

The **INDEPENDENT THINKER**

HENRY FRANK *Editor*

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The Anti-Vice Crusade

"The Eternal 'I Am,'" (Concluded) *Lecture*

A Tilt with Mr. Pentecost

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The Independent Thinker.

HENRY FRANK, EDITOR.

Vol. II.

FEBRUARY, 1901.

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THE ANTI-VICE CRUSADE.

Every good citizen of course rejoices in the uprising of the conscience and culture of the Metropolis against the recrudescence of its social vice and iniquity. Everybody hopes that this will not prove to be a mere momentary spasm, but an organized effort which will bear fruit for many years to come. But whether it will or no all depends upon how much sincerity and determination may exist in the hearts of its sponsors. Not only will it depend upon their sincerity, but as well and even more upon their discernment of economic principles which underlie and occasion the offensive exhibition of crime that daily confronts us.

The mere suppression of vice, in and of itself, is but to increase vice. The vicious are produced by some natural cause, as are diseases in the human system and disastrous cataclysms in the world. To remove the symptom is but to conceal the cause and deepen the mystery of the disease. The true physician strikes at the taproot of the trouble and eradicates the ramifying germs and microbes which infest the body. In this manner only can Social Disease be eradicated; and if Reform pauses at mere political or partisan parleying, seeking to foist the blame of iniquities upon current administrations of power or individually responsible officers, it will prove to be but a tempest in a teapot and a laughing stock for vulgar ridicule.

What is the real cause for the existing Social iniquity in the "Submerged Tenth," not only of our own city, but of every great city both on this and the European continent? The very fact that this Iniquity cannot be localized; is not complexioned by race or climate; exists as well in Tokio as in London, in Calcutta as in New York or Chicago, demonstrates that it is occasioned by a deep, underlying, universal Cause, which is wholly independent of politics or nationality,

corruptionists in power, or any other temporary condition. A state of woeful political corruption has been made possible by an economic force, which is wholly independent of politics and cannot be swayed by the alteration of party power or the substitution of honorable and cultured citizens in office for tough-skinned ward-heelers and Bowery-bellied aldermen. Vice is rampant and the Police force corrupt, not merely because a certain party is in power or a certain gentleman who deals in race-horses wears a crown and poses as the Metropolitan King. Depose your king and hurl his hideous henchmen into oblivion, and have you even then satisfied the rigorous demands of Nature sufficiently to reap the fruits of decency and sobriety, and build a commonwealth of order and respectability? No, I answer, emphatically No. You must sway your political scalpel more intelligently; you must wield your social probe more scientifically, if you expect both to diagnose and eradicate the disease in the Body Politic which you are attacking. You must answer correctly the following questions, and establish the remedies which they imply, if you are to succeed permanently.

Why is it that the section of the city in which Vice is most rampant and offensive is where the population is so dense and compact that it astonishes the whole civilized world and has not its parallel anywhere else? In the Tenth ward of this city you have the chief culmination of the Social Evil, and precisely in this ward have you the most appalling congestion of population. Here are herded together 423,000 persons in 712 acres, or 644 individuals to a single acre of ground. Not a green spot or playground is in sight. Poverty—sordid, sullen, sodden and despairing Poverty—here crushes in his murderous grip anæmic mothers and starving sucklings, maidens blushing at the brink of womanhood, strong men gasping in desperation and orphans pleading for a crust of bread. But over against this picture what god does the Metropolis exalt and unto whom does it erect its altars? None other than the god of Money.

Mercenary ambition, bestial avariciousness, the maddening greed for gold, this is the cause for the existence on the one hand of stupendous systems of corporate wealth, and on the other the sea of misery, whose

bloody waves wash the feet of Mammon and cry eternal vengeance on his cruel power. The darkest cloud that falls as a deadly pall on Eldridge street and the Tenth Ward is not the passing shadow of the bribe-taking brass-buttoned officer, but the ominous shape that rises from the gambling counters in Wall street, and settles with sinister glee on the homes where Despair sits brooding beside the fuelless fire-side and new-made coffin. The greed that monopolizes every avenue of trade and preempts each opportunity for employment; that seizes every available plot of ground in advance of the approach of population, mortgaging the future of unborn generations and damning them to poverty before they are conceived; the uniting of numerous monetary forces into one great combination, forming an economic dynamo that will not only run all the machinery of industry, controlled by a single corporation, but will grind beneath its merciless wheels all who resist its power and cry for freedom; this is the primary, underlying cause that is poisoning the vitals of society and generating its foul diseases.

