

The Assembly Herald

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A. W. HALSEY, D.D., JOHN DIXON, D.D., WILLIAM H. SCOTT, Committee

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HOME MISSIONS

OCTOBER TOPIC—MORMONISM

The Octopus.

"Like a huge octopus, the Mormon hierarchy is fastening its tentacles throughout the Rocky Mountain States, and is sapping from its devotees the very life-blood of American freedom."—*Presbyterian Home Missions*, by Sherman H. Doyle, D.D., Ph.D.

So many inquiries have been made regarding "Dr. Thompson's Los Angeles address on Mormonism" that we give our readers that part of the Secretary's address at the General Assembly last Spring.

"I have spoken of the plains. At their end we come to the mountains—gigantic, obdurate, menacing. Knit and compacted by elemental fires, they long resisted the attack of civilization. They stand for some moral conditions that are among them in some of the States of the mountains—gigantic, obdurate, menacing.

"Have you read Victor Hugo's 'Toilers of the Sea?' Then you remember that awful portrayal of the man in the sea who encountered an octopus. Listen to it again:

"Its folds strangle. Its contact paralyzes. It is disease embodied in monstrosity. It is not to be torn away. It adheres closely to its prey. How? By a vacuum. The octopus on the chase hides. It contracts, condenses itself, reduces itself to the simplest possible ex-

pression. It confounds itself with the shadow. It looks like a ripple of the waves. It resembles everything except something living. The octopus is a hypocrite. When one pays no heed to it suddenly it opens—a glutinous mass possessed of a will. What more frightful! Glue filled with hatred! The octopus is vulnerable only in the head. There is a certain moment in which to seize it. It is the instant when it thrusts forward its head. He who misses at that juncture is lost."

"Awful description, but it describes Mormonism. It, too, strangles whatever it enfolds. It, too, is a vacuum—promises that have no substance back of them. It, too, resembles beautiful things—a shadow, a ripple on the wave. It, too, when you touch it is clammy with death. It, too, clings to what it fastens on—relentless, inexorable, glue filled with hatred of what is good! And it, too, has one vulnerable point—only one—its head is an organism of vitality and power. Its ultimate aim is hierarchical domination of the State, and that is not to be educated, civilized, reformed—but crushed! If we miss at that juncture we, too, are lost!

wards me. In all my life I have not been kept in so much patience and contentment with my condition as during this sickness, although so distressful. Such nearness of approach to him have I received from Christ, that I desire to be with him the whole time, especially at nights. All my pains are forgotten as I am busy in thoughts of his love, his grace, his atoning work, and his intercessions. Sometimes in my mind I am standing upon the shore of the foaming Jordan; and I ask, 'is it possible for me to cross this river, I so guilty a sinner and stained?' My answer I have received: 'Yes, there is a vessel that will safely carry you over.' All glory to the grace of Christ who is the vessel of my salvation.

To-day I place my whole will at the feet of Christ; whatever pleases him, I am content."

Our departed brother may be regarded as a high type of the purer, finer character which has developed among his people under the influence of an evangelical Christianity. His intelligence and his moral sense had received an uplift through much study of the Bible and the practical application of its teachings to private and social life. His spiritual sense was that of the new creature in Christ. I seem to see in him the personification, as it were, of the Gospel work accomplished among this Syriac speaking people; not a spotless product; but a triumph of divine grace over adverse conditions; an earnest of yet a nobler type of Christian life yet to be achieved here.

The Condition of the Armenians in Persia.

By Rev. S. G. Wilson, D. D., Tabriz.

At the beginning of modern missions hope was cherished that revived Oriental churches would be the means of spreading the truth through Moslem lands. The wide dispersion of Armenians in Persia would give them great opportunities to do this, if the Spirit and life of Christ were manifested through them. What is their condition and what is the prospect of their becoming propagators of the faith?

Materially the Armenians of Persia are prospering as never before. Their numbers have increased greatly both by a high birth rate and by immigration from Turkey. The style of their houses, their furniture and dress have undergone rapid change. Their adoption of foreign customs is hearty and wholesale. This is specially evident in the young women, who are discarding their *chudras* and headkerchiefs and studying the fashion plates for the latest styles of hats and dresses and walking unveiled and unabashed through the streets, in the gaze of the Moslems.

Intellectually, the Armenians show rapid development. They have commendable zeal in the establishment of schools both in cities and villages. In Tabriz both wards have schools

for boys and girls with kindergarten and dressmaking departments. On them they expend more annually than our total station appropriations. They are about to open a Central High School in a building costing \$20,000. The Ladies' Society is developing a system of common schools in the villages of the province. As an instance of this: one of our own teachers has lately been employed for a village where houses for the school and teacher are to be built and an endowment of \$5,000 provided by a Russian Armenian.

Morally, not so much change can be noted. The same dishonest and unscrupulous principles are professed and practiced in business as formerly with a shocking disregard for truth. On the other hand, the demoralization caused by the revolutionary movement has received a check. Sobriety is on the increase. An anti-Alcoholic Society is prospering. In it the missionaries are united with the Armenians and their Bishop is its honorary president. This temperance movement has had a marked effect in decreasing drunkenness, especially at weddings and festivals.

Religiously, there is among Armenians a prevalent indifference. Old rites and doc-



HAMADAN BOYS' SCHOOL—MOSTLY JEWS.

trines have lost their hold, the facts are rejected, forms are abandoned, church services unattended, and the priests despised. Infidelity through the influence of sceptical teachers is rampant among the young men. The bishops sometimes care as much for Tolstoi as for Christ, for politics as for religion, the priests serve for hire and the people are careless about it all.

The majority of thinking people are convinced of the propriety of reform in the Old Church, they acknowledge its departure from primitive Christianity; they declare Protestantism to be the most sensible and most scriptural form of religion—but they go on in their indifference and worldliness. The star of hope for Armenians is the mission school, where the Gospel is taught and the consciences of the pupils trained.

As for expecting the Oriental churches to be reformed and revived and to begin the evangelization of Moslems in this generation,

there are no signs of hope. This latter must be done, if at all, by direct work through missionary organizations. It is only among our Protestant brethren that we see any signs of interest in Moslem evangelization. During the past year, four or five Armenian evangelists with an equal number of Syrian (Nestorian) evangelists have been earnestly and successfully engaged in this work. The hope of Christ's kingdom in the East is in the Protestant Church, not in the corrupt and indifferent Oriental churches. The missionaries of the former generation were not mistaken when they separated from these spiritually dead organizations. And it was of Providential ordering that even when they were averse to separation as in almost every case they were, they were cast out with their evangelical sympathizers by the churches.

Protestantism may rejoice in its reputation for purity and truth, and God, we trust, has a great work before it in this land.