

THE FREETHINKER

EDITED BY G. W. FOOTE.
Sub-Editor—J. M. WHEELER

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COMIC BIBLE SKETCH.—No. 252.



A DARK BARGAIN.

And he said unto him, Take me an heifer of three years old, and a she goat of three years old, and a turtle dove, and a young pigeon. And he took unto him all these, and divided them in the midst, and laid each piece one against another: but the birds divided he not. . . . And it came to pass, that, when the sun went down, and it was dark, behold a smoking furnace, and a burning lamp that passed between those pieces. In the same day the Lord made a covenant with Abram.—GENESIS XV., 9-18.

THE PAGAN VOLTAIRE.

NEARLY sixteen centuries before Voltaire was born, a wit as brilliant, a spirit as trenchant, an intellect as fearless, and a nature as sunny, was ushered into the world at Samosata, a Syrian city in a bend of the Euphrates. Lucian, as we call him, or Loukianos as it is in Greek, was intended by his parents to be an artist. He was apprenticed to his uncle, a sculptor, but he was beaten for breaking a piece of marble and he ran away. After long wanderings and varied experience as advocate, rhetorician and lecturer, he returned home at the age of forty and settled down, living henceforth by literature. Although there was no printing, books were comparatively cheap; there seems to have been a pretty wide reading public, and a clever writer could live by his pen, especially if he gave public readings from his own works. Lucian appears to have followed this course, and he earned enough to satisfy his modest wants. He was industrious and his mind was fertile. Accordingly the Teubner edition of his works comprises fifteen hundred pages of closely printed Greek.

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Lucian married in middle life, and had a son. Temperance prolonged his age to ninety years, and he doubtless died at peace with himself and the world. But bigotry will not allow sceptics to die a natural death, so the story was floated that he was at last torn to pieces by dogs.

There is a complete translation of Lucian in French. Dr. Francklin's version is far from complete, and more a paraphrase than a translation, though it cannot be denied that he has a happy style and a command of sinewy English. During the present year Messrs. Bell and Sons have published a passable translation of the Dialogues in two volumes, and Professor Morley gives a selection from Francklin in a volume of the "National Library." Lucian's felicity in the use of Greek is lost on unclassical readers, but in any shape he is good reading. The very worst translation could not completely hide the charm of the splendid wit who amused the last hours of David Hume and helped him to meet Death with a smile.

Mr. Andrew Lang, in the current number of the *Fortnightly Review*, has a capital article on Lucian, written with sympathy and *verve*. Mr. Lang speaks of Jesus as

"Our Lord," and ventures to say that the ideal of Lucian, depicted in the character of Demonax, is "essentially Christian." But these are only the pinches of incense he throws upon the orthodox altar, and do not detract from the real value of the article.

Lucian did not believe in gods, says Mr. Lang, as Coleridge did not believe in ghosts, "because he had seen too many of them." Long before the age of Comparative Religion he saw the various faiths of the credulous East with his own eyes, and he came to the conclusion which every sane man arrives at when he listens to a diverse crowd of monomaniacs. The gods were the most frequent butts of his ridicule. "Nothing could be more audaciously profane," Mr. Lang allows, than one of his dialogues in which Zeus holds a council of the gods to consider the neglect of mankind; the special occasion being the dereliction of Menestheus the pilot, who vowed a sacrifice when his vessel was in danger, and fulfilled his promise by giving an old cock half dead of the pip, although Zeus had invited sixteen gods to feast on it, and four grains of musty incense which they could scarcely smell. Nor did Lucian deride the old gods alone, his satire was launched at the "new gods coming up like mushrooms all around him." Yet the toleration of the Roman Empire, as Mr. Lang observes, let him live and laugh; while Giordano Bruno was burnt at the stake by the Christian Church "for a much more cautious buffoonery." Such was the progress in toleration made in fourteen centuries under the mild and merciful sway of the religion of love!

Mr. Lang does not notice that if new gods came up in Lucian's time like mushrooms, and "new religions were as common as patent medicines are now," the origin of Christianity is *prima facie* doubtful. Being one of the crowd, it is at least open to suspicion; and if the age was so credulous, every faith that arose from it—the survivor as well as those which perished—is certain to smack of its source.

Mr. Lang gives a rapid summary of Lucian's "audaciously profane" Dialogue, but the reader will find it inimitably translated in the third volume of Froude's *Short Studies*. Here is a passage from Zeus's address to the assembled gods on the crisis. After narrating the pilot's delinquency Zeus continues:

"I was standing in the porch, engaged on these reflections, when I observed a crowd about the hall, some inside, some pressing about the door. I heard voices loud in contradiction. I understood at once that a couple of professors were disputing, and I determined to hear what it was about. By good luck I had a thick cloud on. I adjusted my dress, gave my beard a pull to make myself like a philosopher, and elbowed my way in. There I found a good-for-nothing scamp of an Epicurean named Damis, and the respected and excellent Stoic, Timocles, arguing together. Timocles was perspiring with eagerness and hoarse with shouting. Damis was turning him into ridicule, and driving him distracted with his coolness. The subject of discussion was ourselves. Damis maintained that we had no concern with men and their doings, and almost denied our existence. Indeed, this was what he meant, and many of his audience applauded. Timocles took our part, passionately and indignantly. He argued well of providence. He dwelt on the order which is observed throughout nature. He was not without his friends, but he was unequal to his work; he spoke badly. The party in favor of Damis grew larger every moment, till, seeing what was likely to happen, I ordered up Night to bring the meeting to an end, leaving them to finish the argument to-morrow. I mixed in the crowd as the people went home. I found most of them, I am sorry to say, on Damis's side; a few only remained undecided till they had heard out what Timocles had to reply. You will now, my divine friends, be no longer at a loss to understand your summons to this assembly. From men we derive our honor and glory and our revenues. Let men once conceive that we do not exist, or that we have nothing to do with them, and victims, incense, and prayers will cease to be offered to us. We shall be left sitting idle here in Heaven, banquets and ceremonies at an end, perishing of hunger. It concerns us all, gentlemen, it concerns us all. What is to be done? How is Timocles to get the best of the argument and answer Damis sufficiently? I have no confidence in Timocles. He means well, but unless we help him he will certainly be beaten. Give the usual notice, Hermes. Any god who can give advice in our present emergency, let him rise and speak."

