

The Freethinker

Edited by G. W. FOOTE.]

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THE TRAFALGAR-SQUARE MEETING.

THE *Freethinker* is not a political paper, but all its readers know by this time that I am neither an Anarchist nor a Socialist; indeed, I have sometimes been insulted by both parties for not belonging to them. Quite recently I have written in these columns on Anarchy and Assassination, pointing out the absurdity of supposing that government can be dispensed with in human affairs, and denouncing the folly and wickedness of murder as a method of political action. My own public, so to speak, are acquainted with my position; and I need not be disconcerted by the misrepresentations of the Tory press in respect to my participation in the Trafalgar-square protest against the atrocities inflicted on political prisoners in Spain.

I may say here, once for all, that while I call myself a Secularist, for convenience, I am not fond of wearing any other ticket. I hope I belong to the party of common sense. I have always mistrusted cut-and-dried schemes for reaching the millennium. If I am anything in politics and sociology, I am a meliorist. I believe that the only way in which we can serve the future is to serve the present. Posterity will take its own course, and we must take ours, day by day and year by year, according to our lights and opportunities.

Two principles, however, I have always been steadfast in. I love freedom, and I detest cruelty. Liberty and love will reform the world sooner than any other agencies; and, without them, all other agencies will only leave us slavish and embased.

When I heard, therefore, of the wholesale arrest of "suspected" persons in Barcelona, and of the alleged cruelties they had suffered in prison, I felt it was a matter for serious inquiry. I have satisfied myself of the general truth of the allegation of torture. In the case of Francisco Gana there is no room for doubt. His story is confirmed by medical testimony. It is enough to make one's blood boil to hear his account of the tortures inflicted upon himself, and also upon several of his fellow prisoners. They are not only horrible, but obscene. They display a bestial ingenuity which reminds us that Spain is the classic land of the Holy Inquisition.

Even the Tory *Daily Mail*, which called for the prohibition of the Trafalgar-square meeting, is obliged to admit the reality of these facts. "There is little reason to doubt," it said on Monday, "that Spanish prisoners suspected of complicity in outrage have been abominably tortured."

This "complicity in outrage" is meant as a palliating qualification. But what is the truth? I have satisfied myself that only a small proportion of these Spanish prisoners were even theoretical Anarchists. Of the twenty-eight deported to England, as far as I can ascertain, only four or five are Anarchists. The others are Freethinkers, Anti-Catholics, Socialists, Freemasons, Trade Unionists, and Radicals. The fact is, the Spanish Government seized upon the bomb-throwing fifteen months ago as a pretext for arresting on "suspicion" no less than five hundred advanced citizens. The person who threw the bomb has not been discovered, any more than we have discovered the miscreant who left that bomb in a carriage on the Underground Railway. We did not arrest five hundred persons on "suspicion," but they do things differently in Spain, where freedom is a name without any reality.

Gana himself, who was so vilely tortured, is not an Anarchist. He was a Freemason, which made him

obnoxious to the Catholics, and a Trade Unionist, which made him obnoxious to the classes who are in power.

How could the National Secular Society's Executive refuse to help these exiles, or to participate in the protest against the injustice and cruelty to which they had been subjected? It was resolved that we should join the Spanish Atrocities Committee, consisting of representatives of all shades of advanced and humane opinion. Our representatives (Mr. Forder, Mr. Cohen, and myself) helped to frame the resolution which was carried at Trafalgar-square. That resolution had no taint of Anarchy or any other sectionalism, and I give it here in full, so that my readers may judge for themselves:—

"Seeing that it has been proved by incontestable evidence, and acknowledged by the British and Continental press, that the most barbarous tortures, recalling those of the Middle Ages, have been inflicted by the Spanish Government on prisoners arrested wholesale on mere suspicion, and some of whom so tortured were never even brought to trial;

"Seeing, also, that the Spanish Government treats with callous disdain all representations addressed to it on this subject;

"Seeing, further, that the Spanish Government has deported twenty-eight of these prisoners to England;

"This meeting of English men and women feels that it has a right on every ground to record its public protest against these detestable outrages on the common humanity of the civilized world."

I had the honor of moving that resolution in Trafalgar-square on Sunday afternoon, and my colleague, Mr. Cohen, had the honor of supporting it. The newspapers were good enough to speak in praise of our speeches. Certainly, like the genial and brave chairman, Mr. Pete Curran, we kept to the point. We spoke as men, not as politicians; as citizens of the world, not as members of a party. Some of the speakers were less careful. Mr. Turner thought it a matter of importance to proclaim that he was an Anarchist, and Dr. Aveling went out of his way to talk bombastic nonsense about the assassination of Canovas. On the whole, however, it was kept clear that the object of the meeting was purely humanitarian. Such also was the attitude of the huge crowd which filled the Square, and could not have numbered less than fifteen thousand—one newspaper putting it as high as twenty-five thousand. A forest of hands supported the resolution. About fifty hands were held up against it, including those of a small gang of rowdies who tried most fruitlessly to break up the meeting by singing "God Save the Queen"—as though *she* could be in favor of tyranny and torture.

A collection was made on behalf of the Spanish exiles, and many persons flung copper and silver coins on the plinth of the Nelson Monument, where the speakers were standing. This incident is described in characteristic fashion by a leader writer in the *Tory Sun*, who represented the speakers as "fighting and biting and scratching each other in their eagerness to make sure of the nimble pence, each for his own pocket." This writer has to earn his living by writing such stuff. But what self-contempt he must feel! I do not hate him. I pity him. He knows, as I do, that the money was picked up by the collectors and carefully counted, and that every penny of it will be devoted to the relief of the Spanish exiles.

The Spanish Atrocities Committee has been maintaining these exiles and trying to find them work. A few of them have been sent to South America to join their wives, who have been deported there by the Spanish Government,

which is base enough to war against women. "Philanthropists" are giving nothing, and funds are urgently needed. The N. S. S. Executive has asked me to open for one week, or two at the outside, a subscription in the *Freethinker*, heading the list with its own donation of two guineas. My own donation of half-a-guinea comes next. All I receive will be handed to Mr. Hartmann, the N. S. S. treasurer, who will pay it over to the Committee as our Society's contribution.

Nearly all these Spanish exiles are Freethinkers. This is a fact which I ask my readers to remember.

Now that I have explained the matter to my own public, as I said, I am indifferent to outside opinion. One must do one's duty and defy misrepresentation. Charles Bradlaugh was misrepresented all his life. Why then should I, his humble successor, complain? Let the Tory papers call me a Socialist, an Anarchist, or whatever they please. I have other work to do in the world than to answer their falsehoods.

G. W. FOOTE.

DEFECTS OF CHRISTIANITY.

WE have recently heard much of "progressive Christianity," the idea of which, however, is, in our opinion, very absurd, inasmuch as, if this faith has progressed, it is necessarily more advanced now than it was at a former period. In that case, it was not originally a perfect system, and therefore not an emanation from a perfect being. Moreover, if Christianity has in the process of time improved, why may not its improvement still go on? But if these constant changes take place, at what juncture in its development does the true religion appear? The early Christians thought that in their faith they had a perfect and complete revelation from God; but if the progressive theory be correct, the faith as it "was once delivered to the saints" was exceedingly incomplete, which entirely does away with the truth of the assumption of its "divine" nature. Herein lies one of the defects of orthodox Christianity; it is so vague, incoherent, and indecisive that it has been "all things to all men." It is a mistake to suppose that, from its inception to the present time, Christianity has been regarded by its professors as presenting one uniform faith. Its nature has varied, not only in different countries, but also in the beliefs of the many sects termed Christian. There are marked differences between the beliefs of the Catholic and the Protestant Churches, as there are also between the teachings of the Church of England and those of Dissenting congregations.

So striking are these divergencies that the Rev. Dr. Irons, in his book, *The Bible and its Interpreters*, writes: "We may mention Wesley, Gill, and Whistan as examples. They were all pure and upright men, and learned men too. They all honestly found their systems in the existing English Bibles. One was an Armenian and a believer in the sinlessness of true Christians. One was a Supralapsarian, Calvinist, and a Baptist. The third was an Arian.....It cannot be said that the differences between such men are even comparatively small. The first would have thought the doctrine of absolute predestination held by the second to be incredibly blasphemous, and he has left that on record. The second would think the first to be utterly a 'carnal' and self-deceived man. The third would be regarded by the first and second as a denier of the foundations of Christianity. Yet a man of patient and earnest character might at any time persuade himself, on apparent Scripture grounds, to embrace either of these three views of revealed truth—that is, in plain words, be either Freewiller, Fatalist, or Arian—or Baptist, with either of these three peculiarities superadded" (pp. 76 and 77). The Doctor further adds: "It might be easy even to show that what is now popularly thought to be in some respects the true and only meaning of the great doctrines of Christianity had no existence at all in the earliest days" (*ibid*, p. 79).

The position taken and the arguments advanced by the rev. gentleman have been more than justified, since he published his book, by such writers as Dean Farrar, Dean Fremantle, Canon Driver, Lyman Abbott, and many other "advanced Christians," whose representations of Christianity would have been deemed "rank heresy" by their predecessors. This defective aspect of the Christian faith

is so palpable that it is difficult to say what its professors, to be consistent, should really believe. By some it is deemed necessary, in order to be considered a Christian, to believe in the verbal inspiration of the Bible, in the story of the fall of man, and his redemption through the death of Christ; that unbelievers will be punished in a future state of existence; in the efficacy of the prayer of supplication; and in the doctrines of Baptism, Election, and Predestination. Now, while the majority of orthodox professors allege their belief in these tenets, they are discarded by the rapidly-increasing section of "progressive" Christians. But even among these the subject of belief is vague and indefinite. It is true these "reformed" religionists tell us that we should believe in the Bible; but, be it remembered, not in the whole of it, only in certain parts. As to what those parts are, each person is left to decide for himself. Further, we are assured that "belief in Christ" is the basis of all sects of Christians. The question, however, arises, What is meant by "belief in Christ"? Is he to be regarded as God or man? Or is he to be thought a combination of the two? Must it be supposed that he desired to secure the salvation of those who believe in him by his conduct in life, or through his alleged sufferings at death? In short, should he be revered as a "divine being," or simply appreciated as an advanced reformer of his day? It is not enough to proclaim, "Believe in Jesus"; all who consider that he lived no doubt entertain that belief in some degree; the point to be made clear is, What is the nature and extent of that belief? And this is just the question upon which Christians themselves are not agreed.

Those persons who have at all studied impartially the early history of Christianity must be aware that the faith which Christ is credited with preaching, and what is called Christianity to-day, are entirely different. According to the records of ecclesiastical history, the Christian faith was altered and modified shortly after the period when it is said that Christ died. Paul was much nearer being a philosopher than Jesus, hence his (St. Paul's) Christianity differed widely from his Master's. The character of Christ was submissive and servile; Paul's was defiant and pugnacious. We could no more conceive Christ fighting with wild beasts at Ephesus than we could suppose Paul submitting without protest or resistance to those insults and indignities which are alleged to have been heaped upon Christ. Neither could we for one moment imagine Paul advising his disciples, when anyone smote them on one cheek, to offer them the other. Paul introduced by his personal character a certain amount of boldness and energy into the Christian propaganda, and by the character of his mind he largely modified the Christian system. In fact, each successive age has left its impress upon Christianity. No system was ever less rigid and more plastic. Persons of the most contrary dispositions and the most opposite natures have been its great illustrators, expounders, and living representatives. It has found room for all temperaments: the ascetic and the luxurious enjoyer of life; the man of action and the man of contemplation; the monk and the king; the philanthropist and the destroyer of his race; the iconoclastic hater of all ceremonies and the superstitious devotee. But this heterogeneous family is by no means the result of any all-embracing comprehensiveness in the system of Christ, but rather the effects of a theology characterized alike by its indefinite, incomplete, and undecisive principles. Until, therefore, Christians can prove to us that their principles are capable of producing uniformity of character; until it can be shown that the principles as taught in the New Testament are compatible with progress and human advancement; until the course said to have been pursued by Christ when on earth is adopted by his professed followers of to-day, and made to harmonize with reason and humanity, it cannot be truthfully said that Christianity is capable of furnishing a code of morals by which all succeeding generations shall be governed, and to which the great intellects of the world will finally succumb.

