

THE WESLEYAN.

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SATURDAY, AUGUST 25, 1877.

RELIGION IN RELATION TO DOMESTIC HABITS.

Most opportunely, at this disturbed juncture in European relations, two remarkable books have appeared, illustrating the habits and dispositions of the Russians and Turkish peoples. "A Ride to Khiva," is a most fascinating description of travel from the centre to the extremity of Russia, through immense vicissitudes of climate, and difficulties of social life most perplexing to a foreigner. "Turkey in Europe," is, as its name indicates, a lively portraiture of this latter country, from the pen of a man well qualified by attainments of education and experience to claim the right of authorship on this particular subject. The reader traverses in these volumes several thousands of miles through the heart of the respective countries, and forms an intimate acquaintance with several millions of human beings, fair, (swarthy rather) types of dense populations. The authors are both British military officers, whose fame, in literature at least, will not soon die. Their moral heroism, too, as well as their physical endurance, comes out conspicuously in their narratives, showing that the English soldier deserves all the praise, for prowess and adventure, which has been so freely accorded to him. Any one who reads thoughtfully these two books (associating with them if they please Kinglake's first volume upon the Crimean war) will have as correct and comprehensive an idea of the Eastern question, that first problem in European affairs, and also of the principal parties involved in its complications, as it is possibly for any one readily to obtain.

There are numerous suggestions standing out in the records of these travellers, inviting the reader to a comparison of the races described with those of his own more immediate acquaintance. The contrasts in almost every instance are very marked. It ought always to be remembered that religion, woven into the warps and woofs of the peoples' mental and moral character, has much to do with their habits national, social and domestic. We take at this time but a single feature of this wide moral landscape, and allude to its shades of colour, merely by way of leading the reader to a most interesting and instructive study.

Domestic cleanliness no doubt owes its existence to science in some degree. The discovery that ventilation, sewerage, and general tidiness, or its neglect had much to do with public and family health, may have caused, by compulsory attention to sanitary laws, the growth of cleanly habits, which in time, became pleasant to the senses. But this can only have affected localities of dense populations. General cleanliness originates with self-respect—such a regard for the person and the home as lifts both out of the atmosphere of impurity. Self-respect has itself a paternity. It does not always proceed from education or from a sense of superiority; our British nobility, and our sovereigns for that matter were not exemplary in their domestic habits all through even their most brilliant periods of history. Savage chiefs are seldom more cleanly than their slaves, though full of a sense of supremacy and importance. "Clothed and in his right mind," were the results of a discovery made by the penitent as to his new relations, new dignity, through grace divine. Gough tells that an abandoned woman, her body nude to the waist, listening to an appeal from his own lips, first was observed to weep, then, in presence of a large audience unfastened a shawl and drew it closely about

her. She had been awakened to self-respect, and this was followed by the shame of neglect and degradation. She next appeared at a public meeting washed and evincing rude attempts at neatness and gentility.

Christianity has not always carried with it the most pure and gentle habits into the domestic circle. But then Christianity has not uniformly been introduced among sinful populations in its own most complete and advanced types. Fragments of Christianity, so to speak, have entered the body politic and accomplished only a measure of what was possible. Christianity in Russia is almost enshrouded in superstition and picture worship. There is not sufficient pure religion to beget purity. The descriptions of rural character and habits given in a "Ride to Khiva" are shocking to a refined mind. In Turkey these evils are if possible, more aggravated. Mohammedanism has the reputation of being a religion of cleanliness; it ought to be that if the instruction of the Koran were literally carried out. Repeated ablutions are enjoined by the Prophet; but the miserable devotees of this religion evade his injunctions by the subterfuge of pouring over themselves sand instead of water. It is not with the Mohammedan, however, that this defect originates; he meets the highest instincts which his religion is capable of creating. Mohammedanism does not elevate the human character into purity—does not exalt the man in his own estimation into proportions which command his self-respect.

This mere physical advantage—this domestic glory which everywhere crowns pure religion when received in its completeness—is of itself a sufficient incentive to send the Gospel to degraded races. Disciples of Rationalism would laud their philosophy to the skies if it could be proved by practical experience that it accomplished even the result of elevating filthy villagers into respectability. It would be easy to trace this result in the history of Christian missions. The just and natural inferences we leave our readers to draw for themselves.

