

Miscellaneous.

MR. BARNES NINTH LECTURE ON THE EVIDENCES OF CHRISTIANITY.

THE ADAPTATION OF RELIGION TO MEET THE WANTS OF MAN.

After the lapse of eighteen hundred years we ought to be able to determine this question, and thus obtain a proof of the truth of Christianity. Man has wants both as a creature and a sinner, and if Christianity be true it will meet them. Other religions did not. The Hebrew religion did not. The Chaldaic, Assyrian, Greek and Roman did not. Does Christianity?

The speaker here laid down certain principles by which to govern the inquiry, viz.: 1. There is such a thing as truth—truth as spoken or represented, and truth as in the reality of things, which is the basis of the former.

2. There is that in man which responds to truth; this so universal an effect that to the boy and the man it is the same, whether conveyed by the living voice, or by a landscape or waterfall.

3. The effect upon the mind depends upon its perception as truth, which perception seems almost intuitive in one mind, but attained by a slow process by others.

4. Hence there is a distinction between right and wrong; and there is that in man which responds to this difference.

5. Revelation is not contradictory to truth—not to scientific, natural or moral truth.

6. Revelation on the same line of subjects is in advance of science; and if it disagree with science, science must prove itself to be true.

Guided by these principles, we proceed to the consideration of the Christian religion being adapted to the wants of man. And now we ask: What is the end of human life? What are those objects which, if all be attained, it can be said the great end of life is accomplished? What is the chief end of man? Different answers will be given according to the degrees of intelligence, the particular aims and passions, or the religious views of mankind. The worldly man the ambitious, the pleasure-loving, the epicurean, and others, would limit it to present gratification, emolument or fame, and mere selfish considerations. But to glorify God and enjoy him for ever is the true end of man, and that end is contemplated in his creation: The fears, desires, hopes implanted in his nature, his instincts pointing toward God and heaven, give evidence that the Creator designed man for this end. If we examined a watch and found that all its wheels and springs were constructed for the evident purpose of denoting time, we should say at once that was the end for which it was made; or if in a steam-engine we discovered in its various valves and pistons and rotary motion, an adaptation to move machinery or draw cars, we would conclude it was made for this purpose, that this was its end, and if this end was not accomplished by it, its construction was a failure. So from the various hopes and aspirations of man, the love of happiness that animates his breast, his convictions of the Divine Being and character, and his looking toward a future existence—from these we judge that he has been created for a higher purpose than merely worldly gain, or pleasure, or selfish ends; that he has been created to glorify God, to serve and honor him, and seek his everlasting favor. The end of man pertains to the future. Not so the brutes; they have instinct—man has conscious thoughts, reason, adaptation to know and love and enjoy God. He is, therefore, a religious being, and needs a religion adapted to his nature. His desire of happiness is universal, his looking forward to eternity and impressions of God and of a future retribution, are universal. Who would not wish something to meet this religious want? Christianity does meet it!

There are two classes of wants belonging to man. 1. Natural wants, or such as belong to him as a creature, and 2. Spiritual wants, or such as belong to him as a fallen being.

The physical world supplies the material wants of man as a being in health, but this is different from meeting his necessities when diseased and suffering. It furnishes air, light, water, food, and whatever he requires, when not sick or injured, but it cannot cure disease (without the aid of science), although in its plants and materials it furnishes medicinal remedies. It cannot set a broken bone. Precisely analogous are the wants of man in the moral world. He has wants as a creature independent of those arising from the malady of sin, and those belong to him as a sinner, and Christianity meets both of these classes of wants.

As a creature, man is rational and immortal. Reason points him to an object of worship, and the duty of loving and serving the supreme Source of all good. Reason and consciousness of an undying spirit within prompts the wish for future happiness, and the soul sighs for something better and more lasting than earth. It craves an immortality of bliss. Now Christianity reveals God to man as the object of his affections, his confidence, obedience and homage. And it unfolds a blessed immortality. All that a sinless creature would desire, in God or in immortal existence Christianity furnishes. It shows the end of life and teaches how to glorify God, and gives the promise of the enjoyment of him for ever.

But it also meets the wants of man as a sinner. It reveals a way of salvation consistent with the perfections of God and the honor of his government. It reveals an arrangement which would not have been necessary if men were not sinners. It provides for the wants of all sinners, exempting no one as beyond the reach of hope. It offers pardon to all in a way honorable to God and honorable to men. No human government can offer universal amnesty. To do so

would expose life and property and spread violence and ruin over the community, but the Gospel proclaims forgiveness to all who believe, whatever their previous character.

