

## British Conference.

(A Letter from Rev. Dr. Richey, to the Editor of the Boston Christian Times.)

NEWCASTLE-UPON-TYNE, England, }  
July 31st, 1851. }

REVEREND DR. CHOULES:—My dear Friend:—Your personal application to me for a letter or two, in respect to the proceedings of our Conference, and the course that it might be led by existing agitations, to mark out for its future guidance in the administration, or by the modification, of its discipline and polity,—was made under circumstances which rendered it impossible for me to say, Nay. The delight I experienced at meeting you so unexpectedly in the picturesque metropolis of the French (I had almost said, *military*) Republic, secured my unhesitating acquiescence in giving the pledge, which I must now, as best I may, endeavor, to redeem.

The Conference has been only two days in session, and therefore you cannot expect this communication to contain a large amount of information as to its *doings*; but as from the state of the atmosphere and the aspect of the heavens in the morning, we are accustomed to anticipate with a probability that seldom disappoints, the kind of weather we are likely to have for the day; so the spirit in which the Conference has commenced, and the character of its preliminary and incipient action, afford unmistakable indications of the rule by which it is its unswerving purpose to walk. An entire week, as you are aware, is annually occupied by the sittings of various Committees in connexion with the interests of our church, before the opening of Conference. All those committees, several of them comprising many lay members,—were, throughout, characterised by the utmost harmony in spirit and action. I ought not to omit to apprise you that the Rev'd. Dr. Beecham, our President during the past year, summoned about two hundred of the more intelligent and influential official members of our Societies, to meet in Manchester a number of our senior ministers, a few days previous to the assembling of Conference, in order to confer with them as to the best means of allaying the spirit of agitation which has already resulted in the diminution of our numbers to the amount of more than fifty thousand. After, at that meeting, more than eighty propositions or suggestions were submitted, it was, after much prayerful deliberation, *unanimously* resolved, to refer the whole subject to the collective wisdom of the Pastorate, with an earnest recommendation, that while they remained intact, the great constitutional principles which lie at the basis of our Connexional economy, they would adopt any conciliatory modifications as to the mode of administration, in particular cases, that might be deemed expedient, at the present crisis. To this reasonable desire, there exists, I believe, every disposition in the leading ministers of the Conference, to respond; and if the expressed wishes of the most liberal of our faithful people are not in all respects met, it will be, because they are felt to be dissonant to, and, however good their *design*, subversive in their *tendency* of our discipline, which in all its essential attributes, we believe to be in perfect accordance with the New Testament.

The Missionary Committee of Review, as we technically call it,—met according to usage, the day immediately preceding the Conference. As the assailants of our peace have directed their most unmitigated hostility against our great Missionary Institution, this meeting, in the composition of which there is a fair representation of the sentiments and spirit of the laity of our Church throughout the kingdom, is the most faithful mirror of the general state of our Societies. This was a meeting not only more than usually harmonious and happy, but altogether unprecedented in its character.—The lay brethren emulated each other in the expression of their entire confidence in the management of our Missions, and in the eminent calumniated men, on whom has been devolved the onerous responsibility of conducting their extended operations. Their concurrent testimony was borne in words that burn, not unfre-

quently interrupted by profound and tender emotion, and rendered pathetically emphatic by many tears. Such a meeting, assembled on such an occasion, so hallowed, so melting, so tranquil amidst exterior agitation, so blessed, notwithstanding the malignant efforts employed to disturb our peace; in a word, so *heavenly* and *heavenlike*, I have never witnessed. This is an auspicious omen of the adequate voluntary support, and by the blessing of God, of the triumphant progress of the work of salvation, by the ministrations of Methodism.

On Wednesday, July 30th, the Conference was opened with the usual devotional exercises. The first work was to supply the chasm made by death or superannuation, in the hundred members of Conference, in which is vested by Mr. Wesley's Deed, the property of the Connexion. Of the 13 ministers who were advanced to this honor, 10 were elected on the ground of *seniority*, and 3 by nomination.

