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In the grave I may speak through the stones, in the voice of my friends, and in the accents of those words, which their love may afford my memory.—JOHN DONNE.

Dowie—and Others.

THERE are many varieties of foolishness in the world, but none that is so difficult to cure as religious foolishness. When one comes across a fool in politics, in art, or in science, one can tackle him with some prospect of success. There is usually to be found some common ground of reason that can be used as a foothold to get more. But how is one to approach the religious fool successfully? Point out to him the unreasonableness of his creed, he does not stop to deny or disprove the charge; he simply retorts that reason is not to be depended on, and counts every proof of the irrationality of his beliefs as something in their favour. He is proof against attack, because reason is the only weapon that can be used against him; and reason, to be effective, must be recognised by both combatants.

And the existence of the religious fool naturally provides the condition for the development of the religious rogue. So long as fools are in the world there will not be wanting rogues to practise on their folly; indeed, the only sure way of spoiling the latter's game is to wipe the first out of existence. And just as the religious fool is the most hopeless of his kind, so the religious rogue is the most brazen and the most successful, though the most transparent to those who have been endowed with intelligence enough to see through his trickery. One need only run over in one's mind the numerous religious impostors, both ancient and modern, to realise that in no other walk of life would so much ignorance and impudence, combined with unscrupulousness, have met with so much success. Messiahs, miracle-workers, end-of-the-world prophets, faith-healers, reincarnated biblical characters—the list is almost infinite in length and variety. And the religious fool learns nothing from the game being so frequently played. The crop of fools is perennial, and the rogues jump at the tempting dish.

One of the latest exploiters of the rich field of religious folly is "Prophet" Dowie, of Zion City, U.S.A. Like the originator of the Mormons, Dowie founded a new sect and a new city; and like another religious leader, General Booth, much of the property of the new sect belongs to him. Like Booth, also, he saw that the religionist might be commercially exploited with considerable ease—and he set about this work with considerable success. But Booth was astute enough not to run into any unnecessary collision with other Christian sects. Moreover, Booth was content to announce himself as merely inspired by God to do a certain work and preach a certain doctrine. Dowie was less moderate. He went "bald-headed" for all the sects, which was bound to arouse hostility, and he declared himself a reincarnation of Elijah. Of course no one could prove he was not, but it was a tactical blunder all the same.

In Australia Dowie got into serious trouble through declaring that if Jesus came again Edward the Seventh would take second place. One would have thought all good Christians would accept this statement without demur; but a Jewish mayor, who

did not believe in Jesus, protested on behalf of Christians who did, and police protection became necessary for the "Prophet." The incident is only illuminating so far as it records the opinion of Colonial Christians that even though Jesus did come again he would have to settle down as a member of the British Empire and acknowledge as his liege sovereign lord King Edward the Seventh.

A fortnight ago Dowie landed in England. He came, he saw, and—went away again, richer in experience if not in pocket. Hotel-keepers declined to accept him as a visitor, and at the meeting-place of the Zionists in the Euston-road energetic Christians assembled to mob the "Prophet," and solaced their gentle souls by throwing stones through windows of the building. This is the same spirit of gentle Christian charity that spread broken glass on the floor of the Mohammedan Mosque at Liverpool. We force our missionaries upon the Chinese at the point of the bayonet, we insist upon all those peoples—who may be bullied—entertaining the preachers of Christianity, and when the missionary of a new faith visits us we treat him to an outbreak of Christian Hooliganism! And a London newspaper said this was "England's glorious revenge!"

Generally the religious press is silent over the Dowie visit, probably with the feeling that any undue publicity might stir up unpleasant comparisons between Dowie and other operators in the religious field. The ordinary press, however, scented copy, and their comments are worthy of a little notice. None of them, it may be noted, condemn the Hooliganism of the Christian mob; on the contrary, they seem to think it eminently praiseworthy, and furnish numerous excuses for the mobbing and stone-throwing. One of these is that Dowie is an ignorant religious quack, brimming over with vituperation against all who do not agree with him. I do not question the justice of the charge, but only marvel at its one-sided application. Is Dowie in this respect worse, for instance, than the evangelist Torrey—to go no farther afield? He is certainly not a greater liar, and those who have followed his speeches will not question his talent for abuse. Yet Torrey was taken up by clergymen all over the country, and the press reported his speeches without a single complaint as to their character. Of course, Torrey was careful enough to abuse *non-Christians*, and this makes a wonderful difference. Moreover, he did not aim at setting up a rival sect. He was content if his own business paid, and did not mind other firms in the same line reaping a share of the profits. Which was wise. Still, a religious consciousness that praises Torrey and denounces Dowie is only repeating in another direction its performance of encouraging a blaring Salvation Army band on Sunday, and prosecuting a newsboy for disturbing with his cries the day of rest.

Another excuse is that Dowie is an impostor. Agreed; but is he the only one in England? It is hard enough to believe, I grant, that a man shrewd enough to amass the money he is said to have wrung from his dupes could be silly enough to believe all he says he believes. But there is just the same problem facing us with any number of other Christian operators. There is one individual who has been preaching—and postponing—the end of the world

for many years, and who is in anything but a state of poverty as the result of his labors. And do all the Christian clergy believe what they preach, and as their listeners believe they do believe? I am constitutionally a sceptic; but even Christians will follow me in my doubts as to the *bona-fides* of many of the clergy. Does anyone really believe that men of education in the pulpit accept—honestly accept—their creeds, confessions of faith, the miracles of their “sacred” books, and all the hundred-and-one absurdities that constitute Christian theology? Are they not preaching year in and year out stories that they *know* are untrue or unreasonable? We all know they are; and that in this respect, except that their language may be more refined, there is nothing to distinguish them from Dowie of Zion City, U.S.A. Verily, if we break the windows of all meeting-places where hypocrites officiate, and drive the hypocrites out of the country, glaziers will be busy in the near future, and our population will be reduced by a good few thousand.

But Dowie professed to cure disease by faith! Well, every genuine Christian believes that disease can be cured by faith. The New Testament teaches it; the Church of England expressly declares in favor of the doctrine; preachers of all denominations are continually telling us of disease that has been cured by the prayers of the faithful. Where, then, is the difference between Dowie and other Christians? Well, there is a difference, small but important. Other Christians believe in faith-healing, but they also believe in doctors. They say with Voltaire, in cases of sickness prayer is an excellent thing—if taken with the proper quantity of physic. Dowie says, “Hang the physic; we’ll have the prayer alone.” And on this the other Christians protest. They say that to act in this manner is to expose the machinery to the scoffing glance of the outsider. The fly could persuade other flies that *he* was turning the wheel so long as he did not leave it. It was when he left the wheel and the wheel still revolved that the value of his claim became apparent. It is decidedly unwise of Christians who assert their belief in the power of prayer to cure diseases to leave out the physic.

Another charge against the “Prophet” is that he “blasphemously” declared himself an incarnation of Elijah. This, again, was an error of judgment. A few hundred years ago it might have gone down, and the calendar of saints enriched by the acquisition of “Saint Dowie.” But it was injudicious to try it on to-day. It led scoffers to ask him to perform a miracle—which certain religious papers considered a quite just request, although they express their indignation at the “gross materialism” of the Jerusalem crowd that is said to have asked Jesus for the same proof of his mission. Still, is there any substantial difference between the man who proclaims himself as an incarnation of Elijah and other men who say they are singled out and inspired by God for a special purpose? What of the clergymen who declare they are called by God to another church—generally at an advanced salary—and who go on their knees to ask God to direct them what to do when the offer is made, having previously given instructions to have their furniture packed for removal? And what of the Church of England minister who declares at his ordination that the Holy Ghost has moved him to apply for “Holy Orders,” knowing all the while that his profession was chosen for him by his parents, just as they chose that of lawyer or doctor for his more gifted brothers? And what of the bishop who says *he* is selected by God Almighty for the appointment—on the advice of the Prime Minister? Is there any substantial difference between any of them and Dowie?

Gentlemen, ye are humbugs all! The field of fools is large, and the rogues riot unmolested. Unmolested, that is, so long as the old adage is respected and they play fair with one another. It is when they do not play the game, but act so as to interfere with long-established firms whose hypocrisy

is old enough to have gained an air of respectability—like grey hair, that invites respect, even though it shelters a rogue—that trouble begins. Dowie tried to play the game off his own bat without regard to other practitioners; and in England, at least, he has paid the price. Poor Dowie!

C. COHEN.

The Crucial Point.

How proverbially fond many people are of beating about the bush, instead of making straight for the core of the subject. They argue vehemently about side issues and systematically evade the really burning question. They closely resemble the caricatured Dutchman who insists upon knowing your full name, and upon telling you his own, before breaking to you the startling news that your house is on fire, the only difference being that they often run away without touching the central point at all. In the controversy between Freethinkers and Theologians the all-important question that demands to be settled is seldom, if ever, honestly faced. It is comparatively immaterial what Christianity has or has not done since its first entrance into the world, the only vital point being, Is it true, or is it not true? If true, its practical failure to realise its objects would be no argument against it; and if not true, its most abounding success would be no argument for it. The thing that is true *deserves* to prosper, and the thing that is false *deserves* to perish. When seriously asked, “Is Christianity True?” the Christian’s usual answer is, “Yes, for otherwise its miraculous triumphs in the world would be an insoluble mystery.” But a moment’s reflection will conclusively show how wholly fallacious such an answer is, or how entirely it misses the point at issue.

Freethinkers stoutly maintain that Christianity has been a colossal failure. Even numerically it has not triumphed. The Ven. Archdeacon Sinclair frankly admitted, the other day, that in London it has been, for many years, alarmingly losing ground. Numerous other prominent Christian workers regretfully make the same admission. But the failure of Christianity is further proved by the fact that those who professedly live under its banner are not ethically superior to other people. Speaking generally, they are neither better nor worse than their non-Christian neighbors. We know that the most fervent religious enthusiasm may flourish side by side with the most degrading immorality. But my point is that however signally Christianity may have failed to fulfil its own promises, it is not on that account to be dismissed as false. It may be true in spite of its failures, and it may be false in spite of its successes.

