

Note and Comment.

It is said that times of business depression are favorable to religious revival. Is this why we are expected to be thankful for what we haven't got?

A voluntary committee will collect and exhibit at the trans-Mississippi exposition at Omaha, as an evidence of prosperity, a car-load of cancelled Kansas mortgages. Of course if they cannot collect enough of the genuine article for their purpose, paper and printing are cheap (another evidence!) and they can add spurious copies at pleasure.

"Conscience is made to direct man, and not man to direct conscience," says a religious exchange. But the fact remains that man does not only direct conscience, but, so far from its being a something created and set up in him as an infallible guide, he himself creates or develops it, just as he has developed every other mental and moral attribute. Conscience is but the reflection of man's ideas of right and wrong—an effect, never a cause—grows out of his experience and changes with the alteration of his opinions. Were it the fixed and infallible thing supposed in the quotation, men's opinions of right and wrong could not change—in fact, they could have no opinions on ethical points, being merely vassals to conscience or outlaws against it. But conscience in the orthodox sense is nothing more nor less than fear. The "conscience-stricken" sinner simply quakes in fear of the vengeance of his god, and the feeling is the same in the pagan devotee as in the Christian.

We have the lesson of India as it applies to religious myths. Nobody believes in a god who could supernaturally intervene to save India. That day has passed. True, Christians still claim omnipotence for their god, but it all applies nowadays in a metaphysical sense. He still works miracles in people's hearts, but he has resigned his position as weather-regulator. All civilized people understand that floods and drouths are due to causes with which no god can interfere. We have learned that lesson. Why not take up the next—the sociologic lesson? Are we truthseekers? Would India be in her helpless, starving condition if free from the domination of rent and tax gatherers? Has not landlordism rendered her helpless and unable to provide against calamity? Even in the most productive years are not the toilers stripped almost to the very verge of what they now suffer when they have produced nothing of which to be robbed? Would they stand in need of an omnipotent god if allowed full possession of their own powers? Impartial

observers report sufficient food in India for all. But it is not in the hands of those who produced it, and the producers alone are hungry. Drouth is indeed a hardship, always and everywhere, but Christian England's spoliation must bear a large share, if not the whole, of the blame for actual starvation in India.

J. H. M.

The Fall of Man.

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against it. With such a combination of faculties could there be any conflict in the mind, any debate, any temptation (i. e., tension)? It would surely be an argument of only one side; a simple decision of the moral faculties. The bare mention of so terrible a crime would shock such a nature. Now, if the reader will picture to himself a mind in which the moral faculties exert a similar restraining power over all the inferior propensities, he will have the idea of a perfect mental government.

If Adam possessed such a perfect mental equipment he would not and could not have sinned, because perfection implies complete moral restraint. On the other hand, if he was created imperfect, in yielding to sin he would have undergone no constitutional change. That is to say, if he sinned in deed he was a sinner in thought before he committed any outward act, and must have been originally endowed with a sinful nature. Or, in still other words, he must have been depraved before he fell, or he would not have fallen, and being already sinful, of course he did not fall when he sinned.

The bible teaches that Adam fell. If he was created perfect the idea of the fall is absurd. If he was created imperfect, he then, in sinning, simply acted out the nature with which he was endowed, and manifested a will which was necessarily evolved from his inherent organization and his environments. In the latter case God would have been directly responsible for Adam's transgression.—[The Brain and the Bible.

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