

Lesson 8.—The Year of Jubilee.

LEVITICUS 25: 8-17.

GOLDEN TEXT.—"Blessed is the people that know the joyful sound."—Psalm 89: 15.

Central Truth.—A glorious season, not of rest only, but of restoration to all the blessings of God's covenant of love, awaits the true people of God.

In the wise arrangement which God made for his ancient people every seventh day was to be holy unto the Lord. Six days was man to labor, but the seventh was to be a Sabbath of rest. In like manner every seventh year was to be a Sabbatical year. Six years the people were to sow and reap, but on the seventh the usual sounds of husbandry were to cease. And, so again, at the end of "seven Sabbaths of years," or of "seven times seven," they were to keep yet another sacred season, the "year of Jubilee." The command ran: "Ye shall hallow the fiftieth year; it shall be a jubilee unto you." In the good purpose of God this was to be a great and joyful year in the life of Israel.

It is worth noticing that not only was it ushered in with trumpets, but the trumpet used was not the ordinary long, straight, silver trumpet of other festivals. It was one curved after the manner of a ram's horn and more startling and impressive in its sound, the same as that used at the giving of the law at Sinai, before the walls of Jericho, in sounding the alarms of war and in calling solemn assemblies. And so it signified that the joy to which it called was not that of hilarity, but more deep and religious, attested with that awe which ought to be felt in the thought of the presence of God.

Then it is to be observed that it began on the tenth day of the seventh month—"the Day of Atonement." Doubtless it was at evening, after the solemn services of the day were over, that the joyful peal of the far-sounding horn began. And it is most significant that this, the best of all the years, should always open in this way. First of all the sins of priest and people must be removed by the blood of expiation. And so we are again reminded, as we have so often been in these Old Testament lessons, that propitiation and reconciliation must go before to prepare the way for all blessings. That joy may be unimpeded and complete there must first be peace with God. It is only as sin is expiated, pardoned, borne away, that we can hope to enter Heaven.

Three things particularly marked the year. In the first place it was a time of emancipation to the enslaved, "Ye shall proclaim liberty throughout all the land, unto all the inhabitants thereof." From every Israelite who had "waxen poor" and sold himself as a hired servant the proclamation lifted the weight of bondage. In the second place it was a time when they should "return every man unto his possession." He whom the pressure of poverty had compelled to part with the family estate regained the lost inheritance. The exile from the home of his fathers could now return. There was no injustice in this arrangement, for as appears in the latter part of the lesson the price paid for a "possession" was always "according to the number of years after the jubilee," and before the next. In the third place the year was to be one of entire rest from every kind of toil in the fields. They were not to sow or reap, to gather in the grapes or to prune the vineyards. This does not mean that the fruits or grains which had grown without sowing were to be left to go to waste, but that they were not to be claimed by the owners of the soil. The poor and the stranger might claim them. Nor does it mean that the people were to be wholly idle. That would have made the year a curse. Portions of the time were to be spent in religious observances; they had also to look after their sheep and cattle as at other times; and, since the labor forbidden was that of husbandry, a "good portion of their time would be occupied with the repair of their houses, implements of husbandry and domestic furniture, and in weaving and the various other economical arts."

What, now, was the purpose of all this? What good ends could be served by it? No doubt these were partly secular and partly moral and religious. One reason, no doubt, had respect to the soil. This needed rest. Those were days in which nothing was known of the "rotation of crops." And the soil of the land to which Israel was going was one which, more than that of many other places, would need periodical rest. Then it is easy to see the advantages of the regulations respecting the recovery of possessions and freedom. They were well suited to "perpetuate equality;" make it impossible to be born to absolute poverty; retain the Israelites in their own land by cutting off poverty, the great cause of emigration; encourage marriage; secure a better cultivation of the soil and strengthen the spirit of patriotism." These were great and sufficient reasons.

