

The Wesleyan, 143

143

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LETTER FROM THE LONDON CONFERENCE.

Once more your correspondent is among
his brethren in Conference assembled—in
the beautiful western city of London.
Previous Conferences in the same city at-
tended by your correspondent have be-
come historical. It was here in 1855—
that "Elder Case delivered his celebrated
jubilee sermon, and Dr. Beecham and
your own Dr. Richey were in our midst—
and the remarkable act of legislature
took place, which in the year were re-
versed because of pressure from without
extending the time of a ministers resi-
dence on a circuit to five years. Dr.
Wood was its President, and Samuel D.
Rice his Secretary. Again ten years after
we met in the same city—Rev. R. Jones
was our President, Rev. Samuel Rose was
appointed to the Stewardship of the Book
Room—Drs. Elliott, Peck and Eddy were
a delegation from the M. E. Church.
Our Book Room and College greatly em-
barrassed. Then in 1873—the old Canada
Conference assembled in this city, and con-
tinued in session for the unprecedented
time of ten weeks—Dr. Rice was its Presi-
dent. Another basis for the whole scheme
of confederation and union was laid. The
result of which is seen to-day in the ex-
istence of the Methodist Church of Can-
ada. The only drawback to the comfort
of visitors to this city is the occasional
strong odour which comes from the oil
refineries to the east of the city.

The first question which met us in com-
ing to Conference is—who is to be Presi-
dent and Secretary. This was soon set-
tled by the ballot vote, which placed by
a large majority—Rev. W. S. Griffin in
the chair, and Rev. George H. Corstam as
Secretary. The noon prayer meeting was a
grand spiritual reunion in which the sol-
emnizing thought with us was that eleven
of our numbers had during the year left
the church on earth for the church in
heaven. It was with no ordinary pleasure
that the Conference welcomed back into
their midst, Dr. Burns—who left us in
his early manhood, fourteen years ago
to take the presidency of Simpson Col-
lege, Iowa—and now has come back to
take charge of the Wesleyan Female Col-
lege. A large committee was appointed
after a great deal of discussion to investi-
gate the Woodstock Church trouble. In
this growing town our friends have re-
cently erected a very handsome new
church—and its present incumbent is
chairman of the Brantford District, but
between him and the official boards of
the station there had arisen very serious
difficulties, which had resulted in their
going to the extremity of locking their pastor
out of the church.

On the evening of the first day a meet-
ing of an unusual kind took place in the
Conference church. It was a memorial
service—presided over by the President,
and intended to do special honour to the
departed of the Conference. The speak-
ers for the occasion were—Drs. Sanderson,
Williams, Rice, and Bro. N. Wil-
loughby and Savage. While the meeting
was one of deep interest it was on the
whole felt by the Conference that a mis-
take had been made, in not making it a
regular session of the Conference.

Great care was given to the reception
and examination of the candidates in and
offering for our ministry, and one young
man who had given six years of minist-
rial work between us and another church,
and who came up recommended for full
reception an ordination, was dropped. It
was ascertained that the full number of
members in this Conference is 38,767—an
increase of 887 on last year. The educa-
tional meeting on the evening of the first
day was a grand success. It was held
in the Dundas Street church, and was
addressed by Rev. N. O. Henderson,
M. A., Dr. Burns, and Dr. Burwash.

Your correspondent was not present at
the reception meeting on Friday evening
—but it was stated to have been one of
great interest—twenty-one young men
were received into full connexion, and
very eloquent addresses to them were de-
livered by Rev. Drs. Eyekman, Nelles,
and the President. On Saturday morning
a very long discussion took place upon
the case of one who had immediately after
receiving his appointment last year ten-
dered his resignation—he was a young
ordained man, and had given great promise
of future usefulness, but the Conference
hesitated for days over the matter,
and finally only allowed him to retire as
a supernumerary. Another case of some
interest was decided upon. A married
minister belonging to another Conference
had received a supernumerary relation—
and had as such, been transferred to the
London Conference, and now comes up
with an earnest request to be restored to
the effective work. Though there were
very strong reasons for restoring him, yet
the Conference felt that under the circum-
stances it was especially a sort of back
door, into the effective ranks of this Con-
ference. The brothers relation was con-
tinued.

A series of resolutions was submitted
by Dr. Rice in the matter of the serious
embarrassment of our Missionary Society
and was referred to a special committee.
It was a pleasing feature of the first day's
proceedings that there was not a single
case of moral delinquency. With the ex-

ception of Woodstock difficulty—was there
anything between the Conference at all
on the subject of character.
"Whereas the General Conference of
the Methodist Church of Canada at its
session in Sept. 1878, did pass a resolution
by which the committee known as the
committee for the transfer of ministers
and preachers is so changed, in its com-
position as to infringe upon the rights
and privileges of this Conference, we
therefore record our disapproval of such
General Conference action"
H. R. R. S.

