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CHICAGO, ILL., Saturday, August 28, 1896.

Bible Interpretation.

The Andover Review for April last, coming from the Puritan school of the prophets, Andover Theological Seminary, and held as the organ of the most staunch and steadfast old-time New England orthodoxy, has an article on "The Bible a Theme for the Pulpit," in which are some remarkable admissions, which it is not too late to refer to.

The Review says that intelligent ministers have a "new notion of the Bible," and the question is how much they shall tell of this notion, which is unlike the old belief in Bible inspiration and infallibility.

In plain English this means that the Bible is not plerarily inspired, that errors in fact and science are in its text, and that the preachers had best come out like men and say so,—to all which we give hearty assent.

On the other side of the Atlantic Canon Farrar, an eminent dignitary in the English Episcopal Church, gives his Bampton Lectures on Bible Interpretation, and lays down the ground that the book must be looked at as a progressive revelation, and approached with the same use of reason and critical scholarship by which any other book would be examined.

Human knowledge and experience are to be brought to the study of the Bible. Revelation is to be viewed in the light of the knowledge of the present. The past has not been altogether unproductive. From each age "some element of elucidation, some fragment of knowledge, some flash of light" has been inherited.

These are plain words from orthodox sources, so plain and forcible as to need no comment. Their significance is greater than we fully realize, for they are the beginning of the end of all bibliolatry, and foreshadow the good day when the soul shall be held answerable to the Bible, not as a master, its truths accepted,

but the load of its errors that now weighs them down to cast off.

Standing in the dawn of that day we can see that the Spiritualists are the only competent Bible interpreters. Without their method its spiritual significance is paltry. Its angel visitants, its visions and transfigurations, are held by liberal Unitarians and others as but irrational and mythical records of absurd and uncertain events,—as marvels not in accord with any law or in the line of any reasonable experience, and only fit to nourish decaying superstition and wonder-loving belief in miracles.

Shall the Heathen Burn Forever? Serious Congregationalist Troubles.

New England orthodox Congregationalism has been held as Puritan in its standards of thought, and Andover theological seminary as the school of the Puritan prophets, but a breath of nineteenth century air has reached the seminary cloisters and stirred the souls of Congregationalists, not only in New England but far over the land.

A new controversy is going on, not touching superficial matters, but in regard to things held as the foundations of faith. Since the hot old word, by which bad men still swear and by which good men made sinners feel and fear the wrath of God, has been banished from the revised version of the Bible, and the mild sheel has taken its place, the old notions of future punishment have greatly changed.

The prudential committee of the American Board, while waiting more definite instructions from that body, decline to commission men who are not prepared to reject the hypothesis of a possible future probation for such heathen as die without a knowledge of the "historic Christ."

They are troubled by clerical applicants for missionary employ, who accept this humane hypothesis, and who really begin to think that it would be unjust in Deity to roast men eternally for being ignorant of a person whom it was impossible for them to know anything about while on earth.

A New Haven letter to the New York Sun tells of a leading theologian who portrays "dangers which threaten the cause of Christian missions from the course pursued by the Home Secretary of the American Board, in erecting a creed of his own selection into a standard of orthodoxy by which to test persons offering themselves for missionary service in foreign lands."

The reply made to this is that the Secretary has set up no creed "but has simply insisted that the missionaries be not tinctured with the heretical and dangerously false doctrines now being promulgated by the Andover theologians." How are the mighty (at Andover) fallen, when such things are said of them!

The Chicago Advance, the western Congregational organ, charges these Andover heretics with using every method to force their peculiar views on the churches, in the west as well as in the east.

Dr. John Todd of New Haven has withdrawn from the Congregationalist Association and written a sharp letter rebuking them for endorsing orthodoxy who hold "unsound and unorthodox views on future punishment." Rev. Dr. Munger and Dr. Smyth of that city are the two new preachers of these unsound views, and seem to hold their own pretty well notwithstanding the wrath of their opponents.

It looks like undertaking the impossible to keep Congregationalism in Dr. Todd's old ruts, but when a sect tries to enlarge its views its old D. D.'s make bigoted protest.

