

# TORCH OF REASON.



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## Legend of the Enchanted Hill.

Revised for the Torch of Reason.

An ancient legend, good or ill,  
Describes a fair, enchanted hill  
Whose summit, reaching to the skies,  
Contained a very precious prize  
For him who would ascend to find,  
Yet did not cast a look behind;  
One backward glance, aye, one alone  
Would change the climber into stone!

And he forevermore would be  
A stony statue fair to see;  
And evermore in seeming pride  
Adorn the hill's enchanting side,  
A guide in all the future time,  
For those who did attempt to climb,—  
But all who tried the prize to find  
Somehow would cast a look behind.

Upon that hillside did a throng  
Of sirens sing an endless song.  
Its groves were beautiful to see  
With sylvian dells, fair as could be,  
With blossoms that did charm the eyes  
Of all who clambered for the prize;  
With flowing streams like rills of wine,  
And fruits of paradise divine.

And many did attempt to climb,  
So says this tale of olden time,  
Until the hillside grew more fair  
With lifeless statues standing there;  
With lifeless statues gazing back  
Upon a former place or track,  
Where some fair siren in disguise  
Had tried to win them from the prize.

Life is that fair enchanted hill,  
And happiness the prize; for good or ill,  
We climb the realm so fair to find,  
Our vices make us look behind.  
Our vices are the sirens fair  
That woo us backward to despair,  
Unto the sins that we have known—  
'Till death shall change us into stone.

## The Bible and Women.

BY B. F. UNDERWOOD.

The preachers never tire of repeating the statement that the Bible is a perfect rule of faith and practice, a perfect guide in all the affairs of life, and that it will ever be so in all conditions and circumstances in which man shall exist. But the fact is, the Bible is a book as foreign to all the objects and aims of the enlightened civilization of today as are the terra cotta records of the old Assyrian monarchy. It is irrelevant to the life of today of the foremost nations. It is a mere relic and curiosity for the study of the archaeologist, who alone can understand it.

The masses in the Bible period were slaves or savages, creatures of habit and instinct as much as are beasts. Two natural personalities—priest and king—supplemented by two alleged supernatural persons—God and Satan—are all the personalities whom the Bible recognizes. Now it is precisely these four dominating official persons that the enlightened civilization of today is successfully endeavoring to eliminate as factors in human affairs. Of course the god here meant is the

old theological personage, the czar or pope in the heavens who made the world once on a time, and requires worship and incense to keep him in good temper toward his creatures.

What is the attitude of the Bible in relation to women? The old testament puts a man's wife in the same category with his ox and his ass. The position of woman in ancient Egypt was relatively high; so it was among that division of the Greek race known as the Dorians. But the position of woman among the Hebrews was essentially subordinate. The social condition of the mass of women was one of inferiority and subjection. The heroine of the Biblical pastoral entitled Ruth, was the subject of purchase on the part of her Hebrew husband, Boaz, who evidently loved her, but whose behavior toward her was dictated by mere cast-iron custom and usage, and not by the heart at all. A nearer kinsman of Naomi would have had Ruth if he had wanted her, but he did not happen to want her. Ruth is represented as "falling on her face and bowing herself to the ground" before Boaz, the Israelite grandee, whom she, under the shrewd instruction of her mother-in-law, was trying to captivate. This illustration sufficiently indicates the prostrate and servile condition of women within the domain of the Hebrew law-givers. "Thy desire shall be to thy husband and he shall rule over thee"—expressed the present Jewish sentiment. A Hebrew prayer repeated to this day by the orthodox Jew of the masculine gender, thanks God that he (the man) was not born a woman. Solomon, the sage of the Hebrews (the worst man that ever lived or ever should live, according to the Bible), said that "one man among a thousand" he has found, but he has never found a true woman.

