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THE ABBÉ LAMENNAIS.

THE CHRISTIAN SAINT IN OUR REPUBLICAN CALENDAR.

GEO. JULIAN HARNEY.

THE worship of ancestors is one of the oldest forms of religion, probably nearly coeval with that of the sun, the moon, the elements which alternately vivify and gladden, and destroy, and terrorise. Family worship would, probably, in the first instance, be paid to some progenitor distinguished for his bodily strength and ferocious courage,—a village Nimrod, if villages then were. The homage paid to the memory of a noted ancestor would, in time, come to be paid to all progenitors of the existing family, whether of note or nameless. Save among savage tribes that form of worship has gone the way of all things human: "Even gods must yield; religions take their turn." But a once established cult does not perish without leaving some survival, some incitement to a continuance of the devotion no longer paid to dethroned gods. Our modern Lares and Penates, our household gods, if comprising the portrait of a father or mother, and two or three photographs of members of the existing family, are more noticeable for pictures or busts of benefactors of the human race, or of men who have shed lustre on one's native land. Not many German homes having any pretensions to neatness, not to speak of elegance, but rejoice in presentments of Goethe and Schiller, not to speak of other Teutonic worthies. Englishmen will have portraits of Shakespeare and Milton, Bacon and Newton, Chaucer and Raleigh, Alfred and Nelson, Byron and Shelley, and so on. A Scotsman will exhibit mythical portraits of Wallace and Bruce, and authentic likenesses of Scott and Burns. The American will deck his library, or favorite rooms, with the lineaments of Washington and Lincoln, Bryant and Longfellow, and others who have reflected honor on "the Stars and Stripes." The custom,—the sentiment,—is good and commendable, expressing, as it does, admiration of "the men of light and leading," who have glorified our country or advanced the welfare of mankind. When Roman Catholics are reproached for their veneration of the relics of Saints, they are able to retort that those who scoff at their relic-worship exhibit just as much of condemnable weakness or praiseworthy devotion in the like pursuit,

only, instead of Saints enshrined in the calendar, the relics they seek are of poets, patriots, warriors, or other distinguished secular heroes. The pen Shakespeare wrote with, if still existing, if it could be found, unquestionably authenticated, would command even deeper reverence than the coat of Nelson perforated by the fatal ball that dimmed the glory of Trafalgar and quenched a nation's hurrahs in moans and tears.

In addition to the greater names of History, we do well to remember and pay homage to all who have sought and fought and worked, and spent their intellectual energies, their very lives, in efforts to leave the world better than they found it. This kind of homage is open to all and its exercise is a solace and a joy.

* * *

I have been led to these reflections by the recent issue of two books which ought to be widely known. Both, in a sense, are reprints; though the first—I name them presently—is a new translation from the French; the second a selection from a political periodical which, though long ago it ceased to appear, still in its ashes holds its wonted fires, at which many a torch may be illumined to throw light on the thorny path of Progress.

In my life, more nomadic than I could have wished, not from choice, not spurred on by the spirit of adventure, but driven by circumstances,

"As a weed
Flung from the rock on Ocean's foam to sail,"

I have never been able to rest and enjoy accumulated books, either torn from me, or I banished from them. But there are men to whom, though they live in a cave, or sleep under a mulberry tree, books will come; and to whom they are as necessary as the air they breathe. Among the few books I have here,—on the southern shore of the Thames, almost within view of the scenes where Pope conversed with Swift and Bolingbroke, and Thomson sang "The Seasons" and their changes,—one of the most valued is a neatly bound, thin octavo volume, the pages showing abundance of margin and blank spaces between the chapters; the title "Paroles d'un Croyant," Paris, 1833. The name of the author does not appear; but, as all conversant with revolutionary literature know, the author was the famous Abbé de la Mennais. In the year following the publication in Paris, there appeared an Eng-

lish translation published by B. D. Cousins, 18 Duke Street, Lincoln's Inn Fields, London, with this startling title and announcement: "The Words of a Believer; by L'Abbé de la Mennais: And having thus spoken he was damned for ever by the Pope"! B. D. Cousins, like Henry Hetherington, also a printer, engaged in the war of "the Unstamped" to overthrow "the Taxes on Knowledge." The printing office in Duke Street should have been of interest to Americans as the alleged scene of Benjamin Franklin's "forme" exploit. This was at "Watts's printing-house near Lincoln's Inn Fields," as he says in his autobiography, where "on occasion I carried up and down stairs a large forme of types in each hand, when others carried but one in both hands," much to the surprise of the beer-drinking Britons; Franklin being a water-drinker. In Mr. Cousins's time there was still in the printing-office an ancient hand-press at which Franklin was said to have worked. That would have been a desirable "relic" for any admirer of Saint Benjamin. In Franklin's time Watts's printing-house, and in my time Cousins's printing-office, is now a butter and cheese store; and where the works of Bacon might have been printed, bacon is now on sale.