THE TORONTO METHODIST CONFERENCE
commenced its sessions in the
Methodist church Port Hope at 9 o'clock
this morning, the Rev. E. B. Harper Presi-
dent, in the chair. Rev. J. G. Laird,
Secretary, read two portions of Scripture,
after which the President gave out a hymn,
which was sung, and the Revs. Drs. Young
and Potts led in prayer.
The roll was then called and 180 minist-
ers answered to their names.
The Conference then proceeded to elect
its President, by ballot, which resulted as
follows:

Rev. J. Shaw	128
" Dr. Dewart	16
" Dr. Sutherland	13
Scattering votes	23

Rev. Mr. Shaw was therefore declared
elected.
He was called to the chair, and suitably
welcomed by the retiring President, who
delivered to him the Conference seal.
The President elect returned thanks to
the Conference in a short, appropriate ad-
dress.
The election for Secretary then took
place as follows:

Rev. T. S. Keough	90
" J. G. Laird	71
Scattering votes	4

Mr. Keough was declared elected.—
Port Hope Paper.

We observe that Dr. Potts is reappoint-
ed to the Metropolitan, Toronto, after an
absence of three years—the first results of
Dr. Rice's resolution at Gen. Conference
looking in this direction. We half imagine
Dr. Rice had this particular appointment
in view when the change was made, per-
mitting a preacher to return to circuit
after three, instead of six years. The ex-
periment in this instance will work well,
we are quite sure.

The London Conference passed the
following resolutions bearing upon the
movement for the relief of the Missionary
Society Debt.

It was then moved by Dr. Rice, second-
ed by Dr. Sanderson, and resolved,—
1. That this Conference having heard
the resolutions of the Missionary com-
mittee of Consultation and Finance, and
the statements of a deputation in support
of the same, hereby expresses its profound
conviction that an immediate effort to re-
lieve the embarrassments of our Mission-
ary Society, and enable it to extend its
operations, is an urgent Connexional ne-
cessity.

2. That in the judgment of this Confer-
ence a movement embracing (1) The pay-
ment of the society's debt, (2) The exten-
sion of the work, especially in the North-
west and among the French in the Pro-
vince of Quebec, and (3) The strengthen-
ing of the Superannuation Fund, would
receive the cordial sympathy and support
of our people throughout the Conference.

3. That in our judgment, the minimum
for the fund should be \$150,000, and
should be raised by special effort, apart
from the regular Missionary or Superan-
nuation Fund incomes.

4. That in the event of this or some
similar scheme, involving the endorsement
of the various Annual Conferences, this
Conference pledges itself to put forth
every possible effort within its own bounds
to carry the enterprise to a successful is-
sue. That this Conference would respect-
fully suggest the appointment of a small
committee by each Conference, to confer
with the missionary committee of Con-
sultation and Finance, in preparing a de-
tailed plan of operation and this Conference
herby appoints the following committee
as its representatives in such plan.—(after
a lengthened conversation the following
were appointed).—Revs. Drs. Rice and
Sanderson; Revs. Leonard Gaetz, W. R.
Parker, Dr. Fowler, A. E. Russ, D. Savage,
J. Harris, and Joseph H. Robinson.

The *Guardian* Montreal correspondent
thus refers to Dr. Douglas's health.—
THE MONTREAL DISTRICT MEETING
was held in the Dominion Square Church
on the 28th and 29th ult. The esteemed
Chairman was in his place punctually at
9 and 2 each day, and on the second day
protracted the session until 7 p.m., so as
to finish the business. We may state that
Dr. Douglas's general health is excellent.
He seems as vigorous in mind and method
as in his palmier days. The condition of
his eyes, however, is such as to cause ap-
prehension, as their improvement is not
progressing so favorably now as a few
weeks ago.

THE BIBLE AS A LITERARY BOOK.

BY REV. EDWARD THOMPSON, A.M.

Sir Wm. Jones, one of the ablest
scholars of the eighteenth century,
and who was thoroughly familiar with
oriental and classical literature, says:
"I am of opinion that this volume, in-
dependent of its divine origin, contains
more sublimity and beauty,
and finer strains of poetry and elo-
quence than can be collected from all
other books, in whatever age or lan-
guage they may have been composed."

