

VIEW FROM THE TOWER.

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Rev. Charles A. Briggs, D.D., for some years professor of Hebrew in the Union Theological Seminary (Presbyterian), has for some months been the centre of a religious commotion which is causing Presbyterianism a great deal of trouble and is awakening all classes of thinking people.

Prof. Briggs is a fine scholar, and is more than ordinarily independent as a thinker. For some time he has been a leader among the progressives in Presbyterian circles, and, with others, has been quite outspoken in his opposition to the old Confession of Faith, and very desirous of having a new one adopted which would be liberal enough to permit the advanced and progressive Presbyterians to remain in the denomination and subscribe to its Creed without so many mental reservations and stretchings of conscience as have been and still are necessary.

We can only commend the desire for full freedom of conscience evinced by Prof. Briggs and his colleagues, and heartily advocate the abolition of the musty traditions and confessions of our forefathers. We utterly repudiate the thought that the framers of the Presbyterian and other creeds of Christendom were either more honest or more inspired than are Christian men of to-day. And surely the increased facilities for critical Bible study which to-day abound should permit honest men under the guidance of the one Spirit of truth to gain a clearer idea of the teachings of the Bible than was ever before possible. It is, therefore, undoubtedly right for Prof. Briggs and for all true Christians to seek to know God's revealed truth, and to hold and teach it rather than the misconceptions of that truth entertained by fellow-mortals centuries ago. In no way could the promise of God have been fulfilled, that the path of his Church shall shine more and more unto the perfect day (Prov. 4:18), unless some of God's people had acted upon this principle of loyalty to his Word, thus asserting their freedom from human bondage.

But, having commended the attitude of Professor Briggs and his colleagues in their battle against the darkness and errors of the past, we

must criticise the methods they have adopted, because we believe them wholly wrong, dishonoring to themselves, and dishonest toward others not so far advanced, who put them into the positions of trust and influence they now occupy. Surely the use of influence thus bestowed, to the injury of the system which reposed the trust, is neither honorable nor honest, and must therefore be worthy of condemnation. We regret the necessity for such plainness of speech; but many teachers of theology greatly need plain lessons in honesty--in doing to others as they would that others should do to them if the circumstances were reversed.

Nor can it be urged that the end sought--the liberation of Presbyterians from a dead creed--

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justifies the means. This is the doctrine of the Jesuits, but it is condemned by the Apostle Paul as unworthy of any servant of God. (Rom. 3:8.) On the contrary, while warring against error and sin and in behalf of the Truth, we should remember that no warrior will be crowned unless he war lawfully--justly. (2 Tim. 2:5.) The maxim, "All is fair in war," will not apply to Christian soldiers fighting the good fight of faith--contending for the faith once delivered to the saints.

But, says one such, I have a good excuse for my conduct: let me state it to you. For the past three to six years I have been out of harmony with the denomination with which I am connected. I have seen that its ideas on election and damnation, and other subjects, are entirely unscriptural, and I have longed and prayed for the revision of our Confession now in progress. I am glad of what we have attained: it is a step in the right direction. I wish to God it were more thorough, and I hope to see it so within the next ten years. Meantime, I, with others, will wait and privately labor for that end. In the Presbyterian church I have had an opportunity and an influence for good which I would not have had if I had stepped out of her six years ago; and one result is the present half-way revision of the Confession. Had I stepped out of my pulpit, merely announcing that a change of views as to the teachings of the Bible prevented my remaining any longer a Presbyterian, the support of myself and family would have been withdrawn unless I could have found some other denomination with which I could fully agree, which is not the case. I consider that I have a right to teach in my

own pulpit and to my own congregation of the Lord's church whatever I find taught in God's Word, so long as they are agreeable to having it so. Now tell me, Does not this explanation justify my course?

Ah no! dear Brother. Do get rid of that Jesuitical idea that the end sought justifies ignoble and dishonorable means for obtaining that end. You know very well that it is not your pulpit, but the pulpit owned and controlled by the Presbyterian denomination; and you know very well that it was only upon your recognition of it as their pulpit and under their supervision and control and after you had most solemnly vowed before God and men that you accepted and believed fully all the doctrines and regulations of Presbyterianism, that you were intrusted with the influence as a pastor, and as a teacher of Presbyterianism. You know, too, that your congregation is similarly bound, and that it assembles, not as a Church of Christ to study and to believe all that you can find and point out in God's Word, but as a Presbyterian church, pledged to believe neither more nor less than is taught in the Presbyterian Confession of Faith. You know very well, too, that if you, and every member of your congregation, should conclude to become simply Bible-Christians, taking God's Word as your only rule of faith and practice, as did the early Church, you would be hindered from using even the church-building, which is the property of the Presbyterian denomination. Think not that the Master will award a crown of glory for such violations of your covenant with your fellowmen, even though done in the name of service for the truth. Remember, too, that obedience, even without sacrifice, is better than great sacrifices without obedience.

You should have stepped out of Presbyterianism or any other ism you might have been in,

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just as soon as you received greater light on God's Word than its creed would permit you to preach fully and conscientiously. The Lord has promised to provide for our temporal wants--as well as for our eternal welfare--not sumptuously, but nevertheless surely.--Isa. 33:15,16.

#### PROFESSOR BRIGGS' DOCTRINES.

A new professorship had just been added to the Union Theological Seminary--that of Biblical Theology--and Prof. Briggs had been

called to fill it. He took the usual oath, declaring his belief in the inspiration of the Scriptures, and in the Westminster Confession of Faith as the proper interpretation of them, and promised to teach nothing subversive of the said Confession; and it was his inaugural address which followed (January 20th, 1891) that aroused the disturbance of which his name is now the centre.

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That inaugural address seems to many candid people to be a direct violation of the oath just previously taken. We give, below, a synopsis of the address, from which all can judge how much elasticity of conscience it would require to make oath that it is simply Presbyterian doctrine, or Prof. Briggs' understanding of the meaning or teaching of the Westminster Confession.

#### JUST WHAT THE ADDRESS URGED.

"The address set forth historically three great fountains of divine authority--the Bible, the Church, and the reason. The authority of the Church, the address urged, served to lead to God the majority of Christians from the Apostolic ages. If we cannot see good in the Church it is because the institutions of the Church have so enveloped themselves with human conceits and follies. The authority of reason was equally potent to lead men to the truth. This is the very holy of holies of human nature, and the vast multitude are unconsciously guided by God through its forms. The third source is the Bible.

