

POETRY.

For the Wesleyan.

LINES

ON THE DEATH OF MR. W. VALENTINE.—ARTIST

Gone to the place appointed,—ceas'd his care, For skill, nor knowledge, nor device is there! Gone to the Land of Spirits, where shall shine Beautified the human face divine. Gone to his rest, his earthly labour done The works that "follow," wrought by God alone. Ever retiring his demeanour mild, In his last moments, like a weaned child, Yet eloquent in death, he preached to all! Bide them be ready for their Saviour's call! The chamber where this 'good man' breath'd his prayer 'em'd hallow'd, as if angels hover'd there! Ample the solemn testimonials given That these escaped have winged their way to Heaven. Oh death! thy shafts fly quick, it seems thy day— The young,—the lovely too, are call'd away; But if their hope is fix'd beyond thy power 'Twill be a welcome—not distressing hour. Halifax, 31th Dec. By A FRIEND.

COTEMPORARY OPINIONS.

From the (London) Watchman.

Ought the Methodists to be an Educating Body?

We know that this is a question which is raised by some parties who have hitherto held back their hearty co-operation in the movement of the present day, because they doubt whether the Methodists have any clear vocation to this work. They hold that the true mission of Methodism is evangelical preaching, both at home and abroad,—that it is in this work its mightiest results have been reaped,—and that any diversion of the aims and efforts of the people to other organizations and plans of usefulness, will be likely to interfere injuriously with this original designation of Divine Providence. These persons shrink from a work so extensive in its scope,—so weighty in its responsibilities,—and so serious in the pecuniary cost it is likely to involve, because they regard it as new both in principle and practice. And some of them look with apprehension at the introduction of an organized agency which may very possibly, at length, become commensurate in numbers and territorial extent with the regular Ministry, and the incorporation of which into the frame of the ecclesiastical body politic may be a work of some difficulty and hazard. These scruples, if not in themselves very formidable, are worthy of consideration when they are entertained by parties who are, in other respects, valuable and devoted Members, or even Ministers, of the body, and whose active concurrence would be of great service to the cause of religious education. It will indeed argue well for the country, and for the religious interests of the poor especially, if in urging on this movement, the Methodists set with that unanimity of opinion, and concentration of effort which have hitherto, under the Divine blessing, made them successful in every thing they have undertaken. We purpose, then, to address ourselves to this point. We might begin with the objection of novelty by denying the fact. There can be no doubt that amongst the varied and multifarious schemes of benevolence which John Wesley originated during his life-time, religious education by means of Day-schools was one. Witness the Kingswood School, which was set on foot, in the first instance, as an institution for the children of the poor, and not only for Preachers children. Indeed Mr. Wesley's whole public life furnishes us with the instructive example of a man, who turned aside from no means of doing good in all ways, as opportunity and ability were afforded. The system that he formed was, under God, the creature of circumstances and emergencies; and as to formed it in the simple and unassuming attempt to meet Providential calls, and to conserve the spiritual work which he had been permitted to originate, so doubtless he has left it free for further development, expansion, and adaptation as future circumstances might require. As it respects the Founder of Methodism then, the educating function of the Wesleyan Body is not new, either in principle or practice. Still less can it be called new as it respects the Conference, which has succeeded to the governing and managing power that Wesley wielded. In encouraging directing, and controlling the religious education of the young in Sunday Schools, has not the Conference admitted its responsibility towards the children of the neglected poor,

and that not only of its own communion, but of the entire population?

