

SATURDAY, MAY 18, 1878.

"ORIGIN OF CREATION."

We promised our readers an extended notice of a book named by us a few weeks ago, among the publications recently laid upon our table. The work is the conjoint production of Dr. Thos. R. Fraser, of Halifax, and Andrew De-war. It is understood that the latter name represents merely the literary, and the former the scientific, merits of the volume. The object of the treatise is to set forth a theory of the "Origin of Creation." The name is somewhat confusing to an unscientific mind. It is tautological, creation being itself an origin, and an origin in this sense a creation. Of this, however, we can say but little. It is certain that no ambiguity characterizes the book itself. Of the few scientific works we have read of this class, though sufficient to cause a belief that complications of terms and ideas were essential in scientific disquisition, this is the most perspicuous and intelligible. True or false the theory, it is certain that in every one of the twenty-nine chapters the author adheres to his principles—principles which are few and simple enough, but certainly tend to strike at the tap-root of all the science of the schools.

Creation is a word embracing an immense extent of suggestion and supposition, especially when one is seeking for its source—enquiring after the How and Whom of material things. Three classes of thinkers there have been within the past few hundreds of years, ever since, indeed, the education of science led men to ask whether established notions as to creation were true or false. A few have steadily clung to the original opinion, that which comes from a strictly literal rendering of the Bible upon the origin of things. To them, God, so far as our world is concerned, ceased to be a Creator at the end of those six literal days when He pronounced all things good. He wrought by miracle, producing out of nothing the hills and oceans, land and sea, with all their tribes and species. Since then all things have remained, save as they have been affected by the attrition of the ages, or the dispensations of Providence. The second class—Christians also, and devout in the faith—conceive that the Bible can only be fairly, scientifically, understood by considering the days of creation as of unlimited extent, and the order of creation as miraculous only in the sense of bringing forward, from the life originally bestowed by the Divine Being, new orders of vegetable and animal existence. These maintain that a divine power is just as necessary, and God as much honoured according to their theory as that of the literal six days. A third class reject revelation altogether, and look to science alone for an explanation of the origin of things material. The book which we are noticing now belongs to the second class.

It is noticeable that most of the discussions as to theories of creation have reference specially to the origin of life. The desperate purpose of sceptical men of science is to discover a cause of life somewhere in Nature itself apart from God. Scientists of the second class referred to, admit that life is being reproduced, or perpetuated, rather, according to definite laws under divine direction. We cannot see, while there is a departure from the strictly literal notion of a miraculous creation out of nothing, that it makes serious difference to the Christian as to the methods of creation, save with respect to consistency and truth. God is as much in one theory as another, inasmuch as the present order of things could never have had an existence or be perpetuated without Him. Taking consistency and simplicity into the question, we confess this "Origin of Creation" is the most plausible we have met with. Having tried the experiments which the author submits, we can see quite enough to set any reflective mind at work tracing a chain of reasoning through many, at least, of the links which he mentions.

This work ought to have attracted more critical notice than has thus far fallen to its share. Had it originated

in scientific circles—had it even sprung from England or Germany—the world would have heard more of it. Even among ourselves it has not gained the respect it deserves. Of those who have read it, one class profess to sneer at its theory, because, forsooth, it ignores much of their own scholastic systems of science. This it certainly does with a vengeance. But old systems of science have been disputed and even displaced by others more rational and intelligible; and this author certainly has neither obscurity of style nor are all his principles radically in conflict with natural law, as far as common observers can judge. Others imagine that they have discovered in the book a rejection of the Christian doctrines of a Divine originator—a substitution of Nature for God. We cannot agree with them. There is a very manifest devoutness in all its allusions to the Creator; while its seeming departure from old landmarks of thought is not any more marked than that of Dawson or Hugh Miller in Geology or Chalmers in Astronomy. True, there is not so much an aim at linking science with religion as in the books of those great men, but on the principle that they are not to be condemned for turning their backs upon venerable theories, neither should this author be condemned. Indeed, the preface warns readers against all books, in passing judgment, except the Scriptures.

But the book has made converts. And they are not among the illiterate or scientific, either. We have met several, with training and position in the world that entitle them to respect as critics, whose judgment is very favourable to the author's theory. We consider it creditable to our provincial literature that a book of great originality, and manifesting a very wide and discriminating knowledge of past and present schools of thought, has appeared in our land, attempting to establish a new theory amid so much conflict as obtains among scientists.

