



### Truth.

BY G. H. WALSER.

**T**HERE liveth a jewel more precious than gold,  
 More precious than diamonds from Africa's field,  
 Which brighter appears [as the wearer grows old,  
 Protecting the breast as an armor and shield.  
 When th' shadow of Time as the mantle of night,  
 In silence approaches, performing its task,  
 Then welcomed the future will be with delight,  
 The wearer will have no regrets of the past.  
 It softens the heart and it brightens the eye,  
 Enhances the cheeks with sweet Innocence's bloom,  
 It wards from the breast the sharp sting of a sigh,  
 And keepeth the mind from the trammels of gloom.  
 It honors the brow of both manhood and age,  
 And shieldeth from evil the footsteps of youth;  
 Enriches the mind of both statesman and sage,  
 Who foster, with care this bright jewel of Truth.

For the Torch of Reason.

### Solid Foundations.

BY G. W. MOREHOUSE.

**H**E who would erect an enduring structure must first make sure of the stability of its foundations. The next considerations are good materials and skilled and careful workmanship. The thinker of to-day is fast reaching the decision that the old creeds have reached the point of decay where every attempt at repair is a costly failure. The critical inspectors, and the advancing knowledge of nature have condemned the supports upon which the whole trembling pile rests. Many have seen this, and have been at work tearing away a rotten piece here and another there, in the interest of the safety and progress of humanity. The time is at hand when the old home must be abandoned and a new shelter erected. It is tottering to its fall, and its inmates and their near neighbors are in danger. Some are in favor of taking refuge temporarily in the open, tearing down the old shell and building anew on the same site. Some would prefer a new site, and are willing to let the old house stand as long as it will—a general receptacle for relics and rubbish. Some in building, would use all new material, others would select more or less of the old, putting old bricks into new buildings. We are floating along in the

current of evolutionary changes, but possess some power of selection and adaptation. That such power of choice may be wisely used, every endeavor should be directed to obtaining a better knowledge of nature's methods, that we may avoid as far as possible the mistakes always attending superstition or imperfect knowledge. To accomplish this desired result we must give our attention (now that we know the danger of the old and have resolved to rebuild), to the new work. Is it not our duty to turn our backs on the condemned creeds and give undivided attention to the new work in hand? We have ceased to be mere "unbelievers" in the old, we are believers in, and workers for the new. This course is natural. The new sprout starts before the old branch is entirely dead, and by the vigor of its growth aids in the early elimination of its once useful and vigorous, but now dwindling and harmful predecessor. Keep the old house watched and propped enough for safety, until the new structure is ready for occupancy. Has that time arrived? Does nature-knowledge offer the world more of good and promise than do theological authority and emotional credulity? Has not science almost won the battle against ignorance and superstition? There can be but one answer. In substituting scientific knowledge for religious superstition the material gain to our race is everywhere in evidence. The intellectual gain in the realms of reason, investigation, and mental discipline are scarcely less marked. The moral gain, resting on the solid foundations of experience, after the recovery from temporary disturbing elements naturally arising during a period of rapid change will not be less. The universal recognition of a code of ethical principles founded on experience and the study of natural laws will tend to bring about a brotherhood of man. Only through such enlightenment may we hope to see the end of war, inordinate greed, and needless misery. Science, which is another name for knowledge of nature and man's relation to the universe, is the true guide and only hope of humanity. It is coming of age. Some interested theologians try to make their deluded followers believe that Science is only in its pin-feather stage; but in their secret thoughts they know it to be

a full-grown young giant whose invincibility they are doomed to publicly recognize. The foundations of SCIENCE are real and solid. There is a difference between world-material and dreams. In building anew, and with new material, we avoid the danger of the coming scientific civilization being weakened by aging beams and braces, and by needless exposure to theological disease germs. The great evolutionary movement does not require the aid or endorsement of any diluted brand of Christianity or any other kind of religion. It does depend upon a strict adherence to scientific truth. Freethinkers would strengthen their cause by a scientific study of nature, and by so doing arm themselves with an invincible array of facts and reasonable and legitimate conclusions therefrom. It is possible to build better than we in this generation know. The fruits of good as well as the fruits of evil are progressive. The enemy's defenses are down; let us strengthen our own. Scientific knowledge is not something out of reach of the average mind; on the contrary very much of its most pleasant and useful teaching is within the grasp of nearly all. Attention, determination and work are necessary. Once start and the mind will be strengthened and illuminated by reading, reasoning and investigating along the line of our environment. Nature is the fountain of all knowledge. **No Right to Punish.** BY JEAN MESLIER. **M**AN'S nature, it is said, must necessarily become corrupt. God could not endow him with sinlessness, which is an inalienable portion of divine perfection. But if God could not render him sinless, why did he take the trouble of creating man, whose nature was to become corrupt, and which, consequently, had offended God? On the other side, if God himself was not able to render human nature sinless, what right had he to punish men for not being sinless? It is but by the right of might. But the right of the strongest is violence; and violence is not suited to the most just of beings. God would be supremely unjust if he punished men for not having a portion of divine perfections, or for not being able to be gods like himself. Could not God have at least en-

dowed men with that sort of perfection of which their nature is susceptible? If some men are good or render themselves agreeable to their god, why did not this god bestow the same favor or give the same dispositions to all beings of our kind? Why does the number of wicked exceed so greatly the number of good people? Why, for every friend, does God find ten thousand enemies in a world which depended upon him alone to people with honest men? If it is true that God intends to form in heaven a court of saints, of chosen ones, or of men who have lived in this world according to his views, would he not have had a court more numerous, more brilliant, and more honorable to him, if it were composed of all men to whom, in creating them, he could have granted the degree of goodness necessary to obtain eternal happiness? Finally, were it not easier to take man from nothingness than to create him full of defects, rebellious to his creator, perpetually exposed to lose himself by a fatal abuse of his liberty? Instead of creating men, a perfect god ought to have created only docile and submissive angels. The angels, it is said, are free; a few among them have sinned; but all of them have not sinned; all have not abused their liberty by revolting against their master. Could not God have created only angels of the good kind? If God could create angels who have not sinned, could he not create men sinless or those who would never abuse their liberty by doing evil. If the chosen ones are capable of sinning in heaven, could not God have made sinless men upon the earth?— [Common sense. Modern Bible critics, pursuing scientific methods of study, have obtained results which demonstrate, so far as the subject is capable of demonstration, that: The books comprising our modern Bible are selections from an ancient literature comprising history, poetry and romance, covering a period of more than a thousand years. Science and scholarship have demonstrated that it is wrong in its account of the creation of the universe; wrong in its account of the origin of man; wrong in its story of a universal deluge; wrong in accounting for the diversity of languages; wrong in its chronology; wrong in much of its history; wrong in its interpretation of nature; wrong in its ideas of God; wrong in its ideas of men; wrong in its Christology; wrong in accounting for the origin of sin and wrong in many of its moral teachings.—[D. B. Stedman in Free-thought Magazine.