GOD'S PLAN OF SALVATION

AN AGNOSTICS METAMORPHOSIS

for Thirty Years a Know-Nothing on the Subject of Beligion, Now Views the Work and Plans of the Creater With Amazement and Ad-miration—The Causes That Opened the Eyes of One Who, "Seeing, Saw Not."

To the Editor of The Observers In my pastoral duties lately I have had my attention drawn to the following private letter which so impressit a wider opportunity for helpfulness.

Concord, March 23, 1905.

My Dear D-: This is Sunday, and I have concluded, after much earnest cogitation and after much painful, reluctant deliberation, to try to write you a letter befitting the day and the new departure I have taken from the old beaten track over which I have been journeying all my life.

the past thirty years I have been a consistent agnostic, a know-nothing on the subject of religion: looking upon the Christian as merely best form of the various religions of the world. As to the Supreme Being He was utterly unknowable, had for His own purposes set things going under certain fixed and unvarying laws. withdrawn Himself personally and let these laws govern, as His vice regent. It developed upon us poor forlorn creatures placed here without any option in the matter to study and find out these laws and make the best we could of our deplorable condition. I, however, and a firm conviction that we were Hving under a moral government, and and upward for the race. As for the individual, when death came, was simply a leap in the dark. Knowing myself as I did and my fellowas I had learned him I had come to beleive, that in the eyes of a Perfeet Being the difference between George Washington and Judas Iscarlot was only one of degree and of environment, and of neutral and moral development. Consequently, we all the same fate after death which, not impossibly, might be annihilation.

For the last two years I have been compelled to stand beside the high- His Father than you or I can have way and see the procession pass, not taking any part myself. It has been and I have fretted and worried over my helplessness beyond the conception of one who has never had a like disagreeable test. By degrees, I had learned to accept the situation and to endeavor to make the best of it. During that time I have, on an average devoted eight hours every day to studious and thoughtful reading of the works of the greatest thinkers that have lived on our planet or are now residing on it.

For nearly three months of each of of the creme-de-la-creme of our South ern people. They were all extremely select people, in every respect. Among the men. I have never seen one under influence of whiskey, never heard ed. Some few of them- the exceptions -were somewhat skeptical on the subject of religion, but never obtruded their views under any circumstances.

I dropped down among these people an utter stranger and found their little excursions and the pleasure these people, at intervals, and with but this Being I beleived in was but a some regularly. To illustrate; a beauticold abstraction and was giving my ful, winning, refined and highly culti-vated young girl, about 20 years of age, and I would turn over on my pillow had only a few days leave of absence sooner it is all over, the better for from her work, and the amount of me." Now, however, without a word rest of us. She knew only one person when she came but when she left there were the whole colony of us, big and little, at the station to see her off. young woman, from the first, went out of her way to show me little kindnesses and we became great | leave my loved ones in His charge and friends. She is helping to supper her that He could and would do what is mother and family. They were, up to best for them. You can't imagine the the death of the father and husband a few years ago, in affluent circumstances, but now are dependent upon their own exertions for a living.

Now, D-, my admiration, regard and worshipful respect for this young lady-and she is but a type of thousands in this broad land-is simply inexpressible in words. When her image is recalled an exhibitantion as of the strains of the sextette of Lucia di ammermoor is experienced and I thank God that poor human nature can develop such a fragrant and beautiful flower. In her company even in as they have no communication with imagination, I am under the spell of us or with each other? Of late, howof refinement and whited-souled purity fills the world around me.

But suppose she and others like her were made in this state, and kept so, by the Supreme Being, and to be goed and sweet cost her and her mother and friends no sacrifices, cost her no efforts of self-restraint and selfdenial-that she was good because she just couldn't help it, or couldn't be any other way. Don't you see my feelings would not be the same towards her? The very fact that only the most strenuous and constant and unremitting watchfulness over her thoughts and