The name of the translator is not given on the title-page of the first English version of "Paroles d'un Croyant": probably the Rev. J. E. Smith, I think a Scotsman, a man of learning, but of opinions too erratic, not to say heterodox, to be trusted with a pulpit in any Scottish church, established or dissenting; so that the "Rev." was merely a title of courtesy. He was better known as "Shepherd Smith" from the name of his periodical, *The Shepherd*, printed and published by Cousins, a curious work combining pantheism and transcendentalism. I suspect *The Shepherd* never paid its printing expenses. Later its conductor became editor of *The Family Herald*, still published; its earlier volumes containing editorials suggestive—in spite of eccentricity of expression—to men of thought, but which (if read) must have sorely puzzled the lovers of "light reading" who bought the *Family Herald* by tens, perhaps even hundreds of thousands. The editor did not too much obtrude his peculiar opinions, and his editing must have been a success, for he was handsomely paid and found such work much more remunerative than preaching philosophy or acting as the propogandist of Pantheism.

* * *

A new edition and translation by L. E. Martineau of the "Paroles," has recently been issued by Chapman and Hall, London (price 4 shillings). I have compared the two translations and may say that probably the new version is the better rendering. Moreover the volume issued by Chapman and Hall contains also a translation of "The Past and Future of the People,"

by the same author. To the two works is prefixed an interesting memoir, the first part of which is a reproduction of an incomplete sketch by Mazzini. The translator has chosen to put the name of the famous Frenchman in its perhaps more democratic, certainly more prosaic, form of Lamennais. The memoir opens with this striking paragraph:

"In 1815 a young foreigner of modest aspect and timid bearing presented himself at the town residence of Lady Jerningham, sister-in law of Lord Stafford. He went with an introduction, I know not from whom, to seek a humble situation as teacher. He was poor, and poorly dressed. Without even bidding him be seated, the lady put a few laconic questions to him, and then dismissed him without engaging him, because—as she told a friend—*he looked too stupid!*"

"That young man was Lamennais!"

"Nine years later—in June 1824—a priest well known to fame through the rapid sale of 40,000 copies of his works, and through the warfare he had carried on against the revolutionary spirit of the age, with an eloquence equal to Bossuet, and learning and logic superior to his, was travelling full of faith and hope, from France to Rome in order to hold a conference with Leo XII. In the Pontiff's chamber the only ornaments he saw were a painting of the Virgin and his own portrait. Leo XII. received him with friendly confidence and admiration."

Imagine the discernment of the fine pensive aristocrat! I wonder if Lady Jerningham ever became aware of, and had the grace to blush for, her silliness!

One of those illustrious Bretons who have done so much for the *true* "glory" of France,—a list including such names as Abelard, Descartes, Chateaubriand, and Rénan,—Robert Felicité de la Mennais was born at St. Malo in 1782 (one would have liked to have known the full and exact date as a Saint's day in our Republican Calendar). He was the son of a wealthy commercial family, not very long before his birth ennobled for generous help to the starving poor in a time of famine; let me say not more honorable to the family than to the tottering Monarchy already doomed. Two circumstances, perhaps also a third, hindered the young Lamennais from passing through a regular course of education: the death of his mother whilst he was yet in his infancy, the disappearance of his father's wealth amidst the storms of the Revolution, and, lastly, his own restless disposition and dislike of prescribed forms of tuition. But genius and enthusiasm may attain to the mastery of knowledge without the aid of schools and colleges.

Here I had best pause nor attempt to fill column after column of *The Open Court* with a bald enumeration of the principal points of Lamennais's career; when for a sum so small as a dollar the reader may obtain the volume containing the memoir and the two translations; my object is to promote the sale of an excellent book, not to render its purchase unnecessary.

