

# THE WESLEYAN DAILY RECORDER.

CONFERENCE OF 1869.

No. 3.]

TORONTO, ONTARIO, SATURDAY MORNING, MAY 29, 1869.

[Vol. I.]

## Poetry.

### PILGRIMAGE.

"And confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth."

Cheerful, O Lord! at thy command,  
I bind my sandals on:  
I take my pilgrim's staff in hand,  
And go to seek the better land,  
The way Thy feet have gone.

I oft shall think, when on my way  
Some bitter grief I meet;  
"This path hath echoed with His moan,  
And every rude and flinty stone,  
Hath bruised His blessed feet."

Painting and sad along the road,  
Thou layest on my head  
The hands they fastened to the tree  
The hands that paid the price for me,  
The hands that brake the bread.

Thou whisperest some pleasant word,  
I catch the much-loved tone;  
I feel Thee near, my gracious Lord!  
I know thou keepest watch and ward,  
And all my grief is gone.

From every mountain's rugged peak,  
The far-off land I know;  
And from its fields of fadeless bloom,  
Come breezes laden with perfume,  
And fan my weary brow.

There peaceful hills and holy vales  
Sleep in eternal day;  
While rivers, deep and silent, glide  
Twixt meads and groves on either side,  
Through which the blessed stray.

There He abides, who is in Heaven,  
The loveliest and the best;  
His face, when shall I gaze upon!  
Or share with the beloved John  
The pillow of His breast!

### THE PREACHING FOR THE TIMES.

There is an uneasy feeling abroad, as if the pulpit was losing its legitimate power—as if preaching was in danger of being pushed to one side by this busy crowding generation as of no practical use; and very ludicrous, if not lamentable, methods are resorted to restore its power to the pulpit and its efficiency to the preaching. Unusual subjects are advertised, eccentricities of speech and of manner are adopted; comic stories and funny sayings are heard, liturgical modes of worship are used; and, in certain cases, all the devices of ecclesiastical millinery are brought into play.

Now, will these and such like methods make the pulpit more effectual in its proper work? The answer to this question is involved in the answer to another. What is the proper work of the pulpit?

What is the object of preaching? Is it merely to draw a crowd—a laughing, wondering crowd? This is easily done. Make a fool of yourself, and the people will run to see you do it. Trick yourself out in as many colors as the clown of the circus wears, and they will come to see how you look. Resort to gimcracks and claptrap, and the mob will rush to hear and see you with the same motives that they crowd to witness the gibberings of a monkey, and the antics of a buffoon. If the church is as good as a play, they will go to the church—but only for a while. In the end they will prefer the real article to your shabby imitation, the genuine circus to your spurious copy. But is this mere getting together of a crowd success? Suppose by stamping and shouting, and laughing and crying, and dressing up, and letting down; by preaching on unusual subjects, or giving your sermons striking titles, you fill the pews, and crowd the aisles—what then? What have you accomplished?

The means must be suited to the end. What is the object of preaching? It is the conversion of sinners, the edification of saints, the building up of the church of God, a living temple on earth. This I insist, is the end of preaching, and this end has not changed through centuries. It is the same now, as when Peter preached the first sermon on the day of Pentecost, the same now as when Paul wrote that wonderful epistle to the Romans. The casting out of all sin, the bringing in of all righteousness, this is the purpose, the sole purpose of the preaching of the gospel of Christ. Whatever does not tend to further this end, is a total failure, even though it crowd the house for a while.

Now in this age, which is all agape after novelty, there is danger that, in running after the new, we lose sight of that which is ever the same. Sin remains the same stubborn fact with which we have to contend. Our flashing telegraphs and interesting railroads and ocean steamships may have revolutionized business and international relations, but they have not changed the great fact of sin. The march of discovery, and the triumphs of science have not brought earth any nearer heaven. It is as true now as ever that man is without God in this world.

Then, the remedy is the same, the minister is still a minister of the cross; the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ is the same old but ever new Gospel, the gospel that speaks of sin and atonement and the new birth, the gospel that has a Triune God and a divine Saviour, and the dying sacrifice for sin, and the renewing and sanctifying Holy Spirit in it. This is the gospel which we must preach now, if sinners are to be saved, and the world converted to Christ. "Preaching for the times!" Pshaw. Wherein do these times differ from the times that have gone before? There is the same old

devil, the same old evil heart of unbelief, the same unquiet conscience, the same God, the same hell, the same gospel.

