

**THE METHODIST VISITOR: A  
MAGAZINE FOR ALL  
BRANCHES OF THE METHODIST  
FAMILY; FOURTH VOLUME**

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The Methodist Visitor: A Magazine for All Branches of the Methodist Family; Fourth Volume by Various

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**VARIOUS**

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THE  
**METHODIST VISITOR;**

A Magazine for all Branches of

**THE METHODIST FAMILY.**

*FOURTH VOLUME.*



"THAT THEY MAY BE ONE."—John xvi. 11.

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MDCCLXXV.



## THE NEW YEAR.

"A HAPPY NEW YEAR!" Familiar but very pleasant words. We all like them. Each is welcome. Take them one by one, and examine them. "Happy." Everybody wishes for happiness. Good, bad, and indifferent want to be blessed. "Who will show us any good?" is the universal cry. More than that: God desires our happiness. It is not His will that we should be miserable. There is no virtue in dismal faces and doleful voices. The Bible plainly tells us that Christ wishes our joy to be "full." Does not nature say the same?

"Did God plant His fountains of light in the skies,  
That man should look up with the tears in his eyes?  
Did God make the world so abundant and fair,  
That man should look down with a groan of despair?  
Did God fill the earth with harmonious life,  
That men should go forth to destruction and strife?  
Did God scatter freedom on mountain and wave,  
That man should exist as a tyrant or slave?  
Away with so hopeless, so joyless a creed,  
For the soul that believes it is darkened indeed!"

"New." Novelty is generally attractive. If we meet with a friend, we most likely ask, "What's the news?" When tradesmen advertise, they often tell us that they have "the latest novelties of the season." We call tales "novels." If two books lie on a table, one with dog-eared corners, dirty leaves, dusty covers,—the other with gilt edges, clean pages, and elegant binding,—we shall be sure to take up the new in preference to the old. A little shop with three or four steps to the door, small windows, flickering lamp or candle, and other evidences of antiquity, will not be so likely to secure customers as that which boasts of plate glass, brilliant gas lights, and various other modern improvements. "The people gathered in crowds around the statue," writes a recent traveller, "and looked at it again and again. It was not the finest work of art in the city, nor the most intrinsically attractive. Why, then, did the citizens of Verona stand in such clusters around the effigy of Dante on that summer's evening? Do you guess the reason? It was a fête in honour of the poet? No, you are mistaken; it was but an ordinary evening, and there was nothing peculiar in the date. The reason was very simple: the statue was new!"

"Year." Of course there is something solemn in this. It is a far graver thing to wish any one "a happy new year" than to say "good day" or "good night." Why? Because a year takes a large portion from our existence. The average of human life is but thirty-three years. Antediluvians could count their years by hundreds.

Then a man was, as it were, a youth of promise at fifty. People could say, "A happy new century to you!" They might make remarks like this, "I have not seen you for the last two hundred years." How different is it with us! A year is a serious item in the brief period allotted to us. Nevertheless, if we think a second time about the word "year," there is something pleasant in it. What makes the year? The earth's journey round the sun. It takes three hundred and sixty-five days to accomplish its circuit. This is always the case. There is no variation. It is not sometimes three hundred and sixty-five, and at other times three or four hundred. No. The most perfect order and regularity are observed. Wonderful and cheering fact! We are in the hands of a Being whose kind and wise laws never fail.

"A Happy New Year" is possible. Christ said, "Not as the world giveth give I unto you," and every Christian may truly say, "Not as the world wisheth wish I unto you." When the world wishes "a happy new year," it usually means, "I wish you health, money, influence, position." But that is a vain wish! All cannot get these things. Even if they obtained them, they would not make us happy. Happiness does not depend upon possessions. Dr. Hamilton tells that when he was a boy he often looked, in winter, with curious eye at certain spots far up a certain mountain. For what reason? Because they seemed to be "suffused with constant sunshine." To his mortification, however, he found that they were only patches of withered grass. In like manner, to us at a distance the high places of wealth and rank seem to be suffused with the sunshine of bliss. We should find, if we got nearer, withered hopes and blighted expectations. Henry VII.'s emblem was a crown in a bush of thorns. A quaint Puritan author says that worldly possessions are like nuts: you scratch your hands and tear your clothes in order to get them, but when you have obtained them they are hard to crack, and when you eat them they fail to satisfy your hunger. The Roman Emperor Severus declared, "I have been everything, and everthing is nothing." Another monarch, taking the crown in his hand, exclaimed, "This is a beautiful burden." Goethe, the great German poet, whose career was one long success, made the following confession: "They have called me a child of fortune, nor have I any wish to complain of the course of my life. Yet it has been nothing but labour and sorrow, and I may truly say that in seventy-five years I have not had four weeks of true comfort!" Lord Byron remarked to his medical attendant: "Do you suppose I wish for life? I have grown heartily sick of it. Can it afford me any pleasure? Have I not enjoyed it to a surfeit? Pleasure I have known under every form in which it can present itself to mortals. I have



travelled, satisfied my curiosity, lost every illusion. I have exhausted all the nectar contained in the cup of life: it is time to throw the dregs away!"

