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In the Valley.

Thy feet are glorious on the distant mountains,
Thy tread majestic on the swelling sea,
Thy ways are pleasant in the lowly valleys,
Come down to these, O Lord, and smile on me.

Mirth for the mountains where thy footsteps lingered,
Joy for the ocean waves whereon they pressed,
Deep peace and dreams down lower in the valleys,
And in the lowest, where I lie, sweet rest.

When death's sure hand that reaps at last the mountains,
And gathers treasure from the laden sea,
Draws near to garner in the pleasant valleys,
Then draw Thou near, O Lord, and smile on me.

Impressions of a Visit to the United States.

BY REV. DR. JAMES DENNEY, BROUGHTY-FERRY.

I Had a glimpse of the American schools in Minneapolis (Minn.) both the primary and the high school—and learned much from it. The equipment of the schools with apparatus is much superior to that of our common schools, I have nowhere seen in this country the plan of having a separate desk and seat for each child, though it has so many obvious advantages, educational and ethical.

Unluckily for myself, I saw little of the actual working of the colleges and universities. No one who knows what Goodwin and Gildersleeve have done for the study of Greek, or what philosophical study owes to writers like James and Bowne, can doubt that the forces are at work in American schools which produce the highest type of scholar, and it is with diffidence and deference that I venture the remark that the point in which the average American student is probably most deficient—I mean the student leaving the college to enter the seminary is philosophical training. Not only students but teachers admitted this in conversation—a want of skill in the manipulation of ideas, of readiness to see what they presupposed and to what they led, a willingness to be eclectics, which means to wear motley in the brain and despair of truth.

American churches seem to aim at greater variety and brightness in their services than Scottish ones. It is, in a way, pleasanter to go to church in America than here; there is more sunshine in the building, there is more music, the minister does not seem to be carrying such a burden, nor letting the people feel the weight of it so much. Not that I always liked the music. It strikes a stranger, sometimes, as rather professional for the occasion; and a solo which is not an inspiration is very apt to be an affliction. But here my prejudices may be as great as my experience was limited, and I give this passing impression for no more than it is worth. I am very sorry that I heard so little preaching—seven sermons in all. But two out of these seven were impressive and memorable in the highest degree—one rich in every imaginative and poetic virtue, as well as in the inspiration, all through, of one sublime thought, the other simple, direct, and powerful, carrying in it every

atom of the preacher's strength, physical and spiritual, and reminding me irresistibly of Mr. Spurgeon. What minister would not be happy if he preached well two times out of seven? Not, of course, that the other five did not preach well but they attained not to these two!

Of American theology, or even the impression I got of the conditions of men's minds on theological questions, it would not be becoming of me to speak, even if I knew much more of the matter than I do. I found myself in easy and natural sympathy on most questions with most men whom I met. I imagine, rightly or wrongly, that Americans overestimate the differences between themselves, at least between different parts of the country in these respects. The East is not so daringly heterodox as it seems in the West, nor the West, nor even Chicago, so determinedly obscurantist as it seems to some people in the East. A liberal theologian, provided he held to the sum and substance of the New Testament, could be at home and live in peace in the most conservative circles to which I was introduced, and a conservative theologian, under the same conditions, would find his rights admitted in the most liberal circles. The burning question, formally, is that of Scripture; but it is remarkable that men who differ widely when they *talk about* the Word of God, and try to explain its peculiar value, agree without trouble when they *preach* the Word of God and leave it to do its own work. The moral of this may reach further than one thinks at a first glance, but surely it reaches thus far—that men who preach the same gospel and find the standard declaration and interpretation of it in the same record, should be able without loss of temper or love or spiritual power, to come to an understanding with each other about what is, after all, a secondary question. The discussion of the critical problems arising out of the study of the Bible has been carried further in public with us than with you, at least in the West; and I do not think the result has been discouraging.

One thing is certain—the discussion must be carried through. It must be carried through in public, and the results must be, and will be, made intelligible to all men. The truth asks no more than a fair field, but most of the defences that men raise round it act as barriers to make it inaccessible. It is really like beauty, when unadorned, adorned the most, when undefended, inviolable. One of the gravest dangers the Church has to encounter is that of creating a prejudice against the truth by her very anxiety to safeguard it. Men who believe that in Jesus Christ God has come into the world, calling men once for all to judgment and mercy, have enough to unite them through all conceivable disagreements about minor things. And every lover of the American churches will pray that they may be kept in this unity, and brought out through all the controversies that await them into a large room.—*Congregationalist.*