

# THE Freethinker

Edited by G. W. FOOTE.

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*Nature proposes to herself no aim in her operations, and all final causes are but pure fictions imagined by men.*—SPINOZA.

## St. George's Day.

APRIL the twenty-third was Easter Sunday, and Easter Sunday is the moveable anniversary of the Resurrection of Jesus Christ. We may feel pretty certain, therefore, that the event it celebrates belongs to the region of romance. Historical anniversaries occur on the same day every year. When an anniversary depends upon the sun and the moon it is not historical but mythical.

April the twenty-third was also St. George's Day—the date in the calendar devoted to England's patron saint. And who was St. George? Emerson says he was George of Cappadocia, an enterprising scoundrel who became a Bishop, and was deservedly lynched by the mob in A.D. 361. This account of him is fiercely repudiated by Ruskin. The real St. George, he argues, was a Cappadocian, it is true, but not a rascally bacon-seller and army contractor. He suffered martyrdom in A.D. 290, and was a most noble and praiseworthy character. But does it matter very much, at this time of day, whether St. George of England is the ecclesiastical gentleman who was martyred in A.D. 290 or the one who was lynched in A.D. 361? England's real patron saint, if we may use the phrase, is a very different person from either of them. His name is William Shakespeare.

This year of grace, A.D. 1905, saw the anniversaries of Jesus Christ, St. George, and Shakespeare all falling on the same day. Of the first, little, if anything, is known; for the incidents in the Gospels are nearly all miraculous, and consequently incredible. Of the second the very identity is disputed. Of the third we know that he lived in England three hundred years ago; that he was a handsome man; that his nature was so sweet that the epithet of "gentle" was the one most frequently applied to him by his contemporaries, including Ben Jonson; and that he also happened to be the greatest poet of his native land, and probably of the whole world. We might say *undoubtedly* the greatest poet of the whole world, but the statement is not necessary to our argument. It is enough that Shakespeare is the greatest poet of England. That fact justifies his selection as our "patron saint." For what is a poet? Shelley said that poets were the "unacknowledged legislators of mankind." Others wield visible power; they wield invisible influence. They most profoundly affect the intellectual and moral atmosphere of our lives. They govern as by "looks of beauty and words of good." They move us through our higher natures. They are thus associated with all our upward tendencies and strivings. They kindle our imaginations, quicken our sympathies, and purify our passions. Such is the function of all true poets, and mankind has always instinctively placed them in the highest category. What then is the place and the value of the greatest poet? Carlyle said that England, if compelled to make the

choice, would give up her Indian Empire rather than give up Shakespeare. The hero-worshiper meant well, but it was a weak comparison. The alternatives were incommensurable. The Indian Empire ministers to England's pride and very little else—except the personal interest of certain "upper" classes; if it were given up England would still be England—as sound, and perhaps sounder, in head and heart and hand; but to cut Shakespeare out of England's conscious vitality would be an awful operation and involve an unimaginable loss.

Setting St. George utterly aside, and taking Jesus Christ and William Shakespeare, we ask any candid and competent person, who is not under the glamor of early, though perhaps faded, belief in the former's divinity, whether there is any real comparison between them. Suppose we accept all that is ascribed to Jesus Christ in the gospels as having fallen from his lips, what sort of relation does it bear to the mighty mass of poetry and philosophy that came from the brain of William Shakespeare? It is idle to say that the Jew died twenty years younger than the Englishman. That may be true, but it cannot be helped, and we have to go by the facts as they are—not as they might be wished or conceived. And, judging by the facts, it appears to us, at any rate, that the central figure of the New Testament is a child in comparison with the profound and majestic spirit which informs the work of the myriad-minded poet who revealed himself to us through his wonderful creations. *Revealed*, we say, and *revealed there*; because, when all is said and done, and every record has been examined, weighed, and tabulated, the dictum of Emerson still remains true, that the only biographer of Shakespeare is Shakespeare himself.

Much eloquence has been expended on Jesus Christ, but little of it strikes us as really sincere, and most of it as strained and hectic. But as Jack Falstaff could say that he was not only witty in himself, but the cause that wit was in other men, so it might be said of Shakespeare that he was not only "inspired" himself but a source of "inspiration" to nearly all the best writers since his death. Goethe, Coleridge, Lamb, De Quincey, Carlyle, Emerson (to take only writers in English) have almost eclipsed themselves in praising Shakespeare. Arnold's sonnet has a grand air that is not easy to match in his other work. Even the dainty and rather dilettante Leigh Hunt rises into a more vivid and powerful expression when he says of some early work of Shakespeare's, in the midst of lesser men's, that "we feel the touch of his electric hand." Mr. Meredith's sonnets on Shakespeare are very splendid. Mr. Swinburne would have exhausted the resources of panegyric, if the eulogy of Shakespeare could ever come to an end. And even the wayward and slightly histrionic Mr. Bernard Shaw—who is, nevertheless, solid and sincere enough at bottom—goes on "taking the cheek out" of Shakespeare with ever-increasing additions of positive glorification; so that we may yet live to see him declare with a laugh that he was not deprecating, but illuminating, the praise of Shakespeare all the time. Yes, if England must have a patron saint, let it be Shakespeare. We can all look up to *him*.

G. W. FOOTE.

## Religious Indifference.

IF one were to judge from speeches made in connection with revival meetings, Freethought is on its last legs. The "spirit of God" is abroad, the general public is being converted in thousands, unbelievers are being brought wholesale into the arms of Jesus. Indeed, from this point of view, it would seem almost as if before long the last Freethinker will be captured, and perhaps preserved in all his unredeemed villainy to serve as a reminder of a type that is extinct. But away from revival meetings things seem pretty much as they were—or even more so. Preachers are still complaining of the general indifference shown to religion, they still lament the beggarly array of empty benches, and deplore the popular impression that the average parson is either rogue or fool, or an unsavoury mixture of the two. And the curious thing is that this optimistic and pessimistic view of the present religious outlook is often found in the same individual. Whichever view is expressed appears to depend upon the circumstances of the moment, and may be taken as a general expression of the unthinking religious temperament, which asserts to be "gospel truth" whatever feeling happens to be uppermost.

The obvious fact that the condition of a full revival meeting is a drainage of the chapels in the neighborhood either never strikes the average parson, or he thinks it the better policy to keep quiet. Or even though a particular church or chapel, here or there, may secure large congregations as a result of revival excitement the general position remains unaltered. A branch establishment may find its trade improving, but a review of the whole trade shows that there is no improvement in the gross turnover. From this aspect of the matter there is no escape, and it is amusing to note the theories propounded by preachers to explain it. The Rev. George Barret, assistant preacher to Dr. R. F. Horton, and who runs his chief close in the quality of muddle-headedness, is of opinion that one great cause of religious indifference is that people "give themselves up entirely to the lust for pleasure," or they "determine to make their pile," and break away from religious beliefs, as that would hamper them in their task of money-making. Now, while I am quite willing to agree that there is not much pleasure in church-going, except of the kind enjoyed by the individual who declared that the greatest joy in life was the pleasure of a "right good funeral," I do not believe that anyone ever stayed away from church because it hampered him in the way of making money. A wealthy Christian is not by any means a rarity; the Stock Exchange can show its fair proportion of energetic church or chapel goers, while Scotchmen and Quakers, whose profession of religion is certainly not lacking in ostentation, are notoriously successful in "making their pile." If Mr. Barrett had said that thousands attend church or chapel because they believe it to be one of the conditions of money-making, he would be far nearer the truth.

