

The Grace and Glory of the Truth.

BY T. B. WAKEMAN.

We felt sorry for the "Rev." J. P. Bland when we read the paragraphs we reprint about the "Grace and Glory" of the old faiths which the "dominant philosophy" takes away, and when he adds: "I feel the dreary contrast between that dear faith which once was mine and the gloomy shadows of that which now has forced itself upon me—whose God, if such its Infinite and Eternal Energy can be called, is void alike of evil as of good, of love as of hate; . . . while man is but an evanescent bubble," etc. Now, these may not be the learned author's own sentiments, but those he has properly attributed to his aged Professor who, Moses like, had reached the Mount Pisgah between The Old and The New—the Mount which age forbids him to leave to explore and realize the Promised Land he dimly foresees for others.

Yet these pessimistic views of the New World, Life and Hope are common, and likely to be taken as the Author's. We believe them to be just the reverse of the truth, and profoundly regrettable. The fact is just exactly otherwise. Those who are "out in the clear" of the New World of Science and Humanity are the healthiest, strongest, best, most useful, satisfied and joyous people that are, or ever have been, on this planet. Those old, ignorant, superstitious, medieval barbarians called "Saints" are not comparable with the true ladies and gentlemen—the true nobility—who have given us the New Era and its "dominant philosophy" of Science. Take them by the hundred or thousand from Shakespeare and Goethe down to Comte and Spencer, Darwin and Huxley, and they are the flower of the human race. They had the hard trials of revolutions in their several departments, but they did their work manfully and more than happily; they were blissfully triumphant, and were joyous in the assured victories which they foresaw. How far behind this age that regretful Professor is may be seen by contrasting his views with the views of the professors of a Liberal University.

Let us begin such an inquiry with the Professor of Cosmology, that is, of Astronomy, Physics and Chemistry. This would be his reply:

"Where the 'grace, glory' and joy in that old, flat, firmament-roofed world may be, it seems to me impossible to find in contrast with the sun and starlit, infinite Cosmic-Universe that Science has revealed. What happiness, glory or joy could there be to a race of slaves created in a 'three-story tenement house' of a world, a few thousand miles in extent; with its

'living' or earth floor as 'a vale of tears,' in which 'the state of probation' had to be passed before dropping into the excruciating torments of eternal hell, in the basement; or flitting to the worse silly inanity of an eternal heaven just above the clouds. No wonder that the past of the human race has been a dirty, bloody swamp, enlivened by myriads of wriggling human beings trying to reach some hope or a "Nirvana" of practical non-existence. In Asia and Africa that is very much the state of things today, because THERE the old world and the consequent old faiths still impart their 'grace and glory'—of unspeakable misery.

"By way of contrast, the New World of Science gives us the reality of Bruno's 'Infinite Space lit by innumerable sun worlds.' Among them our sun has a fine position on the borders of the Milky Way the galaxy of glory. Nor is our planet's place in our solar system in anywise despicable. We are not melted like Mercury nor frozen like Neptune. We are in the temperate zone of planets, where we live on a splendid rotary observatory, daily 'alternating,' as Faust opens by saying, in what Shelley calls 'that astonishing chorus'—

Alternating Paradise brightness
With deep and dreadful night!

And what an observatory! Each year we are sweeping around in a sun orbit 558 millions of miles. Nor is there likely to be eternal sameness in these daily and yearly travels, for the sun is carrying us towards Lyra at the rate of ten miles a second, or 300 millions of miles a year, and Lyra is in her travels, too, so there will be no collision. (See Prof. Newcomb, in McClure's Magazine, July, 1899.)

Q.—Well, Professor, but you know that our whole solar system must return to "star mist" in a few millions of years?

A.—"Nonsense! It is time that such old echoes of Theology were out of our school books, to say nothing of our scientific philosophies, and especially Herbert Spencer's. As Professors Lockyer and Proctor say, the meteoric hypothesis has displaced it. As Prof. Heysinger says, 'There has not, so far, been observed in all the heavens any gaseous nebula which lends the slightest support to the Nebular Hypothesis.' And as Prof. Ball says, 'The Nebular Hypothesis is emphatically a speculation. It cannot be demonstrated by observation, nor established by mathematical calculation.' Such a metaphysical hypothesis should no longer masquerade as verified Science. As long as attraction balances repulsion, inflow equals radiation, and no limit is found to time and space, you may settle down to work with the grace, glory and joy of endless progress gaining its illimitable victory, upon the Astronomical

and Physical Foundation of Human Life. To compare that position with the old horror from which we have escaped, is of its self sufficient to inspire a continuous satisfaction and joy unspeakable. Let us hear no more about the grace and glory of that old Theological Nightmare.