What will you do with vice when you have suppressed it? I ask this question in all candor. The very fact that you merely suppress it proves that it still continues to exist. Where will it exist? To localize it will merely emphasize it. To scatter it, will, while temporarily concealing it, spread its germs to the outmost centers of the city and corrupt its fountain head. It is not vice with which we must ultimately deal, but the CAUSE of VICE. Who will be that True Reformer who shall arise so to cleanse these modern Augean stables that the waters of social purity will be swept through them and the deep-lying moral microbes be overpowered, not with foolish force, but with such principles of truth as are irresistible? Not till that Reformer shall arise to sway the intelligence, culture, and common sense of our city will permanent results be achieved. Not till the murderous grip of corporate wealth is thrust from our throats; not till we shall cease to fear and worship the money power; not till corruptionist-wealth shall be banished to social honor and political preferment; not till every worthy man is rightfully employed and given an honest chance to make an honest living; not till the commonest home shall become a sacred

shrine where domestic purity may be worshipped and proudly scorn the Tempter's touch, unmenaced by the bitter grimace of penury or starvation's bony clutch ; not till such Economic Paradise shall have been established shall we hope to banish the Banquo's ghost of Social Shame that rises to rebuke and curse the laws and customs which we endure, and the stigmatizing system which we uphold.

THE ETERNAL "I AM."

(Continued from January Number.)

Once more, then, I say, "I Am" is the seat of freedom. For only as man possesses the consciousness of the Universal Life, and realizes that he is but as a shadow on the earth, carried along by some spiritual influence, and that the shadow shall pass away some time, but the influence shall always remain, does he realize his freedom—realize that he makes his own career according to the same law that shapes the stars and orders the events of time. For that is truly free which operates unhindered within the plane of its own being.

Back of everything that we see and feel and hear, there is the eternal, the resistless, the indestructible energy. That is the energy of life, being and intelligence ; the energy that acts as the matrix from which the phenomenal universe is born. Temporarily we live in the phenomenal universe, but finally and forever our being abides in the imperturbable and permanent essence of Nature, which is without shadow or variableness of turning. We are always being born outwardly into temporary relations and conditions, but we are also always drawn back inwardly into the infinite and all-compassing intelligence, wisdom and love of the Eternal.

So, my friends, I am not the little body that I seem to be,—this combination of bone and blood and nerve and cell ; but I am that something within it all that has made possible this bone and blood, these nerves and cells.

I am from eternity to eternity ; I am divine, immortal and infinite ; for my outward presence is but the temporary expression, in charac-

teristic form, of the presistent presence which in some manner reveals itself in all things.

Hence we are not necessarily limited to the humdrum lives which seem to be forced upon us. Let me but realize that I have wings with which to soar above the dull atmosphere of earth and what care I how foul the stench be in the lower depths?

But have I not wings with which to ascend? I at least have feet, and with these can climb to yon golden height, mantled with an atmosphere of purest air. And though I have not wings with which to fly, nor feet strong enough to clamber to so lofty a height, this much I have: Fancy, with which to people the dream world of my soul as imagination builds the structure of my hope and proud ambition. I can test the large possibilities of my inner nature which ever well within me crying aloud, "Arise! Arise thou that art fallen! Awake, thou that art asleep!" But while one is imbedded in the clayey cell of the human body, ever conscious of its limitation and confinement, one is not free—one knows not whither the wings of aspiration fain would waft him. Soar aloft! Soar aloft! Walk where the stars are lamps to your feet and where the winds of heaven make everlasting music to your soul.

