

Dr. Colfelt on Theology.

AUTOBIOGRAPHY.

By Rev. L. M. Colfelt D. D.

There is no Eden into which some Serpent does not intrude. Most men of active mind about the age of 45 arrive at a period of disillusion and Cataclysm. Mine took the intellectual and theological form. The new Science whose marvelous Darwin's researches revealed, and Herbert Spencer reduced to philosophic deduction and system intoxicated, dizzied, and shook the whole structure of inherited beliefs to their foundation. The Scholastic system of Augustinian Theology tumbled down into Catholic ruin. The Evolutionary hypothesis, even after one clung with desperation to the first words of Genesis "In the beginning God" left little beside abolishing utterly Archbishop Usher's chronology of 6000 years and carrying back man's existence to the Glacial Epoch, enlarging the longevity of the race by more than two hundred thousand years. In establishing the descent of man from superior animal forms his special creation was consigned to limbo. The Federal headship and the fall of man from a sudden descent, to a long, steady ascent, from inorganic to organic, animal to mental, mental to moral, moral to spiritual. The cosmogony of Moses and the Garden of Eden was changed into a jungle filled with ape-like creatures, the Deluge into a local cloud burst, and in fine the whole Bible story of origins was reduced to a beautiful Mythos with no scientific basis. Science revealed that the world has been fortuitously composed, created and rounded out of impalpable Star dust and is destined after an unknown number of revolutions to be redissolved into the aboriginal luminiferous ether, and that after the same manner the whole universe passes through this same process of Evolution and Involution endlessly. Terrestrial phenomena repeat the same circular performance. The vegetable consumes the earth, the ox and the sheep graze upon vegetation, we eat the ox and sheep, invisible agents we call death consume us, in the scale of creation some creatures serve only to destroy other creatures, and the universe is like an enormous Catafalque upon which burns a funeral torch lighting up the Statue of Eternal Fatality. Some are patient because they have been born lymphatic, many are heroes because they have much blood, others are thinkers because they are bilious, more are musicians and poets, their nerves are excitable, but all die of their own characteristics and all live while their stomachs endure; while their hearts, their brains, their spines are sound. What we call virtues or vices are tendencies of organism, what we call faith is but a few drops of blood less in the veins or some atoms of phosphorus in the bones, and what we call immortality is an illusion. Death only is real and certain, and human history is but a procession of shadows passing like bats between the day and the night and dropping one after the other into an obscure unfathomable abyss called nothingness. As for religious beliefs, they are mere phantasies of imagination. The Incarnations of Gods, the Deifications of men, the miraculous conceptions, the material Miracles, the Heavens and Hells, Angels and Demons, all the spiritual paraphernalia are but beautiful poetic fancies, products of the childish imagination of the race, accumulations of Folk Lore, mythology aggrandized into Theology, Credulity dignified by the name of faith and quite incapable of rational verification by practical experimentation. Thus the race has passed through successive cycles of Evolution beginning with theological superstition, rising into the rational and metaphysical and culminating in the positively scientific age into which it is our privilege to be born and to enjoy its certainty. The problem of the exact sciences is the succession of cause and effect. The experimental method gives positive results concerning the laws of light, chemical affinities, the development of organisms, the laws that govern different bodies and even the laws of human mind. It will furnish exact answers to questions about the chemical elements of the stars and planets, about the movements of the sun with its constellations, about the origin of species and of man, about the infinitely small and weightless particles of ether. The agglomeration of these particles has produced that lump we call the body and the mutual action and reaction of these particles upon each other has produced what we call life. In fine, all is development, and differentiation tending by the operation of inexorable laws to complication and perfection, and the province of human investigation is to discover and systematize the laws that govern the process. Here alone are we on the solid ground of verifiable knowledge. All scientific allusions and data, therefore, found in so called inspired and Sacred Books of all ages and races that are pronounced irrational and untenable by Exact Science must be eliminated as impossible of rational belief however it may jar man made doctrines of Inspiration and Inerrancy. Truth is mighty and must prevail and no error can be made immune by calling it inspired.

