

# THE Freethinker

Edited by G. W. FOOTE.

VOL. XXIII.—NO. 35

SUNDAY, AUGUST 30, 1903

PRICE TWOPENCE

*A Parson is a Lamb in a drawing-room, and a Lion in a vestry. The notions of Society will not permit a parson to give way to his temper in any shape—so he festers in himself—his features get a peculiar, diabolical, self-sufficient iron stupid expression. He is continually acting—his mind is against every man, and every man's mind is against him.—He is a hypocrite to the believer and a coward to the unbeliever.—He must be either a knave or an idiot—and there is no man so much to be pitied as an idiot parson.—JOHN KEATS.*

## Atheism and Cruelty.

THE late Samuel Butler, the author of that clever philosophical satire called *Erewhon*, represented the inhabitants of the fictitious land he visited in imagination as attaching moral reprobation to ill health. Colds and catarrhs were regarded as misdemeanors, and typhus and small-pox as felonies. Consumptive persons were at one time executed, but when more humane sentiments prevailed they were only imprisoned for life with hard labor; and their coughings were regarded as the groans of convicted sinners. This topsy-turveydom made it natural for the Erewhonians who differed in opinion from each other, on subjects that excite strong feeling, to make peculiar reflections on each other's condition. When a man could not silence his opponent, and felt wounded by his obstinacy, he hinted that there was something wrong with his health. No doubt this was very absurd. But a very slight change puts it on all fours with the practice which is common in all Christian countries. Instead of bodily health, religious people make moral health the subject of their suspicions. If you reject any doctrine they believe, especially if it is one that, from the nature of the case, can never be susceptible of proof, they blandly suggest that your morals are out of order. You may have a very good head, but you must have a very bad heart. For it is the peculiarity of these people that they consider the organ of religious thought to be resident, not in the skull, but in the trunk. Thus one of their leading writers makes the fool—as he politely puts it—say “in his heart” that his pious neighbors were all mistaken.

Several years ago the Bishop of Chester, who is paid to teach as the Word of God a book which orders parents to beat their children, got up at a public meeting in his own city and declared that the worst ill-users of children were working-class Secularists. This was an extremely well-calculated declaration. Dr. Jayne carefully defined the category of these offenders. He took pains not to include well-to-do Freethinkers. There was a danger that such persons might make noisy denials, and that their protests might appear in respectable newspapers. But the working-classes were more like “dumb driven cattle.” It was far easier to take liberties with them, and they could be slandered with impunity. So the Bishop let the working-class Secularists have it. Some of them might show resentment, but who would notice them? And if the worst came to the worst, the Bishop's position and income were tolerably safe.

Beside the Bishop of Chester, on that occasion, sat

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the Rev. Benjamin Waugh, the secretary of the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children; which seems to be much needed in Christian England, although there does not seem to be room for it in any savage country. Mr. Waugh endorsed the declaration of Dr. Jayne. Probably he had inspired the right reverend father in God. It is just possible, however, that he felt it incumbent upon him to stand up through thick and thin for a gentleman of his own cloth; just as the gentlemen who wear blue, and give testimony in police-courts, are said to swear whatever is requisite to support each other against the Philistines in the dock.

The Bishop of Chester is like the impenitent thief on the cross—or like God Almighty and Mr. Chamberlain. “What I have said I have said” is his motto. Mr. Waugh, however, is like the penitent thief—and stands a chance of Paradise. Some years afterwards, at a meeting in Leeds, he unsaid what he had said at Chester. Subsequent experience had shown him his mistake. How, indeed, could it do otherwise? Mr. Waugh has had to prosecute some cruel mothers belonging to what is called “society,” and in every case the culprit has been an undoubted Christian.

Freethinkers must not be too hard upon these poor Christians—just as Portia was as good as possible to her unwelcome suitors. “God made him,” she said of one of them, “and therefore let him pass for a man.” So these slanderous pietists are, after all, human beings, and perhaps not so vicious naturally, only they have been brought up in a very evil school.

Talking of Portia brings us to Miss Frances Power Cobbe. Not that she is exactly a Portia in all respects, but she is learned and talkative. She is not a Christian, we believe; her creed is “simple Theism”—and we admit the “simplicity.” In many respects she is a friend of progress, and she has always been a fervid opponent of cruelty to the lower animals; if some of them are “lower” than a considerable number of the people who call them so. Miss Cobbe has protested in season—and occasionally perhaps *out* of season—against vivisection. It is rather astonishing, therefore, that she should be ignorant of the fact that “infidels” have been amongst the conspicuous opponents of this practice.

Mr. William Watson, the poet, initiated a correspondence in the *Daily News* on Vivisection, which he heartily abhors. Of course a characteristic letter appeared from the pen of Miss Cobbe; and in the midst of it the following extraordinary passage:—

“Let me for a moment endeavor to define the view of the world which alone can be held consistently with the claim to vivisect animals after the fashion of physiologists and pathologists. It is surely this: ‘that things have been so ill-arranged by the Author of Nature that the physical salvation of the highest animal, Man, can only be obtained by his moral degradation as a torturer, and by the agonies of tens of thousands of sensitive and innocent creatures.’ Such a view, I think, we may justly say is only logically open to an Atheist to maintain.”

Now we do not wish to be hard upon Miss Cobbe. She is a lady, and she has good qualities. So we say that she is grievously mistaken.

How, to begin with, can she imagine an Atheist talking about the arrangements of the Author of

Nature? The Atheist drops all that as the jargon of superstition. He takes the universe as he finds it. What it is it is, whether it had an author or not. The first postulate of Theism has no relation whatever to any practical problem that the universe presents. Moreover, the Atheist might easily smile at Miss Cobbe's picture of a supernatural "Merciful Lord of Man and Beast" in view of tigers, sharks, and disease microbes—to say nothing of human Jack the Rippers. If the Lord's "mercy," led him to create these beings, and keep them in active and healthy existence, it is a "mercy" which is amazingly like something that bears a very different name. One might even think that if the Lord's "mercy" is compatible with so much ravage and cruelty, man's own mercy may be quite as compatible with any possible form of vivisection.

What right, in the next place, has Miss Cobbe to speak for Atheists? Why are they "logically" bound by whatever she chooses to fasten upon them? Which of them has ever said, or dreamt, that his physical salvation is only to be obtained by moral degradation? The idea is positively absurd. Morality is a part of health. Right conduct is the condition of social well-being. It has absolutely no other meaning to an Atheist.

Finally, we have to advise Miss Cobbe to extend her researches into the literature of humanitarianism. She will then find that "infidels" have done more than their share in protesting against vivisection. The most passionate denunciation of it in existence came from the lips of Colonel Ingersoll. Charles Bradlaugh condemned it. And the line of "infidel" protest may be carried back through Schopenhauer and Bentham (both Atheists) to the arch-heretic, Voltaire; and beyond that to Shakespeare, who, as Mr. Swinburne says, was the greatest of all Freethinkers.

G. W. FOOTE.

### Protestantism and Progress.

THE death of Pope Leo XIII., the passing of the Education Act, with the consequent shrieking of Nonconformist opportunists, have all resulted in a perfect orgie of self praise by the extreme Protestant party. Numerous addresses and articles are published all to the one end of branding Roman Catholicism as the enemy of freedom and progress, and extolling Protestantism as the savior of nations, with Puritanism as its choicest expression. I do not at all object to the Protestant attacks on the elder church. Roman Catholicism is quite as evil as these charges declare it to be, and I am impartial enough to agree with a great many of the counter attacks upon Protestantism. Still, there are certain aspects of the subject that appear in neither Roman Catholic or Protestant organs, and this is my principal reason for introducing them here.

Foremost among the charges against Roman Catholicism is that it is a corruption of primitive Christian teaching. I am not at all interested in this question of doctrinal purity, except to point out that this so-called secularising or corrupting of primitive Christianity was one of the essential conditions of its existence. Absurd and impracticable doctrines such as the New Testament teachings of non-resistance, celibacy, etc., may remain unmodified so long as its advocates remain a small body without the responsibilities of government, or without the power of influencing national life. Quakers may decline to resist evil while a police force is maintained by less "spiritual" citizens, or Shakers practice celibacy while others carry on the work of perpetuating the race. But let either party become overwhelmingly predominant in the State, and their teachings will become "corrupted" or they will cease to exist.

It is this point that is lost sight of by both Catholics and Protestants. Had Christian doctrines been adhered to in all their primitive impracticability,

Christianity would have remained of no more historic consequence than are the long-haired followers of the Lost House of Israel who may be found in modern London. The corruption and secularising of Christianity was in reality a rationalising of it; an attempt to adapt it to contemporary needs and ideas. And, as a matter of fact, every attempt to govern society by Christian doctrines has necessarily ended in failure or corruption. Calvinism in Geneva broke down utterly after two hundred years of rule, during which period Genevan intellectual life lagged behind the rest of Europe. Presbyterianism in Scotland went through a long process of secularising in order to live. The reign of the Puritans in England, which was essentially an attempt to govern the nation according to ideas derived from the Bible, is one of the most ghastly failures recorded in history.

To keep Christianity pure, therefore, is to keep it before the public in all its native absurdity and unworkability. It becomes rationalised in order to live. Its "corruptions" are the modifications forced upon it by the desire to rule and to live. It is in this way that the "corruption" of modern Christianity has led to the dropping of Biblical inspiration and infallibility, eternal damnation, miracles, and the assumption of liberal thinking by various sections of the Christian church.

The second absurdity in this orgie of Protestant praise is that voiced by such men as Mr. R. F. Horton, who commonly ascribe all the differences in Protestant and Catholic countries, to difference in the forms of Christianity adopted, just as all the difference between Christian and non-Christian countries is ascribed to the difference in religious belief. The fact that in countries where Christian and Mohammedans, belonging to the same race, exist side by side the superiority is often on the side of the Mohammedan, in no way disturbs the easy going philosophy of men like Mr. Horton. It is enough for him that China is not Christian and England is. Therefore, comes the sapient conclusion, all the difference is due to religion. Race, climate, institutions, are all left without any consideration whatever.

It is the same with Catholicism and Protestantism. Spain is Roman Catholic; England and America are Protestant. Therefore the progressive tendencies of the one and the backward tendencies of the other is due to religious beliefs. Philosophising would be the simplest of matters if only conclusions were to be reached in this exceedingly easy manner. But a very important consideration is quite lost sight of. This is that, to make the comparison of any value, cases would have to be found where Protestantism and Roman Catholicism, with their respective clergy, have an equal quantity of political power, and therefore equal power to help or injure. As it is, any sane student will find that the only benefit conferred by Protestantism is an accidental and a negative one. Protestant countries are, on the whole, more progressive than Catholic ones, not because of what Protestantism does, but because of what it does *not*. The divisions of Protestant bodies, their never-ending rivalry, prevents any of them securing a supreme power such as that which was for centuries enjoyed by the Catholic Church, and so leaves a larger area of civil life *outside religion*. It is that which gives us the sole benefit of Protestantism over Roman Catholicism—it does not interfere to so large an extent with social life. The Roman Catholic priest avowedly aims at dominating life as a whole. The Protestant minister is forced by political conditions to disavow any attempt to coerce the State; and it is to this negative quality that the development of countries where Protestantism is dominant is due.

