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THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 24, 1868.

### SUPREMACY OF THE SPHERE OF FAITH.

Who, by searching, can find out God? A question which gives a hint of the limits of the reasoning faculties. By themselves, they cannot introduce us to the highest objects of human interest. The stream cannot rise higher than its fountain. That which is born of the flesh is flesh. That which is within the reach of reason, must belong to the sphere of reason. Reason, indeed, in its right exercise, would make us aware of its own limits and so point obscurely to something beyond itself. Rightly used, it would be ready to receive and act upon truth, originating in a source beyond its own powers of discovery, as its highest privilege and most beneficent exercise. But its great, radical fault, and the proof of its share in the fall, in its perverse disposition to arrogate to itself the supremacy among the faculties and to rule out everything that will not render an account at its bar.

The supreme power of the soul is that which makes us cognizant of supreme truth; that which ranges beyond reason's utmost confines among spiritual realities; that which produces conviction without an intervening process of reflection and ratiocination; that which never has asked and never will ask of such processes the right to its conclusions, or the means of defending them. The conclusions of science based on the admitted imperfect testimony of the senses and the defective and uncertain operations of the understanding, must be inferior in authority to the absolute assertions of the faith-principle; the varying and often contradictory phases of scientific propositions and systems cannot claim comparison with the eternal realities of faith; the scientific tendency, which is felt and which can be followed by the few only, cannot aspire to dominate the universal characteristic yearning of the human race; science, which makes us better acquainted with the relations of our material and temporal existence, must be regarded as the most dangerous of the foes of humanity; if it refuses to admit the comparative insignificance of its whole sphere, and its subordination to that class of truths which points to man's higher destiny, his celestial relations and his kindred to Deity, and if it claims to comprehend absolutely the whole of man's interests. Self-love, self-respect, conscience, hope, aspiration, the yearning for rest in perfect truth and perfect love, the outcry of unconscious guilt and the fearful apprehension of judgment to come, the sigh of the broken hearted—these deep voices of the soul affirm, with unanswerable emphasis, the supremacy of the objects of faith over every possible result of the processes of mere thought. The most carefully drawn conclusions of science, which contradict the fundamentals of faith—the existence of a personal God, and of an immortal immaterial soul, the possibility of miracles and of a revelation, the distinction between right and wrong and the future state of rewards and punishment, the need and the possibility of an atoning sacrifice and a perfect Saviour,—must go down. No amount of argument, no chain of demonstration can establish conclusions in the world which are at war with that which supplies the downright necessities of living men. The ofttest achievements of science cannot suppress, if the heart of man, a joyful echo to that faithful saying, that Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners. Even after the hoped-for triumph of the goddess, material science of our day, and the silencing of the pulpits and the schools of biology, the aching void of the soul will secretly demonstrate the indestructible vitality of the faith-principle, and it will abide its time and take revenge in new and stupendous forms of superstition, if not allowed its natural and legitimate place as man's guide and governor through the gospel.

Such results, though their possibility in this fallen world is admitted, we do not for a moment anticipate. But amid whatever vicissitudes, we are sure the victory must be with that principle of faith "which overcometh the world." This tone the builders may refuse, but it shall be the headstone of the corner. Whosoever shall fall upon it shall be broken, but upon whomsoever it shall fall, he shall be ground to powder.

Amid such vast convulsions of nature as the late South American earthquake, the query suggests itself, what is there to hinder the still wider spread of such devastation, until it involves the whole globe, and the entire race of man? What is our confidence in the stability of our earthly surroundings? The merely scientific man has nothing but vague surmises—has, in fact, nothing that can be called an answer to the

question. The believer in God's providence and in the plan of Redemption, can promptly say: the world is certain to be preserved until the moral ends of its creation are answered. It is saved from general catastrophe for the sake of the Church. Nature is no blind irresponsible force, but is controlled to work out higher ends than its own. Under these higher ruling objects alone, it can claim to be called a Cosmos. Rightly read, nature testifies most clearly to moral ends in her own structure. The great geological catastrophes, eras, and progress, in ages past, all join to point to man, and to prepare this world to be his home, his workshop, and his temple. We cannot doubt that such lesser, though dreadful catastrophes, as we witness, are equally under Providential control, and equally tributary to the interests of our race.

### THE TREATY WITH CHINA.

The most secluded and inaccessible of foreign nations hitherto, the one most reluctant to form relations with others, and the most arrogant in its self-importance and self-sufficiency, now seems to have fairly and voluntarily adopted the opposite policy, and in a manner unheard of, is inviting all civilized nations to form friendly alliances with itself, for all the purposes usually contemplated in international intercourse. A foreigner, an "outside barbarian," an American, was chosen to lead this unparalleled, universal embassy of the Celestial Flowerly nation; and, as a mark of the Chinese estimate set upon such services, his salary, originally forty thousand dollars per annum, has been doubled, as we are told by an American resident of Shanghai, during the progress of the mission, without Mr. Burlingame's knowledge or request.