The disease is the same, the remedy must be the same; and when men have tired of claptrap, and laughed at oddities, and fallen asleep beneath our fine-spun sentiment, and left us to discourse on science to empty pews—let the minister come Sabbath after Sabbath into the pulpit with this same old, but ever new Gospel, let him preach it as if he believed it; let him go to the work of saving souls as the physician goes to the work of saving life—let him preach this Gospel, feeling that it is the very thing which these dying sinners need; preach, not because a sermon is expected of him, but because he has something which he must say; preach Christ, constrained by the love of Christ, and sinners will flock to hear him, not to be amused, but because he speaks to their souls, and what he says meets their profoundest practical wants, and, as the blessed result, souls will be saved, and the church of God be edified.

The truth is, we are too much afraid, in this age of scientific progress and active thinking, of preaching the simple, undiluted gospel of Christ. As a recent writer well puts it: "The difficulty is that, in our worldly wisdom, we have too often mistaken man, emasculated the gospel, and distrusted God. Mistaken man, thinking him a fool or a puppet, to be interested in sleight-of-hand performances, rather than a being once made in God's image, and having still intense and earnest gazing upward toward the skies, and ceaseless, though undefined longings for something better; emasculated the gospel, vainly imagining that which appeals to the lower and perishing instincts mightier than that which reaches down after that which is enduring and God-like in man; distrusted God, in that we have wanted confidence in that way of bearing life to men which he has declared to be the embodiment of his highest wisdom."

Still there is a variable quantity in preaching. The gospel is the invariable quantity, inasmuch as God's character and law, man's character and relation to God, and the nature of sin remain ever the same, and in arriving at any correct theory on this subject we must hold fast to this distinction between the variable and invariable quantity in preaching. The body is the same; but not the clothes which wrap it about; and a man would make himself ridiculous should he dress in the fashions of the eighteenth century. He should not cut off an arm or a leg in order to be in the fashion, neither need he go about in tights or knee buckles in order to preserve the integrity of his preaching. So in preaching. We should preach another and a mutilated gospel; we should not become lecturers, ministering only to the popular rage for novelty and amusement; we should be preachers of the gospel, the whole gospel and nothing but the gospel; but let us not preach as if we lived two hundred years ago, preach it as standing in the middle of the nineteenth century.

Were this article intended to be exhaustive, I should here enquire. What are the fashions of the day? What are the characteristic tendencies of the age in which we live? But to do this would require more space than can now be spared me. There are a few very obvious thoughts, and on these I will just touch, premising that an answer to the question: What is the best mode of preaching for the times? is involved in an answer to the question: What preaching does any congregation need? for, generally, that preaching which is good for my flock, is equally good for some other flock. But to our hints.

1. Preaching should be in the popular language of the day. Preach the old doctrines, but preach them in a current phraseology. To clothe the gospel in the style of the seventeenth or eighteenth century would be sillier and worse than clothing the body in the fashions of that age. The style of Edwards or Hopkins is scarcely intelligible to the mass of hearers now, and equally objectionable is the custom of using theological technicalities in preaching. Preach to men about sin, atonement, regeneration, the divine decrees, the work of the spirit, etc., but preach these doctrines in language which is used in the street, in the shop in the family.

2. Be short. The age is in too great a hurry for long sermons. People now-a-days cannot stop to listen to them. Preach the everlasting gospel, but do not preach everlasting sermons.

3. Be specific. Preach the whole gospel, but do not try to preach it all in one sermon. Saying a little about every thing, is saying nothing to the purpose about anything, and it is easier to think out and deliver specific sermons than sermons that touch and go on everything inasmuch as the mind moves from particulars to general. Be specific. Preach about one thing, so that people in a hurry may have patience to listen, and carry away something with them.

4. Be practical. This is an intensely utilitarian age. Men will not listen to abstruse speculations and fine-spun theories. Preaching that meets no living want, will not, in these days of practical inventions in science, and practical questions in politics and social life, call out and hold together a congregation. Bring the gospel home to the conscience; apply it to the life. Preach, not about mankind, but, to the men and women that sit before you.

