

## OUR CONTRIBUTORS.

### FUNCTIONS OF THE PULPIT.

MR. EDITOR,—The last issue of "The Canada Christian Monthly" throws its influence upon the above important subject in a direction which lays it open to serious criticism. That publication is gaining for itself a high position under its new management, and I trust a hint from a friend on a subject of such practical importance will not be objected to. I refer to a sample of discourse given, and eulogized by the editor as I have not seen any one of the many other excellent ones he has published. It is one of ten preached on the Evidences of Christianity by one of our young ministers, and the C. C. M. editor remarks, "Happy is the land whose village and town pastors are able to preach in the ordinary course of their ministrations, such discourses as we find in this little volume."

Now, much has been said of late about the real or imagined decay of pulpit power, and upon the back of it all, in the good providence of God, we have had a happy reaction in favor of more Scriptural preaching than has prevailed in some quarters. It is a pity that this should be checked, yet there are many in the pews and perhaps some in the pulpit whose false notions on this subject might be strengthened by such utterances from such a source. It is for this reason that I venture to question their wisdom.

Two points here present themselves for consideration. - *First*, is it wise or right of a minister "in the ordinary course of his ministrations" to spend upon the "Evidences" the precious time and opportunities implied in a course of ten lectures? *Second*, is the specimen given valuable as a sample of what may be done in that way?

The first question involves much that is debateable, and cannot now be fully discussed. Suffice it to say that many of the most earnest workers and advocates of the truth in Evangelical Christendom at the present day, while not denying that there is a proper place for lectures on the "Evidences," especially in the education of Christian youth for the ministry or otherwise, are disposed to give them a very low place for the purpose our preacher tells us he had in view, viz., "to counteract the leaven of unbelief which is working among those who have not yet come to decided convictions as to Christianity, and their duty in relation to it." Their dependence is placed rather upon the preaching of the truth itself and the witness borne to it by the lives of Christ-like believers; and certainly they have a strong argument in the terms of the Master's commission and the example of Himself and His great apostle. Christ said, "preach the gospel," and added, "teaching them all things, whatsoever I have commanded you." Paul said, "nothing but Jesus Christ and Him crucified;" but we learn from his ministry at Ephesus, and his epistles in general, that that included "the whole counsel of God"—the truth of God as to doctrine and questions of daily life. But it does not appear that Master or servant was wont to trust the preaching of "evidences" for the Christianizing of unbelievers. For this they trusted the truth of the gospel "evidenced" by the Spirit of God and the consistent lives of believers. Thus Christ prayed for the holiness and unity of His people, "that the world may know Thou hast sent Me." And many other passages might be quoted to the same effect. There is little doubt that Moody and Sankey converted more infidels in London during their brief career than all the well-meant lecturers of the "Christian Evidence Society" in all the years of its existence. For brevity I omit details that might be adduced in illustration, and pass to the second question.

Something, no doubt, may be said as to the *right* of the preacher, if he choose to discuss in the pulpit apologetics found in the Bible itself, such as prophecies, miracles, character of Christ, etc., while the expediency of giving much time to such things remains doubtful; but the subject of this sermon is different, viz.: "The Bible in harmony with Natural Science, and in advance of its demonstrated facts." The discourse itself is, in my humble opinion, a sample of the signal failure which must attend the attempt to convert infidels by such discussions. Were the writer only consistent with his own views he must have adopted a different course. He says, "The Bible, in ages past, has suffered much in the attempts men have made to bring its statements into line with their peculiar ideas

of Natural Science." Yet he goes on to attempt the very thing he deprecates and condemns, viz.: to show the harmony of scripture with modern attainments in science, so far as in his opinion they may be considered "demonstrated facts," just as the well-meaning apologists he condemns did in the days when the long-discarded "Ptolemaic System" of astronomy was in vogue; while at the same time, in another connection, he says, "What is the history of Science but the history of contradictions? Indeed, there is hardly an established truth in Science, to-day, concerning which men have not uttered erroneous opinions. Opinions have been given forth with an air of certainty, and by-and-by some penetrating genius has shown their absurdity, and so they have given place to others."