It is time now that we gave some idea of the book. This cannot better be done than by citing the author's own words, so far as they illustrate the principles which underlie all his discussions. We quote verbatim, from several portions of the work.

"The data upon which our theories have been based, are found in a discovery of the nature, classification and properties of the atoms of matter, and of the law that governs their action and force, and are proved by practical experiments, and under personal observations in chemistry, telegraphy, and marine diving, &c., &c."

"Matter is composed of two classes of atoms, mineral and vegetable; or, as they are often called throughout the work, Hydrogen and Oxygen. Every atom is a magnet, having polarity. Like atoms attract each other, and those of its class only, the greater body attracting or reversing the polarity of the smaller. Like poles repel, thus dissolving matter, and unlike poles attract, thus building up or forming material substances. Thus by nature's laws all work together in harmony."

"To this law we have applied the term ATOMAGNETISM."

"While we have discovered the law, we do not claim to be the infallible interpreters of it."

"All atoms are male and female. The mineral atom is the male, and its properties are that it is naturally cold; has blue and white cold colours; and is acid and combustible. The vegetable atom is the female; its properties are that it is naturally warm; its colours are yellow, red, and the warm colours; and it is incombustible."

"There is no such thing as a dead atom. All atoms are alive, or have inherent life properties, but they must occupy favourable conditions and positions in order to show their vitality."

"Every atom is a magnet having polarity—that is, each atom has two poles similar to a compass needle. The law of atoms is observed to be, that like attracts like; but by the law of magnets, it is seen that like poles repel, while unlike poles attract. Atomagnetism is a combination of these natural laws, resulting in a universal law of attraction of like atoms and repulsion of like poles."

The above contains, we think, the author's text. His subject is an ingenious application of these principles to the various forces and productions of Nature. Animal life, appetite, chemical action, heat, light, colour, electricity, magnetism, sound, water and rain, dew, storms, food, coal, coral, volcanoes and earthquakes, the tides, ocean, currents, comets, meteors, and finally medicine and health—all come under observation, and are represented as governed by the law of Atomagnetism. The closing chapter provides against the prejudice which this theory might engender as affording comfort to the materialist, and a defence of it as

quite consonant with the doctrines of revelation.

Any further attempt at expounding the system would be an injustice to the author. The book must be read to be understood. There are positions taken by the author which we think could be successfully assailed, but we write rather for review than for criticism, and, besides, the author does not claim infallibility. Luther was right, though he erred betimes in applying his principles.

Can any one explain the passion, for lotteries which prevails in the country. The St. John Telegraph nobly protests against them, though it might derive advertising advantage by encouraging the very questionable business. Most strange of all is, that men of standing give their names to be used for lottery purposes. We need a better moral sentiment, decidedly.

Fenians and Fenians. They are again collecting money from American servant girls for raising an army to take Canada! Russia is supposed to be helping on the scheme. But the papers are so hungry for sensations that we can place little dependence upon rumors of this kind. We imagine, however, that the Fenians discovered during their first and last raid on Canada that Canadians are neither cowards nor Quakers. They believe in non-resistance till really called to arms. Then they resist.

A letter has reached us from the Rev. John Brown, in reply to Mr. Currie on Baptism. We have sent it to the Messenger, as instructed, in the event of our refusing to publish it. Ordinarily, any one addressed by name in the columns of a paper would be entitled to the privilege of replying; but in this case we inserted Mr. Currie's articles not as controversy but as the correspondence of a Methodist minister. It would never do to open our columns to the sinuosities of a discussion on baptism. There are papers which exist for that purpose in great part: this does not. Yet Mr. Brown would scarcely expect the Baptist papers to publish Mr. Currie's letters.

The Allan line of steamers has been fortunate in the past. Just now a distressing accident has been reported from one of them. The Sardinian was their best ship, and Dutton their best captain; yet all precautions have not prevented a calamity. We quote from the telegrams to the press:—

LONDON, May 11.—Steamer Sardinian was at anchor at Moville, Ireland, at the time of the accident. The explosion took place in the coal bunkers; she took fire immediately. The greatest confusion ensued. When order was restored the compartments were searched for the dead and wounded. Some of the latter had arms and legs broken; a few were burned about the face. It is believed that when the full extent of the disaster is ascertained, the figures given of the injured as estimated will be considerably increased. The wounded were temporarily placed in warehouses fronting on the Quay. Three of the injured in Derry infirmary are pronounced hopeless. Two bodies of the crew were recovered. Some passengers are reported missing. Among the Sardinian's passengers were 40 orphan children, destined for domestic service in America. An attempt was made to beach the vessel on McKinney's Bank, but she was finally scuttled and filled and sunk in five fathoms water.

