

# THE Freethinker

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## Where is God?

THE big-gooseberry and sea-serpent season has been utilised by the *Daily News* in promoting a discussion on whether the world is getting better or worse. We have glanced through the correspondence, and most of it is contemptibly silly. It is one of the commonplaces of old age, and even of advanced life, that the world is neither as wise, as good, nor as happy as it was some thirty, forty, or fifty years ago. Men speak too much from their own feelings. They are the victims of their own personal equations. They attach too much importance to their own real or fancied experience. And when the pessimistic mood is upon them a slight earthquake portends the approaching end of the world, or a war between two countries is the last herald of the universal Armageddon. The truth is that human progress is definitely perceptible only by comparing different states of society separated by considerable intervals of time. You cannot see a plant growing by watching it. Strangers perceive the growth of children more clearly than their parents. And husband and wife who love each other, spending their lives in intimate intercourse, fail to notice as others do the traces of the hand of time upon each other's face and form. How, then, is a man who knows only his own age, and that chiefly from the newspapers, which are read to-day and forgotten to-morrow, to tell whether the world is improving or deteriorating? What he has to say can only serve as ballast for newspapers that are short of cargo, and almost anything does in the "silly season."

One of these *Daily News* correspondents managed, however, to ask a very serious and pertinent question. Seeing, as he thought, that things were going from bad to worse on this distracted planet, he put the query, "Where is God?" Now a brisk debate on that question would be worthy of a better time than the "silly season." It would brighten up the pages of a common newspaper. But what newspaper would admit it? Certainly not the *Daily News*, which has lately been cultivating a pious vein and giving special attention to the doings of "the Churches."

Where is God? He does not seem to be discoverable for love or money. The clergy talk about him a great deal, but that is a trick of their trade. What they know about him would not fill a volume; no, nor even a sheet of note paper, and probably not the space of two lines. They pretend to know what he is, they set forth his attributes, they ticket him, so to speak, like an exhibit in a museum. They say he is this, that, and the other. They tell us he is all-wise, all-good, and all-powerful; also that he is omnipresent, which means that he is everywhere, and what is everywhere must be everything—a Pantheistic conclusion that is enough to make the ordinary man of God stand aghast and throw up his hands as if in presence of the abomination of desolation. Yet how can that conclusion be resisted? If the alleged Deity is everywhere, then God is all, and all is God.

But the gentleman who put that question in the *Daily News* did not mean, we take it, to ask where God is, but rather what he is doing. If he created the world, why did he not make a better job of it? If he rules the world, why does he not regulate its affairs more wisely and benevolently? If he watches over the world, why does he not interfere on behalf of justice

and humanity? That seems to be the gentleman's idea, and we defy all the ministers of religion to give these questions a satisfactory answer.

Thomas Carlyle, in his old age, said despondently to Mr. Froude that "God does nothing now." The philosopher of Chelsea need not have taken so long to discover this truth. He might have perceived it fifty years sooner if he had not been blinded by the religious prejudices—or, as they are generally called, the religious principles—of his early training.

It is perfectly idle to try to burke this question. The people are going a good deal further on the road of scepticism than the clergy imagine. Besides the men who go to church, there are the men who do not go, and never will go; and they have their thoughts on the subject of religion, although they do not confide them to the ears of the professional soul-savers. The other evening, on the top of an omnibus, we overheard a couple of men talking about the Kentish Town murder. They were rough fellows with honest instincts, and, without being able to use fine language, they could see a point as well as a clergyman. "Well," said one of them, "they may talk about religion, but I don't see why somebody or something didn't chip in when a poor innocent girl was being trapped to her death. I wish I'd been behind the blackguard." It was a natural wish, and a sensible reflection. God was behind the blackguard, if we are to believe the clergy; yes, and beside him and before him, and under him and above him. God was with him when he fetched the poor girl from her home, God was with him when he went into the chemists' shops and bought the ounces of oxalic acid, God was with him when he took his intended victim into the parlor of his father's house, God was with him when he went out to the scullery to fetch the coal hammer, God was with him when he tore the clothes from the poor girl's body in his brutal and insane lust, God was with him when he forced her raiment down her throat, God was with him when he hammered her head into bloody ruin. God was there all the time. Yes, but how much better for her if a policeman had been about, or any other man with a heart and hand to interfere?

We do not deny, we are not concerned to deny, the Pantheism of a Spinoza, or the idea of God as a vast irresponsible power, governing the universe by general and unchangeable laws, and working out far-distant ends without a special attention to the individual happiness or misery of his sentient creatures. Such was the deity of Pope, who sneeringly asked "Shall gravitation cease as you go by?" He overlooked the fact that the constancy of gravitation is a poor relief to the man whose head is broken by a falling chimney-pot. He also overlooked the fact that the God behind such a law does not come into any sort of moral relationship to his "children." Indeed, it is nonsense to call them his children. He is not even their step-father. To call him "Our Father" is a wretched abuse of language. But the other God, the God of the clergy, the God who sees and hears and notices all that happens—that God is fairly entitled to be called a Devil. To know that outrage and murder are to be committed, and not to move a finger to prevent them, is the sublimation of infamy. The outrager is inspired by his lust, the murderer by his passion, but the callous onlooker is the lowest of the three in the sink of degradation.

G. W. FOOTE.

## Bolingbroke.

MORE than a century has elapsed since Burke put his famous question, "Who now reads Bolingbroke?" The query was rather premature, since there is ample evidence that a good many people were even then reading this much-abused author, although it is only to be expected that the majority of readers would be in no hurry to avow their partiality for such a notorious heretic. Still, if Burke were alive to-day and put the same question, I might answer: "I do; and find no little entertainment and instruction in the reading." And I am evidently not singular in this respect. Second-hand booksellers—or at least such as know the value of books—continue to ask a fair, although not a fancy, price for Bolingbroke's writings; and that is certainly one indication of whether an author is read or not. Dr. Churton Collins, a critic of no mean value, has written in high praise of him, and quite recently there has appeared a fresh edition of some of the more valuable of his writings, upon which fact we may safely ground the assumption that publishers would not produce unless there was at least a probable market.

My own re-reading of Bolingbroke is due to more or less of an accident. It was while hunting round some second-hand bookstalls—an occupation which your true book-hunter pursues with a supreme disregard for dignity and dust—that I came across "*The Works of the late Right Honorable Henry St. John, Lord Viscount Bolingbroke*." In five volumes complete. Published by David Mallet, Esquire. London; 1754." It is sincerely to be hoped that the price asked by the owner of the stall was no real indication of the value of the writings of the "late Right Honorable," etc. Four shillings for five calf-bound volumes, in excellent condition, each one measuring about twelve inches by nine, and weighing a good three pounds, was surely not an extravagant sum to ask. At any rate, the exchange was soon effected; and, as I lugged home my fifteen or sixteen pounds of literature, I realised that Bolingbroke was certainly a *weighty* author; and, averaging the price of the books per pound, I was irresistibly reminded of the old bookseller in *Liberty Hall* who objected to take fourpence for *The Last of the Mohicans*, on the ground that it wasn't a "apenny a Mohican."

Probably it was the size of the volumes that operated as a determining factor in fixing the price. Folios, while objects of desire at one time of life, may easily become *anathema* at another period. A single man may hug home huge books with pride and impunity; a married man finds many reasons—some spatial, some financial—in the way of the gratification of such a taste. One cannot smuggle a folio into the house with the intention of dropping it undetected on the hall-stand, until such time as it may be placed on the shelves, and lost amid the multitude of its fellows. Books 15 × 10 or 20 × 12 refuse being coerced into a handbag, or ignominiously hidden under one's coat. They enter in full view of she who keeps guard over the household gods and a watchful eye on the accumulation of "lumber." So it was in all likelihood the size of the volumes that had something to do with fixing the price of Johnson's "hungry Scotchman's" edition of Bolingbroke's writings.

There can be no question that Bolingbroke has been hardly treated by the generations that have followed his decease. He has been denounced as a libertine without any proof that he was worse in character than the people around him, while in many respects it might be shown that he was distinctly their superior. The story of his having run naked through Hyde Park as the outcome of a drunken wager rests upon no better evidence than a statement of Goldsmith, who avows that he "heard" it from someone else. The latter portion of his life certainly showed him capable of strong domestic virtues. At any rate, the first half of the eighteenth century was not remarkable for the spotless character of its prominent men, whether they were divines or politicians, and there is a sad want of equipoise in writers who drag a man out of his natural environment in order to test him by the standards of a later generation. It is fairly just in the case of Bolingbroke to vary the defence imputed to Charles II., and

say that in general his faults were those of his age, his virtues the outcome of his innate ability.

But posterity—unless it be that portion which delights in scandal—is far more deeply interested in a man's work than in his personality, and rightly so. The one is permanent, the other evanescent. A man's life is never, perhaps, without its interest, but it is the value of a man's thoughts and deeds which marks him as helpful or injurious to the race. That Bolingbroke bit pretty deeply into his times is shown both by his numerous admirers and the virulence of his equally numerous enemies. His influence was great in both political and literary circles. In the former department, although Mr. Leslie Stephen's half sneer that he was neither a Comte nor a Montesquieu may have some justification, yet his knowledge of men and things was correct enough to make much of his writings on European affairs rich in common sense and shrewd observations. Mr. Stephen apparently thinks lightly of Bolingbroke's theory that the only method of maintaining a European peace is by balancing the forces of the various European powers. But, as a matter of fact, it is, at the present day, the only real method by which peace is maintained, and even within a nation the balancing of different class interests does secure a far more workable policy, and bestows a greater measure of justice upon all than any quantity of abstract theorising. And, in the larger field of historical philosophy, no less an authority than Buckle declared that, before Gibbon, he was "the only Englishman who took a comprehensive view of history."

His literary merits deserve, and have obtained, great praise. Pope, it is well known, idolised him. Pope's principal work, the *Essay on Man*, is only Bolingbroke versified. Critics like Swift, Chesterfield, and Pitt showered compliments upon him. Voltaire was another of his admirers, and said that Bolingbroke could give him lessons in French. Some modern writers have complained of his treatment of his opponents. But his was an age when the amenities of literary warfare were not too nicely studied, and there are few of Bolingbroke's enemies who could deal a stroke with as much severity and civility. One suspects that his phrases were objected to not because they offended the taste of the time, but because they went home. His description of the House of Commons as a place where people "grow, like hounds, fond of the man who shows them game, and by whose halloo they are used to be encouraged," is worthy of Swift, and shows no little ability of using the lash.

His real offence—or, at least, his lasting offence—consisted in the publication of his writings on philosophy and theology. These were bequeathed in MS., with a substantial legacy, to his friend Mallet. A large bribe was offered to Mallet to avoid publication, but was refused. It is this edition—1754—which lies before me as I write. These writings were all penned during his exile in France, and, although rather diffuse, are marked by much shrewdness and, of course, grace. They went the usual way of heretical books in that day—that is, declared by a grand jury as subversive of religion, morality, and government, and burned by the common hangman. Walpole, his greatest political enemy, and glad as he was to see Bolingbroke degraded, was yet quick enough to point out that those "to whom he was a hero, a patriot, a philosopher, and the greatest genius of his age; the moment his 'Craftsman' against Moses and St. Paul are published, have discovered that he was the worst man and the worst writer in the world."

An avowed deist, he attacks with equal and impartial energy metaphysicians and theologians. They were all so many "pneumatical madmen," eking out a scanty knowledge of facts with an extravagance of theory. "What these wild or dreaming philosophers could not do by any hypothesis about body they attempted to do by the hypothesis of a soul," and in thus acting they are "just as mad as the architect would be who should undertake to build the roof of the house on the ground and to lay the foundations in the air." They are simply "building a world with categories."