But with this distinction, and allowing for the difference in the social powers of the two faiths, the Protestant clergy show themselves as inimical to progress as do the Catholic clergy. If the Roman Church punished the scientific workers of the fifteenth, sixteenth, and seventeenth centuries, the Protestant Churches of the *nineteenth* century showed

as bitter hostility to Lyell and Darwin. Protestant Churches, in their small, peddling way, are as fond of heresy-hunting as are Roman Catholics, as witness recent instances among Methodists and Presbyterians. Protestant Churches are as eager to have their doctrines enforced by the State and their exchequer filled as are Roman Catholics. It is true that the section of the Protestant Church known as Nonconformists claim, in this country, to be more democratic than Episcopalianism. But this is taking credit for a mere political accident. Episcopalianism is the State religion; it is the religion of the ruling class; and the Nonconformists, in their opposition to this form of religion, are necessarily thrown upon the people for support, and must at least *pretend* to favor progressive ideas. But they show themselves wonderfully ready to scramble for State favor and State support. They agitate to be present at State ceremonies, they appeal to the State to enforce their narrow Sabbatarianism, and they dip their hands into the coffers of the State in the shape of relief from taxation in various directions. Place the Dissenters where the Episcopalians are, and what would become of their progressive sympathies? Church of England leaders are quite right in treating the Nonconformist outcry as dictated by jealousy and the greed for emoluments. They know the chief motive with themselves, and are not slow to detect it in others.

Finally, there is the case of intellectual freedom. A Scotch preacher said the other day, *apropos* of the death of the Pope, that Rome denies the right of the individual "to work out his own salvation in thought and conduct," while "we demand in every case to be put in possession of the facts before we judge.....To maintain an open mind; to insist upon reaching the facts of the case; to be honorably, generously open to conviction, from whatever quarter it may come." This sounds extremely generous, and for those who are anxious to collect copy-book headings, no doubt convincing. Others will be inclined to ask how much is it worth in practice? What does the speaker really mean by it? The plain truth is that there is not a church in Christendom that would tolerate its practice. What church or what clergyman is there that insists upon people knowing the facts of a case before they decide, or wishes them to be open to conviction from any quarter? How many clergymen are there who tell their congregations one half of what may be said against the belief in prayer, or miracles, or God, or a future life? Would any of them permit their pulpits to be used by a Freethinker in order to place another aspect of religion before his congregation? Far from this, their constant advice is for people not to read Freethought books, not to attend Freethought meetings, and to guard their minds against suggestions of unbelief. Why, Dr. Horton actually suggests ostracising from human society all who do not believe in immortality. And yet this class of people have the consummate hypocrisy to talk about the Roman Church and its intolerance! And worse still, there are Freethinkers who call them tolerant and liberal because they mouth liberal sentiments without the least intention of carrying them into practice.

Look at the matter historically, and one gets the same lesson. For savage intolerance, it is hard to beat the early generations of Protestants. Calvin, Luther, Beza, Knox, are names that suggest an intolerance as bitter as anything displayed in the annals of the Roman Catholic Church. Luther believed in stamping out all who denied the principles of the Christian religion, and that all Jews ought to be confined as lunatics. Calvin's burning of Servetus was accompanied by every device to prolong his victim's agony for the satisfaction of his religious bigotry. Knox was intolerance incarnate, and his followers openly taught that the killing of heretics was a justifiable act. In England, heretics certainly gained no more favor from the Puritans and their successors than they did from Catholics. It was under Protestantism that men and women were sent to prison, time after time, for selling

Paine's *Age of Reason*. And in New England, wholly Protestant from the first, the reign of the Puritans was accompanied by every mark of savage bigotry and brutal intolerance.

And even to day it is an excuse to speak or think of persecution as being over. People are no longer burned, and not often imprisoned; but they are banned and ostracised. Their living is filched from them, and their peace of mind, where they are not of a sufficiently stern type, destroyed. And between the church that cuts off a man's living, or denies him social intercourse, because of his dissent, and the church that burns for the same offence, the difference is one of degree only. There is no difference in kind. It is the same spirit in both cases, but in the former it can only express itself imperfectly.

There is no greater delusion than this of accepting Protestantism as *per se* more tolerant than Roman Catholicism. The one is just as intolerant as the other. In brief, every form of supernaturalism, and in particular Christian supernaturalism, is necessarily intolerant and destructive. It ceases to persecute science only when science is strong enough to cry "Hands off!" It yields to reform only when it is too weak to resist. And it is the height of folly to mistake weakness for a virtue or impotency for goodwill.

C. COHEN.

## From Christian Pulpit to Secular Platform.

BY RICHARD TREVOR.

### IX.—PLAY-ACTING IN THE PULPIT.

IN theory, Arnoldism is exquisitely beautiful and irresistibly fascinating; but, in practice, it proves woefully complicating and confusing. It leads to all sorts of insincerities and hypocrisies. A long time ago a famous actor, on being asked by a clergyman, "Why is play-acting so much more successful than preaching?" answered, "Because we treat fiction as if it were truth, and you present truth as if it were fiction." It was a witty, apt, and, if both preacher and actor believed the Bible to be the Word of God, eminently true answer. In numerous instances, it must be confessed, the pulpit is such a signal failure because the fire of enthusiasm does not burn in it, or because so many preachers are empty-headed and empty-hearted triflers. They do not doubt, because they are too lazy to think. To them, the ministry is solely a "living," an easy and respectable "billet," and they would forsake it to-morrow did it not allow them to spend their days in luxurious indolence. But there are other ministers to whom laziness is not a besetting sin, and who cannot complain of non-success in their work. The chief source of their weakness is that they proclaim fiction as if it were truth, thoroughly believing it, for the time being, to be truth. We are assured that, while on the stage, first-rate actors verily feel as if they were the characters they represent, which, for the time, they doubtless are. Judging by my own experience, and by observation of other cases, pulpit play-acting reveals itself in various ways.

In the first place, no sooner had I adopted Arnoldism, and commenced to treat the Bible as literature, than I discovered that I dared not preach all I knew. In course of time, I came into possession of a large body of esoteric truths, which were of too dangerous a character to be communicated to a mixed congregation. I was positively certain that the Pentateuch was not written, even the earlier and simpler portions of it, for many centuries after Moses' time. I knew well enough that the Mosaic Economy was a late and gradual development, and that from the time it began to assume a definite shape the prophets and the priests became sworn enemies, proofs of which fact abound in the prophetic writings themselves. It was as clear as noonday to me that Genesis is a collection of interesting legends, traditions, and myths; that Adam, Noah, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob are by no means historical, but

purely fabulous, symbolical, or eponymous characters, and that the stories of Creation, the Fall, and the Flood are fables, borrowed from Babylonian and other sources. It was not hidden from my eyes that the Historical Books were extremely crude and imperfect, full of contradictions and discrepancies; that the two Chronicles, in particular, were written with the object of representing the priesthood of the later Jewish Church as an institution that had existed continuously, and in its entirety, from the time of Moses, and that of history in the modern sense they contained none. Dr. Torrey boldly asserts that there are no mistakes of any kind in the Bible—an assertion that makes one wonder whether the popular evangelist can be even an honest man. From the time I began to treat the Bible as literature, I have not been able to shut my eyes to the fact that it contains innumerable mistakes—historical, chronological, numerical, and moral. But although I had full knowledge of all these things, I had to be silent about them in the pulpit, because of the danger that any public reference to them might disturb the people's simple faith in the inspiration of the Book. If I ever mentioned the Higher Criticism at all, it was merely for the purpose of emphasising the fact that if the Bible is inspired no criticism, however hostile in spirit and aim, can inflict any permanent injury upon it. It was also undeniable that as yet the Critics themselves were not quite sure of their ground, inasmuch as they hotly disagreed with, and contradicted, one another. Nor could it be forgotten that some of the most advanced and iconoclastic among them were yet firm advocates of the moral and spiritual supremacy of the Volume, and stood in the front rank of evangelical preachers. On these grounds, as far as I possibly could, I kept my congregation in the dark as to what was being done by Biblical scholars, and continued to treat the Bible as the supreme seat of authority in religion. Its history might be glaringly inaccurate; its geology, hopelessly chaotic, and its astronomy, ludicrously antiquated; but then it was not written to teach these lower, earthly sciences, but to be an infallible guide in all matters affecting the destiny of the soul. Such was the attitude taken up by theologians as soon as they realised the impossibility of retaining the exploded theory of verbal inspiration and inerrancy; and we preachers feebly followed their example. But, after all, preachers have no moral right to withhold important knowledge from their congregation, nor can they do it without seriously weakening their position and doing themselves irreparable harm.

In the second place, I found that, having adopted the literary and poetical method of interpreting Scripture, I attached other and, as I fondly fancied, larger and worthier meanings to the great theological terms than those which they popularly bore. This was an excessively risky game to play; but it was played in the sincere hope that genuine good might be the result. For instance, the generality of the people believed God to be an infinite and eternal person, clothed with so many natural and moral attributes of absolute perfection, with whom through the merits of Christ they professed to be in intimate and soul-making communion. They told him all their troubles, confessed to him all their sins, implored him to pardon and release them, and besought him to grant them sundry little favors. To me, on the other hand, God was the name loosely given to the sum-total of ideal virtues and moral excellencies, communion with whom signified active admiration for, and an ardent desire and effort to possess and exhibit, such noble qualities. I spoke of him as if he were a person; but I did so in a loose, poetical, or literary sense. I addressed him as Father, Friend, Savior, meaning just this, that at the core or heart of things is constructive, healing, saving Love. In maintaining this attitude I was enormously helped and comforted by Henry Drummond's exquisitely beautiful book, entitled *The Ascent of Man*. Its teaching was nebulous, vague, poetical, almost fantastical, but to me at that time irresistible. The law of the Universe was Love, and only that which opposed the glorious purposes of love

could be called sinful. There were numerous other terms, such as *atonement*, *regeneration*, *justification*, *immortality*, which I treated in the same ambiguous and passing way. The object I had in view was the gradual conversion of the people to my way of looking at things.

But my success in the realisation of that object was most discouragingly small. It is cocksure dogmatism that always moves the multitude; and even I, in my most Arnoldian mood, was supposed to be speaking dogmatically. There were but few who took me in my own sense, and those few soon lost all interest in the popular religion and ceased to attend its various meetings. I was all the time on the high road to Secularism, though at that time I had not the least suspicion of it. Some of those who joined me in the strange pilgrimage soon outstripped me in speed, and arrived at the inevitable destination years before I did. One of these was a man of exceptional intellectual brilliancy, dowered with a fine, lively imagination, and privileged, above most, to live close to Nature's heart. What deep joy was mine when I had succeeded in winning him to my side; but his stay with me was wonderfully brief. He perceived, almost at once, that the position I occupied was illogical, irrational, and impossible, and his sense of perspective drove him at a furious pace straight on to Naturalism or Monism, in which he found intellectual peace and heart-rest. We are both together again now, sharing each other's joy, as well as responsibility.

When will ministers learn that theological liberalism is only a stage in the journey either to Rome or to Atheism? Many of us remember how Newman, in a book of startling novelty, assigned that fact as the chief reason why he was obliged to become a Catholic—to bow in lowliest reverence to a corporate authority—in order to preserve his faith in religion. At one time he and his younger brother, Francis William, stood on practically the same platform; but one day they parted company, John Henry going down to Rome and becoming a Cardinal, while Francis William climbed towards and almost reached the domain of pure Naturalism. Theology cannot be liberal, and live. Based on an infallible revelation from heaven, it must remain stationary for ever, or die. No progress is possible, except the progress out of it. Newman was philosopher enough to perceive this; and he made his escape in time.

The next chapter will explain how my deliverance came.

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### Montesquieu.