Briefly, let me say Lamennais began his young life inclined to scepticism; but finding therein only the

torment of doubt, but no rest, no satisfaction, he, like many other ardent spirits to whom religion of some kind seems to be a necessity, took refuge in Belief, and naturally fell back upon the church of his forefathers. But not therein did he find rest, for the position of that church was to him a burthen and an indescribable pain. It was the slave of the State under the Imperial discipline of Napoleon and made subservient to the upholding of his despotism at home and the furtherance of his aggressive and insatiable ambition in relation to Europe at large. Very soon Lamennais discovered that he could write, and the Imperial police discovered that here was a rising young man to be closely watched, none the less dangerous for being profoundly religious. And now began the publication of a series of works,—pamphlets and books asserting the freedom of the church, its independence of the State and the right and duty of Catholic education not cramped and fettered by State restrictions. After the final overthrow of Napoleon, Lamennais brought his brief and hapless sojourn in England to a close and returned to France. He soon found that the church was as much in bonds under Louis XVIII., and, subsequently, Charles X., as it had been under Napoleon. He, therefore, continued to write in the character of champion of the church much to the satisfaction of Rome, as evidenced in the above extract noticing his reception by Leo XII. It is said that so highly were his talents and enthusiasm rated that even a Cardinal's Hat was proffered him, but which the modest priest humbly declined.

There was a side of Lamennais's character to which Bishops, Archbishops, and Cardinals, all the hierarchy of the Roman church up to and including the Pontiff himself, were as blind as Lady Jerningham had been in her estimate of the intellectual powers of the poor tutor; namely his Christian devotion to the cause of the poor and the oppressed, whether the poor of France and Ireland, or the oppressed of Poland and Italy. The church in his view must be the church of Jesus, not of Constantine. He accepted the *status quo*, but on condition that the Gospel on which the church professed to be founded should be practically preached and be made the guardian of the weak, the comforter of the oppressed, the champion of the wronged. The church took the alarm; ecclesiastical censure and prohibition was brought to bear upon the man who it was feared might turn out a Rienzi and Luther combined. He had never the opportunity of the first, and he had no thought of following the example of the second. Persecuted by his enemies he appealed to Rome. He went thither in person, and was coldly received by Gregory XVI. He was bidden to abjure his errors and cease to plead the cause of the peoples; and he left Rome well-nigh broken-hearted. The Rev-

olution of 1830 had previously occurred, and when the Polish insurrection burst forth Lamennais had dared to advise the Pope to make himself the leader not only of the Poles but all oppressed nationalities. The alarmed despotisms had stimulated the action of Gregory, and Lamennais found to his dismay that the Pope was but a mere kingling and the willing tool of kings and autocrats. For a moment, like Galileo, he faltered. But soon reflection pointed out to him the path of duty, and though that path was fruitful only in thorns, though on either side the wild beasts of Temporal Tyranny and Ecclesiastical Despotism menaced him with their fangs and threatened him with destruction, he entered upon that path and never faltered, not even on the brink of his grave, confident in his own rectitude and invincible in his devotion to "God and Humanity."

In 1833 he launched his "Paroles d'un Croyant," and his "Words" shook Europe from shore to shore. The London *Times* described it as "a fire-ship launched into the midst of the moral world," and the journals and other organs of the European governments and privileged orders denounced the book as a baneful production intended to inflame the minds of the poor and suffering against governments, authorities, and all social order. Lastly, as was to be expected, the Vatican hurled its bolts at the daring offender. In an encyclical letter to the prelates of the Catholic World the Abbé was compared to John Huss and Wickliff, and in one account the Pope is represented as saying "We damn for ever this book of small size, but huge depravity."

Under the reign of Louis Philippe, in November, 1840, he was condemned to twelve months imprisonment for his pamphlet on "The Country and the Government." He was then nearing his sixtieth year. His health suffered, but he continued his labors; and his book "The Past and Future of the People" was published whilst he was yet in confinement. The dedication was simple: "To the People. F. Lamennais, Sainte-Pélagie, 12th June, 1841."

Then came the *bouleversement* of 1848. Lamennais was then sixty-six years of age, in feeble and failing health of body, but with undiminished intellectual powers and a heart strongly beating in sympathy with the people. Three days after the proclamation of the Republic he commenced the publication of a daily paper, *Le Peuple Constituant*, which was continued until October, 1848, when the reactionary press laws under the dictatorship of Cavaignac caused its discontinuance. He was elected one of the deputies for Paris to the National Assembly. But the days of reaction and disaster soon succeeded to the Parisian working men's triumph, culminating first in the election to the Presidency of the traitor Louis Napoleon,

and, in the second place, the blood-reeking *coup d'état* of the 2nd of December, 1851. This closed the political career of Lamennais. Still he remained busy with his pen, his last work being a translation of Dante's "Divine Comedy" into French prose. Finally, attacked by pleurisy in January, 1854, he succumbed on the 27th of February—the anniversary of the day on which six years before he had commenced *Le Peuple Constituant*—and passed away at the age of seventy-two.

