

# THE Freethinker

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*The whole faculties of men must be exerted in order to nobler energies, and he who is not earnestly sincere lives but in half his being—self-mutilated, self-proscribed.*—COLERIDGE.

## Coronation Day.

CORONATION DAY has come and gone at last. It was fixed for the end of June, but "Providence" played the deuce with the arrangements. Splendid weather was turned on, and the King knocked over. It was a nasty sarcasm on the part of that said "Providence," and a postponement was inevitable. Fortunately the King was taken in hand by a strong detachment of the best doctors in the nation. Everything that skill and care could do was done for him; everything that money could command was available. It is not miraculous, therefore, that His Majesty pulled through the worst of the trouble with more than usual celerity; nor is it quite astonishing that his convalescence has been remarkably rapid, for a magnificent yacht in the Solent is certainly an ideal hospital. Science has saved the King. But it would never do for him to say so. He has to play his part as head of the Church as well as head of the State. Accordingly, in his message "To My People" he gives Science the go by. Not so much as an allusion is made to the doctors or the nurses. They will get their rewards, of course; but they must not be thanked publicly. Thanks have to be rendered elsewhere. The clergy must be recognised. They got up prayers for the King's recovery, and they expect to receive all the credit. They are so exacting in these matters that the King was obliged to humor them. "The prayers of my people for my recovery," he says, "were heard, and I now offer up my deepest gratitude to Divine Providence." Perhaps the King half believes this; he can hardly be such a fool as to believe it altogether. It is a discreet mixture; a big sop to the clergy, and a little *blague* on his own account.

We have asked this question before, and we ask it again: Why should God save the King more than any other man in this nation? Monarchs are no longer indispensable. Queen Victoria's loss was irreparable, but it was found that the earth still turned on its axis. After the lapse of a year and a half she is almost forgotten. King Edward's death would equally have left no unfillable void. The Prince of Wales would have mounted the throne, and the loyalists would have worshipped a new God. For loyalism is really a form of religion. When the Prince of Wales becomes King we can see a deity created under our very eyes. He is sanctified by "the divinity that doth hedge a king." He becomes a totally new being in the twinkling of an eye. Before, he could even be chaffed; now, to speak lightly of him is a species of blasphemy. This is all nonsense, however, to the eye of reason. Kings are but men. However high your seat, as old Montaigne says, you actually sit on your own posteriors. Nor, we repeat, are kings in any way indispensable. One king disappears—and another takes his place—"The King is dead—Long live the King." And what difference is there, from the point of view of the

Infinite, between the greatest king and the meanest of his subjects? A dead lord, as Gray said, ranks with commoners; and a dead king ranks with the mob of "the illustrious obscure." Unless, indeed, he is something more than a king. But how few monarchs have been able to claim the title of great men. Most of them are small enough—except in their own estimation, or in the flattery of their parasites. It was this truth that made Byron exclaim, in reference to "God save the King" in connection with George the Third, that it was "a great economy in God to save the like." Poor men, working men, breadwinners of families, die every day, and many of them prematurely. They have no *posse* of doctors round their sick beds, no crowd of nurses to attend to all their wants. They have to fight death alone, and they succumb. Why does not God save *them*? Why save the father of princes and princesses, and not the father whose death leaves his children to penury or destitution?

Whatever be the reason of the King's recovery, he has recovered, and gone through his Coronation. That old arch-quack, the Archbishop of Canterbury, has dabbed His Majesty's bald head, his breast, and the palms of his hands with holy oil, and thus "consecrated" him in the name of the Lord. He is now a full-blown sovereign, King in the sight of God, as well as in the sight of men. The one thing wanting is added. Edward the Seventh was King *de facto* already, but the Church has made him King by the grace of God. He is now both crowned and anointed—and much good may it do him!

The men and women who "assisted" at the Coronation in Westminster Abbey were not the British nation. Neither did they represent the British nation. Most of them were drones or parasites. Some of them had attained to their positions by hard work, of a kind, but these were a very small minority. As for the idle crowd outside, one need not speak of it with the slightest respect. There is more loyalism—perhaps we should say royalism—to-day than ever. There is also more rowdiness. Forty years ago it was not common to hear lads swearing in the streets; it is common enough now; and these lads doff their hats with grotesque reverence at the sound of "the King!" Various "odes" have appeared in the more "respectable" papers. Mr. John Davidson even has joined in the melancholy chorus. But the popular Coronation poet-laureate is the author of a tippy song which has been shouted on the music-hall stage, and shouted still more lustily in the public thoroughfares:—

Drinking whisky, wine, and sherry,  
We'll all be merry  
On Coronation Day.

The sentiment and poetry of these lines are worthy of the occasion; the humbug at one end is matched by the vulgarity at the other; and one is tempted to say that to be King over such a mob is not an honor for which any man should thank God too vigorously.

Humbug and vulgarity! These are the chief characteristics of present-day loyalism. There is not a note of sincerity in it. Journalists who should know better, and *do* know better, are swept along by the popular flood. The *Daily News*, the organ of the Nonconformist Conscience, put on one of its best homiletic scribes to write on "The King's Thanksgiving." There were many blunders in his article,

but nothing quite so bad as the reference to that great and noble Emperor whose very name is music to the students of humanity. "The burden of Marcus Aurelius," the writer said, "was not so heavy as the burden of the ruler who presides over the destinies of the British Empire." What a prostitution of scholarship on the altar of political superstition! Marcus Aurelius was not a sham ruler, but a real one; the actual burden of empire rested upon his shoulders. He governed in fact, not in theory; he wielded power and bore responsibility; and in all serious fighting he went through the campaign at the head of its army, sharing its hardships no less than its dangers. Such a man needed no hocus-pocus of anointing to make him a true Emperor. The finest head and the noblest heart in the Roman Empire, resting on the bare ground of the tented field, wrapped in a cloak whose only distinction was that its color was the imperial purple, and thinking out some point in moral philosophy before falling off into a sleep well earned by the day-long cares of a mighty rulership—ought not to be mentioned in the same breath with a commonplace "constitutional" monarch, who is not the helm, but the gilded figure-head, of the ship of State. Christendom has never produced such rulers as the great Pagan Emperors. The throne shed no lustre on them; they shed lustre on the throne. They were eminent and conspicuous not only by station, but by intellect, and character, and public service. And now, after the lapse of nearly two thousand years, and all the pretended uplifting influence of Christianity upon the Western world, we have nothing but "Edward, R. and I.," to set beside Marcus Aurelius! It is really *too* absurd. We drop our pen in amazement at human folly.

G. W. FOOTE.

### The Shadow of the Cross.—I.

IN all matters connected with Church history, Mr. H. C. Lea has long and deservedly held a front place as a most painstaking and trustworthy authority. His "*Historical Sketch of Sacerdotal Celibacy in the Christian Church*" has since its appearance in 1867 ranked as the chief text-book on the subject, and his two works on Auricular Confession and the *Inquisition of the Middle Ages*, not to mention his other writings, show him to be a careful and judicious workman, in a department where accuracy means real hard work, and where unbiassed judgment is all too scarce. His last and recently-published work, *The Moriscos of Spain: their Conversion and Expulsion*, carries the reader over ground with which a student is tolerably familiar in outline, and the more familiar one is with the general scope of the inquiry, the more grateful will he feel to Mr. Lea for providing such a mass of detailed information on one of the most monstrous and, in its effects, most far-reaching of Christian persecutions.

If one may venture on a word of criticism at the outset, it is that the work has a somewhat unfinished and incomplete air about it. A preliminary chapter describing Spain under the rule of the Moors would have helped the general reader to a clearer understanding of the subject, and a final chapter tracing at length the influence on Spanish civilisation of the Moorish expulsion, would have helped towards an appreciation of the real gravity of Spanish Christian intolerance and cruelty. Mr. Lea's defence would probably be that the book is but part of a contemplated larger work dealing with the whole history of the Spanish Inquisition, and so we must accept the reason, and, like Oliver Twist, ask for more. In what follows, however, I purpose, in giving an outline of Mr. Lea's work, filling up the gaps I have indicated, not in any sense *adding* to Mr. Lea, but only supplying the material necessary to general readers understanding the full importance of the author's researches.

The whole story of Mohammedanism in Spain covers a period of about 900 years. During the earlier portion of this period the Moors built up a civilisation far and away superior to anything that existed in contemporary Christian Europe, and to

which modern Europe owes much for the science and civilisation it now enjoys. The Mohammedans alone continued the traditions of civilised antiquity and thus provided a starting point for the vivifying influences that came into operation at the Renaissance. Their cities were well built, cleanly, and well equipped with advantages that were simply unknown to the Christian world. Colleges, academies, and gymnasiums were established not only in the principal cities, but in many of the small towns and villages. No less than fifty colleges are said to have existed in Granada and its environs. Schools were attached to all Mosques, and public libraries, possessing hundreds of thousands of volumes, established at a time when the chief libraries in Christian Europe consisted of a couple of hundred volumes stored in some old chest, and when, as Alfred said, "scarcely a priest south of the Thames could translate Latin into his mother tongue."

Mr. Fitzmaurice Kelly, in his admirable *History of Spanish Literature*, gives the Spanish Mohammedans but small credit for their influence on pure literature; but, without canvassing this opinion, it is certain that in philosophy and science both Spanish Moors and Spanish Jews attained great distinction, and stand well out from the contemporary ignorance of Christendom. Two such names as Averroes and Maimonides, the intellectual parent of Albertus Magnus and Thomas Aquinas, are sufficient evidence of this. Draper's catalogue of the scientific achievements of the Moors in Spain doubtless needs a little checking, but there is little question that their contributions to science were many and valuable. As early as the ninth and tenth centuries they were teaching geography by the use of globes. Seven hundred years later the Christian Church was anathematising Copernicus, burning Bruno, and imprisoning Galileo for teaching that which had been perfectly familiar to the Mohammedans for the better part of a thousand years. They wrote upon atmospheric refraction, applied mathematics to astronomy and physics, developed Algebra—the very name bearing evidence of the Moorish influence—raised chemistry to a science, were the first to build observatories in Europe, introduced the mariner's compass, gave to medicine and surgery the only improvements made since the days of the Greek and Egyptian schools, and corrected many of the current misconceptions concerning the nature and operation of light. One has only to take the names of those who quickened European thought during the twelfth, thirteenth, and fourteenth centuries, and trace their intellectual genealogy, to see how deeply these were indebted to the Spanish Moors for their knowledge.

Socially, the change from a Christian government to a Mohammedan one was accompanied by many advantages, as the change of government later, from Mohammedan to Christian, was accompanied by many disadvantages. After the Conquest Christians were allowed to remain in undisturbed possession of their property, paying the customary additional taxation levied by Mohammedans on people of other religions—an arrangement which, however obnoxious to modern ideas, was an extremely liberal one at a time when, throughout Christendom, non-believers were scarcely allowed to exist. Under the Moors Christians were allowed liberty of worship; they were subject to the same laws as their Mohammedan fellow-subjects, and were not even excluded from holding office in the State—a privilege not allowed in Christendom until comparatively recent times, and not wholly allowed even now.