Most of the "inspired" writers fare but badly at his hands, St. Paul worst of all. He is "a loose phraser, a cabalistical commentator"; he "rather doubles mystery than simplifies it, and adds everywhere

a mystery of words to a mystery of things." His whole teaching formed "an intricate and dark system, with here and there an intelligible phrase that casts no light on the rest, but is rather lost in the gloom of the whole. By faith I may believe, but by faith I cannot understand. A proposition the terms of which are unintelligible is an absolute mystery; to say that we are bound to believe mysteries in this sense is itself nonsense; to say that we do believe them is a lie." And the final result of all such teachings is that "The Church has been in every age an hydra, such a monster as the poets feign with many heads. All these heads hissed and barked and tore one another with fury. As fast as some were cut off others sprouted out, and all the art and all the violence employed to create an apparent could never create a real uniformity. The scene of Christianity has been always a scene of dissension, of hatred, of persecution, and of blood."

It was probably a love of ease that prevented Bolingbroke publishing these writings during his lifetime. They were published, however, and played their part in the history of Freethought. To-day their attack has lost much of its force owing to the modifications Christianity has undergone. But Bolingbroke will still repay reading, particularly when Mallet's quartos can be picked up at a trifle under tenpence per volume.

C. COHEN.

### Defective Salvation.

SALVATION through Christ is the very foundation upon which orthodox Christianity rests. The language of the New Testament is: "Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sins of the world." "Christ died for our sins, according to the Scriptures." "And he [Christ] is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world." "So Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many: and unto them that look for him shall he appear the second time without sin unto salvation." "For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive" (John i. 29; 1 Corinthians xv. 3; 1 John ii. 2; Hebrews ix. 28; 1 Corinthians xv. 22). The views here set forth are endorsed by the official records of the Christian Churches. The second of the Thirty-nine Articles tells us that Christ "was crucified, dead and buried, to reconcile his Father to us, and to be a sacrifice, not only for original guilt, but also for actual sins of men." The Confession of Faith states that Jesus "hath fully satisfied the justice of his father, and purchased not only reconciliation, but an everlasting inheritance in the kingdom of heaven for all those whom the Father hath given unto him" (chap. viii., § v.). Here it is plainly taught that the death of Christ was regarded as a means of reconciling God to man (not man to God), as a satisfaction to God's notion of justice, and of purchasing his forgiveness. Is it possible to conceive of a more defective and degrading doctrine than this? It is a belief that God, having placed his children upon the verge of ruin, refuses to allow them to escape, except at the sacrifice of his "only begotten son," who, we are told, had committed no wrong. A system based upon such a scheme of salvation as this is not the gift of a loving father, but rather the purchased equivalent of an exacting tyrant.

The latest pronouncements upon this subject were by Professor Moberly in his recently-published work, *Atonement and Personality*, and Dr. Horton in the *Christian World*. Although the Professor's book has been described as "a most important and valuable work to modern theologians," it does not remove one of the many difficulties of the Christian theory of salvation. The book is a fair specimen of special pleading, and an evasion of the real objections to "The Atoning Death of Christ." The same may be said of Dr. Horton. Here is a sample of his defence of the scheme. "Let us try," he said, "to see what salvation means. I take it to be summed up in four things. First, knowledge that God is our Father; second, knowledge of the kind of life we are expected to live; third, reconciliation with ourselves, with our own consciences; fourth, a sense of pardon and communion with God, and knowledge of eternal life within us." Now, two

out of these "four things" have no necessary connection with Christianity; they belong to the secular duties of life. Dr. Horton was more to the point, subsequently, when he said: "That was salvation; to know what to do, and how to do it." But how such knowledge can be obtained from a study of the Christian notion of salvation the present writer cannot imagine. Is it right to arrange for people to do wrong, and then make them suffer for the misdeeds of others? Is it just to plan that the people cannot be saved from the "error of their ways," except by complying with conditions which, to many of them, are impossible? Yet this is the principle of Christian salvation. Even the Doctor's two theological essentials to salvation are fictitious. What *knowledge* does anyone possess that "God is our Father," that we are in communion with him, and that we have "eternal life within us"? All such notions rest upon conjectures, and nothing more. They are theological fictions born of credulity, and perpetuated through indifference and lack of real knowledge. If Christ had really been necessary to the salvation of the world, would it not have been better if, instead of ascending to heaven to sit at the right hand of his Father, he had remained on earth, teaching practical truths, and showing by constant personal example how the world could be rescued from that moral and intellectual darkness and despair to which a corrupt theology had reduced it?

The following are the five principal theoretic modes of salvation believed in by the different Christian denominations. It does not say much for the simplicity of Christian redemption when its nature is so obscure that so many different theories have been propounded as to what the death of Christ really signified. The Augustinian doctrine, which was taught by the Church during the early centuries, was that men were doomed to hell through the fall of Adam, and that Christ's death cancelled the sin committed, and thus saved them from being utterly lost. The Calvinists believe that God foresaw that Adam would fall, and that posterity would be damned; he, therefore, selected a few to be his chosen servants. Before, however, the few could be saved it was considered necessary for Christ to suffer and atone for sins which were said to have been committed by others. Yet it should occur to the most superficial reasoner that if God foresaw that Adam would fall, and that posterity would be damned, he, being all-powerful, should have prevented such an awful calamity. Besides, if God really thought fit to "elect a few to be saved," would it not have been better to have included the whole human race? Such an act of justice would be more in keeping with impartiality, and certainly more worthy of a beneficent God. The third plan of salvation is that held by evangelical Christians, who believe that the vicarious sufferings of Christ obtained conditional pardon. In order, however, for persons to partake of the advantages consequent upon those sufferings, they must have faith that Christ died as a substitute—that is, that the innocent suffered for the guilty. The fourth method of salvation is that believed in by the Roman Catholics, who, while teaching the fall of man and his salvation through Christ, also teach that none will be saved unless they accept the authority of their Church and observe her rites. This is at least consistent. Certainly it is priestcraft; but, then, what religious sect is there that has not its priests? The difference between Catholicism and Protestantism upon this point is that, while the Catholic is honest and acknowledges the necessity of a priesthood, the Protestant is dishonest in denying its right, and at the same time practising its evils. The principle in both cases is the same; it differs only in degree. The fifth view of the atonement is that held by the Universalists, which is in substance that no one is damned beyond his personal sin in this world. The Unitarians reject all the above theories, and regard the object of Christ's life, rather than his death, to be the reconciliation of man to God, not God to man.

Such is the Christian plan of salvation. Christians profess to believe that the Godhead is composed of three persons of one substance, power, and duration. If this be so, the first person could have no virtue which the other two did not possess. Admitting that in this scheme of salvation infinite justice demanded that an atonement should be made to God the Father,

a like plea could be urged for an atonement to God the Son, and to God the Holy Ghost. For, as the three persons are indivisible, the "transgression" was against all equally. But we do not read of any sacrifice having been made to the last two persons in the Trinity; the redemption is, therefore, incomplete. Again, the three persons being one in substance, could a part be wrathful and a part merciful? The New Testament speaks of God's wrath; and it was from this that the atonement was to save us, according to the teachings of many Christians, including such writers as Flavel, Wesley, and Dr. Watts. If God and Christ, however, are not distinct, the one could not be vengeful and the other forgiving at the same time. Thus this scheme robs the Trinity of the virtue of forgiveness. The first person demands payment before granting pardon; the second exacts belief as the condition of salvation; and the third refuses forgiveness for sin against himself under any circumstances. The same difficulty is manifested in the death of a part of the indivisible Godhead. If Christ alone died and remained lifeless in the grave for three days, he was not equal in eternity to his father; if, on the other hand, the whole of the Deity expired, then we have the spectacle of a dying and dead God, and the world for a time subsisting without a God to govern it. To say that it was only the manhood of Christ which suffered is to advance another difficulty by allying humanity with divinity, and destroying the perfection of the whole. For where the human element is there cannot be perfection.

Real salvation is only to be secured by human effort. According to Secular philosophy, mankind, instead of trusting to the supposed merits of Christ for salvation, should pursue virtuous and honorable lives, remembering that self-reliance is the surest method by which human regeneration can be obtained. Probably, if Christ had never been heard of, the world would not have gone on groping its way to progress through moral and intellectual darkness. Man, rather than buoy himself up by false hopes of a Redeemer who, it is said, lived two thousand years ago, should recognise the fact that, so far as he needs redemption, he must redeem himself by exercising earnest, vigorous thought and performing useful and noble deeds.

CHARLES WATTS.

### Romanist Casuistry.

ATTENTION has recently been drawn to the *Analecta Ecclesiastica*, a theological-political monthly, published at Rome and edited by Felix Cadene, a domestic prelate of Leo XIII. As an outcome of the "Eternal City," it may command attention, now that we hear of the millions of copies which have been, or are going to be, printed of Hall Caine's latest effort to induce the public to believe that he is, in truth, a novelist. The *Analecta Ecclesiastica* seems to devote itself, not so much to romance and ridiculous high falutin', as to recording, *inter alia*, decisions of the Pope on cases of conscience, or what in English law might be called "Crown Cases Reserved."

From one of the recent numbers of this periodical a special decision is quoted by the *Church Times*. It is a pronouncement on a "Casus Conscientiæ," given "ad S. Apollinarem in Coetu S. Pauli Apostoli." It relates to a case of pre-nuptial unchastity on the part of a woman who, having repented of her sin, had been absolved at confession. "On this ground, and upon oath, the woman declared to her betrothed that she was free from the guilt of 'fornicatio.'"

On the morning of the day appointed for the marriage the bridegroom is represented as having informed the lady that he would not take her for his wife had she not assured him upon her oath of her stainless innocence. But shortly after their marriage, it is said, the guilt of the lady was revealed. The husband immediately leaves his wife, and refuses to live with her. "Hereupon the first question arises—whether the marriage was now rightly dissolved? which is answered in the affirmative."

It was next demanded of the "Collegium," sitting under the presidency of a Consultor of the Index-Congregation, "whether Caia (the wife) had acted rightly?"

The decision was: "She acted rightly at the first. For it is not certain whether she then knew that Titus (the husband) would require bodily chastity as a condition of marriage. And, as she had received from another source the forgiveness of her sin, she was justified in availing herself of a *reservatio mentalis* in her reply to his inquiry."

The *reservatio mentalis*, which is one of the resources of Jesuit casuistry, shows how little confidence may be placed in the most solemn assurances of religionists who owe allegiance to Rome. The *Church Times* says:—

"This amazing decision in moral theology, as it has occurred at a moment when there is so hot a controversy over the ethical teaching of Liguori and Gury, has not only intensified the old conflict between Roman Catholic and Protestant, but tends further to widen the breach between Catholic and Catholic. It is not simply between Roman Catholic and Old Catholic, but between those who accept the Vatican decrees of 1870 as binding upon all Christians, that the principles of the Liguorian ethics have now become a field of battle. The Roman Catholic 'minimisers,' the 'Liberal Catholics,' or 'Reform Catholics,' as they now are called all over the Continent, are manifesting an increased restlessness under the Liguorian burden."

On the morality of the deception played by Caia on her husband Titus there can hardly be two opinions amongst people not immersed in the Romish superstition, which makes no absolutely clear distinction between right and wrong; or, if it does, obscures the ethical distinction by condonation for payment. The *Kolnische Volkszeitung*, a Roman Catholic daily paper, says that "many false or questionable decisions may be found in the venerable folios of the last three or four hundred years; but Catholics of the present day are not compromised by this or that false or questionable doctrine of venerable age." But then the decision in the above-cited case was made as late as March 11 in the present year. It is, as the *Church Times* says, based "upon the authority which a loyal Vaticanist Catholic is bound to accept. It is published in *Analecta Ecclesiastica*, it has received the editorial imprimatur of the Pope's domestic chaplain, and is now presented to the world stamped as living and modern, and as the utterance of the *Ecclesia docens*." The conclusion is rightly drawn from this decision that henceforth, so far as the Vatican is concerned, Roman Catholics may commit perjury without misgiving, providing they have previously received absolution of the sin in regard to which they lie.

