

THE
RELIGIOUS
EVOLUTIONIST

A MONTHLY MAGAZINE DEVOTED TO A
**SCIENTIFIC AND PRACTICAL
RELIGION.**

Revelation by Nature through Reason.—Salvation by Wisdom through Righteousness.

S. W. DAVIS, EDITOR.

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
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 *Temporarily, the editorial sanctum will be at No. 53 Taylor street; but all letters and papers to be sent to the editor should be addressed to either the Evolutionist or S. W. Davis, P. O. Box 289, Topeka, Kan. As soon as we can obtain a more central place for our office we will duly announce the permanent location.*

THE

RELIGIOUS EVOLUTIONIST.

SCIENTIFIC AND PRACTICAL.

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VOL. I.

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NO. 1.

INTRODUCTORY.

RIGHTEOUSNESS is the key that unlocks the gates of Heaven. Gold cannot purchase it; blood cannot redeem it when it has been lost. Each soul must work out its own salvation, and the merits of one cannot extenuate the demerits of another. The relationship of good and reward, on the one hand, and that of evil and penalty, on the other, is that of cause and effect, under immutable law. The ultimate result of both reward and penalty is the evolution of humanity. Death is not the portal of either heaven or hell. The mystic river flows through the midst of both hell and Paradise; the surest way to enter heaven on the other side is to live in heaven on this side, and the best preparation for death is life well lived. The choicest fruits in the Father's fields is that of "the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, which is in the midst of the garden," and that of "the tree of life," which is "in the midst of the street of it, and on either side of the river." (See Gen. iii, 22; Rev. xxii, 2.) As the wise husbandman despises not the compost heap and

manure pit as sources of fertilization of his fields, nor neglects the pruning hook and plow as means of promoting the growth, increasing the quantity and improving the quality of his fruits, grains and vegetables, so the wise spirit accepts Truth whencesoever it comes. The geologist may dig it up from the soils and rocks of earth; the astronomer may draw it down from the spheres of heaven; the antiquarian may uncover it where the dust of ages has concealed it; and the philosopher's logic may lasso and his profundity tame it, but the wise man who loves righteousness asks not Whence? but Whither?—accepting the good and rejecting the evil.

The foregoing brief statement of some of the fundamental principles which the EVOLUTIONIST proposes to advocate and disseminate we believe to be worthy of presentation in full as to their practical application and ultimate tendencies; hence the publication of this magazine is undertaken.

THE RELIGIOUS EVOLUTIONIST is printed from clear, new type, on good book paper, in the best style; thus producing a magazine that for typographical beauty and excellence will be creditable to any table or library. In the matter of its contents and manner of presenting its statements, editorially, the EVOLUTIONIST will contain concise and respectful criticisms of all forms of religious belief, with direct reference to their tendencies and ultimate effects upon the individual and society. Everybody, of whatever religious belief, and everybody of no definite faith, as well as everybody of "no belief," who reads it, will find this magazine a well-spring of information both interesting and valuable.

FREETHINKERS AND LIBERALS

who delight in taking broad, bold and unprejudiced views of religious subjects, and who will read this magazine, will find in it a congenial companion, and an able and active

ally in defending the State against the encroachments of Sectarianism, and against the dissemination of religious dogmas in the public schools. Investigators of Spiritualism will be interested in the fair and faithful inquiry which the EVOLUTIONIST will conduct in its attempts to answer that question of old—"If a man die, shall he live again?"

Both ancient and modern spiritual phenomena, whether those at Endor and the mount of transfiguration, at the palace of Belshazzar the king or the gathering of the faithful on the day of pentecost, as well as the modern wonders at Hydesville and thousands of other places, afford facts that are, doubtless, worthy of places in gaining a knowledge of immortality and the spiritual world.

In discussing religious doctrines and practices the new monthly will aim to be fair though firm, and earnest though calm. And the believer in the bible as literally infallible, if honest in his search for truth, may read its criticisms and explanations without feeling that his right to his own opinion is in the least questioned.

Though the EVOLUTIONIST will be unsparingly iconoclastic it will not be wholly so, nor will it be chiefly so; but its *leading feature* will be the dissemination of religious doctrines based upon scientific principles, which, when carried into practice *seven days in the week*, will constitute

A NEW RELIGION

worthy of supplanting not only the oriental and ancient religions, but also the modern systems, including both Catholic and Protestant Christianity.

The scope of the EVOLUTIONIST is indicated by the following enumeration of its departments: Editorial, Contributions, Selections, New Hymns, Correspondence, For the Children, Literary Review, Publisher's Announcements,

Advertisements of legitimate branches of business. For no consideration will it be defaced by

OBJECTIONABLE ADVERTISEMENTS of any kind; this excludes from its pages advertisements of alcoholic drinks, tobacco, quack medicines, obscene "specialists," and lotteries whether in saloons or church fairs.