The intellectual greatness of the Spanish Mohammedans rested upon a solid basis of industrial and commercial activity. They cultivated sugar and many tropical plants, the cultivation of which left the peninsula with their expulsion. Silk, cotton, and woollen goods were manufactured on a most extensive scale; and Mr. Lea writes of their general value to the State as late as the sixteenth century:—

"They were skilled in marine architecture and the Catalan power in the Mediterranean was largely due to their labors. The wonderful system of irrigation by

which they converted Valencia into the garden of Europe still exists, with its elaborate and equitable allotment of waters. They introduced the cultivation of sugar, silk, cotton, rice, and many other valuable products, and not a spot of available ground was left untilled by their indefatigable industry.....In all the mechanic arts they were unexcelled. The potteries of Malaga, the cloths of Marcia, the silks of Almeria and Granada, the leather hangings of Cordova, the weapons of Toledo, were renowned everywhere and furnished the materials for profitable foreign commerce, which was stimulated by the universal reputation of their merchants for probity and strict fidelity to their engagements, so that it passed into a proverb that the word of a Granadan and the faith of a Castilian would make an old Christian, or, as Hernando Talavera used to say, 'They ought to adopt our faith, and we ought to adopt their morals.' They were temperate and frugal..... There were no beggars among them, for they took affectionate care of their own poor and orphans; they settled all quarrels among themselves, and held it to be unlawful to prosecute each other before a Christian tribunal. In short, they constituted the most desirable population that any land could possess, and we shall have occasion to note hereafter the curious perversity with which these good qualities were converted into accusations against them by their Christian persecutors.\*

This brief sketch of the character and value of the Mohammedan portion of the Spanish population is necessary in order to get a full conception of the villainy of the measures afterwards carried out, and to understand what a terrible curse Christianity has been to Spain. To drive a people, such as the one depicted above, to rebellion and despair, required, as Mr. Lea remarks, exceptional perversity and wrong-headedness; but these were not lacking, and the stupidity of the procedure adopted is all the more striking as all recognised that the industrial and commercial welfare of Spain was peculiarly dependent upon its non-Christian population.

When the Mohammedans landed in the South of Spain in 711, they rapidly subdued nearly the whole of the country, the work of conquest being far more of the nature of a simple occupation owing to the weak defence offered and the passivity with which the bulk of the people received their new masters. But there were numbers of disaffected also, and these, retreating to the mountainous region of the north-west, succeeded in maintaining their independence. They did more than this, for they maintained a warfare against the Moors century after century, steadily winning back portions of their lost territory, until the conquest of Granada in 1492 reduced the Moors to the position of subjects where they had formerly been masters. So long as there remained territory to be conquered from the Moors, the Spanish Government probably deemed it inexpedient to resort to an open policy of persecution in order to bring its Mohammedan subjects within the fold of the Church. Spasmodic attempts at conversion were made, and harsher measures, such as ordering all Moors to wear a distinctive badge, were resorted to now and again, but these also appear to have been more or less sporadic in their nature.

But in proportion to the decline of the Moorish power in Spain, the Church grew in strength, and greater ecclesiastical pressure was brought to bear upon the Government in order to secure the enforcement of old regulations and the creation of new ones to suppress both the Jewish and the Mohammedan religion. The fall of Granada in 1492 finally cleared the way for more systematic attempts to Christianise the Moorish population, and very soon after this event regulations commenced to press with increasing severity upon the unfortunate Moriscoes.

In the case of the surrender of Granada, Almeria, and various other places, the most solemn stipulations had been made concerning the future security of the Moors and the maintenance of their religion. The terms of the surrender permitted them "to live in their law and faith, and to be judged according to the *zunna*, or Moorish code, it declares their houses inviolable against forcible entry or the free quartering of soldiers; it guarantees them possession of their

horses and arms, and that they shall never be required to wear badges.....That children born of Christian women should choose for themselves at the age of twelve which religion to embrace; that no Jew or convert should hold jurisdiction over them; that no Christian should ever enter their alyamas." At the surrender of Granada the stipulations were more explicit than in other instances. Ferdinand and Isabella swore in the name of God that all Moors should have "full liberty to work on their lands or to go where they desired through the kingdoms in search of advantage, and to maintain their religious observances and mosques as heretofore.....They had free permission to trade with Barbary and with all places in Castile and Andalusia without heavier imposts than those paid by Christians. Renegades were not to be maltreated by act or word.....and no constraint was to be applied to the Moors to induce conversion.....All the revenues of mosques and schools and charitable foundations were to be maintained, and paid, as usual, into the hands of the *alfaiques*, and the governors and magistrates appointed by the new sovereigns were to treat the Moors kindly and lovingly; anyone acting wrongfully was to be visited with due punishment."

Had these stipulations been honorably observed by Ferdinand and his successors, the condition of Spain to-day might have been far otherwise than what it is. But in the sequel everyone of these agreements were violated, save that stipulating that no Jew should be appointed to govern the Moors, and in breaking them Spain laid the foundations of its own downfall and degradation. It had always been the stock maxim of the Christian Church that no faith need be kept with infidels, and religious zeal showed itself before long, here as elsewhere, oblivious to all considerations of honor and morality.

C. COHEN.

(To be continued.)

### Missionary Tribulations.

A NEW feature has arisen of late years in connection with missionary enterprise. It may even be described as a difficulty of some magnitude and importance, and certainly a source of great tribulation, as far as well-informed and strictly conscientious missionaries are concerned. In the old times, the missionary who went out to preach the Gospel to the heathen was perfectly well assured about the Gospel he was going to preach. He took with him the "Word of God," and never had the least doubt that the book was indeed the Word of God,—pure and unadulterated, inspired from cover to cover, free from any admixture of error, absolutely unimpeachable in its narration of facts and inculcation of morals, scientifically accurate, transmitted to us with almost miraculous care and translated in a manner which left little or nothing to be desired.

The early missionary set sail with perfect confidence in the Divine Revelation which he proposed to offer to the inhabitants of heathen lands. He knew nothing then of what is now called the "human element" running through Holy Writ. He had no inkling of the modern theory of "Scriptural development" whereby all the absurd or objectionable portions of the Old Testament and some of the New are glossed over as the lower steps in the ladder of revelation—as if, forsooth, it were necessary in a Divine plan to teach falsehood in order to prepare the way for truth. He never dreamt that many of the books comprising the Scriptures were anonymous and of uncertain date, that some were merely allegorical and others purely legendary, and that many of their leading features had been derived from heathen or pagan sources, and that there were sections which it was open to even Christian people to reject as historically unreliable or ethically repugnant.

He carried the book with all the confidence born of blissful ignorance. He presented it with calm assurance, without the least shiftiness of eye or hypocrisy of mental reservation.

\* *Moriscoes in Spain*, pp. 6-7.

But now! Imagine a cultured, well-read man, fresh from the critical atmosphere of one of our great Universities, embarking with the self-same book on a missionary expedition to the unlettered heathen. He has divested himself of the old traditions as to the inspiration and inerrancy of the whole of the Bible. He believes it in part. He thinks he will confine himself to preaching "Christ and Him crucified," and say as little as possible about anything else. This, of course, is very well if he proceeds to virgin soil. He may please himself what he presents there, and appease his conscience with the sacrifice of that which he withholds. But then suppose his steps are turned in directions whither he has been preceded by *other* missionaries. Suppose he finds himself in places where the Bible, translated into the native tongue, is already in circulation. What is he to do? Especially when he finds, what is usually the case, that the very things which he would most wish to forget in his heterogeneous Scriptures—such as the beguiling serpent, the eating of the apple, the talking ass, the man inside a fish, etc.—are just the things which arrest and fix the native attention. If he endeavors to explain them away as non-literal occurrences he is derided as an impostor and his book condemned as containing lies. If he lets them remain, unexplained and with all their naked absurdity undisturbed, he does violence to his own instincts of honesty—of truth and fair-dealing as between man and man. He must either impose on the "poor untutored" heathen, or, by disclosing facts and attempting to explain them, involve himself in endless difficulties and complete disaster to his mission.

These are not mere imaginary contingencies as some Christian critics may quite too hastily assume. Many men have hesitated to go out to the heathen to preach Christianity, not that they did not think and feel themselves to be Christians, but because they have foreseen difficulties in connection with the book which they would have to carry. They could explain it to themselves—in a way—or to fellow-countrymen who have been familiarised with the Scriptures and to whom nothing is strange in the way of diverse interpretation. But they have felt it hopeless to attempt to satisfy pertinaciously enquiring natives who are necessarily on a lower grade of education and without those powers of transforming error into truth, which seems to be one of the great mental achievements of our modern Christian civilisation.

Fortunately for their own peace of mind, the men who go out as missionaries are mostly of the stone-blind, unread, "whole-hog" description. They believe all that they have been told in infancy, and though the intellectual world rushes on and tramples down one idol after another, they remain unconcerned, uninformed—children and idolators to the end of their existence. One such who describes himself as "An Indian Missionary" contributes to the *Christian* a special article on "The Present Crisis." He is sufficiently informed to know that what is called the Higher Criticism has brought about a crisis, and he is not unconcerned as to possible consequences. But he is absolutely purblind in regard to the outlook and so childish in his complaints that one might really think he was in his dotage. He tells us that the proceedings of the Assembly of the United Free Church of Scotland in connection with the case of Professor George Adam Smith, who a little time ago was accused of heresy, have filled him with dismay. The same feeling, he says, must be uppermost in the minds of many missionaries. By this he means that the fact of Professor George Adam Smith having escaped the consequences of a free criticism of the Old Testament has opened the way to unbelief in that collection of documents which he (the Indian missionary) is now offering for acceptance to the Hindus. He does not want to enter into any controversy—religionists of his turn of mind never do—but as a practical missionary, with the realities of mission work constantly in evidence, he wants to ask the disciples of the Higher

Criticism a plain question. And this is how he puts it:—

Missionaries constantly come in contact with Mohammedans. One of the chief objections to our teaching raised by Moslems is that in the Pentateuch and the Psalms of the Christian Bible we have not the revelation which was given to Moses and David respectively. The reply of all missionaries hitherto has been that in those books of the Bible we have such a revelation—in short, that the author of the Pentateuch under Divine inspiration was Moses, and that the Davidic authorship of the Psalms, as a whole, is undoubted. Now if a Mussulman brings forward the usual objection, what am I, in accordance with the teachings of the higher critics like Professor Smith, Professor Driver, Professor Cheyne and others, to reply? Am I to say, as all Christian missionaries hitherto have said (as above), "Your objection is groundless? The Torah as we have it is the Torah which was written by Moses, and the Zabbur is the Zabbur which was written by David." Or am I to say, "Your objection is well founded—as a matter of fact ascertained by criticism? The Pentateuch, or Torah, as we have it, was not written by Moses at all. There *may* be in it some Mosaic teaching, but, as a matter of fact, the Pentateuch, as we have it, as the Jews had it for centuries, as it existed in Mohammed's time, is not the production of Moses, but of some unknown Jew or Jews in post-exilic times. When and by whom it was so concocted—for whoever wrote it wished to make it appear that Moses was the writer—we do not know, but of this we are certain, that it was not written by Moses. And as for the Zabbur, the Psalms which we have, and which the Jews had, are not Davidic at all. Some may be ancient, but how ancient we do not know. One thing, however, is certain, that none of them were written by David."

