

CONTRIBUTED.

MISCELLANEOUS PAPERS.

NO. III. (Concluded.)

THE DESTRUCTION OF FAITH AND ITS RESULTS.

BY W. H.

But the results on public and individual morality of this decline and decay of religious belief would be of the most serious and alarming character. It is a matter of undisputed history, that unchristian and unbelieving ages and nations have always furnished the world with their "programmes of blood," and scenes of the most revolting and unblushing immorality and crime have been transacted under the influence and sanction of customs which once wildly prevailed, but which, thank God, are going down year by year into the darkness of a deserved and infamous oblivion. One writer states the moral and social condition of Greece, under a mere human and pagan religion, in their palmiest days, and he says, "In the purest and sublimest moralities prevailed; not only the great and essential principles of morality wanting, but crimes like piracy and murder, suicide and infanticide, lying, impurity and revenge, received the sanction of the world's greatest thinkers, and vice of the darkest kind are excused and are classed with virtues."

And yet back to these inhuman and barbaric times the masters of modern unbelief would throw us with one fell and destructive swoop! Strike from the great common mind the motives and restraints which our Divine and supernatural religion presents, and vital principles which hold millions within the bounds of a moral respectability would be cancelled, and the flood tides of iniquity would spread themselves far and wide. We cannot, as a recent writer has said, ignore a true piety without loosening the golden cords which secure the safety and stability of human society; if the religious sentiment is allowed to perish, then farewell to those influences which keep society pure, and give to man a moral elevation and character which he could not possibly otherwise acquire. Allow the Christian faith to decline, and the moral aspect of this nineteenth century would soon undergo a sad and lamentable change; the moral code and conscientiousness which are the creation of New Testament teaching, would be ignored, and nothing would eventually be left but the empty theory, which a mere human expediency might dictate as the ever varying circumstances would seem to demand. The reduction of the principles underlying many of the "advanced systems" of to-day, to the common practice and operation of everyday life, would secure the above terrible results, and demonstrate in the most conclusive manner the utter insufficiency of these productions of unresting minds to meet the requirements of the golden rule. Society would shrink with horror from the yawning gulph of moral and social ruin into which a false science would plunge her, and the most confirmed unbeliever would stand agabed at the results to which his own teachings would ultimately lead. It is claimed, however that the moral standing of many of those distinguished doubters is of a very high character. This may be admitted as a rare and marked exception to the general rule, but it presents a strange inconsistency which it is not difficult to explain. It is like the Moorish king of whom we read, who having mounted his horse, struck off the head of the slave who held his stirrups. A distinguished author has well said that "no doctrine can be morally good which ignores morals; and no doctrine which ignores morals can be supported by men that are morally good."

The destruction of the Christian faith strikes at the root of all true and continual progress, and the manspining of the noblest activities is at once broken, and a wild, bewildering and dreary chaos is the ultimate and final result. Men talk about the sufficiency of the "Temple of Reason," but the dark and crimson pages of the revolutionary period in France, and all pagan history, fling back the claim and ask for something higher. Even the ancient Greeks, we are told, detested a pure atheism and with the best of them it was only another name for wickedness. The sad and unappealable sorrow running through all unchristian ages, permeating the best of the unbelieving literature of the day, and casting the shadow of a sad and sickening gloom over the lives and deathbeds of those who have left the grand moorings of the Christian faith is full of profound significance, which we do well to note. The story of Hume's mother is sad enough. He had persuaded her to give up her faith in Christ, but when sorrow and affliction came upon her she found that, with her faith in Christ her comfort, too had fled, and, to her infidel son she said, "My son you have taken away my religion, now tell me something to comfort me." Alas! he had no comfort for his poor mother in the hour of her lone and crying need.

