

interrupted work, to acquire unlimited knowledge, to solve perplexing mysteries—in a word, to love and learn and enjoy forever and ever.

Whether all this is to be our privilege we do not, and cannot know; only this is certain, that our help is needed in this world at present, while, as regards the future, good work here is the best preparation for complete fruition hereafter.

So long as human beings live and suffer and enjoy in this, the only world open to our present knowledge, the BROTHERHOOD OF MAN will be the highest possible ideal, and the effort to realize that ideal will be the noblest and most satisfactory occupation of every individual intelligence. The end can be attained only by learning and obeying the eternal laws of nature, as these are demonstrated through the discoveries of Science.—“The Christ Myth.”

### Man More Merciful Than His God.

This Texas Tornado was a terrible affair. Whole towns have been wiped out. Miles of country have been devastated. Hundred of vessels have been wrecked. Thousands of houses have been destroyed. A multitude of people have been ruined. Men have perished in hundreds. Women with children in their arms have been drowned or crushed to death. The very graves have been turned up, and the buried corpses swept out to sea. Darkness completed the terror of the scene, and the most superstitious may well have thought that the Day of Judgment was at hand. The damage amounts to millions of pounds. But what is that beside the horror, the agony, the sufferings of the killed, and the awful misery of many of the survivors who move about in a strange world without wife or child or friend? This is the worst bitterness of such a catastrophe.

“A hospital was blown down” at Galveston. Of course it was. How could it be expected to withstand the storm? But that hospital was presumably full of the sick and perhaps the dying. One would think that providence might have made an exception in this case. Hospitals are not to be fired on in besieged cities; but when providence lets loose the artillery of heaven, nothing is sacred; everything is overwhelmed in a blind fury.

We read that doctors made heroic efforts to help the injured; that the surviving citizens strove to save their fellow men and women, and that the sympathy of America is hastening to the relief of the homeless and destitute. All that is good. It gives a happy thrill to every tender heart. But does it not show that man is more merciful than his God?—[Freethinker.

### The Belief in God not Innate.

The belief in God has often been advanced as not only the greatest, but the most complete of all the distinctions of man and the lower animals. It is, however, impossible, as we have seen, to maintain that this belief is innate or instinctive in man. On the other hand, a belief in all-pervading spiritual agencies seems to be universal, and apparently follows from a considerable advance in man's reason, and from a still greater advance in his faculties of imagination, curiosity and wonder. I am aware that the assumed instinctive belief in God has been used by many persons as an argument for his existence. But this is a rash argument, as we should thus be compelled to believe in the existence of many cruel and malignant spirits, only a little more powerful than man, for the belief in them is far more general than in a beneficent deity. The idea of a universal and beneficent creator does not seem to arise in the mind of man until he has been elevated by long-continued culture.

He who believes in the advancement of man from some low organized form will naturally ask, “How does this bear on the belief in the immortality of the soul?” The barbarous races of man, as Sir J. Lubbock has shown, possess no clear belief of this kind, but arguments derived from the primeval beliefs of savages are, as we have just seen, of little or no avail. Few persons feel any anxiety from the impossibility of determining at what precise period in the development of the individual, from the first trace of a minute germinal vesicle, man becomes an immortal being; and there is no greater cause for anxiety because the period cannot possibly be determined in the gradually ascending organic scale.

I am aware that the conclusions arrived at in this work [The Descent of Man] will be denounced by some as highly irreligious, but he who denounces them is bound to show why it is more irreligious to explain the origin of man as a distinct species by descent from some lower form, through the laws of variation and natural selection, than to explain the birth of the individual through the laws of ordinary reproduction. The birth, both of the species and of the individual, are equally parts of that grand sequence of events which our minds refuse to accept as the result of blind chance. The understanding revolts at such a conclusion, whether or not we are able to believe that every slight variation of structure, the union of each pair in marriage, the dissemination of each seed, and other such events have all been ordained for some special purpose.—[Darwin.

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