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To Dogmatism the Spirit of Inquiry is the same as the Spirit of Evil; and to pictures of the latter it has appended a tail to represent the note of interrogation.—
DOD GRILE (AMBROSE BIERCE).

Mr. Campbell's Blarney.

WHEN the late pastor of the City Temple died the newspapers were in the doldrums of the dull season, and the consequence was that Dr. Parker's successor had the advantage of a most extravagant advertisement. He was very little known before, and all at once he became a famous personage. We do not mean that he would never have achieved his present popularity without such assistance. On this point we are not concerned to express an opinion. All we want to suggest is that it may be possible to attach too much intrinsic importance to Mr. Campbell's utterances. But this again is mainly a matter for Christians. For our own part, we are entitled to take any man as a valid representative of Christianity if the Christians stamp him with their approval in that capacity. We will therefore assume, just for the sake of argument, that Mr. Campbell is a great man.

From this point of view Mr. Campbell's opinions and sentiments on the present Education struggle are of some moment. He has long been a theoretical Passive Resister, and he is now a practical one. From his fine house and beautiful garden at Enfield, where he is following poor Jesus Christ through this vale of tears, with as much cheerfulness as the sad circumstances permit, Mr. Campbell was summoned to appear before the local magistrates for not having paid the full amount of his rates. He did not plead poverty in defence. He stated that he had a conscientious objection to paying what was demanded. The sectarian portion of the Education rate was one that he was bound to resist. He would not pay towards a form of religious instruction which he believed to be false.

That was enough for the magistrates. They were not assembled to listen to Mr. Campbell's eloquence. Neither did the law authorise them to consider any man's conscientious objection to paying his rates and taxes. They issued a distress warrant against the reverend gentleman, and he will have to pay in some fashion, or "do time" as a wilful defaulter.

Mr. Campbell's little speech to the magistrates was honest enough—if he only meant it. Perhaps it was also reasonable. Citizens have a moral right to refuse to pay towards a form of religious instruction which they believe to be false. But why has Mr. Campbell just found it out? He has been paying rates and taxes, presumably, for some years; and a portion of what he has paid has been devoted annually to the maintenance of schools in which Church of Englandism and Roman Catholicism were taught. Why, then, does he raise a rumpus now? Perhaps the answer to this question may be found in Mr. Campbell's speech to the public meeting that was held after his appearance before the magistrates.

In the course of that speech Mr. Campbell declared that "It was a libel to say Nonconformist

principles were taught in Board schools. They would only allow their beliefs to be taught at their own expense." We quote from the *Daily News* report.

Now this "libel" is what a great many people consider to be an accurate statement of the truth. And some of them have fairly shrewd heads. The late Marquis of Salisbury, for instance, was no fool; and when a Nonconformist deputation waited upon him to protest against the Education policy of his government, he told them that he could not understand their complaint, for it was Nonconformist religion that was taught in the Board schools of England.

Mr. Campbell denies this, and what his denial is worth we shall see presently. Meanwhile we may observe that the rawness of feeling he displays points to something suspicious. In trying to hide his traces Mr. Campbell only emphasises them. The fact is that the Nonconformists did not refuse to pay their rates before because they had compensation under the old system. In the towns, with the assistance of the Education Department, it was easy to keep "denominational" teaching out of the Board schools. This left the Nonconformists on equal terms with Churchmen as far as the children were concerned. The children were given Christian instruction, but they were not branded and folded as of this, that, or the other Church. They were made a sort of Christians—Christians in general. And when they left school they were as eligible for the Chapel as for the Church.

Both sections of English Christianity—the Established Church and the Free Churches—started fair in the race for the prize; which was the possession of those children as they grew up to be adults.

That nice little arrangement, which worked out so agreeably for the Nonconformists, has been put an end to by the new Education Act. For the present, at any rate, the Established Church has an immense advantage, even in regard to the Provided schools. Hence all these Nonconformist tears.

We are now in a position to see the value of Mr. Campbell's denial that Nonconformist religion was taught in Board schools. Certainly it was not Nonconformist religion in the sense of being the dogmatic faith of any Nonconformist Church. But it was Nonconformist religion in the sense of being what suited Nonconformist interests in the existing circumstances. It was just as much as Nonconformists could ever hope to get at the public expense. It supplied the groundwork of all Protestant Christianity; an acceptance of the Bible as a unique, inspired book; in short, as the Word of God.

Mr. Campbell's statement, that the Nonconformists would only allow their beliefs to be taught at their own expense, is simply blarney. In a sense it is true; in another sense it is a falsehood. The Nonconformists would not allow *all* their beliefs to be taught at the public expense, for this is impossible; but they allow *as much as they can* to be taught on that footing. They are perfectly willing to tax Churchmen and Catholics, and even non-Christians, in support of this policy. And if an Atheist refused to pay for what *he* disbelieved, he would be a great fool if he expected any mercy from the Rev. R. J. Campbell.

G. W. FOOTE.

One of God's Failures.

"DOWN Manchester way" a series of lectures is at present being given, under the general title of "Is Christianity True?" They are meant to stem the tide of Freethought, and, although the lecturers are all men of some standing in the religious world, their efforts have nevertheless a strong Mrs. Partington flavor about them. With every effort to look at the lectures impartially, one finds it impossible to imagine any Freethinker embracing Christianity as a result of their influence, although one can easily conceive believers having many doubts suggested by hearing or reading them. Anthony Collins said that no one ever doubted the existence of God until the Boyle lecturers began to prove it; and one may say with greater accuracy that the evident necessity for so much defence and restatement must awaken doubts in quarters where none previously existed.

Each of the lectures as delivered is published in penny pamphlet form, so that the effort is evidently intended as a serious stroke of business. The second of the course is on "How God Prepared for Christianity," the lecturer being the Rev. James Moulton, Fellow of King's College, Cambridge, and tutor of Didsbury College, Manchester. The title, although a fairly common one, is alone enough to suggest the kind of reflection that ends in disbelief. If there is a God, he must not only have prepared for Christianity, but for everything else. Everything, or nothing, must be part of the divine plan. If he prepared for Christianity, he must also have prepared for Buddhism, for Confucianism, and for all other "isms." If he prepared Jesus for the cross, he must have prepared all other things necessary for the crucifixion, including Judas Iscariot. One must be as much part of the "divine plan" as the other; in which case all distinctions of good and bad logically disappear. Judas becomes as worthy of gratitude and admiration as Jesus; it was all part of the "divine plan" of preparation.

Dr. Moulton sets out to show "how God made man in such a way that Christianity was the only thing that was fitted for him"; and his method of doing this is identical with the plan of one of the essays in *Lux Mundi*, in which the writer dealt with the preparation in history for Christ. This method may be best described as science turned upside down. A sane student of historical processes notes that certain conditions produce certain results, and that, given the conditions, the results are inevitable. He finds the explanation of the result in the conditions that led up to it, just as is the case in chemistry or any of the other sciences. The method of Dr. Moulton and other theologians works round the other way. To an ordinary student one of the conditions of the spread of Christianity was the growth of communication between different portions of the ancient world, due chiefly to the conquering power of old Rome. The theologian argues that because these conditions favoured the spread of ideas, therefore the conditions were created for no other purpose. One might, on the same lines, argue that because a poison is distributed throughout the body by the blood, man's circulatory system was created for this special purpose.

Dr. Moulton believes God made man in such a way that Christianity was the only thing fitted for him. I presume he means that God *intended* to so make man, for looking at the subject fairly one can only describe the whole job as a gigantic misfit. Barely a third of the human race are even nominally Christian; while the actual number of convinced Christians would represent but a ridiculously small fraction of the human family. And of the nominally Christian nations of the earth, some of the best and most intellectual representatives have been, and are, openly and avowedly hostile to Christianity. Nor is this all. Some fifty thousand clergymen in this country alone find themselves quite unable to hold

their own so far as the number of Christians in relation to the population is concerned. They all practically admit that without constant supervision and attention people drift away from Christianity, and that if they are allowed to grow up without it they seldom or never adopt it in their more mature years. Yet we are told that God specially designed man in such a way that Christianity is the one thing in the whole world that fits him best. Of all the misfits I have ever seen or heard of this is surely the greatest.

Dr. Moulton is, he says, a friend of Mr. J. G. Frazer, the author of that monumental work, *The Golden Bough*, and his lecture professes to be a defence against the anthropological attack on Christianity. His first care is to assure us that Christianity is not hostile to science. "The fact is that Christianity welcomes all that science can do." The statement sounds strange in view of what one *knows* of the history of Christianity; and it is also strange that Dr. White could fill two bulky volumes of nearly 900 pages describing the conflict between science and Christianity. And the manner in which Dr. Moulton bolsters up his statement is stranger still. He tells us "some of the greatest men of science in this and in former ages have been devout Christian men; I need only mention such names as Sir Isaac Newton, Michael Faraday, Clerk Maxwell, Sir George Stokes.....to remind you that there can be no antagonism between Christianity and science, for otherwise we should have to say either that these men were not Christians or else that they were not scientific men."

Stupendous! A scientific man is a Christian, therefore there can be no antagonism between Christianity and Science. Was the Christianity of any one of these men the result of their science? Everyone knows it was not. They were Christians before they were scientists, and the utmost that can be said is that they retained their Christianity in spite of their science, where others like Darwin were led to give it up. And they retained their religion for the reason that they never brought the same reasoning power to bear on their religious beliefs as on other matters. Faraday said quite candidly that if he reasoned about his religion he would have to give it up; and the statement holds good of others beside himself. And these men were certainly not great because of their Christian belief. Newton the mathematician, or Faraday the chemist, are names that command the respect of all. Newton the theologian and Faraday the Sandemanian are names that rouse nothing but a smile or a regret.

Proceeding, Dr. Moulton describes the results of the investigations of Frazer and other anthropologists showing how all the fundamental elements of Christianity are to be found in other and more ancient cults; and he announces himself as quite undismayed by this discovery. "For my part I should not be afraid to say that there may be elements in Judaism the suggestion of which it owes to other religions." *Maybe!* Oh, modest Dr. Moulton! After it has been demonstrated up to the hilt in scores of volumes that such is the case, this champion, who is in love with science, is ready to admit it *maybe* so. And if it is so, the explanation is simple. When the Catholic missionaries first visited India and found the Hindoos with crucifixes and virgin-born saviors and rosaries, and the whole paraphernalia of Christianity, they said all this had been invented by the Devil. He knew they were coming, and parodied their religion before they arrived. Dr. Moulton has the same explanation, with a difference. He admits the similarity between non-Christian and Christian beliefs, but he says it is due to the action of God gradually preparing the mind of man for Christianity. All the religions of the world were, according to Dr. Moulton, so many stages in the preparation for Christianity—a theory that sounds plausible until it is examined. And then, when one remembers that if God inspired the various forms of the religious idea to suit the

differing intellects of different branches of the human race, he also created the differences and difficulties he had to minimise and overcome, the whole process becomes something in the nature of a gigantic conjuring performance, and is more apt to excite laughter than admiration. The difficulties are created, exactly as at a conjuring entertainment, so that we may admire the manner in which the performer gets over them.

