

Correspondence.

INFIDELITY A REFUGE FROM DIS-QUIETING TRUTH.

In the recently published life of Theodore Parker, we find him in one of his letters making the following admission: "At one time the Bible rested on me like a nightmare; I could not bear it, nor get rid of it."

This is a very significant confession. Does it not throw light on the scope of that peculiar theology which its author put forth? There is nothing strange or surprising in that repugnance with which he admits that he had once regarded the Bible. Thousands and tens of thousands might adopt his very words. The carnal mind is enmity against God, and it revolts against the claims which are necessitated by His existence and holiness. It finds the Bible articulating these claims with distinctness and authority, and with the blinded instinct of malice endeavors to silence the "still small voice" in which they were uttered. Indifference toward it is thenceforth impossible. The justice of its claims must be conceded or denied. One must find peace and a refuge in that submissive faith which casts itself with trembling hope at the foot of the cross, or begin a life-long conflict with those truths which enforce upon the soul the obligations of a sinner in the sight of God.

This is the inevitable alternative. Here is the point at which the paths of the soul's spiritual destiny diverge. The choice here made marks the crisis of the soul's experience. Let that choice be the right one, and the conflict is forever at an end. The terrors of Sinai are lost in the glories of Calvary. "Mercy and truth are not together." The old antipathies of the soul give place to that lowly submission and loving obedience in the exercise of which it exclaims, "O how love I thy law!" Not a single feature of the divine justice is marred or erased. Not a single claim of the law to a perfect obedience is abated or set aside. And yet that which was unspeakably terrible once, becomes gloriously attractive now. The soul delights in God, and makes his word "the man of its counsel." It rebukes itself for its former enmity. It wonders at that hardness of heart which it once evinced. Henceforth it is in harmony with God, with his works, his providence and his grace.

What a stereotyped experience this has become in the history of the church! Paul once felt toward the Gospel of Christ all the aversion of a bitter and unrelenting persecutor. Shepard, of Cambridge, tells us of the agonies of conviction through which he had to pass before he could submit to accept "the truth as it is in Jesus," and every reader of his "Parable of the Virgins" feels that he had himself trod the paths which he charts out with such clearness and distinctness. Bunyan's "Grace abounding to the chief of sinners," reveals to us his agonizing sense of the crushing weight of Bible truth, and sometimes seems merely to expand, to a more full expression, the confession wrung from the pen of Theodore Parker.

Here was the point where the two men might have stood side by side, united in common experience and sympathies. But here also their paths began to diverge. The same problem was to be solved by both, but they attempted it by diverse methods. Bunyan accepted the truth that disquieted him, and sought peace by the blood of the cross. Theodore Parker revolted at doctrines which humbled man and glorified, even in the exercise of redeeming mercy, the fearful holiness of God. He too must have peace, but it must be a peace secured by putting aside what disquieted him, by essaying to refute doctrines which denied him repose. His choice is made, and thenceforth, fashioning for himself an "absolute religion" sifted of nearly all that excites the terror of the sinner and the rapture of the saint, he labors to put it into reasonable shape, and commend it, by all his acts, to the acceptance of others. The Bible must be interpreted or reduced to such a shape that he can "bear it or get rid of it."

How far he was successful it is not for us to say. We know not whether doubts and fears intruded to the last beneath that veil of calm assurance with which he propounded his theories. But there must have been at some time sharp if not protracted struggles. The "nightmare" of that conviction which every intelligent mind feels in reading the law of God and the terms of the sinner's salvation, is not easily thrown off. The giant Enceladus under burning Etna seems but a parable of the agonized spirit under the terrors of Sinai. But when the purpose to evade the claims of duty is fully formed, the skill of man will contrive methods for executing it, which often meet with temporary success. Some rush to scenes of amuse-

ment to escape from thought. Some bond over the chess-board to render themselves oblivious to the game—so graphically sketched by Retsch—of Satan's playing with man for his soul. But it is the same impulse also which urges a man to attempt to undermine the Gospel system, and render the terrors of the law null and void. In this attempt, different methods may be pursued, but in nearly all we may trace the venom of conscious antipathy to the claims which God makes upon the penitence and humility of the soul.