There are many other defects in the Christian system which render it inharmonious with the properly disciplined intellect of our time, and which mar its force as an element of the mundane progress of the human race. For instance, it has failed to inspire consistency upon the part of its professors. They preach that "all men are brethren," while they give their practical support to the perpetuation of a system that divides, to a humiliating and unjust

extent, both politically and socially, the rich from the poor. They preach the advantages of poverty, yet they are continually striving to accumulate riches. They condemn the pleasures of the world and the habit of gambling, while they resort to both, even in their religious propaganda. This was really admitted at the recent Annual Conference of the Yorkshire Evangelical Union, held at York. Speaking at that gathering, Dr. Hughes-Games said: "The rich lived in the enjoyment of luxury, absorbed in self-aggrandizement and self-gratification. Men hastened to get rich. No longer content with the ordinary means, they gambled and speculated, and this gambling spirit pervaded all classes and both sexes. Then there was intense love of pleasure. Men and women longed after pleasures of all kinds, and never seemed satisfied. Even for church purposes and religious objects it was very difficult and almost impossible to raise money, unless pleasure was in some way associated with it. Thus bazaars, concerts, oratorios, and balls were employed because Christian people would not respond to the appeals made to them. Even in religious services the desire for sensuous pleasure was an element that had largely to be taken into account" (*Rock*, July 9, 1897).

The same inconsistent conduct is manifested by Christians in adopting the old Puritan spirit without emulating its devotion. This is shown in their attempts to deprive the people of a free Sunday. The bishops mustered in force in the House of Lords to reject Lord Hobhouse's Bill, which had for its object a more rational use of the Sunday than at present obtains; and yet the very bishops are silent when operatic music is played at Windsor Castle on the "Lord's Day," or when the aristocracy have their Sunday receptions. They prate about their "Gospel of Peace," while they applaud a Jubilee craze, with its naval review, and the exhibition of the fighting power of England, to which is attributed the security of the nation. Christ and his gospel count for nothing in the "greatness" of England. And yet we are constantly being told of the influence of Christianity upon our national progress. It is quite time such shams were exposed and ended, and that, instead of the people being further deluded by such false pretensions as orthodox Christians set forth, we inculcated honesty of conviction and fidelity to sound practical principles, born of active intellectuality and moral force, which are the promoters of peace, liberty, and justice, upon which the true salvation of the nation depends.

CHARLES WATTS.

THE DOOM OF SPAIN.

"Who can positively say why the Spanish nation, so dominant at one time, has been distanced in the race? The awakening of the nations of Europe from the dark ages is a still more perplexing problem. At that early period, as Mr. Galton has remarked, almost all the men of a gentle nature, those given to meditation or culture of the mind, had no refuge except in the bosom of a Church which demanded celibacy; and this could hardly fail to have had a deteriorating influence on each successive generation. During this same period the Holy Inquisition selected with extreme care the finest and boldest men in order to burn or imprison them. In Spain alone some of the best men—those who doubted and questioned, and without doubting there can be no progress—were eliminated during three centuries at the rate of a thousand a year."—CHARLES DARWIN, *Descent of Man*, part i., chap. v.

In his careful style, Darwin states the two-fold way in which the Christian religion, as exhibited in its greatest Church, has inflicted incalculable evil upon humanity. It first drained some of the most refined and cultured, in an age of barbarism, from recruiting their race. Then it eliminated all who showed strong tendency to vary from the orthodox standard. The actual data of the martyrdom and imprisonment of heretics in Spain, between 1471 and 1771, are 32,000 burnt, 17,000 burnt in effigy (they mostly died in prison or escaped from Spain), and 291,000 condemned to various terms of imprisonment. Mr. Francis Galton, who gives the figures, says, in his work on *Hereditary Genius*: "It is impossible that any nation could stand a policy like this, without paying a heavy penalty in the deterioration of its breed, as has notably been the result in the formation of the superstitious, unintelligent Spanish race of the present day."

Four hundred years ago Spain stood at the pinnacle of nations. Its Moslem-founded universities had been the

first and the finest in Europe. It had discovered a New World. Its dominions extended from Mexico to Malacca, and it had great soldiers who were also men of mind, like Bernal Diaz, Lope de Vega, Hurtado de Mendoza, Calderon, and Cervantes. But even then its priest-led rulers pursued the short-sighted policy of lopping off the heads of its tallest citizens. It drove out not only the alien Moors, but the native Moriscos, who maintained a fine strain of Oriental art and culture in Granada. Its Inquisition relentlessly persecuted the Jews, who had aided its commerce, medicine, and learning. Under Torquemada, the confessor to Isabella, in one year two hundred and eighty were burned in the city of Seville alone; seventy nine were condemned to perpetual imprisonment; seventeen thousand suffered milder terms. In the following year not less than two thousand were burned.* In March, 1492, every Jew unbaptized by July was ordered to leave the kingdom. Probably over three hundred thousand were thus banished, many to terrible sufferings and death. The Inquisition maintained against all heretics the policy pursued towards the Moors and the Jews. In the fact that Spain has fallen from its high estate some may see "the hand of God in history." For my part, I trace but the natural consequences of its own acts.

And this shortsighted and cruel policy, which is as absurd as it is atrocious, is still pursued by pre-eminently Christian Spain. Only last year some wretch at Barcelona threw a bomb at a religious procession. It must have been the work of some madman, or one provoked by the police. For no priest was injured; the procession was over when it was thrown, and only a drummer boy and some of the populace were injured. The panic was made the occasion for seizing over five hundred citizens; known Republicans, leading Freemasons, the heads of Trade Unions, the writers on Radical papers, Socialists, and philosophical Anarchists, all in any way obnoxious to the civil or ecclesiastical authorities, were arrested. Immediately before this the Government had demanded 200,000 men to be sent to Cuba, and the humanitarians of Spain had made a protest. The bomb was an opportune one for the Government, for it secured its tottering seat by enabling it to bag those it regarded as dangerous enemies. All were branded as Anarchists, a term of odium which is as recklessly employed as was "Atheist" in former days. Five were shot, many imprisoned for life, others detained without trial, and tortured to extract proofs of conspiracy. At length public attention was drawn to these uncivilized proceedings, and the Government graciously liberated those against whom there was no evidence, and who could pay, or find friends to pay, their passage to another country. Only those were set free who had been convicted of no crime. And now these men are visited with odium for Goll's crime, in which they can have had no share; and again two hundred more are arrested and cast in the Spanish prisons.

There are crimes real, and priest-made crimes. In Spain it is a crime to read a book unauthorized by the priest; a deadly crime to marry without his blessing, and to bring up children without his baptism. All who act thus are criminals in the eyes of the priest. But humanity has another voice. The worst enemies of morality are they who obscure its natural foundations by inventing a multiplicity of pseudo-crimes. A child made to regard Sunday amusement as equally sinful with cruelty to animals is in a fit state to have its morals easily overturned. I have heard of an inscription written for a certain charitable institution:—

This hospital a pious person built,
But first he made the poor wherewith to fill't.

A similar inscription might serve for the prisons of Spain, and of many another country.

The man who throws a bomb anywhere is a real criminal. He is invading the lives, to say nothing of the rights and liberties, of others. Let the person aimed at be ever such a tyrant, in constituting himself judge, jury, and executioner the assassin or tyrannicide becomes a criminal, whose sole excuse is that he must be insane to so constitute himself. But righteous indignation at murder should not be vented on the innocent. And the Spanish exiles are not assassins, but victims. In this I write that which I know. I have seen them and examined the evidence so

* *Crimes of Christianity*, p. 160.

far as I am able. I have seen that one, at least, has been terribly tortured. They are certainly not the scum of the earth, not criminals, but intelligent men, with the conscience which comes from intelligence, the very men who in propitious circumstances might help to redeem their country.

When Louis XIV., instigated by his priestly advisers, commenced the persecution of Protestants in France, he made a step towards the Revolution, and decisively benefited our country while injuring his own. Mr. Samuel Smiles, in his work on the Huguenots, has clearly shown that to them we owe very many of our industrial arts, and much of the most valuable life-blood of our race. To Free-thinkers it should be necessary to mention but one name—that of Harriet Martineau. Had I lived four centuries ago, I would rather have been with the stigmatized few who raised their voice against the expulsion of the Jews; had I lived two centuries ago, I should, I trust, have sided with, and if possible helped, the Huguenots; and now I would at least say my little word for the outlawed Radicals, Freethinkers, Socialists, and Anarchists of Spain. It is easy to over-estimate or under-estimate contemporary events, but history has decidedly set its mark on the character of the policy of Christian Spain.

Freedom of opinion cannot thus be stamped out forever. In Mexico, Cuba, and South America are a race of Spaniards, republican, freethinking, and cosmopolitan in sympathy. That New Spain is reacting, and will react, on the old country. So with Germany. The Emperor may repress Socialism, deprive Freethinking professors of their chairs, and imprison all advanced speakers for *lèse Majesty*; but in America a new Germany is growing, which will surely make its influence felt on the Fatherland. It is folly to sit on the safety-valve. In the Macchiavellian phrase, it is worse than a crime—it is a blunder. The crimes and stupidities of Anarchists are often pointed out. I am not one to defend them. Rather let me emphasize the fact that the bomb-thrower at Barcelona was the occasion of the wholesale imprisonment of hundreds of innocent men and women, and that Golli, by his assassination of Canovas, gave excuse for the fresh *razzia*. But who shall write of the crimes and stupidities of Governments? It would need the pen of a Swift and the patience of a Mommsen.

J. M. WHEELER.

DEAD JAHVEH.

Kent: Vex not his ghost: O, let him pass! he hates him
That would upon the rack of this tough world
Stretch him out longer.

Edgar: Ho is gone indeed.

Kent: The wonder is that he endured so long:
He but usurp'd his life.

—*King Lear*, Act v., scene 3.

Poor Jahveh! Like the mad King Lear, the old Jewish God is "gone indeed." Is not his death recorded in the chronicles of the Higher Criticism? The rack of a tough world has proved too much for him. The wonder is he survived so long.

Some there are that say he is not dead; that he has only suffered a kind of "sea change into something rich and strange." And they paint a shadowy picture of a great Principle or indefinable Power. But that is another god altogether. That is not the Jahveh or Jehovah—the God of our old idolatry—of our Sunday-school days—of our boyhood's catechism over which we were wont to groan. He lies down "full fathom five," with a dead weight of modern knowledge round his neck. If there was any change in him—or in our conception of him—it must surely have been such as overtook poor Bottom. For Jahveh has indeed been "translated." He has been translated and revised, and dispassionately tried in the light of present-day intelligence and scholarship. If he has not altogether appeared as Bottom did upon his transformation, it is because there were, in his natural aspect, too many dark and tragic features.

Not only is Jahveh dead—dead as a door-nail—but he is succeeded by another deity—an up-to-date deity, one specially furnished in a new and improved form to meet modern requirements. As Jahveh was a jealous God, and of a warlike spirit, we may be sure that, if he were alive, nothing in the world would prevent him "going for" the metaphysical nonentity which has been put in his place.

When we remember how mightily anxious he was that "Thou shalt have no other gods before me," and in what daily fear he went that some other god would oust him from his throne, we can in a measure understand how grievously this modern usurpation must "vex his ghost"—if a ghost of him is left, which I beg leave to doubt.

But then, was he not always angry with something or somebody? It was a mad kind of anger, too, because mostly engendered by the results of his own ineptitude and folly. And herein we have a parallel to the character of King Lear. As the mad monarch gave all that he had to his daughters, so Jahveh showered blessings on his chosen people. In each case base ingratitude followed. Lear *might*, but Jahveh *must*, have expected as much. Therefore, while we may forgive in some measure the outbursts of Lear, Jahveh's angry disappointment and chagrin, leading to the deluge of the world, is absolutely inexplicable and indefensible. Many points of similarity occur between the ravings of Lear and the passionate fulminations and impotent fury of Jahveh. One's sympathy, however, as far as it is excited at all, must be entirely bestowed on the mad king. He did not—if Jahveh did—create and order things from the beginning of the world with a complete knowledge of what would happen.

As Lear's unfilial daughters set to work to reduce the number of the poor old king's attendant knights, so in these latter days Jahveh's quondam friends have undertaken the task of gradually reducing the bulk of the Jew God's "revelation." The authority of one book after another has been swept away until it has become generally understood that in the Old Testament, at least, there is no inspired revelation at all. It seems, therefore, time indeed that Jahveh joined the other dead gods of history. "He but usurped his life," and during the past half century has simply "crawled toward death."