The treaty lately concluded between our government and this novel embassy is worthy of consideration. It will probably be of more significance than that formed with any other power, since we are the nearest civilized neighbor of this vast empire, and are likely to carry on the greatest trade with China, not only for our own purposes, but on account of Europe as well. Our own advanced position before all the continents of the globe in being traversed completely, from ocean to ocean, by a continuous line of railroads, will make us the medium of commerce from one side to the other of the old world. It will be easier and more direct to get from the Eastern to the Western shore of that body of land, through the 240 degrees of longitude, in the midst of which is placed North America, than through the 120 degrees of actual distance which separates the Thames River from the Hoango, since the actual time of travel via the Pacific Railroad will be less than one-half of that consumed by the old route, via the Cape of Good Hope.

The first two articles of the treaty concede the simple rights of China to her own territory, over her own subjects, and to such parts of her policy as she does not choose to bring within the conditions of a treaty with other nations. The Third provides for Chinese consuls at our ports, on the same terms with those enjoyed by Great Britain and Russia. This will furnish protection to the Chinese emigrants in the ports of California, for instance, where they have been subjected to such abusive treatment as is only paralleled by that visited upon the freedmen of the South, and as every class of men not holding a recognized position in society, are liable to meet. For an outraged Chinaman to get justice in California, has been an exceedingly rare thing, as the laws of the State do not allow a Chinaman to testify against a white man. The presence of a Consul at San Francisco, Sacramento, &c., will be a guarantee that such unredressed wrongs will become matter of negotiation between the two governments.

Article Fourth enlarges the scope of a clause in the treaty of ten years ago, by which the Christians of our country and converts in China were exempted from persecution. The present treaty secures toleration for our countrymen of every religious persuasion, and, in return, stipulates that, as with Americans in China, so "Chinese subjects in the United States shall enjoy entire liberty of conscience, and shall be exempt from all disability or persecution on account of their religious faith." The mutual right of sepulture is also conceded. Whether this article will be understood as encouraging Chinese immigrants to introduce the entire system of Buddhism, with its orders of priesthood, its public observances, its temples, and its corrupt and contaminating heathen practices and abominations, is not exactly clear. Already the fifteen or twenty thousand of these people in San Francisco, have a temple of some pretensions, with a hideous idol which they worship, not far from the business centre of the city. As this vast people, embracing one-third of the human family, knocks at the door of our

country, through one of our own citizens, related to a well known minister of the Gospel, if not a Christian man himself, and asks entire equality of religious privileges for Buddhism, as for Christianity, it seems an appropriate time for us to ask after our own reputation as a Christian nation, and how far such a character, if we actually possessed it, would restrain us from granting the whole burden of their prayer. Admitting that we should tolerate these people in their own chosen belief, which no one doubts, do we not, by conceding entire liberty of conscience and exemption from all disability on account of religious faith and worship—do we not concede a principle radically and dangerously inconsistent with our religious position as a Christian nation? Have we not slighted, and so endangered those great moral principles derived from the Bible, which actually lie at the foundation of our laws and of our existence as a free people, in this offer of politically equalizing with them the worship of false gods, of no gods at all, and the perpetration of abominations in the name of religion? Or is our Christianity so well-grounded and so rightfully confident, that it can more than endure, can meet and, by the unaided power of its truths, transform these idolaters into nominal followers, at least of Jesus Christ, before they have inflicted serious mischief upon ourselves by their publicly allowed heathenish observances?

It must be remembered that these fifty thousand Chinese in California are but the advance guard of what may turn out a mighty eastward movement from the most populous hive of humanity in the world, which, like the march of diminutive animals, rats, locusts, army worms, squirrels, ants, in vast numbers; like the migrations of Goths, Vandals, and Saracens, and like the movements of rebellious hordes in China itself, may be utterly beyond the control of the more civilized, but numerically weaker, races. Shall we beckon this heathen mass to our shores, with the express understanding that their heathenism shall work them no disadvantages? Or, to turn homeward, are we not reminded, by the concession of this fourth article, of the protracted toleration of the nuisance of polygamy in the heart of our country, under the name and pretext of religion? And is not the persistentopathy of our politicians towards this enormity, as practiced by our own citizens, a significant hint as to the possibility that similar practices of our heathen neighbors, in the name of religion, enjoy like tolerance, if any political end were to be gained by it? Is a combination of Chinese and of Mormon interests such an impossible thing in the future, after this treaty has produced its expected results, that it should be dismissed with a laugh? Or shall we promptly give the criminals of Utah the alternative of abandoning their public and avowed immoralities, or of coming under the disgrace and penalties of the law; and at the same time notify the Chinese government, that the fourth article of the treaty cannot be construed to allow practices abhorrent to Christian morality? It would seem we could not do the latter consistently, unless we also did the former.

