

# The Wesleyan

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### THE STORY OF THE YEAR.

The forest leaves became more and more yellow, leaf after leaf fell, and the stormy winds of Autumn howled. The year was now far advanced, and upon the fallen, yellow leaves, lay the queen of the year, looking up with mild eyes at a gleaming star, and her husband stood by her. A gust of wind swept through the foliage, and the leaves fell in a shower. The summer queen was gone, but a butterfly, the last of the year, flew through the cold air. Damp fogs came, icy winds blew, and the long, dark nights of winter approached. The ruler of the year appeared with hair white as snow, but he knew it not; the soft snow-flakes falling from the sky covered his head, as they decked the green fields with a thin, white covering of snow. And then the church bells rang out for Christmas time.

"The bells are ringing for the new-born year," said the ruler, "soon will a new ruler and his bride be born, and I shall go rest with my wife in yonder light-giving star."

In the fresh, green fir-wood, where the angels of Christmas, and consecrated the young trees that were to adorn his feast.

"May there be joy in the rooms, and under the green boughs," said the old ruler of the year. In a few weeks he had become a very old man, with hair as white as snow. "My resting-time draws near; the young pair of the year will soon claim my crown and sceptre."

"But the night is still thine," said the angel of Christmas, "for power, but not for rest. Let the snow lie warmly upon the tender seed. Learn to endure the thought that another is worshipped whilst thou art still lord. Learn to endure being forgotten while yet thou livest. The hour of thy freedom will come when Spring appears."

"And when will Spring come?" asked Winter.

"It will come when the stork returns." And with white locks and snowy beard, cold, bent, and hoary, but strong as the winter storm, and firm as the ice, old Winter sat on the snowdrift-covered hill, looking towards the south, where Winter had sat before, and gazed. The ice glittered, the snow crackled, the skaters skimmed over the polished surface of the lakes; ravens and crows formed a pleasing contrast to the white ground, and not a breath of wind stirred, and in the still air old Winter clefted his fists, and the ice lay fathoms deep between the lands. Then came the sparrows again out of the town, and asked, "Who is that old man?" The raven sat there still, or it might be his son, which is the same thing, and he said to them,—

"It is Winter, the old man of the former year; he is not dead, as the calendar says, but he is guardian to the spring, which is coming."

"When will Spring come?" asked the sparrows. "Spring!" Again the echo sounded from the hills on which the snow lay. The sunshine became warmer, the snow melted, and the birds twittered, "Spring is coming!" And high in the air flew the first stork, and the second followed; a lovely child sat on the back of each, and they sank down on the open field, kissed the earth, and kissed the quiet old man; and as the mist from the mountain-top, he vanished away and disappeared. And the story of the year was finished.

"This is all very fine, no doubt," said the sparrows, "and it is very beautiful; but it is not according to the calendar, therefore it must be all wrong."—*Hans Anderson.*

**BISHOP Bowman**, of the Methodist Episcopal Church, entertains sound views on church periodicals. We quote an utterance from a recent letter to the Editor of the *Central Christian Advocate*, St. Louis, and commend it just now, to all the pastors in our connexion:

"If I were a pastor I would aim to at least double the circulation of the Church papers among my people, believing that this would more than double the Church power in every department. The pastor has no more valuable assistant than the Church papers."

"UNPARALLELED."—An Iowa correspondent to the *Northwestern* writes of an event which he pronounces "unparalleled." Tiffin, Iowa, last year did not pay all the pastor's salary. On the first of the present month he received the deficiency, with ten per cent. interest added. Some Ontario "parallels" to this would bisect the line of many lives in the itinerancy.

### INTERNATIONAL BIBLE LESSONS.

FIFTH YEAR, 1877. JANUARY.

FIRST QUARTER: STUDIES ABOUT THE KINGDOM OF ISRAEL.

EXPLANATORY.