Business men will understand that an advertisement in a journal that excludes all unreliable, obscene and evil-producing advertisements is a far more valuable medium than one which admits everything without discrimination. Business men, mechanics, etc., who ply respectable and useful vocations should apply for our advertising rates.

We believe that the rationalistic people of the West demand a periodical such as we are publishing; and that it will find a hearty welcome by a large number of such people. The publisher does not propose to beg for patronage, but hopes to furnish a magazine that will deserve patronage on account of its usefulness, and that will be in such demand as to bring him fair compensation for his labor. We want a fair trial; and to this end all who want a paper like the one we are now making are invited to subscribe for it,—at least for a three months' trial. The periodical above described is such as we start with: whether it will improve or not lies with the patrons of the paper. If even a fair return is made us for our labor, improvements and additions will be made from time to time.

Topeka is certainly a good location for the publication of such a magazine; and we believe that the liberal minded and enterprising citizens of the young capital of Kansas will appreciate and encourage our undertaking.

Hoping the EVOLUTIONIST will receive careful perusal by those who receive it, and that you, reader, will decide to patronize it, we are, respectfully,

THE EDITOR.

EVOLUTION OF RELIGION.

BY THE EDITOR.

RELIGION is the special endeavor to attain perfection and happiness. Or, in other words, it is the soul's aspiration to righteousness, which is the aggregate of those actions that culminate in perfection and absolute happiness. Practical religion is the maximum of good acts in conjunction with the minimum of evil acts, and contains as its characteristic element a special, intensified or predominating passion for securing that end. This intensity may co-exist with other aspirations and actions, just as in the case of a merchant who deals in flour, feed and grain, and makes a "specialty" of wheat. A man may be devoted to his farm, or other business; he may enjoy society, nature, etc.; he may love science or adore art; and yet he will be religious if to these he adds as a "specialty" the endeavor to attain to the state of righteousness. The simple endeavor without the special or predominating element constitutes morality. And this makes a plain distinction between religion and morality, which by some are considered to be identical and by others to be diametrically opposed to each other as to consequences.

No other kind of religion than that above defined is under consideration in this article.

The above definition accepted, there can be no rational objection to the application of the development theory as a means of elucidating the origin, history and tendency of religion. However, as objections are not always rational, objections of some kind may be made in this case; and to refute them and show that religion, like all other phases of

human phenomena, did not spring into existence, like our fabled father—Adam,—complete from the hands of the Creator, incapable of improvement, or of progressing except backward and downward; but that it is being evolved contemporaneously with the development of the human family; also, that it is evolved contemporaneously with the development of the individual person; and that religion varies in essence and activity at different stages of race and individual evolution.

That the maximum of good accomplished by the human family, in conjunction with the minimum of its evil actions, results in the highest degree of human perfection and happiness is almost, if not absolutely, a truism. Reflection will lead the mind to see that the perfection of humanity and its endowment with complete happiness, which conditions are inseparable, is the very highest end for which any individual, or nation, or race, can labor; and that absolute perfection and complete happiness presupposes the entire absence of either active or passive sin and consequent misery. And further: that whatever of human action or omission culminates in this state is good, and whatever detracts from it is evil. And finally, that the good and the evil are temporary conditions, real only in relation to immediate, or to comparatively immediate results, while absolutely and ultimately they are the same in their results; both are roads to the Celestial City, the one a "straight and narrow way," the other a broad and crooked road over mountains and deep chasms, rocks, rivers and morasses. Good is the kind shepherd leading his flock by promises of reward, and evil is the shepherd's faithful dog, who drives the flock forward by threats and slight punishments, but also keeps at bay the wolf of total destruction. Good is the force that draws,

evil the force that drives. This view of human evolution is the only one that can also see Justice on the throne of the Universe; the only view that can pierce the veil that covers the face of the Great First Cause and behold infinite goodness as well as omnipotence and infinite wisdom.

The chemist analyzes substances, reducing them to their proximate, and ultimately to certain simple elements. His means are as powerless to make further analyses as a film of gossamer is powerless to drag from its place in the heavens the central sun of the universe; so the religious scientist may analyze religion and arrive at certain elements which utterly resist further analysis and which he can only label "the seeds of the tree of life." From these simple and inherent statical principles are gradually evolved the complex and dynamical proximate elements of a highly developed religion. The combination of the simple elements forms the complex proximate elements of the religious code.

And thus from the speculative and theoretical we obtain only this consolation: that the beginning is inferior to the present state, and that the problem that directly concerns us is not so much regarding the origin as the destiny of religion. The practical feature of religion is to the wise man what the fruit of a tree is to a hungry botanist. It is what a straight, smooth and well made high way is to a traveler; what tools are to a mechanic, books to a student, prepared paints and brushes to an artist, discipline to a general: the best, though not the only, means of accomplishing the ends desired. The human spirit may approach perfection when the chief motive power is the lash of evil; but the rewards of good are better incentives, because they lead directly and painlessly toward it.

