

THE RELIGIOUS WORLD.

NATURE STUDY IN THE SUNDAY SCHOOL.

MR. WILLBUR S. JACKMAN, of the School of Education in the University of Chicago, contends that the teaching of certain phases of nature study as science should be an integral feature of seventh-day instruction. Science and religion, urges Mr. Jackson, have been moving along on converging lines toward contact without collision. This movement has resulted already, he claims, "in a reconsideration concerning the function both, both, and in a new conception of the spiritual realm." Hence his advocacy of the introduction of science into the Sunday school. Of the difficulties confronting such an innovation he writes in *The Educational Review*, New York, as follows:

"It is important in the outset to observe that the task of the present is simply to introduce nature study into the Sunday-school. If that were all, the undertaking would be far simpler than it really is. It must be remembered that a vivid account of nature always has been presented with dramatic clearness as a part of the Sunday-school curriculum. So faithfully have these lessons been taught that to thousands of people it were not more shocking to doubt the common axioms of morality than it is to question any part of the Bible as a record of nature. . . . But out of patient and careful observation science has reached a conception of the origin, the development and the destiny of nature and of man's place in the great plan, that can not be linked with the primitive conception by even the maddest flights of poetic fancy. . . . The Darwinian theory, which certainly has more points in its favor regarding the history of life than any other, completely demolishes the old picture which was very firmly established in our minds in our early years through the teaching of the Sunday-school. . . . It is against this kind of wall of pious belief that nature study must thrust itself and upon which it must make a serious impression if it is to gain a foothold in the Sunday-school as a means of moral and religious training. To introduce nature study into the Sunday-school, then, is to make a direct factor in moral and religious training means to give the child an entirely different point of view from that received by those of us who regarded its lessons a quarter of a century ago."

What, in the old conception, was the story of an immature nature, we now regard as the story of a man in nature, says Mr. Jackman. He continues:

"The generalization of science upon which our future ethical systems must rest is that nothing happens through whim or chance; that everything that in the realm of the physical world and within the field of human action occurs in fixed and definite order. . . . There are at this instant before us the so-called natural laws that have a general recognition. Of these, the law of gravitation is perhaps the best example. . . . So far, at least, have people been thoroughly trained the principles of science. But, one step farther and there is considerable confusion. There are, for instance, whole communities which know that the only way to avoid injury from the falling brick is to dodge it, yet they do not hesitate to pray for rain which the last analysis is such a matter of physics as the falling brick. And, when we go beyond this, and seek to refer human actions and their consequences to natural laws that are as rigid and as immutable as that which controls the falling brick or the leaning house, there are as yet but very few people who are willing to follow. . . . Mature reflection, however, will show that the considerations of science are to be preferred. It is vastly more conducive to sound faith to realize that the affairs of men are, on the whole, subject to a beneficent and unchanging order than it is to suppose that they are subject to the vagaries of caprice that may yield at any moment to either human or celestial influence. Herein lies the tremendous stimulus to the study of nature; the greater knowledge of the law and the facts, the more secure we become in our possession of the future."

The law of love, as set forth by Christ, is a natural moral law, states Mr. Jackman. He claims, moreover, that the final confir-

mation of the great law of love belongs to science, and must come "from and through a study of nature." We read:

"Nineteen centuries ago the high law was steadily and unflinchingly maintained and so bravely maintained that it transfixed the attention of the world. 'Whoever will lose his life shall find it.' There has never been formulated a higher natural law than this. . . . The law of love is an expression of a fixed natural moral order, as the law of gravitation is an expression of a fixed natural physical order. The ape and tigers and all their kind who cannot understand this law of love will not observe it; but the wise man, inasmuch as he will not be bowed beneath a fallacious wall. There is no wonder why it has taken nineteen centuries for the great principle expounded by Christ to have any popular influence in the affairs of men is because they have not believed it to be a natural law. They have looked upon it as a whim or as merely the expression of personal opinion, or as a bit of advice, and nobody, necessarily, has any regard for any of these several things. It is the only law of the universe. The final confirmation of the great law of love belongs to science. It comes from and through a study of nature. Its acceptance is made possible only by man's true place in nature becoming known and understood. What a century under the operation of this law will do for mankind we can scarcely imagine. In a hundred years we shall look back upon the present century, and the reformers of the present will look back upon the pillars and humbers of the present of reform. The present will be visited as curiosities as we now visit the Tower of London. The new century of science will be the age of the schoolboys and of education. The strong will help the weak and thus more surely increase the power of the weak."

"We stand in much more before the disaster of the Illinois disaster. The disaster is repeated over and over again every year in our cities. Unsanitary houses, filthy streets, adulterated food, impure air combine to carry off human beings that are the victims of a neglect as reprehensible as that which attaches to any directly responsible for the Illinois disaster. That they die one by one and alone instead of suddenly and in a heap does not really lessen the horror. The conscientious application of half the science we know would save them all. I believe in the great doctrine of redemption. When imbued with the new religion, every man will become a savior of the weak and the needy. Man will not only be a brother but a brother who will be a brother in truth his redemption."

THE DECAY OF RELIGIOUS CONTROVERSY.

FRANCIS WILLIAM NEWMAN is cited by Francis Gibble in *The Fortnightly Review* (London), as one of the anti-theists of his brother, Cardinal Newman, but as a man who laid the axe at the root of the tree of dogma. With the abolition of dogma will follow eventually the abolition of religious controversy. The contrast between the theological methods of the two brothers is thus suggested:

"Francis Newman once tried to explain to Dr. Martineau the difference between his own religious attitude and that of his eminent brother the Cardinal. 'It is a matter of faith,' he said. 'I have faith, and the Cardinal has none. The Cardinal comes to a river and believes that he cannot possibly cross it unless he takes a particular boat with a particular man to guide him on it. But I believe that I can swim.'"

By the boat, of course, he meant dogmatic doctrine. Francis Newman passed from "a rigid to a fluid" Christianity, from a fixed to an elastic creed, from definiteness to vagueness; from a religion of the intellect to a religion of faith. The cant word "latitude" has been applied to this "fluid Christianity," in which dogmas have been dropped and dogmology only maintained. The views of advanced thinkers with regard to dogma Mr. Gibble thus states:

"At present, as far as men can judge . . . the view of dogma entertained by advanced thinkers within the churches appears to be pretty much this: that there is now a very general failing to accept them as sins that have been committed. We have most of them were dropped, and the best stated; but that they have the propo-