

have been Christians. Believing in a personal God, the Father of men, they believed also in the brotherhood of mankind, in a reward beyond that of their own feelings, in a treasure laid up in heaven. The good we do is not un-seldom repaid by ingratitude, sometimes by hatred. Such a return might well freeze up all the springs of benevolence and philanthropy, were it not for a belief in God the Father of all, to whom men are accountable. Take away human responsibility to a known personal God and what law will remain for the general good of mankind? It is not hard to say the law that will remain, and the one that the immense majority of men will put into practice, it will be "selfishness." Men will follow whatever they fancy will lead to their personal good. If a few remain firm and steadfast in the practice of the virtues of generosity and self-denial, we cannot shut our eyes to the self-evident fact that the enormous majority will take its own interests, passions and appetites as the laws of life.

Let faith in God, the Father and the Judge be lost. Let His revelation to man be rejected as unworthy of belief. Let a faithless and soulless naturalism replace Christianity, and what remains to control the evil instincts of the masses. Mankind would soon find that the law of the strongest would be the only law that the fittest only should survive. Occasionally, in the history of nations we find the exhibition of the extreme consequences of such an order of things. Conquerors like Tamerlan exterminating the vanquished men, women and children. Parents, like the Spartan, killing sickly children, that would have been only a burden on the state. Charitable souls like the Bishop Hatto of the old legend, who imagined as the best possible poor relief, the shutting up in a barn and burning alive all the beggars of his diocese! Of course our modern philosophers will not acknowledge the logic of these conclusions. Their safeguard against these extremes are found, first, in their superior culture, but, second, and perhaps chiefly, in the influence of Christianity around them, of which they can never wholly free themselves. But let them remember that the masses are not at all influenced by their scientific theories, whilst it cannot be denied that the idea of a personal God, to whom every one has to give an account, is one that has, as yet, an enormous influence among them in restraining evil. Destroy this idea, persuade them that instead of being the children of a personal God they are evolved from primary germs, through gradations of brute life, and who knows when the tendency to descend, acknowledged by the doctors of that school, may not bring them back to brutal deeds, the thought of which makes humanity shudder!

It is said of Voltaire, that he once ordered all of his servants out of the room, where his friends were ridiculing the idea of a personal and avenging God, giving as his reason, that he had no wish to be robbed or murdered in consequence of such theories. Infidel as he was, his powerful mind could not but work out the inevitable solution of the atheistic or agnostic problem. Analyze the work of unbelief and you will find it described in the word "destruction." It has rudely attacked Christianity in all its most cherished beliefs. It does not hide its intention to overthrow if possible that immense structure, which, after withstanding the storms of nineteen centuries, is as firm as ever. It snatches from the poor wretch floating on the stormy waves of the sea of life the plank of hope that held him up, and leaves him to drown. It ridicules all it cannot explain. Nothing is sacred to the unbeliever, neither his father's faith nor his mother's tears, neither the tombs of the martyrs nor the cross of Calvary. Unbelief has erected no hospitals, built no asylums, reformed no criminals, civilized no nation. But we can see daily around us its destructive

work. We see it in the existence of sons of Christian mothers, who deem themselves too intelligent, too wise, too far advanced to frequent churches, or even to grant that 'Unknowable' they have enthroned on Jehovah's seat the least worship, the least adoration, the least gratitude. It has taught them to make the chief end of life, riches, power or pleasure, to acknowledge no other restraints than those of civil laws and selfish regard for themselves. Unbelief has, although in a smaller degree, influenced woman, and the results, which we need not specify here, have been appreciated by unbelievers themselves, who rarely prefer the infidel to the believer when they wish for a life companion, or even for a school teacher or a governess. The most skeptical husband knows well that he has infinitely higher guarantees of faithfulness in the principles of a Christian wife than in the most beautiful theories of the agnostic.

Insufficient to build up and insure the solidity of the social edifice; modern agnosticism is still more insufficient to satisfy the wants and aspirations of the human soul. It wipes away no tear; it may float on the ocean of life during a dead calm, but sinks at the first tempest. We have, in dark days of life a thousand times felt the strength of the divine comforts of the gospel in our soul. Where shall we find the comforts of a philosophy without a personal God? Answer, great philosophers of the age! For it is not only our intellect which cries for the light; it is our heart. And what light do you give in the eclipses of life, or beyond the veil of the grave? In spite of the most beautiful sophistry the human heart, brethren, has always cried out with Philip, "Show us the Father and it sufficeth us," and will always repeat that cry. Show us the Father! The Father, not only God, but more. God in His relation to man. Any ideal, less than this, although superior already to the highest conception of infidelity, would be insufficient. Therefore, so long as man is the Being that we find him, we have not the least fear that agnosticism or any other system of philosophy can destroy, or replace the theism of holy writ. Even according to the much talked of doctrine of the survival of the fittest, the gospel will survive modern attacks as it has survived the old. Human science has much to do, much to invent, before it can supply the world with a moral force equal to the one bestowed by Jesus of Nazareth, when He revealed God as the Father of humanity; much to do, before it could replace the Creator, by causes, both improbable, and in any case insufficient for known effects, before proving that humanity has groped in the dark through all its ages until those comets of the 19th century left their track on the heavens. Will it ever succeed? We think not, and as a philosopher of the modern school wrote in a recent number of the most widely circulated French review. "After having tried everything, some of us may possibly discover that there is a God who is the Father of his creatures, and a future life to which this present existence is only the preface."

Secondly. This brings us to consider the sufficiency of the Christian ideal of a Divine Father. Let us first ascertain what are the needs of humanity. They are social necessities and personal necessities. How does the gospel, that revelation of God as a Father, meet them? If God is "the Father" of all mankind, men are brethren. Both statements are explicitly made in the Gospel. God is called "the Father of all." We are directed to address Him in prayer "As our Father which art in Heaven." Jesus tells men "Ye are all brethren," and the apostles address Jews and Gentiles by the titles "men and brethren."

We cannot separate the Fatherhood of God from the brotherhood of man. Let man see His Father in God, and receive this relation with the implicit faith it merits, and the noblest virtues, the most touching sacrifices, will