

simply illusion, fraud, or hypocrisy, especially the latter. The soul or religion of a people is the action and result of THEIR nervous systems, and the attempt to convert the Chinese religion into the Yankee's must be preceded by making the Yankee brains take the place of the Chinaman's, which is simply absurd. No trepanning or surgical operation can help the matter. Religions cannot be exchanged like coats, and those absurd and destructive attempts should be made to subside by turning the light of Science upon them. How destructive they are, and why, we may show further hereafter. In a word, they cannot give a new faith, but they disconcert and demoralize the old. We have only space now to indicate the way out, which is this:

We should do for other peoples what we did by Japan, through Commodore Perry in 1852, only better. Give them protection and the Science and materials to gradually grow into a higher and better civilization, from the BASIS of the religions morals and customs they have already evolved up to. But do not knock the bottom out of everything by smashing, suddenly and directly, such religions, morals, customs and governments as they happen to have. Above all, don't horrify all of their holiest feelings by an instant reversal. The Chinaman is based upon ancestry-worship and the continuity of his social life and customs, through generations of high Fetichism. You tell him that all his ancestors are seething in Hell, that his present life is damnation, from which he can only escape by traitorously deserting all his family and race and taking a lone-eternity in your impossible sky-parlor. Do you wonder then that he thinks you are a "foreign devil," who ought to be put out of the way, as you would a rattlesnake?

Look on your map. See the various confluent rivers which make the mighty rivers. Never can you make one confluent run over the mountain ranges of time and space that divide them, and be "converted" into another. But notice, larger and stronger they grow, until they gradually CONVERGE into a mighty "Father of Waters," bearing the commerce and helping and cheering the intercourse of nations, until they reach the boundless ocean.

Let this suggest how all "the religions" may be gradually guided and leveled to converge and flow on helpfully together into the all-inclusive RELIGION OF HUMANITY, where the "helpful reciprocity" of Confucius and "the golden rule" of "the Christ that is to be," may be realized in "The Earthly Paradise."

You should have a copy of the Torch of Reason Song Book, No. 2. They are only 10 cents each.

For the Torch of Reason.

"Has Hell been Obliterated."

BY MRS. M. M. TURNER.

"The Rev. George Wolf Chunn has an article in the North American Review for June, 'Has Hell been Obliterated,' he says: 'The appeal to fear has wellnigh ceased, and yet there is no fact which we are so compelled to see as the fact of retribution. The law of retribution works in our present life. It is fair to assume that what holds good in the present life, that which is a part of man's very structure here, will continue hereafter. We may give up the notion of a material hell, but we cannot give up the doctrine of retribution. What then has become of hell? It has not been obliterated. Men in our day have overlooked retribution in seeking to get rid of Materialistic notions concerning hell. The time has come to recall the awful fact of retribution, but it must be done directly, and always with those exceptions in mind which so greatly modify it.'" From "The Literary Digest" for June.

The Rev. Mr. G. Wolf Chunn is not willing to give up the doctrine of a hell of some kind. That which men suffer here for wrongdoing is not enough as Mr. Chunn thinks. When the brain ceases to act and the muscles and nerves are at peace, there must be, according to this theory of continued retribution, some part of the individual that can carry the unrepented, unforgiven sin across the border that more retribution can be meted out to it in the way of some kind of torture, "whether for one year or two or for eternity, it is not material to decide" as Mr. Chunn thinks. The one important thing is to get the sinner into hell. In this tragedy of the universe the only actors are the brainless, nervous, individual something called the soul and an omnipotent omniscient god who made for himself a home of peace and happiness in heaven.

If Mr. Chunn could know all that leads to sin in the way of inheritance, ignorance, superstition and the bitter struggle with poverty and want, he might feel that, instead of retribution, justice required some compensation for the human being brought into existence in conditions for which he is in no way responsible, but which make that existence one long agony from the cradle to the grave.

Is Mr. Chunn virtuous because he loves virtue for itself, or because he fears retribution?

The Roman Catholic priest, for a price, gives absolution for sins. The blood of Christ "is a full and sufficient sacrifice for the sins of the whole world." Surely, between the Roman Catholic priest, Christ and good, sound common sense, hell has been obliterated.

The doctrine of a soul and hell has no proof. It is an instrument in the hands of the clergy; therefore, they hold on to it and think they believe that this superstition, fear and ignorance make a better foundation for morality than the ordered, organized and proved knowledge of the changeless laws of the universe which Science gives, and which in itself is virtue.

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