

The Wesleyan.

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FROM THE PAPERS.

Six of the graduating class of New York University Medical College intend to go abroad as medical missionaries.

New York and Philadelphia have sent forth this spring from their Medical Schools five hundred and seventy-five M.D.s.

Dr. Day, of Boston, who has treated over 7000 cases of inebriety, says that eight-tenths of them are the traceable results of wine and beer-drinking.

A recent witticism attributed to the Bishop of London is: "The Dean of Westminster is the chief Nonconformist in my diocese."

At a recent examination in Peking, a Chinese boy performed the almost incredible feat of repeating the whole New Testament without missing a single word.

The amount contributed annually in the United States for foreign missions is less than the sum spent for intoxicating liquors in three days.

The *Examiner* and *Chronicle* (Baptist) says that "it is a fact, and a distressing one, that changes have taken place in a single year in about one-third of all the pastorates in the State of New York."

The way to introduce a Methodist paper into every Methodist family is, for each Official Board, with the pastor, to take the matter in hand and do it.—*Christian Advocate*.

From *Christian Guardian*, Toronto: "Hon. H. Windom, recently appointed Secretary of the Treasury in the American Cabinet, is a brother of Mrs. John Douglas, sister-in-law of Rev. Dr. Douglas, of Montreal."

We are constantly hearing the cry against the amount of money expended in foreign missions, but New York city expends two-thirds as much on its police as all societies in the United States together spend in foreign missions.

By the way, I find we are to have a succession of Presidents in the Ecumenical Conference from day to day, perhaps a new one each day of the twelve. Variety is charming. I hope it will prove so in this case.—*London Methodist*.

Christian union was well illustrated in Birmingham, England, January 16th, when the pastors of sixty-one different churches—Congregational, Baptist, Methodist, and Presbyterian—exchanged pulpits.

Postmaster-general James, in declining a banquet tendered him by New York merchants, thanked them for their appreciation of the manner in which he has performed his duties in the past, but he adds that the trial of his fitness has only just begun.

In noting the fact that in spite of its famine Ireland consumed over \$50,000,000 in whiskey last year, the *National Baptist* aptly says, "It is not the landlords or the land laws that keep Ireland down, it is whiskey, ignorance, and superstition."

The Dowager Queen Caroline Amelia, of Denmark, who died the other day, lived for the last thirty years in the greatest seclusion. She occupied herself only with works of charity, annually putting aside one-third of her income for the benefit of the poor.

Noticing the prohibition tidal-wave the *Methodist Advocate* says: "In Georgia, much is being done. Mississippi is falling into line. Arkansas and Texas are surprising the world by their advance movements. In the South, at this time, there is more interest in prohibition than in total abstinence."

The Bishop of Toronto, preaching in Grace Church on a recent Sunday, attributed the stationary position of the Church of England in Canada to lack of missionary enterprise. The church in which the Bishop made the remarks was being reopened after an expenditure of \$10,000 in extension.—*Witness*.

The New Orleans *Advocate* says of a formidable report of deficiencies in ministerial support in certain Conferences: "The preachers can live better without receiving these amounts than the Church can without paying them. There is a sure remedy for these things, as there is for every form of sin. It lies first in the getting of more religion, and second in the changing of our methods."

A GOOD CHARACTER.

BY REV. G. O. HUESTIS.

A good character is not talent, or remarkable mental ability; for some men thus endowed by nature, are not in possession of a good character. Others, who have not been favored with special intellectual power, have acquired great excellence of character. Nor is it genius; inventive thought, in literature, science and mechanics. The history of our race furnishes many examples of persons possessing this rare quality of mind, while the leading features of the moral character were far below the proper standard. Much of the genius and talent of our world has been prematurely buried in the swamps of sensuality and intemperance. Mere mental endowments and acquisitions are not a safe breakwater against the inflowing tides of vice. Neither is a good character reputation; the esteem and respect of our fellow men, though this is generally associated with it. We may lose the reputation without being deprived of the desirable character. Colton, with great propriety, says, "The two most precious things this side the grave are our reputation and our life. But it is to be lamented that the most contemptible whisper may deprive us of the one, and the weakest weapon of the other."

