

# The Wesleyan.

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## MOUNT ALLISON ANNIVERSARY.

THE ORATION OF WM. ELDER, ESQ., A.M.,  
ON "EDUCATION, IN ITS ENFRANCHISING  
INFLUENCES."

(From the *Chignecto Post*.)

In our last issue, we promised to give our readers an outline of this oration, as we continue to call it, despite Mr. Elder's modest protest, and we now endeavor to fulfil our promise as far as circumstances permit. After some introductory remarks, in which a hearty compliment was paid to the munificence of the late Charles F. Allison in founding the institutions; to the Wesleyans who sustained them; to the learning, zeal and ability of the professors; and to the standing of many of the Alumni; Mr. Elder spoke of the fact that the Institutions were in the last decade of their 50th year, a period comparatively long in the history of a young country, but he said their lineage was more honorable than their age, and went back to the far distant past. He recognized in the Mount Allison Wesleyan College a worthy descendant of those ancient schools of learning with which Europe became dotted after the fall of Constantinople, and which had a famous history. They attracted to them hundreds of thousands of students whose zeal, self-sacrifice and love of learning were very great. Many of them were poor and ill clad. Some of them actually begging their way over a great portion of Europe, that they might sit at the feet of some teacher of note in Paris, in Bologna, in Oxford. As the plants stretched forth its tendrils towards the light, as the bird greeted with song the rays of the morning sun, so did these ardent youths hail the new learning. The universities of Great Britain were in the true line of academical, or even apostolical succession from those of Medieval Europe, that of Glasgow having been founded by Pope Nicholas V. As one who has participated in the studies of those universities, "I bear to you," said the orator, "the fraternal greetings of your fellow-workers elsewhere; your kin beyond the sea." I congratulate you on the comparatively happy period which marks the closing decade of the 19th century.

He said that it was the great possibilities of our schools and colleges, the good they might effect, and the great men they might produce which interested him most. He referred to another youth, also without family pretensions, who was a student at the time, and who prefixed to his first novel the motto—  
Why then the world's mine oyster,  
Which I with sword will open.  
The sword which the author of "Vivian Gray" used was fashioned out of the liberal learning, persistence and ambition, which bore on that well known personage to fame and fortune, and taught him as they enabled others also to know "when to take occasion by the hand." But the Gladstones, Disraelis, etc., were few, and toil was the lot of the millions. Would liberal culture exercise an enfranchising and strengthening influence on men in general? did it do so in past times? would it still do so, if mind and heart were brought under the influence of truth, whether human or divine? He argued that men in any sphere, were higher than their trades, and could not live by bread alone, but needed liberal culture, even more than persons in a higher social circle, in order to enable them to control their passions and appetites. He took the case of a farmer, and pointing out the relations between a knowledge of geology and of tillage, asked if the one study would not at once promote and dignify the other? The same principle applied even to poets, who might be supposed to be able to dispense with the discipline of schools, but could not. They saw what Tennyson owed to culture; they remembered what Carlyle had said of the great loss that Burns had suffered from want of culture, and how it stood in the way of his doing what it was in him to do. Mr. Carlyle compared an educated man to one who stood in the midst of a boundless area-

nal and magazine, filled with all the weapons which men had been able to devise from the earliest times, and who worked accordingly with a strength borrowed from all past ages; while the uneducated man stood without the fortress, which he could neither storm nor unbar its gates. "A dwarf behind his steam engine might remove mountains, but no dwarf will hew them down with his pick-axe." Mr. Carlyle himself, the great iconoclast of shams, the great critic, biographer and historian, was a proof of the power and the enfranchising influences of a liberal education, but it was pleasing to know that he had adhered to some of the most precious truths which he had learned in his Shorter Catechism, when a boy, and knew that he could not outgrow the prayer which, with his little folded hands, he had learned by his mother's knee, when he was taught to say, "Our Father which art in Heaven," the first words in religion and the last words in philosophy.

