

## Our Contributors.

### MR. OLDTIMES ON THE MCKINLEY BILL.

BY KNOXONIAN.

Mr. Oldtimes is one of the original settlers. He came from the Old Country about fifty years ago, and settled in the bush. Powerful muscles, sound nerves, good digestive organs, a half-crown and an axe were his capital. His only partner was his young wife. Mr. and Mrs. Oldtimes endured many hardships when they settled in the bush, but they were a brave young couple, and, fighting life's battle bravely and well, they won. Mr. Oldtimes never had nervous dyspepsia. The only time he ever knew he had a stomach was at meal time. He never examined his meals with a microscope. Mrs. Oldtimes never had hysterics or any fashionable trouble. For years she laboured under the antiquated delusion that a wife's first duty is to help her husband and take care of her home. This wretched delusion was so thoroughly wrought into her mind and conscience by her Old Country mother that it clung to her through life. The Oldtimes' family did well. The old gentleman has something laid up for a rainy day; the boys are rising in the world, and, as it is generally assumed that the girls will make women like their mother, they get good offers—that is, those of them that have not accepted a good offer already.

Mr. Oldtimes is not a bad speaker. He got a fairly good English education in the parish school at home; he has been reeve of his township, warden of his county, and has more than once nominated the political candidate of his party. For many years he has read—well, we won't say what paper he has read. That might savour of party politics, you know. Seeing that his neighbours were somewhat anxious about the effects of the McKinley Bill, Mr. Oldtimes agreed to address them on that subject, and without straining our imaginations to any dangerous extent we may suppose that he said something like this:—

Gentlemen, I shall not say anything about Mr. McKinley himself for two reasons. I don't know anything about him except that he is a member of Congress and a strong Protectionist. Being a plain farmer like yourselves I cannot discuss matters that I don't know anything about. Learned men can discuss questions whether they know anything about them or not, but we farmers must stick to matters we know. Most likely Mr. McKinley is a sharp politician who has his eye on the farmers' vote for the next election. If so he resembles some of our own. There is another reason why I don't say anything about Mr. McKinley. If I did try to score him a little he might never see my speech, and if he did he might light his cigar with it. Never score a man if he does not care a straw for the scoring. That is the mistake that some newspapers are constantly making. They attack men who never read them. The men attacked care nothing for the attack beyond having a general aversion to the paper and all connected with it.

Nor shall I say anything, gentlemen, about the relation of our own political parties to this Bill. Whether the Dominion Government has done all it could do with self-respect towards getting reciprocal trade; whether the other party, if in power, could or would do more; whether Free Trade or a measure of Reciprocity would or would not be good things in themselves, are questions that will be fully discussed at the elections. Meantime, gentlemen, I want to enlarge on one idea. You may perhaps say that an idea is not enough for a speech. Gentlemen, how many speeches have you heard that hadn't one idea in them? How many sermons have you listened to in which you couldn't find an idea with a microscope? Gentlemen, I say one idea is quite enough for a speech if the idea is a big one. A man ought to be thankful if he has one good idea. Good ideas are not picked up every day. One good point well made and sent home to stick is worth a hundred points half made that don't stick at all. Now, gentlemen, prepare yourselves for my one point. Put yourselves in a receptive mental attitude. My point is this:—

THOUGH THE MCKINLEY BILL SHOULD DO AS MUCH HARM TO CANADA AS THE MOST DOLOROUS PESSIMIST SAYS IT WILL DO, YOU ARE THEN IN A HUNDRED TIMES BETTER POSITION THAN YOUR FATHERS WERE FIFTY YEARS AGO.

You say the McKinley Bill will spoil our horse trade with the United States. Your fathers had no horses. Most of them began with oxen, and drove nothing but oxen for years, and still they got along. If they made themselves and their families fairly comfortable for years without any horses at all, surely their sons might stand a reduction in the price of horse flesh for a year or two.

You say this new tariff will destroy the barley trade. Well supposing it does. Your fathers got on fairly well without barley. The barley trade is a comparatively new industry. It is confined to certain localities and if there is an end to it why you must just do as your fathers did. When they were worsted in one line they tried something else.

We hear a good deal about eggs. In the early days there was not one hen in a township for every hundred there is at the present time, and yet the old settlers worked along and got good homes for themselves. And hay, we hear much about hay. Don't you know, gentlemen, that our fathers had to cut down the forest and clear up the land before they ever raised a ton of hay. Surely if they hewed the hay fields out

of the forest you might contrive to live on them after they are hewn out.