THE FINANCIAL DISTRICT MEETING—

WHAT SHOULD BE ITS AIMS.
Naturally enough this connexional first annual assembly has taken a name which implies business. Methodism has always been systematic in secular matters: and its economy has educated its ministers into habits of readiness and comprehensiveness in the management of financial affairs. Hence we have a large proportion of shrewd business men in the ministry who have had no drill beyond that which our elaborate system renders necessary. He who traverses intelligently the financial economy of a Methodist Quarterly Meeting, a Financial District Meeting and an Annual Conference, mastering the details at every stage, and helping to work out the various methods by personal calculations, must necessarily take a considerable step in the direction of Financial Science. It ought not, indeed, to be optional whether this study is to be pursued by ministers or not. Finance is so interwoven with Methodism—forms so important a part of its operations, and assists so much in securing the fulfillment of its highest functions—that ministers owe it to themselves, to the cause of God and humanity, to understand the entire system with a view of affording help in every department. There are entirely too many financial novices amongst us. It is not surprising that our system is not better understood among the laity, while those who ought to be their ready instructors are sadly lacking in knowledge of the most common fundamental laws of church business. Members of other religious bodies may take shelter behind the plea of a distinct, divine call to a purely religious office, and point to the deaconate, whose province it is to "serve tables." Their systems may be such that no responsibility attaches to ministers as regards business knowledge beyond the mere capacity to avoid being imposed upon. It is not uncommon to find business ignorance in these instances elevated into a virtue of the first merit. To their own Master these stand or fall.

With us the case is very different. Methodism has grown gradually in the two-fold character of a spiritual and financial system, which observers have constantly admired because of its marked adaptation to ordinary human conditions. Religion is the heart and soul, finance the hands and feet, of Methodism. If one member suffer, all the rest suffer with it. Without the religious element, this system would be lifeless—paralyzed; without the financial there would be no locomotion. Darwin has given philosophers a new name and theory as regards animated nature; perfection, according to him, is the result of selection and development; and development has ensued from a constant reaching out by the creature after unattained advantages. This theory might have found its illustration in Methodism. It began with life—spiritual life, in its lowest type. Gradually it leaned toward one and another method of usefulness, each member of the general system gaining strength and excellency by the exertion. We can now see remarkable results; and magnificent proportions are being developed which have a still greater perfection before them. The process all through has been one of selection; and by the laws of spiritual growth, Methodism ought to make rapid and constant advancement. Its institutions are the survival of the fittest.

But this illustration applies equally to the religious element in Methodism. Can there be, in a system such as we have endeavored to define, an annual legislative gathering of a purely, exclusively, secular nature? Can such a meeting confine its attention to, and concentrate its entire strength upon, the secularities of the church, and still be in harmony with the constitution and genius of Methodism? We answer, very emphatically—No!

Let the history of our cause in E. B. America, during the period from 1862 to 1875, speak on this subject. We were passing through a financial crisis. Our most difficult problems were of a financial nature. Financial questions received, during that period, unusual attention. Discussions on the subject were always warm, sometimes not free from acrimony. It was not uncommon to occupy days over questions of appropriation, and break up without more than a passing reference to the churches' spiritual necessities. Those were not the most prosperous days. In later times, imitating the notable example of English Methodism, our District Meetings have become seasons of review and prospective arrangement, quite as much, if not more, for the spiritual as for the secular wants of the church. God honoured our solicitude and crowned our plans with prosperity. We have once more become accustomed to reports of large increase in membership, while our financial economy is sure to gather strength with the advancing cause. In fact, all the members of our body have been in general and healthful exercise, obeying the imperative laws of being, and we find corresponding development everywhere.

