

# The Freethinker

Edited by G. W. FOOTE.]

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## THE DOOM OF CHRISTIAN SPAIN.

A TRANSATLANTIC wit, the other day, said that Spain probably wished she had never discovered America. Certainly her presence in the Western hemisphere was always a curse to everyone concerned. From the time when the great Columbus introduced slavery there, down to the present, when Spanish government in Cuba means wholesale torture and murder, Spain has been a perpetual blight to her colonies and dependencies. In their own country the Spaniards, at least in the provincial districts, appear to possess a good share of the simpler virtues. They are said to be temperate, truthful, honest, and hospitable. But the same may be said of the Turks. Yet the Turks are a curse to all who fall under their power, and this is equally true of the Spaniards. Both races have been trained up under despotism and superstition, both are capable of the wildest fanaticism, both are proud of their very deficiencies in civilization, and both have a certain savagery in their natures which flames into unspeakable cruelty in the face of opposition.

Spain has a noble language, and in many respects a noble literature. She gave to the world one of its immortal books in *Don Quixote*. For a hundred years after the discovery of America she was immeasurably the most powerful country in the world. But her decline was as rapid as her ascent, and she is now at the very foot of the ladder of European civilization.

What is the reason of this terrible downfall? The answer is simple enough. Spain is the victim of Christianity. Catholicism is Christianity to the evolutionist, and Spain is the typical Catholic country. Shut out by the solid barrier of the Pyrenees from free intercourse with the rest of Europe, and imbued with the belief that the greatest of all earthly objects is the maintenance of the Catholic religion, she has been a standing object-lesson in the blessings of Christianity when unchecked by other influences. To the Spaniard religion is not an amusement, or a social decoration, or an artificial aid to morality; to him it is a passion that inflames his whole nature, and makes all other things look comparatively trivial; all other things, that is, but the lust after ill-gotten wealth, which somehow or other has always been singularly compatible with the strongest faith and the most ardent devotion.

Protestants will of course deny that Roman Catholicism is Christianity. They have the real article themselves. But if there had been no Catholicism there would have been no Protestantism. Historically, as Michelet observed, Protestantism is as an estuary, and Catholicism as the main sea. It is from the Catholic Church that every Protestant sect derives its doctrines, and from the same Church that all Protestant sects derive their Bible. Christianity contains certain fundamental ideas, and it is these, and not selected texts from a large and self-contradictory Scripture, that the evolutionist and the historian have to deal with. These ideas in the course of ages found practical expression in certain institutions, and those institutions are all marshalled under the Catholic Church. Nor is Protestantism, as some Rationalists affirm, a better religion than Catholicism. There is less of it—that is all. It is only better as a mild attack of fever is better than a severe attack of fever. And many Protestants have it very mildly. With hosts of them it is a slight recurrent disorder, coming on once a week. Others

have just enough religion to amuse them, and get a little æsthetic titillation at church or chapel instead of at the theatre or the music-hall.

Protestantism with supreme power would make as great a desolation as Catholicism with supreme power. Scotland under the Presbyterian yoke was as ugly a place to live in as Spain under the Catholic yoke—in some respects far uglier. Give the clergy power, and it doesn't matter whether their dogmas are fifty or a hundred; their tyranny is just the same, they hate and persecute science and freethought, and make their teaching the alpha and omega of human wisdom. Those who think that Protestantism, in itself, was more favorable than Catholicism to the growth of natural knowledge and the free play of the human mind are simply ignorant of the facts of history. All the early Protestant "reformers" were absolutely opposed to any freedom of travel beyond the point they had reached themselves. They imprisoned, tortured, and burnt heretics with the greatest alacrity. Only by a kind of accident did freethinking creep upon the scene. The appeal to a multifarious book like the Bible divided Protestants among themselves. They kept each other in check, and made a ring which bolder spirits gradually entered. Equilibrium, so to speak, was maintained by antagonistic forces that could not destroy each other. Was it not Voltaire who complained that in England he found twenty religions, but only one sauce? But did he not soon perceive that this was the secret of English freedom? In France there was one church big enough to swallow all others, and it did so; while in England there were twenty churches, all hating each other, but all obliged to keep a certain measure of peace and toleration. And in the midst of that peace and toleration there was a chance for a more daring originality.

Protestantism never had a career in Spain. It was suppressed in less than ten years after its first appearance there. She is the Catholic nation *par excellence*. Even her most distinguished literary men have been devout Catholics. Cervantes became a Franciscan monk three years before his death. Lope de Vega was a priest and an officer of the Inquisition. Moreto, the great dramatist, wore a monk's dress during the last twelve years of his life. Calderon was chaplain to Philip IV. A long list of lesser lights is given by Buckle in his chapter on Spain. "The Church," as Buckle says, "retained her hold over the highest as well as the lowest intellects." "Everyone," he adds, "believed; no one inquired. Among the better classes all were engaged in war or theology, and most were occupied with both." Literary men ministered to the prevailing prejudice. "The quantity of Spanish works," Buckle says, "to prove the necessity of religious persecution is incalculable; and this took place in a country where not one man in a thousand doubted the propriety of burning heretics."

Spain was marked out as a home of superstition. Not only was she shut off from the rest of Europe by the Pyrenees, but she suffered more from earthquakes than all the rest of Europe (excepting Italy) put together; and wherever nature is destructive man tends to be fearful, credulous, and priest-ridden. For eight hundred years, too, Spain was the scene of a holy war. The Mohammedans landed in the south in 711, and gradually established an empire there, pushing the Christian Spaniards back to the north. Everyone knows what a brilliant civilization the Moors established, how superior it was to anything Spain has seen since

their power was finally broken at the end of the fifteenth century. The Christian empire was restored after the capture of Malaga in 1487, and of Granada in 1492. For twenty generations the Christian Spaniards had been more or less engaged in fighting the Mohammedan Moors. The struggle was religious as well as political, and the conquerors were thoroughly steeped in pious fanaticism. Rulers and people alike prided themselves on being soldiers of the Cross. They were determined that the soil of Spain should not be polluted by the feet of heretics or infidels. Their first move was to expel the Jews. Every son of Abraham who refused to deny his faith was driven out. Various estimates are given of their number, ranging from 160,000 to 800,000. To convert them or exterminate them was the special business of the Inquisition—the vilest and bloodiest tribunal ever established on earth. Imagination shrinks appalled at the record of the sufferings of these unhappy Jews. Most of them perished miserably. But holy Spain was freed from the descendants of the people who crucified Christ, and that was cheaply effected at any cost of blood and tears.

Spain's holy zeal was next turned against the Dutch Protestants in the Netherlands, where she had carried her empire. Charles V. slaughtered from fifty to a hundred thousand heretics there. He was not naturally cruel or vindictive; he simply did what he thought was his duty; he carried out the behests of Holy Mother Church. His successor, Philip II., continued the good work after him. For thirty years he tortured, hung, burnt, and buried alive the damnable misbelievers. How many of them he murdered is unknown, but some idea of their multitude may be gathered from the fact that the infamous Alva, in five years, disposed of eighteen thousand in cold blood, besides those that were slain in battle. Philip II. was a disgusting, selfish, vain, and callous brute; but the Spaniards loved him to the day of his death. He embodied their ideal. He was the wrath of God against heretics.

Next came the turn of the Moriscos, the remnant of the Moors in Spain. They did not become Christians fast enough, and the Church resolved on their extirpation. The Archbishop of Toledo proposed to cut the throats of all of them—men, women, and children. But milder counsels prevailed, and an order was issued for their expulsion. "About one million," Buckle says, "of the most industrious inhabitants of Spain were hunted out like wild beasts..... Many were slain as they approached the coast; others were beaten and plundered; and the majority, in the most wretched plight, sailed for Africa. During the passage the crew, in many of the ships, rose upon them, butchered the men, ravished the women, and threw the children into the sea." Many who landed were slain by Bedouins, and others perished of famine in the desert. Of one batch of 140,000 no less than 100,000 died after horrible sufferings. But the infidels were all cleared out from Spain. That was the great thing. Thanksgiving sermons were preached, and Spain was assured that she would now receive the choicest blessings of heaven. But she was to reap the reward of cruelty and folly. The industrious Moriscos being gone, arts and manufactures declined, fields were left uncultivated, large districts were depopulated, and famine fell upon the richest parts of the land. Cities diminished in population; that of Madrid fell from 400,000 to 200,000 in less than a century. Spain sank into a sleep, as Buckle says; not the sleep of repose, but the sleep of death.

The one great power left in Spain was that of the Church. She had the love and the support of the wretched people whom she had betrayed and degraded. Throughout the eighteenth century her wealth increased in the midst of national impoverishment. As late as 1788 a minister of the crown stated that the ecclesiastical revenues had in many cases doubled in value within fifty years. The Inquisition was still maintained, and only succumbed to the roar of Napoleon's cannon. Reaction set in again, as it did all over Europe, when Napoleon was chained up at St. Helena; and the Church has been triumphant ever since. Spain is loyal and superstitious. She has built some ironclads, but essentially she is now what she was when Buckle wrote—"The sole representative now remaining of the feelings and knowledge of the Middle Ages." Her civilization is skin-deep; her heart is with the past, which she deems glorious, but which is only shameful.

What does the Spanish Constitution say? "This nation binds itself to maintain the worship and ministers of the Roman Catholic religion." A glorious ambition! for which a nation must pay heavily. Protestant worship is allowed, but it must be entirely in private, and all public announcements are forbidden. Spain has 65 cathedrals; 30 religious colleges; 18,564 churches; 161 monasteries, with 1,684 monks; 1,027 convents, with 14,592 nuns; 11,202 sanctuaries and other religious houses, not churches; and 32,435 priests, for a population of something over seventeen millions. Such a number of priests is enough to make a larger nation stupid—not to say poor and miserable.

According to the last census of which we have the figures—that of 1887—the following are the numbers of non-Catholics in Spain:—

6,654 Protestants  
402 Jews  
9,645 Rationalists  
510 Other Religions  
13,175 Religion not Stated.

All the rest of the 17,565,632 are Catholics.

There is some hope still for Spain if she has nearly ten thousand Rationalists—to which number, we suspect, must be added a good many of those who prudently declined to state their religious belief. Some of those Rationalists, of course, have a pretty rough time in such a bigoted nation. When we attended the International Freethought Congress at Paris, in 1889, we had the pleasure of shaking hands with a Spanish Freethinker from Barcelona, a gentleman of education and refinement, who had left his native land in a great hurry. He had written an article, such as any Radical newspaper would publish in England, on the Giordano Bruno celebration at Rome. He called Bruno a noble martyr, which he undoubtedly was, and condemned the Church for burning him to death. For this article he was prosecuted. He was found guilty of insulting the Catholic Church, and sentenced to seven years' imprisonment.

Spain is wonderfully pious, and of course she is wonderfully ignorant. The item in the national Budget for Education amounts to 1,868,650 pesetas—about £78,000. In 1889 only 28 per cent. of the people could read and write, and it is not likely that much improvement has taken place in nine years. Just think of it! With all her sonorous gasconade and donnish posturing, she leaves the immense majority of her people in gross illiteracy. They cannot even read the glorious book of Cervantes, which is the delight of the whole civilized world.

Multitudes of Spaniards have no idea of the relative size and position of their own country in the world. When the poet, James Thomson ("B.V."), was acting as correspondent to a newspaper during the last Carlist war, he showed some of the Basque peasants a map, pointing out Spain to them, and also their own district of the peninsula. The result was that they were all dumbfounded and crestfallen. They fancied that Spain was the biggest part of the world, and that their own district was the biggest part of Spain.

The best-known personages in Spain are saints. The most precious articles are relics. The most powerful men are cardinals, bishops, and priests. The most popular men are bullfighters. A leading *toreador* is the envy of all the men and the darling of all the women. He commands a princely salary, and enjoys the highest distinction, not to mention other privileges which are not exactly describable. Bullfighting in Spain is not on a level with the forms of cruelty which humanitarians seek to suppress in England. It is not sporadic, but chronic; it does not sneak about in search of patrons, it is a national institution, patronized by all classes of society from princes to beggars. Priests occupy seats and watch the bloody sport, which is necessarily demoralizing, and perhaps more so to the spectators than to the performers. It blends pleasure with the suffering of others, and recreation with bloodshed, and panders to the fundamental savagery of human nature. No one who understands it can wonder that the Spaniard is so brutal in Cuba, in the Philippines, or wherever else he rules; or that he tortures political prisoners, with instruments borrowed from the Inquisition, in the fortress of Montjuich. Even the Spanish women enjoy the bullfights, and what a brutalizing effect this must have on the children they rear!