But there were others of a higher nature, and we have learned that God always had respect to these. God would keep the people in mind that the earth and the fulness thereof are his. He made and preserves all things, and has a right to dispose of them as he will. Man's right and property in them are limited; he has what he has as a loan. Of this God would keep him in mind; partly to bind him in humble dependence to himself, and partly to restrain his grasping selfishness. Therefore he said, "The land is mine, for ye are strangers and sojourners with me." Then God would test the faith of his people, and try their spirit of obedience. He promised to feed them; could they trust him to do it? There was yet one other side to this

observance, quite as interesting as either of the others, and no doubt one of the great reasons for it. It had a prophetic character. There can be no question that there was a reference to it in those words of Isaiah, fulfilled, as the Saviour tells us, in his own advent—"The Spirit of the Lord is upon me; because the Lord hath anointed me to preach good tidings unto the meek; he hath sent me to bind up the broken-hearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound; to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord." It is in the Gospel day that the year as a type has its fulfilling. In Jesus the believer has rest; he has also that liberty wherewith Christ sets his people free; his also is the lost inheritance of divine favor restored. But the final and grander fulfilling of this type is in the rest, freedom and riches of heaven.

PRACTICAL SUGGESTIONS.

- 1. Do not forget that the year of Jubilee began on the Day of Atonement, and that expiation and pardon must prepare the way for any and every other true good.
2. God means that we shall rest as well as work; he has not appointed us to be unrelieved toil; the life is more than meat.
3. Liberty is a blessing to be prized, cherished and defended.
4. God is always the friend of the poor, the weak and the oppressed; such may be sure their cry enters his ear. So far as wisdom and justice permit, he will bring to them present help.
5. God hates oppression, and in the long run his providence as well as precepts may be seen to be designed to restrain the grasping selfishness of the greedy and strong.
6. God meant the earth to be a garden; he is pleased with man's efforts to improve the soil, and to enrich and beautify the landscape. In the great Gospel Jubilee the wilderness will literally bud and blossom.
7. God is always testing the obedience and faith of his people; yet never does he fail to provide for those who trust him in darkness, and who obey him with cost.
8. The fear of God (verse 17) is the best restraint from every form of disobedience and wrongdoing.
9. The believer has no reason to be despondent or anxious. He may now be weary, the bondage of sin and earth may be oppressive; he may seem like a stranger or exile far from his home. Nevertheless, if consciously in relations with Christ, he has even now foretastes of the full blessedness of the heavenly Jubilee, which to none of us can really be far off.

BLACK TO INGERSOLL.

A Caustic Review of the Latter's Latest Magazine Article.

PATISANSHIP IN RELIGIOUS DISCUSSION AND WHAT IT LEADS TO.

Ancient and Modern Philosophy Versus the New Dogmatist—Which is to be Believed.

PHILADELPHIA, November 5.—The Press to-morrow will publish the following letter from Judge Jere S. Black: TO THE EDITOR OF THE PRESS.—Among the great metropolitan journals you alone, as far as I know, took any apparent interest in that number of the North American Review which contained what its editor called: "A Debate on the Christian Religion." It seems right, therefore, that you—and, if you please, your readers—should know why it is that the number last out appears with an article from Mr. Ingersoll unaccompanied by any remarks of mine.

I was not a volunteer in the business. The editor of the Review made two journeys to my house and besought me to furnish him with a refutation of Ingersoll's blasphemous doctrines, which he said were everywhere puzzling religious teachers and leading people astray. I did not believe that Mr. Ingersoll's utterances were at all harmful, and if the faith of the Christian world was in danger I was unworthy and unfit to be its defender. There were, in my opinion, ten thousand professional theologians who could and would do better, and were, in fact, doing it most effectually at that very time by their words and their deeds. But this editor was assured enough to insist that if I did not answer Mr. Ingersoll he would not be answered at all, and it would thence be inferred that the Christian system was false. Moved by his importunities and influenced by a regard for the wishes of "certain friends whose loves I might not drop," I agreed that I would append to Mr. Ingersoll's article my own opinion of its fallacy, and thus make the two together as fit as I could for publication in a decent magazine.

From the beginning it was distinctly understood that my defense was to be printed in the same number with the accusation. The editor was (or at least pretended to be) a firm believer in Christianity, and he would not for the world publish Ingersoll's poisonous stuff without putting the antidote right beside it—to do so would not only afflict his conscience but greatly injure the character of his Review.