This is the point whereat the "Indian Missionary" feels himself fixed. He knows the Moslem will say: "On what ground, then, do you ask me to accept your Torah and your Zabbur as Divine revelations, when you do not know when and by whom they were written, when as a matter of fact you admit that they were written by some unknown persons, centuries after Moses or David?" And the missionary plaintively asks: "What am I to reply?" Then he adds:—

"And if the Moslem goes on to say, 'You tell me that Jesus Christ in the Gospels tells us that the Pentateuch was written by Moses—for that is what His words plainly mean—and that the Psalms (or some of them at all events, which He quotes or refers to) were written by David. But when you now admit that such a statement cannot be true, how can you ask me to admit that Jesus Christ was the Son of the one true God? How could Jesus, Who you say was the truth itself, be Divine, when He made a statement which is not true?' What am I to reply?"

Frankly, this missionary adds, if he believed the teaching of Professor Smith and his school to be true, he would "cease to be a missionary to-morrow." He could not possibly feel that he had any message to give to either Mussulman or Hindu. "If," he says, "the Pentateuch and the Psalms are not to be attributed to Moses and David—if they are simply the production and concoction of some unknown writers, who could not possibly have been inspired by the God of truth, when their writings were undoubtedly suggestive of falsehood; if our Lord's testimony to their authorship is to be rejected—then I have no message based on Divine revelation to give. Can you wonder that the *practical* acceptance of such teaching (for not denouncing it as unscriptural simply means that a clergyman or missionary may teach it if he pleases) fills me with dismay?"

No doubt the poor man is filled with dismay. And so are many other missionaries filled with dismay at the inroads made on the Old and New Testaments by Dr. Cheyne and his *collaborateurs* in the *Encyclopædia Biblica*. Here, these unfortunate missionaries are enduring (according to their own accounts) untold hardships in foreign lands, distributing the Scriptures to the natives, while fellow Christians—and Christians of high degree—are doing their level best at home to undermine the authenticity and reliability of the greater part of the once-prized volume. This is distinctly sad. Either the missionaries are in the position of "the blind leading the blind" or modern criticism must be upset.

FRANCIS NEALE.

## Roger Bacon.

“Yearning with desire  
To follow knowledge, like a sinking star,  
Beyond the utmost bounds of human thought.”

THE brilliance of the Renaissance, the potency of its effect, and the renown attained by the foremost men connected with the movement, have blinded us to the eminence of thinkers who lived before the close of the Middle Ages.

The coincidence that Roger Bacon bore, in a time before surnames had come into general use, the same surname that was to be carried to fame four centuries later by “the wisest, brightest, meanest of mankind” has cast into deeper eclipse the reputation of one of the boldest thinkers who have ever revolted against ecclesiastical authority.

Roger Bacon's birthplace is uncertain. He was probably born at Ilchester about the year 1214, a stirring time for England, being the year before King John granted Magna Charta.

Of his early days little is known. His family seems to have been fairly wealthy. Tradition says that he early showed an intense desire for knowledge, and soon exhausted all the available learning of his native place. But his father seems to have had little taste or sympathy for learning. A friar who became interested in the boy desired he should go to Oxford, then, as now, a centre of learning, and approached the father with a view to obtaining his consent. But the father was obdurate. Roger, however, seems to have only awaited a favorable opportunity to leave home, for as a boy he entered a monastery and eventually went to Oxford. Since the thirteenth century, both the City and University of Oxford have changed. When Bacon went there not a single college had been founded. Why Oxford became a centre for learning is unknown, for until the colleges were founded, the pupils used to travel to any town where a great teacher lived and reside there, forming a school of his followers. It was not until Bacon was an old man, when he returned to England at the end of his life, that he saw the first college.

Of his education we know that in philosophy he soon proved himself a master. From Oxford he went to France, and entered the University of Paris. Here he was honored with the degree of Doctor of Divinity. He joined the Franciscan Order, through the influence of Bishop Grosseteste. Into his studies he introduced systematic methods, and as his methods differed from those in use, he was charged with being in league with the Evil One. He and Friar Bungay are said to have made a brazen head which was to warn England of danger.

Bacon was again at Oxford between the years 1250-57. While there he incurred the displeasure of the superiors of his Order, and was removed to Paris and placed under supervision. Here he organized a school. This brings us to the great event of Bacon's life. On June 22, 1266, Pope Clement IV. wrote to Bacon, commanding him to commit his knowledge to writing and send it to Rome. Bacon had to face the opposition of his Order. Then, as now, it was the hardest work to persuade the world to accept any new knowledge in the face of religious bigotry and dogmatism. To assert anything unknown to the Church was to tamper with revealed religion. This state of affairs raised the anger and contempt of Bacon. He had to face opposition and persecution. He wrote to the Pope, apologising for the delay in sending his writings as commanded, and appealed for help. The work demanded of Bacon required the use of scribes, and the Holy Father sent no supplies. For the transcribing of Bacon's researches the common copyists were useless; it required trained workers. The difficulties were appalling; but the work was commenced at once, and was carried on without intermission. Considering the difficulties, the labor was stupendous; and has, possibly, never been equalled. It was all done in slightly over a year. The Pope wrote his letter on June 26, 1266. It would take time for the letter to reach Paris, and then the

beginning would have to be made. Yet all was accomplished before the end of 1267.

There are three works, the chief of which—the *Opus Magnus*—covers the whole scope of physical science as then understood. For this work tables had to be constructed and diagrams drawn. Everything had to be done by a friendless and unaided man, with nothing but the force of his own genius to carry him through.

There are but few facts of the remaining years of Bacon's life. The record is a sad one. Clement IV. died shortly after the completion of Bacon's work, leaving him to the tender mercies of his ignorant and intolerant superiors. The storm gathered, and in 1277 burst in all its fury. Bacon was condemned for heresy and cast into prison, where he lay for fourteen long, weary years—from 1278 till 1292. He was liberated within sight of his eightieth year. He died two years later, laying his life down at Oxford, where, as a boy, he had studied.

There hangs over his writings the veil of a dead language. A small part only has been translated out of the original Latin. In his day, however, he was a power. We have two signal proofs of his influence. In a memorial by Dr. John Dee to Queen Elizabeth, upon the reform of the Calendar, he quotes Roger Bacon as an authority. Cardinal D'Ailly, in his book, *Imago Mundi*, a geographical work which influenced Columbus, copies a large part from Bacon's *Opus Magnus*, but omits to acknowledge the obligation. Columbus cites the copied passages as one of the incitements which induced him to start on his voyage.

We know little of Bacon's personality. Matthew Paris, the historian, refers to Bacon's wit. But no romance lights up his life. Like Rabelais, one side of his nature was asphyxiated by the Great Lying Catholic Church. Through all his years of youth and prime there shines no gleam of love, nor even of friendship, save as arose in the common pursuit of learning. No woman is mentioned in any part of his writings, except his mother. From the day he first set foot in Oxford he kept two objects, and two only, in view—the discovery and diffusion of truth and the exposure of error.

It has been said that Roger Bacon lived three centuries before his time. This is an observation founded on a misconception of human progress.

None can say what he might have accomplished in invention and discovery had he not been hampered by the priests of the Great Lying Church. He was born in an atmosphere loaded with what Erasmus, in a later and happier day, complained of as “irreligious religion and unlearned learning.” Roger Bacon's mission was to act as a pioneer, to clear the way for workers in a more fortunate age. Error had been accumulating through all the centuries of faith following the dissolution of the Roman Empire. It lay as deep as volcanic dust on buried Pompeii on every subject of human inquiry. Bacon's career as an individual may be reckoned a failure. Regarded in its true light as an important episode in the history of Rationalism, it must be deemed part of the mighty movement destined in the lapse of years to overthrow superstition. The message he proclaimed fell as seed by the wayside; the clue which he uncovered seemed to slip unheeded from his dying hand. Still, the seed had been sown, the clue had been found, and this despised heretic, “voyaging through strange seas of thought alone,” was the protomartyr of Rationalism—at once the knell of Christianity and the *reveille* of freedom. Roger Bacon was the first English Freethinker—the first Englishman to claim freedom for human intellect and proclaim its scope. Nobly begun, the work has been nobly continued.

The sea of faith  
Was once at the full, and round earth's shore  
Lay like the folds of a bright girdle furled;  
But now we only hear  
Its melancholy, long, withdrawing roar,  
Retreating to the breath  
Of the night-wind, down the vast edges drear  
And naked shingles of the world.

MIMNERMUS.

## Acid Drops.

WHAT cant has been in the air during the Coronation orgie! Even in the sedate *Westminster* a "Song for Coronation Day" by Nora Chesson contained the following lines:—

The head high lifted of a King, a lover  
Of long ago, that breasted sea and breeze  
To pluck a rose in Denmark,  
And bring a wife from Denmark,  
A worthy mate for splendid destinies.

"Breasted sea and breeze" is distinctly good. We all know what magnificent courage King Edward displayed when he made that perilous voyage to Denmark to bring home Queen Alexandra as his wife. He deserved the Victoria Cross for such a feat of daring seamanship.

Zola pointed out that the Dreyfus case acted as a sort of touchstone. It seems to distinguish the false from the true, the wrong from the right, and leave them in separate heaps. Take the recent letter of General De Gallifet, for instance. This aristocratic soldier, who was Minister of War in the Government that "pardoned" Captain Dreyfus, said in conversation with M. Reinach that the "traitor" had been in the service of Russia. M. Reinach gave this statement publicity, and Captain Dreyfus immediately branded it as an abominable lie. General De Gallifet replied that Captain Dreyfus, in petitioning for his pardon, admitted his guilt. But this is in direct contradiction to the known facts of the case. The pardon was offered to Captain Dreyfus, and it was only the solicitations of his family that induced him to accept it. On leaving his prison he protested his innocence, and his resolve to strive for the legal revision of his case, which would be possible if "new facts" arose on which he could base his appeal. General De Gallifet either suffers from a bad memory or is guilty of a gross falsehood. In other words, he has been proved unsound by the Dreyfus touchstone.

Those who talk about the "tyranny" of the French Government in closing religious schools that will not conform to the law, should read the article by Mr. William Durban in a recent issue of the *Daily Express*. "The French Government," he admits, "is fighting for its existence against a vast organisation which has aimed at the political capture of the country through the schools. The Orders have not been content to carry on their excellent educational work, but have in numerous cases become machines for propagating prejudice against the Administration. With these prejudices thousands of scholars, girls and boys alike, have been imbued. The trouble created is not a merely transient agitation. Those who know what has been going on in France expect that worse commotions will eventuate."

There are some brave men of God in France. At Folguet the priests urged the women to oppose the troops sent to enforce the law against unauthorised schools, by kneeling in the roadway in front of the horses. But it is not a new thing to find priests sheltering themselves behind petticoats.

The recent revelations in France as to the accumulated wealth of the religious Orders are being illustrated by the expenditure of those who have found a refuge in Great Britain. For instance, the Trappists who have settled near Kingsbridge in Devonshire have arranged to spend no less than £30,000 upon the erection of a monastery there. This is by no means an exceptional case. How can the immigrants claim to have observed the rule of poverty?