G. W. FOOTE.

(To be continued.)

## INTELLECTUAL ADVANCEMENT.

TAKING an impartial retrospect through the ages of the past, we behold marvellous instances of intellectual changes. The greatness of Rome and the splendors of Greece have disappeared. A theology, once regarded as invulnerable, has been either entirely destroyed or greatly modified by the process of human thought. The erroneous notions of ancient times as to the nature and potency of the universe have been corrected by the application of modern science. Upon the ruins of a grand civilization the Christian religion arose, and then there commenced a period of intellectual and moral subsidence, culminating in the ignorance and corruption of the Dark Ages. A cry for intellectual freedom was heard in the sixteenth century, when scepticism began to exert its powerful influence, and, as a result, Protestantism was established, Nonconformity arose, Deism was openly professed, and Free-thought initiated a mental revolution which has continued in its operation, and which to-day is successful both in and outside the churches. It is this intellectual advancement, born of Secular philosophy, which has been the means of producing those reforms of the present century of which we, as Secularists, are so justly proud.

Intellectual advancement implies progress from mental slavery to the freedom of man's reasoning powers. It also implies the ability and willingness to give up the belief in old traditional notions, and to readjust one's views in accordance with increased knowledge and more rational conceptions. To us it is most gratifying to be able to recognise that in every phase of thought this intellectual process has made greater strides during the nineteenth century than at any previous time. It is also pleasing to know that this advancement has been achieved during the most sceptical period of the Christian era. This is pre-eminently a critical age, when the right to examine teachings submitted for our acceptance is more than ever claimed. In the light of modern thought, no subject is too sacred for honest criticism, and no opinion too ancient for reasonable investigation. Reason is now rapidly taking the place of blind belief, and serfdom of authority is yielding to the influence of mental emancipation. As a recent writer in the *London Daily Chronicle* said: "Many men living can remember the time when the Agnostic was popularly imagined as a drunken, foul-mouthed tinker. But ere long it appeared that the Agnostic had been imagined wrongly, and was in reality a man of culture, a man of science, or a lady novelist. Disbelief was no longer socially ostracized. On the contrary, young people in drawing-rooms were almost morbidly anxious to tell you that they had lost their faith, and were unreasonably sanguine in their hope that the fact would interest you. I do not want to overstate the case, but I think it will be generally allowed that the great barriers of religion were at that time much weakened and broken down. What followed? Not the outbreak of crime that some expected, for the recruits of Agnosticism were not from the criminal classes. Not the rigid life by rule of reason that others had foretold, for the two primary instincts go for something. A spirit of restlessness followed, a spirit of inquiry, a hatred of fixed forms and traditional ideas."

Intellectual advancement is perceptible in every department of both public and private life. In politics the despotism of class rule is rapidly giving way to the just principle of the government of the people by the people. In theology the old landmarks are gone, and Christianity has been deprived of its original garb. Even in pious Scotland many of the old religious dogmas have been discarded. In a volume of Scotch sermons there is one entitled "The Things that Cannot be Shaken," in which the preacher admits that among the educated clergy the following doctrines are regarded as being no longer tenable: "The descent of man from the Adam of the book of Genesis; the fall of that Adam from a state of original righteousness by eating the forbidden fruit; the imputation of Adam's guilt to all his posterity; the consequent death of all men in sin; the redemption in Christ of an election according to grace; the eternal punishment and perdition of those who remain unregenerate." Of these doctrines the Christian author of the volume remarks: They "dominated the Christian intellect for centuries. They have ceased to dominate it. They no longer press

on the minds and spirit of men like an incubus" (quoted by John M. Bonham in his *Secularism: Its Progress and its Morals*, p. 117). In education, as given in our public schools, religious dogmas are prohibited, and in literature the secular element predominates. Into the realms of fiction scepticism has penetrated, and in such novels as *Under which Lord? Robert Elsmere, The Manxman, Trilby*, and numerous others, the principle of Free-thought is expounded. Of course science has been emancipated from the trammels of theology. In the words of Canon Farrar: "No one who is acquainted with the history of science, and has sufficient honesty to accept facts, can possibly deny that scarcely a single truth of capital importance in science has ever been enunciated without having to struggle for life against the fury of dogmatists. In every instance the dogmatists have been ignominiously defeated." The present Archbishop of Canterbury has also declared "that all the countless varieties of the universe were provided for by an original impress, and not by special acts of creation modifying what had previously been made" (*Laing's Problems of the Future*, p. 196). A Professor of Divinity, preaching in the University of Oxford, said what Canon Fremantle approved—namely, "The field of speculative theology may be regarded as almost exhausted; we must be content henceforward to be Christian Agnostics" (*ibid.*, p. 197).

Similar advancement to what is here indicated has occurred upon social questions. The Malthusian principle is now freely discussed, and the injurious results of large families are generally admitted. The marriage laws are acknowledged to be unjust, and the endeavor to win for woman her right position in life is accepted as one of the "duties nearest to hand." It cannot be urged with any degree of accuracy that this intellectual advancement is in consequence of the teachings of Christianity, for the reason that the New Testament does not inculcate such progress; and, moreover, before the present sceptical age, when Christianity had almost absolute power, no such advancement took place. It is to such non-Christians as Voltaire, Paine, Carlile, Hetherington, Watson, and many others, that we are indebted for the improved condition of society. It was Thomas Paine who circulated his *Common Sense*, which was followed by *The Crisis* and the *Age of Reason*, also by the *Rights of Man*. The reading of such literature, and the study of the principles it taught, were the means of exposing the bigotry, the despotism, and the exclusive spirit that had so long prevailed, and at the same time of stimulating the progressive desires of the masses.

In the *Jewish Quarterly* for the month of July, 1897 (we think), appeared Mr. Conybeare's concluding paper upon "Christian Demonology," in which the writer indicated the advance that had been made from the Bible teaching of the possession of devils. He wrote: "It was one of the chief tasks of Jesus as Messiah to rescue the world from Satan and his angels. That He was at once obeyed by the demons was a prime test and proof of His being the predicted Messiah. There is a curious irony in the history of our religion. The evil demons have been all expelled. They have no longer the engrossing interest for divines which they had for nearly eighteen centuries. It was not ever thus. Whence the change? Why no demons any more? I should answer that it is free inquiry, a scientific attitude, modern science, and modern scepticism, which, during the last 150 years, have rid the civilized world of a burden which dogmatic theology and Christian rites, and even the New Testament itself, had done nothing to alleviate, and much to aggravate, during seventeen centuries of undisputed sway."

But perhaps the most striking instance of the intellectual advancement of the present decade is the change which has taken place within the Roman Catholic Church. At the Catholic Congress held in Fribourg, in Switzerland, during August, 1897, the chief speaker, Dr. Zahn, avowed his belief in the theory of Evolution rather than in that of Special Creation. He said: "As against the alternative theory of Creationism, the evidence, all must admit, is overwhelmingly in favor of evolution. I am quite willing to agree that, as yet, the theory is not proven by any demonstrative evidence. I freely grant that, *a priori*, Creationism is quite possible; but is it probable? Science answers, 'No.' As to affording any positive evidence in favor of the special creation of species, it is absolutely mute; and the negative evidence is of such a character that there are few, if any, serious men of science who are

willing to consider it as having any weight. Creationism is so highly improbable as to be practically ruled out of court. Those who still cling to the theory.....assume that the Genesiac narrative is to be interpreted literally; whereas all contemporary Biblical scholars of note declare that it is to be understood not literally, but allegorically." The secretary of the "Protestant Press Agency," writing to the *Christian World* of March 12 last, says: "If Protestantism is numerically weak in the land of Voltaire, Romanism there is in a deplorable condition. Before me lies the late Monsignor Dupauloup's *Remarks on the Encyclical* of Pius IX. What does the great bishop say concerning the influence of his Church on his countrymen? On page 41 he writes: 'In those villages of France which are under my spiritual care (in Orleans) the Church has the women and the old men.....the newspaper and the tavern keep hold of the men and the youth.'" The writer then quotes the following: "We must admit that Catholics are a small part of the population of France to-day. They can only be in a minority; for it is no use classing men as Catholics who never go to church, nor frequent the Sacraments, nor share the burdens of furnishing their country with population" (*Catholic Times*, April 19, 1897, leading article). The Rev. Dr. A. Robertson says: "It is an undeniable fact that Roman Catholic nations have, to a very large extent, cast off the Papal yoke, while they have not, at least to the same extent, united themselves with other churches. In Italy, for example, twenty millions of its thirty millions of inhabitants never cross the threshold of the Papal Church; but of these twenty millions, only a fraction frequent the National Reformed Catholic Church of Count Campello, or other Protestant Churches. The bulk of the nation have long ago ceased to attend public religious services of any kind" (*Rock*, February 25, 1898).

Thus we see that, despite the Churches, with their huge armies of priests, clergy, and ministers, the work of intellectual emancipation goes bravely on. We believe that the advancement of the future will be even more pronounced than that of the past. Cultivated reason will continue to manifest its power more and more—that reason which, when not fettered with theology, has proved the enemy of injustice, the foe of despotism, the protector of liberty, and the guiding star of all real progress.

CHARLES WATTS.

## COURAGE THE CHIEF VIRTUE.

(Concluded from page 260.)

As to the real value of courage—active courage, that of the soldier rather than of the martyr—too much can hardly be said, and yet very little is needed. It would be conceded at once as one of the absolutely indispensable conditions of progress. Willingness to risk the untried, to run the gauntlet of danger, for the sake of possible advantage, to imperil safety for the chance of improvement, is a factor which is always presupposed in the accomplishment of any upward step. And seldom is it lacking "under nature." Although primarily a self-regarding virtue, it is in its ultimate results, and often directly, a race-regarding one also, and any individual's first duty to himself and to his kind is to be brave. He may get through life decently, and even honorably, lacking any other one virtue; but without this, never. No other virtue is of real effect without it. The chief value, both objective and subjective, of love lies in the bravery which it develops in behalf or defence of its object. The supreme test and criterion of any virtue is whether it develops courage or not. Love must express itself in deeds of devotion involving risk of injury or loss, "faith" by "works" of the same character, patience by fortitude under trial. In short, it comes nearer to being the one element according to whose presence and degree we call an action "virtuous," the one great criterion of morality, than any other quality or grace. It is no mere coincidence that the primitive meaning of "virtue" is "bravery," which again is, by further analysis, that which distinguishes "a man" (*virtus—vir*). Neither nature nor man, neither Church nor State, biology nor morals, has any use for the coward. Conversely, our chief criterion in judging of the nature and degree of a crime or vice is the

degree to which courage is absent from it. The essence of cruelty, for instance, lies not so much in the infliction of suffering, for that may be absolutely necessary and blameless; but in its infliction under such circumstances that there is no balancing risk of possible equivalent suffering on the part of the inflictor, as in the case of women and children, or of unarmed or prostrate foemen. One of the weightiest considerations in determining the murderous or justifiable character of a homicide is the amount of risk run by the aggressor, as to the strength, weapons, and warning of his opponent—in short, the amount of cowardice displayed by him.

The essence and only ascertainable "sin" of the commonest of offences, lying, is its cowardice, the desire to gain an advantage, inflict an injury, which we dare not affect by open means, or to escape a punishment or avoid a loss which we haven't the courage to face squarely or submit to. In fact, there is scarcely a crime or vice into which it does not enter as an important element. And the instinctive respect and admiration for courage which we find everywhere fully corroborates our view of its supreme value and importance. It is not merely respected because it makes its possessor formidable, but it provokes a spontaneous and irresistible respect, and even love, for its own sake, which is utterly unparalleled by any other virtue or grace except beauty. We do homage and reverence to bravery upon the same sort of irresistible impulse as we worship beauty and purity in a woman. It is one of the great passwords of nature. One touch of it unites all conditions, all beliefs, and all ages in an instinctive throb of sympathy. How a brave deed stirs us in spite of ourselves, whether in friend or foe, black or white, man or beast! Kipling has well voiced this universal sympathy in his stirring refrain:—

For there is neither East nor West,  
Border nor breed nor birth,  
When two strong men stand face to face,  
Though they come from the ends of the earth.