As long as hypocrisy is a possibility among men, reputation may be based upon a false assumption. We may think too highly of others as well as of ourselves. Of late years, our Province, as well as other places, has furnished too many sad illustrations of this possibility. Men high in social position, mentally well developed, encircled with worldly honours, enjoying the confidence of the public, professed Christians, were yet for years deliberately embezzling the funds of others, entrusted to them for safe keeping.

If then a good character be neither talent, genius, nor reputation, nor the combination of all three, what is it? We answer with all brevity, the moral inclination or purpose of the soul, the spiritual nature. According to this definition, the elements of a good character are found chiefly in man's moral nature. But this is closely interwoven with the intellect; we cannot speak of one without implying the existence and influence of the other. Character, then, is not a natural endowment, nor a providential gift, but an acquired possession. We form it for ourselves. And we do it more by thought, than by either words or deeds. Through these, others learn our character. As a man "thinketh in his heart, so is he." Right thoughts precede right actions. It is "out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh." Character is a conscious possession, we know what we are.

By divine arrangement, ability and opportunity to form good character are placed within the reach of every one. So that those who have it not, cannot justly blame God or his providence. Although many influences, human and Divine, conspire to build up a man's character, the superstructure rises not without his own individual attention, direction and co-operation. It is a most affecting thought that we are now daily building up a character that may yet be stamped with immortality. While it is true, that as regards worldly goods, we brought nothing into this world, and shall carry nothing out, it is equally true that we brought moral and mental capacity into this world, and shall take a self-made character out.

The formation of character is a serious matter. *Salvator* says, "Actions, looks, words, steps form the alphabet by which you may spell character." "The way to gain a good reputation," *Socrates* says, "is to endeavor to be what you desire to appear." Another writer beautifully remarks on the formation of character, "Have you ever watched the icicle as it formed? Have you noticed how it froze, one drop at a time, until it was a foot long or more? If the water was clean, the icicle remained clear, and sparkled brightly in the sun; but if the water was slightly muddy, the icicle looked foul, and its beauty was spoiled. Just so our characters are formed. One little thought or feeling at a time adds

its influence. If each thought be pure and right, the soul will be lovely, and will sparkle with happiness; but if impure and wrong, there will be deformity and wretchedness."

Character is a possession worth acquiring. "That character is power, is true in a much higher sense, than that knowledge is power." Duke Chartres used to boast that no one could have less regard for character than himself; yet, he would gladly give twenty thousand pounds for a good one, because he could immediately make double that sum by means of it. Franklin writes well on this subject: "The most trifling actions that affect a man's credit are to be regarded. The sound of your hammer at five in the morning or nine at night, heard by a creditor, makes him easy six months longer; but if he sees you at a billiard table or hears your voice at a tavern, when you should be at work, he sends for his money the next day."

A good character may be obtained, lost and regained while we live on earth, but not in the next state of being. This solemn thought should always influence our minds. In eternity this mental and moral possession will continue unchanged. "He that is unjust let him be unjust still; and he which is filthy let him be filthy still; and he that is righteous let him be righteous still; and he that is holy let him be holy still."

Burlington, N. S.

A SECRET OF SUCCESS.