Dr. Moulton's trump card in meeting the anthropologist is this. He admits, by way of argument, that religion may have developed out of magic, and that the theories advanced in *The Golden Bough* are correct. But "I do not care in what way the idea was developed; the one thing I care about is that the idea is there. But you have to explain it, and the Christian explanation is that God put it there. He evoked it.....and so he prepared for the climax of revelation, the Coming of the Man."

So Dr. Moulton explains the existence of the God idea by saying God put it there. A schoolboy might have told him that this is not an explanation at all, but the emptiest and silliest of statements. Anyone can say of anything, "God put it there"; but it surely requires a mind of more than average density to look on this as an explanation. And when Dr. Moulton, after talking about *The Golden Bough* and similar works, tells anyone that he still has to explain how the idea of religion came to exist, he shows himself quite unable to appreciate what such works really do. For they either explain the religious idea or nothing. Anthropology shows that the idea of God may have come by men worshiping ancestral spirits, consequent upon the belief in a double, that was again due to a misunderstanding of dreams and other subjective experiences. Or it may have originated by a simple and perfectly natural personification of natural forces by the primitive savage. Or the two may have co-operated. Anyway it is indisputable that if one accepts either of these positions, he has explained all there is to explain. But to accept these teachings as even probably true, and then say, "You have still to explain the religious idea," discloses a degree of mental mystification not often seen off the theological platform.

The further statement that the whole of human evolution was to prepare for the "Coming of the Man," if taken seriously, can only demonstrate how fearfully God blundered. Human evolution was to prepare for the coming of Christ, and when he did come the people killed him. The mind was developed in order that people might accept Jesus, and the whole tendency of modern thought is to reject Christianity. The combined efforts of all the Churches cannot arrest this movement; they can, at best, only prevent one here and there from forsaking the Christian faith. After incalculable generations of human history, the idea of God is regarded by most thinkers as a mere hypothesis; by some as an exploded one. The Christian Scriptures are admitted to be unhistorical, and of only doubtful ethical value. Even the existence of Jesus is challenged. And yet Dr. Moulton believes that from the very dawn of Creation God was planning everything so that Christianity should be the religion of mankind. What a gigantic failure!

C. COHEN.

"Salvation by Grace through Faith."

THE above is the title of the Annual Sermon of the Free Church Council, preached at Newcastle-on-Tyne on Tuesday evening, March 8, by Dr. A. M. Fairbairn, Principal of Mansfield College, Oxford. Principal Fairbairn is looked upon as one of the profoundest and subtlest of living divines. He is the author of several theological works which have been pronounced classics. It is stated that in this sermon he was at his very best, and that although he preached

for upwards of an hour the vast congregation was held in strained attention to the close. As it was the official sermon of the Council, it may fairly be taken as typical of the theology of all the Free Churches in our land. The attitude of the Council towards Free thought was monstrously unfair, and betrayed inexcusable ignorance. The Rev. John Thomas, of Liverpool, characterised the *Clarion* attack on Christianity as "a fatuous misapprehension" and as based on a "vulgar misconception." The Rev. J. G. Greenhough waxed eloquent in the denunciation of the modern critics of religion. He could not understand why Christians should be so much alarmed by their "vulgar attacks on Christianity," which were not worthy of an answer. According to him, Free thinkers "run through the Bible, after the manner of their tribe, with the dog's keen scent for decayed bones." "They have no spiritual inspiration," he cried, "no devotion, no reverence, and, worst of all, no saving grace of humor." This ignorant tirade was afterwards de-scribed as the most brilliant speech the reverend gentleman had ever delivered. On the subject of Education, also, the Council was dominated by the same narrow, bigoted, and selfish spirit. It demanded every conceivable concession from the Church of England, but was itself not prepared to make the slightest concession either to the Church of England or to the non-Christian section of the population. But on the subject of theology the Council ought to have spoken with intelligence and authority. If it could not be fair and just towards Episcopalians and Free thinkers, surely it could utter itself clearly and sanely on the central doctrines of the Christian Religion; but, judging by Dr. Fairbairn's official deliverance, we cannot resist the conclusion that the Council's theology is as disappointing as its politics and ethics.

The text chosen was, "For by grace are ye saved through faith"—words which to outsiders convey no meaning whatever. The terms on which the preacher dwelt were "grace" and "faith." Grace belongs to God, and faith to man. The object of grace is man, while the object of faith is God. Grace was defined as favor. It "expresses and denotes the feeling that prompts the favor, and the gratitude the favor begets. It denotes both the beneficence that comes of a joy that cannot be uttered and yet must be expressed: the joy that cannot bear the sight of the pain, the misery, and guilt, and death confronting it on this wide earth." That sounds very plausible; but what evidence or least sign is there anywhere of the active existence of such sweet grace? We are told that grace comes of a joy that cannot bear the sight of pain, and misery, and injustice, and guilt, and death in the world; and yet that is the very sight this imaginary joy *has* borne, without perceptible protest, for thousands upon thousands of years. No gracious God has ever yet manifested himself in the daily life of this earth. The paupers in the slums of Christian cities are infinitely more miserable than the lowest tribe of savages in the wilds of Africa.

Dr. Fairbairn maintains that grace lives and is active in God. "It is to him a thing of nature, he is gracious by the nature he has, and as is the nature such is the will, and the action ever follows the will." But where is the action that follows the will of the God who is said to be by nature gracious? If there be a gracious Father, his inactivity equals his silence; and he must be inactive because he is impotent, and impotent because he does not exist. What is the use of a redeemer if he does not redeem; of a sovereign if he does not govern; and of a gracious Father, if he perpetually endures the ugly and painful sights confronting him on this wide earth? It is most easy to sing out that God is love; but it is an impossible task to verify such a statement from the facts of life.

Principal Fairbairn sails among the clouds and never touches the solid earth. The problems he deals with are purely theological, not ethical, and he treats them all by a theological method. He asserts that the grace of God is free, unpurchased and un-

purchasable. The New Testament assures us that believers have been redeemed, or bought with the precious blood of Christ, and within my own recollection divines were accustomed to teach that the death on Calvary was the price divine justice demanded before salvation could be possible; but Dr. Fairbairn exclaims with great fervor: "Ah, do you remember in days long ago when men talked of 'the blood,' and spoke of the blood as if it bought the mercy of God? Brothers, grace cannot be bought, not even by blood, it cannot be bought, but he who is gracious gave to the death the Son of his love." But in the next sentence he flatly contradicts himself: "See, then, grace is free, the moment the Son made this glorious sacrifice whereby we are all redeemed." If men are saved by grace, the free, unpurchasable grace of God, how unutterably absurd it is to say, in the same breath, that they are redeemed by the glorious sacrifice of Christ! There is here a plain contradiction in terms. If God's grace is in its very nature free, then Christ sacrificed himself in vain; and if the Father put the Son of his love to death without just cause, then the Father must be pronounced guilty of murder of the most brutal kind. In this connection Dr. Fairbairn condemns the Catholic and Anglican Churches, "the systems we hate and fear, that call themselves by great and venerated names, and that talk about their sacraments and their successions and their orders and their institutions," because "they limit the grace of God and put the institutions of men between man and heaven;" but the preacher forgets that those great organisations can turn the tables upon him by characterising all Free Church ministers as interlopers and charlatans, who are leading their congregations to hopeless perdition. Dr. Fairbairn's own teaching is as unbelievable and as immoral as that which he so vehemently denounces. Take this sentence as a sample:—

"What did Paul mean when he said, 'By grace, and grace alone are ye saved?' He meant that not by the eating of bread, however consecrated, not by the drinking of wine, though turned into blood, not by any act that man by any feat of his can do, can any creature on earth be saved, only the mercy of God, only the grace of heaven, only the free, unfettered love of the Father can save man."

If that is not sheer nonsense, pray what is it?

At this point the great philosophic divine takes up the subject of faith, on which he makes most astounding remarks. He omits to tell us what faith is, or how and why it becomes the medium of salvation. What does he mean by saying that "Paul read man through God, and read history through heaven?" How can anybody understand the known through the unknown? How did Paul obtain his knowledge of God and heaven except through himself and his fellow-men? How could he "look at mankind through God's own eyes?" The whole thing is unspeakably absurd, the idle vaporing of an impassioned rhetorician.

Dr. Fairbairn informs us that "there are two great opposites of faith, one a real the other an absolutely false antithesis." Just here he descends to a great depth of vulgar and vituperative jargon. "Find a credulous man," he cries out, "and that man, you will find, is also a sceptic. Nothing is so near unbelief as complete superstition; nothing is so near superstition as the attitude of complete unbelief." Did it dawn upon the Principal, while speaking, that he is himself the slave of superstition, and that what he was giving his hearers was an incoherent chapter from the great book of mythology? Was he standing on the verge of scepticism? No wonder that in his feverish excitement he hit an opponent below the belt. Referring to Mr. Blatchford's book, *God and My Neighbor*, he said: "The other day it was my fortune or misfortune to take up a book they say the working men of this land are fools enough to be led by. Why, the man could not even transcribe the correct title of a book on which he stated his case. He had Renan lying open before him, and he made a substitution that would have roused all

the fury of Renan's nature in contempt of the man who made it. And so I say, never be at the trouble to refute ignorance." Is that the utterance of a courteous Christian gentleman? No wonder the working men of England are lost to Christianity when they are so brutally insulted and maligned by the public defenders of the Faith! No wonder Free-thinkers despise the theologians who, incapable of argument, indulge in cheap, personal abuse when face-to-face with opponents. The working men who follow Mr. Blatchford are not fools, nor is his following by any means confined to the laboring classes. The author of *God and My Neighbor* is one of the best-informed literary men of the day. Surely it was unworthy of the learned Oxford divine to base a charge of ignorance against him on a mere slip of the pen, when, had he looked into the text carefully, he would have seen that the title of Renan's famous book is correctly transcribed in other places. What delightful Christian logic! Because a writer incorrectly transcribes the title of a volume in a list of books recommended, his arguments are not to be refuted, although thousands of working men are said to be fools enough to accept them as conclusive.