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IN the Biblical story of Creation, God (and what is God but man's thought, man's desire, man's passion?) finds a disorder, a thick darkness, a chaos. He transforms it into a heaven and earth; he divides sea and land; he distributes life into classes; he makes a man; and then the woman as helpmeet. What is all this but the spirit of order seeking to realise itself in an orderly world? And later on comes the formal law, when God personally delivers the Ten Commandments from his thunder-throne. All this myth, all this parable, is a picture of the nature of man striving to express itself, first in order, then in law. The spirit of law is a factor of human nature. We might even say, Man is order, man is law. Take away order and law, and you take away humanity. I mean conscious order and law—the feeling that life must be governed, disciplined, ruled, fashioned.

This idea gave a title to the celebrated work, *The Spirit of Laws*, by the Frenchman Montesquieu. He was of gentle blood, as the phrase goes, and was born in a castle near Bordeaux, in 1689. Though aristocratic, his parents had a worthy sense of the claims of humanity. Just after the baby Montesquieu was born, a beggar happened to present himself at the castle-gate. He was asked to become the child's godfather, thus testifying to the kinship which underlies differences of rank. The castle had stern

battlements, and was surrounded by a deep moat. Perhaps there was a likeness between Montesquieu and his home. Thinker and philosopher, always interested in the world, he yet lived apart from its business and bustle. He was a man of slight frame, with nervous temperament; refined face; nose long; large eyes, but weak; a mouth touched with a satirical smile. Montesquieu was an intellect rather than a heart; his mind had more light in it than warmth. A lady once complained of him that, even in society, he seemed to be composing his books. At the university he studied law. At that time, the study of law was a kind of half-way house between the aristocracy and the people. It enabled bright young men to train their talents, and so raise up for France an aristocracy of reason. For a while, incited by the example of Sir Isaac Newton, Montesquieu pursued anatomy, botany, and other physical sciences; but his defective eyesight checked research in this direction. More and more, he turned to the deepest of all studies—the study of men and man's spirit, and especially the spirit of man's laws. Man—that is the key-note. When you go into a church of the old order, you are met and subdued by the idea of God—this is the house of God; here is the altar of God; you are here in the presence of God; here you and God may speak together. That is theology; that is the old order. That is the idea which is slowly, very slowly, passing away. But when you, so to speak, enter the church of Montesquieu, you are in the presence of humanity. Montesquieu has a little altar for God, but it is in the corner:—

"God," he says, "is related to the universe as creator and preserver. The laws by which he created are the laws by which he preserves.....It would be absurd to say that the Creator might govern the world without those rules, since without them it could not subsist."

In a note he adds an observation from Plutarch, "Law is the King of mortal and immortal beings." Thus Montesquieu fastens up God in a gilded cage, and there leaves him in the very first chapter of his book.

The *Esprit des Lois* was published in 1748; and its author died in 1755. A critic and friend said that, just as the painting of the Transfiguration was placed by the death-bed of Raphael, so on the coffin of Montesquieu should have been laid a copy of his *Spirit of Laws*. The work is divided into thirty-one "books," and then again into short chapters. One is so brief that it can be quoted entire:—

When the savages of Louisiana are desirous of fruit, they cut the tree to the root, and gather the fruit; this is an emblem of despotic government.

There you have the whole chapter! Montesquieu means that a despotic government is strong and wealthy at the expense of the people's life. In the earlier pages, he discusses the respective characters of the republican, monarchic and despotic modes of government, giving his vote for a limited monarchy. It is interesting to notice that Montesquieu holds the opinion that "it is natural for a republic to have only a small territory." In our own days of the telegraph and railway, the term "small territory" has a different application to what it had in Montesquieu's time. But his principles holds good, and has a significant bearing on the British Empire. He observes that "It is contrary to the nature of things that a republic should conquer towns which cannot enter into the sphere of its democracy." In that case, a British democracy could not govern India on the present system. Some parts of Montesquieu's work must have very much surprised his readers, especially his discussion of the influence of climate on a people's character. To us, there is nothing new in the idea; the work of Henry Thomas Buckle has taught us to look closely into a man's or a nation's environment, in order to understand the man's mind, or the nation's habits. The Frenchman was a pioneer in this research. In the course of many judicious remarks on trade, commerce, money, etc., he says "the English know better than any other nation upon earth how to value at the same time these three

great advantages, viz., religion, commerce, and liberty." One catches a trace of Montesquieu's satirical smile here surely; or is it a compliment to our great nation?

After he had treated the subjects of marriage-laws and population, Montesquieu turns to religion. He has a very neat way of hinting that, in religion, the only important factor is morality, or conduct. For example, here is a pithy chapter on the inhabitants of Pegu. The opening words must, of course, be read in an ironic sense:—

"In a country so unfortunate as to have a religion that God has not revealed, it is necessary for it to be agreeable to morality, because even a false religion is the best security we can have of the honesty of men. The principal points of religion of the inhabitants of Pegu are, not to commit murder, not to steal, to avoid uncleanness, not to give the least uneasiness to their neighbor, but to do him, on the contrary, all the good in their power. With these rules they think they should be saved in any religion whatsoever. From hence it proceeds that those people, though poor and proud, behave with gentleness and compassion to the unhappy."

It is easy enough to see, in this reflection, Montesquieu's opinion that moral ideas are strong enough to stand by themselves without the help of any divine revelation. A very fine piece of satire occurs in the same portion of *The Spirit of Laws*. A Jewish girl of ten years had been burned by the Inquisition at Lisbon. Montesquieu cites a paper by a supposed Jew, but no doubt it is his own composition. He represents the Jew as asking if it is just of the Christian, who believes all the Bible, to burn a Jew who happens to believe but a part:—

"You put us to death," protests the Jew, "who believe only what you believe, because we do not believe all that you believe. We follow a religion which you yourselves know to have been formerly dear to God. We think that God loves it still, and you think that God loves it no more. And, because you judge thus, you make those suffer by sword and fire who hold an error so pardonable as to believe that God still loves what he once loved!"

I feel rather like the traveller, mentioned by Montesquieu, who journeyed to Egypt, cast an eye on the pyramids, and returned home. So I have, as it were, cast an eye on this extensive work of his, and then am forced to depart. The chief thing that strikes me, as I read the *Spirit of Laws*, is the genuine homage with which the author approaches the ideas, customs, and laws of mankind, barbarian or civilised. It is so different from the old method which gave elaborate study to the laws of God, and counted the laws of man as a topic of secondary importance. Montesquieu seems to feel that, in the long history of the human race, the spirit of laws has been a struggle to reduce chaos to order and to rule passions and impulses into obedience to the Common Good. Many laws were foolish; many laws were unjust; many laws were useless; and perhaps the time will come when laws will be few and lawyers fewer. But the spirit of laws—the effort to govern complex, many-sided societies—was a noble spirit. It was one of the expressions of human morality. It was the same spirit as that which moves a right-minded woman to govern a household in peace and cleanliness; which moves the man of science to arrange facts and draw out general principles. For this spirit of laws Montesquieu felt a deep reverence. And his work has helped the modern mind to understand and reverence humanity. F. J. GOULD.

#### AGITATION.

Men must be agitated for their good;  
Grapes must be trodden first, and grain be ground,  
Ere wine be looked for, or ere bread be found.  
Though some opinions we are apt to shy at,  
Opinion hurts not truth, though it run riot;  
It's error always begs and prays for quiet.

—P. J. BAILEY.

## Acid Drops.

What a lot of humbug Christian morality is, especially as between the West and the East. A few years ago Emperor William flew into a dreadful rage because the Chinese sent a couple of German missionaries to heaven. He demanded the heads of the murderers, some twenty thousand pounds compensation, and a slice of Chinese territory. Some time afterwards Emperor William sent a number of German troops to co-operate with the troops of Russia, France, Italy, Great Britain, and the United States, in teaching the Chinese an object-lesson in Christian benevolence. In order to show them that they ought not to kill an ambassador, especially when he was a German, the Allied troops killed the Chinese wholesale, often without distinction of age or sex; and in order to show them the loveliness of Christian purity, the Allied troops (including the Germans) raped hundreds, perhaps thousands, of Chinese females.

Now we have the Holy Czar on the rampage. A few months ago there was a terrible massacre of the Jews at Kischineff, which was obviously winked at by the authorities. Protests arose in every civilised country. The Jews of America put their protest into the form of a memorial, and the United States government tried to present it to the Russian government; but it was declined without thanks, the Czar's ministers intimating that whatever happened in Russia was the business of nobody outside. What noble independence! But just see what has happened since. A Russian consul in a very disturbed part of Turkey, where racial and religious feeling is running very high, strikes an Albanian with a whip, and is shot dead on the spot—as might have been expected. Thereupon the Czar demands the instant punishment—that is to say, the execution—of the offender or offenders; lectures the Sultan like a pickpocket, tells him to set his house in order immediately, and dispatches a Russian fleet to Turkish waters. What a difference in the Czar's action in the two cases! And is it any wonder, in spite of the missionaries, that the very name of Christian honor stinks in the nostrils of the East?

Before the House of Commons broke up Mr. Balfour, replying to a question, stated a view of the present Eastern question which is calculated to enrage many good Christians in Great Britain. This is what he said: "I am not going to ask the house to endeavor to apportion the responsibility among the various historical causes which for centuries have been at work, and which have led to the present disastrous condition of Macedonia. If you are going to begin on that theme, you might go back to the original divisions among the Christians of Eastern Europe, divisions not yet healed, without which the Turks would never have been there. These divisions between Christians date back many centuries, and they are still producing the same baleful results, and it is not the Turk alone, deep as is his guilt, who is responsible for the miserable condition of the peasantry of Macedonia. To represent what is going on as simply a question between Turk and Christian is to wholly misunderstand the situation. While I have never said a word which could by political animosity be twisted to express anything but the deepest horror of many of the dreadful deeds of Turkish officials and soldiers, it is folly to forget that Christians are at this moment committing atrocities on Christians. It is not simply to deal with Turkey or to provoke European interposition that these Bulgarian bands are ravaging the country, but to drive Christians of a different sect from themselves into the adoption of their own special form of orthodoxy."

Passive Resisters did not get on as well as they expected at Sandwich. On appearing at the Petty Sessions, they all attempted to deliver an oration, but the magistrates were not having any. After a long wrangle, however, they allowed one of the defendants to say a few words. Alderman Jacobs acted as spokesman for the lot. This gentleman is a Nonconformist, of course, and was for sixteen years Chairman of the Sandwich School Board; under which, presumably, the religious education imparted (at the public expense) was such as met with his approval. Henceforth, however, the religious education may be a little different. He told the Court, therefore, that he and his friends would not pay for the teaching of a religion which they abhorred. Probably it never occurred to him, during all those sixteen years, that there were people in Sandwich who abhorred *his* religion, yet were obliged to pay through the rates for its teaching.

Alderman Hughes, sitting on the bench, answered Alderman Jacobs. He pointed out that two-thirds of the Sandwich Islanders (we beg pardon; the Sandwich inhabitants) were Nonconformists; that they had always ruled the roost;

that the Chairman of the School Board had always been a Nonconformist; that the Chairman of the present managers was a Nonconformist; and that the headmaster of the school of the church Alderman Hughes belonged to was a Nonconformist; yet the Churchmen had never objected to paying their rates. "That is not the point at all," cried Alderman Jacobs. Of course not. The only point is the point that pricks Nonconformists. Other people's feelings don't count.