At the time of the publication I agreed that if Mr. Ingersoll had any fault to find with the result it might seem cowardly to refuse him another chance on the same terms. I was not afraid of any new result he might make if he was not afraid of my defense.

Three months afterward fifty pages of the foulest and falsest libel that ever was written against God or man was sent to me. I was entirely willing to treat it as I had treated the other, that is, give it the answer I thought it deserved and let both go together. But it came when I was disabled by an injury, from which I could not hope to get well for some weeks, and

I so notified the editor. To my surprise I was informed that no contradiction, correction, or criticism of mine or anybody else would be allowed to accompany this new effusion of filth. It was to be printed immediately, and would occupy so much space that none could be spared for the other side. I proposed that if its bulk could not be reduced so as to admit of an answer in the same number it should be postponed until a reply could be made ready for publication in the next succeeding number. This and divers other offers were rejected for the express reason that "Mr. Ingersoll would not consent." Finding the Review controlled by him to suit himself, I did not think I was bound to go further.

True, I was offered the chance of replying in a future number, but that was not the privilege I had bargained for nor the duty I agreed to perform. Besides, if I would write an answer, what confidence could I have that they would not suppress it? A promise of theirs, express or implied, is not, in my estimation, worth a straw if they have an interest in breaking it. Their object was not what they professed—to get the truth vindicated—but to make a sensation and increase the sale of their paper.

I am especially blamable for allowing myself to be taken in by them on this occasion, because the same treacherous concern had basely betrayed me once before. After tracking me out and hunting me down to get an article from me on the Great Fraud of 1876, a subject then of much general interest, and making by its publication, as the proprietor himself told me, not less than ten thousand dollars, they handed me and my friends, living and dead, over to be covered with irrelevant slanders on a bargain that I should not be permitted to refuse them in their pages. The pamphlet to which I was driven could not reach half the readers of the Review, and the other half probably believe to this day that I and certain other men, some of them the best and worthiest in the land, were guilty of the most atrocious crimes known to any law, Divine or human. It was weak in me not to prosecute those libelers in a court of justice; still weaker to condone the offense and put myself in the way of being similarly maltreated again. Perhaps, also, it was unwise at the beginning to look for better behavior from adventurers conducting a magazine without avowed convictions or principles and without capacity to contribute an original thing of their own except rags and lambark.

It would be pleasant to believe that some professional theologian or other believer in the truth may be permitted to address the readers of the magazine in question. But I expect not. It seems probable that the North American Review will be prostituted entirely to the service of atheism.

This is no personal wrangle with Mr. Ingersoll. He has said nothing offensive about me. His indignation at finding himself confronted, not by a professional theologian, but by a layman who applied the judicial test to his assertions, was natural and expressed with tolerable moderation. On the other hand, I tried, and I think tried successfully, to confine myself rigidly to the square issue between us. A just or even an intelligent criticism could not be made without some reference to his mental peculiarities, which with habits of shallow thinking and rash talking, made him an utterly incompetent judge of the subject he pretended to argue. But I found the proofs of this within the four corners of his own paper. There, also, I learned that he was without any acknowledged standard of right or wrong. It was legitimate to notice that, because it accounted satisfactorily for his other utterances.

Neither is there any question of partisan politics between us. I have certain political convictions, which you may call prejudices of you will. But whether they are well or ill founded, they have no manner of just connection with the subject matter of Mr. Ingersoll's diatribe against Christianity. I believe, and have often expressed the belief, that religion and politics cannot be mingled together without endangering both. The most perfect system of human government that ever was invented by the wit of man and the holiest religion that God has revealed to his creatures when united together form a monstrous compound highly injurious to the best interests of the human race. Such a union is pronounced by Christ and his Apostles to be impure, and the fathers of this Republic so shaped their fundamental law as to make it a wall of perfect partition between them. Without such complete separation there can be no security for either civil liberty or the rights of conscience in matters of religion. The worst form of this adulterous connection is not assumed when a legal union is formed between Church and State. It is when a popular party in a free government undertakes to mingle its coarse interests and its vulgar passions with the religious sentiments of the people. This is what pollutes and falsifies both. The history of the world, and especially that of our own country, has been written in vain if this be the lesson it teaches.

