

**BURNING QUESTIONS OF
THE LIFE THAT
NOW IS, AND THAT
WHICH IS TO COME**

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Burning questions of the life that now is, and that which is to come by Washington Gladden

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WASHINGTON GLADDEN

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BY

WASHINGTON GLADDEN.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS.

	PAGE
I.—HAS EVOLUTION ABOLISHED GOD?	1
II.—CAN MAN KNOW GOD?	35
III.—IS MAN ONLY A MACHINE?	67
IV.—WHAT IS THE USE OF PRAYER?	97
V.—IS DEATH THE END?	129
VI.—WHO IS JESUS CHRIST?	161
VII.—ARE THE GOSPEL FAIRY TALES?	195
VIII.—WHERE IS THE KINGDOM OF GOD?	221

I.

HAS EVOLUTION ABOLISHED GOD?

Let us take the sphere of Science—that is, of the knowledge of the physical world, which is chiefly in men's minds when they speak of science. Must we not admit that the discoveries which have been made in it have been to us real revelations or unveilings of God, and that their spiritual results have been of very great value? The immutability of His will is shown in the reign of law, so that a lawless scepticism is rendered all but impossible. The true position of man is also made clear, so that a check is placed upon wilfulness and presumption.

—CANON FREMANTLE.

What you want is not a system which may be adjusted to theism, nor even one which finds its most reasonable interpretation in theism, but one which theism only can account for. That, it seems to me, you have. An excellent judge, a gifted adept in physical science and exact reasoning, the late Clerk Maxwell, is reported to have said, not long before he left the world, that he had scrutinised all the agnostic hypotheses he knew of, and that they one and all needed a God to make them workable.—ASA GRAY.

I.

HAS EVOLUTION ABOLISHED GOD ?

IN one of Mrs. Browning's most striking lyrics she puts into verse the voice of that great cry which is said to have swept over the earth at the moment of the crucifixion of our Lord, when the ancient mythologies, as if smitten by lightning from heaven, yielded up the ghost, crying :

"Great Pan is dead!"
And that dismal cry rose slowly
And sank slowly through the air,
Full of spirit's melancholy,
And eternity's despair;
And they heard the words it said,
"Pan is dead—Great Pan is dead—
Pan, Pan is dead."

The old nature-worship, vanquished by the clearer light that shone from Bethlehem and Calvary, shrank dismayed and palsied to the earth from which it sprang. It was the end

of one era of religious history and the beginning of another.

There are those living on the earth to-day who think that they have heard a similar cry, only this time it proclaims that the Christ is dead and that Great Pan is alive again. The belief is entertained by some that we have come to the end of that period of religious history which commenced about nineteen hundred years ago in Palestine; that the force which then began to shape the world's destinies is now practically spent; and that a religion—if we may call it a religion—not unlike that of which the gods of Hellas were the representatives—a nature-cult—is now, in its turn, to dethrone Christianity, and resume that empire over the Western world of which it has so long been despoiled. In some quarters with exultation, and in others with alarm, this outcry is heard. It is thought by some and feared by many that the religious beliefs which have been regarded throughout Christendom as most fundamental, have been undermined by recent discoveries in physical science; it is loudly said that Christianity is doomed, and that the Churches must give place to other