The chapel was opened at 12 o'clock, as is the custom for the admission of the people, to unite with the ministers in prayers for the divine blessing on the proceedings of the Conference. It was a season of power from on high. Seldom, perhaps, since Abraham took hold of the strength of Jehovah, in pleading for the cities of the plain, has a voice of more fervent and effectual intercession ascended to the mercy seat. A pervading characteristic of the prayers offered, was yearning compassion towards those who are the agents of the divisive organization that has unhappily been formed by false brethren, and towards those whose souls—many of them sincere—who have become the dupes of designing and ambitious men. Dr. HANNAH, with whose estimable character and high attainments you are not unacquainted, was elected President by a large majority.—Messrs. John Lomas, John Scott, and Dr. Alder, being the only other names with which was connected a respectable number of votes. The selection of Dr. Hannah to the highest office in the Body by 157, among about 220 votes fully evinces that the Conference is resolved, come what may, not to surrender its scriptural authority at the demand of unreasonable and disappointed men, by comprising principles for the maintenance of which, in unimpaired integrity, they conscientiously feel their responsibility to the Head of the church.

The second day's sitting was distinguished by an occurrence and decision by which the Conference has solemnly and deliberately committed itself to the principle of rejecting all proposals of conferring with the antagonistic separatists in relation to any alterations suggested by them as necessary to be made in our discipline. An application from the, so called Delegates, to that effect, has been respectfully but firmly answered in the negative. There is an end, therefore, to all communication, in the way of counsel with them, or rather the resolve is *final* never to *open* such communication with them. By some this will be regarded, and by the antagonist portion of the Press doubtless represented and denounced, as an uncharitable and high-handed measure. But to have our good evil spoken of is not our peculiar inheritance. It is a stale device of the accuser of the brethren.

The examination of character is in our body an important part of its annual confessional proceedings. No one has this year questioned the *right* of the Conference, when it chooses to exercise that right, to interrogate in regard to any matter inviting grave suspicions against character, any minister of our Church who may happen to occupy that unenviable predicament. Dr. Beaumont in consequence of alleged dereliction of duty, in not duly enforcing our discipline, was pronounced by a district meeting ineligible for the present to the superintendence of a circuit; and the minute in his case has received the sanction of the Conference. Mr. Daniel Walton has also incurred the censure of the Conference for the publication of a pamphlet entitled—"Counsels of Peace," but of which, however well intentioned, the direct tendency is to add a fresh element to the agitation which aims at the subversion of our entire code of discipline.

The public services have been times of

refreshing from the presence of the Lord, and most of the sermons of a high order.—That of the President's and Ex-President's are to be published. Dr. Bunting was put down in the plan of pulpit appointments to preach on Sunday evening. He did me the honor to say that he would acquiesce in the desire expressed to connect his name with the appointment, with the distinct understanding that if he was unable through his infirmities to officiate, I should take his place. It so occurred that neither he nor I was in a state of health to preach at the appointed time—a disappointment, so far as he was concerned, deeply felt by all; and by none more than by

Yours, very respectfully,  
MATTHEW RICHEY.

## Family Circle.

## A Sister's Influence.

A sister! This is one of the most tender and endearing appellations in our language, and the relationship is one from which flow some of the gentlest and most affectionate sympathies which soften and sweeten the intercourse of the family circle. Notices of consanguinity are more delicate or more powerful than those which proceed from and entwine themselves around the heart of a lovely and affectionate sister. The names brother and sisters are enshrined in the affections of every bosom, and can never be separated or forgotten. And all who bear these endearing and endearing names ought to cherish in their hearts, and manifest in their conduct, the corresponding affections of them.

Whatever be the cause of the difference, it very often happens that the sisters of a family are more virtuous, pious, amiable, and exemplary, in all respects, than the brothers. And no one can fail in observing and rejoicing in that benign and powerful influence which many sisters exert over their reckless and wayward brothers. Sometimes the only earthly hope of a young man is the genial and plastic influence of an affectionate sister. For her sake, and under her influences, he will abstain from vices, which, but for that auspicious influence and regard, would disgrace her and ruin himself, and would do things for his own advantage, which, were it not for her example, satisfaction, and gentle persuasions, he would never do.

She can entertain him and make him happy at home, or induce him to accompany her to the abodes of salutary and refined society; in default of which, the haunts of infamy, the abode of profligacy, and the resorts of dissipation, would be visited for recreation and indulgence.

She can gently and insensibly instil into his mind the doctrines and precepts of religion; compel him to admire virtue and piety by a loving and winning exemplification of their heavenly grace, in her own character, conversation, and life; and she may prevail upon him to accompany her to the house of God, where he may hear the words of eternal life; when, but for her, he would slide into infidelity, learn to despise and scoff at religion, and spend the Lord's day in idleness, dissipation, and revelry.

