

they could possibly roast in an imaginary hell.

If those ministers in New York and elsewhere who are talking so much about heaven and hell (of which they know nothing) would be more altruistic, honest and truthful; and acknowledge that they are all Agnostics, and that they do not know anything about the hereafter, they would have more respect for themselves and all sensible people would honor them. To teach young children who are reaching out in all directions after facts and truth, that if they do wrong they will go to hell, is a crime that should be punishable by imprisonment. They should be taught to do right because it is right and the only honorable and noble life to live. They should not do wrong because it is a great wrong not to do right; it is debasing, dishonorable; and that they will lose their self-respect and the respect of others. To frighten a young child with the horrible stories of hell is a flagrant wrong. During the 40 years of my professional life, I have seen more than 20 cases of lunacy, idiocy, and suicide that were brought about by evangelical excitement. Of mental wealth the paucity of teachers is deplorable. They teach as they were taught, governed by custom and society.

First of all, children should be given a good thorough and liberal education—collegiate if possible. They should be taught self-reliance, and how to think and reason for themselves, and to do right because it is right, and not because there is a yawning chasm waiting for them if they do wrong. Keep them away from all dogmas and the Bible—particularly the old testament, if they are daughters, until they have arrived at the age of discretion and judgement. Inculcate only the religion of humanity, i. e., to do good, and the Golden Rule which Jesus is said to have taught. The Golden Rule is a natural religion, a pure religion, born in the human heart, and the best rule, guide and religion of life. It was enunciated and practiced back of the pyramids in pre-historic times when parents taught their children to be truthful, pure, faithful, and kind to each other. Confucius says, "Thou only needest this law alone; it is the foundation and principle of all the rest." If children are taught to always tell the truth, to be honest in everything, to be kind to their comrades, to be pure in all their thoughts, obeying the laws of morals, body, and mind, they cannot help learn the true love of truth; a manly love of mankind and a right and holy love of righteousness, and this planet will be covered with noble and useful men and women.

Paper horseshoes are said to last longer than those made of metal.

Religious Instinct in Man.

Since the publication of Darwin's "Origin of Species", the notion that God made man in the form he now has, and gave him the faculties, characteristics and powers that we now recognize in the race, must be given up. It is now certain that God did not implant in man an instinct at the time he first made him a living, breathing, feeling, nucleus of being, by which he was to recognize the existence of God and the duties and responsibilities he owed to him. I know that Christians are now trying to reconcile scripture with evolution, and admitting that God might take a million years to make a man, and might call that long time a day of an evening and a morning, if he wanted to, and that he gave the religious instinct to him when the proper time arrived. But that hypothesis will not fit the facts that are well known and settled.

A more rational theory is that all instincts, faculties and characteristics are the result of growth, through heredity and environment. That man, after he had developed so as to release himself from the entanglements of his lower animal nature, began to look around him and observed the ever-moving phenomena of Nature; being ignorant of the cause of these wonders, he, as ignorance always does, guessed that there must be some supernatural being, or beings, who were invisible to him, who were working these wonders. He saw that they were powerful, and he sought to secure their power, or to placate their anger. And then cunning men stepped forward, claiming the power to control these supernatural beings, and thus, through ignorance, fear and hope, religion was born. Thus mental bondage to an organized priesthood became universal. These wild and ignorant guesses became established belief, and through hereditary influence were transmitted to their descendants through thousands of generations, and became instincts, or, in other words, "the power in man" that little narrow Christians think is evidence of the existence of gods, ghosts, devils, and all the paraphernalia of guessed-at nothings, and so-called spiritual religion.

What we have learned of electricity has shown the folly, absurdity and falseness of our fathers' notions. Our ancestors saw the action of electricity, and as they did not understand it they guessed at a cause—or jumped at the conclusion that it was supernatural. In the lightning they saw a bolt thrown directly from the hand of God; and in the roar of the thunder they heard his angry voice. But modern man, discarding the power that led him into such delusions, investigated, studied and thought, and the result has been to utterly de-

molish the superstition that the power or instinct had indicated to our fathers. And so it has been all down the long path of history. The delusions that have arisen from the guesses of ignorance, have one by one been swept away, by testing them by the senses of materialism, the only guide to actual truth.

