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## Religious Miscellany.

For the Provincial Wesleyan.

### Hymn to God.

Great God! as with profound delight  
I gaze upon the star-like sky;  
Those wondrous worlds that shine so bright,  
Where'er I turn my wondering eye;  
I view Thy works, and in them Thee,  
Great Father of Eternity!

When gentle suns and fruitful showers  
Spread life and beauty through the grove;  
And singing birds and fragrant flowers  
Awake the heart to joy and love;  
I view Thy works, and in them Thee,  
Great Father of Eternity!

When gusty wind, and stormy cloud  
Prestage the thunder coming shower;  
When lightning flash, and thunder loud  
Fill yonder vault with sounds of power,  
I view Thy works, and in them Thee,  
Great Father of Eternity!

When tempests lash the foaming deep,  
And waves on wave like mountains rise,  
Or fierce tornadoes on it sweep,  
That seem to blend the sea and skies,  
I view Thy works, and in them Thee,  
Great Father of Eternity!

When Autumn's loaded fields declare  
A bounty that is all-Divine;  
Man, bird and beast Thy bounty share,  
As fruit on loaded branches shine,  
I view Thy works, and in them Thee,  
Great Father of Eternity!

But when I view Almighty love  
To us in Jesus Christ displayed—  
See Him forsake His throne above;  
Then in the lowly manger laid;  
Expiring on the cursed tree;  
To save a guilty world and me;  
I see this sight, and worship Thee,  
Great Father of Eternity!

My wondering soul, now humbled, lies  
Low in the dust before the Lord;  
I view Him as my sacrifice—  
He suffers—I escape the rod;  
I view Thy love, then I love Thee,  
Great Father of Eternity!

M. BURNS.

**DEAR SIR,**—The former part of the following lines you may have seen. It is said they were written by a person in Britain, under the name of the fly-leaf of his Bible. They were copied as an introduction to the serious perusal of a Bible purchased in this Province; and on the fly-leaf at the end was written, some time afterwards, the latter part, as not less appropriate, though less striking and pointed, to express the result of a prayerful reading of the Book. The insertion of both, with this brief explanation, (or any remarks you may prefer) in a corner of your valuable paper, if deemed worthy of notice, will confer a favor on—

Yours,

A BIBLE READER.

Colchester, May 23rd, 1861.

"This is the price my Bible cost:  
Was't cheap, or dear? Ah! who can tell?  
The answer is in heaven or hell—  
In the soul saved, or doubly lost."  
The day of Judgment will make clear,  
"Was very cheap, or very dear."

"Two cheap! In tree of life does  
The shafts of sin, and death, and hell;  
And all who eat its leaves shall dwell  
Till the shade above the skies.  
Nor flaming sword, nor dead decree  
Can bar them from that healing tree."

**Salvation as a Free Gift.**  
The simple style of the following extract, which we find in Challen's Monthly, may be suggestive to some of our clerical readers, who wish to reach the hearts of the people:

"I once found myself, in company with a party of friends, in the gallery of a small village church, listening to a discourse from a colored minister, or, rather, exhorter. After some preliminary exercises, a gray-headed man, evidently quite a patriarchal personage, arose, and announced as his subject, 'The History of Dives and Lazarus,' which he proceeded to explain and enforce—

"One illustration he used so full of simplicity, and at the same time so adapted to express the idea he meant to convey, that it struck me forcibly. He was trying to show how a sinner should accept the gospel offers of salvation."

"Suppose," said he, "any of you wanted a coat, and should go to a white gentleman, to purchase one. Well, he has one that exactly fits you, and, in all respects, is just what you need. You ask the price; but, when told, find you have not enough money, and shake your head."

"No, massa, I am too poor; must go without."  
"But he says, 'I know you cannot pay me, and I have concluded to give it to you—you will have it.'"

"What would you do in that case? Stop to him and say, 'O, he's just laughing at me; he don't mean it.' No such thing. There is not one of you, who would not take the coat, and say—

"Yes, massa, and thank you, too."  
"Now, my dear friends, God's salvation is offered you as freely as that; why won't you take it as freely? You are lost, undone sinners, and feel that you need a covering from his wrath—If you keep his holy law blameless, you might purchase it by good works; but all you are all full of sin, and that continually. Prayer and tears are worthless. You are poor, indeed; and if this is all your dependence, I don't wonder that you are turning off in despair. But stop! look here—God speaks now, and offers you the perfect robe of righteousness, that will cover all your sins, and fit all your wants, and says that you may have it, without money, and without price. O, brethren, my dear brethren, do take God's word for it, and thankfully accept his free gift."

What impression the words had on the old man's colored auditors, I cannot tell; but, as our group left the church, one of the ladies remarked to the other:

"What a strange idea that was about the coat!"

"My dear friend," was the reply, "it suited my state of mind, rough and unpolished as it was, better than all Dr. —'s elaborate and eloquent arguments this morning. I am so glad that I came here. This is the way I have been despairingly seeking for years. How simple! How plain! Free grace alone! Yes, I will take God as his word—"

"Nothing in my hands I bring,  
Simply to thy cross I cling."