We invite the attention of Chairmen of Districts to these considerations. Let not any pressure crowd out of our annual meetings the question of "The spiritual state." The year should begin with a council of anticipation, the official laity assisting in forming practical plans for a year's systematic and diligent work. When finance has been disposed of, turn to the other and more important feature of our work. At the moment it may not be apparent that there is any gain in conversation, in suggestion or contrivance. But great results often grow out of little causes. In all religious history it may be noticed that God honors determination. He has himself enjoined upon His people that their purposes shall take definite shape and be placed upon record. "Vow and pay unto the Lord." Resolutions are so common in Methodism that patience may some times be exhausted by them. But much of good, honest life, and of great moral conquest, is the result of that reflection which ends in the form of a sacred vow or purpose. Time and thought are never lost in the consideration of "The Spiritual State."
May our purposes this year be such to find record on high!

THE B. A. BOOK AND TRACT SOCIETY AND THE NOVA SCOTIA CONFERENCE.

The *Presbyterian Witness* does not wish to revive the controversy on this subject. It simply asserts that the Conference has made charges which it cannot prove, has taken action which cannot be defended. The Secretary of the Conference has written a letter to the *Halifax Chronicle*, with the endorsement of the President: and the *Witness* intimates that the letter is "childish" and the Secretary has been "tempted," to a course unbecoming a christian gentleman, or something to that effect.

Our cotemporary knows something of the force of language, and no doubt has foreseen what those expressions are likely to imply when read by the public. The Society is immaculate, while the Conference is—well, we shall leave the construction of the language used by the *Witness* to its readers, and beg them to put the most charitable meaning possible on those sentences. We ask them however, to bear in mind that the Nova Scotia Conference numbers 100 christian ministers.

If the Conference have uttered unwarrantable expressions in regard to the Tract Society, it surely has its punishment in the opinions which that society now employs through its organ. How matters are to rest at this stage, it would be difficult to conjecture.

We forbear writing at any greater length at present, as we understand the Tract Society has appointed a Committee, to meet a Committee of the Conference to be nominated by the President, which it is to be hoped may lead to a settlement of the difficulty.

CORRESPONDENCE.

NOVA SCOTIA MINUTES OF CONFERENCE.

Correction.
MR. EDITOR.—Will you please publish in the *Wesleyan* the following names of subscribers to the Missionary Society, which I regret to find have been omitted in the lists published in the Minutes of Conference.

	Yours, &c.,
August 21.	S. F. HUESTIS.
	HORTON CIRCUIT.
	HORTON.
Coffin, Rev J S and family.....	\$ 5 00
	WOLFVILLE.
DeWolfe, A D.....	6 00
Elder, James.....	1 00
Kennedy, Prof.....	5 00
Tobias, Mrs A C.....	5 00
	HAMILTON CIRCUIT, (Bermuda).
	SOMERSET.
Swan, Thurston.....	0 2 0
	CANSO CIRCUIT.
	RAYFIELD.
Randall, J F and family.....	5 00
	SYDNEY CIRCUIT.
	SYDNEY.
Burchell, Mrs Geo E.....	2 00
	ANNAPOLIS CIRCUIT.
	CLEMENTSPORT.
Potter, Isaac.....	1

DERBY, N. B.—Just now I am very busy in connection with the parsonage. The bazaar for which the ladies of the congregation have been working for the last eight months, came off on Wednesday, the 8th. The day was unfortunate so far as the weather was concerned, for rained heavily and unceasingly, from the early morning till late at night, nevertheless we took \$220. What country place of the same size, under the same circumstances, and without help from outside themselves, can beat that? We continued the bazaar for two days longer, but the weather on the second of these two was worse than ever. Still our total receipts were a little more than \$400. All honor and credit is due to the ladies who worked so long and perseveringly that the bazaar might be a success; but *notably* to Mrs. Wilson and Misses Letitia and Mary Wilson, without whose co-operation we should hardly have entered upon the enterprise at all. The work of building will now go on apace.

Yours,
A. R. B. SHREWSBURY.
Derby, August 13, 1877.

DEAR MR. EDITOR.—Sabbath was to us a day of rich blessings. Rev. Alex. S. Tuttle, of Aylesford, being on a visit to friends preached for us in the morning an earnest, comforting sermon. Rev. A. W. McLeod, D. D., whose health is improving addressed the communicants as we approached the table of the Lord. It was a time of holy joy. In the evening we enjoyed a meeting for the promotion of holiness. Again Dr. McLeod was able to speak as well as Bro. Tuttle and others. Many pledged themselves to seek the sanctifying grace of God, to whom now they surrendered without reserve.