A controversy, we are told, is now proceeding within the Roman Catholic Churches of Austria, Germany, and Switzerland mostly upon the Liguorian moral theology. And no wonder. The morality inculcated by St. Alphonsus di Liguori is hardly acceptable to-day even amongst the most faithful adherents of Roman Catholicism, though, as it is said by the *Church Times*, and is a matter of history, the doctrine is that of the very man whom Pope Pius IX. raised to equal "dignity" with St. Gregory, St. Ambrose, St. Jerome, and other so-called saints.

Attempts have been made in Austria, in Bavaria, and in one of the Roman Catholic Cantons of Switzerland by the secular authorities to put a stop to the Liguorian controversy, begun in these later times by Robert Grassmann, who died a few weeks ago. The writer in the *Church Times* mentions that—

"One of his opponents, the author of *Offene Worte*, a Bavarian priest who conceals his name under the pseudonym of a 'Catholic Theologian,' has replied to Grassmann's 'Excerpts from the Moral Theology of the Holy Doctor Alphonsus Liguori' in a fashion which might almost be cited in defence of the accused. He contends that R. Grassmann ought not to have published these specimens of Liguorian ethics; but he adds that the German clergy, now that they are published—though Grassmann's work has been placed upon the Index of Prohibited Books—ought to petition the German Bishops to forbid the further use of 'this Italian Moral-theology' in their dioceses, 'where it has now quite displaced,' as he says, 'the sound and wholesome morality of our former German Catholic handbooks.' This assailant of Grassmann actually goes so far as to suggest that 'the fearful increase of *moral-delicte* amongst the priesthood' may possibly be connected with 'the unwholesome study and application of Liguorian morals.'"

This admission as to the "fearful increase of *moral-*

*delicte* amongst the priesthood" is worth noticing. The causes may be connected with the "unwholesome study" of the teachings of the renowned Alphonsus, or may have some other origin. Anyhow, it is made tolerably evident that even in the so-called universal Church, with its infallible head, there are doctrines disseminated and decisions given which are far from ethical perfection.

FRANCIS NEALE.

### Jehovah-Worship: Its Origin and Destiny.—III.

(Concluded from page 557.)

A NATION is always feminine in popular thought. Even we, with our rigid rules of grammatical gender, always speak of a nation as "she"; and much more the ancients, who made the grammatical genders agree with these popular personifications. But the spirit whose influence produced such emotions as I have described was necessarily masculine; and so, in the marriage between Jehovah and Israel, the foundation of all the subsequent developments was laid. If he was the husband of Israel, he must be the father of her sons, not merely as Jove was the father of gods and men—not merely as the elder, or the ruler, or even the creator—but as linked to them by the tenderest ties of fatherly affection. And, if he was a jealous husband, he never could permit the worship of other gods; nor could sacred prostitution, that common accompaniment of heathen worship, be tolerated by those who were really imbued with the religion of Jehovah. In truth, that religion has always carried with it a peculiar personal character. It is not altruism, nor obedience, nor awe, though at times it may issue in all these; but there is a peculiar elevation of soul about the Jehovah religion—a peculiar warmth and intensity, which it is difficult to put into words. And, through all the lapses of Israelitish history, the desert God still had his devoted adherents—men of intenser natures than the rest—who still clung to the original conception, and, since those who cared not for it mingled themselves with the Gentiles, finally made it dominant in Israel. But meanwhile the nation, bound by covenant to one object of supreme affection, was constantly violating that bond; and by these men all her catastrophes were attributed to his jealous indignation. If the Assyrians attack them, they are "the rod of his anger." He brings them because his people had "feared other gods, and had walked in the statutes of the nations, and had rejected his covenant which he made with their fathers." But, if he had power over the Assyrians, it was easily inferred that he had power over the whole earth. And then it came to be thought that the heathen gods were but imaginary, probably owing to the heathen habit of making symbolical statues of their gods, and then perhaps worshipping the statue. What then? If Jehovah is the Lord of the whole earth, and the heathen gods are but imaginary, he must be the only God. Then he is identified with the cosmic forces, he becomes "Jehovah Elohim," and a foundation is laid for further developments.

There were already two evil traits in the Jehovah religion. Owing to his chieftainship, and to the belief that the excitement of battle was caused by the indwelling of his spirit, the attempted extermination of the Canaanites was attributed to his orders. The Israelites would have tried to exterminate the Canaanites any way, for, like other nations, they were very anxious to seize upon the lands of the weaker tribes. But, from Jehovah's functions as their war-chief and indweller, they drew the inference that he sanctioned it—an inference without which they could not consistently have undertaken it. Owing to his jealousy, they enacted cruel and inquisitorial laws against all who should seek after other gods. But these were deductions, which were not necessarily implied in the fundamental conception. There was now a third evil trait to be added. Since he was the mind back of nature, he must be the author of all famine, pestilences, and sudden deaths. So men think now. Then they thought that he produced these effects by immediate action; now they think that he produces them by maintaining an eternal chain of causation. Then they thought he did it to

punish some offence; now they think that he does it, like the old lady in Alabama who whipped her slaves every Monday morning, just for fun. Then serious causes of offence were not always forthcoming, and so they had to attribute the catastrophe to whatever occurrence had happened, as when Uzzah's sudden death was attributed to his having steadied the ark; or when the pestilence in David's time was attributed to his having numbered the people. Now causes of offence are not inquired after, for we have given up explaining catastrophes on moral grounds. And, unfortunately, this last evil trait is not like the others. They were inferences which the Israelites drew from the functions and character of the God. This is hard fact; and, if we cannot explain it away, we can never get rid of it so long as we worship the mind back of nature. But the foundations of Jehovah-worship lie in the family affections—the husband's quenchless love and burning jealousy, and the father's pitying care—ideas which, when Christianity substituted a cosmopolitan for a national religion, underwent an almost unavoidable change; the jealousy first misunderstood and caricatured, then deemed odious, and finally rejected; the husbandship attenuated and evanescent; and the fatherly affection attributed, first to approbation of character, next to adoption, and finally to creation, rather than to its true historic source.

All that was fundamental in the Jehovah religion has evanesced, and there is a strong tendency in the minds of the more educated to veer round to the old heathen conceptions as modified by modern scientific knowledge. If our religion has been an historical development of heathenism, we should have worshipped the sun, the thunder-cloud, the storm-wind, the forest-fire, and the ocean, until it had been discovered that these are not the cosmic forces themselves, but merely products of them. Then we should have conceived light, heat, magnetism, and gravitation and the passions to be conscious forces, and should have worshipped them until it was found that they were merely modifications of one cosmic force. And then we should have conceived that one cosmic force as conscious, and worshipped it under the title of the "Immanent God," just as an increasing number are doing to-day. As far as I can learn, this was the course which the Brahminical religion actually took, arriving, however, at the idea of unity, not by science, but by philosophy. And, as the heathen did not attribute a very high moral character to their gods, we should not have been troubled with theodicies.

But Christianity is an historical development of Jehovahism, and consequently the doctrines of fatherly affection, and of justice in ruling, have survived to us. And from the doctrine of justice in ruling we have derived the doctrine of the absolute rectitude of the divine character in itself. From these bases, combined with the conception of the conscious cosmic force and the misinterpretation of Scripture texts, a vast mass of dogma accumulated in the Middle Ages; but, though it still commands a listless acquiescence, it has ceased to be a living force. In fact, two dogmas only are strong in the religious consciousness to-day—the fatherly affection and the conscious cosmic force—and the problem on which many books, called "theodicies," have been written is, Can we reconcile them together? And, if not, which shall we reject, or shall we reject them both? I have read much on this question, and have taken such opportunities as offered of conversing with those who seemed likely to be able to throw light upon it; but the conclusion at which I have arrived is that we cannot attribute fatherly affection nor justice in ruling nor absolute personal rectitude to the conscious cosmic force. Nor can we surmount the difficulty by supposing an unconscious cosmic force with a mind behind it, for, ethically, it amounts to the same thing.

Then, shall we worship the mind back of nature, notwithstanding that we cannot deem him good? This might have been done generations ago, when ethic was founded on awe and not on love, and when the whole structure of society depended on authority. But now it is impossible.

Then, shall we believe that somewhere in the universe there is a great being who possesses these high qualities, but who is not the mind back of nature? Certainly, if such a being exists, we ought to worship him. Then

there would be no need to tell us that we do not love God so much as we ought to do; for love, even to the fullest degree, would flow forth spontaneously and unbidden. But is there any evidence of the existence of such a being? Not in the conscience, for, if conscience were the voice of God, it would become more authoritative the more it was resisted, whereas the contrary is notoriously the case. Conscience is simply a jar produced by acting contrary to one's ideal, and, if a man's ideal be evil, he does not feel it, unless, perchance, he happens to do good. Not from what is called "feeling God," for that may be merely subjective. What, then, must be our conclusion?

The true object of worship is not a person, but a character. Indeed, all worship is really the worship of a character. If you worship a supposed powerful spirit, it really is his power and not himself that you are worshipping. For, strip him of his power, and where would be your worship? Worship, therefore, an ideal character; and do not mind whether any person or conscious force possesses that character or not. And love man the more because he has no father in heaven, but is only an orphan child, at the mercy not only of the forces in the physical universe, but also largely of those emotions which so often carry him away into doings which, in his calmer moments, he would abhor. And cultivate the higher emotions rather than the lower. Jehovism has fulfilled its mission. It has given us a higher ideal than the worship of the cosmic force.

H. W. BOYD MACKAY.

—*Freethought Magazine.*

### Acid Drops.

SUPERSTITION crops up in all sorts of places. The first meeting of the Scarborough Harbor Commissioners was held the other day, and it was proposed that the Piers and Harbor Committee be reduced from fourteen to thirteen; whereupon Sir Charles Legard asked whether that was not an unlucky number. The chairman said the number could not be increased, and Sir Charles asked why it could not be reduced to eleven. This suggestion caught on, and was unanimously adopted. Had the number been made thirteen, no doubt something dreadful would have happened. The piers might have fallen in unaccountably, or vessels might have been wrecked in calm weather. But the number is eleven, and Scarborough is safe.

We have been favored with a Salvationist bill advertising the performances of Bob Johnson in South London. He was formerly a nigger minstrel, but he was converted on Epsom Downs, on Derby Day, 1893, and he now sings and plays the banjo for Jesus—and General Booth. Judging by his dress and watchchain in the picture, he is fairly flourishing. One of his "popular songs" in his new line of business runs thus:—

Glory to Jesus! He satisfies me!  
Glory to Jesus! I'm free, I'm free!  
Glory to Jesus! Praise him I will:  
He saves me and keeps me and uses me still.

Evidently the banjo gentleman's poetical faculty has not been improved by his conversion. He can hardly have sung such utter "rot" in his unregenerate days. Nigger minstrel songs are often great rubbish, but never quite as bad as the above quotation from Bob Johnson's bill. No nigger minstrel could possibly sing such "balmy" stuff without being chased from his pitch.

The *British Weekly* denies the right of those who do not believe in the Jesus Christ of the four Gospels to call themselves Christians. Christianity is not an "effort of the human reason," but a "supernatural revelation." That is what our contemporary says, and we quite agree with it. The miracles of the Gospel story constitute its supernatural character; its teachings were all in the world before. It is the miracles, therefore, that have to be accepted or rejected. If you accept them, you are a Christian; if you reject them, you are not a Christian. That is the long and the short of it.

We do not agree with the *British Weekly*, however, when it says that such criticism as Huxley's on "the Gadarene pig affair" may well be ignored—except on the ground that the least said is soonest mended on such a ridiculous story. It is poor as fiction; as part of a divine revelation it is beneath contempt.

The Bishops seem to have their lives cast in pleasant places. We read in the papers that the Bishop-Designate

of Durham will return shortly from Switzerland; that Bishop Ryle has returned to the Episcopal Palace, Exeter, after a month's holiday; and that the Bishop of Marlborough is getting back to duty after a couple of months off. This is the way they bear their cross.

