

Sceptics and the Bible.

The Rev. Henry T. Miller in his sermon, opening commencement week of the University of Rochester thus spoke:

Talk about Newfoundland fogs: Why, there are no such mists hanging over any coast as hang over the teachings of these skeptical philosophers. Take the writings of Huxley, and Spencer, and Comte, and what have you? Fog, fog, from first to last. The very plainest truths held off the distance of an arm's length cannot possibly be seen through their thick air. Comte wished to describe the god he believed in, and listen to the words. Here he is:

"The continuous resultant of all the forces capable of voluntary concurring in the universal perfecting of the world." I am sure we shall all know that being the very next time we meet him. Down on your knees that you may worship him! But I say no. Nothing of such sacrilege as this. Rather up from your knees, and down again that you may worship the God of the Bible. Oh how tired I am of this everlasting talk about a philosophy that is going to hound the Almighty out of the universe. One would think from their pretensions that these skeptics were the makers and owners of the world and that God is but a vagabond tenant suffered to have a place in it only by their exceeding forbearance. Away with their teachings. You must not be caught by them. From first to last they are only snares. Never did fowler in fields of Palestine spread his net more slyly for sparrows and larks than these skeptics of our day are spreading their infidelity to catch your feet and mine. Be careful where you step. That book you are reading may curse you with everlasting doubt. That magazine you are taking may be the flight of a pestilence on the wings of the months. Those lectures you are hearing may damn your soul forever. Be careful! Don't take any risks. I tell you no greater compliment can be given a young man than to say he has the Word of God abiding in him. No knowledge like this the world through. It is better than Shakespeare, better than Dickens, better than John Habberton, better than all other books you can bring—the Word of God.

You wonder at this enthusiasm? O, yes, I am always enthusiastic when talking about the Bible, and hear the reason. It is all because it is the Word of God. Had you written it I should not be so stirred. Had Pliny or Josephus written it I should not be so awakened. But when I remember that the Lord God Almighty wrote it on stone, on vellum, on papyrus stock, then I am fired through and through that I can hold such a volume in my hand! Shall I tell you what I think of those who are attacking God's word? I think they are mean. I think they are playing the swine. You never saw an oak but was rooted against to be overthrown by the very swine that ate of its acorns, and that is the very doing of these persons. Voltaire, I care nothing about his genius; it is enough for me that he hated the Bible. Bolingbroke, I care nothing about his polish; it is enough for me that he ridiculed this blessed word. Robert Ingersoll, I care nothing about his eloquence; it is enough for me, and should be enough for you, that with low blasphemy he blackens these white pages.

Yonder west, southwest off the isle of Mull stands the Skerryvore lighthouse. Great need that it should be built, for in forty years forty ships have gone to pieces on the hungry shore. Commencing the work it was only by almost superhuman effort that a foothold could be gained on the rock. With a force of three tons to the foot the waves hammered on the reef, and only after six years of battling was the structure run up. Here comes a vessel making for the harbor. It is midnight, and the wind is blowing right on shore with sweep of hurricane. "Up," you say, "with wicks the highest and set the lanterns to revolving." But I slip a hammer into my pocket; I slyly creep up the winding stairs; I break the glass, and filling lungs the fullest, blow out the light. What do you think of me? You think me a wretch; you think me a villain. Yes, and so do I. I think that man a wretch, and that man a villain who in any way touches this Word of God.

Why what is this world? Only a great ship, loaded with thirteen hundred millions of passengers, through storm and rock and midnight trying to make harbor of heaven. That we may know where to steer, God has set off from shore this light of his truth. Most brightly does it shine, and that person, I care not what his name, I care not what his gifts, who tries to blow out this light does a thing so contemptible that for him I have no respect. Did Hume,

or Paine, or Ingersoll only go up the winding stair to set a better lamp in the tower, they should have my praise; but when their whole doing is only to tear down and to blow out, I brand them as monsters to be execrated.

O, you want to cling to this book! Never let it go. What did your aged father believe in to the very last? You say, this Bible. What did your sainted mother believe in until the day she went up to glory? You say, the Bible. Very well; a book that was good enough for them to live and die by, is good enough for you to live and die by, world without end. I beseech you to cling to it. In no other way can you get the victory. Who was it that conquered at Waterloo? You say, Wellington; I say, Blucher. Had not the great Prussian general swept on them, just as the clock was striking five that afternoon, Wellington would have been whirled in utter route from the field, a defeated man. Blucher saved him. The Bible is the Blucher God sent to save you.

A Child of God.

A man may be in the household, and yet occupy different positions. For example: a man may be a servant, a guest—or, listen, a child.

Pray, sir, whose child? God's. And as Christ Jesus said, I, too, would reverently take his language and send it broadcast to-night, "The Son abideth ever." You can never break relationship, "born of incorruptible seed." The lineaments of his eternal strength and beauty are indelibly marked upon his children.