Respectfully,
T. D. HART.
Fugwash, August 20th, 1877.

REV. H. SPRAGUE, A. M. AND HIS MISSION BEFORE THE BRITISH CONFERENCE.

(From London Watchman.)

Friday, August 3. The Conference resumed at half-past nine this morning.

Mr. T. M. Albrighton then read the report of the committee appointed to consider an appeal from the New Brunswick and Prince Edward's Island Conference, we cordially commend its Secretary, the Rev. Howard Sprague, M. A., to the sympathy and co-operation of the superintendents of the respective circuits in this country.

Dr. Punshon, in seconding the resolution, referred to the unparalleled calamity which had overtaken that city, and to the distress and embarrassment of the people. He mentioned the case of some supernumerary ministers who had been completely burnt out of their homes, and cordially recommended the Rev. H. Sprague, the bearer of the appeal referred to, to the sympathy of our ministers and people.

The resolution was supported by the Ex President, who said he thought we ought to sympathize deeply with those who were suffering from such a calamity as this—through no fault of their own, but clearly through a visitation of Providence—and that our help in these circumstances would strengthen the bonds which bound us to our brethren across the sea. He hoped the Conference would adopt the resolution.

Mr. Arthur having indicated his support of the resolution, the Secretary of the Conference suggested that Mr. Sprague should address the Conference as soon as the Stationing Committee had retired, which was agreed to.

At 10.40 a.m. the Stationing Committee retired, and the chair of the Conference was taken by Dr. James.

The Rev. Howard Sprague, M. A., from St. John, then addressed the Conference in support of the appeal from his own Conference to this for help in rebuilding the chapels, ministers' houses, and other connexional property destroyed in the late terrible fire. He said: Mr. President, and honoured fathers and brethren, I cannot but regret that I have the privilege of speaking to you to-day. The hope of speaking upon the British Conference, even of seeing England, was one which until four weeks ago I had never entertained; and the circumstances to which I owe my presence here are so distressing, and the story which I have to repeat is so painful for me to tell, that I cannot but wish that the hope had never come to me at all. The twentieth day of June last was one which will be for ever memorable in the history of St. John. On that day our district was to meet about fifty miles from the city. All the preachers and supernumeraries had gone out by an early train. In the evening we heard that a terrible fire was raging in the city, that our homes were in danger, and that we had better return by the earliest opportunity. I reached the city at midnight to find that my house was gone, and my family no one knew where. For two hours I searched for my wife and children by the light of the burning town, and found them under circumstances in which, I trust in Providence I may never see them again. The fire which had thus destroyed our homes was the greatest calamity of the kind which had ever fallen on a city of the American continent. For, though the great fires in Boston and Chicago were actually more destructive, yet, relatively, they were not so ruinous. The Chicago "Daily Tribune" said, a few days after the fire, "Our friends of St. John are in sore trouble. A fire, more ruinous to their city than the great fire was to Chicago, because a far greater proportion of it is in ashes, has left thousands of them within sight of actual starvation." When I tell you that in a city of about 30,000 inhabitants, nearly 20,000 were in twelve hours thrown out of their homes, you will see that it was a calamity of no ordinary kind. (Hear, hear.) When I say that in that little city nearly 27,000,000 dollars' worth of property, or about £5,500,000 sterling, was consumed; and that, after all insurance is paid, over £4,000,000 will, by the most careful calculation that could be made before I left, be the absolute loss of the city, you will see that the disaster is appalling in its magnitude. (Hear, hear.) A calamity so great immediately attracted the attention of the world. Messages of sympathy and contributions for our help came to us with every flash of the wires and by the arrival of every train. The city of Halifax, nearly a day's ride from us by rail, but, in our land of magnificent distances, our nearest neighbour, was prompt and noble in her generosity, from the merchant who contributed \$800 to the little boy who had treasured up a dollar and a half and threw it into the fund. (Cheers.) Between St. John and Halifax there has always been a rivalry, perhaps not always generous; but, in our great tribulation, Halifax must have given us more than a dollar for every one of its inhabitants—for it has about 40,000 in its