The remaining articles of the Treaty do not call for special comment. They are, Fifth, provision for regulating the Coolie traffic according to the ordinary humane principles of immigration; Article sixth guaranteeing to citizens of each nation, the right to unobstructed travel or residence in either country, with the same privileges, immunities and exemptions which are accorded to the citizens or subjects of "the most favored nation"—a provision which will probably lead to the settlement, and, perhaps, naturalization of many Chinese among us, who are now merely adventurers, and bring a better class of this people to our shores. The "most favored nation" clause of this article, shows that China has not advanced beyond her former narrow concessions as to the right of residence; foreigners are not allowed to settle in the country at large, but only in the few ports on the outer boundaries of the Empire, thrown open to foreigners by existing treaties. Mr. Burlingame has not yet succeeded in liberalizing the nation to the point of welcoming foreigners to a residence in every part of their wide dominion. Article seventh provides for equal enjoyment of educational facilities in both countries by the citizens of both. Article eighth, and last, gives opportunity to our Government to take part, by the appointment of Engineers, in any improvements, such as railroads and telegraphs, which the Chinese Government shall, of its own option, and under its own control, undertake to carry out.

This treaty has provoked a great degree of jealousy and ill will in the newspapers of England, but it seems to us that the movement in the hands of this Embassy, although headed by an American, is of the broadest international character, and contemplates, as a grand result, the admission of China, into the great circle of na-

tionalties which profess to be governed by a regard to the principles of justice in their dealings with one another, and will thus protect China against another such outrage as the Opium War. True philanthropists ought to rejoice at such a result, and ought not to find it grievous if the nation which has helped China into such a proud position reaps, for a time, a somewhat larger share of the advantages.

Fresh opportunities and duties in the Evangelization of China, it is very easy to see, are brought to the American Churches by this Embassy, led by an American, and by this treaty which brings the two nations into new and more general relations. May God enlarge our plans, our gifts, our spirit of self-consecration and of prayer, in proportion to the grandeur of the emergency.

### ARE THE OLD SCHOOL SACRAMENTAL CALVINISTS?

The North-western Presbyterian, the O. S. paper of Chicago, notices our article on the teachings of the Westminster Standards on the subject of the Sacraments in a style very different from that adopted by its Philadelphia coadjutor. It quotes largely and continuously what we said on the subject, and represents us with as much fairness as we can expect from a theological school which is in a state of chronic alarm. It is indeed as fair as we can expect any thoroughly Old School man to be, in regard to any one who disents from him.

On one point he gives us our answer. He takes the ground that the Calvinistic doctrine of the sacraments is that of the Old School Church as such. He accepts the Calvinistic doctrines of Baptismal Regeneration and of a Eucharistic Real Presence of Christ's Body and Blood; not merely as stated in the Westminster Standards, but also as embodied in our quotation from the Scotch Confession of 1560. He is as full and explicit as any one could desire, denouncing the Zwinglian doctrine as an attempt to "retire the supernatural from experimental Christianity," an "opposition to the presence of Jesus, by the efficiency of the Holy Spirit, in the sacraments."

We are gratified, and we are sure The Presbyterian will be so, doubly sure that The Reformed Church Messenger will be so,—to find our Chicago friend so explicit here. But we are not less astonished than gratified. If this is Old School doctrine, then that Church has been hiding its light under a bushel to a very grievous extent. We had supposed—with most others,—that the common Protestant doctrine (of the Sacraments being commemorative rites) had obtained, with some few exceptions, within her pale. We are certainly not aware of the opposite doctrine being advocated from any of her pulpits;—we are certain that it has not been so from her press, until The North-western Presbyterian set the good example. Will the North-western kindly tell us—and we think The Reformed Church Messenger, and The Presbyterian would like to know also, in which of the numerous issues of the O. S. Board from the pens of our Old School divines, we shall find the orthodox doctrine vindicated against a gain-saying generation?