Christianity attaches itself to whatever elevates society. It is the friend of education, of good government, of science and art, of polish and refinement, of pure morals and benevolence. Buddhism, Romanism, and other Pagan or unevangelical religions confer no such benefits. They cherish ignorance and superstition, and retard the progress of nations in whatever is conducive to true prosperity, while Christianity is connected with the highest development of the race. It brings comfort in the hour of sorrow and affliction, peace and joy to the penitent, and support and triumph in death. A religion that thus meets the wants of man, that leads to the knowledge of God and an endless life, brings pardon to the guilty and holiness to the depraved, elevates and adorns society, imparts comfort in sorrow, and casts a bright ray of hope over the gloom of death and the grave, must be from God.—Christian Intelligencer.

CONVENTION TO SECURE AMENDMENTS TO THE NATIONAL CONSTITUTION.

A Convention for the above purpose assembled in the church corner of Eleventh and Wood streets, Philadelphia, on Tuesday, March 5th, at 7 P. M. The object of the movement is stated in the following memorial to Congress:—

We, citizens of the United States respectfully ask your honorable bodies to adopt measures for amending the Constitution of the United States so as to read in substance as follows:—

We the people of the United States [humbly acknowledging Almighty God as the source of all authority and power in civil government, the Lord Jesus Christ as the Ruler among the nations, and His revealed will as of supreme authority, in order to constitute a Christian government and] in order to form a more perfect union, &c., &c. do ordain and establish this Constitution.

Hon. Wm. Strong, of the Supreme Court of Pennsylvania, President of the National Association for this purpose, was called to the chair. Prayer was offered by the Rev. Dr. Cooper. Rev. T. P. Stevenson was chosen Secretary. The Convention was addressed by the Chairman, and by the Hon. and Rev. R. A. Browne, D.D., of Harrisburg, Pennsylvania.

A Business Committee was appointed, consisting of Rev. J. T. Cooper, D.D., of Philadelphia, Hon. Judge Agnew, of Beaver county, Pa., Rev. J. Kennedy, of Delaware county, N. Y., Rev. E. W. Smiley, D.D., of Philadelphia, and John Alexander, Esq., of Philadelphia.

Letters were received from Gen. O. O. Howard, Rev. Francis Vinton, D.D., of New York, Rev. Dr. Eddy, of Boston, Rev. Geo. C. Vincent, D.D., of Westminster College, Pa., Hon. Samuel Shellbarger, of Washington, Rev. Bishop Levi Scott, of Delaware, and others, approving the object of the Convention.

The following resolutions were reported by this Committee on the following day, and adopted:—

Resolved, 1st. That it is a principle taught in the word of God and corroborated by the teachings of nature and reason that civil government is an ordinance of God, as the Governor of this universe; and that those who occupy official positions in the government are, in their capacity as civil magistrates, the ministers of God. 2. This being the case, it follows as a legitimate and necessary deduction that the authority of Jehovah must be regarded as the primal source of all civil authority, and, consequently, must be regarded as imposing upon the government as such, and those who are called to administer it, supreme and paramount obligations.

3. It belongs to the great Founder of civil society to say how and by what means He shall make known his will to man, as to the principles which should control him as a member of civil society. The only question for us to consider is: Has the Supreme Ruler given us any expression of His will in regard to this matter? That expression, wherever found, whether inscribed on the framework of creation, the physical, intellectual, moral, or social constitution of man, or set forth in the inspired Word, has, and must necessarily have, the force of LAW.

4. These principles being indisputably correct, it follows, that a people favored, like the people of the United States, with a written Revelation, are bound by the highest conceivable obligations to receive with profound reverence and submission, every intimation which the infinite Author of that Revelation has been pleased to make as to the conduct which He requires in the important relation which they sustain to Him and each other as members of civil society. 5. If in this Revelation the Founder of civil society has distinctly made known to us the fact that he has constituted One to be the "Governor among the Nations," and the "Prince of the Kings of the Earth," and "the Head over all things," it is surely the high and imperative duty of all to whom this fact has been made known, to recognize Him in the character and position in which He is thus presented; and as He has made known to us in His written word the fact that this character and position belong to the Lord Jesus Christ, such recognition is unquestionably due from us to Him.

6. In a government having a written constitution, the proper place in which to look for such recognition of the Being and Authority of God, the paramount obligations of His law, and the supreme delegated dominion of the Lord Jesus Christ, is in the official document which gives organic existence to the government, which document is the Constitution. And it is our solemn conviction that a refusal to incorporate these principles in the Constitution is to expose ourselves to the just displeasure of Almighty God.