In Mr. F. Frankfort Moore's remarkable novel, *Phyllis of Philistia*, there are various striking allusions to Jahveh as the world now knows him, and to Jahveh's special friends whom no one now-a-days would care to know. A fashionable Rationalist clergyman, the Rev. George Holland, writes a book in which the favorites of the Jewish God are severely but justly handled. For this, Phyllis breaks off her engagement with the rev. gentleman. Phyllis says: "I could not marry an Atheist, however sincere he might be." "An Atheist!" exclaims Lady Earls court; "Mr. Holland is not an Atheist. On the contrary, he actually believes that there are two gods: one worshipped of the Jews long ago, the other by us now-a-days."

Undoubtedly Jahveh has been superseded, and it may be truly said of any Christian believer who would still present him as the model of divine perfection: "He hates him [Jahveh] who would upon the rack of this tough world stretch him out longer."

These references to Shakespeare suggest the reproduction of a very pertinent inquiry in the before-mentioned novel: "Why," asks the Rev. Mr. Holland, "should not Shakespeare be sung in the churches—Shakespeare's divine poetry—instead of the nonsense rhymes that people call hymns?"

FRANCIS NEALE.

PLEASING GOD.

LOOKING into a Sunday school not long since, while the superintendent was addressing the school, I heard once more the old chestnut that I had heard a thousand times before: "Children, strive always to please God." And each little, innocent simpleton looked as though that was the proper thing to do, having been told it so often that it had become in their unthinking minds, not a lesson to be thought about, but a phrase, a slower of speech, an old story to be sung, a part of the ceremony to be performed, and the duty was done when they had piously listened to it.

It is a favorite phrase, and we hear it everywhere, from the Salvation Army hobo in the gutter, in his grotesque uniform of red and blue, to the bishop at the altar in his flowing white gown. "Live so as to please God." What does it mean, and how are we to please God? If God is infinite in wisdom, in goodness, and in power, he must be abundantly able to please himself; why should he care whether we please him or not? Nobody knows what will please him but himself, and he won't tell us, but hides

himself away up above the stars beyond the scope of our most powerful telescopes; whether over Texas, or in the directly contrary direction over China, we never can know. It is true the ministers and priests undertake to tell us what will please him, but can we rely upon what they tell us when it is palpably evident that all they tell us is just what will please themselves? Then they will say, There is the Bible; that will tell you how to please God. Will it? I propose in this article to show that the Bible is as unreliable as the ministers and priests are, and that the rules laid down by the Bible cannot be trusted to please any reasonable God. But the Bible God is not reasonable; on the contrary, he is so changeable and capricious that no man can tell what is likely to please him. The priests have been obliged to invent excuses for him; to account for his capricious conduct by saying that "his ways are not as our ways"; for that reason we can never know how to take him when he violates all rules of reason and common sense, nor know whether any conduct of ours will please him or not.

He even cheats his own priests, and puts a lying spirit into their mouths, as he did in the case of Ahab (1 Kings xxii. 22). Ahab was anxious to please God, so much so that he kept four hundred priests to tell him how to do it. God had a grudge against him, notwithstanding his piety, and wanted to get him killed; so he put a lying spirit into all these four hundred priests to put him up to go to war against Ramoth Gilead, where God had arranged matters so that he should be killed. And he was killed for no reason at all but trusting the priests and trying to please God.

That lying spirit has stuck to the priests from that day to this; it won't do to take their word for what will please God. The Bible is God's word, of course—the priests tell us so; but this little story about Ahab, and the conspiracy of God and the priests against him, shows that it won't do to believe any of them, nor the Bible either.

In old times, when God was only a wooden image, or a brass one, or some other metal set up before the eyes of the people, it was just the same as now. God did not speak, nor give any other indication of what would please him; but he had a crowd of priests around him, who told the people that he liked the smell of burning flesh and blood, and to please him they must bring their sacrifices, which, of course, went to the benefit of the priests. And when the people were sufficiently submissive they went still further; and if they found a fellow who didn't believe in their right to speak for God, nor in their knowledge of what would please him, then God required a human sacrifice; and the heretic was burned on the altar under the nose of God, thus pleasing him, or at least pleasing the priests, which amounted to the same thing; they got rid of a dangerous enemy, and taught the people the danger of free thinking, or at least free talking.

After a while the people became a little civilized, and too sharp to be fooled with the wooden or brazen image, and the hocus-pocus performance before him. When science had demonstrated that these gods could do them neither good nor harm, and faith in the priests was growing faint, then it became necessary to yield a little to the scientific spirit of the age, and save the power and influence of the priesthood, by giving up the wooden and brass gods and setting up invisible gods, so far off up in the sky that they could not be examined by the laity, and proved to be as harmless and helpless as the wooden ones.

But these invisible, or, more properly, non-existent, gods were to have all the powers and appetites that had formerly been ascribed to the old visible gods, and the priests were still to be their agents to tell us what they said, and what we want to do to please them, as well as what they would do to us if we did not please them.

So the old racket was still worked, and ignorant people, anxious to know how to please the gods, sought the priests, and were instructed to obey them and bring their sacrifices—in money by this time—and they would see that the gods got the benefit of them. But they never produced any receipts to show that the promise had been fulfilled. Their dupes must have faith in their word, or else the gods would not be pleased.

As time went on and knowledge increased, the gods began to die out. In the most enlightened parts of the earth they are all dead but one, and he seems to be in declining health. We have ecclesiastical authority for saying that two-thirds of the people of Europe and America

don't care whether they please him or not. Many of them are willing to go to church—if it is a fashionable one, and the upholstery is fine and comfortable; but they have no "living faith" in what the priest tells them. The music must be first-class, but nobody troubles themselves about the sermon. A brass band has been introduced in some churches as an attraction; and Talmages, in New York, employed the most famous cornet player of that city, for a while, in imitation of the ram's horns of the Jews that blew down the walls of Jericho; but the horn of Levy even does not seem to make any impression upon the walls of the modern Jericho.

If God's ways were like our ways, it might readily be supposed that no better way could be devised to please him than to treat him to the splendid intonation, technic, and expression of Levy's cornet playing; but when we remember that he is a "being without body, parts, or passions," it is difficult to conceive how he could be pleased with music that, having no ears, he could not hear. The same difficulty applies to the prayers that are recommended by the priests as a performance likely to please him. Being located a long way above the atmosphere, and all sound being but vibrations of that medium, of course no sound can ever reach him where there was no air to convey it, even if he has ears. Evidently he cannot be pleased by any sounds, and the attempt to please him by appealing to the sense of hearing might as well be given up.

As he has no organs of sight, he cannot be pleased by our kneeling before him; and even such a performance as King David's, when he pulled off his trousers and danced around the ark of the covenant, must have been of no effect as a means of communicating pleasure to God, even supposing he had an appreciation of the ridiculous. Again, the astronomers tell us that no object is so small or so distant that no parallax can be drawn from it and measured, or is perceptible to sight. (A parallax is the angle formed by two lines drawn from the opposite sides of an object, and converging to a point in the eye of the observer.) If the object is so distant that no perceptible parallax can be drawn, then the object cannot be expected to convey any idea of what it is, or what it is doing. If God had eyes as big as the Lick telescope, he could not derive either pleasure or pain from anything that we might do. What is the use, then, of trying to please God? We have no communication with him, and so far as we know he will never know that we are trying to please him; neither can we know whether he is pleased or not.

We can safely and profitably lay aside all cares and fears about God. He has never done anything to disturb the peace of the world, nor of families, whatever the Gospels may have said about him; and he never will. A God without body, parts, or passions can be nothing but an idea, a principle, or method of action, which we term the laws of nature, and which priests have personified and made into a bugaboo to frighten fools with. We speak of the principle upon which the mechanical forces act, the lever, the pulley, the inclined plane, the screw, etc.; but who but a knave or fool would think of personifying such principles, giving the masculine name, and speaking of them as he, him, and his? But that is just what the priests have done for the mechanical principle upon which the universe works, and they persistently exhort us to try always to please that mechanical principle—which mean only to please them.

J. P. RICHARDSON.

—*Independent Pulpit.*

It need not be disputed that religious institutions have been a necessary accompaniment—often a useful one—of human progress. But the question for us is, not what was the value of religion when man was a savage, who thought one big "god" hurled thunderbolts from his residence in the clouds, and that another dwelt in an ocean cave to send the devastating hurricane and earthquake, but what is its value to-day, when men have learned, at all events partially, to control the powers they once thought were supernatural, and have replaced their former ignorant reliance upon "superior powers" by self-dependence and an intelligent belief in the universal reign of law? We venture the firm opinion that not only has religion ceased to have any useful moral effect, but that all dogmatic religious beliefs are radically opposed to true morality, and stand in the way of all progress.—*J. Spencer Ellis.*

SUNLESS SEAS OF SOLID STONE.

WHEN thoughtful people try to fit
The growth of grass and tree
With common sense and "Holy Writ,"
They find they don't agree.

But ante-solar grass and trees
The folk can well admit
Who "swallow" ante-solar seas:
The Bible-ites, to wit.

The old Creation tale was told
Within a sultry zone
By folk who didn't know that cold
Turns water into stone.

Without the sun, no rain, nor lake,
Nor stream could ever be;
It is his mighty rays that make
The dew-drop, sap, and sea.

The thought of pre-sun rain or sea
Would all our knowledge mock;
Sans Sol, the sea like stone would be,
And adamantine rock.

When winter's truant, furtive, sun
His sidelong glances throws,
The frigid streamlets cease to run;
The rill no longer flows.

Before the sun was made, we're told,
Jehovah made the seas;
Apparently, before the cold
Had learned the way to freeze.

To-day the cold will freeze the seas
When feebly shines the sun;
But Bible seas refused to freeze
Though sunshine there was none!

G. L. MACKENZIE.

ACID DROPS.

EMPEROR WILLIAM stands level with God Almighty in Germany. One is protected by the law of blasphemy, and the other by the law of sedition. It is a positive crime in Germany to say anything disrespectful of the Emperor. Critics were prosecuted for hinting that his musical compositions were not quite worthy of Beethoven. Any person who said he was not exactly as wise as Solomon, or as handsome as Apollo, would soon have leisure to think it over again in a government hotel. Even talk in private circles is not privileged. A young Silesian engineer has just been sent to prison for six months for a remark he made in the domestic circle about the little-great William. His mother-in-law reported him to the authorities! Emperor William should invite that lady to the next court ball.

Dr. Stanton Coit, the Ethical Culturist, has been put forward as one of the School Board candidates for West Lambeth. Speaking on Clapham-common last Sunday, the *Chronicle* reports him as saying this: "Rather than permit on the one hand the introduction of creeds and catechisms, or on the other consent to the utter exclusion of the Bible and religious teaching, he would let the Compromise stand until the teachers were qualified to give instruction in those great moral principles which make good citizens, and which should be the foundation of all good government." If this is a correct report, and if such is the spirit of the Ethical Culturists, we do not see how the Secularists are to continue working with them on the recently-formed Committee of Moral Instruction. The Secularists are against religious teaching in Board schools first of all, and they will not abandon that opposition for the mere sake of co-operating with the Ethical Culturists.

Russia is a land of strange sects. A report comes of a new one founded by Alexander Panjaschko. Its central idea is the devilishness of the body. The Panjaschkovtzi never wash, never shave, never cut their nails, and never change their clothes, nor do they ever clean their houses, and the food they eat is scarcely fit for dogs. Their morality seems to be on a par with their habits. A considerable number of them are said to exist in the province of Saratov.

Angiolillo, the assassin of Canova, died with a courage worthy of a better cause. He declined the attentions of

the priests with firmness, though with courtesy. They wanted to help him make his peace with God, and he said that he could do all that himself; besides, he did not believe in the existence of God. The doctor could not detect any change in his pulse. What a pity that such courage and steadfastness were not turned to a better account!

The King of Siam (according to the *Westminster Gazette*) has been invited to place himself at the head of the reformed Buddhist movement, which was started some years ago in Ceylon. One part of the program of this movement is the training of missionaries to spread Buddhism throughout the world. A great central college is, if possible, to be established in India. It is hoped that a reunion will be brought about of all the Buddhist sects. If this can be achieved, there will be a new power in the East. Significantly enough, there is also a revival of the old aggressive spirit in the Mohammedan world. If the devotees of Brahmanism should also be united, Christianity will find itself face to face with three powerful religions, and will probably meet with much trouble.