The Scripture makes known to us two thoughts concerning children. The mistaken one of the "adoption of children" should not be in the New Testament. God does nothing of the kind. I do not understand how God could adopt a sinner. But I can understand his passing sentence of death upon the sinner, and recreating the man. Not by reformation, but by death, we pass into the life of the Son of God. God never mixes up the old with the new. We are "begotten of God." Our life as Christians is as far superior to anything that Adam knew before the fall as Christ is superior to Adam.

If you tell me what God designed when he gave his precious Son a human body; if you tell me what was in God's great heart when he designed to give us a new fountain of life—not in Adam, but in Christ—then I will tell you what it is to be a son of God. But I am free to say, I cannot tell. John himself says, "It doth not yet appear what we shall be." The truth is, we are waiting until God himself shall be the exponent. John touches the thought of moral beauty when he says, "We shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is"—like him who is "the brightness of the Father's glory, and the express image of his person."

Refer to Phil. iii., the last two verses: "For our conversation is in heaven," etc. The word "conversation" should be "citizenship." "The Lord Jesus shall change our vile (humiliated) body." Exceedingly humiliating it is to have a body sold under sin. Man defiles almost everything he comes in contact with. But this vileness of the body in its present condition passes away; for the Lord Jesus Christ "shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body," etc. Such is the prospect for the child of God who now feels the body in which he lives to be a cumbersome, irksome thing, causing him to groan. The body, from a sense of oppressive weariness, often calls out for sleep when we would have the energies of the mind to the front, and infirmities press us down, until the inner man is almost paralyzed. The body is not a helper of spiritual life, which is seen here always at a disadvantage. I pray you be charitable towards one another. Spiritual life was not primarily designed for an earthly platform. The factory where a musical instrument is being made is not the orchestra to judge of the music. You must wait till the article is complete. You must wait till the believer is perfected, and the glory reached; it will be well then.

Now turn to Rev. i. 12. I merely read the description that John gives of the body of Christ, and I ask you to remember that it is unto the likeness of that body that you and I are to be formed—the "body of his glory." Figurative language, you say; yes, but the great fact is behind the figure. Mark the appearance was "as the sun that shineth in his strength." That is the condition awaiting the children of God.—Rev. Henry Varley.

For the Visitor. South Indian Missionary Conference.

II.

CANADA, JULY 11, 1879.

In my letter of the 27th ult. I gave a brief outline of the proceedings of the Conference as far as the close of the third day's sitting. On Saturday, June 14, papers were read on the subject of "Sunday Schools and Bible Classes," (1) among Europeans and Asians, (2) among native Christians, (3) among Hindus. The second part of this subject elicited the most discussion, and the opinion that seemed to me to be most generally held was that it was well to have the adult Christians as well as their children assembled in the Sunday School to study God's word. Most of the older Christians need this help to secure a knowledge of the Bible as much as the younger do. Bishop Sargent told about some schools among the Tinnevely Christians of the C. M. S. He said that after a service in one of the churches, the greater part of the congregation remained answer soon at work, divided up into a number of classes.

On the same day a paper was read which gave some account of the Industrial Institutions connected with the Basle Mission on the west coast. After this the subject of "Medical Missions" was taken up. Dr. Chester read a paper, in which he spoke very highly of such work, as it afforded so many opportunities for recommending the religion of Christ to the people. Several others testified to the good they had been able to effect through their knowledge of the healing art.

On Monday, 16th, several questions in regard to the work and position of "The Native Churches" were discussed. Papers were read (1) on the advance that had been made during the last few years and the best means for promoting progress in self-support, etc. One of the papers allusion was made to the great number of chapels that have been built by native Christians for themselves; this was mentioned as a sign of healthy growth.

(2) The second question in regard to the Native Churches was about caste, and the importance of keeping it out of the church entirely. Some years ago there was considerable discussion in the papers as to whether caste was a religious or social distinction. At the Conference it was universally admitted to be a distinction founded on the Hindu religion. Many of us wear a tail like the Chinese queue. This is called the "koodoomi." There was quite a discussion as to whether the "koodoomi" should be cut off before baptism or not; and the general opinion seemed to be that it should be cut off, as it is a mark of heathenism.

On Tuesday, 17th, one or two papers were read on the present numbers and condition of the Mohammedan population of Southern India. From these papers and remarks that were afterwards made in the discussion, it appeared that there is a large field of usefulness among the Mohammedans, but that a knowledge of Hindustani is necessary for successful work among them. It also appeared that as a rule they are slow to receive Christ.

The subject next considered was that of "The Native Ministry." This embraced (1) The training of native agents; (2) The relation which ordained native ministers should hold to missionaries; and (3) On what principles native ministers should be paid, as long as they need foreign aid. In regard to the first question, many thought that a good training in the Bible and in their own language was the most necessary thing for native workers. A knowledge of English was considered by some desirable, as opening up to the native minister a wide range of Biblical literature.