"As examples, the men who have been thus led to the truth were instanced--Cardinal Newman, the churchman; the rationalistic philosopher, Martineau; and the great biblical expounder, Spurgeon. These three, the address held, found God in their own ways through the three fountains of authority.

#### HUMAN OBSTRUCTIONS TO THE BIBLE.

"The Bible, continued the address, is the book of God, the greatest treasure of the Church. Of the three fountain-heads, no one is so beset with human obstructions as the Bible. No one can get at the Bible unless he force his way through these human obstacles. These barriers are: (1) A superstitious reverence for the book itself. (2) The belief in the verbal inspiration

of the Bible. The divine authority is not in the words but in the thoughts.

(3) The authenticity of the Scriptures. Traditions from the dead church assign authors to all the books of the Bible, but higher criticism pronounces these traditions fallacies and follies.

(4) The dogma of the inerrancy of the Bible. Historical criticism again pronounces that there are errors in the Bible, but they are in circumstantial, not in essentials. (5) The miracles are in violation of the laws of nature, and they keep men away from the Bible. (6) The failure of minute prophecy.

"As to the doctrines on Faith, there are (1) the doctrine of God, (2) the doctrine of Man and (3) the doctrine of Redemption.

#### FUTURE PROBATION.

"The Old Testament doctrine of redemption is chiefly concerned with (1) material interests of man; (2) redemption comprehends the whole process of grace; that is, it comprehends justification, sanctification and glorification; (3) redemption is not limited to this world, but continues during the vast periods of time which have elapsed for most men in the middle state between death and the resurrection. This middle state must not be shortened as to time by human limitations.

"The only sanctification known to experience is progressive, and cannot be limited as to time. Progressive sanctification after death is the doctrine of the Bible and the Church.

(4) Redemption is a redemption of our race and of universal nature. It is not to be limited by the doctrine of election. There is a definite number of the redeemed, but that is multitudes that no one can number. The salvation of the world is the salvation of the race as a whole."

The fault found with Prof. Briggs is upon these two points--his placing the Church and uninspired Reason not only on a parity with the Bible, but even in advance of it, and his belief in a future probation in an intermediate state, between death and resurrection; or, as he states it, before the judgment.

Prof. Briggs has since re-affirmed his statements above quoted, and has supplemented them by fuller explanations, some of which we quote below. Defending his position on the Bible, he declares--

"That the Church is a source of divine authority is taught by all the organized churches of Christendom."

And again--

"Unless God's authority is discerned in the forms of the reason, there is no ground upon which any of the heathen could ever have been saved, for they know nothing of Bible or Church."

"Unless God speaks with authority in the forms of the reason, no other mode of revelation was ever possible than that of an external and mechanical kind."

We see just where the Professor stands; and we believe that many more Presbyterians and others who take opposite views from his would more fully sympathize with his position if they were as logical as he is without seeing the one and only complete solution of the problem. Prof. Briggs has gotten out of the idea that

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the Presbyterian Church contains all, or nearly all, the "elect," and that all others than the elect little flock are unalterably predestinated to everlasting torture. He is therefore, with a larger heart, looking around him to see who are saved and what saved them. He thinks of the billions of heathen people who have never heard of the Redeemer and who have never seen a Bible or in any way come in contact with its truths. He thinks, too, of some honest-minded, moral-living skeptics who have not believed in the Bible or trusted in Christ as their Redeemer. His conclusion, in common with the conclusions of other progressive theologians, is that these are somehow saved at death; for surely they are too good and too numerous to be tormented to all eternity on account of not believing what was not clearly made known to them. He asks himself, What saved these billions? and answers: Neither the Church nor the Bible, but Reason.

The Professor next looks about him at those who have come more or less under the influence of the various professed churches, and thinks of the millions under the control of Roman Catholicism, Greek Catholicism, Mohammedanism, etc., who have practically no access to the Bible, and of the millions of Protestants who know but little of either the Bible or its teachings. He cannot, nor can any other man of sound and enlightened reason, bring himself to think that all these millions are to be tormented forever because of their ignorance of the Bible and its teachings. So he asks himself, What saves these millions? The only answer he seems to get is, The churches as organizations save them by teaching them to live approximately

moral lives.

Thus unintentionally, and contrary to their own theories and to the Scriptures, they make morality the ground or condition of salvation. Certain errors in their way hinder their getting the real Scriptural solution of the problem and force them to reason from false premises to erroneous conclusions.

Looking next at the Bible and at the few who have any considerable understanding of it, he reaches the conclusion that of the three presumable fountains of divine authority and instruction the Bible saves the fewest and should be mentioned last. But the gentleman has surely omitted another, a fourth fountain, necessary to be remembered to complete his theory; for from this fourth fountain of saving grace (according to his theory) more blessing flows than from all the others together. That fourth fountain (according to his theory) is ignorance; for the Professor and many others claim that more than one-half of the race die in infancy, and that all these, since the revision of the Confession, are saved as fully by ignorance as the others are saved by reason, or the Church, or the Bible.

Having found that the Bible saves very few, the Professor next concludes that it has been idolized too much, and forthwith he declares its errancy, and that not the words of the prophets and apostles were inspired, but merely the naked ideas, which they were left to clothe in fit or misfit language of any color, according to their temperaments or moods. According to this theory every reader is left free to guess for himself and to imagine what he pleases, regardless of the meaning of the words used by the apostles and prophets.

Against such a theory we must most emphatically protest. If we can place no dependence on the inspiration of the language of the Bible we are entirely without a divine revelation. Even among those who admit that the words are inspired there are widely conflicting views taken, and we can readily see that if verbal inspiration were denied, and each interpreter left free to guess what the apostles and prophets had in their minds, regardless of the words they used, it would speedily make the Word of God of none effect. Take any text on any subject and apply this idea, and see what nonsense it would make. For instance, in the one which reads, "The soul that sinneth

it shall die:" if the words were not inspired, but merely the teacher's "concept," the interpreter might deny that the word "sinneth" conveyed the proper concept, and claim that the prophet had not expressed himself clearly, but that he meant a vile sinner who commits several murders. Or another might deny the word "die" and claim that the prophet did

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not express himself correctly, and that instead he should have said, shall live in misery. Or another might question the use of the word soul and claim that the prophet should have said body. And thus each self-conscious reader might reconstruct his Bible to meet his own "concept."