Credulity, then, is the real antithesis to faith, and, without controversy, credulity is distinctive of Christians. It is they who believe, or profess to believe, the unbelievable, and who revel in superstition. But the false antithesis to faith is reason. Dr. Fairbairn calls faith "incipient knowledge," or "knowledge in the making," or "reason in embryo." He quotes from Nathaniel Culverwell to the effect that reason is a luminary that purifies and beautifies our day, while faith is the luminary that illumines and beautifies our night. Hence faith is only a moon, pale, feeble, and uncertain, while reason is a glorious sun. When our day is done, and our night sets in, we shall stand in need of illumination from neither moon nor stars in the deep unconsciousness that will then overtake us. Therefore, while our day lasts, let us walk in the bright light of our reason, and not allow ourselves to be befogged amid the dark vagaries of faith. It is something to be thankful for to find a theologian admitting the superiority of reason to faith, and anticipating the time when faith must cease to be forever. But after a brief interval of semi-lucidity the Principal sinks back into incoherent mysticism. By faith "we see into God; God comes by it into us." This is the stuff dreams are made of; and religion is the illegitimate offspring of dreams. Here is a highly significant passage:—

"Come out of mystery we live in mystery, we go into mystery; mystery is all around; and so far from mystery being a reason for unbelief, it is a reason for belief. The system that has none knows nothing of truth; the system with no mystery can know neither God nor man."

Now, the supreme claim of orthodox theology is that all mystery has been annihilated in Christ, and that believers in him possess all knowledge. This is how the New Testament addresses Christians: "Ye have an anointing from the Holy One, and ye know all things." Christianity is supposed to have abolished all mystery, and to have "brought life and immortality to light." Preachers both make and sell complete maps of heaven and hell, and are prepared to supply us with full information concerning God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Ghost. Had Principal Fairbairn really believed in mystery he could not have preached the sermon under consideration. Had he been cradled in mystery he would not have had the audacity to speak so confidently of the grace and love of an Eternal Father who slew his only begotten Son in order to prove how very gracious and loving he is. To those who say they have an unction from on high there is no such thing as mystery. Their faith banishes mystery, and they bask in the refreshing sunshine of knowledge.

Dr. Fairbairn is a disciple of Paul, but pays no heed to James, who gives Paul the direct lie. Paul said: "A man is saved by grace through faith." James said: "No; a man is saved by his works."

And James was right, while Paul was perilously wrong. A man's salvation consists, not in the knowledge of God, and Christ, and eternity, but in the knowledge of himself and his faculties, and in giving himself fairplay in all the concerns of his life. If he has missed his way, all he requires to do is to retrace his steps and start afresh. If he is doing wrong, he must learn the art of doing right. What we need to find is, not God, but ourselves; and in the finding of and in the coming to ourselves is highest life, or fullest salvation. Let no false prophet deceive or mock us. We must save ourselves, or perish. We must throw ourselves upon our own resources, or sink into ruin. No god can help us: "our valors are our best gods." "Trust thyself," says Emerson; "every heart vibrates to that iron string." "Nothing is at last sacred," continues the same sage, "but the integrity of your own mind. Absolve you to yourself, and you shall have the suffrage of the world." By constant practice we must acquire self-knowledge, self-reliance, self-mastery, and self-harmony. Do we require faith at all? Yes, faith in ourselves and in one another. Do we need the ministry of grace? Yes, of the grace that embodies itself in righteousness, and truth, and purity, and sympathy, and love. These are graces that make life on earth pre-eminently worth living, and that never trouble themselves about any other life.

JOHN LLOYD.

Modern Popery.

It has been calculated that 26,000 monks and nuns found their way to England during the past year as a result of the French law applying to religious communities. Forty-seven new convents have been established in this country by the Roman Catholic priesthood.

These merchants of Mary will find many of their old clients here, together with some of the Italian peasant population who have settled amongst us in itinerant occupation. They will probably convert many more, for they have capital wherewith to commence business operations; and, after all, Christianity is a sort of long firm, the partners of which disagreed on trivial points in days gone by. The present mongers of the Protestant branch not only took over those shops of the company which happened to be situated in this particular Anglo-Saxon district, but captured most of the customers ready-made. The same with the Greek Church.

But the old central depot of Rome deals in varying merchandise, with due regard to the political or social necessities of each particular neighbourhood.

The Catholicism of England, America, or Australia differs somewhat from that of the south or even the north of Italy. We have no modern miracles here worth mention. In Italy they are of every-day occurrence. We speak of Christ as much as Mary, but in Italy his mother is chiefly considered. As Mark Twain remarked, "The Holy Personages rank thus in Rome:—First, the Mother of God, otherwise the Virgin Mary; second, the Deity; third, Peter; fourth, some twelve or fifteen canonised Popes and martyrs; fifth, Jesus Christ the Savior (but always as an infant in arms)." And the law strictly forbids any journalistic doubt as to the immaculate conception.

The second person of the Trinity is sometimes recognised even in Italy. They have two or three bodies of him, each guaranteed by its particular priests to be the genuine, only flesh-and-bone corpse of J. C. There is one at Valcalda, Pieve di Cadore; one at Segromingno, Lucca; and another, whose beard grows at certain seasons, in Perugia, Piazza Annibale Marriotti.

Various districts are devoted to particular saints: Peter at Rome, Joseph at Naples, Anthony at Padova, &c., and each saint possesses a particular virtue.

The faithful count upon S. Anthony, for example,

to insure themselves and their property from outbreaks of fire or thunderstorms. He is a sort of fire insurance agency, though, strange to say, his own statuary representations seem singled out by the elements and have been stricken by lightning over and over again, and last year a so-called indestructible temple of his was burned, together with the father in charge of the place.

Yet the miraculous reputation of S. Anthony will not die. It is next to impossible to explain to true believers that these miracles are humbug. I will narrate one historical occasion (if the digression is excusable) in which the fraud did succumb. Fourteen years ago there was at Baku, in Russia, a Temple built over an inextinguishable flame (so-called), which, springing from a fissure in the natural rock, had been an object of worship from time immemorial. The miraculous fire suddenly expired. The proprietor of the neighbouring petroleum springs had tapped and deflected a stream of the natural naphtha gas for business purposes.

To return to Italy. The legal statistics for the past year, published by the *Direzione Generale della Statistica nel Decorso Anno* (Roma, tip. Nazionale), record that crime has increased during the last few years. The clericals say, of course, that it is due to the growth of irreligion among the people. They themselves, however, furnish no negligible quota of offence of the pecuniary quality, and also of the type recently provided by scoundrels like Dons Porcu, Spinachi, Spinardi, and Lippi. The last-named was condemned at Lucera last week to twelve months' imprisonment for the attempted violation of a dying woman. The enforced celibacy of a virile clergy is greatly to blame for these occurrences. It is satisfactory to note, with regard to the statistics above mentioned, that the abolition of capital punishment has been followed by a vast decrease in homicidal crime. The quinquennial record ending 1886 gave 4,620 per annum, or 16·10 per 100,000; that ending 1900 gives 3,479 per annum, or only 10·70 per 100,000.

These figures are not commented upon by the parsons, who have constantly advocated the reinstatement of the death penalty, just as their Protestant brothers in God are the strongest opponents of the abolition of capital punishment in this country. The difference between Roman and Nonconformist is one of business detail only, with a view to the adaptation of their wares to degrees of temperament or education of their followers. There is not so much difference between the confessional and a curacy of souls; and the ethical value of indulgences or forgiveness of sins to be committed in the future differs little from that of pardon for those that have been committed beforehand. The adoration of dead men or dead women or of eternally distant gods or goddesses alike is a waste of valuable opportunity and time that must be given to the improvement of humanity. The superhuman is ever the inhuman in motive.

G. GUARDIABOSCO.

Torrey and His Tribe.

MR. FOOTE'S splendid scourging of Torrey, American Revivalist and Reviler, ought to arouse honest religious people to ban and exclude such vile liars from pulpit and platform. Even reputable Christianity is degraded and disgraced by those who so shamefully misrepresent it, as we can perceive by the nauseous mouthings and perverse prevarications of such as Torrey—Turpitude Torrey.

As for his diatribes against great men of science and noble thinkers like Thomas Paine, whom Torrey and his tribe are not even worthy to name, the New York *Churchman* (Episcopal) some time ago gave a very kindly, appreciative, just notice of his works and life, acknowledging that great injustice had been done to that eminent and enlightened man, through bitter

religious rancor, ignorance, spite, and hatred. But ecclesiastical ruffians of the Torrey order regard Episcopalians generally as unregenerate, "born in sin," and not fit to teach "converted" or, rather, perverted Torrey-ites.

The better, higher class of Anglican and Roman clergy, however, will have nothing to do with, and cannot abide these ranters. They and their saucy questions of "Are you saved?" "Have you found the Lord?" and the following invitation, "Come to Jesus!" such men regard as impertinent and silly. It is the Nonconformist, of a low type, the howling Methodist, the shrieking Salvationist, or the bigoted, when not thoughtful, Baptist, or the Low—*very* low—Churchman who desires men to "get religion" in this way. Adjectives fail us in describing such as these and their methods.

They organise and conduct camp and revival meetings, where, it is rumored, more souls are created, often, than are "saved," through the promiscuous, sensational, sensual ways pursued, the excitements cultivated and fostered—thanks to the holy fervor encouraged. It is but a step from heights of exalted spiritual ardor to depths of license—and the godly brethren and sisters know it, and find it so.

"Don't you want to be saved?" said an impudent evangelist to two young ladies of my acquaintance, whom he stopped as they were passing him on the street. "No, thank you," said the elder one; "at least, *not* in your way. Besides, we are Episcopalians, and are already in the pathway of safety and salvation." The evangelist hurried on to find "other sheep, *not* of this fold."

"Saving men and women!" roared a Salvationist. "Saving women?" called a naughty young man; "well, save me some!"

Putrescent, offensive attacks on Freethinkers or their representatives, like Paine, Ingersoll, or G. W. Foote, and Mr. Blatchford, are nauseous to all healthy, decent nostrils—even Christian ones. It is felt to be unworthy any manly man to revile a candid, outspoken thinker, whomsoever he may be. "Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth," a precept of Paul, Dr. Torrey and his tribe would do well to heed. Throwing filth is not a respectable way of answering any argument, and is always disgusting to sensible men.

Yes, 'tis time, as Mr. Foote's article says, that *honest* Christians should openly disclaim the innumerable lies and slanders uttered so recklessly against those who do not agree with Torrey and his company (Korah and his company), of whom we can heartily say, "Hence, loathed" Torrey and thy tribe!

GERALD GREY.

Acid Drops.

We hear of two Passive Resistance "martyrs" at Birmingham. Mr. Edwin Jones has had to suffer three days' imprisonment as a first-class misdemeanant. We believe the day of his committal counts as one, and the day of his liberation another, so that his sentence meant one clear day in gaol. But even this is terrible. Mr. Edwin Jones has our profound sympathy, and we hope his friends will hurry him off for a long recuperative rest at the seaside. Two or three months of such treatment may restore him to something like his former condition of health. Unfortunately the case of the second "martyr" is still worse. The Rev. Udy Bassett was sentenced to five days' imprisonment in the first division. Even the Chairman on the bench, Mr. Tangye, was shocked at the thought of such suffering. "My deepest sympathy goes with you," he said, with tears in his voice, to the reverend prisoner. Our own deepest sympathy goes with him too. We earnestly hope it will not lead to his permanent disablement. We fear that six, or even twelve, months' holiday may be necessary in this instance.

