

# Freethinker

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## Easter.

WHAT a lot of antiquities we are, to be sure! I do not mean this as a reflection upon the number of birthday anniversaries celebrated by readers of the *Freethinker*—that would be a rather dangerous observation to make concerning the feminine portion, and plenty of the male readers would find it none too pleasing. I refer rather to the manner in which the various sciences have converted us into antiquities. Astronomy and geology have added undreamt-of millions of years to the history of our planet, biology has taught us to look for the origin of our most deeply-seated impulses in long dead-and-gone generations of animal life, and anthropology, not to be behindhand in these matters, makes it plain that a large number of our institutions and ideas and beliefs have their beginnings in frames of thought long ago discarded, and in social conditions long since outgrown.

In this manner science has given to the phrase, "The Antiquity of Man," an altogether new meaning, a quite unexpected significance. It involves not merely the existence of man thousands—hundreds of thousands—of years before the orthodox creed once fixed the creation of the world, but also the antiquity of many of our ideas and customs, and carries with it the further lesson that to understand these ideas, particularly those belonging to religion, we must get back into the dim past and try to trace out the genesis and the course of their development. It is more or less waste of time dealing with the reasons that people *now* give for maintaining religious customs; that they believe is adequate proof that they do not understand them. If they did understand them, they would cease to believe. As it is, their avowed reasons are nothing but curious illustrations of the persistence of custom, and of how closely related the most civilised race of the present is to the uncivilised races of the past.

A pertinent illustration of what has been said above lies at hand in the present festival of Easter. It is now called a *Christian* festival. Christian, forsooth! Why, there is not a single particle of it that is Christian, except that Christians have adopted it as such. Every symbol, every ceremony, is pre-Christian. Even the name does not belong to it. This is probably derived from the Saxon Eostre, the Goddess of Fecundity. So far as the New Testament is concerned, Easter has no existence, the passage in the *Acts* being an obvious mistranslation—a conclusion confirmed by the fact that the Christians for centuries celebrated Easter upon the date of the Passover until it finally gave way to the present date.

But it is hard to disguise the origin of such a festival as Easter, and the manner in which the date is fixed is a sufficient proof that it is *not* the celebration of a historical occurrence. The date of any historical event is the same year after year. The Battle of Waterloo, for example, was fought on June 18; and, whether June 18 falls on Monday or Tuesday, or any other day of the week, does not matter—that is the anniversary of Waterloo. But we do not fix Easter in this way. The supposed death of Jesus must always be commemorated on a Friday, and the Friday is determined—by what? Not by a historical occurrence, but by an astronomical one. Its date is avowedly determined by the spring equinox. Was ever a historical occurrence, was ever any man's birthday or deathday,

fixed in this manner? Is not this enough to prove that we are in the region of mythology, and not history?

Of course, the truth of the matter is that you cannot understand Easter, any more than you can understand other Christian festivals and ceremonies, so long as you restrict yourself to a study of Christianity alone. The man who knows but one religion, said the late Professor Max Müller, knows none; and one may add that the man who knows more than one generally disbelieves in all. But you certainly must get beyond Christianity to understand it; and, when we have done this, we discover that we are dealing not with the death of an obscure Jewish peasant in ancient Judea, but with part of a world-wide system of mythology, celebrated by people thousands of years before Jesus is alleged to have been born.

Among all the nations of the East the period of the spring equinox was a season of rejoicing and religious ceremonial. It was the natural beginning to the year, the real resurrection of nature from the death-like sleep of winter; and religious ceremonies bore obvious and unmistakeable references to it. Attis, Adonis, Osiris, Dionysius, all had their death and resurrection symbolised and celebrated at the spring festival; and in the case of Jesus we have merely a duplication of the same ceremonial. Mr. Sydney Hartland in his *Legend of Perseus*, and Mr. Frazer in his *Golden Bough*, have collected so many different instances of miraculous-born, piacular-dying, and resurrected deities that it is no longer possible to doubt the substantial meaning of the Easter festival as celebrated in the Christian Churches of to-day.

What the Christian Church did was to take these old myths, which had some significance while they were treated as mythological, and attempt to give them a literal historical significance. The result was to fashion a gigantic absurdity. What reason is there, for instance, in Christians calling the anniversary of the day on which their God died *Good Friday*? If the Jesus of the New Testament really was a historical character—nay, if he was, as the Churches tell us, "very God of very God"—his being put to death by his creatures was one of the most stupendous crimes that history records. Yet this is the day that Christians distinguish by the epithet "Good"! Would a mother call a day good because her child died thereon? Would a mere friend act in this manner? Take Easter for what the Churches say it is, and one is either disgusted or amused. Take it for what we know it to be, and we can appreciate its significance to primitive peoples, and still utilise it as a piece of poetic imagery now that its mythological interest has died out.

It is the same with all other ceremonies and usages connected with Easter. All have an unmistakeable Pagan origin. The cross upon the buns sold on Good Friday most Christians piously believe to have some kind of connection with the crucifixion of Jesus. But the cross was the symbol of all the deities I have named, as well as of numerous others I have not named. And the eating of cakes marked with the symbol of the god is, as Mr. Frazer has shown, almost world-wide, and is in all probability but one way of eating the god himself. Probably, too, it is a survival of the primitive belief that, in eating a person, the eater inherits the qualities of the eaten. In Mexico the image of the principal deity was made in dough, baked, and eaten by his worshippers. In India, in Asia, and in many parts of Europe the same custom, with slight variations, is found. In Rome itself loaves made in the shape of the sacrificial animals were regularly baked, sold, and eaten.

Connected with this custom of cake-eating, Mr. Sidney Hartland has collected some curious and instructive instances of what he calls "sin-eating," lasting well into modern times. First of all he points out, and amply illustrates his contention, how widespread is the custom of eating sacramental cakes at the death of a chief or of a relative. This custom still survives in the handing round of cakes and wine before going to a funeral. The frequent restriction of this eating to the actual bearers of the corpse points clearly to its religious origin. And this custom he finds lingering well on into the nineteenth century. An eighteenth-century writer tells of a Welsh custom of employing professionals, whose function it was to drink and eat a cake stamped with the name of the deceased persons. These people were called "sin-eaters," and received 2s. 6d. for the week—not over-well paid, seeing they were supposed, in eating, to take upon themselves all the sins of the departed. But the connection of this practice with the God-eating of the Christian religion, and the bun-eating of children on Good Friday, is too obvious for students of mythology to miss its significance. The common Easter egg is also a survival of pre-Christian times. It was sometimes the symbol of the universe, but always the symbol of life, and it is closely connected with supernatural births in very many of the legends in Mr. Hartland's collection. In ancient Rome painted eggs were the common playthings of children. In pre-Christian Russia they were exchanged in visiting as symbols of friendship. The Jews used them—and still do so—in the celebration of the Passover. The Christians simply fell into line with another universal pre-Christian custom in using them as a symbol of the resurrection. There was nothing new in the symbol, or in the thing symbolised. Numerous other Easter customs might have their origin traced in a similar manner.

There is no need to deal here with any of the stories related of the alleged crucifixion and resurrection of Jesus. Both these events are unhistorical and intrinsically absurd. All impartial students of religion know this nowadays, and so do many of the clergy, only it does not pay them to say so. They are in the business, and must keep up the reputation of the firm as well and as long as possible. And so we see annually in the churches the solemn farce of celebrating as an actual historic event a piece of mythology that was world-wide and thousands of years old before ever Jesus is said to have been born.

In its pagan garb the spring festival, with its obvious and avowed reference to the quickening of vegetation and the rejuvenation of life, had at least some reason for its existence. Whatever our opinions may be, we can all rejoice at the approach of spring, and re-echo the gladness of nature with voice and action. But Christianity, in associating these ancient ceremonies with its supposed historical founder, has converted what might have lingered on as a pretty and harmless custom into a piece of senseless or disgusting buffoonery. In line with its general pessimism it has surrounded the season of the earth's re-birth with the depressing picture of a tortured, emaciated, Jewish peasant. True, people do not nowadays show themselves depressed by the supposed sufferings of Jesus; they eat and drink rather more lustily than usual; they arrange for holidays and excursions; and, instead of Easter being the anniversary of a murder, it might, to all appearances, be the anniversary of a wedding.

But the credit of this is not due to Christianity. The Churches *tried* to crush the gladness out of life, but failed. What it proves is that the Pagan creeds, with all their faults and stupidities and cruelties, came much nearer to an understanding of life than ever Christianity has done. And you cannot altogether crush out tendencies that rest upon, and are, the expression of the community of human and cosmic existence. You may distort or dwarf, but you cannot destroy. Spring-tide was a season of rejoicing long before Christianity appeared; it has remained a season of rejoicing in spite of the efforts of the Churches to make it otherwise. And the persistence of its primitive characteristics shows how powerless is even religion against the operation of tendencies of this character. Religion *may* triumph over the better part of human nature for a time, but gradually nature reasserts its power and religion sinks into oblivion.

C. COHEN.

## The Reformation: "The Cause of God."

THE Rev. H. Hensley Henson, Canon of Westminster, recently preached a sermon in Westminster Abbey upon "The Reformation," in which he described it as "the Cause of God." This was in accord with Lord Shaftesbury's statement that the protest of the sixteenth century was "a holy movement inspired by God." It appears strange, if Protestantism were ushered in under special "Divine" influence, that the principal men engaged in bringing about this revolution should be such questionable characters as they were. Luther was a bitter persecutor, a believer in polygamy, and a stern opponent of science. He was a relentless antagonist to freedom of thought when it was exercised outside of his own Church—as witness the testimony of Lord Russell and Hallam. Henry VIII., who was, after Luther, the chief agent in establishing the Reformation, was a most cruel and despicable character. He was a murderer, a hypocrite, and a perpetual plunderer. Calvin, who undoubtedly planned the death of Servetus, and Knox, who prayed that the "bloodthirsty Catholics may be sent down to hell," were far from being a credit to any cause, be it of man or of God. Human wisdom would not have selected such men to pioneer any movement intended for the good of mankind.

Besides, if the Reformation were really "the Cause of God," who is supposed to be all-wise and all-powerful, it is but reasonable to suppose that it would have been complete and successful, whereas it was neither. It failed to establish mental freedom, and to destroy the power of Roman Catholicism. There is no doubt that the Reformation was far too limited; and its principal exponents were not sufficiently liberal towards those who preferred to advance further on the road of Scepticism than the doctrines of the Reformed Church permitted. In too many instances the Bible was substituted for the Church as an absolute authority, and severe punishment was inflicted for heresy; private judgment was interpreted to mean the judgment of the English Church; and instead of one Pope, whose behests commanded obedience, several popes, under the name of clergymen, exercised their despotic power over the adherents of the new faith. The establishment of Nonconformity was a striking proof of the weakness and incompleteness of Luther's protest. The doctrine of "passive obedience," as taught by the new Church, was found so cramping to the mind that in one day two thousand clergymen left the Church never to return. As Taylor, in his *Retrospect of the Religious Life of England*, remarks: "The principle of the Anglican Church is conservative, not progressive. She keeps what she took at the time of her separation from Rome, without carefully sifting its quality; and, her limits being once fixed, she neither contracts nor enlarges them. Her deference to authority checks the free investigation of truth. She shrinks from the unconditional acknowledgment of the right of private judgment. With her the consent of antiquity must control and subdue the impulses of the individual mind." Of course, the influence of Freethought, which is everywhere so potent to-day, prevents members of the "Broad Church" from strictly acting up to their official teachings; but the Thirty-nine Articles, the Creeds, and the authority of the Prayer Book still exist, and if it were not for the secular spirit of the age they would probably have the same deteriorating effect as ever. For, be it remembered, the dominant phase of Protestantism was always a reflex of the political and ethical status of the times in which it was professed. For instance, this faith assumed very different aspects under the respective reigns of Henry VIII., Edward VI., and Elizabeth; while at the present time Protestantism as a religious faith is a mere shadow of its former self.

