

THE WESLEYAN.

Vol. III.—No. 34.] A FAMILY PAPER—DEVOTED TO RELIGION, LITERATURE, GENERAL AND DOMESTIC NEWS, ETC. [Whole No. 138

Ten Shillings per Annum)
Half-Yearly in Advance. }

HALIFAX, N. S., SATURDAY MORNING, FEBRUARY 26, 1852.

{ Single Copies
{ Three Pence

Poetry.

NEARER TO THEE.

Nearer, my God, to thee—
Nearer to thee!
E'en though it be a cross
That reacheth me;
Still all my song shall be,
Nearer, my God, to thee—
Nearer to thee!

Though like a wanderer,
The sun gone down,
Darkness comes o'er me,
My rest a stone;
Yet in a dream I'd be
Nearer, my God, to thee—
Nearer to thee!

There let the way appear,
Steps unto heaven;
All that thou sendest me
In mercy given;
Angels to beckon me—
Nearer, my God, to thee—
Nearer to thee!

Then with my waking thought
Bright with thy praise,
Out of my stony griefs
Bethel I'll raise;
So by my woes to be
Nearer, my God, to thee—
Nearer to thee!

Or if on joyful wing,
Chasing the sky,
Sun, moon and stars forgot,
Upward I fly!
Still all my song shall be,
Nearer, my God, to thee—
Nearer to thee!

Christian Miscellany.

We need a better acquaintance with the thoughts and reasonings of pure and lofty minds.—Dr. SWEET.

Foreign Missions.— No. III.

MR. EDITOR.—We have seen, after all that has been done to evangelize the world, that eighteen thirtieths of the human family are pagans—that five-thirtieths are Mahomedans—and that only seven-thirtieths bear the Christian name. How deplorable is the fact—how humiliating to the Christian Church—and how derogatory to the honour and glory of God—that so few have been reclaimed from their wanderings, saved from their apostasy, and elevated to the possession and enjoyment of life and immortality!—There are only two ways of solving the problem, why has not the world been evangelized. First:—God is not willing to do it or he is not able. Or second:—The Church has not done her duty. That God is both willing and able to renovate and renew the moral world, and raise it from the ruins of the fall, does not admit of a doubt; for "He will not the death of a sinner"—and He is the "Almighty,"—the "Omnipotent" God, and neither wants will nor power to do whatever is right and proper to be done. If the fault does not rest with the Almighty, then the Church has been remiss in the discharge of her duty, and has not fulfilled her high destiny. This leads to the important enquiry, has all been done by every individual member of the Christian Church, that could be done, to save so many millions who are perishing for the lack of knowledge? Have they been as often found at the throne of grace as they ought, pouring out their fervent prayers before God on behalf of perishing Heathen? That many sincere prayers have ascended Heavenward on their behalf—that feelings of sympathy and affectionate pity have been excited in their favour, and that many ardent desires have been expressed that Missionaries might be sent to them, we can bear ample testimony. But after all, it is great to be feared, that many have been formal in their addresses—cold in their affections, and apathetic in their desires, for

