Toronto. So that the book need not be expected very soon.

Lunenburg is to be congratulated on having a newspaper. E. L. Nash, Esq., has started a weekly called the Lunenburg Progress. It is a very creditable little sheet. We wish it prosperity.

Friends of City Mission work in Halifax should patronize the Musical Entertainment to be held next Monday evening in the Brunswick St. Mission Church. The object is to furnish a library for the children.

THE Annual Missionary Report from the Mission Rooms, we should have acknowledged before. It shows great care, and not a little cause for thankfulness in its information. The year which has been distressing in the matter of finance, has been prosperous spiritually on the missions.

We call attention to Dr. Woodbury's Card in this issue. He is a first-class Dentist. What ought to be an extra recommendation, he is a good, useful, true man. As a local preacher, the Doctor ranks specially high. He has come to a sphere of great influence for good, though in New York he need not have wanted in that regard.

AMONG the painful revelations of commerce is the rather startling fact that the Banking business returns of the Dominion show a shrinkage of six millions of dollars, by decline in stock, since last September. No wonder that public confidence comes up but slowly, while even shrewd men of business cannot judge the condition of trade from one day to another.

MESSERS PALMER AND TUCK, of the New Brunswick Bar, have greatly distinguished themselves in connection with the McCarthy murder case. Dr. Tuck for the Crown, and Mr. Palmer for the prisoner, have afforded, by their skill and eloquence,

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