Christianity is a religion that concerns itself primarily and pre-eminently not with time but with eternity, not with man’s relations to society but with his relations to God, not with morals but with worship. Its most fascinating word is heaven, and its supreme aim is to make mankind citizens of that delectable land. It enjoins faith in God as an all-good and all-loving Heavenly Father, in Christ as the redeemer of our race from the power of Satan and the fear of death, and in the life that is to come, in relation to which the life that now is is only a dream, a shadow, and, for its own sake, absolutely not worth living. It proclaims the proper deity of Christ, his virgin birth, the miraculous character of his life, his death of atoning sacrifice, and his triumphant resurrection and ascension. These are what it calls its sovereign truths, its fundamental doctrines, its unshakable realities, which all its priests are under oath faithfully to teach. But what proof is there that such doctrines are true? At one time all the proofs required were to be found in the Bible. Now, however, the Bible has been superseded by experience. But the strangest thing of all is that experience must be

preceded by faith. Unless I believe in God I cannot know him. Unless I believe in Christ he cannot give me salvation. The Bible itself tells us that "faith is the assurance [substratum] of things hoped for, the proving [test] of things not seen." Without faith experience is an impossibility. Do you not see how infinitely absurd this teaching is? The greatest simpleton on earth must know that faith cannot give reality to its objects; but it is equally clear that the objects of faith are profoundly real to those who are able to exercise it. The other day I persuaded myself to believe that a friend had presented me with a million pounds, and I was an indescribably happy man—as long as my faith lasted. What good would I not do with that money! The slums would all vanish like morning clouds! The objects of my faith are of necessity grandly real to me. That is to say, they possess a *subjective* reality, or a reality which concerns myself alone and any others who may share my faith. Well, Christians are *believers* in what they call unseen realities, and these alleged realities affect them proportionately to the strength and vehemence of their faith. Languid believers experience but little. There are many Christians whose faith in God and Christ is so weak that it brings them scarcely any joy at all. The risen Savior does not fill their hearts with seraphic rapture. Faith both creates and limits experience.

In the natural world faith *follows* experience. Here we see first, and then believe. We investigate, make experiments, collect and sift evidences, catechise facts, and if the results are satisfactory faith is born and we get to be known as believers. Experience begets faith, not faith experience. In the so-called spiritual world, on the contrary, we are solemnly exhorted to believe without evidence, to exercise faith in the entire absence of proof, and assurance is given that if we faithfully and sincerely do this, we shall see, and know, and experience on an ever-increasing scale. And this is perfectly true, as well as a satisfactory explanation of all religious enjoyments. *But what causes the genesis of this religious faith?* What makes the first act of it possible? According to the Bible faith is the gift of God. In that case, no man is responsible for his unbelief. It is God's own fault that such myriads disbelieve in him. Why does he give faith to some, and withhold it from others? The truth is, however, that belief rests on some external authority. People believe because other people believed before them. The child follows the example of his parents, or accepts the testimony of the Church, and so naturally becomes a believer. In his turn he too can boast of his experience, and quote it as the supreme proof that Christianity is true. But it proves nothing of the kind. It merely proves that he believes Christianity to be true. Hence there is absolutely no proof of the objective existence of a being called God, or of the reality of a supernatural realm.

But is this faith in the truth of Christianity capable of producing the highest type of character? That is the claim made for it by Christian apologists. But it is a false claim. It is readily admitted that many Christians are in the highest sense noble and good, and devote themselves to the service of society; but that admission is made in order to emphasise the truth that the excellency of their character is not traceable to the influence of their religion. Such nobility is the fruit not of Christianity, but of human nature itself. The superiority of one man to another is due to heredity and environment, not to Christian belief and practice. As a *Christian*, Mr. Gladstone was, in early life, an advocate of slavery; but later, under the pressure of environment, he became, *as a man*, a strong supporter of abolition. It was the Quakers who initiated, both in England and in America, the abolitionist campaign. In 1827 they declared that to hold slaves was "not a commendable or allowed" practice. Now, as everybody knows, the distinguishing characteristic of the Quakers has always been their brave and persistent reliance on the inward light that is, on the best convictions and impulses

of their own nature. *Theologically* they are great heretics, being without a creed, a liturgy, a priesthood, or a sacrament; but *ethically* they have excelled all orthodox Christians, because they have been free to follow their own noblest instincts.

In America, especially in the South where the degrading institution flourished, the Church justified slavery in the name of God. In 1836 the Moderator of the Presbyterian Assembly, Dr. T. S. Witherspoon, was a slave-holder. This is what he said:—

"I draw my warrant from the Scriptures of the Old and the New Testament to hold my slaves in bondage. The principle of holding slaves in bondage is recognised by God. When the tardy process of the law is too long in redressing our grievances, we at the South have adopted the summary process of Judge Lynch."

Dr. Witherspoon was generally regarded as an ideal saint, as a specially-favored man of God, and as a leader whom the whole Church could safely follow. The attitude of the Northern Churches was practically the same. Christians, *as Christians*, have never opposed slavery. I may be told that Wendell Phillips, William Lloyd Garrison, and Henry Ward Beecher, the distinguished abolitionists, were zealous Christians. True; but it was as humanitarians, and not as Christians, that they so passionately denounced slavery. Those illustrious advocates of human freedom were firm believers in God, but they interpreted him through their own nature. To them he was a vastly different being from what he was to Dr. Witherspoon and the Churches.

I have referred to the subject of slavery as an illustration of the undeniable truth that the highest type of character is not distinctively Christian, but undoubtedly human. God is not the original of man's best character, it is man who is the original of God's best character. God has not created man in his own image, it is man who has created God in his own image. This is clearly seen from a careful study of the Bible, and specially from a faithful examination of the history of the Church. God's character varies according to the inherent differences between the men who portray it. Consequently, it is safe to infer that the belief in God as an infinite and absolute personality has its roots deep down in superstition. Man shot forth, projected his own thought, externalised or flung out his own personality, and called it God, and then fell down and worshiped it. This is the only way in which we can rationally account for the different and conflicting conceptions of the Supreme Being which have always prevailed in the world.

Whether there is a God or not no one can tell; but it is a certainty that the Christian conception of God is the offspring of faith and metaphysics, and not in any sense or degree of knowledge. The Incarnation, which is the foundation on which the whole Christian Scheme rests, is an imagined fact, the reality or historicity of which is insusceptible of proof. The resurrection of Christ, which is said to be the corner-stone of the Christian Religion, is likewise an imagined event, and incapable of verification. In this light, the belief in a supernatural world is seen to be the outcome partly of fear, partly of ignorance, and partly of human inventiveness. Is Christianity true, then? No; because its so-called fundamental truths transcend and contradict knowledge, and because it rests not on verified facts, but on semi-emotional and semi-intellectual dreams, or transcendental assumptions. Experience, we are told, is the final test of truth, and I ask, Can anybody know the truth of the Incarnation, the Virgin Birth, and the Resurrection by experience? Such alleged events lie altogether outside the realm of experience, and consequently cannot be known as historical facts. People may believe them to be facts, but their belief does not make them facts. This is the crucial point which modern apologists dare not face. Rather than confront it, they fly off at a tangent, and assert that they know Christ is God by the wonderful miracles he has performed in their souls. To this I reply that the alleged miracles have been performed, if at all, not by Christ as God, but by their faith in

him: as such; and that the same miracles, and much greater ones, can be and often are performed by natural means. Morality is a fruit that grows and ripens on the tree of human nature, and the quality of the fruit depends alone on the health of the tree.

JOHN T. LLOYD.

Herbert Spencer's "Autobiography."—IV.

SPENCER not only admits but emphasises the fact that he was not strong on the emotional side. There was a decided overbalance of the intellectual faculties in his composition. Yet he was a lover of music, upon which he wrote with knowledge and discrimination. He appears to have devoured a good number of novels in his younger days, and his taste seems to have survived into old age for that light literature which George Meredith has called "the garden of the soul." One can hardly imagine him, however, taking an intense interest in such productions. He had a real appreciation of poetry, but his likes and dislikes were strongly personal. Perhaps it was the enthusiasm of youth, which attacks even the coolest natures, that made him like Shelley. Writing, at the age of twenty-four, to one friend about another, Spencer says: "He is, I believe, very poetical—admires Shelley enthusiastically and conceives him by far the finest poet of the era, in which I quite coincided with him." In another letter he says: "I lately bought Shelley's poems in four volumes. It will be a great treat to you to read them, which you shall do the first time I come over. His 'Prometheus Unbound' is the most beautiful thing I ever read by far." He admits that he found Homer (in an English translation) quite disgusting, partly because of the "ceaseless repetition of battles and speeches" in the *Iliad*, but more, apparently, because "the subject-matter appeals continually to brutal passions and the instincts of the savage"—which is not a catholic view of the case, for there is more than this in the *Iliad* and far more in the *Odyssey*. But, strange to say, Spencer's objection to a long reading of Dante had nothing whatever to do with his terrible hells, and the implacable way in which he places people in them on his own judgment. "I soon begin to want change," he says, "in the mode of presentation and change in the quality of the substance, which is too continuously rich." All poetry which he cares to read "must have intensity." He regards "emotion as the essence of poetry." We should rather call it the primary condition. All great poets have great intellects. There can be no satisfactory and durable poetry without mind as well as feeling, and to call either element alone "the essence" of poetry is hardly scientific. Nor does Spencer grasp the true principle (we venture to think) when he says that "If the emotion is not of a pronounced kind, the proper vehicle for it is prose." The proper antithesis of prose is verse. The question is one of form. Some great poetry has been written in rhythmical prose; and rhythm and rhyme are two very different things. Spencer practically admits this in the following passage, which we extract as expressing his deliberate view of the question:—

"I have occasionally argued that the highest type of poetry must be the one in which the form continually varies with the matter; rising and falling in its poetical traits according as the wave of emotion grows stronger or becomes weaker—now descending to a prose which has only a suspicion of rhythm in it, and characterised by words and figures of but moderate strength, and now, through various grades, rising to the lyrical form, with its definite measures and vivid metaphors. Attempts have I think been made to produce works having this heterogeneity of form, but with no great success: transcendent genius is required for it.

"About others' requirements I cannot of course speak; but my own requirement is—little poetry and of the best. Even the true poets are far too productive. If they would write only one-fourth of the amount, the world would be a gainer. As for the versifiers and the

minor poets, they do little more than help to drown good literature in a flood of bad. There is something utterly wearisome in this continual working-up afresh the old materials into slightly different forms—talking continually of skies and stars, of seas and streams, of trees and flowers, sunset and sunrise, the blowing of breezes and the singing of birds, &c.—now describing these familiar things themselves, and now using them in metaphors that are worn threadbare. The poetry commonly produced does not bubble up as a spring, but is simply pumped up; and pumped-up poetry is not worth reading.

"No one should write verse if he can help it. Let him suppress it if possible; but if it bursts forth in spite of him it may be of value."

There is truth in this, of course; but is it any more than one aspect of a general truth? Job's exclamation, "Oh that mine enemy would write a book," would have little force to-day. Most of his enemies would write a book without his invitation—if he only waited a little. There is a vast output of what is called "literature," and how much of it is entitled to the designation? Dr. Henry More, the seventeenth century Platonist, sneered at "this scripturient age." What would he call it if he were living now? Delicacy forbids us to print our conjecture. But neither his admonitions nor those of a hundred Herbert Spencers will ever be heeded. While readers hold out writers will be equally persevering. And the minor poets—all are minor except a dozen or so—may well ask why they should wear a special gag. Why not gag the novelists, the essayists, the historians, the divines, and even the philosophers? A poor versifier might humbly point out that there is a terrible deal of "working up the old materials" even in philosophical systems. After all, a philosopher might be charitable to the poor little poets. All men cannot be great, and it takes a lot to make up a world. Besides, a little poet occasionally writes something that lives. In a happy moment he produces something original; perhaps the inspiration never recurs; but that one effort enters into the common stock of beautiful things, stimulates or consoles numberless readers for many generations, and secures its author the harmless immortality for which he yearned. And as for the great poets, to tell them to be less fecund is simply to fly in the face of the common characteristic of genius. The fecundity of great genius is a constant feature of literature. Look at Dickens and Balzac; look at Beethoven and Wagner; look at Shelley, with his few years of life, and Burns and Byron, who both died well under forty. Look at Shakespeare. Masterpiece after masterpiece flowed from his creative brain, and the final *Tempest* displayed every element of his genius in mellow maturity.

