

it in more mature years. Early in life, before the mind has been formed, the child is saturated with the Christian superstition and the tree bends, naturally, in the direction in which the young twig is inclined.

In spite of all this there is a tendency for adults to abstain from attending church and to such an extent has this tendency grown that the churches are loudly complaining of the lack of attendance each Sunday and the evident lack of interest in religion upon the part of the masses in both England and America. Every Sunday some preacher finds it necessary for him to hold forth upon this subject and not a few offer some suggestion as a means of increasing the attendance at his particular church. Bribes are offered. They used to employ threats, but that game won't work in these prosaic days. An estimate has been made which places fully seventy-five per cent of the people who remain away from church and many different causes for this indifference are assigned. But few seem to have discovered the real cause which is the fact that the people have had enough of religion, are sick and tired of the subject and have practically abandoned it.

According to Sebastian G. Messmer, Archbishop of the Roman Catholic Diocese of Milwaukee, the disestablishment of the church in Italy is bound to take place in the near future. This is a consumation devoutly to be wished. With France ousting the church and Italy following suit, the latter, now the home of the Vatican, will inflict a more serious blow upon the church. Bishop Messmer admits that everything now points to such an event, and is capable of realizing that the government does not occupy a friendly attitude towards the church. The growth of education in Europe is producing an anti-clerical feeling, and the innumerable hypocrisies within the church all working the Freethought leaven among the masses in all Europe. It must have been a bitter pill for bishop Messmer to swallow when in a recent statement made in public he said:

"It is true that a large portion of the people of Italy seem to be drifting away from the Church, many of them into infidelity. This is due to two causes—first, to the fact that the universities and higher institutions of learning are all in the hands of the government. Infidels are appointed to the professorships, and the works of the German philosophers tending to infidelity are translated into Italian and taught in these institutions. Thus, infidelity is sown broadcast among the upper classes.

Without knowing it or realizing it, perhaps, this priest has placed education as a correlative of infidelity and practically admits that the orthodox religion can flourish best only where ignorance prevails. Nor will an extended religious instruction avail the church because the character of instruction implied thereby does not make for the progress that marks the age in which we are living. When we consider the further fact that the Pope cannot appoint a bishop today, save in some of the old Roman states, without the consent and approval of the government, we may perceive that this church is no longer able to dictate but is dictated to. There can be no doubt about the unfriendliness of the Italian government towards the church and the government has good and sufficient cause to be unfriendly. The church has never aided the government save when it could aid itself by so-doing. Experience has taught even governments that a church power, solid and influential, within its jurisdiction, is an unmixed evil and one by one restrictions are placed

upon the church and its power curbed. Naturally enough the preachers make a kick but it is worse than useless. Let disestablishment come and may the day that brings it be hastened in its dawning.

Instructive figures, showing the apathy of the people towards the church, are contained in the report of the Manchester City Mission, submitted to the annual meeting.

In six districts of the city details were obtained concerning 20 streets, totalling 605 houses. Taking one representative from each house, 139 claimed to attend a place of worship, 382 stated that "they never go anywhere," and 84 claimed a nominal adherence to church or chapel, but owned that they did not go.

In another district, out of 75 houses tenanted by "Protestants" only six professed to attend a place of worship. In some localities the average was one in ten; at best it was one in four or five.

Seventy-five per cent of the people, therefore, do not attend worship, while the claim of attachment to some place, made by many for the sake of respectability, will be found on examination (says the report) to be no index as to the facts of the case.

Frequently on inquiry it is discovered that they have not been for six or seven years. In many cases and not since marriage; the husband gave it up when he left Sunday school, and the woman claims that it is impossible to go on account of having the children to see to, or, as one woman bluntly expressed it, "Good Heavens, man! I've got enough to do to look after the kids."

That Pittsburg preacher denies that he refused to accept \$100 in "mottoless" gold from his congregation. He offers as proof of the denial the fact that no money was offered him.

THE PERFECTION OF GOD.

Well Written Article on a Deep Subject From a Fifteen Year Old Lad.

(By Joe B. Thorn.)

For the sake of a mere experiment let us borrow the time machine of H. S. Wells and travel backward if we can, far into the past.

Were it possible for us to gaze upon the earth from a distance we would behold an enormous body, probably twice its present size, completely enveloped in flame, with an abundance of oxygen and hydrogen that have not been forced off the surface by chemical or mechanical action.

Still travelling we observe the two elements named in a more condensed form, and we perceive they have now formed water. The water and the land were not divided then as they are now but the land overlapped the water and the water overlapped the land. In other words the combination wrought was simply a shallow, muddy sea, extending from pole to pole, for be it known there were no mountains in those days.

Now the question arises, how did life first originate? Life is but the natural evolution of a body supplied with proper elements. In passing from a heated state into a cold state there was no life for there could be none.

We will not stop our machine at every station but turn the cranks and push rapidly on until we reach the monkey-man epoch. The first man noticed the movements of the sun and stars; he saw the lightning and heard the thunder; he saw the ceaseless movements of rivers and seas; he saw volcanoes in eruption, and from these phenomena the man-god epoch came to be. From these terrestrial, solar and

stellar experiences man drew the forces, those notions, from which he created god. In other words, simpler, perhaps, everything this early bird failed to understand he converted into a god, and what he did know could have been put into a capsule.

Each of these gods had a separate function to perform, but every durn one of them took it out of the poor little monkey-man, who had created them and was unable to defend himself against them. In a few years he began to understand things a little better and he began to get rid of his gods one by one. During the days of Hellenic civilization man was blessed, or cursed, with over 2 000 gods.

The Hebrews were perhaps the first to show a little common sense. They got awful tired of so many cranky gods and narrowed their vision down to but one. In making this unitarian selection they donated to him the possession of absolute power, not knowing or caring how he would use it. He was a sour, sometimes a just god, but was extremely jealous. He enjoyed himself by busting the banking institutions of the Jews and appropriating their savings by sending either an Egyptian or Assyrian army down upon them. In this manner the Jewish god was getting perfected day by day. Later the Hebrews gave him to the Greeks, but the strangest part of this affair is that the Hebrews had just as much left. This god grew jealous toward the people for eating hog-meat because he liked it better as a burnt offering.

When god had monopolized Israel he turned his attention to a few other countries but didn't succeed in crossing the Atlantic until Columbus showed him the way. Maybe he could have done it if he wanted to but was afraid of the redskins. I do not blame him either for not coming all by his lonesome and converting Injuns.

God seemed to take an especial delight in watching people blow out each other's brains ever since he allowed a monk to invent gunpowder. Before that he had the people use betts. He also burnt San Francisco and allowed the heathen Japanese whip the Christian Russians and is now looking for another scrap like that somewhere.

Here, then, we have the people's great god! He is selfish, unjust and cruel. Instead of fixing up home missions for his people he visits foreign lands and it maybe that he has got all the followers he can here as the army of Freethought is steadily advancing. If we can run him and his missionaries abroad, why can we not run them to the moon? But let us not be too hard on the Christians for they are modifying him that after a while we can accept him. Until that time comes let us await the perfection of god.

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