If the Church parsons, from the Archbishop of Canterbury down to the lowest incumbent, plainly said that they were simply in the clerical business to obtain a living, that they meant to get all they could and stick to all they got, they would be entitled to a certain measure of respect. Even a highwayman who shuns pretences and indulges in no hypocrisy, is better than one who whines and snuffles before demanding your purse. But when the clergy make out that they are laborers in the Lord's vineyard, that they are called of the Holy Ghost to preach and save souls, and that they are dedicated servants of their Lord and Savior, who said "Blessed be ye poor" and "Woe unto you rich,"—then it is an infamous thing to find some of them rolling in wealth and living in palaces while others can hardly procure bread to eat. Dr. Temple's salary is £15,000 a year, and Dr. Ingram's £10,000. Yet we read that a poor curate, the Rev. F. J. Bleasby, has been obliged to enter Tiverton Workhouse. For three years he has had no employment, though he made no less than 470 applications for it; he has had to sell his books and other belongings in order to maintain himself; and now, after serving as a curate for twenty-three years, he has to enter the Union as a pauper. Surely there is something in this case calling for the attention of the Holy

Ghost. That personage ought to inspire one of the fat Bishops to take this poor lean curate out of the Workhouse. Otherwise the Church is one of the ghastliest mockeries in the world.

Of course it is just conceivable that the Holy Ghost has a special reason for not inspiring any of the Bishops to befriend this pauper curate. It may be that the Holy Ghost has resolved to bring this pauper curate safely to heaven; one of the best ways to which is through the workhouse, for there, if anywhere, a man should be able to earn the blessing of poverty. And it may be that the Holy Ghost has resolved to send all the Bishops to hell, and see that they get there. When they are safe in Old Nick's establishment, we daresay he will baste them in front of the fire, with a sarcastic reference to the Sermon on the Mount every time he souses them with their own gravy. So perhaps, after all, it is better to be Curate Bleasby in Tiverton Workhouse than Archbishop Temple in Lambeth Palace.

Mr. Lambton, brother of the Earl of Durham, gave the following account of the British Constitution in the course of a recent debate in the House of Commons. "The British Constitution," he said, "was itself not logical, neither were the Houses of Parliament. The one House was selected by Providence, and the other House by the people. One-half of our legislative wisdom we owed to the choice of chance, and the other half to the chance of choice." Mr. Lambton has clearly a pretty wit of his own—and not too much respect for Providence.

"Salute one another with a holy kiss," says the Apostle. Over at Newbridge, in Ireland, a soldier practised this advice on "a good-looking girl" named Sarah Cunningham. Thereupon the police brought her before the magistrates and charged her with being kissed. Surely this must have been the first time in history that a girl was ever charged in a court of justice with such an offence, and it is not surprising that the magistrates dismissed the case.

Mrs. Parish, of Ardilaun-road, Highbury, took Annie Wiggins as her servant with a good character for honesty from the Salvation Army. Annie Wiggins is now doing six months' hard labor for stealing her mistress's jewels and other things to the value of £15.

Sentences are often very disproportionate. If a servant girl gets six months for stealing, how much should a man get for throwing a lighted paraffin lamp and a kettle of boiling water over a woman? In this case the woman was seriously injured. The man, however, only got three months. But the woman was his wife. Perhaps that explains it.

An insane tramp was brought up at the Marlborough-street Police Court and charged with begging in Oxford-street. He called himself "Rotlschild de Vanderbilt." It is a wonder he did not add "Pierpoint Morgan de Carnegie." Indeed, he might have gone the whole hog and called himself God Almighty. He was poor enough to take the text, "Yours is the kingdom of heaven," as applicable to himself.

Colin S. M. Brown, belonging to Orkney, was "a good and popular preacher," but he went mad at Edinburgh, threw his landlady upon the floor, and jumped upon her chest until he killed her. Where was "Providence" in this case?

Miss Marie Corelli's publishers announce that they are printing an unprecedented first edition of her new novel. This is a shot aimed at Mr. Hall Caine. These two good Christians are in a fierce competition with each other. Both are working "Jesus Christ, you know," for all he is worth—and a bit more.

A wag of a Socialist, on the Customs Tariff Committee of the Reichstag, introduced an amendment to Clause 946, dealing with imported toys. He proposed that decorations conferred by sovereigns should be included with "children's toys." Unfortunately, there was no discussion on this proposal, owing to the chairman's intervention.

The Rev. Dr. John L. Campbell, pastor of the Baptist Church in Lexington-avenue, New York City, has "struck oil." He managed to treble his Sunday morning and evening collections by securing the services of a lady whistler—Miss Luise Traux. She is young and pretty, and, as she whistles well too, she had to take an encore. This opens a new line of usefulness for ladies who want to help their pastors along. According to the old proverb, a whistling maid and a crowing hen are neither fit for God nor men; but they have altered all that in America, at least in the churches, and whistling maids will soon be plentiful. Only they must not be old maids. Youth and good looks are indispensable.

But fancy Moses, Paul, or Jesus Christ revisiting the glimpses of the moon, strolling into a church, and hearing a lady whistle! It would be enough to bring on a stroke of apoplexy. Paul would certainly succumb. "Let your women keep silence in the church," he said; and think of the silence being broken by a woman whistling! Jesus might stand the ordeal a little better, for he was used to ladies' society, and even a whistling woman would not kill him after his experience of Mary Magdalene and her seven devils. No doubt the old Hebrew prophet would cry "Holy Moses!" and drop down in a fit.

The New York *Tribune* describes the innovation as an approach to a "canary choir."

The following inscription is to be seen on the gates of Bandon—which, as everybody knows, is in Ireland: "Jew, Turk, or Infidel may enter here, but not a Papist." A Roman Catholic wit has inscribed beneath it:—

Who wrote these words wrote well,  
The same is written on the gates of hell.

Dante's inscription was more suitable to the entrance of Inferno. "All hope abandon, ye who enter here." But he was an Italian who took things very seriously. He would have found some fun even in hell if he had been an Irishman.

That piety may co-exist with cruelty is beyond dispute. We do not need to go back to the tortures of the Inquisition for evidence of that. Even in modern days we may find men who are at once orthodox and heartless. For instance, a parson named Heaven—note the sanctified name—has been fined recently for treating a dumb animal in a shamefully cruel way. This Rev. Heaven, who is the vicar of Horley, near Banbury, was the owner of an aged pony. Regardless of its infirm condition, he drove the poor animal to Banbury. On the way it collapsed and fell from sheer weakness, breaking its knees badly. Nevertheless, the Rev. Heaven drove it two miles further, and then left it without troubling to see that it was properly treated. He was fined £3 9s. 6d., including costs—a quite too lenient penalty. Paul asks, in a brutal kind of way: "Doth God take care for oxen?" (1 Cor. ix. 9). Parson Heaven evidently does not care for his beasts of burden.

A gallery in the Church of St. Francis, at Prato, in Tuscany, collapsed recently. By God's will, nothing more serious happened than the bruising of a bishop.

While travelling by rail to fulfil a preaching engagement at Charleston, near Shipley, Mr. Casson, a deacon of Westgate Baptist Church, Bradford, suddenly died. There is no moral; but had this happened to a Secular lecturer the pious would have found one.

The beautiful spirit of Christian amity which prevails between the Church and Dissent is exemplified by a recent letter in a Church weekly. The writer devoutly trusts that the President and other officials at the forthcoming Church Congress at Northampton will decline to receive any Dissenting deputations. He says, with a great deal of truth: "At the present time, Dissenting expressions of goodwill, etc., appear to be downright lumbag and hypocrisy."

Two Welsh Congregationalists have been adjudged guilty of an even worse offence than bearing false witness against their neighbor. They have borne false witness against their pastor, the Rev. William Bowen Richards, of Nazareth Church, Deri. That worthy Christian has chosen to ignore Christ's declaration: "Blessed are ye when men shall revile you and persecute you and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely for my sake." Instead of "rejoicing" and being "exceeding glad," he has felt hurt and annoyed, and has gone to a court of law, where he has been awarded £100 damages and costs. He probably thinks that a better solatium than waiting for the promised "reward in heaven."

The recent discussion on the proper flag for churches has brought out an amusing instance of ignorance. A retired naval officer took Holy Orders, and became rector of a country parish in the Midlands. His parishioners, wishing to give him a surprise, subscribed amongst themselves, and bought a flag for the church tower. Directly the old gentleman saw it he flew into a violent rage, and ordered it to be taken down at once. One of his parishioners asked him why he did not like it. "Allow that flag to fly on my church tower? Never! It's an insult!" he exclaimed. "Do you know what that particular flag signifies, sir? It means, 'In distress; want a pilot!'"

If a fierce light beats about the Crown, a keen eye is kept on the sayings and doings of the Primate. A writer in the

*Rock* falls foul of Dr. Temple for calling the roaring Leo "Your Holiness." But that is a minor offence compared with that of which the Archbishop of Canterbury was guilty a short time ago. Then, it seems, "he inaugurated in Rugby Chapel a medallion of a poor man who, about a fortnight before his death, brought out an essay in which he said that the accounts of the Resurrection are 'poetry,' mere fiction intended to give a flourish to the Gospels. A fine example to set before the boys! and in a building, too, erected for the worship of Christ as verily risen and ascended!"

In various ways of late clerics have been affording examples of how to play the fool. And it goes without saying that they have succeeded. Some have entered into hat-making competitions; others have turned themselves into old washerwomen and have washed dirty dusters against time. Now we hear of a parson at a bazaar down Colchester way taking upon himself the rôle of cheap jack. His supreme effort of drollery appears to have been his attempt "to sell a middle-aged lady a pair of web braces." The *Church Times* is indignant with these clerical clowns. But why complain? The sky-pilots seem to have been in their element. Thus occupied, they have been less harmful and not more absurd than when in the pulpit.

Dr. Robertson Nicoll preached the official sermon of the recent Bible Christian Conference in London. He said that many were leaving the Word of God and he proposed to indicate some of the ways in which it was forsaken. It was forsaken by many who had a heart for work among the poor. "I was told," he went on to say, "by an eminent man that the new religion was humanitarianism. He told me instances of men and women who had gone to live among the poor. One of these young workers said, 'My business is to save their bodies; it is God's business to save their souls.' He spoke of a young couple brilliantly gifted, beginning their married life in the East End, sharing their home with outcasts. He confessed that generally speaking those workers were Agnostics. It was the brother they had seen rather than the God whom they had not seen who filled their thoughts. From the organised Churches they had gone forth in contempt. They had been brought up in them, and had come to the conclusion that they had hopelessly failed to grapple with the poverty of the city. Along with the Church they had often, though not always, abandoned Christianity and the Bible. They knew nothing about another life. All they were concerned with was this life."

This, of course, is pure Secularism, and one is glad to have Dr. Robertson's admission that Secular principles are thus being carried out. Continuing his address, Dr. Nicoll said "they had seen the Bible torn to tatters by some, and even from their own trusted teachers they had heard that the faith of their childhood must be modified, and that though there are Divine elements in Scripture, yet from much of it the glory has been removed."

Having painted this picture of prevalent doubt and unbelief, Dr. Nicoll proceeded to urge that the "Word of God" should not be forsaken. But as he himself seems not to be quite sure what the "Word of God" is—how we are to find it in this generally discredited book—it is hardly worth while discussing his appeal on its behalf, especially as it is of the usual kind of pulpit rhetoric in which there is a mere ha'porth of reasoning to a shilling's-worth of assertion and sickly sentiment.