Besides, if Prof. Briggs and others to-day are able to get the conception or thought of the Spirit of God in spite of the improper use of words by the apostles and prophets, and if they in turn are able to express the real thought in better words, would it not prove that these teachers are much in advance of the writers of the Bible on all points, and consequently that it is time to discard the Bible as a hindrance rather than a help to the knowledge of the truth? --because the common people will take the erroneous (?) words of the apostles and prophets instead of going to Prof. Briggs for the true (?) interpretation--the proper words which they should have used and which the Holy Spirit should have dictated. In that event would it not be far the best plan now to suppress the Bible and to hire Prof. Briggs and his colleagues to be our Pope and council to tell us the truth?

Is not this one of the very mistakes made by Papacy? It first placed the teachers of the living Church ahead of the teachings of the apostles and prophets, and very soon the Bible was not only useless to them, but an inconvenience, because the common people might puzzle the clergy by asking how the teachings of the living apostles (?) agreed with those of the dead apostles. Let Christians everywhere beware how they take such a backward step. If we discredit the verbal inspiration of the Bible we may as well cast the book aside entirely.

But let us not be misunderstood: We do not refer to the English or German or any other translation of the Bible as being verbally inspired. Translators and transcribers have made a few errors; and here and there a few passages have crept in under the Bible covers which do



not belong to the Bible. These,\* of course, we do not defend.

Another matter: certain books, such as Chronicles, Kings, Esther, Jonah, etc., are merely histories, and no more inspiration was necessary to write them than other more modern histories. A truthful statement of facts is all that can be demanded or claimed for these. And not only are any reasons for false statements lacking here, but considering that these histories cover centuries it is remarkable that so few flaws can be found in them. Their chief value is in furnishing us with chronological and genealogical data, the value of which information we have seen in examining the subjects presented in MILLENNIAL DAWN, VOL. II., where we saw also that God has supplied, through the apostles in the New Testament, any breaks or points of uncertainty in those records.

When Prof. Briggs asserts that the minutiae of prophecies have never been fulfilled, he speaks from his own standpoint merely, and does not realize the minuteness of the fulfilments past and present. Our readers who have carefully studied Volumes II. and III. of MILLENNIAL DAWN will disagree with the gentleman and wish that he could realize with us some of the minute fulfilments.

The claim that the authorship of certain books and portions of the Bible is a subject of dispute does not affect the question. For instance, whether or not Moses wrote one word of the first five books of the Bible is of no consequence. We know that Israel as a nation accepted those books as the essence of Moses' teachings. We know, too, that our Lord and the apostles referred to and quoted from the narratives of those books as the teachings of God through Moses. What matters it, then, whether Moses wrote them with his own hand or whether he had amanuenses who wrote according to his direction and under his supervision, and who properly closed the records with a purely historical account of the death of the great law-giver.

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\*As instances see John 21:25; Mark 16:9-20; Rev. 20:5; portions of 1 John 5:7,8; and other less important words interpolated at sundry times, as shown by comparison of texts of the three oldest Greek MSS., by Prof. C. Tischendorf. All students should have these Testaments with Tischendorf's foot notes. We have arranged to supply them at 50 cents post paid--usual price being \$1.00 plus postage.

Again, a difference should be recognized between the prophetic and doctrinal writings of the apostles and prophets and the merely historical books of Joshua, Judges, Samuel, Kings, Chronicles, Esther, Ruth, the four Gospels and the Acts of the Apostles, which are merely historical records. The truthful writing of matters of history in this our day is not supposed to require inspiration, but merely honesty; and all well-informed persons know that the Jewish scribes were scrupulously careful in their work. In fact, no other historic records of those times are counted worthy of comparison with theirs.

We hold, however, and believe the claim is supported by the internal evidences of the historic books of the Bible, that God, intending to furnish his people with such a reliable history of such incidents, dates, etc., as would be necessary or helpful to them, assisted the memories and exercised a general supervision over those whom he used as narrators of the historical features of his Word, "that the man of God might be thoroughly furnished." (2 Tim. 3:16,17.) And to some extent the same may be inferred respecting many items of more modern history which bear testimony to the fulfilments of prophecy, though the historians themselves were in total ignorance of the service they rendered to divine truth. The slight inaccuracies in some of the dates given in the books of Kings are, as we have heretofore shown, fully met and corrected by Chronicles and other Scripture; and many of them no doubt would be fully explained if the history were given in greater detail, so as to show joint reigns of fathers and sons.

The authorship of the epistle to the Hebrews is also in dispute. But those who have partaken of the spirit of that epistle can not doubt that it was inspired by God, whoever may have written it. But so far as we are concerned there is no room to question that the author was none other than that great theologian and servant of the Church, the Apostle Paul. No other pen, it would seem, than that which wrote the Epistle to the Romans, except under special divine control, could write so clearly and forcibly of spiritual things.

Miracles the Professor dismisses as "violations of the laws of nature;" but we should remember that many things might appear to us to be violations of nature's laws which in reality

are not such. The usual we consider to be the law, while in reality the usual is as little understood as the unusual. For instance, it is the usual thing for grape-juice to form gradually, slowly, upon a vine, yet our Master, who undoubtedly understood the laws of nature, should not be esteemed a violator of its laws because he produced similar results at the marriage at Cana without the usual process. He, as the one who was giving his life as man's substitute and redeemer, violated no law that we understand or can appreciate when he healed the multitudes by letting his vitality (virtue-- Luke 6:19; 8:46) go out into them.

Our Lord's miracles were not foolish deeds for the benefit of the curious. They were, all of them, good works done, not selfishly in his own interest, for the gain of wealth or power, like the fabled miracles of Aladdin and others, but they were part and parcel of the long promised fruits of the Kingdom: "Those things did Jesus and manifested forth [beforehand] his glory." (John 2:11.) It was by these that Israelites were to recognize him as Messiah, in fulfilment of the predictions of the prophets. And when John the Baptist hesitated a little and sent to our Lord to inquire whether he were indeed the Christ, Jesus replied by pointing to his miracles as evidence, saying, "Go and show John again those things which ye do hear and see: The blind receive their sight and the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed and the deaf hear, the dead are raised up and the poor have the gospel preached to them."--Matt. 11:4,5.

