

ARTICLE VIII.

CRITICAL NOTES.

I.

DANA ON GENESIS AND SCIENCE.

WE have not been alone in regarding the article of Professor Dana, published in the *Bibliotheca Sacra* for April, 1885, entitled "Creation; or, the Biblical Cosmogony in the Light of Modern Science," as one of the most important contributions to this subject that have been made for some time. On two different occasions Mr. Gladstone sent special communications to a leading English magazine for the purpose of calling attention to Professor Dana's ideas as presented in that article. We are glad, therefore, to see that its value is receiving increased recognition, and that it is now in a fair way to get a wider circulation than our own pages have given it. It has recently been translated into Japanese, and, with a bibliography of the subject, is now accessible to all the students of that inquiring people. Professor Dana has also recently presented the subject in a more popular form in a lecture, and that has been issued in a small volume of seventy pages. But the views, as he states in a note, are the same as those of the article referred to, only it is somewhat more expanded, and some collateral points are introduced. For the benefit of those who have the original article, we will give a brief *résumé* of these points.

Professor Dana believes that the prevalence of monotheism must be due to the influence of a special revelation of God, since the tendency of the human reason, "under the influence of the various causes of fear, dread, awe, in the world," will naturally be toward polytheism. The tendency of the Jews to degenerate, and to abandon their monotheism, is a proof of this proposition. The monotheistic idea must be divinely nurtured as well as divinely implanted, or it will not continue to prevail. We have, therefore, in the monotheistic character of the biblical cosmogony, an indication of its inspired origin. In this respect it is unique among the cosmogonies of the world. In setting out upon the discussion, therefore, Professor Dana declares that, from first to last, he cannot but regard the first chapter of Genesis as a divine record, and that not only the first verse, but each verse, has a worthy place in such a record. Even though the book of Genesis were compiled from several documents, as some suppose, the compilation is so remarkable that it must be regarded as divine.

Professor Dana warns his readers against being influenced by "the oft-repeated statements that geology is an immature science," and "that the chapter was not intended to teach physical science," and says, that while "the first chapter of Genesis does not teach science," but merely uses certain fundamental facts of science by way of illustration, the success with which these illustrations are chosen cannot fail to attract the attention of the candid scientific man. The scientific knowledge of a writer is no less apparent in his choice of illustrations than in a formal treatment of the subject.

Coming to the subject in hand, Professor Dana freely acknowledges that there are apparent discrepancies between the facts and the record, but contends that proper attention to the conditions of the case readily explains them. For example, the use of the word "day" at first sight seems to refer to a period of twenty-four hours, and, so, to be contradictory to geological facts. But this is shown to be merely an apparent discrepancy by the great range that is given to the significance of this word in other portions of the narrative. So the use of the word for plants in the third day's work would convey to an ordinary reader the idea of such plants as he is familiar with, because man's comprehension of statements is, to a considerable extent, limited by his present experience and knowledge of things. But that does not prevent there being a divine selection of language, such as shall render it adjustable to the increasing knowledge of future ages; and that is precisely what we seem to have even in this case, where in the expressions, 'yielding, seed,' 'having seed in itself,' the words describe, with wonderful precision, . . . the fundamental characteristics of a living species, distinguishing it from mineral or inorganic substances. . . . The new creation was in an important sense complete, although represented at the first only by the lower tribes of plants" (p. 44).

Professor Dana calls renewed attention to the remarkable facts that with the exception of the account of man's creation, the record in Genesis nowhere teaches that species were made by a special divine act, since such phrases as "let the earth bring forth the grass," etc., readily fall in with modern ideas of the derivative origin of species; that the creation of light is made to precede the creation of the sun, which while strictly correct, is not such an idea as the facts would naturally have suggested to an ancient writer, since it is one that modern science has obtained only by long and painful effort; and that the progressive order of the creation as represented in Genesis displays a knowledge and a philosophy beyond the attainment of a mere human author of that period. For example, the document is divided into two halves, with three subordinate members in each,—the first relating to the development under the influence of primal light depending on the constitution of mat-

sixth day, and in these references the order of creation is admirably preserved in Genesis, for, 1st, according to science, plant life is undoubtedly the source to which we must trace, in the Archæan period, the deposits of graphite (which is pure carbon), and the lower species of plants are capable of enduring heat which would be destructive of animal life. 2nd. That stage in the progress of the universe in which earth's vapors were so cleared away as to open its surface to the direct rays of the sun, which Professor Dana takes to be the work of the fourth day, is of the very greatest significance to the organic world, since the sun's direct light is essential to all higher grades of plants and animals; the chemical power of direct sunlight being ten times that of the diffused light on a cloudy day.