A native brother read a paper on the second question, in which he protested very strongly against old and experienced native pastors being ordered about by young missionaries just arrived in the country. Many of the native brethren present replied to this remark by assuring the conference of the happy relations they sustained to the missionaries under whom they labored.

In regard to the salaries of native workers when paid by a Foreign Society, it was felt that sufficient for a comfortable support should be given, but it was not well to give more than native churches might be expected to give when supporting their own pastors.

Wednesday, 18th, was the last day of the Conference. Papers were read on the subject of "Christian Literature," and also on work among Europeans and Eurasians. Mr. Miller, of the Free Church College, in Madras, made the closing ad-

dress. He considered the Conference a success in that it had showed the great unanimity which prevails among missionaries of all bodies in regard to many important questions affecting Mission work in South India.

This was, indeed, a result worth all the expense and trouble incurred by those who attended the Conference, and to this might well be added the sharpening up we all received by meeting and conversing with workers from all parts of the Madras Presidency. I think that no one who was present at the Conference wished he had stayed away. I am sure at least of one who is thankful he was there, and that one is

JOHN CRAIG.

For the Visitor.

Notes by the Way.

The heart of North River Settlement is distant from Petitcodiac seven miles. This is a prosperous agricultural village. Hay, potatoes, and grain are growing finely there this season. Wheat promises an abundant yield. In this place we have a small Baptist church, which for years has been a power for good. At present it enjoys the ministrations of Pastor J. H. Hughes. It was my privilege during my stay at Petitcodiac to meet with these dear brethren, a number of whom I baptized, in their monthly conference. It was a season of great joy to my heart. On Sabbath Bro. Hughes preached twice. The precious gospel was "a feast of fat things." From my heart I thank God for the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Again on board the train, we dash along. On arriving at the pretty and populous village of Sussex, we step off the train, and are warmly greeted by Pastor Corey, and his estimable wife. Being cordially invited, we spent a few days with our dear brother and his happy family. It was to me a happy reunion, for in the past we passed in and out of each other's fields of labor, enjoying true gospel fellowship. On each successive day during my very happy visit, Bro. C. brought a carriage to his door, and invited me to drive with him on his pastoral visits. These drives were healthful and cheering. There is perhaps no finer road for a rapid and pleasant drive, in any section of our Dominion, than that which lies through this garden of our Province.

Just now Sussex Vale is in its prime. As we proceed mile after mile, on the right and on the left, are seen broad and thoroughly cultivated farms, level as a floor, and rich as the Western prairie. Among the pleasant drives with which I was favored, was one up Williams Street leading to Ward's Creek, to the top of Prospect Hill. Here on the right are Gen. Williams' residence and grounds. This mansion is spacious and imposing. These grounds, in the hands of skillful gardener, could be made very beautiful. On our left and at our feet lies a broad meadow, now awaiting the mower's scythe. Out of this alluvial soil grows the proud majestic elm, which raise its head into the clouds, and stretch forth their arms as if to invite a conflict with the thunder and the lightning.

Away to the North as far as the eye can reach, are seen the wooded hills of Corn Ridge and Smyth's Creek, making a beautiful background to a very pretty picture.

In view are the spires of churches, belonging to six different sections of the so-called Christian Church. O Christianity, thou fountain of life! how greatly thou art slandered by being made to bear the name and reproach of so many who refuse to wear thy lowly badge. Among these different denominations and their ministers, there is much co-operative work, and among all there are cordial greetings.

Pastor Corey is settled among a kind and appreciative people. His church loves him for his work's sake, and they ought to, for he is devoted and pains-taking. It is my prayer that he and his church, through the daily sacrifice of prayer and praise, and the divine blessing upon the faithful preaching of the gospel, may see the salvation and glory of God, as witnessed in the additions of the saved.

The time has now come when I must leave Sussex, with all its attractions, its healthy climate, and the kind friends whose acquaintance it was my privilege to make. I hope they will receive my thanks for their kindness. Good bye, Bro. Corey and family; we shall meet again.

I am off for Bloomfield to farther recuperate at the home of my sister and her kind husband. Here I am delighted to meet with the pastor of the Norton church, and also Bro. I. Wallace, our general mis-

siary agent, who preached on the Sabbath I rejoiced to hear him preach the word.

The Norton church is on the eve of being destitute of pastoral oversight. The present pastor has decided to leave his charge, in a few weeks, so we were informed. Hampton will also be destitute. These are important interests, and should not be neglected. Hampton, is so situated as to be a grand centre from which to radiate the gospel light and life. It is growing in commercial, manufacturing, and religious importance every day.

Homeward bound! I return with health much improved. There is no place like home.

J. M. CURREY.

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