

EDITORIALS

THE GROWTH OF RELIGIOUS UNBELIEF.

IN the midst of the nations of modern Christendom is a widespread and rapidly growing disbelief in revealed religion, which unhappy state of the public mind threatens to culminate in the near future in a collapse of all religious belief as complete as it will be terrible. This impending crisis is recognized by many of the leading minds of the age, who are vainly theorizing with regard to its origin and speculating as to its ultimate results. These theories however, simply touch secondary or apparent causes, the originating cause is ignored or repudiated by these inquiries. It lies in the rejection of the revelations of the everlasting gospel by the masses of the people; and in those lands where its principles have been the most widely proclaimed is this disbelief in, or disregard of, religious obligations, the most strongly developed. Indeed it is but the natural and inevitable outgrowth of a refusal to accept the word of the Lord. The rejection of Divine truth originates in the iniquity of the people; "they love darkness rather than light, because their deeds are evil;" and when they have repelled the light, the darkness grows more profound and the influence of iniquity the more powerful and dominating.

The literature of all English speaking countries is surcharged with evidences of this prevailing condition of the public mind. This is particularly so with so-called scientific works, but even many of the most recent works of fiction are distinctively non-religious. They entirely ignore God. Their heroes and heroines are strong in their humanity, conquering temptation solely by internal strength of character and triumphing over evil simply by innate personal virtue. Too many, also, of the most popular educational text books not only exert a negative, but a positive influence against revealed religion; whilst what is called natural religion, by some so highly extolled, is pretty much what each individual chooses to make it. With some it is the worship of his fellowman's best efforts, with another it is the convenient makeshift of a sounding name which means anything or nothing according to time, place or circumstance. It is perhaps true that in the minds of some men, who combine great strength of character of a reverential cast with high scientific attainments, is to be found a strong manifestation of the sentiment of worship. But if you search into the recesses of such men's hearts you find nothing tangible, nothing definite, nothing that will save or exalt humanity, but merely a "make-shift" drawn from personal study or experience, some mixture, perhaps, of Christian ethics with ancient philosophy, a plank of the theological wreck which will barely hold two.

Yet there is probably an increase of church building, possibly even of church going; but the crust of outward piety is thin and hollow, and is growing thinner and hollower every day. There may be "a form of godliness" but Christendom is not at once prepared to throw aside the traditions of ages, which make it the respectable and proper thing for every one to be a professor of religion; nor is society yet prepared to assume the unknown responsibilities which an utter repudiation of religious teachings would entail. And, again, amongst the various uninspired irreligious schemes of which the present century is so prolific, no system has yet been discovered capable of elevating the moral tone of society, of promoting temperance, unselfishness and thrift, of developing self-respect, and insuring domestic virtue any better than the old sects, however much they may have been weighted with adventitious matter and besmeared with the harlotries of modern Babylon. A change thus becomes to many a simple question of "jumping out of the frying pan into the fire."

Supposing—and we think the supposition a very reasonable one—that this condition of religious doubt and disbelief grows until it becomes pre-eminently the ruling sentiment of all classes, modified slightly by social position, education and tradition, what will be its probable effect on morality? We answer—a moral

chaos. For a short period, it is conceivable that the restraints of public opinion, fashioned under the old conditions and the fear of unwelcome responsibilities, would hold the first generation who reject revealed religion to a moderate standard of outward morality, but it can scarcely be hoped that in the next generation the same standard, however poor it be, would be maintained, either by the abstract idea of virtue or the positive law of the State. Social science cannot supply the place of religion, weak as men may have made much of it; and by the side of true religion what does it give in exchange for the verities of the gospel of Jesus Christ? A gospel of force—evolution, the struggle for existence, the survival of the fittest—a gospel which teaches the Englishman it is no shame to shoot Zulus, and the American that the Lamanite is his rightful prey. In the words of Mr. Roebuck, M.P., "The first business of a colonist is to clear the country of wild beasts, and the most noxious of wild beasts is the wild man." What will survive of that grand truth which holds together the families of mankind, that "God hath made of one blood all nations of men for to dwell on all the face of the earth?" Blot out this idea of the brotherhood of man and the fatherhood of God, ignore the glorious act of Divine self-sacrifice consummated on Calvary, requiring self-sacrifice from us in return, extinguish the gospel hope for the individual, its hope for the race, and what restraining barriers does positivism, infidelity or naturalism present? These are gospels of antagonism, gospels of policy, gospels of raging selfishness.