In taking a historic view of the way in which the mind gained strength and power by liberal culture, enabling it to cast off prejudices and superstitions, the growth of ages, Mr. Elder described how astrology, of whose dread influence in past times he gave a graphic account, had given way to the sublime science of astronomy, though some little remnants of the former were still to be seen. They had Zaddiel's prophecies, and Gipsy fortune tellers, but they were harmless as the predictions of Vennor, or the forecasts of the young lady who traced our fate in cards; whereas once the heavenly bodies and all their phenomena were supposed to be ever revealing the histories and fates of men, especially great men.

THE WARRIOR'S SPIRIT IS BLOOMING IN THE SKIES,  
THE WORLD IS DARKENED WHEN A HERO DIES.

These superstitions had given way before a knowledge of the facts of physical science. Some regretted this and adopted the lament of the poet, who exclaimed:—

When science from creation's face,  
Her lovely veil withdraws,  
What glorious visions yield the place  
To cold material laws!

But the thought that the bachelor alumni, at least, would agree with him that science, like a fair woman, appeared all the more charming with the veil withdrawn, and that for one glorious vision which had disappeared in consequence of the advance in science, it had supplied thousands instead. They had now ceased to be troubled by unlucky stars or days. If any young lady still refused to be married on Friday, the ceremony could be performed with impunity on any of the other days of the week. He did not know whether the virtues of witch-hazel, or mineral rods were yet wholly exhausted, but he did not believe that those implements of discovery were used in searching for gold at Montague diggings or for oil or albertite at Beliveau. They were as much out of date as the royal cure for the King's evil, though the great Queen Elizabeth and the good Queen Anne practised the rite, and though Charles II. had touched some 10,000 persons for that disease during his reign, the miracle of healing being always performed after due notice given, and with appropriate religious ceremonies. But the most instructive illustrations of the way in which the advances in physical science and liberal learning, aided by a more humane philosophy and better knowledge of the letter and spirit of the Sacred Scriptures, which had often been so interpreted as to favor superstitious practices, were derived from the histories, religious persecutions, and the bloody criminal code of England, which, until recent years, contained 223 crimes punishable with death. Mr. Elder drew a dark picture of the times in which such errors and cruelties prevailed, with all their tragic results. He showed that when education was neglected, no amount of severity could repress either crime or pauperism; on the contrary these became yawning gulfs, absorbing the property of the nation; while education at once stimulated the industries of the country, and restored its morals. Often, however, it was found that it was only by questioning the dicta of authority and arraying the inductions of science against it or by true interpretation that any progress could be made. The persecutions the hangings and burning of witches were due to misinterpretation of a word in the Rigveda, or rather the alteration of a couple of letters in a word, as shown

by Max Muller and others. The fact of religious persecutions grew out of the exploded idea that theological error was of the nature of crime and ought to be punished. He quoted authority to show that it was between the writings of Bacon and Locke that Chillingworth first taught a contrary doctrine, and that it was between the same writings that the writ *hæretico comburendo* was expunged from the Statute book, and that the soil of England was for the last time stained with the blood of unbelievers. The picture drawn of the way in which ignorance produced fear, and led to so many horrid judicial murders, two thousand vagrants being put to death in the reign of Henry VIII. alone, the character of some of the crimes which were made capital offences, and the indignities offered to the dead bodies of the criminals were strikingly delineated, but our space will not permit us to go further into details. We must not forget, however, that Mr. Elder referring to Cicero's eulogium on studies and books, passed a still more elaborate one on modern books, the like of which, he Cicero had never seen. He particularly spoke of the works of the moderns in criticism, history, exegesis, etc., which had revealed men to themselves in a way they never knew before, the Germans being the pioneers in the work of reconstructing human knowledge in those departments, but now the English in the same field were equally distinguished. Towards the close, the orator inquired if the ameliorating influences of education, in which he included those of religion as well, had done their work in softening the manners, enlarging the mind and purifying the heart. The answer was in the negative, and Mr. Elder hinted