It has been the never-failing theme of song and story through all the ages, from the "dark wrath of Achilles" and the "*Arma virumque cano*," to the charge of the Light Brigade. Courage has no need to sue for a place in the list of virtues of any religious code. It has a religion of its own, whose sacred books are the whole heroic literature of the world, and whose worshippers include the entire human family. In our heart of hearts we feel and know it to be the supreme virtue. Not even love takes precedence of it, for this without courage would be as dead as "faith without works." To dare to be true to ourselves, to our highest convictions, no matter what comes of it—this is our crowning glory. Nothing has ever struck a deeper chord of response in every true, manly soul than Henley's lyric:—

Our of the dark that covers me  
Black as the pit from pole to pole,  
I thank whatever gods may be  
For my unconquerable soul.

Courage—sheer, dauntless, inexhaustible—was the supreme glory of Calvary, the one thing which all true hearts have ever worshipped, and will ever worship, as divine. And the more so as they regard Jesus of Nazareth as man rather than God. Rightly has the Church ever insisted upon the supreme importance of the death of Christ. Without it his life had made no lasting impression upon the heart of the world. The profound simplicity of his moral precepts, the spotless purity of his life, the sweetness and gentleness of his nature, would have won the admiration and respect of the student, the philosopher; but it was the striking combination with all these graces of a high-souled courage which any iron-gloved fighting-man might have envied—a courage which would not fight, but scorned to flee, that has compelled the love and reverence of the entire Western world. Sooner than surrender one iota of his convictions, sooner than delay a moment longer the proclaiming of that reign of love, justice, and peace which was literally a "kingdom of heaven," he deliberately dared, and unflinchingly suffered, a death of shame and torture. All risk of which might have been completely avoided by ceasing to preach, or by an hour's midnight flight beyond Jordan. But from his fearless, sensitive soul "this cup could not pass" in any such fashion. And to the spotless courage of his love the whole world bows in reverence, and shall bow as long as humanity endures.

Wherefore the Church, being vindictive and cowardly, slew him, as she has done his memory scores of times since, and is doing to-day. For obvious reasons, she has never approved of minds of this type, who cannot be driven even by the certainty of future damnation; and, besides burning and massacring all such, whenever she dared, she has ostentatiously thrust forward into the front rank of the virtues the more ladylike graces of love, faith, and meekness. Hence the necessity felt by men, in all ages, of having a code of their own as to courage, honor, justice, etc., outside of the standards of the Church.

And while this code has generally tacitly accepted the stigma placed upon it, of being built upon simply "carnal pride" and "worldly ambition," it has usually been equal and often superior to the ecclesiastical, and deserves formal recognition as a moral source and sanction. In fact, the one-sided "gospel of love" needs to be supplemented by the gospel of courage. Love as a motive and the Golden Rule as a principle of action are of the highest value in all cases in which they apply—i.e., in man's relations to his fellow-men. But in the wide range of his relations to the great forces and movements of the universe, between him and the gods, or the fates, or the times, they simply have no bearing. But there is one principle which is always to be relied upon, even here—one beacon whose light never falters, even in the wildest storm, one rock to which a man can cling through all the fury of the elements, though it be with clinched teeth and bleeding hands; and that is the courage that is in him.

Never has a deeper-reaching, truer precept of human conduct been laid down than in Kipling's wondrous refrain:—

Whatever comes  
Or does not come,  
We must not be afraid.

This, and this only, will carry a man through the blackest night and most furious war of the elements. It may not be much "consolation," but it is all there is, and it does remain as a living principle of action and a reality when everything else has become an empty form of words. So long as a man is true to this faith, all is well; let him be false to it, and neither Sinai nor Mecca nor Calvary can save him. If there be an "unpardonable sin," a "sin against the Holy Ghost which shall not be forgiven," it is cowardice.

WOODS HUTCHINSON.

—*The Open Court.*

### SAINT PATRICK NOTHING BUT A POPISH MYTH.

THERE are several ancient lives of the saint, all written, as Miss Cusack admits, for edification—that is, to stir feelings of devotion, not to awaken intelligence or to give information. Not one of those lives reaches back to within two hundred years of the alleged death of the saint; and there is no evidence to carry us farther back.

Patrick cannot be regarded as a historical character. He belongs essentially to the class of beings known as Irish giants, or giants of any other land; and his deeds are all on a par with those of necromancers, wizards, fairies, genii, etc. His whole career is one of miracle—that is, of fudge and falsehood, borrowed from old mythological tales, worked up in their present garb, and located here and there to suit the purposes and improve the trade of the priests. The Irish fairy-tales are quite as real history as the legend of St. Patrick; and Puck or Titania is just as historical a reality as the Irish saint.

The miracle Patrick is best known for is the expulsion of all demons, snakes, and toads from Ireland. Supposing it were a true story, still Patrick introduced into Ireland and established there the worst vermin and the worst reptiles the world has ever yet been cursed by—namely, the Romish priests and their agents.

But the clearing of Ireland of snakes, etc., is ascribed also to Joseph of Arimathea, an older fiction located in the first century, or 400 years before Patrick's time. Solinus, a geographer of the third century, or 200 years earlier than Patrick, mentions the absence of reptiles, etc., from Ireland.

Patrick employed a drum to frighten away the venomous reptiles of Ireland, as Booth does now to scare devils. It

must be pleasant for Booth to remember that he but follows the Popish saint in the use of the drum. Patrick beat his drum so vigorously that he knocked a hole in it. However, an angel, who had probably been brought up to that trade, soon mended it for him, and he banged away again.

One cunning old serpent refused to budge, do what the saint would. At length Patrick made a box, and told the serpent he could not get into it. This led to a controversy, and the serpent was foolish enough to get into the box to prove to the saint that he could get in. The saint clapped on the lid, fastened it, and flung box and contents into the sea—which proves that serpents are no match for Romish saints in point of cunning.

Another reptile, a monster, Patrick chained up in Lough Dilveen, and told him to remain there till Monday. There the poor thing still remains, and every Monday morning he calls out, in good old Irish, "It is a long Monday, Patrick." The people around the Lough are said still to believe that. And why not? It is as true as anything else they say of Patrick (*Credulities: Past and Present*; W. Jones; 1884).

Patrick began his fight with the demons of Ireland before he landed there. When he approached the island he found a cordon of devils (no one else saw them) on the shore to prevent his landing. He made the sign of the cross, and they fled.

In Christian art Patrick is represented with a staff, around which a serpent is coiled. Exactly. Patrick is merely the Pagan god of healing, *Æsculapius*.

Patrick is said to have blessed the shamrock, and to have used it to prove to an Irish chief that the conundrum of the Trinity was a true doctrine. But this yarn did not see the true light until about 700 years after Patrick's death. In sober truth, the Irish reverence for the shamrock has survived from the old Pagan times—as everything else now called Christian has done.

But I must pay particular attention to Patrick's miracles and miraculous experiences. We are told that he went in early life to Lerins, an isle in the Mediterranean. Here he found a very old woman. A blooming young man appeared and claimed the old woman as his daughter. Patrick was astonished. The young man explained that Christ had bestowed upon him the gift of perpetual youth; that this precious gift he had forgotten to ask for his children as well as himself; consequently his children grew old and died, while he himself was ever young.

From this island Patrick bore away with him the staff of Jesus—a miraculous crozier, or walking-stick; and with that he performed the miracles and signs he showed to the Irish.

When the blessed saint went to Ireland, he sailed thither upon his altar-stone, which he seems ever to have borne about with him, and which was quite capable of taking a trip through the air much better than any bird could fly.

Another version of the stone-yarn is given by Miss Cusack. She says that when Patrick was leaving the coast of Gaul a poor leper on the beach begged to be taken on board. The crew refused, but the saint flung his stone altar within reach of the leper, who sailed thereon in the wake of the ship until they reached Ireland; there the leper was the first to land.

On one occasion Patrick kindled a fire by five drops of water that fell from his fingers; and on another he performed the same trick with icicles. This happened while he was yet a child. He also raised five cows to life and one man, while still in his boyhood. During the same early period he turned a bucket of water into the purest honey. Bee farmers would be delighted with a boy like that.

The fisherman at Wicklow refused to give the saint some fish, and he cursed the river to that degree that the fellow could never find fish there again.

A staff fell from heaven for Patrick—if it wasn't from a tree it fell.

Patrick had a furious contest, at the court of Tara, with the king's Druids. He raised one of them high in the air, and let him fall and killed him. Then an earthquake shook the place, and a furious storm came on, and a mysterious darkness surrounded the Pagans. Like Christ, he passed through the keyhole into the palace, much to the fright of the king and his people.

The Druid, not able to poison the saint, brought down a mass of snow, which covered the ground up to the

waists of men. Patrick swept it all away in a moment. The Druid then covered the land with dense darkness; and Patrick dispelled that also.

Patrick then offered to shut up one of his converts in a hut with a Druid—the Druid clad in the Christian's tunic, and the Christian wearing the Druid's. The hut was set fire to, after being piled on one side with dry faggots, on the other with green wood. The Christian took his place on the dry wood, the Pagan on the green. The Christian came out quite unhurt, but the Pagan garment he wore was reduced to ashes. The Druid himself was burned to death, but the Christian garment he wore had not the least sign of fire upon it.

The king was not converted, but he might as well have been. There was no resisting a juggler like Patrick.

Patrick's stone altar, when an outrage was committed near it, emitted three streams of pure blood; but they do not say what animal's blood it was.

Patrick, in his travels, came to a cross erected over a grave. He went to the grave, and asked the corpse who he was. "A poor Pagan," replied the corpse. "How came the cross here then?" demanded the saint. A certain foreigner was buried not far off, and his mother came to erect this cross on his tomb. Grief blinded her, and she put the cross on the wrong grave. The saint thereupon rectified the mistake.

He lost his horses in the darkness, and he held up five fingers, which illuminated all the plain like an electric light, and the horses were found.

Near Limerick they show a stone marked by the impress of Patrick's knees and body.

I have given a selection of the incidents and juggler-tricks in what is called "St. Patrick's Life." The Romanists believe all that wretched stuff—and gape for more.

That Patrick is but one of the heroes of the nursery tales, or of fairy tales, or of household tales, must be clear to all unbiassed people. Fin McCoul, the ancient Irish giant, was as historical as Patrick, and his miracles quite as edifying. Irish and other popular tales preserved by the peasantry are of exactly the same character and equally true.

And this ridiculous fiction the Irish Romanists yearly celebrate as the most important "personage" in their history! Such is one result of priestly tuition.

—*The Liberator*.

JOS. SYMES.

### He Went Too Far.

Christian Scientists, Jezreelites, Latter-Day Saints, Peculiar People, and the rest of the credulous crowds who risk health and some their wealth at the *soi-disant* inspiration of a new prophet or prophetess, might learn a lesson from the story of the latest sect and its self-appointed guide. The *Journal des Débats* tells us that a small hotel-keeper in Norway started a new sect a short time ago, with himself as the High Priest. What the precise tenets of the new creed were is not quite clear, but it was like the rest—a short cut to happiness, health, and Heaven. A number of followers were soon attracted, and, as usually happens in such cases, the High Priest made a good thing of his creed. He lived in the odor of sanctity, and worked wonders and miracles that materially added to the luxury of his cuisine and the amount of his property. All might have gone well had he not, like others of his kind, taken temporary leave of his senses in a moment of exaltation. Two deaconesses of the new order were found guilty of having "sinned against the Holy Spirit," and mine host the High Priest condemned them to expiate their crimes, whatever they were, by a death of voluntary starvation. One of them fortunately revolted against the inhuman order, escaped from her prison-house, and saved herself by a good meal in a hotel in the neighboring town. But the other woman died, and was discovered by the police. The leader of the sect is not unlikely to retire for a time into obscurity in a place where the pangs of hunger are not altogether unknown, if the Norwegian prison dietary be the same as that of our own prisons. But folly is a disease difficult to cure, and perhaps the Panjandrum of the sect will be looked upon in future as a martyr as well as a saint.—*Westminster Gazette*.

When bad men combine, the good must associate; else they will fall, one by one, an unpitied sacrifice, in a contemptible struggle.—*Burke*, "Thoughts on the Present Discontents," vol. i., p. 456.