5. Be in earnest. These are earnest times and this an earnest people. We were terribly in earnest in our late civil war, and have not got over it yet. There is an intense earnestness pervading business and politics, science

and philosophy, and the pulpit must be in earnest too. The people who come panting from the race in the world, will not listen to the dreams of a half asleep ministry in the church.

6. Be vivid and fresh. Present old truths in new forms. Do not preach always the same sermon, only changing the text. Make the truth not only impressive but attractive. The water of life is none the less the water of life even though drunk from a golden goblet. I believe illustrations give vividness to pulpit discourse. They arouse and fix attention, and what is still better, they make all nature preachers of the everlasting gospel. Such preaching will be a power with man. In the end, the distilling dew will, from morn to morn, speak to him of the silence, the energy, the invigorating contact, and the wide reaching influence of God's proclaimed message; and the fading leaf, sweeping across the sky, while it speaks to him of his own withering life, will tell him of accumulated work, an imperishable monument left behind for the coming generations.

Rev. J. A. Ross.

### WORK FOR YOUNG WOMEN.

A lady writes in the Christian at Work: Oliver Wendell Holmes makes in one of his works a remark to this effect, that many American women would become crazy, if they had no piano on which to pour out the longing and unrest which often possesses them. This is probably exaggerated; but, if so, it is an exaggeration of a state of things which does really exist. How many women bear continually the burden of an unoccupied, aimless life, a life which seems to afford no channels in which the force and warmth of their natures can flow. Especially is this true of young ladies who have finished the usual course of study, and have not yet been called to a definite place in the world's work. At least so it seems to them, and I should like, as a sympathizing friend, to say a few words to them.

I am not one of you now, for God has kindly given me the holy and delightful work of a wife and a mother to do for him. But it is not very long since I was in your position, and felt, as I am sure many of you do, that I had no work to do. But I soon learned that that is not true. God gives "to every man in his work," and it is a work for him. It is not always easy for you to find it; but if we really long to work for him, ask him fervently and in faith, "Lord what wilt thou have me to do?" and as surely as Paul received an answer to his prayers, surely will you. If you live in the city there is no lack of work all around you, lying ready to your hand. Can you not take a class in an Industrial School on week days, and have one in a Mission school or in the Sabbath school of your church on Sunday? Can you not visit the poor and the suffering? A few hours of every day is little indeed to give to him who gave himself for you. You have but to join one of the many organizations for work within your reach, to find plenty to occupy hand and heart.

And you who live where there are no such organizations—can you not begin a work for yourself? Do you not know of any whose poverty you can help, whose suffering you can alleviate? If you have nothing else to give, give sympathy. That you must have if you are truly Christ's, and one word of your blessed Master may prove a richer gift than treasures of gold and silver. In order first to find work and then faithfully do it, fill yourself with thoughts of Jesus and his love. Study his character, his life of unwearied self-denial and work and suffering for you: think of him now pleading for you with the Father that he will not cut down the unfruitful tree; think how he loves you, how he yearns over you, and how he grieves over those perishing ones, whom a word from you, with his blessing might turn to him and heaven. Can you let him see you idle, unearning?

### HOW TO BE MISERABLE.

Sit by the window and look over the way to your neighbor's excellent mansion, which he has recently built and paid for, and fitted out, and say:

"Oh, that I were a rich man!"

Get angry with your neighbor, and think you have not a friend in the world. Shed a tear or two, and take a walk in the burial-ground, continually saying to yourself:

"When shall I be buried here?"

Sign a note for a friend, and never forget your kindness, and every hour in the day whisper to yourself—"I wonder if he will ever pay that note!"

Think everybody means to cheat you. Closely examine every bill you take, and doubt its being genuine until you have put your neighbor to a great deal of trouble. Put confidence in nobody, and believe every man you trade with to be a rogue.

Never accommodate if you can possibly help it.

Never visit the sick or afflicted, and never give a farthing to assist the poor.

Buy as cheap as you can and screw down to the lowest mill. Grind the faces and hearts of the unfortunate.

Brood over your misfortunes, your lack of talents, and believe that at no distant day you will come to want. Let the work-house be ever in your mind, with all the horrors of distress and poverty.