At the last meeting of the Metropolitan Methodist Lay Mission, London, the Lord Mayor in the chair, the Rev. H. S. Hughes, M. A., asked why it was that Methodists of London had never really supported the Metropolitan Methodist Lay Mission? He believed it was because the lay Methodists of London had never really believed in the need of systematic house-to-house visitation; they seemed to consider that if they built a fine chapel, and obtained a popular preacher, and got the place filled, their duty was done. If it did not fill they complained of the people or the preacher, or wrote to the papers complaining, attributing its non-success to the use of the Liturgy, or to having too many mutual improvement societies; but at his chapel at Barry-road they had both, and during the last month it pleased the Almighty to grant them a most blessed revival of religion. It had been his privilege to hold an eight days' mission; over four hundred persons entered the enquiry-room, of whom more than 100 had been admitted to Society classes. Why had God given them this great result at Barry-road, where ten years ago there was no Methodism of any kind? He believed it was the result of systematic house-to-house visitation of all the people who lived in the neighbourhood. Five thousand houses were thus visited with the result he had stated. But in the British Army the captains led the men; and so it must be in Methodism if they were to succeed. He ventured to say that if the Lord Mayor would visit every house on one side of Brixton-hill and the honourable member for Leicester the other—(laughter and applause)—and the work was followed by other influential men, similar success would be achieved in the Brixton-hill Circuit. As the result of the mission services that had been held in the three chapels in the Mostyn-road Circuit there would be the addition of at least 300 members to the Methodist Society. House-to-house visitation had brought to light the fact that there were many ex-Methodists in London who were formerly class-leaders and local preachers, but who in London had lost their peace with God. Why should success only be achieved by the Ritualists and the Salvation Army? Methodists were too fond of depressing one another and looking at the dark side. He was thankful for the new departure; it was time to have done with grumbling and criticizing. They must put on a cheerful courage, and organize these missions and employ numbers of such men as Mr. Cropper as agents, then the day of their mourning would be ended and the Methodist chapels of London would be crowded with happy congregations.

THE AGE OF LIGHTNESS.

Inspiration has put on record that in the last days men, though "having a form of godliness," will be "lovers of pleasure more than lovers of God." The present is peculiarly an age of lightness and trifling among professors of godliness. Some readers may remember the missionary meeting in Brooklyn, N. Y., wherein two noted ministers vied for the mastery in clownishness; and one enthusiastic partaker in the churchly nonsense styled it a "pentecost feast of jollity." This expression is evidence of the irreverence which prevails, if it is not begotten, even in such assemblies.

Forty years ago platform jokes and public witticisms were confined to political or convivial assemblies. Now a speaker, to please, even though he occupies a pulpit, must tickle the ears of the giddy and the gay, or be counted a failure. The curse of intemperance is a subject of sufficient solemnity to cause groanings rather than mirth, but a temperance lecturer is expected to keep the house convulsed with laughter.

We attended a "temperance" meeting not long since, wherein a man told a very silly story, not at all related to the subject of temperance, and he was not only uproariously applauded, but his "speech" was commented upon as the "hit" of the evening. From such meetings the people retire in a state of mental and moral dissipation. If good impressions are made at all they are lost beneath an overflowing tide of folly.

Once we attended a Monday morning meeting of Methodist ministers in Boston. The subject for discussion was "Sanctification." A score or more of Methodist ministers met to consider this subject, might be expected to present a scene of more than ordinary gravity. But even there it took but a small matter to elate them even to loud laughter and clapping of hands. Many doctors of divinity, and mostly Presbyterians also, we saw in the annual convention of the National Association to procure the "religious amendment" of the constitution; and even here mirth seemed all-prevailing. Only two prominent men of the large number there present refrained from joining in the noise of cheering and stamping.

The Presbyterian Northern Assembly has passed through its session in Madison, Wisconsin. The first business set the D. D.'s in a glee; and a correspondent to the *Christian at Work*, reports: "I never saw an assembly of any deliberative kind start off with so much good humor and merriment."

And so they go. The whole world, religious and secular, is given to trifling, and is growing wild with sensational excitement. A Baptist paper, sometime since enquired, "Where are we drifting?" That well expresses the situation—"Drifting." Where will these things end? "From such turn away."

BANKRUPT IN ETERNITY.