### THE MAN-MADE GOD.

SET up thy little God, oh little man;  
Fashion thy little creed to fit thy span;  
Say that Jehovah made thee from the sod,  
And miss the larger thought—that man made God.  
Think an Almighty in His work should fail,  
And punish thee because He made thee frail.  
Men, in the light of thy poor fatherhood,  
Bestow a Father's name and call Him Good.  
Yet make thy fiction serve the other end—  
Hear, God of Battle, Lord of Might attend—  
Set on the foe, oh Saul; with ruthless hand  
Slay and spare not; it is the Lord's command.  
So gently lead thy children to the good,  
By teaching them their God spilt children's blood;  
And this the God, all-knowing and all-wise,  
Who views their mild offences with surprise!  
Build upon all that great consummate lie,  
And prate for thy mean sins a God did die;  
That God, unholy God, would not forgive  
Unless Christ died—and yet does Jesus live!  
Praise Him in anthem, lift thy voice in song,  
Hymn Christ who died for thee—three days, so long!  
And yet, methinks, a man that's not a log  
Would gladly die three days to save his dog.

L. G. C.

### ACID DROPS.

THE Archbishop of Madrid has appealed to all the saints to protect the Spaniards, and almost promises them invulnerability against American bullets. The blind chaplain of the United State Senate is not behind in the praying business, only he does a little discreet hedging. He doesn't ask God to stop Spanish bullets, or any such darned nonsense. He only begs the Almighty to "wisely direct the President and his advisers to strengthen our forces on land and sea." But in a certain sense this is one better than the Archbishop of Madrid goes. Dr. Milburn really asks God to join President McKinley's cabinet during the war—for this occasion only, as the cheap-sale people say.

Aristocratic ladies in Madrid are co-operating with the clergy in organizing special services of prayer night and day for the success of the Spanish arms. We suppose these services are worked in shifts. No doubt it is a good way to keep the Lord's attention engaged, but is it likely to have any effect on the course of war? It will take a large quantity of Madrid prayer to keep the Yankee shot from penetrating a Spanish ship.

Women and priests don't go to war. They stay at home and egg the men on to fight. Of course, the women are not built for fighting, and nobody wants to see them handling rifles and bayonets. But the priests are supposed to belong to the male sex, and they ought to take a share in every war they approve. Indeed, they ought to be placed in the front. If their theories be true, they would be safe enough in that position. Bullets should fly off from the Lord's anointed; and if they didn't, why it would then be clear that God was against them, and all the soldiers behind them could just take the hint and march home.

What a strange thing is the orthodox trust in God! The Queen Regent of Spain, for instance, ended her speech to the Cortes by declaring her faith that God would protect the Spanish nation as he had done before. It did not occur to this lady that, if God means to do anything of the sort, he is going a very roundabout way to work. The way to protect Spain—at least, the only visible way—was to impart a little common-sense to her statesmen in face of the long-continued protests of America against the infamies perpetrated in Cuba. But that common-sense was not imparted. Spain was allowed to rush towards her fate, and it doesn't seem likely that the particular God she worships will now be able to save her from the overwhelming force which America can bring against her.

After the Queen Regent of Spain—of course, a long way after—comes the Rev. Thomas Spurgeon. This gentleman trusts in "God's guidance" now that the famous Tabernacle is burnt down. Well, if he gets it, he will be lucky. One would think that, if God were giving this gentleman the benefit of a special providence, it would have operated to prevent the Tabernacle from being destroyed. A little prevention is easier—and better and safer—than a lot of cure.

Spurgeon's Tabernacle was burnt down in broad daylight. A couple of hours sufficed for its complete destruction. A

pious assembly was being held on the premises when the fire broke out, and the Lord's business had to be adjourned in consequence of the hostility of Nature. It appears that cooking was going on in the lower parts of the building for this pious assembly, and that the fire originated from an over-heated flue. What a prosaic finish!

Pastor Thomas Spurgeon doesn't seem very prevailing in prayer. He was presiding over a meeting in the Pastors' College when news was brought that the great Tabernacle was on fire. Then and there he prayed that the Tabernacle might be spared from grave damage. Presently it grew too hot in the College itself, the meeting had to break up, and the Tabernacle was completely destroyed.

Sunday Closing was going to work wonders in Scotland, but it hasn't, for the inhabitants drink more whiskey than ever, and, in spite of the law, lots of them get gloriously "fou" on the blessed Sabbath. And the worst of it is, from the Church point of view, that the closing of all refreshment-houses on the Lord's Day hasn't in the least helped to fill the gospel-shops. Many decent people career over the country on bicycles; others take coast or river trips on steamers; and, as for the determined lusington, after consuming all the liquor he took home on Saturday night, he wanders about in search of a "wee drappie" in some illicit establishment—and generally finds it.

Sunday Closing does not appear to have met with any better success in Ireland. Dean Dickinson, a member of the Royal Commission, asked Sir Andrew Reid, Inspector-General of Constabulary, how it was that "in rural districts, where Sunday Closing is in force, people managed to get drunk on that day." Sir Andrew Reid replied that "it might be by evasion of the Act," though "the police did their best to protect it." "I can speak of the West and South of Ireland," says Mr. T. Foy Frazer in the *Outlook*, "and I can safely say that there is more drunkenness on Sunday in both districts than on any other day of the week."

The worst of Prohibition, Ingersoll says, is that it doesn't prohibit. When you prohibit a thing not in itself criminal, and not branded as such by a practically universal public opinion, you merely create an artificial desire for it. That is how the Fall happened in Eden. If Jehovah had said nothing about those pippins, Eve might never have cared for them; but, as they were the only things she couldn't have, they were the only things she wanted.

Miss Marie Corelli sends us her card and compliments: "Regretting to disappoint the *Freethinker* of 'the comedy of the season.'" This is in reference to our recent paragraph on Miss Corelli's threat of legal proceedings against the publisher of Mr. W. P. Ryan's *Literary London*. We stated that Mr. Ryan stood firm, whatever might be the attitude of his publisher, and that, if he were proceeded against and the case went to trial, we might expect plenty of food for laughter. It appears, however, that Miss Corelli does not intend to cross legal swords with Mr. Ryan. Messrs. Lewis and Lewis have frightened the publisher, Mr. Leonard Smithers, who apologises for having put his name on a book containing statements damaging to Miss Corelli's "reputation and position as an authoress," and promises not to sell any more copies "until the passages complained of are eliminated." This is either handsome or abject on the part of Mr. Smithers, according to the reader's point of view. But as Mr. Ryan is in a position to act for himself, and apparently means to do so, Miss Corelli informs us that "Should the author continue to circulate the now admitted libel, Messrs. Lewis and Lewis will hold the printer responsible." Evidently it is "anybody but Mr. Ryan" for Miss Corelli's money.

What right has Miss Corelli to speak of the "statements" in Mr. Ryan's book as "the now admitted libel"? Mr. Leonard Smithers simply speaks of them as "damaging to her reputation and position as an authoress"—not as a woman. Surely every critic is as free to "go for" Miss Corelli as an authoress as she is free to "go for" the public purse by issuing six-shilling novels. Every writer challenges criticism by the mere act of publication. We have criticised some of Miss Corelli's novels in the *Freethinker* in a way that is well calculated to damage her reputation and position as an authoress, and we shall repeat the offence (if offence it is) whenever the occasion arises without the slightest fear of Messrs. Lewis and Lewis!

Archbishop Temple states that when he was Bishop of Exeter he received a visit from General Gordon, who declared that he would convert the whole of Africa to Christianity if the natives were only allowed to retain polygamy, to the extent (say) of four wives to one man. Dr. Temple replied that "they could not eliminate from Christianity the law which permitted to Christians no more than one wife." This is all very fine, but there is nothing against polygamy in the Bible, and it still lingered among

the Jews in the time of Christ. The truth is that Christianity arose, or at least achieved its first important conquests, in a monogamous civilization, and it simply followed the prevailing custom of the Roman Empire. Among the Romans themselves, as among the Greeks, the marriage of one man with one woman was established by law. Monogamy naturally arises in a certain stage of civilization; lower down it is just as natural to find polygamy.

"The Bishop of London, who has been abroad for a fortnight, will return to St. James's-square to-morrow evening, and he intends to reside at London House till Whitsunside, when he will remove to Fulham Palace for the summer." The gentleman whose movements are thus chronicled in an evening newspaper is an apostolic successor of the poor Carpenter of Nazareth.

Captain Alfred G. Mahan, author of the famous *Influence of Sea Power upon History*, spoke as follows at a recent religious service in Brooklyn: "Let me briefly say—to define my position at once clearly—that my experience of life is that of one who has based his practice upon the full intellectual acceptance of the Christian faith as explicitly set forth in the historic Creeds—the Apostles' and the Nicene Creeds. In those and in the Word of God I have found and find, not merely comfort and strength, but intense intellectual satisfaction."

This is the first time we ever heard of these Creeds giving intellectual satisfaction. We always understood that every Article in them had to be accepted by an act of faith. As to the "comfort and strength" which Captain Mahan derives from these Creeds, we should like to ask him whether the same "comfort and strength" will also serve the turn of the Spaniards, whose "acceptance" of them is quite as thorough-going as his own. When the Yankee and Spanish fleets come into collision, we guess the "comfort and strength" of the combatants will depend upon far other things than the Apostles' and Nicene Creeds and the Word of God.

Admiral Villamil, of the Spanish navy, seems quite as pious as Captain Mahan, and as he worships the same God—there or thereabouts—it is not easy to see what the Almighty can do to satisfy both of them. Admiral Villamil took his seamen to the shrine of the Virgin at Cadiz, where all of them knelt before the crucifix and took a solemn vow never to return to Spain unless victorious. We daresay, however, that a good few of them will be glad to get home again even without victory. "With your shield or on it!" was the way the Spartan women told their men folk to come back from the fighting. But we don't quite follow the Spartan policy nowadays. We do our best when fighting is on, and, if we get licked, we made the best of our beating. We have learnt that, God or no God, the strongest side wins.

The *Liverpool Echo* really ought to know better. It publishes—as though the thing hadn't been published thousands of times before—the famous description of the personal appearance of Jesus Christ in the forged letter of Publius Lentulus (which it spells Lentullus) to Tiberius Caesar. It also states that what it publishes is "taken from a manuscript now in the possession of Lord Kelly, and in his library, and was copied from an original letter of Publius Lentullus (*sic*) at Rome." Now this is gross ignorance or shameless mendacity. There is no such "original letter" at Rome, and there never was. Every scholar knows the story of this ridiculous forgery.

The Rev. Marcus Rainsford, vicar of St. James's, Holloway, is responsible for the following:—While at Brixton, a man, who was anxious about his dying brother, asked the rev. gentleman to visit him. On going to the house, he was assured by the nurse and other servants that the sick man would refuse to see him. "Take my card," said he. This was done, and returned with "A damn parson" written across it. Upon receiving the card back, after many entreaties, he was allowed to go up alone to the sick chamber. Knocking at the door, the sick man shouted, "Who's there?" "A damned parson," said he, opening the door. Only one of many.

According to Mr. H. Luttman-Johnson, who recently lectured before the Indian Section of the Society of Arts, the Garos of Assam believe that the earth is a square, flat body, hung up by a string at each corner. There is a squirrel always trying to gnaw these strings, and a demon is appointed to prevent him; but as the demon was struck blind for neglect of duty the squirrel has the best of it, and the earth is likely to be soon turned upside down. Of course, this is very laughable—to us; but is it any more absurd than the Bible cosmogony? Every country laughs at every other country's superstitions. Livingstone and others found the negroes of Africa laughing at lots of things in the Englishman's Bible.

Writing on the outbreak of hostilities between the United States and Spain, the *Daily News* remarks that the war spirit seems to have gained strength at the end of the nineteenth century. "In our own country," it adds, "it is remarkable that the cry for war has nowhere roused a more enthusiastic echo than among ministers of the Prince of Peace."

"Dawson Burns, D.D.," writes a letter to the *Daily News* on this Cuban business, in which he says that "Cuba is actually nearer British territory than that of the United States." So it is, geographically, but not socially and politically. Cuba may be near Jamaica, for instance, without being at all near to the hearts of the citizens of London. Mr. Dawson Burns is technically right, but every other way he is wrong; and his letter is another proof of our constant contention that the men of God, who know so much about the next world, are deplorably ignorant of this one.

