

THE WESLEYAN

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Having a large and increasing circulation in Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, Prince Edward Island, Newfoundland and Bermuda.

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SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 15, 1877.

THE "WITNESS" ON THE TRACT SOCIETY.

Really, we scarcely know now where to turn, or what to say, in view of the shape matters have taken. For two years, at intervals, we have been striving to defend an annual Conference against persistent attempts to frown it down before the public, first for the presumption of passing resolutions in protection of its Sunday Schools and families, against literature opposed to its teachings, and next against charges which meant that it was ignorant, dishonest, or jealous, as the only grounds for its action.

"It will be remembered that statements like these were made last year. Proof was earnestly sought for by the Society whose character was assailed; but to this moment no proof has been given. Why is this? If the Society is so bad, it would be but justice to the whole community to destroy it at once. We shall most cordially assist the WESLEYAN in the work of destruction as soon as we see that evidence.

As if that were not explicit enough, we have in the same article this paragraph:—"Where are the charges? Will the WESLEYAN kindly reproduce them? It can surely afford to do so. We shall expect our friend to do not merely the just thing, but the thing that is magnanimous and generous, as John Wesley would do. But by all means, publish the evidence: justice demands that. We have no doubt whatever that the Conference was misled by rash statements into uttering the accusation which it did utter against the character of an Evangelical Society which has carried the light of the Gospel into many a desolate corner of these Provinces."

We quoted last week from the same article, this sentence:—"It may be very astonishing to the WESLEYAN that we cannot accept the finding of the Conference though twice repeated, but we cannot do so consistently with what we know to be facts; and we deplore exceedingly that so honest and intelligent a body as the Conference should have been so misled."

The Witness of last week reprints our article and proceeds to comment upon it. But—well something has changed. Either this is not the same world; or two years have been blotted out of the memory of the Witness; or a wonderful flash of light has come from some quarter.

The Witness says:—"The Editor of the WESLEYAN counselled silence at the Yarmouth Conference. This, from his point of view was kind; but after all, the Conference was morally bound to bring the matter to an issue—either to make good the charge of 1876 or to withdraw it."

So far good. This is precisely what we have been insisting upon. This is precisely what the Conference authorities are now doing. Up to last Conference, however, we believed the Conference could afford to drop the discussion: not so now. The Society has anew intimated to the world that the Conference had no grounds for its action, and the Witness has repeated the assertion, challenging proof, taunting the WESLEYAN with its inability to show cause. Our article of last week was written on the defensive—for really it is the Conference which now stands accused. The points made in that article the Witness of last week tacitly or posi-

tively admits, and falls back upon special pleading for its defence.

It concludes its article thus:—"They (the Conference) will be able to relieve themselves from this difficulty in a way which will reflect honour not only on themselves but on our common christianity. We will not dishonour them by giving credence to the rumor that the officials of the Conference are now engaged in gathering up 'evidence' to justify action taken in June 1876. What affects the honour and good name of one denomination affects more or less the other denominations. In this sense if one member suffer all suffer with it."

This is the crowning contradiction! The Conference was "misled," "tempted,"—had no evidence—and now it would be "dishonour" to believe that the Conference is collecting its evidence with a view to its defence. The Book and Tract Society sent circulars to the members of Conference for evidence, and made no little capital out of the result; but for the officials of Conference to do the same thing is so disreputable that the Witness will not dishonour them by believing it. We imagined the Witness had a reputation for logic!

We are specially anxious to know how the Conference can "relieve itself from this difficulty in a way which will reflect honour" upon it, or "on our common christianity," except by convincing the world that it has a character for honesty and intelligence which is too precious to be held up to doubt and all but contempt, as has been the case for some time back. This can only be done by giving the public its evidence, for the public has had so much of mere assertion on both sides that it cares not a rush for individual opinions. But this evidence the Witness does not want, and will not allow to go to the public if it can help it. The reader may take this as prophecy.

We will now close by a little summary of two propositions:—

1. The Nova Scotia Conference must look to its reputation. When that has been maintained properly, we will talk of christian courtesy and love. Till the truthfulness and honesty of the motives of Conference are admitted all round, all writing on charity is but as "sounding brass."

2. The B. A. Book and Tract Society must take a new name, or launch into a very different kind of work from that in which it has been engaged for some time. While Methodism has been supporting this Society freely, the Society has been as freely undermining Methodist teachings. Who is responsible for this is a question with which we have nothing to do. We only repeat the fact, and have no expectation now of being called upon to prove it. We will even undermine the special plea of the Society and the Witness, by affirming that, so far from taking action on this subject without any warning, the agencies of the Society had been cautioned and remonstrated with for years before the Conference finally took the matter in its own hands.

REVIEW OF THE "MINUTES."

MISSIONARY INCOME.

There are causes which prevent a full showing of the receipts for Missions in the Western Conferences, in time for the printed Minutes. We can, therefore give no data as respects those 'at our present writing. For the three Eastern Conferences we have the following reports.

Table with 3 columns: Receipts, Members, Per Member. Rows for Nova Scotia, N.B. & P.E.I., Newfoundland.