## Religious Intelligence.

### British and Foreign Bible Society.

On Wednesday last, the fifty-seventh Annual Meeting of the British and Foreign Bible Society was held at Raster Hall. The spacious edifice was densely crowded, as usual, long before the time for the proceedings to begin, and every seat on the platform—which was devoted exclusively to gentlemen—was occupied by prominent lay and clerical friends of the Society, gathered from all parts of the country. Precisely at eleven o'clock, the Right Hon. the Earl of Shaftesbury, the President, came upon the platform, accompanied by the Bishops of London, Carlisle, Durham, and Victoria, Lord Charles Russell, Lord Ebury, Lord H. Cholmondeley, Mr. R. H. St. John, M.P., Mr. Joseph Pease, M.P., Mr. Arthur Kimball, M.P., the Rev. W. Arthur, the Rev. J. B. Chown, the Rev. H. Venn, the Rev. J. Stoughton, the Rev. E. Prout, the Hon. and Rev. Baptist Noel, the Rev. George Clayton, the Rev. Hugh Allen, D.D., and other Ministers and gentlemen.

The Rev. John Lee, one of the Secretaries of the Society, offered prayer, and read the first chapter of the Second Epistle of Peter.

Lord Shaftesbury then rose amid loud applause, and said—

"Ladies and gentlemen, you will, I hope, excuse me, if, through somewhat of indisposition, I am unable to make myself distinctly heard. I should much rather have preferred to be silent, but in this particular crisis I could not make up my mind to let this anniversary pass without one or two observations. Let me first say that, since our last meeting, God has been pleased to bless this Society with very great success. He has opened the kingdom of Italy. In Italy now it is circulated, without let or hindrance, the full and complete Word of God, in the language spoken by the people. He has been pleased to send wisdom into the minds, and I hope, into the hearts, of those who rule the Austrian Empire, and Bibles are now admitted across the frontier for the use of the Protestant subjects of his Imperial Majesty. And we have to rejoice that in the great Empire of Russia the Czar has seen fit to allow the circulation of the Scriptures in the old language of the country, the old Russ. The printing press is active in sending forth copies of the Word of God, and we have reason to hope that, if the matter terminates as it has begun, the seed of the Word of God will be sown over every acre of that large and most important empire. But since the last meeting other matters have occurred. There has been a large maturity of infidelity exhibited in the bosom of the Christian Church. A company of seven gentlemen, conscientious, no doubt, in their own views, but holding a belief in the faith antagonistic to the volume to which we believe, have put out a volume with much pomp and circumstance. Now, I hold that all the authors of that book are responsible for the whole and for each individual part. United in a single publication, sharing alike the consequences, the profit, the loss, the honour, or the reverse, as it may be, of that publication, they are bound together in a common effort to introduce a new Gospel, which is to be propounded and circulated for the general acceptance of the British public. Now, this is not the time nor the place in which to enter at full length into the principles and the consequences of Rationalism, but we ask what concern, then, is it to the Bible Society? Simply this, it is a notice to quit. If that book be true we have no business here. If the Word of God be not the record of inspiration—if it speak not the mind of a Divine Author fairly, simply, fully, if it be not the Word of God himself, I say the Bible Society are standing here to circulate a grand imposture. We are circulating a book which we tell every one to receive and obey as the record of heaven, as the written Word of God himself, when, if that other book be true, we are circulating that which is a gross imposture, which is an imposition perfectly intolerable, the more intolerable because it promises to come from heaven, when it is, in fact, very little more, or nothing more, than the labours and production of uninspired and fallible men. And again, I maintain that, even if we admit the interpretation that they would put upon the Holy Scriptures, we are equally out of place in circulating the Scriptures. I maintain that if their principles of interpretation be true, the Bible is not the book for the poor man, the Bible is not the book for general and universal circulation. If it be true that the Bible can be comprehended only by the learned, only after long and profound thought, by much meditation, by the masses of acquisition in classical and ancient knowledge, if that be true, do you not at once, by that admission, shut out the light because you shut out the possibility of private judgment? You shut it out from the great mass of mankind. You shut it out from all but those who may be possessed of inexhaustible stores of learning, and you establish an intellectual despotism more dangerous, more glaring, more unrighteous than the worst despotism that ever was established by the Church of Rome in her most barbarous times and in her most detestable periods. Now, we protest against that—we have denounced the work; but that is not enough. The laity must take it in hand. The laity of the kingdom must look up to the bishops. The bishops will be left in the lurch. We heartily applaud their courage and Christian conduct, and we will approve it not only by our words, but also by our actions. The laity must take it into their own hands, and must determine to what schools, colleges, and universities they will send their children for instruction in Christian life. The laity must determine what literature they will encourage, what men they will countenance, and how far they will in social life support or repel those who maintain doctrines that are subversive of the great foundations on which we