A mad "Scottish Liberal," bailing from Rothesay, makes an extraordinary suggestion in the *Daily News*, which seems ready to print any imbecility on the part of Passive Resisters. The suggestion is that the Rev. Dr. Clifford and

the Rev. Dr. Horton should head a deputation of Passive Resisters to Washington, and there "make an appeal to the United States Senate that the Senators and Representatives of the American people address a paper to the Tory Government of England demanding the cessation of the present persecution of their Liberal English brethren." "A sharp notice of this sort," the wild North Briton says, "would make Messrs. Balfour & Co. call a halt." Would it, indeed? Considering how John Bull loves foreign interference, this is about the silliest thing the Nonconformists could attempt. Besides, one would think the Senators and Representatives of the American people might begin their reformatory work a little nearer home. How about the harrying of the Mormons and the lynching of negroes? Seizing a Passive Resister's dining-room table hardly seems as bad as soaking a negro in kerosene and then setting fire to him.

Mr. Alfred Davies, M.P. for the Carmarthen District, should learn a little accurate English history. Having joined the Passive Resisters, and being summoned before the Hendon magistrates, he wanted to explain that he had a "conscientious objection" to paying his rates—which was in itself sufficiently absurd; for Mr. Davies belongs to the assembly of men who make the laws, and then he turns up before magistrates to show why they ought not to be carried out. Naturally the magistrates declined to hear him. It was a case of "chaos" come again. But the M.P. who was "agin" the law passed by parliament was not to be done so easily out of his projected oratorical performance. He addressed a meeting in the street, where he invoked the memory of that "loyal citizen" John Hampden who "refused to pay ship money." But what analogy is there between the case of John Hampden and the case of Alfred Davies? John Hampden had no objection to paying his contribution towards the maintenance of the nation's ships. What he objected to was the agency by which the money was levied. He held that it was levied illegally—simply by the King's order, without the consent of parliament. And he fought out the legal question before the judges. Alfred Davies, however, does not contest the *legality* of the Education rate. He should therefore desist from taking the name of John Hampden in vain.

Mr. Harrold Johnson, the Ethicist (is that the right word?), whose verses have occasionally appeared in the *Daily News*, recently sent that journal a letter in which he asked the Nonconformists whether, when they have beaten the Church, and perhaps disestablished it, they intend to establish their own sort of religion in the public schools of this country; and, if so, how would they treat Passive Resisters under that arrangement?—Mr. Johnson himself meaning to be one of them. For our own part, we quite approve Mr. Johnson's letter; it was brief, terse, and very much to the point. But was he really ingenuous enough to expect to see it answered? Some time ago we also, in a still briefer letter to the *Daily News*, begged to have the following two questions answered:—If religion were removed from the public schools, what would there be left to quarrel about? And why do Nonconformists, who object to a State religion for adults in churches, uphold a State religion for children in schools? We never expected that any Nonconformist would have the honesty and courage to answer those two questions. And we were not disappointed. In all probability Mr. Johnson will fare no better at the hands of these hypocrites.

There is a very bold Passive Resister at Filey. The Rev. J. Potts says he stands for God, truth, and justice. That may be, and yet God, truth, and justice may not have the honor of his acquaintance. He also says that he is prepared if need be to die for his principles. Well, we hope his fellow-Christians will never give him the opportunity of making good his boast. He will not be martyred by Freethinkers. They will simply smile and pass on.

South Africa appears to be in a sad way. But we hear that Gipsy Smith is going there, so it will be all right presently. He claims to have converted several landlords (of pubs.) in England. Perhaps he will convert some of the landlords in the Transvaal.

Beal's Island, Maine, a settlement inhabited by some four hundred fisher folk, has lately been upset by three "evangelists" who are said to belong to "The Holy Ghost and Us" sect. Great stress was laid upon the terrors of hell, and the fisher folk went raving mad with religious fever. Cats and dogs were sacrificed to the Lord, and there was a proposal to sacrifice a child; but at this point the few sane persons left in the place summoned the Sheriff from the mainland, and the three "evangelists" incontinently fled. No

doubt they carried off a fair amount of spoil, for these pious adventurers do not operate for nothing.

Rev. A. E. Beilby, of the New Church, Moss-lane, East Manchester, seems to have a very intimate acquaintance with the phenomena of the next world. In a recent sermon, dealing with the lot of suicides, he stated that the late Whitaker Wright woke up again within a few hours after his death, and found himself still in the hands of justice. He was in the land of spirits, the intermediate stage, where sooner or later all would go, good, bad, and indifferent. The preacher would not undertake to say that he had gone to hell, but he had gone to a place of discipline, and would not be allowed at large again until he had learnt the lesson of self-restraint. All of which, of course, is very interesting; but one would like to know how the reverend gentleman learnt it. Is he in communication with the dead? Or has he died himself and returned to tell the story? We wish he would explain.

A fortnight ago, in our leading article, we took the *Daily News* to task for trotting out as true that mythical old story of Queen Victoria declaring that the Bible was the secret of England's greatness. We advised our wealthy contemporary to spend half-a-crown in hunting up the facts. Well, it appears to have taken our tip. But not for worlds would it mention the wicked *Freethinker*. So it falls back on "correspondents" in dealing with the subject. Finally, it takes shelter behind the Rev. Charles Bullock, author of the *Queen's Resolve* which has had a circulation of 300,000 copies, and therefore *must* be true. On the strength of this gentleman's authority it says that the story "has an historical basis." Yes, and the fable that Queen Anne cured scrofulous people by touching them has also an historical basis—for it is admitted that there was a Queen Anne. But our contemporary thinks there is something more in the shape of "history" than this in the Queen Victoria story. "The picture of her gracious Majesty," it says, "presenting a Bible to a kneeling, dusky warrior may not be true to fact, but the spirit of the act is in accordance with all that is known of the late Queen's belief in the Bible as a power for good in the nation." We may take it, however, that the *Daily News* is satisfied that the incident in the famous "fake" picture never occurred. It does not care to say so plainly, but it gets as near to the truth as can be expected.

And now for the "historical basis." It appears that the Earl of Chichester, in 1849, brought the Queen a letter and a piece of cloth from some African chiefs, one of whom rejoiced in the name of Sagbua. His lordship was commissioned to frame a reply to the donors; and in that reply, which he signed, and which was his own composition, he said:

"But commerce alone will not make a nation great and happy, like England. England has become great and happy by the knowledge of the true God and Jesus Christ. The Queen is, therefore, very glad to hear that Sagbua and the chiefs have so kindly received the missionaries, who carry with them the Word of God, and that so many of the people are willing to hear it. In order to show how much the Queen values God's Word, she sends with this, as a present to Sagbua, a copy of this Word in two languages—one the Arabic, the other the English."

There is not the slightest reason for supposing that Queen Victoria saw that letter of Lord Chichester's before it was sent; and the fact that it was published in the *Church Missionary Intelligencer* speaks volumes against its having been an official document. Anyhow the pious picture which has imposed on so many simple souls is quite imaginary. Queen Victoria never handed a black chief a Bible, with the words "This is the secret of England's greatness." The story is a "fake," and the picture is a "fake"—as the book it was intended to puff is a "fake."

Mr. Foote's bold, outspoken tract, *God at Chicago*, is far too strong meat for any London newspaper. But the *Westminster Gazette* went recently within measurable distance of its "blasphemy." The writer of a sonnet headed "Ventnor," apparently dying slowly of consumption in the hospital there, wound up as follows:—

Ah, cruel God, that in this sunlit gloom,
This idle life, whence every hope hath fled,
Hast set me midst the dying and the dead.

"Cruel God" is fairly strong. The *Westminster* is getting on.

The Lord's Day Observance Society is striving hard to nullify Sir William H. Willis's splendid gift of a new art gallery to Bristol. The gallery, which is almost completed, will cost between forty and fifty thousand pounds; and the donor's one stipulation is that it shall be opened on at least twenty Sundays in each year. The Sabbatarians have urged him to withdraw the stipulation, but he has replied that he

does not see his way to do so. Their next move is to memorialise the City Council against accepting his gift with such a condition. We hope they will fail ignominiously.

Reviewing the newly published *Life* of that tremendously overrated man, the late Dean Farrar, the organ of the Non-conformist Conscience makes the fatuous observation that "in 1877 from the pulpit of the Abbey he first carried the warfare into the atmosphere of popular belief and compelled every man to choose his side" on the question of everlasting punishment in hell. This is just like the Christians. Nothing is ever done in the world except what *they* do! The real truth is that the revolt against hell has been going on *outside* all the Churches for nearly a hundred years before Farrar took the subject up. The "popular belief" had been affected by the writings of Thomas Paine, by the teachings of Robert Owen and the early Socialist missionaries, and by the platform and press work of the militant Freethinkers, from the days of Richard Carlile down to the days of Charles Bradlaugh. Then, too, there was the influence of the poets. Byron and Shelley touched the popular mind far more than is generally supposed nowadays. Robert Burns did his share, also, in undermining the belief in eternal damnation. Tennyson, likewise, had preached "Eternal Hope" long before Farrar, and far more boldly and thoroughly, for he gave voice to complete Universalism in *In Memoriam*. Farrar just came in when the doctrine of everlasting punishment was moribund, and when Lord Westbury's judgment showed that it might be attacked, even inside the Church, with absolute impunity. He was just a little ahead of the more backward Christians. That is all. And there is something unspeakably ridiculous in the idea that "future generations" will remember him with gratitude. When an American asked Thackeray, "What do the English people think of Tupper?" the great novelist replied, "Sir, they do *not* think of Tupper." Future generations are likely to think as much of Dean Farrar.

On Sunday, the 13th inst., Romanists had a great celebration of the thirteenth centenary of Pope Gregory, the Bishop of Rome who sent the monk Augustine, with others, to oust the British Christian Bishops, who were well on the road to obtain ascendancy over the Germanic invaders of their country. Naturally Augustine lighted on the dominions of a king whose wife was already converted—but by the priests of the conquered race—who, strangely enough, had a church going in Canterbury dedicated to St. Martin of Tours: a humanitarian Bishop who objected to burning heretics, and with a fad for sending missionaries to these islands, one of whom, St. Patrick, was his nephew. However, the Bishops who worshiped in St. Martin's, and who had converted the king's wife, were "postponed," as our great grandfathers used to say—that is, they were "put down behind."

Somehow those Bishops have dropped out of history, with so many other persons and events. They were an organised and astute body, yet, oddly enough, we find no record of them after Augustine's conversion of King Ethelbert. From Augustine *therefore* our present episcopal system has sprung, and the occupants of our English sees are his successors. From then until now the see of Canterbury has existed, with all the sees founded or—and a very important *or*—*captured* by the Italian ecclesiastical raiders who came with him. They are all occupied by Britons, placed there by no other than that same authority which gave Augustine the diocese of Canterbury—that of the King of Kent.