In every land where the English language prevails we have it said, to use the language of Prof. Goldwin Smith, "That the old rules are relaxed, and the old lines broken through; that commercial adventurers who have made fortunes by questionable means, unscrupulous political intriguers, and even brilliant courtisans occupy in virtue of their success, a position they never occupied before." This is but the beginning of the end, the shadow of a shade, but yet the warning of a coming deluge of irrestraint, in which each man shall be a law unto himself, his own passions the special pleaders, his selfishness the sole judge. Then might will be right, and the fittest—that is the strongest—will survive.

From this threatened catastrophe there is but one escape for the world. It is to turn back from its present course and accept the verities of latter-day revelation which it now rejects, for in that rejection lies the source, the cause, the reason and the fear of the hastening destruction. Naught else will deliver, nothing less will save.

THE WORK IN EUROPE.

WE publish, with pleasure, a few more items in regard to the progress of the work of God in Europe, gleaned from the *Millennial Star* of July 19th, which has only just come to hand.

Elder W. C. Parkinson writes encouragingly from the Newcastle Conference. Two persons had recently been baptized in the Stockton district, two in the South Church Branch and two had given their names for the ordinance in Newcastle.

Elder Hugh Findlay reports from Glasgow that eighty-six members had been added by baptism during the past eight months, with excellent prospects for an accumulated increase. The "Articles of our Faith" had been stereotyped for distribution by tens of thousands, by which means much good had been accomplished.

At a conference held in Glasgow June 27th, very interesting reports of their labors were given by the Elders, and the following were sustained in the various positions named:

Elder D. C. Dunbar to succeed Elder Hugh Findlay as President of the Glasgow Conference; also, Elders Thomas Jack, W. C. McGregor, James Low and James Houston, as traveling elders in the Glasgow Conference; as presidents of branches: John C. Gray, of Glasgow; Henry Wilson, of Parkhead; John Cunningham, of Irvine; Francis Marshall, of Kilmarnock; George Campbell, of Galston; Wm. Hartley, of Kilwinning; George Henderson, of Edinburgh; Wm. Robertson, of

Hamilton; Wm. Little, of Haywood; David Caoron, of Lanark; Robert Lamont, of Falkirk; Wm. Dyett, of Slamannon; Wm. Hood, of Benhar; James Elliot, of Loanhead.

On Wednesday, July 14th, President Budge left Liverpool for the Continent. He proposed visiting conferences in Denmark, Sweden, Norway and Germany, and probably the Netherlands. He was accompanied by Elders Moroni Snow and Lyman R. Martineau, and expected to be absent until sometime between the 18th and 22nd of August.

On Saturday, July 17th, Elder Peder Andersen, returning missionary, left Liverpool, for his home in Utah, on the S. S. *Arizona*. Elder Andersen arrived on a mission in November, 1878. He labored in Norway, encountering a good deal of difficulty in his ministry, on account of the poverty and opposition of the people. He baptized about thirty persons. The *Star* says:

He was released to return home with the company that left Liverpool on July 10th, but was prevented doing so by circumstances somewhat peculiar. He was on the point of leaving Stavanger for Christiania, with a party of fourteen emigrants that were going with the July company. Shortly prior to the time when the steamboat was expected to leave he was arrested by the police, on a charge of preaching and baptizing. He obtained permission to return to the boat, accompanied by a couple of officers, to transfer some business to another of the party. While one of the officers stood at the gangway, waiting for Bro. Andersen to appear on deck, the latter, by aid of one of the mates, passed him, disguised in a sailor's jacket and large oilskin hat. He was then hid away in another part of the vessel and thus escaped. The magistrate, however, telegraphed to Christiania, where he was on his arrival there again arrested and thrust into prison, where he remained three days in a miserable cell. He felt rather keenly when the time was slipping past when it was possible for him to accompany the emigrating Saints, with whom he had been released to return home. After he was taken out of jail the magistrate decreed that he should report himself to the police station twice each day that he might be known to be within reach when wanted. He succeeded in getting away from Christiania and reached Copenhagen, from which latter point he came to Liverpool.