While talking about genius we may occur to what Spencer says about it in another aspect. People sometimes imagine that a man of genius must be all genius. They might as well expect to find a tree all fruit. The largest part of the life of the greatest men is that which they share with the rest of mankind. And they live that part just like other men—sometimes a little more so. There was really nothing in the way that Shakespeare did up his boots to indicate that he had written *Hamlet*. People read Spencer's books and pictured him as an absolute philosopher. A Frenchman was brought by a member to the Athenæum Club and taken into the billiard room, where he saw the author of the Synthetic Philosophy engaged in a game; at which spectacle he lifted up his hands and exclaimed that if he had not seen it he could not have believed it. Another instance is the following:—

"Mr. Andrew Carnegie, the American millionaire, who in August, 1882, was returning to America by the *Servia* in which I was going, brought a letter of introduction to me; and afterwards told me how astonished he was during our first meal on board to hear me say—'Waiter, I did not ask for Cheshire; I asked for Cheddar.' To think that a philosopher should be so fastidious about his cheese!"

Spencer objects to the "identification of philosophy with stoicism." Philosophers enjoy the

common pleasures of life, and are as much entitled to them as their neighbors. "One may say as a rule," too, "that no man is equal to his book; though there are, I believe, exceptions." Generally he puts his best brain-work into his book, and to expect distilled thought in his ordinary conversation is absurd. This was Spencer's view of the matter, and in the main it was sound, although some of the "exceptions" he alludes to are very surprising.

Men of genius are usually thought to be difficult to live with. Wiseacres have declared that they should never marry. But the marriage of a man of genius may be a success or a failure like that of common mortals. The wiseacres point to the case of Byron. They ignore the cases of Wordsworth and Tennyson. Allowing for the pious cast of the expression, we may appreciate Tennyson's deep joy in marrying the woman for whom he had waited so long. "The peace of God passed into my life," he said many years afterwards. And these felicitous unions are not to be lost sight of in the reckoning.

Spencer's view on this question was special, and we believe mistaken. Writing to a friend in 1851—he was then turned thirty—he said that he did not mean to "get on," it was "not worth the bother." "On the whole," he added, "I am quite decided not to be a drudge; and as I see no probability of being able to marry without being a drudge, why I have pretty well given up the idea." Writing his "Reflections" at the age of seventy-three, Spencer justified his lifelong bachelorhood.

"As the difficulties of self-maintenance while pursuing a career analogous to mine, are almost insuperable, the maintenance of a wife and family must of course be impossible. One who devotes himself to grave literature must be content to remain celibate; unless, indeed, he obtains a wife having adequate means for both, and is content to put himself in the implied position. Even then, family cares and troubles are likely to prove fatal to his undertakings. As was said to me by a scientific friend, who himself knew by experience the effect of domestic worries—'Had you married there would have been no system of philosophy.'"

But is this so certain? Darwin could hardly have done his great work without the domestic comfort and security with which his noble wife surrounded him. It is all very well to talk about "domestic worries," but is a philosopher the greater for forswearing the essential life of his kind? Was not Comte a greater philosopher than Spencer at least in one thing—in prescribing marriage to the priests of the Religion of Humanity? Marriage and fatherhood bring "worries," but that is not the end of the story. They bring something else; moral experience and discipline, for instance, and the development of the emotional nature, which kindles instead of damping the intellect. Some of the obvious defects in Spencer's philosophy might have been corrected by more natural conditions of existence. Late in life he bethought him that "the society of children might be a desirable distraction," and he borrowed a couple from some friends for a fortnight. The result was delightful; it awakened his philoprogenitive instinct, and the presence of a pair of children became quite a feature of his summer holidays.

Spencer's efforts to secure a certain livelihood that would leave him free to pursue his philosophical work are very sad reading. Once he wrote to John Stuart Mill asking whether it was at all likely that an office with a very moderate salary and not too heavy duties could be found for him in the India Company's service. Mill's reply was sympathetic but not encouraging. It is painful to think that one of the greatest thinkers of the age, whom Mill so honored and to whom Darwin addressed words of such high praise that the recipient could not think of printing them, had sometimes for long periods to deny himself the pleasure of hearing a concert or an opera because he was unable to buy a ticket. No wonder that in later years, looking backward over his straitened life, he doubted whether the game he played was really worth the candle, whether his

achievements and his fame compensated for his many great sacrifices. On one occasion he applied for a Stamp Distributorship which was vacant. The office would have suited him; and it was such an office that enabled Wordsworth to cultivate his genius instead of drudging for bread. But the post was given to a Conservative provincial editor who had been useful to his party. The thinker, the philosophical genius, was passed over. He accepted the rebuff, gave up all such hopes, and plodded with set face along the dusty old road of self-sacrifice. The quiet resolution of the man was heroic. It reminds one of his saying, that a man's thoughts are "children born to him which he may not carelessly let die." Spencer did not let his perish. He could boast with Schopenhauer that he was always true to his intellect. That is a great thing as the world goes—and posterity reaps the benefit. Let us lift our hats to the heroes of thought!

G. W. FOOTE.

(To be concluded.)

Ingersoll Gems.

The parasite of woman is the priest.

If man could not suffer, the words right and wrong could never have been spoken.

The dogma of the Trinity multiplies the difficulty by three.

Love is a flower that grows on the edge of the grave.

God is a guess.

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FRED. L. GREIG.

Acid Drops.

Heine's phrase about the Aristophanes of the Universe came to our mind on reading of the terrible calamity of the burning of the pleasure steamer *General Slocum* in the East River, New York. Nearly two thousand persons were on board, rather more than half of them being children, and some eight hundred were burnt to death or drowned by jumping overboard. Of course the awful accident was a purely natural one; but there was a sarcastic side to it on the theory of the providential government of the world. It was a Sunday-school picnic! The children and most of the adults belonged to St. Mark's Lutheran Church, New York. Those who believe in "Providence" must feel that this personage was in a very satirical mood at that moment. When hundreds of people lost their lives by the fire at the Iroquois Theatre, Chicago, it was broadly suggested that they were offending God by sitting in such a place of amusement. But this could hardly be said of the people on board the *General Slocum*. They were enjoying an innocent excursion. Yet, in Biblical language, the Lord met them by the way, and the result sent a thrill of horror through the civilised world.

"The corpse of one woman," the report says, "with the dead body of a baby clasped in her right arm, was taken out of the water by one of the boats." Maternal love was stronger than death. The horrible rush of the surging water, the fierce convulsions of drowning, could not loosen that mother's clasp of her babe. How grand was her dear heart to that of the Almighty God—say rather Almighty Devil—who is supposed to have looked on, and helped no one, and let all those men, women, and little children perish!

One does not like to be too critical in regard to the people who die in such a catastrophe. But we will not refrain from a perfectly legitimate criticism. The terrified crowd were in such a state that nothing could be done with them, and very little for them. They were simply maddened by the fear of death. Yet they were all Christians; not indifferent Christians, but active Christians associated with a well-known Church. How often is it said that Christianity is the great religion of consolation, that it takes away the sting of death, and robs the grave of its terrors! But how different is the fact from the theory! Probably a boatload of Freethinkers would have acted less insanely than these New York Christians, who remind us of the man in the epigram who "died from the fear of death."

Judge Wills, who sentenced George Senior, one of the Peculiar People, to four months' imprisonment, with hard labor, for trusting his sick child to the Lord, according to the teaching of the Bible; this same Judge Wills, at the recent Denbighshire Assizes, after hearing the evidence of a girl of fourteen who swore a criminal assault against two respectable working men, said that she was the most thorough little liar he had ever heard during his long judicial experience. We dare say she kissed the Book all right.

Sabbatarianism flourishes, as might be expected, amongst the Methodists. According to the Rev. T. M. Rees, President of the Methodist New Connexion, recreation of any kind is positively unlawful on the Lord's Day. "There is no question with Methodists," he says, "as to whether it is right to play golf on Sundays. The Prime Minister may do this sort of thing, but Methodists stand sponsors not for recreation in the West-end, but for the redemption of the East-end." For our own part, we think the better of Mr. Balfour for incurring the resentment of these melancholy fanatics.

The Archdeacon of London, who is Sabbatarianly inclined himself, seems to believe that England's greatness depends on Sunday observance. He admits, however, that the Puritanism of this country is something special. Luther, Calvin, Beza, Melancthon, and most of the "Reformers" in Europe approved of what is commonly called "the Continental Sunday." Luther was very outspoken on the subject. He was not accustomed to mince his language, and he certainly did not do so on this occasion. "If anywhere," he said, "the day is made holy for the mere day's sake—if anyone sets up its observance on a Jewish foundation, then I order you to work on it, to ride on it, to dance on it, to feast on it, to do anything that shall remove this encroachment on Christian liberty."

Take no thought for the morrow: labor not for the meat that perisheth: lay not up for yourselves treasures on earth. Good old Gospel texts! And now for a practical comment. The Rev. James Carter, rector of Duxford, Cambridge, has

left behind him property valued at £71,267; and every scrap of it goes to another "blessed be ye poor" gentleman—the Rev. Henry Carter, of Barham Rectory, Ipswich.

"J. O." in the *Daily Chronicle* comments on the Rev. A. J. Waldron's statement that Mr. Blatchford's *Clarion* articles against Christianity were only a "rehash of the Bradlaugh system." "I do not know anything about the Bradlaugh system," J. O. says, "but it seems to me that these and kindred articles are little more than a rehash of Volney's *Les Ruines*, written more than a hundred years ago." Of course there is some truth in this, but the statement needs much qualification. Volney, in the *Ruins of Empires*, wrote as a Deist, and both Bradlaugh and Mr. Blatchford more recently go farther than that.