Again, the "I Am" is the Seat of Truth; therefore, "I Am" is the Truth. The "I Am" is the inward witness to the soul of its own verity and immortality. That which is myself must be perfectly *myself*. I cannot be partly myself and partly another; I cannot be yes and no, myself and not myself; at the self-same moment of time I am always myself, and therefore always perfectly myself. But if always perfectly myself, then I can never be less than myself. I may not always be consciously perfect, for I may not always be perfectly conscious of myself. But however limited be my discernment of myself, that limitation does not qualify my essential self. I do not see all of the sun at any one moment of time, nevertheless the sun is always the sun, and is never less than itself. So, though I may not always know myself, that does not qualify the fact that I am always perfectly myself.

In that which is perfectly myself there can be no denial or contradiction of myself. There I dwell, there I am ever one—the same yesterday, to-day, and forever.

And this in reality is what is meant by the fundamental declaration of an ancient philosophy which disports itself to-day under the modern garb of so-called Christian Science.

When this cult proclaims "There is no lie; all is truth," it means that in the ultimate constitution and essential character of Nature there can be no contradiction, antagonism or inconsistency.

All is One, and that One is ever self-same and invisible. In that ultimate Being there is no lie, no evil; all is truth, harmony, holiness. But as man in reality is always self-same and unchangeable, in him there is no lie, contradiction or disharmony.

Thus Christian Science, with all its bigotry, ignorance and crudity, popularizes a conception old as the reason of man—taught long ago in Indian, Egyptian, Greek and Hebrew philosophy and religion—but always with a certain reserve which held it aloof from the masses.

Christian Science has thrown the pearl to the multitude, but in doing so has befouled it with much insincerity, pious pretense and silly hypocrisy.

The fundamental statement of Life and Being which this cult teaches is scientific, true, and hence incontrovertible. But the application of these principles, the pretense that they are specially delivered messages from some divine source to the founder of that sect, and the extravagant and unseemly claims which are made for their practical uses, all this is nonsensical and fallacious.

This much is true: he who can realize the stupendous fact that the "I Am" is a potent and creative energy embodied in the latent forces of each human being, which may by proper practice be called into activity—producing marvellous results in the life, health and character of an individual—possesses the real secret of nature and the key to all knowledge.

As a last thought I would impress upon you that the soul is always young. "Before Abraham was I am." That is, the everlasting soul—the all present I AM—the indwelling, unchangeable and all-pervading

Intelligence of Being, is now, has been, and ever will be. The Eternal Now knows no past, no future; hence it never counts its periods in points of time; it is never old, never fatigued, never exhausted. It is always young, vigorous and fresh. Within the Eternal I Am there abides unfading youth.

How often, when I have stood beside the coffin lid which forever shuts out the earthly vision of some departed friend, how often do I ask myself whether he, who mayhap in earth-time was 70 or 80 years of age, was really old—old in soul, in the interior, ethereal, undiscovered self.

When one passes from this life, if he continues to exist, does he go with a consciousness of age or of youth? Does he go with the bent and broken spirit of a decrepit old man or with the alert and daring spirit of aggressive youth?

If the soul continues to live after death it must have the same consciousness, the same faculty of constructive reason which it possesses when in the body. Now, pause a moment and examine yourself. Have you ever caught yourself asleep or exhausted in your deepest, inmost nature?

Is there a man or a woman who in his soul of souls feels old? Have you ever been so sick, so exhausted and depleted with fever or starvation, but you could still freely and joyously commune with yourself—"loafe with your soul"—in secret and exalted realms whither no one would suspect you of roaming?

Who has not recognized his double self, even when devoured by the flames of a ravishing fever? While you groan and writhe in the consciousness of pain, still you are ever dreaming and communing with that "other self," which stands near by to paint rapt visions of beauty upon the dream cameras of your Mind—to sing to you in strains of unwonted melody, and to carry you away on the bosom of some lethean stream that wafts you towards Oblivion!

