



# Provincial Wesleyan.

WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 19, 1873

## AN IMPORTANT ENQUIRY.

A question of importance to Methodism generally has lately been discussed in the columns of the principal official organ of the Methodist Episcopal Church. That question is, Why is it that so many persons entered on trial for membership in the church never become fully identified with it? That is an enquiry as interesting to English and British North American Wesleyans as to United States Methodists. For in England and British North America as well as in the United States many persons are yearly received on trial for church membership who are not subsequently enrolled as full members. Surveying that question from our own stand-point, we conclude that a full answer thereto comprises many particulars. Some converted persons received on trial for membership in our church ultimately decide, from the effect of early training, of personal associations, or of some specially adverse influence brought to bear on their minds during the period of their probation, to connect themselves with some other section of the great Christian brotherhood. This class is not a very large one. All converted persons are in danger of backsliding, and many do backslide to a larger or lesser extent and for a longer or shorter period. They who suffer serious declension after becoming full members of the church are likely to cease being members. They who backslide while probationers are pretty sure to fail to become full members. And converted probationers are as liable to be entangled in the webs of the devil as full members.

Some converted probationers are a religion of a very feeble type. They are harassed by doubts and fears. They get overwhelmed with discouragements, and shrink from the profession involved in complete membership. Many taken on trial are not converted. It is not at all surprising that a considerable proportion of these fall for the time to obtain the blessing sought; for some of them either from natural indolence or because not prepared to make the necessary sacrifices, or on account of their not being even thoroughly awakened to a sense of their need of conversion, are not in downright earnest in their professed desire to experience this great change, and grow weary of seeking for what they fail to find.

Many probationers are lost to the church because they are not properly cared for. Sometimes this care is wanting on the part of ministers, sometimes on the part of members official and otherwise; sometimes on the part of both. Some of these lost probationers were perhaps aroused to religious concern by the labours of ministers powerful in revival work, but feeble and unskillful in the discharge of the unspeakably important duty of feeding and training and guiding the Christian flock.

Others were possibly led to the foot of the cross by the ministrations of pastors quickly thereafter removed to another sphere of labour. These bereft of their spiritual guide, and meeting with neither sympathy nor aid from the membership around them, felt expelled from the communion of the church rather than drawn toward it, and are lost to it.

Some few here and there, it may be, were wrought upon in revivals almost entirely conducted by outside agency. When that agency was withdrawn, the parties mainly benefited by its labours felt the pressure of no ties binding them to the local religious society remaining, which had taken no earnest part in the revival work accomplished. Probationers thus situated, might easily be lost to the fellowship of that society.

All things thus considered, it is not difficult to understand why so many persons received on trial in the various branches of the great Methodist body fail to augment its membership.

Nor is it difficult to perceive in what direction efforts ought to be made to remedy the evil lamented. Clearly our societies and pastors ought nowhere to place their main dependence for carrying forward the work of God upon special revival efforts. Such efforts are often useful, and when made in the proper spirit and in the proper way, are often crowned with remarkable success. But it has become a pressing need for our church to expect greater results from the use of the ordinary means of grace than are commonly obtained. Were such an expectation cherished as it should be, the desired results would be sure to follow. For the Church's faith would unquestionably give aim and force to the Church's efforts. Such an expectation God-inspired would itself be a pledge of its own realization.

When special revivals seem to be necessary, each society with its pastor ought to have a firm conviction that it has in its own bosom the agencies which if rightly employed the Great Head of the Church will assuredly render successful. The assistance of neighboring societies should be thankfully accepted. The aid of distant evangelists may on occasions be wisely made available. But the members of each society engaged in the conflict should be in the very heart of the fight; and the pastor surrounded by his local preachers, class-leaders, prayer leaders and members mighty in supplication, should head the movement.

The fruits of victory should be both pastors and members in their respective spheres gathered, husbanded, guarded and cherished with the most tender and watchful care. Probationers not converted should be pressed if possible with a determined and wise earnestness into the kingdom. Probationers with hope in God of every shade and degree of experience should be met at every turn with generous sympathy and unfeigned Christian love, and pointed

to the higher attainments of the Christian life. Were all this done, there might still be some losses to lament; but how great would be the gains! J. R. N.