Teachers in elementary schools, and non-Churchmen of all shades of opinion, should give earnest attention to an answer made in Parliament to Mr. W. F. Lawrence by Sir William Anson: "That managers of a public elementary school had no right to take children to church during school hours, or to compel a teacher to conduct the children to church." Freethinkers should also resist strenuously the illegal teaching of religion under the cover of dictation and writing lessons. One Board school copybook ("Vere Foster's, No. 16") has the line "Content is more than a kingdom," which is perniciously false; for a kingdom is something, while content not only is nothing in itself, but it is the cessation of endeavor to manufacture or acquire something. The next is a contemptible and emasculating piece of superstition: "Care and diligence bring luck"; which is appropriately followed by "Duty can never exist without faith"; which is not only religious instruction, but is a gross specimen of religious lying; and its insinuation into the curriculum of a Board school instances the unsectarian honor of the party of which Dr. Clifford is the champion, for its being put as a writing lesson is a jesuitical evasion of the plain words of the Education Act of 1870, still in force, that the time, or times, during which any instruction in religious subjects is given at any meeting of a school shall be inserted in a time-table, to be kept permanently and conspicuously affixed in every school-room. Obviously it is impossible for a parent to be in this manner informed at what time his child is taught to believe in "luck" and that "duty can never exist without faith" while nominally simply learning to write.

Mr. F. E. Smith, a Passive Resister, harangued the Bench at the Malmesbury Petty Sessions, and uttered a terrible lot of nonsense. He pointed out that in 9,000 parishes there was only one school, which every child was compelled to attend; and a large number of children in those parishes had to be withdrawn from religious instruction. This involved a certain stigma which no child should be compelled to endure, and demanded an amount of moral courage which no child should be called upon to display. So said Mr. F. E. Smith, and we thoroughly agree with him; only we mean it, and he doesn't, and that's where his nonsense comes in. For thirty years Mr. Smith and his friends have cheerfully subjected Freethinkers to the very outrage which he considers so monstrous when the sufferers are Nonconformists. The present writer's four children have all had to be withdrawn from the religious instruction arranged by Mr. Smith and his friends. They had to endure the "stigma," and they had to display the "moral courage." Yet we never heard that this fact, or facts like it, caused the Nonconformist party to turn a single hair. We are really sick of the hypocrisy of these people.

When the whale had to get rid of Jonah, the Lord spake unto it and it vomited Jonah up on dry land. There would have been no need for the Lord to speak if a Passive Resister had been handy.

The self-assurance of these Christians! A deputation from the Church Society for the Promotion of Kindness to Animals waited upon the Alake of Abeokuta, and presented him with one of its medals, which a lady pinned upon nervous fingers upon his capacious breast. What the deputation said to the Alake does not appear in the report. We are puzzled, therefore, to imagine why they visited him at all except to advertise their Society. Surely they did not mean to pay him the bad compliment of supposing that animals needed special protection against cruelty in Abeokuta. At any rate, there is plenty of cruelty to animals to be done away with in England yet; and this Church Society need not trouble itself overmuch about Africa, at least for the present.

The Alake made a little speech, which was interpreted—let us hope wrongly. According to the report, he said that "the Founder of the Christian religion showed great love for

all dumb creatures." This is something new. Has the Bible Society been playing a trick upon this black sovereign? Has it faked up a special copy of the New Testament for his behoof? The copies of the New Testament in circulation in this country do not bear out the Alake's statement.

The four Kensitite "martyrs" were soon released from Derby Gaol. A sympathiser paid their fines. What a pity it is that Joseph of Arimathea had not the opportunity of doing this for Jesus Christ. He would have saved his Master the crucifixion—and the world the curse of the cross.

The *Daily News* turned on one of its most pious protégés to review the first volume of the collected edition of Mr. Swinburne's poems. Mr. C. F. G. Masterman laid it on thick. He affected to admire the Atheistic poetry of the "Hymn to Proserpine" and the "Hymn of Man." This he did in order to belittle the still Atheistic poet of to-day. According to Mr. Masterman, the author of that splendid new poem "The Altar of Righteousness" now yields only "scentless autumn flowers" and "dead yew leaves and a little dust." Which reminds us of Mr. Swinburne's proud statement that "I have been fortunate in my friendships," and also "no less fortunate in my enemies." The *Daily News* has some little poets of its own. It should leave Mr. Swinburne alone.

"Providence" spoiled the Kentish fruit crop last year with too much rain. This year it has done the trick by cold winds in June. The "blight" is said to be very serious.

The late Mr. Edward Hulton's will has been proved for the sum of £558,436, of which only £3,000 is bequeathed to Manchester charities. Mr. Hulton was the proprietor of the *Sunday Chronicle* and other publications. It was he, we believe, who stopped "Nunquam's" career when that now more famous journalist was writing Socialism and Secularism in the *Sunday Chronicle*, and thus led to the establishment of the *Clarion*. Mr. Hulton's big fortune shows that there is plenty of money in the newspaper business, if you don't burden yourself with such ridiculous things as principles.

The London *Express* sent a representative to ten City churches on Sunday morning, July 12. These ten churches have seating accommodation for 3,750 people, and the total attendance was 213! There were only three women and one child at Canon Shuttleworth's old church, St. Nicholas Cole Abbey. The climax of the joke is the fact that the men of God who run these ten empty churches have £5,713 a year between them.

There is a little gold mine in the sites of these ten deserted Bethels. Three City churches have been pulled down within the last ten years, and the sale of the sites has realised £86,187. This is nearly £30,000 apiece, and if the others realise as much the Church will have some £300,000 for building fresh Bethels in the suburban parts of London. No wonder the Bishop of London is straining every nerve to get this cash in hand for that purpose. It would help the Church immensely in its rivalry with the Nonconformists.

The Bishop of Chester, who, as the *Daily News* says, is not often heard in a London pulpit—which seems a great pity—entertained a North London congregation on a recent Sunday evening by preaching on "The Philanthropy of God." At any rate, he would have entertained us, if we had happened to be present. The title itself was a fine joke. We believe it was first employed by that sparkling humorist, the late Rev. Hugh Price Hughes. Certainly it was a brilliant idea to enrol God Almighty among the philanthropists. It shows that man's old gift of vanity has not deserted him. The principal virtue of the Omnipotent is his fondness for the inhabitants of this planet; just as, in the Bible, the noblest job of the Creator was the production of the first two human beings.

We do not gather from the *Daily News* report that the Bishop of Chester proved the philanthropy of God by means of everlasting punishment. That would have been a splendid stroke of wit. We are sorry his lordship did not attempt it. But he did something nearly as effective. He informed his congregation, the report says, that "Christ had started medicine and surgery on its career." This is really capital. Just let us follow it up a little.

Christ was a first-rate surgeon. We frankly admit it. He anticipated all the grafting processes of the present age of science. What is more, he dispensed with all appliances. He just talked to the parts of the human anatomy he was dealing with, and they obeyed him straight away. When peppery Peter, for instance, drew his sword and sliced off a

young man's ear, Christ picked it up and stuck it on, and it was as right as ever again. No stitches, no bandages, no antiseptics. Just the word of the Lord. That's the sort of surgery for you! Why, if the Bishop of Chester could run a hospital on those principles, he would be dirt cheap, even at his present salary. And he really should be able to, for Christ promised that those who believed in him should do greater wonders than he had done himself.

And now for the "medicine"—which we will take as including everything except surgery. There is Christ's cure of his hand, spat upon it, rolled it up into a plug, and stuck it in the socket of a blind man's eye. Ordinary people would fancy that this was the way to deprive the patient of any gleam of sight he had left. But the Lord's ways are not as our ways—and to learn this is one of the first steps on the road of piety. That clay plug gave the blind man sight. He could see afterwards as well as any Christian. Some people will say that this is not much. But we beg to observe that we are serious, and not inclined to frivolity on such a grave subject.

We thank the Bishop of Chester for calling our attention to these things. His conception of Christ as starting surgery and medicine is really magnificent. It is better than anything offered to the British public by Mr. Daniel Leno. Evidently our most pregnant humorists are in the pulpit. And the Bishop of Chester takes the cake.

Scratch the Russian and you find the Tartar. Scratch the Christian and you find the Hooligan. The more peaceful his profession, the more atrocious his action. The monk was molested at the Holy Sepulchre, and he revenged himself by the Crusades; the friar found that kings jibbed at him, and he established the Inquisition. The Puritan fled to have free exercise for the practice of the Sermon on the Mount, and revenged himself for his persecutions by turning on the unoffending Quaker for his audacity in attempting to live the life he himself professed.

The Quaker, however, is now rich, and owns newspapers—that is to say, he possesses power; and this is his manner of using it. Elijah Dowie—who is quite as much "Elijah" as Booth is "General"—following on the ancient lines of his trade, being bankrupt, is getting himself persecuted. He is setting himself deliberately to excite popular fury, as Elijah the First, John the Baptist, Jesus, Mahomet, Loyola, and in fact every successful "prophet," has done before him. In Australia a Jew was obtuse enough to fall into the trap and excite the opposition—and clamor—he wanted. Here it is the *Daily News*.

The red flag Elijah is waving is very small and very absurd. It is merely the statement that the ex-Prince of Wales, now King, has "no religion to spare." Well, for about half a century, ever since he went to Cambridge, no one has imagined he had any religion at all, much less to spare; but this is a statement many millions both of men and women will think very complimentary to him. Very much harder comment than this has been made on him during his lifetime; but of all the accusations which he, with every other prominent person, has to endure, it has never yet been said that he is a hypocrite. He has never been—and cannot be—taxed with being a humbug.

But like the mad dog of Islington, for reasons of its own the *Daily News* went rabid over this awful and paralysing assertion. While Mr. Dowie was yet in Berlin it started with the hint, in regard to his coming to London: "it would not be wonderful if he did not come at all"; it spoke of "his abominable utterances against the King," but without quoting any whatever, and prophesied that "It will be amazing if the man who crowns his blasphemies with such abominable utterances will be calmly heard in this country." It also said: "It is to the highest credit of an hotel" that it "refused to give this man shelter." On another page of the same issue it coolly said: "We are able to quote in another column Dowie's opinion of our King." And then this significant sentence as a separate paragraph: "Dowie had better stay away."

It was a brutal and disgusting thing, we believe it was even a criminal thing, to get up a boycott against Dowie and raise the mob against him, as was done by more than one London journal, and particularly by the *Daily News*. What was the result? According to the *Daily Chronicle*, it appears that Dowie was in danger of being lynched, and this in a country which is always highly indignant at the reports of lynching in America. "The fact of the matter is," our contemporary says, "that almost every hotel manager in London was warned that if he harbored the prophet an

angry mob would be brought to the doors, the windows would be smashed, and much else done by way of protest." Even the Zionite chapel was surrounded all day long by fanatical crowds, some armed with potatoes and some with eggs, and some probably with worse weapons, all intended for one solitary man who was merely coming to address his followers in their own building.

The boycott against Dowie seems to have been engineered by the *Daily News*. This Christian paper, which champions the gospel of "resist not evil," and "if one smite thee on the one cheek turn unto him the other also," hit upon a novel way of heaping coals of fire upon its enemy's head. The pious and virtuous organ of the Nonconformist Conscience boasts of having sent a representative to the Hotel Russell with a view to getting Dowie turned out into the street; and of course it was well aware that Mrs. Dowie would have to go with him. This amiable policy was successful. Dowie had to clear out. But all other hotels were closed against him by the same charity. Even private lodging-houses were terrorised into refusing him admittance. He was thus reduced by the *Daily News* to the condition of the Son of Man who had not where to lay his head.