God after god gives his advice. Momus says they shirk their duties; good men perish in penury or slavery, while profligate wretches are wealthy, honored and powerful. Posidon's advice is that Damis should be settled with a thunderbolt, but Zeus reminds him that every man's death is predestined. Apollo says they must assist Timocles, keep him out of absurdities, and make him speak so as to be comprehended. Hercules suggests that the debaters

should fight it out; if Timocles has the best of it, well and good; if Timocles is beaten, let the hall be pulled down on Damis's head; but Momus reminds him that this clumsy device will destroy a thousand to punish a single bad man. So the fun continues, until the gods agree to descend and hear the adjourned debate. Timocles uses the ordinary arguments of theology, and Damis refutes them all with imperturbable logic and wit. At last Timocles loses his temper, and asks Damis indignantly what he is laughing at. Damis suggests they should close the discussion. Timocles says, "You admit that you are vanquished," and Damis replies "Of course." This sarcasm makes Timocles furious, and he pursues his adversary with the time-honored abuse of confounded theologians.

"Oh! oh! you are sarcastic, are you! you gravedigger! you wretch! you abomination! you jail-bird! you cess-pool! we know where you came from; your mother was a whore; and you killed your brother and seduced your friend's wife; you are an adulterer, a sodomite, a glutton, and a beast. Stay till I can thrash you. Stay, I say, villain, abhorred villain!"

Damis walks off laughing, and Timocles follows railing and throwing tiles at him. Zeus asks what is to be done, and Hermes replies that a few people have gone away believing in Damis, but "a great many more believe the reverse; and the whole mass of uneducated Greeks and the barbarians everywhere."

Lucian laughed consumedly at superstition, but Mr. Lang remarks that he never laughed at "goodness, courage, kindness, and honesty." He pictures an ideal City of Rest, where men win "wisdom and manfulness, and the very Beauty herself, and Justice, while they have stripped their soul of desire for wealth and pleasure and bodily delights." His ideal friend Demonax lived "a righteous, wholesome, and blameless life." He was full of benevolence, humor, and courage, and "it was ever his way to reconcile brother to brother, and husbands to their wives." "Such," says Lucian, "was the manner of his philosophy, gentle, and glad, and easily entreated. Him could no evil come near, but the illness or death of friends; and friendship he deemed the chief of mortal happiness." What did Christianity, at its very best, add to the charm of this ideal? and whenever does Christianity rise to the level of its beautiful sanity?

"Lucian," says Mr. Lang, "was not only an unequalled wit, a philosopher in his way, a clear-sighted observer, of men and gods, but a poet also, like Heine, a poet with a magic all his own." Both Mr. Lang and Mr. Froude tell us that the age of Lucian was in many respects like our own, full of crumbling creeds, with a revival of sentiment and superstition. There was the same incredulity among the educated and thoughtful, and the same lamentation over the spread of infidelity; and Lucian may therefore be regarded as a robust friend who travelled the road before us. "We hear him," Mr. Froude says, "telling us in every sentence to keep a sound heart in us; to tell no lies; to do right whatever may befall us; never to profess to believe what we know that we do not believe; to look phantoms in the face, and to be sure that they cannot hurt us if we are true to ourselves." G. W. FOOTE.

THE OATHS BILL.

MR. BRADLAUGH does not seem to have managed the Oaths Bill with his usual skill. He has carried his amendment by a small majority, after opposing Dr. Hunter's, which was, to say the least of it, no more objectionable than his own. But this may not secure the third reading, for several who voted for Mr. Bradlaugh's amendment in order to whittle down the Bill have declared their intention to vote against the whole measure at the final stage. And the worst of it is that Mr. Bradlaugh carried his amendment, as a compromise to conciliate the superstitionists, in face of the stern opposition of Radicals like Morley and Trevelyan, as well as Labouchere, and even Illingworth, who had backed the Bill. It is a pity that the hostility of such men was not discovered before; or, if discovered, that it was not properly reckoned with. Mr. Bradlaugh takes a justifiable pride in associating his name with an Oaths Bill, and it is natural that he should feel a parent's affection for his offspring; but we doubt the wisdom of his forcing it through the House in a maimed condition, and by the help of Tory votes, against the protest of all whose sentiments are worthiest of respect. Were it a case of "now or never," he would be quite right in carrying the Bill in any shape that improved, in however slight a degree, the existing state of things. But there was really no such desperate hurry. Time is with the principle of the Bill and all the irresistible forces of progress are making for its

success. We are aware that Mr. Bradlaugh is a discreet as well as a courageous fighter, and we have not overburdened him with gratuitous advice; but the Bill is a public measure, the moment is critical, and Freethinkers are entitled to speak. It is rather unpleasant to find Mr. Bradlaugh censured by the Radical press and lauded by the *Times*; and, on the whole, we cannot help thinking that there has been a regrettable miscalculation of the state of feeling in the House of Commons with regard to the latest struggle for religious equality. Some kind of compromise is often necessary in practice; only a fool thinks of carrying his own principles everywhere and always; but a compromise which excites the indignation of the best men on your own side is difficult to justify. A statesman or a leader must always reckon with his own party first.

EDITORIAL.

The full advertisement of the new Radical weekly, which is to be published at our office, is unavoidably postponed till next week. For the present we may say that the preliminaries are all settled, and the new venture will certainly be launched by the first week in August at the very latest. The title is fixed, and will be given in our next announcement.

We take the opportunity of a little available space to make an appeal on behalf of the Metropolitan Radical Federation, to which the N. S. S. is affiliated. The Federation has called a demonstration in Hyde Park to-day (July 15), at 5 o'clock, to protest against the imprisonment of John Dillon and the judicial murder of John Mandeville, and to call on the Government to grant the inquiry demanded by Mr. Parnell. The demonstration will be devoid of sensational attractions. No M.P.'s or high personages are invited. The speakers will all come from the Clubs, and such a protest will show that the London Radicals are in deadly earnest. Unfortunately the Federation has a limited income and many demands on it. It is to be hoped, therefore, that all who can spare a donation will send it on behalf of the demonstration. Any sums we receive shall be acknowledged next week; and as preaching is useless without practice, we head the subscription list with half a guinea.

ACID DROPS.

Mr. A. B. Moss is ordered by the London School Board to desist from lecturing on Sunday on the hypocritical pretence that doing what he pleases in his own leisure would interfere with his duties. But another public servant, Sir S. A. Blackwood, who draws £2,000 a-year from the national purse, can go to the Mildmay Park Conference, and preside at all the principal meetings, in the time when he is supposed to be doing the public's work. Such are the different measures dealt out to Freethinkers and Christians.