In the case of nearly all the forms of modern infidelity we feel that there is ground for more than surmise, that—as the language of Theodore Parker would seem to intimate in connection with his own course—the wish has been father to the thought. An intelligent mind, averse to the spiritual claims and duties of the Bible impelled toward some phase of infidelity, and that phase depends largely upon the structure and training of the mind itself, or the circumstances in which it is placed. One may give the preference to "the Absolute Religion," or he may drift toward the coarser and more vulgar infidelity of Tom Paine. He may find rest in the crude romance by which Benian caricatures the noblest life that was ever lived on earth, or he may, with Herbert Spencer philosophize God into the regions of the "unknowable," but all these diverse paths, however they may cross one another, tend to the same goal—either to be able to bear the Bible or to get rid of it.

THE BETHESDA HOME.

It is an interesting fact, perhaps not generally known, that there is in the neighborhood of this city, Chestnut Hill, an institution on the principle of Muller's Asylum in England, as exhibited in "The Life of Trust." We take a few extracts from a Report kindly handed us, published in January, 1862:

In 1854, three years after her conversion, Annie Clement was appointed to take charge of a class connected with a missionary church in Eleventh street, in the southern part of Philadelphia. The duties of this work called her to visit families at their homes, and she was thus brought in contact with much destitution and distress, which most abound in this section of the city. Her means were freely distributed to lighten the miseries of the poor, but she labored and prayed chiefly for the salvation of their souls. She found how much deception was practiced upon the benevolent; how money, clothing, and even food were frequently exchanged for intoxicating liquors. Many would rather beg than work, and would use their children as means to rouse the sympathies of the humane; and then squander what was given for relief, for that which only rendered their misery more miserable, and sunk them deeper in poverty and degradation. The care of children was laid as a burden upon her heart, and she felt the necessity of a house where they might be separated from such degrading influences, and trained to a religious life. Bearing this burden continually in her prayers, she soon felt assured that, sooner or later, God would provide her such a place; but when, or where, or how, she could not tell. She also conceived the idea that a House of Industry could be carried on in such a manner as greatly to improve the condition of those old enough and able to work; that many young girls might be saved from degradation and shame, and trained to lead industrious and virtuous lives, if separated from evil influences, cared for and brought into a cheerful and religious home, where they could be taught to work, and their labor so systematized as to insure profitable returns for their industry; that women with drunken husbands, who sat nursing their children in rags and dirt, could be persuaded to leave off their begging, and come into such a house, where they could learn to earn a living and keep themselves decent.

At this time, the Holy Spirit was preparing her heart for a life of faith, which should receive temporal things from the hand of God, as directly as spiritual necessities are supplied. One text was so strongly and constantly impressed on her mind that she firmly believed some time she would be compelled to render a liberal obedience. It was, "Sell that ye have, and give alms," and almost without a struggle her heart said "Amen!"

In the autumn of 1859 she took rooms in the building at the corner of Thirtieth and Ellsworth streets, and resolved never to ask help from any human being, nor make wants known to any save God. The Report says: "Many mothers with young children seemed peculiar objects of pity and sympathy. Some of these were taken to the Home, under the impression that there was an institution for infants established in the city, to which the children could be sent when their mothers found places to work out. But, upon inquiry, this proved to be a Children's Hospital, unavailable to any but the sick, and it was ascertained that there was no provision made for children under three years of age. The ladies in charge of the Home regarded these circumstances in which they were now placed as indicating the path which Providence had assigned them, and immediately devoted themselves to the care of young children."

We give an item reminding us of Mr. Muller's narrative: "January 24th. This morning our

closets and purses were empty. We ate our breakfast, not knowing where dinner was to come from, and a sick person of delicate appetite must be provided for. A severe storm was raging, and few persons would like to venture out on such a day. At ten o'clock A. M. a carriage stopped at the door, and a delicate female came in, bringing a large basket of all kinds of provisions, needed for our dinner, and leaving ten dollars. She said she had been so impressed to bring these things this morning that she could not rest. Her brother-in-law had thought it too stormy for the horses to go out, and she had determined to come in the cars, when he concluded to send the carriage."