If Dowie had been an Englishman we believe he could have prosecuted the *Daily News* for conspiracy. Anyhow, it is an infamous thing that one man (or clique of men) should be able to boycott another man throughout London, and deprive him of access to lodgings, and by consequence to food and drink. This is the murderous spirit which has been displayed too often in Christian history.

This hypocritical *Daily News* has the brazen impudence to declare that "There was no question of the freedom of speech, or even of language, involved in this." Then it goes on to hint at something behind. It says that its representative "disclosed the man's true character to the manager of the Hotel Russell." What does this mean? One would think that this "Zeal of the Land Busy" was exposing a card-sharper or hotel thief. Things have come to a pretty pass when fellows who own or edit newspapers—and are therefore in business like greengrocers and tallow-chandlers, and often less honestly—can keep a private list of objectionable persons, and go round with it to the hotels, with a view to getting all such persons turned out into the streets. A country where men could be punished without trial, and without indictment, would not be worth living in.

Freedom of speech is involved in this matter. It is idle for the *Daily News* to talk about Dowie's "calumnies on the King." This is simply *blague*. We are not living in Germany, and our King is not the Kaiser. Nor are boycott and mob law civilised jurisprudence. And government by the *Daily News* is the silliest despotism conceivable.

Freethinkers should think over this matter carefully. It will show them what to expect from "earnest" Christians. The organ of the Passive Resisters objects to the payment of the Education Rate, although it has been voted by Parliament and endorsed by the very King whose reputation our contemporary is so zealously protecting against the terrible Dowie. To pay sixpence under such conditions is a "sin," and to be compelled to pay it is "martyrdom." Yet the paper which is so very scrupulous in this respect does not hesitate to use the dirtiest weapons of persecution against a fellow Christian of a different color, and even boasts of its disreputable performance. And the whole Nonconformist world takes it as a matter of course. The party of the "martyrs" does not even squeak a protest.

The glory of engineering the boycott against Dowie is not to be peacefully enjoyed by the *Daily News*. It is claimed by the *Daily Mirror*. "That he was refused accommodation at most of the London hotels," this journal says, "is due to the action of the representative of the *Mirror*." What a noble competition!

What amazing ignorance is often displayed by representatives of our "glorious free press." Generally speaking, the *Daily Chronicle* is a good paper, having some capable and well-informed writers on its staff. But it also appears to have some of the other sort. One of these was appointed to interview Mrs. Besant about the "chestnut" doctrines of reincarnation. This gentleman (or was it a lady?) discovered that Mrs. Besant had "a somewhat startling theory to expound" with regard to the "often touching devotion of the 'brute' to his master." "To the animal," Mrs. Besant said, "man is his god, his sun, his superior, to whom he pays homage." Of course the observation could only apply

to certain animals; for the word "homage" cannot well be applied to the attentions bestowed upon man by sharks and tigers. Even with this qualification, what Mrs. Besant said is only original to people who are ignorant enough to think it so. There is really nothing "startling" about it to a decently well-read person. Mrs. Besant may have seen it herself, many years ago, in Darwin's *Descent of Man*. And it is at least some centuries older than that. Bacon in his Essay "Of Atheism" wrote: "For take an example of a dog, and mark what a generosity and a courage he will put on when he finds himself maintained by a man; who to him is instead of a God." "The word 'maintained' in this passage must not be taken as meaning 'kept' or 'fed,' but 'upheld'—just as God is supposed to uphold man.

Do we really want to live again? Christian preachers fancy that nearly everybody is yearning for immortality. Well, to speak plainly, we do not believe it. Many people feel the sentiment of Mr. Swinburne's beautiful lines in "The Garden of Proserpine":—

From too much love of living,
From hope and fear set free,
We thank with brief thanksgiving,
Whatever gods may be,
That no life lives for ever;
That dead men rise up never;
That even the weariest river
Winds somewhere safe to sea.

These beautiful lines occur in one of the poems in the first volume of *Poems and Ballads*, which forms the first volume of the collected edition of Mr. Swinburne's poems that is now appearing.

That accomplished scholar and profound thinker, the Bishop of London, speaking on Monday evening at Sion College, did not hesitate to defend the Virgin Birth of Christ and the Resurrection. Candid and sensible people, who reflect upon the pain with which Dr. Ingram left the East-end for the West-end and £10,000 a year, will no doubt appreciate the value of his testimony to the truth of these doctrines. They may wonder, though, that he made a curious slip which might have been corrected on the spot if discussion had been permitted. The Bishop seems to have acted like the poor young woman who excused her "improper" baby on the ground that it was "only a small one." He cited Huxley as saying that the miracles of the Church were as child's play to the miracles seen in nature. But his lordship forgot that "miracles" can be used in more senses than one, and that, while a church "miracle" means a supernatural occurrence, a scientific "miracle" only means a striking natural occurrence which has not yet been fully explained.

We hear that a detective moves about in a certain Christian Evidence meeting in Hyde Park and picks out disturbers by signal from the platform; the said disturbers being "infidels" who fancy the lecturer means what he says when he offers to answer questions. But we are quite sure that this cannot be true. It is well-known that Christian defenders of the faith are desperately in love with free discussion.

Dr. Clifford evidently thinks it is the duty of all county and municipal bodies in England to co-operate with the Passive Resisters. He complains of the "indecent haste" of the London County Council in adopting the Education Act. It looks like a case of what is learnedly called megalomania and more popularly swelled head.

We hear little or nothing now of the holy images which the Russian generals took out to the East. It looks as though the Japs would use them for firewood in the rainy season.

Mark Twain's *Extracts from Adam's Diary* was reviewed very unfavorably in the *Daily News*, which was unable to forgive his jocose treatment of a Scriptural subject. The *Daily Chronicle* review was less ridiculously pious. We venture to quote the following passage:—

"There will be differences of opinion as to the propriety of turning the first chapters of the Book of Genesis into burlesque; for many people still regard them as containing sacred truth, while others think they should not be regarded as subjects of fun. But there remain, of course, many who do not care either way, and are willing to laugh at anything that is quaint, grotesque, topsy-turvy. And these will laugh heartily at the diary of a Yankee Adam."

Evidently there has been a great deal of progress during the twenty years which have elapsed since the editor of the *Freethinker* suffered twelve months' imprisonment for poking fun at the Bible.

Mr. Foote's Lecturing Engagements.

Sunday, June 26, Secular Hall, Rusholme-road, All Saints, Manchester: 3. "Holy Russia and Heathen Japan"; 6.30, "What Did Shakespeare Think?"

To Correspondents.

- C. COHEN'S LECTURING ENGAGEMENTS.—Address, 241 High-road, Leyton.—June 26, Newcastle-on-Tyne. July 3, afternoon and evening, Victoria Park; 10, afternoon and evening, Victoria Park.
 - R. L. M.—Acknowledged here as desired. Thanks for your personal good wishes.
 - G. FACER.—The *St. James's Gazette* report of Canon Cheyne's recent address to the Churchmen's Union at Westminster, which you kindly send us, contains nothing particularly new; and, with all due respect to the books you mention, we venture to point out that this Virgin Birth story was well ventilated in Mr. Foote's *Bible Romances* published twenty years ago, and now being issued in a popular sixpenny edition. The "new facts brought to light" is all nonsense. The essential facts, at any rate, were open to any resolute student long ago. Mr. Foote was bold enough to anticipate these Higher Critics.
 - L. B. GALLAGHER.—Thanks for cuttings. With regard to that "old-age microbe," we fancy we have heard of similar fancies before. Even men of science have their dreams, and sometimes their hallucinations. After all, the most uncommon thing in the world is common sense; and people who possess it reconcile themselves to the fact of their mortality. Still, if some "fountain of youth" should be discovered, we dare say it would soon be surrounded by a mob of wealthy Christians, outbidding each other for the means of keeping out of heaven.
 - W. PATERSON.—Mr. Foote is not without readers in America. His writings are sold at the *Truthseeker* office, New York, and must be widely distributed over the United States by this time.
 - R. DALGLEISH.—The Rev. A. S. Parker, of Barrow-in-Furness, has not "met both Mr. Foote and Mr. Cohen in public debate at Liverpool." Certainly he has not met Mr. Foote, and we believe he has not met Mr. Cohen. He may, of course, have sat amongst the audience and asked a question, or offered a few minutes' criticism, after a lecture. But that is a very thing from a "public debate." Personally, we have no recollection whatever of the reverend gentleman.
 - G. WEIR.—Copies were sent as requested. Mr. Foote would be very happy to debate with a *bona-fide* Christian representative at Leeds.
 - J. E. STAPLETON.—Pleased to see your handwriting again. Thanks also for the information. We are not disturbed, as you are not, by the fact that a present-day Christian was once a professed Freethinker. So many Freethinkers were once professed Christians. We did not see last week's *Clarion*, being unable to obtain it where we were; but we don't suppose we lost much as far as the Christian-defence article was concerned. The only proper criticism of the whole lot (if we may be pardoned a liberty with Mr. George Haw's name) is "Haw, Haw!"
 - JOHN FAGAN notifies Branch secretaries that he has removed to 41 Parkfield-street, Islington, N.
 - T. A. (Glasgow).—Whether the great painters were Catholics or Protestants was simply a geographical accident. It depended on where they were born and brought up. Angelo was a Catholic, and Durer was a Protestant. There is no personal or argumentative significance in either case. Another point, Raphael, Titian, Correggio, and other great artists, painted religious subjects because they were employed to do so; but they seem to have painted classical subjects, and even their own mistresses, when left to themselves. Correggio, for instance, painted a wonderful Deposition from the Cross; but he also painted a still more wonderful Jupiter and Io. Christianity did not enrich art. What happened was simply this. The Church employed artists, and called the tune because it paid the money. The same thing has happened in other parts of the world under other religions. Of course there are artists who are Freethinkers. There are many in France, and some in England, including Watts. See "Sugar Plums."
 - E. PARKER.—Your letter and lecture-notice reached us too late last week. Pleased to hear that Mr. Thresh made a good impression at Stratford.
 - G. SCOTT.—Change of address noted. Proof in due course. Thanks.
 - W. P. BALL.—Thanks for cuttings.
 - W. J. RUSSELL.—Always glad to receive cuttings. We have dealt with the spirit-photograph fake already. The *Clarion* articles for Christianity will probably be dealt with by "Nunquam." We do not propose to follow them. Are they worth following?
 - F. R., F. COTTERELL, C. SHEPHERD, W. H. SPIVEY, J. COWGILL, J. CLAYTON, N. BARNARD.—Duly received.
 - V. ROOPE.—We shall deal with the matter fully in our next. Thanks.
- 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.
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Sugar Plums.

Mr. Foote visits Manchester to-day (June 26) and delivers two lectures, afternoon and evening, in the Secular Hall, Rusholme-road. These are his last lectures until the autumn, and are by special request. The subjects should attract good meetings in spite of the splendid weather. Probably we ought to say it is splendid as we write; whether it will be splendid on this particular Sunday no man knoweth, no not the angels which are in heaven—for this is England.