Miss Kingsley, who, we believe, is a daughter of the Rev. C. Kingsley, bears testimony to the baleful effects of Christian civilization on the natives of West Africa. In her *Travels* she urges upon those at home "the importance of combining technical instruction in their mission teaching, which, by instilling into the African mind ideas of discipline and providing him with manual occupation, will save him from those relapses which are now the reproach of mission-ary effort and the curse and degradation of the African."

An Englishman in the Philippines gave this testimony as to the doings of the Spanish authorities there. He said: "In an old dungeon in the fortress of Manila some hundred people were thrown in one night. There was scarcely room for thirty. The miserable wretches were up to their knees in filthy and putrid mud. Next morning fifty-nine corpses were taken out. I am told the Spaniards are actually nailing the natives' hands up to the walls and flagellating them, applying the thumb-screw, etc." Spain prides itself upon being a Christian country. It is Christian, and, moreover, it provides a valuable lesson as to what Christianity was, and is, apart from secular influences of civilization.

Mr. A. Pigeon, in the *Crescent*, bears testimony that the so-called Spanish Anarchists are men of refinement and education, who would in this country be considered as mild, but rather unpractical, Liberals.

The *British Weekly* records that Protestants are met with intolerance in Spain. The church of the Irish Presbyterian Mission College at Puerto, Santa Maria, near Cadiz, has been closed by order of the authorities, the pastor being reminded that "there was no religious liberty in Spain."

In last week's *Echo* Mr. W. Hudson inquired what were the marks of the true Church as revealed in the New Testament. He was immediately answered by Mr. G. L. Mackenzie and H. Reilly, both of whom pointed him to Christ's last words as recorded in Mark xvi. 17, 18: "And these signs shall follow them that believe. In my name shall they cast out devils; they shall speak with new tongues; they shall take up serpents; and if they drink any deadly thing it shall not hurt them." Nothing more could be required than that all claiming to be Christians should be submitted to Christ's own tests.

"Christ's true disciples all may know
By signs like some of these;
They cast out demons as they go,
And conquer all disease.

"They take up deadly serpents oft,
Without the least alarm,
And drink the poison lethic draught
Secure from death or harm."

The Rev. R. C. Fillingham, the Radical rector of Hexton, says: "The fact is, the ordinary clergyman thinks Liberalism means disendowment, and, as he considers the cash-box more than Christianity, he won't have anything to do with it." Mr. Fillingham seems to understand the gentlemen of his own cloth.

The average salary of a Presbyterian minister in the United States, according to the *Interior*, is "but little, if anything, more than that of a mechanic." His ability, however, is vastly less, and his use infinitesimal in comparison.

The American *Congregationalist*, in a recent issue, comments on the illusory character and uncertain value of church statistics. Of 5,482 churches in its own connection 2,148 have less than forty members each, and many have less than ten. President McLean, of the Pacific Theological Seminary, is quoted as saying that in California "there are

one hundred churches too many; and, if they should die off, it would be the best thing for the kingdom of God."

Divinity Doctor Witherspoon, of Louisville Theological Seminary, says, in the *Homiletic Review*, that the statistics of church attendance in the United States are "simply appalling." This despite the fact that the churches are run as social clubs, and made attractive with orchestras, prima donnas, sensational sermons, and pulpit harlequinade.

The Rev. Mace Coleman killed Professor Pattersea at Montgomery, Alabama, on the 28th ult., at the Baptist Congress there in session.

Edward Hext, alias McFarlane, of Chesham, is doing three months' hard labor for stealing jewellery and money from a public-house where he had been given a night's lodging because he said he was penniless. During the night of the prisoner's arrest he aroused the police by praying loudly in his cell. He asked God to put it into the hearts of the magistrates to give him another chance. His prayer was heard. Five previous convictions were brought against him, and the magistrates gave him a whole quarter to continue the second part of his prayer—namely, that God would enable him to turn over a new leaf. Probably it is not what he really wanted; but that is a matter between himself and "the one above."

The attention of subscribers to the Hospital Sunday Fund should be drawn to a case reported in the *Daily Mail* of August 18. It appears that a young woman known to Mr. W. Sowerbutts, of the London City Mission, as a poor and very worthy applicant wanted a wooden leg, her old one being perfectly useless after ten years of hard wear. Being without means of obtaining a new one, she was sent first to the Mansion House, and thence directed to the office of the Hospital Sunday Fund. They gave her a form which must be signed by the minister of the church to which the applicant belongs. The poor girl attended no church or chapel, and has in consequence to remain without a leg. We know that Freethinkers in the parks and elsewhere have subscribed to this fund, and have had occasion before now, in connection with the question of the employment of nurses, to recommend that subscriptions shall rather be given to the Hospital Saturday Fund, which is more open to popular control. A powerful leverage is given to the clergy by making the distribution of public charity depend on their goodwill.

Arthur William Brown, an inmate of one of General Booth's shelters at King's Cross, has been sentenced to three days' imprisonment for stealing and selling waste-paper. It came out in the evidence that the prisoner had to draw about a barrow all day collecting waste-paper for the Army, and could bring in as much as nine shillings' worth a day. For this work he received his bed and food, which he said was not fit to eat, and the magnificent sum of sixpence a week. This is what General Booth calls elevating the residuum and finding work for the unemployed. If it were done by a private employer, it would be called sweating. But circumstances, especially religious ones, alter cases.

"Blood and Fire" is General Booth's trade mark and the motto of the Salvation Army, and one would think that his soldiers were well used to both items. But when a false alarm of "Fire!" was raised at the Congress Hall, Clapton, on Sunday evening, there was a wild rush for the doors. Several persons were injured, and many were carried away in a fainting condition.

Mr. Shiel, the magistrate at Westminster Police-court, seems to be quite fanatical in his love of the compulsory vaccination laws. Frederic Longman being summoned for refusing to have his child vaccinated, a medical certificate was produced that the child was unfit for the operation. As the certificate was obtained, very naturally, after the summons, Mr. Shiel said that he should fine the defendant £1 and 2s. costs, or fourteen days' hard labor in default. He adhered to this decision, although told that the child was in a dying condition; indeed, the child actually died while the case was proceeding, and is now beyond the reach of vaccination officers and magistrates. Such acts of "authority" breed anarchy and contempt and hatred of the laws.

The *Sydney Bulletin* says of the Australian production of the "Sign of the Cross": "The attendance at any time is largely composed of brethren who have found salvation. The typical brother, shedding his oily beam upon this beautiful play, is a droll study in self-gratulation. He bangs his cold, damp paws together, and beats the carpet with his redeemed feet, when the patriarchal Christian (A. D. 64) says, 'The Kingdom of God is at hand,' for there is much Y.M.C.A. comfort in the thought that the Kingdom must certainly have arrived and got to a high state of perfection during the past 1833 years. And, again, when the giddy Pagans (A. D. 64) complain that their modern

waltz-melody stands no chance against the *fin-de-siècle* hymn tune of early Christianity, the d.c. pietist revels in the Pagan's discomfiture. He refers to the musical 'fight between Pluto and Christus' as a noble dramatic conception, quite forgetting for the moment, that Messrs. Moody and Sankey, likewise General Booth, bemoan the Devil's luck in capturing all the best tunes. And again, the brother aforesaid demonstrates with his four limbs upon hearing from the wicked stage that Pontius Pilate found no evil in the Nazarene. At this point the enthusiast is apt to glance triumphantly around the theatre, as though he would like to know whether Infidelity can find anything to say after *that*."

Another writer in the same paper remarks: "The dialogue of 'The Sign of the Cross' is bald, recalling Sheridan on the purple patches of Richard Cumberland: 'lumps of marl on a barren moor, encumbering what it is not in their power to fertilize.' An actor's play. The bites in Barrett's sentences are plundered from Holy Writ, except one from Carlyle: 'What is Life? A gleam of Time between two eternities.' Whereupon the amphitheatre gives the conveyancer a round of plaudits."

The vicar of Marylebone put a lot of Ritualistic trumpery into his church, in opposition to the wishes of his parishioners. Many do the same. But this vicar forgot to get a faculty from the Bishop of London for his innovations. His churchwardens petitioned against him, and a side aisle of St. Paul's Cathedral was devoted to hearing the proceedings, much to the amusement of visitors to the Cathedral.

By the way, we wonder that the objectors to the reredos at St. Paul's do not lift their voices against the new cartoon, which is quite a secular representation of a text which may be claimed as Atheistic—that in Ecclesiastes which says: "Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might; for there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom in the grave whither thou goest."

The Rev. Thomas Needham, of New Brunswick New Jersey, has caused a sensation by asserting that "there are no female angels in heaven; they are all men, and will be a mighty army." Of course he has scripture for it. All the angels mentioned in the Bible are masculine; moreover, their advent among the daughters of men was often followed by an increase of the population.

The *Sunday World*, of New York, solicited the views of many theologians on this knotty point. The Rev. T. Douglas, of the West Fifty-first-street Presbyterian Church, says that in the hereafter we shall recognise each other, "but not as male and female." He wisely refrains from explaining this. The Rev. J. M. Henderson, pastor of Bethel Methodist Church, knows all about it. He says: "There is no such thing as sex in the spiritual world, either here or hereafter." But Mr. Ballington Booth will have none of it. He knows that his "own mother is in heaven," and believes women are wanted in the celestial choir.

Some time ago the Rev. G. D. Haughton, B.A., published a book entitled *Sex in the World to Come*, in which he contended that sexual distinctions would be retained. Swedenborg, in his profound work on *The Delights of Wisdom Relating to Conjugal Love, and the Pleasures of Insanity Relating to Socratic Love*, goes a deal further, and contends that not only are men males and women females after death, but that love of the sex remains and marriages are contracted.

Joseph E. Cardon, an elder of the Church of Jesus Christ of the Latter-day-Saints, writes to the *Boston Investigator* an article headed "God is in Form like Man." He cites Jesus as saying that "He that hath seen me hath seen the Father," and shows from the old book that men are made after the similitude of God (Jas. iii. 9). Adam walked and conversed with God. The Lord talked and ate with Abraham, who also washed his feet (Gen. xxxii. 24-29). Jacob saw him face to face (Gen. xxxii. 29, 30). Moses talked with him as one man talks with another (Ex. xxxiii. 11); and he also saw his back parts. He promised to speak with Moses mouth to mouth (Num. xii. 8). We are told in the fifth chapter of Deuteronomy that he has a hand and an arm. The Psalm (cxxxix. 16) tells us he has eyes, and Isaiah (xxx. 27) says he has lips and a tongue. John describes his head, hair, and eyes (Rev. i. 14).

Elder Cardon concludes that "God not only possesses a body and parts, but flesh, bones, and sinews, and all the attributes, organs, senses, and affections of a perfect man." This is the Mormon doctrine, and the saints have a hymn:—

The God that others worship is not the God for me,
He has no parts nor passions, and cannot hear or see;
But I've a God who has a heart to feel and eyes to see—
O that's the God, O that's the God, O that's the God for me.

A scene occurred at St. Peter's Roman Catholic church at Blackburn last Sunday. Father Upan, the curate, was preaching when Father Kirwin, the rector, violently rang the sanctuary bell, and compelled him to stop. After some high words with the rector the curate resumed his sermon, but after a few minutes the rector peremptorily ordered him to retire. It was explained by Father Kirwin that he stopped the sermon because his curate would not bow his head at the mention of the holy name, and the congregation dispersed amid great excitement.

The unco' guid have come near having more deaths at their doors. The steamship *Victoria*, being unable to use the pier at Dunoon to land her passengers on Sunday, was sending them ashore in boats. One of the boats capsized, and its ten occupants were thrown into the water. They were rescued with much difficulty, one of them passing right under the steamer. The passengers then demanded to be landed on the pier, and, the steamer coming alongside, they went for the entrance, and burst it open with the aid of a wheelbarrow. The police were there, but offered no resistance.

The Jews have suffered such Christian treatment in Russia, Austria, and Roumania that it is no wonder they desire to set up a State of their own, where they will be at liberty to develop their lives in their own fashion. But it is very doubtful if they will carry out Zionism in Palestine. The present Sultan will not resign what is as much holy ground to the Moslem as to the Jew. Moreover, the country is too sterile to support a large population.

Despite the taboo put on the Zionist Congress at Bale, there is no doubt the project of a Jewish State has excited such hopes in the poorer ones of the chosen race that it will not be allowed to drop until definite efforts have been made for its realization.

As late as the time of William III., when money was needed to prosecute the war with France, it was seriously proposed to exact, under the semblance of taxation, a hundred thousand pounds from the Jews. This proposition, says Macaulay, "was at first favorably received by the House, but difficulties arose. The Jews presented a petition in which they declared that they could not afford to pay such a sum, and that they would rather leave the kingdom than stay there to be ruined." After some discussion the Jew-tax was abandoned.