Professor Dana dwells with increasing confidence upon the fact that there is a system in the succession of species, according to both records. There is a gradual rise and grade of species, according to geology, and, when properly interpreted, the same appears in the account of Genesis. "Gradual development, if not actually taught by the chapter, is in accord with its spirit." Man, with his knowledge of moral distinctions, is fitted to subdue the earth and have dominion over it, and the earth is to him "but the first stage on the way to celestial heights. . . . His mind is not simply a motive power to his individual body, but a radiant centre of force, fitted to diffuse energy indefinitely around; . . . A piece of moving enginery is a thing of life, because penetrated by the intelligent spirit of man. All things have become active through the breath that was breathed into the being of the last creation." We will quote entire the last three or four paragraphs:—

"Such is the grand cosmogonic week described by Moses; and such the corresponding records derived from nature. These readings of nature are modern; the facts read are from records during the ages to which they refer. A century since, those ages were beyond the bounds of knowledge or thought. The earth in common belief had no past beyond man's birthday. Science has lengthened time back through indefinite aeons. It had no history except in the fates of Omnipotence. Now, a volume of revelation is opening before us in which God has inscribed his wisdom and beneficence all along the ages; and the systems of nature, instead of being the system of the now and of this little sphere, is the system of immensity in time and space.

"The degree of accordance between science and the Bible which has been made out should satisfy us of the divine origin both of nature and the Bible. If one in origin, they should be in essential harmony, and not a part in 'cosmogonic ideas;' and so they prove to be.

"The events of creation recorded in Genesis were known only to the Creator; and the stately review of the ages, making the introduction to the Bible, stands there as the impress of the divine hand on the first leaf of the sacred book. The leaf carries the history, in sublime announcements, onward to man: and then, man in his relations to his Maker, man's duty and destiny become the absorbing themes.

"Nature has her words of hope. For if myriads of ages were used in per

fecting a single sphere in space and fitting it for its final purpose, and countless tribes of animals lived and died before the series reached a living soul, man has reason to believe that this noblest form of life, whose likeness to the Eternal One is such that he is able to interpret and utilize his laws and find delight in the beauty and wisdom of his works, will not, after a few short hours, be blotted out forever. But the sure word of prophecy is given him in the Sacred Book which came as a sequel to the volume of nature to be man's special guide to life and immortality."

II.

THE EXPULSION OF THE BIBLE FROM THE PUBLIC SCHOOLS OF WISCONSIN.

THE recent action of the Supreme Court of Wisconsin prohibiting the reading of the Bible in the public schools of that State is so radical and so far reaching in its consequences that the facts with reference to it should be fully considered by the Christian public. We will therefore give here for convenience a concise statement of the case, making free use of material found in a pamphlet containing four sermons, of rare ability, upon the subject, by Rev. W. A. McAtee, D. D., of Madison, Wis.

The larger part of the inhabitants of Wisconsin, at the time of the original adoption of the State Constitution, were emigrants from New England and New York, and they carried with them the ideas of religious liberty which had embodied themselves in the institutions of the original states of the Union. In these states the Bible had from time immemorial been habitually read in the schools, and the practice was continued while Wisconsin was a Territory. The propriety of thus reading the book in the schools seems never to have been questioned.

In the Constitutional Convention of 1846 a section was reported from the Committee on Education with a clause, saying, that "No book of religious doctrine or belief, and no sectarian instruction, shall be permitted or used in any public school." When this came before the Committee of the Whole, however, the phrase "no book of religious doctrine or belief" was stricken out by unanimous consent, and the rest of the clause retained. This Constitution being rejected, the Convention of 1848, while making changes in other portions of the document, made none of any material significance in this, but simply provided that "no sectarian instruction shall be allowed in said [the

The ground for this decision is supposed to be in two Sections, which read as follows:—

Sec. 18 of Art. 1: "The right of every man to worship Almighty God according to the dictates of his own conscience shall never be infringed, nor shall any man be compelled to attend, erect, or support any place of worship, or to maintain any ministry, against his consent. Nor shall any control of, or interference with, the rights of conscience be permitted, or any preference be given by law to any religious establishments, or mode of worship. Nor shall any money be drawn from the treasury for the benefit of religious societies, or religious or theological seminaries."