French priests are not as well paid as the Church clergy in England. Still, there are some good pickings in the ecclesiastical establishment over there. The living connected with the most fashionable church in Paris is worth about £5,000 a year. The priest who has just got it is happy. His immediate predecessor is supposed to be happy too—in heaven.

We have a certain respect for the Rev. J. W. Nixon, Vicar of Roberttown, Liversedge. In his *Parish Magazine* he blames the clergy for getting up amusements to make money for their churches. "We have," said one churchman, "danced for prayer-books and sung comic songs for hymn-books at our church." Mr. Nixon thinks all this is nauseous. The proper business of the clergy is to warn their people to "beware of the temptation of the world, the flesh, and the devil," and this can hardly be done by "making themselves as foolish as they can on Saturday evening" and putting on a solemn face in the pulpit on Sunday.

An amusing paragraph is going the round of the press in relation to one of those "sucking doves" called curates. It is as follows: "Curate (looking round, and seeing only one person 'congregated'): 'Dearly-beloved sister —', 'Come, none o' that, mister; my young man's just comin' in to fix up about the banns!'"

Recently Mr. Horatio Bottomley gave, in his article in the *Sun* called "The World, the Flesh, and the Devil," some samples of the enormous sums left by Bishops of the Church of England. There are now given some particulars of the Rev. John Wesley's income and style of living, which are, indeed, a contrast to the present-day episcopal affluence. Here is one example: The Commissioners demanded of John Wesley a complete statement of all his plate, etc., bearing duty, and "chargeable by Act of Parliament"; in default thereof his refusal would be made known to "My Lords." Mr. Wesley replied as follows: "Sir,—I have two silver teaspoons at London, and two at Bristol; this is all the plate which I have at present, and I shall not buy any more while so many around me want bread."

Dr. Winnington-Ingram says it is "a popular delusion that bishops are rich men." He says he had to pay £8,000 during the last two months in entering upon the See of London, and its two great see houses. Well, there is always some initial expenditure when you drop into an income of £10,000 a year and the occupation of a palace and town house, and proceed to adapt them to your liking. The outlay of £8,000 still leaves him with a margin of £2,000 on his first year's income, and then, if he lives, he will go on piling up the ten thousands, subject, of course, to some necessary disbursements which other people have to make as well as bishops. Where is the hardship?

Mr. John Lobb, in a note on the school of "Perfectionists" with special reference to the Rev. J. A. Macdonald, says: "My experience as ex-chairman of the Lunatic Visiting Committee is that these 'Perfectionists,' as a rule, degenerate into melancholists, and end their days in an asylum. There is a phase of piety, which is to be deplored, manifested in the self-styled Christian who is continuously striving to personally pose as a spotless saint, and throwing a merciless searchlight upon the secret faults of others. This detective Christian is truly one of the most dangerous elements of modern society."

The *Rock* publishes a letter from Mr. T. H. Aston, of the Birmingham Protestant Laymen's Association, in which there is a nasty knock given to harvest thanksgivings. He says it would be well if all Protestant Christians would make an effort to put an end to those held for show and decoration only. Oftentimes the whole thing is hollow and insincere. The congregations are attracted more out of curiosity than for the worship of God. These materialistic decorative exhibitions cannot be acceptable to God. "God is a spirit, and can only be worshipped in spirit and in truth."

A good story is told of one well-known diocesan, who is famous for his ardent temperance views. Walking down the street of his cathedral city one day, he passed a couple of working men, one of them a native, who was showing the sights to the other, a visitor. "Look," said the native, "that's our bishop; he's a great teetotaller, you know." The bishop glowed with pride at the tribute, till he heard the visitor reply, in an off-hand manner, "Ah, there's reformed of all classes, no doubt." Then the bishop's dignity crumpled up, and he walked on with an air of having heard nothing.

The *Spectator* thinks that the Roman Church does not stand so high in the friendly feelings of the English public as it did. One reason for this change, says that journal, lies in the fact

of the Roman Church in France appealing to the worst passions of the French nation against Dreyfus in defiance of all justice, thereby scandalising Englishmen.

The Bishop of Mashonaland has proposed a method of dealing with polygamy. The plan for achieving the result is original. Permit polygamy, he says, but regard every wife after the first as a luxury which should be taxed; and the tax should be a progressive one. If £5 should be the duty on wife No. 2 (No. 1 being free), the duty on wife No. 3 should be £10, on No. 4 £20, and so on, on the system of book-keeping followed by the Rev. Mr. Stiggins. The man, then, who had only one wife would have to work, owing to his limited supply of daughters; the ardent devotee of the fair sex would have to work to earn the wherewithal to pay his harem duty.

The Bishop of Mashonaland's bright idea is a capital one, and it would be perfect if the taxes thus raised were handed over to the missionaries for the propagation of the Gospel.

An edifying discussion is taking place on that most important question of the substitution of wafers for ordinary bread at the Communion by certain S. P. G. chaplains on the Continent. The *Times* says: "A chaplain who, in reliance upon a verbal quibble of interpretation, forces upon unwilling worshippers the use of what is obviously not what the words of the rubric imply, is surely overstepping the bounds of common sense and of charity, without in any way adding either to the solemnity or to the spiritual benefit of the ordinance."

The whole performance is ridiculously absurd, whether a piece of bread or a wafer is used. One could understand a little commemorative feast if it were made perfectly clear what it is established to commemorate. But in the historic uncertainty, the extravagant propositions made by Romanists and Ritualists in regard to the wafer or the bit of bread or the drop of wine, and their transubstantiation, are perfectly nonsensical to all who will trouble to think.

The Institute of Journalists has recently held its annual conference at Leeds. There were the usual sermons on the Sunday. The Methodist discourse preached by the Rev. A. K. Stowell was founded upon the following text, of all others: "Woe unto you, scribes and pharisees, hypocrites!"

That just served the Council of the Institute right for being so silly as to arrange for any sermons at all. Several newspapers have mentioned the incident with the headline, "Methodist Minister's Strange Text." Their surprise, after all, is a little superfluous, for the text is applicable to not a few of the members of that Institute.

In connection with the reported miraculous cure of a Lourdes pilgrim suffering from paralysis, a doctor writes to point out that readers of any medical book on the subject of railway spine will see nothing miraculous in the "cure." "Only one year ago," he adds, "a friend of mine (paralysed for two years after a railway accident) had an abscess, for which he took chloroform. On recovering from the effects of the anæsthetic his paralysis had left him."

In regard to the alleged genuineness of the "bones of King Edmund," the Rev. Alex. Donovan, vicar of Garton, writes a letter in which he is extremely sarcastic at the expense of the believers in these relics. He says that Romanists should be the last to question that notable miracles were, in former times, worked by these and similar relics. Then he says: "If they are the real article, their curative virtues should continue when placed in the shrine at Westminster. Let some blind, halt, or withered persons be restored by their means, and I, for one, will cease to doubt. Readers of Ingoldsby will remember how the authenticity of St. Gengulphus's relics was shown: 'The cripples,' said they, 'fling their crutches away, and people born blind now can easily see us!' But she (we presume, a disciple of Hume) shook her head and said angrily, 'Credat Judæus!'"

It was once suggested to Archbishop Manning that "a miracle" in London, instead of a pretended miracle at Knock, in Ireland, would be the more satisfactory proof of Rome's preposterous claims; but the miracle never came! The educated priests know what a delusion it is; but they do not mind a little superstition as "a means to an end."

Attention is once more drawn in the religious press to the falling off in the number of candidates for "holy orders." The statistics of the Trinity ordinations published in the *Guardian* show that the fall, noticed some time ago, continues. The total number of men ordained at Trinity was 381 as against 408 last year. The absolutely new recruits, the deacons, numbered 157 as against 188 at Trinity, 1900.

The *Church Times* admits that the fall at any time would

be large enough to be grave, "but, coming as it does after other signs of a lessened supply, it is more than ever serious."

There is the further fact that this year, as in several previous years, the proportion of the men offering themselves for ordination from Oxford and Cambridge has fallen heavily. The *Church Times* admits, frankly enough, that "the authorities of the Church, and indeed Churchmen at large, make no attempt to disguise the gravity of the situation."

It suggests that the disinclination is induced by the want of adequate "prospects." But from other religious organs we have learnt that it is not so much the want of "prospects" as the want of faith in the principal tenets of Christianity which has led many University men to turn their attention to other callings. They revolt at the idea of being hypocrites.

To Archdeacon Sinclair is attributed the remark that it always gives him a keen and excruciating pain on Sunday morning to glance in the direction of the choir, and see thirty merry, chubby-faced choir boys, utterly lacking the devotional spirit, crying with jubilant and reckless carelessness to Heaven to have mercy upon them, "miserable sinners!"

Rome is as intolerant to-day as she was three hundred years ago, as is proved by the attacks on Protestants in Limerick, Cork, and Dublin. At the same time we have no sympathy with the Protestants, who are equally intolerant when they have the chance.

The Paris police are busy tracing the identity of a new "Messiah" who has appeared in Paris. The limits of human credulity are still unreached, and this "Messiah," who used to be a hotel waiter, has been doing well, with elegant apartments in the best quarter. It seems as strange as it is pitiable that such an impostor should already have some thousands of deluded followers, and yet, unhappily, there is nothing surprising in it. It is merely history repeating itself.

Another instance of religious mania. During the sermon at St. Chad's Church, Stafford, a local publican's wife jumped from her seat and shouted that she was a prophet, and that the world was coming to an end next Saturday. She was removed from the church, but clung to the church gates for twenty minutes. Eventually she was removed to an asylum.

Referring to the "wines of the Bible" and some recent apologetics, the *Church Times* observes: "It is strange that one who describes himself as 'an inquirer' should adopt the fanatical teetotal theory that the wine used and sanctioned by Christ was an 'unfermented' beverage. There is no distinction drawn in the Bible between intoxicating wine and wine which is not intoxicating; and the chemical process by means of which fermentation is prevented in wine robs it of its character, so that it ceases to be wine, and is therefore not fitted for the sacred purpose of the Eucharist."

The grotesque notions founded upon the Apocalypse have been further exemplified in a letter to the *Roca*, by Albert H. Waters, who writes on the Millennium. He says "the 'last trumpet' is the seventh one whose sound we are now expecting. Six have sounded, six vials have been nearly poured out—perhaps fully so; the seventh may be even now changing the atmosphere, and causing such mysterious diseases as influenza!"

It is announced that Dr. H. von Schrenk and a United States Government Commission are to investigate the decay of sleepers in railways. Sleepers in our places of worship will be left undisturbed. There is no decay among them—as to numbers, anyhow.—*Sun*.

As a well-known London clergyman was recently ascending the steps to his church, an old lady requested his help. With his usual courtly grace, he gave the old woman his arm. On reaching the top step she halted, breathlessly, and asked him who was to preach. "The Rev. Mr. —," he replied, giving his name. "Oh, dear," exclaimed the lady, "help me down again! I'd rather listen to the endless grinding of a wind-mill. Help me down again; I'll not go in."

"The population of greater London," says the London Wesleyan Methodist Mission Report, "is more than six and a half millions. More than half this number are quite outside all Churches. In some of the districts only one person in eighty enters any place of worship." Yet, in the face of these facts, the Churches go on raising money for the conversion of "the heathen" in foreign lands; the explanation being, of course, that these Foreign Missions are an agency for lessening the pressure of out-of-works in the clerical labor-market at home.

Preaching at Wesley's Chapel on Sunday, the Rev. Mr. Wakinshaw sought to show "what great effects from little causes spring." Amongst other illustrations, he introduced that of the Pilgrim Fathers. "When the Pilgrim Fathers landed on Plymouth Rock," he said, "no one ever imagined that the great Republic of the Stars and Stripes would follow." Mr. Wakinshaw seems to think that the Pilgrim Fathers were in some way the creators of the great American Republic, and that it would not have existed without them. But this is the greatest nonsense imaginable. First, it is not the voice of actual history; secondly, the Pilgrim Fathers were only a small and insignificant section of the American colonists; thirdly, the said Pilgrim Fathers set up in America a worse tyranny than the one they escaped from in England. They were not really opposed to despotism; what they wanted was to run the despotism themselves.

