

# TORCH OF REASON.

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## Now.

If you have a kind word—say it,  
Throbbing hearts soon sink to rest;  
If you owe a kindness—pay it,  
Life's sun hurries to the west.  
Can you do a kind deed—do it,  
From despair some soul to save;  
Bless each day as you pass through it,  
Marching onward to the grave.  
If some grand thing for to-morrow  
You are dreaming—do it now;  
From the future do not borrow;  
Frost soon gathers on the brow.  
Speak the word—perform the duty;  
Night is coming deep with rest;  
Stars will gleam in fadeless beauty,  
Grasses whisper o'er thy breast,  
Days for deeds are few, my brother,  
Then, to-day fulfill thy vow;  
If you mean to help another,  
Do not dream it—do it *now*.  
—SELECTED.

## Christians and Heathens.

Since Rev. John Barrow's return from India the religious and some of the daily papers have contained very disparaging personal references to the eloquent expounder of Vedantism. Swami Vivekananda, who was one of the speakers at the parliament of religions, and who recently returned to India after making a lecturing tour in this country and in Great Britain. He has been giving his countrymen through newspaper interviews some of his impressions of the American people. They are for the most part quite favorable, but he indulges in some criticisms. What has offended the clergy and the religious press is his unfavorable estimate of the character and some of the christian missionaries, whom he regards as perverters of the truth, his remarks regarding a certain class of women, and his claim that the parliament of religions was a "show" which proved to be more in the interest of Paganism than of Christianity. The women he alluded to are those who he says go to summer resorts to "catch husbands" but failing, join the church and become very churchy and disagreeable old maids. Perhaps the Swami exaggerated in referring to women of this sort; or perhaps reporters in India are like those in this country, more anxious often to give sensational statements than to report accurately just what is said, and it may be that Vivekananda's remarks were more qualified than they appear as published. Be this as it may there seems to be no just reason for making this heathen just now an object of pious abuse. If, swayed by prejudice, he has conveyed wrong impression in regard to religion or its representatives in America, his offence is mild compared with that of the ordinary christian preacher

who has in order to glorify his own religion habitually and persistently misrepresented and slandered in the most outrageous manner, not only the religions and the people of India, but those of all heathen lands.

Rev. Barrows says Vivekananda, (who was received at Madras by 20,000 people) falsified as to the decline of christianity and the acceptance of Hindooism or Buddhism in America. Well Vivekananda Dahmarpala and other scholars and teachers from India say that the missionaries are constantly sending home false reports of the spread of christianity among the Hindoos. Of the decline of christianity in this country there is no room for doubt. This decline takes the form mainly of radical modification of belief which is seen by the clergy and admitted by them in words like the following by Rev. A. J. F. Behrends in the Congregationalist Boston: "The doctrine of the Trinity is reduced to a form of logic. The incarnation is so formulated as to reduce it to the pantheistic statement of a universal indwelling of God in all men. Inspiration is reduced to intuition. Atonement dwindles down into a rhetorical expression. Expiation and propitiation have become figures of speech. Our ranks seem to be honeycombed with universalism and annihilationism. The reality of the fall is boldly denied, and the most extreme doctrines of natural evolution are openly advocated in our pulpits. Sin is declared to be only the remnant of our animal ancestry, which we are gradually sloughing off. The revolutionary theories of Wellhausen are invested with infallible authority, and the narratives of the Old Testament are reduced to a mass of fables and forgeries."

Advice, Congregationalist, Chicago, says: "It is a long time now since a clean Unitarian or Universalist has found it difficult to have a council so constructed as to ordain him or install him for a Congregational pulpit."

The Advance says that Dr. Behrends "cannot be accused of forming its judgments under pre-millennial bias nor of lack of knowledge and spiritual insight. The occurrence of his warning, therefore may properly lead us to serious reflection."