Canon Henson says:—

"The Reformation is seen to have been a day of decision, a crisis in the fortunes of the nations of Europe, an appeal of God. The effect of the response then made is summed up in the words 'progress' and 'decline.' The nations who shrank from reformation have declined, and are now everywhere showing signs of social dissolution; the nations who adopted reformation are advancing."

These statements are exceedingly vague and misleading. What was decided at the Reformation? Not

any definite form of religion, for the adherents of the new faith almost immediately split up into numerous sects. It is a great error to imagine that the secession from Roman Catholicism was followed by the establishment of one permanent form of Protestantism. The various Dissenting sects which now compose the motley Protestant Church are the result of the lack of decision which marked the era of the Reformation. No doubt it was "a crisis in the fortunes of the nations of Europe," for it was a bold attack upon ecclesiastical authority, and a mighty effort to vindicate the principle of Scepticism. But a long time elapsed before the struggle came to partake of any other character than that of a struggle for liberty on the part of various societies or associations of men. At the commencement of the sixteenth century the phrase "individual liberty of conscience" was not understood by the masses. It is only just, therefore, to admit that the "crisis" did confer at least one advantage upon a large portion of the community. In theory it was held that every man had a right to "search the Scriptures" for himself; but it must not be overlooked that this right was at once curtailed when it culminated in the rejection of the notions of the Reformed Church. As to the alleged "appeal of God," to whom did he appeal, and for what purpose? Was it for the cessation of Catholicism? Then the appeal was in vain, for that blight upon humanity still thrives in our midst. Was the appeal to Protestants? If so, it was of little avail, the appeal to Protestants has only been a conglomeration of incomprehensible creeds and hollow professions.

Canon Henson urges that the nations which have adopted the principles of the Reformation have advanced, while those who ignored them have declined. This is but stating the partial truth—a too frequent habit indulged in by orthodox writers when they wish to enforce their theological teachings. It is a principle in history that, when the false is opposed only by the partially true, error is seldom combated successfully. This is the case with the Canon's contention. He alleges that the progress made in Protestant nations is due to the superiority of the Protestant religion to that of the Catholic. But this is only half the truth. The real cause of the progress in Protestant countries is the extensive scepticism that is allied with the reformed faith. This is evident from the fact that for over two centuries after Luther's protest but little progress was made in reference to social, political, and scientific questions. And even in the domain of theology the advancement from the conditions existing under Catholicism was not great. Until the latter part of the eighteenth century, Protestantism was narrow in its teachings and intolerant in its influence. It was not till the nineteenth century, when scepticism had become a power, that any material progress was perceptible. The Reformation having opened the door to freedom of thought, the sceptical elements of Non-conformity entered, followed by bolder and more advanced scepticism, which in its turn opened the portals still wider for the entrance of intellectual liberty.

The Reformation was, beyond doubt, a step in the right direction; and, had it not been marred by theological restrictions and clerical machinations, its results would have been far more beneficial to the community than they have been. At its dawn a golden opportunity awaited real and practical reformers. Prior to the sixteenth century Freethought was generally confined to the few, while the many were content to accept with implicit belief all that was provided for them by those who had so long held the human mind in bondage. Scepticism arose and inspired the masses to make a desperate effort to break that bondage, and to inaugurate a conflict in vindication of individual liberty. Theology became separated from morals and politics, and the truth was proclaimed that moral and political vitality could exist apart from theological direction. This was a most progressive step.

It must not be supposed that the slightest attempt is here made to palliate the gross corruptions of the despotic nature of the Roman Catholic Church. No words would be too strong to characterise the conduct of those who labored from generation to generation in aggrandising the Roman Church at the expense, not only of society in general, but also of all other Churches.

It must be admitted that under the rule of Roman Catholicism the state of Christendom was deplorable in the extreme. It is, therefore, the more to be regretted that, when once a blow had been struck against this demoralising Church, the conflict was not carried to its legitimate issue. Protestants failed to do this desirable work. Having secured liberty for themselves, they denied it to others who were not content to abide by their limitations of human thought. It requires the Secular application of intellectual freedom to combat successfully the reign of bigotry, the strife of theology, and the power of priestcraft. It should be gratifying to every true Freethinker to be able to recognise that some of the noblest instances of human endurance and of determined resolve to emancipate mankind from the power and dominion of a narrow theology, and often of an unscrupulous authority, have been conspicuous as the result of Secular enterprise. The continuance of this work is the further reformation that is now required; and the task will not be performed by theologians, but rather by men whose hope is to see established a condition of society free from all creeds and dogmas.

CHARLES WATTS.

## Should Happiness be Our Aim?—IV.

### III.—UTILITARIANISM (*concluded*).

SELF-SACRIFICE AND MARTYRDOM.—It is suggested that self-sacrifice and the loftier and rarer forms of self-abnegation in general will die out under Utilitarianism. But why should they? When self-sacrifice promotes human happiness, Utilitarianism, by the very terms of its formula, will obviously support it. Without such vindication or excuse, the sacrifice of one's own life is foolish or culpable suicide, or self-murder. When there is a justifying object or imperative purpose that object or purpose will supply the motive, and Utilitarianism will provide a rational test of the rightness or wrongness of the self-sacrifice, thereby furnishing such moral sanction or authoritative command as the case may require. It may freely be confessed that the suicidal self-sacrifice of the good for the preservation and multiplication of the innately bad or inferior will not occupy so prominent and so mischievous a position in Utilitarian morals as it does in the moral ideals of theophylanthropists and other admirers of "pathetic exaggerations" like those in which the Sermon on the Mount indulges. Duty to our fellows will remain, and brotherly love will continue, but irrational self-sacrifice and absurd asceticism will no longer convert our codes of conduct into sources of human misery. Only *useful* kinds of self-denial and self-sacrifice will be retained. Martyrdom for truth may disappear under Utilitarianism because the *need* for it may disappear, since Utilitarianism will not desire or permit fanatical persecutions like those fostered by religion. But Utilitarianism will not weaken or extinguish the *spirit* which has inspired men like Bruno at the stake. Martyrdom for principle will depend on the native "grit" in a man, and Utilitarianism will not take this away, but, on the contrary, will supply consecration and support to heroes and martyrs whenever there is urgent need of their precious protest against the tyranny of falsehood and fanaticism. Unlike the religion of the past, however, Utilitarianism will greatly prefer to preserve and multiply brave thinkers whose precious characteristics the Church would have eliminated from the race by persecution or celibacy.

I may be asked how I reconcile such faithfulness unto death as that of the heroic Bruno with the Natural Hedonism which I have said governs all our actions. I reply that Bruno took the course which, to his noble mind, was the less painful. He had the choice between a painful death and the still more painful violation of some of the firmest habits and ideals of which his mind, or his system of thought and action, was built. To him, as a philosophic disbeliever in hell fire, death in itself had no insuperable terrors, or was even a friend in disguise. He chose the inalienable pleasure of a peaceful conscience. Self-respect, honor, dignity, manly fortitude, heroic determination, sustained and comforted him. He was animated by zeal for the truth he gladly

championed, by fiery indignation against the cruelty and fraud that he defied, and by the knowledge or hope of the ultimate value of his protest against triumphant brutality. The prospect of a cowardly surrender and of life-long self-contempt was to him more humiliating, and thereby more painful or less endurable, than the prospect of the relatively brief agony of a martyrdom, which would be an eternal vindication of the great cause for which he gave his life, and also a deeply-welcomed personal release from all further stings and arrows of outrageous persecution.

**RULES.**—Some allege against Utilitarianism the absurdity of requiring men to make an elaborate or impossible calculation of all the results of each particular action on the general happiness of mankind before they can decide what to do. But to suppose such an absurdity is itself an absurdity. The good sense of mankind has to agree upon certain *rules* of conduct, just as we find it best to have a rule of the road, rules of navigation, rules of etiquette, etc. It is these rules we have to keep, and they are impressed upon us from childhood by social usage and personal training and habit. Utilitarianism supports such rules because they are absolutely necessary for the general advantage; but it also supplies the means of testing, correcting, and improving as well as strengthening them, whereby the evolution of morals is facilitated for the common benefit, and an *intelligent* obedience to the rules is substituted for a blind, slavish obedience, which sometimes defeats the whole purpose of rules, which are, or should be, but details or applications of the great fundamental rule or principle of Utilitarianism.

#### IV.—IS UTILITARIANISM A FAILURE?

A reviewer\* of Leslie Stephen's recent work on the English Utilitarians speaks of the "waning credit" and slow downfall of the great Utilitarian school, in which the reviewer includes Bentham, the two Mills, Dugald Stewart, Malthus, Ricardo, Grote, and Buckle, but does not undertake to include Herbert Spencer, although the latter advocates the "rational" Utilitarianism which places virtue in the foreground as a necessary means of the "supreme end"—happiness. The Utilitarians, of course, wrote according to the knowledge of their day. They mostly lacked the light which modern science, with its doctrine of evolution, has thrown on man himself and on the moral and social problems with which he is so deeply concerned. Thus James Mill, we are told, could see no room for the theory of a moral sense. That we should not trouble about virtues, but should always go direct to the Utilitarian principle as our guide, is a policy which is not suitable for ordinary men, and is not acceptable to such Utilitarians as perceive the value of emotional and habitual virtues as well as of intellectual insight. But all this does not in the least rob the "greatest happiness principle" of its validity as a statement of the aim of moral or social effort, or of its usefulness as a test of right or wrong. We may grant that "efficiency," and not happiness, has been the *primary* determinant in our evolution in the past; but the question we now have to decide is, What shall *our* aim be? Are we to sacrifice happiness for the sake of efficiency? And, if so, why? Or shall we aim at happiness, and only care for efficiency so far as it promotes that end? The Utilitarian principle explains why efficiency is generally desirable, and directs us to the most valuable kinds of efficiency—namely, such as best promote the general happiness. The reviewer, however, alleges that the theory of the greatest happiness being the measure of right and wrong, has "melted like a morning mist." I venture to believe, on the contrary, that the Utilitarian principle pervades and illumines the morning mist like the dawning sun. Even those who decry the Utilitarian formula appeal continually to its substance, and will, apparently, do so more and more as time evolves higher and wider conceptions of sympathy and humanity, and prepares the way for the far-seeing scientific morality which will study the happiness of all generations.

It seems to me that there is a growing agreement that, as moral beings, we ought all to work for the general happiness of mankind. So far as I can see, the Utilitarian phrase, "the greatest happiness of the

greatest number," is the best approximate summing-up in brief of the goal to which the moral or social effort of mankind is evolving or tending. Of course, there are limitations to the application of this principle. Thus, for various good reasons, we pay far more attention to the happiness of our own species than to the happiness or misery of the lower animals, though these enormously outnumber mankind. That among mankind our love and effort are not diffused in equal strength to all—that our charity begins at home, though it does not end there—is no defiance of the Utilitarian principle, since mankind, as a whole, is far better provided for by each mother tending her own children, and by each citizen looking after himself and his own family, than if our efforts were frittered or wasted on universal or indiscriminate attentions to the whole species, instead of being strengthened and made effective in comparatively narrow channels of self-love, personal attachment, family love, etc. Quality of happiness, too, is to be considered even more than quantity, if only on the ground that quantity will thus be ultimately increased, the higher kinds of pleasure and pain being our most hopeful security against the worst miseries that afflict mankind, and the indispensable means of maintaining peace, order, and the general blessings of civilisation, which enable enormously increased numbers of people to live safely and happily where otherwise hardly a hundredth part of the number of savages could maintain a precarious existence passed in constant danger of starvation, and of torture or massacre at the hands of cruel and relentless enemies.

