

INSTRUCTION AS TO THE EVIDENCES  
OF CHRISTIANITY.

From the Bishop of Niagara's Charge.

THIS is an age abounding with scepticism and infidelity, and the propagators thereof are most active. I may be mistaken, but I do not think that I ever heard of a person going about a country lecturing openly in favour of infidelity for gain, until I heard of Col. Robert Ingersoll doing so, and making more money by his lectures than the lecturers in favour of morality and religion make by theirs. And I was shocked the other day to read, in one of the great Toronto dailies, a statement, boldly made by one of its correspondents who wrote over the signature of "Agnostic," that "the story of the creation, the story of Eden, the origin of evil, the flood, the miraculous deliverances of the Israelites, and a host of other fables and fictions, are not only worn out, but have been abandoned by the best minds in the Church itself." I do not believe a word of it, because I know better. But, when such bold assertions are frequently made in respectable newspapers, which come daily into our families and are read by the young thereof; when it is boasted that an infidel work published in Toronto, has gone to a second edition in less than a year, it becomes our clergy to see to it that our people are taught the grounds on which we believe the Bible to be the word of the living God. I believe that there is more scepticism in our congregations than is generally supposed. There is in every congregation, especially among the males, persons upon whom all the appeals of the pulpit, or in private interviews, make no impression whatever. They are not confirmed sceptics, perhaps, much less are they open and avowed infidels; but Satan has filled their minds with such doubts that they are not prepared to take their stand on the Lord's side. The clergyman who has to deal with such persons was never himself harassed in this way, and cannot, therefore, understand their real condition. Again, there are thousands of young men who are ill-informed, and who are by Satan kept inactive. They are influenced by arguments pure and simple, and so feeble that those better informed could never imagine that they could influence anyone. I cannot help believing that our system of public school education (entirely divorced as it is from religion) is pandering largely to this evil. The cultivation of the intellect is the great object aimed at in our public schools, the thing placed continually before the pupils in them, as the one thing needful, whilst the cultivation of the heart and conscience is entirely overlooked. It was a wise saying of the great Duke of Wellington, that "if you cultivate the intellect to the neglect of the heart, you only make a man the greater devil."

The democratic spirit of the age—when most men feel themselves wiser, certainly more highly educated than their fathers were—tends in the same direction. They are more apt than their fathers were to take objections to established things. They are unwilling to take things as much on trust as their fathers were. Because their fathers believed the Bible to be the revelation from God to man is no reason for them. They want to "judge for themselves" in this as in other matters. Now, my brethren, there is no use trying to contend against this current. The best way is to recognize and to be prepared for it. I believe that you should give your people full instruction in regard to the Bible being the Word of God, so that when the gainsayer brings to bear upon any one of them his plausible objections, he may find them not only well grounded in the faith, but also well able to give a reason for the hope that is in them. You should instruct them as to the genuineness, authenticity, uncorrupted preservation and inspiration of the Holy Scriptures; including among other things a full investigation of the testimony from profane writers, as to the fulfilment of prophecy to the very letter. You should adduce the evidences afforded by miracles to the inspiration of the Scriptures, and by the internal evidences furnished to the same effect, by the sublimity and excellence of the doctrines, and by the purity of the moral precepts of the Bible. You should show them the remarkable harmony that exists between the different parts of the Bible, and the proofs of its tendency to promote the present and eternal happiness of mankind, as furnished by an historical review of the beneficial effects produced in every age and in every country when the Bible has been cordially received and its precepts acted on; together with a refutation of the objections that have been made against the Scriptures by sceptical infidel writers in modern times. These things should be made plain and level to the understanding of your people. This I believe to be the best way to prevent injury being done to your people by sceptical and infidel publications, lectures and conversations in their houses, in shops, in bar-rooms, and other places of public resort.

Lay the foundations, deep, strong, and firm, and then you need not fear what sceptics can do with

your people. They will be able to answer them, as an aged Christian friend told me he answered such: "I may not be able to answer all your objections, but, having been well instructed in those matters, I know the Bible to be the word of the living God." But be very careful to make your arguments so clear and convincing that the youngest and most ignorant of your hearers may understand you.