Parson Wadsworth, according to the *Durham Chronicle*, is in a sad state of mind in regard to the parish of St. Oswald's, Durham, of which he is vicar. He has tried a little plain-speaking from the pulpit, but we should hardly imagine it will have much effect. He is deficient in tact, and rails like an old fishwife. What seems to have specially roused his ire is the fact that when he went to celebrate Holy Communion the other Sunday morning, he found only one male communicant present! This was the last straw that broke the camel's back. This carelessness and callousness on the part of Churchmen generally he ascribed in a great measure to the "restless spirit of the age." And one of the causes of the restless spirit of the age was "the spread of education." No doubt; but Parson Wadsworth, if he had been wise, would not have said so.

He hastens to explain that it is the little learning, the smattering of knowledge, which causes many people to "argue and dispute the great cardinal doctrines of Christianity." Possibly even that modicum would have been deemed sufficient if it had led to the acceptance of the cardinal doctrines and to an attendance at Communion. Another cause was "the spread of cheap literature." The world was being flooded, he said, with productions that were

positively wicked. These productions were frequently perused by the working classes. The whole mysteries of the Catholic faith of Christianity were being held up as "a fable and an old wife's story." This led people to argue, dispute, and doubt those holy things which had always been held by Christian people in past ages with the greatest of confidence.

Poor Parson Wadsworth! However much we may sympathise with him, it is difficult to see what can be done to remedy this dreadful state of things. We cannot stop the "spread of education," even though that education does not achieve the altitude or profundity of that in which Mr. Wadsworth rejoices. We cannot stop the "spread of cheap literature," though it turns inside out and smashes up the cardinal doctrines of Mr. Wadsworth's faith. We cannot make the sterner sex attend Holy Communion if they consider it useless and nonsensical. All that we can suggest is that Parson Wadsworth should pray to Almighty God against this "restless spirit of the age." After all, it is as much God's business as Mr. Wadsworth's.

Mr. Hugh Price Hughes is indignant at a statement by the *St. James's Gazette* ancient the case of Dr. Beet. That journal, "among other unprovoked and offensive comments," ventured to observe: "We strongly suspect it would be found that in the Nonconformist communions, as in the Established Church, the average clergy lag far behind the laity in tolerance and enlightenment." Well, does not the result prove that the Wesleyan Conference was lacking in "tolerance and enlightenment"? It did not accept Mr. Price Hughes' own pleading on behalf of Dr. Beet, but linked with his nomination two other names, and these were referred to the Pastoral Session. Dr. Beet was re-elected by the Pastoral Session only upon his assenting to humiliating terms. Does this look like "toleration and enlightenment"?

A man and woman broke into the parish church at Matlock Bath and stole the money from the church expenses box, the Communion wine, and the altar cloth. When arrested the woman was intoxicated through drinking the wine. We had an idea that, as a rule, the sacramental wine dispensed was non-alcoholic, but apparently at Matlock Bath it is rather a strong sort of tippie, or the woman must have imbibed very freely. Usually the stuff is so sour that if it weren't so meagrely laded out the communicants would be afflicted with the "collywobbles." Anyhow, whether alcoholic or not, communion wine appears to induce in most churches a spiritual form of intoxication little less degrading than that in which this woman was found.

The men of God are not satisfied with making the Sunday miserable with their pious exactions. They have now the impudence to want to encroach on Saturday evenings. Positively, it has been suggested in a symposium on the "Future of Sunday" in the *Christian Commonwealth* that all business on Saturday evening should finish at eight o'clock, and all theatres and places of amusement should be closed, "in order to procure a time of preparation for the solemnities of the morning." We hope the pious will persevere with this proposal—if they are fools enough.

The *Pilot* is rather severe upon Professor Cheyne. We are not surprised that it is so. Much as his scholarship and critical acumen are to be admired, Professor Cheyne occupies a very anomalous position. He has himself written, and is editorially responsible for the writing by others of the most damaging criticisms of Bible belief. Yet he continues a Canon of the Anglican Church and a teacher of Anglican Divinity. The *Pilot* thinks it is time "to speak plainly about this matter," and it does so. It accuses Dr. Cheyne of using his position to popularise and promulgate "non-Christian beliefs." The "confident" negations of Christian belief as to the Divine Person of our Lord are specially singled out for attack. Plain men, it says, will not tolerate the endowments of the Church being used to propagate teaching which "cuts at the root of the Christian faith."

Dr. Cheyne's position, the *Pilot* is prepared to admit, would be quite defensible if he were a "free lance," and if he had not voluntarily undertaken obligations, both as a priest and a professor, to serve the Church of England. "But when a man finds that his intellectual convictions no longer harmonise with the doctrines which he is paid to teach, it is high time for him to consider whether he should continue to hold the positions of dignity to which he has been appointed by the authorities of the University and of the Church." Possibly Dr. Cheyne would reply that his convictions do harmonise with the doctrines he is paid to teach. We confess to being unable to see how any such reconciliation can be effected. It would necessitate such a display of intellectual gymnastics—of wriggling, twisting and evasion—that Jesuit casuistry would look foolish by the side of it.

Likely enough, the reason Dr. Cheyne has not been dealt with long ere this by the ruling authorities of his Church is the belief that his heresies are privately shared by many of the clergy. Nonconformists are not so weak and temporising. Officially they are conscious of their power, and they wield it. This may be specially said of the Wesleyans, as witness the way in which they have brought poor Dr. Beet on his knees. His offence, which he has meekly promised not to repeat unless "by permission," is mild and harmless compared with the out-and-out infidelity of Dr. Cheyne.

The *Chicago Tribune* recently published the following pathetic paragraph:—After fatally wounding a little playmate, Roy Potter, by the accidental discharge of a revolver, Leslie Argyle dropped to his knees beside his injured companion, and offered a childish prayer that Roy might not die. The physicians who examined the wounded boy at the hospital said they feared the prayer would not be answered, and their prediction was verified. The boy died after a few hours. Commenting on the above, the *Freethought Magazine* declares that any kind of a decent God that ever answered a prayer would surely have answered this one.

Mr. W. Warry, evangelistic orator, writes from South Hornsey to the gossip in the *Sporting Chronicle*, whose amusing notes on Mr. Gott and the Bradford *Truthseeker* we referred to last week. Editorially Mr. Gott had informed Mr. Warry that he could not find money for a debate between that gentleman and Mr. Percy Ward. Neither would he find any money for Mr. Warry's pal, Yappy Jack. "We cannot accept either of you at any price," said Mr. Gott. Upon this Mr. Warry solemnly declares to the *S. C.* gossip that he never applied to Mr. Editor Gott for a penny. He says that the *Truthseeker* editor offered him money, and he refused to take it—declined it with thanks. Mr. Gott, he says, offered him the handsome inducement of 2s. 6d. an hour. Nay, he went further, and enlarged the prospect as follows: "I very much regret that you are unable to come and stir up your fellow-Christians in this town. If 'Appy John and yourself could come for one week we would pay your fares and give you £3 each."

The gossip cannot understand why the editor should afterwards have transformed this alluring offer into the chilling intimation: "No; we cannot find money." He imagines that Mr. Gott afterwards regretted an impulsive generosity. "This is a failing," says the gossip, "I have had to complain of myself in editors. Hence it is a sound working principle always to seize the happy chance before they have time to waver." Mr. Warry refused in cold blood that £3 and his fare. Yet, as he convincingly explains, there were reasons. For: "I had a greengrocer's round to attend to in the morning and an engagement at the Variety Theatre, Hoxton, in the evening." These were undoubtedly strong ties to keep him at home. No money passed, and Mr. Warry feels hurt that the statement should have been made that he applied for any.

Mr. Warry says: "I am not ashamed of being a Christian, but I would not like your readers and my friends to form a wrong opinion of me and think I lectured for gain." This is a noble and dignified attitude, but as the *S. C.* writer points out to him, he need not be so conscientious when even mitred bishops and gaitered deans are not above the acceptance of a stipend, and even Dr. Parker can hardly afford to work for nothing. But Mr. Warry—happily having the greengrocery round and his theatrical engagement at Hoxton—is superior to such inducements. He would have us believe that he is annoyed at Mr. Gott tempting him with filthy lucre. But he seems to be still more annoyed now that Mr. Gott has withdrawn the offer.

After praying for rain and good crops, which they think were sent by God, the Kansas farmers were so ungrateful as to desecrate the Lord's Day by working last Sunday in their fields, gathering the harvest his bounty had bestowed. The Kansas farmers appear to be working the Almighty for all he is worth.—*Truthseeker* (N.Y.).

Grant Allen, as a scientist and Freethinker, had no superabundant respect for "the cloth." He has left a few new stories, which J. W. Arrowsmith has just published. In two of them there is a murder by a clergyman. The others are very unorthodox, and, as a *To-Day* reviewer observes, "they may be considered, from the point of view of the unbending moralist and rigid Protestant, most reprehensible."

Two disastrous results of the forcing through Parliament of the Education Bill are foreseen by *The Speaker*—first, religious war; second, such reprisals sooner or later as will make the extreme Churchmen regret rather bitterly the unrelenting triumphs that provoked them.



There seems to be a regular campaign carried on against the **FREETHINKER**. We do not know exactly in what quarter to look for our enemies, though they are probably bigoted Christians. What we do know is that a movement of some kind is going on in "the trade." Several newsagents, some of them important wholesale agents, have lately refused to supply the **FREETHINKER** to their customers. During the past week we have received a dozen letters from persons in Edinburgh asking where they can obtain this journal there, now that Messrs. Menzies have struck it off their list. May we ask our friends to do all they can to counteract this insidious persecution? Small newsagents, whose wholesale agents will not supply them with this journal, are requested to communicate with the Manager at our publishing office, who will in every case make some arrangement whereby the **FREETHINKER** will reach them.

### Mr. Foote's Lecturing Engagements.

August 17, Failsworth Sunday School Anniversary Services: 2.45. "What Should we Do with the Bible?" 6.30. "Good without God, and Happiness without Heaven."

### To Correspondents.

C. COHEN'S LECTURING ENGAGEMENTS.—August 17, a. and e., Camberwell; 24, m., Kingsland; a., Victoria Park; 31, m., Kingland.—Address, 241 High-road, Leyton.

E. H.—Thanks for the cutting. See "Acid Drops."

J. G. BARTRAM.—We are obliged to you for the reference. The articles shall be looked up on our return to London.

W. D. MARTIN.—We have not had time to read Mr. Herbert Spencer's last book, much less to review it; and we shall wait now for the new edition, which, it is announced, is to contain a special Preface. We were glad to notice, from a review in another journal, that Mr. Herbert Spencer is far from being in love with the vulgarism of the Salvation Army. In this he resembles the late Professor Huxley.

Owing to an unforeseen delay Mr. Foote has been unable to deal with any letters arriving at our office after Friday morning (August 8). Correspondents will please note, and make the necessary allowance.

J. WEBSTER.—Thanks for the good wishes of a many-years' reader. Mr. Joseph McCabe is working for the Ethical movement. Mr. G. L. Mackenzie seems to be very quiet; at least we have not heard from him lately. His *Bristone Ballads* was published at 2s. 6d. You could be supplied with a copy by ordering from the Freethought Publishing Company.