Scepticism cannot save man, nor give him the answers and explanations for which he longs in the hours of his deepest needs: like the old Spartan trying to make the dead body of a man stand upright, failing he said, "It wants something within." So what the world needs is not the vast, cold corpse of an atheistic philosophy, but the living God-man who is the same yesterday, to-day, and forever. He alone can give solace to the sorrowing heart, and along man's rugged path can scatter the rose leaves for his bleeding feet. The duty of the Church is to grasp

yet more firmly the grand and satisfying realities of her imperishable faith. Is not also her duty to attack and resist this moral vandalism which is abroad, wherever and whenever she can? The duty of the earnest Christian is to equip himself with the world's "unkilled evidence" which is within his reach, so that he may be able to stand in the evil day and having done all to stand. For the Christian religion there is, and can never be any substitute. In believing possession of this faith we may answer that most pathetic enquiry of the Saviour addressed to his disciples, Will ye also go away? With Peter we may say, if we part company with this precious faith, "To whom shall we go but unto thee?" and from the vast, cold, and godless vacancy into which materialistic philosophy would plunge us, there comes back the echo of our own deep enquiry: To whom, to whom, shall we go?

MEMORIAL NOTICES.

MRS. M. PICKLES.

Another mother in Israel has gone home to God. The very name of the subject of this memorial, so many years associated with that of her sainted husband, Rev. M. Pickles, in our Maritime Provinces, will arrest the attention of our beloved people. After the death of her husband in his native land, Mrs. P. returned to these Provinces to spend the remainder of her days with her children.

More than fifty years ago our departed sister, was made the partaker of converting grace, and united herself with the Methodist Church, and continued this relation up to the time of her death. Her marriage with her late husband took place not long after her conversion to God. For this important position in the Church, she was pre-eminently qualified. Divine grace, and her natural social disposition and buoyancy of mind enabled her to endure the numerous difficulties of itinerant life with cheerfulness and courage. In those early days of our Church history, there were privations connected with a Methodist preacher's life which are comparatively unknown at the present day. To her husband, whose natural disposition was not as hopeful as her own was, she was in every way truly an helpmate. Her religious experiences was of a most confident and cheerful cast. After an acquaintance, extending over forty years, with Mr. and Mrs. Pickles, the writer can say that his many interviews with them were really seasons of spiritual profit. As a mother her uniform affection and tenderness must render her memory ever precious to her children. Under God, her faithfulness and her husband's faith and prayers have been owned in the conversion of all their children. Four of their sons have been dedicated to the Christian ministry.

In reference to her last suffering and death her son, the Rev. F. H. W. Pickles, writes: "During her last sickness she was a great sufferer, but during all she was enabled to rest on her Saviour, and at the last had glorious manifestations of God's love. She sat up for the last time, Sabbath, 3rd of April, and when lying down again said she had been up for the last time. To friends who called in the evening she remarked, 'You see me near the crossing.' About 1 a.m., she passed into an unconscious state, which was thought to be death, but after some time aroused from this. Her daughter asked her if she was happy. 'Yes,' she replied, 'I am so happy.' During the morning she kept dwelling upon Christ, saying again and again, 'I nothing have, I nothing am, but Jesus died for me.' 'I am a sinner saved by grace.' About daylight she said, 'I have had a whole Sabbath-day sermon.' On being asked what about, 'O,' she said, 'about Jesus.' 'Jesus the life, the truth, the way.' The bitterness of death is past; all fear is taken away—I am no longer of the earth," she seemed now to perceive the spirits of her children who had passed before her into the better land, speaking to those about her, calling each by name, except one who had died two years ago. After a short time an appearance of happy recognition passed over her face, and she said, "and James too." She now remained perfectly quiet and free from all pain, and time some after she exclaimed, "'Dying happy, dying happy,' and her happy spirit passed away."

The testimony of those who have seen her after death has been such that they were sorry when the morning dawned. She wished her affectionate regards sent to her many friends, and therefore all such who read these lines will receive this as her last message to them. Thus our sister, in the full assurance of everlasting blessedness, departed this life on the 2nd of April, 1881, in the 71st year of her age. Her funeral was attended by a large concourse of friends who listened with deep attention to an appropriate sermon from I Thess. iv. 13.

A remarkable circumstance took place during her sickness. Of her elder brother she talked a great deal, as they had been very intimate in their childhood and youth, and desired very much to see him. One day, however, she said, "I cannot think of him to-day as among the living." The next day and the next she said the same thing, adding, "of course that cannot be; no doubt he is living." Next morning she asked her nurse, "Who did you say was to be buried to-day?" "Why, no one," was the reply. "Well," she said, "it is strange; I thought that some one told me there was a man to be buried to-day, and I saw the corpse and it looked very much like my brother." Strange to say, some time after intelligence was received that on that

very day she first spoke of him, as seeming to her among the spirits of the dead, he died, and on that very day she thought she saw a funeral he was buried. In concluding this brief memorial I feel deeply impressed with the fact that nearly all the Methodist ministers in the Maritime Provinces who constituted our early ministerial staff, and their wives, have passed away. May I not add in behalf of the few of us who remain on a supernumerary list, "Dear junior brethren, see that you take the front rank. God speed you. But do not go into that position with 'crutches.' No, no, studiously, with faith and prayer, take your important stations. J. G. H."

