

# TORCH OF REASON.



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For the Torch of Reason.

## Fair Play.

BY ISAAC A. POOL.

I would not laugh when others weep  
In sorrow and distress,  
Lest nevermore to me shall come  
A happiness to bless.  
I would not weep when others sing  
The joy that fills their souls,  
Lest I should bear their gladness down  
To deeps that grief controls.

I would not play while others work  
In daily strife and toil,  
Lest bread refused to come to me  
From out the fertile soil.  
I would not work while idle knaves  
Consume the toilers' bread,  
Lest they should scorn the fertile earth,  
Whence all the world is fed.

I would not wear a "golden crown"  
And tune a sounding "harp"  
While other men are bowing down  
In pain and torments sharp.  
I would not share the pains of hell  
To please some carping saint,  
While he expects to mount to heaven  
By traitorous complaint.

I notice all this "saintly crew"  
Are very fond of pelf;  
Each generous soul gives hell to you,  
Nor wants a scorch himself.  
'Tis time to bring an ancient "saw"  
Still plainer into view,—  
"Do unto others as you would  
That they should do to you."

If God there be, he ought to know  
Each single creature's sin  
Without the earthy "priest's police"  
To "run poor devils in".  
It's bad enough to be in fault,  
Where hypocrites are crammed,  
Without their challenging assault,—  
"You surely will be damned."

Humanity is bad enough,  
By some queer hook on crook,  
Without the "fire and brimstone" stuff;  
Why don't it burn "the book"?  
All other things are growing clear,  
As science makes advance;  
Now brush these dusty cobwebs off,  
And give humanity a chance!

## Heathen Doctrines of the Christian Bible.

BY KERSEY GRAVES.

There are to be found in the old pagan bibles the same grand and beautiful truths mixed up with the same mind-enslaving errors and deleterious superstitions as those contained in the Christian bible. And the same exalted claim is set up by the disciples of each for their respective holy books—that of being a direct revelation from God, and inspired at the fountain of infinite wisdom. And all were exalted, adored and idolized by their respective admirers, as containing a perfect embodiment of truth, without any admixture of error. The ancient Persians carried their bibles in their bosoms, and read them and prayed over them daily. The Hindoos often read their bible through on their bended knees, and sometimes committed it all to memory. The Baghavat has the following text: "The most important of all duties is to study the holy scriptures, which is the word of Brahma

and Crishna, revealed to the world." Some of the Mohammedans claim that immortal life can only be obtained by reading the Koran, and that the reading of it is essential to the progress and practice of good morals, and the advancement of civilization; and that it will ultimately reform and civilize the world. Both they and the Hindoos, like the Christian world, have numerous commentaries, explaining the obscure texts of their bibles and aiming to reconcile their teachings with reason and science. And the disciples of all bibles had a mode of doing away with the immoral teachings, and concealing the worst features of their sacred books by bestowing on them a spiritual meaning, as Christians do theirs, thus dressing up error in the guise of truth. The Hindoo bible, the Mohammedan bible, and other holy books, consign those who disbelieve in their teachings to eternal damnation, denouncing them as infidels. In this respect, also, they are like the Christian's bible.

"But then, after all (as some good pious Christian will probably exclaim), the bible and Christianity are essential to the progress of good morals, and the advancement of civilization, and the civilized world would sink into a state of heathen darkness, demoralization and savagism without them; for every enlightened nation owes its present moral and intellectual greatness to the Christian bible and the Christian religion, and would relapse into barbarism without them." This is a mistake, a most egregious mistake, my good brother Christian, as the following facts of history will show:—