W. MANN.—Received with thanks; shall appear.

HAROLD ELLIOTT.—The matter shall have our attention. Mr. Foote will be very happy to visit Manchester again and afford you the "treat" you desire. His health has much improved.

G. LEWIS.—We do not know Mr. Lloyd's address and consequently cannot forward it.

PAPERS RECEIVED.—Torch of Reason (Oregon)—The Crescent—New Century—Two Worlds—Boston Investigator—Westminster Review—Free Society—The Liberator—Open Court—Truth-seeker (N. Y.)—Morning Leader—Public Opinion (N. Y.)—Secular Thought (Toronto)—Progressive Thinker (Chicago).

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.

THE SECULAR SOCIETY, LIMITED, office is at 2 Newcastle-street, Farringdon-street, E.C.

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., and not to the Editor.

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.

### Sugar Plums.

Mr. FOOTE delivers two addresses to-day (Aug. 17), afternoon and evening, at the Anniversary Services of the Failsworth Secular Sunday School. The afternoon meeting is fixed for 2.45, and the evening meeting for 6.30. The subjects selected for Mr. Foote to speak upon are "What Should we Do with the Bible?" and "Good without God, and Happiness without Heaven." The Secular Sunday School is in Pole-lane. Manchester friends should take the Hollinwood tram leaving Piccadilly about 2; this will bring them without changing to the Pole, Failsworth.

We desire to draw special attention to the appeal signed by Mr. Foote on behalf of the Camberwell Branch of the National Secular Society. This appeal was printed in our last issue and is repeated in the present issue. There never was a case in which help was more needed or more deserved. We press the matter particularly upon the attention of London Freethinkers. It would not involve a heavy burden upon them if they made up the required £50 immediately. We venture to hope they will do so, and give a fresh inspiration to a very gallant band of soldiers of Freethought, who are all fighting purely for the love of the cause.

"Seeing the boycott in the *Freethinker*," writes Mr. David Barr, who calls himself an old admirer, "I have made it my business to visit thirty newsagents' shops in the N.W. and W. districts of London, to find out the reason it is not sold by them. I find it is frequently asked for, but the name 'Freethinker' prejudices it in the eyes of shopkeepers, and pious customers object to it when exposed for sale. Newsagents find it very difficult to get it from the middleman newsagent because he cannot get it from the big wholesale agent. I have spent nearly three days on this job, and my conclusion is that you will have to make an offer through the paper to supply the small shopkeepers and supply them on good terms. Then readers can call attention to it. At present they get one farthing profit and plenty of trouble and abuse."

We cordially thank Mr. Barr for his trouble. Perhaps some other friends would visit newsagents elsewhere and send us the result of their inquiries.

Retail newsagents who experience a difficulty in getting a supply of the *Freethinker* from their wholesale agents, should communicate with the Freethought Publishing Company's manager, 2 Newcastle-street, Farringdon-street, London, E.C. They will then be given by private communication the address of a wholesale agent who will supply their orders in full.

Mr. Robinson, stationer, 111 Newington-road, Edinburgh, will be happy to supply the *Freethinker* to any of its readers in the "grey metropolis of the north." This is not our poetry, but Tennyson's; so Scotsmen who don't like it will not throw stones at us.

Mr. J. D. Anderson writes with reference to the difficulty Edinburgh friends have found in obtaining the *Freethinker*, that Miss Dickinson, of 96 Lauriston-place, Edinburgh, is prepared to supply as many copies of the paper as may be ordered.

Yorkshire Secularists are requested to rally to the Freethought Demonstration which takes place to-day (Sunday) at Shipley Glen. The afternoon meeting begins at 3; the evening meeting at 6. Tea will be provided about 4.30. The speakers will include Messrs. John Grange, Greevz Fisher, Henry Smith, and H. Percy Ward.

The *Torch of Reason* (Silverton, Oregon) reproduces from the *Freethinker* of the 6th ult. the poem "Three Voices," with the explanatory note by the Editor as to their first appearance in *Progress* in 1844. *Secular Thought* (Toronto) reprints from our pages Mr. John Young's verses on "Monsieur Parlo."

The Secretary of the Keighley and District Hospital acknowledges in the *Keighley News* the receipt of the proceeds of "a collection at a Freethought lecture delivered by Mr. Percy Ward at Steeton on July 29."

The *Liberator* (Melbourne) reproduces from our pages the article by "Mimmermus" on Bret Hart.

## Help for the Self-Helping.

THE Camberwell Branch of the National Secular Society has a long and honorable history. For nearly twenty years it has provided regularly Sunday lectures, and occasional week-night lectures, in the Secular Hall, New Church-road. During the summer months it has carried on open-air propaganda in Brockwell Park, at Station-road, and on Peckham Rye. A vast amount of work has been cheerfully performed by its officers and committee. They have also often taxed themselves financially to meet the Society's expenses.

During the period covered by the South African war, which has been so injurious to all advanced movements, the Branch has naturally suffered from a diminished income. One result is that rent is owing to the Secular Hall Company, the non-payment of which would create serious difficulties.

Knowing all the facts of the case, and being confident that this Society deserves hearty support, I have undertaken to raise for it (if possible) the sum of £50. This would enable it to face the next season's work, in September, free from debt and sanguine of greater prosperity in the immediate future. A breathing time would also be gained for arrangements whereby the Secular Hall—the only place of the kind at present owned by Freethinkers in London—might be secured in perpetuity to the Freethought movement.

It should not be difficult to raise this £50. London Freethinkers alone could provide it. But the appeal is not confined to them. Freethinkers throughout the country should be interested in maintaining one of the few halls belonging to the Secular party.

Cheques or Postal Orders should be sent to me crossed, and will be acknowledged in the *Freethinker*. I hope the response to this appeal will be prompt as well as generous, so that the Fund may be closed at the end of August.

G. W. FOOTE.

(President, National Secular Society.)

2, Newcastle-street,  
Farringdon-street, London, E.C.

## The Rev. Molyneux-Tollemache.

A SKETCH FROM THE LIFE OF ONE OF OUR SPIRITUAL GUIDES.

MASTER HOLBECHÉ MOLYNEUX-TOLLEMACHE was the bastard offspring of a younger son of one of our old nobility. His mother was a music-hall artiste of excitable temperament; his father was a brainless sportsman, well-meaning, but hopelessly impecunious and incompetent. Holbeche was fairly intelligent, and his mother sent him to a good grammar-school, where he got a scholarship. As a private tutor in one of his long vacations, he ran away with the daughter of Lord Lascelles, by whose influence he was appointed to the living of Little Pedlington, value £450 a year, with some 350 souls in the village to be cared for by their spiritual guide. His leading idea was that he should be embraced by the county "sassiety," as befitted one of such aristocratic breeding and connections. This ambition was not fulfilled, and the result was that Mr. Tollemache became a violent hater of all the official *élite* of the neighborhood. Not that his hate was of a radical or reforming nature; he had no love for the working-people, and no dislike to our semi-feudal system, but merely a spite against its representatives for not having chosen to assimilate himself. He took every opportunity of insulting the local squire, who was suspected of leanings towards Agnosticism, or, at any rate, to Mr. Stead's "Religion of the Future." He also delighted in cheeking his bishop, or any of his fellow-clergy, whom he referred to by name at clerical gatherings, often calling attention to any personal peculiarities which they happened to possess—such as a squint, a bowed head, a limp, a red nose, a big mouth, an unkempt beard, or a threadbare coat. His conduct of the church services was peculiar. If he felt lazy, or had a headache on Sunday evening, he would send his son to pin a card on the door, on which would be written, "No service to-night.—Lascelles." The boys all read the lessons in turn at Matins. The eldest, Darcy, had been drowned while bathing in the river. The father had displayed great excitement at the funeral, and had

tried to throw himself into the grave; but this did not prevent him from inditing the following snobbish inscription for the tombstone: "Sacred to the memory of Darcy, eldest son of the Reverend Holbeche Molyneux-Tollemache, and grandson of Lord Lascelles." The third son was called Rupert, and he consulted a local lawyer as to the chances of prosecuting his father for cruelty to children, as he and Lascelles had been kept one whole Sunday in a cold conservatory in winter-time, with no food but bread and water.

Inquiries, however, showed that the boys had run up bills at most of the shops in the neighboring town, which they had said Lord Lascelles would pay, and that they had tortured cats for amusement; in fact, were so disreputable that the S.P.C.C. could hardly interfere between them and their father. Rupert was then sent to a shoddy boarding-school, where he lived free as a decoy-duck, as he enabled the proprietor to state to the British parent that "We have here boys of the highest social tone, including grandsons of dukes and sons of Anglican clergymen."

One evening Lascelles and his elder sister, Hildegard, went to the crowded Wesleyan Bethel in Little Pedlington to get copy for a novel which the mother was composing. They wore sham hairgear, and were somewhat disguised in dress, but the Dissenters guessed who they were, and, after the sermon was over, a crowd followed them to the gate of the rectory. The two children entered the house, and presently the rector and his son sallied forth with big sticks, with which they banged the shoulders of the Dissenting Demos. A local grocer, who received a good whack on the funny-bone from his fellow-Christian, summoned the rector for assault. The Bench was crowded with people whom Tollemache had insulted, so they found him guilty, and fined him £10.

Tollemache will remain for life the spiritual guide of the villagers, rattling through the State-prayers in an empty church, breeding a barbarian family in a roomy rectory, and giving fresh illustrations of the "inestimable advantages of the establishment of our National Church, which provides the services of a cultured gentleman in every parish in Great Britain."

J. A. FALLOWS, M.A.

## The Shepherd of Hermas.

How many years, it may be asked, must elapse before an early Christian forgery came to be regarded as a revelation from God, composed by an apostle or a companion of an apostle? This question is in no-wise unreasonable, and it is one which has an important bearing on the alleged authenticity of the Gospels. Setting aside, however, the last-named books (chiefly for lack of trustworthy evidence), we may, I think, get some approximate answer from an examination of one of the great second century frauds—the *Shepherd of Hermas*.

As regards the date and authorship of this work, we have the testimony of the Muratorian Canon, one of the most ancient documents extant, that the writer was Hermas, the brother of Pius, Bishop of Rome, and that it was composed while that prelate was "sitting in the chair of the church" in that city (*i.e.*, A.D. 140-155). We may therefore place the composition of the work about the middle of that period—say, A.D. 148.

The book consists of three parts—visions, commandments, and similitudes. The visions the author claims to have seen in an out-of-the-way field, where, he says, they were explained to him by an angel in the form of "an old woman, arrayed in a splendid robe, and with a book in her hand." The commandments and similitudes, he tells us, were delivered to him by "the angel of repentance," who appeared to him as "a man of glorious aspect, dressed like a shepherd, with a goat skin, a wallet on his shoulders, and a rod in his hand"—hence the title of the book, which is also called the *Pastor*.

From this angelic Shepherd, he says, he received the following command: "Write down my commandments and similitudes.....that you may be able to keep them more easily by reading them from time to time." "Accordingly," says the veracious writer, "I wrote down the commands and similitudes exactly as he had ordered me." These commandments, when examined, are found to contain nothing new, and the

similitudes are simply a mass of nonsensical rubbish too silly to have emanated from anyone save a second century Christian, or a twentieth century Christian Evidence man. However good may have been the motive of the writer, the book is, beyond all question, a lie and a fraud. The pretended divinely-received commandments and similitudes, which take up about seventy pages of print, are, of course, but the crude conceptions of Hermas himself. That the work is, from beginning to end, a tissue of falsehoods, no one now denies.

