



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

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THE GIFTS.

CHARLOT M. HALL.

THERE were three gifts at eventide the West Wind brought to me,
That I might choose for joy or use my fate from out the three:
"Now here is gold," the West Wind saith, "and fair it is to see;
Who chooseth gold hath power to hold; men serve him loyally."

"A prince he is," the West Wind saith, "I know the hidden mine;
Shalt guide thee now o'er fire and snow to where the ingots shine?"
"Nay, then, who hath the yellow gold hath trouble at his back;
Whose needs are few, whose heart is true, what knoweth he of lack?"

"But here is Love," the West Wind saith, "the light of life is he;
Wilt bid him now to crown thy brow with myrtle greenery?
He sets the pace that young feet dance and leads with lute and bow;
Take thou his hand and through the land with him till curfew go."

"Nay, then, for he who seeketh Love finds but an empty nest;
Love cometh still of his own will, unsought, and that is best."
Then one spake out full loud and clear: "Now I am Work," said he;
"And they who hold nor love nor gold have need of mine and me."

"Wilt follow, follow, where I lead?" his voice rang free and strong;
"Here's hope and cheer for all the year; here's balm for every wrong."
"Yea, I am fain to follow thee; thou speakest like a king;"
"Then shalt thou see, if true thou be, THE OTHER GIFTS I BRING."

—[From Success.

BIBLE ILLUSIONS.*

Other Religions.

BY ROBERT G. INGERSOLL.

WE must remember that ours is not the only religion. Man has in all ages endeavored to answer the great questions Whence? and Whither? He has endeavored to read his destiny in the stars, to pluck the secret of his existence from the night. He has questioned the specters of his own imagination. He has explored the mysterious avenues of dreams. He has peopled the heavens with spirits. He has mistaken his visions for realities. In the twilight of ignorance he has mistaken shadows for gods. In all ages he has been the slave of misery, the dupe of superstition and the fool of hope. He has suffered and aspired.

Religion is a thing of growth, of development. As we advance we throw aside the grosser and absurder forms of faith—practically at first by ceasing to observe them, and lastly, by denying them altogether. Every church necessarily by its constitution endeavors to prevent this natural growth or development. What has happened to other religions must happen to ours. Ours is not superior to many that have passed, or are passing away. Other religions have been lived for and

*These plain Bible facts from Ingersoll are not to be had except in the Seventh Volume of the Dresden Edition. We will print them in parts—each part reads as a whole. We do this because until the people are emancipated from the Catholic Church, the Protestant Bible, and the belief in "the supernatural," there is no hope for this world.—ED. T.

died for by men as noble as ours can boast. Their dogmas and doctrines have, to say the least, been as reasonable, as full of spiritual grandeur, as ours.

Man has had beautiful thoughts. Man has tried to solve these questions in all the countries of the world, and I respect all such men and women, but let me tell you one little thing. I want to show you that in other countries there is something.

The Parsee sect of Persia say: A Persian saint ascended the three stairs that lead to heaven's gate, and knocked; a voice said, "Who is there?" "Thy servant, O God!" But the gates would not open. For seven years he did every act of kindness; again he came, and the voice said, "Who is there?" And he replied, "Thy slave, O God!" Yet the gates were shut. Yet seven other years of kindness, and the man again knocked; and the voice cried and said, "Who is there?" "Thyself, O God!" And the gates wide open flew.

I say there is no more beautiful Christian poem than this.

A Persian after having read our religion, with its frightful descriptions of perdition, wrote these words: "Two angels flying out from the blissful city of God—the angel of love and the angel of pity—hovered over the eternal pit where suffered the captives of hell. One smile of love illumined the darkness and one tear of pity extinguished all the fires." Has orthodoxy produced anything as generously beautiful as this? Let me read you this: Sectarians, hear this: Believers in eternal damnation, hear this: Clergy

of America who expect to have your happiness in heaven increased by seeing me burning in hell, hear this:

This is the prayer of the Brahmins—a prayer that has trembled from human lips toward heaven for more than four thousand years:

"Never will I seek or receive private individual salvation. Never will I enter into final bliss alone. But forever and everywhere will I labor and strive for the final redemption of every creature throughout all worlds, and until all are redeemed. Never will I wrongly leave this world to sin, sorrow and struggle, but will remain and work and suffer where I am."

Has the orthodox religion produced a prayer like this? See the infinite charity, not only for every soul in this world, but of all the shining worlds of the universe. Think of that, ye parsons who imagine that a large majority are going to eternal ruin.

Compare it with the sermons of Jonathan Edwards, and compare it with the imprecation of Christ: "Depart ye cursed into everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels"; with the ideas of Jeremy Taylor, with the creeds of Christendom, with all the prayers of all the saints, and in no church except the Universalist will you hear a prayer like this.

"When thou art in doubt as to whether an action is good or bad, abstain from it."

Since the days of Zoroaster has there been any rule for human conduct given superior to this?

Are the principles taught by us superior to those taught by Confucius? He was asked if there was any single word comprising the duties of man. He replied, "Reciprocity." Upon being asked what he thought of the doctrine of returning benefits for injuries, he replied, "That is not my doctrine. If you return benefits for injuries what do you propose for benefits? My doctrine is: For benefits return benefits; for injuries return justice without any admixture of revenge."

To return good for evil is to pay a premium upon wickedness. I cannot put a man under obligation to do me a favor by doing him an injury.

It does seem to me that if I were a Christian, and really thought my fellow-man was going down to the bottomless pit; that he was going to misery and agony forever, it does seem to me that I would try and save him.—[Ingersoll.

SOCIOLOGY—

Unstable and Stable Civilizations.

BY F. H. GIDDINGS, PROFESSOR OF SOCIOLOGY IN COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY.

(From "Elements of Sociology.")

CONQUEST has not always ended when political integration has gone to the limit of absorbing those weaker states territorially adjacent to the conquering power, and are in their population and social forms fit to become component societies in a larger national state. In history ambition has repeatedly overleaped its proper bounds, and visions of universal empire have arisen before the eyes of powerful monarchs. Egypt, Babylon, Nineveh, Macedonia, Rome, Carthage, and again Rome, one after the other, undertook to conquer the world. Distant peoples that never could be an integral part of the conquering nation were subjugated in mere wantonness of power. While all such conquests were destined to result in ultimate failure, they had for the time being certain good consequences for civilization. The conquered peoples were made to pay tribute to the conquerors, whose capital cities increased enormously in wealth. This wealth resulted in marvelous material splendor, and in a high development of art in its first rude forms of architecture, sculpture and painting.

The early civilizations, including that of the Roman Empire, were essentially unstable because their fabulous and magnificent wealth was a continual temptation to the barbarians of the outer world who, after incursions for thousands of years into the valleys of the Nile and the Euphrates, into the Grecian Peninsula, and into Italy, finally overwhelmed the Roman Empire.

But the Germanic nations, simultaneously prepared for civilization by their own inherent development and by their long contact with Rome, entered upon political evolution under precisely the opposite conditions. They simultaneously grew into statehood in an environment of civilization which, for ages, had lain between them and the more remote barbarism of central Africa and central Asia; and on the partial ruins of the western extension of that civilization they built. Protected thus in great measure from the danger of barbarian invasion, a danger which only twice in the history of Europe has become imminent,—once when the