

THE WESLEYAN

FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 16, 1881.

FAITH IN GOD.

Dr. Payson, of saintly memory, once remarked that one may easily tell the home of the wounded child, who at once leaves his comrades in the street, and seeks the help and sympathy of his home. Happily a similar remark may be made in reference to nations. In prosperity they seem to forget God, and pious souls, jealous of the honor of their Master, weep between the porch and the altar over such forgetfulness. But times of trial prove that faith in the Almighty still holds its place in the human soul.

The heir to England's throne is at the point of death, and in solemn procession the heads of the nation make their way to the great national temple and with bowed heads implore the help which men confessed themselves unable to give. Another nation is in sorrow. The hand of an assassin has prostrated its chief ruler. Life and death tremble in the balance. The love of fifty millions of freemen seems powerless. All that ingenuity can devise or affection suggest is done, but apparently in vain. The nation then turns Godward. It remembers the example of England's Queen in her sore distress, as well as rejoices over her sympathy in its own time of sorrow, and having done all that human skill and human love can do, leaves the issue with the Almighty ruler, not forgetful that He is to be inquired of for these things. His goodness in the growth of a mighty nation, and his power to bring back the ruler from the gates of death is readily acknowledged.

Christianity has yet her triumphs. She triumphs when a nation bows at the feet of God, and millions of prayers go up in strong yet submissive faith, and when men, not wont to use many words in behalf of religion, are prepared to ascribe the changed wind and falling temperature, and other favorable influences to the direct intervention of Him who in olden times wrought "wondrous works." Thus times of trial instruct, and

Darkness shows us worlds by night
We never saw by day.

Let Christian not blush for the Gospel or its author. Deep down in its heart of hearts the world still holds to God, and still honors the righteous men who are the salt of the earth. "How did Roger Sherman vote?" asked the proud John Randolph, as he once walked into Congress on the eve of a vote being taken; and yet out in the busy world he would probably have joined in a laugh at the honest Quaker. "Why do such men as you give that man money?" said a stranger to a number of gamblers in a San Francisco gambling-hell, as he saw them respond generously to a man who asked them for some of the Lord's misused money to aid in the erection of a place of worship. "Why," was their reply, "if it were not for men like that the earth would open and swallow us up." And at a dinner given to a number of successful generals, a King of Prussia once pointed out an evangelical but despised preacher as the man to whose prayers, more by far than to their prowess, Prussia owed her victories.

Yes, the world has yet faith in prayer, and in the Great God and Father of all, whom we approach in prayer, and in Jesus Christ, the Mediator between God and men. And blessed are those sufferers through whom God reminds their fellows of this thrilling fact.

MINISTERIAL VACATIONS.

A few years ago the absence of a minister from his pulpit for a succession of Sabbaths was a comparatively rare occurrence. Only some cause of a special character was held to justify the man who was missing from his post at any time from January to December, and often the weary city or country pastor was found counting the weeks that must elapse before the District Meeting, if perchance he might sustain the pressure of duty till that season should bring him brief rest.

Since then the churches have grown wiser. As though conscious of the increased mental strain arising from smaller circuits and greater general educational advantages, the leading laymen of many of our churches have seen fit to send their pastors off for rest and change, and in some instances have wisely sought, by prompt financial assistance, to give to absence its highest value. That the churches have been gainers by such action we dare not doubt. Often has a minister returned from his vacation, conscious of improvement of a physical, mental and religious character, in the advantage of which his flock must inevitably be partakers. A mem-

ber of a Methodist church once asked his pastor a question in relation to his spiritual life, and was astonished by the answer—"I haven't had time to think of it." The writer found fault with the reply, but years after, when the passage on an ocean steamer, and quiet Sabbaths abroad had permitted him to turn inward the gaze which had steadily been fixed upon his flock, he felt that the objectionable remark was not wholly without reason.