Clear, distinct, positive instruction is imperatively demanded at the present time. It never was more demanded than now. The old times of the early apologists are upon us. If the faith was worth defending in their days, it is worth defending now. St. Jude tells us that we are to "contend earnestly for the faith."

These are strange times, perilous times, in which we are living; times which are trying and will try men's souls to the uttermost. What the Church of Christ has now to meet are insidious evils; forms of error, under such specious guises, as Satan himself, transformed into an angel of light, knows well how to present. More dangerous these perils are than open persecution, because they address themselves to those human weaknesses where man is most likely to be overcome.

The modern press has risen to be an almost irresistible power, and you should do your best to control it in religious matters. It gives shape to public opinion. It dictates even to the pulpit, and has assumed in some cases the guardianship of the faith. This is not all! Religious error is much more prevalent amongst us than many imagine. Has not, then, the Church something, very much, to do in behalf of her sons and daughters in such an age and times like these? Should she not teach them—teach them faithfully—what are the elementary principles of the faith of Christ and of the Church of Christ? Is there any cause for wonder or surprise if, when she neglects such instruction, her sons and daughters should be the victims of Romanism on the one hand, and of scoffing and infidelity on the other hand?

I feel perfectly sure that if our clergy, by diligent study, would make themselves able to meet all the objections of those sceptically inclined, and would kindly visit any amongst their people whom they suspect to be even slightly affected by scepticism, at their houses and talk kindly, but earnestly, with them on the subject, they would receive their warmest gratitude and be the means of preventing immortal souls from going headlong to perdition. It is just as much your duty to do this, my brethren, as it is to visit those suffering from bodily ailments. The laity of the Church are calling for this positive, distinct Church teaching. If the Church has a foundation to stand on, they want to know what the foundation is. More than this, an intelligent conviction as to the claims of the Church, a firm belief that she is the body that Christ Himself appointed for the conversion of the world, is an indispensable means for the enkindling of an earnest zeal on her behalf, and for unsealing the fountains of an overflowing liberality. Our people have means ample for all our wants. But we cannot reach their hearts and consciences; we cannot call forth their gifts for the needs of the diocese in any other way than by plain and honest dealing. It is downright madness to cast distrust upon the Church's claims to our loyalty and devotion.

But lastly, let me press upon you, one and all, the necessity of cultivating a spirit of holiness in your own souls, if you are to influence the world around you. If Churchmen in their daily lives and conversations, in their duty to God and in their intercourse with their fellow men, would live up to the spirit of their Prayer Book; if they would only reflect in their lives the purity, holiness, entire devotion to God's service which pervades the Collects and other prayers that they use in church, great would be our progress and amazing our influence. See to it, then, dear brethren of the clergy, that you lead those committed to your care along the narrow way of life, and oh, dear brethren of the laity, walk in that way, through God's grace, to your life's end.

## Diocesan Intelligence.

## ONTARIO.

From Our Own Correspondent.

OTTAWA.—Several changes are being effected in and about this city. At St. Alban's, Rev. J. J. Bogart, M.A., the new incumbent, has assumed the duty, receiving a cordial welcome from the congregation, who, by the way, showed their high appreciation of the noble work done here by the founder of the parish, by presenting Archdeacon Jones with a magnificent testimonial and hearty addresses on his departure. Rev. C. P. Emery was presented with an address by his late parishioners at Smith's Falls, on leaving for Kemptonville, to which mission he succeeded on the resignation of Archdeacon Parnell. Rev. A. C.