Now it is within the memory of living men that John Smallirons, a recent Bishop of the diocese formerly ruled by Gregory, sent here one Nicholas Wiseman and others, to found a branch of his own local communion. It is also a fact of the most common knowledge that Wiseman and his partners avoided assuming any title which should in the remotest manner connect them with those sees attributed to Augustine and his company. They opened a completely new business concern, in entirely new premises; yet one of Wiseman's companions—it is so recent that one is still living—himself the founder of an absolutely original branch of the foreign firm, with the immediate successors of the other co-founders with Wiseman, on Sunday had the audacity to telegraph to Taylor, the present successor of Smallirons, a message describing themselves as "The Archbishop and Bishops of England, successors of St. Augustine." This is not audacity; it is idiotcy. Apart from the fact that these persons are the creatures of the Italian whose halter they solemnly worshiped the other day with savage prostrations, the actual successors of Augustine still flourish at Canterbury and York and London, and all the other sees originated in his age!

In the present temper of Englishmen towards the Roman sect, many will probably exclaim: "What nonsense! Why

should not these men style themselves the Bishops of England, seeing they are the Bishops of England of their Church?" This, however, wholly misses the reality of the matter. They style themselves "the Bishops of England, successors of Augustine," while they are the successors of Wiseman merely. Now, there is a body of English Government officials who are the Bishops of England. They are appointed by the State, controlled by the State, receive their commands and religion from the State, and in all things are absolutely the creatures and subjects of the House of Commons, which is constantly enacting statutes to "discipline" them.

Now, the people of England are the House of Commons, and are their masters; but these sons of Wiseman are mustered and under the authority of a foreigner, as apart and distinct from England as the Sultan! One, whose demented pretensions have thrown England into about a score of civil wars and brought on her at least half a dozen invasions. The claim of these men is a flagrant and open imposture. It is one our fathers so successfully and completely crushed that the present generation obtusely refuses to realise its nature and virulence. It is not dead, and might burst forth at any moment with all its former pretensions and with a recuperation of its former energy. That is why no rational man should ignore these men nor despise their self-advertisements with their tentative frauds.

General Kuropatkin is in possession of nearly a hundred ikons, or holy images, several of which are "miraculous." If this be true, the Japs had better look out. It is possible, however, that they despise the holy and miraculous ikons, and may capture the blessed lot—with the General who owns them.

The funeral of the late Dowager Empress of Korea has just taken place. There were two biers. The first was destined for the "Great Devil." Probably the idea was to cheat him with an empty coffin.

Rev. James Allan Davidson, a curate, thirty years of age, eloped with a young lady from Plymouth, and tried to marry her by special license in London. But the family followed him up and stopped the wedding on the ground that the young lady was under age. Some people, no doubt, are astonished to see a man of God acting in this disreputable manner. We are not.

A tender-hearted Dominican, Nicolas Cuzzoli, has just been sentenced at Rome to eight years' imprisonment, and a fine of 4,000 lire, for shooting at some boys who were trying to appropriate some of the fine Convent grapes. He fired at them deliberately, in spite of their appeals for mercy, and one of them, fourteen years of age, was killed. Perhaps he reflected that if God damned the whole human race for the loss of an apple, he might shoot a boy or two for the loss of more valuable fruit.

How they love one another! At a West Bromwich meeting, where Councillor Cheshire was lecturing against Ritualism, there were several free fights, and the police were hurried up to save the good Christians from shedding each other's "claret."

Frederic Cooper, secretary of the Bilston Education Committee, and superintendent of the Wesleyan Sunday School at Bradley, seized a boy and endeavored to haul him into the pulpit, eventually dragging him in by the feet. "A thrill of horror went through the school." Another thrill went through Cooper when he was fined ten shillings and costs for assault.

A writer in last week's *Reynolds'* referred to "the first great Son of Democracy, the Man of Nazareth." This is the sort of twaddle that one only meets with in Socialist, Radical, and Republican papers published in English. French, German, and Italian working men would not suffer such unscientific notions of politics, sociology, and history. Any absurdity seems good enough for the average English workman. That is because he still listens outside churches, though he does not enter; and because his reading is almost confined to intellectual slops. Mr. Thompson, the editor of *Reynolds'*, is a well-informed gentleman. Why doesn't he keep a firmer hand over his more gushing contributors?

The *Hull Daily Mail* has a lady contributor who is responsible for the "House and Home" department. We

see that she refers to "Socialism, freethinking, and unclean living." This would be gross impudence on the part of a man. As the writer is a woman we shrug our shoulders and say nothing.

Pontefract has had a discussion on the Bible in the Friends' Meeting House. Most of the speakers lauded the Bible to the skies, and as far beyond as they could get; but Mr. Ludlam spoke adversely and held his position courageously. There was a resolution in favor of the Bible, and he moved as an amendment: "That the Bible does not stand in an unrivalled position to-day, but is challenged by other literature which is being studied and brought to the front." At the end of the discussion they actually took a vote, and of course it went in favor of the Bible. No doubt the Lord was on thorns until the figures were announced; we presume he breathes more easily now. But what would have happened if the vote had gone the other way?

The Bishop of Chester is advocating a revision of the Athanasian Creed. He wants to see it so dealt with that it can be equally used by those who accept it and those who detest it. How characteristic of the Church of England! That great clerical Trade Organisation will never break up for want of compromise.

Edmonton Urban District Council will be elected next Monday (March 28). The Social Democratic Federation is running nine candidates, of whom three are professed Atheists, while the others, we believe, are not overburdened with religion. Naturally the whole nine are opposed by the Black Army, the publicans, the jerry-builders, and the labor-sweaters. Even the Nonconformist Conscience has joined this interesting combination. An appeal to the electors is published in the local press, calling upon them to reject men who "scoff openly at religion," and, above all, to see that they have nothing to do with the local schools under the new Education Act. It is so necessary, as all right-thinking people see, that children should receive proper "Bible instruction"; and how is it to be secured to them if scoffers at religion hold the reins of power? Such is the common appeal of the churches and chapels in view of their common enemy. They agree for once under the instinct of self-preservation. The appeal is signed by four Church parsons and three Chapel ministers; and even the local Salvation Army "Adjutant" joins in the round-robin. When they do agree their unanimity is wonderful.

All is not always for the best in Christian countries. Miss Mary E. Durham, in her admirable new book of travels, *Through the Lands of the Serb*, tells of an Albanian she met, who had been a Turkish irregular and had lived some time in London, and who, from a moral point of view, much preferred Turkish Albania. This is what he said to Miss Durham:

"London; it big bad place. Five million peoples in London. My God, what a lot of criminals! In my country no man starve. He knock at door. 'What you want?' 'I hungry.' 'Oright, you come in.' He give him bread. he give him wine. In London you say, 'You git 'long, or I call a p'leece.'"

Really the Albanian appears to have had the best of the argument.

We have noted the general ignorance concerning the Apocrypha in commenting on the Bible Society's expunging of those books from its editions of the Bible. The present writer once—having not read the Apocrypha since his childhood—went in search of it, not knowing where it might be obtained. He began with his customary "bookseller, stationer, and newsagent." "Can you get me a copy of the Apocrypha?" he asked the young woman behind the counter. She wrinkled her pretty brow. "I can't quite remember, sir," she replied; is it a weekly—or a monthly?"—*Daily Chronicle*.

An old joke is doing fresh duty in New York. It is told by Father Ducey. He says that he saw a little boy crying bitterly in Fourth Avenue, and a small girl asked him: "What ails you, boy? Why are you crying so hard?" "Because mother's gone to heaven," sobbed the child. "Oh, don't fret so," replied the girl, "maybe she hasn't."

The Archbishop of Canterbury says that nothing will shake "our belief" in the inspiration of the Bible. We suppose this means *his* belief; and we should think not, indeed. Fancy shaking a belief held down by £15,000 a year. That means about three hundredweight of solid gold. Surely enough to steady any belief.

Mr. Foote's Lecturing Engagements.

Sunday, March 27, Town Hall, Birmingham: at 3, "Holy Russia and Heathen Japan"; at 7, Freethought Demonstration.
April 10, West Ham.

To Correspondents.

C. COHEN'S LECTURING ENGAGEMENTS.—Address, 241 High-road, Leyton.—March 27, Birmingham; April 3, Stratford Town Hall; 10, Camberwell.

J. LLOYD'S LECTURING ENGAGEMENTS.—March 27, Birmingham; April 3, Sheffield; 10, Manchester; 17, Merthyr Tydvil; 24, Fallsworth.

W. A. PYRKE.—Thanks for your letter. See "Acid Drops."

W. P. BALL.—Much obliged to you for your useful batches of cuttings.

F. NIBLETT.—Thanks for cuttings. See "Acid Drops."

T. MANSER.—Always glad to receive press cuttings on which we can find a paragraph.

JOHN ROSS.—Mr. Foote was none the worse for his work at Liverpool. He thoroughly enjoyed himself, as the "saints" appeared to do. Thanks for your good wishes. If we realised all you sincerely wish us we should be fortunate indeed.

W. R. COLUMBINE.—We insert lecture notices for Secular Societies and Ethical Societies, and cannot see our way at present to do the same for Labor Churches. They have other means of advertisement, and the object of the *Freethinker* is very definite.

O. ALLEN.—Thanks for your interesting letter. It is pleasant to hear from converts to Freethought. You say that the only thing you miss in leaving the church, where you were sidesman as late as 1902, is the music; yet that loss is "more than counterbalanced in other ways." Perhaps, as you suggest, we should not be too hard on the bigoted laity who are misled by their clergy. We feel that, too. But we are not inclined to make the same allowance for the professional whose slander of Freethinkers is only a part of his general lying for a living. Such men are not dupes but impostors.

G. SCOTT.—Proof shall be forwarded. Thanks also for the cuttings, though they are too late to be dealt with this week. One of them is, as you say, very suggestive from a miraculous point of view.

T. H. ELSTOB.—Pleased to hear Mr. Lloyd had such a good meeting at Gateshead. The report in the *Chronicle* is encouraging.

H. C. SHACKLETON.—Thanks for report of the Rev. T. Waugh's address. We are crowded with copy this week, but will try to give the matter a paragraph or two in our next. We are obliged to you for your personal good wishes.

F. J. GOULD.—Change of address to 75 Humberstone-gate, Leicester, noted. We also are sorry that pressure of business prevents you from writing as often as you could wish for the *Freethinker*.

F. J. VOISEY.—Papers sent as desired. We know nothing of the infidel-slayer called Clarke who is slandering Ingersoll at Dartmouth. He is probably a novice. If you can show him up, pray do so. These libellous blackguards ought to be hunted down.

H. PARIS BROOKES (South Norwood).—We do not quite follow your letter. If you are a Christian, and are prepared to read Dr. Torrey a lesson, you should try to do so in a Christian paper. We are quite able to give him all he wants, and more, in these columns.

The National Secular Society's office is at 2 Newcastle-street, Farringdon-street, E.C.

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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.