At a Conference of the Church Missionaries of Ceylon the European missionaries had a breakfast at the Mission House together, while the native ones were sent to breakfast at the house of a native schoolmaster. Commenting on this, the *Buddhist*, of Colombo, Ceylon (July 30), says that the day of Christian missionaries doing any good is past. It remarks: "We are fully aware that neither the good men of Europe, who contribute largely for the support of Eastern missions, nor the pious and liberal-minded clergy, know the proceedings and methods of their agents here. If they know them, we are certain that many of the English missionaries here, who are driving about in stylish turnouts, and living in fashionable bungalows, with servants *ad lib*, and who feel it a shame to be seen seated with a brother native clergyman, will not be kept here a day longer than they can help."

Jones has just returned from a visit to the Holy Land. He says he should never have thought, if he had not been forewarned, that God would have chosen such a sterile, stoney, and verminous country as his birthplace and residence. Even Western enterprise has not yet made the roads decent. The chief industry is preying on pilgrims; the leading manufacture, "objects of piety." Fancy the smile with which Jews carve crosses out of bogus "wood from the Mount of Olives" to sell to Christian travellers.

The birthplace of the second person of the Trinity is, as Justin Martyr said it was, a cave, known as the Grotto of the Nativity. That there may be no doubt about the spot, it has a Latin inscription: *Hic de Virgine Maria Jesus Christus natus est*. The romance is rather spoilt by the dirty and evil-smelling priests who are always in attendance to explain things and take the cash. Among things explained are, that a white marble slab represents the cradle of the Savior, and that an aperture represents a spring which God caused to flow from the rock for the use of the Holy Family, and which was stopped when they departed for Egypt. It seems a pity God doesn't provide water and soap for the priests.

You can see for a little extra payment the very spot where Joseph met the angel who explained things to him. Another coin will show you the tomb where are buried all the innocents massacred by Herod (Jones believed this), and close by are the tombs of the holy saints Eusebius, Eustochia, Jerome, and other pie'ists who studied and prayed in the

caves of Bethlehem. One of the most holy of these caves is called the Milk Grotto, because the B.V.M., in offering lacteal nourishment to her juvenile divinity, spilled some drops from her at once virginal and maternal bosom. Ever since a chip of stone from the rock (price three dollars) is a sure cure for milk stoppage. Surely such a cave is worth going to see.

Jones says that the dirtiest chapel of all in Palestine—and that is saying a bold word—is the chapel at the Shepherds' Grotto, where the angels announced the supernatural birth to the shepherds. Whole generations of pastoral keepers seem to have left their effluvia there. The conclusion Jones has come to from his inspection of the Holy Land is that the inhabitants must all have originally been troglodytes living in caves. Stoning, he thinks, must have been their principal diversion, as stoning to death was certainly their form of punishment.

On the Mount of Olives they still show the marks of the footprints of Jesus when he ascended from this earth to some of the other planets. Jones inquired how it happened that, if the body of the Lord was so light that he could levitate aloft, his feet were so heavy as to leave such infernal kicks behind him. He was told that St. Jerome, in the fourth century, certified to the footprints, and therewith expressed himself perfectly content. Jones says that the only native of Palestine for whom he has any esteem is the ass. It was the only one that did not continually cry for "backsheesh." But he found one sufficient. He did not try riding into Jerusalem on two.

Dr. St. George Mivart, the Catholic naturalist, says in *Franciscan Annals* that "not less than twenty thousand human lives are annually lost by serpent bites in India." He does not state how he reconciles the fact with an ever-watching Providence.

As a matter of fact, religious superstition is largely responsible for the excessive mortality from snake bites. The natives regard all kinds of serpents with reverential awe, which makes them antagonize efforts for their destruction.

Godless scoffers in the bush are again reminded by the drought that, previous to the advent of priests, parsons, gospel-shops, and Salvation Army, rains were abundant (comparatively), dandry spells of infrequent occurrence. The moral whereof whoso runs may read.

Bishop Meyers, of Melbourne (bishop of Nat. Kinsman's church—own make), has been lecturing on "Drunken Parsons I have Met." He tells of one minister who was so tight that he went to sleep in the middle of his own sermon. Bishop Meyers shouldn't jump to conclusions. We have often seen good teetotalers fall asleep in the middle of a sermon—why should the parson always escape the influence?—*Sydney Bulletin*.

Canon Pennington tells in the *Guardian* how he, as a diocesan inspector of schools, "always asked the children, chiefly the children of Nonconformists," questions bearing on denominational religious instruction. He says, in so many words: "We are training the children of Nonconformists to be children of the Church." This is exactly so, and is likely to remain so till Nonconformists come to see that the school is the place for secular instruction only.

"Give us this day our daily bread," Jesus Christ taught all Christians to pray. That was nearly two thousand years ago, and now comes Mr. T. P. O'Connor, who asks, in the *Daily Telegraph*, whether daily bread is a good thing. He inclines to believe, with the late Mr. Isaac Holden, M.P., that bread is not the proper staff of life, and that our consumption of it tends to diminish our longevity. Mr. O'Connor will have to reckon with his Savior—that is, if he has one.

If a Rabbi should happen to die in Jerusalem at a time when the rain which annually fills the cisterns has been long in coming, and much anxiety has arisen in consequence, a piece of the dead man's shroud is cut off, dipped in water, and placed in his hand, so that he may not forget to pray for rain when he reaches the other side.—*Lucy M. J. Garnett*, "Women of Turkey," vol. ii., p. 69.

Josephus is careful not to tell that the Jews had no smith in Israel (1 Sam. xiii. 19). If at a later period no Israelite could obtain a spear or sword except Saul and Jonathan, how could the Israelites have gone out of Egypt an armed host? (Ex. xiii. 18; xiv. 8).—*S. P. Dunlap*, "The Ghebers of Hebron," p. 244.

Every tyrant has been of the opinion frankly expressed by Napoleon: "Priests are the most splendid gifts which Heaven can make to a Government."—*J. S. Stuart Glennie*, *Introduction to the "Women of Turkey."*

Mr. Foote's Engagements.

Sunday, August 29, Athenæum Hall, 73 Tottenham Court-road, London, W., at 7.30, "God's Prison."
September 5, Manchester; 26, Birmingham.
October 10, Glasgow.

TO CORRESPONDENTS.

- MR. CHARLES WATTS'S LECTURING ENGAGEMENTS.—September 5 and 12, Athenæum Hall, Tottenham Court-road, London. October 3, Sheffield; 10, Birmingham; 24, Halifax Sunday Society. November 7, Glasgow. December 5, Manchester. —All communications for Mr. Watts should be sent to him (if a reply is required, a stamped and addressed envelope must be enclosed) at 81 Effra-road, Brixton, London, S.W.
- S. HARTMANN, N. S. S. treasurer, as we are going to press, acknowledges a cheque for £2 towards the new Scheme, from the veteran A. Tripp, of Brighton.
- J. A. FLEMING.—Nothing of the sort intended. We have no room at present for more on the subject.
- A. E. ELDERKIN.—Canon Taylor's articles on the failure of missions appeared in the *Fortnightly Review* for, we think, October, 1887.
- SPANISH EXILES FUND.—National Secular Society's Executive, £2 2s.; G. W. Foote, 10s. 6d.; J. M. Wheeler, 5s.
- MR. E. COPLAND, the writer of the sketch of Mrs. Law (p. 540), points out that the sentence, "The Anti-Missionary Meeting at Manchester," ought to read "The Anti-Missionary War Meeting at Newcastle."
- THOMAS MACLEISH.—Many thanks for your prompt reply to our inquiry. The fact that Dr. McDonald, of Glasgow, who certifies to the torture-marks on Francisco Gana, is a strong Conservative and Churchman is one of extreme importance.
- POLICEMAN.—Thanks for your interesting letter. Kindly send us what you refer to if it appears.
- G. W. BLYTHE.—There has of late been great pressure upon our space, and we fear there would be very little interest now in the subject you refer to.
- J. RALSTON (Motherwell) has arranged with a newsagent to exhibit a *Freethinker* contents-sheet; the newsagent taking in a good supply of the paper, and friends undertaking to pay for any unsold copies. This correspondent hopes to see Mr. Foote at Motherwell shortly.
- DR. HENRY SMITH writes:—"I remarked to a priest that of late I had felt a great desire to do more good, to be a better man, and to write more perfectly and in a better style. This feeling, I said, had taken a strong hold on my mind. He quietly remarked, 'It is a symptom of a diseased liver.'"
- R. JOSLIN.—The tract is so silly that we do not know how to criticise it. How can one discuss with an idiot, or comment upon his drivellings?
- J. K.—You have perhaps overlooked our condition, that letters must be accompanied by the full name and address of the writers. This is a universal press rule. Of course your name and address can be withheld from publication, but should be sent in as a guarantee of good faith.
- B. LEES SUMNER (Birmingham) writes:—"When on a little holiday a week since, I read your *Prisoner for Blasphemy*. Anyone who wants a fillip to his Froethought should read it. I am sorry to hear it is out of print. The remarkably brave and able way in which you defended yourself, and the noble cause of free speech, is beyond all praise." We have for some time thought of abridging this book and publishing it at a smaller price, for the sake of those who have entered the Secular party since 1884, the year of our liberation from Holloway Gaol.
- J. CUFF.—Thanks for the subscription (acknowledged elsewhere) and your good wishes.
- G. F. DUPLAX.—You do not really answer anything we said. With most of your letter we are very much in agreement.
- F. W. SWAIN.—Mr. Foote will try to offer you a date if you can obtain a suitable hall. Thanks for the list of subscribers to the Treasurer's Scheme.
- P. D.—Mirabaud's (D'Holbach's) *System of Nature* is powerfully written, though somewhat diffuse and declamatory. An English translation is still published by Mr. Truelove, and can be obtained at Mr. Forder's, price 2s. 6d.
- J. FISH (Chester).—Mr. Foote will be happy to pay your Branch a visit when he is delivering Sunday lectures in the neighborhood—perhaps in October or November. He will write to you when a date can be offered.
- MR. FOOTE'S LECTURE SCHEME.—A. J. Marriott, 2s. 6d.; J. Barry, 5s. This Scheme is suspended while an opportunity is given to the larger Treasurer's Scheme. At the same time, Mr. Foote is carrying out his engagement with Mr. C. Cohen till the end of August, and this involves an expenditure which ought not to fall upon him alone.
- A. J. MARRIOTT.—Sorry to hear you have been unwell.
- PAPERS RECEIVED.—Torch of Reason—Vegetarian Review—Daily Mail—Northern Daily Telegraph—Isle of Man Times—Suroy Comet—Blue Grass Blade—Liberty—Lucifer—New York Public Opinion—Sydney Bulletin—People's Newspaper—Der Arme Teufel—Freithenker—Two Worlds—L'Etoile Socialiste—Progressive Thinker.
- THE National Secular Society's office is at No. 377 Strand, London, where all letters should be addressed to Miss Vanco.

It being contrary to Post-Office regulations to announce on the wrapper when the subscription is due, subscribers will receive the number in a colored wrapper when their subscription expires.

FRIENDS who send us newspapers would enhance the favor by marking the passages to which they wish to call our attention.

ORDERS for literature should be sent to Mr. R. Forder, 28 Stonecutter-street, E.C.

LETTERS for the Editor of the *Freethinker* should be addressed to 28 Stonecutter-street, London, E.C.

SCALE OF ADVERTISEMENTS.—Thirty words, 1s. 6d.; every succeeding ten words, 6d. *Displayed Advertisements*:—One inch, 4s. 6d.; half column, £1 2s. 6d.; column, £2 5s. Special terms for repetitions.

SUGAR PLUMS.

MR. FOOTE had a fine audience at the Athenæum Hall on Sunday evening, including many ladies in tasteful summer costumes, and several American visitors. The lecture was on "God and the Devil," and was freely punctuated with laughter and applause. Mr. Foote occupies the same platform again this evening (August 29), taking for his subject "God's Prison."

Mr. Chainey, of the *Boston Investigator*, was in Mr. Foote's audience on Sunday evening. He is an extremely pleasant young man, with a very good head and a modest, engaging demeanor—so different from the typical Yankee of British imagination. Mr. Chainey spent an hour at Mr. Foote's house after the lecture. He sailed for Boston on Thursday. We congratulate editor Mendum on having such a bright young colleague.