His death was worthy of his life. He died free and fearless—so good and true a man could have naught to fear—he forbade the admission of any Catholic priest to his bed-side; he would allow of no opportunity for mendacious stories of "recantation of errors." He directed that his long-suffering body should be laid among the mouldering remains of the poorest of the poor, without the superfluous ceremony usual over the unconscious clay. No memorial marked his grave save a plain staff from which was suspended a scrap of paper bearing the name of Felicité Lamennais.

The length of these remarks forbids quotation from "The Words of a Believer," but I venture to hope that many of the readers of *The Open Court* will obtain for themselves the full copy together with "The Past and Future of the People."

A Frenchman, Lamennais more resembles two illustrious Italians than, perhaps, any celebrity of his own country,—Savonarola in the past, and his contemporary Mazzini, who was his fervent admirer and devoted friend. There was a narrow fanaticism in the composition of the Italian martyr from which Lamennais was free; but they resembled each other in their early illusion as to the practicability of making the Church of Rome the Church of Christ, and in their fidelity to truth, righteousness, and the welfare of the commonweal. A later convert to the faith which came to the Italian patriot intuitively in his earliest years, Lamennais rivalled his illustrious contemporary in absolute, self-sacrificing devotion to that cause which took for its banner's motto: "God and Humanity."

ABRAHAM LINCOLN'S RELIGION.

In the September number of the *Westminster Review*, Mr. Theodore Stanton brings to a close his series of four articles on Abraham Lincoln. We quote these paragraphs from the final article, sent to us by Mr. Stanton:

"A word still remains to be said about Lincoln's religious belief—or shall I say non-belief? Messrs. Nicolay and Hay and Mr. Herndon devote considerable space in their Lives to this aspect of their hero. That Lincoln was an orthodox Christian nobody pretends to assert. But his friends and biographers differ as to

how much of a Christian he was. If Lincoln had lived and died an obscure Springfield lawyer and politician, he would unquestionably have been classed by his neighbors among Free-thinkers. But, as is customary with the Church, whether Roman Catholic or Protestant, when Lincoln became one of the great of the world, an attempt was made to claim him. In trying to arrive at a correct comprehension of Lincoln's theology, this fact should be borne in mind in sifting the testimony.

"Another very important warping influence which should not be lost sight of was Lincoln's early ambition for political preferment. Now, the shrewd American politician with an elastic conscience joins some church, and is always seen on Sunday in the front pews. But the shrewd politician who has not an elastic conscience—and this was Lincoln's case—simply keeps mum on his religious views, or, when he must touch on the subject, deals only in platitudes. And this is just what Lincoln did.

"Lincoln thought little on theological subjects and read still less. That, when left to himself, he was quite indifferent to religion is frequently evident in the acts of his life. Thus the text of the greatest moral document of his Presidency, the Emancipation Proclamation, contains, as originally drawn up in secret with his own hand, no mention of God; and, what is still more significant, when the 'omission' was pointed out to him by one of his Cabinet officers, he simply incorporated into the text the religious paragraph offered him. In his criticisms on the original draft, Secretary Chase wrote: 'Finally, I respectfully suggest that on an occasion of such interest, there can be no just imputation of affectation against a solemn recognition of responsibility before men and before God; and that some such clause as follows will be proper: 'And upon this act, sincerely believed to be an act of justice warranted by the Constitution, and of duty demanded by the circumstances of the country, I invoke the considerate judgment of mankind, and the gracious favor of Almighty God.'

"Perhaps it is also significant that while adopting this paragraph, the only change made in it was of a political and constitutional nature, substituting for 'and of duty demanded by the circumstances of the country,' the phrase, 'upon military necessity.' In other words, when he came to weigh Judge Chase's paragraph he turned his attention only to the mundane portion of it.

"More than one instance of this kind might be cited. Thus, when a convention of clergymen passed a resolution requesting the President to recommend to Congress an amendment to the Constitution recognising the existence of God, Lincoln prepared a first draft of a message to this effect. 'When I assisted

him in reading the proof,' says Mr. Defrees, Superintendent of Public Printing during Lincoln's administration, 'he struck it out, remarking that he had not made up his mind as to its propriety.'

"In dismissing the subject, I propose giving the testimony of a few witnesses *against* Lincoln's orthodoxy; the testimony *for* his orthodoxy is always so well presented and made the most of that it need not be dwelt upon here.

"The testimony I have to cite is contained in the following utterances.