SUNDAY fishing is becoming a habit by far too prevalent among our young men of Halifax. Surely common respect for God's holy day, apart altogether from the respect which is due to themselves as gentlemen, ought to prevent this desecration of a day set apart for rest and worship. Yet our own observation and the testimony of others has convinced us that young men whom few would suspect of the practice, set forth by day break of the Sabbath for a fishing excursion, returning by night, thus covering their iniquity. The law may yet be called in, if milder measures do not prevent it.

Clarke's Reed Organ Melodies, advertised in our columns by Ditsen, is for sale by J. & F. W. Harris, 115 Barrington St., Halifax. These music dealers recommend the work as of great value. Its price is \$2.50. The work has gained a good reputation, though but recently published.

THE WAR.

If any reader imagines it is easy to ascertain the precise condition of matters as to European war or peace, he must certainly depend upon something better than ordinary editorial judgment. For instance, we find this paragraph in the Moncton Times of the 8th inst.

PEACE.—The despatches of yesterday and to-day greatly encourage the hope that Peace will be maintained in Europe. This will be gratifying to every reader.

And in the Kentville Chronicle of the same date:

The war cloud has again spread itself over Europe, and now matters look a little more like business. The difficulties between England and Russia are apparently widened, and the chances of settlement far less than a few weeks since.

The fact is that the balance hangs in equipoise, and its turning either way depends upon contingencies, of which no mortal can form a correct judgment. Perhaps there is not in history a case parallel to this, in which the war dogs stand growling at each other for months, without fighting. A strong leash holds them back on both sides. In Russia it is the dread of a drubbing. In England it is the sentiment of the peace party. We observe that an immense representation of Nonconformists, clergymen and others, have been before Gladstone, with a desire to bring pressure upon the government in favor of keeping out of war. Gladstone delivered a wonderful speech, full of pacific eloquence.

MCCARTHY'S body—the man said to have been murdered in Moncton last Fall—has been found, and precisely at the spot indicated by the testimony of Annie Parker. It will be remembered that this French girl—a very remarkable girl by the way, in all the elements of shrewdness—declared the body had been thrown into the river, after death by poisoning and violence had been brought about. But there are indications that the girl's testimony was not all true. Money and his watch were found upon his person, though she declared he had been robbed of both by the Osbornes. We will give the particulars after all testimony has been given before the Coroner's jury. This is an event of profound interest, and has naturally caused intense excitement in the region surrounding Moncton.

DEATH OF REV. J. G. CURRIE OF ISLAND COVE, NEWFOUNDLAND.—The following letter reached us by last Newfoundland mail. It explains itself. We had no direct knowledge of the esteemed brother whose death is reported, more than by a most favorable reputation. It is probable we shall soon have an extended obituary from some loving hand.

ST. JOHN'S, N.F., May 8.
DEAR BRO.—By a telegram received this afternoon from the President, the death is announced of the Rev. J. G. Currie, superintendent of Island Cove circuit. For this solemn event we were prepared. The alarming and protracted illness of our dear brother, forbade the hope of recovery. In his case, "Death is gain."
Yours truly,
THOMAS HARRIS.

We observe that a Queen's Birth-day excursion—on the 24th inst.—is to carry passengers to Hillsboro, New Brunswick. The enterprising Rev. C. W. Dutcher and his officials have set on foot,—the receipts to go to circuit use—a grand Musical Festival to be held in the Hillsboro Rink at 7 p.m. There is to be a great combination of voices with a band of music.

In the Latin version of a hymn by Gladstone on an inside page, two errors occur in type. Scholars would discover these corrections for themselves, but Gladstone's vengeance might overtake a compositor who allowed his compositions to be willingly slaughtered.

EDUCATIONAL MEETING.—On Monday evening last an educational meeting was held in the Methodist Church in this city, an interesting address was delivered by his Honor Judge Wilmot, chairman, and Rev. Messrs. H. Daniel, Weddall, Paisley, Read, and Dobson. Rev. W. W. Brewer read the report.—Fredericton Rep.

Diphtheria has deprived John E. Warner, Esq., Pugwash of both his lovely children within a few weeks. We deeply sympathize with parents passing through such an ordeal.

TRANSFER COMMITTEE.

