

TORCH OF REASON.

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The Law of Love.

By John Prescott Guild.

"Now love me, or I'll whip you!"
Said Jones to Jack, one day;
"If you don't love I'll strip you,
And quick your hide will flay."
"O, Pa! how can I love you,
When you treat me so bad?"
"You must, 'cause I'm above you;
Love me, for I'm your dad."
"Now love me, or I'll damn you!"
To mankind God did yell;
"Love me, or I will jam you
Into the fires of hell!"
"O, Jove! how can I love you,
While thus you poise the rod?"
"You must, 'cause I'm above you;
Love me, for I'm your God."
He knoweth not what love is,
Who thinks to love control;
No oracle above is
The essence of the soul.
True love is won by loving,
Love unto love will draw;
Love obeys no "aboving,"
For love is highest law.

For the Torch of Reason.

Bohemian Evening, No. 2.

By C. Elton Blanchard.

[NOTE: For the first paper of this series see issue of September 23d.]

THE HOLY BIBLE.

Upon the arrival of the hour in which the doctor expected his young friends to appear for the second evening, as agreed, the old man sat in his study looking intently into the grate, where a bright fire glowed cheerily. It was not the fire that held the doctor's gaze so intently. It was thought that absorbed him, leaving the sense of sight to be attracted by the hypnotizing power of the flickering flame. From this spell of reverie he was presently awakened by footsteps, and the young men filed in, each shaking his hand heartily as he did so.

Dr. Brown: "Well, boys, I am very glad to see you all, and especially to notice two or three new faces."

Mr. Votipka: "Dr. Brown, these young men are brothers; John, Frank and Yaro Czek." (The young men bowed with some awkwardness and embarrassment, and finding chairs they assumed the attitude of interested attention.)

Dr. Brown: "Well, friends, I have given the matter of Mr. Palivec's question some thought since you were here, and I trust you may be helped by what I have to say. We are to inquire regarding what is known about that book commonly called the bible; the book that has been more widely read, and which has exerted more influence on the race, both for good and ill, than any other writing in human history; a book about which clings more tradition, myth and superstition than could be mentioned in volumes of print. It is of this book that I wish to talk to you, and as I

speaking, should any questions occur do not hesitate to speak out freely; you will in no way annoy me by so doing.

"What do we know of the bible? More than the priests and orthodox, who wish to hold to it the superstitions of inspiration, infallibility, and supernatural origin, wish we knew. But let us begin. The true student of science sees all races coming from out the haze of distant eras of the past. He observes one small branch of the Semetic family, called the Jews, struggling for independence and existence among the various nations in whose midst nature has developed them. In common with other people these Jews advanced to higher stages of intelligence. We need dwell only to this extent upon this early period. I refer you to the histories of civilization. For more light than I can give you in so brief a conversation I call your attention to the work of that great scholar, Dr. C. H. Cornill, professor of old testament history in the University of Konigsberg, and others of equal sincerity and worth.

"We find the Jews a captive nation in the hands of the Babylonian king, about 500 years before the birth of Christ, commonly called Jesus. In the surging of the powers, the Persians had overpowered the Babylonian Empire, and Cyrus, a man who was far in advance of his time, permitted the children of Israel to return to their former home. It was here the name Jew originated, and henceforth their history is not that of Israel, but of Judaism. I speak of these things because they have a direct bearing upon the origin and history of the book about which we are talking. In 536, B. C., 42,000 Jews started upon the march for home, led by the high priest Joshua, who, no doubt, had many ideas of government and religion from the courts and temples of Babylon. It will at once be apparent that church and state could not be other than inseparable under such conditions. In a few years another expedition started under the leadership of Ezra, who at once set about collecting the ancient writings of the law. This work, in which Nehemiah also took a prominent part, was not only the collection of the writings, but extended much farther. It will be seen that a natural pride arose to establish a national character, and to this generation Isaiah and Jeremiah became idealized. They were easily made great and true prophets of the Spirit. The Hebrew lan-

guage, as a language, which Moses and David might have spoken, was dead, and was a sacred classical tongue to be known only by the learned. The dialect of the people was the Chaldee. It follows as a most natural result that these writings collected by Ezra and his assistants should need interpretation and explanation. This body of men who originally had been scholars soon acquired authority as civil and judicial officers. Probably the great Sanhedrin was an outgrowth of this early body. At this time the "holy" idea became a living force in thought; and inspiration was taught, doubtless, that the civil influence might be greater and obedience to the law more easily secured. You can understand the power of mysticism in such matters.

"Now arose a division of these explainers of the law, into schools, or parties. I have recently read in the Open Court, of Chicago, a very excellent series of articles by the Rev. B. Pick, giving some valuable thoughts along this line. These schools begin with the leadership of Simon the Just, about 180, B. C., and the work went on until 500, A. D., being in its greatest power about the time the humble Jesus appeared upon the stage of action. During all these generations the Talmud was being produced. It was a great encyclopaedia of explanation by the long list of schoolmen. These scribes and Talmudists spent lifetimes of devoted labor to preserve the consonant text. They separated the words by spaces, and probably originated the verse mark. It was due to their dogmatic thoroughness that the old testament was handed down to us with so great a degree of accuracy and freedom from the corruption that would have crept in if handled during the later centuries. It is interesting to note that schools or seats of learning were at this time flourishing at Tiberias, in Galilee, and at Sora, in the Euphrates valley. I have no doubt the thoughtful Jesus spent much of his early years at this former place, but history is silent on the subject. These scholars were called Massorites. What has been called the Massorah was a mass of notes or comments the Talmudists had committed to memory and handed down by tradition, but in no way marked upon the texts. The Massorites now undertook to do this, and the work continued until 1106, the date of the oldest manuscript now known to exist. This work shows the trace of many hands, and must

have covered a long period. The vowel markings, however, were not found upon many of the texts used by the Jews in the synagogues long after.

"Christianity was already a great power in the world. Many of these early churches hesitated about accepting the authority given the old testament by Jesus and his disciples, just as they held objections to anything Jewish. Hebrew was known by no converts to the church except Jews, and few, if any, of these had a knowledge of the sacred laws. About 300, B. C., a great center of learning had grown up at Alexandria, and here we find the origin of the Septuagint version or translation of the scriptures. There was no end of stories about the origin of this Greek text. The early Christians told of a certain fixed date upon which seventy-two elders, six from each tribe, were sent to translate into Greek the Hebrew text. Their translations were exactly alike in every word, and though they had been sent to Egypt in separate parties, and conducted the translation separately, by divine inspiration their translations were identical! We pass these marvelous tales, of which there were many, with no further comment. Even Christians now days shun their mention. The Septuagint version was made 285, B. C., by the intelligent Ptolemies, at Alexandria's great school, as a part of the literary lore of the world. The work was not well done in all parts, and many books not in Hebrew, but originally written in Greek, were added. Greek was now the popular language, and the Jews neglected the Hebrew almost entirely at the time of Christ. The apostles quoted the scripture from this version, and thus it passed into the church as the authorized version.

"The disputes and debates between the Jews and the Christians over points of the law seem to come echoing down to me through the ages. The two parties, in philosophy, denied and affirmed the truthfulness of this text, and I suppose the spirits of the Ptolemies held up their hands in wonder at the sight of the rumpus their work was raising! The Jews gave up this version and went back to the Hebrew. The most scholarly of the Christians tried to learn the language. In 430, A. D., Jerome tried the Hebrew, and studied with a Jew, learning all his teacher knew. He now set himself at work to translate the original text. He did this with the

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