Misunderstandings of Christians, preachers and laymen, by the general public, is another cause of indifference named by Mr. Barrett. It is quite affecting to learn that "there is a very widespread idea that preachers do not believe the doctrines and creeds that they proclaim.... They imagine that preachers have a doctrine of reserve; that they do not speak out their minds; that they do not repeat to their congregations what they themselves have thought and the conclusions to which they have come." Well, now, in the name of all that is sober and reasonable, to what other conclusion can anyone come? Here is a whole mass of critical literature upon both the Old and New Testament, with the general results of which, at least, most clergymen are acquainted. The doctrine of evolution is now universally accepted in its general outline by all educated people, and, in addition, there is

a large body of literature dealing with the relation of Christianity to other religions. Yet, so far as the sermons of the average preacher are concerned, the discoveries and researches of the last half century might as well be non-existent. No matter to what extent a clergyman may admit, when pressed, that the writings of the Old Testament are anonymous and unhistoric, that many of its characters and incidents are obviously and demonstrably mythical, in the pulpit the whole thing is treated as though it were as real as an ordinary history. They see, in addition, preachers accepting doctrines, and yet giving to them a meaning that earlier generations would repudiate with horror, either not preaching what they are paid to preach, or teaching what they are not paid to teach. When any reasonable individual studies the tricks and subterfuges, the shufflings and evasions of the clergy, what other conclusion can he come to than that he is dealing with a body of men to whom neither honesty of thought nor speech is a very powerful consideration?

Mr. Barratt thinks that a great deal might be done to correct the indifference to religion if the Churches only meant business. And what he means by the Churches getting to business is this. The Christian people, by combining, could in five years "have all the public-houses closed on a Sunday, and all the shops; and I tell you this—I am convinced that if that were done our churches would be crowded. The people would come in again, would be driven in again, because they would not know otherwise how to spend their Sunday."

Of all the suggestions for filling the churches this is the most wonderful. Not that it is wanting in truth; for Mr. Barratt will find many supporters in his belief that the only way to get people into church on Sunday is to make everything so deadly dull that even a "Gospel service" will prove an attraction. Nor is there anything new about the method; for parsonic hostility to Sunday entertainments, Sunday opening of museums, etc., has always been based upon the conviction that the majority of people would only go to church when it was impossible to go anywhere else with comfort. Not all the perfumes of Araby can make religion sweet, but it may be made comparatively so by making other things distasteful. The surprising thing is to find a preacher who is honest enough—or stupid enough—to so completely give the game away.

It is more than a little curious that even the perception of the truth that, with absolute free trade, Christianity, or religion in general, could not hold its own, does not lead to the further recognition of the artificial nature of religious belief among civilised people. Ideas or beliefs that correspond to a genuine need of the time do not require the rigorous suppression of all counteracting agencies. They persist because they are the product of the conditions amid which they exist. And so long as a belief is in harmonious relation with contemporary knowledge or feeling, there is no need to forcibly suppress possible rivals. It is only when beliefs do not correspond with contemporary knowledge that artificial nurture is necessary. And then they are perpetuated, as religion is perpetuated, by the stimulation of feelings that have their origin in the remote and barbaric past, and by the suppression of information, thus perpetuating an atmosphere in which such beliefs may flourish.

For the solid fact is that with any degree of civilisation there is met the same complaint from religious teachers. People will not pay attention to religious ceremonies, and they hold their beliefs but loosely. The same phenomenon is not to be met with in other directions. The qualities that go to make life better, healthier, do, on the whole, grow steadily better, or at the very worst they persist—there is no fear of their disappearance. It is only with religion that the fear is present, and it is justified by the fact. For among all-civilised people religion does grow steadily weaker. Old habits, old instincts, with numerous less lovely forces, serve to keep it

alive; but it is dwindling nevertheless. And when a belief or an institution has come to the point of demanding constant protection from competition if it is to live, the evolutionist needs no fuller or further proof of its uselessness.

C. COHEN.

### Stray Thoughts for Easter-tide.

ONCE again it is among the things of the past. Both the mourning and the rejoicing, both the dirges and the peans, both the forty days' fasting and the one day of triumphant feasting, are over. Once more Easter-tide has come and gone, and we breathe again. But this season gives rise to reflections, and these reflections often lead to unexpected conclusions. Easter is said to be "an annual Church festival commemorating Christ's resurrection"; but this word, *Easter*, is of a distinctly mythological savor. All the good gifts of Nature come from the East. The sun rises in the East; each new day comes fresh and bright from the bosom of the East. Night, which we do not like, is a child of the West. All things dark and gloomy, painful and sad, come from the same source. Therefore, we love the East and hate the West. Spring and summer, too, issue from the chambers of the East, while autumn and winter crawl from the West. Now, in Anglo-Saxon, *Eastre* is the name given to the goddess of light or spring, in whose honor a festival was celebrated in April. Nature experiences an unspeakably glorious resurrection once a year, and our Pagan forefathers invented a goddess whose special function it was to preside over that ever-wonderful event. Thus, you see, Easter is an adaptation or development of an old mythological festival. Indeed, the Venerable Bede defines Easter as "the old festival observed with the gladness of a new solemnity"; and Boniface, representing Germany, would have given a similar definition.

But Easter, I admit, is not the oldest name of the Christian festival of the resurrection. There is a country in Great Britain in which the term Easter is seldom if ever employed. There, the name of the festival is *Pasc*, which is very like *Pasque* and *Pasqua*; and thus we are reminded that this Christian festival is an adaptation or development of the Jewish *Passover*. But the *Passover* was a spring-festival of great antiquity, to which we find wonderfully close parallels all over the ancient world. The fact is that practically all the Christian festivals are adaptations or developments of older Jewish and Pagan originals. At first, all Paschal Lambs were offerings to the sun in celebration of his annual rejuvenescence.

Such reflections and conclusions are inescapable. Scholars are bound to entertain them. It is too late in the day to trifle with the facts of history. The eyes of the people are being opened, and their teachers cannot, as of yore they could and did, lead them by the nose. All religions are essentially alike; and they are all more or less intimately connected with the movements of the sun.

Easter is a time of rejoicing. Nature herself seems now to be full of gladness. Winter, with its long, dark nights, with its snow and sleet, with its driving storms and suffocating fogs, is over, and with full hearts we sing:—

Lo, the winter is past,  
The rain is over and gone;  
The flowers appear on the earth;  
The time of the singing of birds is come,  
And the voice of the turtle is heard in our land.

This is the time to realise to the full the thrilling joy of life. This is the time to feel young and fresh, to cast off dull despair and welcome tuneful hope, to eject the croaking devil and admit the singing angel. It ought to be a crime to feel old in the springtime. I have a friend of ninety-two, and not even the blackest winter has ever robbed him of his eternal youthfulness. He has the bright, joyous, sanguine temperament, and in the spring the very sight of him

is a benediction. The best means to keep young is to keep clear of carking care; and the best means of preventing carking care from intruding, is to live close to Nature's heart. "But I am the slave of my temperament," someone cries out; "I am constitutionally lugubrious and morose." My message to such a man would be: "What you say, my friend, is only too true; but make believe that you have the opposite temperament, and try to act as if you had, and in time your inherited temperament will be considerably modified." It is wonderful what miracles a man can perform upon himself by a long course of persistent self-education. Communion with Nature in spring and early summer always made a new man of Wordsworth. In his opinion sorrow is very largely the outcome of unnatural relations. "Have I not reason to lament," he said—

Have I not reason to lament  
What Man hath made of Man?

To his poetic mind, Nature—especially in spring—is profoundly joyous. The primrose tufts, the periwinkles, the hopping and flying birds, the budding twigs—all seemed to him to be strangely thrilled with the joy of life; and as he contemplated them, he caught their mood and rejoiced with them. Everyone of us can have the same experience, to a certain extent, if we adopt the same means. At first, the joyous mood may come to us but occasionally, but if, each time it comes, we make the most of it, it may eventually become almost habitual.