The Home was removed about two years since to Chestnut Hill, and not long after a large and commodious house, originally erected for a race-groom hotel, was offered to the managers free of rent. The offer was accepted. The institution receives orphans and aged people who are dependent. It is in successful operation, under the care of Miss Clement, a Methodist, Miss Lawton, a Presbyterian, and Mrs. Valentine, a Quakeress. The Report closes with these words:

"And thus God raises up in one place, and another testimonies of His power and the truth of His word, that they who trust in Him shall never be confounded. Francke's Mission House in Germany, the Orphan House of George Muller in England, the Bethesda Home here in Philadelphia, all witness to the power of faith, that those who believe will not be left without excuse. God will vindicate the truth of His word, and whatsoever we ask, we receive of Him, because we keep His commandments, and do those things that are pleasing in His sight." (1 John iii. 22.)

LETTER FROM INDIA.

MY DEAR BROTHER MEARS.—In my last I gave you some account of the murder of our dear brother Janvier. Thinking you will be interested in seeing how justice is meted out to his cruel murderer, I send you Commissioner Lake's summing up and sentence in the case, which has been confirmed by the higher authorities.

I send also the translation of a letter from the priests, which they sent to the Deputy Commissioner of Amritsar with a hundred rupees for Mr. Janvier's children. The letter does the priests credit, and bears distinctly on the wrong opinion of some officials that the natives in general hate the missionaries because they teach Christianity. No doubt some do, but the great majority of them respect a man's religious convictions, and respect him all the more if he acts up to his convictions.

To this cruel murder of Brother Janvier must so soon be added that of Brother Loewenthal, at Peshawur, of which you will have heard before this reaches you. There is some ground to hope his servant shot him accidentally; but thus far the circumstances give occasion to suspect malice premeditated. These two able and devoted brethren are a great loss to our mission work and the O. S. Presbyterian Board. But neither of these cases can be regarded as any evidence of general hostility to missionaries or their teachings. It is possible the recent violent attack upon Brother Bunnell, of the Madura Mission, may be traced to such hostility, but not so either of these.

You are aware that our Christian converts embrace in their number one of our native princes, viz: His Highness, the Maharaja Dhuleepsingh. He has made his home in England for some years, but has recently visited Bombay, and left a very pleasant impression of his Christian character. A spiritual-minded man like the Rev. George Bowen speaks of having conversed with him much on the higher spiritualities of our holy faith, and with great satisfaction in view of his attainments in the divine life and knowledge. While in Bombay the Maharaja gave an entertainment to his native Christian brethren, of which I enclose a brief notice.

Last year I gave you some account of the unhappy decision of Sir M. Wells in the case of the young convert Hem Nath Bose, forcing him back into the power and control of his heathen father. A similar case has just been decided in Bombay by Sir Joseph Arnould. The young convert was of just the same age, but Sir Joseph Arnould accorded to him the age of discretion, entitling him to choose his own faith and place of residence. This decision is directly opposed to that of Sir M. Wells, but who can doubt that justice and humanity, as well as true piety, are on the side of Sir J. Arnould's decision?

Such are a few of the lights and shades of our missionary work in this dark land. Our work is hard; often are we quite disheartened. Government often fails to adopt measures and use its influence as we think it should. We know that our lives are constantly exposed to the malice of some daring, revengeful native; and sometimes our spirits are oppressed with an apprehension that dear friends far away in our native land are feeling less interest and

praying less for our dear mission and these perishing idolaters for whom we labor. But, may God strengthen us for our work, and help us ever to feel that it is ours to follow our Divine Leader even to the cross.

In haste and Christian affection, yours sincerely, R. G. WILDER. KOLAPOOR, India, May 20, 1864.

THE MURDER OF MR. JANVIER.

(Lahore Chronicle, May 7.)