What a glorious event it was (said an American humorist) when the Pilgrim Fathers landed on Plymouth Rock. Yes, but, all things considered, it would have been a still more glorious event if Plymouth Rock had landed on the Pilgrim Fathers.

Pious Emperor William seems to have overreached himself. He had mapped out a beautiful little function at his court on the arrival of Prince Chun and his suite from China to apologise for the murder of the German Minister at Peking—after that official's death had been avenged by wholesale slaughter and violation. It was arranged that the messengers from the Celestial Empire, including Prince Chun, who is the Chinese Emperor's brother, should all make a certain number of bows and fall on their faces before Emperor William. But, on hearing of the treat that was in store for them, the Celestial messengers pulled up at Basle, just two miles outside German territory. The sort of thing offered them was none the better for being made in Germany. They said they were not having any. Some of them even said that they would sooner die than submit to such humiliation.

Emperor William is a Christian, and Prince Chun is a "heathen." One of the greatest of Christian virtues is "humility." Likewise the German Emperor is considered to be—and certainly considers himself—a first-rate Christian. Yet some people say there is a decline of humor in the modern world.

The parish churchyard at Stanningley, in Yorkshire, wants "improving." Voluntary assistance came forward at first, but it soon dropped off, and the poor Vicar has been left alone to wield the pick and shovel. But perhaps it will be a benefit to his health, and help to increase his longevity in this vale of tears.

Palmists don't intend to be suppressed as rogues and vagabonds. They have formed an Occultists' Defence League, with a view to upholding their profitable profession. We wish them all the success they deserve.

Seriously, we don't quite see why the Palmist profession should be worried by the police. If a fool wants to have his hand "read," and another person wants to "read" it; and if the fool is ready to pay, and the other person is ready to receive; it seems to us a fair and open contract, and at least as respectable as the Purgatory business which is conducted by the Roman Catholic Church.

"Bags or Plates" was the exciting topic of a "Sunday Afternoon for the People" address by the Rev. E. Husband, at St. Michael's, Folkestone. It appears that it is necessary to circumvent the meanness of thrifty Christians even in the very House of God. Hold out a bag to them, and they drop in a coin of the smallest value. God sees what it is, of course, but they don't mind that as long as the collector and their fellow-worshippers are in ignorance. Hold out a plate, and their contribution is seen of all men; and what the eye of the One Above cannot do is brought about by the eyes of the many down below. Parsons, therefore, are down on bags, and are going solid for plates.

Mr. Husband told his audience of a millionaire who dropped a threepenny-bit into the collection-box. That was in the morning. He came to the same House of God again in the afternoon. And when the churchwarden came round, the rich Christian loudly whispered a refusal to contribute. "Certainly not," he said; "I have already given to the offer-to-day."

This reminds us of the good old story of the well-to-do gentleman who joined lustily in singing the beautiful hymn before the collection:—

Were the whole realm of nature mine,  
That were a present far too small;  
Love so amazing, so divine,  
Demands my life, my soul, my all.

And all the time he was feeling in his pocket the edge of a small silver coin to make sure it wasn't fourpence.

Professor W. M. Flinders Petrie, the eminent Egyptologist, has been enlightening the Society of Friends, in connection with their Summer "Settlement" at Scarborough, on the "Antiquity of Man." He said that they had to deal, in Egypt, with an unbroken chain of historic record from 5000 B.C., and there were actual objects carrying them back at least 2,000 years further; which, by the way, is about 3,000 years prior to the alleged creation of Adam, according to the chronology of the Bible. But that was not all. Even nine thousand years of human history took them "far from the beginning," for the civilisation of Egypt "must have come in from another country," although no one had the slightest idea where it was. And behind all historic records, of whatever description, there were those "vast periods" during which man had "kept up the chain of life." Altogether, this lecture must have disconcerted the faith of a good many of the listening Friends in the inspiration of what is (now) facetiously called the Word of God. They must have asked themselves, we imagine, what the deuce Paul meant by saying that "in Adam all died" when no such person as Adam ever existed.

It was not the Churches that subscribed that £250 as a present to the brave rescuers of the entombed pitmen in the recent disaster in Fifeshire, but the "ungodly" London Stock Exchange, whose members often use language that is intensely Scriptural, although it would shock the devotees in any Christian place of worship.

Thomas Bauld, one of the rescued miners, being interviewed by a representative of the *Glasgow Herald*, confessed to being a religious man in his own way, and to having trusted in God all the time; but he naively added: "I believe that we owe our lives to Thomas Rattray, the oversman, who, I am convinced, has lost his life." All that God did, then, was just nothing at all. He did not so much as intervene on behalf of the gallant oversman who lost his own life in trying to save the lives of his comrades. This ought to be a fine object-lesson in the doctrine of "Providence," if the Fifeshire miners would only take the trouble to think the matter out.

A lady writes to us from Notting Hill. She gives her name and address, but we need not disclose them. Her object is to correct a mistake in our "Atheist Shoemaker" pamphlet. Mr. Price Hughes said that his convert, who died of slow consumption, spoke in a clear, ringing voice only a few minutes before he expired. This we ventured to doubt as a physical improbability. But our lady correspondent says that it is nothing of the sort, for her own husband, who had been for two years dying, called out in a clear, ringing voice "It is all right," only an hour before his decease. Still, we are not convinced. The lady does not say that her husband died of slow consumption. Perhaps she meant it to be inferred. But that is not the same thing as a plain assertion.

Whether a person dying of slow consumption is able to speak in a loud, clear voice just before the last breath is merely an incidental point raised in our pamphlet. Whichever way it is settled, it does not affect our main criticism of Mr. Hughes's story. But somehow or other the Christians are fond of picking up these minor points, to the neglect of the chief issues. One pious critic called us a liar, and said he preferred to believe Mr. Hughes, simply because we referred to that gentleman as "young." This was to forget that the word "young" is often used relatively. Lord Rosebery, for instance, is "young" as a statesman in comparison with Lord Salisbury, but he is no chicken nevertheless.

The *Essex County Chronicle* gives an account of a lecture by Mr. C. M. Handley in the Market Square at Maldon on the "grand truths with reference to men being like donkeys." Mr. Horsman, of London, followed, and the principles of Christadelphianism were vigorously expounded. They met, however, with little favor from the crowd, which was distinctly unsympathetic and even derisive. "When a stranger," our contemporary says, "got up and addressed the people, and asked them not to believe such dangerous doctrines as the teaching of the Bible, and gave his reasons, he was cheered." We presume this Mr. C. M. Handley is the gentleman whose poetical efforts we criticised some time ago.

Happiness is the interest that a decent action draws, and the more decent actions you do the larger your income will be. Let every man try to make every day a joy, and God cannot afford to damn such a man. I cannot help God; I cannot injure God. I can help people; I can injure people. Consequently, humanity is the only real religion.—*Ingersoll*.



**Mr. Foote's Engagements.**

Sunday, September 8, Athenæum Hall, 73 Tottenham Court-road, London, W.: 7.30, "Mr. Hall Caine, the Pope, and Christian Democracy."

September 15, Athenæum Hall, London.

September 22, Manchester.

September 29, Glasgow.

October 6, Birmingham.

October 13, Hull.

October 20 and 27, Athenæum Hall.

November 10, Camberwell.

November 24, Leicester.

**To Correspondents.**

ALL communications for Mr. Charles Watts in reference to lecturing engagements, etc., should be sent to him at 24 Carminia-road, Balham, S.W. If a reply is required, a stamped and addressed envelope must be enclosed.

FREDERICK RYAN writes: "I have been away on business, or I should have written you before to express my sincere sympathy with you in the trouble with Mr. Anderson. There is, of course, no discredit in such a Bankruptcy as yours, and that is the chief thing."

JOHN ROBINSON.—Thanks for your good wishes.

J. DICK is sorry to see the way in which we have been used by Mr. Anderson. "My opinion of him," this correspondent says, "is that he is a good promiser, but a bad fulfiller. I hope you will defeat him at every move."

J. FISH.—Not at all too late. Thanks. You need not fear that we shall "spare" Mr. Anderson, any more than he has spared us. The matter of the Shares has got to be settled yet.

E. A. CHARLTON writes: "I am proud to be able to admire Mr. Foote, and I most sincerely sympathise with Mr. Anderson, for in the eyes of those who consider evidence before *rumor* he stands condemned as not possessing the mental balance necessary to enable him to keep the path of honor, justice, and common humanity."

J. P. BROWNE.—Thanks for cutting. See "Acid Drops."

W. P. BALL.—Thanks always for your welcome cuttings.

NAVAL FREETHINKER.—Your letter would have been just as welcome without the enclosure, though we daresay it gratifies you to send something, even from a very slender purse. It is pleasant to note your view that we have done "a splendid work for all Freethinkers." We shall be glad when we can get on with the work again without having to print compliments.

A. J. B. PEDLEY.—Thanks for your sympathetic letter. We value such things, with or without anything else. Those who can only give us encouragement, and give it, are also our very good friends.

HARRY DAVIES.—Miss Vance has handed us your pleasant letter, for which we thank you. We are sorry, however, to hear that you have been three months in Belfast without being able to come across the *Freethinker*; but glad to learn that you encountered it in a shop window at last. Our blessing on the shop.

W. W. STRICKLAND.—Your letter is no reply to anything we said. We are no more in love with the "commonplace" than you are, but we seek the opposite elsewhere than in the cultivation of the bump of wonder.

JAMES THOMSON.—You will see that Mr. Foote is to visit Glasgow in a few weeks, when you will have the opportunity you desire of hearing him. Thanks for your kind letter and enclosure.

CORRESPONDENT.—If we printed it we should be asked where it happened, for some people are very literal-minded, and you do not furnish us with the means of answering.

C. R. BARKER.—Don't believe anything that Christian papers say about the last hours of the late Charles Bradlaugh. They were not in a position to know anything on the subject. Even the "brother" you refer to only speaks from a reckless imagination. Charles Bradlaugh was not on speaking terms with him for many years, and apparently with very good reason. We advise you to get the pamphlet by Mrs. Bonner (Charles Bradlaugh's daughter), entitled *Did Charles Bradlaugh Die an Atheist?* She stood by his death-bed, and knows what she is talking about. She has also written a Biography of her father. It is a large book, and contains ample authentic information about the great leader of English Freethought. You should also read Mr. Foote's *Infidel Death-Beds*, where the pious stories about the recantation of historic Freethinkers are exposed and refuted.

D. CURRIE.—Thanks for cutting. See "Acid Drops."

J. DEWAR (Edinburgh).—Miss Vance reminds us that we did not thank you for that vol. i. of the *Freethinker* which you very kindly sent us. We much regret the oversight, and beg you to accept our best thanks now.

L. JENKINSON.—Our literary work has been terribly impeded by worries as well as other occupations. We hope, however, to get a clear time now to write several things which have long been mapped out, and for which we have collected materials. The book you refer to would be amongst the number.

F. SMILES.—The Twentieth Century Edition of Paine's *Age of Reason* has sold very well, and is still in good demand; but the first issue [of 10,000 copies is not likely to be exhausted for some time. We should like to hear of the last copy having gone by Christmas.

L. SIMPSON.—Pleased to hear from you, but afraid we cannot use the manuscript.

PAPERS RECEIVED.—Crescent—La Raison—Blue Grass Blade—Truthseeker (Bradford)—Little Freethinker—Freidenker—Two Worlds—Secular Thought—Book Queries—Essex Chronicle—Belfast Witness—Sydney Bulletin—Leicester Reasoner—Truthseeker (New York)—El Libre Pensamiento—Discontent—Torch of Reason—Public Opinion—Leeds Daily News.