W. P. BALL.

(To be continued.)

### Man the Image of God.

THERE is one matter in connection with the Hebrew Creation story which is not often noticed. This is the Bible statements respecting the form and appearance of the Hebrew Deity. In one of the articles of the Church of England this mysterious Being is said to be "everlasting, without body, parts, or passions; of infinite power, wisdom, and goodness." This statement does not, however, possess in the eyes of many Christians the same authority as Scripture. We will, therefore, see what the Bible has to say upon the subject.

If we search through the inspired volume, we shall find numerous passages in which the alleged Creator of the universe is stated to be wise, glorious, holy, just, perfect, true, upright, righteous, good, gracious, faithful, merciful, compassionate, long-suffering, and jealous; but these, it will be seen, are merely human qualities, which tell us nothing of the real nature of the Deity. There are also several passages in which the Hebrew God is said to be omniscient, omnipresent, and omnipotent; but these, again, are simply attributes which leave us still in uncertainty as to the form or appearance of the Creator. Finally, we are led to turn to the Creation story, and here at last we find a clear statement upon the matter.

The author of this narrative tells us in the plainest terms that the *genus homo* was made in the image and likeness of the Creator—that is to say, this writer believed that the Hebrew God possessed a physical form of precisely the same shape and make as man, having head, limbs, eyes, ears, vocal organs, etc. His account of the creation of the human species (Gen. i. 26, 27) reads as follows:—

"And Elohim said, Let us make man in *our image*, after *our likeness*; and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, etc.....And Elohim created man in his *own image*, in the image of Elohim created he him; male and female created he them."

The sentence, "Let us make man in *our image*," may be explained by the fact that the word "Elohim" has a plural termination, and meant originally "gods," though the term afterwards came to be employed to designate one god only—the Hebrew Deity Yahveh. The statement in Genesis is thus perfectly plain: man was made in the image and likeness of his Maker. Many professing Christians, however, have the effrontery to assert that the writer of Genesis did not mean what

\* *Daily News*, November 9, 1900.

he said. These perverters of Scripture contend that the inspired writer meant that man was like the Creator in being endowed with intelligence, in being created pure and sinless, in having a moral nature, and in possessing a spiritual something within him called a soul. This interpretation is a clear perversion of the sacred narrative; for the writer was obviously speaking of man's physical form, not of any qualities or attributes he might possess.

According to the story, the Creator prepared the earth for habitation, and called into existence some of every species of the lower animals, after which he paused in his work to consider what form should be given to the last specimen of his handiwork. Should he make man in the "image" or "likeness" of any of the animals already created—say, in that of an ostrich, a serpent, an elephant, or a crocodile? After considering the matter for a moment, the Hebrew Deity decided to make man of precisely the same form as himself. This is what the writer of the story says, and what he evidently meant.

In order, however, to remove the smallest possibility of doubt upon this subject, we have but to notice the meaning given to the words "image" (*tselem*) and "likeness" (*demuth*) in other passages of the Old Testament. This is what a certain Christian Evidence writer calls "Letting the Bible speak for itself." The following examples will make the meaning clear:—

1 Sam. vi. 5: "Wherefore ye shall make *images* of your tumors, and *images* of your mice."

Ezek. xxiii. 14: "She saw men pourtrayed upon the wall, the *images* of the Chaldeans."

Dan. ii. 32: "As for this *image*, his head was of fine gold, his breasts and arms of silver," etc.

Ezek. i. 5: "And out of the midst thereof came the *likeness* of four living creatures. And this was their appearance; they had the *likeness* of a man," etc.

Ezek. i. 26: "And above the firmament that was over their heads was the *likeness* of a throne. . . . And upon the *likeness* of a throne was a *likeness* as the appearance of a man upon it above." (This "appearance of a man" was "the Lord.")

Gen. i. 27: "And God created man in his own *image*."

Gen. v. 1: "In the day that God created man, in the *likeness* of God made he him."

Gen. v. 3: "And Adam lived an hundred and thirty years, and begat a son in his own *likeness*, after his *image*; and called his name Seth."

After noting the sense in which the two words are used in these passages—viz., that of a material representation—there cannot be the shadow of a doubt as to the meaning of the statement in Genesis. Man was made in exactly the same shape as the Creator, and resembled that Deity in form as closely as a statue resembles the person from which it has been modelled. The words used by the writer refer to the outward appearance of man, who was a perfect model, as regards physical form, of his Maker. In other words, the Hebrew God was conceived to be man-like in shape. Could there be any doubt upon the subject, it would be dispelled by the last passage in the foregoing list. Adam begat a son "in his own *likeness*, after his *image*"—that is, the son resembled his father in bodily conformation. Seth was begotten in the likeness and image of Adam; Adam was formed in the likeness and image of Elohim.

That the Hebrew Deity was believed to possess a material and man-like form is clearly evident from many passages in the Old Testament. The following are examples:—

1. In the story of the Fall, Adam and his wife are stated to have heard "the *sound* of the Lord God walking in the garden in the cool of the day" (Gen. iii. 8).

2. Abraham, when sitting one day at the door of his tent, saw "three men" coming towards him, one of whom turned out to be "the Lord." All three partook of refreshments consisting of butter, milk, veal, and cakes. The meal being over, the Lord sent his two companions (who were, of course, angels) to Sodom, and remained alone with Abraham to tell him of the approaching destruction of that city. This done, "the Lord went his way" (Gen. xviii. 1-33).

3. It is related of the patriarch Jacob that, upon a certain night, "there wrestled a *man* with him until the breaking of the day." This man was "the Lord," who, at the close of the match, said to Jacob: "Thou hast striven *with God* and with men," etc. After the Lord's departure, Jacob "called the name of the place Peniel

[i. e., face of God]; for, he said, I have *seen God* face to face, and my life is preserved" (Gen. xxxii. 24-30).

4. We are told that Moses, Aaron, Abihu, and seventy elders "*saw* the God of Israel; and there was under his feet, as it were, a paved work of sapphire stone. . . . and they *beheld God*, and did eat and drink" (Exod. xxiv. 9-11).

5. The Hebrew God is reported to have said in answer to a request of Moses: "Thou canst not see my face, for man shall not see me and live. . . . I will put thee in a cleft of the rock, and will cover thee with my hand until I have passed by; and I will take away mine hand, and thou shalt see my back: but my face shall not be seen" (Exod. xxxiii. 20-23).

6. In the account of Saul's interview with the witch of Endor we read: "And the woman said unto Saul, I see a *god* coming up out of the earth. And he said unto her, What form is he of? And she said, An old *man* cometh up; and he is covered with a robe" (1 Sam. xxviii. 13, 14).

7. The prophet Ezekiel was also privileged to see the Almighty, who was seated upon a throne and had "the appearance of a man" (i. 26-28). According to this writer, the Lord, "from the appearance of his loins and upward," was of the color of bright amber; and "from the appearance of his loins and downward" he had "the appearance of fire," the whole figure being rendered glorious by "brightness round about him." At the sight of so much glory the prophet fell upon his face, and the Lord then began to talk to him familiarly.

Of course, when the Almighty was conceived to be of man-like form, so also, we should be led to expect, were his holyangels. And this we find to have been the case. In every instance in which an angel is recorded as appearing to man his form is either stated or implied to be man-like.

Coming to the New Testament, we find in the Fourth Gospel the following statements:—

John iv. 24: "God is a spirit."

John i. 18: "No man hath seen God at any time."

Here we are told by no less a personage than Christ himself that God is "a spirit," or simply "spirit" or "wind"—that is to say, that he is in his nature immaterial, and is invisible to the eyes of man. The idea was probably derived from the expression, "spirit of God," in the Old Testament. But in another passage in the same Gospel Jesus is represented as saying: "Ye have never heard his *voice* at any time, nor seen his *form*" (v. 37). God, therefore, was supposed to possess a voice and a form. We find, further, that the evangelist who represents Christ as saying "God is spirit" makes the following statements on his own account:—

1 John i. 5: "God is *light*, and in him is no darkness."

1 John iv. 16: "God is *love*."

God, according to this writer, was spirit, light, love, or anything he chose to call him. But even this evangelist appears, later on, to have forgotten that he made Jesus say "God is spirit." In a conversation between Christ and his disciples the former is represented as saying: "If ye had known me, ye would have known my Father also; from henceforth ye know him, and *have seen him*." One of the disciples Philip, then said: "Lord, shew us the Father." To this Jesus replied: "Have I been so long with you, and dost thou not know me, Philip? He that hath seen *me* hath seen *the Father*; how sayest thou, *Shew us the Father*?" (xiv. 7-9). If this luminous specimen of Christ's teaching has any meaning, it means that Jesus, in his bodily form, was himself "the Father"—a form which he had previously told the Jews they had never seen. But the absurd statements in the Fourth Gospel do not in any way affect the older narratives in the Hebrew Scriptures. Moreover, all the New Testament writers acknowledge the Old Testament books—which they called "the Scriptures"—to be of higher authority than their own writings, and quote them as "oracles" in support of various matters which they record. Even Jesus is represented as appealing to them in proof of his messiahship. He also refers to the account of the creation of man in Genesis: "Have ye not *read*, that he which made them from the beginning made them male and female?" (Matt. xix. 4). It thus becomes evident that, as already stated, the narratives in the Old Testament are in no way invalidated by anything said in the New.

It is true that in the Hebrew Scriptures there are, here and there, some passages in which diverse views of the nature of the Deity may be found; but this is but one of the results of having scraps of literature of various dates bound up together. There cannot be the slightest doubt that amongst the Jews, in the earliest times, the Hebrew God was conceived to be anthropomorphic. And it is to this imaginary Being, who was supposed to dwell just above the clouds, that we are asked to address prayers and supplications for guidance and assistance in all the affairs of life. ABRACADABRA.

### Acid Drops.

A PIOUS contemporary is down on the Duke of Devonshire for his evidence at the Betting Inquiry. It says: "The Duke did not plead that God's Word sanctions or approves of gambling and betting." That is true; but the Duke might have said that neither does God's Word condemn gambling and betting.

Then our pious contemporary commends to his Grace a few sentences on the religious point, quoted by the Rev. W. Cuff in addressing his congregation of 3,000 the other week, from a lecture by the late Samuel Martin, of Westminster: "Gambling denies, or at least ignores, the government and the providence of the one true God. The gambler may or may not be an Atheist or a sceptic in opinion. But certainly, so far as his gambling is concerned, he saith either that there is no God, or that with the world God has nothing to do. *The god of the gambler is chance.*"

The passage quoted is a mere play upon words. The same observations might be made in regard to any business speculator, though the men of God are too 'cute to offend some of their principal supporters by suggesting that, in so far as their speculations are concerned, they "deny, or at least ignore, the government and the providence of the one true God." Besides, why may not a gambler stake his money, devoutly hoping and even praying (*D. V.*) to win?