The farmer knows that whatever he does by way of add-

ing fertilizers, stirring the soil, or destroying of weeds, etc., that results in the largest yield of crops of the best quality is "good farming," and that whatever he does or omits to do that detracts from the quantity or good quality of his crops is "bad farming." So the wise man who cultivates the soul knows that whatever he does to perfect the quality of the spirit and increase the quantity of happiness is "goodness" and whatever he does which results oppositely is "wickedness." And, further, that the goodness of one man as compared with that of another; or of one period in a man's life as compared with that of another, constitutes a difference that is readily conceivable. The term religion is a term representing a variable phenomenon. Religion to a Jew is one thing, to a Gentile another; to a Mohammedan it is something different from what it is to a Buddhist; to a Christian it is not exactly what it is to a Rationalist. It is not the same at different stages of a man's life, or at different stages in the life of humanity. Just as art is one thing at one time and quite another at another time. Just as government varies in different countries and at different epochs of the world's history. And just as there must be one kind of government that is the best possible for a given age or people; one kind of art and architecture best adapted to a given age or people; one system of teaching the best adapted to a certain person, class of persons, race, or to the same person or race at different stages of their existence, so religion varies, and what is the best for one age, or race, or individual, or period in life, may not be the best for other ages, races, individuals or periods in life. In short as humanity varies in its elements in time, character and environments, so religion varies; and as these variations of humanity are governed by inexorable natural law in the line of gradual

evolution, so the variations of religion are governed and constitute the steps and stages in a gradual evolution.

If the evolution of humanity as a whole is progressive, the evolution of the proximate elements is also progressive ; and thus it is reasonably inferable that the evolution of religion is progressive. That in points of time, as a general rule, f subject to special variations or exceptions, the evolution o religion is from the simple, incomplete and ineffective to the more complex, complete and effective as a means of general human evolutionary progress.

A merchant may buy and sell and still be a poor mathematician. He may always, in adding up his accounts, say that thirty-seven-and-a-half added to sixty-six-and-two-thirds make 104 ; and while he would not be absolutely correct he would be approximately so. So with religion as a system of moral practice. One may err, and yet be approximately correct. Yet there is but *one* correct result of adding any two or more numbers together, and there is only *one* absolutely correct rule of religious action in any given case. Hence it is well to enquire, What are correct religious principles, and what are the *best* rules for religious practice?

Scientific minds are not satisfied with approximation to correctness. The astronomer who would be willing to undertake complex calculations without caring for accuracy of detail in every step would be everywhere considered as unscientific. The chemist who would analyze any substance and tabulate the result without setting down the tenths, hundreths and even thousandths of his unit of measure would be pronounced a mere dabbler. Thoroughness is the soul of science in every department—in investigation, in experimentation, observation and in generalization of facts. It is no less the soul of religion, in its scientific and practical phases.

As science has been evolved from mythology, so is religion being evolved from superstition. And while science has outstripped religion in progress toward perfection, it is only because it is subordinate to true religion. The superstructure is not first reared and the foundation built beneath it; the foundation is first firmly laid and the superstructure built thereon in due order. So science as a firm basis for religion has been evolved first, and the grand temple is only beginning to be added to its everlasting foundation. The laws of nature will regulate its construction, and time will pass by as a gradual and steady stream until "a building not made with hands, eternal in the heavens," "built upon a rock," and which storms nor floods can effect, shall have been evolved.

Such an exalted stage of scientific and practical religion may never be attained on earth. The earthly environments of humanity may be incompatible with such a high degree of perfection. But, if the immortality of the soul is a fact, those who have long since passed from the environments of earth to others more compatible with spiritual perfection and happiness may not only now be enjoying such a religion, but it may have been attained in those higher spheres before the earth was born.

THE spirit-world around this world of sense
Floats like an atmosphere, and everywhere
Wafts through these earthly mists and vapors dense
A vital breath of more ethereal air.

—LONGFELLOW.

Religion is something which has passed, and is still passing through an historical evolution, and all we can do is to follow it up to its origin, and then to try to comprehend it in its later historical developments.—MAX MULLER.

SERMONS FROM STONES.

BY THE EDITOR.

Introductory.

THE popular author who wrote that there were "sermons in stones," etc., hit upon a truth far broader, deeper and higher than most people, including even himself perhaps, ever realize. Geologists have a fashion of neglecting to attend upon the preaching of men while they go out into the fields, forests and seas to listen with scientific attention upon the "still, small voice" that is forever preaching soul-stirring sermons from the rocks, stones, pebbles and sands of earth and ocean. The lessons he learns overwhelm him with awe and bind him to nature as a child is bound to its parent. Even people who are not professional geologists, who do not even possess scientific discipline, can and do hear these sermons, when they listen aright.