All that is finite is within the province of experimental and exact science. All that is beyond is the Infinite and may be apprehended theoretically and imaginatively but not comprehended. But it must be confessed that the apprehensions of infinite things by finite beings are not verifiable and one man's guess is as good as another's where nothing can be exactly or exhaustively known. It is this incomprehensible realm beyond the finite which has given rise to so many systems of theoretical science, the most important branch of which is Metaphysics or Philosophy. Multitudes of men in all ages and races

have devoted themselves to this Herculean task of unraveling the Infinite, only to the contradiction of each other, only to describe a perpetual oscillation between Materialism and Spiritualism, Epicureanism and Stoicism, Nominalism and Realism, the futile quest ending in the hopeless conclusion that we are all and each but an inconceivable part of an inconceivable whole. These intellectual Samsons have circled round creation but never a one has ground out anything that has satisfactorily solved the riddle of universe, but have only ended where they began. Indeed the wisest of them all, Socrates, Saky, a Mouni (Budha) Solomon, Schopenhauer, baffled utterly in the quest, took refuge in Pessimism and ended their Samson-like labors by pulling down the pillars of the intellectual universe upon themselves, finding no resource better than the Philosophy of Despair. Vanity of vanities, all is vanity! Thus no refuge from the Iconoclasm of science can be found in philosophy, the profoundest researches of which end in nothing but the Agnosticism which must helplessly confess that the end of all wisdom is we do not, cannot know. What wonder Paul said to the Corinthians, "the world by wisdom knew not God." This dislocation of the traditional Theological view, brought about by the new science of nature for which no panacea can be found, in Philosophy, is doubtless some disturbing force that is fermenting in the minds of the student body in the United States at the present time and occasioning so many tragical suicides. Often in my pulpit experience did I watch with anxiety the effect upon Students, returned from college for their Holidays, when seated in the family pew they listened with polite attention to the preacher as he set forth the ancient dogmas with which they vainly tried to reconcile the staple college instruction in the natural Sciences. Later warned by the wreck of many a youth's inherited beliefs, I addressed myself to the limit of my humble powers and the perturbation of some of my parishioners to the task of working out a possible approachment that might tide them as well as myself over this Critical impasse. But while it is easy to destroy men's beliefs it is an almost superhuman task to reconstruct equally satisfying religious views. The best that I could do was to acquiesce for the time being in the truce which my generation declared between Religion and Science. From that day to this it must be confessed that no rational reconciliation has been effected between the two views by either the champions of religion or science. There is not a shadow of doubt that a pre-established harmony will be discovered between the present irreconcilables in God's good time. The Author of Science and Revelation is the same God and cannot be at war with himself. But this seeming gulf will only be bridged when Man's knowledge of the true interpretation of Scripture and of the revelation of Science is vastly

increased and clarified. In the meantime it behooves all to maintain their souls with peace and patience, praying for nothing so much as light, more light! But so far had this irreconcilable situation at that time affected my mind that I could not continue in the pulpit preaching a form of Religion with which I was no longer in rational accord and I determined to resign and ascertain my theological bearings.

Wool Growers Make Plans for Marketing Clip.

The Centre county Sheep and Wool Grower's Association are making plans to market their wool co-operatively again this year. This plan of selling wool has proven very satisfactory. More growers are taking advantage of the association each year and the amount of rejections have been decreased until last year there was only approximately 5% of inferior grade.

A supply of wool twine has been purchased by the association and can be obtained at the Agricultural Extension office in Bellefonte, and also from the members of the board of directors in the various communities. Shearing is underway in the county and special care should be taken by the growers not to get their clip dirty or wet. It should be tied in good shape with paper twine, as there is usually a difference of from five to seven cents a pound between rejections and No. 1 wool.

Proud Woman

Once upon a time there was in Salem a storekeeper who did not like proud people, not even if they were among his customers. He had one patron who was extra proud. She sent her servants to do her shopping. That was when a "hired girl" got \$3 a week pay, and a wealthy family kept two or three maids.

So proud was this woman that she would not even let her servant carry bundles. She insisted that the storekeeper send them. One morning she ordered a spool of cotton. The storekeeper called his errand boy, told him to get a wheelbarrow. He put the spool of cotton on the wheelbarrow and ordered the boy to deliver it. Did it have an effect? It did not.—Salem News.