**JEROBOAM.** All that is truly known of the previous history of Jeroboam is contained in the eleventh chapter. The announcement of his future royalty by Ahijah was doubtless followed by some overt act of rebellion on his part, hence his flight to Egypt. He was of the tribe of Ephraim, which had since the time of the judges claimed pre-eminence. (See Judges 8, 1; 12, 1.) Came, To Shechem. See verse 1. Shechem was in the tribe of Ephraim, between Mount Ebal and Mount Gerazim, in a natural amphitheatre. Its selection for the coronation was an honor done to Ephraim, possibly intended to pacify the angry tendency to rebellion. See also Josh 8, 33; 24, 1; Judges 9, 6.

**REHOBOAM.** Son of Solomon by an Ammonitess. [Chap. 14, 31.] He is said to have been forty-one years old at this time [chap. 10, 21.], but as Solomon married strange wives only in his later years, (chap. 11, 1.) and as verse 8 speaks of young men (boys) who were brought up with him, it is thought he could have been but twenty-one, an error easily made in copying. [See *Lange, Spk. Com.*] This agrees with 2 Chron. 13, 7. **APPOINTED.** In answer to their complaint and demand for lighter burdens, he had shrewdly asked three days for consideration, ver. 4-8.

**ROUGHLY.** Heb., *hardly*, that is, in an imperious, tyrannical, despotic manner. How different from the way of David! See Psa. 101. He that would gain men must use the bait of love. Forsook the old men's counsel. That is, the "elders that stood before Solomon," ver. 6. See chap. 4, 2-6. When the young forsake the advice of men of age and experience they are in a dangerous path, but when they forsake the counsel of God they are in the way of death. It is safe to follow the rule given in James 1, 5, as did Solomon. 2 Chron. 1, 10.

**COUNSEL OF THE YOUNG MEN.** The term in the original means a child at any age, from birth to youth. *The Septuagint* has "boys." Their rash, headstrong advice just suited his harsh, proud and selfish character. Your yoke is easy. Their complaint. Solomon's reign, on the contrary, was one of peculiar peace and happiness to his subjects. See chap. 4, 20, 25; 5, 13, 14; 9, 21, 22. **WHIPS.** SCORPIONS. Meaning, If my father treated you as servants, I will treat you as slaves and criminals.

**CAUSE WAS FROM THE LORD.** Rehoboam's passion, pride and foolishness worked out the accomplishment of the divine designs. Not that Rehoboam was forced unwillingly to speak so, but in the same sense in which it is said of Pharaoh and of Judas. That he might prevent. Without interfering with man's own free-will. God guides the course of events, and accomplishes his purposes. Ahijah the Shilonite. A prophet living in Shiloh. In chap. 14 he prophesies Jeroboam's downfall and the Babylonian Captivity. In 2 Chron. 9, 21, reference is made to a record of Solomon's reign made by him.

**ALL ISRAEL.** The ten tribes. The distinction between "Israel" and "Judah" began early. See 1 Sam. 18, 16; 2 Sam. 3, 10; 5, 5. From this time onward it is rarely used in its proper sense. What portion have we? Tribal jealousy, dis-

like and anger, led them to disclaim all share in the glory of the recent monarchy. Son of Jesse. A tautology, as "carpenter's son." (Matt. 13, 55.) To your tents, O Israel. A proverbial call originating in the wilderness. Thine own house. The tribe of Judah.

**CHILDREN OF ISRAEL.** Members of the ten tribes who happened to be settled within the land of Judah. We read in 2 Chron. 11, 16, that many others came over to Rehoboam and strengthened his kingdom, because they could there worship the Lord. The heart truly loyal to God is ever ready to give up home and friends if need be to secure freedom of worship.

**ADORAM.** As he was over the tribute, which was the thing complained of. Rehoboam probably thought he could arrange matters satisfactorily, but in their blind rage they rose as a mob and stoned him with stones. Rehoboam, fearing the same treatment, made speed to flee to Jerusalem, his capital, about thirty-five miles nearly south. Note the failure of this first grand gathering of the children of Israel in which there was no acknowledgment of God as their ruler. It was but the "beginning of the end." The subsequent history of Israel is a continual departure from God, until he "removed them out of his sight."

**UNTO THIS DAY.** Shows that the writer of the book of Kings, who must have lived during the captivity, about 560 B. C., [See 2 Kings 25, 27.] and consequently long after the rebellion of Israel had come to an end, must have copied from a manuscript written much earlier.

