

1849

## Methodist Quarterly Review for January 1849

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## METHODIST QUARTERLY REVIEW FOR JANUARY, 1849.

WE looked with much interest for the appearance of this number, not only because of the high personal regard we feel for its editor, but also because we believe that a new era in the literature of our Church is at hand; and we hoped to find evidences of this in the general tone and character of the Review. By saying this, we do not mean to disparage, in the least, former series, or former editors, but simply to state what we consider to be a fact in the literary history of American Methodism, to wit, its progressive tendency and capacity to adapt itself to changes in the social condition of a people.

As the forests disappear before the energy and perseverance of man, advancing with rapid strides from the condition of a comparatively rude and uncultivated backwoodsman to opulence and power, the refined pleasures of life, and facilities for mental culture become more abundant and more generally diffused. A church, to fulfil its high mission for converting the world, must possess the flexibility requisite to adapt itself to this onward movement without. It must keep pace with, nay, should lead the age, not by pressing down its standard or bending it to suit the times, but by elevating it, and by showing that she possesses also this vital principle of progression.

We are happy to state that our expectations, justly entertained, we think, have not been disappointed. From many sources we learn that the character of the present series of this standard periodical of the church, bids fair to be such as the growing wants of its day demand. We tender our congratulations to its editor upon the success which attends his labors.

The narrow limits allowed us necessarily preclude any extended notice of the articles contained in the number before us, and we hope our readers will be contented with a hasty glance at those in whose perusal we were most interested ourselves.

The article upon the Rev. Dr. Dixon pays a just tribute to our transatlantic brother. We were much pleased with the style, at once flowing and perspicuous, and think it justly entitled to its place as vanguard.

The article on Channing we read with more interest, perhaps, than any other. We have ever admired the man; not for his errors, to be sure, but for his noble and comprehensive philanthropy, his devotion to what he considered truth, and the lofty bearing of his moral life. Nor shall his opposition to slavery prevent me, though a son of the south, from according to him the merit due to upright and honest purpose.

Claiming for myself the right to form my own opinions, and to express them freely, I *cannot, will not* deny it to others.

For the writer of the article we are also free to confess our high regard. We like his bold and fearless advocacy of opinions deemed by him of vital importance to humanity. 'Tis true we differ from him on many points. Born and reared in the midst of those institutions which, to *his mind*, are so directly at war with the nobler impulses of our nature, which trample with cruel indifference upon the most sacred rights of men, *we* are perhaps so blinded by habit as not to see the glaring enormity which offends *his* vision, yet Christian charity demands of us to cherish feelings of brotherly kindness. We hope our brother will reciprocate, and not judge of the general character and operation of those institutions by the possible or actual abuses of them.

If, instead of indulging in indiscriminate, and often unjust reproaches, northern men would devote their energies to devising some practicable plan of emancipation; if, forbearing to provoke by harshness, they would strive to win by kindness, we think much more could be effected towards gaining their object.

Southerners feel that slavery is an evil, but an evil which the present generation had no part in originating. They would gladly be rid of it, but know that this cannot be done in a day, and consider themselves better judges of the time, means, and manner of effecting it, consistently with the interests of both races, than those who are far removed from the difficulties which any plan of emancipation must involve.

The article upon the "Progressive Principle of Language and Style," contains many valuable thoughts. We would, however, prefer a style more natural, and more readily understood, with less of seemingly studied ambiguity. The articles upon Irving and Carlyle afforded us much pleasure in their perusal, and we are glad the writer of the latter has promised to continue his subject in a future number.

We consider the critical notices of the editor by no means the least valuable portion of the work. In short, we believe the plan and execution are such as to merit and secure a largely increased subscription. We commend the Review to the patronage of the public, particularly to members of our church. Substitute this journal for the trifling, not to say pernicious literary productions of the day; for the trash which is constantly poured forth from the press, and is found, I am sorry to know, in the hands of persons whose profession should keep them aloof from all that corrupts—I mean members of our church.