stand. Now what will the clergy do? It is not for us, perhaps, to say to the clergy what they ought to do, but I will say to the clergy, on my own behalf and on the behalf of many of the laity, what we wish them to do. We wish the clergy to lead their flocks to the fountain-head of truth. We do not wish them to enter into controversy, and to answer fact by fact and statement by statement. You may often prove your adversary wrong without proving yourselves right. We ask them to preach incessantly the great and saving doctrines of the Word. We ask them to let the Bible do its own work—

and not upon the man in his inner experience, and not by a display of outward learning. And if they will do this, rely upon it there will rise up a million or more of the most able controversialists—men of deep knowledge of the saving truths of the Scripture, vigorous in heart, well furnished in mind, and able to give an answer to all who shall gainsay the hope and the faith that is in them. And if these deluded men, for such they are, will float down the stream of theology, rejoicing in the mixture of the impure tributaries of human science, who are orthodox Nonconformists and members of the Church of England will, with our pastors, ascend the stream to the fountain-head, and there drink the waters fresh and pure as they first came from the lips of the living God. I should like to ask what, after all, is the voice and force of this famous book? Does it contain anything really new? What is there in it that is new? Ay, there is one new thing, and one only. Having evangelized from the Gospel all vital religion, so well do the authors know the wants and cravings of the human heart that they substitute for the vitality of truth a manky sentimentality. Is there nothing new but that? Is there nothing in it that may not be found in the whole range of infidel writers from Celsus down to Tom Paine? What, then, has given such currency to it? Have there not for years been pamphlets and writings of all descriptions bearing upon these points, seeking to invalidate Scripture, and to subvert the faith of man—in producing genuine difficulties to perplex men's minds and disturb their hearts? But all these have gone into the only place that is fit for them, the waste-paper basket, for the purpose of consumption in the fire. Why is it, then, that this book has been rescued from so well-deserved a fate? For no other reason than this: this is the first time in our history in which a plan of a new Gospel and a new system of interpretation of Scripture has been boldly put forward by men whose names are notorious—by men who hold high offices in the Church—by benefited clergy—by dignitaries. The value is not in the writings, but in the offices of the men; not in the force of the work, but in the names of the persons who have sent it forth. Had it not been for that, satisfied I am that they would have shared the same fate as all others of a similar description have shared, and I doubt not that in the course of a short time the fact would remain in the minds of men that there was such a book, for I dare say there would not be found in the whole realm of England a man who would be foolish enough to give half an hour to the perusal of it. And yet the work is producing great mischief. A friend of mine told me that in one of his courses of investigation throughout the metropolis only a short time ago, he ascended to the upper room of a gin-palace, and there he found twenty men engaged in the perusal of this work relishing everything that tended to subvert the original truths of Scripture, and to take away from the Book of God its coercive power upon the human heart. And yet, even in that body there was found one man to say, that whatever might be the truth of the book, it was not the truth he had been taught as a child at his mother's knee. But I am alarmed to see to what an extent in the present day—a day of inquiry and, as we are told, of intellectual effort—people are carried away by mere names, without really estimating the truth of those things which they so readily believe. Sooner or later, I dare say, we shall see another extraordinary proposition as readily imbibed. Only let the doctrine of the development of species be taken up by dignitaries or men of position and name, embodied in a volume, and put forth to the public, and hundreds will be found to rejoice in the discovery that they are sprung from a fungus, and that as soon as possible to the fungus they will return. But this really becomes very serious, because upon these things unthinking men ground the dreadful assumption that the Scripture is unsuited to the times in which we live. Good heavens! were the truths of the Book prevalent in the hearts of men, should we be disturbed and frightened as we are day by day by those gigantic frauds that are arising out in every community, and which lead us to believe that all honesty in trade, all honesty in public, all honesty in private life, have left the earth for ever? Is it unsuited to the times in which we live, when, if its holy precepts and its divine commands had been listened to, we should not have before us those gigantic cruelties that pervade the Continent of America, and the non-observance of which precepts has led to that great and astounding issue, the severance and demolition of the largest Republic that ever figured upon the face of the earth? These are two instances in which, if that Book had been adopted as suitable to the age in which men live, those great and terrible issues would have been avoided. Ah! but now they come and tell us that the Bible is false; that it is worn out; that it can do nothing; and that we must now have some new influence and to guide man. Effete! Indeed! should like to know whether it is effete at this moment in India. Is it effete in the effect lately begun to be produced in China? Is it effete in the islands of the Pacific Ocean? Is it effete in Madagascar? Have you read the account given by Mr. Ellis in his most instructive and interesting work? He returned to Madagascar after an absence of 18 years. During that time the people had suffered the most bitter persecution. Copies of the Scripture, as in the old days of persecution, were hunted out and destroyed, and it was death to circulate the smallest portion of the Word of God. What did he find? He found a community of Christians, pure, holy, true, faithful, observed by every one for their decent, orderly, and becoming conduct, respected by the judges who condemned them to death. He found these men bound together and steadfast in the faith. By what? Not by

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