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An Ode to Science.

Science! We hail thee! No better friend
has man.
Saviour of the race, unheralded, un-
sung,
Thou, the "rock of ages" wert, ere
worlds began,
— Always right, though oft cajoled by
wrong.
Science! Jewel fair! Thou art the king
of kings;
We know thou art, no matter what
thy name.
The cosmos yields to thee, the scepter
flings,
And plumes thee victor in the vast
domain.
Science! Thou Alpha and Omega art!
To thee
E'en sky and sea, the vast and great
unknown,
Their secrets yield: Thou hast the key.
Humanity, posterity, will never thee
disown.
Science! Thou handmaid fair! We thee
adore!
We bow to thee alone, our only hope,
As time rolls on, we love thee more and
more.
Friend thou art, more dear than priest
or pope.
Science! Thou all in all! E'en must it be
In the great realm of fact thou stand'st
secure.
Thy citadel is safe, without dogma or
decree—
Defenseless, yet fortified by all that
can endure.
Science! Crucible of all! 'Tis true that
thy fair name
Has been assailed. By bigots crushed
to earth,
Thou risest up more valiant, and with
wider fame.
It still rolls on, this "rock" of price-
less worth.

—HENRY BIRD.

The Protestant Principle and Spirit.

Protestantism as a revolt against priestcraft, as a protest against authority, as an assertion of the right of private judgment, in short as a rational movement, must be regarded as the most important factor in modern progress. Its effects have been wide-spread and far-reaching, and these must extend and multiply through the coming ages.

Free thought and democratic government are the logical conclusion and the legitimate outcome of Protestantism. In so far as they existed before the Reformation and in pre-Christian periods they were the result of the same great principles which were announced and emphasized by Luther and his co-workers. Such private judgment and right of self-government as has had been exercised in Pagan Greece and Rome, were forbidden by the Roman Catholic hierarchy, and they could never have been regained without a powerful and successful protest against this established authority.

The conquests of Protestantism in Europe, as Macaulay states, did not extend beyond the territory embracing the countries which were

converted during the period of the Reformation, and portions of this territory, notably the French districts ceded to the Protestants, were subsequently lost, and the population added to the adherents of the church of Rome. The people of Latin Europe and the Levant, were too ignorant and too deeply imbued with superstition which had formed their mental habits, to be susceptible to so great and radical a change as the Reformation implied. Their superstition although bearing the Christian name dated back beyond the Catholic church, beyond the time of the Nazarene. It was largely the corrupt paganism of ancient Rome, modified and incorporated into the creed and ceremonial of the ecclesiastical system which millions were then and even now are stupid enough to believe was founded by the Judean reformer.

People who had been servile idolators for thousands of years could not respond to the great intellectual and moral movement. The people of Northern and Western Europe, North Germany, England, Wales, Scotland, North Ireland, Holland and Scandinavian countries and the best part of the people of Switzerland and France, became Protestants, or as the French Protestants called themselves, Huguenots. Into the majority of the people of these countries the old corrupt pagan civilization of Rome had not entered, and their minds were less warped and their disposition less servile than those of the Latin and Levantine populations. They were more intelligent and self-reliant, more accustomed to think, to use their reasoning faculties and they had a more sturdy morality.

The countries that remained Catholic were in comparison mentally and morally dwarfed, and whatever progress they have made has been in proportion to the diffusion of liberal ideas among them and the decay of faith, as in Italy. Some of the Catholic countries are in such a state of mental and moral debasement, and everything, in the absence of intellectual activity, has become so fixed, hardened and unmodifiable that nothing but revolution perhaps can break up the established order and make advancement possible. A few years ago a writer in the Contemporary Review said: "The weight of an unsolved question lies on these European States which three centuries ago shut themselves up against spiritual

emancipation. They had to break off in their turn with the theocracy to disengage themselves from the trammels of a dead tradition. The nineteenth century will complete the work of the sixteen, and the nations which are found unable to accomplish that revolution will fall in the rear of civilization.

The absurdities of Protestantism as a sect or a number of sects are obvious enough, but the absurdities do not lessen the value of the principle asserted by, and implied in the attitude of these sects. Protestantism as an attempt to be rational while teaching absurd superstitions, to repudiate the infallibility of the pope while holding to the infallibility of a book, to disown the authority of the church while demanding submission to the authority of written creeds, to reject miracles of the early church while insisting upon the importance of believing in miracles older and quite as improbable as, of course, an inconsistency and an anachronism as little worthy of support as that crystallization of dogmas and ceremonies against which Protestantism originally revolted. And all the Protestant sects that teach the right of private judgment and, the right of protest against religious authority, and at the same time make salvation depend upon acceptance of what they offer, and damnation the inevitable consequence of disbelief or doubt, contain within themselves the elements of decay, and are but so many transitional forms in the continuous development from Rome to reason.

What liberal minds of every class have to do is to stand by the Protestant principle, the right of private judgment in regard to religious belief with all that is thereby implied. The assertion of this right will, sooner or later, destroy the authority of all hierarchies, and make men as fearless to question doctrine and speculations of a theological character, as they are to question those in any other province of thought. B. F. UNDERWOOD.

For the Torch of Reason.

The Inconsistency of Agnosticism.

"If they (the Oregon Secular churches) declare that this life ends all, they will be a failure. I am myself agnostic in this regard, believing that it can be neither proved or disproved that this life ends all." James R. Allen in TORCH OF REASON.
If we devour an oyster or a chicken can we not prove or is it

not an absolute self-evident fact that, after we have eaten and digested such oyster or chicken, that then this individual oyster or chicken exists no more? So if man is cremated or inhumated it is a self-evident fact that he, as such individual, exists no more. Disassociated from all mysticism and from the superstitions of the dark ages, transmitted to us and perpetuated by a rapacious hierarchy, the origin, life and end of man is as void of mystery as the beginning and end of a worm, oyster or chicken. We have but to reject the vagaries of mystery-mongers, open our eyes, observe for ourselves the simplest every-day facts, believe our senses, and we are in possession of all the facts in the case and the entire truth.

The admission that life after death cannot be proven implies, or should imply, the antithetical proposition that individual life does end at death; in other words proof that man does survive death not being forthcoming the assertion, not being sustained by evidence, falls to the ground. This affirmation is so bold, so visionary and so absolutely contrary to all self-evident facts and our daily experience, that unless the hypothesis can be maintained by science, logic and reason it must be peremptorily rejected. Until evidence is forthcoming, which after thousands of years of assertions, has as yet not been produced, there is no logical or rational excuse for an agnostic attitude upon this subject, because all our knowledge plainly demonstrates the fact that when man dies he is dead.

The problem—if so it must be called—resolves itself in the simple school-boy question: What is man? If man is an animal a living physical organic structure and not simply a bag of wind, a breath of air or less than a soap-bubble, then it is self-evident and an absolute fact that when such animal or living organism dies and is again decomposed into its segregate chemical constituents, that then this animal or man, as such being and form, has vanished or ceased to exist. If such an animal must first be created, evolved, produced or born before a man has being or existence, then, of course, without such animal structure there can be no man. If man is an animal—as science plainly classifies him—then the animal is the man and man is the animal. Without the former the latter cannot exist. If then,
(CONTINUED ON PAGE EIGHT.)