To be in close touch with Nature in the spring-time is to gain new strength and inspiration for the various duties of our human life. Great is the number of these duties, and great is the responsibility involved in them. One of the most important of them, perhaps, is the duty of cultivating an optimistic attitude. There are no people in the world to whom the cultivation of this desirable attitude ought to be so easy as to Freethinkers. Indeed, we are the only people who have a right to rejoice and be glad. For one thing, we are not weighed down and hampered by the degrading belief that the great majority of mankind are on the road to hell. That is a Christian belief. What right have Christians to rejoice when millions upon millions of their fellow-beings are doomed to everlasting destruction? Although they themselves have a clear title to the blessedness of heaven, it would be sheer heartlessness on their part to eat and drink and be merry. Their heads ought to be fountains of water, and they ought to go about weeping and mourning all the time. Mr. Quenton Ashlyn told Mr. Stead that ever since his conversion at the Albert Hall, he is a new man and feels "like laughing all the day"; but how can he laugh when he believes that so many immortal souls are in danger of hell? Would it not have been kinder to go on giving them clean and innocent entertainment to break the monotony of their sad journey? If it is not right for him to make such people laugh, can it be right for him to feel like laughing all the day, when he believes that such a fearful doom is awaiting them?

But Secularists are not dominated by such an inhuman belief. They are in blissful ignorance of everything beyond the tomb. Nor have they any knowledge of original sin. The doctrine of the hopeless depravity of the race, apart from the cross of Christ, is to them the deadliest of heresies. Their conviction is that humanity is on the up-grade. The gradient may be very slight; but it is very real. Well, such a conviction is wholesome and inspiring. It is exhilarating to think well of your neighbors. When Charles Haddon Spurgeon began to charge his brother ministers with being theologically on the down-grade, it was discovered that emotionally and religiously, he, too, was on the same grade. His ill opinion of his brethren proved lowering to himself. So, likewise, to be optimistic about other people reacts beneficially upon ourselves, and the more we cultivate such an attitude the better it will be for ourselves.

And there is ample justification for encouraging

such an attitude. The world is slowly getting better. It is improving even morally, while in enlightenment its improvement has of late been both decided and rapid. The ramparts of superstition are crumbling away. The iron rule of the creeds is breaking down. The most orthodox divines of to-day would have been persecuted as heretics a hundred years ago. For example, take the great doctrine ever emphasised on Easter Sunday, the Resurrection of Christ, and you will realise what progress towards sanity has been made during the last few years. In the *Hibbert Journal* for last April there appeared an article on "The Resurrection of Jesus Christ," from the facile pen of the Rev. Canon H. Hensley Henson. The Canon unhesitatingly pronounces the evidences for the resurrection, as a historical fact, utterly inadequate. He asks:—

"Is the vital truth of Christ's religion really bound up with what have been oddly called 'unambiguous historical statements,' declared by historical science to be either doubtful, or false? Is the resurrection really inconceivable apart from the materialistic notions which current Judaism contributed to the earliest literature of the Christian Church? Is an honest belief in the resurrection really inconsistent with a reverent agnosticism as to the historical circumstances out of which in the first instance that belief arose? Is the faith of the Church in a Divine Christ, living, present, active, really 'built on an empty tomb'? Must we accept the desperate conclusion that the religion stands and falls with the historical truth of the primitive notions as to its origin."

We consider Canon Henson's own doctrine equally as impossible and inconsistent as the orthodox one he rejects. We may ask, what is the use of retaining the word resurrection if no corresponding historical fact underlies it? If Christ did not actually rise, how can He be said to be indeed risen? If there was no "empty tomb" how could there have been a real resurrection? If the soul of Christ was immortal, as all Christians believe, it needed to undergo no revival or resurrection to continue its active life. If the body of Christ did not actually rise from the tomb, it is simply absurd to speak of his resurrection. But our present point is that at this time of day the most enlightened theologians find it quite impossible to accept the stupendous miracle of the resurrection. The evidences for it fail to satisfy their reason. At this Freethinkers rejoice and are exceeding glad. Canon Henson and his friends have their faces in the right direction, though they have made a halt at too early a stage in their march. Their next halt, we believe, will be at their only legitimate destination, namely, denial of the supernatural altogether. Generally speaking, the Easter sermons of the present are radically different from those of fifty years ago. The basis of faith has in the meantime been entirely changed.

We have reason to be optimistic. Freethought is triumphing all along the line. The Albert Hall Mission did not convert London, after all. It made no impression upon the city as such; and the impression it *did* make upon a very small section of it was not altogether favorable. Mr. Quenton Ashlyn was always a quiescent Christian, having been brought up in a distinctly Christian home, and being always in friendly touch with zealous disciples. He is only a backslider won back from the flesh-pots of the world. The trend of the times is steadily away from all religion, away from the trammels of ecclesiasticism, and away from the autocracy of the priests; and the present wave of revivalism will only tend to strengthen this movement towards Secularism. The Freethought of the twentieth century has invaded the Church, while in the outside world it is subtler, stronger, and more permeating than at any former period.

J. T. LLOYD.

All superstition is much the same, whether it be that of astrology, dreams, omens, retributive judgment, and the like, in all of which the deluded believers observe events which are fulfilled, but neglect and pass over their failure, though it be much more common.—*Bacon*.

## The Revival Wanted.

CHRISTIAN revivals have occurred at intervals for nearly two thousand years. But religious revivals have not been confined to Christian countries. Long before the birth of Christianity, revivals in connection with religions took place in many heathen lands. Buddhism revivals may be taken as an example. But all the revivals of the world—heathen and Christian—have been huge failures. Not one of them did anything to uplift the masses from their poverty, degradation, immorality, and misery. In fact, none of them tried to improve the secular conditions of man in this world. They are not designed to fight oppression, exploitation, legal robberies, unemployment, and economic slavery. The only class that benefits by them are the revivalists and priests. They are got up not to prepare men to make the best use of this world, but to make them fit for another, of which they know nothing, not even that there is one. No wonder they are a failure, and a huge waste of energy, time, and enthusiasm! Besides, they block the way, hypnotise the victims of injustice, and distract their attention from the social and economic wrongs from which they suffer.

What good did the Moody and Sankey revival do? Did they do any good? Did they help to remove one single evil of social life? Did their services reduce, by any perceptible degree, the amount of poverty and misery in Britain or America? Did the Welsh revival of 1859 improve the worldly state of the principality? Did the colliers, miners, quarrymen, farm laborers, and unskilled workers have better food, better clothing, better houses, or more comforts owing to the revival? If not, was the excitement and heat not a waste of time, energy, and opportunity?

Similar train of thought may be pursued in regard to every revival of the past and the present. They all spend themselves, and leave even religious things much as they were. The Torrey-Alexander and the Welsh Revival will collapse like all the rest, and the supposed fruits will gradually disappear. Socially, there will be no fruit at all. The revival will do nothing to destroy the slums, diminish overcrowding, provide work for the unemployed, and to uproot the causes of unemployment and poverty. Charity provides no permanent cure. Unless continuous as long as the need lasts, it is little less than a mockery of distress. The inefficiency of efforts to relieve the distress is proved by the periodical need of renewal. Charity has been more or less active for thousands of years without effecting any decrease of destitution. And the present revival will do nothing to diminish destitution any more than the efforts of the Salvation Army have done. A third of our population are constantly on the verge of starvation, and a million of children attend school unfed and underfed, proving that all the agencies hitherto employed to cope with poverty are almost useless and worthless, and that because they never attempt to remove the causes that produce destitution.