Rev. E. O Leary, of Broadford, County Kildare, is, according to *Truth*, the latest clerical promoter of Turf lotteries for religious ends. This rev. gentleman is sending out books of tickets for a lottery on the Grand National—first prize £10, second £5, and third £2 10s. Probably he thinks the end justifies the means. Certainly he does not find anything in his religious faith incompatible with gambling and betting.

On the other hand, the Rev. J. W. Horsley, who seems to be a very persistent notoriety-hunter, has been giving evidence before the Parliamentary Committee on betting. As a minister of the Gospel, he had many disclosures to make. Also he was led to remark, in a mysterious sort of way, that "if one person were to say to-morrow, I will never again go to any race-course where betting is practised, the evil before long would entirely disappear." "One person?" inquired Lord Aberdeen. "Yes, I mean the King," was the reply.

Of course, the Rev. Horsley very much over-rates the Royal example. If the King were to absent himself from every race-meeting held, betting would still continue on the course and elsewhere. There might be a slight falling-off in the attendance of those who make a point of going wherever Royalty leads, but the bulk of Turf patrons would show no appreciable diminution, and the "bookie's" occupation would be far from gone. It would be idle, however, to treat the Rev. Horsley's assertion seriously. It is only one of the sensational absurdities of which he has a pretty good stock.

A dying prize-fighter appears to have given much trouble to a professional soul-saver, said to be a Welsh Independent minister of South Glamorgan. The pugilist was, in the first place, concerned as to his chances of salvation in kingdom-come. Upon this point he was consoled, in the usual professional way. But still he was disturbed in his mind. He was perplexed by the prospect of being buried twenty miles away from the place where a limb that he had lost had been interred. He failed to see how, on the resurrection morning, the limb and the body were to be brought together. The minister, it is said, tried long and manfully to bring assurance to the troubled mind, but in the end he had to leave, confessing utter failure.

Mrs. Besant has just published a work on *Esoteric Christianity; or, the Lesser Mysteries*. She says Latin is used in Catholic worship as "a living force in the invisible worlds." It sets up certain vibrations which form Words of Power which could not be imitated in ordinary languages, unless a great occultist should compose in them the necessary succession of sounds. It is lamentable, indeed, that Mrs. Besant should have fallen a prey to such "Theosophic" delusions.

Mr. Sinnett, another leader of the "Theosophic" superstition, is full of credulity, and, as the *Daily Chronicle* remarks, his belief in spiritualistic phenomena is not to be baulked by the failure of ordinary tests. Some friends of his pretended they were accustomed to bring heavy furniture across the Atlantic in the twinkling of an eye. They were asked to produce a copy of that day's issue of the *New York Herald*. Of course they failed to do so. All this makes no impression on believers.

Among the Imperial Regalia of Japan is a mirror, which is carefully preserved in the charge of a priestess. According to the legend related in a recent lecture by the Chancellor of the Japanese Legation in London, this mirror was used by the deities when the Sun Goddess was once enraged and withdrew herself into a cave, thereby leaving the earth in darkness. They tempted her forth once more by telling her that a more beautiful goddess than herself had been found; and, in proof of their words, they held the mirror for her to see herself. Another article of the regalia is a sword which was taken from the tail of an eight-headed serpent, after he had been slain by the brother of the Sun Goddess. These objects have the highest significance in the eyes of the people, and they are supposed to represent certain virtues—the sword symbolising courage, and the mirror knowledge.

The House of Lords has accepted Lord Beauchamp's motion for a return relating to the benefices in the City of London. The income of the forty-seven incumbents is £42,452 per annum, which is over £900 each on the average, in return for which almost nothing is done. Such services as are held in the City churches are usually attended only by congregations of the scantiest description, and the whole system is a public scandal.

Bishop Thornton, in common with certain other bishops, condemns the present system of Church patronage and describes the traffic in livings as an abomination. But why do not the bishops *act* as if they believed this?

There's no doubt about it, we live in an age of great irreverence. It must be so, because the *Christian Age* says it, and has noticed the fact for some time past. When in 1844 Morse, the famous inventor, established his telegraph line in the United States, the first words to flash over it at the public trial were: "What hath God wrought?" Now, in these degenerate days, when Marconi achieves success with wireless telegraphy, there is no formal offering of thanks to Almighty God, no special recognition of his power. The news is accepted "practically without question, and certainly without the reverent wonder with which our fathers saw the beginning of our new age."

According to the Church of England *Year Book* just issued, the candidates for confirmation in 1901 numbered 220,014, an increase of 3,000 only on the number in 1895. The *Church Times* says these figures are "deplorable," and observes: "The Church is, in fact, standing still in her spiritual work."

After all, the clergy, it seems, are amenable to discipline from their flocks. The Rev. Canon Brooke speaks despairingly of "these days when the clergy are not allowed to preach for more than a quarter of an hour."

In 1847 Dr. Chalmers was almost paralysed by the discovery that there were 30,000 persons in Glasgow who never went to church. The House Missionary Committee of the United Free Church of Scotland reported last July that out of the present population of Glasgow (759,000) no fewer than 462,000 never attend any place of worship. Thus are the Gospel shops ignored!

Dr. Parker recently informed his congregation that he was only able to occupy that pulpit because he had taken doses of "quinine, digitalis, nux vomica, etc." If the venerable light of the City Temple often doses himself with such a mixture of medicine, there is no wonder that he breaks out into those audacities of speech which make his hearers stare.

The Society for the Propagation of the Gospel were disappointed in their recent attempt to capture the Prince of Wales. They wanted him to preside over one of their public meetings. In reply they received a letter intimating that the rule of the Prince of Wales would not permit of his presiding at such a gathering.

In London, as elsewhere, incumbents are not at all above drawing fees for interments in public cemeteries where they render no service. The Lambeth Borough Council have been discussing the scandal.

Sad— isn't it? when you come to think about it. Marconi, if he has not already given the sky pilots a look in, might endeavor to appease the *Christian Age* by telegraphing a few verses of Holy Writ, or he might sanctify his newly-invented system by transmitting selections from Moody and Sankey's hymns. There might also be thanksgiving services arranged

in churches and chapels for the public expression of gratitude to God, with an intimation that we could have done with the system a little earlier, and would like its development accelerated. Something of this sort might remove the black stigma of irreverence.

A silk undervest, worn by Charles I. on the scaffold, was sold the other day by auction for two hundred guineas. This was a genuine relic. Priests have enough of the wisdom of the serpent to laugh at such a paltry return. At Treves they made thousands of pounds out of a spurious coat of a man who never lived.

We all know the value of pious relics. The true Cross must have been the height of St. Paul's Cathedral, and the real and only genuine crown of thorns the size of Kennington Oval, judging by the extremely numerous fragments scattered over Europe.

There is a remarkable misprint in a recently-published book by Mrs. Lodge, entitled *The Rector's Temptation*. When we read, "Be not deceived; God is not *worked*," we are naturally mystified. We thought he had been "worked" for all he was worth for quite a long time now.

The wife of the Rev. A. S. O. Sweet, vicar of Cowlinge, near Newmarket, recently obtained a separation order against him. Then his bishop inhibited him, and the church door was barred against him. But the man of God was not to be easily kept out. He wanted to conduct the usual communion service, and hand round the symbolic flesh and blood of the Savior. With that object, he struggled at the door with a crowbar for two hours, but in vain. Also in vain he attempted to enter for the morning and afternoon services, and once again in the evening. Only upon a threat of forcible measures being applied to him was he induced to go away. He is now much incensed at the indignity offered to his cloth, and greatly mortified at his failure, in the first instance, to keep a mere woman in subjection.

An extremely sweet-mannered young man was George Darling. He was deeply interested in a Convention held at the Paddington Baths for the purpose of "deepening the spiritual life" of business men. And when he became acquainted with a young lady his conversation was "nearly all about spiritual things," in addition to writing her essays on the "Sublime Doctrine" and "The Four Judgments." As was to be expected, he also made his lady-love presents—a beautiful Bible and *Daily Light*. But, alas! both were stolen in addition to £20 in solid cash, and the unappreciative Mr. Plowden, of Marylebone Police-court, gave him three months' imprisonment, so that one judgment out of four George Darling is at least acquainted with in a practical manner. Thus does another force for the deepening of the spiritual life disappear from our midst.

America has the opportunity of returning thanks to Providence for floods which have caused the loss of thirty lives and £3,000,000 worth of damage to property, and for a snow avalanche which has killed a number of miners. London can express its gratitude for over 1,600 cases of small-pox, and for many deaths caused by influenza, which latter complaint has prostrated no less than nine members of the Government. East Africa, as well as India and Australia, is visited by the plague. India is still suffering from famine caused by drought. In the United States over 22,000 cases of small-pox were reported in a single week.

Cholera is carrying off some sixty people a day in the holy cities of Arabia. Much apprehension is felt at Constantinople, as the 200,000 Mohammedan pilgrims are exposed to almost certain infection. Common sense would suspend the pious visit to Mecca under such circumstances, but religious fanaticism is above all such considerations. Animals must be sacrificed at Mecca, and the Holy Stone must be venerated at any cost to the pilgrims or to the millions of people among whom they may diffuse disease and death on their return.

More Providence! The town of Kiangri, in Asia Minor, has been destroyed by an earthquake. Three thousand buildings were wrecked, four persons were killed, and a hundred injured.

While a priest was in the act of blessing a new bridge across the River Marañon, in Peru, a few days ago, the structure divided and a large number of persons fell into the water. Over a hundred were drowned.

A minister belonging to the Colonial Missionary Society was recently shot dead in the dark by a sentry at Cradock, Cape Colony. The Lord failed to open his servant's ears to the sentry's challenge.

"Climbing down" is still one of the features of the day with Christian preachers who realise the force of modern criticism. Principal Caleb Scott, at the recent Bradford Free Church Council, came down with some celerity, though,

of course, he pretended that he was doing nothing of the sort. He spoke of "the better understanding of the Bible." We know what that means. For "better understanding" read "partial abandonment." He said we owed this to "the trenchant, fearless, and, for the most part, reverent criticism to which the books of the Bible had been subjected."

The term "reverent" is introduced to avoid an apology to the "infidel" critics who, in early days, made this "better understanding" possible, and whom the Christian Church persecuted with relentless bitterness and fury.

"Incidents in Old Testament history," he said, "which had once completely baffled them, had been made quite plain." Yes; plainly shown to be uninspired. "The moral strain—and he remembered well in his young days feeling this moral strain—which was caused under the old views with regard to the inspiration of the Bible, had been, to a large extent, removed. He referred to the imprecatory Psalms, and to such statements as that Samuel 'hewed Agag in pieces before the Lord,' as illustrations of the difficulties which used to perplex them."

Why don't they perplex Christian people now? Because it has been found expedient to reject as inspired the passages in question. That is a short and easy method. "If thy right eye offend thee, pluck it out and cast it from thee." But what about the authority of that which remains, and how much or little may be cast aside?

Dr. Selwyn, whom the *Christian World* describes as a well-equipped scholar and a singularly independent thinker, has put forth a volume on *St. Luke the Prophet*. He will have nothing to do with the New Testament presentment of Pentecost. The cloven tongues of fire that sat upon each of the apostles, and the many languages miraculously spoken by them, have to go. The original Greek, according to Dr. Selwyn, does not say "fire," but "as it were fire"; while the tongues mean simply varying dialects and accents of the universally diffused Greek. Similarly Peter's deliverer from prison is not an angel, as stated in ordinary Bibles, but only one of the king's guard, whom the apostle afterwards gratefully described to Luke as an angel. And so by degrees the Bible miracles and the Bible myths will pass away. They cannot endure the searching light of criticism.