Exactly so. Vivekananda indulges in no falsehood in saying that christianity is deadening in America, though possibly he mistakes the readiness of large audience

to hear eloquent expositions of the religions of India and the philosophy of the east for a disposition to adopt his religion in place of christianity. The probability, however, is that he has merely asserted that he has found many here ready to accept certain ideas which he has presented regardless of their historical associations.

Virechand R. Gandhi, of Bombay was at Grand Rapids, Mich., last month lecturing on Original Philosophy. Mr. Randall, pastor of a Baptist church, a young man, invited this gentleman from India to speak at a business men's banquet to be held in the church, or "Business Men in India." Mr. Gandhi writes:

"I accepted the invitation. Later his committee and two or three ministers of orthodox churches disliked this idea and they said they could not break bread with a heathen. So Mr. Randall wrote me a courteous letter, regretting that his committee had changed the plan and in this way he was obliged to withdraw the invitation that he had extended to me."

It is men who make such shameful exhibitions of mental narrowness and religious bigotry as those shown in the treatment of Mr. Gandhi, a man of ability and culture and of broad views, who are in favor of sending missionaries to India to convert the heathens to the religion which these bigots of Grand Rapids possess. No wonder the Hindoos, Buddhists, Parsees, Jains, and other religionists of India have representatives in this country to deny and refute the falsehoods and slanders which the missionaries and the orthodox clergy generally have kept in circulation respecting India. Contrast the treatment which Rev. John H. Barrows received from the heathens of India, wherever he travelled in that country with the contemptible smallness shown Gandhi by the followers of Christ in Grand Rapids. In reply to the question "How do you like India," Mr. Barrows said the other day:

"I have every reason to like India for I have had, during the last several weeks, the most courteous reception from the various religious communities. I was welcomed at Bombay by men of several faiths, and in Calcutta every kindness was shown by Hindoos, Moslems, Jains, Parsees, Brahmans and many besides."

I have learned to admire the keenness of the Hindoo mind, and its quick and sympathetic appreciation of the very best which I had in my power to offer." B. F. U.

## God in the Constitution.

And if there is to be an acknowledgment of God in the Constitution, the question naturally arises as to which God is to have this honor. Shall we select the God of the Catholics—him who has established an infallible church presided over by an infallible pope, and who is delighted with certain ceremonies and placated by prayers uttered in exceedingly common Latin? Is it the God of the five Points of Calvinism, who is ingenious enough to harmonize necessity and responsibility, and who in some way justifies himself for damning most of his own children? Is it the God of the Puritan, the enemy of joy—of the Baptist, who is great enough to govern the universe, and small enough to allow the destiny of a soul to depend on whether the body it inhabited was immersed or sprinkled?

What God is it proposed to put in the Constitution? Is it the God of the Old Testament, who was a believer in slavery and who justified polygamy? If slavery was right then, it is now; and if Jehovah was right then, Mormons are right now. Are we to have the God who issued a commandment against all art—who was the enemy of investigation and of free speech? Is it the God who commanded the husband to stone his wife to death because she differed with him on the subject of religion? Are we to have a God who will re-enact the Mosaic code and punish hundreds of officers with death? What court, what tribunal of last resort, is to define this God, and who is to make known his will? In his presence, laws passed by men will be of no value. The decisions of courts will be as nothing. But who is to make known the will of this supreme God? Will there be a supreme tribunal composed of priests?

Of course all persons elected to office will neither swear or affirm to support the Constitution. Men who do not believe in this God cannot so swear or affirm. Such men will not be allowed to hold an office of trust or honor. A God in the Constitution will not interfere with the oaths or affirmations of hypocrites. Such a provision will exclude only honest and conscientious unbelievers. Intelligent people know that no one knows whether there is a God or not. The existence of such a being is merely a matter of opinion. Men who believe in the liberty of man, who are willing to die for the honor of their country, will be excluded from taking any part in the administration of its affairs. Such a provision would place this country under the feet of priests.—INGERSOLL.