the extension of Christ's kingdom. It is the bounden duty as well as the exalted privilege of every Christian, to "pray for all men every where, lifting up holy hands without wrath and doubting." How necessary and important that our holy and fervent aspirations should ascend to God, on behalf of our fellow creatures, who are going down to the grave in mental, moral, and spiritual darkness, without one ray of light to gild the gloom! But have the members of the Church exerted all the influence in their power, to extend the Messiah's reign, and to bring the wanderers back to God? Every person, however humble his situation in life may be, exerts a mighty influence, for weal or woe, over the destinies of his companions and associates. That they have sometimes exhibited the miserable state of the Heathen world—spoken in favour of sending an "ambassador" to them—desecrated upon the success attending the labours of God's Ministers, and described the useful lives and the triumphant deaths of those brought to God through Missionary exertions, we are ready to believe. Yet all that influence has not been exerted, nor all that fervent zeal and burning charity displayed, that ought to have been, in a matter of such paramount importance. Have the members of the Church contributed towards the support of Missionary Institutions, to the full extent they might and ought to have done? Many have done nobly, they have given according to their means, and thanked God not only for the ability but for a heart to give. Notwithstanding, there are others who have done nothing, no not so much as to subscribe one farthing, from year to year, in aid of the funds of Missions, without which pecuniary help the Gospel cannot be proclaimed to the ends of the earth. Where are the burning zeal and yearning pity of those persons for their dying fellow men? Have the fountains of benevolence been dried up? Does the love of God dwell in the heart of that man who has it in his power, but refuses, to give one shilling to save a fellow creature from going down to the grave enveloped in darkness more deep and dense than Egyptian gloom? Can you, my fellow Christian, listen to the dying groans and the bitter wailings of so many millions who are passing out of time into eternity, without an interest in Christ,—can you look from your high and holy position upon the vast crowds that are annually going down to the grave amidst the deep gloom and thick darkness of spiritual night, and not come to their rescue? Men of Israel, help! help!

* We weep for those that weep below,
And bemoan'd for the afflicted slave;
The various forms of human woe
Excite our softer sympathies,
Fill every heart with merciful care,
And draw out all our souls in prayer
Father of earth's ting love,
To every soul thy "son reveal,
Our guilt and sinners to remove,
Our deep, original wound to heal,
And bid the fallen race arise,
And turn our hearts to Paradise!"

February 20th. JUSTITIA.

For the Wesleyan Religious training of the Young.

SABBATH SCHOOLS AND CATECHUMEN CLASSES.
No. I.

The different sections of the Christian Church in this day, seem to be more than ever impressed with the importance of religious training, and of implanting sound Christian principles in the minds of the youth placed under their Pastoral care and superintendence.

Many persons have thought that Sabbath School instruction, and the public preaching of God's Word, were all the religious training that is necessary for youth; and that parents having sent their children to a Sabbath School, and brought them to the House of God, had done all their duty as far as religious education is concerned; and that Ministers, by advising with Sabbath School Teachers, and sometimes, perhaps only very occasionally, visiting the Sabbath Schools, and by their public ministrations, have also

discharged all their duty to the youth of their respective congregations.

This now proves to be a mistake, that is, these are not sufficient to impart the requisite supply of religious knowledge to our youth.

Sabbath Schools have indeed been incalculably beneficial to both the Church and the world, and parents do well to send their children to those Institutions, that they may learn to understand the Bible; commit to memory those excellent Catechisms that are there used; listen to the exhortations that are there given, and try to profit by the libraries usually connected with these Schools: Also Christian Ministers do well to visit Sabbath Schools as often as possible, in order to give exhortation and instruction, as well as to pray with the children; but after all, something more is necessary, if we wish our youth to be thoroughly instructed in religious knowledge, and have their minds fortified against the different forms that infidelity assumes, and the various other errors of the day.

It is a fact not to be disputed, that many who were once promising youths in our own or other Sabbath Schools, have, by their intermixture with persons holding erroneous or dangerous opinions, or by visiting large towns in the United States, or elsewhere, where such opinions are held, had their minds poisoned; which in many instances would not have been the case, if their religious instruction had been more complete. Some of our youth have become sceptical, others have received the blasphemous views of the Unitarian faith, some have fallen into the sink of Universalism, and some have gone over to Deism, while numbers have become vile and profligate, of whom hopes of better things had been long entertained.

Christian ministers and others have long deplored the obligation of our youth; many of whom they had once anticipated would, when they arrived at maturity, have become pious and useful members of the Church.—For a long time the question was asked, and without an answer: "What can be done to remedy this great evil?" At length the response was given, and it is this, establish Bible or Catechumen Classes, to receive our youth when they leave our Sabbath Schools, and there you will have an opportunity of imparting to them such knowledge of Bible truth, as they either did not receive or could not understand in the Sabbath School; and moreover, you will have them at an age when your instructions are more likely to produce a lasting effect upon their minds, upon their religious thinking, and upon the future actions of their life.