Mr. Cohen's visit to Newcastle on Sunday last was a complete success. There was a good meeting in the morning, and in the evening by far the largest audience on the Town Moor listened, with evident appreciation to an address of nearly an hour and a-half's duration. In the face of a cold wind, this was no light task for either speaker or listeners. Mr. Cohen repeats his visit to Newcastle to-day (June 16). The meeting-place is again the Town Moor; time, 11 o'clock and 7.

Saturday's (June 18) *Westminster Gazette* contained the seventh of "Studies in Personality" by Harold Begbie. The subject was Mr. G. F. Watts the famous painter. The following passage will interest our readers:—

"No man is more in sympathy with science. He believes that man is destined to overcome the world and to illuminate with 'the taper, his reason,' most of those dark corners of the universe which are now occupied by mystery and miracle. He has no dogmas, no creed, and religion means to him simply the work of a man's life. He believes with Rabbi Ben Ezra that 'the best is yet to be,' and, in the midst of his great years, he is at peace with the world and with the world to come—whatever it may hold for him. He is, too, very little of a mystic. His anxieties are all with the affairs of this planet, and particularly with the affairs of England. He is always a contemporary. The world of men has lost none of its charms for him. He has no ear for the song of angels, but both ears for the march and battle-cries of progress. He is in the midst of the battle, and so long as he is in the midst of it he will not speculate on the peace that lies beyond the mountains."

The national festival in honor of secular education was the occasion of a superb Republican demonstration at the Trocadero to-day (June 19), in which President Loubet, the Ministers, and the highest official personages took part. It is exactly thirty-two years since Jean Macé, the founder of the Education League, presented his famous petition to the National Assembly claiming free compulsory primary education for every French citizen. M. Loubet had a magnificent reception from a dense crowd. After speeches had been made, luncheon to 10,000 school teachers and pupils was served in the huge Galerie des Machines on the Champ de Mars.—Paris Correspondent, *Daily Chronicle*.

The *Daily News* Paris correspondent sent a longer account of this function, which he praised in glowing language; but the London editor, probably, mutilated it by altering one word—substituting "unsectarian" for "secular." Education in France is not "unsectarian," it is absolutely "secular." But the *Daily News* thought it best to use the former word in order to keep its Nonconformist clients in countenance.

The Glasgow Branch Rambling Club goes to Millport on Saturday, June 25, by the 2.10 train via Fairley, to visit the Marine Biological Station. Members are requested to note that they should take return tickets (2s. 9d.) Station—St. Enoch's.

The Sheffield Secular Society's members and friends meet to-day (June 26) at 1.35 in front of Victoria Station to go by 1.50 train to Conisbro' and thence to Edlington Woods.

"Is Religion in Danger?" (rather a belated question) has been partially discussed in the *Daily Chronicle*. Dr. William Barry, the well-known Catholic writer, admits the existence of a bad state of things. This is how he describes it: "Bible torn to shreds, churches emptying, candidates for holy orders falling off, millions never heeding religion, absolutely 'without God in the world.'" The new *Encyclopædia Biblica*, edited by Canon Cheyne, is referred to as a work "where the Old Testament and New are broken in pieces and the Christ of dogma—that is to say, whom alone we have worshiped as our Savior—vanishes in a cloud of conjecture and becomes, to all intents, a myth." Dr. Barry, of course, believes that Christianity will weather the storm, but the reason he assigns does not involve much confidence in its character as a definite revelation. Its "two motive powers" are "man's infinite sorrow and his unconquerable hope." Which is almost an admission that Christianity is at best a pathetic fallacy.

The Real Jesus.

NOT so long ago numberless people, whose knowledge of Palestine and the Jewish nation was solely derived from the Bible and orthodox commentaries thereon, implicitly believed that the appearance of Christ on the scene of human affairs constituted a social phenomenon that could not be accounted for otherwise than by a supernatural hypothesis. This delusion has by no means entirely passed away, but it is undoubtedly fading. People are slowly realising that there is such a science as Sociology—thanks mainly to Herbert Spencer—and that the men and women who figure prominently in the world's history are largely the product of their times. Their lives, their conduct, and their destinies are to a great extent moulded and conditioned by the existing circumstances of their age; and the prevailing currents of popular thought have also an influence in forming their characters that should not be ignored. That great men rise superior to circumstances may be a truth, but it is only half the truth. The other half is expressed when we say that with the hour comes the man.

That the life, conduct, and final end of Jesus of Nazareth can be quite adequately explained without reference to the supernatural will scarcely be disputed by anyone who has studied the state of affairs that existed in Judea and the Roman world at the opening of the Christian era. We, of course, expressly exclude the miraculous legends that gathered round his personality, most of which are gradually being relegated to the same limbo with the Old Testament myths. Apart from the miraculous, however, it should not be difficult to perceive that the extraordinary religious and political ferment into which the Jewish mind was plunged after the passing of the Asmonean dynasty made the career of Jesus possible, and gave to his teaching a notoriety and an importance it would not otherwise have achieved. Perhaps the most valuable and suggestive part of Renan's *Life of Jesus* is that which deals with the order of thought that surrounded Christ, and the peculiar local influences that moulded his nature and directed his teaching. Renan shows us in luminous fashion how the prevalent tendency of contemporary Hebrew thought and the attitude of those with whom Christ came in contact seemed to engender in the mind of the latter a belief in the divinity of his mission. He was, in fact, incited and encouraged by circumstances to ultimately assume a rôle that he had not originally aspired to.

The great work of Ernest Renan certainly treats the figure of Christ with a larger degree of reverence than will be at all palatable to the average modern Rationalist. In our eyes this is, perhaps, the author's main defect. But, despite the poetic and sentimental nimbus with which he surrounds Jesus, Renan never loses sight of the cardinal position that the career of the Nazarene must be reviewed in the light of reason, common sense, and human experience. It is a man with whom we have to deal—however gifted he may be—not a God. And Renan maintains this fundamental principle of historical criticism—that "a supernatural account cannot be admitted as such, that it always implies credulity or imposture, that the duty of a historian is to explain it, and seek to ascertain what share of truth, or of error, it may conceal."

It is the dazzling effect of this artificial halo that has been formed round the name of Jesus of Nazareth against which advanced thinkers have still to contend. The once popular belief that the life of Christ presents humanity with an absolutely unparalleled example of humility, purity, benevolence, meekness, and general sublimity of character, dies hard. When a man like John Stuart Mill incautiously commits himself to the statement that the Gospel account of Christ's life must be true and historical because no poet or dramatist ever lived who could have imagined the life and character lived in the Gospels, we cannot wonder that lesser

intellects cling to the idea that there never was a man, before or since, who spoke and acted as Jesus did. But, as the proverb has it, much water has passed under the bridges since that utterance was penned. In the light of modern inquiry and research the originality of Christ's teaching is not so overwhelmingly manifest. His precepts are largely culled from the moral maxims of the Old Testament, supplemented by the many pithy current sayings that were the common property of the Jewish teachers. It should be remembered that religious instruction amongst the Jews was almost entirely oral. Every Rabbi of eminence had his own little school of pupils and followers, through whom were handed down the accumulated Hebrew traditions and ethical axioms of centuries.

Many of the apothegms and aphorisms of the Rabbinical teachers must inevitably have entered into the popular speech, and it is not unreasonable to suppose that Jesus would be quite familiar with them. Certain it is that an examination of the Talmudical literature in conjunction with the Old Testament abundantly shows that neither in the spirit nor in the letter can the Gospel utterances of Christ be considered original. Be it noted we are at present waiving the objection that it is impossible nowadays to finally determine what proportion—if any—of the sayings ascribed to Jesus in the four Gospels were ever really delivered by him at all. Assuming that the Gospel narratives *do* accurately embody the teaching of Christ, our contention is that, eliminating the miraculous element, they contain nothing startling or remarkable. There is not a maxim in the New Testament that had not been expressed in some form or other long before Christ's time.

And if we concentrate our attention upon the incidents in the life of Christ (again excluding the miraculous, for which we have no use to-day) what do we find that could not have occurred to any ordinary mortal, and has indeed occurred to many, in the history of man's inhumanity to man? The enormous quantity of rhapsodical nonsense that has been preached and written regarding Jesus would almost persuade us that there had never been a man who lived a humble, pure, and upright life until Jesus came! That there had never been a man who had endured unmerited scorn and insult and outrage, culminating in a cruel and ignominious death, until the coming of Christ! Why, the history of the martyrdom of man could furnish instances of undeserved affliction and excruciating torture beside which the much-bewailed sufferings of Christ would pale into insignificance! And if it be urged that never before did a *God* endure so much, we can only reply that the divinity of Christ is just the very point as to which there is no proof. At any rate, *men* have had to undergo a vast deal more than Christ ever did, and if *he* were indeed God his strength and patience should have been so much the greater than ours.

Religious and ecclesiastical writers in general display a conspicuous lack of historical and literary perspective when treating of any person, or subject, or occurrence, even remotely connected with Christ and Christianity. So marked is this tendency in certain cases as to suggest an obsession of the mind closely bordering on monomania. By persons of this type, every word of Christ however trivial, every action of his however unimportant, is magnified and dilated upon to such an extent, and so skilfully juggled with, that the most fantastic meanings are attached to quite commonplace expressions and incidents. And so the pleasing illusion is kept up that Christ is our model, our sole pattern of moral excellence. Just as we are told that mankind would be ignorant of what constitutes morality were it not for the Bible, so we are asked to believe that Christ was the first to point out the perfect way of life, and walk therein. But we are as little disposed to accept the one proposition as the other. We see nothing new or epoch-making in the recorded sayings of Jesus, nor do we perceive any cause for an extra-

vagant exhibition of wonder, awe, and admiration in such of the events of his career as have an appearance of plausibility.

We repeat that the real Christ, when stripped of the priestly trappings wherewith his figure has been decked, is seen to be largely the product of his time. Like many another would-be reformer about whom vastly less has been heard, he was also much indebted to those who preceded him. Amongst those whose life and work made Christianity possible the name of the estimable Rabbi Hillel calls for special mention. A recently published book entitled *Forerunners of Christianity* gives a very interesting sketch of the life and sayings of Rabbi Hillel. The latter did more to pave the way for Christ than did John the Baptist.

G. SCOTT.

The Novel of the Future.

IN these days of concentrated foods, lightning lunches, motor-cars, and hurry and scramble—when one cannot spare the time to attend even one's own funeral without a grudge—it is rather odd that no attempt should be made to develop the art of novel-writing on lines more in harmony with the spirit of the age.

The exigencies of present-day life demand of the novelist work that is brilliant—and brief. Brevity is the alpha of the alphabet of literature. But few writers have learned their letters; fewer applied their knowledge. Hence the pitiful spectacle of a novel-reading public—whining and begging for the scraps and parings of paltry hours—wasting valuable days and nights poring over the worthless work of clumsy craftsmen.