ORDERS for literature should be sent to the Freethought Publishing Company, Limited, 2 Newcastle-street, Farringdon-street, E.C., and not to the Editor.

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

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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.

There was a much improved audience at the Camberwell Secular Hall on Sunday evening, when Mr. Foote delivered his first lecture there this year. Mr. Victor Roger, who presided, said he was sure they were all glad to see Mr. Foote in better health, and hoped his recovery would be speedy and complete, which was loudly applauded.

There will be a Freethought "mission" (if we use a word the Christians are growing so fond of) at Birmingham to-day (March 27). Mr. Foote, Mr. Cohen, and Mr. Lloyd will all three be speaking in the Town Hall. In the afternoon Mr. Foote will lecture on "Holy Russia and Heathen Japan." In the evening he will preside at a Freethought Demonstration, when addresses will be delivered by his colleagues as well as by himself. The admission to both meetings will be free, but collections will be taken up towards the inevitable expenses. Fortunately there is no rent to pay for the Town Hall, which is granted to the local N.S.S. Branch for the day by the kindness of the Mayor. But cleaning, lighting, &c., have, of course, to be paid for; and the billing and other advertising of Town Hall meetings is naturally a considerable item. We therefore hope the local "saints" will come well provided for liberal collections. The general public can only be appealed to after they arrive.

Between six and seven o'clock, when the Freethought Demonstration commences, the City Organist, Mr. C. W. Perkins, will play selections on the fine Town Hall organ. This will be a treat for those who can come early enough. We are also asked to announce that tea will be provided in a side room of the Town Hall for friends who come from a distance; but those who are likely to join the company should do their best to let the secretary know beforehand. Address: J. Partridge, 65 Cato-street, Birmingham. Mr. Partridge has also a few reserved seat tickets left, which can be obtained of him on application.

Mr. Cohen lectured last Easter Sunday in the Stratford Town Hall to a large audience, and he will repeat the effort this Easter Sunday. The Secular Society, Limited, has secured the Stratford Town Hall for three consecutive Sunday evenings, beginning with Easter Sunday, and it falls to Mr. Cohen's lot to start the ball. Mr. Foote takes the second lecture of the course, and Mr. Cohen follows and winds it up. Of course the West Ham "saints" will do their utmost to crowd the hall on each occasion. Admission to all seats is free, so that the working people need not stop away on the score of expense. There will be collections, of course, but contributions are optional, and no one need be ruined. It is hoped, however, that the Freethinkers will give with reasonable liberality.

Mr. Lloyd's lectures at Gateshead passed off very satisfactorily, the audience in the evening being a very large one. At the close of his lecture on "Why I Gave up the Supernatural," Mr. Lloyd received quite an ovation. There was some opposition, though of a nondescript character. An exceptionally lengthy and able report appeared in the *Newcastle Daily Chronicle*.

Owing to the difficulty in obtaining an adequate use of the Queen's (Minor) Hall on Sunday evenings, and with a view to the continuity of our Freethought meetings, it has been deemed advisable to make an effort elsewhere. London is unfortunately about the worst place in England for available halls, but after a long and difficult search a building has been found and engaged for a number of Sunday evenings, beginning with April 17. It is the Printer's Hall in Bartlett's-passage, right behind the well-known drapery and furnishing establishment of Wallis & Co., in Holborn, and within a couple of hundred yards or so of the famous City Temple. Many years ago the building was used as a Welsh chapel; latterly it has been occupied by the Machine Printers' Trade Union, from which the Secular Society, Limited, are now renting it, at least for the Sunday evenings aforesaid. What will follow must, of course, depend upon the result of this experiment.

Bartlett's-passage is not a great thoroughfare; it is, indeed, one of the old city passages; but it is very quiet and thoroughly "respectable." It is also really easy of access—east or west; either by way of Fetter-lane, or by way of Bartlett's-buildings. There is no reason in the world, that we can see, why Freethinkers should not find their way to it, and fill Printer's Hall with a crowded "congregation." They will certainly look like a congregation—until the

speaking begins; for the hall still retains its old chapel aspect—and this may add a spice of novel contrast to the proceedings.

In order to give this Printer's Hall experiment the best possible chance, Mr. Foote has arranged to throw himself into it at the outset exclusively. He will not only deliver the opening lecture, but occupy the platform for several Sunday evenings afterwards. If people will not come to hear him there, they will not come to hear other lecturers; and if they do come to hear him they may come to hear the others also.

One great advantage of a Freethought meeting-place being open every Sunday evening is that Mr. Foote (for instance) can take some great topic of the hour, on which it is possible to throw the light of Freethought principles, and thus attract a larger audience—which, of course, means influencing a larger number of people. This used to be done at the Athenæum Hall, and many will recollect with much success. This is not possible, however, when a hall has to be specially engaged for a definite course of lectures. In that case, you have to get out your bills, and stick to your printed subjects. There is no elasticity, things become too formal, and the interest flags. In these days one has to be up to date.

Under the heading of "Truth v. Superstition" another letter appears from the pen of Mr. J. W. de Caux in the *Yarmouth Mercury*. It is a reply to a Christian correspondent "Timothy," who scarcely deserves the honor. Mr. de Caux has his compensation, however, in being read by thousands of persons whom he would find it difficult to reach in any other way. Still, it is a pity he cannot find a foe worthy of his steel. We suppose the local leaders of the Christian faith are too wise (though not in the honest sense of the word) to cross swords with him. They know the inevitable result—and avoid it.

Dr. Moncure D. Conway has passed the Psalmist's three score years and ten. But he still advances with time, and is more heretical now than he was twenty years ago. His Freethought has become more pronounced, and his opposition to Christianity more uncompromising. It was not to be expected, however, that these facts would be emphasised in a paper like the *Daily News*; on the contrary, they were very carefully concealed. This is what our contemporary said of Dr. Conway on Thursday, March 17:—

"Dr. Moncure D. Conway, who is to-day seventy-two, is a descendant of the Washington family, and was born in Virginia. He married Miss Margaret Daniel, granddaughter of Thomas Stone, a signer of the Declaration of Independence. Dr. Conway was Unitarian minister at Washington, whence he was compelled to go on account of his sermons against slavery in 1857. Washington's loss was Cincinnati's gain. When the war broke out in 1861, Dr. Conway became particularly active as a lecturer in the cause of emancipation. Later he went to live at Concord, where he edited the *Boston Commonwealth*. Coming on a visit to England in 1863, he became minister of South Place Chapel in 1864, where he stayed for about twenty years, and whither he returned for another five years in 1892. He was a witness of the Franco-German War, as correspondent to the *New York Herald*. His writings are many, and include many biographies of European and American prophets."

No reader of the *Daily News* could infer from this notice that Dr. Conway was anything more than a Unitarian, or that his "biographies of European and American prophets" included the authoritative and classical Life of Thomas Paine. The ostrich tactics of the organ of the Nonconformist Conscience are quite entertaining.

Dr. Conway was giving up his pastorate at South Place Chapel (it is called Institute now) at the time of our prosecution for "blasphemy." He spoke out boldly on our behalf, and branded in glowing language the base orthodox lie that we had any connection with "indecent." In fact, he said that was the most indecent thing about the whole prosecution. Twelve months later, on our release from prison, Dr. Conway was one of the speakers at the great St. James's Hall meeting that called for the total repeal of the Blasphemy Laws. On that occasion he let the cat out of the bag, tail and all. Some of them, he said, perhaps a little old-fashioned, had fancied that Mr. Foote was going a little too far in the *Freethinker*. But the event showed that they were wrong. The Christians had gone out of their way to prove that Mr. Foote was right. All that he had said against Christianity was true. The Christians had demonstrated it by his imprisonment. They had robbed him of a year of his life, and would have robbed him of all of it if they dared. Yes, it was a base, brutal, and bloody superstition; and Mr. Foote was justified in all the attacks he had made against it, or that he ever could make against it. Dr. Conway spoke

quietly, as usual, but every word came out with clear determination, and the big audience cheered him to the very echo.

We felt grateful to Dr. Conway then, and we feel grateful to him still. His was one of the clearest and most honest voice at that period—one of the times, to use Paine's words; that try men's souls. And now that he is seventy-two, and will probably not open a new chapter of life, we beg to assure him that there is at least one heart in England that will always beat a little quicker at the sound of his name.

Buckle's *History of Civilisation*, as it is called in brief, though its title is "Introduction to the History of Civilisation in England," is now obtainable in one volume at the very low price of five shillings. Here are more than nine hundred pages of small, though clear and readable, print; including all Buckle's text, all Buckle's notes, and supplementary, up-to-date notes by Mr. J. M. Robertson, who is well-equipped for such a task. The publishers are Messrs. Routledge and Sons. Copies can be ordered from our own publishing office by readers of this journal.

We are glad to see that the *Academy* speaks highly of Mr. Robertson's editorial Introduction and also of his Notes. The Introduction is indeed excellent. It is just and eloquent, and it explains why Buckle, like other masters of thought, needs overhauling from time to time as to positive matters of fact, in order that simple students may not be misled. Where we have sampled Mr. Robertson's notes—for we do not pretend to have gone through the whole volume—we find them good and useful, and written in the temper of a disciple who corrects the master only in the interest of truth, and by the assistance of a light of knowledge which the master did not live to see. Mr. Robertson's edition of Buckle is the edition for the people, and we hope it will have a wide circulation. Every self-respecting working-man ought to have this copy of Buckle on his bookshelf.

The *Northern Echo* prints a good letter from Dr. J. G. Stuart in reply to its statement that "non-Christians have for the most part been satisfied with the Conscience Clause in satisfaction of their objections to Board-School Christianity." Dr. Stuart says that this is not exactly true. But, if it be so, why are not the Nonconformists also satisfied with the Conscience Clause in settlement of their objections to Voluntary-School Church-of-Englandism? Dr. Stuart also points out that Christianity is necessarily "sectarian" in a country which contains myriads of people of other beliefs.

Dr. E. B. Foote, of Larchmont, New York, has lately celebrated his seventy-fifth birthday. His friends in America and elsewhere sent him countless messages. Those near enough sent flowers. Dr. Foote's health, we believe, is not all that might be desired; but his active brain seems likely to carry him forward to a considerable longevity. He has the profound respect and good will of Freethinkers in all parts of the world—including our own. Next to Colonel Ingersoll, we think we liked him best of all the friends we met during our visit to America.

"Boko" has a "Democratic View" of the Bible in the *Manchester Weekly Chronicle*. It is in reply to the Bishop of Ripon, and is effectively sarcastic. The writer argues that the more the Bible is read and studied the less it will be "regarded as a sacred book and a revelation from God to man." It is only natural, he says in conclusion, that the Bishop of Ripon, being "a man nurtured in the Church, adopting the Church as his means of livelihood, should view with apprehension the fact that the Bible is losing its hold on the people. But laymen, who have not interests at stake, are fully entitled to express their opinions on such matters."