What is it that is wanted to change the state of society morally and socially? That it wants changing is indisputable. Great numbers of the people are not moral enough, not honest enough, not kind enough, not sober enough. How can you get a sober people whilst you allow brewers and publicans to set their traps at every street corner to inveigle the unwary? How can you get honest people whilst the robbery of the toilers by landlords, employers, merchants, and officials is legalised by the State? How can chastity be established whilst frail women are left without the means of livelihood, and are hunted and persecuted, whilst the greater number of equally guilty men are never even reprimanded? How can you get a refined, virtuous public whilst millions are left helpless in the grip of poverty and misery? No change for the better is possible without nationalising the land, machinery, and wealth to secure a comfortable livelihood for all

the people. Will the revivalists do anything to change the social order, stop the robbery, and lift the masses from the depths of poverty, degradation, and misery? Not they. They have not done it in the past; they will not do it now, or in the future. Watch their movements, and you will see them, as usual, supporting the classes against the masses.

What is wanted is a revival in the service of man in this world. Religious revivals are all in the service of God—prayers to God, praise to God, confession of God, pledges of loyalty to God. But God requires no service from man. He is all-wise, almighty, all-good, all-wealthy, omniscient, unchangeable, and eternal. Man can do nothing for God; but for man, man can do much. God needs nothing; man needs all things. Millions on millions are in want of food, clothing, houses, education, leisure, and comforts. At least a million of children attend schools unfed and underfed. If all put their shoulders to the wheel the State could be compelled to see that the wants of all were supplied.

The revivalists are never tired of singing "Thanks be to God." I would like to ask them what do they thank him for? Is it for the toil and danger in pit and quarry and works? Is it for the long hours of toil for small pittance and starving fare? Is it for sickness, accidents, and death? Is it for the scanty clothing of themselves and their wives and children, many of them in wretched hovels for which they have to pay exorbitant rents? Is it for allowing themselves to be plundered right and left by idle parasites? Is it for a life of misery that might be a life of happiness? If not for these things, what are the thanks for? If God converted Royalty, the Government, millionaires, financiers, landlords, exploiters, and all the crowds of idlers that live in luxury and grandeur on the labor of poor toilers, the masses might have something for thanking God for.

If the revivalists were to exercise the same enthusiasm in the service of man as in the supposed service of God, men would have something to thank them for. If all the Churches and all organisations, political and social, were to unite and make a revival to establish a brotherhood of man, to uproot poverty, to place all men in comfortable and secure livelihood, the promised millennium would soon begin to be.

R. J. DERFEL.

### Tributes to Voltaire.

"The breath of God has relegated Voltaire to the limbo of forgetfulness."—REV. DR. TORREY, *Daily Chronicle*, February 3, 1905.

OLIVER GOLDSMITH.

Should you look for the character of Voltaire among the journalists and illiterate writers of the age, you will find him there characterised as a monster, with a head turning to wisdom, and a heart inclining to vice—the powers of his mind and the baseness of his principles forming a detestable contrast. But seek for his character among writers like himself, and you will find him very differently described. You perceive him, in their accounts, possessed of good nature, humanity, greatness of soul, fortitude, and almost every virtue: in this description those who might be supposed best acquainted with his character are unanimous.

MACAULAY.

Of all the intellectual weapons which have ever been wielded by man, the most terrible was the mockery of Voltaire. Bigots and tyrants, who had never been moved by the wailing and cursing of millions, turned pale at his name.

CARLYLE.

He gave the death-stab to modern Superstition! *That* horrid incubus, which dwelt in darkness, slunning the light, is passing away; with all its racks and poison chalices, and foul sleeping-draughts, is passing away without return. It was a most weighty service.

ROBERT BROWNING.

Ay, sharpest, shrewdest steel that ever stabbed  
To death Imposture through the armor joints.

JOHN RUSKIN.

There are few stronger adversaries to St. George than Voltaire. But my scholars are welcome to read of much of Voltaire as they like. His voice is mighty among the ages.

VICTOR HUGO.

Voltaire waged the splendid kind of warfare, the warfare of one against all—that is to say, the grand warfare; the war of thought against matter; the war of reason against prejudice; the war of the just against the unjust; the war of the oppressed against the oppressor; the war of goodness; the war of kindness. He had the tenderness of a woman and the wrath of a hero. He was a great mind and an immense heart. He conquered the old code and the old dogma. He conquered the Feudal lord, the Gothic judge, the Roman priest. He raised the populace to the dignity of people. He taught, pacified, and civilised. He accepted all the menaces, all the persecution, calumny, and exile. He was indefatigable and immovable. He conquered violence by a smile, despotism by sarcasm, infallibility by irony, obstinacy by perseverance, ignorance by truth.

BUCKLE.

He used ridicule, not as the test of truth, but as the scourge of folly. And with such effect was the punishment administered that not only did the pedants and theologians of his own time wince under the lash, but even their successors feel their ears tingle when they read his biting words; and they revenge themselves by reviling the memory of the great writer whose works are as a thorn in their side, and whose very name they hold in undisguised abhorrence.

GOETHE.

Voltaire will ever be regarded as the greatest name in literature in modern times, and perhaps even in all ages, as the most astonishing creation of nature, in which she united, in one frail human organisation, all the varieties of talent, all the glories of genius, all the potencies of thought. If you wish depth, genius, imagination, reason, sensibility, philosophy, elevation, originality, nature, intellect, fancy, rectitude, facility, flexibility, precision, art, abundance, variety, fertility, warmth, magic, charm, grace, force, an eagle sweep of vision, vast understanding, instruction rich, tone excellent, urbanity, suavety, delicacy, correctness, purity, clearness, eloquence, harmony, brilliancy, rapidity, gaiety, pathos, sublimity and universality—perfection indeed—behold Voltaire.

LECKY.

Wherever his influence passed, the arm of the inquisitor was palsied, the chain of the captive riven, the prison door flung open. Beneath his withering irony, persecution appeared not only criminal but loathsome, and since his time it has ever shrunk from observation and masked its features under other names. He died, leaving a reputation that is indeed far from spotless, but having done more to destroy the greatest of human curses than any other of the sons of men.

ALGERNON CHARLES SWINBURNE.

Voltaire's great work was to have done more than any other man on record to make the instinct of cruelty, not only detestable, but ludicrous; and so to accomplish what the holiest and wisest of saints and philosophers had failed to achieve: to attack the most hideous and pernicious of human vices with a more effective weapon than preaching and denunciation: to make tyrants and torturers look not merely horrible and hateful, but pitiful and ridiculous.

COLONEL HAMLEY.

He was the untiring and eloquent advocate at the bar of the universe of the rights of humanity.

JOHN MORLEY.

Voltaire was the very eye of modern illumination. It was he who conveyed to his generation in a multitude of forms the consciousness at once of the power and the rights of human intelligence. Another might have said of him what he magnanimously said of his famous contemporary, Montesquieu, that humanity had lost its title-deeds, and he had recovered them. The four-score volumes which he wrote are the monument, as they were the instrument, of a new renaissance. They are the fruit and representation of a spirit of encyclopaedic curiosity and productiveness. Hardly a page of all these countless leaves is common form. Hardly a sentence is there which did not come forth alive from Voltaire's own mind, or which was said because some one else had said it before. Voltaire was a stupendous power, not only because his expression was incomparably lucid, or even because his sight was exquisitely keen and clear, but because he saw many new things, after which the spirits of others were unconsciously groping and dumbly yearning. Nor was this all. Voltaire was ever in the front and centre of the fight. His life was not a mere chapter in a history of literature. He never counted truth a treasure to be discreetly hidden in a napkin. He made it a perpetual war cry, and emblazoned it on a banner that was many a time rent, but was never out of the field.

## Acid Drops.

The Christian Evidence Society is very lucky. Its advertisements cost nothing. A begging-letter from its office—signed by the treasurer, Mr. H. Goschen, and several sky-pilots, including the Dean of Canterbury—has been printed in many newspapers, and has even got as far north as the *Glasgow Herald*. Mr. H. Goschen's name is suggestive of the people of Israel, but we suppose he is a true-blue Nazarene; for the opening sentence of the appeal says that "The existence of an energetic anti-Christian propaganda calls for the earnest efforts of all Christian people to counteract it." We quite agree with this admirable sentiment, and we hope the Christian Evidence Society will be liberally supported. It does a great work for Free thought by drawing attention to the "evidences" of Christianity. That cannot be done without raising more doubts than it settles. So here's a health to the Christian Evidence Society. Long may it stir up the stagnant minds of true believers.