The mental pabulum of the last twenty years, the short story and the novel-in-a-nutshell, have certainly carried us far beyond the primitive stages of novel-reading. (He were a low type of novel-reader indeed who would now sit down to devour a "three-decker"!.) But even the novel-in-a-nutshell has outlived its day. Life is too short; time too precious to permit of spending any upon such an old-fashioned means of intellectual entertainment.

The literary world is to the epitomiser. The whole duty of journalism is to summarise. And only he who expresses a thought or conveys an idea in telegraphic (not necessarily *Daily Telegraphic*) language commands the ear of the intelligent public.

A novel reduced to its simplest terms should consist of two, or, at most, three words. This is the novel that will hold the field in future. For obvious reasons. The public have a natural bent for condensed foods, mental or physical, and will receive with acclamation anything that appeals to their particular bias. We have already accepted the "ox-in-a-teacup." Why not the novel-in-a-name?

With all due respect to the divine William (not he of Germany), there is more in a name than at first meets the untrained eye. Worlds of beauty, imagery, and seductive thought are suggested by some names; while others are as barren as Sarah. Consider Devonshire and Chamberlain. The former suggests the calm, tranquil, drowsy, ever-blessed sleep: and the effect produced by gently murmuring "Devonshire" to oneself would turn a professional hypnotist green with envy. Whisper "Chamberlain," and one is alert, keen, eager. Visions of battle-fields, warring crowds, excited mobs, turbulent tumult, fly and scurry before one's mind's eye with bewildering effect. "Balfour," on the other hand, rouses no responsive thought. Such a name is a nebulous nothing. Here the mind has no thread to hold on by. It is "presented with a universal blank."

Luckily, few names are so lean of possibilities as "Balfour." Raw material will be found by the novelist with a nose for ideas in every page of the G.P.O. directory. And by skilful manipulation of this material ready to his hand, the novelist of the future will be able to throw on the screen of his reader's imagination in one flash of intellectual

genius, by the aid of one single line of bold-faced type, all the poetry of exquisite fancy, all the enchanting glamor it now requires a six-shilling volume to transmit from one snail-paced brain to another.

Spectrum analysis has enabled us by the examination of a single ray of light shot from a distant star to learn what are the elements composing that far-off star; and renders it possible for us to analyse the substance of suns millions of leagues away. Soon someone will discover that by a mental process somewhat similar to the operations of the spectro-scope it is possible for the human brain to learn by the examination of a phrase, or a name, flashed from the fervent glowing imagination of a Wells or a Hardy, what it has hitherto been impossible to understand without long, weary hours of tedious reading.

From a bone we can build a horse. From a zoophite, conceive a human race. From a gas, imagine a world. Why not a novel from a name?

For instance, take the name BRENDA. To the novel-reader of last century, gifted with the trained imagination of the average wooden rocking-horse, BRENDA on the title-page of a book suggested nothing more than that the book was probably about a woman. And to learn what it was all about, he had to read and handle a clumsy production—some 300 pp. of closely-printed matter, tiresome to the eye and wearisome to the brain.

To the developed novel-reader of ten years hence what will the name not mean? "A new novel, by BRENDA"—he will read on the sky-ad., as he motes home from office. His motor stops at the nearest kiosk. He buys the novel—a dainty, little, bevelled card, gold-edged, and trimmed with a bow of claret-colored silk ribbon (for that is the shape novels of the future will take), with the name in artistic type printed on the face of it—and, with his eyes resting on "BRENDA," at once gives himself up to the full enjoyment of the suggestive emotion from the brain of the author with which in some subtle way the name is charged. BRENDA! With his mento-spectroscopic-power he reads all the story in the word: a sweet, young lady, tall and timid—"linked sweetness long-drawn-out"—nervous, of a shy disposition, much given to introspection, but fearful of reasoning closely on subjects that trouble her mind lest she be led into forbidden fields of speculative thought. Possessed of wonderful gifts, but lacking self-confidence. Of a clinging nature—her very name clings to the lips like a kiss—she fears to leave the rock of convention; fears to climb to heights she might easily attain; fears to think; fears to live, except according to the code of the petty-minded Supton-on-the-sloshites; dreams beautiful dreams; marries a mere man; and fades into commonplace respectability—a blossom that never came to fruit!—He gets the whole story in a glance; commenting on the author's conception, execution, and style, as he places the novel in his card-case for future reference.

Or take MARIA. What possibilities lie in MARIA! A name suggestive of Southern beauty, fire, and passion. With dare-devil eyes that lure and tantalise the very saints; lips that kiss the souls out of stone statues; and a temper kings might long to tame. Under skilful hands MARIA would run to twenty-five editions.

SELINA. Poison-cups and daggers! Cancerous kisses of crawling crocodiles! Room for the authors of the weird, sensational, and ghastly.

ALICE. Ah, Alice. Round this name one can imagine the future novelist weaving a romance of perpetual youth and beauty—for nursemaids and hobble-de-hoys. One cannot conceive of an Alice old, withered, and toothless. Nay, not even an Alice married. Always wooed and won, but never wed. Sweet Alice!

Sweet as summer sunshine,
Sweet as English air,
Sweeter than the breath of morn—
Fair, and ever fair!

Now, take the problem-novel of the future. Reduced to its simplest terms, it would read thus:—

Tom — Jack + John ² — Johnny ³ + etc.	Tom — Rachel
Eliza + Lizzie Ann + Bessie Ann ² + Lebbie Ann ³ + etc.	+ Jack
= Tom	
= Eliza	

This is a tale of Love, Lust, and Lollipops, ending in the union of the two chief characters. The attentive reader of the future would perceive at a glance the characters in this drama are entirely human. Poor Tom, weak and vacillating, struggling desperately with his environment. And full-blooded Eliza, fire leaping in her limbs, swayed this way and that by overpowering human passions—which she masters only after severe and bitter trials. It is a story of the eternal tragedy of the human heart. And Rachel's great sob of pain as she is wrenched from the side of Tom (see the numerator of the last fraction) rings loud in one's ear. The local color (note the "etc.") is laid on with the brush of a master-artist. Even the author of *Tess*, and *Jude the Obscure*, will admit the excellences of the future problem-novel.

The Kale-yaird school will be represented, of course. We have that school with us as a punishment for our literary sins. But the burden is hard to bear. "How long, O Lord, how long!"

The only consolation one has in reading a novel of the Kale-yaird type of to-day lies in the unlimited room left for improvement. But lovers of this class of literature (save the mark) will in the future be spared the impossible conversations and sermons, and the antediluvian manners. A plain tale will satisfy the greediest of Kale-yaird worms.

For instance:—

JEAN AN' JOCK
JACK AND JEANNIE
JOHN AND JANE

will represent one novel and three sequels of to-day. These few names will give to the educated novel-readers of 1920 the whole history of the rough-and-tumble courting in the Auchtermuchty byre, the imaginary manners and customs of the worthies of all the surrounding villages and clachans, the causes of JEAN entering "genteel" domestic service and developing, *via* JEANNIE, into the prim housewife JANE. The career of the rough saw-miller JOCK is also traced through the "fein' market" to the Newcastle shipyard, where he becomes known as JACK, and thence to the manager's office, from where, as JOHN, he sends every sacrament-eve to his old "meenister" five pounds (less the usual trade discount for cash) towards the sustentation-fund.

But enough has, perhaps, been written to point out the lines upon which the art of novel-writing should develop. It lies with the younger writers to lay siege to the heart of the great novel-reading public. Let this be an instruction: Brevity is the apple that will tempt the reader of the future.

FRED. L. GREIG.

The Jewish Life of Christ.—V.

(Continued from p. 396.)

These Therapeuts resembled the Jewish Essenes so much in their doctrines and way of living that many learned men have held them to be identical; and the teaching of the Essenes was so similar to the teaching of the Gospels that it has been held that the Essenes really were Christians under another name. According to Josephus, they looked upon pleasure as evil, despised riches, esteemed continence, and looked upon marriage with contempt. When Jesus says "In my Father's house are many mansions" (John xiv. 2)—a rather curious house, by the way, if we take it literally—the real meaning is "In my Father's house are many cells,"* as in a

monastery. "The word translated *mansions*," says Mr. Meredith, "is the very word from which *monastery* and *monks* derive.....the very expression—many mansions, or separate dwellings, in the same house—incontestably proves that Jesus meant a monastery."**

The Pagan mysteries also flourished at Alexandria. The Eleusinian mysteries were "introduced into Alexandria from Greece about 400 years before the Christian era."† These mysteries played a very important part in the evolution of Christianity. Mosheim, the Christian historian, admits that "The profound respect that was paid to the Greek and Roman mysteries" induced the Christians to use "several of the terms employed in the heathen mysteries; and proceeded so far, at length, as even to adopt some of the rites and ceremonies of which these renowned mysteries consisted."‡ And Mr. J. M. Robertson shows good reason for believing that, in the story of Christ's Supper, Passion, Betrayal, Trial, and Crucifixion, we have a transcript of one of these mystery dramas, added to a previously existing document or Gospel.§ "That the sufferings and death of Osiris were dramatically represented, modern Egyptology has freshly established from hieroglyphic documents."|| And it was from a combination of the attributes of Osiris and Apis that the priests formed the god Serapis.** And it is of this very god that Macrobius tells us that "The City of Alexandria pays an almost frantic worship to Serapis and Isis"; and that the Emperor Hadrian, in a letter to Servianus concerning the inhabitants of Alexandria, remarked that "Those who worship Serapis are likewise Christians; even those who style themselves the bishops of the Christ are devoted to Serapis."††

All the elements of Christianity existed in this city. Says Sharpe:—

"Alexandria under the Ptolemies, a Greek city built on Egyptian soil, and colonised by strangers who were courted to settle there, shows a strange mixture of European, Asiatic, and Egyptian civilisations. There the religious opinions and the philosophy of all these nations were alike patronised by the sovereign, and alike struggled for mastery, and in some minds moulded themselves into union."‡‡

As we have seen, the Septuagint had its origin here. "All the oldest and best manuscripts of the Greek Bible now remaining were written by Alexandrian penmen—that of Paris, that of the Vatican, that of Cambridge, that of the British Museum, and that from Mount Sinai, now in Russia."§§ And many scholars hold a similar opinion as to the origin of the New Testament literature. Professor Keim declares:—

"It is a fact supported by the clearest evidence, and hence recognised not merely by Baur and Baumgarten, but also more or less openly by Lücke, Bleek, and others, that the Johannine Gospel owes its existence to that Alexandrian Philonic philosophy of religion which fifty years earlier had made it possible for Paul to construct the edifice of his dogmatic teaching" (*Jesus of Nazara*, p. 153).

