

Current Topics

The Curse of Pride

Pride was the sin whereby angels fell, and by pride men have fallen in every age since Adam lost his humility and wanted to make a god of himself. There have been great falls of individuals—falls that shook thrones and plunged nations in blood. But the worst fall of all is that of the modern States which have in their blind intellectual arrogance dethroned God and made idols of themselves. Man and nations abandon God through corruption which blinds them to the eternal truths of faith; but no less frequently and fatally is the perversion due to a foolish pretence to maintain their intellectual dignity. A religious minded man who knows the depth and the breadth and the width of even what truth we may attain is humbled at his own ignorance, as was Newton who confessed that all his lifetime he was but gathering a few shells on the shore of the infinite ocean of truth. But men who are not religious and who put self between them and the infinite vistas revealed by faith imitate Lucifer and proclaim their rebellion against God. And as it is the way of our time that the most unscrupulous and the most unprincipled men strive after public positions it follows too often that our States are in the hands of those who are so puffed up by their pride that they look on themselves as the State and expect the people to fall down and adore them as if they were gods. In this manner it has come to pass that the modern State regards itself as the supreme end and supreme source of all right and property: it intrudes in the most sacred and private affairs of domestic and individual life; it hates the restraint of religion and asserts its own infallibility. The modern State is a State without God; and without God there is no religion, and consequently no morals. In the name of liberty it persecutes those who differ from it in holding that the eternal truths are important, and it penalises and punishes those who hold that it is important that children be taught that there is a higher sanction than poetic platitudes for human conduct. Preference is always given to atheists or Freemasons when public positions are open; and a premium is set upon schools that are in opposition to the Christian view of sound education: in fact the control of the schools is too often left in the hands of people who are not even professing Christians, and it is by no means unusual to hear a Jew laying down the law on education for the youth of Christian parents. The modern State builds on the ruins of the unchangeable truths without which there can never be stability or soundness in society; and as surely as the True and the Good are inseparable so surely does the State that rejects the Truth plunge into moral evil all the more terrible because of its blinding power. Hence it is that we have advocates of suicide, advocates of free-love, as well as the innumerable other proofs of the sad degeneration of mankind to-day. We need not marvel at all: the enormities and the vices that now and then show their ugly heads above the thin veil of social veneer are the logical outcome of principles such as those that inspire our legislators and our educationists. The men who talk so glibly of intellectual dignity are they that have torn up from the roots the ancient principles which taught the people to love God and to serve the neighbor, mindful of the high sanction, and of the immortal destiny for which each one was created. The way of modern States is to teach children that it does not matter what you believe, or indeed what you do, if you are not found out. Our statesmen have robbed the people of true freedom and made laws which restrict liberty of speech whenever they do not approve of what is said. In a word, in the name of Progress and intellectual dignity, we have been made slaves and we have been given schools which systematically teach children to ignore the only right principles of freedom and manly dignity. Religion is removed, and in its place

we have the Servile State and the tyranny of Materialism. All things considered what greater curse could God put on mankind than to allow the people to be led like dumb animals by the ignoble Governments which care so little about the welfare of any but themselves?

Liberty and Licence

The trend of modern times is to claim for man unrestricted freedom of thought and speech particularly in the domains of philosophy and religion. Not only freedom from unjust restraint but freedom from all restraint is claimed as the prerogative of the noble mind of man. It is declared unworthy of man's dignity and degrading to his genius to limit and bound his intelligence by any laws, traditional, religious, or philosophical. The Roman *Index* which puts a ban on books likely to weaken the faith of readers is denounced; the prohibition of books that are as full of filth as an egg is full of meat is regarded as a proof of Rome's narrow-minded tyranny. On the other hand, it is quite right that the British Government should suppress newspapers that ask politicians to do so decent a thing as to keep their pledges. Speakers who advocate the rights of small nations are with the full approbation of the defenders of freedom of thought sent to die in British gaols. Nay, the editors who denounce the Roman *Index* and rant of the despotism of the Vatican will call angrily on the Government to suppress a paper and to imprison an editor for telling the truth. It comes to this: press and politicians advocate freedom for filth (and parsons help them); they advocate freedom for atheism and infidel blasphemy; but they will not stand being told the truth about themselves nor will they listen to a man who points out their national hypocrisy. In a word, licence not freedom, hypocrisy not truth, are the ideals of the heirs of Luther to-day in the British Empire. How far those people have fallen away from the Christian ideal! Long ago, before Luther and his English friends—Henry and Elizabeth—reformed the world and made it safe for despotism, men commonly believed that they were sent into this life to love and serve God; they knew that they were God's creatures; they did not think they were individually infallible and that they had a right to pronounce ex cathedra on the Bible, religion, right and wrong, morality and immorality. They knew that all these things were decided before they came on the scene and that the natural and divine laws were made, not for their criticism, but for their guidance. They knew that man is a poor, transient creature, subject to many miseries and prone to evil from the cradle. In the light of religion they were able to look into their hearts and see there what potential wickedness and evil they were capable of but for the grace of God. They recognised that God was their Lord and Master, and that the Church was His mouthpiece on earth; and consequently they sought for enlightenment, not in the little gleam of their own reason but in the light of the infinite and infallible Truth of God which came down to them through the Church. They did not imagine like later-day maniacs that each man was to be a law unto himself; they did not dream that the world was made for kings and princes and plutocrats and that human law could abrogate God's law. They respected the rights of wife and children; they looked on the family as a sacred foundation; they knew they had duties not only to Church and State but to their neighbors around them, and that their rights were limited by the rights of wife and children; they looked on the family as a sacred foundation; they knew they had duties not only to Church and State but to their neighbors around them, and that their rights were limited by the rights of other people. Christian people understood that men are free. But they did not think that freedom meant that there must be no restraint on thought, word, or deed: they recognised that it meant a rational freedom within the order established by God for the welfare of religion, society, and individuals. The difference between the old and new views is that Christians adored one true God and Him alone, while modern Protestants and atheists adore many Gods, or a conglomerate God, composed of self,