These convictions not only disarm me of the power to repel Mr. Ingersoll's assault by a political argument, but force me to admit for the purposes of this case that he is right on all the

points of that kind which he chooses to lug in. I do that, *argumenti gratia*, without affecting the real question in controversy.

He thought he was striking a powerful blow at the Almighty when he showed that the Jewish Constitution contained a provision which conflicted with the platform of Abolitionists. They had determined and resolved that where the toleration of slavery or servitude for life was a crime. By this and by other means not now to be described they got money, power and great personal consequence for themselves and their fellows. Mr. Ingersoll could trust them to unite with him in howling down Christianity or anything else that diminished the profits of their business. Directly before him he had the successful example of Demetrius, the silversmith, who raised a tremendous uproar against the Gospel of Christ by simply bellowing out: "Great is Diana of the Ephesians." "Sirs, ye know that by this craft we have our wealth."

I could only protest that these appeals to the interests and passions of a political party were unfair. Diana of the Ephesians and Yankee Abolitionism may both have been great, and they were great in the sense of being popular, but that does not prove that the Gospel of God is a pernicious imposture. The Jewish Constitution, which tolerated the enslavement of savages in Jude, and the resolves of the Abolition caucus, which condemned it in America, might both be right, since the two systems were not to be judged by one another; each should be considered with proper reference to circumstances widely different. But the suggestion that the infallible God might be believed to have proceeded on just grounds without impugning the righteousness of the Abolitionists met with no favor. The practiced demagogue cannot forego the tricks of his trade, and so he makes the panegyric of his political faction an excuse for casting contempt in the face of his Maker and for insulting the faith and reason of all who believe in Christ. The barest thought that the Judge of all the earth did right fills him with rancor, which he pours out over page after page and then repeats it again and again:

Unpacks his heart with words And fails to curse like a very drab— A scullion—

I have said this much about the slavery point not as an answer to Mr. Ingersoll, but because I will not have it understood, if I can help it, that I permitted or provoked the introduction of partisan politics into the discussion of a religious subject.

These furious outbreaks of intemperate abuse upon God, His laws and institutions, do not disturb any one's intellectual belief or at all diminish the awful reverence which a Christian feels for the supreme object of his adoration. Mr. Ingersoll thinks he is raising a storm on the ocean of thought; he is not producing a ripple. He is merely doing the part of a common scold, to whom the idle listen for the sport of the thing, while others, taking counsel of their outraged feelings, think him a nuisance that ought to be abated. This is, perhaps, not very easy to do. A woman, for such an offense, could be ducked under the rule of the ancient law, but when a *communis viratrix* of the male gender vexes the peace of a neighborhood in this way the remedy is difficult and doubtful.

To learn how gratuitous these anilities are—how he scolds for the mere sake of scolding—look at his fanfaronade on polygamy. By the unaided influence of the Church alone this vice has been extirpated completely and perfectly. In Christian countries the universal rule is that one man shall be the husband of one wife and no more; and it is neither the rule nor the practice anywhere else on the face of the globe. Now, a person who has ordinary sense must see that the moral merit of Christ's Gospel in this respect is directly proportioned to the magnitude of the evil from which it has relieved human society. But Mr. Ingersoll tries to blacken the character of the Christian religion by railing at the bad practice which it has opposed and destroyed. If he had flung out at monogamous marriage, which Christianity upholds, his act, though unjust, might have had an apparent object not altogether preposterous. Indeed, monogamy is as open to mere vulgar vituperation as polygamy. When an unclean mind exerts itself to imagine what may place it as it is as easy to talk about brutality and the animal degradation of woman in one case as another. To the beastly all things are beastly. In point of fact the great body of unbelievers have denounced the Christian institution of marriage with especial bitterness. To tie one man and one woman together by a bond which nothing but death can dissolve is, in their opinion, not only unjust and immoral, but a base and brutal tyranny which imposes a degrading restraint upon the natural rights of men and women to love and cohabit with whom they please. This is a prime and prominent part of the atheistic theory everywhere advocated by its regular organs and its greatest disciples. In France, where their societies are compact and powerful, they define their creed substantially thus: 1. There is no God. 2. Religion is a lie. 3. Property is theft. 4. Love must be free. 5. Marriage is slavery. 6. Children belong to the State and not to anybody in particular. This is "the gospel of dirt." I don't