Rev. J. Hunter, a Chicago revivalist, told his hearers to "look out for five D's—death, dearth, drink, devil, and dance." He was particularly hard on the last D. "The modern waltz," he said—as though there were an ancient waltz—"is the outrageous invention of the devil." Revivalist Hunter's description of it shows that he has looked at it until his mouth watered. Clearly, if he danced a waltz, he would make it lascivious enough. We pity him.

Much better sense was talked at Chicago by Dr. R. A. White, pastor of the People's Liberal Church. Preaching on "Environment and Morals" he said:—

"If you want good folks here in Chicago give them in some way better surroundings. Clear out your tenements, clean up your alleys, give them pure water, widen your streets, and let in the sunlight; get people out of the cellars, give them enough to eat and wear, that is, give them the opportunity to earn them, create parks and breathing spaces, give the children better homes, then things will go better."

Evidently there is *some* wisdom left in Chicago.

We referred last week to the pious and malignant drivel of Paul J. Gilbert, of the Torrey-Alexander Mission, in the *Sunday Companion*. Dr. Torrey's underling—the great revivalist's own mouth being stopped by Mr. Foote's pamphlet—told some fresh cowardly lies about Ingersoll. Here is a sample of his performance with respect to the three other Freethinkers:—

"Infidels are expert at denying everything that exposes the fatal defects of their heroes. According to their manner of thinking, no one can possibly be telling the truth who speaks of such defects. To them it is absolutely unthinkable that their chief idols, like Thomas Paine and Voltaire, ever should have been filled with the agony of remorse, because of their sins and unbelief, or that other of their infidel heroes should have expressed regret at their sceptical habit of thought, as did Hume, when he despondently spoke of himself as being 'in the most deplorable condition imaginable, environed with the deepest darkness.'"

Here are three lies in three sentences. Thomas Paine never expressed remorse for his unbelief. Voltaire never expressed remorse for his unbelief. The statement that they did so is an orthodox invention. That is why the liars lie without producing any evidence. They know it cannot be produced. But they also know that the lie is useful—and they will never abandon it while it pays. The lie about David Hume is the very opposite of the truth—just like Dr. Torrey's lie about Ingersoll. Hume's friend, Dr. Adam Smith, author of the famous *Wealth of Nations*, wrote that he "gave up all hope of recovery, but submitted with the utmost cheerfulness, and the most perfect complacency and resignation." Dr. Black, the physician who attended him, who was present at his death and closed his eyes, wrote: "When he became weak it cost him an effort to speak, and he died in such a happy composure of mind that nothing could exceed." Dr. Black was there. The dirty little liar, Paul J. Gilbert, was not there. He lies about Hume for a living a hundred and thirty years afterwards. And he is one of the Dr. Torrey gang who have come to "save London." What has London done to be afflicted with such vermin?

Don't meddle with an "inspired" man, or with a man who gets the mob to believe he is inspired—which is just the same thing. All the people who meddled with "inspired" men in the Bible came to a bad end—from Saul the King down to the more or less obscure persons that Peter, Paul and Co. "smote." This ought to have been considered by the Rev. H. M. Roberts who rebuked Evan Roberts for carrying on so at a Liverpool revival meeting. Evan Roberts behaved like a lunatic or a mountebank, and the reverend gentleman told him that his conduct was a "mockery." This blasphemy against God's elect apostle is like the sin

against the Holy Ghost—there will be no forgiveness for it in the present world, and there is no forgiveness for it in the present world. When the Rev. H. M. Roberts went to Llansannan to preach he travelled by way of Denbigh, where he called at a refreshment house, but was peremptorily refused food and lodgings. He was also interviewed by some religious leaders in the town and severely criticised. On Sunday morning he preached at a small chapel in Llansannan, but a message reached him from Tanyfron that his services would not be required there in the afternoon. The poor persecuted man of God, of the common or kitchen-garden variety, returned to Denbigh in great distress; several ministers finding him there "in a dejected state of mind and crying piteously." Let him cry. Evan Roberts smiles. But his turn is pretty sure to come. When the pious mob thrust out their tongues at *him* he will smile on the other side of his face. "Inspired" gentlemen have a shorter career now than they had in the good old times.

Dr. John Watson ("Ian Maclaren") is retiring from his pulpit at Liverpool. We are not surprised, therefore, at a recent sermon of his on Nicodemus. Dr. Watson pointed out that the mob were not always generous, and that rich men were not always the opposite. When the mob welcomed Jesus into Jerusalem in their excited way Nicodemus was not there, but when the mob turned right about face and cried out "Crucify him!" Nicodemus was found pleading the cause of Jesus before the rulers. When the dead body hung upon the cross not one of all those who shouted "Hosanna!" would have anything to do with it, but it was given "a beautiful and honorable burial at the hands of a Jewish capitalist and the ruler and scholar Nicodemus." This is a hit, a palpable hit at the Christian Socialists. Will they hit back? We wonder.

Dr. Watson's words about the religious mob should be studied by Evan Roberts and Dr. Torrey—yea, and by Gipsy Smith:—

"The people with no more than an elementary education, and some of them not even that, like the open; they are happy with processions, bands, and flying banners; the greater the crowd about them when they profess their faith and the shriller the voice which gives it expression the better, they think. And I would not have you judge them. Religion in the common people must have its expression thus. But if you are willing to make immense allowances for the vulgarities of the populace, then surely you are not going to condemn the scholar's reticence as cowardice because it is not his way to bawl out his profession of faith before the multitude."

What price the penitent form now?

We invite attention to the following extract from the *Manchester Guardian* of April 18:—

### "RELIGIOUS MANIA."

"At a meeting yesterday of the visitors to the North Wales Asylum at Denbigh, the medical superintendent was asked whether the revival had had any effect upon the number of patients. Dr. Cox replied that during the past two months they had had an exceptional number admitted—namely, 36 males and 30 females. Of these eleven males and six females appeared to have been injuriously affected by the revival. These represented a percentage of 25. But some of the cases were old ones, and hereditary insanity was found in others, so that only in 9 cases could the primary cause be said to be religious fervor. It was pointed out, however, that in normal conditions a certain proportion of the patients suffered from religious mania, and that this consideration would further reduce the number of cases directly to be traced to the present revival. The Committee expressed the opinion that there was no cause for alarm, considering that in all the cases there was a certain predisposition or liability to mental derangement, and that any unusual excitement, whether religious or of any other kind, was likely to upset the balance of such persons."

Note the way in which it is sought to minimise the evil effects of the revival, in order that no cause may appear for "alarm." One argument of the committee is positively ridiculous. Of course "unusual excitement" operates prejudicially upon persons "of a certain disposition or liability to mental derangement." Just in the same way two hundred-weight placed upon shoulders that can only bear one operates prejudicially. But should two hundred-weight be placed upon shoulders indiscriminately because some are *able* to stand it? Now the "unusual excitement" of the revival is prolonged for weeks and months, and the weakest heads are mostly brought under its influence. At first the very weakest go wrong; after a time another stratum of heads is upset; and, if the revival continues long enough, there will be mischief in ever-ascending levels. This is the moral of the Denbigh Asylum report.

The *South Wales Echo* declares that they have "reached a dangerous state of frantic opinion in Wales." There is a spirit of intolerance growing up side by side with the

revival, and if it gets the upper hand "we might say good-bye to all progress in Wales for a century."