And can that be fairly considered an innovation in principle or practice, which proposes to extend over six days the instruction which has already been given in one,—not to mention the relief from secular instruction on the Sunday which may ultimately be obtained by this course? It may be said, indeed, that Sunday-school instruction being purely religious, and mostly of a devotional character, is now more strictly within the range of the spiritual obligations of a Christian Church. It is true, indeed, that an object purely spiritual was contemplated in the first instance, and most always in such institutions be the leading consideration. But what can be done with a child who is taken out of the streets on the Lord's Day, unable to read, as well as untaught to pray? He cannot become devout till he has been instructed, and he cannot be taught merely by oral lessons; for one part of the duty to be inculcated is that of searching the Scriptures. He must therefore be taught to read; and the same obligation which confessedly binds a Christian to teach a child to fear God and to keep his commandments, must, in the case of his ignorance and inability to read, infer the obligation to teach him to read.—Neither must it rest here; for this child must be taught to read with intelligence and interest, and therefore must have a knowledge of some other things besides the powers and combinations of letters. It is astonishing to mark the eagerness with which an inquisitive child runs into the precincts of the sciences, in seeking to understand the meaning of the plainest passages of Holy Writ. If the subject is the flood and Noah's ark, he must know a little about ship-building. If it is Joshua bidding the sun and moon stand still, he must peep into astronomy. If it is about the locusts, or the fiery flying-serpents, he must stray into the field of natural history. If it is about the peopling of the earth, or the scenes of our Lord's personal ministry, he must explore a little geography. And you cannot stop him by saying, "It is Sunday, and this is secular knowledge;" for he may at once retort upon you, "Why then are you teaching me to spell and read?" Accordingly, every superior teacher in a Sunday-school finds himself insensibly and inevitably led on to communicate a considerable amount of secular instruction; and all this because he finds it necessary in order to gain his primary spiritual object.

Now we are not arguing in favour of secular instruction in Sunday-schools on the Lord's Day. But, we ask, what will result there so great in the principle of the thing, that a man who recognizes the duty of a Christian Church, to go thus far on the Sunday for a spiritual object, need doubt whether the same obligation exists in reference to a religious education on the weekday? Plainly, the question cannot be one of principle at all, and it is to be viewed as one of Christian propriety and expediency. We aver, then, that the Wesleyan body by committing itself, as it undoubtedly has done, fully and generally to Sunday-school operations, as a matter of Church duty and scriptural necessity, has also, by implication, committed itself to a general Day-school movement, whenever the times shall call for it, and prudent indications shall permit.

We submit that the time is now come for such a movement. We ask whether there is nothing in the present moral condition of the youth of this country which demands the special solicitude of the Christian Church? Let the annals of crime be consulted, and it will be discovered that the future of the criminal statistics of the country is the fearful prevalence of juvenile delinquency. Let the active agencies of evil, which are concentrated around us be surveyed, and it will be seen what a fearful proportion of them is devoted with a special adaptation to young persons and children. Will it be said then, that the proprietors of penny theatres, and penny circuses, and penny periodicals, are to have free license to allure children to their corrupt haunts, while the Christian Church is to stand by with folded arms, simply because it has not been used to make this kind of effort a very conspicuous part of its operations? What would John Wesley have done in such a case? What would any General of an army do in contending with an active and wary foe? Would he not suit his movements to the tactics of the enemy? Or could he expect to protect the country he had to defend, if he determined rigidly to adhere to all the rules and precedents of regular and customary warfare, whilst he permitted flying detachments of the enemy to ravage villages, and carry off crops, and plunder missions? Yet it is, undoubtedly, true that the youth of the country are at this time exposed to temptations, in number and insidious character unprecedented. And equally true is it, that under these temptations they are falling so rapidly, as to arrest the attention of politicians and statesmen. These persons are trying to devise means for the reformation of juvenile delinquents, for they rightly

consider, that with respect to them the State is bound to do something else than inflict punishment;—and that society has too deep a stake in their future course, to allow them to pass through its penal courts without some endeavours to reform them. And is it really that whilst men who regard chiefly the civil and material interests of society, devote their anxious consideration to the improvement of the young, because they see that the well-being of the nation depends upon it, the Christian church should hesitate about her vocation to bless the young with her evangelical teaching? We should rather have said the Wesleyan Church, for other professedly-Christian churches are sufficiently alive to their duty. The Roman Catholics in England at this day are relying, for the position they are to take in the country, upon the hold of the youth whom they are seeking to possess by means of their schools. The Church of England is using her schools for the purpose of filling her churches, and in some places has emptied our Wesleyan Sunday-schools, and thinned our congregations, so that it has become necessary for the conservation of those means of usefulness, to establish the subsidiary agency of Week-Day-schools.