At a meeting of this committee held in Toronto on Thursday, 2nd inst., the following transfers were made:—

Rev. L. Gaetz from Montreal Conference to London Conf.
Rev. Hugh Johnston from London Conference to Montreal Conf.
Rev. W. J. Hunter from Montreal Conference to Toronto Conf.
Rev. C. A. Hanson from Toronto Conference to Montreal Conf.
Rev. Job Shearman from Nova Scotia Conference to Newfoundland Conf.
Rev. Thos. Harris } from Newfld. Conf.
or some substitute } to N. Scotia Conf.
Rev. Chas. Meyers applied to be transferred from the Newfoundland to the N. Scotia Conference, but the transfer was not effected.
E. B. BYCKMAN,
Secy. of Com.

CORRESPONDENCE

FUNERAL OF THE LATE REV. W. F. PENNY, B. D.

DEAR BRO. NICHOLSON.—The remains of the Rev. W. F. Penny, B. D., were brought on here for interment in the family burying ground, on Saturday, April 14th. We buried him on the following Monday. A very large concourse of people attended his funeral. The Revs. John S. Peach, James Dove, and James B. Heal, assisted at the service. Bro. Dove and myself gave short addresses to the assembled congregation in the church. As Bro. Penny was a Free Mason, the members of the Harbor Grace Lodge of F. and A. Masons, (and of which Lodge Bro. Penny was a member,) attended his funeral and buried him with Masonic honors. The whole service was very impressive. The Sunday night following, his death was improved by a funeral sermon preached by the writer of this notice from St. Luke's Gospel, chap. 12, verse 50, to 58. At the conclusion of the sermon a short sketch of his life and death was read. The church was crowded by an attentive congregation and we trust that good was done. May the death of this dear brother be sanctified to all.

JOHN GOODISON,

Carbonara, May 1, 1878.

CYCLOPEDIA OF METHODISM.

DEAR BRO. NICHOLSON.—Will you kindly allow me through the medium of your excellent WESLEYAN, to thank those brethren who have so readily responded to my request as given in your paper of March 9th, and to request those members of the three Eastern Conferences who have not sent me the required information, to do so promptly. Especially those whose ministry began prior to 1855. The facts I wish are—date of reception on trial, ordination and admission to full membership in the Conference and the name of circuits travelled up to present date. If any brother has a spare copy of the Minutes of the N. B. and P. E. I. Conference for 1875, I would be thankful if he would kindly mail it to my address. I am progressing as rapidly as my pastoral work will admit in the preparation of the MSS., and hope yet to have it ready the press by the time previously stated.

Yours fraternally,

GEORGE H. CORNISH,
Grimsby, Ont.

AYLESFORD: REV. A. S. TUTTLE REPLIES TO AN ASSAILANT.

MR. EDITOR.—Some weeks ago an article appeared in the Christian Messenger, signed C. Moser, of Lake George, which may be more or less misleading, to which reference would have been made before this, had it not been for protracted personal affliction. At Lake George I met two gentlemen, by the name of Moser, a father and son. I assume, the father a licensed Baptist preacher, is the writer. He writes, that in connection with meetings held at Lake George, 14 persons were put through the ceremony of admission and that "on one of those affusion occasions, &c." Such expressions, used by any exclusive, immersion, and Close Communion Baptist, imply that affusion is not baptism, notwithstanding the teaching of inspired truth, and the opinions of an overwhelming majority, of the most highly cultured and godly men, to the contrary. He says, that in a discourse on baptism, the Baptists felt themselves wronged, and their principles misrepresented. A serious charge, indeed, but he fails to substantiate it. It may be that, because I intimated, that the mode of baptism could not be determined by baptism, and because some allusions to Greek prepositions did not accord with his views, he concluded the Baptists were wronged. I did not say, I believe the apostolic mode of baptism was by pouring any more than by sprinkling, but that the apostles baptized by affusion, resembling the baptism of the Holy Spirit, which was by pouring, shedding forth, &c. Mr. Moser feels, very keenly, a remark I made to the effect that the Close Communion Baptists did not recognize other denominations, as true evangelical churches. I made this statement not to misrepresent, but believing it to be a fact. I know nothing to the contrary yet. The Methodists have always respected the Baptists, but it does not follow that they must endorse all their dogmas and sanction all their usages. If such prominent men in the Baptist Church as Spurgeon, Pentecost, and others of similar ability, could write condemnation upon "Close Communion," can it be expected that those denominations who are by it, rejected from the Lord's table, as