America sent Dr. Torrey to England, and England has sent the Rev. W. J. Dawson to America. It would be hard to say which country had profited by the exchange. But that is not our point. Mr. Dawson, writing home to the *Christian World*, makes a confession that we ask our own readers to notice. "Labor, as a rule," he says, "has no faith in Christianity, and is bitterly hostile to wealth. The Church has never been its friend. Only on one occasion in all of my meetings have I had a genuine working-man audience. We shall make an attempt to-night in the Broadway Tabernacle to secure such an audience, but the result is doubtful. One of the gravest of all problems which confronts the American Churches is the almost total alienation of labor." When we say such things in the *Freethinker* the Christians laugh incredulously. When one of their own popular preachers talks in this way they may listen more seriously.

Dr. Torrey said the other day that people must not look to him for humor. Nobody would who had seen him or his photograph. His case seems a very hopeless one. The *Christian World* gives a sample of his wit, which he "evidently hugely enjoyed" himself. Speaking of April Fools' Day in New England, he said that "all the fools try to make all the other fools bigger fools than they are themselves." This is worthy of an average orang-outang. Not that we would dogmatise on the point. It would not be fair to the orang-outang.

Rev. J. Morgan Gibbon, the *Christian World* says, has left England for a two months' voyage in the Mediterranean. Happy Morgan Gibbon! It seems a nice situation to a laborer in the Lord's vineyard.

The Wee Kirkers in Scotland don't mean to be bullied and despoiled of their recent gains by any legal or strategic efforts of the Free Kirkers. They mean to resist to the death. Meanwhile they warn Scotland against falling into the Free Kirk pit of heresy. Here is a passage from their latest manifesto:—

"No Government would venture to despoil the Free Church in order to endow a Church with no creed—no distinctive testimony, but which claimed the right to become Roman Catholic to-morrow if it chose, and is already drifting towards Unitarianism."  
Orthodox theology is at stake, and the spirit of our old John Knox will have to be reckoned with in this struggle.

Mr. G. K. Chesterton had a Good Friday article in the *Daily News* on—Rabelais! At the end of the article he remarked that the Christendom of Rabelais' time "would have made short work of Zola, not for his realism, but for his idealism"—"and it would have been quite right." Why? Because the principles of Zola were not the principles of that Christendom or of Mr. Chesterton; those principles being "the ideals of a scientific civilisation, ungenial, unchivalrous, without God or hope in the world." When the great Mr. Chesterton ceases to be a jester he becomes a bigot. He approves of "making short work" of Zola—or anybody else who preaches a gospel different from his own. Perhaps, in a lucid interval, he may reflect that more than one side might play the game of extermination, and that an adverse majority might "make short work" of him.

Listening to the sweet Christians you would imagine that the Turks were the only persons capable of cruelty in South-East Europe; whereas the truth is that all the races and nationalities of that part of the world are perfect devils when let loose upon each other, and if there be any difference it is in favor of the Mohammedans. Reports appear in the newspapers of the exploits of a Greek band, 300 strong, in Bulgaria. At Zagoritchani they "massacred indiscriminately, shooting, stabbing, hacking, and dynamiting." Sixty-two unburied corpses of villagers were found afterwards, including six women and two children. The latter had been first bayoneted and then disembowelled. Both the butchers and their victims were Christians!

The Glasgow Synod of the Established Church of Scotland has passed a resolution not to oppose the opening of museums and art galleries on Sundays "provided proper precautions are taken to ensure that there be no interference with the due observance of public worship." This is professionalism naked and unashamed. Do as you please, the clergy say, as long as you don't injure our business.

Rev. F. O. Chambers, of Snainton, near Scarborough, wanted a head teacher in the Church (State supported)

school, and this is how he advertised for that desideratum:—

"Wanted, a head master, for non-provided school. Local preference will be given to one who can play the organ in church and train the choir. The school managers have no use for a bigot or a Protestant."

Considering that the Church of England is a Protestant Church this was remarkably rich. But the organ and choir part of the advertisement takes the cake. Evidently the parson wanted a factotum—at the public expense.

Professor Garvie, after a discourse at Looe, in Cornwall, on "Christian Faith and Modern Unbelief," was bold enough to offer to answer questions—though none of them were likely to be of a revolutionary character. During this part of the entertainment he threw a wonderful illumination on what may be called the mind of Christ. We quote the following from the *Christian World*:—

"Rev. W. J. Michell (Bible Christian), referring to the Professor's observations on the divinity of Jesus, asked what were Christ's limitations, and to what extent he shared the views common to his own time? In reply, Dr. Garvie said that Jesus shared our full humanity, and was therefore limited in his knowledge of the date and authorship of the Old Testament. He also held the popular view respecting demonology, etc. But Christ's authority was supreme as a revealer of the moral and spiritual character of the Heavenly Father."

This is extremely interesting. Dr. Garvie knows what Jesus did and did not know. That is, he says he does. But how do we know that? And how did Dr. Garvie come to know it? Did Jesus tell him so, or how *did* he find it out? Nor is that all. Even if we suppose Dr. Garvie to be accurate on this point, it is clear that he opens up another ground of serious criticism. It is admitted that Jesus was mistaken *where we are able to test him*. He is claimed to be infallible *where we cannot test him*. But is this a sound process of reasoning? If a person is quite wrong where you are able to test him, he may be quite wrong where you are not able to test him. At any rate, his being wrong in one direction is no proof that he is right in another direction. It appears to us that Dr. Garvie, like other Higher Critics, is giving the game away. You cannot run with the hare and keep with the hounds.

Hero-worship can be played very low down. After seeing Burns's umbrella (real or otherwise) advertised as a valuable fetish, we note the sale of John Wesley's bedstead for 140 guineas at Christie's. Couldn't they offer for sale a bone or two, or even a hoof, of the horse he rode on his last preaching tour, or a few whiskers from the last cat he stroked before giving up the ghost?

The *Daily Mirror* should keep a sharp eye on its paragraphs. On Monday morning it referred to Walter Savage Landor as having had "the most prodigious rows with neighbors, with people in England, and with Byron and Shelley in Italy." So far from "rowing" with Shelley, Landor was not even acquainted with him. Landor's "rowing" with Byron is of the same imaginary character. Whatever difference there was between them was purely literary. They were not personal friends, nor even acquaintances.

Mr. A. E. Fletcher seems bound to go wrong when he refers to Shelley. In last week's *Clarion* he quoted Shelley's statement that he "had rather be damned with Plato and Lord Bacon, than go to heaven with Paley and Malthus," and took this to mean that Shelley was opposed to "the law of population." Not being an idiot, Shelley could not be opposed to a scientific truth, and the "law of population" as formulated by Malthus is of that character. Shelley's opposition to Malthus was based upon something very different; he objected to the law of population being advanced as a barrier to human perfectibility. There is a footnote to the Preface to the *Revolt of Islam* which clearly explains his attitude. "It is remarkable," he says, "as a symptom of the revival of public hope, that Mr. Malthus has assigned, in the later editions of his work, an indefinite dominion to moral restraint over the principle of population. This concession answers all the inferences from his doctrine unfavorable to human improvement." It was precisely this "human improvement" that Shelley had in mind when, in the Preface to *Prometheus Unbound*, he made that striking statement of his own attitude towards Plato and Bacon, and Paley and Malthus. Not so much the *opinions* of Plato and Bacon were meant (for those two thinkers were considerably opposed to each other) as the *spirit* with which they approached the problems of man and society. Mr. Fletcher will perhaps understand the matter now. But he seems fated to be nonsensical whenever he writes about Shelley, and we seriously repeat the advice we gave him some years ago to let this subject drop altogether. There

are other subjects on which he writes with greater power, better information, and a more unprejudiced mind.

The Social Democratic Federation's annual conference passed a resolution condemning "the gigantic system of sweating carried on, under the pretence of charity and religion, by the social wings of the Salvation Army, the Church Army, and kindred organisations." It is good to hear some plain speaking on this subject. The *Freethinker* saw through William Booth's policy from the very beginning. It took other "reformers" a good deal longer to find him out. But better late than never.