Follow these receipts strictly, and you will be miserable to your heart's content—if we may so speak—sick at heart and at variance with the world. Nothing will cheer or encourage you, nothing will throw a gleam of sunshine or a ray of warmth into your heart.

### THE BEST RICHES.

Not long since a gentleman took an acquaintance upon the top of his house to show him the extent of his possessions.

Waving his hands about, he said:

"There, that is my estate."

Then, pointing to a great distance on one side—

"Do you see that farm?"

"Yes."

"Well, that is mine."

Pointing again to the other side—

"Do you see that house?"

"Yes."

"That also belongs to me."

Then said his friend:

"Do you see that little village out yonder?"

"Yes."

"Well, there lives a poor woman in that village who can say more than all this."

"Ay, what can she say?"

"Why, she can say, 'Christ is mine!'"

He looked confounded, and said no more.

### THE WESLEYS AND THEIR HYMNS.

BY ISABELLA BIRD.

#### PART II.

The Wesleyan hymns were contemporary with the rise and progress of Methodism under the leadership of John and Charles Wesley. They were the product of a great religious upheaving. Unlike the hymns of Watts and Doddridge, which were the studied productions of literary men in retirement and leisure, the hymns of the Wesleys were thrown off under the inspiration of the moment, in circumstances of intense action and excitement. The Non-conformist hymns were written in a time of universal religious declension. They read sometimes like elegiac strains on the burial of vital Christianity. They were put forth when the Gospel, locked up in the technical phrases of the dogmatic theology of the Puritans, had almost ceased to be a power in the land, and when the pious. The hymns of the Wesleys were written in the great Methodist revival, and before the burst of spring had subsided into the glorious luxuriance of summer. They are hymns of birth, not of burial, and of a nation "born in a day." They are the hymns of a Gospel liberated, of the Rock re-asserted, of the descent of the Comforter, of the Pentecost of the land. They are the utterances of an emancipated Christianity, of a fully enlightened faith. They are hymns of the light and of day, soaring upward at once, on the pinions of a victorious faith. They are the monument and the expression of the best day that ever dawned for England. They throbbled with the pulse of the Great Awakening. They are the spiritual autobiography of the leaders of the true English Reformation.

The Wesleyan hymns may be regarded as the work of Charles Wesley, though they bear throughout the impress of the severe taste and vigorously applied pruning-knife of John. John, however, wrote a few original hymns, and, after his visit to the Moravian settlements, where he first learned the power of hymn singing, he made some very successful translations from Gerhard, Tersteegen, Zinzendorf, and other evangelical German hymnists. Among the best known of these are the imitation of Bernard's famous hymn, "O sacred head once wounded," "Thou hidden love of God, whose height," "Commit thou all thy griefs," and the soul-stirring hymn, in which the recovered Gospel was bound up, "Jesus, Thy blood and righteousness." Among his original hymns, none is known so well as, "Ho, every one that thirsts draw nigh," but the less known one, "How happy is the pilgrim's lot!" is, perhaps, the first in poetic merit. There are many touching associations connected with this hymn, which has a great power of commending itself to the sad and friendless. A simpleton, by repute an idiot, became enlightened on the subject of saving faith, and for many years itinerated over the north of England, a simple but successful preacher of the Gospel. He sang this hymn at every hearth which gave him a night's shelter, and died repeating the last half of the last verse:

"Now let the pilgrim's journey end:  
Now, O my Saviour, Brother, Friend,  
Restore me to thy breast!"

Charles Wesley's poetry is the richest, though the least explored region of English hymnody. Though he has enriched every hymn-book of every Christian denomination by his verse, this most prolific, most powerful, and most poetical of hymn-writers is comparatively unknown. "The glorious reproach of Methodism" still attaches to his name; Dissenters and Presbyterians distrust the great Arminian poet; Churchmen sing his hymns in ignorance

or distaste of their authorship. In England, he is almost solely known by 626 of his hymns published in the "Collection of Hymns for the Use of the People called Methodists," put forth by his brother John in 1779. The various Methodist collections in the United States contain about 800 of his hymns, and not more than 100 of the whole are known outside the pale of the Methodist societies. These are scattered throughout innumerable collections in England and America; and, except in a few compilations, the authors name is not attached. So little is this great poet studied, that thousands of persons have a general appreciation of him, who are unaware that he is the composer of about 7,000 hymns, 4,000 of which were published during his lifetime, and are to be found in thirty-one separate publications put forth between 1740 and 1785. Few of these have been reprinted, and only about a ninth of his hymns are accessible to any but the curious.