Sec. 3 of Art. 10: "The Legislature shall provide by law for the establishment of district schools, which shall be as nearly uniform as practicable, and such schools shall be free, without charge for tuition, to all children between the ages of four and twenty years, and no sectarian instruction shall be allowed therein."

In interpreting these Articles, the following propositions are laid down and defended by the Court: 1st. That the reading of the Bible without note or comment is "sectarian instruction." 2d. That the reading of the Bible without note or comment in the schools "is or may be a violation of the rights of the conscience guaranteed" by the Constitution. 3d. That reading the Bible in the schools makes the schoolroom in which it is read "a place of worship" within the meaning of the Constitution. 4th. That the reading of the Bible in the schoolroom converts the school into a "religious seminary" within the meaning of the Constitution.

In criticising this decision, Dr. McAtee, following the lead of Judge Bennett, urges with great force that the same reasoning would prove the Constitution of the United States to be a partisan, political document, because it is differently interpreted by different parties, and therefore unfit to be studied in the schools. And surely it would seem that the Bible, being the document from which all the Christian denominations derive their supposed warrant for existence, should no more be regarded as sectarian than the Constitution of the United States should be regarded as partisan. The most that the judges could with any reason claim upon this point would be that *certain portions* of the Scripture might be prohibited. But to this they would not consent, and are unwilling to make any exceptions to the case in hand, though it was proved that the passages which had been read in the school, and which gave rise to the case, were selections entirely devoid of sectarian significance.

their definition of what is an infringement of the rights of conscience. Upon this point, the judges of the Supreme Court of the State of Maine seem to reason more correctly.

The following is their language as formulated by Justice Appleton:—

“If the Bible, or any particular version of it, may be excluded from schools, because its teachings may be opposed to the teachings of the authorities of any church, the same result may ensue as to any other book. If any one sect may object, the same right must be granted to others. This would give the authorities of any sect the right to annul any regulation of the constituted authorities of the state, as to the course of study and the books to be used. It is placing the legislation of the state, in the matter of education, at once and forever, in subordination to the decrees and teachings of any and all sects when their members conscientiously believe such teachings. It at once surrenders the power of the state to a government not emanating from the people, nor recognized by the Constitution. . . . As the existence of conscientious scruples as to the reading of a book can be known only from the assertion of the child, its mere assertion must suffice for the exclusion of any book in the reading, or in the hearing, of which it may allege a wrong to be done to its religious conscience. . . . As a right existing on the part of one child, it is equally a right belonging to all. As it relates to one book, so it may apply to another, whether relating to science or morals. . . . As the child may object to reading any book, so it may equally object to hearing it read for the same cause, and thus the power of selection of books is withdrawn from those to whom the law intrusts it, and by right of negation is transferred to the scholars. The right claimed undermines the power of the state. It is that the will of the majority shall bow to the conscience of the minority, or to the conscience of any one. . . . Nor is this all; while the laws are made and established by those of full age, the right of obstruction, of interdiction, is given to any and all children, of however so immature age or judgment.”

It seems also a very strained interpretation to make every place in which the Bible is read a place of worship. Upon this construction, as Dr. McAtee urges, every ship in our navy, and every soldier's fort, and every penitentiary, or public home for the poor or insane, where the Bible is read for its influence upon the morals and *esprit de corps* of the occupants, is transformed into a place of worship, and the law of the land by that means broken.

Still more startling is the position of the Court that the reading of the Bible in a district school transforms it into a “religious or theological semi-

charge of reading their own opinions into the documents which they are set to interpret, instead of restricting themselves to the work of finding out what the documents originally meant. The hazard of misinterpretation belongs to everything that is committed to human interpreters. Those who would reject the Bible as the authoritative standard of religious doctrine because of its liability to misinterpretation must, on the same grounds, reject all the most carefully drawn constitutions and legal statutes; yet there are few who would be so rash as to do away with statutes and written constitutions, because of this infirmity of their authorized interpreters. As written documents, they furnish in themselves the best means of correcting the aberrations of individual judges, and so we may hope that, in this case, the discussion which is aroused, will ultimately lead to a reversal of this decision by other judges, or, at any rate, will prevent the judges of other courts from following in the mistaken line of argument pursued by the Wisconsin court.