#### DR. BRIGGS' VIEW OF FUTURE PROBATION.

In Dr. Briggs' views on future probation, or, as he terms it, progressive sanctification, centers chiefly the interest felt in his new departure. His skepticism upon other points could be lightly passed over by many who cannot brook even the suggestion that grace and mercy extend beyond the present life.

And yet on the other hand there is an increasing number of Presbyterians and of other

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Christians whose hearts are nearer to the truth than their heads--who seem to be feeling after the truth, but who are so convinced that their denominational creeds properly present the teachings of the Bible that God's Word is the last place they would think of looking into for a reasonable solution of their difficulties. This

is well illustrated by the remarks of the Rev. H. P. Smith, when discussing Dr. Briggs' position before the Presbyterian General Assembly at Detroit recently. He is reported thus by the public press:

"He quoted the passages of the Confession that point to a limited atonement, and that about elect infants, and said the revision recently recommended by the committee would not very long ago have been considered rank heresy. I don't understand Prof. Briggs' views on progressive sanctification (laughter), but that

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may not be because they are not clear. The Confession has many points that are often misunderstood. The doctrine of the Presbyterian Church is that every minute thirty human beings drop into the unspeakable and unending torments of hell. Think of this awful belief--you can't do it and keep out of the lunatic asylum. I think most of us have a secret hope that in some way God will find a way out of this. If Dr. Briggs can find this in the Bible, let us be glad. On a strict construction of the Confession, of course, he is wrong, but will you, who mean to make such a radical change of our Confession as to say that all infants are saved, not leave a little margin for Dr. Briggs? Prejudice is easily raised but not allayed. The theological stomach is delicate and made squeamish."

Many of our readers have supposed that Dr. Briggs' views are in harmony with our own, but not so: although his views are much more in sympathy with ours than are the views of Presbyterianism, there is yet a wide difference between a future probation at the close of the Gospel age, during the times of restitution of all things which God hath spoken by the mouth of all his holy prophets since the world began (Acts 3:19-21), and a future probation in death, of which God has never spoken by any apostle or prophet.

Prof. Briggs' position only illustrates how one error invariably leads to another. He sees the necessity of just such a scheme as the Bible points out, but he has not seen what the Bible teaches on the subject, and hence has proceeded to manufacture a theory expressing his own concept of what ought to be, and he believes therefore is, the divine arrangement.

His first conclusion is that the Gospel age, instead of being God's time for the election and perfecting of a "little flock" of saints, is the time for the salvation of millions and

billions of mankind.

His second conclusion is that God does not work miraculous changes in character, but leaves character to be developed under discipline and experience.

His third conclusion is that the vast majority who die have not at death developed good characters, and hence that they would be totally unfit for the companionship of Christ, the saints and the angels until they be put through a schooling and discipline which will develop in them true and pure characters in full harmony with God. His idea is closely allied to that of Romanism expressed in the doctrine of Purgatory, and, though more refined and less objectionable every way, it is equally unscriptural.

His fourth conclusion is that since this theory would get him over his two great difficulties (a small number of saved saints or a host of saved ones unfit for heaven and whose presence there would not only cause pain to themselves but disturb the pleasure of all others there), therefore his way must be God's way.

We quote the Professor's own words in elucidation of his views and his reasons for them.

It will be noticed that he bases nothing upon the statements of the Bible, which he classes last and least among the "three great fountains of divine authority," but bases all upon Reason and Church theories. He uses the word "believers" in connection with his theory, but by this expression he must not be understood to refer to believers in Christ as a redeemer, but rather to all who believe that there is a God (which includes almost every one). This conclusion is irresistible from his statement that Reason is one of the principal fountains of divine revelation. Reason never leads to Christ and his sacrifice and justification by faith, but to works for self-justification. Reason, however, does admit a god of some sort as a first cause of all things; and this we must suppose

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to be Prof. Briggs' understanding of a believer, as in no other sense can heathen millions who never heard of Christ be said to be "believers." His own words are:--

"There are some theologians who persuade themselves that they can believe in the immediate justification and the immediate sanctification of infants, of incapables and of heathen adults, in the change of death, in that supreme moment of transition from this life to the middle state. Such a theory may be stated in

words, but it is inconceivable in fact. It would violate the intellectual and moral constitution of man.

"If regeneration and sanctification are one act, how can we distinguish the intervening act of justification? and if regeneration, justification and sanctification may all be one at death, why not in this life? Why was the world turned upside down at the Protestant reformation in order to discriminate justification by faith from sanctification, if after all these centuries of Protestantism they are really identical?

"Then Protestantism would be not only a failure, but also one of the greatest crimes in history. This is the pit of ruin into which some of the scholastic dogmatic divines of our day would force us, rather than extend the light of redemption into the middle state.

#### ONE WAY TO MAKE CHRISTIANS.

"The doctrine of immediate justification and sanctification at death involves the conceit that the child who dies in infancy a few minutes after birth is immediately justified and sanctified, receives saving faith and all the Christian graces in an instant; while his brother, who lives in this world, is not justified until he reaches the age in which he can exercise personal faith, and then he has all the struggles of life to undergo until he reaches the limits of human life without the comforts of sanctification, which he can not receive until death. If this were so, then blessed are those who die in infancy, and thus outstrip their fellows in the Christian race.

"What parent would not prefer to lay all his children in an early grave, assured of their salvation, rather than expose them to the dreadful risks of life and the possibility of eternal damnation? According to the current beliefs, those Chinese mothers who put their children to death make more Christians than all the missionaries.

"The Roman Catholic doctrine of purgatory is a perversion of the true doctrine. It is mechanical and unethical, like other peculiar doctrines of the Roman Catholic system. But it is better than a blank agnosticism.