If we see beauty, grandeur and sub-
limity in nature and know that this
volume has had the same great Author,
it is but reasonable to suppose that
we would here find beautiful expres-
sions, noble sentiments, grand concep-
tions, sublime comparisons.

Infidels often denounce the Bible as
inferior in style. But if we carefully
and thoroughly investigate the sub-
ject we shall see that their opinions
are altogether without reason.

The Bible, though not a professedly
literary book, excels in many respects
the works of Grecian and Roman lit-
erature. It, of all other books, seems
to have the ability to captivate
the taste and expand the intellect of
man.

The two chief requisites of a good
style are complied with to considerable
extent in each of the sacred writings.
First, the resources of the three lan-
guages in which the Bible was written
are quite fully brought out. And sec-
ondly, the forms of expression in the
various parts of the volume seem to
be eminently adapted to the thoughts
desired to be conveyed.

It is true there seem to be diversities
of style. But this apparent diversity
will seem to be most remarkable
harmony when we consider two things.
First, the writings composing the
Bible were not only written in three
different languages, but also at differ-
ent times during the long period of
fifteen hundred years. And it is well
known that words, phrases, idioms, in
any one language, are liable to expe-
rience radical changes in the space of
even one or two centuries. And sec-
ondly, it should be remembered that
these sixty-six separate books have
had no less than thirty-six different
authors; and that the Divine Spirit
seems to have employed the peculiar
style of each individual writer. But
in each book, by profound investiga-
tion, we shall find a purity of diction,
perspicuity, vigor and dignity of ex-
pression that give to it great merit as
a literary book.

There is no attempt at elegant writ-
ing in the Bible. There is no grasping
for beauty of expression, or strugg-
ling for grandeur of thought. It is all
as natural as are the beauties of na-
ture. Another element of good style
to be discovered in the Bible, is that
the sacred writers seem to be abstracted
from self and are absorbed in the
subject in hand.

Among the rhetorical figures used
in the Bible are: comparison, meta-
phor, allegory, hyperbole, interroga-
tion, antithesis, climax, ellipsis, per-
sonification and apostrophe—the
whole field of rhetoric covered. Ob-
jections have been made to the extra-
vagance of some of the figures used in
the Bible. But it must be remembered
that they were uttered by Orientals,
and our colder Anglo-Saxon taste may
not be able to fully appreciate their
beauty. The gorgeous imagery em-
ployed in such parts as the Song of
Solomon is thus to be accounted for.
This was an Oriental love song.

The literary characteristics of the
Bible have been appreciated not only
by theologians, but by the most emi-
nent literati of modern times, and by
those who have denied its inspiration.

For instance, Rousseau, the celebrated
French infidel, says: "The majesty of
Scripture strikes me with admiration."

Peruse the works of our
philosophers! With all their pomp of
diction, how mean, how contemptible
are they compared with the Scrip-
tures."

The poet Milton, one of the finest
linguists of his time, for several years
a translator to the court, familiar with
all the classic writings, says: "There
are no songs comparable to the songs
of Zion; no orations equal to those of
the prophets."

Daniel Webster, the greatest states-
man orator the New World has pro-
duced, says: "From the time that at
my mother's feet, or on my father's
knee, I first learned to lis verses from
the sacred writings, they have been
my daily study and vigilant contem-
plation. If there be anything in my
style or thoughts to be commended,
the credit is due to my kind parents in
instilling into my mind an early love
of the Scriptures." And we know his
style was superior. His speeches read
better than Clay's or Calhoun's, or
Hayne's, or Benton's, or Corwin's, or
any of his contemporaries.

In Webster's speeches there is nothing
florid, redundant or overdrawn.
His thoughts are expressed clearly,
strongly, vigorously. And his speech-
es will be handed down from genera-
tion to generation as models of Ameri-
can senate oratory.

We will close this list of quotations
with one from Fisher Ames, an Ameri-
can orator, but little less distinguish-
ed, though of earlier times than Web-
ster: "I will hazard the assertion
that no man, of modern times, ever
did, or ever will become truly eloquent
without being a constant reader of
the Bible, and an admirer of the pur-
ity and sublimity of its language."

BEARDS.