One attraction England will always have for the best Americans. It contains the graves of so many of the mighty dead in the world of literature. Mr. Chainey spoke reverentially of his visit to the grave of George Eliot at Highgate.

The *Chatham and Rochester Observer* of Saturday last gives a very fair report of Mr. Watts's recent lecture at New Brompton. It says: "A large audience was attracted to hear this eloquent speaker."

The same journal gives a graphic account of the annual "outing" of the children and their parents belonging to the Chatham Secular Sunday-school, which, we are pleased to hear, is in a flourishing condition.

Mr. A. B. Moss's annual holiday is over, and he has resumed work. On Sunday morning he lectured out of doors at Camberwell, and in the afternoon at Peckham, both meetings being large and appreciative. Mr. Moss is now making up his winter list of engagements.

The holidays are getting over, and the days are shortening. Next week's *Freethinker* will therefore contain a more thorough presentation of the Treasurer's Scheme for the financial reorganization of the National Secular Society. At the last meeting of the Executive a special sub-committee was appointed to attend to the promotion of this Scheme, and to report upon details as early as possible.

Next week we shall print a complete list of the promises up to date, so as to show exactly how the Scheme stands in this respect. Meanwhile we have to make some fresh acknowledgments. Mr. J. W. Gott promises 10s. annually. Writing to Mr. Hartmann, he says that there are half-a-dozen sympathizers in Bradford alone whom a collecting secretary might call upon with advantage. John Cuff promises £1 (paid); Alert, 5s.; J. Ralston and brother (Motherwell), 10s. each. James Stanway promises 10s., and hopes to increase it before the end of the year. Mr. Partridge sends another Birmingham promise, J. C. Bridges, 10s. 6d. Mr. Swain sends the following promises from the Derby Branch:—W. H. Whitney, 10s.; G. Harper, 5s.; F. W. Swain, 5s.; J. Brownword, 5s.; T. Newton, 5s.; J. Brooks, 5s.; H. McGuinness, 5s.; T. Gorbell, 5s. Mr. Fish sends three promises from Chester:—J. Edwards, 5s.; Todd, 5s.; Fish, 5s.

Joseph Kimberley (Bermondsey) says he thought of promising 5s., but then he thought "that is only a penny a week," so he resolved to forego a certain amount of tobacco, and put the price of it on his subscription. He promises 15s. himself, and has induced three of his shopmates to promise a donation—F. Simons, 10s.; Luke Brooker, 10s.; James Boorman, 10s. These are all working men, and how many more could imitate their example!

"Pickup," in his "Screapins" in the *Workington Star*, calls attention to the preaching on the Pic and Froethought

opposition. He says in Cumberland dialect: "T' preacher gat off a varra gud lectur, an' he gat a varra gud hearin' anaw, bit wen he had finisht a man at hed bin takkin' aw in started a opposishun lectur fra a Freethinker's point o' view, an' t' way 'at he hannelt t' furst chap's sarmon meade me think 'at he had bin at t' same gemm befooar. He was varra gentlemanly; neah hard wurd was spokken, an' thear was as gud order as if it hed bin in a church. Thear was neah organ nor music—only t' music o' t' watter—bit thear was plenty o' fresh air, an' them 'at wanted a smeuk cud hev yan, and thear was neah colleckshun. Which o' t' chaps hed t' best on it Ah's nut prepared ta say, for Ah niver argy on politics or religin, bit them at taks an interest in these things shud gaa an judge for thersels."

The *University Magazine* for September opens with a trenchant criticism of John Morley's Romanes' Lecture on Macchiavelli, by J. M. Robertson. In "The Story of the Fall: Its True Significance," by H. O. Newland, that writer thinks it has more than a phallic significance, having reference to different races. We rather distrust the researches of M. Plongeon, who is quoted. E. H. Parker has a notable article on "Infanticide in China." G. Delaney writes on "The Birth of the Soul," and Ebenezer H. discusses "Is the Rationalist a Debtor to Christianity?"

The following passage in the opening address of Sir John Evans at the meeting of the British Association at Toronto is worth remembering: "When we remember that the date of the commencement of the Neolithic, or Surface-Stone Period, is still shrouded in the mist of a dim antiquity, and that prior to that commencement the River-Drift Period had long come to an end; and when we further take into account the almost inconceivable ages that even under the most favorable conditions the excavation of wide and deep valleys by river action implies, the remoteness of the date at which the Palæolithic Period had its beginning almost transcends our powers of imagination." How pitiful does this make the story of human descent from Adam and Eve.

Sir John Evans believes that Britain was inhabited during the Palæolithic period, but he does not claim for our island home, which in the dim ages of the past was not an island, but part of the continent, that it was the place in which the civilization of the Palæolithic period originated. He points to the discovery in other countries and continents of implements so identical in form and character with the British specimens that they might have been manufactured by the same hands. It is safe to say that, had this address been delivered a generation ago, it would have provoked a furious outcry from the orthodox. To-day they are anxious for peace at any price, so long as they may have the teaching of the children.

The annual excursion of the Birmingham Branch took place on Sunday last. There was a good muster of friends, who journeyed by rail to Worcester, and thence, by special steamer, for a trip up the Severn. A most enjoyable day was spent among the beautiful scenery of the river. After tea short addresses were delivered by Messrs. Taylor, Ridgway, and Armfield, and a hearty vote of thanks was accorded to Mr. W. T. Pitt (treasurer) for his labors in organizing the outing.

The Plymouth Branch desires us to announce that Mr. E. P. Luke, who has recently returned from Australia and India, will deliver a series of anti-theological lectures in the Co-operative Hall, beginning to-day (Aug. 29), when his subject will be "Christian and Secular Salvation."

During the four hours that the Tate Gallery was open on Sunday afternoon there were 3,643 visitors. According to the *Daily News*, they were largely drawn from the working-class population of the district. Still, we suppose the clergy will go on saying that the working-classes don't really want these institutions open on Sunday.

The secretary of the Sunday Society points out that, as the taxpayers support the Galleries and Museums, payment is really made for these institutions being kept open on Sundays, and they are legally "disorderly houses." Surely the opening of the Tate Gallery will be the last nail in the coffin of that obnoxious Act of George III. The following list of the number of visitors to the different institutions ought to be enough to dispose of the old argument that the people do not want Sunday entertainments:—National Gallery of British Arts, 3,643; National Gallery, 1,899; British Museum, 1,121; Natural History Museum, 1,345; South Kensington Museum, 2,106; Bethnal Green Museum, 1,389; National Portrait Gallery, exceeding 600.

At the Co-operators' Festival at the Crystal Palace the veteran, Mr. George Jacob Holyoake, was presented with a fine oil portrait of himself, painted by the German, von Kamptz, an officer now in exile for offending against the

Emperor. Mr. Holyoake gave the portrait to the Labor Association. The *Times* of August 20 devoted half a column to the proceedings.

The *Star* estimated the Trafalgar-square crowd as between twenty and thirty thousand. "Mr. Foote, the Secularist leader," it said, "lent an academic touch to the discussion by a fine appeal based on the celebrated declaration of Mirabeau's," about treating men like brutes till they become wild beasts.

The *Morning Advertiser*, in its long report of the Trafalgar-square Demonstration, said: "It must be confessed that Mr. Foote, the Secularist leader, elevated the tone of the gathering by an appeal to the higher principles of human liberty." Of Mr. Cohen it says that his "diction was almost philosophic," and his "apostrophes to liberty were almost Baconian in their clearness."

The *Daily News* said that "the thoughtful face of Mr. G. W. Foote could not fail to bind attention." The *Star* referred to Mr. Cohen as "an intellectual-looking young Jew."

The *Westminster Gazette* says that "sympathizers with the tortured Spaniards were a little unlucky" in the time they chose for their demonstration; nevertheless, "they carried their resolution and talked a good deal of sense." "Mr. Foote's aphorism," it adds, "that if governments treated their citizens like wild beasts, it was not surprising if some behaved like wild beasts, could hardly be improved, as a comment on a great deal of Continental Anarchy."

The *Daily Chronicle* regards the fact of Mr. Foote's moving the resolution as disproving "the allegation that the meeting was an Anarchist one."

The *Daily Mail* gravely states that Mr. Foote "read the report of a doctor as to the injuries of Francisco Gana, caused by instruments of torture in the prison of Mountjuich. It is, to say the least, outspoken, and Mr. Foote suppressed nothing." There is not a word of truth in this statement. Mr. Foote did nothing of the kind. All he said was that he had written to Glasgow for information as to Dr. McDonald, who had certified as to Gana's injuries, and that Dr. McDonald was a practitioner of thirty years' standing, a Conservative, and a Churchman.

It is said that some of the Trafalgar-square speakers were molested on leaving. Mr. Foote and Mr. Cohen walked off together quietly. It is to be presumed that the little gang of disturbers made a rush for one or two of the speakers who were injudicious enough to walk that way.

The Toronto clergy were busy last Sunday preaching to as many members of the British Association as cared to attend church. Many members preferred a trip to Niagara. Lord Kelvin, whose piety is vaunted by Christian advocates, went with a select party to the Muskoka district, which is often called the paradise of Canada, and is a far better one than that described in the book of Revelation.

Judging by the number and appearance of its publications, the vegetarian cause must be having wealthy support. The *Vegetarian Review* is a capitally-got-up magazine. The number before us is well printed, and has a history of the vegetarian movement by C. Forward, and a good review of *Forecasts of the Coming Century* by H. S. Salt, illustrated with portraits of Edward Carpenter, Dr. A. Russel Wallace, and G. Bernard Shaw.

Religious Indulgences.

The popes persevered in treating indulgences as purely a matter of money, unconditioned by repentance or confession. Clement VII., in 1524, when removing the suspension of the cruzada in Spain, recites the bulls of Julius II. and Leo X. as granting *plenissimam indulgentiam* to all who would pay the sum required for the prosecution of the war against the infidel, or for the fabric of St. Peter's. Clement, moreover, when prescribing the conditions for his Jubilee of 1525, makes no mention of contrition or confession—the only conditions are the customary visits to the churches. It is the same with the plenaries granted by him in 1530 to members of confraternities formed to aid the Inquisition in extirpating heresy; and a still more cynical disregard even of appearances is manifest by an extension of privileges in 1565 after the Council of Trent by Pius IV. to the Hospital of St. Lazarus, for he offers a plenary remission and indulgence *a culpa et a pona* of all sins to those who, at death, shall bequeath a legacy to it, without any conditions of contrition or confession.—H. C. Lea, "A History of Auricular Confession and Indulgences," vol. iii., p. 78.

MR. HALL CAINE'S "CHRISTIAN."

II.

GLORY QUAYLE is loved by another man as well as by John Storm. This innamorato bears the terrible name of Francis Horatio Nelson Drake. Of course he moves in high society, and of course he is clever and handsome. His love of Glory Quayle is represented as really high and pure, and eventually he makes her an offer of marriage. Yet he takes her to the Derby, in company with the *roué* Lord Robert Ure and a battered dove named Betty Bellman, who calls one man "balmy" and another a "cough-drop." And when the race is over, and the champagne flows freely, Drake toasts her as "the loveliest, liveliest, leeriest, little woman in the world." What an epithet is *leeriest*! Fancy a man applying it publicly, or even privately for that matter, to a woman for whom he has the smallest shred of respect, or even the faintest spark of honest affection! But the cream of the joke is that the glorious Glory Quayle hides her face coquettishly in the midst of "a merry laugh."

Mr. Caine evidently thinks that such manners are absolutely fashionable among the stars of the music-hall and theatrical professions. Speaking of the music-hall, John Storm—who delivers what Mr. Caine described to the interviewer as his "message"—declares: "It is impossible for a girl to live long in an atmosphere like that and be a good woman." This dictum is also extended to the theatre. Glory is to play the part of a wicked woman at a theatre specially taken for her by Drake and Lord Robert Ure, and the rehearsal overwhelms her with confusion. "How was she to play this evil woman? The poison went to the bone, and to get into the skin of such a creature a good woman would have to dispossess herself of her very soul." According to which peculiar theory of histrionics, a woman who plays Lady Macbeth is graduating for a murderess, and a woman who plays Cleopatra is graduating for a prodigal wanton!