Little by Little.

As I walked out one Sunday morning to refresh my body by a few inspirations of fresh air, and my mind by living lessons from nature, I came upon a large, overhanging rock—a cliff. I sat down beneath it, enticed thither by its cool shade and quiet presence; and immediately I began to observe its curiously cragged and moss-covered face, when the very stillness became almost oppressive and the solitude nearly unbearable. Just as I was about to go out again to continue my stroll a drop of water, which had been long accumulating little by little on the rocky roof over my head, fell and struck upon a stone at my feet, sending forth a peculiar ringing click that reverberated from every

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recess in the rocky walls around me. I looked about to see what it was that had fallen, and there in the stone upon which the drop had fallen was a circular hole an inch deep. While gazing at this another drop of water fell from above repeating the ringing click and falling exactly into the hole in the stone.

Then, as with a calm, sweet voice, the old moss-covered cliff began to say: "Before this hill on my back bore trees or grass, or was the play-ground of any living creature, I was here. When no sounds were heard on the face of the whole earth except the hissing of flames of fire and of steam, the howling of tempests, the roar of thunder and of awful volcanoes, I was placed here. Floods, tornadoes, fires and frosts have tried me ever since. Grain by grain and spawl by spawl of myself has given way to my enemies and have fallen. Long ages passed and the cavern below was formed, little by little, and became a shelter for beasts and birds and primitive men. A little vein, fed by a spring in my very heart, one day burst out and drop by drop has the clear liquid fallen on the stone before you. Days, years, centuries, ages, have passed, and still those little drops fall in the same spot, make the same ringing click, which seems to me like a long, monotonous song, the burden of which is, 'Little by little; patience and assiduity overcome all obstacles.' And those little drops of water, so soft and yielding, are gradually overcoming that obstacle to their progress toward the heart of Mother Earth."

As I returned to my daily labors the sermon of the stone, full of meaning, haunted my mind, and ever afterward in hours of discouragement has it kept at bay despair and undue haste, as I hear the echoes of the sermon—"Little by little; patience and assiduity overcome all obstacles."

BLISSES NOT CAUGHT IN NETS.

[SELECTED.]

TRUE worth is in *being*, not *seeming*—
In doing each day that goes by
Some little good—not in the dreaming
Of great things to do by and by.
For whatever men say in blindness,
And spite of the fancies of youth,
There's nothing so kindly as kindness,
And nothing so royal as truth.

We get back our mete as we measure—
We cannot do wrong and feel right,
Nor can we give pain and gain pleasure,
For Justice avenges each slight.
The air for the wing of the sparrow,
The bush for the robin and wren,
But always the path that is narrow
And straight for the children of men.

We cannot make bargains for blisses,
Nor catch them like fishes in nets ;
And sometimes the thing our life misses
Helps more than the thing which it gets.
And slight is the sting of his trouble
Whose winnings are less than his worth ;
For he who is honest is noble,
Whatever his fortune or birth,

EDITORIAL NOTES AND COMMENTS.

PECULIARITIES OF ROMAN CATHOLIC BELIEF.

The Right Rev. Monsignor Capel has an article in the *Nineteenth Century* in which he states some of the peculiarities of Roman Catholic belief. He says :

To doubt wilfully any one article of faith, or to enter upon the examination of any dogma with any intention of suspending belief until the conclusion of such examination, would be for a Catholic a deadly sin. The Catholic believes the whole deposit of revelation to have been committed to the care of an organized body possessed of a divine life. He believes this living body, the church of Christ, to be the sole guardian, the unerring teacher, the indefectible witness of the faith and the ultimate judge in all controversies concerning it. In order to be admitted into the church, the adult has to make an act of faith in this fundamental truth of her existence and authority ; * * * and having admitted her divine life, authority and testimony, he afterward accepts her word habitually and without questioning.

What Mons. Capel above designates as "a deadly sin" is the very foundation principle of all scientific investigation. To suspend belief until the conclusion of examination of any question in any department of natural science is exactly what every real scientist, and every real, earnest enquirer after truth, invariably does as one of the chief elements of success from research. The church, fearing the results of this kind of investigation, peremptorily forbids it as a most deadly sin. The fallacy in Capel's principle is clearly seen when his statement is closely scanned. First, one must believe in the authority of the church in order, secondly, that he may "accept her word habitually and without questioning." Now, belief always rests on some kind of evidence

