



The Three Preachers.

Charles Mackay.

There are three preachers ever preaching,
 Fil'd with eloquence and power,
 One is old, with locks of white,
 Skinny as an anchorite;
 And he preaches every hour
 With a shrill fanatic voice,
 And a bigot's fiery scorn:—
 "BACKWARD! ye presumptuous nations;
 Man to misery is born!
 Born to drudge, and sweat, and suffer—
 Born to labor and to pray;
 BACKWARD! ye presumptuous nations,
 Back! be humble and obey!"

The second is a milder preacher;
 Soft he talks as if he sung;
 Sleek and slothful is his look,
 And his words as from a book
 Issue glibly from his tongue.
 With an air of self-content,
 High he lifts his fair white hands;
 "STAND YE STILL! ye restless nations;
 And be happy, all ye lands!
 Fate is law and law is perfect;
 If ye meddle ye will mar;
 Change is rash, and ever was so;
 We are happy as we are."

Mightier is the younger preacher;
 Genius flashes from his eyes;
 And the crowds who hear his voice,
 Give him, while their souls rejoice,
 Throbbing bosoms for replies.
 And they listen, yet elated,
 While his stirring accents fall;
 "FORWARD! ye deluded nations,
 Progress is the rule of all;
 Man was made for healthful effort,
 Tyranny has crushed him long;
 He shall march from good to better,
 And do battle with the wrong.

"Standing still is childish folly,
 Going backward is a crime;
 None should patiently endure
 Any ill that he can cure;
 ONWARD! keep the march of time.
 Onward while a wrong remains
 To be conquered by the right;
 While oppression lifts a finger,
 To affront us by his might;
 While an error clouds the reason
 Of the universal heart,
 Or a slave awaits his freedom,
 Action is the wise man's part.

"Lo! the world is rich in blessings—
 Earth and Ocean, Flame and Wind,
 Have unnumbered secrets still,
 To be ransacked when you will,
 For the service of mankind;
 Science is a child as yet,
 And her power and scope shall grow,
 And her triumph in the future,
 Shall diminish toil and woe,
 Shall extend the bounds of pleasure
 With an ever-widening ken,
 And of woods and wildernesses,
 Make the homes of happy men.

"ONWARD—there are ills to conquer,
 Daily wickedness is wrought,
 Tyranny is swoll'n with pride,
 Bigotry is deified,
 Error intertwined with Thought,
 Vice and misery ramp and crawl,
 Root them out, their day has passed,
 Goodness is alone immortal;
 Evil was not made to last.
 ONWARD! and all earth shall aid us
 Ere our peaceful flag be furled."
 And the preaching of this preacher
 Stirs the pulses of the world.

Our Substitute for a Creator.

As a substitute for the hypothesis of a personal creator, we submit the proposition that the universe in its entirety is eternal and self-existent. Instead of ascribing the wonderful phenomena of nature to a cause even more inexplicable than the phenomena themselves, we regard the universe as the self-contained cause of its activities, in the same general sense that theologians imagine God as the self-contained cause of his operations. We hold that this is the only reasonable

view; from the fact that every form of argument indicating the necessity of an antecedent or creative cause of nature, would also imply the necessity of an antecedent cause of that creator. We are, therefore, logically driven to the conclusion that matter contains within itself the potency to produce all the effects which we behold.

It is idle for Christians to complain that Materialism degrades man to the level of bricks and mortar. Properly defined, our principles not only detract nothing from man, but, on the contrary, give him a greater dignity than he has ever enjoyed hitherto. On this point, Mr. Underwood well says:

"No wonder theologians bestow upon matter so many bad names when they have divested it of its noblest powers and capacities in order to enhance the greatness of a being who is supposed to act through it. In their estimation, it is inert, powerless, contemptible, unless stirred like the pool of Bethesda by the potent touch of Jehovah. Let them restore to it the powers of which it has been robbed in order to enrich a being whose glory has ever been at the cost of the world and humanity, and possibly they will see less reason for maligning it. They may then be able to see in it those elements which in their ever-varying forms become not only the air they breathe, the water they drink, and the food which hunger craves; not only the amethyst and diamond, the violet, lily and rosebud, but the ruby lip, the love-lit eye, the wonderful brain, and, in brief, the bodies and souls of the noblest beings that the earth has yet produced."