But even in this matter the tendency to extremes—often another name for Satan's devices—has become painfully evident, though happily not yet in our own country. A Western pastor, calling here lately in an ocean steamer, spoke with regret and surprise of the number of churches closed in a city through which he passed on his way to the seaboard. And our own surprise at the facts he stated has only been increased by other statements in American religious journals. The N. Y. Advocate tells of a town of twenty thousand people near New York in which for two weeks this summer there was not a single Protestant minister to preach the Gospel, visit the afflicted or bury the dead. A Boston pastor writes to Zion's Herald that from his windows he can count forty churches, not a single pastor of which is at home, and that from his door he can see a dozen churches, all of which are closed. One of them had a sign over the entrance, which reads, "No service or Sunday-school in this house during the hot season. Some one, on reading the sign, had gone around to the side entrance and drawn, in colored chalk marks, a picture, life size and in full costume, of his majesty the devil, horns, hoofs and all, on the door, with the inscription underneath, "It is not too hot here for me." In some cases "supplies" are provided, but these "supplies," he says, "preach on the Sabbath, and then they are gone; but week before last there were two hundred and thirty deaths in Boston and last week about two hundred and twenty. The camp-meetings were in session, and I found I was the only Methodist pastor in Boston. I had two, three and four funerals a day, and in every instance the persons buried were strangers to me. In some instances I could not reach all of them, even when doing without my dinner. I have heard of several burials where no minister could be found."

Well does this minister, after the statement of these and other facts, write "My brethren, these things ought not so to be." In reference to our own country we earnestly add, "May they never be." Such a state of affairs must result in part from lack of arrangement and in part from positive neglect. Any necessary absence of the pastor should be preceded by careful preparation for the uninterrupted continuance of his pulpit and pastoral work. No large circuit should be left to its own undeveloped resources for a single week, as is too frequently the case at the time of our annual gatherings. Satan is as busy in the summer as in the winter, and death like him knows no season as purely its own. The popular idea that men can only be saved in the winter season is a fallacy which Satan loves to encourage, and which we too readily receive.

It is to be hoped that this evil, so apparent among our neighbors, will soon be brought under heroic treatment. This wholesale abandonment of churches, the most of whose attendants cannot go abroad, is producing painful results. The more thoughtful grow distrustful of their spiritual guides, the more thoughtful see in closed churches a justification for the Sunday excursion, and the youth, in the absence of continued influences of the better kind, have the opportunity for evil, which human nature is not slow to embrace, and—the end of these things is death.

THE GREAT METHODIST ASSEMBLY.

According to announcement the delegates constituting the Ecumenical Conference met on Wednesday, the 7th inst., at City Road Chapel, London.

Arrangements were made by the Executive Committee to devote several evenings to accounts of Methodism from the various countries—the best speakers being selected for description of the progress of the Church in the lands they represent. Dr. Osborn—President of the British Wesleyan Conference, Bishop Peck, of the Methodist Episcopal Church, Dr. Stacey—of the New Connexion Methodists, and Dr. Douglas, President of our own General Conference, were to preside at the sessions of the Conference for the next four days.

Bishop Simpson, of America, delivered the opening sermon on Wednesday

morning, from John vi. 63. At the close the assembled delegates and their friends partook of the Lord's Supper. In the afternoon, during the opening prayer, special petitions were offered for the recovery of President Garfield. Dr. Osborn, in an address of welcome, against the success of the Conference as already assured. Responses were made by Bishop McTear of the M. E. Church South, and Dr. Douglas, of Canada. In the evening about nine hundred delegates and others assembled at the Mansion House, at the invitation of Lord Mayor McArthur, who expressed great pleasure at the presence of so many American representatives. With other addresses, proceedings were continued until a late hour.