This is not a mere picture of imagination, unattainable in experience. It has often been exemplified in real life; and ought to be so common as to be familiar to all. Many sisters are more than guardian angels to their brothers, and will be ascertained to have been such in a better world. One sister, too, may exert such an influence equally benign and salutary over another, and may prove to her more valuable than all the rubies in the world.

This holy influence over both brothers and sisters ought to be the aim of all who bear this appellation and sustain this sacred relation. It ought to be acquired at the earliest period possible; and the easiest and surest way to establish it, is for the sister to be herself virtuous, pious and intelligent, affectionate, amiable, and agreeable. Being so, her influence may be almost omnipotent.—S. S. Treasury.

No man is so insignificant that he can be sure his example will do no hurt.

## Sailor's Mother! Do you Pray for your Boy?

We imagine your reply.—"Yes, to be sure I do! How could I ever forget my poor dear sea-child, out upon the mighty ocean, where he may find a grave, in a moment, beneath the rolling waves?" Well, come then, sit down a minute, and get a word of encouragement to pray on: the account is given by a minister—read it, and pray again.

"What hallowed associations crowd round the heart at the mention of a mother's prayers! Years may pass away—mountains, rivers, and oceans may intervene between us and the spot where first we heard a mother's prayers; yet they cannot be obliterated from the tablet of memory. Sickness, sorrow and neglect may be suffered, and even the heart may seemingly become callous to all good impressions, yet at the sound of a *mother's*, a PRAYING *mother's* name, a chord is touched which thrills through the soul, and rarely fails to awaken better feelings. Does danger threaten?—

We hope, and perhaps fondly anticipate, that a mother's prayers, which have been offered on our behalf, may be answered. Never did I see this more forcibly illustrated than in the case of a weather-beaten sailor, who resided in one of our coast-towns. The narrative was given by his mother. In making his homeward passage, a dreadful storm arose as he doubled the 'stormy Cape.' The mother had heard of her son's arrival 'outside the Cape,' and was waiting, with the anxiety a sailor's mother alone can know, to see her boy. But now the storm had arisen, and as she expected, when the ship was in the most dangerous place. Fearing that each blast, as it swept the raging deep, might howl the requiem of her son, with faith strong in her God, she commenced praying for his safety. At this moment news came that the vessel was lost. The father, who was not a pious man, had, till this time, preserved a sullen silence, but now he *wept aloud*. The mother observed, 'It is in the hands of Him who does all things well,' and again, in a subdued and softened spirit, bowed, and commended her son and her husband, in an audible voice, broken only by the burstings of a full heart, to God. Darkness had now spread her mantle abroad, and they retired, but not to rest; and anxiously waited for the morning, hoping, at least, that some relic of their lost one might be found. The morning came—the winds were hushed, and the ocean lay comparatively calm, as though its fury had subsided since its victim was no more. At this moment the little gate in front of their dwelling turned on its hinges. The door opened, and their son, their lost, their loved son, stood before them!! The vessel had been driven into one of the many harbours on the coast, and he was safe. The father rushed to meet him—the mother, already hanging on his neck, exclaimed, 'My child, how came you here?' 'Mother,' said the lad, with the tears flowing over his sun-burnt cheek, 'I KNEW YOU'D PRAY ME HOME!' Look at this spectacle, praying sailor's mother! A wild, reckless youth, acknowledging the efficacy of prayer! It seems he was aware of his perilous situation, and that he laboured with this thought—'My mother prays! A Christian's prayers are answered, and I may be saved!' This reflection, when almost exhausted with fatigue, gave him fresh courage, and with renewed effort he laboured till the harbour was gained.—Mothers! praying mothers, go to God for those sons who are likely to be wrecked on the stream of life, and their prospects blasted forever. Now is the time—God bends his ear. Your precious boy MAY be saved."

## The Broken Heart.

A class of little ones were standing around their kind teacher, repeating the following text:—"The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit; a broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise."—when a tiny boy, of four years of age, looked into her face, saying, "If you please, ma'am, our Betty's Uncle Ben was put in prison for buying stolen wool, and he died broken-hearted." The good teacher replied,—"Perhaps it was the sorrow of the world, which worketh death, that he felt. He was, doubtless ashamed of the disgrace he would