Recently at a prayer-meeting, a brother was heard to say, "I had rather be a pauper on earth than a bankrupt in eternity;" and all who are capable of estimating the importance of the future over the present must agree in the judgment. There are those blest with an abundance of this world's goods, who are making to themselves "friends of the mammon of unrighteousness" and are taking heed to the divine charge to "lay up for themselves treasures in heaven." Too many, however, possessed of wealth, are seduced by a love of "Lucre," and, esteeming worldly riches above righteousness, are absorbed in the pursuit of the former, to the utter neglect of the latter. They have no appreciation of the "true riches" either here or hereafter. All their possessions are on earth and, when they leave the world, they will take nothing with them, and will have nothing laid up for themselves in eternity, but will enter it utterly bankrupt. In contrast with such folly, how wise and commendable is the choice of those whose supreme aim is to secure "durable riches," and who, though poor here, are able to rejoice in the prospect of finally coming into possession of "an inheritance, incorruptible, undefiled, and that fadeth not away."

Well and truly has it been said that it is "convenient to be rich," and that "it is very inconvenient to be poor."

But the advantages of wealth and the inconveniences of poverty are only temporary, and whether a man be in one or the other condition, is of little consequence compared with the assurance of his eternal salvation. But if riches involve eternal bankruptcy, their non-possession is a blessing and not a curse. Of how many rich men may be said that dying they left not only property, but everything. They entered eternity bankrupt. But of how many may it be said, that dying penniless, they entered eternity rich—rich in spiritual life, rich in lofty character and rich in heirship with Jesus Christ.

THE CLASS-MEETING.

Some time ago a minister of the Established Church, whilst catechising a village school in the Isle of Man, asked the question, "What is meant by 'the communion of saints?'" There was a pause. Looking round, the minister repeated the question, "Can none of you tell me what the communion of saints is?" A little girl then put out her hand, "Well, what is it?" "Please, sir," said she, "it is the class-meeting." The minister passed on to the next question.

At the time of the Reformation the Romish Confessional was abolished from the English Church. It was a grand work done. One of the saddest things in the Established Church to day is the attempt which is being made to reinstitute it. But the original institution, out of which the confessional had sprung, was not restored. "I believe in the communion of saints," said the worshippers, as they met together from time to time; but, so far as this life is concerned, they had no opportunities afforded them for enjoying that communion—the "fellowship" of the early Christians. It was reserved for a later Reformation, or revival, to restore that ancient means of grace. The story of how this was brought about is told very plainly in the "Rules of the Society of the People called Methodists." The class-meeting is the distinguishing feature of Methodism. A Methodist, in the highest sense, is one who meets in class. He receives the quarterly token of membership, and is eligible, if suitable in other respects, for appointment to the various offices of the Church.

Mrs. Wightman, the wife of a clergyman of the Established Church, in a small book called "The Annals of the Rescued," tells us that she was asked by some of the people whom she had been the means of leading to Jesus to commence a class-meeting like the class-meeting of the Methodists. She confesses that she was prejudiced against the class-meeting; but like an honest woman she resolved to go and see and hear for herself. Accordingly she accompanied a Methodist one evening, sat and listened. She says, "I must acknowledge that all my prejudices vanished. The deep humility of all present and the wise and apt quotations from Scripture suited to each individual case struck me as being most remarkable. In wise hands such a meeting must have a rich blessing. I am sure no hypocrite could attend a second time, so close is the scrutiny. It would be unbecoming to any except the sincere and earnest seeker after Jesus." She established class-meetings herself. "My husband," she continues, "takes one for me fortnightly. He comes from the class with a radiant face, and tells me it is the sweetest hour he spends. Every one speaks freely of his trials, struggles, &c.; asks counsel on special occasions, and receives encouragement from the treasury of God's Word. The same truths which appear of general application when heard from the pulpit go home straight to the heart when spoken at these meetings." The worst foes of the class-meeting are dullness and formality; keep these out, and we shall keep life and blessing in.

The prayer of deeds is oftener answered than the prayer of words.