

THE WESLEYAN.

Vol. III.—No. 36.] A FAMILY PAPER—DEVOTED TO RELIGION, LITERATURE, GENERAL AND DOMESTIC NEWS, ETC. [Whole No. 147

Ten Shillings per Annum
Half-Yearly in Advance.

HALIFAX, N. S., SATURDAY MORNING, MARCH 13, 1852.

(Single Copies
Three Pence)

Poetry.

BLESSINGS OF LIFE.

BY M. ST. JEROME.

Life may bring its hours of sadness,
Flinging from the breast a sigh,
Shedding out each scene of gladness
From the tear-suffusing eye:
Yet how often purest pleasure
Assuming life to ungodly,
Feeling us a richer treasure
Than was Ophir's wealth of gold.

Clouds may gather o'er our vision
And obscure each lovely view,
Wrapping all that seems Elysian
In a shade of sombre hue:
But whenever those clouds are parted
They a tenfold light reveal;
These into the trusting-hearted
Appear as fancy, light is real.

When the sunbeams slightly viewing,
Life seems ruled by fate's command,
Which apparently is strewing
Fortunes with a partial hand:
But when viewed by close inspection
In the light of truth divine,
It appears that God's direction
Truly works his just design.

Trouble is like the swelling ocean
May their threatening billows roll,
Darkness frown, and dread commotion
Rage around the hopeful soul:
Yet he trusts the truth eternal,
That the wrong shall yield to right,
Turbid sink in calm serenity,
Darkness a day before the light.

God is the Christian only
Who this blessed truth may know,
On his heart, though poor and lonely,
His own richest gifts shall flow:
He who shall these gifts inherit
In the soul by truth made free,
Quoted by the Holy Spirit,
One of heaven's family.

It is by living faith confiding
In the oath of Christ the Lord,
Obeying a hope abiding
As the everlasting word:
By a life of holy doing
It opposes every sin,
Thus to all around him showing
Witness of the faith within.

Then his duty call to labour,
Let us all our gifts apply—
Due good unto our neighbour,
And adding cost on high.
Then shall life be led as glorious,
God shall in it be met away,
With an error prone victorious,
Death reveal eternal day.

Christian Miscellany.

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

For the Wesleyan.

Religious training of the Young.

SABBATH SCHOOLS AND CATECHUMEN CLASSES.

NO. II.

I have long been impressed with the idea that Catechumen Classes ought to be established in all our Circuits in these Provinces; and under this impression, about four years since, I made a successful attempt to form one in the Town of Lunenburg, which Class consisted of twenty-three members.

The following year I removed to Barrington, where we organized two Bible Classes consisting of sixty-three members; one in the Mission House, and the other in the house of William B. Sargent Esqr., West Passage.

Last District Meeting I was appointed to Yarmouth, and on the 8th of August last commenced a Catechumen Class in this Town, which comprised at the first meeting twenty-eight members. At our second meeting we numbered thirty-nine, and at our third sixty. We were then compelled to leave the Mission House for want of room, and we returned to a school-room. But our numbers continued to increase at every meeting, so that a still larger place became necessary. Our friends then hired a large room called the *Puritan Hall*, partly for the

use of the Bible Class, and partly for public worship; for we occupy this Hall as a preaching place, every Lord's-day evening.

From the time we removed to the Puritan Hall, our numbers have continued gradually, but constantly, to increase, up to the present time. The number of our members after filling up all vacancies is now one hundred and forty-four.

Our members are generally between the age of sixteen and twenty-five years.

We meet every Monday evening, and occupy about two hours. The members read one chapter in the Pentateuch, one in the Gospels, and one in the Acts of the Apostles, or as much of them as time will allow; and we of course close our meeting with singing and prayer.

The members who can afford it pay one penny per week, for incidental expenses; and should there be any balance at the end of the year, it will be regularly transferred to the receipts of the Circuit.

The members are admitted by ticket, and when the weather is favourable we usually have considerably more than one hundred present.