Further, The North-western Presbyterian repudiates Zwinglianism not only for its own sake but as "New School." Indeed, the editor seems to write under the impression that we have spoken of it as such. We do not believe that there is the slightest difference between the two Branches of the Church in this regard. We distinctly charged Zwinglian views on the Presbyterian Churches which speak the English language; we might have excepted, the American German Reformed Church. We believe that the case is precisely with us as it is with the Old School. The great mass of both Churches are utterly indifferent to the doctrines in question. Of the few who have had their attention aroused to the subject, the greater part reject Calvinism and accept Zwinglianism. That there are exceptions in both Branches we know, but they are probably as numerous in our Branch as in the Other Branch. Unless some very sudden revolution should take place among his followers, an event not impossible in the present state of excitement and alarm, we doubt if Dr. Erskine will find a baker's dozen of the most obstructive O. S. men, who will subscribe to his doctrine of supernatural sacraments, a Eucharistic real presence of the body and blood of Christ, and a baptismal regeneration. Let him count noses.

On two other points our critic has sorely misinterpreted us. He took our reference to John Locke's "Philosophy of Common-Sense" as an endorsement of that great "Philistine," and bases thereon, all sorts of admonitions and censures as to New School reliance upon philosophic systems. If we individually differ from the O. S. men at all, it is in being much more decidedly

opposed to John Locke than they are; and it has always been the very characteristic of the New School to lay no sort of stress upon a man's philosophy of things, provided he has "the root of the matter" in him, in head and heart.

The North-western gravely infers from our article that there exists in the New School Church an element, which may be appropriately designated as Taylorism, which would "retire the supernatural from experimental Christianity," "introduce the Philosophy of Common-Sense as an expounder of Christianity," and teach that "regeneration is but a change of purpose," that "man needs not a new life but only aid, the aid of illumination, moral suasion, favorable surroundings, etc., to do all that the Gospel requires." We can only reply that such a representation of even the most decided New School men, would, like the Protest at Albany, be merely ridiculous, were it not that there are perhaps many in the Other Branch who will accept it as true. They are simply a mis-statement too gross to be ranked even among caricatures, for a caricature pre-supposes some kind of resemblance to the thing caricatured.

The article closes with a warning to its readers not to accept our representation of the doctrine of the Confession as reliable, as being made up in the most arbitrary way, of detached sentences, strung together with words which we have inserted. Such a caution cannot stop there. We challenge our critic to specify any point in which we have misrepresented the Confession. If we have done so, show it; if not, the editor is bound in courtesy to retract his paragraph implying that we have.

Dr. E. Wentworth, in a note to Zion's Herald, proposes to correct the statement of our correspondent GENESSEE, that the members of the Chinese Embassy are not idolaters because Confucianists.

"There is an image of Confucius in every school-house, to which pupils pay reverence, homage, worship. There are, sometimes, if not always, images of Confucius in the temples of Confucius, and, where there is no image, an ancestral tablet, and at the annual and semi-annual sacrifices offered in the Provincial temples, animals, grains, silk, music and prayers are offered at the shrine of Confucius. The Old Confucian temple at Foo Chow had, in it a wooden image of Confucius, which was burned when the temple was destroyed by fire. The followers reverently gathered up the ashes of the idol, urned them, buried them, and raised a huge tomb over them, as the Romanists would say, with imposing ceremonies."

Intelligent observers in China are not agreed as to whether any real worship is designed in these proceedings.

Street preaching is being prosecuted in New York with a good deal of vigor, such men as Stephen H. Tyng, Jr., and Geo. J. Mingins throwing themselves heartily into the work. In our own city it can hardly be said to have been dropped in past years at all. Mr. James Grant of the First B. P. Church has long conducted these "out-door services" in connection with their long established colored mission school in St. Mary street, and his efforts have been ably sustained by others, among whom we notice Mr. Geo. H. Stuart, Jr. On recent Sabbaths, quite a number of localities have been occupied on Broad street for this purpose, the young men of the city having put their hand to the plow. Dr. Allen of the Third Church has not been behind in this good cause.

The current in our Presbyteries on Reunion is all one way. Without turning aside any more than to record an occasional dissent from the 2d and the 10th articles, the Plan of the Joint Committees is adopted everywhere as a whole. There is no tampering or tinkering with that which both Assemblies adopted, and to which they gave such a satisfactory explanation by the Report of the Special Committee, on the one hand, and the Answer to the Protest on the other.

Our readers will observe with interest the large amount of information which we are able to lay before them in regard to our own Church. It will be found that no one of our denominational papers is so full in this respect as THE AMERICAN PRESBYTERIAN. Just now, the meetings of Presbyteries and Synods demand a large space, but as the question of Reunion is under discussion, our readers will not think us too liberal in our policy. To make the different parts of the Church known to each other, and to keep alive a flow of spiritual sympathy by prompt and full interchange of thought and intelligence, are leading objects of newspaper enterprise in the religious world.