in some degree—either that of direct experience or indirect experience or testimony. Now, for one out of the church, the scientific rule he calls a deadly sin must be adopted in order to get into the church, because no unbeliever could possibly ever become a believer in any other way. Then, having found his way into the church by the light of a deadly sin he is no longer to trust the light that has thus far led him safely, but must shut his eyes and trust the priest as the representative of the church. Mons. Capel speaks of the applicant for admission into the church "making an act of faith," but he fails, as everyone must inevitably do who attempts the task, to tell how one can make an act of faith except by the examination of evidence and suspending his judgment until the conclusion of his investigation. We can conceive of a form of faith that is acquired with very little or no effort—such as the faith of children in bugaboos, of the superstitious in charms, amulets, lucky days, prayers, etc., but this constitutes a passive form that is in no sense an act made by the one who adopts it. Faith as a system of belief not based upon evidence is only a hollow word; whereas faith that is made by thorough research and unimpeachable evidence is a firm reliance upon the absolute reign of law and order in the matter investigated, whatsoever that may be. The "deadly sin" of Mons. Capel and the Catholic church is the veritable philosophers' stone, that which transmutes the base metals—facts—into the pure gold of scientific principles and practical knowledge.

WHO ARE EVOLUTIONISTS.

In a paper upon the "Critics of Evolution," in the May and June numbers of the *American Naturalist*, Prof. Lipincott says that at Harvard every professor whose depart-

ment is connected with biology—such as Gray, Whitney, A. Agassiz, Hagen, Goodale, Shaler, Farlow, and Faxon—is an evolutionist, and man's physical structure they regard as no exception to the law. They are said to be theists, and all conservative men. At the John Hopkins University, which aims to be the most advanced in the country, evolution is held and taught. In the University of Pennsylvania all the biological professors are evolutionists—Leidy, Allen, Rothrock and Parker. At Yale, Dartmouth, Cornell, Michigan, Brown, Bowdoin and Princeton Universities, the biological professors are in the same category. Wherever there is a working naturalist, he is sure to be, almost without exception, an evolutionist.

LIBERALISM.

Liberality is, doubtless, a great virtue. So is water a good element for human use; yet, he who would attempt an aquatic life or a purely aqueous regimen would certainly discover that too much of a good thing may be a great evil. So, we think, with liberality; in excess or misapplied it is no virtue, but may be a positive vice. Temperance in all useful things, including liberality, is a sound principle. We not only believe in liberality but trust that we are worthy of being called a Liberal. A term of about fifteen years acquaintance with the workings of Liberalism has furnished us much evidence that evil does result from extreme or misapplied liberality. Our attendance at the Liberal camp meeting at Bismarck Grove, last fall, put us in possession of very strong objections to casting our pearls before swine. At that meeting the platform was declared free to all, without regard to person or creed. What was the result? So long as liberal people only occupied the platform harmony prevailed. But no sooner did such bigots as Elder Grant,

the Boston Second Advent fanatic, and the old political haranguer sent out by the opposition at Lawrence, than did the cloven hoofs and swinish nose appear. After accepting of the hospitality of the Liberals they, Indian-like, immediately began an attempt to strangle the benefactors who allowed them to share their platform; they ranted, roared, stamped the stage from end to end and sawed the air, like mad men, in frantic efforts to make a disturbance in the congregation, which they partially succeeded in doing. A lot of roughs from Lawrence were on hand as allies of the professed followers of the meek and lowly Jesus, to do the hoisterous cheering, whistling, hissing and hurling of insulting epithets. Those scenes clinched the last nail in the argument, and we left them thoroughly convinced of the utter folly of providing a free platform for such men to use in abusing ourselves and our friends and libelling our ideas. We believe it to be misplaced liberality to make a free gift of arms to an enemy—especially "an enemy that does not recognize the rules of civilized warfare." Jesus, though not always practically even with his own precept, uttered sound common sense when he said: "Give not that which is holy to dogs, neither cast ye your pearls before swine, lest they trample them under their feet and turn again and rend you." Matt. vii, 6. Let us be prudent as well as liberal.

PROGRESS IN GERMANY,

Dr. Christlieb, a very learned German theologian, is apparently becoming discouraged as to the results of theological labor in Germany. But his confession of the chaotic state of what he calls religion, in his native land, is good news to liberal minds everywhere. Germany is not slow to adopt needed reforms, even in religion, and in this case the

Fatherland is evidently on the very threshold of the most important reformation ever undertaken even in the land of Martin Luther. Dr. Christlieb says :

Wherever you go, whether into the lecture-room of the learned professor, or the council chamber of the municipal, or the barrack of the soldier, or the workshop of the mechanic, or into whatever place of public or social resort, everywhere you hear the same tale, that the old Faith has become obsolete. The advance of modern science, it is said, has made all real belief in it impossible. Only fools and ignoramuses ever profess to believe in it any more.

