

TORCH OF REASON.



"TRUTH BEARS THE TORCH IN THE SEARCH FOR TRUTH."—*Lucretius.*

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Just as the Star.

Wie Das Gestirn; Just as the Star;
Ohne Hast, Without haste,
Aber Ohne Rast, Without rest,
Drehe sich jeder, Let each the circle
Um die eigne Last. Of his duty trace.
[Goethe's Saying.] [Translation.]

POETIC COMMENT.

YES! "Without haste, without rest:"
Bind that motto to thy breast;
Bear it with thee as a spell;
Storm or sunshine, guard it well!
Guard the flowers that 'round thee bloom,
'Till they fruitful make thy tomb.

Haste not! Let no thoughtless deed
Mar for aye thy spirit's speed!
Ponder well and know the right;
Onward then, with all thy might.
Haste not! Years can ne'er atone
For one reckless action done.

Rest not! Life is sweeping by,
Go and dare, before you die;
Something useful or sublime
Leave behind to grow with time!
Glorious 'tis to live for aye,
When these forms have passed away.

Haste not! Rest not! Calmly wait!
Meekly bear the storms of fate;
Duty be thy polar guide;
Do the right what e'er betide!
Haste not! Rest not! Conflicts past,—
Love shall crown thy work at last.

ANON. (Varied.)

Tells the Truth!

A Clergyman Revolts Against the Bible.

THE BIBLE AND CIVILIZATION.

Extracts from a sermon preached in St. James' Episcopal Church, Greenville, Mass., Sep. 30th, by Rev. Quincy Ewing, from the text, Judges iv, 17-23. (The Story of Jael.)

THERE is no telling to what an extent the civilization of the world has been retarded by that false view of the Bible common among Christian people, which has prevented them from seeing in their true light acts like that of Jael, the murderess; which has made it seem to them necessary for the sake of the Christian religion to defend, and attempt to justify, any and every sort of crime that appeared to have the sanction of some Biblical writer. It is simply awful to think how many times, and through what centuries, the conscience of children may have been dwarfed or blunted, by parents or Sunday School teachers, who have thought it their duty to justify to the young minds any meanness or wrong or crime set down in the Bible, provided such meanness or wrong or crime was done by a Biblical saint, or ministered in some way to the advancement of the people who considered

themselves "God's Chosen." And if a child's conscience is not permanently dwarfed or blunted, what positive moral principle can possibly be implanted in the childish mind by parent or teacher, who insists, for example, on a thorough learning of the Ten Commandments—not omitting the Sixth: "Thou shalt do no murder"—and in the next breath tells the child that Jael did a righteous act when she murdered Sisera! Moral agnosticism, if nothing worse, might naturally be expected to follow such teaching. There is very great likelihood that something worse does follow it; likelihood verging close upon certainty.

Let me illustrate: You have seen to it that your ten or twelve-year-old son has gotten careful religious instruction, either at your side or in the Sunday School. He knows, of course, the Ten Commandments and the Lord's Prayer. He is familiar with the Sermon on the Mount. You encourage him to read the Bible. Well, one day his conscience revolts, his boyish instinct for fair play is shocked, when he opens his Bible at the fourth chapter of Judges and reads about the treacherous murder of the Canaanite general. He comes to you with his trouble, and wants to know what you think of that murder, what your opinion is of Jael. What would you say to him?

Why, supposing you shared the common opinion, that it is irreligious to condemn anything a Biblical writer commends, you would have to tell him that Jael did a good deed when she murdered Sisera, and go on to explain that it was a good deed, because Sisera was a powerful enemy of the chosen people of God; because, had he lived, he would have been a constant menace to their safety; because he was not a worshiper of the true God, but an idolater, and the welfare of the worshipers of the true God depended upon all idolaters being rooted out of the land. Perhaps, and very naturally, you would add, that God inspired Jael to do what she did—invite Sisera into her tent, cover him with a mantle, give him drink, nurse him to sleep—and then murder him!

