

Contributions.

Turn on the Lights.

ANNA D. BRADLEY.

In a recent issue of a popular journal there appeared an interesting and able article from the pen of Rabbi Levi, entitled, "Believing Skeptics." The leading thought is the right of the individual to think for himself; and the writer boldly asserts that "Thought is the parent of skepticism and doubt."

I am indebted for the pleasure of reading this article to a friend who proudly claims to be what the world calls an infidel. My friend rather vauntingly writes: "I claim the right to think for myself. I wish you would do the same, it would lead you away from the mists and the superstitions of the twilight age into the broad, clear light of day."

Now, this is very kind in my friend, and I value his thoughtful anxiety in my behalf, for I earnestly desire all the light which I can receive, let the source be what it may.

I do not claim to be a very profound thinker or writer, but I do dare to claim to be a sinner saved by grace, and I am not at all afraid that the religion so taught by my Master is in the least jeopardy when men begin to use their God-given minds for legitimate purposes. Verily I have not so learned my Bible.

The position which the Rabbi Levi, my friend, and others of his school, assume, is that the religion of Jesus Christ feeds only the emotions; that it is a thing entirely apart from our intellectual being; that the men and women who rally around the Cross would never dare to apply to the superstition they cherish, the crucial test of candid investigation.

But if this assumption is true of the Christian world, I think we are in error. If higher knowledge, deeper investigation, the brightest light of science, can have power to dethrone God, and prove Him only a superstition of the darker ages, still would I cry—as must every lover of truth: Turn on your brightest beams of electricity; let the result be as it may. At any cost, let us know and hold the truth, for it is only the truth that can make us free.

Why should the Christian fear to give to thought its unclipped wings? If it is true, as Rabbi Levi asserts—and I am very sure that it is true—that, "Thought is the parent of skepticism and doubt," still is it also true beyond controversy, that skepticism is the initial step to all progress and reform.

The Lutheran reformation was the grand result of one poor monk growing skeptical concerning the faith which he for years had held as sacred. America would never have been the America she is to-day but for the skepticism of our ancestors respecting the rights of monarchical government. Our churches would never have been the aggressive churches they are to-day, pushing their way into every heathen country, planting the cross upon every land, translating the Bible in every language, if Wm. Carey had not been skeptical as to the faith in which the Christian world was resting, viz.: "If God wanted the heathen saved, He would save him."

Slavery would still have been an ulcerous sore on our land, if doubt, as to the rights of existence, had not been born in some noble hearts. And thank God that the evils of our country, which our government permits to exist to-day, will, sooner or later, all be swept aside to give place to better things, simply because the truest men and women of our time first thought, then doubted, and now are bravely working for reform.

Thank God for the power to doubt; for if doubt did not exist, progress would be impossible.

If in your heart and mind a doubt should ne'er arise, then you and I would surely drift into eternal death. But because we do doubt and struggle for the best, we'll climb to heights not dreamed of now.

If to-day the modern world is demanding added proofs of the verity of the theology of the Bible, theology will not resent the demand, but will rather insist that her accumulative evidences be rigidly examined. We are under the orders of our divine Leader, who commands that we "prove all things."

It is of urgent moment that every shadow of suspicion be removed from the theology of the Bible, yet it is of equal importance that every adulteration which human hands have mixed with the divine original shall be also removed.

Science steps to the side of Revelation, and proposes to put to the proof her claims. And Revelation, strong in the consciousness of its impregnable claims, readily consents, while the world looks on and applauds.

In the morning of the battle Faith begins to tremble; half-hearted Christians sigh that all is lost, while scoffing infidelity shouts in triumph.

But the battle continues. Science is wholly impartial as to results. She is only determined to establish truth.

Now if Science has caused Faith to tremble, Science must either overthrow Faith entirely, or establish it on a foundation so secure that it can never even be shaken again. The only hope, therefore, is to add to Science much more science. Thus faith is put to its severest test.