## A WORD TO OUR FRIENDS.

(Borrowed from the Christian Guardian.)  
Though the Book Steward has extended the period allowed to subscribers to renew their subscriptions, we are sorry to say that a considerable number have not yet renewed. We believe in most instances, this arises from neglect. In the multitude of cares and business engagements, the small matter of paying the subscription for a religious newspaper is last of all and neglected, and then there is a feeling of disappointment and annoyance, if the paper is stopped. The payment of the subscriptions for the paper are not, however, a small matter to the Book Steward. We hope that all our friends who have not paid will lose no time in doing so, as the Book Steward is bound by the resolution of Conference to carry out the cash principle. It does not imply any want of confidence in the honesty and ability of any subscriber when his paper is stopped. All our subscribers are invited to send their checks and strikes off the names of those who have not paid. Let no one therefore take offence at his paper being stopped; but let each take the hint and send in his subscription without delay. The time is now come to stop the papers of all who have not yet renewed.

We are sorry that the appeal of the Book Steward and Editor for new subscribers has not met such a practical response as it should have received. Many of the ministers have done nobly; but from about half the circuits expect answers from their brethren. Some of the ministers have explained that in consequence of the pressure of other engagements, they have not, up to the present, been able to find time to canvass their circuits thoroughly for new subscribers. Well, it is not too late yet. We know the ministers are very busy at this season. But the work of spreading a sound and instructive religious literature among the people is second to none in importance. Now, that the missionary meetings are mostly over, and ministers and preachers generally engaged in circuit work, we appeal to our brethren and friends, before we get further into this year to make one more general effort, on all circuits not fully canvassed already, to send in a list of new subscribers possible. There is always a considerable number who fail to renew. So that we need a number of new subscribers to keep up our average circulation, to say nothing of the extension and increase, which we should expect annually from the growth of wealth and population. Men of Israel help!

The *Western Christian Advocate*, in an article on the duty of sustaining religious papers, very pertinently says: "And, furthermore, we believe that not a few of our families are without our Methodist papers because they are not advised as to their intrinsic value, and because their attention has not been directed to the important relation of the literature of our Church to all her other interests. Indispensable as the daily paper has become, it does not supply the wants which the weekly religious paper is designed to meet. The dailies record but a few general religious events, give no connected view of denominational matters, and can not reflect the religious thought of the times. Political and secular news has the precedence, and crowds out religious news from their columns, so that the important movements of the Church can not come to the notice of those who only read the secular daily. There are Church members who subscribe for some secular weekly, either because they can get it as a club-rate or because they think a secular weekly must contain more reliable commercial news. These weeklies are made up from the dailies, and hence can not supply the place of a religious weekly. The dailies, with their commercial reports from all parts of the world, are more important to the business man than as a medium of religious intelligence to the Christian. There is an activity in the Church not less marked than that in the other affairs of the world, and as a result, events are transpiring in her various and widely separated fields of labor which are fraught with interest. These events, with every member of the Church should be familiar, have a current record only in the religious press. And while the religious paper contains these important news which find no place in the secular press, they are also the medium of the religious thought which has been awakened and quickened in the Church, and enabled their readers to keep themselves informed as to the progress and results of religious research and study."

The meeting was then addressed by the Rev. M. G. Henry, Pastor of the Presbyterian Church at Clyde River. In a short but telling speech he exposed the Atheistic tendencies of Materialism. "Any reasoning which derives its force from the material nature would deprive God of all spiritual and immortal attributes, and of all being applied to both." Therefore all such reasoning must be false, as it leads to blank infidelity.