Now, in such a case, what would be the almost inevitable effect upon your boy's character, upon his moral vision, supposing he accepted your teaching and grew to manhood without outgrowing it? Why, this, of course: His character

would be Jesuitized, his moral vis-

ion would be Jesuitized. He learned from what he was taught to look upon as the sacreddest of all books, with your approval, your positive, explicit sanction, that evil might be done to bring about good; that the most treacherous and foul murder was pleasing to God, if it served to make way with any enemy of His chosen people and his true religion. What then would prevent that boy become a man from doing evil himself that good might result, and comforting himself—making himself feel good—with a sense of the Divine approval?

What would prevent him, for example, if he were a pious church member, from swindling "sinners," unbelievers, heretics, in order to get the wherewithal to contribute more largely to his church's support, or to swell some missionary fund to convert the wicked heathen? What would prevent him, having concluded—as of course he would—that he was one of God's chosen people, from committing any sort of a crime against an alien people, or member of an alien race, in the name of God—contending that it was God's will for His people to succeed, to go forward, and for other people to fail, to fall by the wayside, in the struggle for existence; and that His chosen race would be recreant to Duty and Destiny, if they did not sometime grow fat in all green fields of earth—fertilized by the blood and the bone dust of peoples wearing darker skins and serving "other gods?"

Teach your boy that once upon a time God inspired murder to hold down one race of people and help forward another; and you are preparing him to commit himself, some day, or to give his sanction to any crime which might be defended with the plea, that it was necessary, in order to keep the line sharp and clear between the superiority of his race and the inferiority of some other. You are preparing him to be able to enter the legislature and write statutes defining murder, fixing the penalty therefore, and describing the only legal mode of executing it; and to be at the same time perfectly capable of ignoring those statutes, brushing them aside, and getting up a lynching party to torture to death some fellow-citizen of an "inferior" race for an alleged crime, which, if proven, would mean simply a short term in the state prison for a member of his own race.

Very probably the miserable murderers who broke open the jail

down in Tangipahoa Parish, La., a few nights ago, and among 12 black men suspected of burglary picked out four that they, the mob—the calm, wise, majestic mob—deemed most likely to be guilty, and dragged them out and hanged them; very probably those cowardly murderers, or some of them, were taught in their youth that Jael did a good piece of work, when she inveigled Sisera into her tent and drove the nail through his temples!

Teach your boys and girls that the Bible is everywhere throughout the word of God; that God inspired crime, or sanctioned crime, in order to hold up one religion and pull down another, or in order to advance one race of people and destroy another; teach your boys and girls that; fix it firm in their brain, plant it deep in their hearts—and they may live through a long life and never become legal criminals; they may never have to answer to the indictment of a grand jury; but the probability, I might almost say certainty is, that they may go through life Moral Criminals—cherishing sentiments, instincts, ideas, that are the very essence of criminality!

In conclusion I would say to all parents and Sunday School teachers: Don't run the risk of dwarfing, or blunting, or corrupting, the consciences of the young children committed to your care, by laboring under the terrible mistake that it is your duty to justify to their young minds everything you may chance to read to them in the Bible. When you read about a meanness, a contemptibility, an indecency, whether done by outcast heathen, or pious Hebrew—tell them that it is a meanness, a contemptibility, an indecency; and that God had nothing to do with it, except to abhor it. When you find lying, or theft, or murder commended, tell them that lying is lying, that thieving is thieving, that murder is murder, in all places and ages; that no book was ever Divine enough to make a crime holy; and that in all ages and places, there has been no room in the Kingdom of God for thieves, or liars, or murderers! Teach them that the Bible is the moral word of God, just to the extent that it bears vital witness to the moral words, the life, the character, of Jesus Christ.

Teach them that the Bible worshiper may be an utter pagan, that the Christ-follower is the only Christian.