In the parish church of Halden, Kent, they held an egg service last Sunday. The parishioners attended in large numbers, and brought over 2,000 new-laid eggs, in addition to other dairy produce, and these were sent on Monday morning for distribution among the sick and needy poor of St. Luke's parish, Camberwell. The Archbishop of Canterbury after this should remove the forms of prayer for rain and fine weather from the Book of Common Prayer, and include one for a good egg crop.

Old Moore has turned out as good a prophet as any of the ancient Judean gentlemen. Among his predictions for this April the well-known Almanack says: "The destruction of a famous building by fire may be expected about this time. Insurance will cover the actual cost, but historical associations, alas, have no money equivalent." We hope the venerable Calendrist will not set up a claim to inspiration, for this might raise an inconvenient second question as to whether the source of the inspiration is from above or below.

The heathen King of Siam, in his reply to the address of his people on his return from Europe, says: "We must try to do together, not only what is useful, but what is right. For, as our Lord Buddha said, 'Righteousness will protect and preserve those who are in the right.'" It must be a sad reflection to the orthodox Christian that, even after witnessing the superb Christianity of Christendom, his dark Majesty can still rather appeal to the Lord Buddha than to him who said: "All who went before me are thieves and robbers."

The choir boys of Weston, by Rucorn, Cheshire, have sent out letters asking for a subscription for building a church. The best part of the letter is, as usual, in the postscript—viz., "His Lordship, the Bishop of London, has very kindly sent us his photograph to help us." A spiritual grace, more precious than silver and gold, doubtless diffuses itself from the photo.

The *Church Gazette* contains an article on "The Diversions of the Clergy." The hunting parson, it says, is not quite extinct yet, for there is a rural dean who keeps three hunters, and a well-known High Churchman indulges occasionally in "going straight," but at a distance of 100 miles or so from his parish. Our archbishops own to being fond of recreation. His Grace of Canterbury likes "light literature"; the Archbishop of York prefers riding and walking; the Primate of all Ireland owns to a weakness for conversation. The Bishop of Bath and Wells states that when in Australia he was given to boating and swimming, but now cycles. Cycling is a sport shared in by the Bishops of Carlisle, Ripon, and Stepney. The last-mentioned prelate likes "fives" also. Photography has a votary in the Bishop of Limerick, and golf in his lordship of Bangor. The Bishop of Aberdeen, one fears, has had rather a joyless winter, for his favorite pastime is curling. The work of overseeing souls is so onerous that we cannot wonder our fathers-in-God require little relaxations as well as rest. It would be a pity if their precious time were taken up as fully as that of the navy who said: "I has to work like steam all day, so I sings all the night."

The American Churchman is, it seems, not satisfied with praying for peace; he wants to know at the same time what are the odds for and against his prayer being answered. The *Daily Telegraph's* New York correspondent says that last Sunday "congregations in New York, while religious duties were in progress, were supplied with extra editions of the newspapers giving the changing phases of opinion upon the situation."

The anti-Semitic *Libre Parole*, of Paris, gnashes its teeth and foams at John Bull's friendship for Brother Jonathan. Both nations are "assassins and malefactors," and when Europe rises to punish them there will be "no excuse for mercy." Well, it is something to know the worst, and we

must prepare to meet our fate with all possible fortitude. Meanwhile we may enjoy ourselves to some extent by laughing at the fanatics of the *Libre Parole*.

Another death of a Jewish child by circumcision suggests that the Bible-ordained rite, which was never nice at its best, may be a possible source of danger to the infant operated on. Pity God could not institute a covenant with Abraham without ordaining a barbarity.

Mr. Alfred Marriott, late a Yorkshire manufacturer, and now God knows what, left a big pile of wealth behind him. No less than £597,000 of it goes to various societies and to London and suburban churches. The Society for the Promotion of the Gospel in Foreign Parts comes in for £180,000. This is an excellent thing for the gentlemen engaged in propagating the said gospel in foreign parts, though of very doubtful good to the foreign parts themselves.

"The attitude of the clergy towards modern thought," the Bishop of London says, "is now, on the whole, more satisfactory." Well, that is entirely a matter for the clergy themselves. Modern thought doesn't care a straw whether they curse or bless it. Time was when it mattered. It doesn't now. Sensible people are quite aware that Darwin was right in saying that when the men of science are agreed all the clergy have to do is to say Ditto.

E. T. Smith, once lessee of Drury Lane Theatre, got into bad odor with the pious by starring on a pantomime bill: "Miraculous Draught of Fishes." He was desirous of obtaining a music licence for one of his ventures, but for a great length of time was unsuccessful. In order to propitiate the magistrates, he gave up his large room for the purpose of holding a series of prayer-meetings, which were to be presided over by the bishop. The first prayer-meeting passed off well, until the bishop proposed to conclude by all joining in the Doxology. E. T. Smith, in an excited state, but apologetically, said that he could not permit it; his general licence covered praying, but not singing, and if they sang he would be liable to a heavy penalty. The idea of a bishop in a Christian country not being permitted to sing the Doxology was horrifying, and that congregation, with one accord, signed Smith's petition for a music licence, which he readily got.

It is shocking to hear that a member of the Social Democratic Federation, named Partridge, is doing a month's hard labor for what is called "obstruction." This high-sounding word is one of the hypocritical devices of the police when they want to stop public meetings which they happen to disapprove. Mr. Partridge simply expounded Socialism at St. Giles's, Oxford, a place where religionists hold forth without let or hindrance. But the police wink at the Christian speakers, and open their eyes like saucers at the Socialists. We are glad to see that a stand is being made against this gross partiality. England is supposed to be a free country, and though we can't all think alike—and perhaps it would be monotonous if we did—we can all agree to respect fair play. All forms of opinion must have the same right of expression. Socialists are citizens, and sometimes better citizens than their opponents. If they are wrong, argue with them, but don't shout for the police. We congratulate the Socialists of Oxford on their courage in fighting for the right of public meeting. This is a struggle in which they will have the sympathy and support of all Freethinkers.

### New Light on George Washington.

Says the *Memphis Commercial Appeal*: "Several writers of late have marred the perfect wooden image which history has left us of George Washington. They have shown that he was a master hand at swearing; that he could carry about as much liquor as any other of his esteemed contemporaries, and that he was, in short, something of a dead game sport. Human nature is such that it has rather rejoiced over these revelations. It gags at perfection just as strenuously as it condemns total depravity.

"Zealous efforts have been made by priestly falsifiers to make the 'Father of his Country' something he was not. They represent him, while at the head of the army, frequently going aside to pray. This is wholly false, as is the hatchet and cherry tree story told by Elder Weems, on the strength, as he represented, of a statement by George's maiden aunt.

"Truthful history presents Washington as irascible, impetuous, and very profane on great occasions. He was human, with the infirmities of human nature. He was not an orthodox believer, but, like nearly all the fathers of the republic, he was a deist, repudiating the dogma of a virgin-born God."



### Mr. Foote's Engagements.

Sunday, May 1, Athenæum Hall, Tottenham Court-road, London: 7.30, "The Devildoms of Spain in America."

### TO CORRESPONDENTS.

MR. CHARLES WATTS'S ENGAGEMENTS.—May 1, Glasgow; 3 and 4, Debate in Manchester; 5 and 6, Failsworth; 8, Manchester; 15 and 16, Birmingham; 22, Sheffield.—All communications for Mr. Watts should be sent to him (if a reply is required, a stamped and addressed envelopemust be enclosed) at 81 Effra-road, Brixton.

G. BERRY.—See "Sugar Plums." Thanks for your efforts to get this journal placed on the table in the Stockton Free Library reading-room.

YANKEE IN ENGLAND.—We met Moses Harman and his daughter at Chicago. With the former we had a long talk at our hotel. Lillian Harman is now in England, and we shall be glad to shake hands with her over here as a Freethinker, though we have no sort of sympathy with her Free Love theories. The lady has not communicated with us, or with the National Secular Society, in any way; and we don't even know her whereabouts; so it is probable that she is only over this time on a Free Love mission. We shall probably see her at the Legitimation League meeting, which we mean to attend for press purposes. Now you know all about it.

H. ORGAN.—See paragraph in "Acid Drops." We hope the Socialists at Oxford will fight to the finish and win. The right of fair and equal public meeting is worth some sacrifice to uphold. The other matters are being attended to.

"TOUR" (Dewsbury) writes: "I was very pleased to see you in such good form at Huddersfield, and don't regret the nine-miles walk I had to hear you." This correspondent asks whether Schopenhauer's writings can be obtained cheaply in English translations. Schopenhauer's principal work, *The World as Will and Idea*, is published in three volumes at £2 10s. by Triibner. Seven half-crown volumes of miscellaneous essays, admirably translated by T. Bailey Saunders, are published by Sonnenschein. Two important essays "On the Fourfold Root of the Principle of Sufficient Reason" and "On the Will in Nature" are published in one volume at three-and-six by Bell and Sons, in Bohn's Library. It is a pity that Mr. Saunders's seven slender volumes are not reprinted in one volume at, say, five shillings. We believe there would be a large sale at that price.

"ESS JAY BEE," himself one of our laureates, writes as follows: "I am delighted to hear that our old friend, G. L. Mackenzie, is thinking of publishing his poems in volume form. His satirical verses are, in my opinion, second to none that appear in *Punch* and other 'respectable' papers. Please ask Mr. Forder to put me down as a subscriber."

E. FOWLER.—Swedenborg was a man of genius in his way, but while his devotees think him inspired we think he was much demented. There is an excellent essay upon him in Emerson's *Representative Men*—a book, by the way, which contains more marrow than Carlyle's *Hero Worship*. Swedenborg has rare flashes of insight if the reader has only time to wait for them. The most eminent Swedenborgian in England is Dr. Garth Wilkinson, who was gifted by nature with a really magnificent genius, although he has never done justice to it, thanks to his discipleship of the mathematico-metaphysical Swede.

RAMSGATE FREETHINKER.—We do not think any good purpose would be served by its insertion, well written as it is. We strongly advise you to read some of Ingersoll's best lectures and essays, which can all be obtained from Mr. Forder, 28 Stonecutter-street, E.C. A final judgment of such a man's powers is not to be formed upon incidental passages in the *Freethinker*. American oratory, you will find, is generally more florid than English oratory. But that does not mean that it is worse—only that it is different. A true taste is catholic.

G. BRADY sends his monthly subscription of 10s. to the Treasurer's Scheme. This correspondent is also thanked for the accompanying letter.

J. ROBERTS.—Glad to hear you are still on the Committee of the Liverpool Branch, though very sorry to hear of your wife's illness. We hope her health will soon be restored.

W. KYLL.—Thanks for your letter and cuttings. We would gladly insert the notice of the meeting you propose to call, with a view to seeing what can be done to reorganize at Ipswich, only you don't state the time. The place being the Great Eastern Tavern, Commercial-road, perhaps the local friends whose eyes this meets will make enquiries for themselves and manage to be present.—We deeply regret to hear of the sad accident to Mr. Robert Fountain, who was (we believe) a warm supporter of the late Charles Bradlaugh.

B. HANSON.—We do not remember the verse. Perhaps it did, as you suggest, appear in the *National Reformer* many years ago, but we really have not time to hunt it up.

N. S. S. TREASURER'S SCHEME.—Miss E. M. Vance acknowledges:—Chatham Branch, £1; S. Burgon, 5s.; J. Oram, 2s. 6d.; E. Bator, 5s.

N. S. S. BENEVOLENT FUND.—Miss E. M. Vance acknowledges:—Chatham Branch, 14s. 6d.

N. S. S. GENERAL FUND.—Miss E. M. Vance acknowledges:—Chatham Branch, 7s.

W. MORVEN.—Mr. Foote was invited to speak at the Trafalgar-square meeting last Sunday, but he thought it inopportune. When the Spanish Atrocities Committee was formed he did his best to help the exiles in London, and to raise a public protest against the torture of prisoners at Montjuich. But this does not seem a well-chosen moment to call upon Spain to release other prisoners, however unjustly confined. Spain has other matters to attend to just now, and larger issues are raised in her trouble with America. Besides, she knows that English sympathy is mainly against her and in favor of the United States; and any action taken in England on behalf of prisoners in Spanish gaols is rather calculated to aggravate than to mitigate their sufferings. Enthusiasm in a right cause is excellent, but it should be tempered by discretion and common sense. Anyhow, that is Mr. Foote's view of the matter, and he states it without the slightest disrespect to those who thought otherwise.

