



Bruno.

When reason's light so clear and bright
Was sunk in superstition's night,
And sombre clouds of darkest hue
Spread thickly o'er the sky so blue.
Oh, then it was that human life
Became a victim to the bloody strife;
Of bigots in their zealous ways
Offering up to God their praise.

The pages of history testify
How many martyrs learned to die:
Yea, die for knowledge, truth and light,
That we might tread these paths so bright.

But in perusing this dark page,
The history of a cruel age,
Our eyes at last are open wide
To all the horrors here described.

When Bruno with his truth and light,
And Pantheism's story bright,
Was to the stake compelled to go,
And then condemned to hell below,
We do not hear him cry in fright
Like Christ in crucifixion's night,
But, like a philosopher true and brave,
Went calmly to a martyr's grave.

Three hundred years have onward sped,
Throughout which Science light hath
shed;

And over Bruno's honored grave
Time rolls her soothing peaceful wave.

His costly statue marks the spot
Where love and mercy were forgot,
And stands a menace to the Pope,
But to the world a shaft of hope.

So while the ages onward speed,
With Science to supply our need,
Our thoughts will turn to ages past,
And give to Bruno thanks at last.

—Sel.

For the Torch of Reason.

Hindoo Religion and Christianity.

Christendom is not the only part of the world cursed by superstition, and by priestcraft which grows out of it. Christianity itself grew out of pre-existent superstitions, and no portions of earth were before or have been since free from superstitions.

Notwithstanding all that is said about the philosophy and religion of the educated Hindoos, of their high intellectual and ethical character, popular Hindooism, the religion of the masses contains but little to admire.

The people are ignorant, without the knowledge or the practical advantages of science; without intellectual independence; subject to customs and traditions of the past, and their religious conceptions and practices correspond with their mental condition. The learned representatives of the religions of India have done well in acquainting us with the high thought and the elevated morality which exist in their country, and they have done a needed service in reminding us of the absurdities of the christian system of drunkenness, licentiousness, robbery, murder, etc., so common in christian communities. But their eloquent words should not make us lose sight of the fact that India is suffering from religious mendicancy, from priestcraft, from caste, and the vilest superstitions.

I presume Rev. J. H. Barrows

does not exceed the truth in the following statement:

"India is a land where religion can be observed, and where it cannot be escaped, for two reasons; first, because the religion is external and, second, because it is universal. The Hindus are born religiously; they die and are buried or cremated religiously. They will not open a shop or office, they will not go on a journey or embark in any enterprise whatever save under religious observances. There is a temple to the goddess of small-pox. Here are idols so hideous that they might do for advertisements of some dime museum on State street. Here are men carrying a dead body to lay it in the sacred waters of the Ganges before it is burned. Here others are pounding the fragments of a human form that has been only partly incinerated. Here are hideous caricatures of humanity, shriveled, clothed in rags and vermin, deformed, mendicant, lying on the verge of the stream hoping that death will strike them there. Here priestly tyranny has achieved its most diabolical triumphs; it has enslaved and degraded and almost bestialized a proud and intelligent people.

"Again enter the temples—if the cows will permit you, for the cows are here deified—and you see loathsome wretches crawling through filth and touching various parts of the sacred animal with their lips. Here idolatry presents an aspect which robs it of its last vestige of respectability. In Hindu temples almost everything is dark and ugly and many things are physically and morally unclean."

According to Mr. Barrows the only remedy for this superstition is "the divine and ever-living Christ." If Mr. Barrows were a practical man, a philosopher, and not merely a preacher of theology; if he could take a cosmopolitan view of the world and of religion he would see that India can never be christianized when christianity is decaying in all the advanced countries in which it exists. He would see, too, that an old religion, like Hindooism, is not likely to give way to another system of faith, except by a process of evolution or by invasion and coercion. He would see, further, that Christ is an oriental character whose cult of poverty and mendicancy and whose ideas of other-world lives, etc., have contributed to the present condition of the Hindoos, and that what advancement has been made in christendom has been accomplished by departing from these teachings. He would see that what is needed in India is not another religion, but scientific knowledge, the mechanical arts, and habits of industrialism, such as have made the United States, England, Germany and France great nations.

Wherever in christendom belief in christianity is the least disturbed by science and freethought, there the intellectual, social and political conditions are the least advanced.