There are many things which are, as yet, mysteries to us; but there is no power in man that can find a demonstrated or reliable truth in mystery by guessing at it. There is a power in man that enables him to investigate, to find the truth by the action of his material brain, trusting to no theories until they have been demonstrated by evidence that is convincing to an understanding mind.

No one but a simpleton now claims that there is any such evidence of gods, devils, or ghosts, or of any other supernatural beings or things; and what is there left of religion after all these are gone?

I know that you will say there is still left the religion of good morals, of right conduct, of justice, of love and conscience, and that that is the real foundation of religion. But it is a misnomer to call good morals religion. All these belong to the relations of man to man as a social being, and grow out of his recognition of mutual rights and duties that secure peace and prosperity to the individual and the community. But religion concerns only the relation of man to God or gods, and the duties it is pretended he owes to him or them. It is true that religion pretends to teach good morals, but it is only a pretense. It makes morals to consist in obedience to the commands of church and clergy and conformity to ceremony and observance of ritual and creed. The Presbyterian church in Scotland held it to be immoral and sinful to assist in saving a shipwrecked vessel on Sundays, and I have heard a minister declaim against the immorality of our German citizens who spend Sunday enjoying themselves with their families at a picnic. With religious people the question of good morals is always secondary to religious dogmas, and everything that is not religious is immoral. How many Christians do you suppose there are in this country who would denounce this writing as an immoral act? Yes, and they would vote for a law to punish it if such a law should be submitted to the people.

Religion is always the enemy of good morals, in all cases where it cannot be made to promote belief in dogmas that are in themselves immoral.

There is no power in man that will enable him to find truth in a mystery that he don't understand; but there is a power of investigation that will help him to resolve the mystery or find the truth, if in the meantime he suspends judg-

ment and doubts the ad captandum conclusions of ignorant barbarians of ten thousand years ago.

To conclude, I will say what perhaps I should have begun with, for it is the text upon which I have preached this sermon. It is this: Man, in common with other animals, has two kinds of ideas. First, those which are the result of the action of his brain, stimulated to motion by the perception of his senses. This is knowledge. The other is the result of the action of his ancestors' brains, constituting their ideas and transmitted to us through hereditary influence; it cannot be relied upon as true, as we know nothing of the evidence upon which our ancestors based it.—[J. P. Richardson, in Independent Pulpit.

LITTLE TORCHES.

By W. E. Johnson.

The purer the heart the clearer the vision.—[The Bible Reader for January.

Another good reason why the heart should not be defiled with the obscene, barbarous teachings of the Bible.

A living faith does not lie supine after stumbling over the first obstacle that lies in its way.—[Methodist Recorder.

Maybe it does not lie "supinely", but it lies stupefyingly just the same. Whats the difference between a "supine" lie and the ordinary article, anyhow?

The only one, in the Bible, who repented on his death-bed, died on the cross.—[The Midland.

But God let him die just the same. If the thief was guilty of one one-hundredth of the atrocities that God confesses to in the old testament, he certainly had much to repent of.

Last accounts received are favorable regarding our secretary's health. Let us thank God for mercies given.—[Morning star.

If you "thank God" for the "good health" of your secretary, who are you to thank for his bad health. If God is able to give a man good health, he must certainly be a contemptible wretch to inflict one of his children with sickness.

A Psychological Problem.

Whether such rascals as Rockefeller, who donate a small percentage of their stealings to God, are trying to fool God or to fool the people, or are deceiving themselves, is a psychological problem of considerable interest. The teaching of theological dogmas instead of direct truth, has created all kinds of moral and immoral monstrosities, that would require an experienced naturalist to classify.—[New Dispensation.