If, then, happiness does not consist in outward possessions, in what does it consist? Not in what we obtain, but in what we contain. It is internal, not external in its sources. Some time ago a young woman, who had been born blind, was subjected to a surgical operation, by which she gained her sight, but at first she experienced the following peculiarity: she had no idea of distances. She thought the far-off to be near, and the near far-off. She put her hand out of the window to touch a tree which stood on the other side of the way. People make a similar mistake about happiness. They think its causes are distant, when in fact they are close to them. Sidney Smith says: "Many run after felicity like an absent-minded man hunting for his hat, while all the time it is on his head." To come to the point at once. Christ is the source of happiness. If we have Him we shall be all right. To trust His promise of pardon, think on His dying love, yield our wills to His perfect will—this, and nothing short, is bliss. "A Christian not happy?" says an accomplished author: "I am now sixty-eight, and am far happier than I was at twenty, principally because the Lord has shown me more of Himself." Yes, the often-quoted words of Scripture are as true as they are old, "Blessed is the man to whom the Lord imputeth not iniquity." "Light is sown for the righteous, and gladness for the upright in heart." "If ye know these things, happy are ye if ye do them."

We wish to be frank and plain. Dear reader, are you a Christian? Are you? If you cannot honestly answer, "Yes," there is small prospect of the new year being a really happy one to you. If you live it will not, but *if you die*—what then? You know. We entreat you, then, to act reasonably and wisely. Live no longer without Christ. While yet you linger on the threshold of another twelve months, lift your soul in simple and earnest prayer to Him. "Have mercy upon me, according to Thy loving-kindness." Why not at once say that? "Create in me a clean heart." What better can you do than make such a request? You will be heard. "He delighteth in mercy." Never would the Saviour have died for you if He had not been willing to save poor sinners. Do draw nigh to Him. "Blessed are all they that put their trust in Him!"

## PRAISE THE CHILDREN.

For every child who receives an excess of praise or commendation from its parents, there are ten, at least, who are oftentimes thoughtlessly, but none the less selfishly and cruelly, defrauded of that which is due them in this respect.

Children love praise, they crave it, and will do much to win it. There are exceptional cases, of course. Occasionally we see a child so stolid and indifferent by nature, that praise and blame alike seem wasted on it. But such instances of "total depravity" are few. Childish griefs are short, but they are also bitter; and when a child feels justly-merited praise is withheld from it, through heedlessness or indifference, it matters not which, how sharply does the arrow enter that striving, yearning little heart! It feels that it has been unjustly deprived of a fairly-earned reward; and though it may only realise this in a dim, undefined way, the feeling is there, and a small spirit of resentment, and possibly of insurrection, creeps into the little heart also. Of the injudiciousness, the unwisdom, of excessive praise, it is useless to speak, since the error seems to lie, almost without exception, in the opposite direction.

But, mother, when your little girl has put her whole baby-heart into some little office she is striving to perform for you, when she has been unusually sweet-tempered and good throughout the trying day, whisper approving words in the little eager ear. Tell her, in encouraging phrases (on the tip of every mother's tongue), what a treasure she is to you. Such praise will not be wasted. As the summer's dew upon the rose, words like these will fall upon the child-heart, making it richer with the fragrant incense of duty and love.

Father, if your boy has learned his lessons right well; if the daily tasks he is set to do have been performed more thoroughly and faithfully than usual; if in little ways he has been more thoughtful of your comfort than is his wont, notice these things; not silently, but by word of mouth, generously and cordially approving his conduct. Let him feel that his endeavours are fully appreciated, that no good or noble action on his part passes by you unnoticed. Thus will you incite in him a desire to merit always your approbation, and the resolve to make himself more worthy each day of such a father's love. Withhold not praise from your children when they can claim it as their right. Used wisely, it is a healthy stimulant that cannot injure, but, on the contrary, is productive of results good and lasting. See, in the hurry and worry of the flying days, that you forget it not, lest there be, through your forgetfulness, small heart aches now and great ones hereafter.

## WHAT HAS INFIDELITY DONE ?

**SCHEPTISM**, infidelity, false religion, and no religion at all, have had time enough and opportunity enough to do something besides boast, and ought ere this to be able to show some substantial results—some progress that could be cited as proof of the utility of such teachings and the excellence of such inspirations. Infidelity has long railed at Christianity—let it plead now its own cause. What has it ever done for the world, even in the realm of material benefits? What countries has it discovered? What lands has it settled? What governments has it established? What cities has it builded? What missionaries has it sent forth? What savages has it civilised? What schools has it established? What colleges has it founded? What hospitals has it erected? What charities has it fostered? What statesmen, and orators, and patriots, and examples, and heroes, has it produced?

What is the record of infidelity, with all her boast of wisdom and of power? Can she name a Columbus or a Livingstone? A Bacon or a Galileo? A Shakespeare or a Milton? A Whitefield or a Wesley? What has infidelity *done*? Where are her cities, her empires, her conquests, her triumphs, her works of art, her discoveries in science? Has she written poems? Who has read them? Has she chanted hymns? Who has sung them?

Infidelity has no hymn-books, sings no hymns, enjoys no visions of a better life than this. Christians sing of an eternal home. They lift their eyes to the heavenly hills, whence cometh their help. They exult in the prospect of a certain inheritance where sickness, sorrow, pain, and death are never known. But the infidel cannot frame a hymn of praise about his vague nowhere! Non-existence invites no song, stirs no affection, enlarges no capacity of the soul. What a poor miserable theory is that which opens no bright hereafter; claims no life and joy beyond the grave; and, instead of praises and thanksgivings, utters nothing better than murmurs and criticisms from the cradle to the grave!

The great doers in history have been men of great faith in God; men whose eyes have been anointed to see invisible things and behold eternal glories. Compared with them, infidels, with all their boastings, are as cyphers in the world—their belief a mere negation, their hearts without inspiration, their legions a routed rabble, without guide or head, without aim and without hope, mere camp-followers in the great warfare of life. After faith has fought the battle, infidelity comes and claims the spoils. After faith has founded an asylum for the oppressed, infidelity comes and struts through it, and boasts of her liberty. After faith has constructed society, infidelity says, *and*