The custom of shaving the beard
was enforced by Alexander of Macedon,
not for the sake of fashion but for a
practical end. He knew that the
soldiers of India, when they encoun-
tered their foes, had the habit of grasp-
ing them by the beard, and so he or-
dered his soldiers to shave. Afterward
shaving was practiced in the Macedo-
nian army, and then among Greek
citizens. The Romans imitated the
Greeks in the practice, as they did in
many other things, and spread it to
the different European nations yet
barbaric. In the Middle Ages, and at
the time of the Renaissance, shaving
was introduced, and the habit was re-
tained, though classicism gave place to
romanticism, and that in its turn was
replaced by realism. The beard was
a source of trouble to Peter the Great,
who, simultaneously with the intro-
duction of his great reforms in Russia,
tried to induce his people to imitate
the shaving nations. This innovation
was resisted by his subjects with the
utmost persistence, and they preferred
to pay a heavy fine rather than suffer
disfigurement, as they believed, of the
image of God. To the Russians of old-
en times the beard was a symbol of
liberty. In several countries of West-
ern Europe and in the United States
the beard was restored to honor only
about twenty years ago, but even yet
the majority of men respect the cus-
tom introduced by Alexander the Great.

KEEP STRAIGHT AHEAD.

Pay no attention to slanderers or
gospel mongers. Keep straight on
your course, and let their backbitings
die the death of neglect. What is the
use of laying awake of a night, brood-
ing over the remark of some false
friend, that runs through your brain
like forked lightning? What is the
use of getting into a worry and fret
over gossip that has been set afloat to
your disadvantage by some meddle-
some busy-body who has more time
than character?

These things can't possibly injure
you, unless, indeed, you take notice of
them, and in combatting them give
them character and standing. If what
is said about you is true, set yourself
right at once; if it is false, let it go
for what it will fetch. If a bee-stings
you, would you go into the hive and
destroy it? Would not a thousand
come upon you? It is wisdom to say
little respecting the injuries you have
received. We are generally losers, in
the end, if we stop to refute all the
backbitings and gossiping we may
hear by the way. They are annoying,
it is true, but not dangerous, so long
as we do not expostulate and scold.
Our characters are formed and sus-
tained by ourselves, and by our own
actions and purposes, not by others.
Let us bear in mind the "calumniators"
may usually be trusted to time
and the slow but steady justice of public
opinion.—*Baptist Weekly.*

UNREPORTED SUCCESS.

There is one point in connection
with the success of missions which
has often struck me. There is a part
of our work and success for which we
have no column in our schedules: it
cannot be tabulated. We are accus-
tomed to think there is little progress
in missions, unless we can calculate
upon chapels built, schools erected,
congregations brought together, and
numbers reported.

But there is a blessed work going
on quietly and secretly—something
like one of the mighty influences of
heaven. Nobody can weigh a sun-
beam. You may concentrate the in-
tensest heat of the sun upon the nicest
balance, but you cannot make that
balance quiver at all, and yet there is
immense power and influence in that
sunbeam. And many of our successes
are of this class. They are hard to
appreciate; we cannot put them into
the schedule; we cannot talk much
about them. Who can tell the vast
amount of light that has been circulat-
ing through India for instance, quietly
circulating and changing the gloom
of midnight into the brightness of
morn? Who can tell the vast amount
of curiosity excited in many minds
there? Who can tell what are the
deep convictions which have been im-
pressed on many minds, which pride
often conceals, and which men are in-
genious enough often to smother? But
these convictions will by and by break
out into conversions to God. We can-
not tell, I say what secret influence
is going on, as the result of missionaries
living and laboring among these peo-
ple. The fact is there is a great deal
to be thankful to Almighty God for
which can never be seen in the Soci-
ety's reports. The secretaries cannot
find figures and language to express it
in the annual statement.—*Canon Far-
rar.*

WHY FLOWERS TURN TO THE SUN.

Wiesner has presented to the Vien-
na academy a monograph upon helio-
tropism and geotropism in plants. Af-
ter a historical sketch, the author
treats of the influence of light on helio-
tropism, and shows that with de-
creasing intensity of light the strength
of the heliotropic effect increases to a
certain point, and beyond this point
decreases. The lower limit of light
intensity coincides with the lower lim-
it of heliotropic effect for the stoppage
of growth in length, while the upper
limit does not coincide, or only occa-
sionally coincides with the upper lim-
it of heliotropic effect for growth in
length. In the case of very sensitive
heliotropic plants, the upper limit of
light intensity for stoppage of growth
in length lies higher, and in less sen-
sitive plants lower, than the upper
limit for growth in length. He next
considers the relation between the re-
frangibility of rays and their helio-
tropic effect, and shows that portions
of very sensitive heliotropic plants, as
Vicia sativa, curve in all lights, even
in the ultra-red and ultra-violet, ex-
cept the yellow. Experiments on the
joint action of heliotropism and geotro-
pism are next described, and the auth-
or concludes that the phenomenon of
heliotropism is due to unequal
growth upon unequally lighted sides
of the plant.—*Harper's Magazine.*