Bacon says: "This I dare affirm, in the knowledge of nature, that a little natural philosophy and the first entrance therein doth dispose the opinion to atheism; but, on the other side, much natural philosophy and deep wading therein will bring men's minds to religion."

When the battle ended, Skepticism shrank back abashed, while Science placed the victor's wreath upon the pure brow of religion.

The late evening of this nineteenth century is busy uncovering its countless buried proofs that must convince every honest observer that the Biblical account of early history is no myth.

It has been a long while since Moses wrote; and once faint-hearted Christians—who were already half infidel—grew very uneasy lest the geologist's hammer should dash into fragments the Mosaic structure. But the Old Book felt no anxiety, even though she knew that

"Humanity, with all its fears,
With all its hopes of future years,
Was hanging breathless on her fate."

Why should the Old Book fear?

"She knew what Master laid her keel;
What Workman wrought her ribs of steel"

And one can fancy the Old Book Book crying out to timorous believers who shrank from every fierce blow which came from the iron hand of Science:

"Fear not each sudden sound and shock,
'Tis but the wave and not the rock;
'Tis but the flapping of the sail,
And not a rent made by the gale."

Who fears for the Bible to-day? Not one enlightened adherent who joyfully watches as the Book with her obedient handmaiden, Science, walk side by side.

I have sometimes fancied that our questioning nineteenth century might be likened unto the doubting disciple, who would not believe that his Lord had risen until he put his fingers into the print of the nails, and thrust his coarse, unfeeling hands into the wound-prints of His side. Yet this cruel investigation our Christ did not rebuke. He who had commanded His disciples to prove all things, now extends His wounded hands to Thomas, and bares His pierced side unto his gaze. And

then, and not till then, did that disciple cry, "My Lord! My God!"

Oh, haste to turn on all your brightest lights. 'Twill sooner show to you your waiting Father, watching for His prodigal child to come home. Probe deeply as you can, oh hand that is seeking for the jewel TRUTH! If you but probe deep enough, you will find your Saviour's loving, bleeding and forgiving heart. TURN ON THE LIGHTS.

Benjamin Kidd Criticized.

I have called "Social Evolution" a parley with religion. At last Science becomes painfully aware of something not right in her reckonings. Her stars are out of orbit. There is a disturbing force somewhere. With her whole outfit of boasted phenomena and hypotheses she has failed to bring forth a demonstration. "The struggle for existence," "Survival of the fittest," "Natural selection," "Monads," "Primeval star-dust," "Spontaneous generation," "Origin of Species," "Anthropoid apes," "Pithecoïd men," "Protoplasm," "Bathybius," "Silica, Nitrogen, Carbon & Co.," all this amazing outfit, and much more, together with the god that is "unknowable," and a creation "unthinkable," plus still some little added trifle such as (to use Principal Dawson's language), "An outfit to start with, self-existent matter, for instance, in a state of endless revolution,"—with all this, Science has not been quite able to account for everything. She goes back, therefore, recasts her reckonings, and concludes that religion really explains all that has been hitherto inexplicable. She calls a halt, raises a flag of truce, and proposes a parley. She goes over to the camp of Christianity, and addresses her as "Religion," not having yet discovered that Christianity is a distinct and unique species of the genus religion, perhaps the only well authenticated example of the "origin of species" that falls within the purview of the Darwinian ages.—W. J. LHAMON, in November *Canadian Magazine*.

You Don't Have to Swear Off

Says the St. Louis *Journal of Agriculture* in an editorial about No-To-Bac, the famous tobacco habit cure. "We know of many cases cured by No-To-Bac. One, a prominent St. Louis architect, smoked and chewed for twenty years. Two boxes cured him so that even the smell of tobacco makes him sick." No-To-Bac sold and guaranteed; no cure, no pay. Book free. Sterling Remedy Co., 374 St. Paul St., Montreal.