"Believers who enter the middle state enter guiltless; they are pardoned and justified, and nothing will be able to separate them from Christ's love. They are also delivered from all temptations. They are encircled with influences for good such as they have never enjoyed before. But they are still the same persons,

with all the gifts and graces and also the same habits of mind, disposition and temper they had when they left the world. Death destroys the body. It does not change the moral and religious nature of man. The eternal punishment of a man whose evil nature has been stripped from him by death and left in the grave is an absurdity. It is the work of sanctification to overcome sin in the higher nature. The Christian graces will unfold under more favorable circumstances than in this world.

#### THE MIDDLE STATE A HEAVENLY UNIVERSITY.

"What practice have infants and imbeciles when they enter the middle state? How far short in practice do the best of men fall? Are they no longer to have an opportunity for the practice of true holiness? Will there be no chance to learn what true holiness is? The middle state must, from the very nature of the case, be a school of sanctification, a heavenly university, the aim of whose training is Christlikeness and glorification at the second advent.

#### CHRIST'S PROPHETIC OFFICE CONTINUES TO THOSE IN THE MIDDLE STATE.

"Christ is the mediator between God and man in the exercise of his office as prophet, priest and king. Those who passed a few years in this world, and then went into the middle state and have been there for centuries, have not passed beyond the need of his mediation. The interval between death and the judgment has its lessons and its training for them as well as for us. The prophetic office of Christ continues to those who are in the middle state. After his own death he went to the abode of the departed spirits and preached unto them his gospel. He ascended into heaven, taking his redeemed with him.

#### THE FATHERS, TOO, TEACH THE DEAD.

"The redeemed robber is not the only one to whom he has something to say in the middle state. All believers enter his school and are trained in the mysteries of his kingdom. Those mysteries are not cleared up by a flash of revelation; they are revealed as the redeemed are able to apprehend them and use them. It is improbable that Augustine, Calvin and Luther will be found in the same class-room as the redeemed negro slave or the babe that has entered

heaven to-day. The fathers and doctors of the Church will be the teachers of the dead, as they taught the living.

"Christ's priestly office continues for them. But, above all, Christ is a king in the intermediate state. Here in this world his reign is complete. His reign is entire over his saints, and they are being prepared by him for the advent, in which they will come with him to reign over the world.

#### THE MODERN CHURCH SHOULD BELIEVE IN THE COMMUNION OF SAINTS.

"The Church is chiefly in the intermediate state. The Church on earth is only the vestibule of it. In this world we have learned to know in part the Messiah of the cross; there in the middle state the redeemed know the glory of the Messiah of the throne. There the Church is in its purity and complete organization, as the bride of the Lamb. There Christ the head and his body the Church are in blessed unity."

It will be noted that the Doctor's chief difficulties here expressed are (1) that his heart has outgrown the Presbyterian Confession of Faith;

and (2) that cold, critical study of the Word of God has exceeded the spiritual study of it in the meekness and simplicity of a disciple at the feet of the Master, seeking divine guidance into the deep things of God's plan therein revealed.

What all such large-hearted Christians need is a full, clear view of the glorious plan of the ages. To obtain such a view, however, requires great meekness and patience: meekness to accept and confess the truth from any source; patience to hold objections in abeyance until its gracious and comprehensive provisions are seen. The plan of our God formed before the world, but requiring ages for its full development, is so just, so loving, so good, so altogether complete and so soul-satisfying, as to leave no aching void for reason to search to fill.

(1) That plan shows that, so far as the world in general is concerned, God, who created all perfect in the one representative man whom he made and in whom he placed procreative powers, has for six thousand years been letting the condemned race feel the full weight of the just penalty threatened and pronounced--"Dying,



thou shalt die."

Only the Church composed of the faithful overcomers of the Patriarchal and Jewish ages and the Church of the Gospel age have yet in any sense or degree escaped the sentence; and these saved ones are as yet saved from that calamity only partially. At present they are "saved by hope" only (Rom. 8:24), and must await the appointed time and the full coming of God's Kingdom, when our blessed Lord and Redeemer will reign in power and great glory, and will complete to both of those Churches the work of salvation, raising them fully out of the death condition to perfection of life and organism.--1 John 5:19; Heb. 11:37-40; Rom. 8:24; 2 Tim. 4:8.

(2) It shows that the "groaning creation," which for six thousand years has been travailing in pain together, is also to be delivered (liberated) from the bondage it is now under by reason of the sentence of death, and that those of the world, too, may have everlasting life if they will accept of it then upon the terms of the New Covenant sealed by the precious blood of him who died for all.--Rom. 8:21; 1 Pet. 1:18,19.

But it shows very clearly in this connection that this deliverance which Christ will extend to the whole creation is not due until after the two elect Churches (Jewish and Christian) have first been selected, and that these two elect classes, as the seed of Abraham--both that which is after the flesh and that which is after the spirit (Rom. 4:16) are thus to be unitedly the agencies of God for blessing all the families of the earth.--Gal. 3:16,29.

(3) It shows that as the Jewish age was the judgment day of the Jewish Church, which proved and selected the worthy ones of the fleshly seed of Abraham who will constitute the earthly phase of the kingdom of God; and as the Gospel age has been the appointed time for the trial and selection of the spiritual seed of Abraham who will constitute the higher, spiritual phase of that kingdom, so the Millennial age is the time appointed as the world's judgment day under the kingdom of Christ which will bless all the families of the earth with a righteous government, and assist all the groaning creation to the attainment of full perfection and everlasting life under the New Covenant.

(4) It shows that the holy ones of both the

sin and accepted God's freely-provided justification by faith, and who consecrated themselves fully to the will and service of God, were accepted of him provisionally as FULLY SANCTIFIED, and were tested by him (Heb. 12:8; Rom. 8:14) in order to prove the depth and sincerity of their sanctification. However, we do not refer to sanctification in the sense which Doctor Briggs' language intimates--a sanctification of perfect conformity of the flesh to the will of the Lord. This is impossible because of the inherited weakness of the flesh through the fall. Our reference is to a sanctification or full conformity of the will or spirit of such consecrated ones to the will of God. Such sanctified ones seek as best they can to bring every thought and word and deed of the depraved body "into captivity to the obedience of Christ." This sanctifying work progresses with each member of the Church as soon as he is accepted into the family of God. This cleansing or purging of God's elect Church is accomplished by those trials and persecutions which are permitted to come upon its members, to teach them their own imperfections, to emphasize the necessity of the ransom, the atonement and the Mediator which God has freely provided, and to develop in each a character appreciative of righteousness and love. Such under the Lord's care grow stronger with each wind of adversity and with each battle with selfishness and sin. Thus we see that, to the faithful of the Jewish Church (Heb. 11:37,38) and the faithful of the Gospel Church, the Jewish and Gospel ages have been purgatories or periods of purgation. With reference to the fires of the purgatory in which God has been thus destroying our weaknesses and cleansing and purifying unto himself the Gospel Church, called to be the Bride of Christ (Eph. 5:30-32), the Apostle says: Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you; but rejoice inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ's sufferings, that when his glory shall be revealed ye may be glad also with exceeding joy.--1 Pet. 4:12,13.