All those circumstances are aggravated in their importance by the interference of the Government, which, so far from being a matter to be complained of, is highly creditable to its enlightened patriotism, and indeed in the present state of political and religious parties, must be regarded as inevitable. That aid, in the present case was inevitable. It has, in fact, been afforded, though under important restrictions, to Roman Catholic schools.

Surely these circumstances together constitute a Providential call to the Methodists to bestir themselves. Considering them to be pledged to the principle, is it not high time to organize the details and the development? We put it, therefore, to those parties who hesitate to commit themselves to the Educational movement, as a church-duty, and binding upon the Body in its corporate character, whether something more ought not to be done for the regeneration of our youth; whether the nation does not just now look to the Christian Churches for the doing of this work; whether our Churches have not generally admitted their duty to take this work in hand; and whether it is becoming that the Methodists should be behind-hand in this patriotic enterprise? The only ground, as we conceive, on which this last position could be maintained, would be the repudiation of the character of a Church on behalf of the Methodist Societies.—But surely it is too late in the day to advance this plea. Whether intentionally or not, we have been thrust into the position of a distinct and formal Church, and we stand charged before God, the country, and Christendom, with all the responsibilities of such a position. To attempt to evade any of those responsibilities would be idle, and if the religious education of the young by means of Week-day schools be one of them, it must be taken up boldly and energetically.

To urge possible difficulty, expense, and perplexity, would be out of place after the question of duty is settled. This might do very well for a private person in a matter which is optional, but we must not forget, that what would be in a private individual commendable prudence, would be in the case of a great Christian Church unpardonable pusillanimity. Of such public pusillanimity, the Methodists have not yet been guilty, nor will they be. Let them only believe that they ought to do this work, and that, by the help of God, they can do it, and in the name of God, they will do it.

(From the Toronto Christian Guardian.)

Special Efforts.

When we consider the happy results of special efforts for the conversion of souls in hundreds of instances, it is a matter of surprise that there should be opposition to them or backwardness in making them. We are of opinion that if the number of Christians in America could be ascertained whose present position in the church is, under the Divine blessing, to be attributed to special efforts or protracted meetings, the Christian public would be amazed. When have these services been held and not proved a blessing to deathless souls? How many eminent for preachers among the laity and in the ministry, have been brought to God at protracted meetings? And how many are before the throne of glory who were led to the throne of grace at such services? The world is too wicked and the church is too lukewarm to admit the thought of discontinuing special efforts. The ungodliness of the world and the impotence of the Church at large urge upon each devoted Minister and member to be up and doing, to increase their efforts to spread the Saviour's name, and to bring immortal souls to the cross of Jesus.

We hope that special efforts will be made on every circuit throughout our entire Connection, and that more than usual good will attend the labours of our beloved brethren in their arduous and responsible but honourable and happy work.

STANDING REGULATIONS.

Correspondents must send their communications written in legible hand, and, unless they contain the names of new subscribers, or remittances, free of postage, and submit us in confidence, with their proper names and addresses. The Editor holds not himself responsible for the opinions of correspondents—claims the privilege of modifying or rejecting articles offered for publication—and cannot pledge himself to return those not inserted. Communications on business, and those intended for publication, when contained in the same letter, should, if practicable, be written on different parts of the sheet, so that they may be separated when they reach us. Communications and Exchanges should be addressed to the Editor, Halifax, N. S. Published Weekly, on Saturday Morning—Terms Ten Shillings per annum, exclusive of postage—half yearly in advance—Single Copies three pence each. The Wesleyan Ministers of the Nova Scotia and New Brunswick Districts are our Agents; who will receive orders and make remittances.

THE WESLEYAN.

Halifax, Saturday Morning, January 3, 1850.

IMPORTANCE OF RELIGIOUS TRUTH.