He says that the elders have many obstacles to meet with on the Norwegian coast, where he labored. The officials are very bitter and the people generally degraded. He partially maintained himself by working with his hands, and in the same way obtained means to hire rooms to enable him to preach the gospel. Bro. Andersen says that had he not been released to return home he would not have exerted himself to elude the officers, but would have stayed in his field and taken the consequences resulting from preaching the gospel of Jesus Christ.

EDITORIAL NOTES.

When fraud, violence, or incompetence controls, the noblest constitutions and wisest laws are useless. —Hancock.

Vain glorious men are the scorn of wise men, the admiration of fools, the idols of parasites and the slaves of their own vaunts.

During the last ten years, Missouri's increase of population has been over 33 per cent., while that of Ohio has been 19 per cent. and of Illinois 20 per cent.

"The right of trial by jury, the habeas corpus, the liberty of the press, the freedom of speech, the natural rights of persons and the rights of property, must be preserved." —Hancock.

There are in the United States and Territories 843 daily papers, 58 tri-weeklies, 123 semi-monthlies, 7,590 weeklies, 43 bi-weeklies, 123 semi-monthlies, 870 monthlies, 14 bi-monthlies, 55 quarterlies; in all, 9,723 publications. So we learn from Geo. P. Rowell & Co's Newspaper Directory.

The official figures show that the profits on the silver coinage of the United States for the past three years—that is, the difference between the cost of the bullion and the value of the coin into which it was made—have been over ten million dollars. The coinage of standard dollars during that period was nearly sixty-four millions.

NORTH CAROLINA AND VIRGINIA CONFERENCE.

MOUNT AIRY, Surry Co., N. C.

The North Carolina and Virginia Conference was held near War Hill, Surry Co., N. C. July 24th and 25th, 1880.

There were present on the stand, Elders H. G. Boyle, Aaron D. Thatcher, R. A. Ballantyne, Seth M. Langton, Thos. Farr, Geo. O. Pitkin and W. W. Fife from the Virginia Conference, and James H. Moyle, N. W. Taylor and G. R. Hill of the North Carolina Conference.

Elder H. G. Boyle was chosen to preside, and G. R. Hill and R. A. Ballantyne clerks of Conference.

Elder H. G. Boyle made a few remarks upon the object of the Conference.

Elder A. D. Thatcher spoke of the office and calling of the Elders, and bore a strong testimony of the truth of the same, and promised all who would obey it, a testimony for themselves.

Elder Thos. Farr addressed the congregation on the gift and power of the Holy Ghost, and said it was necessary for the former day Saints to have it, in order to understand the principles of the Gospel, and it is just as necessary for us to have the same, that we may know the way of truth.

Elder James H. Moyle said we believed in the Bible; in his travels he found that nearly all people pretended to believe in it. But do they follow its teachings? Asked do we find the gospel upon the earth, as it was in the days of Jesus. Paul, in his writings says: The time will come when men shall be proud, boasters, etc., having a form of godliness but denying the power thereof, and as he traveled among the people of the world and examined into their doctrines, he found that they were in that condition.

Elder H. G. Boyle said he had been much interested in the remarks that had been made. The speakers had proven all they had said, by this book, the Bible, and there is not a principle in our doctrine that we cannot prove by it.

Meeting adjourned till 3 p.m.

3 p.m.

Elder Seth M. Langton spoke at some length on the unchangeableness of the gospel, plainly showing that there is only one way for the human family to be saved, and bore a faithful testimony to the truth of the work.

Elder N. H. Taylor said it requires a great deal of preaching to get the people to understand the principles of the gospel. The speaker referred to the dispersion of the children of Israel, and that they were to be gathered in the last days. He exhorted the Saints to be humble.

Elder G. R. Hill quoted from the first Chapter of Galatians, 8 & 9 verses. We find the Apostles taught faith on the Lord Jesus Christ, repentance of sins, by forsaking them, and the laying on of hands for the reception of the Holy Ghost; that these sacred ordinances are to be attended to by those having authority from God, which authority they must receive by revelation through his prophets.