The Crown vs. Bhag Singh, son of Runjeet Singh.—The crime with which the prisoner stands charged was committed at Anandpore, a town in the Hoshiarpore district, founded by Guroo Govind Singh the tenth and last Guroo of the Sikhs, under whose teaching the Sikhs, from harmless devotees, became a martial race. As he himself said to his followers—"Hitherto you have been Sikhs (disciples), henceforth you are to be Singh (lions)." This connection of the town with their warlike Guroo has made Anandpore a place of great fame among the Sikhs, and it contains several Sikh temples to which pilgrimages are made. The chief assemblage of people, however, takes place at the Hoolle festival. It was at the time that this festival was celebrated in March 1864, that the deceased, Mr. Janvier, and his brother missionary, the Rev. Mr. Coxleton, came to Anandpore in order to preach the gospel to the large concourse who were assembled there. They selected, however, a retired spot for their work, and it is shown in evidence that no altercation took place during the fair between the missionaries and the people. Indeed, the prisoner himself admits that he killed the deceased, not because he was a Missionary, but because he was a European. From the confession of the prisoner, and the evidence adduced, it appears that the fair was over, and on the 24th of March the concluding ceremony had been performed, which consisted in bringing out in procession all the flags in the different Sikh temples and doing worship to them. The missionaries had retired to their tents, and about 8 P. M., Mr. Janvier came outside to give some orders regarding his march the following day, when suddenly the prisoner Bhag Singh appeared, and struck him two severe blows, one on the top of the head and the other just above the right eye. Mr. Janvier did not utter a word afterwards, and remained insensible until he breathed his last the following morning before day-light. The medical evidence shows that the injury above the right eye was of such a nature that death must have ensued. The club used by the prisoner is about two feet long, and weighs nearly three pounds. The prisoner admits that he came from a Sikh temple some four hundred yards distant with the deliberate intention of killing a European, and the only motive he assigns for this act, is, that he was once struck with a whip across the face by some European Officer for not saluting him. Although this doubtless weighed with him, the ceremonies in which he had taken part that day were calculated to rouse the spirit of fanaticism; for the procession of flags referred to above, serves to remind the Sikhs of the martial triumphs of their last Guroo and of his followers; apart from this the prisoner Bhag Singh belongs to a sect of Sikh Faqueers known as Akalies (Immortals) or Nehungs, who, under the Sikh rule, enjoyed immunity from all law and authority, and who are much addicted to the use of intoxicating drugs.

The evidence adduced shows that the prisoner was caught by Kurroom Buxsh as he was running away after the commission of this act, of which there were two eye-witnesses, Gulab and Dulloo. He had just before thrown his club away, and this was found close to the place where he was apprehended. The evidence adduced, and the confession of the prisoner, clearly establish his guilt; the Court concurring with the assessors, finds that Bhag Singh has committed the offence of murder, and has thereby committed an offence punishable under Section 302 of the Indian Penal Code, and the Court directs that the said Bhag Singh (subject to the confirmation of superior authority,) shall be hanged by the neck till he is dead.

EDWARD LAKE, Commr. and Supdt. Hoshiarpore, 23d April, 1864.

I direct the Deputy Commissioner of Hoshiarpore to give a reward of fifty rupees to Kurroom Buxsh, in addition to the twenty rupees received from the Police, for capturing the murderer Bhag Singh. The evidence shows that if Kurroom Buxsh had not followed him up so promptly, the prisoner Bhag Singh would have got mixed up in the crowd, when it would have been very difficult to have apprehended him.

The Rev. Mr. Woodside, who attended the trial of Mr. Janvier, and the Society with whom the deceased was associated, having expressed a wish to receive the club with which the fatal blow was struck, his request was granted and the club made over to him.

EDWARD LAKE, Hoshiarpore, 23d April, 1864.

The India paper from which the above is clipped, adds the following account of the remarkable action of priests and heathen functionaries in behalf of the murdered missionary's family: "With reference to the above, we may mention that some days ago a paper in Goomukhiee was handed to Deputy Commissioner of Amritsar, by a deputation from the Priests, Nibangs, and Akalis, connected with the Great Temple there, with a contribution of 100 rupees, of which the following is a translation: "We have heard the circumstances of the death of the heroic Missionary gentleman who fell by the hand of a reckless Akali at the venereal town of Anandpore. We are all extremely grieved at this mournful event. The Mis-

sionary gentleman was possessed of affable manners and an excellent disposition. He was killed by the hand of an unworthy person. Being grieved at this untoward occurrence, we all remember it with great sorrow. The gentleman's children, in consequence of his death, must have been brought into great distress. Therefore, by way of assisting the children of the heroic gentleman, deceased, we give 100 rupees out of our own pockets, and with sincerity of heart we pray our venerated Guru, that, besides the punishment the murderer receives from the Government of the country, he may receive additional punishment, as the reward of his deeds, from the Venerated Guru."—Lahore Chronicle, May 7.