tenfold added value in my eyes. Human nature may be compared to the elementary substance, carbon. At one end is the diamond—at the other, graphite, both crystalized carbon—yet how different! The mere fact that this fair young creature is a diamond of the first water when the chances were in tavor of her becoming a six-sided stick of graphite, makes her the precious gem I find her to be; and her intrinsic worth is all owing to the fact that ideas of right and wrong have played such an important part, in perplayed such an important part in per fecting her lovely character. Every choics for herself as to her thoughts D-, pardon me, if I seem officious and as to her conduct, and in the main in this letter, but I mean you well; me as well as some others who she determines aright, guided by her were privileged to see it, that with the permission of the necessary parties, I to please a higher Power. Now, don't have requested The Standard to give you see that a creature of this type is of an infinitely higher order than a cast-iron, as it were, sort? The Creafect: but, if we can gradually, by our own efforts, aided by His help requisite, attain unto this perfection. we are incomparably superior to made

to-order perfection. This is what is going on around us. This young woman shadows forth what the Almighty designs concerning the club, us all. The better we are, the more we love purity of life, unselfishness, and the perfume of spring flowers, jon-the willingness to bear other peoples' quits, fucias, etc. This being an incithe willingness to bear other peoples' burdens. For my part, I am now simply lost in amazement and admiration at God's plan of salvation, and am soon shown to the dining room. with wonder that I have never seen it before. Here is a little woman, so delicate

and fragile as to be at the mercy of every wind that blows, who, if you were stricken down beside her, couldn't defend you against a six-weeks-old member of the mouse family, and yet, were she in trouble or danger, what man with a heart in his bosom, would stop for a moment to count the cost of going to her rescue. This nobility of nature, so many now possess, is the direct resultant of God's plan of sal vation for the race, and no other plan could have developed it that I conceive of. The stumbling block with me, as He said it would be, has been Jesus Christ. I didn't see any super human merit in (even were it so) God's Law underlying what He when He had His Father to encourage and sustain Him. The truth as taught in the New Testament, and it has only shared lately come home to me, is this: Christ voluntarily took upon Himself a man's nature and while He was on the earth He had no freer communication with thro, Him. I beleiving as I now do can say, too, "In my Father's house a most bitter and trying experience, are many mansions." I, in the pangs of death, too, hanging from a cross could and, beleiving as I now do would cry out, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me," and yet that would not prove that I realized my self to be His son, would it? He speaks of His "Father" as also our Father, Christ voluntarily came down here for two purposes in the main: To show He was a man like ourselves, subject to all of our infirmities, weaknesses and temptations willing and anxious to die for us that we might be these years I have, in our mountains, been thrown into the society of many with all our imperfections, we could with all our imperfections, we could thro' Him, by and by, live a sinless life.

Of late, D-, I have realized beyond a doubt that my days are numbered and be they greater in number than I now an oath uttered and have never heard anticipate, the time, now, flies so a word derogatory to woman expressmost before is arrives. So I am to all interests as good as dead-and-buried already, you see. Till quite recently, I have always said my prayers before going to sleep, more thro' a feeling of that utter helplessness and forlornness, than acquintance for any other reason. In the silent was to make a friend. My age, my suf- watches of the night, it has frequently ferings, my inability to join them in occurred to me that it would be a most glorious thing if I could feel that I found in everything going on around this all-powerful and perfect Being many cases, their warm affection, I and in addition would extend this lovcorrespond with more than a dozen of ing care to those very dear to me-Ht down among us last summer. She and say to myself, "all is vanity, the pleasure she got out of these few days from any outside source, it has been was a delight and a revelation to the suddenly (several weeks ago) borne in upon me-as I beleive by the Spirit of the Living God- that a loving Father, through a mediator, was reaching down His hand to me and assuring me that He is my Shepperd and I should not want, and telling me to change that has taken place in views and feelings. As your old friend, "Old Dick" would say: "I'm a changed man bedad!" and certainly an in-

and certainly an infinitely happier one. One thing had always bothered me This little planet of ours, is but as a grain of sand upon the seashore compared with the infinititude of worlds around us. The Son of God, Himself, dies for the inhabitants of this insignificant world. How about the dwellers on the other planets? Will He have to die for each one of them separately, a nameless charm and an enunciation ever, wireless telegraphy has been offering several marvelous suggestions in a crude way on this mystery, and, besides, sin may not have ever entered those worlds, and, then, over all is the Almighty who will attend to all

Now, that I should be singled out as it were, in this way and made to feel that my sins are forgiven me, is most wonderful occurrence of my life. I look upon myself as a clear-headed man. What I read, I weigh and ponder over; I receive it as the truth Yet my whole life gives the lie to its and few closing hours. It is not fear that has did it. I never had doubt but that my know and couldn't know anything about a future life. I beleive that b was the Spirit of God, Himself, who said to me as He did to Paul, "why

said to me as He did to Paul, "why persecutest thou me?"