We have received the second number—we never saw the first, of the *Ingersoll Memorial Beacon*, a monthly periodical published at Chicago, and apparently associated with the Ingersoll Memorial Association. We cannot say that we like this appropriation of a great man's name. Ingersoll does not belong to any organisation or any journal or magazine, and those who use it look like trading on his name. Nor is the *Beacon* at all worthy of the name it assumes. It is far too scrappy, and is lacking in intellectual trenchancy. A really live paper is never one that hangs on to something else, but one that represents an independent vital influence. The mere magic of Ingersoll's name will never keep anything going. It is impossible for Freethought to imitate Christian performances in discipleship. The greatest dead men were. We who now live are. All the secret is in that.

The Ancient Buddhist Missions to the Greeks.

If Greece was not converted to the Law of Buddha, that was no fault of Hindustan; for not only literary records but monumental inscriptions bear witness to the proselytising efforts of Buddhist India, and the history of these efforts was exhaustively described some years ago by M. Sylvain Lévi.* We do not know whether Gautama Buddha himself had ever heard of Greece; but about a century after his death the Persian king Darius Hystaspes ruled over a territory embracing Ionia in one direction and India in the other. The Ionians had long been known to the Syrians and Babylonians as *Yawanai*, the form their ethnic title assumed in Semitic pronunciation; hence the Hindus first heard of the Greeks as *Yawanas*, though they can hardly have known very much about them before Alexander the Great led his victorious troops to the banks of the Indus. The successors of Alexander could not retain their hold upon these distant territories, and Seleucus Nicator was driven out of India by Chandragupta, rajah of Magadha, whose grandson, Asoka Piyadasi, is well known as the first royal patron of Buddhism. The Greek satrap of Bactria, Diodotus, declared himself an independent king about 250 B.C., and founded a Greek state which endured for some two hundred years.

As soon as Asoka embraced the new philosophy he manifested his zeal by religious embassies; and there still remain pillars and rock-inscriptions in which he recounts the victories he had won, not by the sword, but by religion.

"It is in these conquests that the king dear to the dewas finds his pleasure in his empire, and upon all the frontiers for hundreds of leagues. Among his neighbors are Antiyoko, king of the Yawanas; and beyond this Antiyoko four kings, Turamaya, Antikini, Maka, and Alikasudara, all follow the religious instruction of the king dear to the dewas. Wherever the ambassadors of the king dear to the dewas have gone, there they have understood the duties of the Law, and have complied with the precepts of religion. These are the conquests that have been extended into all lands."

The names of the Yawana monarchs mentioned resolve themselves, without difficulty, into Antiochus of Syria, Ptolemy of Egypt, Antigonus of Macedonia, Magas of Cyrene, and Alexander of Epirus; so that the whole Greek world, to its furthest western extent, received the Buddhist missionaries of Asoka, and apparently paid some polite attention to the new doctrine.

"Everywhere in the territories of King Piyadasi, dear to the dewas, and also among the peoples beyond the frontiers, in the territories of Antiyoko, king of the Yawanas, and also of the kings adjoining, Piyadasi, dear to the dewas, has scattered remedies of two sorts, remedies for men and remedies for beasts."

In addition to these, Asoka established superintendents, or consuls, in the neighbouring territories to look after the interests of the Buddhist converts, and see that they were protected from oppression. In short, the Hindu rajah did everything that we are now familiar with in the history of European missions.

In the eighteenth year of Asoka's reign he called the Council of Pataliputra (now Patna). A thousand elders assembled, and the meetings lasted nine months. The rules of the Buddhist Order and the principal doctrines were rehearsed and settled; and the maharajah issued a proclamation, still extant, declaring what were the canonical scriptures. At the close of the council measures were taken to propagate the faith in foreign lands. To quote the Cingalese *Maha-wansa* :—

"The monk Moggaliputta reflected upon the future. He saw that the time had come to establish the Law in the adjoining countries; and in the month Kattika he sent the mendicant Majjhantika to Kashmir and Gandhara, and the mendicant Maha-rakkhita to the land of the Greeks. The holy Maha-rakkhita, coming into the territory of the Greeks, preached in the midst

of the crowd the Kalakarama Sutta. 270,000 persons were converted, and 10,000 became monks.....Dhamma-rakkhita having come to the border land,† preached in the midst of the people the Aggikhandopama Sutta, dispensing the Ambrosia of the Law to 70,000 souls. 1,000 men, and a still greater number of noble women, entered into the religious orders, and became monks and nuns."

According to the Hindu chroniclers, therefore, the Buddhist missions met with enormous success in the western lands ruled by the Greeks. A century after Asoka's death Dushta Gamini, rajah of Ceylon, erected a grand *dagaba* 200 ft. high, called the Maha Thupa, and invited monks from all parts to attend its consecration. Among the visitors were Mahadewo, who brought 460,000 monks from the land of the Pehlevis (*i.e.*, the Parthians), and the Greek Mahadhamma-rakkhita, who brought 30,000 mendicants from Alexandria, "the city of the Yawanas"—apparently the Egyptian Alexandria. These figures are no doubt to be taken *cum grano salis*; but it is evident that Buddhism was in a very flourishing state throughout Asia, even to the shores of the Mediterranean.

We referred just now to the Greek kings of Bactria. For the first century of its existence this dynasty was very energetic; and as the rajahs of Magadha declined, the Greeks conquered Afghanistan, the Panjab, and the whole of northern India down to the Vindhya Mountains. The chief memorial of their rule is the series of gold and silver coins that have been found scattered throughout their territories. These coins are executed in the highest style of Greek art, and bear Greek emblems and Greek inscriptions. But side by side with these were issued bronze pieces that were no doubt the chief currency of the natives, for they had bilingual inscriptions in Aryan and Greek; and some of these coins bore distinctly Buddhist emblems, such as a *dagaba* in stages, surmounted by a star, the Bo-tree, surrounded by its barrier, and the "Wheel of the Law." One of these Greek kings, Menander, is still celebrated in Buddhist tradition, and gives his name to a popular manual of the faith, the *Milinda Prashnaya*, or "Questions of Menander." This work was originally composed in Sanscrit; but is now only extant in a Pali translation. It details a series of dialogues between the Greek king at his capital in Sagala (near Lahore) and the celebrated saint Nagasena, in the course of which the whole Buddhist philosophy is explained and established. It tells how Milinda, king of the Yawanas, like a true successor of the dialecticians of Athens, spent his leisure time in debating with the *pandits*; and so acute was his reasoning that the most illustrious doctors of India had to confess themselves vanquished. But at last he met his match. Nagasena came to Sagala and expounded the metaphysics of Buddhism; every doubt was resolved, every objection was met, and king Menander embraced the faith. The glorious sanctity of Menander was even proclaimed in Greece, for Plutarch relates that this monarch was so venerated by his subjects that the cities disputed the possession of his corpse, and eventually cremated the body, and shared the ashes among them, the relics being treated as those of a deity. In other words, Menander was treated like a Buddhist saint, and his relics were enshrined in various places for the edification of the pious.

Not only did the Grecian monarchs patronise the faith, but inscriptions still remain in various parts of India commemorating the gifts made by private Yawanas to various temples and monasteries. It is therefore evident that the Law of Buddha had many Greek disciples; and as intercourse between India and the West continued for many centuries, it was inevitable that the legends and doctrines of Buddhism should be carried westward, even if later kings did not organise missions on a large scale like those of Asoka. The Manichæan heresy, which originated in Babylonia in the third century A.D. was admittedly

* "Le Bouddhisme et les Grecs," *Revue de l'Histoire des Religions*, Tome XIII., p. 36. (Paris, 1891.)

† The country west of the Panjab, according to Rhys Davids.

impregnated with Buddhistic ideas. It could hardly fail to be so, seeing the strong influence which the Indian philosophy had brought to bear in those districts for nearly five hundred years. The Manichees are almost indistinguishable from Buddhists in their chief practices. The "elect" were monastics bound to celibacy; forbidden to destroy life, whether animal or vegetable; forbidden to partake of flesh, wine, or milk, and spending their lives in contemplation. Mani, the founder of the sect, received his doctrines from Terebinthus, who took the name of Buddha, and pretended to have been born of a virgin. The master of Terebinthus was Skythianus; but it is probable that this name arose through confusion with Sakya. Gautama Buddha descended from the Sakya clan, and he is therefore often styled the Sakya-muni, or sage of the Sakyas. This, however, was not known to the Christian writers, so that they may very well have confounded the title with the more familiar Skythians. In any event, these names convey the impression that Mani was understood to be a spiritual descendant of the Buddha; and when the Catholics overcame the Manichees, they made them repeat a formula of adjuration which cursed Zarades, Bodda, and Skythianus. But this did not annihilate the Buddhistic tradition, for as late as the eighth century, A.D., St. John of Damascus composed the well-known romance of Barlaam and Joasaph which contains the legend of Gautama, and led to his canonisation as a Christian saint under the name of St. Josaphat.

In face of all this evidence of Buddhist influence, surprise has often been expressed that no classical writer should have shown any acquaintance with Buddhism; and only two patristic authors mention the founder. Clemens Alexandrinus only knows that some of the Indians adored "Boutta" as a deity; and Jerome (*contra Jovian*, bk. i.) says: "It is handed down as a tradition among the Gymnosophists of India, that Buddha, the founder of their system, was brought forth by a virgin from her side." But this ignorance was not confined to Buddhism. The cult of Mithra was widely spread over the whole Roman Empire, and the discovery of sculptures in various localities has proved the wealth and devotion of its followers; yet we can glean scarcely any information about Mithraism from the Greek and Latin authors. Christianity itself is almost unnoticed in classical literature; and the references to it are probably forgeries. So that it is entirely unlikely that Buddhism would have attracted any attention from classical authors who, we can see, were only concerned with the Homeric mythology and its literary tradition. The numberless superstitions that infested the Empire had no attraction for the cultured classes of Rome and Athens; Brahminism overwhelmed Buddhism in India itself. While Zoroastrianism, Christianity, and Islamism successively swept over Syria and Persia, and were quite sufficient to obliterate all traces of Buddhistic efforts. The story of the Buddhist missions is only to be imperfectly pieced together from scattered monuments, and from the religious records of distant Ceylon; but we may be sure that the doctrines of the Buddha would not have made their enduring mark in western Asia without a long and enthusiastic propaganda.

CHILPERIC.

Is Religion a Disease?

(Concluded from page 181.)

THERE are an endless number and variety of physical diseases. Some are mild, some are violent; some are almost harmless, and may be called the disease of health. Others are violent, infectious, dangerous, and fatal. In the same way there are a variety of mental diseases, varying in degree and intensity. But to divide mental and physical is only a logical convenience, to help clearness of thought. All the

universe, from the infinite small to the infinite large, is one whole. All the parts are connected, and there is no break between them. So, also, is all knowledge one whole. All the sciences merge into one another, and there is no dividing line to sever their connection. So, also, natural and spiritual, and physical and mental, are one whole. All ideas are derived from, and are based on, nature and experience. Mental diseases, when analysed, are found to be the effects of physical causes quite as much as any bodily ailment. Without a physical body mental disease would be inconceivable. Mental or spiritual disorders never had an existence apart from a physical body.