THOMAS CHALMERS.

THE APOSTLE OF CITY MISSIONS. II.

Fully to appreciate the Christian devotion of Dr. Chalmers in the work to which he gave the best energies of his life, we should remember what brilliant opportunities he had of distinction and of usefulness in other and far different spheres of effort, which good men more affected than he by worldly considerations would have found eminently congenial to their tastes, and certainly useful enough to satisfy their consciences. But Chalmers was ambitious for a far higher degree of usefulness than he could attain by his power of eloquence alone, mighty though that was. He aspired to immediate and vast achievements of the most practical and personal character. He aimed to realize the marvellous reformatory power of the Gospel, in the lowest and most needy classes of population. It was not enough for him to sway listening thousands with the charm of his oratory; to hold the nobility, the magistrates and the senators of Great Britain, and the masters of her parliamentary eloquence, enchained by his commanding powers of speech; or even to melt the opposition of hardened sinners by the overpowering tenderness of his appeals. It was not enough that the first critics of the day laid down their pens, and joined in the general applause of his eloquence; that Mr. Lockhart, of the Quarterly Review said: "Most unquestionably I have never heard, either in England or Scotland, or in any country, any preacher whose eloquence is capable of producing an effect as strong and irresistible as his;" or that Lord Jeffrey should say: "It reminds me more of what one reads of the effect of the eloquence of Demosthenes, than anything I ever heard;" or that Wilberforce should write: "All the world wild about Dr. Chalmers;" or that Canning, himself among the most eloquent of British statesmen, should be greatly affected, at times even to tears, by Dr. Chalmers' discourses, and declare that he had never been so arrested by any oratory. "The tartan," said this generous critic, "beats us all."

It was not enough that he won such triumphs as are described in the following language, by an American clergyman, present at two of his lectures on Church Establishments delivered in London, previous to the disruption. We give the description, that our readers may better appreciate the devotedness of the eloquent doctor in preferring the work of evangelizing the neglected masses of his countrymen to a more brilliant career.

The concluding lecture was attended by nine prelates of the Church of England. The tide that had been rising and swelling each succeeding day, now burst all bounds. Carried away by the impassioned utterance of the speaker, long ere the close of some of his finest passages was reached, the voice of the lecturer was drowned in applause, the audience rising from their seats, waving their hats above their heads, and breaking out into tumultuous approbation. Nothing could exceed the enthusiasm that prevailed in London. The great city seemed stirred to its very depths. The Doctor sat behind a small table delivering his lectures, the hall in front being densely crowded with one of the most brilliant audiences that ever assembled in Great Britain. It was supposed that at least five hundred of those present were peers and members of the House of Commons. The sitting attitude of Dr. Chalmers seemed at first irreconcilable with much energy or effect. Such an anticipation was at once dispelled by the enthusiasm of the speaker, responded to if possible by the still more intense enthusiasm of the audience. Occasionally the effect was even greatly increased by the eloquent man springing unconsciously to his feet, and delivering with overwhelming power the more magnificent passages; a movement which once at least was imitated by the entire audience,—when the words "The king cannot, the king dare not," were uttered in accents of prophetic vehemence, that must still ring in the ears of all who heard them, and were responded to by a whirlwind of enthusiasm which was probably never exceeded in the history of eloquence. Nothing

External force might make an obnoxious individual the holder of a benefice, but there is no external force that could make him a minister of the Church of Scotland. The King, by himself, or by his representative, might be the spectator of our proceedings; but what Lord Clatham said of the poor man's house, is true in all its parts of the church to which I have the honor to belong. In England, every man's house is his castle; not that it is surrounded by walls and battlements; it may be a straw-bull shed; every wind of heaven may whistle around it, every element of heaven may cheer it, but the king cannot, the king dare not.