THE National Secular Society's office is at 1 Stationers' Hall Court, Ludgate Hill, E.C., where all letters should be addressed to Miss Vance.

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

LECTURE NOTICES must reach 1 Stationers' Hall Court, Ludgate Hill, E.C., by first post Tuesday, or they will not be inserted.

LETTERS for the Editor of the *Freethinker* should be addressed to 1 Stationers' Hall Court, Ludgate Hill, E.C.

ORDERS for literature should be sent to the Freethought Publishing Company, Limited, 1 Stationers' Hall Court, Ludgate Hill, E.C.

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.

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

**Personal.**

It was well that I did not *promise* to have done with this Anderson-and-Bankruptcy affair in this week's *Freethinker*. I said that I *hoped* to do so, but I could not go beyond that. So far, at least, I was wise. It will be prudent, I find, to reserve my final statement as to my affairs—certainly for another week. This will give my readers a little rest with regard to the subject. Meanwhile, they can rely on my completing the publicity which has been forced upon me. It is my firm intention to let the Freethought party know *all* the facts, and thus settle, once and for ever, the lying rumors that have been in circulation to my disadvantage.

My friends need no longer be apprehensive as to my home and my books. The settlement of that matter is not quite finished, but all *danger* is at an end. Details shall be given in my final statement. But I must return interim thanks to the true friends, all over the kingdom, and in other lands, who have come to the assistance of my wife and family at a time of grave peril, and have indirectly saved me from the only thing I ever feared.

Mr. Anderson also obtains another week's grace. He has sent a postcard answer to the communication I referred to last week from the Board of Directors of the Freethought Publishing Company. He says that his solicitor is away for a few days, but will no doubt send an answer on his return. Very well, we shall await that answer, in the hope that the "few days" will not be as long as the other "few days," which have lasted several weeks. Personally, I confess I do not understand why Mr. Anderson cannot send *his own* answer. It is not a question of law, at least at present, but a question of conscience. Will he, or will he not, fulfil his public pledge? Surely that is a point for his personal determination. Still, if he chooses to delegate matters of conscience, as well as matters of business, I suppose he must take his own course; though I wish he would act otherwise, as I wish he had acted otherwise throughout.

G. W. FOOTE.

**The Fund for Mrs. Foote.**

Mr. and Mrs. J. Dick, 5s.; J. Robinson, 2s. 6d.; F. Ryan, 10s.; J. Forsyth, 2s.; J. Flood, 2s.; J. Stocks, 2s. 6d.; C. Raffill, 2s. 6d.; Ernest, 1s.; J. Peacock, 5s.; Naval Freethinker, 1s.; Stamps, 1s.; L. V. Horne, 2s. 6d.; Bletchley, 2s.; Harry Davies, £1; Richard Carroll, £1; Mr. and Mrs. Sharkie, 10s.; J. Beazer, 2s.; J. M., 3s.; M. K., 1s.; W. H., 1s. 6d.; Paul Rowland, 5s.; William Milroy, 5s.; John Milroy, 2s. 6d.; J. Fish, 5s.; T. Challon, 5s.; John the Martyr, 2s. 6d.; E. A. Charlton, 10s. 6d.; W. Rowland (further sub.), 5s.; S. Burgon, 5s.; G. F. Finn, £1; E. Andrews, 5s.; A. C. Brown, 2s. 6d.; J. and R. Alward, £1; James Thomson, £1; G. Burrell, 1s.

## Sugar Plums.

THERE was a crowded audience at the re-opening of the Athenæum Hall on Sunday evening, when Mr. Foote lectured on "The Future of the Freethought Party and My Position in It: with a Reference to Recent and Passing Events." Miss Vance occupied the chair, and it was her last appearance in London before taking a well-earned fortnight's holiday. Mr. Foote's lecture was followed with profound interest. We cannot attempt to give any account of it in this paragraph. Of course he referred to the recent attempt to ruin and humiliate him by proceedings in the Court of Bankruptcy, and it was evident that the sympathies of the audience were entirely with him in the struggle. Loud cheers greeted his announcement that his home was safe from all possible attack, and that he intended to remain at his post of service in the Freethought Movement until the party wanted him to give place to another occupant. The £30,000 scheme was obviously an object of derision to the audience, who seemed to consider it quite worthy of the contingent offer of £15,000; an offer so curiously made and so speedily withdrawn. Had Mr. Anderson been present on Sunday evening, and perhaps others—for it is difficult to believe that he has acted in complete isolation—they would have perceived that the persecution of the President has only provoked a strong reaction in his favor. The Freethought party has always respected good honest fighters, but it has never had the least sympathy with those who, not being able to stand up to a leader in front, have sought to stab him in the back. Such a blow, when it misses its mark, as it nearly always does, inevitably recoils upon the striker.

Mr. Foote lectures at the Athenæum Hall again this evening (September 8). His subject will be "Mr. Hall Caine, the Pope, and Christian Democracy"—in reference, of course, to Mr. Caine's new novel, *The Eternal City*, which has been reviewed in most of the papers, and is said to be selling like hot cakes. Mr. Foote will attempt to show that such books, in spite of the applause and profit they bring the writers, are only signs and symptoms of the intellectual senility into which Christianity has fallen. The lecture should be interesting to others as well as to Freethinkers, and the "saints" who attend should try to bring some of their less heterodox friends along with them.

By the way, a gentleman got up after Mr. Foote's address on Sunday evening, and said that, as there did not seem to be any discussion forthcoming, it might be noted that the date was Mr. Cohen's birthday, and in view of many things it might be well to send him cordial congratulations. The idea commanded assent, and the said congratulations are herewith conveyed to their object. Need we say that we join in them sincerely?

We hope there is nothing amiss with our gallant old friend and colleague, Mr. Joseph Symes, at Melbourne. It is some time since we received a copy of his *Liberator*—one of our exchanges which is always welcome when it arrives. Should the recent non-arrival be due to accident, as we earnestly trust, Mr. Symes will no doubt see this paragraph, and arrange, if possible, for a more regular transit of his paper.

The *Leicester Reasoner* for September opens with a careful, well-written, but anonymous statement of "Secularism." We wish it could be read by everybody in the town.

Owing to the resignation of Dr. Wilson and Mrs. Henry, Mr. E. M. Macdonald, of the New York *Truthseeker*, has become President of the American Secular Union. He has summoned the twenty-fifth annual Congress, to be held at Buffalo early in October, from the 4th to the 6th inclusive. We hope the American Secularists will take this opportunity of arriving at a common understanding, with a view to united and effective war against the common enemy.

One of the most gratifying incidents of the Trade Union Congress at Swansea was the reception accorded to an Ode of Welcome, written by Sir Lewis Morris, and recited by Mr. Rees, the editor of the *Cambria Leader*. It was followed by long-continued applause. We are unable to regard Sir Lewis Morris as a great or a very considerable poet. Still, a Shakespeare doesn't turn up on these occasions, and it is pleasant to find working-class representatives hailing one who does come to them in the name of the ideal.

The East London Branch will hold no meetings next Sunday (September 15). The members are going to join the Sunday League excursion to Southend, and will meet at Liverpool-street Station at 9.15 a.m. Members of the committee will wear green and mauve badges, and they hope to see a good number of East-end "saints" on that occasion.

The Glasgow Branch opens its autumn session to-day (September 8), when the platform will be occupied by Mr. J.

McDougall, whose essay on Rationalism appeared recently in our columns. Mr. McDougall is a gentleman of wide reading, and a good and capable speaker. His lecture on "The Church, the State, and the Social Problem" is certain to be up-to-date and interesting, and we hope it will attract an excellent audience.

M. Waldeck-Rousseau, the French Prime Minister, who is a Freethinker, shares the late Charles Bradlaugh's taste for fishing. He had a fortnight's holiday at Jersey lately, where he spent long hours in a fishing boat, wearing a woollen jersey and a sailor's jacket, and smoking a pipe. Evidently the curses of the Religious Orders have had no effect upon him, for he has returned to Paris in first-rate condition; indeed, his friends are surprised at his healthy and youthful appearance.

The West London Branch, whose subscription of two guineas to the Fund for Mrs. Foote has already been acknowledged, has passed a resolution of profound sympathy with the President, and assures him of its continued confidence and support.

Now that the days are shortening, and the first winter month is approaching, we venture to ask our readers to do their best to circulate the remaining copies of the first issue of the Twentieth Century Edition of Paine's *Age of Reason*. Never was such a wonderful sixpennyworth issued before in the history of Freethought. At such a price this immortal masterpiece ought to find its way into myriads of fresh hands. The great thing, of course, is to apprise people of its existence in this cheap and handsome form. To advertise it extensively is impossible; the cost would be too great. But every Freethinker can, if he chooses, constitute himself an advertiser of the book, and thus help to put it into wide circulation. Those who like to lay out a few shillings in copies for distribution amongst their friends and acquaintances can purchase them (for that purpose) at our publishing office at the rate of 4s. 6d. per dozen. Not less than six copies are supplied at this rate.

## The National Secular Society.

REPORT of monthly Executive meeting, held at the Society's offices, August 26th; the President in the chair. There were also present: Messrs. E. Bater, J. Beach, C. Cohen, G. Cooper, T. Gorniot, W. Heaford, W. Leat, A. B. Moss, B. Munton, J. Neate, E. Quay, V. Roger, H. J. Stace, T. Thurlow, C. Watts, F. Wood, and the Secretary.

Minutes of previous meeting were read and confirmed.

The Secretary reported the action taken *re* H. Hunter.

It was decided to issue *The Secular Almanack for 1902*, and Mr. Foote kindly consented to again act as editor.

In view of the several unfavorable circumstances, it was resolved to abandon the idea of an Outdoor Children's Party, and to arrange for one nearer Christmas.

A sum of £1 1s. was voted to the Chatham I. L. P., to assist them in their efforts to maintain the rights of free speech.

Other routine business having been transacted, the President thought he should give the Executive an opportunity of saying whether, in their judgment, his bankruptcy acted as any sort of moral disqualification against him as President. It was at once moved by Mr. Heaford, and seconded by Mr. Gorniot:—

"That this Executive, in full cognizance of the circumstances of Mr. Foote's bankruptcy, records its unabated confidence in him, and calls upon him to continue his occupation of the presidency of the N. S. S."

Carried unanimously.

The meeting adjourned until September 19th.

EDITH M. VANCE, *Secretary*.

N.B.—Will Branch Secretaries please return all information intended for the *Almanack* as early as possible? A complete list of newsagents who sell the *Freethinker* in each town would be greatly esteemed.

## The Family Bible.

Deacon Scrimp—"Humph! Think you've got to have a vacation, eh?" Struggling Pastor—"Yes; the doctor says I must go off until this cough is cured." Deacon Scrimp—"Well, I'd like to know why preachers are always getting bad coughs." Struggling Pastor—"Well, you see, we have to visit around a good deal, and we are always asked to hold a little service before leaving, and I think our throats become affected from breathing the dust that flies from the family Bibles."

## Education and Agnosticism.—II.

(A Discourse delivered before the congregation of the Church of This World, Kansas City, Missouri, and reported for the New York "Truthseeker.")

(Continued from page 549.)

### A DISTINCTION DRAWN.

LET us, then, make the distinction between education and sectarian training. The sectarian training produces honest partisans and sincere sectarians. A great many men, themselves emancipated, cannot understand how people can honestly believe the old doctrines. Some people wrongly think that ministers, as a rule, are dishonest. They are not; they are sincere, and it is accounted for by the fact that they have not been educated, developed, emancipated, freed. They have been trained, repressed, indoctrinated. There are thousands of them. They honestly think God Almighty is a Baptist or a Methodist, and has been baptised, or sprinkled, or poured, and has joined their Church.

It is one of the sacredest and most solemn truths that the intellectual life cannot be trifled with. Nature has set about it, as she sets about virtue, a wall of fire. Who challenges that barrier does so at his peril. A man, to be able to think correctly, must be willing to think freely and fearlessly.