At first thought you will deny this statement, for you have not yet sufficiently analyzed your experience. You will say: "Oh, no; such is not my experience; for when I was a child I was not constantly aware of this wretched rheumatic shoulder and of these old

withered bones, which are now so brittle they crack at every turn of a muscle, scrape between my jaws as I chew my food, and cause my weary body to drag out a tedious existence. Surely, I have lost the symmetrical contour of my youthful figure, the elastic buoyancy of my step, and I am now, indeed, a bowed and bent old soul. I do not hear as keenly as I once did; the tears of life's disappointments have so deluged me I am sodden with grief and pain. O, yes; I *am* old."

But for a moment, my friend, refrain from thinking of your rheumatic shoulder and your cracking bones and tearful eyes, and think instantly of YOURSELF. Can you deny that in your self of selves, in your deep, interior consciousness, you are not to-day just as young as ever you were? Are you not there again a little boy, playing marbles with your fellows, or a little girl cutting doll babies out of colored paper? Can you deny that to-day you are as young as ever in thought, in spirit, in the power to create dream-forms, or to spur ambition from its lair and force it into creative activity? Ay, physical infirmities weigh heavily upon you and you think your spiritual powers are exhausted, and yet if but for a moment you forget your infirmities, release your consciousness of the burden of the flesh, you are again fighting the old battles as vigorously as ever, devising schemes and intrigues for ambitious sport, and mustering men to your service and instruments to your uses, as eagerly, intently and successfully as ever you did when your physical capacities were in full force. But now you are acting out the scenes again with your mind force, which is as keen, as young and virile as ever in your youthful days.

And still another complains: "No, no; I am not as I once was, for when I first looked upon life it was so full of poetry and the rapt visions of beauty. Everywhere I saw sunbeams playing in the mellow atmosphere. All was joy and jubilation—each step bound with buoyant and elastic energy. But to-day it is not so, for despair has laid its cold hand upon my heart, and disappointment, sorrow and tribulation have been my lot. This is a hard, disagreeable, detestable world. It is filled with selfish and ungrateful people who worship the unholy god of gold, and stand ever ready to throttle their more fortunate neighbors and rob them of the property they covet.

I hate this world—this world which once in my childhood I loved so much—because my experience with evil, ingratitude and avariciousness has transformed it, in my imagination, from an angel robed in light to a monster reeking with venom, and buried in unremitting gloom."

But I say to you, my friend, when you speak so, you belie your deeper self. What you consider your real experience is but a momentary shadow flitting across the sunny depths of your diviner nature.

If, perchance, you are a thinker—one endowed to lead the thoughts and purposes of other men—consider those rare movements when you penetrate the radiant centre of your being. At such moments, absorbed at your desk, your mind pours a tempestuous stream of ideas through the point of your pen, till you feel all consumed with some divine afflatus. Or if, perchance, you are too feeble to write your thoughts on paper, nevertheless they throb within your brain and thrill your being with resistless fervor.

Tell me, are you not in spirit just as young at such moments as ever you were in the days of youthful abandon?

But you who sing such jeremiads have not yet attained that altitude of self-consciousness where you realize your freedom from all relations, and your independence. Stand alone. Understand that there is but One in all the world who will never disappoint you—one who will never desert or fail you—one whose cheer will always encourage and whose hope will inspire—and that one is none other than YOURSELF.

Many of us have never yet found a true friend, because we have never been true to *ourselves*. We have never proven the indestructible stability of friendship, because we have never honestly and fearlessly befriended ourselves. We have concealed and apologized for ourself, spoken of it with shame and timidity, as if it were a disgrace and worthy of condemnation, fearing if the world discovered it we would be rejected from among the counsels of men and ostracized from society.

Yet, not until we take this real and ever-present self as our friend, counsellor, guide and inspirer, and trust it without hesitancy or trepida-

tion, will we ever attain the triumph of inward peace or that outward grace that can command the world.

We always know but ourself and never anybody else. Nevertheless, we are always belieing and disgracing ourself, treating it as our devil rather than our God, our Nemesis rather than our good angel.

Seek that inner temple where YOU abide and drink there from the fountain of eternal wisdom.