Lord Robert asks the stormy John, who detests the theatre as well as the music-hall, what is "amiss with the profession"—and adds: "Some of the best men in the world have belonged to it, I think." Whereupon the stormy John exclaims: "Tell me the name of one of them, since the world began, who ever lived an active Christian life." Passing by the absurd chronology of the query, it may be remarked that it is hardly the business of actors to compete with the clergy, who are numerous enough, in all conscience, for their particular business. What would happen if actors filled pulpits on Sunday? Would it not involve the neglect of a host of regular practitioners? Might not some of the most fashionable preachers find a difficulty in filling their establishments? Let each stick to his own trade, or chaos will come again.

John Storm follows this up with a more general query. "Tell me," he says, "how many of them have done anything in real life, anything for the world, for humanity." Well, it all depends on what you mean. Actors are not exactly famous for drafting the girls of Piccadilly to the strawberry beds of Essex, as General Booth proposed to do, though his success in this line is not colossal. But if it be the function of tragedy, as Aristotle declared, to purify the soul by terror and pity, many an actor, with a great dramatist behind him, has preached a more potent sermon than ever came from the mouth of a pulpiteer.

Absurdities, indeed, are thickly sown in this book. Mr. Caine understands London as well as he understands the theatrical profession. Reading him you might imagine, if you did not know better, that our metropolis is almost exclusively peopled by thieves, profligates, drunkards, and harlots; whereas in London, as elsewhere, there is froth at the top and dregs at the bottom, but plenty of good liquor between. Mr. Caine depicts London as the Circe of cities, the Judas betraying with a kiss, the great serpent crushing millions in its folds—in short, as "the wickedest city in the world," which expression, we believe, is borrowed from that accurate person, the Rev. Hugh Price Hughes. It may be true that a hundred thousand people in London "live in constant want," and the fact is sad enough; but consider its vast population of nearly six millions. It may also be true that "not one million cross the threshold of church or chapel," but that is no great calamity. It might even be an improvement if the one million who do go to church or chapel went somewhere else.

Mr. Caine threatens to write a novel on the great drink question. If he keeps his word it is to be hoped that he will try to understand what he is writing about. He certainly does not understand it here. John Storm takes Glory Quayle through the alleys and courts of Westminster, and talks to her in this fashion:—

"What's the use of saying to these people, 'Don't drink; don't steal'? They'll answer, 'If you lived in these slums you would drink too.' But we'll show them that we can live here and do neither—that will be true preaching."

Here is philosophy with a vengeance! A gaol chaplain leads the life of a prisoner just as much as a parson who pitches his tent (but who does it?) in alleys and courts leads the life of the slums. He is in it, perhaps, but not of it. He has been brought up elsewhere; he has other occupations than those of the real slum-dweller; he moves more or less, all the time, in more refined society; and when he is hipped with work and want of fresh air he takes a long and agreeable holiday. His keeping sober and honest is no proof that the slums do not necessarily breed drunkards and thieves.

And now let us take the two monstrous absurdities at the end of this book. John Storm's uncle, the Earl of Erin, is Prime Minister. He is early described as "secretly a sceptic, if not openly a derider of spiritual things." At the very end he speaks of "the inscrutable power which rules over life," and feels "an ever-deepening sadness, an ever-increasing sense of our impotence to diminish the infinite sorrow of the world." Yet this same gentleman resigns office because he perceives the necessity, in the interest of true religion and true civilization, of an absolute divorce between Church and State. A younger statesman must fight this battle, and the old Prime Minister ends by saying, "God grant that he may be a Christian man, and God speed and bless him." This is Mr. Caine's own sentiment, and he forgot the ridiculousness of putting it into the mouth of such a character. But this is not all. Mr. Caine tells us in his poem that "The period of the story is the last quarter of the nineteenth century"—and one is constrained to ask, Why this gratuitous precision when the story abounds with absurdly unhistorical incidents?

The Prime Minister's resignation, however, pales beside the account of a kind of Second Advent craze which seizes upon London. John Storm, having given up the idea of marrying Glory Quayle, goes about dressed as a monk, followed by a big bloodhound. He is the talk of the great city. Crowds flock to hear him denounce its wickedness. People say he is "the most Christ-like man" they ever knew. They discover that he is thirty-three years of age, and was born on the twenty-fifth of December. They also find that he bears a resemblance to the traditional portrait of Jesus Christ. The madness progresses until London is filled with a panic terror. God is going to destroy the city for its iniquities; some say by fire, and some by a flood; and the date fixed is the next Derby day. There is a run upon the banks, businesses are sold and partnerships dissolved, and myriads of people camp out at Hampstead, Highgate, and Blackheath. But of course it all ends in a fizzle.

We will not accuse Mr. Caine of going into the blood-and-thunder business wantonly. We will assume that he thinks this episode within the bounds of probability. But in that case, how well he knows London! Prophet Baxter has been working the Second Advent oracle for all it is worth, and what difference has it made in the value of stocks and house-property? London has never been diverted a hair's-breadth from its ordinary line of business and pleasure. Mr. Caine is simply putting the spirit of the Middle Ages into this *fin-de-siècle* metropolis. What he relates as taking place in London could not take place even at Douglas; not, at least, in the summer season, whatever might be possible in the winter, when the pious natives are waiting for the next spoliation of the Egyptians. G. W. FOOTE.

(To be concluded.)

POSTSCRIPT.—Mr. T. P. O'Connor, taking up the cudgels on behalf of Mr. Caine, complains that "to turn an interview into material for slashing a book is, in my judgment, neither good taste, good sense, nor good feeling." I dissent from this. Mr. Caine knew that he was being interviewed for publication. What he said to the interviewer was meant for the public, and is public property.

A FASHIONABLE METHODIST.

MR. EVAN AP RHYNS EVANS is an energetic Welshman, who in his early years tended sheep in the vales of Llanflechllan. The lad, however, had a consuming vanity, which raised his soul above wool. He preferred *hwyl*—the Welsh term for divine pulpit fervor—as more profitable, and set himself to acquire the *hwyl* by speaking at experience and class meetings, and exclaiming *diolch* or “praise” at *divvigiadau* revivals. Of course, his parents determined to make him a minister, and he soon acquired all that was necessary for the Welsh Methodist pulpit. Presently he followed the Morgans and the Welsh milk business to London, finding a Methodist chapel in the southern suburbs. But this enlarged sphere was soon too restricted for his vast vanity and activity.

Mr. Evan Ap Rhys Evans reminds one of the mythical steamboat, whose whistle was bigger than its boiler. He found out as a babe that if he shouted long enough he would receive some attention, and that if he shouted to the right people he would get more lollipops than spansks. He accordingly determined that as soon as he had a chance he would let off his steam amid the well-to-do folks, where he is now a forward and a fashionable Methodist.

Mr. E. A. Evans says that life in the East-end slums of London is not for him. He has taken up the more difficult and profitable task of converting the aristocracy. He knows there are an immense number who crave only to be legitimately amused on Sunday. Like General Booth, he is a good caterer, and provides an entertainment which claims to be pious. There is an orchestra, vying with that of Moore and Burgess. Of course, like Booth, he is too vulgar for the upper classes, who rarely look in, even once in a way, to see what it is like. But in the shopkeeping and well-to-do servant class he finds a *clientèle* of regular attendants, while all sorts and conditions go occasionally to hear the band, as they would to any other show or recreation.

Mr. E. A. Evans goes round the country and gathers up a deal of the root of all evil by picturing the heathen state of Piccadilly. He has been ten years tinkering at the social evil there, and it is as rotten as ever. It would never do for God to kill the Devil all at once, or his minister's occupation would be gone. The work costs £12,000 a year to keep going, and the Wesleyan Church looks rather askance on a draining of its provincial sinews of war to carry on a mission of which the result is seen mainly in a flourish of trumpets. To reconcile them somewhat, Mr. Evan Ap Rhys Evans has established a lively and spiritual paper, and, by putting himself in evidence everywhere, has forced his name to be a household word in all the Methodist camp. But he is little liked outside his own circle. His noble aim is to get hold of the wealthy, to whom life is a bore, and induce them to take some interest in life by seeing him dispense their filthy lucre. To attract these people he dresses like a Church of England swell, and affects the manners of the West-end fop. It is all in the cause of the Lord, like his famous romance entitled *The Infidel Cord Wainer*; and he has suffered for it by losing the confidence of the stricter Methodists, and having his claims for the presidency of the Conference long deferred.

UNCLE BEN.

ROMNEY'S PORTRAIT OF THOMAS PAINE.

A LITTLE before leaving for America, Mr. Moncure D. Conway, the esteemed author of the best *Life of Thomas Paine*, wrote a letter to the *Athenæum*, in which he put forward a claim of having discovered the portrait of Paine painted by Romney. In America, whence the portrait came, the painting had long been ascribed to Jarvis. Mr. Conway left the painting with the curators of the National Portrait Gallery, Trafalgar-square, where it may be seen upon application, for it is not, and probably will not be, put in the collection. Upon seeing the portrait, which is accompanied by Sharp's engraving from Romney's picture, my mind was at once made up. It is certainly not by George Romney. No critic, who will compare it with Romney's masterly portrait of himself in the same Gallery, or with any of his portraits, can be in doubt upon the point. I said nothing save to a friend, but asked the opinion of the curators. The answer was decisive: “The painting is not by Romney, and is a very bad *replica*.” Moreover, the artist has taken liberties of alteration from the engraving, or the picture, which William Sharp certainly would not have done.

Mr. Conway's letter to the *Athenæum* is reprinted in the August number of the *Free Thought Magazine*, of Chicago, and it has been boomed in many of the American papers that Mr. Conway has found the Romney portrait. That gentleman is not responsible for this. In placing the picture where it is he has done everything possible to clear the matter up, and in taking so much trouble in connection therewith he has added to the debt which all admirers of Paine must feel they owe to him. But it is right and necessary that our American friends should know that the

valuable Romney portrait is not found, and is still probably in their country. It was certainly taken there in 1795 by Dr. Thomas Cooper, of Manchester, afterwards President of South Carolina College, of whom my friend, Mr. Louis Levine, of Charleston, has recently supplied some particulars in the *Freethinker*. It was painted for him, and I doubt not was among his greatest treasures, which, having been a lawyer, he probably carefully provided for by will. Dr. Cooper died at Columbia, May 11, 1840. What became of his effects I do not know; but this I know—that the search for the Romney portrait should begin from Columbia, and not from New York, whence the Jarvis portrait was produced. And the search is worth making. A portrait of Paine by Romney deserves a hunt for a hundred years. Its mere monetary value must be at least one thousand guineas, while, from the point of view of art and history, the worth of a portrait of so great a man by so great an artist is inestimable.

J. M. WHEELER.

(American papers please copy.)

Bogus and Real Hells.

The abolition of future hells is a necessary step towards the abolition of those which exist on earth. The irrational and inhuman theories of future punishment so long prevalent in Christendom have reacted upon the rationality and the humanity of those who accepted them, and are largely responsible for the coarse moral fibre, the brutality, and the bloodthirstiness of the modern world. While the God tortures hopelessly the wicked and the weak, why should the worshipper not butcher his enemies, and take pleasure in tormenting the dumb creatures, or hunt down the weak among men and ruthlessly trample them under foot? While the idea of an avenging torture-chamber exists, so long will Christendom continue to ignore the precepts of its Christ, and to imitate its grim idol. The belief that the Divine Being acquiesces in the endless existence of sin and suffering, the removal of which is for him also an impossibility, has dried the fountains not of human pity alone, but of human energy, and made us supine and helpless in the presence of the problems of poverty, and vice, and fraud. From age to age this foul dogma of despair has paralyzed the heart of mercy and the arm of hope, and turned the whole Church of Christ into contented or helpless witnesses of the human hells of slumdom, brothel-dom, and drinkdom.—*W. Walsh.*

Obituary.

It is with great regret that we have to record the sudden death of Mr. William Westwell, of Manchester. Mr. Westwell was a friend of the late Charles Bradlaugh, and for years he has been a close friend of Mr. Foote, who frequently stayed at his house and often enjoyed his hospitality at the Isle of Man. When Mr. Foote lectured on Douglas Head in defiance of the authorities, a few years ago, Mr. Westwell supported him loyally, and would have spent any amount of money sooner than see him defeated. He was a man of the world and little given to sentiment, but deep down in his heart was the steadfast memory of the beautiful young wife he lost so many years ago. Both his sons died before him, one being drowned in the West Indies only last year. Mr. Westwell's death took place suddenly at Douglas on Friday night, August 20. An obituary notice appeared in the next day's *Isle of Man Times*, mentioning his Atheism, but also praising his probity. Early in life Mr. Westwell failed in business, but he afterwards paid his old creditors in full, with five per cent. interest. He was a man of strict veracity and integrity. We pay our sad tribute of profound respect over his open grave.

