

**A Word to Crusoe.**

BY F. J. GOULD.

My thoughts often go out to the men and women who live on islands. Yesterday I met a man who lives hard by a cathedral city. The church bells ring incessantly, but they wake no response in his heart. A while ago he bowed the knee to Christ. But now he has caught the music of a finer hymn than that which sings praise to the son of Mary. He pledges himself to serve the new order of science and reason. All about him his Christian neighbors troop to the worship of the ancient Yahoo of the Jews. He stands alone; he lives on an island.

I can think, also, of a man who lives under my feet. Out in the far antipodes he has his little cottage, which overlooks the vast Southern Sea. By day he dilligently chops wood; by the evening lamp he cons books that breathe of the coming day and prophesy the fall of the church that now is. His neighbors scout him as a heretic; they give him to understand that a special allotment of sulphur is reserved for him in the grim territory of hell. He smiles; he reads; he argues; he stands steadfast; he lives on an island.

I know a woman who has passed years in a tiny village, and amid a hundred social pressures, resisted the insolence of orthodoxy, refrained from church-going, and quietly and persistently propagated better views of life and history. Brave soul! she has lived on an island.

I know another woman, young, alert, quick of imagination and broad in sympathies, who is a prisoner in a Calvinistic home. Deacons flutter in and out like bats in the gloaming, and the psalms keep up their monotonous wail. And she longs to go out into the open world; she yearns for a more wholesome environment; she lives on an island.

These four men and women are but types of a great multitude. They are today our noblest nonconformists. There was an age when Christians themselves faced such difficulties, and bore them with manful loyalty to the Ideal. The times are changed. The Christians loll easily at the banquet of Convention and nod their heads to the music of the Mode. It is the turn of the Freethinker to play the part of the proscribed. These men and women can smirk over the prospect of no promised land. Angels minister not to them in their temptation. No reassuring dove cleaves the sky, to bring celestial blessings upon their heads. In silence they persist. Faithfully they bear witness. They ask for no reward. Their fidelity is their glory. I think of them in their splendid exile, and I contrast them with the crowd. I

do not despise the crowd; but I remember, with a feeling of triumph, that this crowd will sooner or later follow the Freethought nonconformists. To these Crusoes, these spiritually isolated sisters and brothers, I give my greeting and my homage. For in all this universe of planets and stars and far-radiating infinite distances, nothing surpasses the grandeur of an honest man, an honest woman.—[Watts' Literary Guide.

**What is our Aim and Duty as Libirals?**

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pusernatural by building such a church organization, not passive in character, but aggressive and positive.

But someone will inquire: "Why do you advocate this movement? We have more churches now than can be filled and supported." Others will argue that if the infidels are sincere and anxious to do church work, let them join the Liberal churches already organized, such as the Unitarian, Universalist, etc. To this we reply: No church of to-day of which we have any knowledge fills the requirements we make for a Liberal church. Those mentioned either cling to much of the old doctrine, or have prayer and other objectionable rites very much like the orthodox church. All have their theories of immortality which become motives in their religious work. We want a religion for this life—a religion for this world. We are content to let other worlds get on the best they can. We waste no time or energy upon known impossibilities. We want a religion that saves from wrong-doing and broken law, instead of holding out to an unthinking class the ever present opportunity for escape by forgiveness, which becomes a kind of license for sin. We want to stop all this. We do not pretend to say that we all agree upon what is right and wrong, but we all agree that the theory of forgiveness—Salvation by Faith—is a curse to the race. Christianity and its philosophy is sending too many people to hell on earth for intelligent people not to want something done to save them.—Current Thought.

**The Flood.**

[Concluded from 3d page.]

time playing with a prism and making rainbows on the wall.

This, like many other stories, is accepted by many because it is found in the Bible, and woe be unto him who is rash enough to question them. But intelligence is coming, anathemas have lost their power and the world is seeking light even on religion.—Big Bible Stories.

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