In connection with this decision, a fact of great importance is brought out with reference to our legal machinery, which is too generally overlooked, namely, the power of the courts to make the laws of the country. The power of interpretation really gives the courts the power of enacting laws. Here, for example, is a small body of men, by their interpretation of a clause in a constitution made fifty years ago, determining the policy of the State upon a vital question, and the decision which they make is irreversible by the legislative department. If the Legislature should make a law permitting the use of the Bible, the judges would say it was unconstitutional, and so devoid of effect. Only a change in the Constitution itself could, in the opinion of these judges, change the law which they have laid down. The only other way of removing the Bible from the *Index Expurgatorius* of this court is by changing the minds of the court, which can be done either by the enlightenment of these individual judges themselves, or by the selection of other judges having juster views of interpretation than they. Probably the best plan is to pour in such a flood of light from every quarter upon the question at issue that, if not these individual judges, all future judges at least, will be enlightened with respect to certain fundamental principles in the interpretation of language.

At any rate, the Christian public should be aroused to consider the hazard, at the present time, threatening the system of our public schools. Between the opposition of those churches which are aiming to build up parochial schools and to secure a diversion of the public funds for their support, and the opposition of those classes in the community who object to the Bible because it teaches the existence of a Divine Being, we are in danger of losing the manifold advantages derived from a uniform educational system with compulsory attendance which now exists, and upon which the welfare of the poorer classes, especially, is so dependent. We cannot afford to maintain

youth of the land. At any rate, even such an agnostic as Huxley in England is ready to maintain that the Bible is pre-eminent for the purposes of moral instruction in the schools. We must not allow the sophistries of a few men who happen to constitute for the time the Supreme Court of a single State to make the law of the land on this subject, and this too in face of the endorsement given to the contrary interpretation by a uniform practice during our whole history.

III.

PRESENT DANGER IN THE MORMON CRISIS.

IN our book reviews, we have not commended too highly the recent volume of Rev. M. W. Montgomery upon "The Mormon Delusion." But in view of recent events, it is proper for us to say that the practical measures proposed by him for uprooting the system do not seem to us fully to meet the case. We confess, however, that the problem is so dark, and previous remedies have seemed so ineffectual, that we can look with equanimity upon almost any proposition having in view the uprooting of the vile system. But Mr. Montgomery proposes the interference of the national government by methods which we fear cannot give much hope of success. For example, as an instance of how short sighted legislation often is, we are reminded that the confiscation of the enormous funds of the Mormon Church and the devotion of them to the increase of educational funds of the Territory is really helping to build up the Mormon system, since the administration of the schools of the Territory remains in the hands of the Mormons themselves. This enormous school fund becomes, therefore, an instrument of strengthening their faith in the most effectual way, and yet by a method which they would have been of themselves too short sighted to use, but which under compulsion they are using with marked effect. It does not, however, seem to us probable that any favorable results can come in the end from Mr. Montgomery's proposals to put the whole school system of the Territory under the direct control of the general government, since the general government has never undertaken work of this sort, and neither has, nor can well create, the machinery for successfully carrying out such an extensive plan. A force of government teachers sent in from the outside would but fan the flame of

property, but at the present time the Mormon Church is by no means the only one which is apparently violating that law. Besides, this property is largely of the nature of the reserved fund of a life insurance company,—the Mormon members having a claim upon it for the support of themselves and their families in case of sickness or death. To divert a fund of this sort, and set it to quickening the motion of the sluggish wheels of an educational machinery under the control of the Mormons themselves, is certainly, as Mr. Montgomery avers, short-sighted policy, but at present there seems to be no practical way of correcting the mistake.

Another suggestion of Mr. Montgomery is that "Congress ought to so legislate as to give special encouragement to loyal citizens to emigrate to Utah. If," he says, "one hundred thousand loyal people were to settle there, Congress might then safely admit Utah to statehood, and leave to her own citizens, to education, and Christian missions, the settlement of the Mormon question."

But when we come to inquire what sort of legislation would secure this purpose, we find ourselves at a loss. For, as Mr. Montgomery admits, most "of the five hundred thousand acres of cultivated land in Utah and the water to irrigate them are now in the hands of Mormons who are instructed not to sell to Gentiles." And this would seem to be about the limit of productive lands, unless Government should undertake some pretty extensive irrigating projects. Whatever hope there might have been of securing the aid of Government in such projects when Mr. Montgomery wrote his book, would seem to have been dispelled by recent Congressional action, withdrawing all aid looking toward the irrigation of desert lands at public expense.

