



THE TORCH OF REASON.

For the Torch of Reason.

"So long as the TORCH of truth makes its way it matters not how or by whom it is borne." HUXLEY.

The Torch of truth is making way,
The powers of darkness mourn;
Blest is the land with reason's ray,
By whomsoever borne.

The gloom was great when truth
was crust,
And might was reckoned right;
The rule of wrong has done its worst,
For truth turns on more light.

Once priests and kings ordained—"Obey
Or death is yours, and well,
Ye must believe, or we will slay,
And send your soul to hell!"

But science searched to find out facts,
And found those thronemates frauds;
Truth's torch revealed their roguish acts
The gleam consumed their gods.

In vain the hypocrites may rage,
And priests read bibles strange;
They soon will loose their hireling wage,
With reason's ray in range.

Then brave the TORCH OF REASON bear,
O'er ocean, peak and plain.

Till not a human anywhere
Shall grope in error's reign.

JOHN PRESCOTT GUILD.

The Existence of Man Does Not Prove That of God.

Whence comes man? What is his origin? Is he the result of the fortuitous meetings of atoms?

Was the first man formed of the dust of the earth? I do not know! Man appears to me to be a production of nature like all others she embraces. I should be just as much embarrassed to tell you whence came the first stones, the first trees, the first elephants, the first ants, the first acorns, as to explain the origin of the human species.

Recognize, we are told, the hand of God, of an infinitely intelligent and powerful workman, in a work so wonderful as the human machine. I would admit without question that the human machine appears to me surprising; but since man exists in nature, I do not believe it right to say that his formation is beyond the forces of nature. I will add, that I could conceive far less of the formation of the human machine, when to explain it to me they tell me that a pure spirit, who has neither eyes, nor feet, nor hands, nor head, nor lungs, nor mouth, nor breath, has made man by taking a little dust and blowing upon it.

The savage inhabitants of Paraguay pretend to be descended from the moon, and appear to us as simpletons; the theologians of Europe pretend to be descended from a pure spirit. Is this pretension more sensible?

Man is intelligent, hence it is concluded that he must be the work of an intelligent being, and not of a nature devoid of intelligence. Although nothing is more rare than to see man use this intelligence, of which he appears so proud, I will admit that he is intelligent, that his necessities develop in him this faculty, that the society of other men contributes especially to cultivate it. But in the human machine and in the intelligence with which it is endowed, I see nothing that shows in a precise manner the infinite intelligence of the workman who has the honor of making it. I see that this admirable machine is subject to derangement; that at that time this wonderful intelligence is disordered, and sometimes totally disappears; from this I conclude that the human intelligence depends upon a certain disposition of the material organs of the body, and that, because man is an intelligent being, it is not well to conclude that God must be an intelligent being, any more than because man is material, we are compelled to conclude that God is material. The intelligence of man no more proves the intelligence of God than the malice of men proves the malice of this God, of whom they pretend that man is the work. In whatever way theology is taken, God will always be a cause contradicted by its effects, or of whom it is impossible to judge by his works. We shall always see evil, imperfections, and follies resulting from a cause claimed to be full of goodness, of perfections, and of wisdom.

JEAN MESLIER.

Theological Diabolism.

What savagery, what fiendishness has been taught in the name of him who it was declared, came to bring glad tidings of great joy to the world. Jonathan Edwards, the great leader of orthodoxy in America, said:

"The sight of hell torments will exalt the happiness of the saints forever." "They will not be sorry for the damned; it will cause no uneasiness or dissatisfaction to them; but on the contrary when they see the sight (of the damned in endless torments) it will occasion rejoicing and excite them to joyful praises." Rev. Josiah Spalding said that when the saints see the "wicked sink down to hell, they begin the triumph song. They see the power of God employed in the most terrible manner to make their dearest and nearest connection forever miserable. And for this display of power they ascribe unto new blessings and glory

and wisdom and thanksgiving. They feel exactly as God feels according to their measure as they are filled with all the fullness of God."

Patten in "Sermons to the Young," says "Out of that mouth, out of which when you open it will proceed flames, will also proceed dreadful blasphemies against God. That same tongue, to cool which you will wish for a drop of water, will be eternally employed in cursing and blaspheming God and Christ."

I've seen cruel men, witnessed cruel deeds, but I have never seen men as cruel as God and his saints have been represented to be. I know from personal experience something of the honors of war, of battles and battlefields, of victory and of defeat, of capture and being captured, of guarding prisoners and of being confined in war prisons and hospitals as a prisoner of war; but in all my experience I have never seen manifested such heartlessness, such hellishness of disposition as that of the God of the clergy and of the saints of a few generations ago. I never saw a soldier rejoice over the death agonies of a wounded and dying soldier of the enemy who, by the fortune of war, had fallen into his hands.

I never saw a soldier wounded and suffering, captured, on the field of action, in ambulance, or in the enemy's prisons, denied a glass of water to quench his thirst. It was common under ordinary circumstances for soldiers to give from their canteens, water (or whiskey if they had it) to captured men whom they guarded. But the God of Edwards and Spalding was utterly indifferent to the tortures of the damned, represented as horrible beyond all conception, and he would neither end their agonies nor relent from his purpose to make their suffering as endless as eternity. And his saints, fit subjects for such a God, were so selfish so insensible to the indescribable torments of millions of their fellow creatures who never wronged them, that they were utterly without compassion. Nay they were, when they contrasted the condition of the damned with their own condition, so joyful that they broke out in songs of joy. They contemplated with delight the unending torments of those whom they saw sink into hell, including their dearest and nearest friends.

There is not among the lowest savages or the most demoralized or depraved of men, a man who is so completely destitute of sympathy and sensibility who is so hopefully selfish, so hardened and morally

dead as those saints "who," as Spalding says, "feel exactly as God feels, according to their measures, as they are filled with all the fullness of God."

Incomparably superior to the saints in heaven morally, are those persons consigned to hell, of whom it is not said that they rejoice in one another's sufferings, and whose curses and blasphemies, considering their torment in the flames of hell, which God could end in a moment but will not, are no more to be condemned than would be the expressions and contortions of a human being under the knife of a vivisector who should prolong the suffering to the extent of his power and exercise all his devilish ingenuity in making it as excruciating and horrible as possible.

B. F. UNDERWOOD.

Secular Flashes.

Nature rejects the monarch, not the man, the subject, the citizen; kings and subjects, mutual foes, forever play a losing game into each other's hands, whose stakes are vice and misery. The man of virtuous soul commands not, nor obeys. Power, like a desolating pestilence, pollutes whatever it touches; and obedience, bane of all genius, virtue, freedom, truth, makes slaves of men, and of the human frame a mechanized automaton.—Shelly.

Whene'er a noble deed is wrought
Whene'er is spoken a noble thought
Our hearts, in glad surprise,
To higher levels rise.—Longfellow.

As a general rule people who flagrantly pretend to anything, are the reverse of that which they pretend to. A man who sets up for a saint is sure to be a sinner, and a man who boasts that he is a sinner, is sure to have some feeble, maudlin, snivelling bit of saintship about him which is enough to make him a humbug. Masculine honesty, whether it be saint-like or sinner-like, does not label itself either saint or sinner.—Bulwer Lytton.

Reproachful speech from either side. The want of argument supplied; They railed, reviled; so often ends the contest of disputing friends.—Gay.

Strength of mind is exercise—not rest.—Pope.

The idea that a certain belief is necessary to salvation unsheathed the swords and lighted the fagots of persecution. As long as heaven is the reward of creed instead of deed, just so long will every orthodox church be a bastille, every member a prisoner, and every priest a turnkey.—Ingersoll.