After quoting the above, in an address before a synod at Montreal, and which was published in the *Christian Standard*, Rev. Mr. Langtry adds the following, which confirms both the Doctor's testimony and our hope for the success of the "good cause" in Germany :

And the results of this widespread unbelief are everywhere apparent. No new churches are being built, and no old ones repaired. Only five persons in a hundred, it is said taking the whole of Protestant Germany, ever go to church, and in the capital only one person in a hundred. Everywhere religion is contemned and shoved aside, and the clergy, in spite of the vast learning and great ability of some of them, are utterly unable to stay the spreading deluge.

SUSPENSE OF JUDGMENT.

Dr. Horace Bushnell, an eccentric Calvinistic writer, often hit upon some very wise things ; and many of his bold innovations upon the petrified theology of his church greatly disturbed his brethren. But of that which he wrote no portion seems so reasonable, so consonant with modern civilization, as the very passages that were objectionable to the Calvinists of 1846. Among the good things he wrote the following is worthy of special notice :

Never be in a hurry to believe ; never try to conquer

doubts against time. Time is one of the grand elements in thought as truly as in motion. If you cannot open a doubt to-day, keep it till to-morrow; do not be afraid to keep it whole years. One of the greatest talents in religious discovery is the finding out how to hang up questions, and let them hang without being at all anxious about them.

CHRISTIAN MORALS.

Liberals, Spiritualists and Atheists are sometimes heard to confess that they do not object to the Christian code of morals, but simply to its forms, creeds and errors of doctrines. They have a right, of course, to think so; but on our part, we protest. In the first place we deny that there is a specific Christian code of morals. There are various phases of morality connected with Christianity, various moral principles are inculcated in Christian churches. But all of its moral principles, precepts and practices have been known longer than Christianity has lived; in fact, were adopted by the church from the ancient sages, magi, poets, philosophers and prophets,—from Jews, Greeks, Persians, Egyptians and even, indirectly, from China and India. In synagogues, mosques, temples and ancestral groves were these principles inculcated. Wherein has Christianity even codified these principles which it found ready for adoption by it? Then, again, Christianity as a system does not embody morality as a fundamental element—much less as its basis. It connects it with itself as a very good adjunct to a vicarious atonement; but even classes it as a positive evil when relied upon to the exclusion of faith in Christ as the saving element. Christianity has not added any distinctive moral principle or practice to the common stock of its predecessors and cotemporaries, and hence there is no *Christian* morality. It seems to us that better morals than the church either

preaches or practices is needed; that a real code of morals should be made the basis of religion. We need a system of morals that will recognize legal penalties as means of preventing crime and reforming criminals, not as a means of vengeance and retaliation; that will recognize the sister as entitled to the same degree of liberty and the same eligibility to public offices, professions, trades and business vocations as the brother. A code of morals that will condemn the idolatry of worshipping Jesus as much as that of worshipping any other man. A morality that will recognize the principle of good *causing* reward and evil causing punishment, and that no power on earth or in heaven can change this relationship so that the good man shall be punished and the evil rewarded. That he who sins *must* suffer—that there is no forgiveness, no escape, no palming off of penalties upon goats, lambs or Christs. We want a morality that will be recognized as the essence of religion and not as a mere inferior attachment to it. We want a morality that will condemn gambling at church fairs as well as in saloons. In short we want a code of morals as much better than the so-called Christian code as the combined efforts of humanity can make it.

CHURCHES BENEFICIARY OF THE STATE.

In direct defiance of the National constitution the several States of the Union persist in uniting church and State by exempting church property, like State property, from taxation, and thus compelling tax-payers to indirectly contribute to the support of the churches, or of sects that they may be conscientiously opposed to. As for Ohio, the Cincinnati *Commercial* speaks as follows:

There is over eighteen million dollars worth of untaxed church property in the State of Ohio. We have as yet to

hear a satisfactory argument justifying this exemption. All property, not belonging to the State, should be made to bear its equitable portion of the burden of government. No other principle can make taxation acceptable to all the people.

MODERN SKEPTICISM.

From the New York Independent.

We believe that a great change is preparing in religious opinion, of which * * many of our best men know almost nothing. To those who are thrown into the currents of life, it is evident that men's minds are in unusual working, and that the very foundations of religious belief are rotten and shaking. Among all the earnest-minded young men who are at this moment leading in thought and action in America, we venture to say that four-fifths are skeptical even of the great historical facts of christianity.

What is told as christian doctrine by the churches, is not even considered by them. And furthermore, there is among them a general ill-concealed distrust of the clerical body as a class and an utter disgust with the very aspect of modern christianity and of church worship. This skepticism is not flippant; little is said about it. It is not a peculiarity alone of the radicals and fanatics; many of them are men of calm and even balance of mind, and belong to no class of ultraists. It is not worldly and selfish. The doubters lead in the bravest and most self-denying enterprises of the day. It is not an unbelief to be laughed at, or hunted down. It is calm, abiding, earnest, sorrowful.