The Lord Mayor of London, at the recent meeting of the British and Foreign Bible Society, pointed with some complacency to the fact that on the Society's building in Queen Victoria-street was the inscription: "The Word of the Lord endureth for ever." One would like to know how the Lord Mayor reconciles this assertion of longevity with the modern abandonment, even in Christian Churches, of many portions of the Bible as unhistorical and unauthentic.

Perhaps it will be said that these discarded sections never were the Word of the Lord, which seems a reasonable view, though it raises doubts as to what really *is* genuine. Surely there never was an author, however unfortunate, who has had so much difficulty in preserving the text of his book intact and making his meaning clear as he who is credited with illimitable prevision and power.

The truth and recent occurrence of the following tale are (says a London paper) vouched for by a canon of Ely. The much-venerated and saintly Bishop of Lincoln, Dr. Edward King, is now advanced in years, and somewhat infirm. He has recently been visiting Bournemouth for his health. After resting one afternoon for some time on a seat on the parade, he desired to move, but found some difficulty in rising. A kind-hearted little girl of the town was passing, and, noticing his difficulty, ran up, saying: "Oh, let me help you!" Dr. King gave her one of his sweet smiles, and said: "You're a dear little maiden, but I don't think you're strong enough." "Why, bless you, sir," was the reply, "I've often helped up daddy when he was a sight more tipsy than you are!"

A minister recently made the following announcement to his congregation: "Remember our communion service next Sunday. The Lord is with us in the forenoon, and the bishop in the evening."

A Sunday-school superintendent, praying fervently for his scholars, asked the Lord to "bless the lambs of this fold, and make them *meet* for the kingdom of heaven."

Hinduism is looking up. So we gather from some lamentations in a religious weekly. Hindus of the educated classes in Bengal are now, we are told, "more actively engaged in support of their religion than ever before." Worse still, most of these Hindus "have been educated in Christian schools, or in those established under the auspices of the British Government." Societies are being formed for the defence of Hinduism, for studying its literature, and for practical religious and charitable work. Schools

are being opened by Hindus to keep their children apart from Christian influences.

The picture may be a little highly colored in order to extract more money for Christian missions. Anyhow, it is satisfactory to know that the missionaries are not to have it all their own way. The educated Hindu is rather a tough disputant to tackle. And doesn't the religious weekly rather give the show away when it talks of the native opponents having been educated in Christian schools? This does not say much for the effectiveness of Christian schools as proselytising agencies.

The West London Mission has made a great capture. Or, at any rate, the Rev. J. Gregory Mantle seems to think so. Recently a meeting in connection with the London Wesleyan Mission was held, and Mr. Mantle had much to say about the West London section and the services at St. James's Hall. He said the Gospel of Christ was "as attractive as ever," which was rather a tame observation to introduce into what was intended to be a glowing account. One would have expected to hear that it was *more* attractive than ever, considering that at St. James's Hall it has Price Hughes and Almighty God at the back of it.

But the point of the statement was in the illustration thereof. Mr. Gregory Mantle told the meeting that the Gospel of Christ was as attractive as ever, for recently "a sceptical leather-gaiter maker" had been converted in St. James's Hall. Applause, no doubt, followed the gratifying announcement. Still more delighted must the audience have been to hear that the erstwhile "sceptical leather-gaiter maker" was now "witnessing for Christ daily among his Atheistical fellow-workers." We are glad to notice such a grateful spirit prevailing in the West London Mission. They seem to be thankful for small—very small—blessings indeed.

Dr. Horton, in the *Sunday Magazine*, gives cases which he thinks go to prove that life is "a tissue of answered prayers." The Lord, on being specially asked by Dr. Horton, caused people to send in funds for the erection of a new church. In answer to a "steady and urgent stream of believing prayer" from the congregation, the Lord also restored to health an elder who was acting as architect for the new building. "For twenty-two years," says the jubilant pastor, "in all the expanding demands of the church's life, I have never known Him fail." A successful preacher may talk in this optimistic strain; he can forget the millions of unanswered prayers that mock the miseries of others. Thousands of poor clergy pitifully appealing in their poverty for help for their families, the innumerable sorrows and sufferings that afflict mankind in spite of all prayers for relief, the failure of Christianity to reach more than a fraction of the population of the globe after two thousand years of prayer and preaching, are but a few of the many palpable proofs of the inefficacy of prayer.

The Spanish Press are rejoicing over Lord Methuen's disaster. Heaven, according to the *Imparcial*, is manifestly on the side of the Boers, "while on the other are Satan and Beelzebub, the devil of pride and the devil of avarice." If this is so, Heaven is rather remiss in permitting its favorites to be captured so extensively that the vast majority of the Boers are in the hands of the British, either as prisoners of war or in the concentration camps.

The *Church Times* is of opinion that the disaster to Lord Methuen is due to our departing "from the rest of Catholic Christendom in neglecting to plead the sacrifice of Christ continually in the Holy Eucharist." Consequently, the way to end the war is for the bishops "to lead the nation in humiliation and trust in God." It is also suggested in the same journal that our generals "are not being properly supplied with the right sort of men and horses," and we ought to supply them with everything "that they consider essential to the success of their operations." There is nothing like a religious journal for humor—of the unconscious variety.

The Mormon Church evinces no toleration for bachelors. Marriage is imposed as a stern duty which none are allowed to shirk. Recently about twenty-five of a hundred employees of the *Desert News*, published at Salt Lake City, have been notified that unless they are married on or before June 30 they must give up their positions. This is the official organ of the Church, which is, therefore, able to enforce its demands. Similar pressure will, it is said, be brought to bear whenever possible.

Two hundred lost sermons for which an American Baptist minister received compensation at the rate of five shillings each from a railway company have now been found. He originally claimed they were worth £1 each. Now, it is suggested, an opportunity offers itself for the minister to return the amount received and regain his property. But very likely the minister, now that he is in possession of the £50, may form a more modest estimate of the value of his

sermons than he originally did, and may leave them in the hands of the company. Query: What can a railway company do with two hundred sermons?

Three bishops in the United States, of the many scores of prelates of that title connected with a dozen greater and lesser Methodist and Episcopal denominations, are anxious to be addressed as "My Lord," following the Anglican custom. "Toadies" gratify them in this respect, but it is cheerful to learn that their number is small.

Ping Pong has now been pressed into the service of the Church. Notices were recently placed in the pews of a Congregational Church at Bradford announcing that a Ping Pong Tournament would take place in aid of a fund for cleaning the church. Some fastidious persons have affected to be mildly scandalised. But Christian Churches in the past have never hesitated to enrich themselves by the shadiest of means. Why should they fight shy of cash brought in by a merry little game of Ping Pong?

Here is a poser for Spiritualists. It occurs in a letter from a clerical correspondent of the *Church Times*: "Is there an instance known of a *séance* preceded by the recitation of the Creed and the Lord's Prayer? Or can Christian men be supposed capable of laying themselves out to receive messages from the unseen world without such a preliminary?"

With a great many Spiritualists, we imagine, "the Creed" would be a little "off." Nor can we imagine any Spiritualist applying the test, suggested by this sapient correspondent, of challenging a manifestant "spirit" in the terms of 1 John iv. 1, 2, 3.

From the newspapers we learn that the son of Bishop Colenso is a professional soul-saver. It is a thousand pities that the son cannot find an intelligent "savage" to convert him to Rationalism.

The American papers say that a scientist has discovered a method of bleaching the nigger's skin. Under this treatment "God's image carved in ebony" will become whiter than milk. The Great Lying Christian Church claims that it can whitewash the colored man's soul, and this scientist says he can modify his complexion. This happy union of science and religion will enable the American Christian brother to grasp the African's hand instead of kicking him under the coat-tails as heretofore.

The Rev. G. M. Youngman had a sermonette in *Lloyd's Newspaper* for March 16. In the course of his remarks on "The Ideal King" he says that Christ is "the realisation of whatever is true and good in every aspiration and ideal," and that he "is the hero of every age." The editor of *Lloyd's* only allows the reverend gent half a column to twaddle in. Presumably he thinks that is about as much as his readers can endure at one time.

D'Israeli once said he could not understand the prejudice against the Jews, for one half of Christendom worships a Jew and the remainder deifies a Jewess.

One of our Christian readers complains that our "Acid Drops" are rather powerful, and suggests that we ought to call them *Sulphuric Acid Drops*. We are pleased to find that they are effective. A religion which has shed oceans of blood has no right to quarrel about a few jokes.

A facetious friend has pointed out that the chief festivals of the Christian Church are not entirely unconnected with eating and drinking. Just so! The merry birthday of the man of sorrows is quite an old joke, and the hot-cross buns on Good Friday appeal as powerfully to the imagination of the young as the last dying speech of the second person of the Immortal Trinity.

The Pope has at length been compelled to call in the assistance of the secular tribunals, which he has hitherto refused to acknowledge in any way or shape. He has to do this in order to punish three Vatican officials, who have stolen large sums of money from the Papal treasury. The amount taken is supposed to be about £16,000, but an Italian paper puts the amount at £320. Evidently religion does not succeed in assuring the honesty even of its most trusted adherents.

Scotto, one of the officials concerned in robbing the Vatican, has been found guilty and sentenced to eight years' imprisonment. The other prisoners were acquitted.

It has been claimed on behalf of the Church that the burial of suicides at four cross-roads was dictated by a spirit of Christian charity. Though Christian burial was denied, the body still rested under the shadow of the Cross. "Dagonet" calls this a very charming idea, but asks "why, under these benevolent circumstances, was the stake driven through the dead person's inside?"



## IMPORTANT NOTICE.

After March 25 the business of the Free-thought Publishing Company, including the publication of the FREETHINKER, will be carried on at No. 2 Newcastle-street, Farringdon-street, London, E.C., situated between Ludgate Circus and Holborn Viaduct, and rather nearer the latter. The new premises are in every way more suitable and commodious, and will furnish the opportunity for much-needed developments on the literary side of our propaganda.

### Mr. Foote's Engagements.

IN consequence of his illness all Mr. Foote's lecturing engagements have been cancelled or postponed. Immediate notice will be given when he is able to resume his platform work.

### To Correspondents.

CHARLES WATTS'S LECTURING ENGAGEMENTS.—April 6, Sheffield; 13, Bradford; 20, Glasgow; 27, morning, Stanley Hall, London, N.—Address, 24 Carminia-road, Balham, London, S.W.

C. COHEN'S LECTURING ENGAGEMENTS.—March 30, Athenæum Hall, London. April 13, Manchester; 20, Birmingham Labor Church; 27, afternoon, Victoria Park; evening, Stepney.—Address, 241 High-road, Leyton.

JAMES C. BANKS.—Miss Vance has forwarded your sympathetic letter. Accept our thanks.

D. GILLESPIE.—Your question is a curious one, and we do not know that any good would be achieved by raking up the unsavory stories current concerning the colored, but defunct, champion of Christianity referred to. We, too, think you were lucky in never having had personal contact with this particular individual—although in a different sense to that used by your opponent. Meanwhile, it would be as well for your Christian friend to reply to your objections himself instead of recommending you to other parties, or assuring you that somebody else, now dead, could have "pulverised" you.