As the members read I usually ask their views on different points of Biblical history and Evangelical doctrines; and then give the best explanation in my power, occasionally illustrating my remarks, by reference to oriental customs, to ancient history, or by such philological explanations as I conceive will be either interesting or useful to my youthful auditory.

A more interesting sight can scarcely be conceived, than to see nearly one hundred and fifty of our youth of both sexes, and many of them very intelligent persons, assembled together, each with a Bible, and reading in turn; all anxious to catch every word, that they may fully understand the glorious doctrines that are therein taught; and the highly important and deeply interesting facts that are therein narrated.

Every member is allowed to make any observation, or ask what questions he pleases for understanding the text, and while all are expected to take away and make use of the information they derive from our meetings, yet mistakes are not allowed to be carried out of the Class Room.

Another matter, so as to diversify our subjects, and make our meetings always interesting, gives me a good deal of extra labour; but I never meet my Bible Class but I feel myself more than compensated for all my toil. With these youth I feel my very soul united; for them I do cheerfully toil and incessantly pray; and while the benefit of the Class has already begun in some measure to be felt, yet its influence will be more apparent in future years. It is written—Cast thy bread upon the waters; for thou shalt find it after many days.

I here transcribe a copy of the Preamble and Rules of this Class, which, if you will be kind enough to publish them, will be satisfactory to our members, and may assist some of my Brethren in other Circuits, who may wish to form Catechumen or Bible Classes.

Wesleyan Catechumen or Bible Class, Yarmouth. Instituted Aug. 8, 1851.

The Wesleyan Catechumen Class was organized on the 8th of August, 1851, for the benefit of the youth connected with the Wesleyan Societies and congregations in the Yarmouth Circuit; nevertheless the youth of other religious bodies may be admitted as members; provided there be no objection against their moral character, and they are willing to comply with the following rules and regulations.

Rule 1. Any person desiring to become a member of this Class, must be proposed the previous meeting; if there be no objection, the President shall prepare a ticket for the proposed member, to be issued before the following meeting; but if an objection be raised, the President shall enquire privately into the nature of the objection, and if he deem it a sufficient reason, he shall refuse to issue a ticket to such individual;

otherwise the ticket shall be issued in the usual way.

N. B.—Sixteen years of age is the general rule for admission, but occasional deviations may be allowed.

2. Every member shall be required to show their ticket to the door-keeper at every meeting of the Class.

3. That one chapter in the Old Testament, and two in the New Testament, be read at every meeting; or such portion of them as time will allow; each member reading in turn.

4. That every member shall be at liberty to give his or her view of the Scripture read, and the President shall give such critical or other explanations, as he shall conceive necessary for the right understanding of the sacred text.

5. That the remarks made by members are understood to be in perfect confidence, and any person violating that confidence by making public the remarks or mistakes of any member, be subject to the censure of the Class.

6. That every member pay one penny weekly into the hands of the Treasurer, towards the incidental expenses; that the Treasurer's account be audited at least once a year, and if any balance remain in his hands, the same be transferred to the receipts of the Circuit. N. B.—This rule may be dispensed with where the payment would be inconvenient.

7. Any member absenting himself or herself three weeks in succession, without a sufficient reason, shall have the name discontinued from our lists.

8. All meetings of the Class be opened and closed with singing and prayer.

WILLIAM WILSON.

Yarmouth, Feb. 12, 1852.

"Too busy to freeze."

I have often thought of a beautifully simple illustration we met with, in one of our recent walks, of the benefit and happiness of useful and urgent occupation. It was a bright winter's morning; the crisp untrodden snow covered the scene around with its pure, brilliant whiteness. For some distance the little stream by the side of the road was completely frozen over; but as we approached nearer to the mill, there was a little fall across its narrow channel, down which the water, as though glad to break from beneath its icy covering, rushed, dancing and sparkling, and reflecting the bright rays of the sun,

"Happily, joyously, singing its way,
Through moss and pebbles, the living day."