"We have no purpose of attempting to formulate his creed; we question if he himself ever did so.—Messrs. Nicolay and Hay. 'Scientifically regarded he was a realist as opposed to an idealist, a sensationist as opposed to an intuitionist, a materialist as opposed to a spiritualist.'—William H. Herndon. 'His only philosophy was what is to be will be, and no prayers of ours can reverse the decree.'—Mrs. Abraham Lincoln. 'He was an avowed and open infidel, and sometimes bordered on Atheism.'—John T. Stuart, Lincoln's first law partner. 'He had no faith, in the Christian sense of the term—had faith in laws, principles, causes and effects.'—Justice David Davis. 'I have no hesitation whatever in saying that whilst he held many opinions in common with the great mass of Christian believers, he did not believe in what are regarded as the orthodox or evangelical views of Christianity. . . . If I was called upon to designate an author whose views most nearly represented Mr. Lincoln's on this subject, I would say that author was Theodore Parker.'—Jesse W. Fell, to whom Lincoln first confided the details of his biography.

"A man about whose theology such things can be said is of course far removed from orthodoxy. It may even be questioned whether he is a theist, whether he is a deist. That he is a free-thinker is evident; that he is an agnostic is probable. Addison's line seems to fit the case: 'Atheist is an old-fashioned word: I am a free-thinker.'"

A LANCE FOR ANARCHY.

BY VOLTAIRINE DE CLEYRE.

THE perusal of Dr. Carus's article, "Freethought: Its Truth and its Error" in *The Open Court* of Aug. 6th, has impelled me to a parallel line of thought concerning a doctrine, a principle, less understood, more misinterpreted, both by enemies and followers, than even that much abused, much misunderstood, much misinterpreted principle of freethought; and, as is the case with the latter, the greatest damage proceeds not so much from the opposition of prejudice as from the profession of ignorance.

"Freethought," says Dr. Carus, "has arisen in

revolution to blind obedience." It was indeed the great revolt against human authority over the action of the mind. It was not merely a negation; no revolt ever is: it was the assertion that the individual mind must think according to necessity, according to its own law. And this assertion rooted the negation of that authority which sought to interfere with the law, in the confusion-working effort to build all minds after one fixed pattern. Mark, it was the very fact that thought is not, cannot be free, in the absolute sense, is not a thing of caprice "willing" to think this or that, but a thing of order constantly adapting itself to the relations of all other things, constantly progressing in the knowledge of truth as it fulfils the law of its growth—it was this which justified, nay made at all conceivable, the revolt against "dressed authority,"—that is God, that is—Priests! Here was a contradiction, or, as he would prefer to call it, an antinomy, to delight the heart of Proudhon; thought struggled for liberty because of its fatalism; conceiving the implacable authority of Truth, it denied authority; it would be free from men because it could not be free from self; with the light of a widening infinite in its eyes, it denied the supremacy of the Sun; "Come," it said, "you are great, but you are not all; do not think by your near shining, to shut out the stars."

Now this, precisely this, lies at the root of that doubly abused, misunderstood, misinterpreted word Anarchism. "Anarchism is negation," you say. True. Of what? The authority of rulers, precisely as free-thought negatives the authority of priests. But why this negation. Because of the affirmation that every individual is himself, ruled by the fatalism of existence; within himself contains the law of right being, from which he can no more escape than sunlight can exist independent of the sun, and a "strict obedience" to which is necessary to that morality which Dr. Carus has called "living the truth": disobedience, in its stead, creating ever increasing confusion only to be wrought out and purified after many lives, the weary Karma of the race, and never wholly purged till the wronged law receives its recompense,—Understanding and Fulfilling. Hence this negation of "Archism," which would maintain a puny, false authority, denying the real one, hindering true order and progress. And the real anarchist can truthfully say to the Republican, "it is you, not I, who deny self-government." I say a *real* one, because as there are free-thinkers and freethinkers, so there are anarchists and anarchists; and as I have intimated the greatest damage to either cause proceeds from the ignorant profession of them by people of whose lives they form no part. No real freethinker, comprehending the laws of racial growth, will for a moment deny the value of the creeds so long as they were the highest possible

conception of life; that is while humanity yet remained below the creed; nor will he deny that until a thinker has risen above the creed, comprehending himself, realising that the laws of his mind's guidance exist with it, cannot be conceived apart, the one from the other; until this conception of right guidance from within has taken the place of the old idea of a law descended from Heaven, the freethinker will admit that such a mind is better left among the orthodox, than to become so poor an apology for a reformer, as he must become by throwing away his old beliefs, not replacing them with the faith of truth.