The last case amongst the Sandwich rebels was very promptly disposed of. This is how it read in the *Daily News* :—

"Mr. H. T. Hooker's was the last case, and, in reply to the clerk, he said: I have no legal reason to show, but I have three reasons that I wish to give. First, I want to be honest with my God; secondly, I want to be honest with my conscience; and, thirdly, I wish to be honest with my country. (Applause.)

"The Mayor: Order for seven days."

There is something very funny about that "Order for seven days" after the Nonconformist peroration.

Just what we expected has happened. The first Passive Resister who faced prison walked backwards. As a matter of history, the first committal order was issued by the Hereford county magistrates against Henry Williams, of Backbury Hill, near Hereford. When the policeman arrived with the warrant the money was produced by the wife and paid under protest. "Protest" is good.

"Auctioneer" writes to the *Daily News* about the active antics of the Passive Resisters. He says he is going to take precautions, if necessary, against "brutal assaults by Nonconformist hooligans." And he ventures to tell "John Clifford" and others that he considers his life "quite as valuable to me and my family as their 'consciences' are to them." Hear, hear!

Mr. J. C. Masters, a local auctioneer, who did the "going, going, gone" at the first sale of the goods of Passive Resisters at Altrincham, was greeted with a hymn when he put in an appearance. The poor persecuted Nonconformists present struck up "O God, our help in ages past." This was far from reassuring; so he hastened to inform them that he was not going to undertake another auction. "I hope, therefore," he said, "there will be no rotten eggs to-day." He was addressing Christians.

What an old *farceur* Dr. John Clifford is becoming! In another long letter to the *Daily News*, after taking Mr. J. M. Robertson's name in vain, he protests against the new Education Act because, amongst other things, it allows pictures of "the bleeding heart of Mary" to be hung up in schools maintained at the public expense, and therefore at the cost of Nonconformists. Poor man! It does not occur to his feeble imagination that "the blood of Christ," which is all over the New Testament, is just as objectionable to non-Christian ratepayers. He believes in the Blood of Christ, so that is all right in the public schools; but he doesn't believe in the Blood of Mary, so that is all wrong in the public schools. In other words, there will never be justice in England until Dr. John Clifford, or some other illiberal and illogical Free Churchman, is made absolute King.

"We pay," Dr. Clifford exclaims, "for increasing the numbers and maintaining the power of the Anglican Church." Yes, and for thirty years non-Christians have paid for increasing the number and maintaining the power of the Anglican Church, and the Nonconformist Churches too. But that was *all* right.

President Roosevelt, who wants to continue in office, knows how to keep in with the American Churches. Theoretically, of course, being a Protestant himself, he regards the Roman Catholics as a lot of idolators; but practically he admires and loves them as though he were the idolator and they were the true believers. Having been invited to the Convention of the Catholic Federation of Societies at Atlantic City, he regretted that it was out of his power to be present, though "it would have been a peculiar pleasure." Then he went on to thank them for their efforts to promote "morality and decency." Of course he didn't see how the last word gave both himself and the Catholics away. Why was Christianity ever started, if, two thousand years afterwards, gigantic efforts are necessary to promote common decency in Christian countries?

"A Catholic Priest," writing in *Reynolds's Newspaper*, who professes to read the Christian Fathers in the original, calls upon a Freethought correspondent, Mrs. Annie Drewell, to give precise references to her citations of St. Jerome and St. Gregory with respect to the character of the female sex. This real or pretended Catholic priest *challenges* the lady;

But what a cheap courage he displays! Why doesn't he challenge Mr. Lecky, the historian of European Morals, and Principal Donaldson, the author of the well-known *Contemporary Review* articles on the Position of Woman under Paganism and under Christianity? Mrs. Drewell's citations, and many more of the same kind, may be found in the pages of these two writers. Why not challenge them? Why let them pass, year after year, without a denial, and pounce upon a woman of the people who trusts to their learned authorities? "A Catholic Priest" is either a great coward or a great humbug.

Talking of *Reynolds'*, we note two editorial references in its last issue to the Colonial Secretary, in one of which he is called "Judas Chamberlain" and in the other "Judas Iscariot Chamberlain." Now, we don't complain of this. Our contemporary deals, as we do sometimes, in vigorous language. But what is Mr. Holyoake doing? Why doesn't he write to his friend Mr. Thompson and call him to order? Years ago, when we exposed the late Rev. Hugh Price Hughes's "Atheist Shoemaker" story, Mr. Holyoake said that we committed a shocking offence by referring to "Ananias Hughes." Quite recently he has repeated the admonition to another Freethought journal. But Ananias, who was only a liar, wasn't as bad as Judas, who was a traitor—according to orthodox conceptions. When you call a man "Judas" you mean that he most vilely betrayed, and even sold, his friend or friends. Here is a splendid chance, then, for Mr. Holyoake to show his impartiality as a controversial censor. We shall look for his "Judas" letter in *Reynolds'*—a paper with which he is almost connected, through his presidency of the Democratic League.

The Humbert affair is ended, and the great Thérèse is now safe in prison. It will be some years before she has another chance of airing her criminal accomplishments. "She was a most religious woman," the *Daily News* says—and the *Daily News* ought to know. Nearly all, if not quite all, the famous liars, charlatans, and swindlers of modern times have been "religious." It is a way they have. Nor is it surprising; for "religion" is like crime in this, that it really belongs to the lower stages of human culture. During the time that the House of Commons was engaged in trying to get rid of Charles Bradlaugh, simply because he was a militant Atheist, no less than three other members were wiped off the list for absconding from justice or being sentenced to imprisonment for very grave offences; and each offender happened to be a rather ostentatious Christian. But the fact excited very little public comment. Probably it was felt to be so much a matter of course.

The "Spy" cartoons displayed in the window of *Vanity Fair* office are priced as follows:—Lord Kitchener 5s., Mr. Balfour 2s. 6d., Lord Rosebery 1s., Mr. Chamberlain 6d., Archbishop of Canterbury 6d. It seems perfectly scandalous, and almost blasphemous, to advertise the Archbishop at this paltry rate. He has our sympathy.

The *Yorkshire Post* devotes an article to "Services on the Sand." It says that thousands listen to the preachers at Scarborough and other seaside places, and that it is "a movement to be reckoned with." Our contemporary does not notice the devices resorted to for coaxing the children to these pious performances. Printed leaflets are delivered at all the lodging houses "To the Parents" requesting them to allow their children to attend the services. Collections are made regularly, and those who run the mission are able to live "on the front" in capital style with their wives and families the whole of the season. Indeed, the clerics are plentiful at all the holiday resorts, sunning themselves on the balconies of the big hotels and hydros., seeking "well-earned rest," whilst their unfortunate flocks at home continue to keep their noses on the grindstone.

Even the *Daily News* damns the proposal to form a political Free Church party with a view to getting two hundred Free Churchmen in the next House of Commons. "Nonconformity," our contemporary says, "would be committing a grave error if they made a religious distinction absolutely identical with a political division." For our part, we are not frightened. We fancy, if the Church and Dissent would go on fighting each other politically, that the general body of citizens would soon cry, "A plague on both your houses." It might then be possible to have an advanced Reform party with religion excluded.

"Providence" has afflicted us with too much wet in England, but it is still worse in Ireland. Even in County Kilkenny, one of the best in the Green Island, we read that "the harvest is a great failure everywhere; the potatoes are like soap, and the corn is as green as it was in June." During the coming winter the poorest districts of Ireland will neither

have potatoes enough to eat nor turf enough to warm their dwellings. Good old "Providence"!

It is amusing to read, in the same newspaper which reports these sad facts, a long account of how a sort of average creed was drawn up and accepted by a unanimous vote of the senior class in Bowdoin College, Maine, U. S. A., under the presidency of Dr. Hyde, who is described as "a liberal Congregational clergyman, and a Hegelian thinker." The first article of this new-fangled creed runs: "I believe in one God, present in nature as law, in science as truth, in art as beauty, in history as justice, in society as sympathy, in conscience as duty"—and, it might have been added, "in the Churches as humbug." Perhaps the Rev. Dr. Hyde, or the members of his senior class at the College, will explain why the one God present in Nature has damned the Irish crops so severely.

The *Echo*, without giving its authority, has stated that the Emperor of China has published a Decree ordering a certain rain-producing tablet to be brought to Peking that it may be advised to bring forth the rain that was then much required; also, that a second Decree has been issued commanding Prince Chun to burn a large stick of incense before it, and "to make sacrifice to it." This will no doubt cause many a little Protestant child to lose his Sunday halfpenny into the missionary-box, and will make many a nun shiver. But what is there in it strange and foreign? Do not we Europeans practise the identically same idiocies? It is only a few weeks since a health-producing pasteboard hat was solemnly brought from Naples to Rome to be placed on the head of the dying Patriarch of Latin Christianity. The Benedictines sell metal tablets to keep off lightning. "Miraculous" gold ones are on sale at a Catholic booksellers' here in London. As to the idolatry, the writer of this paragraph has himself offered pounds of incense to biscuits, and adored them flat on the ground on his face. He has knelt to, and kissed, splinters of bone, and genuflected to lumps of painted plaster of Paris; yet, at that time, the idea of this Chinese tablet-incensing business would have filled him with repulsion. Nor have we any stones to throw in regard to this being a State expedient. Here the State orders charms to be repeated throughout the country to change the weather, and we are now in arms at having to pay the mystery-men who teach these State-ordered charms to our children. Was it not only last year that, for some benefit to the nation no one has ventured to describe, the King, Edward VII., was seated on a miraculous boulder and rubbed with miraculous grease, and the Queen was invested with a hat on which was fastened a miraculous pebble?

It will be remembered that the famous Mr. Hooley gave St. Paul's Cathedral a wonderful service of gold plate in honor of the Jubilee of the late Queen Victoria. This gentleman became bankrupt, but nothing could induce the Chapter to discard the dubious "holy" vessels. Now Mr. Justice Darling says some subsequent proceedings of this pious benefactor are as bad as, or worse than, thimble-rigging; and the Public Prosecutor is inquiring if the Judge is veracious, or in error. Should he decide that Justice Darling is correct, and should a jury be of the same opinion, there will be again the question of the sanctity and honesty of the Jubilee Plate. But one may stake the universe that that plate will remain in St. Paul's Cathedral—nothing will occur but a refinement of pronunciation. In future not only Oxford men, but all the clergy, will speak of things used about churches as "ho-oly."

The rubbish about the present Pope being a "peasant" still continues. He is of the same status, it would appear, as Shakespeare and thousands of others whose origin has never been commented on. He comes of that rank which is on the borderland of the middle and artizan classes. The chatter about his name is also stupid. Sarto is certainly plain Taylor; but knock off the Italian "o," and you have Czar! the very highest name ever owned by anyone whatever, for it is the best half of the word rendered in English "Lord of Hosts." On the other hand, by a reference to an Italian Dictionary, the name of the late Pope—about whose high, but fictitious, nobility so much fuss has been made for a quarter of a century—turns out to be "belly" or "paunch." Conceive the high-born predecessor of "Joe" Czar being, after all, only "Jerry Belly." This is cataclysmic! But the other most noble Peters were no better. We have not had courage to go beyond Pius IX., who was Jack Irons, but have relieved our head by pondering on the nomenclature of the lesser fry, the Italian Cardinals, and have not regretted our labor.