Progress and theological decay go on together. Mere faith in Christ as a supernatural character, and in christianity as a divinely-revealed supernatural religion is everywhere disappearing from the minds of the educated classes, and when the masses even are doubting and disbelieving, what folly to talk of this system as a panacea for the evils and ills of a country like India. If by Christ, Mr. Barrows means only the spirit of peace and love, he must see that that is not what the Hindoos are particularly in need of at this time, for he says: "Their general gentleness of spirit and fineness of mind command love and admiration." But when did christianity, with its doctrine of the criminality of unbelief, and its doctrine of exclusive salvation, ever carry peace to any people? Look at the christian nations of Europe to-day, armed to the teeth to fight one another. What has christianity done to lessen war? War will ultimately disappear, I hope, but it will be through the relations and common interests of nations produced by commerce and secular pursuits—not by any system of supernaturalism.

B. F. UNDERWOOD.

For the Torch of Reason.

Ethics as The Basis and Aim of Education.

Education is the drawing out, the unfoldment of powers in the proper direction. It is intellectual active—the striving of mental forces. It means expansion of mind and development of thought. And to what end? Is it not simply, and solely to show and practice the art of living that we educate? Is it not that we desire to develop a higher, a superior intelligence in the ordering of ways of living, that society may be of better quality, of nobler calibre, stronger fibre, more refined and generous, that we expend, as a nation, millions of dollars annually, employ the best instructors, and devote time, energy, thought and highest skill to the cause of education? Says Herbert Spencer, "To prepare us for complete living is the function which education has to discharge." And we cannot think of complete living, of the beautiful meaning of noble living except in connection with a broad system of ethical culture. Such a system running through the career of any individual, be he high or low, rich or poor, is as the sweet fragrance of a flower upon the morning air.

The mistake has been in not beginning early enough in the teaching of ethics. It has been in supposing that the fundamentals are found in reading, writing, geography arithmetic and grammar. But before these branches are put in evidence there should be something else—the erection of the moral standard. This cannot be raised too soon in life. With the first faint grasp of ideas, this important factor should be brought before the child. "O, but we do," says one, we teach children

that they must not do wrong." Yes, but you do not tell them why they must not, and in too many cases, the precept is lost by contrary example. The child is quick to note the difference between preaching and practice, and, naturally enough is as quick to take advantage of it. There is much unconscious teaching, and perhaps, more unconscious acting. Habit is very close to nature. By constant use we acquire ways and methods, and, after awhile it is hard, yea, almost impossible, to divest one's self of these unconsciously acquired habits. If these were always good habits there would be no need to discard them. Hence the value of seeing to it, that, in the teaching and training of childhood, emphatic stress be laid upon first principles, the laying of foundations. These, strong, of good material, well placed and the future structure cannot fail or fall. With a firm basis, a line of ethics well established, it is easy to carry on the work of development, training, reasoning, self-reliance, self-control, and all the faculties that make the well-balanced man and woman.

A thorough grounding in ethics is first of all considerations and from thence moral teaching should be carried on through life in home and school, insisted upon as the one great power in real education, as strongly as we insist upon the principles of mathematics.

We see all around us transgressors of moral laws and the inevitable consequences following such transgressions. Here are where shiploads of of humanity falter and founder. Moral wrecks are strewn upon the banks and shoals of time, stranded, dashed to pieces, here and there, and everywhere. Why is it? Is it not because of the lack of the training for which we plead? And these pitiful wrecks will continue to sadden our eyes and grieve our hearts until we build upon the rock instead of drifting sand.

Morality is practical. It points in one direction—always toward the right. It does not tell that you can err, and err again, repent, and err again and finally be rewarded in the skies for your penitence. But it shows the way to avoid errors and blunders, to profit by mistakes, and to so guage conduct as to get the best of blessings as you go along. It has been demonstrated by years of experience, by repeated intellectual efforts and perceptions, by thousands of individuals, that the moral path is the way, and the only way, to happiness and honor. Thus, should the ethical, like a line of silver, illumine all teaching, whether it be for the professions, commercial interests, or in any of the various arts and industries that go to make up the business of living. If we would get the greatest value out of life, the largest and best service, we must know how to live. With such knowledge, realized and used, men and women become worthy of the name and the earth a heavenly abode.

SUSAN H. WIXON.