So the real anarchist, instead of maintaining as Prejudice would have it appear, the utter abolition of social restraint, the bursting of every bond which man by slow experience has found necessary to order, the inauguration of chaos, maintains, on the contrary, the higher principle, that "every man must be a law unto himself," embodying in himself all the truth of the Codes, and denying their authority beyond this, because he realises this; knowing the glory of the truth he holds he would maintain his freedom to reach out after that which is higher still, unknown but not unknowable. Anarchism is, in fact, the assertion of the highest morality; a conception of society without officials, police, military, bayonets, prisons, and the thousand and one other symbols of force, which mark our present development; a dream of the day when "each having mended one, all will be mended." To him who has arrived at such a conclusion there is no morality in obedience to outward authority, neither in the observance of formulas; neither in doing what is writ in statute books; one is moral only so far as he (by long struggle it may, probably will, be) makes right his nature,—*him*. What then? Does he therefore deny the value, and the present necessity of Codes? Not at all. He would not, if he could, sweep them at once from existence, well knowing that as long as men are incapable of receiving the authority of "the inward must," they are incapable of living without statutes. Yet Prejudice and Ignorance cry: "Anarchy is the destruction of the law." It is not the destruction of the law; it is the fulfilling of the law. It is the only logical outcome of freethought—the ripened fruit of which freethinking is the potent seed. A small seed, as Dr. Carnus says. But it is a seed which was planted in hard soil, watered by red rains, and nurtured among jealous thorns. And yet the tree is scarcely blossoming, and still we dare to dream of that russet warm day of Autumn future when the promise of the seed shall be fulfilled: when every mind shall think according to its own law, and every life express itself freely, bounded only by the equal freedom of others, so finding the more quickly, the more surely, the truth which alone shall live.

THE RELIGION OF PROGRESS.

VLADIMIR SOLOVIEFF, a Russian thinker of uncommon depth calls attention to the fact that the central idea of Christianity must be sought in the glad tidings of the kingdom of God. He says: * "To either the direct or indirect elucidation of this idea are devoted almost all the sermons and parables of Christ, his esoteric conversations with the disciples, and finally the prayer to God the Father. From the connection of the texts relating thereto, it is clear, that the evangelical idea of the kingdom is not derived from the concept of divine rule, existing above all things, and attributed to God, conceived as almighty. The kingdom proclaimed by Christ is a thing, advancing, approaching, arriving. Moreover it possesses different sides of its own. It is within us, and likewise reveals itself without; it keeps growing within humanity and the whole world by means of a certain objective, organic process, and it is taken hold of by a spontaneous effort of our own will."

This conception of Christianity is strikingly correct. Taking the gospels of the New Testament as our source of information, we find none of the Church dogmas proclaimed, but we hear again and again that the kingdom of God is near at hand, and that the kingdom of God cometh not with observation, i. e. with ceremonies or rites. It is not an institution as are synagogues and churches. It exists in the hearts of men. We must create it, we must make it grow within us, Our own efforts are needed to let it come. Says Christ: "From the days of John the Baptist until now the kingdom of heaven suffereth violence, and the violent take it by force."

Is this not a strange conception of the kingdom of God? Indeed it is, if we preserve the orthodox God-idea of a personal world-monarch. But it is not a strange conception of the kingdom of God, if we understand by God the divinity of the universe and the potentiality of spiritual life which has produced us and leads us onward still on the path of progress to ever greater truths and sublimer heights.

What is the meaning of the kingdom of God if we state it in purely scientific terms without using the symbolism of allegorical expressions? God means that reality about us and within us in which we live and move and have our being, and the kingdom of God which has to come, which grows within us, is our knowledge of God, it is our cognition of reality, it is the evolution of truth. What is truth but a correct conception of reality and what is all religion but our agreement with truth in thought as well as in action?

When asked by Pilate whether he was a king

* "Christianity: Its Spirit and its Errors." *The Open Court*, Vol. V, No. 206, p. 2900. Translated from the Russian Quarterly *Voprosui Filosofii i Ist. chologii* by Albert Gullögen.

Christ said: "Thou sayest that I am a king. To this end I was born, and to this cause I came into the world that I should bear witness unto the truth. Everyone that is of the truth, heareth my voice."

Christ considered himself as a king of truth. "My kingdom," he said, "is not of this world," meaning thereby the world in which the ambition of Pilate was centered. Christ did not intend to exercise political power and the accusations of his enemies as well as the hopes of his followers that he would create a worldly kingdom were unfounded. His kingdom was a spiritual kingdom—the kingdom of truth. Truth however is not something that exists somewhere as objects exist in material reality, truth is the correctness, the validity, the adequateness of our conceptions of reality; and truth does not come to us, we must produce it, we must work it out through our own efforts, we must build it up in our own souls. The more we have acquired of truth, the more we shall partake of the kingdom of God. For Truth is the kingdom of God and the kingdom of God is Truth. Every other conception of the kingdom of God is pure mythology.