If you have done someone, or are prepared to do some one, a great injustice and, all at once, it dawns upon you that this person is your best friend and loves you and is dying to do you a favor, really the one favor you desire above all others, one that will affect your wife and children and all your friends—wouldn't a great revuision take place in your feelings? vulsion take place in your feelings' It has been so with Jesus and myself Yours. - -

VIRGINIA DARE BOOK CLUB.

Very Delightful Entertainment by Mrs. W. J. Montgomery—Library Consolidation Discussed.

Special to The Observer. Concord, March 24,-Mrs. W. J Montgomery entertained the Virginia Dare Book Club most delightfully on Thursday afternoon at her elegant home on North Union street, Mrs. Montgomery, though not a member of the club, is one of its staunchest friends. In the hall and parlor was dential meeting of the club there was no programme, so the guests were table lokked fresh and spring-like decorated in quantities of nasturtiums elegant three-course luncheon

was served. At the home of Mr. C. M. White many friends and relatives gathered Thursday afternoon at 4 o'clock to witness the marriage of Mr. White's daughter, Miss Alide to Mr. C. M. Alexander, of this city. The ceremony was performed by Rev. Geo. H. Cor nelson. The service was very sweet and impressive. Immediately after the ceremony, Mr. and Mrs. Alexander left for the old home place of Mr. Alexander's father, a few miles from

A meeting of the library committee of the town was called last Saturday afternoon. Plans and means for consolidated with the graded school library were discussed. The plans were put in form of a motion and were to be submitted to the school board. Action will be taken at the next meeting and it is thought by ,individuals that this will take effect at a very early date. While the public library has constantly advanced since its organization there are some serioss obstacles which tend to hinder its growth. The location is the main objection, it on the third floor of the city hall. If the above action is taken the library will for the present be located in one of the vacant rooms of the graded school building. This will be much more desirable in every respect, but it is hoped to soon be able to have a separate building, and efforts are being made to have a Carnegie library. The graded school has purchased adjoining lots which will be improved and used for the benefit of the schools. Mr. D. L. Fitzgerald, time-keeper for the W. A. Esson Company, at the Rock quarry, has resigned on account health. He will coon go of ill Charlotte for medical treatment. Mr.

G. W. Widenhouse succeeds him. Mr. and Mrs. F. L. Emery left this morning for Mobile, Ala., where they will make their home. Mr. Emery has accepted a position as superintendent of a mill there.

Mr. Carlisle Peters has returned Mr. Carlisle Peters has returned from an extended trip through the Southern States.

Mrs. J. D. Lentz and daughter, little Mrs. J. D. Lentz and daughter, little Lucy Richmond returned home Thursday from Lancaster, S. C., where

they have been visiting Mrs. J. H. Witherspoon.

ON WATER WAGON NOW.

I have, to date, served half my time promise to repent. If you will let me mend my ways be

fore the end of Lent. Ah, if you do, I promise you that whiskies, ales and beers Will not pollute my lips again I vow, for many years.

For I have found at last that the temp'rance people say, A drunken life, O mighty Judge, is life that doesn't pay. Come, open wide your heart to me and

let me out of jail And I will promise that for years I'll drink no more mixed ale. Do pay attention to these words, so humbly writ in rhyme, And if your heart no pity takes-I'll have to serve my time.

Magistrate Breen said that a man who wrote such poetry ought to get a chance to reform, and he ordered his probationary officers to go over to the Island to-day with an order for Donnelly's release,

watchfulness over her thoughts and few closing hours. It is not fear that actions, even the most trivial, has did it. I never had doubt but that my don't put too much of it in canned goods her best and pure, gives her position was correct, viz: that I didn't and cold storage eggs.

which contained the office of Coi. David Guy Maxwell, known widely in the country about as "Squire," justice of the peace and United States Commissioner. Squire Maxwell was as much a part of the old ceurt house as one of the huge with the old ceurt house as one of the huge rewrite pillars supporting the roof of the porch, and he could tell many a tale of ante-bellum days concerning which the worn flagstones and stained walls preserved eternal silence.