N. ASHWORTH.—Mr. Foote will be glad to visit Blackburn when he goes that way again. He is unable to lecture in the provinces till after the Conference.

PAPERS RECEIVED.—Pearls—Star—Bulletin—Friar Tankar—Truthseeker—Public Opinion—The Little Freethinker—Liberator—The People's Newspaper—Progressive Thinker—Solidarity—Adult—Isle of Man Times—Sentinel—Liverpool Echo—University Magazine—Ruled by the Tomb (Offord Northcote).

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.

LECTURE NOTICES must reach 28 Stonecutter-street by first post Tuesday, or they will not be inserted.

The *Freethinker* will be forwarded, direct from the publishing office, post free, at the following rates, prepaid:—One year, 10s. 6d.; half year, 5s. 3d.; three months, 2s. 8d.

### SUGAR PLUMS.

THERE was a crowded audience at the Athenæum Hall on Sunday evening, when Mr. Foote lectured on "The Doom of Christian Spain." The lecture, which contained a great deal of historical and statistical information, as well as more popular features, was followed with deep attention and much applauded. Mr. Job, the chairman, invited discussion as usual, and the invitation was accepted by the Rev. A. J. Waldron, who maintained that Protestantism was not liable to the same condemnation as Roman Catholicism. The reverend gentleman was listened to with attentive respect, and cheered at the finish, when he declared himself in favor of equal liberty for all forms of opinion. Mr. Foote suitably replied, and the meeting broke up in the best of good tempers.

Mr. Foote occupies the Athenæum platform again this evening (May 1). He will supplement his last Sunday's discourse by another on "The Devildoms of Spain in America," showing in detail what a curse she has been there from the days of Columbus till now. Those who heard last Sunday's lecture should not miss this one.

Mr. Charles Watts has been lecturing during the past week four nights in the districts of Glasgow, and to-day, Sunday, May 1, he lectures three times in Glasgow. We hope to hear that he has had his usually good Scotch audiences.

On Tuesday and Wednesday next, May 3 and 4, Mr. Watts debates in the Secular Hall, Rusholme-road, Manchester. He also lectures Thursday and Friday next at Failsworth.

Mr. A. B. Moss addressed a large audience of about a thousand people on Sunday afternoon in Victoria Park. The veteran K. A. Cooper was present, and congratulated him on his discourse. Mr. Moss also addressed a large open-air meeting in the morning at Camberwell.

The National Secular Society's Annual Conference takes place on Whit-Sunday. Its meetings will be held in the Secular Hall, Manchester. Notices of motion for the agenda ought all to be in the Secretary's hands by the time this number of the *Freethinker* is in full circulation. We hope there will be a large attendance of Branch delegates and individual members at the Conference, and that preparations to that end are going on in all parts of the country.

Mr. H. M. Hyndman, the well-known Socialist, who is also a pronounced Freethinker, is to be entertained at dinner on May 11, in recognition of his many years of public life. The circular before us, signed by Mr. W. M. Thompson (editor of *Reynolds's*) on behalf of the committee, states that there will be an excellent musical program, in addition, we suppose, to the necessary speeches. It is intimated elsewhere

that attendance at this function is not to be held as involving agreement with Mr. Hyndman's political opinions. This makes the road clear for many advanced people, who may differ from Mr. Hyndman in some things, and yet entertain the highest respect for his character and public services. Mr. Foote intends to be present at the dinner in this spirit. The tickets are 5s. each, and can be obtained from Mr. W. M. Thompson, Goldsmith-building, Temple, London, E.C.

The Finsbury Park Branch opens its ninth season of open-air lectures in Finsbury Park to-day (May 1), when Mr. Pack will speak on "The Curse of the Cross." The time is 3.30 as before, and the platform will be pitched near the Band Stand. A good attendance of local Freethinkers will give a fillip to the proceedings.

Freethinkers in Stockton-on-Tees and the vicinity are earnestly invited to co-operate in arranging for Freethought lectures there. The local Branch of the National Secular Society meets the first Sunday evening in every month at 1 Victoria-terrace, Norton-road. The secretary's address is—George Berry, 18 Garibaldi-street.

We have received the April number of *The Awakener of India*, published at Madras. Its object is "to stem the tide of Revivalism and Mysticism which threatens now to hamper the beneficial effects of Western Education and Science in this country" (India). It is printed for "free circulation" by N. K. Ramasamy Aiyar, B.A., B.L., High Court Vakil. We wish this gentleman all success in his gallant enterprise. It must be painful to him to see superstitionists, with a scientific jargon on their lips, coming all the way from England to fortify the superstition of his countrymen.

Joseph Symes still keeps the *Liberator* flag flying at Melbourne. He is also lecturing again in the Hall of Science he lost for so many years through the intrigues of enemies. These fell out among themselves, the Supreme Court ordered the premises to be sold, a friend of Joseph Symes went and bought it, and our old comrade now leases it on a yearly rental.

From a marked copy of the *Star* we see that our lively contemporary is still waging war against the low-flash American oil sold in England, which is responsible for numerous fires and considerable loss of life. Pet away, *Star!* You'll win yet. And when you do, we'll drink your health in something lighter than printer's ink.

We are always glad to receive our excellent exchange, the New York *Truthseeker*. The number for April 16, just to hand, contains a lot of interesting matter. One item is a letter from Colonel Ingersoll to the editor. It appears that the Rev. J. P. D. John, ex-president of De Pauw College, tries to get people to listen to him by advertising that Ingersoll himself has said that he (John) is the only man who has ever answered him. "I never wrote anything like it, nor said anything like it," writes Ingersoll. "I do not believe," he adds, "that the Rev. P. D. John has ever answered me, or that he ever will." Evidently, when Jack Falstaff exclaimed, "How the world is given to lying!" he must have had a prophetic view of America at the end of the nineteenth century. The American clergy have lied so about Ingersoll that if they get accommodation in Hades there won't be much room left for the clergy of other continents.

George Macdonald continues to brighten the *Truthseeker* with his "Observations." Referring to the Rev. Dr. Buckley's praise of camp-meetings, George says: "I was not alive sixty years ago, but I remember that in my youth the word camp-meeting was often quoted as having less reference to the saving of souls than to their increase. In this sense, I understand, it has lost none of its ancient meaning."

*The Little Freethinker*, a monthly, is edited by Elmina Drake Slenker, and published by H. G. Green, at Chicago. We hope it has a good circulation in American Freethought families. The April number contains a nice portrait of Colonel Ingersoll. All the youngsters will be in love with it.

On Sunday evening the Camberwell Secular Hall audience had an agreeable change in the bill of fare. Mr. J. B. Medland lectured on Instantaneous Photography, with splendid illustrations. The audience had a treat, and Mr. Medland has promised to pay them another visit.

The Camberwell Branch will not hold indoor meetings during the summer, but will concentrate its energies on the open-air propaganda. Mr. Foote closes the indoor lecturing next Sunday evening (May 8), when he will occupy the platform of the Secular Hall. There ought to be a strong rally of the "Saints" on this occasion.

## WHERE?

THE geography of the Bible is a profound puzzle, if examined by orthodox eyes; it is clear enough when critically studied. The problem is to find a geographical basis for Bible stories in which appear those mythical personages, Adam, Eve, Noah, Abraham, Moses, Solomon, and others in the prehistoric era of the Hebrews; and those mythicals, Joseph, Mary, Jesus, Paul, and others in the historic age; and also for the real persons of Hebrew history, from Mattathias the Maccabee to Barkokab and Ashe, including the words and deeds attributed to them, from creation, Eden, flood, to the end—that is, the destruction of Jerusalem under Hadrian 136 A.D., and the final editing of the Old and New Testaments, Gospels, etc., and the compilation of the two Talmuds, about 500 A.D.

Myths and fictions cannot be actually located, but when considering such writings the various localities selected by the writer are proper subjects of inquiry. In this sense only can the stories in the Bible be examined geographically.

The monks of Palestine have made the task of correcting the map more difficult by their arrangement of the "holy places" to suit their convenience. When following the writers of Bible stories it is often requisite to correct the map, as, for instance, in the case of the journeys and sojourns of the patriarchs. The text leads us to look for Hebron, Bethlehem, Ephrath, Tower of Adar, and other places named, on the north of Jerusalem, not far from Shechem or Bethel. The monks show a Hebron and a Bethlehem south of Jerusalem. On the maps of the crusaders the Stephen Gate is on the north side of Jerusalem, and now it is on the east. Calvary is also located on the north by some; on Moriah, near the site of the temple, by Ferguson and his followers; by others in the valley of Jehoshaphat; another site is near the Jaffa Gate, west, while the Roman Catholics boldly place it near the centre of the city, under the very comprehensive roof of the so-called Church of Holy Sepulchre. It is said that the kings (of the Jews) were buried in the City of David, within the walls, near Siloah. A sepulchre of the Kings is shown on the north outside of the city walls, a tomb of David, in a Mohammedan mosque, south of the present city wall on Mt. Zion, and no tombs of any kind have been found in "The City of David." The magnificent tomb of David which Josephus said was robbed by the high-priest Hyrcanus, thirteen centuries after, has not been found. If Hyrcanus got three thousand talents out of one room, surely the whole tomb would pay the expense of a search.

The present walls of the city of Jerusalem were built, or rebuilt, by Solomon the Magnificent, Sultan of Turkey, in 1542 and later. There are fifteen plans of the city, each by a competent person, and no two of them agree with each other, except in general outline.

The monks have moved the holy places like men on a chess-board. Emmaus has several sites, Bethlehem and Rachel's tomb at least two, and Joseph the Egyptian prince has one tomb at Shechem, and another at the southern Hebron in a crusader's castle. Rival sects, wars, conquests, and the logic of convenience have "improved" the geography of Palestine for the use of the devout pilgrim, but for the orthodox student it is a network of confusion, which can be unravelled only by the critic.

Creation and destruction now go on at the same time, as they always have done, and probably always will. "The beginning" as to creation is unthinkable, and its operation can be mapped on no less a scale than the universe.

Eden, or "the garden of Eden," has been located in America (Reland, Brugsch, Kiel, Kurtz, Bunsen), west of and near the Caspian Sea (Gesenius, Rosenmüller, Tuch), in Media (von Bohlen), Pamir plateau (Lenormant), Babylonia (Calvin, Pressel, Rask, Sir H. Rawlinson, G. Smith, Sayce, Delitzsch), near Damascus (Le Clerc), Palestine (Heidegger, Lakomacher), in Southern Arabia (Herbin, Hardouin, Halevy), and on the Upper Nile (Champollion, Le Jeune); while I suggest Fancyland, among other geographical fictions, as did the ancient writers, Philo and Origen, who also held it was a mere fiction impossible of geographical explanation.

The flood must be located to suit Assyrians, Greeks, Hebrews, Hindus, and American Indians, for there are

original legends belonging to each of these peoples, and all claiming to have had an origin more or less divine.

Babel belongs to the third article of this series, and we can only say here that what is called Birs Nimrud (Hill of Nimrod) was supposed by the Talmudists to be remains of the ancient tower built to defy the gods. It is thirteen miles west of the modern site called Babil, and had once seven receding terraces, painted in seven colors, and was probably used in the Chaldean mysteries.

The exodus out of Egypt is the sheet anchor of Jews and Christians alike. To show the mythical character of that story is to set the Church ship afloat at the mercy of the critics. The map of the country between Egypt and Palestine is scored with conjectured routes, and Brugsch Bey has shown that the way along the shore of the Mediterranean Sea is probably the one that was in the mind of the writer of the fiction of the exodus. The most popular route during the last quarter of a century has been by Suez and the so-called peninsula of Sinai. Some monks who were driven out of Palestine by the Saracens found a place of comparative safety at Serbal, where they built a little city, with chapels and a convent, and at one time it had a bishop. Fresh troubles arose when their wealth excited the avarice of their enemies, and a new site was found at what is now called Sinai, or Jebel Sufufah (Willow Mount), where there is a convent and any number of holy places scattered about. A third was suggested by Dr. Beke, east of Akabah; a fourth is claimed at the so-called Aaron mountain near Petra, and a fifth is found in Jebel Madurah, south of Hebron and east of Beersheba, as they are now located. This is probably the Mozera, Hor, Horeb, and Sinai of the Pentateuch writers. Brugsch Bey's route is the most probable one; but, admitting it was the route in the mind of the exodus writers, it only proves that they were acquainted with the geography and topography of the country, though it does not prove that any Jews existed at that time to go over that or any other route. Those writers had the account of Diodorus of the loss of a part of an army of Artaxerxes in the marshes of that locality, and invention did the rest. The sum-total of the alleged losses of the Egyptians is beyond credence—millions of slaves; millions of borrowed treasure, an entire army, with its commander, the Pharaoh of Egypt. So immense was this supposed loss that no wall of sacred temple, or papyrus, has been equal to the task of holding the record.