### THE TRIUMPH OF THE MAN OF SCIENCE.

Contrast the process of such sectarian training with the process of lawful education. The sectarian training assumes a God and a revelation. About that assumption all things must be arranged; every fact discovered in nature must be harmonised with that fundamental assumption. It is not possible, having formed that foundation, to make any variation or any exception, notwithstanding the increase in the knowledge of the world and new discoveries.

We have witnessed in the past generation the distress, the pathetic, pitiful attempts of a great Christendom to align new discoveries with their old assumption. When the geologist said the world was a million years in making, and the evidence could not be doubted, the theologian, the man with the assumed God and revelation, resented and resisted it, and cried it down with ridicule, and sometimes with anathema. The scientist, undisturbed, calm, and confident, knowing that he was right, bided his time until the evidences increased. The feeling widened and deepened in the mind of man, until within the space of half a century the world knew that the scientist was right, and that the theologian was wrong.

### THEOLOGICAL SUBTERFUGE.

Then the theologian claimed that six days meant six indefinite periods. And yet the infinite revealer, whom they say inspired every line and every word, permitted the man who wrote that book to use a term, the word "day," that he knew would hopelessly deceive and mislead his people for thousands of years. It does not seem so long ago—and honestly it was not so very long ago—that I was listening to the lecturers in the college course, and one of those wise men, determined to maintain the honor and the truth and the dignity of God, believing that the Bible was a faithful witness, and geology was wrong, solemnly said that the fossils did not prove anything, and that the different layers or strata did not prove anything; that it was not necessary to assume that the world was any older than six thousand years because of those impertinent evidences. "Why," he said, "God Almighty could just as easily make a fossil as he could a living man."

It seems past all comprehension, but it is the inevitable difficulty into which any man will come who assumes a definite, positive, absolute theory, and then attempts to explain all things by it.

### LOYALTY TO TRUTH.

In contrast with the position of the sectarian training is that of education proper, which assumes not an authority to be interpreted; not a fact, however great and divine; not even an infinite god. It assumes a mind capable of learning, and a world capable of being learned; and without any prepossession or prejudice or prejudices, without any theory to maintain, without

any dogma to uphold, without any obligation save only to be loyal to the truth as discovered, it goes forth to find out what it can. Such is the difference between the believer and the learner.

The Church is wise. The prelate was far-sighted; the universities do produce Agnosticism; there can be no question about this. Of all the army of professional men—the men whom we take in a general way to represent learning—lawyers, physicians, and the great multitude of newspaper men and journalists, these are so generally Freethinkers that to find an old-fashioned believer among them is a matter of comment and particular report. It is said (I do not know how truthfully) that upon this continent there is not one well-known and influential newspaper man who is a believer in the old doctrines.

The universities cannot help producing Agnosticism, because in the process of education the four sources of knowledge to which the universities appeal are not known to the sectarian, and the source of knowledge upon which the sectarian relies is absolutely unknown to the man seeking education. To assume authority and tradition as a source of knowledge would be to build a wall across the path of the learner; he could not progress upon the way of knowledge; he would be turned aside and driven into a Church.

### GOD'S EXISTENCE UNPROVED.

Moreover, the sources of knowledge to which the universities appeal do not, and never have, and never can, yield the theories upon which the Church rests. All the knowledge that the university can command from sensation, pure reason, the accumulative experience of the world, and the process of education, will not, cannot, and never has produced the definite, positive, undeniable evidence of the existence of a God. How else, then, when a man has followed the process of development and finds that there is a vast silence, giving no speech; when he has been taught to rely upon things near at hand—things that can be measured and weighed, demonstrated and proved, and finds that no report is left of this divine being; finds that by no process of logic can he corner the infinite by a syllogism; finds that by no reasoning, by no process of philosophy, can he make it absolutely certain that there is a God—how else can that process issue except in reverent doubt, that longing unsatisfied to know? Let us be assured that, with reference to this doctrine of a divine existence, the position of the Agnostic is not one of denial. He simply says that by any of the known methods by which knowledge is acquired the knowledge of God is not acquired. He does not, because you cannot approach him along that line, shut any of the other avenues; he leaves the longing open; he leaves the spiritual sympathies unimpaired; he stands reverent, silent, perhaps expectant, and waiting, with no language upon his lips.

(DR.) J. E. ROBERTS.

—*Truthseeker* (New York).

(To be concluded.)

## "What After the Old Religion?"

### A WOMAN'S ANSWER.

I TAKE earnest issue with you in your conclusions as expressed in your editorial of Sunday, July 23, on "What After the Old Religion?" Science has proved beyond question that the human family has developed from lower organisms. This relieves God of the charge of having in his wrath cursed the unborn generations of time, because Adam disobeyed him. It purifies the universe of the blood of its supposed Creator, and proves that the entire damnation and redemption story is the child of ignorance and superstition. Science has proved that the laws of nature are changeless and uniform; that no child was ever born without the agency of a human father. Science has proved that no person really dead ever came to life again, and that no body of flesh and bones ever violated the law of gravity. The mixed, contradictory, unsubstantiated story of the gospel is a descendant of the Dark Ages, but an improvement on the mythology of the time.

What you call the Christian religion has, with the machinery of God, heaven, hell, fire, sword, and torture,

ruled the world for 1900 years. Yet each Christian nation has its hand on the other's throat, while they are all robbing, in the name of Christianity, the weaker nations, spilling their blood, and taking possession of their lands. Political, industrial, and theological greed and dishonesty pervade all departments of life. The pulpit is a plant, an industry supporting a vast army of men, having the advantage of all other industries, in that they pay no taxes, and make use of the fiction of God, heaven, and hell; while their teachings are utterly demoralising, keeping the masses ignorant and superstitious, teaching men that they have no power of themselves to save themselves; that, with bowed heads and folded hands, they must pray to have something done for them; teaches that, no matter how vile the life has been, if, at the end, a man says he believes in Christ, he will go directly to heaven; teaches that it is right to put the penalty of his sins upon a sinless one; teaches that charity must be done in the name of God and the hope of heaven, and not justice in the name of humanity and for love of our brother man. This Christianity divides the community into factions, which in the past have been at each other's throats with bloody effect, and now are disuniting, disorganising, and producing friction, proving the saying attributed to Christ true (if there is any truth in the Gospel), "I came not to bring peace, but a sword."

What is truly moral in the New Testament teaching was taught hundreds of years before Christ, only scientific knowledge was not so general, and the people could not grasp the thoughts so as to lift them out of their slavish condition of ignorance, fear, and superstition.

We do not need to get into right relations with a God who hides himself in the home of perfect bliss he made for himself, but we do need to get into right relations with the changeless laws of the universe, and with our struggling and suffering brethren. When we do this we will know what comes, after the fading away the old religion, based on miracles, and which cannot be proved "until we cease to be men."

The conclusion is, that all which has developed the mind of man, all which has purified and ennobled human life, that which puts out the fires of the "torture chamber," which saved innocent men and women from being tortured to death, accused of being witches; which protected the insane from theological persecution, which enabled science to do the purifying and organising work, is the work of self-sacrificing men, undaunted by torture and persecution, questioning nature until she gave no uncertain answer, and science was born.

A bloody warfare she has had with theology, but she has conquered; with yet a vast work before her, "Science is doing a great work in getting rid of superstition; but there are vast, low-lying plains that have not yet felt her beneficent influence."

All that is true, sure, and good in life is the work of the demonstrated knowledge, of the knowledge of the laws of nature which science has given to the world. Theology is guilty of all that remains. This is the conclusion of a growing number of people.

—*Washington Post.* (MRS.) M. M. TURNER.

No matter what may come to me or what may come to you, let us do exactly what we believe to be right, and let us give the exact thought in our brains. Rather than have this Christianity true, I would rather all the gods would destroy themselves this morning. I would rather the whole universe would go to nothing, if such a thing were possible, this instant. Rather than have the glittering dome of pleasure reared on the eternal abyss of pain, I would see the utter and eternal destruction of this universe. I would rather see the shining fabric of our universe crumble to unmeaning chaos, and take itself to where oblivion broods and memory forgets. I would rather the blind Samson of some imprisoned force, released by thoughtless chance, should so rack and strain this world that man in stress and strain, in astonishment and fear, should suddenly fall back to savagery and barbarity. I would rather that this thrilled and thrilling globe, shorn of all life, should in its cycles rub the wheel, the parent star, on which the light should fall as fruitlessly as falls the gaze of love on death, than to have this infamous doctrine of eternal punishment true; rather than have this infamous selfishness of a heaven for a few and a hell for the many established as the word of God.—*Ingersoll.*

## At Sunday School.

LET us drop into our parish Sunday-school; it will be a change; and there is sure to be much worth noting. Well, we cross the lawn in the churchyard and enter the stack of severe red bricks by an ivy-covered porch, just as the children within are commencing the afternoon with a hymn. "I want to be an angel," they are singing, and we enter the school-room where a number of chubby-cheeked little boys and girls are singing lustily, and rather hurriedly, it seemed to us, just as though they wanted to get it over. For outside the sun is shining, and it is a pleasant afternoon. I want to be an angel. Not the children, surely! Do their parents want them to be angels? I trow not. They would sooner have them good little boys and girls, with the ambition to be good men and women when they grow up. Anyhow, lessons have commenced, and we sit down near a small circle of children who are presided over by a red-haired damsel of some nineteen summers, and evidently very anæmic. We heard afterwards that she was Miss Jones from the linen-draper's round the corner, and it somewhat grieved us to know that, after the long working days that befall young ladies in her walk of life, her leisure was devoted to what she termed the "Good work." In point of fact, however, she was nursing to her breast the ugly serpent of delusion, and, with all the obstinacy of the feminine nature, she believed she was doing right.

But there is more interesting matter in progress. Little Tommy Tussell would, of course, occupy more room than he comfortably needed, and, consequently, little Annie Brown found herself seated upon the floor amid the titters of the other members of the class.

Miss Jones, the teacher, found it difficult to restrain a smile; yet, with a forced glance of severity in Tommy's direction, she impressed him with the unseemliness of his conduct.

Tommy looked very penitent, and one would have thought he was indeed ashamed of himself; but in the young the natural spirit of mischief will assert itself, and this explains why Maggie Thomas, who was sitting just in front of Tommy, was forced to uplift her hand and catch the teacher's eye.

"What is it, Maggie?" said teacher.

"If you please, Miss Jones, Tommy Tussell's kicking me."

"Tommy, you naughty boy, how will you expect to go to heaven when you behave so? If I hear of you again this afternoon, I shall speak to the vicar; so there."

Poor Tommy subsided and shrank into the pages of a large Bible which he had been holding upside down, and indeed that Bible seemed to possess an unquenchable interest for him during the remainder of that lesson. Anyhow, Tommy played truant next Sunday. It was getting towards the close of school-time, and the children began to display an unusual activity. They were evidently looking forward to a romp as they went home to tea, and, once out in the open air, their natural and gleeful antics were a marked contrast to the close and murky atmosphere of the Sunday-school class-room.

FRANK HALL.

## A New "Portrait" of Tolstoy.

M. PAUL BOYER, the well-known French writer, contributes to the *Temps* an interesting account of a visit paid within the last few weeks to Count Tolstoy at his home in the south of Russia. It is six years since M. Boyer saw the old man last, and this is his description of his host: "Lyoff Nikolaievitch is thinner; his face is wrinkled, the lines on his fine head are deeper, his figure is bent, and his shoulders seem narrower, but on the whole he is not changed; his walk is still light and extraordinarily supple and firm; there is no tremor of his finely-shaped hand; his eyes, though small, pale, profound, and mobile eyes, look at you with the same frank gaze from under the heavy white brows. The voice alone, less full and less steady, betrays the seventy-three years of the athlete." And of the recent illness not a sign seems to have remained.