Elder H. G. Boyle bore his testimony to what had been said, and exhorted the people to examine the principles taught. The people cannot get away from the testimony of the Elders, because it is accompanied by a power that they cannot resist. The destruction of the wicked is near at hand. The voice is "Come out of her, O my people, that ye partake not of her sins and receive not of her plagues."

Adjourned till 10.30 a. m. to-morrow.

Sunday, July 25th, 10.30 a. m.

Elder H. G. Boyle explained why the sacrament was instituted, and that those who partake of it should understand that if they partake of it unworthily they would eat and drink condemnation to their own souls.

The sacrament was then administered.

Elder H. G. Boyle had obeyed the gospel in his "teens" and since that time he had traveled fifty or sixty thousand miles proclaiming the gospel, this being his eleventh or twelfth mission, and had visited among this people, who had treated him very kindly. It was said of the Savior when he ended his sermon on the mount, that he spoke as one having authority. Why is it that

he spoke thus? Because he was sent by his father. He said unto his apostles, "Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you and ordained you." The speaker quoted many passages to prove the necessity of authority from God to administer in his name, and testified that it was again restored to the earth. He concluded his remarks by proving from the scriptures the object of baptism to be for the remission of sins.

Elder G. O. Pitkin said; Thirty-three years ago yesterday the pioneers entered Salt Lake Valley. He had never heard anything taught by the Elders of the Latter-day Saints, but what was the power of God unto salvation. God is with his people and had restored the gospel of the Son of God in these days, as was seen by John the Revelator in the Isle of Patmos.

Adjourned till 2 p.m.

2 p.m.

The authorities of the Church were presented and sustained as follows: The Church authorities as sustained at the last April conference; John Morgan as president of the Southern States mission, with H. G. Boyle acting president during his absence; Jas. H. Moyle as president of the North Carolina conference, with N. W. Taylor, W. W. Fife and G. R. Hill as traveling elders; Henry G. Boyle as president of the Virginia conference, with Aaron D. Thatcher, R. A. Ballantyne, Seth M. Langton, Thomas Farr and George O. Pitkin as travelling elders in the Virginia conference; Wm. Hill president over the Pilot Mountain branch, North Carolina; Wm. B. Shelton president of the Mount Airy branch, North Carolina.

Elder R. A. Ballantyne spoke upon the organization of the church of God upon the earth, with apostles and prophets at the head, as it was anciently, for they were to continue in the church till we all come to the unity of the faith, etc. The speaker explained the principles of the gospel as contained in the Bible, which also have been revealed in our day.

Elder W. W. Fife said there are now about 1,000 different denominations all professing to teach from the Bible, and all differ in their doctrines; but when God had men upon the earth, endowed with power from on high, they would all teach the same doctrines and not differ one from another.

Elder H. G. Boyle said we often hear people say, "We would join the church if we knew what church to join." For a description of the Church of Christ, we need not go to any of the sects of the day, but to the Bible, for it contains a full description of the Church of God; explained what prophecy was for, and said we all want a testimony of the work we are engaged in, and a knowledge of the Son of God for ourselves, and not depending on the testimony of the eight witnesses of the New Testament.

Conference adjourned *sine die*.

Benediction by H. G. Boyle.

G. R. HILL,
R. A. BALLANTYNE,
Clerks of Conference.

P.S.—At this conference, there were about 500 present, and the best of attention and the best of order prevailed.

Correspondence.

SYLVESTER, Mecosta Co., Michigan, July 27, 1880.

Editors Deseret News:

Since writing you under date of June 12th, I have traveled much and preached a great deal in public and private. I went to Ottawa County and held several meetings in three different places. I think a good work can be done there. Elders I. W. Pierce, and G. Brigger, of Glenwood, Utah, sent me some German church works which are doing good amongst the German people there. I next went to Allegan County, where I have relatives. They received and treated me kindly. Through their influence I obtained a church to hold one meeting in had a full house—all were very still and interested. Went to Grand Rapids—got permission of the Mayor to preach in the park in the center of the city at 10 a. m. and 3 p. m. of July 4th. Four papers gave notice of it. Elders Butler and Spilsbury came Saturday night.

We went to the park at the appointed time, and I commenced a lecture on the rise, progress and travels of the Church, etc., go-