

ANTI-BIBLE TALK.

CHRISTIAN MISSIONARY.

And now comes Sister Lemert who stops her Bible Talks and begins Anti-Bible Talk. It is well named now if not before. Notwithstanding the editor has at the mast head disavowed responsibility for opinions and sentiments of contributors, and several scribes have taken in hand the matter of keeping the writer from inflicting his heresy upon the people, still the above writer snuffing the danger from afar is determined that a quietus shall at once be put upon the matter. And how? Why easy enough! Just affirm that I am helping Col. Ingersoll.

The sister allows her zeal to run away with her judgment. He is the best friend of the Bible who seeks to use it according to its intent, and not he who fears the people will not reverence it enough if the truth is known, and therefore seeks to keep them in darkness. I said it is possible these writings contain some things unauthorized, (and for this I am accused of helping Ingersoll). Now all the sister has to do is to take up any recent translation or revision and she will find many things omitted and many changed. As a sample of the change take one of her own quotations from Rev. 22: 24, "Blessed are they that do his commandments," &c. Revised version reads, "Blessed are they that wash their robes," &c. She ought to know that the latter part of the 16th chapter of Mark from the 9th verse to the close is in dispute. The two oldest Greek manuscripts and some others omit, and some others have a different ending. Verse 37 of chap. 8th of Acts of Apostles is omitted in the Revision and by others. Will she now turn to John 8th chap., and read the note, "Most ancient authorities omit John 7: 53; 8: 11, those which contain it vary much from each other." This, though not a tithe of what may be said, is sufficient to justify the very modest statement that they may contain some things unauthorized. I said also it is certain the apostles taught much that has never reached us.

Passing by Luke's statement in opening his gospel which I believe has much more weight than is usually attached to it, I call attention to the fact that the apostle speaks of a letter which he had written which is not in our canon—Col. 4: 16. I think there is good

evidence that there was another letter written to Corinth. The apostle Paul was three years and over at Ephesus and a long time at each of several other points. It is not possible we could have all their teaching. As John said of Jesus if all that he said and did were written the books of the world would not contain it, we might with greater emphasis say of the apostles, for his ministry was only about three and one-half years, while theirs was much longer.

Now the sister either does not understand me or she does not want to. I do not say we are not authorized to build a meeting house, &c., &c. I only say by certain rules of interpretation it would follow. I say in the chapter and verse that she gets authority to build a meeting house, and to have a note-book, &c., &c. I get authority to use an organ. For by the same process of reasoning, when we are exhorted to praise the Lord we are authorized to use all means conducive to that end.

The latter part of the article is unworthy of notice, that is, according to my judgment.

Now I want to say just a few things of the many that ought to be said with regard to the design and applicability of the Apostolic Epistles. First let me say that many write and speak of the Bible as though the whole had been written by God himself and addressed to each individual, consequently it all seems to be clothed with just the same authority and applicability. Now you know that in your practical use you do not carry this out, for when you desire to find a passage for a special occasion or an individual case you select; and many passages you find no particular use for. Now I expect that last sentence lacks reverence with some. Let me explain. Take the first chapter of Matthew. When you fully examine that genealogy and find it correct it has answered its purpose. You have no more need for it. Take the 23rd Psalm and it has been the glowing unction of the soul through all time and will do to meditate upon in all ages. Now I had forgotten that any one had ever given expression to the views I hold until I was re-reading the Preface and Hints to Readers in Living Oracles. And as Alexander Campbell is good to some I call attention to some things he says about the New Testament. After showing the

difference in style and matter of the several biographies because written to or for different people, he goes to the Epistles. Allow, however, one or two remarks of his about the Gospels. "Not one of these historians relates all that he knew of Jesus, nor do they all relate as much as any one of them could have related concerning him."

Again: "These historians do not always aim at giving the precise words of those they quote, not even of the Savior himself; but only the full and precise sense of what was uttered or written." This he says applies to their quotations of the Jewish prophets the words of angels, and even the Father himself. Under both these he gives many examples. In speaking of the Epistles he says that some were called out by those to whom they were addressed having first written to the apostle asking for certain information, &c., and by the apostle having heard through others of condition of affairs. He makes much of an understanding of who writes, who is written to, and the reason for such writing. I call particular attention to this sentence: "It is worthy of notice that the apostle does not attempt to settle such questions merely, or, indeed at all, by his apostolic authority." He says the argumentative part embraces the whole of the first eleven chapters of Romans and is concerned with the questions between Jew and Gentile, and as above stated not settled by apostolic dicta but by argument. If this be true, and who that carefully reads doubts it, how much is there, only in incidental allusions, that is applicable to our present individual wants? And yet this is the great doctrinal book!

In the close of his preface to the Hebrew letter showing that it was for persecuted Hebrew Christians he says: "Such is the scope and design of the letter to the Hebrews. Neither it, nor the letter to the Romans, was written as a treatise of divinity, or as an abstract of the Christian system."

All the letters written vary the one from the other, that is, they are different, written for different purposes, and with different instruction. And I am not sure that any of them were intended to be perpetuated through all ages, and certainly not, as I have said before, as "a body of doctrine," or as Campbell says as a "treatise of divinity or as an abstract of the Christian

system." You ask me where then are we to get our teaching? I answer the apostles were commanded to preach the Gospel, and teach all things Jesus commanded. This they did faithfully. They committed the same trust to other faithful men. The church is constituted the pillar and ground of the truth. By its fidelity or infidelity through the ages the world has had the true or adulterated teaching, orally or written. In all of this work there has been left us much as a staple. What were the biographies for? To convince that Jesus of Nazareth was God's anointed apostle and Savior.

Now some might need the old prophets to aid in making this conviction, others might need contemporaneous history, one might be convinced by Matthew alone, others might remain all together to produce conviction.

Christian character is gathered out of the teaching of Jesus and the apostles and our own good judgment. As the apostle says judge yourselves about certain things.

But now there must necessarily arise many local questions in the days of the apostles, as now, which must be met. The apostles and others grappled with them then, we must do the same now. Many of their questions do not concern us, many of ours were unknown to them. They settled them by reason, argument and mutual forbearance, we must do the same. Now what I object to is taking teaching that never was intended for us and making it a load that neither we nor our fathers could bear.

Now let it be observed the things that pertain to life and godliness are far within the sphere of these local observances, which the very attempt to imitate, seems with some to pass for the only vital godliness there is.

To the candid and the lover of truth for truth's sake these thoughts are submitted by one who is a firm believer in Christ and christianity.

The bigot would not be convinced for then his bigotry would be lost.

There is a monster orange tree near Fort Harley, Fla., that measures nine feet one inch in circumference. It is over fifty years old, and some seasons has over 9,000 oranges on it.—Ex.