7. That this Convention most deeply deprecates the fact, that the form of oath pre-

scribed in the Constitution to be administered in the inauguration of the President of the United States, makes no mention of the name of God, and earnestly urge that this omission be supplied.

8. That Government being God's ordinance, instituted not only for the good of the people, but also for the glory of God, and for the establishment of His authority in our world, it should be administered only by those who are the friends of God and the faithful subjects of His rule. And therefore, for Christian men, to intrust the reins of government to the hands of ungodly, profane, corrupt, and intemperate men, the known enemies of the Ruler whose authority they exercise, is to be unfaithful to the cause of God and the best interests of mankind. "As a roaring lion and a ranging bear, so is a wicked ruler over the poor people."

9. That this Convention quote with strong approbation, the following sentiments of Judge Story on the Constitution, and invite the attention of the public to them:—At the time of the adoption of the Constitution, the general, if not the universal, sentiment in America, was that Christianity ought to receive encouragement from the State; so far as such encouragement was not incompatible with the private rights of conscience and the freedom of religious worship. An attempt to level all religions, and to make it a matter of State policy to hold all in utter indifference, would have created universal disapprobation, if not universal indignation: No one who believes in the truth of Christianity as a divine revelation, can doubt, that it is the special duty of government to foster and encourage it among all the citizens and subjects.

The Convention was addressed on Wednesday evening by Rev. J. H. McIlvaine, D.D., of Princeton and Rev. J. R. W. Sloane, of New York.

Another Convention for the same purpose will assemble in Pittsburgh, Pa. on Tuesday, April 8th, and continue through the day and evening following. Auxiliary associations and all Christian congregations are again requested to send representatives.

The annual meeting of the National Association for this purpose will be held in New York, in the early part of the month May.

BOBAX LAKE.

Bobax Lake is about the hundred miles north of San Francisco. Properly speaking, it is a pond, being only one mile long, and half a mile wide. It is situated on a peninsula, which juts into Clearlake, from which it is separated by a mountain. It is, in brief, a crater of an extinct volcano, or at least presenting that appearance. That my reader may duly appreciate the rarity of the curiosity before him, I would remind him that probably no white man ever saw the lake—there being no other of the kind, save in Tibet. Before the discovery of Bobax Lake in California, there were but two sources of supply of borax to meet the demand of the world—that of Tibet and that of a firm in Liverpool, who manufacture the article by chemical process.

Iron coffer-dams, having chambers about five feet square, are sunk in the Lake; the water is bailed out of the dams, the mud in them being pressed by men stamping on boards that cover it, and the concrete mass taken ashore and dried in the sun, the largest borax crystals being picked up during this operation. Crystals are found from the size of a hen's egg to that of a pea. The earth is strongly impregnated with borate of soda—bi-borate, strictly speaking—is subject to lixivation, and the saturated water is slowly evaporated in heated boilers until the octahedral crystals are formed. In the sediment are iodine, silicic acid, silicate of lime, and alumina; the first is likely to prove valuable. At the present time about four thousand pounds of borax are obtained daily; ten to fifteen tons will be the daily yield on the completion of the works. The supply may be regarded as illimitable, and sufficient for the demands of the world. It is constantly forming, and soon there will be no borax in use in the arts and in medicine, save that which the Golden State will furnish.

A REMARKABLE FISH STORY.

In a recent lecture by Prof. Agassiz on the aquatic animals of the Amazon, he described one fish of which he said: "This fish is remarkable for the faculty it enjoys of leaving the water and walking a considerable distance over the land. Sometimes it is found three, four, and five miles from the water, and specimens have been brought to me which I have left on the ground for a day, and afterwards, when put back into water, they were as lively as if they had not been disturbed. That fish has another peculiarity; it builds a nest—a large nest, about the size of a man's hat, with a hole leading to the interior in which it deposits its eggs; and it is not only capable of creeping on even land, but it can creep on an inclined plain, and I have been told by very trustworthy persons, that they are frequently found many feet above the water, on stumps of trees which have fallen down, the trunks of which are so inclined that the fish has reached the branches of the tree, to such a height, that the bird and the fish have more than once been brought down by the same shot."

THE THREE PLANS.

"A Plain Old Woman," writing for the Christian Index, says: "There are three plans by which the house of God may be supported. First, the Old Testament plan, viz: by tithes; secondly, the New Testament plan, viz: laying by on the first day of the week as the Lord has prospered us; thirdly, the modern plan, viz: after having ministered to the lusts of the flesh, the lusts of the eye and the pride of life—after paying our bakers, butchers, lawyers' bills, we dole out at the end of the year such a pittance as our feelings prompt as an alms to the house of God."

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