Again, God through the prophet Malachi (3:3) shows that our Lord Jesus himself is the refiner who is purging or purifying the spiritual Levites (believers), that he may present to himself a chaste virgin-church without spot or wrinkle or any such thing.

(5) As the past and present ages have been times of trial, days of judgment and purgatorial fires for these two Churches, so God's design is that the next age, the Millennial day,

will be the purgatory, the day of judgment or trial for the world in general. And those who then accept of the divine offer of everlasting life, under the conditions of the New Covenant, will, during that age, not only be instructed fully in the ways of the Lord, but disciplined also; for the Lord disciplines every son whom he accepts into relationship to himself--whether human or spiritual sons.

The world's purgatorial or reformatory discipline will in some respects be less severe than that of the Jewish and Gospel Churches, because full, clear knowledge of the Lord's character and plan will remove many of the present obstacles to faith and obedience, and because, Satan being bound [active evil influences restrained], everything will be favorable to the formation of good characters, and only the inherited moral and physical weaknesses will remain to be conquered under the sympathetic guidance and assistance of the Christ of God--the Church of God glorified under the great head of that Church, our Lord Jesus Christ, who as Jehovah's representative secured this privilege of reconciliation of sinners with his own precious blood.--Rom. 14:9; 1 Cor. 6:2; Gal. 3:29.

But as the purgatorial discipline of the Gospel Church is specially severe, so the reward to those who prove faithful is correspondingly greater--the world is offered human perfection and honor and glory, the Church, divine perfection and honor and glory. The standard, however, by which all the sons of God must be measured is the golden rule, perfect love (and hence obedience) to God, and love instead of selfishness toward all the sons of God.

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Here, then, we find the arrangement which God's plan has provided for the work of progressive sanctification of "whosoever wills" of

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all the ransomed race, fitting the justified for the proper enjoyment of those holy and everlasting blessings which God offers to all through Christ. This way, too, so far from running counter to God's Word (as human theories always incline to do), is in perfect accord with "all things written" in the Law, the Prophets and the Gospel, whose statements cannot all be used consistently while ignoring this future part of God's great work, without which also God's

character, as declared in his works, must be apologized for instead of adored. Thus the true light now enlightening his Church, and blessing those upon whom falls "the light of the glory of God as it shines in the face of Jesus Christ our Lord," will yet prove, as promised, to be that TRUE LIGHT which shall enlighten every man that cometh into the world.

Thus, ultimately, will "good tidings of great joy be unto all people," and each class of the blessed will in its turn come to its blessing through God's grace in the sacrifice of atonement made once for all by our Lord Jesus, and by the purgatorial experiences through which he will bring all who submit themselves to his will, and will be accounted worthy of everlasting life.

While these purgatorial influences are common to all sons of God as individuals, at all times, yet there are special dispensational burnings as well. For instance, such a special or dispensational burning occurred in the end of the Jewish age, when, the Israelites indeed, the true "wheat" of that dispensation, having been gathered out of it into the Gospel "garner" at Pentecost, a time of great and fiery trouble came upon the "chaff," the remnant of that nation (Matt. 3:12). So, too, will it be in the "harvest" or end of this Gospel age. Our Lord declares that the "wheat" of this age will be separated completely from the "tares" and gathered into the higher garner of his glorified kingdom, and then the purgatorial "fire" will come upon nominal Christendom, producing "a time of trouble such as was not since there was a nation," which will burn up,

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root and branch, all of its false pretenses and evil systems, and thus prepare the world for the reign of the kingdom of Christ, the true Church glorified.

These great dispensational, purgatorial fires cleanse the floor and prepare the way for the work of the dispensations following. Thus the utter destruction of the Jewish polity as the typical kingdom of God was due at the time of the establishing in embryo of its antitype. And in the end of the Gospel age it is likewise proper that the great nominal Church systems, chiefly in the midst of which the true Church or Kingdom has been developed, should be destroyed (as systems) at the time that the acceptable little flock is to be received into the fulness of her promised glory. In both of these instances those cut off from special favor

are still granted such favors as remain. The Jews, broken off from special favor as the natural seed of Abraham, had still open before them whatever favors remained: they, as well as the wild olive branches, might be grafted in again if they continued not in unbelief. So, too, in the end of the Gospel age: after the elect number has been selected and glorified, all the unworthy (rejected from that high position) will go into the great trouble predicted, and in that purgatorial fire they will finally learn of their rejection from that great honor to which they were called; but they will also be shown that God has some other precious favors which are yet open to them.

But in the end of the world's purgatorial trial, in the end of the general judgment of the Millennial age, there will come another dispensational fire upon those who will still be found out of harmony with God and his law of love, at the close of that day of blessed opportunities for knowing and doing the will of the Lord. That fire will signify the "everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord" of all those then found unworthy of life. There will remain nothing further of favor to be extended to them; for wisdom, love and power will then have done all that could justly be done to influence the wills of men toward hearty obedience to God's law of love.

We thus see that although Dr. Briggs is not at heart so far from the plan of God, yet his head is far from being in harmony with either the letter or the spirit of God's Word. Let us the more earnestly contend for the faith once

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delivered to the saints, and seek in every way to speed the true, the Bible view of purgatory as the only satisfactory answer to both the hearts and heads of God's people. Let each one who sees the true light lift it up where others, too, can see it. Let your light so shine among men that they, seeing your good works, your energy, zeal and love for the Lord, may be drawn, also, to examine God's Word and plan afresh, and thus to glorify God on your behalf.