The School Board has not even the courage of its bigotry. Diggle and his friends sneak away behind the shallow excuse that Mr. Moss's Freethought lectures were "likely to militate against the successful performance of his duties." Now Diggle must know this is humbug. Mr. Moss has lectured ever since he entered the Board's service, and no complaint has ever been made as to his efficiency; on the contrary, his superintendent told the Board that he had always been punctual in performing his duties. Mr. Moss's offence, therefore, is a constructive one. His lecturing doesn't interfere with his work, but then it ought to. Bah! Such disgusting hypocrisy makes one's flesh creep.

The humbug of Diggle & Co. shines conspicuously in this fact. Mr. Moss has a large stock of his pamphlets, in which he has invested his savings. How can the sale of that stock, suppose he writes no more, interfere with his future work? Yet he is forbidden to sell the pamphlets he has on hand. Why? Because they are Freethought pamphlets. We defy Diggle & Co. to find another answer.

Now a word for Diggle & Co.'s constructive argument. There is no tyranny which it would not cover. The Board might say to all its servants, "You shall go to bed and get up at such an hour, eat and drink so and so, wear this kind of clothes, read nothing but the Religious Tract Society's publications and that only for six hours a week, avoid theatres and concert rooms, and be always indoors before nine o'clock; otherwise your health will suffer, and in that case your duties cannot be performed successfully." Indeed, there is no single act of an *employee's* life that might not be regulated if Diggle & Co.'s constructive argument is once allowed to stand.

The Rev. A. H. Stanton has been presented by his admirers with £530. As Jesus Christ told his disciples to carry neither scrip nor purse, we wonder where the reverend gentleman will put the money. Perhaps he has a proxy purse in the shape of a banking account.

Mr. STANTON is said to be a hard worker, although in our opinion he is only grinding chaff, and we are far from grudging

his windfall, or, as perhaps he would like to call it, his God-sent. We simply point out the inconsistency between his belief and his practice.

MR. STANTON, in acknowledging the pretty present which would have set J. C. and the apostles going for years, declared his dissatisfaction with the Church of England. He has lost all enthusiasm for the Establishment through the treatment he has received from the Bishops. Well, the people have received still worse treatment; for all their best interests have been opposed by the right reverend Fathers in God.

THE British Temperance League complains that "clergymen and ministers of religion," as well as "other professing Christians," are investing their money in the drink trade. They buy up shares when big brewing firms are converted into limited liability companies; and this shows the force of Gladstone's argument that a keen eye for worldly profit is the faithful companion of godliness.

THE Roman Catholics have been attacking a procession of Orangemen at Manchester. The Protestants were proceeding to a special service at St. Mark's Church. This was an outrage on their religious and patriotic feelings which the Irish Catholics could not endure, especially on the Holy Sabbath. A number of men and women, armed with hatchets, knives, pokers, and bottles, made a desperate onslaught upon the Protestants, who, being unprepared and overwhelmed by superior numbers, were completely defeated, and were knocked down as they ran with hatchets and pokers, and bottles thrown by infuriated women. Lives would have been lost but for the timely arrival of thirty policemen. A large number of injured Protestants had to be taken to the hospital. How these Christians love each other! And what a beautiful method of keeping holy the Sabbath Day!

THE Rev. H. P. Stokes is a member of the Wolverhampton School Board, and in that capacity he is interested in the children on the canal boats, who are brought up in the most deplorable ignorance. Two married couples, he says, actually came to him the other day, said they had agreed to swap, and asked him to do the necessary palaver. This is doubtless a sad state of things, but the quartet acted very naturally. They thought the man of God was a hired performer of ceremonies, and there is much to justify their opinion.

SIGNOR MONETA, editor and proprietor of the *Secolo*, is going to bring out the Bible in halfpenny parts. We are delighted to hear it. Whenever people take to reading the Bible, they enter the high-road of "Infidelity." Protestantism with its open Bible, its multitudinous sects, and its rationalizing tendencies, is a proof of this; and a still stronger proof is found in the fact that the Catholic Church always does its best to keep the Bible out of the people's hands.

THE Italians have a good sense of humor, and if the halfpenny Bible is extensively circulated there will be a tremendous lot of laughter in the peninsula. Signor Moneta's Bible is to be illustrated, but Messrs. Cassell report that the blocks are those that were used in illustrating their Child's Bible. None of the spicy parts, therefore, will be illustrated, and this will be a serious drawback; for that is the kind of thing which your average Christian particularly relishes.

A WRITER in the *Church Times* thinks the explanations of the Trinity and analysis of the Godhead which goes by the name of the Athanasian Creed, will be perfectly unobjectionable if only we read "Whosoever would be safe," instead of "Whosoever will be saved." This is an ingenious method of paring down what an irreverent parson called "its damnation claws," but it will not make more comprehensible the jumble of three incomprehensibles being one incomprehensible.

FOURTEEN American dioceses of the Anglican Church have petitioned the Lambeth Synod for the removal from the Nicene Creed of the "Filioque"—*i.e.*, the words "and the Son" in the clause declaring that the Holy Ghost proceeds from the Father and the Son. It is well known that this phrase was an after addition. The rest of the creed, though it pretends to have been drawn up at Nicea in 325, really only dates from the Council of Constantinople in 381. The "Filioque" cannot be traced earlier than the Council of Toledo in 589.

A GLASGOW crank issues a sheet advocating the Biblical "flat earth" theory under the title of *The Coming Man*. He puts in italics the notice, "Any looking for the Lord's Coming please communicate with the editor." Those who swallow that oft-repeated flim of Christ's speedy second coming must be credulous enough for anything. He was due eighteen hundred years ago in the lifetime of his own disciples. As he has never put in any appearance he was probably lost on the road.

THE *Methodist Times* has an article on "The Breakdown of our Foreign Missionary Society," which it declares "will soon be bankrupt" unless there is a change of policy.

LORD HALSBURY, whose unctuous piety no longer finds relief in the prosecution of blasphemers, has been serving the Lord by a defence of his Bible, delivered before the Hackney Y.M.C.A. The Bible, he said, was a standing miracle. What, then, are the Vedas, the Avesta, and the Book of the Dead? This is exactly what Mohammedans say of the Koran. Evidently not knowing the difference between myth and history, or fancying that anything will go down with the Y.M.C.A., he spoke of the "efforts made in the early ages to destroy all copies of the Bible by those who were averse to its teachings." Will he try and find out when and where this happened? To avoid modern difficulties, he protested as earnestly as he could against anyone assuming that they were to have a private interpretation of the Scriptures. Evidently Lord Halsbury's true place is with the Roman Catholics, but that would disqualify him for the woollack.