TRUTH, in thought, implies the agreement of our ideas with the nature of things; and, in expression, the agreement of our words with those ideas. It is opposed to error in every shape and form. Any intention to deceive is a violation of truth. This fault is committed when there is the wilful suppression of the whole or the part of what is really true. Thus to arrive at the just merits of any given case "the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth" must be declared. But we speak now more particularly of religious truth.

The Sacred Scriptures are the standard or criterion of religious truth. "Thy word," says Christ, in an address to the FATHER, "is truth." Our doctrinal views, and in fact, our opinions on religious subjects, are to be tested by this infallible touchstone. Whatever cannot be proved by the direct statements of God's Word, or be deduced therefrom by fair and legitimate inference, is without authority in the decision of any contest of opinion of man only; and can therefore possess no right to compel our belief, or to influence our conduct. To substantiate the claim of any doctrine to be religiously true, and, by consequence, to be believed and acted upon, an appeal in its behalf must be made to the Word of Divine Truth, which must be construed according to the recognized rules, not of an arbitrary or fanciful, but of a just and impartial exegesis or interpretation. Though human reason may not dictate what must be the revealed will of God, yet when that revelation is graciously vouchsafed, it may busy itself in ascertaining what is truly "the mind of the Spirit." This we believe every man is bound to do to the best of his ability,—without prejudice or prepossession against or in favour of any class of doctrines, and according to the facilities of examination with which he is favoured,—who would not have his religious belief rest on that of divine Authority. This course has received divine commendation, even in cases where the parties were privileged with the tuition of inspired Apostles. The conduct of the Disciples will be in remembrance, as affording an example not only worthy of imitation, but necessarily to be followed.—"These were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, and SEARCHED THE SCRIPTURES DAILY, WHETHER THESE THINGS WERE SO." They, on whom this high eulogium was pronounced, tested the deliverances of Apostolic men by the truth of God already revealed and then in their possession. Clearly perceived agreement, and that only, would challenge their belief. This was the proof they had a right to demand—they diligently sought—and when

obtained, they without cavil were content of their understandings and their hearts. "Therefore many believed."

This hasty glance will show the importance of religious truth of possessing a standard by which the opinions of men,—who assume our faith, and are disposed to depart from the covenanted mercies of God,—may be tried, and their error ascertained. The Bible, and its teachings, we acknowledge to be this standard by which we are willing to stand or fall.

REVIEW.

The year now terminated has been marked with important events, which have afforded abundant data for the future view. These events we can only take a rapid view. The past year has been marked by the mighty but vain struggles of the valiant nation for civil freedom, by the Austrian Despot in arms to vindicate her time-worn crown, and the heroic armies, and the tide of war, and the waves against the powerful oppressor. Unable, single-handed, to subvert the barbarous hordes of Autocrat. Thus unequally and without performing prodigies, and winning the admiration of Hungarians, by the treachery of leaders—seduced, it is supposed, by Russian gold—with an unconquered spirit, necessity of unavoidable sacrifice of liberty has been only quenched. It burns secretly in the hearts of noble hearts, and waits only to burst forth with renewed indignation, and upward conflict was terminated "right" but by "might." The own ambitious objects to this instance of Russian interference in European contests may yet vengeance on the heads of those who sought it or beheld it as quiet.

During the year past has required inglorious celebrity of interference with Roman soil, the advocate of proved herself tyrannical in force against the rising neighbouring State. The Republic only to a recent neither avert nor surmount this is to be found in the State. Pore's fearfulness to trust in the precincts of the Sabines is a prisoner—only prospects brighten not. There is no favourable change. The lower—danger still threaten object of France is still unaltered or by what means, the Populace to his temporal Sovereign. Perhaps the Republic for ever. Or it may be the denance has greater calamities "doomed" City of the Savoy bloody scenes in reserve of that fearful tragedy. The wisdom of an Athlophel can be disappoint the church President of France and of Pope! He is king for above the water-floods, wise in his own craftiness, wisdom of man of no effect of the Lord, that shall stand