say that Mr. Ingersoll swallows it whole. He believes, or at least he practices, the Christian doctrine on the subjects of marriage, paternity and property, not because he is bound by the Divine commandments, but because he feels like it. Others, rejecting as he does the "golden meadow of the law," have an equal right to take their own feelings as the measure of righteousness. So one set of atheists curses marriage and another blackguards polygamy, and they are both right if there be no God above all and over all.

I do not intend this as a substitute for the answer which I would have made if the presiding genius of the Review had been propitious. My principal object is to show that his "circular abuse" amounts to absolutely nothing. A regular reply would prove that in every line of his last article he has either falsified history or applied to it an erroneous interpretation. But I am tempted not to quit without giving a sample of his efforts at scientific reasoning.

If he does not deny the existence of a God his occupation is gone. The object, therefore, of his highest ambition ever since he took the stump against Christianity has been and is to annihilate the evidence which shows that the world has a Maker and a Moral Governor. This being his great central point on which all other points must turn he has, of course, laid himself out to do his very best for it. Let us see what he has achieved.

I thought I was giving a true and accurate account of his theory when I said that he regarded the universe as natural; that "it came into being of its own accord;" that "it made its own laws at the start, and afterward improved itself considerably by spontaneous evolution." But he denies that this is a true exposition of his views, and he exercises his conceded right to define them again more sharply than he did before. Now he says that the universe did not come into being at all; that it *always was*; nor did it make its own laws, for it has no laws.

If the material universe existed, just as it does now, from all unbeginning eternity, there is, to be sure, not much chance for a Creator to have done any work; if its harmony is preserved and the uniformity of its action maintained without any rule or regulation prescribed by a superior power, there is, then, and has been no need of a lawgiver; God is, therefore, so useless a being that he must be theoretically blotted out of existence.

For the proposition that the universe always was (without a creator) and will be forever (without a preserver) he offers only one proof, to wit: that it is according to his idea. This he considers potent enough to overrule all the evidence, direct and circumstantial, by which his "idea" is opposed. All testimony borne by the common sense of mankind, all the deductions of reason, all philosophy, and all faith in Holy Writ must be swept aside, so that his *idea* may have free course to run and be glorified. But this ascription of supreme authority to an idea, merely because it happens to be his idea, will hardly be concurred in. The assertion of it, indeed, proves nothing except that his bump of self-esteem is in a state of chronic inflammation.

He started another idea, which has the same special merit of being his own, that the material universe is not governed by laws. The planets move at a rate and in orbits which can be calculated with absolute certainty; the earth revolves on its axis with such perfect regularity that the very second of time at which the sun will rise at a particular place can be predicted a thousand years beforehand; chemical substances combine always in exactly the same relative proportions; in the animal and vegetable worlds like produce like; in all organized beings certain causes are known to produce certain effects favorable or unfavorable to life and health. Mr. Ingersoll's idea is that these are not the results of law or any sort of intelligent arrangement; but they are phenomena which happen, and the world is by mere accident prevented from falling into chaos. In his wisdom he decides "as matter of fact" that there is no rule back of the phenomenon which a controlling power compels the subject matter to obey; it merely happens, but it happens so uniformly that it creates the idea of law in our minds, which is, however, a mere delusion. If Galileo and Newton and Kepler and all the other philosophers, great and small, have been seduced into the weak belief that the material universe is under the reign of law, it is rare good fortune for us in these latter days to have found a superior personage who, by merely turning the Drummond light of his intellect upon the subject, at once exposes the blunders of the ignorant living and "the barbarian dead."

Let no man misunderstand or misrepresent Mr. Ingersoll. It is not in irony or to point a scurrile jest that he denies the operation of natural laws upon matter. He is in serious earnest, and if he does not actually believe what he says his simulation of sincerity is very perfect. To make himself clear he takes a simple case. Water, he says, always runs down hill, not because there is a law behind it—law does not cause the phenomenon, but the phenomenon causes the idea of law to exist in our minds—but that idea is on this side of the fact. It fol-

lows that Newton must have been grossly mistaken when he said that the falling of water and other bodies toward the centre of the earth was caused by the law of gravitation.