We have been within an ace of having an aristocrat of the name of Rampolla del Tindaro for Pope. We have no idea

where "Tindaro" is in Italy, but it is a name which at once, by omitting the o, resolves itself into Tinder; from which—as Trinder is common enough here, while Ram-pol suggests a native of India—a suggestion strengthened by the spelling of *Tindar*—one gets a very practicable Eurasian: Ram-pol Tin-dar, out of Rampolla del Tindaro. In the same way MacKey comes out of Macchi, O'Reilly out of Oreglia, Gott out of Gotti, and Van Utel out of Vannutelli. We do not say these gentlemen are really Van Utel, O'Reilly, Gott, and MacKey, but the photograph of Oreglia gives the personification of an Ulster man. Gotti and Vannutelli are unmistakably Teutonic, while Rampolla is as strikingly Asiatic. What Macchi may be like we do not know, but have not an election of a doubt he is every whit as Italian as the average of the Signori who appear here in Italian Opera.

While the membership of the Presbyterian Church remains about stationary, the number of ordinations, according to the Rev. Dr. Roberts, Clerk of the General Assembly, is getting less each year. In 1898 there were 290 ordinations, while there were but 184 last year, 52 fewer than in 1902. Candidates for the ministry decline steadily. In 1898 the number of candidates in the Presbyterian Church was 1,161, in 1900 the number was 908, and last year 810. The number reported this year (1903) is 779. There is also a decrease in evangelists to 119, the fewest for many years, and the number licensed last year to preach was but one-half the number in 1898. When the absurdity, bigotry, and cruelty of the Presbyterian creed are considered, it seems strange that anybody should be willing to preach it.—*Truth-seeker* (New York).

A Jonah Man has turned up at last, and not inappropriately in the *Daily News*. Mr. Alfred E. Lean, F.R.G.S., of 44 East-hill, Wandsworth, writes to that paper as follows:—"I am much surprised to find Dr. Horton endeavoring to persuade people to disbelieve, as a fact, the narrative of Jonah, and suggesting as comparisons the parables of the *Pilgrim's Progress*. It is remarkable that so many eminent preachers of the Gospel should be so ill-advised as to attempt such a presumptuous task as that of putting the Bible straight. For myself I thoroughly believe the story of Jonah as a fact, from beginning to end, and so I do all the Bible stories. I accept the authority of the Bible before that of Dr. Horton."

We are not at all sure that Mr. Lean might not be made a fat property. We believe there is money in him, if he were only exhibited. He is nothing in himself, of course; but, like a dodo, he is a rare survival of an extinct species. Perhaps he is the only specimen left in London. There are *children*, we know, who believe that the Hebrew prophet was entertained by a whale; but how many *adults* believe it? We never met one before. Yes, this Mr. Lean is a decided curiosity. He ought to be in a museum or a show. Lots of people would pay to see him.

What brains the Salvationists have! The *War Cry* promises "valuable prizes" for the best answers to certain questions. Here are some of them: How old is General Booth? Why must we eat? Where is Honolulu? Who was the mother of Moses? This is what we have come to after thirty odd years of national education—in the hands of religionists.

The *War Cry* reports a "splendid case" of conversion from Brisbane. A man with a B.A. degree, who marched with Kitchener to Khartoum, and afterwards became a drunkard and an unbeliever, is now instructing the boys in the Riverview Home. It is not stated what he is instructing them in. Is it drunkenness and infidelity?

These Salvationists—we mean the rank and file: the leaders know better—seem to fancy that every infidel is a drunkard and every drunkard an infidel. Of course this is a very great mistake. Most of the heavy drinking in this country is done by people who profess and call themselves Christians.

The same number of the *War Cry* reports a grand open-air meeting at Tottenham. A drunken man with a banjo stood outside the ring, and insisted on playing his instrument, which, of course, drew a big crowd. The next morning—it is said, with unconscious humor—Dr. Green spoke on "Essentials to Success."

According to *A Little Treasure for Little Catholics*, compiled by the Rev. E. T. Walker, a clergyman of the Church of England, the "Church knows what the Bible means, because the Holy Ghost teaches her its meaning." People who try to make out its meaning for themselves are sure to go wrong. They must consult the Church; that is, the

parson; and remember, of course—for this must *never* be forgotten—that the laborer is worthy of his hire, and the Lord loveth a cheerful giver.

This Protestant-Catholic book sings the praises of the Mass, and flatly teaches Transubstantiation. It speaks of the priest taking bread and wine, and blessing them, and saying to the baked dough "This is my body," and to the fermented grape-juice, "This is my blood," and then says: "When the priest begins the prayer, that which is on the Altar is bread and wine. When the priest ends the prayer, That Which is on the Altar is Christ's Body and Blood; it is Jesus; it is God." Do you want to know how the wonderful transformation trick is done? Listen to the Protestant-Catholic man of God. "How," he says, "does he (the priest) do it? I cannot tell you; he does not know himself how he does it; but it is done." Why, certainly! And only to think that in a country where this game is carried on with honor and profit a poor old woman gets six weeks for earning a casual sixpence at fortune-telling! A mad world, my masters! But what a lot of method there is in *clerical* madness!

One of my reasons for fearing that all will not be joyous in paradise is the circumstance that the same God who orders things in this world will control affairs in that, and I have no confidence in him.—*George Macdonald*, "*Truth-seeker*" (New York).

Mr. G. H. Brookes writes to the *Derbyshire Times* complaining of the "disgusting" language used by some of the local cricketers. "It was my fortune, or misfortune," he says, "to visit one of the Chesterfield local clubs, known by the name of St. Augustine's Bible Class, and worse language than that which was used frequently amongst them I never heard before." Mr. Brookes says that the team he is connected with do not profess to be saints, but he adds, "I can say without boasting that I have never heard a bad word uttered upon our cricket field." He seems to have overlooked the fact that most bad language is Bible quotation.

The Vicar of Hurley, Berks, calls motor cars "damnable engines of Satan." We did not know their inventor was Old Nick.

Rev. J. E. Williams, until recently curate of Cross Church, near Bangor, has been ordered to pay four shillings a week in support of the illegitimate child of a young girl named Ellis. There seems to be a great scarcity of ghosts in that part of the kingdom.

The negro editor of the *Lagos Weekly Record*, a West African native newspaper, speaks out plainly on the subject of the lynching horrors in the Southern States. "The presence of the negro in that country," he says, "furnishes the opportunity for the white people to see the depths to which, with the Bible in their hands, and with all the appliances of science, they are capable of sinking." That "Bible in their hands" is good. We thank the negro editor. May he flourish!

One of the latest extracts from the *Times* of a century ago refers to the author of the *Age of Reason* as "that arch-fiend of wickedness, Tom Paine," and then proceeds to quote a wise sentence from one of "his infernal writings." This sort of thing was serious enough then, for it was a crime to sell Paine's writings in those days; but how laughable it is now! The world does go forward, after all.

Hardly anybody wants to go to heaven, but few people have the courage to say so. One exception, however, turned up the other day at Lambeth Police Court. It was a lady who asked the magistrate's advice about her husband, in case he should be discharged from the lunatic asylum where he was then residing. She wanted to know whether she was compelled to live with him. "He isn't a safe man to live with," she said. "He wants to send me to Heaven, and I don't want to go." We hope the mad husband won't be allowed to hurry her emigration.

NOT TO BE TAKEN AT HIS WORD.—At the talking end of the little whitewashed church Brother Dave Larson, a colored missionary, was urging the Lord with mighty urgings to bestow this, that, and the other of a long list of blessings upon the brethren and sisters of this most worthy-to-be-favored flock. At the grumbling end, near the door, sat Brother Jake Simmons, his nose decidedly out of joint because of the fluency of his rival. In a loud and critical whisper he addressed his neighbor: "Oh, pshaw! If the Lord should give that feller jus' one-tenth of all them things he's askin' fo' he'd fall down daid with surprise!"



### Mr. Foote's Lecturing Engagements.

September 13 and 20, Queen's Hall, London; September 27, Manchester; October 11, Glasgow.

### To Correspondents.

C. COHEN'S LECTURING ENGAGEMENTS.—Address, 241 High-road.

T. CLARK.—We have already pointed out the absurdity of calling all good people "Christians," even when they repudiate the designation with considerable disgust. But we cannot prevent *Reynolds'* from perpetrating this blunder, and we do not desire to be constantly lecturing a contemporary for a single fault. Of course, the common-sense rule is to call people what they call themselves. Everyone is entitled to wear his own label.

A JINGLE.—We are unable to explain why you and your friend failed to hear that lecturer as advertised at Halifax, after walking over from Rochdale to listen to him. No doubt there is a sufficient explanation; but it is a pity, as you say, that some sort of notice was not given to the expectant audience; though that, too, may have been impossible. We shall be glad to see you and your friends at our Manchester meetings.

J. G. ORCHART.—Thanks. You will see we have made use of the extract.

NOTTINGHAM READER writes: "Can you tell me why there is so much difficulty in getting the *Pioneer*? I ordered it from a local newsagent before the first number was published, but each month it has been late, sometimes a fortnight later than the first of the month; and my newsagent tells me to-day (Aug. 21) that he has not yet seen the August number. So far as I can gather, the fault lies with someone in London. My newsagent has no feeling of hostility towards the paper. He supplies me with the *Freethinker* every week, and it never misses." No doubt the fault does lie with someone in London. Our correspondent should beg his local newsagent to put pressure on the wholesale agent who supplies him. The *Pioneer* is published early enough; always before the first of the month, generally several days before. The August number was published on July 29. We regret to say that the boycott we have to suffer increases. There is nothing aggressive in the title of the *Pioneer*, and its contents are written with studied moderation; yet all sorts of obstacles are placed in the way of its circulation, and several firms, including Messrs. Smith & Sons, will not supply it all.

J. B. WALLIS.—Thanks for cuttings. Send more whenever the spirit moves.

G. J.—"It is not surprising," you say, "that Theists boycott the *Freethinker*: I suppose you boycott the Bible." You are misled by a false analogy. We do not sell Bibles, but we should not refuse to supply one to a customer who ordered other things. But the chief point is that we are neither wholesale nor retail newsagents. It would be as absurd to expect us to keep the *Methodist Times* in stock as to go to the *Methodist Times* office with a view to purchasing the *Freethinker*.

G. LANCE (Stratford).—You say that there are two men of God in your locality—one a Churchman, the other a Nonconformist—called Stevens, who both declare that they have met Mr. Foote in debate and given him a good thrashing; and you want to know if this is true. These men of God must have held a debate with Mr. Foote in their dreams. He does not recollect that he ever heard of them before. Ask them *where* they debated with him, and *when*.

S. T. JAMES.—We will consider the matter and write you. We do not know of any poet who dedicated verses to Charlotte Corday.

E. PACK.—Thanks for copy of the *Keighley Herald* with report of your case. We are afraid there is no remedy against magistrates making up their minds before hearing the evidence; and you must expect to meet all sorts of prejudice in Christian courts.

F. BUTLIN.—If you want us to treat the twenty-fifth of Matthew as "an allegory" you had better not waste your time in writing to us again.

E. HAMMOND.—Certainly it is possible. Thousands of people who were brought up as Christians have adopted Secularism.

W. P. JACOBS.—Works on the subject you refer to are scarce and expensive. It would be useless to mention them unless you are prepared for the outlay. Do you read French? There is a classic book by Dulaure.

J. K. MAAGAARD.—Shall appear in our next.

B. ELLIS asks our opinion on the Free Will question, and says that an article upon it from our pen would be very acceptable. We will try to find time for one shortly.