THE Salvation Army has just brought together 40,000 "soldiers" at the Alexandra Palace. Booth's success has been far more rapid than that of Christ or the early Apostles.

GEORGE GARNER, the Church Army "captain" charged with indecently assaulting a girl of eleven in the gospel tent at Stockton (Durham), has been found guilty and sentenced to two months' hard labor, despite two clerical witnesses to the excellence of his character.

AT the Pan-Presbyterian Council the Rev. Dr. Drummond gave an address on "Aggressive Christian Work in large Cities," and the Rev. Dr. Monro Gibson spoke on the "Hopes of Aggressive Christian Work." "Aggressive" Atheism is regarded as something very dreadful, but the adjective somehow becomes an excellent one when applied to Christianity.

EXTREMES meet. Mr. Bradlaugh and Dr. Parker met at Dollis Hall, and had a friendly conversation. At least the *Echo* says so. Perhaps Mr. Bradlaugh and Dr. Parker will exchange platforms now and then. Certainly Mr. Bradlaugh would do some good at the City Temple, and Dr. Parker might also do some good at the Hall of Science if he allowed discussion after his sermon.

MR. W. W. COLLINS has been fined £5 and costs by a Sydney magistrate for selling the *Law of Population*. In his defence he called attention to numerous medical works, but the magistrate remarked that "out of the thousand medical men in England it was possible some obscure doctor might be found who would deal with such matters." More than a dozen gentlemen volunteered evidence for the defence. Of these, four went into the witness-box and testified that the book was not obscene, but useful. The magistrate, however, had made up his mind, and declared, "If you call forty more witnesses it will make no difference whatever to my decision." Mr. Collins's own defence was peremptorily stopped. He, of course, gave notice of appeal to the Supreme Court, where he has already obtained a *rule nisi*, so that there will be a new trial.

THE Rev. R. H. Baynes, Honorary Canon of Worcester, and late Vicar of Holy Trinity, Folkestone, is charged with defrauding the landlady of an hotel and various tradesmen by cheques on a bank where it is alleged he has no account.

THE Rev. G. F. W. Ellis, formerly a Roman Catholic, is sentenced to seven years' penal servitude for solemnising matrimony without being in holy orders, and for forging a certificate of tonsure.

MORE bigotry at Liverpool. The City Council has refused to re-let St. George's Hall to the Liverpool Sunday Society for musical recitals on the ground that it would be "an outrage on public sentiment." Poor public sentiment! She is a squeamish lady, and cries out "rape" whenever she is looked at.

A SECOND reason was assigned. Letting the hall for Sunday afternoon recitals would be "secularizing the Sabbath." The lands are the hands of the City Council, but the voice is the voice of the parsons. Secularizing the Sabbath means emptying their gospel-shops.

THE Rev. Dr. Kay, of Edinburgh, is great on "social purity," but instead of illustrating his subject from the Jewish history he draws on the Glasgow Exhibition, where he finds a number of nude figures in painting and statuary that shock his Calvinistic mind. He shudders for the pure-minded daughters of Scotland, and of course he has a right to shudder. But what a libel he perpetrates on the Scotch lasses! According to Dr. Kay's argument they never wash themselves. If they do not—an idea we repudiate—the sooner they see that clothes are removable the better; and if they do, a naked Venus, Hebe, or Juno is no discovery. Dr. Kay believes that God made us all, and as he clothes us in nothing but skin, the "social purity" preachers should lecture him before lecturing the artists.

THE Church pretends to take a deep interest in the condition of the poor, and discusses papers on the subject. But what does it do practically? While palavering about the sweating system

it raises cash for fresh bishoprics. There is to be a bishop's see at Bristol; £40,000 is already raised, and when the total of £65,000 is reached a new shepherd will be sworn in to comfort the sheep and keep off the wolves. Considering that Jesus taught the blessings of poverty and the evils of wealth it is astonishing how much it costs to fix up a first-class sky-pilot in business.

A BOY of sixteen has been sacrificed to the gods near Nagpore in India. The belief is that human sacrifices cause a bountiful harvest. This is almost as bad as king David having seven men hung before the Lord to stay a famine, or Jephthah sacrificing his daughter. It is feared that the horrible custom still prevails in parts of India as it evidently did in ancient Palestine. But why do the Christians think there is nothing shocking in the story of Abraham and Isaac, or in God's sacrificing his only son, or in God's command that all human beings devoted to him should surely be put to death (Lev. xxvii., 28, 29)?

THE Rev. Johnson Baily, of South Shields, when entertained at dinner by the Mayor, expressed his pain at seeing "the one public room which the Corporation held in trust for the town allowed to be used on Sundays for conducting meetings for the propagation of atheism." It makes this bigot quite wild that a hall in the control of the town should be permitted to those who criticise his own creed. The Free Library hall is available to all parties, and if the Rev. Johnson Baily wishes to exclude Secularists from its use, we presume he is also prepared to exempt them from paying rates for the building.

"WATCHING over the morality and general well-being of the public" is the occupation of the clergy, according to this gentleman. Well now, that is a big job, and it will take a lot of doing. Mr. Baily and his brother clericals need not waste their time over Secularists. They will find enough to do with the godly; and they might make a beginning by ascertaining how many church-goers live on the rents of brothels.

ONE of the Tibetan Grand Lamas is dead, and the officers appointed have discovered three young boys in one of whom "beyond all doubt the spirit of the late Lama has passed." The authorities are now sitting on the claims of the little boys. What nonsense, exclaims the Christian, yet he believes that the Holy Ghost is given by the laying on of hands.

MUCH outcry was made by the clerical party in France as to the complete break-up of society if M. Naquet's divorce bill were passed. The returns have now been published and it appears that although divorces are both far cheaper and more easily obtained than in England, there are only nine for every thousand marriages, and these figures must include many cases of those who would have been divorced long previously if the law had given permission.

THE Pope, for a consideration, allows the Duke of Aosta, ex-king of Spain, to marry the princess Letitia, his own niece. No poor Romanist who desires to marry his first cousin could obtain an indulgence, yet the Pope maintains the sanctity of Christian marriage and fulminates against divorce.

THE Supreme Court of Justice in Spain has dismissed the appeal of two Protestant professors who were sentenced to imprisonment for refusing to salute a Catholic priest who was carrying the consecrated wafer to a sick person. There is, however, a little more reciprocity in the law against acts of disrespect to religion than one might expect in the native land of the Inquisition and Jesuitism. Some Catholics entered a Protestant chapel with their hats on, insulted the pastor, threw the Bible on the floor, and trod on it. The Supreme Court actually decided that the Public Prosecutor must bring these persons to trial.

