

TORCH OF REASON.



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

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Who Doth Hear?

A PRAYER from someone's breaking heart, entreating
A cherished life, is raised to "him on high":
"I fear, Lord, that my loved one's life is fleeting;
Hear me this time; O do not let him die!"
The moments speed, and even draws the curtain
About a corpse and one whose faith sincere
Says, still and ever: "He will live I'm certain;
I've prayed to God for him I hold most dear,
And God doth hear!"
Behold one longing day by day for pardon
From that dread Judge Fear's eyes discern above—
A Judge whose heart at wails of woe may harden,
Or may be moved to pity and to love;
Now, calm in confidence and high elation,
The "culprit" looks aloft and knows no fear;
Anon he cries: "Is there for me salvation?
Pardon me, Lord, and make thy pardon clear!"
But none doth hear!
Poor human wrecks are day by day beseeching
The Lord to give them joy and life again;
And trembling hands feel for those hands far-reaching
Of him who stoops to mortals in their pain.
Each mournful plaint upon the air is wasted,
No Hand from heaven to earth doth e'er appear;
And none that "living water" ever tasted
Which still the Christian craves with sigh and tear—
No God doth hear.
There is no God, or none who heeds the placing
Of sorrow, joy and love in mortals' lives;
Of no avail ourselves in dust abasing—
The battle is to him who nobly strives.
Man is man's savior! All the god-host banish!
Let but the hand of one true friend be near
To grip in hours of darkness, troubles vanish:
A brother's all we need when life is dear,
For HE doth hear!
—[JOHN YOUNG.]

Religion a Resort for Sin.

I AM not entirely sure this will hold in every instance, but it seemstrue in the main. Please think it out for yourself, and if I am wrong put me straight.
The proposition is this: The Artist needs no religion beyond his work. This is to say, art is religion to the man who thinks beauti-

ful thoughts and expresses them for others the best he can.

Religion is an emotional excitement whereby the devotee rises into a state of spiritual sublimity, and for the moment is bathed in an atmosphere of rest, and peace, and love. All normal men and women crave such periods; and Bernard Shaw says we reach them through strong tea, tobacco, opium, whiskey, art or religion.

Our idea of the supreme being is suggested to us by the political government under which we live. Carlyle summed up the situation when he said that Deity to the average British mind was simply an infinite George the Fourth. The thought of God as a terrible Supreme Tyrant first found form in an unlimited monarchy; but as governments have become more lenient so have the gods, until you get them down (or up) to a republic, where God is only a President and we all approach him in familiar prayer, on an absolute equality.

Then soon, for the first time, we find man saying, "I am God, and you are God, and we are all simply particles of him," and this is where the President is done away with, and the Referendum comes in. But the absence of a supreme governing head implies simplicity, honesty, justice and sincerity. Wherever plottings, schemings, and doubtful methods of life are employed, a ruler is necessary; and there, too, religion, with its thought of placating God, has a firm hold. Men whose lives are doubtful want a strong government and a hot religion.

Formal religion and sin go hand in hand.

Formal religion and slavery go hand in hand.

Formal religion and tyranny go hand in hand.

Formal religion and ignorance go hand in hand.

And sin, slavery, tyranny, and ignorance are one—they are never separated.

Formal religion is a scheme whereby man hopes to make peace with his maker; and formal religion also tends to satisfy the sense of sublimity where the man has failed to find satisfaction in his work. Voltaire says, "When woman no longer finds herself acceptable to man she turns to God." When man is no longer acceptable to himself he goes to church. In order to keep this article from extending into a tome, I have purposely omitted saying anything

about the Protestant church as a useful social club, and have just assumed for argument's sake, that the church is a religious institution.

Formalized religion is strongest where sin, slavery, tyranny, and ignorance abound.

Where men are free, enlightened, and at work they find all the gratification in their work that their souls demand—they cease to hunt outside of themselves for something to give them rest. They are at peace with themselves, with man and with God.

But any man chained to a hopeless task, whose daily work does not express himself, who is dogged by a boss, whenever he gets a moment of respite turns to drink or religion.

Men with an eye to Saturday night, who plot to supplant some one else, who can locate their employer any hour of the day, who think of the summer vacation when they will no longer have to work, are apt to be sticklers in the Sabbath-keeping and church-going.

Many men in business who give eleven for a dozen, count thirty-four inches a yard, who are quick to foreclose a mortgage, and who say, "Business is business," are church deacons, vestrymen and church trustees. Look around you! Predacious real estate dealers who set nets for the unwary, lawyers who lie in wait for their prey, merchant princes, who grind their clerks under the wheel, oil magnates whose history never is written or can be written, often make peace with God, and find a gratification for their sense of sublimity by building churches, founding colleges and libraries, and holding fast to a formalized religion. Look around you!

Great sinners are apt to be very religious, and conversely the best men who have ever lived have been at war with established religions. And further, the best men are never found in churches.

Men deeply immersed in their work, whose lives are consecrated to doing things, who are simple, honest and sincere, want no formal religion, need no priest or pastor, and seek no gratification outside their daily lives. All they ask is to be let alone; they wish only the privilege to work.

When Samuel Johnson on his deathbed, made Joshua Reynolds promise he would work no more on Sunday, he of course had no conception of the truth that Reynolds

reached, through work, the same condition of mind that he, Johnson, had reached by going to church. Johnson hated work; Reynolds loved it. Johnson considered one day in the week holy; to Reynolds all days were sacred—sacred to work, that is, to the expression of his best.

Why should you cease to express your highest and holiest on Sunday? Ah, I know why you do not work on Sunday! It is because you think work is degrading, and because your barter and sale is founded on fraud, and your goods are shoddy. Your week-day dealings lie like a pall upon your conscience and you need a day to throw off your weariness of slavery under which you exist. You are not free, and you insist that others shall not be free.

You have ceased to make your work glad, and you toil and make others toil with you, and you all well nigh faint from weariness and disgust. You are slave and slave-owner, for to own slaves is to be one.

Do not hesitate to work on Sunday, just as you would think good thoughts, if the spirit prompts you; for work is, at the last, only the expression of thought, and good work is religion.—[The Philistine.]

Present Status of Cannibalism.

ARE all the cannibals dead? In these days when darkest Africa has seen the dawn, and civilization is exploring the remotest corners of the world, we might suppose that they were at least dying out. Yet trustworthy authors have estimated the number of cannibals at the present day at more than two millions. Dr. Zaborowski, a learned Polish anthropologist, has recently published some interesting and valuable details regarding these savage people, which are thus summarized in *La Science Francaise*:

"Anthropophagy is not primitive. Man did not venture to feed on his own species except under compulsion of absolute necessity, when famine and the desire for animal food pushed him to the last extremity. A body of hunters, for instance, in pursuit of an animal, at a time when it is hard to find game, meets another party. Impelled by hunger, they begin to fight, and the bodies of the vanquished take the place of the absent animal victims. In some such way cannibalism originated. Moreover,