**WHEN ALL ISRAEL HEARD.** By the return of their representatives from Shechem, when Jeroboam had shown himself to their homes, it became known to "all Israel" that the great Rehoboam had come back. His return, however, he acted at Shechem, his friendly relations to the king of Egypt, his Ephraimite descent, his known energy and hostility to Solomon, all pointed him out as the right man for king over the revolted tribes; so they called him unto the congregation and made him king. Judah only. This includes the tribe of Benjamin, [see ver. 21.] and probably a portion of Simeon.

### ADVICE TO THE BISHOP OF LINCOLN IN HIS TROUBLE OVER A METHODIST TOMBSTONE.

CONTAINING REASONS WHY THE WESLEYANS CANNOT ACCEPT THE INVITATION TO RETURN TO THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND.

BY THE REV. JOHN BREWSTER, WESLEYAN MINISTER, SLEAFORD.

To the Right Reverend Father in God,

The Lord Bishop of Lincoln.

MY LORD,—I have had the honor to receive a Pastoral from your Lordship, inviting me to return to the Communion of the Church of England. The Pastoral, in some respects, is worthy of my most serious and prayerful consideration. Although their are statements in it of a most objectionable character, yet the motive which prompted you to write, the frankness of your confessions on things which alienate us, and the devout spirit it breathes command at once my reverence and respect. I reciprocate your Lordship's expressions of love for our zeal, and your admiration of our economy. (Page 18.) I deeply sympathise with you in your sincere regret that "the Bishops and clergy of England" did not "take council together, how to guide the great religious movement set in motion by John Wesley." (Page 14.) I frankly accept your Lordship's invitation to "pray to God for the outpouring of his Spirit upon us, that He will give us grace seriously to lay to heart the great dangers we are in by our unhappy divisions." (Page 14.) I am agreeably surprised at the honest confessions your Lordship makes on pages 5 and 15, of the dark and demoralised state of the Lincoln diocese in the days of Wesley, and that our position and mission are due to a great extent to the dereliction of duty on the part of the clergy of that generation.

It is exceedingly gratifying to hear you apply the wholesome remedy, "Physician heal thyself;" and to see your endeavors to "pull out the beam from your own eye." (Page 6.) In fact my Lord, the Pastoral is a "sign of the times." The present is an age of activity, and some unseen but potent element has roused your Lordship to address the Wesleyans. You have taken a step in advance of your predecessors. While synods and Councils have been discussing us, your Lordship has spoken to us on the most momentous question of union. And although "I am least in my father's house," yet I will humbly venture to answer for my brethren in the ministry that we cannot for a moment entertain your proposal nor listen with satisfaction to your details. (Pages 14 and 15.)

It appears from your Lordship's Pastoral that in a church-yard in some of part of your Lordship's Diocese, a grave-stone had been erected, to commemorate the worth of "A Happy Labourer in the Wesleyan Methodist Church." (Page 1.) This stone became to the incumbent "a stone of offence." Indeed, he took such umbrage against it that he applied to your Lordship for advice how to proceed against the dead. Should he deface the beautiful Memorial or should he remove the offensive grave-stone? My Lord! If that clergyman was troubled with a dead Methodist, what would be his embarrassment with the living! If a grave-stone gave him offence, what would "the living stones" do? Your Lordship frankly informs us in the opening page, that "to remove a gravestone once placed in a churchyard, in the presence of the sexton, would require a faculty, and might lead to a legal process of which it is not easy to foresee the issue." Did it not strike you, at the time you penned these words, that if it required "a faculty," according to law, to remove the grave-stone of an offensive Wesleyan epithet, it would require a much mightier "faculty" to remove the many flourishing societies of Methodism? If you are powerless with the dead, would you not be as impotent, over the living. The moment I read the opening page of the Pastoral, the thought flashed through my mind,—

"If the Methodist listen to this Prelate's advice, and return to his Church, he will prove their Sexton, and not their Bishop."