MISCELLANEOUS.

THE EARTHQUAKE IN SCIO.

At ten minutes to 2 in the afternoon a terrific shock was felt, bringing three-fourths of the houses in the town to the ground like so many packs of cards, and burying a thousand persons under the falling ruins. Then commenced a fearful scene of horror. The ground rocked and danced, kneeling the ruin already formed into an unrecognizable mass of stone. The survivors ran hither and thither, not knowing where to flee to escape the horrible fate that menaced them, and were tossed and flung about by the heaving earth, like feathers in a breeze. On every side the sinister rumblings of the earth, the noise of falling buildings, the tearing shrieks of the walls of houses, and the shrieks of the wounded, lent a fearful horror to the scene. All sought to leave the town and get into the plains, in order to avoid being buried under the falling buildings, but even those who gained the open country were by no means safe. The earthquake attacked not only the town and villages, but worked its ravages in the hills and mountains of the island.

Some time elapsed before any of the survivors recovered from the terror caused by the shock sufficiently to be able to comprehend the extent of the catastrophe, or to think of looking for friends or relatives still perhaps alive beneath the ruins. The town presented a pitiable spectacle. Great fissures and crevices yawned in the streets, walls were falling with a crashing report, and entire buildings crumbled in fragments to the ground. In many places whole streets had disappeared, and it was hard to say where the different well-known buildings had stood. No one knew where to look for family or friends. The ground still heaved and tossed, bringing fresh buildings to the ground at every moment, and burying innumerable victims to destruction. The people seeking to escape were caught in the staircases of their houses by falling walls, or were crushed by the entire house falling in on them as they crossed the threshold. It is impossible to say what the number of victims would have been if a second shock had not displaced the ruins formed by the first and thus permitted thousands of sufferers to escape or to be rescued by others from the horrible imprisonment to which they had been condemned. In the town the victims have been very numerous. The quarters most damaged are the Citadel, the Atzkieles quarter, and the industrial quarter. Beneath the ruins of the citadel alone 500 victims at least must be buried. Among others there are forty Turkish women who were engaged in prayer in an oratory situated in the court of the castle. The Government palace and buildings, the telegraph office, and the mosques, are little better than tottering ruins. Hardly a man in the town remains upright. In the industrial quarter hardly a house remains standing, and while families of from ten to fifteen persons have perished, or must perish, beneath the ruins.

In the country the effects of the horrible upheaval have been even more terrible than in the town. Here the victims may be counted by thousands instead of by hundreds. The monastery of Neomoni is completely razed to the ground, and sixty monks lie buried beneath its walls. The site of the village of Neita presents the appearance of a disused stone quarry. Not a trace of a building remains. The inhabitants have disappeared. It is thought that the number of victims in three villages (Calimassia, Thimians, and Nechori) is over 3,000. Cardamala, Pythios and Dauena, are entirely destroyed. The number of victims is unknown, but is very considerable. At Thessalon, 1,000 houses, half of the town, have been destroyed. Five dead and fifty wounded have been discovered at Koto Panaya. Every house, and there are 900, is in ruins. Twenty-three dead and 150 wounded have been found hitherto. The aspect of the plain of Vounaki is heart-rending. Between forty and fifty thousand persons of all ages and both sexes are camped there, yet but few tents to shelter them, and even in some places, are scattered and dispersed about the plain. Parents wander from group to group in endeavouring to persuade themselves that their darlings will be found among the living. Not a single baking-house and the entire population was thus without food until aid could arrive from the exterior. At one moment an amphitheatre on the side of a hill, broke and rushed crashing down into the plain. The scene is sickening. Here a crevice, while the unfortunate wretch to whom it belongs is buried beneath thousands of tons of masonry. Here, again, a voice calls for aid from under-

ground. A daughter sobbing endeavours to encourage her father, who is imprisoned deep below the surface; and at every turn of the spade or pick some horribly mutilated corpse is brought to light. Numbers of dead are unburied, and in isolated places the dogs are disputing the possession of their inanged corpses.—Letter in London News.