Not much is known of it above; but it underlies now all the strongest external movements. There are, however, glimpses of it. You see it in the daily diminishing influence of the pulpit, and the increasing influence of the press; in the lessening number of strong and original minds who take hold of theology, and the tone of the men who are leading American thought. It speaks in those strange longings for new revelations, and in the occasional denunciations of the old,

OUR GIRLS AND BOYS.

BENNIE BELL :

OR, WALKS AND TALKS OF A BOY AND A
PREACHER.

A STORY BY THE EDITOR.

CHAPTER I. NATURAL TRAGEDIES.

BENNIE BELL was a genius. He was a born questioner, a living and continual puzzle to his parents and friends. He seemed always to be chock full of questions—such questions as one might expect a full-grown philosopher from some other planet would ask on a first visit to Earth. His questions had to be answered directly with the evidence of correctness made very strong, or he would doubt and ask some one else. Bennie and an uncle of his, who was a preacher and a sort of self-appointed tutor of his curious little nephew, were in the habit of taking strolls together over the fields and through the forests. To show my young readers what curious questions Bennie could ask, and how he often puzzled his uncle and arrived at standpoints from which things in nature were to be seen in new revelations, I propose to report some of their walks and talks.

One day Bennie and his uncle went on a ramble through the woods when they came upon a little pond or lake. A little rabbit, with its large, mild eyes almost closed as it crouched in supposed security under a shrub, was near by on the bank ; a long-legged crane was wading in the pond ; on a moss-covered, half submerged log, sat a little screeching frog ; and on a tree was perched a hungry hawk.

"There!" softly whispered Bennie, "let us halt and look at that funny bird."

"That is a crane, my boy," said the uncle.

"What long legs, and neck and bill he has!" said Bennie; "what is he stilted up in that style for?"

"There is a lesson for you, my boy," said the preacher; "all of God's creatures show forth His wisdom and loving kindness. God made that queer bird thus in order that it might wade into ponds and reach down deep into the water to secure the little fishes and frogs upon which it feeds."

"But, uncle," queried Bennie, "if God was so kind to the crane, why did He not also be kind to the poor fishies and froggies which that great gawky thing kills and eats?"

"Well," said the uncle, "I don't know; we should not pry into the secrets that the Lord has hidden from us."

Just then the hawk swooped down from his perch and pounced upon the poor little rabbit, which cried so pitifully in its distress that Bennie's tender heart was touched, and with tears in his eyes he earnestly enquired:

"Why, uncle! Did God make that hawk?"

"Yes, Bennie," was the reply.

"Did God make the little rabbit, too?" asked the boy.

"Certainly; He made all things," replied the preacher.

"Why did the good Lord make a poor, dear rabbit to be murdered just to feed such a horrid old long-nailed, hook-billed creature as that hawk?" Bennie asked, and then added, "Why didn't He make the hawk so it could live on seeds and berries—things that do not suffer when they are used for food?" To these queries the only answer was a sigh.

And then the little frog that had been so happy on his mossy throne was heard to utter faint squeaks, and when Bennie looked toward it—horror of horrors! It was kicking and struggling for dear life in the slinky jaws of a large snake that was in the act of swallowing it alive.

"O, mercy, mercy, uncle!" cried Bennie as he bravely bounded forward and, grasping a stick, dealt the serpent a blow that caused him to release the frog and slip away.

Bennie and the preacher then started toward home. Not a word was spoken for several minutes, but the active mind of Bennie was as busy as a whole swarm of bees, and at last he asked, in sad tones :

“Uncle—Why did God make good animals and birds?”

“He made them for man,” the uncle cautiously replied.

And finally, with a still more sorrowful look of disappointment Bennie utterly routed and silenced the preacher by this inquiry :

“Then why did the good God make all those ugly, bad creatures to murder the good ones He made for man?”

(To be continued in the EVOLUTIONIST for February.)

WHAT BOYS SHOULD BE.

BY HENRY DOWNTON.

WHATEVER you are, be brave, boys !
 The liar is a coward and slave, boys ;
 Though clever at ruses,
 And sharp at excuses,
 He is a sneaking and pitiful knave, boys !
 Whatever you are, be frank, boys !
 'Tis better than money and rank, boys ;
 Still cleave to the right,
 Be lovers of light,
 Be open, aboveboard, and frank, boys !
 Whatever you are, be kind, boys !
 Be gentle in manners and mind, boys !
 The man gentle in mein,
 Words, and temper, I ween,
 Is the gentleman truly refined, boys !
 But, whatever you are, be true, boys !
 Be visible through and through, boys ;
 Leave to others the shamming,
 The “greeding” and “cramming,”
 In fun and in earnest, be true, boys.