Mr. Ingersoll supposes that he is imputing an absurdity to me when he says: "Mr. Black probably thinks the difference between the weight of rocks and clouds is produced by law." Undoubtedly I do. I learned in my infancy (and I have "kept the credulity of the cradle") that this difference is caused by that same law of gravitation operating according to rules perfectly understood by all well-informed men. I will go further and confess that I think it a most beneficent law which prevents the rocks from flying about through the air and the clouds from becoming immovably fixed in the earth. Our great Creator ought to be adored and thanked for making such an arrangement. But this only proves to Mr. Ingersoll that I am a believer in "the monstrous and miraculous, the impossible and immoral."

Mr. Ingersoll is much accused of plagiarism. Whether that be true or not of his declamatory spouting, this notion that the material world is not governed by law is without doubt original. It never entered any human head before, and I think that in all future time it will find no lodgment in the mind of any reasonable being.

Another way he has of reaching the atheistic conclusion. I do not say that I know what he wants to be at. But as well as I can understand him he asserts that the universe could not have had a design—because we cannot trace back the designer to his own origin; the world was not made because we cannot tell who made the Maker, since the necessity of a Creator increases with the wonder of the creation. He is unquestionably, though perhaps unconsciously, right in this. It makes a demonstration as complete as mathematics that man was created by "some pre-existent and self-conscious being of power and wisdom to us inconceivable." But instead of receiving this plain, palpable and necessary consequence of his own logic, he turns his back upon the conclusion and begins to maudlin over his own inability to understand how a designer could be without an anterior design, and telling how hard it is for him to see the plan or design in earthquakes or pestilences, and how the justice of God is not visible to him in the history of the world. This silly trash he thinks sufficient to repel the irresistible proofs of a Creator which he himself has adduced and which by all fair and unperverted minds are received as conclusive. J. S. BLACK.

A Common Fellow.

From the Lancaster Intelligencer.

The President's friends say that he is determined to prove to the country, by a vigorous prosecution of Giteau, that the criminal had no inspiration from him to perpetrate the crime that made him President. That is exactly how a very common fellow would act. His sole aim would be the selfish consideration of how best to free himself from blame. A man of a better mind would consider only the demand of justice. In this case he would satisfy himself about Giteau's sanity or insanity, and act accordingly. Arthur would be afraid to suggest the criminal's insanity, however much he might believe in it, lest he should be thought to sympathize with the crime.

But the fact is that the course which Arthur is advertised to pursue is just the one that would naturally be followed by a man who would have been wicked enough to use Giteau as a tool of his ambition. If he had been vile enough to inspire the murder he would be cruel enough to unhesitatingly hang his instrument; and be glad to do it, beside, to get him out of the way. No one has accused Arthur of hiring Giteau to shoot Garfield. If he was believed to have done this he would not be alive to-day. His ostentatious hiring of counsel to prosecute a man who is universally believed to be a weak creature whose mind is certainly unsound to some extent will do him no credit in public opinion, but will create an impression of his cowardly selfishness that will probably do his character no injustice.

Suing a Lady for Breach of Promise.

INDIANAPOLIS, Nov. 6.—John L. Fince of Chicago, has sued Miss Louisa Frenzel, a young German lady of prominence and a member of a wealthy banker's family, for breach of promise in the sum of \$10,000. The plaintiff is a society man of Chicago, and has placed in his attorney's hands the letters received from the lady, and various presents she gave him during the alleged engagement.

"ONE of the first duties of a community," said Mayor Means, of Cincinnati, in an interview, "is to protect its youth—protect the boys first and they will protect the girls."

THE scientists have taught that insects have their affections, and now some one knows a mosquito that was mashed on a young lady.

"SAY, conductor, why don't this train go on?" inquired a red-haired passenger, with his head out of the car window. "Put your head in," replied the conductor, "how can you expect it to go on when the danger-signal is out?"