Besides, if Congress should, as is proposed, "abundantly irrigate these unoccupied valleys, and provide an ample supply of water for the mines," it is by no means certain that the Mormons would not be the first ones to occupy the lands and to profit from the mines. Against this contingency, however, it is proposed to provide by "passing laws to withhold citizen papers, and to prevent Mormons from hereafter obtaining titles to lands." This suggestion is in line with another proposed by the author, that "Congress should prohibit by law all Mormon immigrants from landing on American soil, and disfranchise all Mormons in the United States territories." All these suggestions which seemed reasonable at the time of writing would appear to be rendered nugatory by events which have recently taken place. It is

festos prohibiting the formation of polygamous marriages, and on the 6th of October the General Mormon Conference endorsed the manifesto. So that now a Mormon can, without fear of prosecution for perjury, swear that he does not belong to "any order, organization, or association which teaches, advises, counsels, or encourages its members, devotees, or any other person, to commit the crime of bigamy or polygamy, or any other crime defined by law as a duty arising or resulting from membership in such order, organization, or association, or which practises bigamy or polygamy, or plural or celestial marriage, as a doctrinal right of such organization." ¹

The effect of this manifesto on the part of Mormon leaders has doubtless been, so far, what they expected. Judge Zane, who is one of the most determined opponents of the Mormon hierarchy, and under whose decision citizen papers had been withheld from Mormons, has, in view of this action, begun again to issue naturalization papers to Mormons, being compelled to accept the *prima facie* evidence of sincerity presented by the action of the Mormon leaders. From this it will readily be seen that the prevention of the immigration of the Mormons will be difficult to secure under any forms of law now existing, or indeed under any which can be devised, which will not be in violation of the constitutional rights of citizens with reference to liberty of religious belief. All that we can now do is to prevent the Mormons in the Territory from practising and encouraging the overt crime of plural marriage, and this now as a church they claim not to do.

It is, however, a curious and instructive instance of ecclesiastical casuistry by which the Mormon leaders now justify themselves in this act before their members. They are as far as possible from disclaiming the divine warrant for polygamy, but they say, we are not able always to give *immediate* effect to the divine commands. Says Bishop Woodruff, "The Lord has required at our hands many things that we have not done, many things that we were prevented from doing. The Lord required us to build a temple in Jackson county. We were prevented by violence from doing it. He required us to build a temple in the far West, which we have not been able to do. A great many things have been required of us and we have not been able to do them, because of those that surrounded us in the world. . . . The Lord does not require at our hands things that we cannot do. . . . It is not wisdom for us to go forth and carry out this principle against the law of the Nation. It is not wisdom for us to make war on sixty-five millions of people." ²

In an address before the same Conference on the 6th of October, Mr. George Q. Cannon, who is next in official rank with President Woodruff, adduces

and cease not their diligence, and their enemies come upon them and hinder them from performing that work; behold, it behooveth me to require that work no more at the hands of those sons of men, but to accept their offerings." 1

The intention of the Mormon leaders is clear enough from these arguments in defence of their position. They are willing to *suspend* the operation of what they claim as their right to practise polygamy, for the sake of exercising the right of suffrage in the Territory, and for the sake of removing insuperable objections to the admission of Utah as a state, but it is easy to see that under our present Constitution, if Utah should once be admitted as a state, Congress would no longer have jurisdiction in the matter, and under the protection of statehood the Mormons would again reign supreme.

We therefore sympathize most fully with the fears entertained by Mr. Montgomery and the "Gentiles" living in the Territory that if Utah should in the present conditions be received into the Union, polygamy would soon be re-established. Nor do we believe it by any means safe to postpone the admission into the Union until that indefinite time in the future when the Gentile population shall have been brought to outnumber the Mormon population, or that it would be safe even then to admit it to the rights of statehood. With the notorious corruption of political parties, we have not entire confidence that a bare majority of Gentiles would always vote together in opposition to laws legalizing polygamy.

We do not see as there is any relief from the present embarrassment except in securing an amendment to the Constitution of the United States either prohibiting polygamy or giving to Congress such general control over marriage laws that it can legislate in the matter for the states. With such protection as this might give, there would seem to be no serious objection to the speedy admission of Utah into the Union. Then the vigorous Gentile element which already controls the municipalities of Ogden and Salt Lake City could assert itself, and afford protection to the protesting elements that will from time to time appear in the more purely Mormon communities themselves.

But the problem of extirpating Mormonism is far more serious than is generally supposed. Our reliance upon the general progress of education and upon the beneficial effects of opening up the Territory to the world by railroad and business enterprises has not been reassuring, and we cordially accept the closing paragraph of Mr. Montgomery's most instructive discussion: "Let him who thinks that the Mormon problem is almost solved, be undeceived. Even when Congress and the courts shall have done their utmost, it will take half a century of the good in the hands of missionaries and