We next turn to the Professor of Biology and Sociology, that is, the combined departments of animal and human life on our planet. To the question: How does the grace and glory of the old lot and fate of man contrast with the new, we get this reply:

"You can answer the question by considering how a mass of wretches condemned to death, or a fate worse than death, by a tyrant 'for his own glory' would feel should they learn that a mighty catastrophe and revolution had occurred, by which the despot had been deposed and the prison walls blown into infinity without hurting one of them, would they not rejoice and be exceeding glad? Would they not look out and up with unspeakable delight over the 'Sun and Starlit Hall of Earth' now sure to be the eternal home of their race, in which all their love and treasure can surely be made continuous forever! If it is said that a few of the poor, miserable creatures might be saved by reason of the voluntary sacrifice of the only Son of the Despot, and so taken into his 'kingdom' to share his 'glory' by his 'grace,' the answer is, that the grace to a few by the murder of the innocent son is manifest barbarism that could only be accepted by savages without a feeling of horror. Nor could there be a 'Heaven' to human beings when the majority of the race, including, perhaps, our dearest ones, are broiling in Hell. The modern touch that makes the whole world 'a kin' makes a Hell of Heaven unless all are in it. The joyful Heaven, with Hell as its real foundation or corner stone, is a contradiction to all advanced peoples."

Q.—But how will they be happy without the special providences of "our Heavenly Father?"

A.—"Why, by learning that the impartial and reliable certainty of our 'Heavenly Law' is in every respect far better than any favoritism, or change of a knowable order.

"The World itself a God of knowable, invariable, correlative law, pursuant to which we can certainly modify events and phenomena to our own advantage, is a well-spring of everlasting joy and satisfaction. By that fact Science has called into play the "cosmic emotions" which have given a higher and more joyful sympathy with Nature than the old faiths could ever begin to think of. Read the concluding pages of Prof. Tyndall's Book on Light; turn to the Nature-inspiration in Shelley, Byron,

Wordsworth and Goethe, and feel the joy, too deep for tears or laughter, that springs from the certainty that the earth, never created nor deluged, and never to be burned, is the blessed Mother of us all, ever ready and willing to be changed to minister to our needs, wishes and joys. Thus as we adjust ourselves to Nature it is a permissible fiction and figure of speech to say that she, like the Earth, is transposed into our Mother and Nurse. Now we have come to add to this the modern fact and conception of the ever-growing, living, and ever more powerful, and now almost Almighty Humanity, lying between us and the Inorganic World. Its collective will is ever becoming more civilized and beneficent. The longing for the best of old barbarian Gods, and all that they were supposed to be able or willing to do is now to long for the shadow after the substance has come. All of the longings that used to go out to the Heavens, Gods, and Saviors of old, are met and fulfilled a thousand-fold by the new relations by which Science, the real Revelation, has related us to the Infinite Cosmos, the Beauty of Order; to the ever-moving, ever-variegated Paradise of Earth and Nature; to the glorious social joy of neighbor, friend, family; and to the mutual homage, love and joy of the sexes, which was never knowable, nor experienced in its higher phases, until modern Science and Sociology revealed the Truth about continuous life, and love and hope."

Q.—But we don't want to die, we want to be immortal and to have those joys infinitely increased for ever.

This world is all a fleeting show
For man's illusion given;
The smiles of joy, the tears of woe
Deceitful shine, deceitful flow:
There's nothing true but Heaven!?

A.—"Very well; where are you to find your Heaven? Now, we have found out that this world is not an illusion or fleeting show, but the eternal REALITY of which we are a creating part. Our smiles and tears are no longer deceitful, but the sunshine and shadows of the dawn of the EARTHLY PARADISE, which Science is substituting in place of 'Heaven,' which of all things is not true, but which became our inconceivable dream, as soon as Galileo's telescope opened the sky. The substance of that dream is HERE, the pleasure of its creation and anticipation is the greatest of joys. The joy, 'grace and glory' of nothingness is what?

"Please to answer that before you ask more."

For sixteen centuries of faith and trust, our ancestors tried to reach Heaven by abandoning their place in nature, and we can now estimate the costs of the experiments.— [F. L. Oswald.