"HOW far is the Church responsible for the present unbelief?" was the question dealt with by the Rev. Dr. Dods, of Glasgow, at the Pan-Presbyterian Conference. Here is our answer—the Church is responsible for all of it. She teaches nonsense which sensible people deride. When the Church disappears unbelief will disappear, just as the Free Trade agitation ceased when Protection was abolished.

AFTER Gladstone's haughty censure of Ingersoll for ridiculing Christianity it is rather rich to find a writer in the *Christian World* saying that at the recent Missionary Conference, when Heathen Systems were under discussion, "from beginning to end the order was 'deprecate, denounce, caricature non-Christian systems, and laud Christianity.'" Thus it is all right for Christians to steal sheep, but flat burglary for Freethinkers to look over the hedge.

UP to the present we have not heard a whisper of the appearance of Gladstone's article on Ingersoll. The "arrangement in another quarter" takes effect very slowly. We wonder how long the G. O. M. will be before he gives the British public a chance of reading his defence of their creed. We shall give him a fair time and then —

MR. FOOTE'S LECTURES.

Sunday, July 15, Radical Federation Demonstration, Hyde Park, at 5 p.m.
 July 22, Kingsland Green (morning). 29, Camberwell (morning and evening).
 August 5, Pimlico Pier (morning); Hall of Science (evening). 12, Albert Embankment (morning); Hall of Science (evening). 19, Battersea Park (morning); Camberwell (evening). 26, Camberwell.
 Sept. 2, Liverpool; 9 and 16, Hall of Science, London; 23, Manchester.

TO CORRESPONDENTS.

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THE *Freethinker* will be forwarded, direct from the office, post free to any part of Europe, America, Canada and Egypt, at the following rates, prepaid:—One Year, 6s. 6d.; Half Year, 3s. 3d.; Three Months, 1s. 7½d.

W. BURRIDGE, in reference to the Oaths Bill, says that his friends and acquaintances are aware of his Radicalism and Freethought, but if he were to go into a court and declare he had no religious belief, the publication of the fact to the whole county of Cornwall through the press would ruin his business and reduce him to want. This is a subject in which Freethinkers are specially interested, and it is well that their views should be stated.

H. J. M.—Thanks for the cuttings. They are particularly useful.

R. FOX.—Your last cuttings are not as usual up to date. We like them fresh.

F. MILLAR.—Cutting received with thanks. Always pleased to hear from you.

A. DE LA VEGA.—Many thanks for the volume. Mr. Wheeler is much obliged for the further list of Freethinkers. We take note of the other matters in your letter.

T. A. WILLIAMS.—It is perfect nonsense for the police to prohibit open-air meetings in Bristol. A particular spot may be suitable or unsuitable, but the prohibition of all meetings is impudent tyranny. We are glad to hear the Bristol Freethinkers mean to hold the meeting at all hazards. Kindly keep us informed of the sequel.

W. J. S. C.—Your jocular questions do not admit of an answer in this column. They shall be dealt with in a separate paragraph. Pleased to hear you are always glad when Friday comes round with the *Freethinker*. Gladstone's article does not seem likely to be "soon published" by himself; he seems to class it with the things that belong to the dim and distant future.

TRUTHSEEKER.—It is impossible to deal here with all the points raised in your interesting letter. One point, however, on which you seek information may be dealt with. (1) All actions are results, because everything is caused. But disapprobation of an immoral, that is an anti-social act, is also caused; and the effect becoming in itself a fresh cause operates upon the minds of persons who are inclined to act immorally, but are also susceptible to the opinion of their fellows. Calling a man a "scoundrel" is only a way of expressing intense dislike; it does not imply that he or you are exempt from the law of causation. (2) We do not make any private inquiry into the character of Christians. We only deal with what is reported in the public press. Nor do we suppose that Christians, as men, are better or worse than other people. But their argument is that Christianity is essential to morality, or at least a powerful aid to it; and if parsons who teach this doctrine go flagrantly wrong themselves, they demonstrate the fallacy of this contention. You must also remember that they commonly pretend there is a necessary connection between scepticism and immorality; so the notification of their delinquencies answers both arguments at once. If a false theory is not to be refuted by facts, how is it to be refuted?

J. T.—Cuttings received with thanks. Your suggestion as to reprinting articles shall be considered.

W. C. (Birkenhead) wants to know where Freethought literature can be purchased in that town. Will one of our Birkenhead readers supply the information?

PAPERS RECEIVED.—Secular Thought—Liberator—Western Figaro—Truthseeker—Freethought—Neues Freireligiöses Sonntags-blatt—Freidenker—Southport Guardian—Fair Play—Open Court—Vospa—Hornsey, Wood Green, and Southgate Times—North London Echo—Menschentum—County of Middlesex Independent—Boston Investigator—Fritänkoren—Monroe's Ironclad Age—Liberator—Revue du Progres Social—Banbury Guardian—Manchester Examiner—Socialist—Hackney and Kingsland Gazette.

CORRESPONDENCE should reach us not later than Tuesday if a reply is desired in the current issue. Otherwise the reply stands over till the following week.

SUGAR PLUMS.

THERE was a much-improved audience at the London Hall of Science on Sunday night, when Mr. Foote lectured on "Plain Truth about Jesus Christ." Several Orientals, apparently Parsees, occupied front seats, and followed the lecture with the keenest attention and pleasure.

A BIG audience greeted Mr. Foote at the Midland Arches on Sunday morning. Unfortunately the later part of the proceedings was marred by the advent of a choir, led by a well-known "infidel-slayer." This hallelujah band sang a dozen hymns straight off the reel, to the annoyance of all the other meetings.

Christians have no sense of fair-play in such matters, and it might be advisable to teach them a lesson. If the Freethinkers started an opposition tune every time the Christians lifted their immelodious throats, the latter would probably find that the game was hardly worth playing.

MR. WISE, of the Christian Evidence Society, had a ten minutes' reply, and spoke on the whole with moderation and good sense from his own standpoint. Another gentleman delivered a short sermon. He complained that the lecturer had quoted very little from the Bible, and hinted that he had a small acquaintance with it. Mr. Foote in his reply asked the gentleman to lend him his Bible for a moment. It was a very large, beautifully bound copy, with faultless gilt edges, and "as good as new." Holding it up in one hand, and displaying in the other his own tattered copy of the "sacred volume," the lecturer exclaimed, "See now, here is the gentleman's Bible and here is mine; which looks the most read?" The answer was a roar of laughter.

