

An Agnostic's View.

EDITOR TORCH OF REASON:

In the Torch of October 27 is an interesting discussion, by Charles K. Tenney, of your editorial on the "supreme being". Mr. Tenney is always interesting, but I do not regard him to be infallible, any more than Moses. He graphically proves that all phenomena of nature is caused by the "action of matter on matter". On this theory he accounts for the growing grass, the blowing storms, the falling rain, the birth and death of man, and the movements of the planets. So far, so good. I travel the same road with him up to this point. But he goes on to argue, as I understand his conclusions, that for the reasons above mentioned, he knows that "matter acting upon matter is the supreme power" Now if Mr. Tenney will explain what causes "matter to act on matter", I will be more willing to accept his gospel. Surely matter cannot "act" unless some power causes it to act. If matter is a dead weight, how can it "act"? To say that "everything is god" is another way of saying that you do not know what God is, or whether there is any God at all. To say that "natural law" makes us grow and die is but using the phrase "natural law" as a synonym for the word "god". Mangasarian, the Chicago ethical teacher, says that God consists in "what is not known". The less we know, the bigger God is, and the more we know, the smaller God becomes.

The trouble with our Atheistic friends is that they put themselves in exactly the same position as the theologian—both claim to know all about it. What is the use of trying to disprove things that are not proven? If a man tells me that "the moon is made of green cheese", it is not necessary for me to get excited and rush around for proof that it is not true. Rather demand that the man who make the assertion prove his statement. It is wasting time for us to be worrying ourselves about the claims of the existence of a god when no one has yet proved that one exists. Fifty years ago, if some dreamer had said that it was possible to send a message to London in a fraction of a second, that it was possible to talk from New York to Kansas City, that it was possible to ride across the continent in four days, or that it was possible to see through a block of wood, Mr. Tenney would have jumped up and down and proved that it was "not so". Just so with the existence of a god. Let those who claim that there is a god trot him out where we can get a good, square look at him and then we will talk seriously about his existence. In the meantime, let us abstain from the theological practice of making assertions that we know nothing about.

W. E. JOHNSON.

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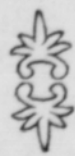
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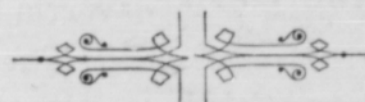
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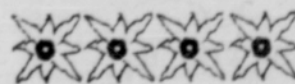
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