W. P. BALL.—Many thanks for your cuttings.

E. H.—Mr. Cohen has handed us your letter. We are still of opinion that Dr. Clifford did *not* reply to the essence of Mr. Headlam's letter. Our own observations had no reference to Wesleyan schools, but to the Christian teaching which Nonconformists had upheld in Board schools, and were prepared to uphold again in the Provided schools under the new Act.

F. S. EDWARDS.—We are looking into the matter and will deal with it next week. Thanks.

RATIONALIST.—The correspondence on "Summer Foods" must end now. A controversy on Vegetarianism is not valuable unless conducted on scientific grounds.

WHITMORE LEDGER.—The *Era* had no other right to exclude your letter than the right which lies in power animated by bigotry. It is a poor sort of a joke to let only one side be heard in a correspondence and call it a discussion.

THE NATIONAL SECULAR SOCIETY'S office is at 2 Newcastle-street, Farringdon-street, E.C., where all letters should be addressed to Miss Vance.

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

LETTERS for the Editor of the *Freethinker* should be addressed to 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.

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

PERSONS remitting for literature by stamps are specially requested to send *halfpenny stamps*, which are most useful in the Free-thought Publishing Company's business.

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.

It has not been found possible yet to secure a Hall for regular Sunday evening Freethought meetings in the West end of London. A series of lectures is therefore being organised, under the auspices of the Board of the Secular Society, Ltd., at the Queen's (Minor) Hall, Langham-place, on Sunday evenings from September 13 to October 4 inclusive. Mr. Foote will deliver the first two lectures, and Mr. Cohen will take the third. The fourth date will probably afford London Freethinkers an opportunity of hearing the gentleman who has been relating his conversion from Christianity to Secularism in our columns under the name of Richard Trevor. He will lecture, of course, under his real name. Full details of these four meetings will appear in next week's *Freethinker*. Meanwhile we invite our metropolitan friends to make a note of them.

Owing to the great uncertainty of the weather the N. S. S. Executive decided not to hazard a Sunday excursion on August 30, as was contemplated, and indeed announced. The chances were against a fine day, and therefore in favor of a financial loss, uncompensated by personal enjoyment. Arrangements are being made for a first-rate Children's Christmas Party indoors, and the Annual Dinner will take place at the Holborn Restaurant probably on the second Tuesday in January.

We are glad to see that Mr. Cohen's article in reply to Mr. John Lobb, of the *Sun*, has attracted that gentleman's attention. Mr. Lobb does not object to the tone of Mr. Cohen's article, but he says he would like "an account of the philanthropic institutions, if any, founded and maintained" by Freethinkers. We do not regard this as a very important question; but, such as it is, we leave Mr. Cohen to deal with it at his leisure. Meanwhile we congratulate the *Sun* on its liberal good sense in recognising the existence of the *Freethinker*. Most papers seem to imagine that if they affect not to see us we are really invisible—the ostriches!

Mr. Lobb was to have been at Mr. Cohen's meeting in Victoria Park on Sunday. So at least we understood. He did not appear there, however, but resorted to the Christian Evidence platform. Perhaps he did not think himself quite a match for Mr. Cohen as a speaker. Should he prefer to make a set reply to Mr. Cohen with the pen, our columns will be at his service for the purpose.

A correspondent, who wishes to appear in print as "F. S." only, writes to us with respect to "Requests to the Secular Society, Limited." "Would it not be well," he says, "to print in every issue of the *Freethinker* a form of bequest as a guide to every friendly reader who might feel it a duty to remember the Cause when either making a will or adding a codicil to an old one? This is, as you know, invariably done in connection with publications issued by philanthropic and kindred institutions, and I see no reason why it should not be imitated by the organised Secularists of the United Kingdom." Nor do we, and we shall act on "F. S.'s" useful suggestion. We are drawing up a special form of advertisement, which will appear in next week's *Freethinker* and subsequently.

Meanwhile we give a brief, but quite sufficient, form that may be adopted by testators:—

"I give and bequeath to the Secular Society, Limited, the sum of £— free from Legacy Duty, and I direct that a receipt signed by two members of the Board of the said Society and the Secretary thereof shall be a good discharge to my Executors for the said Legacy."

The discussion on Christianity continues in the *Yarmouth Mercury*. Last week's issue contained a long and able letter from the pen of Mr. J. W. de Caux; also a long, effusive, and wily letter from the pen of the Rev. C. Lloyd Engstrom, honorary secretary of the Christian Evidence Society. We are tempted to show up this gentleman's tactics; but we leave him in Mr. de Caux's hands, where he will probably receive enough punishment.

One Christian in this discussion actually rebukes another Christian for stating that Jesus "spent his youth in poverty and manual labor, in the obscurity of a carpenter's shop," and declares that there is "no authority for such a statement." Indeed! What about Mark vi. 3? Another Christian, a preacher, refuses to discuss with a "Natural Religionist" because he does not give his name and address! Preacher Greenacre says his opponent mustn't fight like a Boer behind a kopje, but come out in the open like a Britisher (and a fool!). Anybody would think it was a duel, and that the correspondents were discussing each other instead of the subject. Preacher Greenacre forgets that an argument is worth just what it is worth, whether it is signed with a name or a pseudonym.

M. Camille Pelletan, the French Minister of Marine, has just gone through what is called "a romantic marriage"—which simply means that he married a schoolmistress because he and she loved each other. Calling this "romantic" shows what a rotten state the Christian world is in. M. Pelletan's marriage was, of course, purely civil. Neither he nor his bride wanted any Church mummery. M. Combes, the Prime Minister, who is also a Freethinker, was present at the wedding.

Dartmouth Town Council had the power, under the new Education Act, of electing a representative on the body of managers of the Roman Catholic school. They elected Councillor F. J. Voisey, a well-known Freethinker as well as a sturdy Radical.

"Onlooker," in the *Islington Daily Gazette*, replies to a letter from the Rev. D. A. Alcock, and works in some good extracts from the Preface to our *Bible Handbook*. "Onlooker" also usefully corrects the description of Thomas Paine as an Atheist. We wish Freethinkers all over the country would avail themselves in this way of opportunities to say a word for Freethought in their local newspapers.

Rev. Thomas C. Wiswell has resigned the pastorate of University Congregational Church at Seattle, Washington, and announced his withdrawal from the ministry, because of his objection to orthodox theology and sectarianism. He is said to have been popular with his congregation, who urged him to remain with them. He is a graduate of the Chicago Theological Seminary, and has been pastor of University Church six years. It is encouraging to see such men leaving the ministry, and we hope Mr. Wiswell will become a useful Liberal. Liberalism is not an inviting field for men who like a smooth sea and easy sailing, but to those who have deep and well-defined convictions, with courage and determination, it offers a field in which great good may be done.—*Searchlight* (Waco, Texas).

The International Freethought Congress, to be held at Rome in September, 1904, will doubtless be a most triumphant success. Unfortunately it will not be presided over by Professor Bovio, who delivered a splendid oration at the unveiling of the Bruuo monument in 1889. Professor Bovio died recently, leaving a gap not easily filled in the army of Freethought in Italy. Another distinguished man will have to be elected to the chair at Rome next year, and there will probably be many such to select from.

Mr. T. P. O'Connor, in the last number of *T. P.'s Weekly*, had a good deal to say about Charles Bradlaugh, whom he first saw, apparently, at the Hall of Science, in Old-street, on the occasion of the great Iconoclast's public debate with a Roman Catholic; the said Roman Catholic being, though Mr. O'Connor does not say so, Mr. Frank Hugh O'Donnell. On the whole he praises Bradlaugh, and was evidently impressed by the force of his personality.

Bradlaugh's eye is celebrated by Mr. O'Connor in the following fashion: "Everybody who once saw Mr. Bradlaugh, carried away an ineffaceable impression of the man.

The impression might be agreeable, it might be very much the contrary; but it was always ineffaceable. Of all the men I have met in my life, not one has ever given such an impression of power as Bradlaugh. When I saw Henry Stanley in his youth and after he had just discovered Livingstone, I thought his eyes the most wonderful things I had ever beheld; with their open, steady, defiant, affrighting look; I knew that I was in presence of a man who had never known fear, and who had been able to face the lion, the tiger, the cannibal of the desert without ever flinching for a second; that I was in presence of one of those beings that had the cold courage in presence of circumambient peril which makes a man the resistless and natural leader of his fellow-men in hours of peril and death. When I first saw Parnell and gazed into the depths of those strange eyes of his—red-flint in color, brilliant, restless, large, weird—I knew again that here was a man who had that nameless something which gives him the natural right to command and impose on others the duty to obey. The eyes of Gladstone—open, large, black, with every light of heaven in them—were potent to command, and especially when he was speaking in the House of Commons. In an article which will form one of the series which I am writing, I shall have to speak of the eyes of John Boyle O'Reilly, and speak of them with admiration. But when I have said all I have to say about the eyes of these different men who, each in their way, dominated their fellow-men, I still have to repeat that I regarded the eyes of Bradlaugh as the most commanding I ever saw in a man's face."

Mr. O'Connor was not so much in love with Bradlaugh's "heavy jaw" and "long upper lip," and even goes to the length of describing him as a mixture of a coalcaver, a pugilist, and a great thinker. Indeed, he fancies Bradlaugh working the guillotine, and playing the part of a Danton. But was Danton fond of the guillotine? Was it not more in Robespierre's line? No doubt Bradlaugh would have played a Dantesque part in a Revolution, for he had all the qualities that give command in the hour of storm and stress. But he would never have shed blood gratuitously; certainly never voluptuously, as some men have done when they had the power to kill.

One passage in Mr. O'Connor's article is very true, and well worth reproducing. "Bradlaugh," he says, "was adored by those who were brought in close contact with him; his two daughters—one of whom still survives—worshipped him; and so this great, strong, domineering man had plenty of softness and tenderness. He was very good to the poor, giving some hours every morning to those who came to him with their grievances, and with request for that legal advice which though he had no official legal qualification, he was as well able to give as a Lord Chancellor; and he was never anything but honest, outspoken, and as free from cant or truckling as he was from fear in his political expressions."

Professor Smyth was once a highly esteemed historian. His writings have been superseded during the past generation or so, owing to the vast accumulation of data during that time; but they command readers even now, and still keep a place in Bohn's Library. It is a great many years ago since we turned over their pages, and we had quite forgotten Professor Smyth's tribute to Thomas Paine, which a correspondent has just copied out and sent us. "Paine," said the Professor in his *Lectures on the French Revolution*, "is a writer to be numbered with those few who are supereminently fitted to address the great mass of mankind; with Swift, with Franklin, and with Cobbett. Of all these Paine is perhaps the most so; as having a greater power of occasionally producing those striking images, which carry an argument along with them, and from which, when once received, the mind of a reader, more particularly of an ordinary reader, can never afterwards get clear."

In an almanac that I read when a boy there was cited a typographical error which occurred as follows, to wit: The reporter wrote that at the close of an eloquent public address the multitude rent the air with their "shouts." The printer made him say "snouts." That typographical error had the power of reproducing itself with a slight modification. In a late paragraph I said something about some ministers plowing the Sabbath atmosphere with their "noise." From a reprint of the paragraph in the *London Freethinker* I see that they did the plowing with their "noses." It is all right, Brother Foote; no damage done or correction required. I appreciate your comment in which you say I should write more frequently. But presumably you know that while writing *Observations* is no "drowsy pastime of a summer's day," it is not accompanied by that free facial perspiration in which mankind is foredoomed to eat bread. The day devoted to the present output is taken bodily from the middle of the week and spent at Skeetside.