A notable sign of the times is the manifesto signed by three hundred clergymen calling for greater tolerance with respect to "details of the New Testament narrative," "historical validity of which must ultimately be determined in the court of trained research." These gentlemen see that the Bible miracles are all doomed; and they want to see the Christian faith rectified accordingly. But will they succeed? Well, we will not prophesy. Only this is certain—What will be will be. Meanwhile it is evident that the Dr. Torreys of Christendom are poor stick-in-the-muds.

Rev. R. J. Campbell reviewed in the *Daily Chronicle* a new anonymous book called *The Creed of Christ*. His opening paragraph contained the following reference to Strauss: "The German scholar questioned the historicity of Jesus; his successors re-established it." If this means that writers like Harnack admit the historicity of Jesus in the sense which Strauss questioned it, Mr. Campbell is either mistaken himself or trying to mislead his readers. In his last paragraph he writes in this way:—

"We are coming to make a new use of dogmas, not by proving them false, but by overflowing them. To the inquirer who asks, 'Was Jesus really God?' I would respond, 'Yes; but so are you, or you could not ask the question.'"

"Are things what they seem, or are visions about?" Bret Harte's question, apropos of the Heathen Chinese, who played at euchre, a game he did not understand, occurs to our mind after reading this utterance of Mr. Campbell's.

The Chinese and the Koreans constantly accuse the Russian soldiers of outraging females. There is not a single attested case of such a crime committed by the Japanese. Here again Heathen Japan compares favorably with Holy Russia. Such is the value of the Creed of Christ—after nearly two thousand years!

East Ham is on strike. It declines to go on raising a higher and higher Education Rate. The limit of endurance has been reached, and the schools are to be closed on June 1. The County Councillors declare their readiness to go to prison if necessary. Would it not be well if some other districts followed the East Ham example? A regular triumphant mess would probably lead to a review of the whole question of National Education, and to its being settled once for all on a just and proper basis.

Canada has a church and government scandal of larger dimensions than the one recently exposed in this country that involved the manipulating by the administration of Indian trust funds for the benefit of the Catholic Church. The same great predatory Church is concerned in the Canadian deal. The discovery has been made that in framing his separate school policy Sir Wilfrid Laurier, the Canadian Premier, negotiated with Monsignor Sbarretti, who represented the Pope in the matter; that the details of the school policy were submitted to and were accepted by Sbarretti before Parliament was allowed to know what they were, and that all subsequent changes were made only after consultation between Laurier and the Papal emissary. A part of the compact was that the Church would permit the Federal Parliament to extend the boundaries of the province northwest to Hudson's Bay, provided the Manitoba school law should be amended to suit the Roman Catholic view, but if this change in the law could not be effected, then Manitoba must remain, as before, a country among provinces. The Manitoba officials refused to alter the law to suit the Church, and as a consequence the Pope, as represented by his delegate, declined to agree to an extension of the boundaries, and Laurier abstained from suggesting action in that direction. Proof of this connivance is in the hands of the party opposing separate schools for Catholics, and the revelations have intensified the bitter feeling aroused throughout Canada by the Government's proposal to provide separate schools for Catholics in the new provinces and charge the cost of their maintenance to the common fund—a measure that would prove intolerable to thousands of non-Catholic residents.—*Truthseeker* (New York).

Marie Corelli denounces "certain ecclesiastics who do not believe one word of the creed they profess, and who daily play the part of Judas Iscariot over again in taking money for a new betrayal of Christ." In another article in her new book she denounces "Coward Adam" who tried to lay the blame upon Eve. Marie Corelli seems to have been reading our own writings.

Mr. David Taylor, the Manchester man who killed his wife and two children and himself, was one of the workers at Trinity Presbyterian Church. Two letters written by him before committing the terrible act were read from the pulpit on Sunday evening by the Rev. W. J. Jack. Had this unfortunate, distracted man been an "infidel" connected with some Freethought society, Christian preachers like Dr. Torrey would have talked about his "awful" case for weeks. As it is they say nothing.

"I am about to step out of this life and meet my Maker." So said William Bradshaw Cowell, of Medway-road, Bethnal Green, before committing suicide—"during temporary insanity," the jury found it. Dr. Torrey will please note. It is another proof of his assertion that Atheism leads to suicide.

Here is another case for Dr. Torrey. Rev. A. Simpson, curate of Willington, Durlham, was found in his bed with his throat cut from ear to ear.

Here is another case for Dr. Torrey. Mr. Frederick Ingram, of Taunton, is missing, and the police want him. He was a prominent Nonconformist and associated with almost every Free Church movement in the town. He was a local preacher, a Bible class conductor, and president of the Y.P.S.C.E.

A man once asked the Duke of Westminster to finance him. He wanted to start a horse-breeding establishment in the Midlands, which he meant to conduct on "strictly Church of England principles." Did he mean that the mares and stallions would take the Holy Communion once a month? Anyhow, the Duke didn't bite. He wrote that he would be "glad to see the Church of England 'gee-gees' when ready."

Arthur Albert Jukes, who posed as a Christian Turk from Macedonia during Evan Roberts's revival visit to Mountain Ash, turns out to be a Yorkshireman. He is now doing eighteen weeks' imprisonment for stealing shirts and drawers off clothes-lines.

Evan Roberts is taking a rest. Hitherto he has waited for the voice of the Lord; now he listens to the doctors. He had just sense enough left to save his life or his reason. When he is better he will take fresh messages from heaven. Meanwhile the telephone angel has orders not to ring him up.

They are inviting Evan Roberts to Scotland. Why not invite him to the North Pole at once? He has the Lord to help him, and could get there—and back. If he failed the gaiety of nations would hardly be eclipsed.

#### SHELLEY'S GENEROSITY.

As an instance of Shelley's extraordinary generosity, a friend of his, a man of letters, enjoyed from him at that period a pension of a hundred a year, though he had but a thousand of his own; and he continued to enjoy it till fortune rendered it superfluous. But the princeliness of his disposition was seen most in his behavior to another friend, the writer of this memoir, who is proud to relate, that with money raised by an effort, Shelley once made him a present of fourteen hundred pounds, to extricate him from debt. I was not extricated, for I had not yet learned to be careful; but the shame of not doing so, after such generosity, and the pain which my friend afterwards underwent when I was in trouble and he was helpless, were the first causes of my thinking of money matters to any purpose. His last sixpence was ever at my service, had I chosen to share it.—*Leigh Hunt, "Autobiography."*

Forward, O sublime army of progress, forward until law is justice, forward until ignorance is unknown, forward while there is a spiritual or temporal throne, forward until superstition is a forgotten dream, forward until the world is free, forward until the human reason, clothed in the purple of authority, is king of kings.—*Ingersoll.*



### Mr. Foote's Lecturing Engagements.

Sunday, April 30, Alexandra Hall, Islington-square, Liverpool, at 3, "The Last Fight for the Soul: with reference to Sir Oliver Lodge and other Immaterialists"; at 7, "The Falling Faith: Will Revivals save it?"

May 7, Stratford Town Hall.

### To Correspondents.

C. COHEN'S LECTURING ENGAGEMENTS.—Address, 241 High-road, Leyton.—April 29, Hetton-le-Hole; 30, South Shields; 30, Newcastle-on-Tyne.

J. LLOYD'S LECTURING ENGAGEMENTS.—April 30, Stratford Town Hall; May 7, Merthyr Tydfil; 9, Mountain Ash; 21, Fails-worth.

F. S.—Thanks for useful cuttings.

H. R. CLIFTON.—We quite understand why your reference to Dr. Torrey's hooliganism was omitted. Thanks. We hope you have recovered from the influenza.