In New York there are about 500 vendors of awdinst, having a capital of \$200,000 invested, and doing a business amounting to more than \$2,000,000 annually. Forty years ago the mills were glad to have sawdust carted away; twenty-five years ago it could be bought for 50 cents a load, but the price has increased, and now it brings \$3.50 a load at the mills. It is used at the hotels, eating-houses, groceries, and other business places. It is wet and spread over floors in order to make the sweeping cleaner work. Plumbers use a great deal about pipes and buildings to deaden walls and floors. Soda water men and packers of glass and small articles of every kind use it, and dolls and sometimes living creatures are more or less stuffed with it.

BREVITIES.

The future of society is in the hands of the mothers.—De Beaufort.

Mean souls, like mean pictures, are often found in good-looking frames.

The divinity of charity consists in relieving a man's needs before they are forced upon us.

It isn't what goes into, but what comes out of, the inkstand that makes the trouble.

Alberethy used to tell his pupils that all human diseases sprang from two causes: stuffing and fretting.

Men show their character in nothing more clearly than by what they think laughable.—Goethe.

Little Harry cut his finger while at play, and screamed, "Hurry up, hurry up, mamma, I'm a leaking!"

One day when D'Alembert and Condorcet were dining with Voltaire, they proposed to converse of atheism; but Voltaire stopped them at once. "Wait," said he, "till my servants have withdrawn. I do not wish to have my throat cut to-night."

Goethe's words to Eckerman will bear repeating in many circles in these days: "If you have any faith, give me a share in it, if you have only doubts, keep them to yourself. I have enough of my own."

It is the province of a great nature to be still and wait. It is the mark of a weak one to be in a hurry. The osprey hops impatiently from perch to perch, but the eagle's lights on the top of the cliff and waits.

The reason for the observance of the Sabbath lies deep in the everlasting necessities of human nature, and as long as man is man the blessedness of keeping it, not as a day of rest only, but as a day of spiritual rest, will never be annulled.

It is refreshing to meet a man who is in the habit of speaking to all the children he meets. It shows that, besides having a sympathetic heart he understands human nature well enough to know that he could hardly find a better way of doing spiritual good.

"What are you looking for?" asked one of the Widow Bedotta's two daughters, who were entertaining two young fellows on the piazza, rather late one night last summer, of their mother, who seemed to be hunting for something around the front yard. "The morning papers," answered the wid-w. The young men left.

A palatable bit: There is no better bon mot in literature than the reply of a girl who heard her father criticised severely across a dinner table. The careless critic paused a moment to say, "I hope he is no relative of yours, Miss L." and quick as thought she replied, with the utmost nonchalance: "Only a connexion of my mother's by marriage."—Troy Times.

An old-fashioned minister, passing a fashionable church, on which a new spire was going up, was asked how much higher it was to be. "Not much," he answered, "that congregation don't own much higher in that direction." Too often the height of the steeple is the height of the Church's ambition, and all belong to it belongs to the sheriff or the creditors.

Some few years ago, in the room of a house in London, an animated discussion took place on the question, "Was Moses married or not?" The hostess (a Romanist and an authoress) said, "Protestant clergymen always know their Bibles so well, I will go and ask Mr. —." The clergyman replied, "Yes, he was married, and so was Aaron." The lady gave a shriek of horror which startled everybody, exclaiming, "Aaron married? How can you say so? Why, he was a priest!"

That was a pat word said the other day at the Worcester Congregational Club. The speaker thought while so much is heard about ministers that "draw" it was time to hear something about churches that draw. Churches can do as much to make full congregations as ministers. They can do it in a dozen ways, and nothing is more un-reasonable than to leave all the "drawing" to the men who stand in the pulpit. The "How do you do?" "Glad to see you," "Come again," and the "Always welcome" turn of mind on the part of the people who sit in the pews has magical power in filling up a congregation. Just try it.

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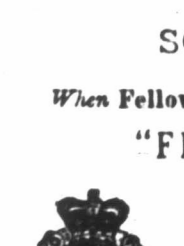
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