liberal culture had to do its work, and in which authority ought to be superseded by the conclusions of sound interpretation and accredited science. As a specimen of what ought to be done, he went at some length into the land and labor questions, in a radical spirit, yet, holding that vested interests, which stood in the way of human progress, as called for by the enfranchising influences of liberal education, should not be ignored, but their representatives indemnified. He concluded an elaborate and often eloquent argument, by a peroration of great beauty and force. He said that great and numerous as were the obstacles in the way of men's progress to freedom and entire enfranchisement, and great as was the work to be done in the school and college, as well as in the retirement of *sevens* and scholars, the course of humanity must be onward. Before the ice broke up in our great rivers, they formed highways for traffic, and to one who had no experience it would never seem as if the ice-king would never relax his grasp. But the sun gathers strength, the ice begins to dissolve, it becomes thinner and thinner; it breaks. Little streaks of blue water begin to be seen, they become wider and wider. Lately the water was cribbed, cabined and confined. Now the water gains the mastery and sweeps the ice-floes onward. They meet obstacles, they are piled for a time in heaps, they form miniature icebergs. But they are borne on, to the ocean, to be swallowed up in its depths, leaving the blue, free sparkling waters behind, prepared for all the demands of commerce and all the necessities of life. So was it with the breaking up of the ignorance, the prejudices, the credulities, the mental and moral fetters, by which men were so long held captive in their centuries. It seemed at one time as if they would last forever. But there were influences at work fitted to destroy them, derived partly from the past and partly from the present. They represented many agencies and instrumentalities favorable to the grand result, nature itself, helping man as the earth in the Apocalypse helped the woman. The everlasting hills, the silent stars, the great oceans, nourished in men's hearts, the love of freedom. The discoverers who had used the forces of nature in giving man greater control over matter and in aiding him in scattering far and wide the printed page were pioneers in the cause. The poets had stirred men's souls with the songs of freedom; the patriots and warriors who bled and died for it; the great teachers and thinkers of the race who vindicated men's right to knowledge, to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness; the statesman who framed instruments of liberty, Magna Charta, bills of right,

acts of emancipation, deeds of manumission, declarations of independence; the preachers of righteousness who gave the sanctions of religion to the acts of heroes; all these were co-workers in carrying on the great and God-like work of human enfranchisement. Nor would their number ever grow less, or their voices cease to be heard until their work was done. The Girondists ere they were led forth to death, joined in singing hymns of liberty, and their numbers being large, the song swelled into a mighty chorus. But as one after another was led forth to death, the chorus waxed fainter and fainter; at last there was but a single voice to chant the hymn, and soon that also ceased and silence reigned. But the reverse will be the case with the friends and promoters of liberal culture and human enfranchisement. The chorus which they raise is ever being increased in volume and power, nor will their work ever go backward. The rivers which did so in the past will again yield to the seductive influences of the ice-king. Their waters will again be frozen, still and silent; but the rivers of knowledge and freedom shall never cease to flow, nor will the fair trees planted near the banks cease to yield their goodly fruits which will minister alike to the intellectual and moral transformation of the nations. "Be it ours, rather," said the orator, "be it yours, my young friends, you who are just setting out on the journey of life, with reverence for the past, confidence in the present and faith in the future," to quote the words of a living statesman, "never to retard but always to advance, the happy consummation. Hasten happy time, so long desired, so long awaited, when knowledge, truth and righteousness cover the sea."

The close of the peroration was the signal for a burst of long continued applause.

## INGERSOLL'S MISTAKES.

REV. DR. PULLMAN ON INGERSOLL.

The Rev. Dr. Pullman, pastor of the Church of our Saviour, at Fifty-seventh-street and Eight-avenue, New York, delivered a discourse recently, on the subject of "Robert Ingersoll's Mistakes." After asserting that the characteristic of all true reform is that it gives more than it takes away, and that the advent of a reformer is a boon—a something to be hailed with satisfaction—the preacher said that he had caused a verbatim report of Mr. Ingersoll's Booth's Theatre lecture to be made in order to discover what kind of a reformer this man was. He must be credited with intrinsic felicities of style, a keen if not a refined wit, a touching pathos, and a certain justice in the plea. Some of the evils he complains of, though disingenuously stated, are true and need to be reformed. Ingersoll's atheism is the atheism of reaction from an extreme and therefore untrue presentation of truth, which calls for reform. When Joseph Cook in the Tremont Temple conducted an argument by his linked logic to prove that a vast majority of the human race is bound to be damned, an applause broke all over the house that had had no parallel, except the applause in hell, when Satan returned with the statement that he had set in motion a train of causes that would result in the ruin of the human race. Just so long as there exists an extreme like this there will be a Booth's Theatre extreme. Ingersoll's is a false and sensuous estimate of life—as if it ought to be a condition where every man should have a good time. He holds the gratification theory, and, like Herold Skimpole, wishes to throw off all responsibilities and enjoy life. His estimate is a low and sensuous one. In a lecture of 20,000 words on the subject, "What shall we do to be saved?" the word "conscience" occurs just once, and the word "character" not at all.