NEWS NOTES.

EPES SARGENT, a widely known Spiritualistic author, died on the 30th ult. Mr. Sargent was a man of fine literary powers, an able scientist, an accurate thinker, and possessed of those moral qualities that are the crowning attainments of the soul. His writings are among the most valuable in the literature of modern Spiritualism. Among his earliest productions was "Planchette—The Despair of Science," a book that has attracted much attention to the subjects of spiritual, mesmeric and other psychological phenomena. His last and best work, recently published, "The Religion of Spiritualism," is rapidly becoming a most popular book, as it richly deserves to be. But two weeks before his death Mr. Sargent wrote a letter in which he mentioned the probability of his early demise, and referred to death as a "kind angel" whom he could meet without any fear of the consequences, and expressed such calm resignation as only accompanies the righteous man through "the valley of the shadow of death." May the hoped-for blissful immortality be his.

THE Liberalists of Kansas propose to hold their next annual meeting at Kansas City, and probably the Missouri Liberalists will unite with them and thus add greatly to the importance and interest of the occasion.

THE First Society of Spiritualists of this city hold their meetings at the residence of Mrs. Greene, corner of Sixth and Topeka avenues. Mrs. Lull, speaker.

THE Topeka Free Library and Reading Room is one of the very best institutions in the city. No college in the State is doing so much toward advancing popular education.

NEW HYMNS.

THE NATURAL TRINITY.

BY S. W. DAVIS.

TUNE—"Old Hundred."

1. *Truth.*

ALL nature unto us proclaims
That changeless law eternal reigns
O'er changing forms of all in Time,
And firmly grounds our faith sublime.

2. *Good.*

THE soul of man immortal lives—
Consoling thought! which courage gives
To all who love the Good and True,
And bravely seek the right to do.

3. *Might.*

REVEALED to us on ev'ry hand—
In starry sky, on sea and land—
A moving force of boundless range,
Evolving All through constant change.

4. *Unity.*

TO Thee, O, Truth! O, Good! O, Might!
The triune guide, Eternal Right!
Thou Spirit Father, God and King!
Our joyous songs of praise we bring.

In Herbert Spencer's "First Principles," page 216, can be found the following technical definition of evolution :

Evolution is a change from an indefinite and incoherent homogeneity to a definite coherent heterogeneity, through continuous differentiations and integrations.

LIBERAL PAPERS.

THE VALLEY FALLS LIBERAL, published monthly by the Liberal League of Valley Falls, Kan., and edited by Messrs. M. Harman and A. J. Searl. The January number of this fearless little iconoclast is at hand, and we find in it many excellent things—every line of it being interesting reading. We wish the *Liberal* a broad field and abundant success.

THE WESTERN REFORMER, a monthly devoted to Liberalism and the Greenback theory. Edited and published by S. P. Davis, Salina, Kan. The *Reformer* seems to be one of those earnest, energetic kind that overcomes obstacles and wins success. May it live as long as reform is needed. In the December number Mr. Cook touches up the “baby liberals” with a sharp stick. We are loth to believe that the case is as bad as that writer pictures it, but strong language seems to be necessary to awaken a certain class of people to the realities of an actively constructive and iconoclastic religious reformation.

THE COMMUNIST, a monthly sheet devoted primarily to the “property-in-common” theory, but also favorable to Liberalism. A portion of it is printed in phonotypy, and the spelling reform and phonography are championed in its pages. Alcander Longly, publisher, St. Louis, Mo.

OTHER papers and magazines, and also books, will be noticed next month.

PUBLISHER'S NOTICES.

EDITORS who receive copies of this number of the *EVOLUTIONIST* are respectfully invited to duly “notice” it in their editorial columns. All favors will be properly reciprocated. Send us marked copies of papers containing such notices.

IF YOU receive a copy of this magazine without it having been ordered by you, it means that you are presented

with a specimen copy, which you are respectfully invited to closely examine; and, if it meets your wants, please send us your order as a regular subscriber.

SPIRITUALISM OF THE BIBLE will be one of the leading editorials in the February number of the EVOLUTIONIST. Believers and nonbelievers should read it.

THREE MONTHS trial subscriptions will be accepted as follows: One copy 3 months, 25 cents; 5 copies 3 months, \$1.00. To anyone sending us 4 trial subscribers and \$1.00 we will send the magazine three months.

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IN SENDING money, one dollar or less may be sent in an ordinary letter. Larger amounts should be sent by P. O. money order or registered letter. Fractions of a dollar may be sent in 3 and 1 cent postage stamps.

THE article in this magazine entitled "The Evolution of Religion" has been reproduced in pamphlet form and will be furnished for 5 cents each, or by mail for two 3-cent stamps.

THE RELIGIOUS EVOLUTIONIST

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