Then you will always act to please *yourself*, and when you so act you cannot but please others with the good you do. Then you will do good for the sake of good. You will not look for outward reward, for your reward will be in the inward joy which comes from the knowledge of obeying the soul's commands. Then the world can have for you no enemies, no ingrates, no disappointments, no pain, no despair. It will be everlasting happiness and unclouded day.

When one feels one's supreme independence—having learned the folly of leaning upon others, whether mother, father, wife or sweetheart—then one first learns true liberty and the confidence that causes the stream of life to flow peacefully as a dream of Paradise. Then one learns the occult meaning of those perplexing words of Jesus: "He that loveth father or mother more than Me is not worthy of Me; and he that loveth son or daughter more than Me is not worthy of Me."

If you make this "Me" refer to the Palestinian Jesus, such teaching is abominable. But if this "Me" refers to the "I Am"—the divinity within us, the Eternal Self which is our only stay and staff in life and the secret source of all wisdom—then his words become a revelation and life takes on a new meaning. For the greatest friend one can find to gladden companionship with sympathy, the dearest child to twine about one's heart-strings, the darlingest mother that ever shed tears of joy over you is YOURSELF—that unseen, divine father-mother principle of Being which is the only source of strength and the true Savior of every individual.

Knowing this, each soul is sublimely self-sufficient and independent. Knowing this, no wayward child can draw the pall of gloom on one's career; no thieving business partner can drive the innocent to suicide;

no loveless wife or heartless husband can bring to each other mutual despair; no bubbling mouth of hell will roar for us at the end of life's pilgrimage, and no jeremiad will escape our lips to sadden others or begloom our path.

Be yourself. Be strong, self-reliant and resolutely fearless. Stand for your convictions, pursue the ambitions your inward heart determines, then none shall be blamed for your falling but yourself, and none but you receive the meed of your own merit.

Then will you sing "I am ever a child immortal, and lean upon the bosom of the Eternal. I am ever the Youth of the Universe, the Yearling of God; and, nestling within that bosom, I feel the throbings of the divine life, I hear whisperings of the immortal voice. I know that nothing can dislodge me, nothing deluge me, nothing destroy, because my conscious self declares I am immortal, I am divine. Ever am I young with God, and God is ever young with me."

CHATS VIS-A-VIS.

Sister Elizabeth Accepts the Salutation.

Your books are GOOD and I'll give them a GOOD notice in next "Nautilus." January issue is too full for utterance and I couldn't squeeze in your notice.

Thank you for that GOOD send-off you gave me. And also Helen! Say, dearie, you are a credit to "advance thought." Your mind is not only "purely metaphysical" but joshy, too! I like the combination! And wish you a Happy Xmas and a New Year full of Success and Fun.
Holyoke, Mass. ELIZABETH TOWNE.

Mr. Pentecost and the Editor Discuss Morality.

Recently Mr. H. O. Pentecost, at my invitation, delivered a lecture to the members of the Independent Church on "Compensation." It was a very interesting and quite extraordinary lecture. It resulted in a correspondence between the lecturer and myself, which, I think, will

prove sufficiently edifying for publication. I took issue with Mr. Pentecost as follows :

MY DEAR PENTECOST :

If the world is at each stage of its existence right, as it is, then at every period of its existence it must, of course, always be right. If, therefore, the world is always right, then there is no necessity for anybody to exercise himself through thought or work in trying to alter its condition. As you said, slavery would have been abolished had it not been for Wendell Philips, Joshua Giddings and the rest, who threw themselves into the breach. Therefore, as in time all conditions will be properly adjusted without the interference of human forces, necessarily it is needless for such forces to be put into operation. Why, then, do you, for instance, exercise yourself in trying to put the world aright, as you admit you are, if the world will get all right anyway without your assistance ?