THE FOOTE CONVALESCENT FUND.—Subscriptions to this Fund are all gifts to Mrs. Foote, to be expended by her at her absolute discretion in the restoration of her husband's health, and in defraying various expenses caused by his illness. The following (fourth list) have been received:—James Neate, 10s.; How, 1s.; Mrs. Neate, 10s.; Miss L. Pizer, 1s.; Miss Pizer, 1s.; A. Button, 5s.; Brookes and Rainbow, 1s. 6d.; J. Rason, 1s.; Pro-Boer, 2s.; J. Herrington, 1s.; Dr. E. B. Foote, senr. (New York), £1; J. C. Banks, 10s.; W. Young, £1 1s.; D. Powell, 5s.; Athos, 5s.; W. C. Webber, £1.

OWING to a postal confusion, arising through our change of address, and the Editor's absence from London through illness, nearly all the Answers to Correspondents stand over till next week.

THE continuation of Mr. Cohen's articles on "Spencer's Political Ethics" is held over until our next issue, owing to pressure upon our space.

THE National Secular Society's office is at 2 Newcastle-street, Farringdon-street, 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 2 Newcastle-street, Farringdon-street, E.C., by first post Tuesday, or they will not be inserted.

LETTERS for the Editor of the *Freethinker* should be addressed to 2 Newcastle-street, Farringdon-street, E.C.

ORDERS for literature should be sent to the Freethought Publishing Company, Limited, 2 Newcastle-street, Farringdon-street, 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.

A popular form of superstition is the belief in fortune-telling. For preying on the credulity of domestic servants and other foolish persons at Brighton a fortune-teller named Ahmed Dalla, but calling himself Fakir Pasha, has just been fined £10 and costs, with the alternative of two months' imprisonment. Yet priests who pray people's souls out of purgatory for cash down are not prosecuted for obtaining money under false pretences. Fraud on the large scale has to be permitted.

## Personal—And Otherwise.

How glad I shall be to get back to my work! A holiday is an excellent change to a busy man, but trying to recover your health and strength is not exactly a holiday. You don't *want* to be where you are; you simply *have* to be there. In one way it is like a railway journey; your object is to reach the end of it. Fortunately the bracing air where I now am is doing me much good in many ways. Yet I still have to be very careful in every direction. My lungs are perfectly sound, but there is still a certain sensitiveness in the respiratory apparatus above them. It is steadily diminishing, but it is enough to check presumption. My voice, too, has nearly recovered its tone. I can also walk with quickness and ease. What I have now to recover is my mental tone. I am conscious of a steady improvement, but the too obstinate insomnia is a sad drawback. Conquer it I must, or it will conquer me; and I mean to win the battle *now* if I can; otherwise I would return to London to-morrow. My primary trouble, as my doctor said, was brain-fag; and I suppose it will be the last to disappear. Happily I feel it is disappearing. I hope to start resuming my literary work soon after Easter. Of course I shall have to "go slow" for a while. It would give me great pleasure to lecture at the Athenæum Hall on the first Sunday in April, but I cannot, at the present moment, make a definite announcement on that point.

And now a few words on the change in the publishing office of the *Freethinker*. When the Freethought Publishing Company, two years ago, engaged premises at No. 1 Stationers' Hall Court, it was very much an experiment. The position was a good one for "the trade." Whether it was good in other respects remained to be proved. A sufficient experience has shown that there is little retail business to be done there. Probably there is little retail business to be done at all in our special line in the city. We believe that more than nine-tenths of our orders will continue to be executed through "the trade" and the post. And that can be done anywhere as long as we are accessible. Accordingly we have removed into less costly premises, nearly as well situated, at No. 2 Newcastle-street, Farringdon-street, about two minutes' walk from Ludgate Circus. The building is entirely new, and we have engaged the whole of it. Besides the shop on the ground floor, we have a splendid basement for storing sheet stock, etc., and three excellent floors above, affording first-rate accommodation for the extension of our business in fresh directions, which will be heard of in due course by the readers of the *Freethinker* in general and the shareholders of the Freethought Publishing Company in particular.

We have had in various ways the assistance of the gentleman who was sneered at by Mr. George Anderson as "Mr. Nameless," simply because he had private reasons for not wishing to advertise himself as a supporter of the Freethought movement. "Mr. Nameless" has not *ratted*, however; he has kept to his word, and he has done more; and his experience of Mr. Anderson has not caused him to lose confidence in Mr. Foote. And as he has been conversant all along with all the principal facts, I think this is something that I am entitled to place to my credit. Anyhow, I beg to tender my warmest thanks, publicly, to "Mr. Nameless" for the way in which he has stood by me and the Company. Had it not been for him, I should have been broken by Mr. Anderson's wealth at more than one critical moment; and, in a certain sense—though I do not mean bankruptcy—the Company itself might have been in the hands of the Philistines. "Mr. Nameless" does not

want my thanks. He is not a man of that sort. But as he has been sneered at publicly in Mr. Anderson's pamphlet, and in open court by Mr. Anderson's lawyers, I feel it my duty to express my gratitude for the quiet, modest, and more than honorable manner in which he has acted throughout.

G. W. FOOTE.

### Sugar Plums.

MR. COHEN'S lecture on Herbert Spencer attracted a good audience at the Athenæum Hall on Sunday evening last. There were several questions at the conclusion of the address, and some slight opposition was offered by the Rev. Mr. Coles. This Sunday evening (March 30) Mr. Cohen again lectures, on "The Ethics of Evolution and the Sociology of Herbert Spencer." This should give rather more scope for discussion than the previous lecture.

The Leicester Secular Society, which always looks well ahead to its financial resources, is contemplating the holding of a Bazaar in the middle of 1903. The committee, of course, would like to know what help they stand a good chance of receiving. Accordingly they ask friends to advise them—or rather to advise Mr. F. J. Gould, the Organiser, at the Secular Hall, Humberstone-gate—what help they are likely to render by (1) Sending made or purchased articles, (2) Giving money with which articles may be purchased. Useful articles are preferred—clothing, furniture, etc.—but books, pictures, etc., will not be disdained. Things are not wanted at Leicester yet, as they would only have to be stored. Promises are asked for now. A register of them will be kept, and reminders will be sent out later on.

The last Bazaar held by the Leicester Secular Society realised a clear profit of more than £150. We hope the next will bring in double that amount. We beg to assure the "saints" all over the country that the Leicester Secular Society thoroughly deserves any support they can give it. It carries on one of the best and most promising Secular efforts in England.

Judging from the American journals to hand, our Free-thought brethren on that side the Atlantic do not intend to let President Roosevelt's reference to Paine as a "dirty little Atheist" sink into oblivion. It was an ignorant, ill-bred, and unnecessarily offensive remark, and the proper course would be for the President to withdraw the expression and apologise for having used it. The President of a Republic which Paine did so much to establish, and to which he gave more than Mr. Roosevelt ever has given, or probably ever will give, should have been the last to use such an expression. Until he does apologise the best policy is to keep his offensive utterance alive, and that American Freethinkers seem determined on doing.

*Apropos* of Paine, Mr. Moncure D. Conway exhibited at the Manhattan Club recently a piece of the brain of the great Freethinker, which, he assured the audience, was about all of Paine that had not found burial in his native land. It was taken from the skull by Benjamin Tilly, an agent of William Cobbett, and bought from the Rev. Mr. Reynolds by Mr. Conway. This piece of brain had passed through the hands of two clergymen, and both had become heretics. Pity it couldn't be passed round to all the clergy.

Mr. Conway also promises to issue very shortly a complete bibliography of Paine, which will be his final contribution on that subject.

We see from an American exchange that twenty students have been suspended in one week at Tuft's College, Boston, for non-attendance at religious service. This reminds us of a story told of a certain headmaster of Baliol College, Oxford. "Dear Sir," wrote a student, "I have been compelled to give up believing in the existence of God, owing to my inability to find any proof of his existence." "Dear Mr. Blank," wrote back the Professor, "if you do not find proofs of the being of a God within twenty-four hours, you will be expelled the college." The proofs were found in what was probably the shortest time on record.

The Church Congress is to be held this year at Northampton. This should prove a rallying cry to all Freethinkers in Brad-laugh's city.

Mr. George Howell, in an article on Friendly Societies, points out how these have been neutral in religion and politics, and have included Catholics, Protestants, and Dissenters of every shade without question of faith or creed. Wrangling was avoided, and men found that difference of opinion did not involve absolute depravity on the other side.

By association and working together for a common practical object, members have been taught tolerance, and have laid the foundations for a brotherhood of man based upon mutual sympathy. All this is practical Secular work of no small importance, and is but one of many examples of a success which will not be attained under religion, which causes endless strife, and would domineer in all branches of human activity if it were not prevented from so doing by the growth of the Secular spirit.

### An Evening with Shakspeare.

RED LION SQUARE is a somewhat dingy locality. The houses round it seem meditating sadly upon their departed greatness, and the trees on a winter's evening seem to stretch out their bare boughs in search of sweetness and light; while the garden-seats, plentifully bestrewn within the iron railings, open their arms in vain to entice the weary wanderer. But, although cheerless itself, the square contains the headquarters of an organisation that has done much towards increasing the cheerfulness of the toilers of the metropolis, upon what has long been the dullest day of the week—namely, the National Sunday League. Entering the offices of the League, passing straight along the passage, and pushing open a glass door, we found ourselves in the midst of the Sunday Shakspeare Society. A cheerful fire was blazing in the grate, and over the mantelpiece was an oil-painting of Mr. Morrell, welcoming us with his well-known smile. The Sunday Shakspeare Society, it may be explained, is not a dramatic society, neither is it an elocution class; it is an association for reading and studying the works of Shakspeare—more especially his plays. The play under consideration that evening was *Richard III.* Each member was provided with a book, and to most of them some part or character in the play had been assigned; those members who were too timid or too lazy to stand up and read being content to follow the proceedings with their own books. Mr. Chilperic Edwards, the Secretary, read out "Act 1. Scene 1. London. A Street. Enter Richard, Duke of Gloucester, *solus*"; and a good-looking young man, with a cheerful expression of face, stepped into the centre of the room, and read out the soliloquy in which Gloucester announces his intention to prove a villain. As before remarked, elocution is not one of the aims of the Sunday Shakspeare Society; but one or two of the ladies and gentlemen present would not disgrace the boards of a regular theatre. The lady who personated Queen Margaret was most tragic in her delivery, and read out the curses in an appalling manner. But the best scene was undoubtedly that of the murder of Clarence. The two murderers were most diverting low comedians, and smiles rippled round as the second murderer humorously enlarged upon his "dregs of conscience."

The whole of the proceedings gave one really a vivid idea of the stage in Shakspeare's time. The readers wore their ordinary dress, just as the Elizabethan actors wore the ordinary costume of their time. And the spectators sat close to the readers, just as the better class of Elizabethan spectators were allowed to sit on chairs by the side of the stage. There was, however, no action, and the readers were looking at their books instead of at one another, so that in most of them one missed that play of feature which is the accompaniment of good acting. As the historical plays have very few female characters, the ladies of the Sunday Shakspeare Society have to take the parts of noble lords, heralds, priests, executioners, and other masculine personages.

After "The Tragedy of King Richard the Third" had been read through, Mr. T. R. Lawson rose to read his paper upon it. Mr. Lawson, it may be said, is a fiery young Social Democrat and admirer of Ibsen, and he considers it his business in life to expose the weaknesses of Shakspeare as a dramatist. He considered *Richard III.* one of the most sanguinary and violent of all the poet's productions. It had no plot—that is, no interchange of mind with mind; but it was merely a procession of titled persons hurrying headlong to their doom. It was difficult to understand why actors desired to appear in the character of Richard, for all the action was banally melodramatic. The courting scene between Gloucester and Lady Anne was psychologically impossible, and was

only comparable with the equally ridiculous scene with the shallow Elizabeth. The noble criminals who pass through the play all die with the sure and certain hope of heaven. Edward IV., after a dissolute, sanguinary, and misspent life, informs his courtiers that—

Now in peace my soul shall part to heaven.