MR. BRADLAUGH did an excellent stroke in vindicating justice and common sense with regard to the three men who were harrassed by the Treasury for daring to take out summonses against policemen for assault in connection with Trafalgar Square "riots." The policeman whose numbers were taken were declared to be dead or abroad, and after being tricked in this way the poor prosecutors were each saddled by the magistrate with ten guineas costs; a sum so monstrous to be almost incredible. Finally the poor fellows were threatened with the worst extremity of the law if they did not pay up. At this point Mr. Bradlaugh intervened. He brought the case before the House of Commons, and frightened the Home Secretary into a show of decency. Mr. Matthews promised to "look into the matter," and the result was that when the three poor men appeared before the magistrate on Saturday, the 8th inst., the Treasury was not represented and the summonses were dismissed.

COMMENTING ON Mr. Moss's case, the *Board Teacher* says:—"We emphatically refuse to meddle with sectarian or unsectarian squabbles, but we can hardly help asking why a man like Mr. Moss (who is described by his superiors as being sober, punctual, industrious, and entirely trustworthy) should be harried and worried merely because he holds the same opinions as are held by Mr. Morley, Mr. Balfour, and other gentlemen who have the pleasure of sitting with Mr. Kelly in Parliament." The *Board Teacher* is the organ of the Metropolitan Board Teachers' Association, and the extract may be taken as expressing the Teachers' view of this business.

HONOR to whom honor is due. The member who dared to question the Chairman of the London School Board on Mr. Moss's case was the Rev. John Fletcher Porter. We do not know whether Mr. Porter is a Churchman or a Nonconformist—we suspect the latter; but, whatever sect he belongs to, he has more courage and honesty, and a higher sense of fair play, than the so-called Radical members of the Board, who have all shirked their duty in this matter, and one of whom has grossly misrepresented Mr. Moss in order to excuse himself. We should like to hear something more of the Rev. J. F. Porter.

THE last number of the New York *Truthseeker* to hand contains a cartoon of Gladstone and Ingersoll. Ingersoll is riding "an unbroken horse with the reins thrown upon his neck," as Gladstone charges him with doing, and the G.O.M. is sitting "solemnly astride of a dead one," according to Ingersoll's retort. The Colonel's horse, Freethought, is a steed of fire. Gladstone's charger is a cross between Rosinante and a cart-horse, and the poor creature is propped up with crutches bearing various labels. The G.O.M. cannot make a start, and the Colonel is off like the wind, raising his hat to the competitor he leaves behind him.

THE *Truthseeker* has also an article on Mr. Moss's case. "This persecution," it says, "shows the tyranny of Christianity in power, and furnishes an additional reason for increased effort on the part of Freethinkers."

THE *Manchester Examiner* prints a well-written letter on the Oaths Bill by Mr. George Payne. We should like to see further correspondence in the same journal, so that the subject might be thoroughly ventilated. Mr. Payne strongly condemns Mr. Bradlaugh's compromise. His view is that the Bill effects but a trifling change, gives no real relief to Freethinkers, and would, if carried, be an obstacle to a thorough reform of the law.

PROFESSOR SAYCE, in the *Academy*, says that Shelomoh, the Hebrew form of Solomon, corresponds to the name of an Assyrian god, Sallimanu. The Professor adds that there are "many surprises in store for us" when the proper names of the Old Testament receive "the attention they deserve."

THE *London Echo* is the first lay journal to notice our reprint of Ingersoll's reply to Gladstone, which it says is "trenchantly written." We expect the religious journals will maintain their old conspiracy of silence—a piece of tactic which is as safe and sensible as the ostrich's trick of burying its head in the sands.

MANCHESTER has formed a Cremation Society. It is a healthy sign of the times that several ladies have joined, and, what is still more wonderful, a few clergymen. How the world moves!

THE Bishop of Rochester, at his Diocesan Conference, lamented the increasing desecration of the Lord's Day, and observed that "Among the young men of the various strata of the middle-class, the *bicycle* has effected an entire revolution in the use and observance of Sunday." People are reconverting their stolen day of recreation to its original use, and all the bishops and parsons cannot stay the gradual secularisation of the sacred day on which Christians would repress worldly enjoyment and innocent amusement as profane abominations.

THE *Expositor* for July contains an article by Archdeacon Farrar, contending that the Second Epistle of Peter is copied from Josephus. He says "it would be impossible for me to feel respect for the judgment of any critic who asserted that the resemblances between the two writers were purely fortuitous." As the *Antiquities* of Josephus was not published until A.D. 94, while the latest date assigned for the alleged martyrdom of Peter is 65, it follows that apostle did not write the epistle, which, as it pretends to be written by him, is a forgery. Of course Archdeacon Farrar does not draw this conclusion, but common-sense people will.

THIS month a new sixpenny monthly magazine of natural history appears with the title of *Life Lore*. On the cover are portraits of Darwin, with his microscope, pointing to orchids, and Huxley, with a skull in his hand, while behind him is a diagram tracing the connection between the hoofed and the five-toed animals.

MR. FOOTE'S open-air lecture at Wood Green seems to have caused a good deal of excitement. The local papers give fair reports. The *Hornsey Times* admits that the lecture "brought people from all the country round," and "was most attentively listened to by a large audience, who appeared to enjoy the lecturer's ready wit and humor." The *North London Echo* says there was an "unusual number of persons of all kinds assembled to hear the famous apostle of Atheism," and in speaking of the lecturer it refers to "that rich vein of satire which is peculiarly his own." The *Echo* adds that "his remarks must have made some of the old school cough."

CARDINAL MANNING has been preaching against the persecution to which he alleges the Church has been subject during the last dozen years in Italy. He complains that the religious orders have been suppressed, which means that mendicancy has been stopped; that the teaching of the faith is abolished in the universities, which means that they are open to all citizens. He further laments that marriage is treated as a civil contract, that the press has complete liberty even to blaspheme the faith, and that priests cannot disturb the public peace without danger of imprisonment and fine. All this shows that Italy has placed itself abreast of the other European nations, and before most of them in the path of secular civilisation.

THE Melbourne *Liberator* has entered upon its fifth year. Joseph Symes has put into it four years' good hard work. We are glad to notice that he appears to have got over his difficulties with the Anarchists, and is as strenuous as ever in battling with the Christian enemy.

MR. WALLACE NELSON also appears to be doing good work in Australia, where we trust he has quite recovered his health. He must have done so largely, or he would not have delivered the first open-air Freethought lecture in Brisbane, as he claims to have done.