Why do you educate, agitate, instruct and lead those who are willing to follow you towards some ulterior, moral or social end, if, after all, they will all get there just the same ? In short, it seems to me that where you miss in the application of your philosophy is this, that you do not separate between a *momentary* right and an ideal or *ulterior* right. Right and wrong, of course, are only relative terms, and they are always relative to that standard by which we judge them. Everything is right which is properly adjusted to the ends for which it was intended. If I desire to cut a piece of wood into a square block, and cut it exactly square, then my act is right ; but if I cut it awry, then my act is wrong. Now the right and wrong of that act is judged merely by the end in view in whittling the block. So in society and in individual lives there is right and wrong only from the point of view of that standard of character and social status by which we judge individual acts and social conditions. The very fact that *we can see a standard beyond the present standard* which is in vogue enables us to see that certain acts of individuals and certain conditions are not right. They are right for the time being because they are adjusted to the only ends which we consider in the present necessary condition of the world.

But they are wrong with reference to that *possible end in view* which we conceive as the higher standard and which we think humanity is capable of attaining.

Hence, while it may be right to say that every act of individuals and the social conditions are all as they must be at the present moment of the world—and, according to that standard, they are right—yet because it is possible for such acts and conditions to be judged from the point of view of a higher possible standard, we say that they are wrong with reference to such ulterior standard, and thus justify ourselves in trying to teach the world what that standard is. Here is the excuse for the existence of moral reformers and agitators who merely insist that the world is wrong in not striving to achieve its highest possibilities, although at the same time they admit that, with reference to present standards and conditions, the world is right as it is. This interpretation also admits of a place for responsibility in morals, whereas yours, I fear, does not. Now, you say that the prostitute, or criminal of any character, is just as good as the best of men and women, because those criminals are simply carrying out the natural conduct of their characters, and could not live any other lives than just those that they do; and that they do live out those characters because they want to be such characters, and if they did not want to be such they would not be. Now the weakness in this position, in my judgment, is this:

Judged by the standard of human possibilities, there is a great difference in the moral judgment we put upon the criminal and the righteous man. The criminal, we admit, is as he must be for the time being, and, according to his end in view and standard of judgment, he is right; that is, his character, as shaped by antecedent forces, has so adjusted him to his environment that he is satisfying the demands of such environment. And as anything or anybody is right, according as it or he is properly adjusted to his ends, so in that way the criminal is right and just as good as the righteous person, because he follows the demands of his character as does the righteous one. Now, if we stop right there all ground of moral responsibility ceases, for we simply say to the criminal, "You are what you want to be, and you want to be what you are, because your character (the crystalization of past forces)

makes you want to be that." And we say the same to the righteous person. Hence, as the righteous person is living out merely the established forces of his character and the criminal is doing the same thing, we are forced to admit that both are equally good.

But, if now we say that when the criminal is asked to look at his life from the standard of the righteous man, and to understand that he has the possibilities in his own character of developing his own life to the character of the righteous man, then we lift him to the higher standard and enable him to judge of his *present character as wrong in the light of his possible character*. Here is the whole ground of moral responsibility. There is a sense of duty lying upon those who have attained higher perceptions and standards of life; that duty is to undertake to help those who have developed only to lower standards to see higher ones; so that by seeing them they shall judge their present characters and conduct accordingly, and becoming dissatisfied with them shall seek for the higher attainments.

If you accept my interpretation, as above stated, you find a ground of justification for your efforts in moral reformation. But with *your* interpretation you seem to me to be hopelessly inconsistent.

To this letter, Mr. Pentecost wrote in reply as follows:

MY DEAR FRANK:

It seems to me that you fail to take into consideration that the irritation set up in us by the knowledge of poverty, etc., that surrounds us is part of that which is "all right." Why do I seek to change conditions that are all right? Because what is right for to-day is not right for to-morrow, and I work for to-morrow. I do not wish to be disturbed by the sight of wretchedness to-morrow as I am to-day. The poverty of to-day is right, and my irritation at it and desire that it shall not be here to-morrow is right also.

As to your: What basis have we for moral responsibility on this theory that whatever is right, *under the circumstances*? I reply, none. I do not believe in moral responsibility. Responsibility to whom? God? Surely not. If there is a God he may be morally responsible to me as he certainly is *for* me, but not the other way. Am

I responsible to any one but God? I think not. If I am I should like to have you show me how or why.