It is with profound regret that I record the death, after a long and painful illness, of Mr. J. H. Saint, who was well known, both in London and the provinces, as a lecturer under the name of St. John. Although only twenty-five years of age, the deceased had lectured for nearly ten years, and bade fair to rank as one of the best of our outdoor lecturers. He was quite aware that his disease would ultimately prove fatal, and awaited death with a calmness and cheerfulness that was remarkable. I was with him a few hours before he died, and can testify to the contempt which he felt to the last for all supernatural ideas. Great sympathy is expressed for his widowed mother and her young family in their bereavement, as prior to his illness he was their main support. He was interred in Hammersmith Cemetery; the Secular Burial Service, which was used at his request, being read by Mr. Stanley Jones.—*F. Todd (Hon. Sec., West London Branch, N. S. S.).*

He that is not open to conviction is not qualified for discussion.—*Whately.*

WHY I ADMIRE JESUS.

(Thoughts on reading an Article by F. W. Baldwin, "Why I Despise Jesus.")

JESUS dared to think and act for himself, and to associate with whom he chose. I admire him for this.

I admire Jesus because he was good, and he taught others to be good. Because he taught us to love one another, and he loved little children. Because he taught men that deeds, not words, constituted righteousness. Because he taught good works and went about doing good. Because he visited the poor, and was not ashamed to mix with the people, and to speak kindly to the sinner.

I admire Jesus because he taught a pure religion. He taught people to make friends with their enemies, and not go to law. I admire him because he taught that Heaven must be *within* us; and he taught that this heaven was a child-like love and goodness to all men. He taught that virtue is its own reward. He taught that our aim should be to do good.

I admire Jesus because he advised people not to judge others nor *despise* others, but to remove the mote from our own eye before we attempt to take it out of our brother's eye. It would be well for many if they did this.

I admire Jesus because he taught the lesson of the Good Samaritan. I admire Jesus because he said, "Love thy neighbor as thyself." I admire Jesus because he taught the best of those teachings which had been taught by all great minds of all ages. He taught that men will be known by their deeds, and not by their professions. I admire Jesus because his teachings are the teachings of the human mind. They may not have been new, they may not have been originated by Jesus; but Jesus taught them—that is enough for me. I admire Jesus for the good he did, and for the good words he spoke. Jesus was essentially a good man. He had a strong feeling of abhorrence of all wrongdoing. He had a gentle, loving nature. Hypocrisy, sham, and cant he hated. The profession of religion or morality was not enough for him. I admire him as man, but do not believe he was God. It is the good in men we should admire and remember; the evil, if we see any, we should condemn and forget.

HENRY SMITH.

THE RELIGIOUS LIE.

HISTORICAL investigations have revealed to us the origin and growth of the Bible; we know that by this name we designate a collection of writings, as radically unlike in origin, character and contents as if the *Nibelungen Lied*, Mirabeau's speeches, Heine's love poems, and a Manual of Zoology had been printed and mixed up promiscuously, and then bound into one volume. We find collected in this book the superstitious beliefs of the ancient inhabitants of Palestine, with indistinct echoes of Indian and Persian fables, mistaken imitations of Egyptian theories and customs; historical chronicles, as dry as they are unreliable, and miscellaneous poems, amatory, human, and Jewish-national, which are rarely distinguished by beauties of the highest order, but frequently by superfluity of expression, coarseness, bad taste, and genuine Oriental sensuality. As a literary monument the Bible is of much later origin than the *Vedas*; as a work of literary value it is surpassed by everything written in the last two thousand years by authors even of the second rank, and to compare it seriously with the productions of Homer, Sophocles, Dante, Shakespeare, or Goethe would require a fanaticised mind that had entirely lost its power of judgment. Its conception of the universe is childish, and its morality revolting, as revealed in the malicious vengeance attributed to God in the Old Testament and in the New, the parable of the laborers of the eleventh hour, and the episodes of Mary Magdalene and the woman taken in adultery.

And yet men, cultivated and capable of forming a just estimate, pretend to reverence this ancient work; they refuse to allow it to be discussed and criticised like any other production of the human intellect; they formed societies, and place enormous sums at their disposal to print millions of copies of it, which they distribute all over the world; and they pretend to be edified and inspired when they read in it.....

More revolting and insufferable even than the lie of religion as acted by the individual is the same lie of religion as acted by the community. The individual citizen, although he belongs ostensibly to some established religion and takes part in its ceremonies, often makes no secret of his disbelief in its superstitions, and refuses to be convinced that a certain form of words, repeated in concert by the congregation, will suspend or alter the laws of nature, that the Devil is driven out of a child when sprinkled by holy water, or that the chanting and speech of a man in a black or white robe beside a corpse will open the gates of Paradise to the soul of the dead man.....

As private citizens, we assert that we do not believe in the

existence of God, that the God of the established religions is the outgrowth of childish and undeveloped minds; but, as members of the body politic, we declare any one holding such views to be guilty of blasphemy before the law, and incapable of holding office. And this notwithstanding the fact that no scientific or rational proof has been offered in evidence of the reality of God; that even the most enthusiastic theologian can produce no testimony to prove the existence of God that approaches, in clearness and convincing force, to that offered by the archæologist and geologist to prove the antiquity of the earth and its inhabitants, or by the astronomer to convince us of the revolution of the earth around the sun.....

MAX NORDAU.

CORRESPONDENCE.

WHO IS RESPONSIBLE?

"Shall there be evil in a city, and the Lord hath not done it?" —AMOS III. 6.

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE FREETHINKER."

SIR,—In last week's *Freethinker* (August 23) I notice some remarks upon Amos. "Shinto's" clerical adviser had evidently forgotten his Hebrew, or he would not have been so positive in asserting that the prophet referred to physical evil instead of moral evil. The word employed by Amos is רָעָה, which undoubtedly means moral wickedness, and it is frequently translated "wickedness" in the English Bible. Taking two texts at random—1 Kings i. 52 and Job xx. 12—we find רָעָה in both, with the same pointing and the same grammatical form as in Amos, and both translated "wickedness" in the English version.

"Shinto" cites a verse from Isaiah in this connection, which is perfectly legitimate, for the word used there is רָעָה, which is practically another way of spelling רָעָה; and this word רָעָה is also frequently rendered "wickedness" in the English Bible.

The text in Amos is purposely ambiguous in the English translation; but it seems hardly possible to cavil at the evident meaning of the Hebrew prophet. CHILPERIC.

PROFANE JOKES.

SOME years ago a clergyman was preaching to a large audience in a wild part of Yorkshire, and announced for his text, "In my Father's house are many mansions." He had scarcely read the words when an old fellow stood up and said, "I tell you folks that's a lie! I know his father well. He lives fifteen miles from Scarborough, in an old tumble-down shanty, and there ain't but one room in the house."

"Bobby," cautioned his mother, "the bishop is to dine with us to-day, and you must be very quiet at table. I want him to think that you are a good little boy." Much impressed, Bobby ate his dinner in silence until his plate needed replenishing. "Pa," he said devoutly, "will you give me some more beans, for of such is the kingdom of heaven?"

"What are the Blenkinsopp girls in mourning for?" "Their parrot." "In mourning for a parrot! Why, it's a positive sacrilege." "Oh, but this one could repeat the Lord's prayer, you know."

A story is told of a Sunday-school teacher in a certain backwoods settlement in a neighboring county, which is worth publishing. She had a new class of young scholars the parents of whom had neglected to give them any instruction in their catechism. Going to the first boy in the class, she asked him who made him. He did not know. She told him God, and urged him to remember it. Of the next boy she asked who was the oldest man. He did not know, and the teacher told him Methuselah. So she went on down the class, asking each a question and giving them the answer. While she was thus engaged the first boy went to the bucket after some water. The teacher returned to the head of the class, and, not knowing that anyone was absent, she asked the first boy who made him. Without hesitation the boy quickly replied, "Methuselah!" "No," exclaimed the teacher in astonishment, "God made you!" "No, he didn't," persisted the urchin, with confidence; "the boy God made is gone after water." The teacher gave up that class.

In Spain the Church, aided by the Inquisition, has always been strong enough to punish sceptical writers and prevent, not, indeed, the existence, but the promulgation of sceptical opinions. By this means, the spirit of doubt being quenched, knowledge has for several centuries remained almost stationary; and civilization, which is the fruit of knowledge, has also been stationary.—H. T. Buckle, "History of Civilization in England," General Introduction, chapter vii.

SUNDAY LECTURE NOTICES, ETC.

[Notices of Lectures, etc., must reach us by first post on Tuesday, and be marked "Lecture Notice," if not sent on post-card.]

LONDON.

THE ATHENÆUM HALL (73 Tottenham Court-road, W.): 7.30, G. W. Foote, "God's Prison."

BRADLAUGH CLUB AND INSTITUTE (36 Newington Green-road, Ball's Pond): 7.15, E. Calvert, "An Historical Review of the Old Testament."

OPEN-AIR PROPAGANDA.

CAMBERWELL (Station-road): 11.30, H. P. Ward.

CAMBERWELL BRANCH (Peckham Rye): 3.15, Debate between Samuel Haba and H. P. Ward.

CLERKENWELL GREEN (Finsbury Branch): 11.30, W. Heaford, "Reason and the Bible."

EDMONTON (Angel road): 7, A. B. Moss, "Heaven Above and Hell Beneath."

FINSBURY PARK (near band-stand)—Finsbury Park Branch: 3.15, H. Snell, "What is Secularism?"

HAMMERSMITH (The Grove, near S.W.R. station): 7, W. Heaford.

HYDE PARK (near Marble Arch): 11.30, O. Cohen; 3.30, A. lecture.

ISLINGTON (Highbury Fields, Highbury Corner): 11.30, F. Haslam, "Sixty Years of Freethought."

KILBURN (High-road, corner of Victoria-road): 7, R. P. Edwards.

KINGSLAND (Ridley-road, near Dalston Junction): 11.30, H. Snell.

LIMEHOUSE (Triangle, Salmon-lane): 11.30, T. J. Thurlow. August 31, at 8.30, E. Pack.

MILE END WASTE: 11.30, E. Pack; 7, E. Pack. September 1, at 8.30, H. P. Ward.

VICTORIA PARK (near the fountain): 3.15, O. Cohen.

WOOD GREEN (Jolly Butchers' Hill): 11.30, A. B. Moss, "Sorrows of Satan."

COUNTRY.

BRISTOL (14 Woodborough-street, Stapleton-road): 7, Important Committee meeting.

DERBY (Pollicott's Dining Rooms, Market-place): 7, A Reading.

PONTYPRIDD (28 Middle-street, Trallwn): Meetings every Sunday evening. Discussion invited.

PLYMOUTH (Co-operative Hall, Courtenay-street): 7, E. P. Luke, "Christian and Secular Salvation."

SOUTH SHIELDS (Captain Duncan's Navigation School, King-street): 7, Discussion on "Labour Problems."

OPEN-AIR PROPAGANDA.

ROCHDALE (Town Hall Square): 3.15, A. Marshall, "The Laws of Nature."

Lecturers' Engagements.

O. COHEN, 12 Merchant-street, Bow-road, London.—August 29, m., Hyde Park; a, Victoria Park; e., Victoria Park. September 5, Sheffield. 12 and 19, Glasgow. 26, Edinburgh. October 10, Gateshead. 16, 17, and 18, Stanley. 24, Newcastle.

A. B. MOSS, 44 Credon-road, London, S.E.—August 29, m., Wood Green; e., Edmonton. September 5, m. and a., Hyde Park; 12, Clerkenwell.

J. FAGAN, 48 Popham-road, New North-road, London, N.—September 19, e., Hammersmith. 26, m., Hyde Park.

J. T. THURLOW, 350 Old Ford-road, London, E.—September 5, Limehouse.

H. PERCY WARD, Leighton Hall, N.W.—August 29, m., Camberwell; a., Peckham Rye.

E. PACK, 90 Camden-street, N.W.—August 29, m. and e., Mile End Waste. September 5, e., Clerkenwell Green. 7, e., Limehouse. 12, Northampton. 14, e., Limehouse. 19, m., Camberwell; a., Peckham Rye. 21, e., Limehouse. 26, m., Mile End; e., Limehouse; a., Finsbury Park. 28, e., Limehouse. October 17, m., Camberwell.

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