—*Freethinkers' Magazine.*

A. L. RAWSON.

### A BALLAD OF TORTURE.

I TOOK up Oscar Wilde's latest book of verse, my mind busy with considerable curiosity as to the evidences it might afford of how deeply the iron of disaster had eaten into its author's soul. That many of the world's greatest literary treasures had been written or thought out in prison we know only too well, but in most cases the writers were imprisoned for some crime to which, whether they were innocent or guilty, no sense of spiritual degradation was attached in the mind of the criminal. Cervantes, Tasso, Raleigh, Bunyan, Defoe, each of these, it is safe to say, received some spiritual—or, at least, intellectual—exaltation from what, to them, was the injustice of their punishment; and they had the additional stimulus to a proud endurance in the knowledge that outside the walls of their prison thousands of hearts beat in admiring sympathy with theirs. With "C. 3. 3." the position was different, even though innocent of the charge on which he was convicted—and many have always felt that he was innocent; still, there was the unutterable bitterness of suffering for an offence which is generally detested; whereas his forerunners among prison authors, even when guilty, had no sense of aught but satisfaction in their guilt, or, at worst, when suffering innocently, suffered for offences which few, if any, of their contemporaries considered shameful.

Hence in their works we find a tone of cheerfulness, and even of rare humor, for, although in prison, they were not "convict souls," nor were they looked on by others as such. Often their judges and the men who brought about their imprisonment were, indeed, criminals at large scorned by the greater number of their fellows. For "C. 3. 3." there

was little source of strength outside his own mind—if before that bar he stood not worse than his condemners, or, perhaps, better, it were well for him; and all the bitter injustice was unrelieved by the feeling that he had sought—or, at least, dared—suffering for some cherished dream or hope of good for others, or for his own proud liberty of free speech. Looked at broadly, no other writer of equal reputation has ever undergone incarceration under more heartbreaking and mind-shattering conditions.

That he conquered those conditions is marvellous, and that he has produced so powerful, so vivid, and so humane a book, notwithstanding the crushing weight of his condemnation, is more marvellous still. For the "Ballad of Reading Gaol" is no whine of a beaten hound to have its own hide spared. It is the keen outcry of a tender soul against a blasphemous travesty of reformatory "justice," against a senseless and stupid system of filthy and fiendish torture shameful alike to our race and age. Truly, as Chamfort said: "There is one thing more terrible than Crime, and that thing is Justice." It is difficult, so strong is the influence of the poem, to speak as yet of the literary merits of this "Ballad"; but one may soon be assured that in tone, in rough power, here and there running, perhaps, into a more polished power, and in a certain sacrifice of rhyme to the imperious need of a direct forthright representation of the story, it is thoroughly ballad-like, in the sense that one intends when one speaks of the most poignant of the songs collected for us by Bishop Percy. It contains nothing new, but altogether too much that is true. If akin to anything contemporary, it is then to "A Shropshire Lad," by Mr. Housman. It gives us in verse what Marcus Clarke has given us in prose, and what Fielding, in his "Jonathan Wild," gave to the readers of his generation. And prison life in England, from Fielding to "C. 3. 3.," seems little altered; in fact, if one reckons the greater capacity for suffering of our prisoners to-day, owing to their, generally speaking, better education, it is allowable to believe that our prisons to-day are greater hells than those known so intimately to Jonathan Wild the Great.

Only one thing strikes me as strange in this otherwise powerful ballad. "C. 3. 3." has here and there dropped into the conventional jargon about Christ as the Son of God, and God and the rest, and has dropped into it with an apparent sincerity which the atmosphere of a masterly ballad of doom necessarily intensifies. Now, I have seen chain-gangs working at Portland, and I venture to say that, to me, a man who can witness this horror of a dozen or more "images of God" chained like mad beasts of prey, and together working under other images of God, made vicious brutes by their occupation, hardly less inhuman than the images of God in the chain-gang—I say the man who can see this horror, and the still worse horrors it implies, and reconcile it with a belief in anything supernatural more elevated than a brutal devil, has a mastery over mental processes which I see no hope of my ever attaining. Indeed, the sight cannot be attributed to the existence of even an intelligent devil, so nauseating is the cruel lack of intelligence in this brutal system. It is the invention, if of any supernatural being, then surely of a devil who has evil allied only to a twenty-three carat malignant stupidity and coarseness.

If those allusions to Christ and God and the supernatural are, in its author's opinion, necessary parts of the ballad as a work of art, and in order to add to its power to appeal to the ordinary reader, then "C. 3. 3." may be left to settle with those critics who are better qualified than am I to decide on such a contention. If, however, they represent in some rough way a belief which, to me, all such places as prisons, madhouses, and hospitals give the lie in its very teeth (representing, as they do, the problem of mental and physical—if I may under the two—evil in its million-times concentrated form—in a form, indeed, to which De Quincey's words are applicable as a description: "Sights that ought not to be seen, things which are unutterable"), then we can only see in them a thing to regret, as indicating a mind made mad with misery, some fall of valor in the soul. Still, they cannot detract much, with any thoughtful man, from the effect of the ballad, which, if it is but widely enough read, may be the most powerful call to Englishmen to look to the horrors of their prison-houses which has appeared since "The Term of His Natural Life." Every humane soul owes thanks to Oscar Wilde for his "Ballad of Reading Gaol."

D. M.

## A SONG OF SOLACE.

Go, tell it out  
To all the world with trumpet shout—  
There is no God.  
List, ye who have the path of torment trod—  
There is no God, whose eager eyes look down  
Upon this restless world,  
And penetrate beneath the outward show  
Of glorious country, busy, prosperous town,  
And scintillating sea,  
Regarding with a gluttonous delight  
The endless panorama there unfurled,  
Of death and rapine, cruelty and lust ;  
Existence one unceasing war ; strong Might  
Triumphant over weaker Right ;  
Unarmored gentleness crushed to the dust ;  
All breathing things that be,  
Sucking their life from multifarious death.  
There is no God, who sees below  
Man's hideous ills, and will not cure ;  
The reeking alleys where the pallid poor  
Gasp for a few sad years, then die ;  
The dens of vice unspeakable, the woe,  
The desolation and the misery.

There is no cynic God, who smiles  
When gallant ships go down,  
And struggling, choking, bursting victims drown.  
No God who trembles with delight  
When smoke and flame and reek of burning flesh  
Stream upward through the night.  
There is no God of famine, pestilence, and death,  
Who his eternal tedium beguiles  
By planning torment fresh  
To wreak on helpless man, created by his breath.

There is no God, who lists with greedy ears  
While ever upward rise  
The sounds of hollow moans, of dropping tears,  
Of piercing shrieks and cries ;  
The wail of writhing slaves, the swirl of lash, the  
clank of chain,  
The groans and thunders deep of war,  
The sobs of grief and anguish sore,  
All blent in one eternal, hideous strain ;  
One hellish harmony, crashed on the keys of earth,  
Thrilling his demon soul with ghastly mirth.  
There is no God, who gloats unseen,  
Where weeping mothers droop,  
Fondling with trembling fingers what has been  
Their light and life—now cold, white clay.  
There is no God, rubbing his spectral hands  
In ghoulish glee,  
Mocking the hearts consumed by useless prayer  
Where stricken fathers stoop  
Caressing with a wan, blank, dumb despair  
Their little ones, whose day  
Is done : frail blooms destroyed by springtide storms.

There is no God ! O, husband, wife,  
Weep healing tears above  
Those blighted budlings of your tree of Life,  
Those piteous, silent, waxen forms—  
Once bonny, bonny bairns, once dancing songsters  
wee,  
Aglow with light and love.  
Yet, O be glad for this—  
There is no murdering knave,  
Who could, but would not, save  
Your darlings from the grave ;  
No butcher-God who slew, to whom their death was  
bliss.

There is a realm of thought where minds find peace ;  
Where priestly machinations cease  
To cow the soul with terrors of phantasmal doom ;  
A land beyond the dread of Hell's abysm ;  
Where flowers of pity, truth, and love perennial bloom,  
Bathed in the light serene of Reason's sun.  
No god or devil haunts that region fair,  
No foul miasma from Religion's fen  
Poisons the bracing air.  
Beyond the bigot's ken  
Glow his glad home of peace—named Atheism.  
Before its portals Death lays down his sword,  
Entering transfigured, pitiful divine.  
When weary, wayworn, tired of toil and strife,  
We long for rest,  
He comes a welcome guest ;  
In his kind hand the lethal wine,  
The grateful anodyne  
That soul and sense shall sweetly sleep  
In blessed slumber, calm and endless sleep.

EX-RITUALIST.

## HEREAFTER.

If our existence is to be continued after death without these senses, what will our existence amount to? Let any man ask himself what life would be worth if he could neither see, hear, taste, smell, nor feel anything? There would be neither pleasant nor unpleasant sounds or sights; nothing agreeable or disagreeable to taste or smell. We could not suffer, for we could not feel. In short, it would be impossible for a man to tell whether he existed or not; neither could he know anything. Could there be any heaven or hell under such conditions? How could a man wear a crown? He could not tell a crown from a hornet's nest, and would not know whether it was on or off any more than a post. How could he twang a harp? He could not tell the sound of a harp from the croaking of a frog.

If there is a hereafter, we may be sure that there will not be a heaven for the few, and hell for the multitude. If there is hell for one, it will be hell for all. Nature never does anything by halves. She is often cruel, but never partial. She has no favorites. The rain descends upon the just and unjust. The sun shines for all—the birds sing for all. The flood sweeps everything before it, and shows neither mercy nor favor. The drought does not favor one and then parch another. More churches are struck by lightning than theatres. Build both alike, and the chances will be equal. All things fare alike under the same conditions when the same causes are at work. All the Christian schemes ever devised cannot thwart the plans of nature. She is "whole hog" in her operations, and never splits differences to favor men, gods, or devils. Gods and ghosts, angels and devils, are a phantasm. Life beyond the grave is an illusion; heaven is nowhere, and hell is played out. The Bible is as much the word of the Devil as it is the word of God. Christianity is a fraud, ministers are mountebanks, and churches are organizations to trap the unwary. He that hath eyes to see, let him see.

JOHN PECK.

## A "NEW" PARSON.

READERS of the *Freethinker* will have a remembrance of a notice, some year or more ago, of the Rev. Tom Collins, a clergyman of the Church of England, known in Spitalfields as the "Dosser Parson." He held services in that neighborhood for the very poorest of that poor district, and permitted smoking—even finding tobacco for those that had none—in his endeavor to improve their condition. His action there being too unconventional, he had to retire; but, being of the opinion that to get at the masses it is necessary to come down to them, he has started a "settlement" at Edmonton in a working-class district. His neat and commodious hall is used on certain evenings for lectures on all subjects, and, being asked by the local Secularists to allow them a night, he at once consented. Friday week Mr. Forder went down, and spoke for an hour and a quarter, taking for his subject "Did Jesus Ever Live?" There was a large audience, and, from the applause, there appeared to be many Freethinkers present. At the close, after questions, Mr. Collins spoke in opposition, and had a hearty reception from all present. He, however, did not venture to defend historic Christianity, confining his speech to its moral and reforming aspects. Several other Christians also spoke, and the proceedings terminated at a late hour, Mr. Forder cordially thanking the rev. gentleman for his generous and brave conduct in allowing the lecture to be given.

SPERO.