The old American Board finds its funds grow less, and the old zeal wax cold, because the people do not, as of old, believe in the eternal punishment of all the heathen—especially since they are finding out that some good pagans are far better than some poor Christians. The dispute is grave and far-reaching, but good will come of it.

All sails set our way, and as dogmas die Spiritualism lives.

A clergyman in Augusta, Ga., has been on trial before the presbytery for heresy. His offense is that he has intimated a belief in Darwinism.

THREE TRAMPS ON THE TRAIL.

The Editor's Party Headed Northwest—The Start—The Road—Gossip on the Rail—Reminiscence—An August Night in a Wagner—St. Paul—First Impressions of Minnetonka—St. Louis Hotel—A Word about M. D. Shutter—Around the Lake—A Dilapidated Belle—Hay Fever—Land Sharks.

We are three—Mrs. Bundy, Curtis, and I. The purpose of the journey is to get beyond the stamping ground of that unconscionable summer stalker, Hay Fever. While Mrs. Bundy is the only one of the party who needs to keep clear of his track, the rest are glad of an excuse to get away. A big city, even when so exceptionally pleasant as Chicago, gets wearisome and uncomfortable as dog-days come along.

The first objective point is St. Paul, to which point Curtis checks our baggage. The big clock in the station tower strikes the quarter, the train despatcher's gong sounds the starting signal and at 2:45 P. M. to a second, the train conductor cries A-L-L aboard!

To give myself a "metaphysical treatment" I take a retrospective glance and compare the transportation facilities of the day with those of my youth. I am not so very old indeed, a would-be Christian gentleman has lately spoken of me as a "modern youth", though when one is forty-five he can hardly call himself young.

But let us get out of the woods and back to the railroad. The "North Western" now traverses a half-dozen States, each an empire of itself, and reaches into or through as many Territories; and the history of this corporation is but that of many another.

Beloit is reached at six o'clock and as we hurry through the brisk little city, catching a glimpse of its college buildings and the waters of Rock River, I suggest supper. No one dissents, and we go forward to the dining car which has been hauled with us all the way from Chicago to furnish this meal to the passengers.

The night grows apace and the porter grows tired; he has turned the cushioned seats into sleeping berths—upper and lower—has transformed the elegant sitting room into a sleeping apartment with a long narrow passage through the centre, guarded on either side by heavy curtains.

Tuesday, the 17th, we take the conventional tour of the lake. The Belle of Minnetonka is the name of an enormous side-wheel steamer, making the daily round. She can carry two thousand passengers easily, and has had twenty-six hundred on board.

of dark forest beyond. The clear tones of a cornet come softly across the moonlit bay bidding us welcome; the graceful little boat shoots through the water toward the dock, the full moon shows her face above the tree-covered hills, and smiling upon water and land they reflect the glorious light of her face and we rapturously exclaim, "The enchanted Summer-land!"

Five minutes more and we step on shore; a pleasant walk of two minutes brings us to the St. Louis hotel. This is a gala night; row upon row of Chinese lanterns decorate the front of the long building. Within, handsome women arrayed in ball dress fit through the halls, drawing rooms and corridors, escorted by brave men—I conclude they must be brave—dressed in the regulation evening suit.

Saturday, the 14th, is our first day at Minnetonka and we pass it quietly, listening to the fish stories of the usual size and decoration.

On Sunday we give the morning hours to correspondence, and in the afternoon listen to a discourse in the parlors by Rev. M. D. Shutter of Minneapolis. The sermon is a strong, manly, unsectarian effort, with more of an ethical than religious flavor.

Mr. Shutter is only one among hundreds, and possibly thousands, of preachers who feel the insecurity of the old faith and are constantly on the alert for a new and better basis of belief.

Nature has done grandly here, but the sordid, two-cent policy of those who came in and gobbled up the shores of this queen of all the ten thousand Minnesota lakes, is too mean and grasping to be tolerated.

The meagre, crude accommodations for comfort, the general air of shiftlessness, the dirt, want of paint, the whole ensemble of this dilapidated Belle make her a disgrace to Minnetonka.