It is not on record that Charles Wesley showed any precocious poetical talent, or, indeed, that he wrote any hymns at all, until he was twenty-nine. On his return, gloomy and dissatisfied, from his mission to Georgia, his religious disquietude broke forth into the famous hymn for midnight, "Fain would I leave the world below," part of which, altered to a more hopeful tone, still stands in the English Methodist Hymn-book. A few as defective followed, and then he appears to have hung his harp on the willows for nearly a year. It was not till May 21, 1738, the date, as he believed, as his passing from death unto life, that he took it down, and the full tide of gladness burst forth in the hymn, "Where shall my wondering soul begin?" To his brother, at the same time, he addressed the lines beginning, "What morn on thee with sweeter ray," entitled "Congratulation to a Friend on Believing in Christ," and a year later, "For the Anniversary of One's Conversion," he wrote the justly popular hymn, "O for a thousand tongues to sing," which strikes the key-note of the Methodist hymnody, and is the first hymn in the Methodist collection. It was a tide of song that never ebbed—a stream whose source was that well of water which springeth up unto everlasting life. From the hour in which he said for the first time, "My Beloved is mine, and I am his," until the day, half a century later, when, with the "swellings of Jordan" about his feet, he dictated the lines, bright with the same faith and hope, "In age and feebleness extreme," his facility of poetic expression never failed. No man who has written so much ever wrote so well.

Like his brother, he was a man of strong individuality; he took nothing second-hand, and his style of thought and language is distinctively his own. He was a man of strong mind as well as strong emotions; a poet by nature; intensely spiritually-minded; his soul more open to impressions from the spiritual than from the material world. In fact, with him the seen only suggested the unseen. He presented a rare combination of the true reformer's fire with tenderness and sensitivities seldom equalled. He had renounced self, and was with it all that most men prize. His objects in life were personal holiness and successful evangelism. Highly cultured and exquisitely refined, his hymns with all their singular vigour have a finish about them which is surprising, considering the circumstances under which they were written. The hymn, "O Thou who camest from above," 311, in an example. The appropriate and sustained imagery which the poet uses to illustrate the varied thought introduced, and the singular unity of the whole, are worthy of the first of our British classical writers. He was the most laborious of evangelists, the most locomotive of itinerant preachers. His hymns were composed on horseback, and jotted down as the animal jogged quietly along; in rambles by the sea-side, at all times, and in all surroundings. Whatever revision his hymns underwent was owing to the severe taste of his brother. Yet under these disadvantageous circumstances his verses, though of very various merits, rarely sink below a high literary standard. His rhymes never halt, and are never forced; he never descends to doggerel, and if he offends the taste of any, it is not by irreverent familiarity, sensuousness, or vulgarity. We must remember that he was emotional and excitable, and lived in a time of high religious pressure, and, above all, that his intense spirituality carried him aloft habitually into regions wherein most men never or rarely tread.

The Wesleyan hymns are most poetical; their peripatetic composition, their autobiographical cast, their lofty spirituality, their intense life and practicality, and their high poetic merit, place them by themselves. Charles Wesley, like his brother John, was an intense believer. Both were naturally religious; both had a singular capacity for receiving spiritual truth. Of this intense belief the Methodist hymns were the offspring, no less than the Methodist preaching. No man ever realized more fully than the poet the destructive nature of sin; no man ever gave more absolute credence to the declaration, "The soul that sinneth it shall die." It was "knowing the terrors of the Lord," that he "persuaded men." It was with an earnestness and directness arising from his own strong convictions that he occasionally cast aside poetic refinements, and apostrophized his hearers with singular plainness of speech.

Along with Luther and other Reformers, the Wesleys believed in a personal devil. Life to them was not a mere tournament, but a real battle with the great adversary of man. The principalities and powers of darkness, marshalled by the prince of the power of the air,