On Thursday morning, in view of special prayer being made in America for the recovery of the President, W. S. Allen, M. P., led the Conference in a prayer of similar import, after which an appropriate hymn was sung. Several American delegates then expressed their satisfaction at the interest shown in the welfare of their chief national officer. The essays for the day on "Grateful recognition of the hand of God in the origin and progress of Methodism—Statistical results—Methodism a power purifying and elevating society, and the influence that Methodism has exerted on other religious bodies, called forth remarks from a number of American delegates.

The Itinerancy and several kindred topics were discussed on Friday morning. Various testimonies of loyalty to this central idea of Methodist polity, and in favor of a system of Lay preaching, were given in the course of the discussion.

EDITORIAL NOTES.

Another point has been reached in the proceedings against Dr. Thomas, of Chicago, for "disseminating doctrines contrary to the Articles of Religion or Established Standards of Doctrine" of the Methodist Episcopal Church. The secular papers generally credit the Presiding Elder—Dr. Willing—with having given Dr. Thomas "generous scope" in his statements in self-defence, in spite of the efforts at limitation put forth by Dr. Parkhurst on the part of the prosecution. On the evening of the 9th inst., after several witnesses had been called to prove the charge of heresy and Dr. Thomas had been heard from the stand, the case was given to the committee. After brief deliberation they returned a verdict sustaining the charge, which must therefore be carried to the Conference. There was no little excitement caused when Dr. Parkhurst, in addressing the committee said: "There are gray-haired, godly men in this city; there are broken-hearted mothers in this city, who are weeping over the ruin of their sons, whose downfall in theatre going, dancing and beer drinking and card playing began with accepting these views from Dr. Thomas." The Dr. was charged with denying the inspiration of the Scriptures, and the doctrine of the atonement, and with teaching the idea of a probation after death.

The Financial Meeting of the Halifax District was held at Wolfville last week. Messrs F. H. W. Pickles and H. P. Doane were unable in consequence of illness to be present, temporary indisposition detained Mr. Teasdale at home, and Mr. Brecken had not arrived from England. Provision was made by those present for two District scholarships of \$25 value each at Mount Allison, and hopes were entertained that a third would be provided for by absent members. Attention having been called to the expected visit of Messrs Inskip and McDonald, commendatory resolutions were passed in reference to these gentlemen and the object of their visit. From a letter received from the President, at Yarmouth, it was thought likely that Messrs Inskip and McDonald would commence their evangelistic services in that town. A wish was expressed that meetings might be arranged for our city in such a way as to have them terminate about the time when the members of the Conference Missionary Board will be in session. These evangelists are well-known ministers of the Methodist Church in the United States, who have recently returned from India and other parts of the Old World, where they have labored with much success.

The Dominion Government having declined to defend the Canada Temperance Act, in the appeal soon to be heard by the English Privy Council, steps are being taken by the "Dominion Alliance" for the suppression of the Liquor Traffic" to secure competent counsel and meet the necessary expenses of the defence

For this purpose a call has been issued for \$2000. The action of the Dominion Government in this matter is somewhat mysterious. While thousands of dollars may be readily found for other purposes, a comparatively small amount cannot be used in maintaining the war against the giant curse of our country, and that by means of a law introduced and carried through Parliament by the Government of the Dominion, declared to be constitutional by the Supreme Court of the country, and accepted by twenty-five out of the twenty-nine constituencies which have voted upon it! In the meantime it is a satisfaction to be able to note that both in Charlottetown and in Digby, the Act is being sustained by judicial decisions.

The Public Gardens now present a scene of rare beauty. Our daily walk through them has but one drawback—the lack of leisure to linger among their attractions. All the details of management seem to have been thoroughly mastered by the competent superintendent. The proportion between lawn and flower plot, the contrasts between various colors, and the selected spot for tree and shrub, leave little to be desired. Here, however, as elsewhere, beauty is short-lived. A very fine border of pansies, which often caused us to turn from the most direct path, has been despoiled of much of its beauty by the worm at the root. And soon the frosts will extend their blighting influence over this fragment of paradise. We shall be glad if the floral beauty can be spared until our numerous friends visiting the approaching Exhibition can enjoy "the right of the eye" as we have done.