THE HEARTS of believers are like the needle touched by the loadstone, which cannot rest until it comes to the point, whereunto, by the secret virtue of it, it is directed. For being once touched by the love of Christ, receiving therein an impression of secret, ineffable virtue, they will ever be in motion and restless until they come unto him and behold his glory.—Owen.

IF WE SUFFER we shall also reign with him." The members of the mystical body must be conformed unto their Head. In Him sufferings went before glory; and so they must in them. The order in the kingdom of Satan, and the world is contrary herunto. First the good things of this life, and then eternal misery in the method of that kingdom.—Ibid.

was more striking, however, amidst all this excitement, than the childlike humility of the great man himself. All this flattery seemed to produce no effect whatever on him; his mind was entirely absorbed in his great object; and the same kind, playful, and truly Christian spirit, that so endeared him to us all, was everywhere apparent in his conduct."

"He was evidently more deeply moved," says Dr. Wayland, in his recent excellent memoir, "at learning that his ministrations had been blessed to the conversion of a soul, than by the rapturous applause elicited by the most successful of his public addresses." And his opinion of the popularity to be gained by these methods was stated by himself in an address to his Sabbath school laborers in Glasgow, in the following powerful language:

"There is another, and a far-sounding popularity, which is indeed a most worthless article, felt by all who have it most to be far more oppressive than gratifying; a popularity of stare and pressure and animal heat, and a whole tribe of other annoyances which it brings around the person of its unfortunate victim; a popularity which rifles home of its sweets, and, by elevating man above his fellows, places him in a region of desolation, where the intimacies of human fellowship are unfelt, and where he stands a conspicuous mark for the shafts of malice, envy, and detraction; a popularity which, with its head among storms and its feet on the treacherous quicksands, has nothing to lull the agonies of its tottering existence but the hosannas of a drivelling generation."

He deliberately and consciously chose, "as the dearest object of his earthly existence—to use his own language—the elevation of the common people, humanized by Christianity and raised by the strength of their moral habits to a higher platform of human nature; and by which they may attain and enjoy the rank and consideration due to enlightened and companionable men." He felt that he was called, so far as in him lay, to the noble work of sending the Gospel with all its blessings for time and eternity to every family throughout the whole of Scotland. This would not be accomplished by building fine churches. The poor, the degraded, the vicious, would never enter those magnificent temples, commonly called the houses of God. The Gospel must be carried to them, and wherever Chalmers went he at once commenced the performance of this duty. Of pastoral visitation he spoke thus: "This is what I call preaching the Gospel to every creature; and that cannot be done by setting yourself in the pulpit as a centre of attraction but by going forth and making aggressive movements upon the community, and by preaching from house to house." "There will never," he says again, "be a general revival of religion until Christians at home go forth among the heathen families around them, with the same enthusiasm that they expect from missionaries who go abroad."

PRESBYTERIAN ORGANIZATION.

The London Times gives the following remarkable testimony to the effectiveness of Presbyterian organization:

"The organization of the Kirk is perfect and potent as the organization of the Popedom. In every parish there is the minister, with his little senate of lay elders and deacons, called the Kirk Session, who rule the congregation from week to week. Every month the Presbytery meets—being an assembly of the ministers, with a certain proportion of laymen, from a cluster of parishes. Every quarter the Presbyteries of a county meet in Synods, and every year there is a General Assembly of the whole Kirk, which is made up of ministers and elders elected by all the Presbyteries in the kingdom. The system of self-government is the most complete that can be imagined, and based as it is on public opinion amply expressed in long discussions and elaborate voting, it is almost irresistible. In scores of enclaves, great and small, doctrines are discussed over and over again; from thousands of pulpits, and in tens of thousands of little prayer-meetings, the prevalent opinion is diffused, and in turn reacts on Assembly, Synod, Presbytery, and Kirk Session. It is a mechanism of prodigious power for the diffusion of opinion, and for the stamping out of heresy. All the parts of it act and react upon each other with peculiar sensitiveness. There is nothing like it in England. There is nothing like it anywhere, save in the Catholic Church, where the organization is equally potent, though on different principles."

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