Christianity being the gospel of the kingdom of God, it became the religion of progress. Its aim is the growth of truth within us, and all our efforts are needed to develop truth. Thus a spiritual realm of truth and of obedience to truth, i. e. morality was created; and this spirit of progress remained the living spirit of Christianity in spite of all the vagaries of the Christian churches.

Dogmatic Christianity is dead. Yet it still exists as a dead weight. Dogmatism is barren like the thorns and thistles in the parable, and it is choking the spirit of the Christian religion, but this spirit will not die, it will spring up again and lead mankind upward and onward to higher and grander goals.

The test of progress is ever increasing truth, i. e. an ever more comprehensive conception of the world we live in; yet the test of religion is progress.

He alone is Christ the Messiah, the saviour who leads us onward on the path of progress, and he only is a disciple of Christ who courageously follows on the path of progress. Those who attempt to make mankind stationary, who try to lock up the stream of life, and prevent the soul from growing and expanding, from increasing in the knowledge of the truth and thus developing the kingdom of God, are false prophets who come to us in sheep's clothes. They preach the letter of the gospel but suppress its spirit.

CURRENT TOPICS.

A DENOMINATIONAL newspaper of my acquaintance, accuses Col. Ingersoll of stealing religious comfort from the poor. It also complains that he mischievously knocks from under the weak-minded the crutch of belief by which they hobble to heaven. In

another column the paper itself unconsciously commits a like offense by denouncing the Holy Coat of Treves as "the most outrageous imposition upon human credulity in these modern times." Very well, but if a belief in the Holy Coat is a religious comfort, why steal it from the poor? If the pilgrims who have gone to Germany to adore the Holy Coat find spiritual refreshment in the worship, and a hope of reward, why should a protestant paper seek to deprive them of that hope? The complaint, if just, applies to all critics of theologies, and especially to those missionaries who wander into foreign lands to steal from the heathen the consolations of his faith. "The Holy Coat," says the paper, "is a Holy cheat, which ought to be resented and denounced; more especially as the pretence is made that miracles are wrought in connection with it." In a religion based on miracles this jealousy of miracles is wonderful. One day a miracle worker came to Marbletown, and the citizens wanted to decorate him with tar and feathers, and to ride him to the city limits on a rail. I said, "Let him alone; never hinder a man from working miracles; we need them." My appeal prevailed, and then the miracle worker said that persons of such little faith did not deserve any miracle. So he left us unredeemed. When a man offers to work miracles he ought to be encouraged, especially when he promises to work useful miracles, like the casting out of devils, for instance, of which most of us possess too many. And if a Holy Coat can do the same thing, give it a chance to do it; the world needs a good deal of miracle just now. When a man says he can make the dumb speak, the deaf hear, and the blind see, don't laugh at him, for he may do it. At least wait until he has tried and failed.

* * *

It is the vision of some seers and sages that the Chinese are to become the masters of the world; and that all they need to make them so is a little more learning in the science of destruction. The soothsayers tell us that, leaving out the art of killing, China holds within herself greater elements of conquest than any other nation has; and they warn the English that in forcing the gates of China to let themselves in, they have let the Chinamen out, and thereby put Christendom in danger. These fears have been rather increased than diminished by the action of the Americans at Amboy in China. They had a 4th of July banquet, at which was present the governor of the province, Tsin Chin Chung. Of course he was called on for a speech, and a wonderful speech he made. In profound political speculation it was more than was bargained for, and in the course of his remarks he said, "China having followed its own principles of advancement during more than 5,000 years, is now compelled to change, and move along European channels. It has begun to own steamships and railways. Its telegraphs now cover every province. It has at last mills, forges, and foundries like those of Essen, of Sheffield, and of Pittsburgh. China is to-day learning that lesson in education which Europe has obliged her to learn, the art of killing, the science of armies and navies. Woe, then, to the world, if the scholar, profiting by her lesson, should apply it in turn. With its freedom from debt, its inexhaustible resources, and its teeming millions, this empire might be the menace if not the destroyer of Christendom." Portentous as that menace is I do not fear it. Excellent in imitation as the Chinaman is, it will take him centuries of study and practice before he will excel the Christian in the art of killing.