Table with 3 columns: Receipts, Members, Per Member. Rows for Last year, Increase.

Taking the Upper Conferences on the basis of last year, we have these proportions:—

Table with 3 columns: Receipts, Members, Per Member. Rows for London, Toronto, Montreal.

The average from all the Conferences would be nearly \$1.40 per member. In the English Conference the average per member, taking in amounts subscribed for Home Missions, would be about \$1.80. It is gratifying to find that, in zeal for missions, our youthful General Conference so well emulates the parent body. Methodism in the United States, if it equalled in mission liberality that of the British countries, would provide such an array of Christian agencies as would astonish the world. But, owing

to the heavy demands of the episcopal machinery, bishops and presiding elders particularly, the drain upon the church's resources is so heavy as to bring American contributions to missions down to a small figure.

It is noticeable that the richest territory is not by any means the most liberal to this particular Fund. There is a larger proportion of purely missionary work performed in the Montreal and Newfoundland Conferences than in any of the others; yet the support afforded to the Funds from those two, if taken in the aggregate, is equal to that from any of the most favoured sections of our work. As a financial speculation alone, it would appear by these statistics that mission enterprise really pays.

Another peculiarity of our missionary reports is, that the mechanical and manufacturing districts are seen to contribute far more freely than the agricultural. There is something extraordinary in this problem of social benevolence, or social economy. Why it is that in localities abounding in wealth of real estate, men should be less liberal than where the artisan and common toiler earns his daily wages, or the shopkeeper waits for his yearly profits, is a question not easily answered. Whether the perpetual handling of money makes men less eager to hoard it as it comes; or the prospect of widening fields and increasing herds has a tendency to make men avaricious, who can tell? He was a farmer who said, "I will pull down my barns and build greater." There is nothing sinful in this disposition when kept within proper bounds; but it becomes a calamity if nursed into national proportions. Investing in advance—buying property on conditions which keep the purchaser in trammels for a life-time, in debt so long that, when emancipation comes, it is too late to burst the bands of penurious habits—this is surely bad policy.

But we must make exceptions, and we do so from cheerful remembrance of what we have seen personally. There are, pursuing the honest, humble profession of agriculture, some of the most princely benefactors of our day, considering their means. We only regret that their example does not diffuse its holy influence everywhere.

If it were not for Baptists and the Wesleyan, the Christian Messenger would be sadly at a loss for subjects; in fact, with the Greek word once settled, and the Wesleyan silenced, the Messenger's mission would be closed, and it might proceed to wind up. We have given towering offence by writing last week that John Wesley's plan of probation was about to be followed in the reception of Baptist candidates for the ministry; and the zenith of impertinence was reached when we presumed to suggest that the same rule might apply to the reception of converts. A correspondent of the Messenger empties his phials of wrath upon our poor head; and the Editor follows him up in this style:—"We never heard of three months' delay in the so-called, baptism of infants. Why then with 'converts'? We have heard of great haste—even among Methodists—in giving that rite, lest the child should die without receiving it. Probably our contemporary has himself been sent for—even at night—to save members of his congregation from such a fearful calamity in their families!

Our brother perhaps does not perceive that such a suggestion, as that we have quoted above, from such a source, is a little impertinent; and possibly was intended as a small magisterial insult, such as he knows so well how to offer. But we are not disposed to regard it so; we would rather exercise the 'charity which suffereth long and is kind,' seeing that he is so continually expressing his anxiety that Baptists should become open-communicants! notwithstanding the restricted communion of all other bodies of Christians.

The correspondent is even more sarcastic and bitter in allusion to "the babies"—charging us with having baptized unbelievers—if he mean by this adults, it is not true; if children, we but obeyed the scriptures. But where is the consistency of these brethren? They charge us with intentional impertinence for writing in regard to their mode and subjects of baptism, and yet they turn upon us with all kinds of sneers in regard to ours! Do they imagine that we have no respect for our ordinances, or that we are unfeeling pagans?

"Suffer the word of exhortation," brethren. Your neighbors, who are no better than they ought to be themselves, perhaps, have made a discovery which you have not. They have the presumption to believe that the Baptist churches receive members a little too readily;—that if they delayed three months, the membership would be reduced to a more healthful basis. They say these things in private—we say it in public; but do not call us ugly names for this. You tell us plain things, and we strive to meet them by argument, or, if convinced, we profit by your counsel; but your method is so censorious you see that people begin to wonder whether you are really open to conviction.

Brethren you are altogether too sensitive. This immersion ordinance is with you like the jewelled crowns which nations have shielded with their bodies, and the loss of which meant to them ruin and extinction. The editor of this paper has far more respect for your convictions than you have for his. He admires what is noble and true in your system and principles, while he thinks you elevate a mere ordinance into a position far beyond what was intended by the Master. He has never alluded to your mode of baptism excepting in argument. You, on the contrary, frequently hold up our "baby-sprinkling" to contempt, and you think of us as unbaptized unbelievers. Is this kind? Is it worthy of a church whose record you point to all down the ages as having endured for the sake of Christ?