Let us pass from the days of the pastoral barbarians of Israel, and from the Israel of Moses and the prophets, to the great Hebrew of that later Israel which had passed under the all-absorbing rule of Roman imperialism. St. Paul, the Hellenized Jew, who was imbued with the poetry and philosophy of Greece as well as with the lore of Israel, was the real founder of Christianity, the primitive author of Christian theology, the spiritual ancestor of all the formulators of Christian creeds of whatever race or century. He contained Augustine and Dominick and Ignatius Loyola and Calvin, 'in posse' as an

oak contains in germ a forest of oaks.

From the writings of Paul it is evident that the Christian Hebrew held woman in no more respect than did the Mosaic Hebrew. Instead of Pauline Christianity being a monument in behalf of the elevation of woman, it was a movement to make the subserviency of woman to the ruder sex permanent. Paul seems to have regarded woman as did that later Arabian prophet, Mohammed, as in permanent eclipse to man and a mere means of continuing the human race. If Renan's description of Paul's personal appearance is correct, he "was ugly, stout, short and stooping, and his broad shoulders awkwardly sustained a little, bald head". But homely as he was corporally, he was beyond doubt a man of genius, as his epistles abundantly prove. But he was a woman-hater. In his first epistle to Timothy, he wrote: "I suffer not a woman to teach, nor to usurp authority over the man, but to be in silence." In the fourteenth chapter of the first epistle to the Corinthians, Paul's Oriental spirit breaks out in full bloom. He writes as we might suppose the master of a seraglio would:

"Let your women keep silence in the churches; for it is not permitted unto them to speak, but they are commanded to be under obedience, as also saith the law."

Elsewhere he enjoins wives to be in subjection to their husbands in all things. Thus the Pauline idea of woman approached that of Mohammed and of the old Greek poet, Hesiod, according to which she is a mere toy and means of sensual pleasure and of the continuation of the race—a necessary evil, imperiling by her subtlety and beauty masculine virtue and continence, forsooth, unless she is kept carefully under lock and key.

Though the Feudal church exalted the mother of Christ, the 'Mater Dolorosa', above deity, and made the worship of her universal, yet that same church steadily represented woman as essentially unclean and an instrument of Satan. There were any number of holy places from which woman was debarred, on the ground that her presence therein would be pollution. She was taught to be ashamed of her dress, for it was the memorial of her fall; and of her beauty, for it was the most potent charm of the enemy of souls.

Christianity, in its origin and doctrines, is an Orientalism; and

being such, it is an obstruction, rather than a means, to the progress of woman. Yet the preachers, repeating traditionary belief, will continue to repeat that the Bible has elevated and is elevating woman.

## Conflict Between Science and Religion.

BY P. B. LADD.

There is no room to question the fact that science and religion are, as they ever have been, in deadly conflict.

Astronomy has filled endless space with worlds and systems of worlds that have existed from eternity. Religion has created but a single world, our little earth, and lighted it, for the sole benefit of man, with a little sun and moon, and a few little stars, all made in a single day, and created out of nothing.

Science reveals our earth as a globe revolving on its axis around the sun.

Religion makes the earth a flat surface, and carries the sun around it. Religious man, in his ignorance, stops the sun to fight his battles, while science tolerates no quietude in the universe.

Religion created the first man a perfect being; science found him a savage. Religion put him in a paradise; science found him in a wilderness. Religion degraded him as time rolled on, while science advances him in the scale of humanity and reason.

Religion created this earth about 6,000 years ago, and peopled it in the short space of six days; science goes back countless millions of years to find its beginning, and then carries it through other millions of years before man made his appearance on it. Religion finds a powerful being, in the image of a man, residing in the heavens, who out of nothing made the universe! Science finds force or gravitation to be a property of matter, and a sufficient cause for the existence and maintenance of the universe. Science teaches that planets are born, live to old age, and die; that they being as tenuous gas, become fluid, solidify, live in the vegetable and animal epochs, and finally, like our moon, revolve as dead bodies; that our sun and other suns are still in their infancy, perhaps in time to become solid bodies fit for habitation.