Mental diseases manifest themselves in many different ways, as physical ones do. When we meet a man who sees monsters in the air and wonders on the land which every sane and healthy man knows do not exist, we never hesitate to conclude that the man is insane. And do not Christians see visions which normal men never see? They see angels, devils, saints, heaven and hell, Jesus and God, and mansions in the sky; and some of them say if we had eyes of faith we should see them too. An eminent apologist declared lately that sceptics fail to see because they have not got a faculty to see which Christians possess. But the faculty is a dreaming faculty. We need not deny that Christians do see visions. They see clear enough, and hear the voices; but they are only dreams, hallucinations, delusions, phantasms of imagination, existing only in their own brains. In any connection but that of religion such symptoms would be taken as evidence of a disordered brain.

Whenever we meet with a man who talks incessantly on all kinds of subjects of which he is ignorant, talks nonsensically on matters familiar to all, makes wild, incoherent statements and assertions about things unknown and unknowable, we say at once to one another, "Poor fellow; he has a slate off." And is this not a characteristic of Christians, and especially of Christian apologists? If anyone went through the sermons, addresses, and articles by Christians on the question, Is Christianity True? and the Bible during the Centenary celebrations, I would not be surprised if he said that half of them consisted of ravings, wild assertions, assumptions, unfounded statements, unprovable declarations, absurd suppositions, baseless presumptions, ridiculous anticipations, erroneous conceptions, impossible promises, misconceptions, misinterpretations, and misleading directions. Volumes of sermons, even by the most eminent preachers—say Spurgeon or Talmage—are an inexhaustible store of absurd statements and unprovable and unknowable affirmations. If this is not an indication of a deranged mind, caused by religion, it is something very like it, and very difficult to be separated from it.

One of the symptoms of the disease of alcoholism is untruthfulness. Drunkards will utter palpable falsehoods seriously, as if they were truths in which they believed. No dependence can be put on anything they say. Their brain is injured by alcohol, and that accounts for it. I hesitate to accuse Christians of wilfully lying; but I have no hesitation in saying that whenever Christians speak about the Bible, the soul, Jesus and God, heaven and hell, and especially about unbelievers and non-Christian nations and religions, they make assertions and accusations without inquiry or evidence, which are libellous and untrue. If this does not prove that their religion is a disease, it points to an alternative which is less creditable to them.

There are men—many men, I fear, who experience and exhibit unbounded delight in the torture and agonies of living creatures, including human beings. The only way to account for such a sad fact is to say that heredity has given them a brutal nature, and environment has made them depraved. But what can we say about Christians who receive consolation from a belief in hell? I have seen Christians fairly enjoying themselves when listening to a sermon on the eternal torment of sinners in hell,

and have heard them speak of the sermon afterwards with delight and satisfaction. How to explain such a phenomenon without attributing it to the baneful effect of religion I fail to see.

If a heathen came here from any part of the world, and told us seriously that he had a message from God, his God and the only true God, who had sent him to convert us and save us from eternal damnation; and that God Almighty was with him in his heart; and that by virtue of his faith in his God he could work miracles, remove mountains, heal the sick without medicine, stop the operations of nature, change the substance of things by his will, and control the eternal destiny of the soul in the world beyond, everyone would say the man was insane, or a wicked impostor, and Christians would be the loudest in their declarations. I think, in the case of the heathen, all Christians would agree that his religion was a disease that had infected his mind, or that he was a rank impostor. Now, if that is true of the heathen, why not of Christians, who act exactly in the same way and do the same things? Take the priests as representative Christians, and you will find that all of them, one way or another, claim to be ambassadors of God, called and sent by him with a message to man to save his soul. It is true that Catholics would call Protestants heretics, and Protestants would label Catholics Pagan idolators; but, as they all claim to be Christians, we must, in the argument, make one bundle of the lot. Like the heathen, they carry God Almighty with them in their heart. Are they not temples of the Holy Spirit, who is God Almighty and who dwells within them? God the Father is in Jesus who is God the Son, and Jesus is inside the Christian. At all events, that is the teaching of the New Testament. Christians can heal the sick by prayer—at least, they say so; and the Bible says so, too. Of course, if they can overcome disease by prayer, there is no difficulty in believing that prayer can make God change his mind and alter the course of nature in answer to it. Therefore, when there is an epidemic, Christians tell God in prayer to put a stop to it. When there is a wet season they tell God to stop the rain, and when it is dry too long they order him to make rain. And can they not perform miracles? If they can, as they profess to do, turn bread and wine into flesh and blood, and into flesh and blood of a God, and eat him, there is nothing more miraculous for them to do, unless it be the great feat of annihilating sin. And their power extends to the world to come; for whom they like they can send to hell or keep out of hell, send to heaven or keep out of it, sending them to purgatory instead, where they can be kept till the priest gets enough money to buy them out. Whether the priests believe all the nonsense or not I hesitate to say. If they do, religion has seriously affected their minds. If they do not believe it they are a class of contemptible impostors, deserving nothing better than ridicule and execration. But whether the priests believe or not, it is evident that the dupes do, otherwise they would not give their wealth to the priests to exercise their magic arts in their behalf when living and for their souls when dead. In their case it seems to me that religion has proved itself to be a dreadful disease, which makes them objects of pity and sympathy.

If Christians are not infected by religion as a cause of their conduct and actions we are driven to the conclusion that they are imbeciles or impostors. That is especially the case with the priests. It is very difficult to believe that they are deceived by their religion; but if they are not, they are rank impostors of the deepest dye.

Of course, I use the word religion in its theological sense, meaning the dogmas and creeds. Religion of work and service is a different thing and is the same everywhere. But the religion of dogmas and ceremonies is a superstition, delusion, and hallucination. In a sense, religion is the protest of man against God. Prayer is a charge against God for wrong doing, and a petition for a better treatment at his hand. Hell has been invented to tell God that he ought to punish

sin, if at all, here and now. And heaven intimates to God what he ought to provide for his children in this world and not in another when they are dead. But they are all delusions and dreams of human imaginations.

R. J. DERFEL.

Obituary.

One of the oldest members of the Huddersfield Branch, Mr. William Entwistle, died on the 15th inst., in his 79th year. He had lived in well-earned retirement from business for some years. He was a man of very quiet demeanor and character, and had been a passive member of this Branch from its formation; before then he was one of the old Secularist body. He was cremated at the Manchester Crematorium.—W. H. SPIVEY.

Free Thoughts.

THERE are lots of good men and women in the world who never do any good for the world.

Christianity is founded upon absolute injustice, upon one of the very worst principles that ever poisoned the human mind, that the innocent should suffer for the guilty.

"If a man die shall he live again?" No, not if he was dead when he died.

Martin Luther said to Romanism: Heads I win, tails you win. That is the way it has been in this country,

The old way: The world, the flesh and the devil. The true way: The Church, the flesh and all the devil's children.

An old maid was asked if she ever played solitaire. She answered, "Play solitaire? Yes! I should think so. I have played it for over fifty years."

The punishment of hell to a man to-day is no more than as a youth he endured when he had to pay a forfeit with a red-headed girl.

The man who lives an upright life, minds his own business and does no wrong to his neighbor, will not have much cause to condemn the laws or criticise the government.

If some people did not care so much what other people say they would not say such wicked things themselves.

The priest's motto: We must save God or we cannot save ourselves.

Lots of people are afraid of their own shadow, but the man who fears God is afraid of the shadow of his idea.

A man denies the divinity of Jesus, but asserts his "divine humanity." If he will rub out the "divine" he will come pretty near telling the truth—that is, if Jesus ever lived.

We would like to know what "sacred literature" is, and what makes it sacred. Is the Bible Holy if it is man's work instead of God's?

One of the terrible temptations to young men of this age is to get rich. The old Franklin advice, to make money, needs to be supplemented by the higher counsel, to make manhood.

If the Pope loves America, why does he not throw up his job at the Vatican and become a citizen of the United States? The Pope loves America for what America puts in his pocket.

It is safe to say anything of the Holy Ghost. He left no relatives to defend his character. The Holy Ghost is nobody's ghost to-day.

—Boston Investigator.

UNIVERSAL INTERACTION.

Wherever men are gathered, all the air
Is charged with human feeling, human thought;
Each shout and cry and laugh, each curse and prayer,
Are into its vibrations surely wrought.
Unspoken passion, wordless meditation,
Are breathed into it with our respiration;
It is with our life fraught, and overfraught.

So that no man there breathes earth's simple breath,
As if alone on mountain, or wide seas;
But nourishes warm life or hastens death
With joys and sorrows, health and foul disease,
Wisdom and folly, good and evil labors
Incessant of his multitudinous neighbors;
He in his turn affecting all of these.

—James Thomson ("B.V."),

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.

NORTH CAMBERWELL HALL (61 New Church Road, Camberwell): 7.30, F. A. Davies.

SOUTH LONDON ETHICAL SOCIETY (Masonic Hall, Camberwell New-road): 7, Miss McMillan, "The Army of the Unfit."

WEST LONDON ETHICAL SOCIETY (Kensington Town Hall, High-street): 11.15, Dr. Stanton Coit, "Wise as Serpents."

WOOD GREEN ETHICAL SOCIETY (Fairfax Hall, Portland-gardens, Harringay): 7.15, C. H. Rosher, "Present-day Religion: What it is, and what it might be."

COUNTRY.

BIRMINGHAM BRANCH N.S.S. (Town Hall): 3, G. W. Foote, "Holy Russia and Heathen Japan"; 7, Freethought Demonstration. Speakers: G. W. Foote, C. Cohen, J. Lloyd. Organ recital at 6, by Mr. C. W. Perkins, City Organist.

GLASGOW SECULAR SOCIETY (110 Brunswick-street): Mrs. Bradlaugh-Bonner, 12 noon, "Forced Labor" (with special reference to Assam); 6.30, "Religious Intolerance."

LEEDS (Covered Market, Vicar's Croft): 11, George Weir, "God and Man"; Woodhouse Moor: 3, "Gospel Yarns"; Town Hall Square, 7, W. Woolham, "Holy Moses."

LIVERPOOL (Alexandra Hall, Islington-square): 3, H. Percy Ward, "The Origin of Conscience"; 7, "Christian Evidences: Where Are They?"

MANCHESTER SECULAR HALL (Rusholme-road, All Saints'): 6.30, Dr. Greenwood, "The Single Tax."

NEWCASTLE DEBATING SOCIETY (Lockhart's Cathedral Cafe): Thursday, March 31, at 8, R. Mitchell, "Robert Burns' Poetry."

SOUTH SHIELDS (Captain Duncan's Navigation School, Market-place): 7, Business Meeting; Lecture arrangements.

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