The Wesleyan Conference has taken important ground on the subject of Catechumen Classes, and has originated plans and measures which will be highly beneficial to the youth of their charge, and which must have a powerful influence upon the morals and religious principles of the next generation.

Catechumen classes were first formally brought under the consideration of the British Conference in the year 1846, as is found in the minutes of that year, page 147, under the head, "Catechumen Classes and Pastoral care of the young;" where it said:

"On these important subjects the Conference resolves:

"1. That the Conference has heard with much gratification of the attempts which have been made in some places to afford to the children and youth of the Methodist Societies and Congregations, especially those between the ages of ten and twenty years, the advantage of increased religious instruction and supervision, by means of Catechumen Classes.

"2. That the Conference approves of the principle upon which such efforts have been based, and earnestly desires to see it carried out more extensively, and in the most efficient manner.

"3. That with a view to promote this object, and secure for our young people more systematic and efficient pastoral care, a Com-

mittee be now appointed to consider the plans which have been laid before the Conference, and any other suggestions on the same subject which may be offered to their notice, and to report to the next Conference."

The Committee appointed consisted of sixteen ministers, including the President, the Rev. William Atherton, and the Secretary, Dr. Newton.

The Committee presented their report to the Conference of 1847, when the following entry was made in the minutes under

"Question xxxiv. What does the Conference determine on the subject of Catechumen Classes, and Pastoral care of the young?"

"Ans. 1. That this Committee is convinced of the obligation which rests on all Christian Pastors, to feed and take the oversight of the lambs as well as the sheep, of the flock of Christ; and of the necessity which exists for the adoption of some well-defined system, in order to the efficient discharge of this great duty.

"2. That it appears desirable to provide some means by which the young persons belonging to the families composing our Societies and Congregations may be formally recognized as the subjects of pastoral care, and receive such instructions as may be suitable and necessary for them, without being regarded as accredited members, or having a claim to the privileges of our communion.

"3. That we therefore recommend, that an effort should be immediately made in every Circuit to commence a work of such acknowledged importance, by collecting at least one class of young persons, of twelve years old and upwards, for whose instruction in Christian truth and duty, the Ministers of the Circuit shall be responsible."

Subsequent Conferences have resumed the subject; writers in the different Wesleyan Periodicals have explained and showed its importance, and particularly the Rev. Samuel Jackson, in a series of articles published in the London Watchman; so that Catechumen Classes are now recommended to the whole Connexion.

WILLIAM WILSON.

A Work for every Man.

Divine Providence has placed every man in his peculiar situation, and assigned every man his work. The situation and work of mankind are various; but the appointment is of God. Some are appointed to guide the plough; others to direct the loom. Some to toil; others to think and direct. Some to study and teach; others to receive direction and instruction. Some are to submit; others are to govern. Every man has his providential appointment given him; and he may discover it, if he wish to do so. Whatever our situation is, God himself, in the counsels of his wise providence, has placed us in it, and connected with it certain duties. To every man he has said, "Be diligent in business, fervent in spirit, serving the Lord."

There are some persons who imagine that the labours which arise from providential circumstances are distinct from piety, and obstructive of it. But this is an error. They may be made so; but they are not so necessarily. They are parts of duty which, if performed in reference to the glory of God, from religious motives, and with a regard to religious ends, as they may be, will secure the divine blessing, and promote, not hinder, our eternal welfare. No man has a charter to be idle. Men of the most ample fortunes are the servants of God. A thousand doors of usefulness stand open before such persons as are exempt from the necessity of daily toil, and to whom God has been bountiful in the gifts of His providence. The man who buries his talent in the earth is deeply guilty, and incurs the displeasure of his Lord. Idleness as infallibly destroys the soul as open sin committed against God. We are all stewards of His manifold gifts: God Himself will at length say, "Give an account of thy stewardship, for thou mayest be no longer steward."—Watson.