The Rev. J. McC. Fulton of Barrington, next took the floor and announced as his theme, "Positive translations of Holy Scripture." He referred to his sermon upon texts relating to the spiritual nature of God, and to that much-abused saying of the Saviour to the dying thief, to the prayer of Stephen, and several other passages which have been mis-rendered and prevented by the opponents of Evangelical truth, relieved them of their burden. His sermon has been investigated, and set them in their proper light. No small amount of research and critical talent were manifested by Mr. Fulton in this address, while the ignorance and dishonesty of certain Materialistic writers were exposed with the severity they so richly deserved.

The Chairman then called upon the Rev. J. I. Porter (Free Baptist), who made a few remarks expressive of sympathy with his brethren in the views and sentiments advanced.

In conclusion the writer would express his hope that this effort on behalf of the interests of truth may be followed by ample and blessed results; and that not only in the locally above referred to, but wherever the dangerous principles of Annihilationism have taken root they may be speedily and thoroughly exterminated.

A desire to contribute in some humble degree to the promotion of this object is his motive in giving publicity to this imperfect sketch of a most interesting and profitable service. ADVERTOR.  
Barrington Feb. 4, 1873.

Ministerial Association is an organization formed a few years since by the Ministers of the various Churches in the county of Shelburne, for the purpose of mutual improvement, and the promotion of Scriptural truth and holiness. This Body deemed it quite in keeping with its character and design to attempt the suppression of error by all legitimate means, and accordingly appointed a public meeting to be held in the locality above referred to, for the purpose of setting forth and defending the true doctrine in reference to the misrepresentations of Materialism. Notwithstanding the severity of the weather and the drifted state of the roads, a large concourse of people assembled at the appointed time, on Wednesday evening, Jan. 29th. After preliminary exercises the Chairman, Rev. W. H. Richardson of the Baptist Church, made a few remarks explanatory of the nature and objects of the Association, and then proceeded to the discussion of this theme. "The philosophy of thought, or the absurdity of supposing that the organization of the human mind is such that it did not originally possess."

This somewhat abstruse subject was handled with admirable force and skill. The speaker stowed most clearly that no possible combination of material atoms could produce the phenomena of thought. That there is a thinking principle, or a personal consciousness, which cannot be identical with the body, for then the larger the man the greater the intellect. Neither can it consist in the breath (as some absurdly teach) for then the greater the lung power, the greater the thought power. No matter how we view the brain, it may act through that organ. Otherwise how is it that portions of the brain have been removed without destroying thought? Besides it is supposed that the material structure of the body undergoes a complete change every seven years, and yet the individuality is maintained. This would be simply impossible if matter and mind were the same. St. Paul speaks of himself on a certain occasion as "in the body or out of the body," he knew not which. St. Peter says he was "part of this tabernacle." That the mind is immaterial, with reason to prove the duality of man's nature.

The next speaker was the Rev. J. S. Coffin of Shelburne; his theme "The Penalty of the Law." He proved by copious citations of Scripture that the terms so often quoted in support of the Annihilationist theory, "Consume," "Destroy," "Death," &c., so far from denoting mere cessation of being, are used in a totally different sense; and that the penalty of the law is not physical death, but "conscious misery as the result of separation from God." He also showed that the Annihilationist errors of Annihilationism, and his able and meritorious exposure of the shallow sophisms employed in its defence, will long be remembered by all who listened to them, and we trust they produced an impression which will not speedily be erased from their minds.

He also referred to the sermon of Port. Let. Tour, whose subject was, "Conditional Immortality, or immortality not more existence but a state of existence." The scriptural meaning of the terms "Immortality" and "Immortal" was explained with admirable clearness, and his conclusions upon the question at issue, C. Borden, of Port. Let. Tour, whose subject was, "Conditional Immortality, or immortality not more existence but a state of existence." The scriptural meaning of the terms "Immortality" and "Immortal" was explained with admirable clearness, and his conclusions upon the question at issue, C. Borden, of Port. Let. Tour, whose subject was, "Conditional Immortality, or immortality not more existence but a state of existence." The scriptural meaning of the terms "Immortality" and "Immortal" was explained with admirable clearness, and his conclusions upon the question at issue, C. Borden, of Port. Let. 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