Our doctrine is simply this: Every force is a quality, condition, or activity of matter, hence neither is conceivable apart from some form of the other. All who admit this to be true are Materialists in every proper sense of the term. Theology, on the other hand, teaches the existence of forces as entities wholly independent of matter, and the original creation of matter from nothing; ideas which are not only incomprehensible, but directly opposed to every principle of reason. Thus, we recognize no such thing as absolutely dead matter. Every atom is endowed from eternity with some force, some phase or degree of intelligence, and the more refined, complex and subtle the combination of matter, the higher will be the manifestation of life and mentality. If anything whatever could be eternally self-existent, surely living matter could be. We have thus no need of a creator.—BEALL.

Religion Opposed to Morality.

It need not be disputed that religious institutions have been a necessary accompaniment—often a useful one—of human progress. But the question for us is, not what was the value of religion when man was a savage, who thought one big "god" hurled thunderbolts from his residence in the clouds, and that another dwelt in an ocean cave to send the devastating hurricane and earthquake, but what is its value to-day, when men have learned, at all events partially, to control the powers they once thought were supernatural, and have replaced their former ignorant reliance upon "superior powers" by self-dependence and an intelligent belief in the universal reign of law? We venture the firm opinion that not only has religion ceased to have any useful moral effect, but that all dogmatic religious beliefs are radically opposed to true morality, and stand in the way of all progress.—J. SPENCER ELLIS.

No Revenge.

By R. G. Inger-oll.

Every man is as he must be. Every crime is a necessary product. The seeds were all sown, the land thoroughly plowed, the crop well attended to, and carefully harvested. Every crime is born of necessity. If you want less crime, you must change the conditions. Poverty makes crime. Want, rags, crusts, failure, misfortune—all these awake the wild beast in man, and finally he takes, and takes contrary to law, and becomes a criminal. And what do you do with him? You punish him. Why not punish a man for having the consumption? The time will come when you will see that it is just as logical. What do you do with the criminal? You send him to the penitentiary. Is he made better? Worse. The first thing you do is to try to trample out his manhood, by putting an indignity upon him. You mark him. You put him in stripes. At night you put him in darkness. His feeling for revenge grows. You make a wild beast of him, and he comes out of that place branded in body and soul, and then you won't let him reform if he wants to. You put on airs above him, because he has been in the penitentiary. The next time you look with scorn upon a convict, let me beg of you to do one thing. Maybe you are not as bad as I am, but do one thing: think of all the crimes you have wanted to commit; think of all the

crimes you would have committed if you had had the opportunity; think of all the temptations to which you would have yielded had nobody been looking; and then put your hand on your heart and say whether you can justly look with contempt even upon a convict.

None but the noblest should inflict punishment, even upon the basest.

Society has no right to punish any man in revenge—no right to punish any man except for two objects—one, the prevention of crime; the other, the reformation of the criminal. How can you reform him? Kindness is the sunshine in which virtue grows. Let it be understood by these men that there is no revenge; let it be understood, too, that they can reform. Only a little while ago I read of a case of a young man who had been in a penitentiary and came out. He kept it a secret and went to work for a farmer. He got in love with the daughter, and wanted to marry her. He had nobility enough to tell the truth—he told the father that he had been in the penitentiary. The father said, "You cannot have my daughter, because it would stain her life." The young man said, "Yes, it would stain her life, therefore I will not marry her." He went out. In a few moments afterward they heard the report of a pistol, and he was dead. He left just a little note saying: "I am through. There is no need of my living longer, when I stain with my life the one I love." And yet we call our society civilized. There is a mistake.

I want that question thought of. I want all my fellow-citizens to think of it. I want you to do what you can to do away with all cruelty. There are, of course, some cases that have to be treated with what might be called almost cruelty; but if there is the smallest seed of good in any human heart, let kindness fall upon it until it grows, and in that way I know, and so do you, that the world will get better day by day.—"A Lay Sermon."

The Christian religion, without music, would be wholly indifferent to human sympathy, as savage in policy as in the days of Calvin or Torquemada. Through its rhythm, meaningless stanzas are turned into powerful appeals. By its touch, stale and repulsive doctrines are made to appear refreshing and attractive. Music tames the wild beast, subdues the savage, and soothes the aching breast to hope and sweet contentment. It is a "balm of Gilead" to all who come beneath its charms.—Selected.