If the other Protestant churches can make no common cause with Baptists, who is to blame? While suggestions and innocent remarks are magnified into impertinences and insults; while the Baptist people are taught that, with all our profession of godliness we are still but disobedient or deluded men and women; while in our love for our offspring and our regard for our Lord, we seek to bring them to Him according to what we regard as His commandment, our conduct is pointed at as a piece of heathenish or Romish foolery—pray what can be expected?

We imagine there is room for charity and love on both sides!

The Papal Ablegate, if we can credit press rumors, is using some rather distasteful measures with the political intermeddling priests of the Province of Quebec. It came to be understood that that Province was Roman Catholic territory, to be governed only by Roman Catholics. It seems to have been discovered that so unpatriotic a notion was sure to work great mischief some day, so that remonstrance and warning have come in good time. If we may accept as genuine the mandates by which the Papal Ablegate has thus far censured the Priests, and even some of the Bishops, there is hope that a better understanding in regard to the common rights of citizens will ensue in the Western Provinces.

Here we are, going over this old Bible in the International course of Sabbath School readings,—great men thinking out its meaning, and millions of teachers and children following their rendering of the text. Just as if all this had not been done, in a different way, for centuries upon centuries! So shall other millions do when we are gone. This grand old book, like God, whose mind it is, is eternal, is the book of all ages and climes and conditions. When we shall have been in heaven perhaps a thousand years, great minds will be writing upon the gospel, and young minds coming to this fountain to drink—like the woman of Samaria, to meet Jesus. Thank God, there is one good legacy at least, which we can all leave to our children!

It will be gratifying to our lady readers to learn that the value of silk goods have been subject to a most important decline—the prices of this valuable article of merchandise have this season reached a point far lower than ever before—thus placing a good Black Silk within the reach of all. In order to fully appreciate the value of this we would advise our readers to look at the advertisement of Davison & Creighton in another column.

WELCOME BACK.—The editorial announcement was this week brightened by the venerable form of Dr. McLeod, whose hand held the helm of the WESLEYAN during its first perilous adventure—from 1848 to 1853. We were mistaken last year in saying that Dr. McLeod was editor in 1858, when the paper made its appearance. It was but an experiment at that early day. After this venture failed, and a Magazine in New Brunswick, for some six years, ran its course, the PROVINCIAL WESLEYAN appeared, Dr. McLeod as editor, taking, in a brief time, a leading place among the journals of the Maritime Provinces. These five years show, by reference to the old files, that the way of religious journalism was troubled very often. Under Dr. McLeod's genius the WESLEYAN did not a little in encountering, but also in creating, the storms. There are but few of the Doctor's old companions remaining to greet him at this late day. Here and there a veteran minister takes him by the hand, or sends him a blessing. On some library shelves are his books on polemics, by which, in the olden times, marked victories were gained. In his pocket remains the same gold-rimmed spectacles—never yet used for reading, however—presented to him by one of his preacher pupils, of whom he seems to have had not a few during his provincial life. Converts of the past, here and there, arise to call him blessed.

Dr. McLeod is now well advanced in years, his head and beard white and pure as the driven snow—a man before whom one could kneel reverently for a benediction. Those who remain of his old-time readers, and all who with them have learned to love and venerate the men who lived and endured for the cause of God in Methodism, will join us in praying that a good Providence may carry him safely back to his home in Baltimore, and crown his closing years with the tenderest blessing.

TALMAGE.—Halifax has enjoyed another rich oratorical treat. Rumors had reached us that, at one of two places, the lecturer had disappointed his hearers. Either he must have been inferior to himself, or they were not judges. The audience in Halifax was very large and very intelligent; and we have heard but one opinion—that of great satisfaction.

Geo. Wilson, Esq., of the Port Hope Guide, was one of the "Press party" who recently visited Halifax. He gives a very animated description of his journey. The Editor of the Wesleyan tenders his thanks for Mr. Wilson's compliments.

Our neighbor, the Halifax Chronicle, ought to see that the Wesleyan at least has no disposition to continue a discussion with the Witness on the Tract Society matter. We offer a fair test by which the difference may be adjudicated upon by the public. Fighting on this subject is now useless—it has reached the point where proof is necessary.

The Hantsport Sabbath School held its annual picnic on Tuesday of last week. The members of the school and friends went in carriages up the Gaspeaux and had a most enjoyable time. The school under the efficient superintendence of Mr. J. A. Taylor is prospering.

There are three moons belonging to Mars—this is the latest announcement. Should the martial planet go on at this rate, we shall feel ashamed of our own solitary satellite. But then our moon is three times as large as those of Mars.

Halifax, like all modern cities, is becoming more and more exacting upon its rate payers. Taxes have now reached \$1.33 upon every \$100. Withal, two main streets in the business parts are kept clean by private subscription. Who can say we are not going ahead?

Every good result seems to have followed the Convention of the Y. M. C. A. held this week in Chatham, N. B. The Convention for the Dominion opened at Quebec on Thursday. Particulars had not reached us up to going to press.