A somewhat interesting decision has been given by the Supreme Court of the State of New York. The Independent states the case:—"A man who had been a member of the Methodist Church, but at that time was not, several years ago took part in revival meetings connected with the Methodist Church at Waterport, N. Y. What he said was well enough; but he was excise commissioner and had signed all the liquor licenses given in the town. This was offensive, and, being a violation of the Discipline of the Church, which would have subjected him to the discipline, if a member, his speaking gave offense. The minister, accordingly, forbade him to speak, and on his insisting, had him arrested by a justice and fined. The Supreme Court decides the pastor was justified in stopping such a disturbance."

The ordination charge lately delivered by Rev. E. Evans, ex-President of the N. B. and P. E. I. Conference, has just been published at the Wesleyan office, in accordance with the wish of many who listened to it. Mr. Evans, without pretension or display, has quietly taken a leading position among our most thoughtful and effective preachers. The charge will be read with no mere momentary pleasure, but with lasting profit by our ministry and membership, whose faith in God and attachment to our Church will be rendered more intelligent and vigorous by its perusal. A large number of copies have been sold, but others desirous of obtaining them can still be supplied from our Book Room.

From the many newspaper articles on Methodism, called forth by the great gathering in London, we have selected one which appears on our first page. A misapprehension as to Wesley's "Societies," and a misquotation of their well-known phrase, "The People called Methodists," do not at all weaken the force of the views set forth by the writer; they only prove the article to be the production of one not likely to have been swayed by denominational influence or prepossession.

Friends coming to the Exhibition are invited to visit our Book Room, where they will find the useful and beautiful, in books and stationery, in great variety and at lowest prices. Any who may pass our old stand will see at a glance that our Book Room is not there, but a few steps northward will bring them to our present attractive establishment at 141 Granville St. Ask for it, as the best place at which to buy books for home reading, or gifts, or Sunday-school libraries.

The subject of Sabbath desecration is receiving much attention in New Brunswick. Bishop Medley gives an express denial to the statement that Bishop Doane, during his late visit, made application for a special Sunday train, but in making this denial the bishop gives expression to views which are scarcely in harmony with orthodox teaching on this subject.

LETTERS FROM BRITAIN.

NOS. III. AND IV.

THE TROSACHS.

Let me not appear absurd. To attempt a description at which any one in his senses might well hesitate, is not my aim. I can but record the impressions made upon my own mind while passing through scenery itself grand enough, and made tenfold more important by history, poetry and romance.

We left Glasgow on Monday at seven o'clock, by the Columbia, a steamer remarkable for her great length, beauty, accommodations and speed. The tourist season was in full majesty, rendering the villages a universal holiday. The Clyde like a universal holiday. The day, which began with poor promise, darkened by degrees till we reached Loch Lomond, where the shadows of the clouds hung heavily over the lake. Before reaching the head of this fine sheet of water, it became plain that we were not to be favored beyond the ordinary multitude coming this way. No mountain could be seen beyond a height of 200 feet or so. Ben Lomond was, if possible, more sulky than usual—a virgin modesty, with a tinge of indignation that found vent in tears at length. (The figure, as your readers must know, is by no means inapposite, as Ben in Gaelic is really feminine.) By coach to Loch Katrine is a drive of six miles. With a kindred traveller, having sufficient muscle for the hills, and with soul enough to drink in their inspiration, I made the tramp in true Highland fashion. Such a walk, too! James Fitz James, Malcolm Greime and Rhoderick Dhu always in our thoughts, as we trod the journey over which they (Scott's "Lady of the Lake" being true) walked and stormed and fretted and fought. Loch Katrine is far the finer piece of landscape—is indeed beyond the finest of even the Highlands of the Hindson River, and that is the ideal of scenery in America. The trip is made here also in a steamer, occupying two hours, and "two and sixpence, if ye please." It really shocks one's poetical sense to find these children of the mountain and the mist—speaking Gaelic by preference—transformed into veritable vultures! For, the farther you go, the more unmercifully do they devour you. If you can imagine yourself in Paradise during a shower of rain, and inquiring your way from the river to the garden, you have a picture of what and where we were. Anything more perfectly enchanting—a precious lady's bower, where eternal silence is broken only by a rude splash of paddle-wheels—no one ever saw. A mile or so, through a gorge between two mountains, composing the Trosachs, so-called, brings us to a hotel, like everything else here picturesque beyond imagination. Aye, and you may well enjoy it! Niagara is brought under control; New York, even, is no longer exorbitant; but the Trosachs continue fairly savage in the matter of fees and tips and charges.

