

view that they are doubters themselves, and only concur in them because they are afraid to be thought not strictly orthodox. Out upon these milk-and-water Christians, who have not the manliness to avow what they really believe, and to battle for it, oppose them who may!

Probably of all the Old Testament facts, none has been more disputed and ridiculed by its opponents, or apologized for by its friends, than "those grapes" of Eschol, spoken of in the 13th chapter of Numbers. The account reads as follows:

"And they came unto the brook of Eschol, and cut down from thence a branch with one cluster of grapes, and they bare it between two, upon a staff; and they brought of the pomegranates, and of the figs. The place was called the brook Eschol because of the cluster of grapes which the children of Israel cut down from thence."

Now this account is straightforward enough, and we see no reason to doubt the fact, except that such enormous clusters of grapes are not common in our day, and country; but we would infer from the narrative of Moses that it was also an extraordinary cluster even for that country, for they took the trouble to name the brook "Eschol" because of the grapes they gathered there. We have heard Sunday school teachers explain this passage away in the most absurd manner, and instead of taking it as a truth, because the Bible stated it as such, assure their scholars that the language was figurative, (which term, by the way is a very convenient expression many Christians have for getting out of a difficulty in which they may find themselves), others, that the grapes were no doubt large, but probably not exactly so weighty as to require the united efforts of two able bodied men to carry them; in fact if they told their scholars what they really believed about it, they would say that they thought Moses exaggerated just a little about the dimensions of these wonderful grapes.

Here is a specimen of the latter kind of explanation which is much more hurtful, especially to the young, than any direct denial of the truth of the Bible. Says the popular humorist Mark Twain in a work read by millions of old and young:

"Joshua and another person were the two spies sent into this land of Canaan by the children of Israel to report upon its character. I mean they were the spies who reported favourably. They took back with

them some specimens of the grapes of this country, and in the children's picture books they are always represented as bearing one monstrous branch swung to a pole between them, a respectable load for a pack-train. The Sunday school books exaggerate it a little. The grapes are most excellent to this day, but the branches are not so large as those in the pictures. I was surprised and hurt when I saw them, because those colossal branches of grapes were one of my most cherished juvenile traditions."

Exactly so Mr. Twain, and for your shattered juvenile traditions and wounded feelings you have our warmest sympathy.

Of course Mr. Twain and thousands of others like him do not believe the story of the grapes, but they can all believe the following which has been going the rounds of the papers for some time past. We quote from memory, but the facts are correct.

"The great vine of Santo Jarbara in California, has this year produced one cluster of grapes which weighs one hundred and forty pounds; the entire yield this year is expected to exceed ten tons."

Now Messrs. Twain and Company, here is a much more remarkable grape yarn than that of Moses in holy writ, which you ridicule so freely. Why don't you dispute the truth of this statement? Why—simply because it would not be safe to contradict a fact, the truth of which can be so easily proved by scores of actual eye witnesses. There would be some courage shown however, if nothing else, in contradicting a fact, even though you were called a fool for it, but there can be none whatever in contradicting a fact which happened thousands of years ago, and which is verified by such an authority as the inspired writer himself. We trust that whenever any of our friends are inclined to doubt the teachings of God's word, they will consider that it is not simply man's record, but the record of Him who cannot lie.

THE PROBLEM OF LIFE.

Life is a problem that each one of us has to solve for ourselves, and on its correct solution depends our future happiness or misery.

Whether we are thinking of it in this connection or not, we are working it out slowly and surely, though perhaps unconsciously day by day, until at last the end comes, and we find ourselves face to face with the result of our life-long labours.

What this result will be depends very much upon ourselves. We are each put here to do a certain work which no one else can do as well as we can. It may be agreeable work, or it may be work disagreeable and distasteful to our feelings, but if it is "our work," we ought to do it, and do it faithfully. If we are faithful in the discharge of the duties God has apportioned us, we may rest assured we will have His blessing, and that He will make His face to shine upon us and lift upon us the light of His countenance.

If we can glorify God here, we will have obtained the correct solution of life's great problem, for we will have fitted ourselves, through faith in our Lord Jesus Christ, to enter into that higher life and to enjoy Him to all eternity. In spite of the practical and materialistic tendencies of the age, it is cheering to feel that so many learned and scientific men are working out life's problem on this basis; it gives the lie to the statement we hear so often that a man who is educated enough to be a philosopher must necessarily drift into skepticism, and become hostile to the orthodox notions of Christianity.

Hear the testimony of the veteran philosopher THOMAS CARLYLE, a giant among pigmies, when compared intellectually with scores of philosophers who think it their duty to try and disprove the teachings of Scripture, and make God a liar. In a recently published letter, Carlyle says, "The older I grow—and now I stand on the brink of eternity—the more comes back to me the sentence in the catechism which I learned when a child, and the fuller and deeper its meaning becomes: 'What is the chief end of man?' 'To glorify God and enjoy Him forever.' Surely this testimony of a giant intellect like Carlyle, who while hovering upon the brink of the eternal, gazes into it with unclouded vision and feelings of greater confidence in the faithfulness of God,—surely this must be correct:—that this glorification of God must be the beginning and the end of that strange and indefinite problem we call—"LIFE."

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