We hear a great deal about poor markets and low prices. Many of your fathers drove their produce twenty, thirty or forty miles—some of them with ox teams—sold the best wheat for 50 or 60 cents, and took their pay in store goods. There was little cash in those days. If a man did not want the store goods he got what was called a "due-bill." Many of your fathers carried flour on their backs for miles to keep their families in bread. Your mothers made with their own hands every article of clothing worn by their families for years. Some of you spend more money on one visit to the Toronto Fair than your fathers saw the first five years they were in the country. You wear more tailor-made clothing in a year now than your fathers wore in the first twenty they spent in cutting your homes out of the forest. There is more silk on a concession now than there was in a township fifty years ago. There are more comforts in a house now than there were in half a country in the "good old times." As good men as any of us were rocked in a sap trough. A sap trough is not a very stylish kind of cradle, but anything lacking in the cradle was more than made up in the baby. The baby is more important than the cradle.

Gentlemen, do I ask you to go back and live as your fathers did fifty years ago? No, I don't do anything so foolish. You could not do so if you tried. In many cases it would not pay to do so. Your fathers walked. It pays you better to ride on the railway. Your fathers were often their own mechanics. It pays you better to employ a tailor, a shoemaker, a carpenter and any other kind of mechanic you need. Besides, comfort and elegance are good things, and if you have a measure of these in your homes be thankful for them.

What then do I ask? I ask you to stop speaking about this McKinley Bill as if it were sure to ruin the country. Did your fathers sit down and whine over their hardships? No, they did nothing of the kind. They cleared up their farms, built their school houses and churches, put up good barns and comfortable houses, and did all this in the face of hardships a hundredfold greater than Mr. McKinley and his Bill can inflict upon the farmers of Canada. Go you and do likewise. By all means secure the best trade relations with everybody that you can, but you will generally find that some neighbours are never so obliging as when they find you can get on quite well without them.

### THE EVOLUTION IN THE MANIFESTATION OF THE SUPERNATURAL.

(Concluded.)

Passing on from the appearance of man to the third period, connected with the coming of Jesus Christ, a further evolution in the manifestation of the supernatural is reached. The possibility of such advance is involved in the reality of the disclosures already noticed in the constitution of outward nature and of man. A God who had not the power yet more specially to reveal Himself would be reduced to the level of a mere natural force. To assert that nothing more of the supernatural can be manifested is to assert either that the human mind is naturally omniscient, or that all which is beyond the natural manifestation of the divine is incapable of being apprehended. Nor can any objection be made to special revelation grounded in the immutable nature of God. Immutability demands consistency of principles, but not necessarily invariableness of actions. Nor is there any reason for representing this further evolution as an after-thought, designed to meet exigencies previously unprovided for. It may very well form part of the original plan. The necessity of additional manifestation of the divine nature is justified by the fact that, without it, men have nowhere generally attained even to the knowledge concerning God, which is revealed apart from Scripture. This necessity is further justified by the strange moral condition of man, on account of which he needs a higher light, to discern his true destiny as a spiritual being, and to enable him to realize it. Recognizing his obligation to obey the moral law, he is compelled at the same time to recognize his failure to do so, in setting up an ideal of duty lower than he ought to entertain, in falling short of his own ideal, and in many direct transgressions. In all this man recognizes a strange problem of moral disorder, but finds for it no solution.

As external nature formed the fitting sphere for the dominion of man, so man's spiritual nature formed a fitting sphere for the kingdom of God. In this manifestation all the divine attributes, which have already appeared, again come to light. But what is specially characteristic here is, that God is made known in Christ, through self-sacrifice reconciling the world to Himself, becoming a burden-bearer, that His creatures may be raised to be partakers of His own divine nature. The revelation in Christ completes those progressive manifestations of grace, which had been taking place ever since the need of reconciliation arose, and whose history the Scriptures contain. The abiding presence of the Holy Spirit in the Church professedly secures the continuance of the completed supernatural manifestation. As the Old and New Testaments are organically connected in setting forth Christ, so Christianity has its root in Him.