When the Talmud Jesus returned to Palestine he probably brought back with him a new form of religion, formed from the materials we have passed in review, and founded a new sect. For this he was excommunicated; and as this failed to stop the propaganda, he was eventually arrested, tried, condemned, stoned to death, and hung upon a tree, as stated both in the Talmud and Acts v. 30 and x. 39. After his death his body mysteriously disappears; the Jews declaring it to have been stolen by his disciples, his followers declaring he had risen from the dead. This is the account both of the Jewish Life of Jesus and of the Gospels.

* *The Prophet of Nazareth*, p. 546.

† Sharpe, *Egyptian Mythology*, p. 80.

‡ *Ecclesiastical History*, p. 56.

§ *Pagan Christs*, pp. 189-194.

|| *Ibid*, p. 186.

** Sharpe, p. 12.

†† Parsons, *Our Sun-God*, pp. 187-188.

‡‡ *Egyptian Mythology*, p. 81.

§§ *Ibid*, p. 113.

* *The Gospel History*, p. 252.

The Toldoth, or Jewish Life, asserts that Jesus was the illegitimate offspring of a Jewish woman by a trick upon the part of a Roman soldier named Pandera, who personated the woman's husband.

Mr. Mead thinks this is a late invention,* the Jewish reply to the "dogma of the physical virginity of the mother of Jesus," and seems to think that the only other alternative is that the "virgin birth" doctrine was invented to meet the illegitimate story of the birth. Of the two alternatives, the latter is the more plausible; for the Talmud knows all about the bastardy of Jesus, but nothing of the virgin birth, or indeed of Christianity. However, there is a third alternative, and that is the Jews, who hated Jesus for bringing his new religion from Egypt, and who feared him as a learned and powerful opponent, invented the tale to discredit him in the eyes of his followers. One has only to read the lives, say, of Thomas Paine or Charles Bradlaugh to see to what lengths religious opponents will go in this direction. Even to-day blackguards like Torrey are in the same business. They rush, as Gautier said, "like swine to the mire."

The very form in which the tale is told is sufficient to show that it is a fabrication; for Jesus having passed some Rabbis with his head uncovered—a mark of disrespect—one of the Rabbis at once declared him to be a bastard, and, upon interrogating his mother, found his diagnosis to be correct. As we have said, the tale was invented to discredit Jesus; and, to accentuate the ignominy, they added that his father was one of the hated Roman soldiers.

However, even if Jesus was of illegitimate birth, no blame could be attached to him for the accident of birth, over which he had no control. Upon this point we are quite in agreement with that very broad-minded and enlightened clergyman, the Rev. Francis Haydn Williams, in his pamphlet, *Who was the Father of Jesus of Nazareth?* the only tract by a clergyman I have ever read with unqualified approval.

It will be asked, "If Jesus lived 100 B.C., and was stoned and hung upon a tree, how do you account for the fact that the Gospels state that Jesus lived at the commencement of our era, and was crucified?"

In the first place, the Gospels, when brought to the test, are found to be utterly unhistorical.

In the second place, the Gospels were unknown until a hundred and fifty years after the supposed date of the death of Jesus.

In the third place, the Gospels themselves contradict one another as to the year of the birth of Jesus, Matthew declaring it to have taken place "in the days of Herod the King," who died 4 B.C., and Luke "when Cyrenius was Governor of Syria," 6 A.D.—a discrepancy of ten years. Luke complicates matters still more by declaring that Jesus commenced his ministry when Lysanias was Tetrarch of Abilene. This Lysanias was put to death by Mark Antony at the instigation of Cleopatra, 34 B.C.! The fact is, the compilers of the Gospels did not know anything about it; they made blind guesses; hence the confusion. As to the birthday of Jesus, St. Chrysostom, writing 390 A.D., declares that it had lately been "fixed at Rome." Christian scholars have fought one another all over the almanack as to the date of his birth, the only point upon which they appear to be agreed being that it could not have been 1 A.D.—the commencement of our era—as the multitude believe.

And, lastly, there is no record among all the writers and historians who lived at, or near, the year 1 A.D. of any such person having existed. So damning did this fact appear, that some Christian—probably Eusebius, for he was the first to discover it, and was quite capable of the action—inserted a

passage about Christ into the history of Josephus. It is now admitted by all scholars to be a rank forgery.*

W. MANN.

(To be continued.)

An Old Maxim.

"TREAT everybody well!"
Thou can'st not tell
The good to others done,
The good thyself shalt win;
Thou mayest hide many a sin—
Kind words, sweet ways begin,
Till hearts are won.

"Treat everybody well!"
Not lost the smile
Which captures even guile—
How, who may tell?
There is a subtle power
Deep in the pleasant face,
The tone, the look, whose grace
Lives hour on hour.

"Treat everybody well!"
Some day thou'lt bless
Thy long-forgot caress,
Thy courteous deed.
And in thine own dark night,
When cares or woes affright,
Kind hearts shall shed their light
Thy steps to lead.

"Treat everybody well!"
The lofty or the low—
Cause every heart to glow
With pleasure, greeting thee.
Act so that men renew
Their faith, since thou art true.
And more contented view
Their lot below.

"Treat everybody well!"
Some may deride,
Some may forsake thy side,
But better yet
Will be the friends who stay,
And never turn away,
Nor feel—dark night, clear day—
One vain regret!

GERALD GREY.

Heaven and Hell.

'Tis said there were no thought of hell
Save hell were taught; that there should be
A heaven for all's self-credible.
Not so the thing appears to me.

'Tis heaven that lies beyond our sights,
And hell too possible that proves;
For all can feel the God that smites,
But ah, how few the God that loves!
—Francis Thompson.

No belief is good for anything which is not part of an organic growth and the natural product of a man's mental development under the various conditions in which he is placed. To promote his intellectual activity, to encourage him to think, and to put him in the way of thinking rightly, is a plain duty. I hold, after a fashion, that pleasant old doctrine that truth has a tendency to prevail.—Leslie Stephen.

* For an examination of the writings and histories of that time see *Sources and Development of Christianity*, by Judge Strange, *Christian Records*, by the Rev. Dr. Giles; and, for origins, *Antiqua Mater*, the author of which says of Justin Martyr, the first apologist of Christianity, "His effort to explain and defend Christianity in the presence of the Jew and the Greek only succeeds in awakening irrepressible doubts as to the very existence of any individual founder at all." Also J. M. Robertson's *Pagan Christs and Christianity and Mythology*.

* *Did Jesus Live 100 B.C.?* chapter ix. But remarks that Laible "holds that the story itself is of early origin" (p. 158).

† See "The Gospels Tested by History," *Freethinker*, June 22 and 29, 1902.

‡ "Christ's Birthday," *Freethinker*, December 28, 1902.

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.

SOUTH LONDON ETHICAL SOCIETY (Masonic Hall, Camberwell New-road): 7, Professor Hudson, "Robert Louis Stevenson."

WEST LONDON ETHICAL SOCIETY (Kensington Town Hall, High-street): 11.15, Dr. Coit, "Sir Leslie Stephen's Religion."

OUTDOOR.

BETHNAL GREEN BRANCH N. S. S. (Victoria Park, near the Fountain): F. A. Davies, 3.15, "The Manchester School of Christian Evidence"; 6.15, "The Bible and Beer."

CAMBERWELL BRANCH N. S. S.: Station-road, 11.30, W. J. Needs; Brockwell Park, 3.15, a Lecture; 6.30, W. J. Needs, "Atheism v. Bible God."

EAST LONDON BRANCH N. S. S. (Mile End Waste): 11.30, W. J. Ramsey.

KINGSLAND BRANCH N. S. S. (corner of Ridley-road, Dalston): 11.30, W. H. Thresh.

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

WEST HAM BRANCH N. S. S. (The Grove, Stratford): 7, W. J. Needs.

COUNTRY.

GLASGOW SECULAR SOCIETY (entrance to Glasgow Green, Jail-square): Open-air Propaganda, 4, Mr. Brown and C. Howat.

LEEDS BRANCH N. S. S. (Armley Park): 11, Debate, S. Broom and G. Weir, "Christianity versus Secularism"; 3, G. Weir, "Christ's Resurrection"; Town Hall Square: 7.30, "Comic Cuts from the Bible."

MANCHESTER SECULAR HALL (Rusholme-road, All Saints'): G. W. Foote, 3, "Holy Russia and Heathen Japan"; 6.30, "What Did Shakespeare Think?" Tea at 5.

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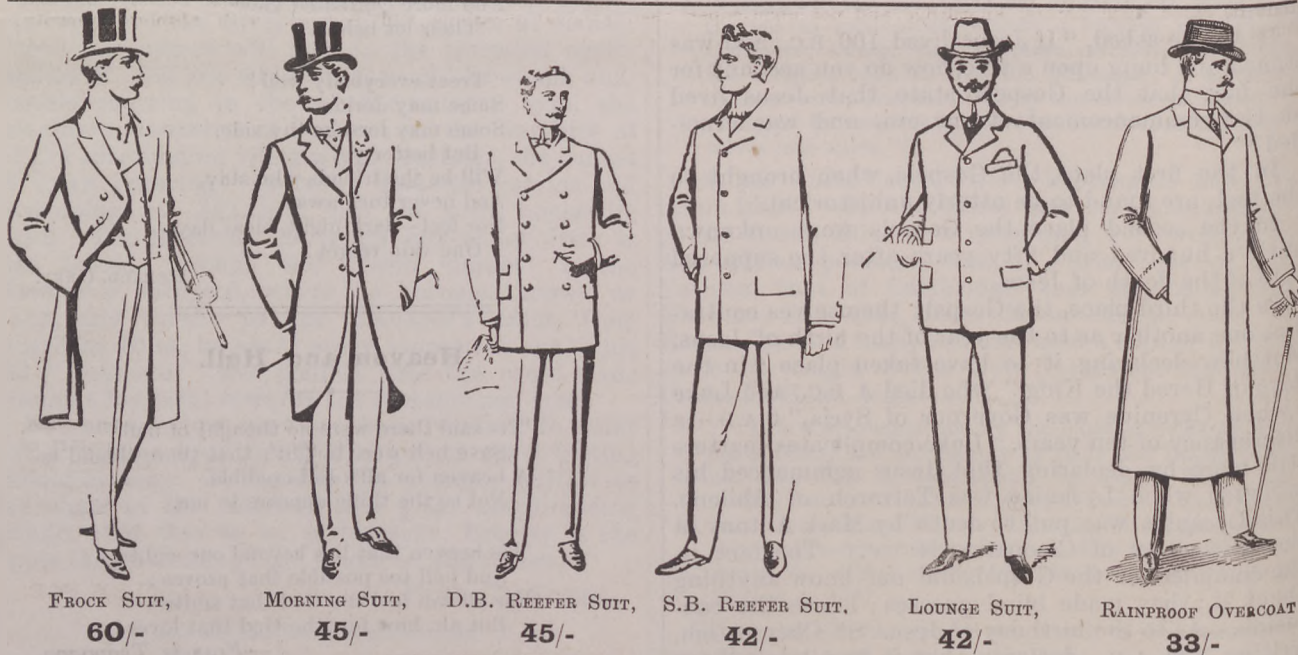
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