Modern Christian apologists, however, find it convenient to ignore this fact, and seem to think they do away with a Christian fraud by styling the book "the *Pilgrims Progress* of Ante-Nicene times." Now, had the book been given to the world as a work of fiction, like that of Bunyan, such a description might be allowable. But this was not the case. There were no religious romances composed by Christians in the first or second century. Everything connected with Christianity was, in those times, intensely real. The *Shepherd* was presented to the Christian world as a revelation made by God to his servant, Hermas: and, as we shall see, was received as such. This pious fraud, it should also be noticed, was not the work of an Ebionite or a Gnostic, but, like the apocryphal *Acts of Paul and Thecla*, was the production of an orthodox Christian.

In his Third Vision the fraudulent author represents the old woman as saying to him:—

"For after three days.....I command you to speak all the words which I am about to say to you into the ears of the saints, that hearing them and doing them, they may be cleansed from their iniquities, and you with them.....You shall read the words in this city (*i.e.*, Rome) with the presbyters that preside over the church."

It would thus appear that Hermas was himself a presbyter of the Christian church in Rome.

But, apart from his deception in representing his silly concoctions as a revelation from heaven, he confesses in the book itself that he had always been an inveterate liar. On receiving from his imaginary Shepherd the third Commandment—to avoid lying—he says:—

"On hearing these words I wept most violently. When he saw me weeping he said to me, 'Why do you weep?' And I said, 'Because, sir, I know not if I can be saved.' 'Why?' said he. And I said, 'Because, sir, I never spoke a true word in my life, but I have ever spoken cunningly to all, and have affirmed a lie for the truth to all; and no one ever contradicted me, but credit was given to my word'.....And he said to me, 'Now you hear my commands, keep them, that even the falsehoods which you formerly told in your transactions may come to be believed through the truthfulness of your present statements. For even they can become worthy of credit.'"

Into the question of the morality of this teaching we need not enter. But if the statement made by the writer be true, he was a most unprincipled liar; if false, he was an unmitigated one. Whether true or false, he stands convicted as a deliberate liar. The fact, too, of his attempting to palm off his fabricated nonsense upon the Church as a revelation from God proves that at the time of writing it he was an irclaimable, as well as an unrepentant, liar. He evidently believed it to be meritorious, rather than otherwise, to lie for the glory of God; he certainly had no fear of punishment in another life for imposing his miserable fraud upon the whole Christian community. And, in this case, the attempt was completely successful.

The *Shepherd* was not only read, as the author desired, to the saints in the church at Rome, but copies soon found their way to other Christian churches. And, as might be expected from the spirit of the age, the book was everywhere received as a revelation from God, until, towards the end of the second century, it became the most popular of the writings in use amongst Christians, being regarded as second only to the Gospels. In the reception given to this very transparent fraud we have a fair illustration of the readiness with which new writings were

accepted as inspired by the early Christian church. We find, further, that after the lapse of a generation or so from the date of its first appearance the authorship of the work was generally ascribed to the Hermas mentioned in Rom. xvi. 14.

Referring to this Christian book of lies Irenæus says (Her. iv. xx. 2):—

"Truly, then, the Scripture declared, which says: 'First of all believe there is one God,' etc. [The quotation is from the *Shepherd*, Similitude 1.]."

Clement of Alexandria in his writings quotes the *Shepherd* six times. He says, for instance (Strom. i., 29):—

"Divinely, therefore, the power which spoke to Hermas by revelation said"—[Then follows a quotation from the fabrication of Hermas],

Similarly, Origen expresses the opinion that the book was inspired by God, and was written by the Hermas named in the Epistle to the Romans. About a century later, however, the supposed authorship of the book in Apostolic times was questioned by many, though it still continued to be read in the churches. The high estimation in which the book was held, as late as the fourth or fifth century, is shown by the fact that it is bound up with the New Testament books in the most ancient MS. now in existence—the *Codex Sinaiticus*.

The following extract may be taken as a sample of what the early church believed to be a revelation from heaven, delivered to the faithful through the inspired saint, Hermas:—

TENTH COMMANDMENT: "Put all sadness from thee; for it is the sister of doubting and of anger.....For every cheerful man does well, and relishes those things that are good, and despises sadness. But the sad man does always wickedly. First, he doeth wickedly, because he grieveth the Holy Spirit, which is given to man, being of a cheerful nature. And again he does ill, because he prays with sadness unto the Lord.....For the prayer of a sad man has not efficacy to ascend to the altar of God. For as wine when it is mingled with vinegar has not the sweetness it had before; so sadness, being mingled with the Holy Spirit, suffers not a man's prayers to be the same that it would be otherwise. Wherefore cleanse thyself from sadness, which is evil, and thou shalt live unto God."

Here is another luminous sample of what the early Christians regarded as "scripture":—

SIMILITUDE II.: "The rich man has wealth; howbeit towards the Lord he is poor; for he is taken up with his riches, and prays but little to the Lord, and the prayers which he makes are lazy and without force. When, therefore, the rich man reaches out to the poor those things which he wants, the poor man prays unto the Lord for the rich; and God grants unto the rich man all good things because the poor man is rich in prayer, and his requests have great power with the Lord."

This is one way of getting over the statement put in the mouth of Jesus that "it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God."

We have now to see what period of time had probably elapsed before the silly concoctions of Hermas were considered "Scripture." Of the Christian authors whose writings are extant, Irenæus is the first who has quoted from the *Shepherd*. If we assume that he was acquainted with the book at the date he became Bishop of Lyons (A.D. 178), the number of years would be thirty. Taking this as the minimum, we may safely say, then, that after a Christian forgery had been in circulation for between thirty and forty years—notwithstanding the fact that its author was known in the locality where it originated—it was received by the Churches scattered throughout the world as a work inspired by God, and its composition was ascribed to an apostle, or to someone named in writings supposed to be apostolic. The Epistle of Barnabas and Epistle of Clement are examples of this ascription of late writings to apostolic times, to which may be added the four canonical Gospels.

If it be asked how the *Shepherd* came to be received

as a divine revelation immediately after its publication, the answer is simple. Among the early Christians there were persons who claimed to have visions and revelations from heaven, and some who also claimed the possession of prophetic gifts. These claims were recognised by the Church, and were admitted without question. Some of these prophets and seers travelled about, visiting one church after another; others remained in one particular church, where they were known and trusted. At the end of the service, if the Spirit happened to move them, these self-constituted seers were permitted to address the saints. In the case of Hermas, that accomplished liar had but to tell the congregation the story of the old woman and the angelic shepherd, and then read them a vision, commandment, or similitude out of his book—to be continued on successive Lord's Days, until he reached the last page.

These prophets and seers were recognised as such, and were accustomed to "hold forth" in the Christian churches, from the time of Paul downwards (see 1 Cor. xiv. 26-40). They are referred to by most of the early Christian writers. Justin, for instance, says (*Dial.*, 82, 88):—

"For the prophetic gifts remain with us, even to the present time.....Now it is possible to see among us women and men who possess the gifts of the Spirit of God."

Irenæus says that in his day—

"Others have foreknowledge of things to come; they see visions and utter prophetic expressions.....We have many brethren in the Church having prophetic gifts, and, by the Spirit, speaking in all kinds of languages."

Tertullian says (*De Anima*, 9):—

"There is at this day among us a sister who has the gift of revelations, which she receives in church amidst the solemnities of the Lord's Day, by ecstasy in the spirit. She converses with angels, and sometimes also with the Lord, and she both hears and sees mysteries," etc.

Just so; and of these pious pretenders and impudent Christian impostors is the kingdom of heaven.

ABRACADABRA.

### The Bible and Unkindness to Children and Animals.

I REFUSE to accept the Bible as a moral guide because its teachings respecting the treatment of children are cruel and unjust.

It advocates the use of corporal punishment for children.

"Thou shalt beat him with the rod" (Prov. xxiii. 14).

"Withhold not correction from the child; for if thou beatest him with the rod he shall not die" (*Ibid* xxiii. 13).

"Foolishness is bound in the heart of a child; but the rod of correction shall drive it far from him" (*Ibid*. xxii. 15).

"The rod and reproof give wisdom" (*Ibid*. xxix. 15).

It advocates capital punishment for children.

"If a man have a stubborn and rebellious son, which will not obey the voice of his mother, and that when they have chastened him will not hearken unto them; then shall his father and his mother lay hold on him, and bring him out unto the elders of his city, and unto the gate of his place.....And all the men of the city shall stone him with stones that he die" (Deut. xxi. 18, 19, 21).

It advocates the indiscriminate and merciless slaughter of little children.

"Samaria shall become desolate; for she hath rebelled against her God; they shall fall by the sword; their infants shall be dashed in pieces" (Hosea xiii. 16).

"As he [Elisha] was going up by the way, there came forth little children out of the city, and mocked him..... And he turned back, and looked on them, and cursed them in the name of the Lord. And there came forth two she bears out of the wood, and tare forty and two children of them" (2 Kings ii. 23, 24).

It advocates the punishment of children for the misdeeds of their parents.

"I the Lord thy God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children" (Ex. xx. 5).

I will stir up the Medes against them.....

"I will also send wild beasts among you, which shall rob you of your children" (Lev. xxvi. 22).

David prays that the children of his adversaries may become vagabonds and beggars; and Jeremiah, that the children of his enemies may perish by famine

God kills Bathsheba's child:

"And the Lord struck the child that Uriah's wife bore unto David, and it was very sick.....And it came to pass on the seventh day that the child died" (2 Sam. xii. 15-18).

Poor babe! tortured and murdered for its parents' crime! I refuse to accept the Bible as a moral guide because it sanctions and enjoins unkindness and cruelty to animals.

Portions of the Old Testament, and particularly those relating to sacrifices, are calculated to foster a spirit of brutality, and a total disregard for animal life. God revells in the blood of the innocent. The offering of fruits made by Cain is rejected by him; the bloody sacrifice of Abel is accepted.

Nearly the entire book of Leviticus is devoted to such laws as these:

"If he offer a lamb for his offering, then shall he offer it before the Lord. And he shall lay his hand upon the head of his offering, and kill it before the tabernacle of the congregation; and Aaron's sons shall sprinkle the blood thereof round about upon the altar" (Lev. iii. 7, 8).

"And if the burnt sacrifice for his offering to the Lord be of fowls, then he shall bring his offering of turtle-doves, or of young pigeons. And the priest shall bring it unto the altar, and wring off his head, and burn it on the altar; and the blood thereof shall be wrung out at the side of the altar" (Lev. i. 14, 15).

The minutest directions for conducting these bloody sacrifices come from the lips of Jehovah himself, and are too brutal and disgusting to repeat.

The number of animals sacrificed was incredible. At times whole herds were killed. On one occasion Asa sacrificed 700 oxen and 7,000 sheep. David made an offering of 1,000 bullocks and 2,000 sheep. At the dedication of the temple, 142,000 domestic beasts were sacrificed by Solomon.

And this wholesale slaughter of innocent animals, we are told, was highly pleasing to the Lord. But—

What was his high pleasure in  
The fumes of scorching flesh and smoking blood,  
To the pain of the bleating mothers, which  
Still yearned for their dead offspring? or the pangs  
Of the sad ignorant victim underneath  
The pious knife.—Byron.