I am bound by my constitution to seek my own peace, and if I give my body to be burned I do it only because I thus seek my own peace. "Who *for the joy* that was set before him *endured* the cross," etc.

These two points cover your questions, though meagerly, and herewith I send you my love and good wishes.

HUGH O. PENTECOST.

In one thing I was wrong. Slavery couldn't have been abolished without Garrison *et al.* This is proved by the fact that it *wasn't*.

I offered but one word in reply:

My correspondent says: "What is right to-day is wrong to-morrow," but he is irritated by the wrong of to-day. Why? Because he sees with to-morrow's eye (that is with the eye of the higher standard, mentally conceived) the wrong of what the world to-day calls right. Therefore to him it is *not* right, because he does not live in to-day but in to-morrow. In that case his dictum, "Whatever is is right," is evidently wrong, for what is right cannot be wrong, and to-day *is*—to-morrow is *not*. His own logic forces him to the conclusion that whatever is is always wrong until it becomes right.

As to "Moral Responsibility," Mr. P. is still suffering from the presence of the *theologicum microbion*. He cries, "Responsibility to whom? God?" Nay, my brother; not the God thou *fearest* but the God thou *facest*. Your responsibility is to YOURSELF. You of "to-day" are responsible to you "of to-morrow." "You are responsible to your own Ideals, to the Powers for Good and Truth that operate in and through you.

Whatever is is *never* right while it is wrong, and it becomes the duty of those who see that it is wrong to-day to make it right to-morrow. Here is the source of responsibility and the ground of duty.

Dr. J. M. Peebles never publishes anything which is unworthy of close scrutiny and investigation. He has just sent me two books, "Death Defeated, or How to Keep Young," and "Vaccination, a Curse." "Death Defeated" is a highly interesting treatise which reviews the physiological stages of life from the earliest forms, with a view to the discovery of what foods and environment are best adapted to the sustenance and prolongation of life. It is replete with occult, erudite and unique information. I heartily recommend the publication to all seekers after truth. A more startling effect will, however, be produced by his other book, "Vaccination, a Curse." This is apparently a thoroughly exhaustive treatise on the subject. It reviews the discovery of the theory of vaccination and its development from the days of Jenner to the present; shows the source of vaccine stock and its commercialized tendency in modern traffic; how vaccination fails to protect; exposes the infamies of vaccination legislation; demonstrates how incurable, fatal and appalling diseases are traceable to vaccination, and fills the book with such a startling array of information, illustrations and summary of knowledge upon the subject in hand as to make us all pause and ask whether we have not stupidly yielded to a popular tradition which has subjected us to disease, disaster and possibly physical decay. The work should be read by everybody. These books are both published at Battle Creek, Mich., by The Temple of Health Publishing Company.

"Victor Serenus," by Henry Wood [Lee & Shepard, Boston], the well-known, versatile writer, is an extraordinary novel. The scenes are cast in the times of St. Paul, and the Roman civilization of antiquity is painted with such vivid realism the reader feels himself communing with those ancient characters. Not only is the language always eloquent, the dramatic situations enjoyable and often thrilling, the *motif* of the story noble and inspiring, but the author's learning and profound thought are exhibited throughout the volume. I read this book first some years ago, just after I had finished "Quo Vadis." Suffice to say that the interest did not suffer by comparison. Everybody should read "Victor Serenus."

"Political Economy of Natural Law," by the same author and publishers, proves his versatility of thought and diction. He writes on economics as interestingly as on romance or philosophy. This work is conservative, some might say reactionary. It opposes the recently popular theories of nationalism, socialism, anarchism, etc., and seeks to prove the benefits, socially and ethically, of competition and the freedom of the individual in the opportunities of trade. In the small space allotted I cannot, of course, dilate upon his theories or discuss them. But whatever one's point of view one cannot but read this book with deep interest and to his edification. If one approaches it with preconceived notions one will run against pretty hard nuts to crack in Mr. Wood's exposition. I advise our readers interested in economic study not to overlook this work.

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