The misappropriation of time will be regularly repeated hereafter so far as other engagements will permit. Thoughts frequently occur to me which are forgotten unless communicated to others through this medium. The loss is not great, but your comment, added to that of others, reminds me that it is felt.—George Macdonald, *Truthseeker* (New York).

It will be remembered that Mr. Pack succeeded in checking the bigotry of the police at Leeds, but this was largely owing to the fact that he appeared before a just and sensible Stipendiary Magistrate. We regret to learn that he was less fortunate at Bingley. The police there were astute enough to charge him only with obstruction; and if four constables, all swearing together, cannot make out a charge like that, there's witchcraft in it. The fact is, there is no such thing as a right of public meeting in highways and thoroughfares, as a right of public meeting in open spaces, unless they are specially set apart for the purpose by local by-laws—as in the case of the London County Council Parks. Mr. Pack, backed up by Mr. Gott, asserted that there was no obstruction caused by his lecture in the Bingley Market Place, and we don't suppose there was; but obstruction can be caused technically by two people as well as two hundred, and if the magistrates are in sympathy with the police, as they appear to be at Bingley, a charge of this kind is very easily established. Mr. Pack was fined 20s., with 7s. 6d. costs, or one month. Which is positively silly; for how on earth can any man (even a Bingley magistrate) outside a lunatic asylum reckon 27s. 6d. and a month's imprisonment as equivalent?

"Dred," in *Daylight* (Norwich), goes for the Vicar of Yarmouth under the heading of "A New Jeremiah." The following passage will please our readers and show how Freethought is spreading:—"The Vicar fears 'that Sundays are becoming, to many people, only days of selfish pleasure-seeking;' but we are not told when Sundays were anything else. Church attendance for the purpose of retaining high places in earthly society, or securing a place among the *élite* of heaven, was never less than selfish. Men and women don't go to church to benefit the world, but to benefit themselves. Even the coppers placed in the bags are regarded as sound investments. Selfishness reigns everywhere. Religionists who are not worth the life of a jack rabbit, pretend to believe that Christ had them in view when he died; but the rest of the nation are beginning to understand their unimportance and their natures. They are tired of confessing their manifold sins and wickedness every Sunday, because one confession should be enough, if the penitents are sincere. If the people prefer the seashore and the fields to a gloomy, sleep-inducing church, they show wisdom. In dull days when there are no other places open for calf-courtship and similar attractions connected with places of worship, one may be content to sing inanities and listen to them, but in fine weather churches should be empty. There is more worship in the act of admiring a flower or a bird, than in the act of admiring an over-fed pulpit-actor."

### A Gardener's Daughter.

If I into the past might peep,  
Some five and sixty years o'ergoing,  
I'd seek out an old garden-keep,  
Where homely fruits and flowers were growing;  
And there (while filial love for me  
A visionary day uncloses)  
A twelve-year maiden I should see  
Plucking the berries and the roses;  
And, round her, other girls to whom,  
With a sweet smile, and heart of bounty,  
She gives the pick of fruit and bloom,  
In that old keep, in Essex county.  
Now, slower, as old Time approves  
(For Mater's count of years is weighty),  
But busy, round the keep she moves,  
This dear old dame that's nearing eighty.  
Service and love, as through the past,  
Prompt her the while the fruit she chooses;  
Service and love, while life shall last,  
Will prompt, for with her neither loses.  
No solemn creed has soured her heart,  
Or e'er made dark the brow of duty;  
From bigot hate she has stood apart,  
And eve draws on in quiet beauty.  
The same sweet cheer, the bounty deep,  
To all, to all, her heart disposes,  
As when, a girl, in that old keep,  
She proffered free the fruit and roses.

H. BARLEE.

### Was Heine an Atheist?

"A new note, an intensely modern note, vibrates in the nervous prose of his (Heine's) sentences and in the magic of his verse. For the first time a strange voice is heard laughing at the sanctities of four thousand years; not a mere mockery, the ripple of which has passed over the sea of humanity from all time, but the laugh of the modern man who has reached the summit, or what he believes to be the summit, of human life, and does not see even the most ordinary Pisgah beyond, much less a Promised Land."—SHARP, *Life of Heine*, p. 203.

"In the lambent flames of his unequalled humor he bathed all the things he counted dearest; to its service he brought the secret of his poet's nature, the secret of speaking with a voice that every heart leaps up to answer.....that humor which is the last concentrated word of the human organism under the lash of Fate."—HAVELOCK ELLIS, *Prose Writings of Heine*, p. xix.

To the religious world, the name of Heinrich Heine stands for "The World, the Flesh, and the Devil." Ask a Nonconformist what he thinks of Heine, and in ninety-nine cases out of a hundred he will say he never heard of him; and the hundredth one will tell you that his writings are so wicked that he must have been inspired by Satan. You may read the newspaper and religious press from year to year without finding the name of this marvellous writer and poet so much as mentioned. The pietists have learned the wisdom of the serpent, since all their blackening of the character of Voltaire only led to a curiosity to read his works. Their policy now is to ignore such writers. Yet Heine did more for the emancipation of the human mind than any other writer of his time. There is only one name to compare with his in this respect—his great fore-runner, Voltaire. And, in fact, he has been named the German Voltaire.

Heine was a true Cosmopolitan. Born of Jewish parents in Germany, he made France his adopted home, but he combined in the crucible of his unequalled genius the essence of three races. He was as classic as the ancient Greek, as dreamily oriental as the Hebrew, as sparkling as the French.

The Hebrew race seems to have lain fallow in the faculty of wit and humor until Heine was born, and then suddenly burst forth into a profusion of such extraordinary richness as to surpass at one bound all their predecessors; and we may well say that "There never has been any other such as he: and another Heine can hardly appear again. As Théophile Gautier wrote of the poet after his death, what long and slow combinations will it cost nature before she can reproduce such a head! There are flowers which unfold their fadeless petals but once, it may be, in the whole slow growth of humanity."\*

While still a young man, Heine fell under the influence of Hegel, that metaphysical and mystical German, who declared that, of all his disciples, only one understood him, and he understood him falsely. "I saw Hegel," says Heine in his *Confessions*, "with his almost comically-serious face, like a setting hen brooding over the fatal eggs, and I heard his cackling; to tell the truth, I seldom understood him, and only through later reflection did I arrive at an understanding of his works. I believe he did not wish to be understood."

He tells us, in his whimsical style, that he accepted "the Hegelian philosophy without examination, because its deductions flattered my vanity. I was young and arrogant, and it gratified my self-conceit when I was informed by Hegel that not, as my grandmother had supposed, He who dwelt in the heavens, but I myself, here on earth, was God." But Heine found the rôle of a God too expensive. "To play such a rôle respectably, two things are above all requisite—much money and robust health. Alas! it happened that one day both these essentials failed me, and my divinity was at an end.....I was compelled to abdicate ignominiously, and to return to the lowly life of humanity." Heine tells us that he came back to a "Supreme Being who directs the destinies of this world, and who for the future shall

\* Sharp, *Life of Heine*.

† Atheism.

also regulate my earthly affairs. The latter, during the time I had been my own providence, had drifted into sad confusion, and I was glad to turn them over to a celestial superintendent, who with his omniscience really manages them much better." And not only does he find it a source of happiness and a relief from business cares, but "This belief has also enabled me to practice great economies, for I need no longer provide either for myself or for others, and since I have joined the ranks of the pious I contribute almost nothing to the support of the poor. I am too modest to meddle, as formerly, with the business of Divine Providence." And he notifies his former dependants "that in future, when in need and affliction, they must apply to the Supreme Ruler, who dwells in heaven, and whose budget is as inexhaustible as His goodness." He concludes, "No philosopher shall ever again persuade me that I am a god." It is upon such exquisite mockery as this that it is sometimes claimed that Heine became a convert before he died!

Heine's finest prose work is undoubtedly his account of *Religion and Philosophy in Germany*. This is an historical account of German religion and philosophy from Luther, through Kant to Hegel, written from a Pantheistic standpoint. It is in this work that he speaks of Fichte as "the Titan of idealism, who had climbed to heaven by the ladder of thought, and had groped about with daring hand in its empty chambers." It is here also that Heine describes how Kant destroyed the deity by theoretical reason, and restored him again by practical reason. Of Kant's *Critique* of pure reason, he says, "This is the sword that slew deism in Germany." To those unacquainted with Heine's description of this performance may be taken as characteristic of Heine's style:—

"Since his time Deism has vanished from the realm of speculative reason. It may, perhaps, be several centuries yet before this melancholy notice of decease gets universally bruited about; we, however, have long since put on mourning. *De profundis!*"

"You fancy, then, that we may now go home! By my life, no! there is yet a piece to be played; after the tragedy comes the farce. Up to this point Immanuel Kant has pursued the path of inexorable philosophy; he has stormed heaven and put the whole garrison to the edge of the sword; the ontological, cosmological, and physico-theological bodyguards lie there lifeless; Deity itself, deprived of demonstration, has succumbed; there is now no all-mercifulness, no fatherly kindness, no other-world reward for renunciation in this world; the immortality of the soul lies in its last agony—you can hear its groans and death-rattle; and old Lampe! is standing by with his umbrella under his arm, an afflicted spectator of the scene, tears and sweat-drops of terror dropping from his countenance. Then Immanuel Kant relents, and shows that he is not merely a great philosopher, but also a good man; he reflects, and half good-naturedly, half ironically, he says: 'Old Lampe must have a God, otherwise the poor fellow can never be happy in this world; practical reason says so;—well, I am quite willing that practical reason should guarantee the existence of God.' As the result of this argument, Kant distinguishes between the *theoretical reason* and the *practical reason*; and by means of the latter, as with a magician's wand, he revivifies Deism, which theoretical reason had killed.

"But is it not conceivable that Kant brought about this resurrection, not merely for the sake of old Lampe, but through fear of the police?" (pp. 118-119).

This work on philosophy and religion is entitled *A Fragment*, but what an extraordinary profusion of literary gems we find within its pages. With what ease and lucidity the most abstract propositions become easily intelligible. Thoughts, that other men have taken whole volumes to express, are here condensed into a sparkling paragraph. W. MANN.

(To be continued.)

\* Freethinkers do not need to have their attention drawn to Heine. But this journal often falls into the hands of others besides Freethinkers.

† Old Lampe was Kant's old servant, who, when the weather was gloomy or threatened rain, "was seen plodding anxiously after, with a large umbrella under his arm, like a symbol of Providence."

### The Inner Voices.

THE sun supernal blazed above,  
The golden wheatfields waved below;  
"There is a God, and He is love,"  
My soul said, "This at least I know."

A vision rose before my eyes,  
I heard despairing thousands shriek,  
I saw the lowering scoriac skies,  
The lava-floods of Martinique.

And then my inner vision fell  
Upon a city's sombre scene,  
More foul than nether pit of hell,  
So drunken, bestial, and obscene.

So that I said within my soul,  
"There is no God to bless or slay,  
And man, unaided to the goal,  
Must sweat upon his upward way."

Hot tears of anguish filled my eyes,  
My head fell forward on my breast;  
I said: "How can man hope to rise,  
With none to aid him in his quest?"

A voice rose in my soul at last:  
"Man has unaided thus far grown.  
Has man not risen in the past  
By his own energies alone?"

And so peace nestled in my soul,  
My former fears fled fast away,  
For man can forge his glorie—  
Can consummate a brighter day.

And now my head is held erect;  
My inmost thoughts no doubt betray;  
My eyes, horizon-turned, detect  
The bright dawn of that fairer day.