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DELIVERANCE.

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"Still o'er earth's sky the clouds of anger roll,  
And God's revenge hangs heavy on her soul;  
Yet shall she rise--though first by God chastised--  
In glory and in beauty then baptized.

"Yes, Earth, thou shalt arise; thy Father's aid  
Shall heal the wound his chastening hand hath made;  
Shall judge the proud oppressor's ruthless sway,  
And burst his bonds, and cast his cords away.

"Then on your soil shall deathless verdure spring.  
Break forth, ye mountains, and ye valleys, sing!  
No more your thirsty rocks shall frown forlorn,  
The unbeliever's jest, the heathen's scorn.

"The sultry sands shall tenfold harvests yield,  
And a new Eden deck the thorny field.  
E'en now we see, wide-waving o'er the land,  
The mighty angel lifts his golden wand,

"Courts the bright vision of descending power,  
Tells every gate and measures every tower;  
And chides the tardy seals that yet detain  
Thy Lion, Judah, from his destined reign."--Heber.

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"GOD IS IN THE MIDST OF HER."

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"God is in the midst of her; she shall not be moved:  
God will help her at the dawning of her morning."--Psa. 46:5.  
Leeser.

Who is this upon whom the great King of the universe hath so set his love, that though all the earth be in the wildest commotion she shall not be moved? Ah, it is she who in compliance with the invitation of the preceding Psalm (45:10,11) hath inclined her ear, forgetting her own people and her father's house that she might become the joyous bride of the King's Son. She has consecrated the remainder of her life to this one thing--the proving of her worthiness to fill the exalted station to which she is called. Gladly she bids farewell to her own people and her father's house--her human friends and relationships. Henceforth she has no further interest in the hopes, ambitions and aims which she once shared in common with them. The way which leads to the goal of her new ambitions and hopes she also realizes will be long and tedious, set

with many a snare, and thronged with numerous foes. But her heart is fixed and she has put her trust in the omnipotent Jehovah, who lovingly assures her (Psa. 46:1) that he will be her refuge and strength and a very present help in trouble. And to-day, when the trials and dangers are most subtle and ever increasing, God is in the midst of his consecrated ones, his Church, and she is not moved; and every moment she is made to realize his presence and help and strong support. God is in the midst of her; nor shall she ever be moved until glory hath crowned what grace hath begun.

But where is this faithful Church to be found? --this people so set apart from the world, so faithful, so loyal and so true?--so ready always to recognize and accept the Lord's help? Does it gather here or there or yonder? and is God manifestly in the midst of its congregation as evidenced by its joyous songs and fervent prayers? Ah, no! it is a scattered flock; so much so that the world does not discover that there is such a people. The world knows them only as isolated and peculiar individuals who cannot assimilate even with the masses of those who bear the name of Christ. There is one in the quiet of country life whose chief interest is not in the harvest of his earthly crops, and who only plants and reaps thus that he may be able to devote himself so far as possible to the reaping of God's harvest. He has glorious tidings

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for his neighbors far and near, of the kingdom which is soon to be established in the earth. And there is a farmer's wife: in the midst of her busy cares the blessed sound of gospel grace has fallen on her ears. She feels at once like dropping the domestic duties and going abroad to tell the good news. But no; she remembers the Lord's teaching, that he that provideth not for his own house is worse than an unbeliever; and so she says, I will let my light shine here. These little ones around my feet shall learn to rejoice in the truth; my companion, my neighbors, my farm hands and all that I can reach through the mail or the press shall know of it; and all these domestic duties which I realize the Lord would not have me ignore shall henceforth be done with an eye single to his glory.

Here is an invalid and there is an aged saint. Their faith in the Word of God, regardless of the vain philosophies and traditions so commonly accepted, brings upon them many reproaches which are meekly born for Christ's sake, while

they humbly endeavor to let their light shine upon those about them. And yonder in a crowded city are a few who dare to be peculiar--to separate themselves from the customs and habits of social life, to forego the pleasures and present advantages of former social ties, to speak the new and heavenly language, to sing their songs of hope and praise and by every agency within their grasp to send forth the glorious message of the coming kingdom. And then scattered far and near are some unencumbered with earthly cares and joyfully denying themselves, esteeming it a privilege to devote all their time and energy to the great harvest work.

Yes, "the Lord knoweth them that are his," and he is in the midst of them. He knows their loyalty to him and they know his voice and are ever ready to follow his leading. Thus no harm can overtake them. They will stand and not fall, and will in the end be crowned as victors. A thousand will fall at their side and ten thousand at their right hand in this day of trial, but they will be kept in the very midst of the wildest confusion. They may, as the trial proceeds and as the faint-hearted and unfaithful fall, be left to stand almost or entirely alone in their several localities; but then they will realize all the more the preciousness of being alone with God.

Trials and siftings are as necessary to the Church's prosperity and development as is the truth, and none of these things need discourage any. If some go out from us, it is because they were not of us (1 John 2:19), and those who still stand after such purification should be the dearer to one another, as they are to the Lord, and should the more endeavor to strengthen and comfort one another with his words.

The promise that God shall ever be in the midst of his faithful Church guarantees her steadfastness --"God is in the midst of her: she shall not be moved." His watchful eye is upon all the ways of his saints. He will give his angels [his messengers or servants] a charge concerning them [messages of truth and grace] and in their hands they shall bear them up, lest they dash against the hidden rocks of error and destruction. (Psa. 91:11,13.) There is therefore no saint of God so weak, or unlearned, or beset with subtle opposing forces, as not to be abundantly able to stand, even in this evil day, if he is only loyal and faithful to God. And his blessed help will be gloriously realized in the fruition of all their hopes in the dawning of the morning of their new life beyond the vail.

MRS. C. T. RUSSELL.



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ITEMS OF INTEREST.

