

those who meet us have no better means of judging of our worth than what they derive from the evidence by ourselves of our having "sat at good men's feasts" and generally moved in decent society, it is most important to all who would make their way in life to study even the silly details of good breeding, to provide themselves with the necessary "small change" in the way of manners which suffices to meet social demands upon us, and by so doing often leads to something of real importance.

Quevedo Redivivus.

CHRISTIANITY AND PYRAMIDS.

The notion of going to Egypt as a storehouse of Christian evidences must be allowed to be a somewhat striking idea. When we remember that the debasing Fetishism of the Egyptians was so notorious that it attracted the ridicule of Juvenal (Sat. xv.), and that the distinctive type of Christianity there developed, owing of course to the nature of the land, was an excessively corrupt species, we are naturally surprised. And yet one among the many crude notions which have found extensive vogue at the present day is an attempt to support the doctrines of Christianity by an appeal to the great Pyramid, and to the principles of pre-historic Egyptian architecture. Such a notion must, of course, be classed with such follies as Millenarian ideas, Anglo-Israel and Shakespeare-Bacon identifications, and would lead us to imagine the intellect of the present age to be attacked by some peculiarly potent disease.

It is a remarkable feature of the present age, and quite a melancholy one, if we think it over, to find a somewhat learned man—unfortunately lacking the "dry light"—making himself an object of ridicule in the eyes of every judicious person, and misleading numbers of well-meaning people. To what a chaotic state a man's mind must be reduced who is ready to confuse the mental lineaments of a Shakespeare and a Bacon, of Semite and Aryan! But it is a sadder thought still to think of any human being hoping to save his soul by means of an Algebra and the exact measurements of the Pyramid of Gizeh. Are we to become Pythagoreans again and rest our faith upon numbers? "Is civilization a failure" indeed?

I have heard something of this Religion of the Pyramid for the last two or three years; but my attention was first seriously drawn to it by the fact of the popularity of a work by the Rev. Dr. J. A. Seiss, who seems to be the high-priest of the cult in America. The gentleman is Pastor, &c., of the Church of the Holy Communion, Philadelphia. His book is called "A Miracle in Stone; or, The Great Pyramid of Egypt," and for the enlightenment of those who have not the time or patience to read through this curious work, I will attempt to give a short account of its contents and object. Have any of my readers ever read that very amusing English squib by the talented author of "Alice in Wonderland," entitled "The New Belfry of Christ Church, Oxford"? If they have, they will have a fair conception of the work on the Pyramid; but they must remember, of course, that while Mr. Dodgson is funny, and does not intend to be taken too literally, Dr. Seiss' face ever wears a judicial cast.

The land of Egypt first demands the attention of the reader, in regard to which certain current notions have to be rectified, and so at first a modest plea is put forward in its favour:—

"Closely secluded from the rest of the world—the Japan of the ages—it still lies at the gateway of the traditions of Judaea, Greece and Rome; intermingles with all the Divine administrations, and connects, in one way or another, with some of the most famous names and events in the annals of time."

But when the writer warms to his work he becomes somewhat more boastful about the land upon whose bosom rests the great Pyramid of Gizeh:—

"And if perchance these new disclosures should be of a character more sacred and imposing than what is being exhumed in other lands, it is what we might reasonably anticipate from a country so singularly linked with some of the most marvellous Divine administrations. It is the type of the world, indeed, but in its milder aspect; the darker type is Babylon. . . . Egypt has ever been the instrument for furthering the great designs of Providence. . . . Israel could not have become a nation without Egypt. The first and greatest of Israel's prophets was rescued from a watery grave, nurtured, schooled, and outwardly fitted for his sublime legation, by the daughter of Egypt's king. Abraham himself, though from quite another section of the world, was ministered unto by Egypt."

Those who recall the actual occurrences, as described in Scripture, will remember that Egypt's king it was who doomed Moses to a watery grave, and that the ministrations of an earlier Pharaoh to Abraham were of a nature that the Patriarch only too gladly dispensed with. After parading some further glories, he concludes:—

"It was Egypt that gave to mankind the first translation of the Hebrew Scriptures." (i.e., the Septuagint, written in Greek and by Greek colonists.) "It was Egypt that proved the stronghold of Christianity after Jerusalem fell. It is from Egypt that we have the noblest and greatest fathers of the Christian Church," (a statement, it is hardly necessary to say, quite untrue,) "and however ignoble now may be the land or its population, we may rest assured that God has something further to accomplish by means of a country of which He has thus availed himself in the past, and that out of it will yet come some of the greatest of sacred marvels which are to mark the closing periods of time."

Which may possibly come to pass, when Western influences have begun to regenerate the land, owing to the Suez Canal, but which also may not.