Every days after noon, during the hot summer months, the squire could be found in a chair propped back against a wan or the cool corridor within, sleeping peacefully, with a red bandana handkerchief thrown over his face to keep off the pestering flies. The spire always awoke from his after-dinner nap refreshed, and ready to join old cronies who sat out on the ground in front and talked of the price of cotton, the boll weevil, "chinches" in the corn, the ruin of "crons" by hell and "old times". of the price of cotton, the boll weevil, "chinches" in the corn, the ruin of "craps" by hall, and "old times." It was on these occasions that the squire looked the typical Southern gentleman of the old school—white linen suit, broad, white liawn tie, broad-brimmed straw hat, white socks, and low-cut shoes, with wide toes and flexible soles. In the winter the squire stayed closely by his office stove, spat contemplatively from time to time into the glowing grate, and spoke an occasional word to "Adjutant" Scroggins.

No outsider ever knew who Adjutant Scroggins was, except that he was the squire's ally counselor, and faithful companion by the office stove in winter. The squire always referred to him and introduced him to the casual caller as "my private secretary, sub, Colonel Scroggins." All the long hours of a gray written scroggins. All the long hours of a gray winter day the squire and the colonel would sit together in silence, while they chewed reflectively and spat thoughtfully into the glowing coals of the open stove. But now there is a knock on the door, and at the squire's stentorian "Come in!" it opens, and two dusky figures walk apit opens, and two dusky figures walk apprehensively in. One is dressed in a black felt hat of wide and drooping brim, a glistening celluloid collar, ready-made tie of brilliant green, rusty black suitthe abbreviated trousers showing a couple of inches of scarlet socks—and brogan shoes. The other is attired in a green skirt with ostrich plumes of red and yellow. They state that they wuks on Cunnel Gaston's fahm, dev has just got a lisunse, an' des thought dey would step roun' an' git ma'led, ef'n de squiyer 'ud be so kin's toe puffonm de sav'mony so kin's toe puffohm de say'mony,

Sah.

A file of sepctators slips in at the door and arranges itself along the walls of the office, for the word has gone forth that a negro couple has just entered the squire's office, and there is an anticipatory grin on every face.

The justice arises majestically, places the justice arises majestically, places are precision, asks a few questions, and transacts the necessary preliminatries. Then drawing himself to his full height with an expression of the most portentous solemnity upon his face, he con-

tous solemnity upon his face, he con-templates the couple for a moment over the top of his glasses, clears his throat with funeral gravity, and begins:
"We have assembled ere tgether, my friends, upon this historic spot, where

No digger's spade Shall e'er invade This classic shade, it shan't, And no connie b'ar Shall roam up thar. Nor anywhar, it can't

to celebrate the nuptial ties of the couple cld snoe and a nandful of rice forminst, them; and may they have smooth salling and fair winds over the matrimonial sea; and may their hull be free from the barnacles of life, and be never subject to squalls nor cries of 'Ship ahoy-'.'

The justice here pauses to interject the usual questions required by law, then raising his voice, he continues sonorously. ing his voice, he continues sonorously

New York Heraid.

With a prefactory note saying that he would reform and work if released from Riker's Island, where he was sent for three months for disorderly conduct, January 27, John Donnelly, of New Rochelle, sent the following appeal to Magistrate Breen yesterday:

O, noble judge, great, mighty judge, to you in verse I write:
I ask you for my prompt release—please help me in my fight.
In January, at the bar, in far-famed Yorkville Court,
I was intoxicated, and—I thought myself a sport.