A God of mercy, it would seem, ought to protect the weaker orders of his creation; but the God of the Bible manifests an utter disregard for them. When the being created in his own image proved too true a copy, and he wished to destroy it, he sent a deluge, "and all flesh died that moved upon the earth." To wreak his vengeance upon Pharaoh, he visited with disease and death his unoffending cattle. In times of war he ordered his followers to "slay both man and beast." Saul's great transgression, the chief cause of his dethronement and death, was that he saved alive some sheep and oxen instead of killing them, as God desired. David and Joshua, God's favorite warriors, houghed the horses of their enemies, and, thus disabled, turned them loose to die.

We teach a child that it is wrong to rob the nests of birds. It opens the Bible and reads: "If a bird's nest chance to be before thee in the way in any tree, or on the ground, whether they be young ones, or eggs, and the dam sitting upon the young, or upon the eggs, thou shalt not take the dam with the young; but thou shalt in any wise let the dam go, and take the young to thee" (Deut. xxii. 6, 7).

Throughout Christendom "man's inhumanity to man" is only equalled by his cruelty to the inferior animals. The Buddhist, who has not the Bible for his guide, considers it a sin to harm the meanest creature. Even the savage kills only what he needs for food, or such as threaten him with danger. But the Christian, whose Bible gives him dominion over the beasts of the field and the fowls of the air, maims and murders in pure wantonness, and after years of patient service, even turns his beast of burden out to die of hunger and neglect.

—*Truthseeker* (N. Y.).

JOHN E. REMSBURG.

After all that has been so plausibly written concerning "the innate idea of God"; after all that has been said of its being common to all men, in all ages and nations, it does not appear that man has naturally any more idea of God than any of the beasts of the field; he has no knowledge of God at all; no fear of God at all; neither is God in all his thoughts. Whatever change may afterwards be wrought, (whether by grace of God, or his own reflections, or by education) he is by nature a mere Atheist.—*John Wesley*, "Sermons," vol. ii., ser. c.

What strange rage possesses some people to insist on all of us being miserable. They are like a quack, who would fain have us believe we are ill, in order to sell us his pills. Keep thy drugs, my friend, and leave me my health.—*Voltaire*.

## Correspondence.

## DOCTORS AND VACCINATION.

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE FREETHINKER."

SIR,—It has grieved me to find such a torrent of abuse against us poor "doctors," as I find amongst "Acid Drops" in your last issue.

I agree with the writer in so far as making vaccination compulsory is concerned. I should feel quite satisfied to leave the matter optional, and I have no doubt results would show in favor of the system.

The insinuation that we advocate vaccination for the sake of the paltry fees it brings us, is a very "acid drop" indeed. (Glacial acetic acid I should say!

The tendency of present day medical science is to improve sanitation to such an extent as to minimise disease—and fees in consequence. A profession which adopts this philanthropic and disinterested course surely deserves kinder treatment in the pages of an organ of Rationalism.

THOMAS J. TALBOT, M.D.

[Dr. Talbot has allowed the bias of his profession to affect his judgment. We did not "abuse" the medical profession. We censured the medical profession for abusing its great powers and opportunities in trying to force vaccination upon the people of this country. Dr. Talbot agrees with us that vaccination should not be compulsory. Very well, then; nothing we wrote on the subject applies to him individually. It is compulsory vaccination only with which we are concerned; optional vaccination is a purely medical question, which we should hardly discuss in the *Freethinker*. We certainly have no quarrel with doctors as doctors. Their profession is a noble one while it keeps within its proper bounds, and fights disease by skill, patience, and humanity. Our quarrel with doctors begins when they get together and use their united influence—which, from the nature of the case, must be enormous—to compel the public to adopt certain medical specifics. If that is not Trade Unionism *in excelsis* what is it? EDITOR.]

## BORROWED FOUNDATIONS?

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE FREETHINKER."

SIR,—I HAVE not read *The Foundations of Belief*, but I have read numerous reviews and criticisms of it. They all concur in describing its author's object as an attempt to show that we can know nothing of the nature of those assumed "things" which we generally take to be the basis of our so-called knowledge, and therefore—it is here we take the leap—we can know something of that third power which, as some allege, underlies the nature of those things; always assuming that the "things" exist, and have an undiscoverable nature. I confess that I have never been able to interest myself in such verbal jugglery, which seems to me on a par with the statement that the shell of the cocoa nut is a mere appearance, and we can never know anything of the meat within; therefore we can know the milk in the cocoa nut!

However, in reading your recent article in the *Freethinker*, I come across a quotation which does raise a faint interest in my mind. Some years ago—I forget how many—in some book of his—I forget which—George Moore made one of his characters speak of the human race as "a discreditable episode in the life of one of the meanest of the planets." (I quote from memory, so, of course, subject to correction.) Mr. Balfour you quote as writing of the story of man as "a brief and transitory episode in the life of one of the meanest of the planets." You write of Mr. Balfour's book as being published about seven years ago. Now, whenever it was published, and whenever George Moore's book was published, there is here a clear proof that Mr. Balfour's doctrine as to inspiration is correct, and that "Inspiration"—like plagiarism!—"is limited to no age, to no country, to no people."

In his "Confessions of a Young Man" Mr. Moore does not, among his many peccadilloes, confess to cribbing from Mr. Balfour.

In Mr. Balfour's general statement that men can know nothing, he does not, as far as I know, make any reservation in favour of an author knowing his own work from that of another, so that it may well be that he does not now know whether the quotation from Mr. Moore is his (Mr. Balfour's) or whether the quotation from Mr. Balfour is Mr. Moore's. Mr. Moore may not be so absolutely Agnostic on this point as Mr. Balfour, and I should be glad, if he sees a copy of this number of your paper, for him to say how far his inspiration preceded or followed Mr. Balfour's. Borrowed thoughts in borrowed phrases make poor foundations of belief.

PHENOMENON.

## A QUESTION OF CHRONOLOGY.

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE FREETHINKER."

SIR,—If it could be shown that the war with Aretas took place immediately after the incestuous marriage of Herod Antipas with Herodias, then the statement of "Abracadabra," that John the Baptist had been dead some years before this event, would hold good; for that marriage would have taken place about A.D. 35. But there is a curious ambiguity on the subject. Josephus says (*Ant.*, xviii., 5, 1) that when Herod Antipas was once at Rome he lodged with Herod, and fell in love with Herodias, his wife. When did this visit to Rome occur? We read of only one visit to Rome on the part of Antipas—that is, in B.C. 3-2 (*Ant.*, xvii., 9, 4), thirty-seven years before the war with Aretas. This, therefore, cannot be the visit alluded to. The construction of the passage in Josephus indicates that the visit was paid some time before the war. Could it have been a few years before? In any case the arrangement was that Herodias should come to Antipas as soon as he returned from Rome. There was another cause of quarrel between Aretas and Antipas, which required time to ripen, although I admit that four or five years appears a long time to be allowed to elapse by Aretas before attempting to wreak vengeance upon Antipas for the wrong done his daughter. But it all turns upon the date of the Tetrarch's visit to Rome and his agreement with Herodias; for the marriage was practically coincident with that visit. Now, if we turn to section four of the same chapter of the *Antiquities*, we shall find Josephus saying that, "after the birth of her daughter Salome, Herodias took upon herself to confound the laws of her country, and divorced herself from her husband whilst he was yet alive, and was married to Herod Antipas," etc. But he also tells us that her daughter Salome was married to Philip, Tetrarch of Trachonitis. But Philip died in A.D. 33, and in A.D. 35, when "Abracadabra" supposes the Antipas-Herodias marriage to have taken place, Salome must have been at least twenty years of age. If Josephus's statement is to be taken literally, then Herodias married Antipas about the year 15 A.D., which would mean that Aretas nursed his wrath for twenty years before striking a blow!

But, then, if Herodias was not married until A.D. 35, what made Josephus use the expression "after her birth" (Salome's)? Where there is so much ambiguity, it is just possible that John the Baptist did reproach Herod with his infidelity to the daughter of Aretas somewhere about A.D. 30, and that he was put to death in consequence. Again, Luke may have been wrong in his chronology. At any rate, it is not by any means proven that John the Baptist had been dead several years before the flight of Herodias, although he might have been before the war with Aretas.

The author of the *Gospel History Critically Examined* says that "Herod Antipas went in A.D. 20 on a visit to Rome, where his half-brother Herod had lived in retirement since B.C. 5.....Antipas fell violently in love with Herodias, and promised to marry her.....She left her husband, and joined Antipas, taking with her her infant daughter Salome." He gives as references *Antiquities*, xviii., 6, 1; Bell. Jud. i., 30, 7; but there is nothing in these passages, or elsewhere in Josephus, to corroborate his statement. The passage in Josephus referring to John the Baptist, if it be genuine at all (as to which I ha' m' doots) seems to require the postulate of some such cause for Herod's antipathy and "jealous temper" as would be supplied by John's reproof of him for his flagrant violation of the religion and laws of his country. What had he to fear from a mere preacher of righteousness? But if John had stimulated his numerous followers to righteous anger at the conduct of Antipas, then, indeed, the Tetrarch might have feared his power to "raise a rebellion."

B. STEVENS.

## HOW TO DEAL WITH PRIESTCRAFT.

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE FREETHINKER."

SIR,—Your correspondent, "Practical Freedom," makes a suggestion which appears to me to be the very reverse of practical. He does not put much reliance on the "work of argument," but says, "All attempts to instruct concerning an unproved hereafter should be prohibited." But who is to prohibit such attempts? It seems to me that any such prohibition could only be brought about by convincing the mass of the people of its justice, and such a change of public opinion could only result from that work of argument which "Practical Freedom" esteems so lightly.

Moreover, by the time this change was brought about, there would probably be no necessity for repressing the priests; priestcraft would have died from want of sustenance. To convince the people by means of reason of the errors of theology may be a slow process, but it is, I believe, the only method possible.

E. J. HIRST.

**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.): Closed during August.

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

CLERKENWELL GREEN (Finsbury Branch N. S. S.): 11.30, R. P. Edwards.

HAMMERSMITH BROADWAY (West London Branch N. S. S.): 7.30, Mr. F. A. Davies.

HYDE PARK, near Marble Arch (West London Branch N. S. S.): Freethought literature on sale at all meetings. 11.30, Mr. F. A. Davies.

STRATFORD (The Grove): 7 p.m., Mr. E. Pack.

VICTORIA PARK (Bethnal Green Branch N. S. S.): 3.15, Mr. A. B. Moss.

**COUNTRY.**

BRADFORD (ShIPLEY GLEN): 3 and 6, Freethought Demonstration. Speakers: Messrs. J. Grange, Greevz Fisher, Henry Smith, and H. Percy Ward. Tea provided at 4.30. Vacant Ground, Morley-road: Mr. Ward will lecture on Monday and Thursday at 7.

FAILSWORTH SECULAR SUNDAY SCHOOL (Annual Services): 2.45 and 6.30, Mr. G. W. Foote. Hymns, etc., by the Choir, assisted by the Failsworth String Band.

LIVERPOOL (Alexandra Hall, Islington-square): No lectures during August.

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

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