At proper seasons and in proper places it may serve a good purpose to show that the "demonstrated facts" of modern science do not contradict Holy Scripture, but to teach that certain verses in the Bible really involved in them some of the most profound discoveries of the student of science in recent times is, I think, taking a course which is in itself unwarranted, and likely to be found now, as in the past, to give much color to the taunts of the sceptic. Yet this is what our young author attempts to do. In justice let us look at his illustrations. He adduces the great discovery of modern astronomy as to the revolution of our sun with his attendant system of planets around a central point in space in the direction of the Pleiades in the course of eighteen millions of years, as making clear David's statement in the nineteenth Psalm that the sun's "going is from the end of heaven and his circuit" (or established course or path) "unto the ends of it." "While science was ignorant of this truth, men sneered at this statement of the nineteenth Psalm. Ignorance does sneer, though it can ill afford to do so. Men to this day refuse to know that the Bible is wiser than science; that IT ALWAYS HAS BEEN FAR IN ADVANCE OF THE ATTAINMENTS OF SCIENCE." Certainly if this is what he means by the statement in capital letters, I must join company with those who "refuse to know" it—though no sceptic or rationalizing critic. How much better had he remained satisfied with the explanation which he gives of the same passage elsewhere (p. 68)—that the Bible is not intended to impart scientific truth. "And if it uses similes or metaphors borrowed from the realm of Natural Science, it usually employs language as understood by men in the ages in which the Bible was written. The Ptolemaic system of astronomy obtained throughout the world at that time." Elsewhere he adds the striking truth that notwithstanding the popular errors of the day, the inspired writers were wonderfully kept from anything inconsistent with recent discoveries. But he undertakes something very different from this, viz.; to show that they have "always been far in advance," and in so doing, resorts to a system of fantastic interpretation against which common sense at once rebels, not to speak of the recognized laws of exegesis. Continuing the proof, he says: "The Pleiades, around which our sun and his system, in eighteen millions of years, revolve—around which suns and systems 'innumerable' in solemn silence roll—whose influences bind all together in one vast universe—is thus referred to in the book of Job by God Himself, when He asks of the patriarch speechless and confounded, 'Canst thou bid the sweet influences of the Pleiades?' Surely the influences of the Pleiades must indeed be 'sweet,' when thereby is firmly and safely held and controlled a universe consisting of millions of suns and other attendant worlds." It were no doubt a very pleasing thought to indulge that this and similar scientific profundities had all the while lain hid in these Scripture phrases; but sober criticism tells us this beautiful figure in Job is an old Orientalism for spring, with which this constellation was, in the days the book was written, associated astronomically and poetically. Some of the other illustrations are still more doubtful. "Other facts of science, discovered long after the Bible was written, might be noted and dwelt upon, e.g., that the air has weight (Job xxviii. 25); that the winds and weather are under fixed laws, which they obey (Eccl. i. 6, 7); that the centre of the earth is in a molten state (Job xxviii. 5); that the rocks and stones of the earth might be melted (Ps. xcvi. 5); that fine gold may become transparent as clear glass (Rev. xxi. 18)—all of which, when science was ignorant of them, drew forth the sneers of sceptics." Here I would just like to ask, is it a scientific fact that "gold may become transparent as clear glass?" and if so, what right have we to conclude that the streets of heaven will be liter-

ally paved therewith? But let us finish with one more "remarkable instance, in the matter of the circulation of the blood, which is plainly foreshadowed in the words of the Preacher, the Son of David, who describes death as 'the pitcher broken at the fountain, or the wheel broken at the cistern' (Eccl. xii. 6). The emblem here is the water-wheels of Egypt, which by a chain of pitchers carried over them and into the river Nile, raise the water, which runs in a trench cut through the fields. Such, Harvey said in his great discovery, 'is the heart and its action.' Now I trust I do not 'take the scorer's chair' if I say this is NONSENSE! Surely it is apologetics gone daft to say that verse 'foreshadows' Harvey's great discovery! In all seriousness I ask, are these the foundations of our faith in revelation? Tell us, fellow-workers for the salvation of souls, is this the wise course to take when we 'would counteract the leaven of unbelief which is working among those who have not yet come to decided convictions as to Christianity, and their relation to it.' I know one preacher who years ago went forth from College with his mind and heart and library full of Natural Science, anticipating much delight in proclaiming the beautiful truth of the harmony of science and revelation; but the first sermon on the subject has not yet been preached, and will not until he has got through with the "all things whatsoever I have commanded you." In the words of the brother who has been I hope not unfairly criticised, "with all deference to, and respect for, science, the Bible has a far grander object. Its design is to impart to fallen man a knowledge of God, of our ruined state, and of the salvation which God has wrought for us in Christ Jesus. These are the central thoughts of the Bible." This is the Gospel—the mightiest weapon ever wielded by man. If we preachers could only learn to handle it aright, we would say as David did of Goliath's sword, "There's none like it!"

GOSPELLER.

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### ARCHBISHOP LYNCH'S CONTROVERSIAL WORK—VI.

On page 27 he says that "when Catholics only beg of the Virgin Mary to pray to her Son for them, and treat her as a mere creature, yet the most favored, they do not honor her too much." This, of course, he would have Protestants believe is all the honor which his Church gives her. Well, even that has no warrant from Scripture. But she gives her what is unspeakably higher. Of this, I could bring forward many proofs, but I have space for only one or two. The following prayers are addressed to her: "We fly to thy protection, Holy Mother of God; despise not our prayers in our necessities, but deliver us at all times from all evils, Glorious and Blessed Virgin." "Loosen the chains of the guilty, afford light to the blind, drive away all our ills." "Oh, Mary! Mother of Grace! sweet Parent of Mercy! protect us from our enemy, and receive us in the hour of death." The following titles are applied to her: "Glorious Queen of the World;" "Temple of God;" "Queen of Angels;" "Queen of Saints;" "Queen of the Heavens;" "Ark of the Covenant;" "Our Hope;" "Our Advocate;" "Our Life;" "Mistress of all creatures." St. Bonaventura has altered the *Te Deum* so as to make it apply to her, of which the following are specimens: "We give praise to thee, O Lady... all the earth doth worship thee." "Holy, holy, holy Mary." "O Lady, save thy people. Let thy great mercy be with us, because we put our trust in thee. O Virgin Mary, in thee, sweet Mary, do we put our trust; defend thou us eternally." Here, certain passages in the Psalms which refer to God, are applied to the Virgin. But the saint, not satisfied with this, has everywhere blotted out of the Psalms the Lord's name, and put in the Virgin's instead thereof. To give the readers of the PRESBYTERIAN some idea of his daring impiety, I quote a passage or two, though it seems almost a sin to repeat his language. "The heavens declare the glory of the Virgin, and the firmament showeth forth her handiwork;" (Ps. xix.). "Let Mary arise, and let her enemies be scattered" (Ixviii.). "The Lord said unto Mary, sit thou on my right hand," etc. (cx.). "O, come, let us sing unto our Lady—let us make a joyful noise to Mary, our Queen, that brings salvation" (xcv.). "Praise our Lady in her saints—praise her in her virtues and miracles" (cl.). The Archbishop knows very well the facts which I have just stated. Therefore, when he says that Roman Catholics "only beg of the Virgin Mary to pray to her Son for them