Lot Like Him

Two public men in Washington were one day talking of the traits of a certain member of congress, who has a way of permitting himself to get "all het up" over trifles and who generally makes a great to-do with respect to the accomplishment of small things.

"Yes, sir," observed one of the men first mentioned, "that chap invariably hitches a Corliss engine to a gimlet."

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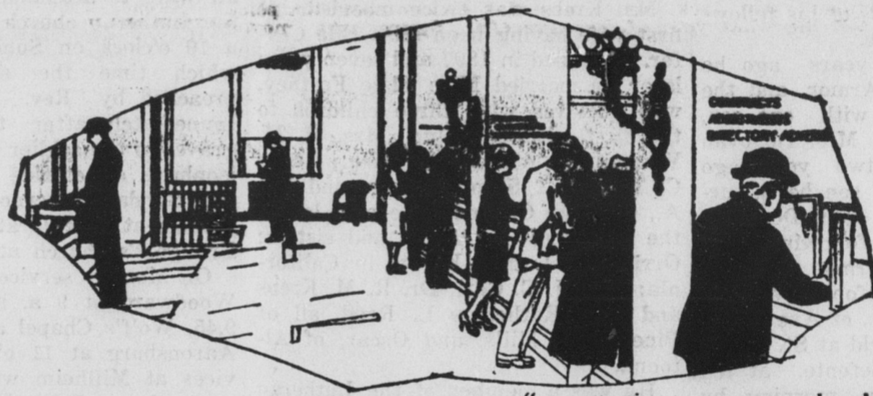
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Smart, indeed, are the Arch Shoes we are syowing for ladies of middle age. They have style, plenty of it, but comfort as well. Sizes run from As to triple Es and we have them in patent kid, tan kid satin and black kid. Note the construction of the sole in the illustration below. It is designed for shoe comfort and costs only



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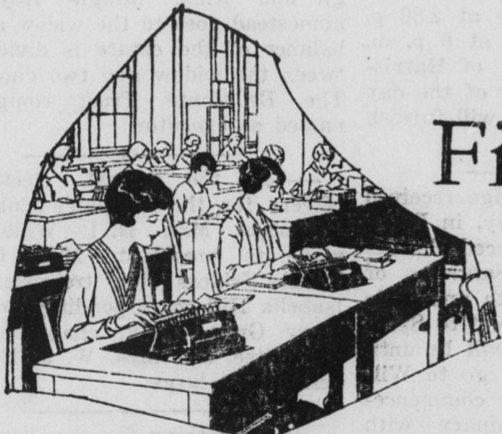
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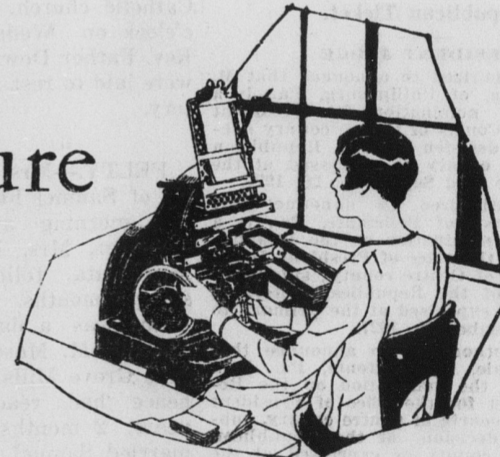
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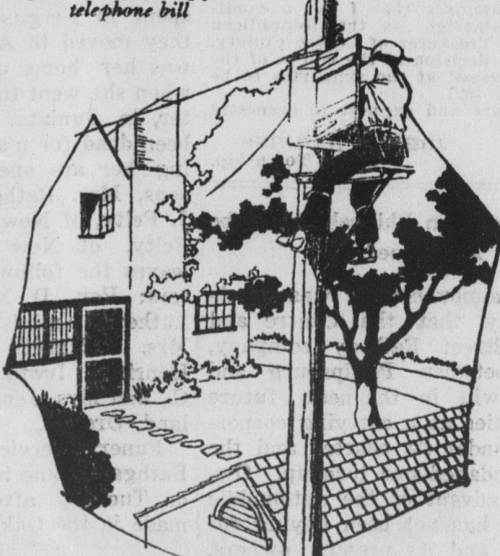
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