While standing humbly, penitent, before you at the rail
You said that I was guilty and then sent me off to jail.
I have, to date, served half my time, and monopolies; by the loud and clarion notes of the old Rhanghal chanticleer, heard in the early morn calling upon his comrades to shake off their claracy; by the old aromatic gourd vine, whose clinging tendrils will shade the pickaming is voice, he continues sonorously:

"By the authority vested in me by the Commonwealth of North Carolina, which is sometimes called the Tar Hell to commonwealth of North Carolina, which is sometimes called the Tar Hell to commonwealth of North Carolina, which is commonwealth of North Carolina, which is commonwealth of North Carolina, which is sometimes called the Tar Hell to commonwealth of North Carolina, which is common to lead to Tar Hell to Commonwealth the old aromatic gourd vine, whose clinging tendrils will shade the pickaninnies around your cabin door, and last, but not least, by the memory of the Decklenburg Mecklapendence of Injuration. I propose well one of the control of t Decklenburg Mecklapendence of Injura-tion I pronounce you Coon and Coonle. Whomsoever that the laws of North Car-olina have jined together, let no coon put asunder! Salute your bride—and may the Lord have mercy upon your souls!" During the ceremony the faces of the bride and bridegroom have held expres-

THE "COON DOG" CEREMONY

SQUIRE MAXWELL'S CONCEPTION

Mr. Charles P. Russell Writes Interestingly in The New York Times of Scenes and Incidents Familiar to Charlotteans—The Text of the Famous Marriage Ceremony is Set Down for the Edification of New Yorkers.

Charles P. Russell in New York Times.

Charles P. Russell in New York Times.

Charles P. Russell in New York Times.

Before the march of progress and commercials me swept it away there stood in the little Southern city of Charlotte, N. N., an old "fo" de war" court house which contained the office of Col. David Guy Maxwell, known widely in the country about as "Squire," justice of the peace and United States Commissioner. Squire Maxwell was as much a part of squire in a state of the peace and United States Commissioner. Squire Maxwell was as much a part of the commissioner of mingied awe and delignt, until at the words "Salute your bride" there the mafter of a fee, as is usual, the grinis is a loud and resounding smack. After ning bridegroom leads out the simpering bride, there is a murmum of appreciation and praise from the spectators, and the justice sinks back into his chair with a justice sinks back into his chair with a pressily for the tying of colored couples, and is given exactly as he uttered it hundreds of times. Its high-sounding phrases and allusions to well-known objects give huge delight to the ampering tries. This is the famous "coon-dog" ceremony originated by Squire Maxwell expressly for the tying of colored couples, and is given exactly as he uttered it more thanked by Squire Maxwell expressly for the tying of colored couples, and is given exactly as he uttered it is some for the tying of the spectators. The substitute sinks back into his chair with a ploud grow heads out the simpering tries to substitute sinks back into his chair with a ploud grow heads out the simpering tries a loud and resounding smack. After ning bride, there is a murmum of a few later in the state with a substitute sinks back into his case, as let the mafter of the ma

room for a modern new hotel, and he now occupies an office upstairs in a reg-ular office building, where the atmos-phere is not quite the same. The squire and the colonel are still sitting by the old office stove. Their feeling for each other is too intimate to make conversation necessary, and so they sit together in silence, spit accurately into the open stove door, and wait for litigants at law and couples desiring to

made "Coon and Coonie."

The April Smart Set. The automobile has found a permanent place in modern fiction, but no better motor-car story has been written than "The Pink Typhoon," by Harrison Robertson, which opens the April number of The Smart Set. The story concerns itself with the delightful motor adventures of a dignified judge in a Middle-West town, and two charming children play important parts in an altogether charming narrative. It is a story which is easy to read, but certainly not easy to forget Perhaps no issue of any magazine

has ever contained such a variety of fiction. There are stories which will will find a particularly good one in "The Woman in Gray," which Ethel Watts Mumford tells with her usual cleverness. A humorous love story, "The Way of a Maid," by John W. Knapp, will appeal to every lover of youth, and "Franco's Lucky Penny," by Frederic Taber Cooper, is a tragic story of great originality and strength. There is a Mardi Gras story, "The Dragon Fly," by M. E. M. Davts, wherein the author has captured the very spirit of carnival time. Emma R. Kaufman contributes a theatrical story entitled. "The Understudy," which everyone who is at all interested in the stage will admire. Ger-trude Lynch tells a splendid love story called "The Man and the Bird," and Ellis Parker Butler has never been more humorous than in his story, "Non Compos Mentis." Other fiction is by Arthur Stanley , Wheeler, Clara F. McIntyre, Roland Franklin drews, G. Vere Tyler and Steell. The essay by Gelett Burgess, "The Sulphitic Theory." the cleverest work The Smart Set has ever published. In his best vein Mr Burgess has some innocent fun with the commonplace people of this world who are constantly making common place remarks. He gives a most humorous list of these "public plati-tudes," and expounds his delicious theory.