And when Rivers, Grey, and Vaughan are on the way to the block, Rivers exclaims:—

Come Grey, come Vaughan, let us all embrace,  
And take our leave until we meet in heaven.

Richard III. is throughout represented as the prize villain of the piece; and he is painted as being without a single redeeming feature. But perhaps a psychological explanation could be found for his character. In Elizabethan times men were inclined to look with impatience upon physical deformity. There was really no connection between deformity and maliciousness. One had only to look into the eyes of a cripple to see a yearning for sympathy—a dumb appeal from an aching heart. So Richard must have experienced similar feelings in Edward's dissolute, supercilious Court. He knew his own merits, and fathomed the shallowness of the courtiers, who daily expressed their contempt for him openly or covertly. Small wonder, then, that a passion for revenge took possession of his soul. The only question was whether revenge was justifiable. Lord Bacon had said that revenge was a kind of wild justice exerted against those wrongs which there was no law to remedy. In Richard's time, unless a man asserted himself—unless he realised his will-to-live—he had no power to sustain his position, or even to preserve his life itself. Then there was the question of political expediency. For many years England had been torn by the Wars of the Roses; and so long as the different factions existed there was sure to be fresh trouble. We should not judge too harshly of Richard's harsh and immoral methods of securing peace and security in the country. Desperate diseases required desperate remedies. All *great* men have been forced to commit immoral acts. In fact, morality and mediocrity always went together. Richard's action was really an anticipation of Benjamin Kidd's lately-enunciated doctrine of "Projected Efficiency"; and the king's crimes were actually the foundation for the quiet, tranquillity, and progress enjoyed by the next generation.

Mr. T. O. Blagg rose to reply. Mr. Blagg is a devoted admirer of Shakspeare, and a life-long student of his works. He thought there were several things in Mr. Lawson's paper that should not be allowed to pass without challenge. It was true that the framework of *Richard III.* was pre-eminently melodramatic; but surely the same thing could be said of *Macbeth*. There were the witches; the murder of Duncan; the ravings of Lady Macbeth; and last, but not least, the melodramatic march of Birnam Wood to Dunsinane. *Hamlet* also was melodramatic in its framework. Why, then, should melodrama be held to condemn a play? As to Richard himself, Shakspeare had had a certain character handed down to him by tradition, and, therefore, the only question was whether he had given us a striking drama upon it. There was really an enormous wealth of character in Richard, who successively appeared as the lover, the buffoon, the shrewd statesman, the great general, the implacable villain, and, finally, as the hero who fell on the battlefield. As to Richard's position in King Edward's Court, Mr. Blagg could not see that he had anything to complain of. Richard had shared in the battles and triumphs of the Wars of the Roses, and had had his share of his brother's honors. In the plays of *Richard II.*, *Richard III.*, and *King John* we could trace the development of the true Shakspearean qualities of great stateliness in tragedy, combined with great humor in comedy. In *Richard II.* we had tragedy, but no humor. *Richard III.* is enlivened throughout by the diabolical humor of Richard himself. Richard regards his crimes as a comic by-play; he has no remorse, but only a delight in them. King John is equally a villain, but a villain without humor; and, therefore, his villainy is relieved by the introduction of Faulconbridge to carry the comic element. But *Richard III.* is deficient in stateliness in the tragic parts. The queens and princesses rant and rave like so many fishfags. After creating the character of Constance in King John, however, Shakspeare never

fell back into the faults that marred his earlier tragedies; and his tragic characters are always dignified. Looking at the wealth of character displayed by King Richard III. and the numerous situations in which that character was unfolded, Mr. Blagg thought that our great actors had chosen aright, and that Richard III. was one of the greatest parts that they could possibly have the honor to represent.

No one else seemed inclined to continue the discussion, and so the proceedings terminated; although we were informed that the plays very often gave rise to very animated debates. We asked Mr. Chilperic Edwards, the Secretary, if these Sunday readings of Shakspeare were not likely to rouse the animosity of the orthodox; but he replied that the Society had existed since 1874, and he did not anticipate that orthodoxy would interfere now. Besides, he added, we are acting entirely upon precedent; for, when Shakspeare commenced his dramatic career, stage-plays were exclusively acted on Sunday; and in country districts secular plays were performed in the churches on Sunday afternoons. In the reign of James I. the Puritans made a great fuss because the Bishop of London had one of Shakspeare's plays performed in his palace on a Sunday; so that the Sunday Shakspeare Society is not an innovation, but the resumption of a praiseworthy institution. In June, July, and August the members assemble in the country for their readings; but the rest of the year they hold their meetings at 34 Red Lion Square, upon the third Sunday in every month, at 6.30 p.m. The subscription is only half-a-crown per annum. Shakspeare's plays are taken in their chronological order, to enable the members to follow the development of the poet's genius; and a paper is read, or a discussion started, after the reading of each play.

AUTOLYCUS.

### Animism.—III.

DREAMS to the savage have a reality and importance which only the large class who yet purchase dream books can appreciate. Mr. Herbert Spencer points out how "inevitably primitive man conceives as real the dream personages we know to be ideal." Mr. Dorman says (P. S., 61): "The influence of dreams is so great upon the life of American Indians that every act and thought is predicated upon this superstition." An Indian dream is an inspiration. An Iroquois who dreamt he had cut off his finger did so when he awoke. Malays do not like to wake a sleeper lest they should hurt him by disturbing his body when his soul is out. The Chinese thought that the soul in dreams went out on a nightly ramble. Once when "the spiritual man" of a magnate named Tib Kevalu was out roaming, a wild beast found his body and ate it, so when the spirit returned it found only the mangled skeleton; fortunately near by was a beggar's corpse, black and lame; this he took as a substitute for his own body, and afterwards walked with a staff. Sir John Lubbock (*Or. Civ.*, p. 220, *et seq.*) has traced this belief in the power of the soul to leave and return to the body all over the globe. Schweinfurth describes in his *Heart of Africa* how the Bongs dispose of the dead. The corpse is bundled up with knees to chin, bound round head and legs, sown in a sack, and then placed in a deep grave. "A heap of stones," says Schweinfurth, "is then piled over the spot in a cylindrical form, and supported by strong stakes which are driven into the soil all round. On the top of the pile is placed a pitcher, frequently the same from which the deceased was accustomed to drink." Here we have the beginning both of the monument and the memorial urn. The forsaking of the hut or kraal where one has died is a widespread custom in Africa. Zulus say that at death a man's shadow departs, and becomes an ancestral ghost; and the widow will relate how her husband has come in her sleep and threatened to kill her for not taking care of his children; or the son will describe how his father's ghost stood before him in a dream, commanding revenge upon his enemies. Fear of the dead, fear that they will return to plague the living, lies at the root of religion. As the spirit is still powerful and usually hostile, it must be appeased, deceived, or driven away.

This is the aim of funeral rites, and of periodical expulsion of evil spirits. Dacotahs beg the ghost not to disturb his friends. This fear probably accounts for heavy cairns, monumental tombs, deep graves, and high fences round them. In Mexico they employed professional "chuckers out" to evict ghosts from haunted places. Sometimes skulls are nailed down, and usually the eyes are closed that they may not see their way back. In Nuremberg the eyes of the corpse were bandaged with a wet cloth. Putting coins on the eyes is a very significant rite. For the same reason the body is carried out feet first. Barriers of water and fire are instituted to keep off the spirits, and fasting is observed for the same reason. Bohemians put on masks and play antics at funerals, so that the dead should not follow them. In Siberia they give the ghost forty days' lief, after which, if he is still hanging about, the Shaman "personally conducts" the recalcitrant ghost to the lower regions, and takes brandy with him to secure a favorable reception to the ghosts by the spirits below. "The rudimentary form of all religion," says Spencer, "is the propitiation of dead ancestors." Ancestor worship, however, is not comprehensive enough to explain all the facts connected with worship of spirits, but it is the central point.

Dr. Tylor, who has collected facts bearing on early history from all quarters with enormous industry, and sifted them with critical care, points out that even among the most civilised nations language still plainly shows traces of early belief: as when we speak of a person being in ecstasy, or "out of himself," and "coming to himself," or when the souls of the dead are called *shades* (that is, "shadows"), or *spirits* or *ghosts* (that is, "breaths"): terms which are relics of men's earliest theories of life. Such expressions as "thank heaven," "heaven knows," etc., take us back to the time when sky-worship was an actual fact, as surely as the sacred stone-knife used in circumcision points back to the time when metal implements were unknown. Similarly, survivals of early faith may be found in most of our sanctified customs, as surely as signs of man's own animal origin are found in his structure and propensities. The irrational parts of our customs and creeds are survivals of an earlier condition, just as the useless parts of an organism refer us back to an earlier development, in which they had a recognised place and purpose.

Belief in spirits appears among all the low races with whom we have acquaintance. This belief naturally leads to some kind of propitiation and worship. Sir A. C. Lyall says (*Natural Religion in India*, p. 26): "It is certain that in India one can distinctly follow the evolution of the ghosts of men whose life or death has been notorious into gods." He mentions that General Nicholson, who was killed at the storming of Delhi, had a sect of worshippers; and in South India they adore the spirit of Captain Pole. In the instance of the natives of Tinnevely, who, after the death of a British officer, offered at his grave the brandy and cheroots which he loved in his lifetime, in order to propitiate his spirit, we see the beginning of a cultus. The temple is founded at the tomb. Mountains become sacred by chiefs being buried at the top. Caves for the same reason. The one suggests communion with the sky, the other with the underworld. A successful leader is first feared as a man, then represented as with supernatural power, and finally worshipped as a god. In Tanna, one of the New Hebrides, Mr. Turner tells us "the general name for God seemed to be *Armeha*; that means 'a dead man,' and hints alike at the origin and nature of their religious worship." Temples were built at tombs or shrines, or are dedicated to dead saints. Worship is first offered to the actual ghost of the person buried. The spirits of the dead are the gods of the living. Great men, ghosts and gods, are originally undifferentiated in thought. Ghosts are fed, propitiated, receive worship, and the fittest ghosts survive, becoming gods. Among the natives of India the deification of men is still active. In the instructive story of Saul and the Witch of Endor she says: "I saw gods (*אלהים*, Elohim) ascending out of the earth" (1 Sam. xxviii. 8).

A touching scene is related by a traveller of an African woman placing a morsel of bread between the lips of her dead child. This artless expression of grief and desire

shows the germ of woman's religion. The life was gone, but it returned in dreams; in yearnings of the bosom. The ghost must want sustenance. Its kin on earth must provide: how could it be reached: where was the messenger? At first others were dispatched, slaughtered as sacrifices, young girls being chosen as being least useful to the tribes; while in a wild state infanticide was religious and useful; then, with the discovery of fire, flame springing from earth to sky became the messenger to whom offerings and sacrifices were consigned. Fire was kept permanently on the altar, that so valuable an agent might never be lost, and it became the duty of virgins, whose lives had thus been saved, to preserve the treasure. Oil and fats, which made the flame leap heavenward, became acceptable offerings. In the ever-burning lamps and candles of modern times we have the survival of a time when fire was precious and flame the messenger of the gods, while the candle preserves the shape of the symbol of reproduction. The Rig Veda opens with an invocation to Agni, the god of fire, the chief agent of sacrifice and itself a god. Fire is asked to accept the offerings and carry them to the ancestors, knowing the way; or the ancestors became embodied in the fire, as Jehovah manifests himself on Carmel, and the Holy Ghost at Pentecost. Here we see the early Trinity, the ancestral Father in Heaven, the Son at once sacrificer and the victim, and the Holy Spirit that conveys the sacrifice.

