

would pay the national debt many times over, or would render all the workingmen's families in the Union comparatively independent.

No wonder our American Fork correspondent wants to know what is understood by the letter she received, particularly if she took the matter seriously. If an effort were made to carry out the scheme, long before No. 20 was reached every man, woman and child in the country would have received a letter and sent out three, so the "chain" is sure to be broken. The trick is an old one, and it is said was originated years ago, when a request emanated from a stamp-furnishing house which had a contract with the government. At that time, however, the limit in the request was No. 10.

As to the value of cancelled stamps, practically there is none, except to some dealers who sell "collections," and possibly they may augment their supply from "Miss Browne." As to the offer to cure a cripple, that may be set down as a hoax. Recently the Chicago papers have contained requests that no more letters of the class named be sent to a young lady in Illinois; but we do not now remember the name. It was said she was being made the victim of a cruel practical joke of the "cancelled stamp" order, and that life had become burdensome because of the daily arrival of hundreds of letters. Another scheme that is worked in this way is the securing of addresses, particularly of young people, for the purpose of distributing among them literature of an injurious character. No sensible boy or girl should have anything to do with "cancelled stamp" communications.

PHILOSOPHY AND THE GOSPEL.

An interesting and important problem of modern philosophy is the consciousness of man of moral obligation. Every rational being feels that there are certain things he ought to do and others that should not be done; he feels under obligation to do what he perceives to be "right" and to refrain from what is "wrong," whether his actions are actually guided by that rule or not. Whence this universal submission, in the abstract at least, to the rule of rectitude? This is at present the central question of ethics.

It is comparatively easy to account for the development of the sense of moral obligation so far as experience goes to account for it. In the child associations of ideas are formed between actions and the consequences following, and a disposition is created in favor of those actions which result in pleasure. This is further moulded by the authoritative commands that govern in the home, the church, the state, and the rewards or punishments held out. Thus a sense of duty is fastened on the mind, and it is finally perfected by the discovery that every enactment of law has for its sole object the well-being of those from whom obedience is enacted, and when this fact is recognized submission follows, not to avoid arbitrary punishments, nor to gain promised rewards, but because of the justice and goodness of the laws themselves.

With all this admitted, however, the

explanation of the origin of the feeling that we ought to do what is right, is yet to find. Fear of the consequences may indeed detain moral agents from performing certain acts otherwise looked upon as desirable, but this fear cannot originate a sense of obligation to conform to the dictates of righteousness. The announcement that obedience to certain laws is to be rewarded in this life or hereafter, and that disobedience is to be punished may indeed awaken feelings of hope or fear and lead to actions in accordance with these feelings, but by that means love of duty for its own sake can never be generated in the human heart. Experience demonstrates this fully.

A thorough consideration of the problem in all its phases leads modern thinkers to acknowledge the futility of accounting for the origin of this wonderful peculiarity of human beings. To the question, Why ought I to do right? the ultimate answer is: Because it is right, but no further account for its source can they give. The origin of it, like the consciousness of being, is incommunicable to others. "I ought to do what is right" is an ultimate, self-supporting, self-authenticating experience, characteristic of human nature as such.

This frank admission of philosophy of its inability to account for one of the most important facts regarding human nature is valuable for the pursuit of the inquiry on another and entirely different line. Philosophy naturally endeavors to trace the origin of the characteristics of human beings as far back as to what it considers the beginning—the childhood, infancy. If it fails in accomplishing its object, it is because it does not go far enough. If philosophy could penetrate beyond that and trace the conditions under which human spirits existed before their entrance upon this earth, many facts, now mysterious, would appear perfectly clear.

The question now under discussion is on a parallel with the inquiry about the origin of the idea of a God, said to be found universally among men. Numerous philosophers contended that it was an innate idea, impossible to account for, while others argued that no conception of a Supreme being was ever formed except through elaborate reasoning. The Gospel of Christ solved that question satisfactorily by showing that man existed before his entrance upon the earth, and that he came here with a strong impression of the Father whose presence He for the time being had left. The following sweet lines of the immortal poet were truly inspired:

In Thy holy habitation
Did my spirit once reside?
In my first primeval childhood
Was I nurtured near Thy side?

They suggest the true solution of a question with which philosophy long struggled in vain. In the same way the doctrine of the pre-existence of the human spirit will be found to account for that obligation which man feels to do right. It is a divine quality which he has inherited, and which, as long as it is not totally destroyed by wrong-doing against the protests of this feeling—this conscience—makes redemption possible.

When the Gospel was preached in

the beginning of our era, it was confidently given to the world as the "philosophy" of God. Gradually it was investigated and found to be all that was claimed for it. The Gospel restored in this age claims the same high honor. As its principles become understood it will be found to offer a solution to all the important questions with which philosophy is now concerned. Without it there will always be gaps impossible to bridge in the road along which men seek for wisdom; with its aid these difficulties will be overcome and perfect knowledge attained, as far as perfection is possible in this stage of our existence.

FOR SHORTER HOURS.

There have been some highly commendable features developed in the efforts of laboring men and mechanics in all civilized countries to reduce the number of hours in a working day to that which would be consistent with their general welfare and development mentally, physically and spiritually. By these proceedings, the eight-hour day has been recognized in many places and departments of labor as being a fitting proportion of the time when a man may be required to work for an employer; the remaining sixteen hours being regarded as necessary for rest and other demands consistent with the well-being of the individual. Wherever the eight-hour day has been made to prevail, the arrangement seems to have been suited in many ways to its purpose in practice as well as in theory.

Some people, however, are always wanting a change from existing conditions. Many who thought the eight-hour system would be good now complain that it gives too much time for laborers to loaf around saloons or other places not conducive to their welfare; they forget the benefits conferred on workmen who are not loafers, and who are the ones really entitled to the advantages of the system and profit thereby. So also there some who now are agitating for a still further reduction in working time. "Eight hours are too long," they cry; "make it six!"

Of this latter class are the membership of the Chicago bricklayers' union. The attitude of this organization is the more notable because it was the agency which first obtained the eight-hour day in Chicago. The bricklayers of the Windy City had been members of the International union, but the latter body was not sufficiently decisive in its action on the reduction to eight hours, so the Chicagoans withdrew, and started out in the movement themselves, achieving success. The latter part of this month the International union of bricklayers holds its convention at New Orleans. The Chicago union has appointed a committee to attend that convention and to propose a reunion with the International organization, the condition being that the latter will adopt the policy of making six hours a day's work. If this proposition is not accepted (although there are several leading union men who believe it will be), the Chicago bricklayers will make the move on their own account, trust-