The poetry is particularly excellent. there being lyrics from such writers as Bliss Carman, Charles G. D. Roberts, Lizette Woodworth Reese, Wal-Irwin, Elsa Barker, Edward Wilbur Mason, Martha G. D. Bianchi Edith M. Thomas and others.

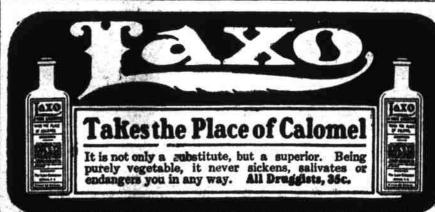
troubles if he didn't take a vacation once in a while.



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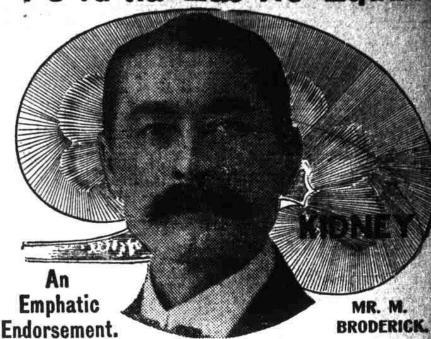
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"FOR KIDNEY TROUBLE AND A WEAK BACK.

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Mr. M. Broderick, 435 E. 46th St., Financial Secretary Stable Employes Union, No. 1041, Chicago, Ill., writes:

"I have been suffering from a weak back and kidney trouble for some time and have been able to find relief only through the use of Peruna. "During the winter season I usually keep a bottle of your medicine in the house and by taking a dose at night, I am feeling fine the next morning. "Some of my friends assure me that Peruna is equally as good for their various ailments as it is for my complaint, but, I do know that for kidney trouble and suffering from a weak back it has no equal."

nized as Catarrh---Pe-ru-na Relleves Kidney Disease Because It Is a Remedy For All Phases of Catarrh.

TWENTY-FIVE years ago,
Dr. Hartman began distributing WENTY-FIVE years ago, before his pamphlets, books and newspaper articles, Bright's Disease of the kidneys was regarded as a disease wholly distinct from catarrh.

Now, Bright's Disease is thought by many the world over to be a phase of catarrhal inflammation.

To relieve Bright's Disease something must be used that has the power to relieve catarrh. Any medicine that is a remedy for

catarrh of one organ is obviously a medicine for catarrh of any other organ. tarrh remedy.

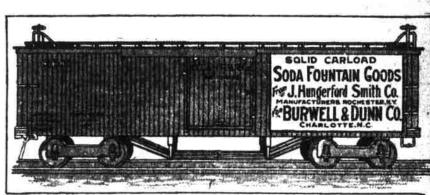
Kidney Trouble is Not Always Recog- | Like catarrh, it pervades the whole system, and counteracts the effects of the disease. A great many people believe that they

have been cured of chronic Bright's Disease by the use of Peruna. It is certainly true that in the earlier stages of Bright's Disease, Peruna is an effective remedy.

Numerous testimonials on this points establish the fact beyond all doubt. Mr. Otto A. Fleissner, American epiurean, formerly Chef to Col. W. J. Cody, 1412 Sixth Ave., Seattle, Washing

writes: "I suffered with kidney and bladder trouble until life did not seem worth living. I had tried many medicines, but did not get any relief until I took Peruna. It was really wonderful how much better I was after I used this medicine only a week. At the end of six months I found to my relief that it Peruna is an internal, systemic ca- had rid my system of all poisons and was cured to stay cured."

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iums, or would you be forced to surrender your insurance? Can you afford to take the risk of leaving your loved ones unprovided for after your death. There is a way to protect yourself and those dependent upon you against such an unfortunate contingency, and that is to insure both your life and earning power by the purchase of an

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