WE have received from Copenhagen copies of a paper with a similar title to our own, in which translations are given from Mrs. Besant and from Colonel Ingersoll, whose writings are read the wide world over.

"GALLANT little Wales" does not seem so enamored of Christianity as Mr. Gladstone is. According to the *Herald of Wales*, Swansea has many places of worship with dozens of gaping pews; places that ought to be crowded are comparatively empty, and piety is a diminishing quantity. The *Herald* attributes the result to "the insipidity of the ministers"; but how can they help being insipid when they and their congregations less than half believe the doctrines they preach? The salt of earnestness is impossible without sincerity.

MR. WILLIAM BUNTON keeps the Banbury people lively. He exhibits and sells a hundred *Freethinkers* weekly, and carries on, in the *Banbury Guardian*, a smart controversy with the Salvationists and other representatives of Christianity in that town.

AN esteemed correspondent informs us that Mr. Richard Stapley, who has been selected as the Radical candidate for Brixton, has expressed his disapproval of the blasphemy laws.

ATHEISM AND MORALITY.

THE paper occupying the first place in this month's *Contemporary Review*, is surely there rather from the reputation of its author, M. Emile de Laveleye, the Belgian economist, and the interest of its subject, "The Future of Religion," than from any merit in the treatment. The argument, such as it is, is of the stalest kind; while the references to evolution show that, whatever his other qualifications, M. de Laveleye is devoid of anything like a scientific training. M. de Laveleye contends that civilised society cannot continue to exist without religion. He postulates it as an undeniable fact that religion has everywhere presided over the development of civilisation. We deny that this sweeping assertion can be substantiated, but granting it is correct, it is a fact equally undeniable that the development of civilisation has everywhere brought the decay of religion. M. de Laveleye himself says, "It is certain that it has never been subjected to a more severe ordeal than at the present time. Hostile winds blow on it from all sides and threaten its destruction. Under the Roman Empire, religious belief was also greatly shaken." If civilisation and belief go together, how does M. de Laveleye account for it that the most backward nations are also the most religious, while the most forward ones show such strong symptoms of practically discarding religion altogether?

M. de Laveleye finds three principle causes undermining religion in the present day. The first is that science seeks to explain all phenomena by natural causes, and thus rejects even the very notion of a supernatural power. The second, the secular spirit of the age, which with some acumen, M. de Laveleye here being on his own ground, he points out is enhanced by the increased facilities for raising oneself in social position. He truly says, "The modern man fixes his affections on the things of this world, and desperately pursues the good things therein attainable, as if this were his lasting dwelling-place and there were nothing beyond." The third cause he finds in Socialism. He quotes from the manifestoes of the German Socialists. "Socialism," they say, "is the commencement of a great epoch of atheistic culture. . . Despotism and Theism have always joined hands to exercise oppression. The people have bowed their heads and sought their happiness in another world instead of claiming it in this, and they have allowed themselves to be turned to account by tyrants. With the disappearance of the last Theist, the last slave will disappear. The future must belong to Atheism. Men will be indebted to it for their freedom and their happiness, which they have so long sacrificed for a mere delusion."

This bold speaking appears to frighten M. de Laveleye, and he evidently hopes that it will frighten his readers also. He clearly sees that the secular spirit is everywhere advancing. With what does he propose to drive it back? Simply with the old bugbear of "dangerous consequences," which has been trotted out against every progressive movement. Morality, he says, will disappear with religion; it will no longer have any basis, and certainly no real hold on the mind. Why should this be so? Religion is based upon certain assumptions in regard to the origin and end of all things; morality is based on the actual condition of man in society. Why, then, should the decline of the one imply that of the other? Because religionists have thwarted morality by founding it upon the arbitrary will of an irresponsible God, whose commands made it right for his favorites to keep slaves and concubines, to kill witches and Sabbath-breakers, and to offer up an innocent son as a sacrifice. To say there are not sufficient natural sanctions for morality is to impugn God, the presumed author of nature. To allow that the natural sanctions are sufficient is to give up the supernaturalists' case. As Bishop Butler well observes, "Things are as they are, why then should we desire to be deceived?" Whatever our origin or end, the sanitary code of society is exactly the same. Morality is the nature of things, and those who disregard it will, in the long run, have to give place to the more moral. Human welfare, and no imaginary God, is "the power that makes for righteousness." It is only because men's religion blinds them to the solid natural foundations of moral conduct, that they fear those foundations being sapped with the fall of religion.

M. de Laveleye allows that morality might exist apart from any specified form of worship but, he contends, not apart from belief in God, and in the immortality of the

soul. What a libel is this on Buddhists and Confucians, who have no such belief. An Atheist, he says, if he argue consistently, will not expose his life to defend either his country or his fellow men. But self-sacrifice is not accomplished by argument. It represents the instincts formed by social needs triumphing over the self-preservation of the individual. Even as the tigress will give her life in defence of her offspring, Bruno did not go to the stake upon a calculation, though he may have felt that to save life by recantation would be to lose that self-respect without which life would be intolerable. If an Atheistic state of society did not produce martyrs, it would be because it would remove their necessity.

Mr. Lecky, in his fine *History of European Morals*, vol. i., p. 187, says :

"The Spartan and the Roman died for his country because he loved it. The martyr's ecstasy of hope had no place in his dying hour. He gave up all he had, he closed his eyes as he believed for ever, and he asks for no reward in this world or the next. Even the hope of posthumous fame—the most refined and super-sensual of all that can be called reward—could exist only for the most conspicuous leaders."

It is common for Christians to assume a moral monopoly, but the assumption is entirely unwarranted by the facts of history and of experience. Atheists are found to be no whit worse than those who need the hope of heaven or fear of hell as inducements to straightforward conduct.

M. de Laveleye admits :

"There are many Atheists who are reckoned among the best and greatest men of their day. Helvetius, for instance, so humane, so full of good works, and James Mill, a model of morality, stoical, cold and pure as an antique marble; but these exceptional men are of themselves philosophers, not exposed to the ordinary temptations of the senses, and were formed by a Christian education in the midst of a Christian society."

We may surmise that our author did not mention John Stuart Mill, since he cannot be pretended to have been formed by Christian education. As to philosophers not being exposed to the ordinary temptations of the senses, that is sheer nonsense, to which M. de Laveleye is driven in order to account for facts which nullify his theory that Atheists ought to be without morality.