LITCHWOOD.

### Disgraceful Illiteracy in Quebec.

THE Rev. C. H. Vessot, a French Protestant, spoke at the meeting of the French Evangelisation Society of the Presbyterian Church in Toronto last week. Mr. Vessot thinks "there are many truths in the Roman Catholic religion, but these are weighed down by other considerations." What the "truths" are we need not stop to inquire; possibly there are as many as in most other religions; but some of the "other considerations" are certainly serious enough to outweigh the whole of them. Some few years ago we called attention to the reports of the Quebec school inspectors, which showed that the education of the Catholic children in Quebec province was almost wholly neglected. There are, of course, the colleges, universities, and seminaries, where the children of the upper classes are educated; but even here there have been constant complaints of the inadequacy of the instruction compared with that afforded in Protestant schools, and it is but three or four years ago that a large number of the scholars of Laval University rebelled against their ecclesiastical teachers, and being denied a reform of the educational system, abandoned their own schools and joined McGill College in a body. We all, too, remember the case of the late Bishop Cleary, of Kingston, Ont., and the editor of the *Kingston Freeman*. The editor had published a very mild appeal for some improvement in the education given in Catholic schools, but the bishop forced him to publish a most abject apology for his presumption, as well as a letter from the bishop himself, threatening him with ruin if he refused, and abusing him in an unmerciful manner for his intermeddling in what Catholics consider to be the special province of the church. Mr. Vessot tells us that there are 600,000 children (practically all the Catholic children) in the province of Quebec who can neither read nor write, and that, while 76 per cent. of the children of the parish of Kamouraska go to school, they only attend less than three years, and know little more when they leave than when they enter. Indeed, it is well known that they learn little else than portions of the catechism and to be abjectly servile in their behavior to the "brothers" and "sisters" and priests who train them. Mr. Vessot said the general illiteracy was painfully evidenced by the numerous letters he had been asked to write; and the law requiring school commissioners to be able to read and write was inoperative, because in many school districts it was found impossible to secure three men qualified for the position! Such a state of things is disgraceful both to the Church which fosters it and to the Dominion and Provincial Governments that permit it. There are, we are told, sixteen Protestant free schools with an attendance of 600; but it is

evident that such efforts as these are totally inadequate to deal with the tremendous and dangerous evil that is holding Quebec in bonds of slavery to the Church. It is the duty of every Government to see that the laws are carried out, and no Church should be allowed to set the law at defiance, and convert it into a dead letter. As a matter of fact, the Catholics of Quebec (miscalled "Liberals"!) hold the balance of power in Dominion politics, and are keeping the present Government in power; with the strides they are making both in Ontario and the North-west, it is not impossible that before long they will hold a commanding position, and then a large part of Canada will rank intellectually with Spain and Turkey. Surely common decency might induce our legislators to cease for a time their wrangling and fighting over the pickings of officials and the swindlings of contractors, over patronage and gerrymandering, and to make an attempt to put an end to this crying evil that is destroying a bright and industrious people.—*Secular Thought.*

### Blasphemous Parsons.

The Editor of *Truth* (August 6), dealing with the clergy, says:—"Whatever one may think of the clergy as a body, there can be no two opinions about the ability and originality which they display in devising new schemes for raising cash, and new methods of framing appeals."

In support of this view he gives two examples of their ability and good taste.

One is from a reverend beggar in Cheshire, who is still exploiting the death of a much-talked-of Greatest and Best and Most Beloved dead Queen, in which appeal this sky-pilot plays the part of a cheap jack or auctioneer, and works up from a single "bob" to a "generous" soul who is promised enrolment in the Imperishable Book of Record as a "Strenuous Giver."

The second instance is, however, more in our way as showing how a parson can treat the most awful doctrine of Eternal Punishment.

"Here is another tasty example of the same kind of thing. It is taken from the Wallasey Parish Church Magazine. I wonder what the Rector of Wallasey would have thought about it if any secular newspaper had printed such a reminder to defaulting subscribers:—

ST. PETER. Who are you?

APPLICANT. A resident of Wallasey.

ST. PETER. Did you subscribe to the *Parish Magazine*?

APPLICANT. Yes.

ST. PETER. Did you pay your subscription?

APPLICANT. I forget.

ST. PETER. "T"

Could anything more completely prove the farcical lightness with which this parson regards the awful doctrine of Hell? Can anything more completely prove the hypocrisy of a man who can seriously preach that doctrine, and then by a printer's type suggest that a human being dares such a fate by not paying a few paltry pence for a paltry paper?

It would be interesting to get on record the result of a careful heckling of this parson—done by some Freethinker neighbor.

T. S.

### Frightened Endeavorers.

(CINCINNATI TIMES-STAR.)

Denver, Col., July 14.—Nearly a score of persons were hurt, one seriously, and 8,000 badly frightened Monday by the collapsing of the large tent in which the Christian Endeavor Convention is being held. A sudden wind storm is responsible for the disaster. In the midst of the services the big tent all at once swelled up like a huge balloon as an oncoming squall sent forward its advance agent of wind. Women screamed and men rushed for the outside. As suddenly as it had come, the wind died out and the huge canvas sank like a blanket over the vast assembly, smothering the screams of the women and knocking people helter-skelter. The ascent of the canvas had pulled the poles from the ground and broken many guy ropes. Fortunately many persons near the entrances and outer confines of the tent were left in the open when it collapsed. These, together with some of the more thoughtful on the inside, rushed to the poles and held them up as best they could and at the same time others raised the canvas in whatever way they could, thus saving the vast throng from suffocation. The work of rescue, after the first panic, became systematic and was prosecuted with calmness. Immediately upon discovery that but few were injured, the multitude gathered in the open and held an impressive praise service. The more seriously injured were: Mrs. Thornburg, Denver, wounded in the forehead, seriously; Allela Murdock, Denver,

arm fractured; J. Alamosa, Col., scalp wound; Miss Mary Ellis, Denver, bruised; Miss Powers, Trenton, Neb., knee injured; Mrs. I. N. Johnson, Denver, bruised and fainted; K. G. Patterson, Alamosa, Col., lead cut; Miss Etta Ward, Chicago, hit by a large pole across the back.

[*Comment.*—Six men and two women were hurt. These Christian Endeavour men endeavored to save their own cowardly lives by running over the women. Sweet scented gang!—*Blue Grass Blade.*]

### Correspondence.

#### THE HOME SECRETARY AND VIVISECTION.

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE FREETHINKER."

SIR,—The reply of the Home Secretary to the Deputation from the Parliamentary Association of the British Union for the abolition of Vivisection, plainly shows that he, and presumably the other members of the present Government, are entirely on the side of the Vivisectionists, and will do nothing even to restrict, much less to suppress, the demoralising practice of experimenting upon living creatures. The Home Secretary's remarks were full of misstatements—for instance, he stated that it was certainly not his practice, nor the practice of his predecessors, to go entirely into the ranks of one party or another for inspectors, yet he must have known that all the inspectors hitherto appointed have either been Vivisectionists, or persons in full sympathy with Vivisection. He denied that Vivisection tended towards any inhuman feelings, and that the operators felt a positive enjoyment in the work they were carrying on, though such assertions are made in the works of Claud Bernard, Cyon, Mantegazza, and other Vivisectionists. He even declared that such a statement was a libel on the medical profession, though it applies equally to persons of all other professions and occupations, since every one who habitually commits cruel acts must eventually become callous and cruel, and must take pleasure in such acts. He asserted that the result of Vivisection was justified in the well-being of the country at large—a totally incorrect and unfounded statement, for this practice has produced various evils results, such as unnecessary operating (which has been noticed in the medical journals) and experiments on hospital patients. Finally, the Home Secretary said not a word on the case of the Brown Institution, although that was one of the chief points in the protest of the Deputation. His reply was very unsatisfactory, for it showed extreme bias, and complete misapprehension of the case against Vivisection.

J. H. THORNTON, C.B., M.B., B.A.

(Fellow of King's College, London,

Deputy Surgeon-General, I.M.S. Retired).

### SUNDAY MORNING.

Beyond the limits of the town  
Across the fields long shadows lie;  
The scarecrow's arms droop humbly down  
That yesterday were held so high;  
The spotted cow gets up behind  
And then in front, and views with scorn  
The frowsy calf, and is inclined  
To lick it clean—'tis Sabbath morn.

The former rude, sarcastic joy  
Sits meekly on the swaying limb;  
The brook that murmured yesterday  
Now sings a sacred hopeful hymn;  
Peace broods o'er all the scene save where  
The pig half in the shadow lies  
And fiercely flips one ear to scare  
Away the Sabbath-breaking flies.

—S. E. Kiser.

A RUSH ORDER.—"Speaking of drought reminds me of a story," said "Abe" Grube to several up-state politicians gathered at the Amen Corner of the Fifth Avenue Hotel the other night. "I was up in Herkimer County during one of the severest droughts the country had ever seen, and I attended a prayer-meeting held for the purpose of petitioning divine Providence for rain. Among those that took part was an old farmer who, though one of the most devout churchmen in the community, could occasionally use strong language. None of those present had suffered more from the drought than he, and when he was called on to pray he made one of the most sincere and impassioned petitions I have ever heard. At the close of his supplication, however, he surprised those present by saying: "We know, O Lord, that thou wilt send us rain, just as thou hast done many times before; but this time, O Lord, unless we get it damned quick it won't do us any good!"

**SUNDAY LECTURE NOTICES, etc.**

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

**LONDON.****OUTDOOR**

**BETHNAL GREEN BRANCH N.S.S.** (Victoria Park, near the Fountain): 3.15 and 6, F. A. Davies.

**CAMBERWELL BRANCH N. S. S.:** Station-road. 11.30, J. W. Needes. "Jesus the Nazarene." Brockwell Park, 3.15, E. B. Rose; 6, E. R. Rose.

**FINSBURY BRANCH N. S. S.** (Clerkenwell-green): 11.30, R. P. Edwards.

**STRATFORD GROVE:** 7, R. P. Edwards.

**WEST LONDON BRANCH N.S.S.** (Hyde Park, near Marble Arch): 11.30, F. Schaller; Hammersmith Broadway, 7.30, a Lecture.

**COUNTRY.**

**BRADFORD (Covered Market):** Saturday, Sept. 5, at 6.30, Ernest Pack, "Adam the Dust-Man."

**BRADFORD (Town Hall Square):** 11, Ernest Pack, "The Jokes of the Bible."

**BINGLEY (Myrtle-place):** Tuesday, Sept. 1, at 6.30, "The Bigots of Bingley."

**BIRMINGHAM BRANCH N. S. S.** (Bristol Street Board School) at 7, Members annual meeting.

**DEWSBURY (Market Place):** Monday, 31, at 6.30, Ernest Pack, "Old Nick."

**HUDDERSFIELD (Market Cross):** Wednesday, Sept. 2, at 6.30, Ernest Pack, "The Jokes of the Bible."

**KIGHTLEY (Skipton-road):** Thursday, Sept. 3, at 6.30, Ernest Pack, "The Bigots of Bingley."

**LEEDS (Woodhouse Moor):** 3, Ernest Pack, "Christian Infidels"; 6.30, "Life and Death."

**SHEFFIELD SECULAR SOCIETY (Hall of Science, Rookingham-street):** August 30 at 3 and 7, Robert Law, F.G.S. For subjects see Saturday's local papers. Admission free.

**SHIPLEY (Market-place):** Friday, Sept. 4, at 6.30, Ernest Pack, "Adam and Eve."

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