Nesbitt has gone to Smith's Falls; and when he left Richmond, he was the recipient of a handsome set of harness, at the hands of the people, who likewise recognized in a substantial manner the valuable services of Mrs. Nesbitt, as organist. Mr. Nesbitt's place is taken by the Rev. J. G. Jemmett, M.A., late of Rochesterville, the western suburb of Ottawa. Rev. T. Garrett goes from the mission of Cumberland to that of Rochesterville and Merrivale. Rev. H. Pollard sailed in the "Polynesian" last Saturday, with Mrs. Pollard, on three or four months visit to England, for the benefit of the latter's health. The duty at St. Alban's, Ottawa, is being taken in the meantime by the Rev. E. D. Braden, M.A., lately assistant to Dr. Jones at St. Alban's. The congregation presented Mr. Pollard with a handsome purse on the eve of his departure. Archdeacon Lauder, commissary to Bishop Lewis, owing to the latter's absence in England, is leaving to take the duty at Reviere du Loup for two or three weeks. His place at Christ Church will be filled in part by the Rev. W. B. Carey of Kingston. On the 10th of July, however, the Rev. J. K. McMorine, A.M., of Thunder Bay, will take the Sunday duty, and have an opportunity for presenting to the oldest congregation in Ottawa the claims of his own destitute mission. On Sunday last he did this at the three mission stations of his brother, the Rev. S. McMorine, viz.: Bell's Corners, Hazeldean, and St. Thomas, Goulbourn; and the handsome manner in which these simple country people responded to the appeal is worthy of imitation by older and more wealthy congregations. Mr. McMorine's term of engagement at Prince Arthur's Landing was concluded a short time ago; but, in consequence of the unfortunate burning of the church and parsonage, he has determined to remain at his post, for which self-denying act he has earned the sympathy of all friends of Algoma diocese. His visit to Ottawa at this time is paid for the purpose of taking back his family, who have been here for some months. With commendable zeal Mr. McMorine has made arrangements for commencing immediately to rebuild the Church property, in which he will doubtless be assisted by Churchmen generally. It is rumoured that the Rev. Mr. Low, of Merrickville, goes to Gananoque, rendered vacant by the sudden death of the Rev. John Carroll. In this event both Cumberland and Gananoque will be vacant.

## TORONTO.

SYNOD OFFICE.—Collections &c., received during the fortnight ending 2nd July, 1881.

ALGOMA FUND. Donation.—James Henderson, Toronto, \$10.00. Day of Intercession Collection.—Colborne \$1.00; St. George's, Toronto, \$15.00; Christ Church, Roach's Point, 34 cents; Bradford \$1.50; Brampton \$5.00; Lakefield \$4.60.

MISSION FUND. July Collection.—St. George's, Toronto, \$22.00. Parochial Collections.—St. John's Castlemore (Tullamore) on account \$19.50; Lakefield \$18.50. January Collection.—Lakefield \$4.85, Warsaw \$1.00.

DIVINITY STUDENTS' FUND. April Collection.—St. George's, Toronto, \$29.46; Lakefield \$3.10, Warsaw 85 cents.

The address of the Rev. Ed. Ransford will be for the future, 13 Rose Avenue (late North Berkeley Street.)

THORNBURY HOUSE SCHOOL.—On last Wednesday night, the pupils attending Thornbury House school, 255 Jarvis Street, gave their annual concert, in the course of which the medals, prizes, and certificates of honour were distributed to the successful candidates. The attendants of the parents and friends of the pupils was large, and the applause which greeted the youthful performers and the recipients of premiums as frequent as it was well deserved. The Rev. Ed. Ransford, LL.B., of St. Matthew's Church, Riverside preached at the distribution and addressed those present in terms suitable to the occasion. He adverted to the success of the school under Mrs. Rolph, to whose illness feeling illusion was made, and Mrs. Hayward, and expressed his certainty that under the regime of Mrs. Lampman, their successor, the institution would make equal progress.

COLBORNE.—During the past week the esteemed incumbent of Trinity church, the Rev. G. Gardiner, received a highly complimentary address, and a purse containing a handsome sum of money from the members of the "Society of United Fishermen," of Newfoundland, an organization of which he was the founder, and for some time Grand Master. It must be very gratifying to the reverend gentleman to have his past services so gratefully remembered by those among whom he laboured for many years.