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Misconceive, mistrust, misunderstand, misconstrue, misrepresent, misquote, misapply, misuse, mislead, misreport--here is a lengthy list of troublesome misses. Who has not seen a victim of their awful work? They have trampled upon and triumphed over the just. They have drowned out the voice of the innocent with their unrighteous din. The Lord himself suffered from the most of them. He was misunderstood, misjudged, and misrepresented; and His words were misconstrued and misapplied, and are to-day. He heard Scripture misapplied,

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and at last suffered death through the misapplication of his own words. Can a disciple expect better treatment than his Master? Poor, frail humanity is always missing the mark. A good man may be the victim of all these troublesome misses, but no good man will entertain or employ them as soon as he finds out their character. We had better be praying to God for more wisdom than to be missing the mark with any of this list. "A fool uttereth all his mind, but a wise man keepeth it in till afterwards." It saves heaps of trouble to have a mouth that won't go off half-cocked, like a dangerous piece of fire-arms, and wound somebody. It is a mark of wisdom to keep the tongue still unless divine grace causeth it to move. --Selected.

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In a recent magazine article the Princeton College astronomer gave an account of the latest astronomical news, mentioning by the way the service which photography is lending to his science. An illustration of that is in this statement, made at the meeting of the Photographers' Association of America: "After an exposure of thirty-three minutes the same instrument which rendered visible to the human eye stars of the fourth magnitude, which in the centre heavens would register 44,000,000 stars, showed to the photographic eye 134,000,000, and upon exposure of one hour and twenty minutes would

throw before the gaze of the beholder luminous dust of 400,000,000 stars." Never before had there been such a revelation of the depths of the infinite.

Truly, as the Prophet has declared, Day unto day uttereth speech and night unto night showeth knowledge. How the increasing light of revelation and invention assure us of the boundlessness of our Father's house of many mansions or apartments! What a field for pleasure and usefulness in the divine service, everywhere revealed, God hath prepared for those that love him! When as joint-heirs with our Lord we shall have finished the great work of blessing all the families of earth at the close of the Millennium, there will evidently be other worlds to bless and enlighten. Of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no limit.

What are the distinguishing marks of a ripe character? One mark is beauty. Ripe fruit has its own perfect beauty. As the fruit ripens, the sun tints it with surpassing loveliness, and the colors deepen till the beauty of the fruit is equal to the beauty of the blossom, and in some respects superior. There is in ripe Christians the beauty of realized sanctification, which the Word of God knows by the name of "beauty of holiness."

Another mark of ripe fruit is tenderness. The young, green fruit is hard and stone-like. The mature Christian is noted for tenderness of spirit.

Another mark of ripeness is sweetness. The unripe fruit is sour. As we grow in grace we are sure to grow in charity, sympathy and love. We shall, as we ripen in grace, have greater sweetness toward our fellow-Christians. Bitter spirited Christians may know a great deal, but they are immature.

Those who are quick to censure may be very acute in judgment, but they are as yet immature in heart. I know we who are young beginners in grace think ourselves qualified to reform the whole Christian Church. We drag her before us, and condemn her straightway; but when our virtues become more mature I trust we shall not be more tolerant of evil, but we shall be more tolerant of infirmity, more hopeful for the people of God, and certainly less arrogant in our criticisms. Another and a very sure mark of ripeness is a loose hold of earth. Ripe fruit easily parts from the stem.--Spurgeon.

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JEWISH ITEMS.

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The Grasdanin, a newspaper published in St. Petersburg, Russia, says, in the course of an article on the Semitic question: "Judaism is proceeding by slow but sure steps to the subjugation of Europe by intrigue, knavery and corruption. It advances easily where the people are ignorant, pliable and apathetic. It is therefore absolutely necessary to protect the Russians against the Jewish conquest by the most radical measures, if we do not wish to see the Israelitish Empire established in our midst." The Grasdanin suggests as preventive measures the refusal of social recognition of the Jews unless they hold a first guild license, that dealings in lands should be prohibited unless the guild licenses them, that only five per cent of the members of councils and clubs may be Jews, and that all Hebrew newspapers be suppressed.

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The change in the position of the Jew within the past half century is one of the most remarkable character. Fifty years ago the Jew was inert and imbecile; now he exercises a greater power than in the days of David or Solomon. The Jews to-day influence more people, control more bullion, and exercise more legislative power than they did when they had their temple, their land, and their sceptre. They have been stationary for eighteen centuries, and

hunted into obscurity. To-day they attract wider attention than ever before in their history. It is estimated, by those who claim to see the drift of things, that in a brief period all the seats of justice will be in their hands. Out of twelve hundred students of law in Berlin, six hundred were Jews. The Berlin and other Councils are ruled by a Jewish majority, and all offices are in the gifts of Jews. The German tradesman sinks to a secondary position alongside his Jew competitor, the best squares are filled with Jew shops, the best estates have passed into their hands. In Germany they have ousted the best families from their patrimonial possessions. This is true of Holland also. The Jew is the world's chief banker to-day. Almost the whole of the liberal press of Germany is in their hands. The two leading papers of Rome were, and possibly still are, edited by Jews. The power of the Jewish press of the continent of Europe is very great in matters

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political, scientific and theological....As the Jew has entered the civilization of the age and become a part of it, Rabbinical Judaism has necessarily undergone considerable modification. Amongst multitudes of Jews in Germany, the hope of a Messiah has totally disappeared. A spirit of scepticism has laid hold of the younger generation, so that conviction has disappeared....All idealism is gone, and nothing is considered to be useful and worth while any effort but that which promises material advantage--wealth, honor, power and enjoyment. Of two thousand shops kept by Jews in the city of Paris, not over a hundred are closed on Saturday. Of the seventy thousand Jews in New York City, not over twenty-five hundred are attached to the synagogue.

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A correspondent of The Faith says: The Academy of Sciences of Bologna have at length produced their report on the question of a primary meridian and universal standard of time. They propose to disestablish Greenwich, and to fix the new meridian at Jerusalem, where the universal day would begin at noon, and where the universal day and chronological day would virtually coincide. The essential thing in a meridian is that it should pass over as much land as possible, so that arcs of it may be easily measured in any investigations into the size and

shape of the earth. From this point of view the choice lay between Boston and Jerusalem. The meridian of Boston is in certain respects the better, but Jerusalem is supposed by the Academy to be a better site for an international observatory. Thus, if the scientific opinion of Europe endorses this report, we shall have in future to regulate our clocks and watches by Jerusalem mean time, and our maps will make all their degrees run east and west, not from Greenwich, but from Jerusalem.

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