Is the life recorded in the Gospels really a further evolution of the same supernatural agency, traceable in outward nature and in man? We have to do here with the trustworthy account of a real life. In the writings of the early Christian ages, there is ample confirmation of this. Even apart from

these, the fourfold record cannot be explained, except on the supposition that it is a record of facts. Every attempt to explain it otherwise breaks down. It surpasses the powers of literary invention. It treats of an age too advanced for the annals to be mythical. There was not sufficient time before the Gospels were written for the formation of legends, nor do they bear the character of such writings. Moreover, if legendary, that fact could hardly have remained unknown, alike to those accepting, and those rejecting them. That Christianity with its literary basis in the Scriptures, and its centre in Christ, is a further stage in the evolution of supernatural agency, may be established by showing that in it the divine attributes already traceable again appear, but now in essentially higher form, and, furthermore, that all these manifestations are dominated by the supremely gracious purpose of redeeming mankind through self-sacrifice.

Connected with the life of Christ is noticeable an exercise of supernatural power, essentially higher than had been manifested in outward nature and in man. The products of this power, when exercised over physical nature, are designated miracles. These consist of occurrences in the sphere of nature, which can be accounted for, neither by the ordinary uniformities known as laws of nature, nor by the agency of man, but are produced in acknowledged obedience to the will of God, and for ends worthy of Him. The possibility of such events does violence to no necessary principle of thought, and must be granted by all who acknowledge that there is a Divine Being, corresponding to the disclosures otherwise made. To doubt this possibility would necessitate the conception of a supernatural agency acting altogether by necessity of nature, a conception at variance alike with the intelligence and moral government of the Supreme Being. Such facts as the beginning of organic life and of rational existence are not consistent with the impossibility of miracles. Not only so, it is antecedently probable that occurrences of this nature would accompany such a work as the redemption of mankind through the self-communication of God. The satisfaction of the need expressed in man's moral condition demands a manifestation of the supernatural, such as in some of its phases would naturally embrace a high exercise of divine power. The power seen in the miracle is not simply an attestation that divine agency actuates the worker, but is itself a manifestation of that agency, and is connected with other redemptive tributes. The miracle is not an arbitrary exercise of omnipotence, a prodigy, parallel with the frivolous examples, and liable to the frivolous objections sometimes employed to discredit it. It is an integral part of a self-manifestation in grace. Consequently its occurrence will have the highest probability if the fulness of this gracious revelation is to be attained. A manifestation in which God entered into human history and achieved the redemption of His creatures by self-sacrifice could not be other than miraculous. The entrance of human life—the incarnation—is a miracle. The sign that redemption is completed—the resurrection—is also a miracle. These are constitutive of this manifestation in grace. In relation to them all other miracles, organically connected, are strictly in keeping, as natural accompaniments. In common with other factors in revelation, they point towards the restoration of the world from that shock and disorder introduced by sin. To all except the immediate witnesses, the proof that such occurrences actually took place must rest on testimony. This is so ample and reliable on their behalf, that it cannot well be turned aside, except by the denial that any conceivable testimony can establish such events. Our knowledge of the powers and limits of nature is sufficient to prevent the explanation, that the miracles as described can issue either from known natural laws, or from possible agencies in nature hitherto unrevealed. The denial that any possible testimony can establish what had originally been a matter of experience is a denial of the validity of testimony, which no one thinks of making when it relates to other matters.

This supernatural power, connected with the work of Christ, is manifested also in the spiritual sphere, not simply in the bodies of men or other natural objects, but also in the inward rational nature. He who said to the palsied, "Arise, take up thy bed," said also, "Son, thy sins are forgiven." The multitudes who have heard a similar voice, and who have experienced hearts renewed by the spirit of grace, are witnesses to manifestations of God within them, in which His power is strikingly shown forth. The believer finds that in his experience there was formerly the consciousness of a native antagonism, alike to the mercies and obligations of the Christian religion. There is now the consciousness that this antagonism has been turned into harmony, that dislike has given place to cordial acceptance. This change, he knows is not self-originated, not due simply to fresh intellectual light or moral vigour, but one in which he is constrained to recognize a supernatural power, using the Word of Scripture to produce newness of life. He has ventured himself on the truth and divine character of Christianity and its founder, and that venture has been justified in him. It is true this manifestation cannot be strictly communicated to those who remain destitute of such experience. Christ spoke of a manifestation to His disciples, which was not unto the world. But the testimony of those to whom this manifestation is given remains valid and cannot in fairness be doubted or rejected by those who refuse to comply with the conditions which make it possible. Besides, marked outward results of that inward power often are discernible in the effect produced on the life. Sometimes it results in the infusion of new power into the former sphere of life, sometimes in the change of the entire