The advice your Lordship gave the Clergyman, how to proceed with the dead Methodist, will give unpardonable offence to the living church. You say "Liberate your conscience. Disabuse your people of erroneous notions. Imitate the Apostle Paul, who saw a heathen altar, at Athens and took a text from it, and preached a sermon upon it. Use that inscription in your Church-yard as a subject for one or more sermons to your people on the present relation of Wesleyanism to the church, and on the sin and unhappiness of schism." &c., &c. (Page 4.) If this be your theory of Church-yard Government, your Lordship's Episcopate has fallen on evil times! A notorious predecessor of your Lordship, in the See of Lincoln, Richard Fleming, receiving his orders from Rome, dug up the holy dust of the great and good John Wyckliffe, and scattered it over the water of river and sea. My Lord! a man's character is formed of principles within, and by circumstances without. Had your Lordship's lot been cast in the days of Bishop Fleming, with your present principles that kindly disposition, which all who know you love, those brilliant talents, which those who have read your works admire, and that excellency of mortal character which all who know you in private life esteem, would have been turned into the bitterness of gall, and

become the tools of Popish tyranny. "Is thy servant a dog, that he should do this great thing," asked Hazael of Elisha. Circumstances develop men. Circumstances are the moral atmosphere, the climate in which men grow. Happy for us and your Lordship that the darkness of Fleming's days is passed, and the light and glory of Wyckliffe surround us. Still it is unfortunate that your Lordship has stumbled in the light. Your principles have cast you down in mid-day. In hastening to embrace us, your "Brethren, beloved in the Lord," (Page 6) you have tripped over a grave-stone, and the accident will not add to your dignity, nor enlarge our sympathy.

My Lord it is unfortunate that your Pastoral should have been conceived in a grave-yard, and meditated over a tomb-stone! It smells of the dead. The dust of dead theories lies thick upon it. Its wail is for the departed age. Its grief is for the living present. It sounds like a funeral dirge over days never to return. It convinces me of my propriety in advocating by press and on platform the necessity of your Church being established by law. I have had the pleasure of standing by the side of your Lordship's Clergy in this Diocese, to defend the Establishment against brethren, whom I highly esteem, in the Dissenting Churches. For this cause I have sacrificed the friendship of good men and devout Ministers, at whose feet, on theology and morals, I would humbly sit. But, I regret to say, that so far from being shaken in my judgment, in the benefits conferred upon this great nation by the Establishment, your Lordship's Pastoral has furnished me with a new and forcible argument for the necessity of Establishment—viz: A Defence of Church Yard Sanctity against the tyranny of Bishops.

The counsel of your Lordship, over the grave-stone to the Incumbent, was insulting to us, whom you style on page 6 "Brethren, beloved in the Lord." "The Scribes, Pharisees, and hypocrites, so dreadfully denounced by our Lord, Matt. xxiii, 29, for building the tombs of the prophets, "whom their father slew and garnishing the sepulchres of the righteous," whom their fathers persecuted, were moderate and gracious compared with this of your Lordship. You will not even "garnish the sepulchre of a righteous man." That which we esteem as an appropriate memorial to our Brother departed in the Lord, you have seized and shaped into a tool to dig up the dead to denounce the living. And standing in the grave, with uplifted hands, defiled by the touch, you call to us, "Come back, brethren beloved in the Lord." What! Exchange the green pastures of Methodism for a grave-yard!

Recall the advice, my Lord, you have given to that clergyman over the dead Methodist. It is as unscriptural as it is unrighteous. "You wish an Incumbent of your Parish to take his stand over the Wesleyan grave-stone, as Paul stood on Mars Hill? You advise him to take his text from the stone commemorating departed worth, as Paul chose his from a heathen altar! While the happy Wesleyan labourer's soul is mingling with the redeemed before the throne in glory, and reaping his eternal reward in the beatific vision of his Lord, does Dr. Wordsworth advise his Clergyman, so to wrest the word of God from its divinely legitimate meaning? Then my Lord, be assured, your people will take you at your word! They also will wrest the Word of God; and while your Incumbent is carrying out your advice, and uttering his diatribes against Wesleyanism, they will take the place of the Athenians, and ask, "What will this babbler say?"

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