As we stood looking at it, a dear companion said, "This water is too busy to freeze!" And thus it is with the useful Christian, actively devoted to the work of his blessed Lord and Master, whose service is perfect freedom; he is too busy to freeze—too busy to become cold and lifeless. Whilst diligently pursuing the path of duty, he catches fresh rays of light and strength from the bright shining of the sun of righteousness, and reflects new beams of grace, leading those who observe his cheerful, happy course, to glorify God in him.

If there be life in one professing to be His disciple, whose meat and drink it was to do the will of Him who sent him, who yet remains wrapped up in selfish indolence, it is only sufficient to make him sensible that his coldness, leading to useless regrets and unavailable complainings, tends to increase, as far as it is felt, a chilling influence.

"I delight to do thy will, O my God," was the language of our blessed Master; and unto us he says, "I have given you an example that ye should do as I have done." The apostle, who in "labour was more abundant" than his brethren, said, "To me to live is Christ;" and not many months since, I heard a devoted home missionary, whose sphere of labour had been a very arduous one, say, "If there be happiness to be found on earth, it is in being laboriously occupied in the service of Christ."

Here, then, is the conclusion of the matter if we would be happy, we must seek to be useful; not as any ground on which to found our hope of acceptance with God—our best services need the blood of sprinkling, for after we have done all, truly we must say, "We are unprofitable servants, we have done that which it was our duty to do." Those who have done most, feel most false. "Not unto us, O Lord, not unto us, but unto thy name, give glory." Under the precious teaching of the Holy Spirit, they feel their own utter weakness and worthlessness, and clinging to the cross they say, "We can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth us."

"All at it, and always at it."

When Wesley was once asked by what magic he had rendered his followers so efficient, he is said to have replied, that the great secret consisted in this, that they were *all at it, and always at it.* Acting upon this principle, every new adherent was not only set at work, but kept at work. There was something found for every one to do, and such was the system of responsibility which was established, that they had to do it. Not one in all their ranks was suffered to remain idle in the vineyard. If there was but one talent, it was employed. The feeblest among them were not allowed to plead their incompetency to the task assigned them, and while the rich were required to give of their abundance, it was made the duty of the poor to aid the cause, at regular and brief intervals, out of their pittance. Giving was as much a system, as their meetings for preaching and for classes. And where there were talents, even of a very inferior order, they were brought into requisition. Their members, when called upon, prayed and exhorted—took the charge of classes—were appointed to circuits. And in this way many were induced into the ministry, who, when they began to preach, had a very limited command of language, and knew very little of the Bible; but by being *always at it*, their own minds were expanded, and their gifts increased.

For one, I am inclined to attach great importance to this motto of Wesley. We have praying members, working members, persevering members, official and unofficial; but it cannot in truth be said, that we are *all at it, and always at it.* If we go to our Sunday schools, it is but a small portion of the members of the church, that are capable of teaching, who engage in this delightful employment—and only a part of the youth, in connexion with our congregations, who are reaping its advantages. If we go to the week-day prayer-meeting or lecture—are all the members of the church there, or the half of them? And if scrutiny were made for the *free-will offerings of the church*, how many would be found on the list of delinquents—so that we are not all at it. Much less are we *always at it.* And it becomes us with deep humility, not only to confess, but to forsake our "sins of omission." O how much have we left undone! How faithless to our covenant vows! Upon how many does the spirit of deep slumber rest—forgetful that the night is far spent, and that the day is at hand. Reader, are you *at it?* Are you *always at it?*—*Watchman.*

"I am a Christian."

Luther tells us of a young disciple who used to repel all temptations with this exclamation, "Begone, I am a Christian." Young man, you wish to bear up against temptation. Be a Christian, and then you will have a shield by which to ward off all the darts of the wicked one.

Afflictions.

"I feel," says a writer, "that repeated afflictions come not as lightnings on the scathed tree, blasting it yet more; but as the strokes of the sculptor on the marble block, forming it to the image of life and loveliness."