So much for the accurate way in which the author measures the benefits conferred upon the world by the land of Egypt. It is now time to consider its chief contribution, the Pyramid itself. This we learn "was designed and erected under the special guidance and direction of God, and bears a somewhat similar relation to the physical universe, which the Bible bears to the spiritual" (p. 36). In other words, it is what is meant by an inspired work, and the question naturally follows, what this Pyramid was meant to teach us. An answer is given in the words of the book itself (p. 255):—

"The same argument from design, which leads us to believe that the world had a personal Creator, warrants the belief that the great Pyramid was built to serve as a monument in stone, not only of the most important mathematical and astronomical truths, but also of the deeper mysteries of God's Revelation."

I will enumerate a few of the many lessons pointed out in the course of the work. It is of Apologetic value, presenting an argument against Evolution, and being a witness of Inspiration; it is a key to the universe and to the last times, as shadowed in the Apocalypse; it affords, moreover, as will be seen more in detail, an explanation of many metaphors and hard passages in Scripture. It "presents a practical solution of that puzzling problem, the quadrature of the circle. It is likewise pervaded with the highest intelligence. There is not an inch of it which does not speak. Even after the lapse of four thousand years of observation, study and experience, there is not a nation or people whose wisdom or every-day affairs it is not capable of improving. There is reason to think that we have not yet reached the fulness of its grand symbolizations." (p. 108.)

These are a few of the numerous significations which the author reads into the proportions of the pyramid. The manner of arriving at his conclusions is curious and instructive. The numbers three, nine and five are discovered in different parts, and each in turn receives elaborate treatment.

Under the last number we read:—

"This intense fineness could not have been accidental, and likewise corresponds with the arrangements of God, both in nature and revelation. Note the fineness of termination to each limb of the human body, the five senses, the five books of Moser, the twice five precepts of the Decalogue. But this is not all. Science now tells us that the diameter of the earth at the poles is *five hundred millions of units, about the length of our inches.*" (p. 47.)

The words underlined are noticeable, for they afford a test of the writer's trustworthiness. Every one knows that an unit may be of any size, and so it is here used to mean nothing, for the actual length of the polar diameter is far from 500,000,000 inches. A careless reader would, however, be deceived into believing that to be the actual measurement, and upon this computation, the author rests an elaborate calculation (pp. 47-8). Presently the polar diameter becomes "500,500,000 of our inches (at p. 61), and upon this measurement, which the author supposes to be the mean between the British ordnance survey of 500,428,296 inches, and the American computation of 500,522,904 (the figures and authorities are the author's own), another curious coincidence is founded!

These facts speak for themselves, as to the exactness of Dr. Seiss, and I think what follows will be equally significant as to his common sense. Under the heading of "The Pyramid and the Christian Dispensation" comes a description of "miniature symbolic graves, every one of which is open," cut in stone, in "the Grand Gallery of our Pyramid."

"More than this, right by the side of each of these open graves is a neatly cut stone set vertically in the wall. It is a symbol of standing upright, and almost audibly proclaims the tenants of those open graves risen, as all true Christians are, not only from the death of sin, but to an headship of a still completer resurrection through Him who is to come again. There are eight times seven of these open graves. Eight is the number of new life and resurrection, and seven of dispensational fulness, so that by their numbers they also signify this newness of life. We thus have one of the intensest and most spiritual features of the Gospel as emphatically pronounced as stones can speak it." (p. 131.)

Very wonderful, certainly, for such early times, but what proof have we for all this but assumption? It would be wearisome, and, I hope, by this time, useless, to give any more of this strange symbolism. But to show how little the writer is to be trusted in his interpretations of Scripture a few more citations must be made. Everything is grist that comes to the mill of Dr. Seiss. This principle seems to be to press into the service of the Pyramid all that is not otherwise explained, and he adds to this much about which most people are tolerably certain. Thus the text from Isaiah (xix. 19-20) prophesying an altar to Jehovah in the land of Egypt is robbed of its natural reference to Onias and the Egyptian branch of the Jewish Church, and becomes the motto to the volumes. Again—

"There is a still more distinct reference to the Great Pyramid in the Book of Job, xxxviii. 1-7 . . . the style of the building is unquestionably the Pyramid . . . the picture will not interpret of anything else." (p. 114.)

The passage referred to is the magnificent one beginning, "Who is he that darkeneth counsel by words without knowledge?" and contains the description of the morning stars singing together, and the sons of God shouting for joy over the laying of the foundations of the earth. The suggested interpretation is a mere bathos. The name of Melchisedec is pressed into the service of the Pyramid, and to aid in the identification of this personage and the semi-fabulous Job, another passage of Job (xxix. 6) is misunderstood. The words are, "When I washed my steps with butter, and the rock poured me out rivers of oil,"