The preacher, after taking up in succession many of Ingersoll's statements and replying to them, summed up the lecturer's mistakes as follows:  
His estimate of what life ought to be, from which he draws the conclusion that there is no God, no moral order, no future, is a purely sensuous estimate, and may be condensed into this: "We do not have enough to eat and drink, we are sick, disappointed and sorry; therefore there is no God." He has no adequate idea of moral evil. He ascribes to the influence of religion those evils and disorders which arise solely from the defective moral nature of mankind. He ignores entirely the

"soul of goodness" in things evil, and the virtues that arise out of struggle and adversity. His capital error is in supposing that all human beliefs are invented by man, instead of arising out of the facts and conditions of life. His whole plea for intellectual liberty is founded on the assumption that men can endure truth from his intellect without any reference to facts. In other words, he is wholly unscientific. Many of the points which he makes as if they were fatal to all religion are in fact not vital to any. In his methods of attack, he commits all the errors that he denounces, and manifests the same intolerant spirit of which he complains.

He manifests gross ignorance of the vital forces of Christianity, of its history, its foundations, its place in human affairs; and especially of the reforms, modifications, and progress of its theology. As a reformer he is 800 years behind the age. He attacks some vulnerable points of what has been, as if there were no such thing as a modern religion, bringing forward the eternal truths free from their superstitions—a religion fruitful in hope and help, strong in moral guidance and control, and rich in great philanthropies. To detect the fallacy of his method, you have only to apply it to the science of law, government, education or medicine. Attacked by the same method, the most useful and indisputable sciences will yield the same food for the ridicule of the ignorant and thoughtless. Something more serious than mere mistake is visible in the flippant and jesting spirit in which he deals with the highest subjects of human thought; in his utter regardlessness of the sanctities which men rightly venerate; in the too subtle, and too insidious, and in the evidently deliberate and intended misstatements which appear in this lecture. Whatever may be the result of present controversies, the ideas of Mr. Ingersoll will fit no form of human society. With such thoughts, methods, and spirit, no peaceful and profitable, association of human beings is possible. The man who panders to a rollicking godlessness will not be a teacher of the truth; neither the cynic, the jester, nor the harlequin will bring liberty and regeneration to human society.

The death of Stephen is a bright passage in the earliest history of the Church. Where in the annals of the world, can we find so perfect an image of a pure and blessed saint as that which is drawn in the concluding verses of the seventh chapter of the Acts of the Apostles? And the brightness which invests the scene of the martyr's last moments is the more impressive from the contrast with all that has preceded it since the crucifixion of Christ. The first Apostle that died was a traitor. The first disciples of the Christian Apostles, whose deaths are recorded, were liars and hypocrites. The Kingdom of the Son of Man was founded in darkness and gloom. But a heavenly light reappeared in the martyrdom of St. Stephen. The revelations of such a character at the moment of death was the strongest of all evidences and the highest of all encouragements. Nothing could more confidently assert the power of the new religion; nothing could prophesy more surely the certainty of its final victory.

In an age when the ideal of a religious life was realized in the Baptist's withdrawing from men and burying himself in the ascetic solitude of the desert, Christ came, bringing religion into the haunts and homes and everyday life of men. For the mortifications of the hermit he substituted the labors of active benevolence; for the fears and gloom which shrank from men, he brought the light of a cheerful piety which made every act of daily life religious. He found the domain of religion fenced off as something distinct from common duties, and threw down the wall of separation and consecrated the whole sweep of existence. He lived, a man amongst men, sharing alike their joys and sorrows, dignifying the humblest details of life by making them subordinate to the single aim of his Father's glory. Henceforth the grand revolution was inaugurated, which taught that religion does not lie in selfish or morbid devotion to personal interests, whether in the desert or temple, but in loving work and self-sacrifice for others.—Gull.

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