"The guide, abating of his pace, led slowly through the passes' jaws, And asked Fitz James by what strange cause He sought these wilds! Traversed by few, Without a pass from Roderick Dhu." So runs the poem. Fitz James pointed to his sword in reply. The modern traveller must meet his guide with a golden pass—two or three of these indeed.

For long hours we stood before that hotel, waiting for Ben Venue to unveil her charms. But deeper grew the darkness, heavier hung the mists, till showers of rain drove us to shelter. Next morning the mountain emerged from its sulks just long enough to excite our wonder and admiration, then drawing about it the folds of a thicker drapery, if possible, it bade us depart. I write this in Bridge of Allan, a retired village in the neighborhood of Stirling, twenty miles from the Trosachs; and you may believe me when I declare that Ben Lomond and Ben Venue, in the one glorious day of sunshine we have just terminated, seem no farther away than they did during the solitary glimpse I have alluded to, though then we stood within what seemed only hailing distance of their glens and silvery cascades.

STIRLING.

No one having any reasonable knowledge of Scottish history needs to be told that this was long a centre of royal influence and power. By a street of rather steep ascent, and winding and broken, we came the castle. This is one of the remaining strong military posts of the olden time, still occupied by soldiers. That venerable drawbridge, flanked by loopholes for musketry, and overtopped by grinning cannon—what associations did they awaken! How many schemes of villainy and blood were entrusted to this sufficient protection! How many storms of hurting ammunition had fallen upon these walls. Through open courts between the palace and the chapel—where Mary of Scots went to worship during her stay here, for she never relaxed that, whatever else unlearned almost, when we enter the "Douglas Room," so called from an Earl of that name, very powerful in the North, and very defiant. All the other chiefs having submitted to the royal authority, Douglas, still discontent, was invited to see the King. In an altercation over their wrongs James plunged his dagger to the heart of Douglas; and from the window of this room the bleeding body was thrown by courtiers. It is now peaceful enough in its purpose. It includes a sort of museum of weapons, furniture &c belonging to those stormy times. And among them all, as if to awe them into peace, are the pulpit and communion table of John Knox. It may have been from this very desk that the Reformer so terrified Mary into the historic admission—"I dread Knox's preaching more than Elizabeth's armies." He is said to have "dinged the pulpit," and certainly this one—for several

Knox's pulpits are in existence—bearing ample traces of "dinging" from some person or cause. It is a rude piece of workmanship, and very like the spirit of a man who looked before him more than about him. From the pine floor, which the grand old preacher must have trod with a prouder step than King and Queen who went to hear him, I brought away a small piece as a memento. Brother Coffin would covet it, I dare say!