At tea, after his usual manner, the sage of Yasnaïa Poliana talked to his guest of the subject which occupies his thoughts most frequently. "It is good to live," he said, "but it is also good to die. One is so well off when one is ill. You feel detached from all bodily things; you see only the life of the spirit and of the soul. And there is nothing terrible about death. It is an abyss, they say. The comparison is false. When you are ill you seem to be ascending an easy hill-slope, which, at a certain height, is curtained off by some light stuff; on the other side of the curtain there is more life; but behind you is death. And of how much moral value an illness is than our normal state of health! Don't talk to me about people who never are, and never have been, ill. They are terrible, especially the women. A woman always in health is verily a ferocious beast." And it is characteristic that, while her husband is hurling this epigram at women in general, his wife should listen with a gentle smile, and Tolstoy, turning to her, should warn her, in most affectionate terms, against the danger of catching cold.

—*Westminster Gazette.*

Correspondence.

MR. ALCOCK'S GOD.

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE FREETHINKER."

SIR,—I have received a letter from Italy, written by Mr. W. W. Strickland, in regard to the discussion raised by the Rev. Henry J. Alcock in these columns. Mr. Strickland, on his letter, writes, without any mark of "Private," or other indication that it is confidential: "To Francis Neale, Esquire. —I shall be curious to see whether you have the honesty to have this letter printed in the *Freethinker*."

The letter, of course, should have been addressed to the editor of the *Freethinker*. There is no question as to "honesty." I wouldn't suppress a word that any critic of mine had to say against my views. Why should I? I have always welcomed opposition.

With the permission of the editor, I will reproduce and reply to the main points in Mr. Strickland's letter. It will be speedily seen that there could be no inducement to suppress his letter. In the first place, he says: "We have had a long and interesting discussion about the Jewish conception of Deity, and at the end of it, it appears to me, we are much where we were at the beginning." This is usually so with disputants and persons of very decided opinions. But one has to consider inquirers, and those who are in a doubtful frame of mind. Mr. Strickland is so very decided, not to say dogmatic, that one can hardly include him in these classes, and therefore it is not surprising that he remains where he was, in spite of all that has been said.

He says: "By fishing up a few cant phrases, such as 'an all-powerful and infinitely benevolent Being' and a 'Personal God,' these barren recriminations can be carried on indefinitely." How, within a few lines, Mr. Strickland can describe what has appeared in these columns, first as a "long and interesting discussion," and then as "barren recriminations," is a point which may be left for fuller explanation. But is it a "cant phrase" to speak of the higher sort of conception of the Deity as "all-powerful and benevolent"? He is certainly so described by believers, and the reason the "cant phrase," which he says has been "fished up" by me, was used was obviously to show the difference between the God worshipped by Israel and the entirely different one worshipped now.

A funny idea, indeed, to call it "fishing up a cant phrase" when one constantly hears it or reads it in the discourses of the highest professional exponents of Theism. I don't believe it to represent anything, of course; but the bulk of Christian Theists do. Has Mr. Strickland another sort of God?

Then Mr. Strickland says: "One thing is clear. Mr. Neale admits the existence of suffering—an enormous amount of it, in fact—and what he calls the injustice of heredity. If his supreme guide, Reason, compel him to condemn a Personal God, made in his (Mr. Neale's) image, for these unfortunate details, when it compels him to deny the existence of such a God, his blame must necessarily fall upon Nature, which is all that is left to blame."

Of course, it would be no use undertaking such an insensate task as to blame Nature. I blame those who would make us believe, contrary to every observation, that this world has been made by an all-powerful and benevolent Being. How the idea of such a Being originated it is difficult to discover. The facts of existence are against it. Who doubts that there is an enormous amount of suffering in the world? And who can reconcile it with infinite benevolence and power? Many books have been written in which such attempts have been made, but you can stab them all with a little poke of the pen.

Mr. Strickland goes on to say that "Mr. Neale is therefore, by necessity, a pessimist, and has no right in any argument to appeal to Nature as against revelation." In the first place, I have said nothing to indicate that I am a pessimist. The statement that there is "an immense amount of suffering in the world" does not show it. And, if I were, I am not conscious of having appealed to Nature against "revelation." I rather thought it was the Rev. H. J. Alcock who appealed to Nature. But, anyhow, whether I am a pessimist or not, that does not logically prevent me criticising the Jew-god or any other god, and in regard to all the gods I have ever heard or read of my attitude is absolute disbelief.

Mr. Strickland says: "Atheists all seem to look upon Nature as a sort of big sausage-machine, a mill grinding humanity into a moment of uncomfortable consciousness and then grinding it back into eternal death. If they would only try to stick to facts, and think of the meaning of the word 'Being,' they would be forced to admit that, if we creatures of a day are beings, Nature is so in a much greater degree. Mr. Neale is, therefore, compelled to deliver his tirades against a Being for not being all that he could wish it, and not against a sausage-machine."

But then I do not know that I have any wish to deliver tirades against Nature considered as a Being or as a sausage-machine. As I have already said, I object to the fanciful conceptions and assertions made in regard to the origin and government of Nature—or the "sausage-machine," if Mr. Strickland prefers it, though I do not think that any of the

"dogmatic Atheists" he speaks of regard the universe in that light. At any rate, if they did, when they look around them they might be moved to think that in regard to that sausage-machine something had "gone wrong with the works."  
FRANCIS NEALE.

"MONISM OR DUALISM?"

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE FREETHINKER."

SIR,—Supposing we grant that "the postulation of morality involves the admission that man has inherited moral faculties from and through billions of dead-and-gone organisms, whose base was carbon," does that bring us any nearer to a cosmical explanation for morality? Cosmically, all quality is inseparable from, or the concomitance of, composition. For example, I take a cup of tea and add milk and sugar till I get what appeals to my sense of taste. It is quite evident that the particular manifestation does not exist in the tea, sugar, and milk uncombined—the qualities of each being different to the combined result—but that it is the concomitance of a particular combination of molecules, and disappears with their dissociation. From a cosmical standpoint, then, difference in quality is the inevitable concomitance of difference in arrangement or difference of components; so that, cosmically, there can be no such thing as transmission of quality. We can only postulate the inheritance of "moral faculties" by their persistence through the different organisms.

"Every thing or force in nature is relative—nothing absolute or free from limitations; hence no free will." And hence no "will" or "volition"; for if nothing is "absolute or free from limitations," then no one thing can determine its own qualities or generate its own activities, "and the guarantee for human actions" does not come "from man," but from his limitations which mould him along the lines of least resistance. If we push the argument that "there is a cause for everything, even for volition, and there is nothing free throughout the cosmos," we make all effect analagous to volition, and the present cosmos a system of volitions; for if Mr. Jones argues that volition exists, and yet is not "free" or voluntary, he lands himself in the position that it is involuntary or automatic. But Mr. Jones absolutely kills his position, that "Volition is a link in the chain of cause and effect, and a perfect chain must have no free link," by his statement that "the term 'voluntary' can only be applied when we leave out of consideration the antecedent." We can only know a thing as an effect in the relation that we grasp its cause by our realisation of antecedents; and, therefore, to talk about leaving out of consideration the antecedent is equivalent to postulating that the effect has components which are not contained in the antecedent or cause. We only realise the link through its relation as part of a chain.

If we "induce a man to cease to do evil, and learn to do well," by influencing, stimulating, or arousing "his dormant moral sense into normal activity," it follows that the "moral sense" is something apart from the general activities necessary to his life as an organism, seeing that the organism performs the necessary functions or reactions both when the "moral sense" is dormant and when it is active. To sum up Mr. Jones's position as it really stands, we are told that digestion, circulation, and breathing—all absolutely necessary to our existence—are reflex actions, while certain cerebral activities involve purpose and volition, and yet cannot occur except in correlation with these processes. Now is there, I ask, any possibility of reconciling this postulate of "will" or "volition" with the position that consciousness is but the concomitance of brain activities which can only occur as part of a living material organism?  
T. W. KINGHAM.

Flaubert on Voltaire.

I do not share your opinion of the personality of M. de Voltaire in any way. For me he is a *saint*. Why persist in seeing a low comedian in a man who was a fanatic? M. de Maistre has said of him, in his treatise on sacrifices: "There is no flower in the garden of intellect which has not been defiled by this caterpillar." I can no more forgive M. de Maistre for this phrase than I pardon MM. Stendhal, Veuillot, Proudhon, for all their verdicts. The consumptive, anti-artistic breed is the same. Temperament stands for a good deal in our literary affections. Now, I like the great Voltaire as much as I detest the great Rousseau; and I take the difference in our estimates very much to heart. I am surprised that you do not admire this great pulse, which moved the world. Can such results be obtained by the insincere? In this verdict of yours you belong to the school of the eighteenth century, which saw in religious enthusiasm only the mummery of priests. Let us bow before all altars. In short, that particular man seems to me burning, eager, convinced, superb. His "Let us crush the infamous" affects me like the shout of a crusade. His whole intellect was an engine of war. And what makes me particularly fond of him is the disgust with which the Voltaireans inspire me; people who laugh at great things! Did he laugh—he? He gnashed his teeth.

—Gustave Flaubert, Letter to Madame Roger des Genettes; J. C. Tarver's translation.

## 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, "Mr. Hall Caine, the Pope, and Christian Democracy."

WEST LONDON ETHICAL SOCIETY (Kensington Town Hall, ante-room, first floor): 11, J. Coventry L'Anson, "Some Lessons from the Life of Emanuel Swedenborg."

## OPEN-AIR PROPAGANDA.

BATTERSEA PARK GATES: 11.30, F. A. Davies, "Christianity and Common Sense."

BROCKWELL PARK: 3.15, F. A. Davies; 6.30, F. A. Davies.

STATION-ROAD (Camberwell): 11.30, R. P. Edwards.

PECKHAM RYE: 3.15, R. P. Edwards.

CLERKENWELL GREEN: 11.30, W. Heaford, "God, Man, and the Bible."

EDMONTON (corner of Angel-road): 7, W. Heaford, "Salvation."

FINSBURY PARK (near Band Stand): 3.30, C. Cohen, "Our Father."

HAMMERSMITH BROADWAY: 7.30, W. J. Ramsey, "The Gospel of Atheism."

HYDE PARK (near Marble Arch): 11.30, C. Cohen, "Christianity and Slavery"; 3.30, W. Heaford, "The Odor of Sanctity."

REGENT'S PARK (near the Fountain): 6.30, R. P. Edwards, "Christ and Other Teachers."

MILE END WASTE: A. B. Moss—11.30, "Bible Saints"; 7.15, "The Fruits of Christianity." Wednesday, September 11, A lecture.

POPLAR (West India Dock Gates): 11.30, E. Leggatt.

STRATFORD (The Grove): 7, C. Cohen, "Christianity at the Bar of History."

VICTORIA PARK: 3.15, A. B. Moss, "Nature and the Gods."

KINGSLAND (corner of Risleigh-road): 11.30, S. E. Easton, "Where Will You Spend Eternity?"

SOUTH LONDON ETHICAL SOCIETY (Brockwell Park, near Herne Hill Station): Lectures every Sunday morning at 11.30.

## COUNTRY.

BRADFORD (Vacant ground, bottom Morley-road): H. Percy Ward—3, "What Think Ye of Christ?"; 6.30, "Bible Heroes." September 9, at 7, S. H. Pollard, "The Gospel of Freethought." September 11, at 7, H. Percy Ward, "Why was I Born to be Damned?"

CHATHAM SECULAR SOCIETY (Queen's-road, New Brompton): 2.45, Sunday-school.

GLASGOW (110 Brunswick-street): 12, Discussion Class—S. Haines, "A Peep through a Telescope"; 6.30, J. McDougall, "The Church, the State, and the Social Problem."

LEEDS (Woodhouse Moor), G. Weir, "The Wickedness of God."

LEICESTER SECULAR SOCIETY (Humberstone-gate): 6.30, F. J. Gould, "Mrs. Hemans."

NEWCASTLE-ON-TYNE (Moor-edge): 7, R. Mitchell.

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