* * *

Representatives of the American Sabbath Union appeared before the World's Fair Commission with such vehement appeals for Sunday closing that it looked as if their liberties were threatened, and that a law had passed commanding every one of them to attend the Columbian Exposition every Sunday. It appeared, however, that their protest was not against any proposed assault upon their own rights; it was directed merely against the freedom of others to go to the exposition or to church as their preference

might be. The sentiment of it was this, "As we, the members of the Sabbath Union do not care to go, therefore we demand that nobody else shall go." A delegate from New York appeared as trustee for Divine punishments, another from Chicago had the disposal of Divine rewards, and they made liberal promises of both, dependent of course on the decision of the question, one of them going so far as to say, "God is now waiting to see what answer you will give." It is only fair to say for them that they spoke not so much for themselves, or the Sabbath Union, as for the working man. They were anxious that he should have rest on Sunday. It was proof of their sincerity, and of their interest in his welfare, that they did not care how hard or how long he worked on Monday or on Tuesday, but they did want him to rest on Sunday. One of them, a minister of the gospel, in a tumult of applause, took the opportunity to issue a comic challenge to all the nations of the earth to bring on their deities and enter them in a contest with his particular champion for the prize of Divinity. Defiant as a prizefighter, he said, "Let the Brahmin, the Buddhist, the Moslem philosophers, the Parsee, and the Mohammedans come on the platform and show the best they have got. Then let the representatives of Christian civilisation bring forth one, the 'Man of Nazareth.' When the award shall be made and the premiums distributed, I do not question but that the verdict will be, Truly, this man was none other than the son of God." By a careless oversight the Directors have made no provision for this competition of theologies, and no premiums have been offered to the various Divinities to induce them to come to Chicago, and "show the best they have got." Even if they did, they would hardly get fair play, for the challenger would insist upon Christian judges to make the award, and "distribute the premiums."

* * *

I have read somewhere about a man escaping from a crocodile in the river to the hospitality of a tiger on the shore; and this appears to be the dilemma of the Russian Jew. Fleeing from Russia as he did from Egypt, he finds himself again in the wilderness but without the pillar of cloud for a guide, and with Canaan closed against him. The great American republic literally carpeted with golden grain, pleads poverty, and says to him, "Go away my good man, I have nothing for you to-day"; and when the wanderer says, "I want nothing from you; I can earn my own living," the welcome he hears is this, "Therefore you must not come in." The Attorney General requires him to give bond that he will work, and the Secretary of the Treasury wants him to promise that he will *not* work; so that like the lamb in the fable, wherever he goes to drink, he troubles the water up stream as well as down. He is to be shut out lest he become a charge upon capital, and also for the opposite reason, lest he compete with the "American workman," himself most likely an alien guest, and a foreigner. Precisely the same dilemma is presented to the Russian Jews in England, but they will probably squeeze themselves between the horns of it and escape. Their immigration into England was opposed for the alleged reason that they were not producers, and that they lived by trade, usury, and speculation. This was contradicted by an object lesson worth more than all the moralising of the magazines. I present it as I find it in an English newspaper:

"A noticeable feature in the proceedings at Worship Street Police Court lately is the increased number of cases in which the parties are foreign Jews, and in which the services of an interpreter are necessary. This was the case in three separate instances on Wednesday, when in a summons for assault, the whole of the witnesses, as well as the complainant and defendant, were Polish Jews, exiled from Russia. Recent cases have shown that the newer immigrants are working as carpenters, cooks, writers, painters, etc., and in the period of the present strike of the building hands, some find employment by working at home."

Thus it became known that the Jew exiles were mechanics and laborers, whereupon arose the "British workman" to de-

mand their exclusion because they were too useful altogether. This harsh alternative is pressed upon the Jew; he must not work, and he must not become a pauper. It is another form of the ancient persecution when he was reviled for wearing mean clothes, as, for instance, when Antonio spit on Shylock's gaberdine; yet when a Jew tried to correct this fault by wearing a fine coat with a little embroidery on it, or some golden ornament, the first Christian that came along, took it away from him on the pretence that it was very unbecoming in a Jew to wear vain trinkets and gorgeous raiment. Let the Jew come here and go to work if he wants to do so, because every man who works for a living increases the demand for labor. He crowds more men into employment than he crowds out of it. This must be so, otherwise the whole industrial system would fall, like those crowded buildings in New York; and the workmen would be under the rains.

M. M. TRUMBULL.

NOTES.

The autobiography of George Jacob Holyoake which appeared in the *Newcastle Weekly Chronicle* under the title "Sixty Years of an Agitator's Life" is now complete and we hope that it will appear in book-form. It is brimful of wise thought and interesting matter and we learn to love and admire its author. In one of the last installments he says: "It was part of my mind never to hold opinions unless I could dare the judgment of others as to their truth. I was by my nature a combatant of ideas. I gave quarter, but never asked any. . . . My rule in debate has always been never to give my reasons against an opponent's arguments unless I could state his case with a fullness and vividness which satisfied him that I understood it. Often when an adversary had put his case badly, I have put it better for him."

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