From the parapet of the castle the view is beyond description. There is nothing like it in Scotland, that I have seen. At a height of 300 feet you look down the face of the rock—a sheer precipice—to the royal and noble mansions, the squares and circles by which those peculiar games were followed are clearly seen cut into the soil. To the North and West a chain of mountains rises strongly marked against the sky, conspicuous among which are Ben Lomond and its associates. Lesser mountains break in upon the landscape at intervals, partially concealing villages that nestle in the greenest foliage, or exhibiting castles and other picturesque structures to better advantage than on the plain. For wide miles of level ground between these and the spectator nature seems to delight in every form of contrast that colours and objects can afford. The serpentine River Forth; trees with overhanging branches; fields green and yellow and golden; villages with church spires, and little cemeteries, dotted here and there; and all bathed in the most mellow sunlight, Ben Lomond excepted, which, true to its traditions, still puts on and off its misty drapery.

Returning from the castle we went our way through the cemetery of Stirling, like the generality of burying places in Scotland now kept with superb taste, and at much expense. Here are monuments to the brave of battlefields at home and abroad, to the heroes of arms and religion. Among these is one, surrounded with glass, that commands our special attention. It was that of the virgin martyrs—Margaret Wilson and Agnes, who, rather than forsake their Master by worshipping contrary to their conscience, submitted to be fastened to stakes in the tide-way of the Solway till the rising flood carried their heroic souls away with it. A martyr's grave is not difficult to find at any time in these regions. There is "bonny dust" of this kind in almost every town and village. A more impossible task, if possible, still awaits me. The Queen has just visited Edinburgh, from which venerable and classic capital I mail this letter. We have beheld a spectacle which Scotland itself never saw before—a review by Her Majesty of more than 40,000 volunteers! But of this anon.

CHURCHES, PUBLIC WORSHIP, &c.

As a sort of buffer between subjects of a natural and artistic character, allow me to say something on matters ministerial and ecclesiastical. Having spent four Sabbaths in Scotland I may be permitted to form certain conclusions without being considered unadvised or unobservant.

First, as to religion in general. It is impossible to spend even a week in this country without seeing the marvellous power of a thorough religious education. An American stranger looks with astonishment at the contrast between Saturday and Sabbath in the streets of the principal cities. In Glasgow, and here in Edinburgh, where it is difficult to make one's way Saturday afternoon and evening, there is scarcely a living object on Sunday morning till the church bells sound out on the air. Then the morning crowds, to all directions, each holding a Bible, is something exceedingly impressive. After walking different times in the vicinity of great railroads, occupied through the week with immense traffic, I have seen but a solitary locomotive in motion on the Sabbath, and that seemed hurrying off as if utterly ashamed of itself.

Entering the churches, and taking a seat—always freely offered to strangers—it is seen that every head is bowed on coming in, and as the benediction is finished every worshipper is seated with head down for a minute or so, giving an appearance of great solemnity to the congregation. The singing is always general, in good time, and hearty. The fine old tunes which wafted the praises of the reformers and martyrs to the throne of God, are here still. In the Free and U. P. churches no organs are in use; but the singing suffers little in consequence.

I have heard but little preaching. Sermons are usually read here; and the readers are not always of the best either. The preaching is almost generally doctrinal, seldom lighted up by a glim of imagination. Strange that Guthrie's example itself has not left very much imitation in the use of figures. I have longed sometimes to hear a preacher give a slight indication at least that he lived in the nineteenth century, or had a life and experience of his own. The preaching is mostly back in the old, old ages. In Glasgow, Stirling and Edinburgh there is not to-day, that I can find a preacher who can thoroughly stir the masses. True, this is the "Seaside" month, and the great men may be away; but in every instance the preachers whom we heard were the regular pastors, and we cannot say they are amazingly eloquent. Dr. Marshall Lang, of the Barony Church, Glasgow, is perhaps the strongest we have listened to, yet even he had only one listener out of every twelve or fifteen worshippers. The other eleven or fourteen were either not attending to the discourse or wondering what it was all about. That is, unless Scottish congregations have great power of deceiving an observer. Dr. Pulford, Congregational, of Trinity, Glasgow, gave us one evening, a sweet, very thoughtful, plaintive discourse on "I

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