There are heathen nations now existing who never saw a bible, and others which flourished in the past, before our bible was written, who nevertheless attained to a higher state of morals, and to a higher state of civilization in some respects, than any Christian nation known to history. A whole volume of facts might be adduced, if we had space for them, drawn from the ablest and most reliable authorities, to prove that India, Egypt, Greece, and other countries had reached a high state of civilization centuries before Christianity or any of its founders were even heard of, or made their appearance in the world. India was distinguished for her learning, her laws, her legislation, her civil courts, her judicial tribunals, her astronomers, her poets, her philosophers, her writers,

her moralists, her libraries, her men of literature, and her good morals, long before Moses was found in the bulrushes. Jacolliot says, "India gave civilization to the world." Egypt borrowed of India, the Greeks of the Egyptians, and the Jews and Christians are indebted to the Greeks for both their morals and their civilization. Dubois, a Christian missionary, in his "Memoirs of India," testifies that "kindness, justice, humanity, good faith, compassion, disinterestedness, and in fact nearly all the moral virtues, were familiar to the ancient Brahmans and Hindoos, and they taught them both by precept and example." Can as much be said of any Christian nation? Certainly not. Rev. D. O. Allen says they were distinguished for all the arts and refinement of civilized life—thus placing them on the highest plane of civilization and moral elevation. And other nations might be referred to. Egypt had her vast temples of science, Chaldea had her astronomical observatories, and Greece her distinguished academies of learning, her profound philosophers, and her high-toned moral writers and moral teachers, while the Jews, "God's holy people," were in a state of semi-barbarism. So affirms the Rev. Albert Barnes.

No advancement has often been made in morals or civilization in any country by the introduction of the Christian bible or the Christian religion. It is the arts and sciences which accompany or follow the bible which do the work. A proof of this statement is found in the fact that no improvement takes place in the morals of the people by the introduction of the bible till the arts and sciences are also introduced amongst them. On the contrary, the morals of many deteriorate by reading the bible alone, because it sanctions as well as condemns every species of crime then known to society. That India has become corrupted and sunk in morals since the introduction of the Christian bible, is admitted by the Rev. D. O. Allen, for twenty-five years a missionary in that country. But science, especially moral science, imparts a different influence. It explains the nature of crimes, and teaches and demonstrates that a life of honesty and virtue can alone produce true and real happiness, while the bible augments the temptation to commit sin by teaching that "it is a sweet morsel to be rolled under the tongue", and that its punitive effects can be entirely es-

caped by an act of divine forgiveness. But science, either directly or by the enlightening of the mind, teaches and convinces the wrong-doer that there is no escape from the effects of a wrong or wicked act, and that sin is not a sweet morsel, but ultimately a bitter pill. And thus it arrests the demoralizing effects of this pernicious doctrine of the Christian bible.

According to Noah Webster, the cultivation of the arts and sciences is essential to the progress of civilization and good morals. But bible religion knows nothing about the arts and sciences. It don't even use the words. Paul uses the word science only once, and then to condemn it. But Jesus omits any allusion to science, philosophy, or natural law. So thoroughly convinced were the early disciples of the Christian faith that the teachings of their bible were inimical to the arts and sciences, that they destroyed works of art wherever they could find them, and opposed with a deadly aim every new discovery in the sciences.

As bibles represent only the morals and state of society in the age in which they are written, and are not allowed to be altered or transcended, they thus hold their disciples back in all coming time, and compel them to teach and practice the morals of that semi-barbarous age as found taught in their bibles. And thus bibles prevent the moral growth of the people as effectually as the Chinese wooden shoes prevent the growth of the feet.—[The World's Sixteen Crucified Saviors.

## People Believe as they are Taught

Men believe in God only upon the word of those who have no more idea of him than they themselves. Our nurses are our first theologians; they talk to children of God as they talk to them of were-wolfs; they teach them from the most tender age to join the hands mechanically. Have the nurses clearer notions of God than the children, whom they compel to pray to him?

All religion is a prejudice which has been handed from father to children. Very few people would have a god if care had not been taken to give them one. Each one receives from his parents and his instructors the god which they themselves have received from theirs; only, according to his own temperament, each one arranges, modifies, and paints him agreeably to his taste.—[Sel.