M. de Laveleye concludes that some form of religious belief and worship must for ever exist among men, and he believes it will be some development of Christianity—that is to say, he expects his own inconsistent Liberal Protestantism to be the religion of the future. Had we not constantly brought before our mind the fact that men do not bring to bear upon their religion the faculties they use in dealing with other subjects, we should be surprised at a man of M. de Laveleye's attainments indulging in such stale platitudes as those with which he supports his thesis. He even finishes his article with the statement that, "in North America the Atheists have a form of worship"!

J. M. WHEELER.

CHRIST'S PARABLES.—XVI.

CONCLUDING REMARKS.

WITH one single exception, the parables attributed to Jesus are thoroughly religious and decidedly inferior in their moral tone, besides possessing minor faults. The God who is to be the object of our adoration and imitation is depicted to us as a Judge who will grant vengeance in answer to incessant prayer, as a Father who loves and honors the favorite Prodigal and neglects the faithful and obedient worker, as an employer who pays no more for a life's work-time than for the nominal service of a death-bed repentance, as an unreasonable master who reaps where he has not sown and punishes men because he made them defective and gave them no instructions, as a harsh despot who delivers disobedient servants to tormentors and massacres those who object to his rule, as a Judge who is merciful to harlots and relentless towards unbelievers, as a petulant King who drives beggars and outcasts into the heaven which is ignored by the wise and worthy, as a Ruler of the Universe who freely permits his enemy the Devil to sow evil and then punishes his victims, as a God who plunges men in the flames of hell and calmly philosophises over the reward of the blest who from Abraham's bosom behold the sight and are not permitted to bestow even so much as a drop of cold water to cool the parched tongues of their fellow-creatures amidst hopeless and unending agonies in

comparison with which all earthly sufferings are but momentary dreams.

Of course there are benevolent features attributed to the deity in these parables, and of this favorable aspect Christians make the most. But they forget that the most lavish generosity towards orthodox friends and supporters is no excuse whatever for injustice to others who are not friends and supporters. Favoritism towards one's own household does not justify outrage on strangers. A jury would not acquit a man of murder or cruelty because he was occasionally charitable to his own family or to beggars or flatterers, and still less would they consider him a man of irreproachable character. No amount of special pleading can redeem the God and the doctrines of Christ's parables from the moral condemnation of such minds as are free to judge.

The lessons taught are those of pious selfishness, of unquestioning submission to power, and of unreasoning practice of the foolish teachings of Jesus as well as of his more sensible sayings. Superstition is the pearl of great price, the treasure for which all else is to be sacrificed. A heaven in the clouds and a hell beneath our feet, supply the vulgar motives of desire and terror which are to urge us on through life. Human welfare on earth is only studied as a secondary consideration, and it is even treated as a great danger, poverty and misery being rewarded with heaven, and riches and comfort with hell. The shrewd practical wisdom of Esop's fables is absent, and on the other hand no lofty motives are appealed to. No tales of self-sacrifice or heroism or love or friendship or honor does Christ utter, such as are embodied in the pagan legends of Curtius, or Lucretia, or Leonidas, or of William Tell, or of the Brahmin king who preferred to enter hell with his faithful dog rather than to enter heaven without it. Courage and the love of truth, on which all great virtues depend, are not inculcated, but we are taught to cringe before Power independently of goodness, and to yield to fear that which love of the right might never sanction. Patriotism, knowledge, secular improvement, are ignored or disparaged. The great work of life is to worship a non-existent God and to seek our own salvation from an impossible fate. To take no thought for to-morrow is to build our house on a rock. Even when we are to forgive a fellow-servant his debts, it is only for selfish theological motives. We are to forgive, not from good feeling and genuine good-fellowship, but as a price by which we purchase forgiveness for ourselves.

The one sound parable, that of the Good Samaritan, is excellent in itself, but by standing alone, by inculcating one particular virtue while others are ignored, it may easily produce an erroneous and mischievous view of duty and morals. Too great stress is thus laid on the one duty of benevolence, which in other parts of Christ's teaching is degraded into indiscriminate alms-giving. The docile Christian is thus led to forget the greater and more essential and permanent forms of benevolence. He is led to be satisfied with the more showy—and more mischievous—forms which are obvious to every child. The less obvious forms are thus neglected. Suppose the Good Samaritan, for instance, by doing his best to secure good government and social conditions, extirpated the gangs of thieves infesting the road to Jericho, or opened out means of honest employment for unfortunate men who would otherwise be driven to robbery through oppression and poverty—would he not be in reality far more benevolent to large numbers of people than if he merely stepped in and occasionally helped one or two poor fellows who had been robbed and wounded but still happened to survive their injuries? One course presents a picture that readily appeals to everyone's feelings; but is not the other and less striking method far more sound and infinitely more essential? Does not the greater and wider benevolence need at least equal enforcement with the first and narrower kind? Yet Christ neglects to advocate this great and unceasing duty of secular improvement, this never-ending fight with roguery and injustice, incompetence and bad government, and prejudice and superstition and the innumerable other evils with which the wise and good are incessantly confronted. Submission to earthly and heavenly authority is the great duty of the Christian, and the approaching Judgment Day is to be the great object of his thoughts, before which political reform and worldly progress sink into mere frivolities. He is to be as a little child, as a babe and suckling, trusting to parables and doctrines that lead

him to despise the wise and prudent from whom God has so strangely chosen to hide his revelation.

How can we say that Christ's parables teach us the spirit of true brotherhood and humanity when they teach us to look for and admire the reversal of a brother's prosperity in hell? Is not such a prospect, held forth by a perfect teacher and infallible God, an encouragement to the meaner passions of envy and malice and all uncharitableness? Does it not naturally and inevitably lead believers to gloat on the anticipated sufferings of heretics or unbelievers whom the righteous Lord is to cut asunder or to deliver to the tormentors? Are not Christians taught to regard their theological adversaries as tares reserved for the burning? Is it not natural that such teachings should result in the hatred and strife and war and persecution for which Christianity has been so notorious?

Such virtues as are taught are the virtues of slaves—terror-stricken submission, the postponement of revenge, trust in the supernatural and in the future rather than in themselves and the present, cowardly fear of punishment, helping each other because the master commands them and will reward them for it. If it be alleged that Christ wisely refrained from teaching the bolder and manlier virtues for fear of exciting the Jews to rebellion against their conquerors, then the parables must be correspondingly defective when addressed to free nations who are masters of their own destiny. Such an excuse, moreover, cannot in the slightest degree palliate the lowness and selfishness of the moral tone, the general absence of lofty motive or sympathy or self sacrifice or heroism, and the fallacious nature of the guidance offered both in secular and religious matters.

W. P. BALL.

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