(THE LATE) J. M. WHEELER.

(To be concluded.)

## The British Valhalla.

"Aux grands hommes la Patrie reconnoissante."—INSCRIPTION ON THE PANTHEON.

"Time, which antiquates antiquities, and hath an art to make dust of all things, hath yet spared these *minor* monuments."—SIR THOMAS BROWNE.

WESTMINSTER ABBEY is one of the most venerated buildings in the world. Apart altogether from its religious aspect, it is rich with historical associations. It is the last resting-place of many famous Englishmen from every rank and creed, and of no creed, and every form of mind and genius. It contains the bones of Newton and Darwin, two men whose works were epoch-making in the realms of science, and whose names tower over all the other celebrities buried in the Abbey. One name—Shakespeare—alone surpasses them; but only a statue represents the greatest Englishman and the greatest poet, whilst his dust makes Stratford-on-Avon the central spot of the world's idolatry.

The Abbey is to England what the Pantheon is to France, what the Valhalla is to Germany, what Santa Croce is to Italy. And yet, owing to it being in the hands of the bat-eyed priests, it is but an imperfect and irregular commemorator of greatness. A building from which clerical impudence excluded Byron, while many others of ephemeral and questionable fame sleep within its precincts, hardly deserves to be regarded as the Mecca of the Anglo-Saxon race.

Westminster Abbey holds the dust of such rakes as St. Evremond, who subdued his passions by indulging them. It immortalises such immoral actresses as Anne Oldfield, Susannah Cibber, Hannah Pritchard, and Anne Bracegirdle. It throws a halo round the memory of John Broughton, the "Prince of Prizefighters," and sanctifies the bones of Aphra Behn and Tom Brown, two of the filthiest and most contemptible scribblers in the English language.

The Abbey should be the Valhalla of our greatest dead; but, if we except about a hundred men of real and unmistakeable eminence, it is crowded with the illustrious obscure. For every eminent name inscribed upon its monuments there are at least a score or so of nonentities either interred or commemorated within its precincts.

It was Nelson's wish to be buried in the Abbey; but neither for him, who made the earth and the seas alike resound with the splendid tumult of his deeds, nor for Wellington, the victor of a hundred battles, was room to be found, for the Abbey was

already full to overflowing of naval and military mediocrities, whose monuments disfigure the long-drawn aisles and fretted vaults.

Generation after generation of visitors wanders through the Abbey, and marvels at the monuments and inscriptions which meet the eye. The cenotaph justly raised to the Earl of Chatham, which proudly declares that "the great commoner was worthy to rest near the dust of kings," is jostled by the colossal monument, conceived in execrable taste, to the memory of three captains who perished in Rodney's victory in 1782—doubtless worthy individuals, but possessing no more claim to such extreme honor than thousands who have died in their country's service.

This last-named monstrosity was long thrown in the shade, however, by the prodigious mass which commemorated the peaceful death of Admiral Tyrrell, who died on land, but was buried at sea. Hard by rests Admiral Sir Cloudesley Shovel, "wearing the eternal buckle of a long periwig." Tyrrell and Shovel were, at any rate, brave men; but what is to be said for Generals Fleming and Hargrave, who never heard a shot whistle in anger, and are only remarkable for their monuments in the Abbey. Hargrave was one of the richest men of his day. The ecclesiastics who thought Isaac Watts, Mason, and Shadwell great poets, and so found room for their monuments, had no scruple in honoring this military nobody. Hargrave's burial in the Abbey provoked an outburst of indignation. The monument was the work of Roubilliac, and when Goldsmith saw it for the first time he said: "I find in Westminster Abbey memorials erected to several great men. The names of these great men I forget, but I remember that little Roubilliac was the sculptor who carved them."

It was presumably for the artist's sake that the effigy of Lady Nightingale was admitted. The carving is indeed beautiful, but what title had she to be buried in such a spot? Enough has been said to show that the Abbey is filled with monuments which exclude those more worthy. Some of the inscriptions, too, are in bad taste. The caustic remarks of the first Duchess of Marlborough, as she gazed on the epitaph erected to Congreve by Henrietta, second Duchess of Marlborough, with whom Congreve had been more than friendly in life, might have been uttered by Thackeray. The epitaph alludes to the happiness and honor she (Henrietta) had enjoyed in her intercourse with Congreve. "Happiness, perhaps," scornfully ejaculated the dowager Duchess, "but the less we say about honor the better."

To place the Abbey on a level with the increasing toleration of Humanity and with the wants of a great nation, it should not be the property of a prejudiced and purblind priesthood. The Abbey is the peculiar possession of the entire British race. A narrow and sectarian body is by no means a fit judge as to who is worthy to rest under the Abbey's time-honored roof. By its history and position it should not be the fortress of a Church, but the appropriate resting-place for famous sons of daughters of England, or that Greater Britain beyond the seas.

But, thanks to the Abbey being a boasted preserve of a clerical corporation, there is now hardly room for the greatest dead of our own generation. Small wonder that many now express the wish to clear away these marble accretions. The common sentiment of humanity forbids the disturbance even of the humblest remains from the spot in which they are finally laid. But no such consideration should stay the removal, if not the demolition, of the tawdry and cumbrous monuments raised to creatures whom nothing can rescue from oblivion, and whose dust desecrates the building which holds the remains of Chaucer and Darwin, Garrick and Pitt, Handel and Dickens. These bulky tombs once removed, it will then be possible to do justice to the memory of those whom it honors England to honor. On this spot should be written the whole history of a mighty Empire. Here should be garnered the mighty dead. The Abbey's sculptured glories throw their shade over what once were monarchs, and over others greater than any kings. But there are at present no monuments to either Byron, Shelley, Swift, Pope, Bolingbroke, Gibbon, Keats, or Burton. They have a right here in this great Temple of Silence and Reconciliation:—

One port, methought, alike they sought,  
One purpose held, where'er they fare:  
O bounding breeze, O rushing seas,  
At last, at last, unite them there!

MIMNERMUS.

## I Do Believe—I Don't Believe.

(An Easter Hymn.)

I do believe, I will believe, that men are "up a tree"  
When they celebrate the murder of Emanuel;  
They kid us that they've fasted when they're gorged as they  
can be,  
At the good old fish-and-bun-consuming "Annual."  
I don't believe, I won't believe, that Jesus died for me,  
That to purge my sins a God committed suicide;  
I do believe, I will believe, with Him 'twas all U P,  
If they nailed Him up and thrust a sabre through 'is side.  
I do believe that if He died, as stated, on a tree,  
That the action was the action of a Bedlamite.  
He died to save the Christians! What are Christians? Answer  
me,  
Pecci, Booth, and Hugh Price Hughes, and Stewart Head-  
lamite.  
I don't believe, I won't believe, that Jesus died for me,  
For I don't believe that Adam had a fall at all.  
I do believe, if I believed, a Paddy I should be,  
For I don't believe they ever *lived* at all at all.  
I don't believe, and shan't believe, that Jesus died for me  
Till I find myself in Jahveh's "happy-hunting-grounds";  
But I'm an "infidel" and booked, as Christians all agree,  
For the weeping-wailing-grieving-groaning-grunting-  
grounds.  
I do believe, I will believe, that Science speaks the truth,  
And that Hell's extinct, extinct as Herculaneum;  
Excepting in the minds of men like those that follow Booth,  
For they've hardly any brains inside their cranium.  
I don't believe, I won't believe, that Heaven's a place for me,  
For the King of Glory's worse than Mephistopheles;  
To be up there and live on "living water" worse must be  
Than to be down here and live on tea or coffee leest.  
I do believe their pocket's picked by pilots of the sky,  
When Tom and Dick and Harry, Kate and Lucy fix  
Their minds on airy castles, which they fancy they can buy  
With the blood of One who died upon a crucifix!

ESS JAY BEE.

## Correspondence.

### AN ETHICAL DISCLAIMER.

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE FREETHINKER."

SIR,—I notice in your last issue an entertaining article dealing with an "Ethical movement," and introducing a "Father McCabe." As there happen to be an "Ethical movement" in existence, and an individual who is likely to be taken as "Father McCabe," I trust you will let me warn innocent people not to take your anonymous correspondent to refer to these. As regards myself, for instance, I have not only never advocated the opinions he assigns to Father McCabe, but on the only occasion on which I had to refer to them I politely but emphatically dissented from them. The words he quotes are the words of one of the most distinguished living scientists and Freethinkers—Professor Haeckel—as I clearly stated in the article from which your correspondent has quoted them. From this your readers will gather that the writer was merely using the familiar licence of the funny man, and not requiring even the slenderest substratum of fact. I will not trouble you with observations on the other points, though it is possible many Secularists may be not uninterested in a movement which takes as its sole unchanging dogma one of the chief constructive principles of Secularism—the independence of ethics.

J. MCCABE.

### THE ROOTS OF MORAL POWER.

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE FREETHINKER."

SIR,—From whence comes our knowledge of right and wrong? It is asserted that this knowledge is the outcome of experience. Suppose a given action, or line of conduct, fully sanctioned by exact knowledge and worldly experience as being right and correct under given circumstances, but which, as sometimes happens, one's inner conscience (internal or self knowledge) plainly condemns as wrong. Is experience still the authority?

There are, of course, occasions wherein the most perfect agreement obtains, but the very fact that differences do occur implies divided authority; unless, indeed, Experience sits in judgment alone, her word being final.

But this does not explain away the "still small voice"—the inner conscience—which, as Shakespeare has it, "makes cowards of us all."

What is the origin and nature of this inner feeling, which may thus be opposed to the dictates of knowledge and experience? Personally, I feel that right is the highest might we can ever know or conceive, justice being eternal. But where may we locate the root unfailingly?

I shall be grateful if one or two prominent Freethinkers will make the position clear in a manner free from metaphysical abstractions, verbal quibbles, and logical subtleties—at least as straightforward and clear as the subject will allow.

ALFRED HOPKINS.

## SUNDAY LECTURE NOTICES, etc.

### LONDON.

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

THE ATHENÆUM HALL (73 Tottenham Court-road, W.): 7.30, C. Cohen, "The Ethics of Evolution and the Sociology of Herbert Spencer."

NORTH CAMBERWELL HALL (61 New Church-road): 7, Conversazione.

EAST LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (Stanley Temperance Bar, 7 High-street, Stepney): 7, W. J. Ramsey, "God is Love."

SOUTH LONDON ETHICAL SOCIETY (Surrey Masonic Hall): 7, J. McCabe, "The Ritualistic Problem."

BATTERSEA PARK GATES: 11.30, W. J. Ramsey.

### COUNTRY.

BELFAST ETHICAL SOCIETY (York-street Lecture Hall, 69 York-street): No meeting.

GLASGOW (110 Brunswick-street): No meeting.

LIVERPOOL (Alexandra Hall, Islington-square): No meeting.

MANCHESTER (Secular Hall, Rusholme-road): No lecture.

SHEFFIELD SECULAR SOCIETY (Hall of Science, Rockingham-street): 7, Pleasant Evening in Musical and other Recitals, etc.

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