## Obituary.

ON Wednesday, April 20, at the age of 52 years, were laid to rest in the Burmantoft Cemetery the remains of John Benson, a sturdy worker in the Leeds Branch N. S. S. when its headquarters were in the North-street Hall. He acted for some years as the Branch's Lewsagent, and served on the committees, especially the one to assist Mr. Bradlaugh in his prosecution for the Knowlton pamphlet. He was also a strong opponent of vaccination, being the first in Leeds to be sent to Armley Gaol (where he spent fourteen days), for refusing to comply with the vaccination laws. Up to the last, though his sufferings were often very terrible, he found his Atheistic philosophy sufficient to sustain him. His last words were a calm farewell to his wife, his daughter, and two sons. He wished to have a Secular burial, and that last sad service was conducted by myself.—JNO. BADLAY.

Stead says that when he was young he "loved to see pigs killed." Exactly; with all his goody-goodyism, he is at heart a barbarian. He worships mere power, crawls before royalty, and trembles before spooks. Stead is an educated savage.—*People's Newspaper*.

BOOK CHAT.

It is announced that the appendix to Sir Richard Burton's work on the Jew, in which he went into the question of the blood accusation as an alleged sacrificial rite of the Sephardim, will not appear as written. The general view is that in this particular case the great traveller was not justified in his view, which has doubtless given rise to much persecution and prejudice against the children of Israel.

\* \* \*

According to J. de Morgan's "*Rechesches sur les Origines de l'Egypte*," the word "Egyptian" signifies the man who migrated from Asia to Egypt, whose civilization was peculiar to himself, and whose racial history is still unknown. Between him and his predecessor, whom we may call the aboriginal inhabitant, he draws a sharp distinction, both mentally and morally. It is evident that the Cush referred to in the Bible as the home of the Egyptian is not Ethiopia.

\* \* \*

According to Mr. A. M. Huntington's *Note-Book in Northern Spain*, there are, among other relics in the Church of Oviedo, "a piece of the bread of the last supper," "one of the thirty pieces of silver received by Judas," "a piece of roast fish which Christ ate with His disciples after His resurrection," "a phial containing the blood and water which had gushed from the side of an image of Christ made by His followers, when the Jews set it up as a mark and struck it in the right side with a spear," "fragments of a linen made moist by the milk of the Mother of God," "a part of the rod with which Moses divided the waters of the Red Sea," and "the bones of the three who entered the fiery furnace of Babylon." And yet there are some people who have their doubts as to the accuracy of Bible narratives.

CORRESPONDENCE.

SOULLESS SECULARISM.

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE FREETHINKER."

SIR,—A somewhat belated reader of the *Freethinker* writes to me concerning one paragraph occurring in your number for February 20, referring to Mr. Morley's phrase of "soulless Secularism," and asks me whether I think that a condemnation of Secularism. I answered that was not my opinion, Mr. Morley being the last man in the world to speak disparagingly of Secularism, which he has vindicated so brilliantly in the lives of the great Secularists which he has written. I understood him to speak of that Secularism which is soulless—there is a good deal of that about, of which I, like Mr. Morley, do not think highly—as possibly you also. I last met him at the grave of Mr. Bradlaugh, and thought it a bold thing of which I know no parallel of a member of the Government testifying personal respect at the grave of an Atheist. On my saying I was glad to meet him, he answered: "Why should I not be here?" G. J. HOLYOAKE.

[Mr. Holyoake's characteristic letter is much behind date, but as that does not appear to be his fault we insert it cheerfully. Whether he makes out a good case for Mr. Morley is quite another matter. One does not see, even now, why the word "soulless" was coupled with "Secularism" in especial. Mr. Morley is an expert in phraseology, and must have known that the expression he used would be grateful to the ears of every opponent of Secularism. Of course there may be "a good deal of that Secularism which is soulless" about, though we have not encountered as much of it as Mr. Holyoake seems to have; but is there not plenty of "soulless" character about some of the orthodox denominations? Mr. Morley did attend Bradlaugh's funeral, but he never attended any of Bradlaugh's meetings during the great Parliamentary struggle. Nor was he a member of the Government then, for the Liberals were at that time in opposition. It must also be observed that Bradlaugh was very popular towards the close of his career, and that he died amidst universal respect. Mr. Morley had nothing to lose at that juncture. He did the right thing in going to Bradlaugh's funeral, but it was not "bold" enough to deserve Mr. Holyoake's transcendent eulogy.—EDITOR.]

APIS OR AMEN?

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE FREETHINKER."

SIR,—The suggestion of "C. E.," that the Jews worshipped Apis, seems to derive some countenance from the story of the golden calf in Exodus, and of that in 1 Kings xii. 28, for when Jeroboam made two calves of gold at Bethel and Dan he could say to the people: "Behold thy gods, O Israel, which brought thee up out of the land of Egypt." It was

natural that Apis, who, according to Plutarch, was an image of the soul of Osiris, should be supposed by the LXX. translator of Jer. xvi. 15 to be identical with Abir. Sir Gardner Wilkinson says of Apis: "He is called in the hieroglyphic legends Hapi; and the bull, the demonstrative and figurative sign following his name, is accompanied by the *crux ansata*."

Is there not also good reason to suppose that the god Amen may be identical with the Amen who has descended to our own liturgies and prayers? These may be only conjectures, but they are of some interest, even though we are without the necessary evidence to determine them beyond the reach of controversy. F. M.

RE HEBREW AND EGYPTIAN WORSHIP.

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE FREETHINKER."

SIR,—Referring to the remarks made over the initials "C. E." in your "Correspondence" column this week anent the probability of the Hebrews having worshipped "Apis," supposing this hypothesis is correct, would it not seem to bear out the tradition of the Egyptian captivity of the Jews, and the consequent absorption by them of Egyptian forms of worship? I should like to see the question gone into, for some of us are inclined to discredit the story of the Old Testament as to the Egyptian bondage, on the ground that no trace of Egyptian is to be found in the Hebrew literature, and *vice versa*. But the statements of "C. E." would seem to contradict this contention. HAROLD ELLIOT.

I H S.

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE FREETHINKER."

SIR,—Mr. Higgins says in his letter last week: "If anybody has any real proof that IHS was derived from YHS, let him trot it out." I do not pretend to have any real proof, but what I do contend is, that there is a sufficiency of etymological, and an overwhelming amount of historical, evidence to justify my remarks in your issue of April 17.

The Rev. W. W. Skeat, M.A., also says: "The Hebrew for Jesus is Yeshua (Jeshua). Here you have beyond doubt all controversy the root Yes, or the ancient monogram of Bacchus—that is, a contraction of Iacchus—which was also one of the names of Bacchus" (Lempriere, *q.v.*)

But why take away the Latin termination of Christus, and still retain it in Jesus? Moreover, to take away the last syllable of a word is not an abbreviation or contraction, but a mutilation, so that IHS is a justifiable contraction of Iacchus, but a mutilation of Jesus, which is uncharitable; therefore, if Jes was the original name, what was the meaning of the mark over the monogram? What did it contract? This ought to be explained, but one may still find room for a quiet smile at the waggery of turning the above-mentioned mark into a cross and placing it on our pulpit cloths.

Mr. Higgins says he fails to discover coincidence, and it is news to be told that Osiris was called Serapis, "one of the Egyptian deities supposed to be the same as Osiris" (see Lempriere); therefore, I conclude that the Egyptian trinity, Isis, Horus, and Serapis, giving us IHS in their initial letters, is a very singular coincidence—that is to say, of course, if Jes is taken as a historical character; but, if taken as an allegorical personification of the sun, then my premise will not hold. W. F. HERBERT.

PROFANE JOKES.

"Ah," said Dozer, "a dreadful thing this Tabernacle fire, you know. It puts one in mind of those beautiful lines of Thingamy's, you know: 'God moves in a mysterious way, you know, His wonders to perform; he plants his footsteps on the earth—eh! what is it he plants his footsteps, or is it his footprints, on?—but, anyway, 'he rides upon a storm.'"

A clergyman at Dorking met a little girl, and, regarding her solemnly, said: "Child, do you know who made that vile body of yours?" "Yes, sir," replied the girl. "Mother made the body, and I made the skirt."

Mephisto—"If St. Peter don't stop sending American crank inventors down here, I'll throw up my job." Asmodeus—"What is the trouble?" Mephisto—"Why, one of these fellows came to me to-day and submitted plans for having the place heated with steam and hot air, instead of brimstone."

"Do you believe in the efficacy of prayer, Aunt Chloe?" asked a young minister from the North of an old Georgia colored woman. "'Deed I does, boss," she replied fervently. "'Deed I does, an' w'n my ol' man was tuk up for stealin' Cunnel Brown's pullets, I jos' got down on my kunkers an' prayed an' prayed all ebenin' dat dem ossifers wouldn't come pokin' roun' my kitchen huntin' for chicken feathers, an' fo' de good Lawd, boss, nary one never come nigh. 'Deed dey didn't, boss."

## 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, "The Deviloms of Spain in America."  
BRADLAUGH CLUB AND INSTITUTE (36 Newington Green-road, Ball's Pond): 8.30, "Animated Photography." May 5, at 8.30, A. B. Moss, "Concerning Ghosts."  
CAMBERWELL (North Camberwell Hall, 61 New Church-road): 7, Concert and Dance.  
SOUTH LONDON ETHICAL SOCIETY (Surrey Masonic Hall, Camberwell New-road, S.E.): 7, Stanton Coit, "Mrs. Piper's Trances"; 3, Peckham Rye (near band-stand), H. O. Newland.  
WEST LONDON ETHICAL SOCIETY (Kensington Town Hall): 11.15, Stanton Coit, "Mrs. Piper's Trances."

### OPEN-AIR PROPAGANDA.

BETHNAL GREEN BRANCH (Victoria Park, near the fountain): 3.15 H. P. Ward.  
CAMBERWELL (Station-road): 11.30, Stanley Jones, "Is the Bible the Inspired Word of God to Man?"  
EAST LONDON BRANCH (Mile End Waste): 11.30, E. Pack, "Saintly Sinners."  
EDMONTON (corner of Angel-road): 7, Stanley Jones.  
FINSBURY BRANCH (Clerkenwell Green): 11.30, A. B. Moss, "The Bible as a Guide."  
HAMMERSMITH (The Grove, near S. W. Railway-station): 7, R. P. Edwards.  
HYDE PARK (near Marble Arch): 11.30, R. P. Edwards; 3.30, R. P. Edwards.  
KILBURN (High-road, corner Victoria-road): 7, H. P. Ward.  
KINGSLAND (Bidley-road): 11.30, H. P. Ward.  
LIMEHOUSE (The Triangle, Salmon-lane): 11.30, R. P. Edwards.  
PECKHAM RYE: 3.15, Stanley Jones, "Miracles and Medicine."

### COUNTRY.

BIRMINGHAM (Bristol-street Board School): R. Forder—11, "Christian Intolerance to Mohammedans"; 7, "Fun on the Nile: A Comic Bible Story."  
CHATHAM SECULAR SOCIETY (Queen's-road, New Brompton): 7, J. J. Taylor, "The Gospel of Revolt," with special reference to Cuba.  
GLASGOW (Lecture Hall, Brunswick-street): Charles Watts—11.30, "Christian Tactics Exposed"; 2.30, "Triumph of Reason over Faith"; 6.30, "The Decline of Paganism and the Dawn of Christianity."  
LIVERPOOL (Alexandra Hall, Islington-square): 7, Laurence Small, B.Sc., "The Non-Morality of Nature."  
MANCHESTER SECULAR HALL (Husholme-road, All Saints): No lecture. May 3 and 4, Debate between C. Watts and the Rev. A. J. Waldron, "Is Secularism Superior to Christianity for this or any Other Life?"  
NEWCASTLE-ON-TYNE (corner of Raby and Parker-streets, Byker): 7, R. Mitchell, "Why I Reject Christ."  
SHEFFIELD SECULAR SOCIETY (Hall of Science, Rockingham-street): C. Cohen—11, "Looking Forward"; 8, "How Christianity Began"; 7, "Rome, Dissent, or Freethought?" Tea at 5.  
SOUTH SHIELDS (Captain Duncan's Navigation School, Market-place): 7, Business meeting; 7.30, Address.

### Lecturers' Engagements.

O. COHEN, 12 Merchant-street, Bow-road, London.—May 1, Sheffield; 8, Liverpool; 15, Blackburn.

A. B. MOSS, 44 Oredon-road, London, S.E.—May 1, m., Finsbury; 8, m., Mile End; 15, m. and a. Hyde Park; e., Kilburn; 22, m., Mile End.

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