H. L. FIELD.—Accept our sympathy. Thanks for cuttings. See "Acid Drops."

P. BRIDGER.—Thanks for your cheerful and encouraging letter. We note your wish that we could have written on Mr. Holyoake's *Bygones* at greater length. It was impossible to do so, however; many other bits of work were clamorous for our attention. We hope the local agent you refer to will do the *Freethinker* justice. It is the injustice we meet with, and often the rigid boycott, that makes our path so difficult. This journal would pay the editor and staff well enough if it only had fair play. It is the boycott that makes us all beggars.

W. H. POWELL.—There is no "account of Jesus" outside the New Testament. Thanks for the cutting. Lecture-notice must be written on the model in our printed list. We cannot undertake to write them out for the printer ourselves, as we must if we have to disentangle them from other matter in letters.

T. TELWALL.—The Central News telegram which has gone the round of the English press, to the effect that Haeckel renounced Darwinism and claimed that man alone possesses a soul, in a recent lecture at Berlin, is, of course, a piece of sheer silliness. It is wonderful how Christians will swallow stories of this kind. The fuller report of Haeckel's lecture shows that he is as sound an Atheist as ever.

J. FLETCHER.—Thanks for good wishes.

G. SCOTT.—Pleased to hear that you regard "Abracadabra's" articles on Daniel as "exhaustive and masterly."

W. S.—Charles Bradlaugh did debate with a Mr. Roberts, a Christadelphian. It was a generation ago, and the debate is not now in print. As the "watch story" was a falsehood altogether, it could not have arisen in connection with this debate.

D. DRENNON.—Thanks; shall be sent.

W. P. BALL.—Much obliged for cuttings.

OUR ANTI-TORREY MISSION FUND.—Previously acknowledged, £114 3s. 2d. Received this week: W. S. 1s., J. Fletcher 1s., J. Dickie 1s., R. E. H. 1s.

THOMAS DOBSON.—We think not. We understand that the iron bridge over the Wear at Sunderland that was built from Thomas Paine's model gave place to a larger structure some years ago.

HUGH LLOYD, 6 Griffith-street, Mardy, Glamorgan, asks all Freethinkers attending Mr. John Lloyd's lectures at Merthyr on May 7 to meet at a time and place that will be mentioned at those lectures, with a view to forming a Secular Society with its centre at Porth.

POST-PLIOCENE.—Sorry we cannot tell you the place and hour of Mr. Lloyd's lectures at Merthyr. Perhaps we may be informed in time for next week's *Freethinker*.

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

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

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

LECTURE NOTICES must reach 2 Newcastle-street, Farringdon street, E.C., by first post Tuesday, or they will not be inserted.

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

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

PERSONS remitting for literature by stamps are specially requested to send halfpenny stamps.

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### Sugar Plums.

Mr. Foote delivers two lectures to-day (April 30) at Liverpool. Both his subjects are new to the audiences there, and will no doubt attract large meetings. These lectures will end the Liverpool Branch's special-lecture list for the present season. Mr. Ward, of course, will continue his work on the spot as resident lecturer.

Mr. Cohen opened the ball at West Ham on Sunday evening. Mr. Lloyd follows this evening (April 30) with the second lecture in the Stratford Town Hall. We hope to hear of a first-rate meeting. Mr. Foote winds up the series on May 7.

Mr. Cohen lectures at the Tivoli, Laygate, near High Shields station, South Shields, to-day (April 30), and will doubtless have good meetings. He will spend some days in the neighbourhood lecturing at other places.

The *Croydon Daily Argus* has been writing, and printing correspondence, on Freethought and the Labor movement. Some effective letters were contributed by Mr. H. R. Clifton. The *Argus* admits that "the Churches believe the Labor Party to be largely agnostic, and they have good reason for this belief in the attitude publicly expressed of the local Labor leaders." We are pleased to hear it.

Secularists all over the country should be making a note of the National Secular Society's Annual Conference, which takes place on Whit-Sunday (as usual) at Liverpool. Branches should be arranging to send delegates, and individual members to attend the Conference on their own account. It is a holiday time of the year, and cheap railway tickets will be obtainable. Moreover, the city of Liverpool is well worth a visit, and there are many places of interest easily accessible from it, including the beautiful scenery of North Wales. Boats will also be running to the Isle of Man. We should add once more that the business sessions of the Conference, morning and evening, will be held in the Alexandra Hall, Islington-square; and that the great Picton Hall has been secured for the evening public meeting, which will be addressed by Messrs. Foote, Cohen, Lloyd, and Ward, and probably by other speakers, whose names will be duly announced.

We are still open to receive the addresses of persons who might become regular subscribers to the *Freethinker* if it were only introduced to them. We are prepared to post a copy gratuitously for six consecutive weeks to such addresses. At the end of that period the recipients would probably want to buy it for themselves, or else to drop it altogether. Now, then, for more addresses.

"Fair Play" writes to the *Wallasey News* against the taboo of the *Freethinker* by the Libraries Committee. He wants to know why they accept other "sectarian" papers if they refuse this one. And he asks why the works of Gibbon, Hume, Mill, Spencer, Darwin, Huxley, Tyndall, Swinburne, and Morley are not cleared off the bookshelves—"the very cream of our literature being anti-Christian."

The April number of the *Humane Review* (quarterly 1s.) contains an excellent article by Mrs. Arthur Bell on "A Humanitarian Emperor of India"—namely, Asoka, the great Buddhist ruler. Asoka tolerated all opinions, and published ethical edicts of the highest value. He declared the essentials of true Piety to be "innocuousness, many good deeds, compassion, truthfulness, and purity." He established the reign of peace, concord, and humanity. But somehow it all went to pieces after his death. Why? Mrs. Bell does not say. Was it not because the world really does depend on its great men? If these, alas, follow lies and lust and lucre, the rest are vitiated by the example; but if one of them, having high character in a high position, treads the good path, millions will follow him adoringly. Theoretical people say that a great man is nothing; practical people know that a great man is everything. Asoka was a great man; he happened also to be a man of the most beautiful character; herein is the secret of his splendid success—and the want of another Asoka was the secret of the miserable failure that followed.

There are other good articles in the *Humane Review*, including "The Horrors of Sport," by Lady Florence Dixie, the "Right and Wrong of Non-Resistance," by Mr. Aylmer Maude, and "Robert Buchanan as a Humanitarian," by Mr. H. S. Salt. This article contains some very interesting letters from Robert Buchanan. In one of them, after expressing the doubt he felt creeping over him as to the

wisdom and beneficence of "the many-headed god, Demos," he asks: "And why do the labor people adopt the jargon of Christianity? Adams does so habitually. Surely the time has come to show that the mistakes of Christianity were the mistakes of its Founder." Admirers of the greatest Atheistic poet after Shelley will be glad to see the following reference to him. "What a satire on literature it is," Buchanan says, "to find the whole world flocking to worship the poets of Good Taste, while a singer like James Thomson dies neglected! We are ringed all round with shams—sham sweetness and light, sham criticism, sham morality, sham Christianity; and the man who tries to break through must assuredly pay the penalty of his foolhardiness. To exist comfortably one must dance like a tame bear in the middle of Society's charmed circle."

The Humanitarian League's annual report is before us. It is an admirable record of a year's good work—and its good results. Readers of ours who would like to see it should write to the honorary secretary, 53 Chancery-lane, London, E.C. We hope they will not forget to enclose a stamp for postage.

The Paisley "saints," who have distributed a large number of our Torrey pamphlets, are now starting outdoor lectures in the town. Mr. Howat led off last Sunday evening. The speakers are provided by the Glasgow Branch. We wish the movement at Paisley all success.

### The Torrey Pamphlets.

A FOURTH supply of my pamphlet on "Dr. Torrey and the Infidels" is being printed; the one on "Dr. Torrey and the Bible," of which three large supplies have been distributed, remaining in abeyance for the present. The latter is reckoned by some fair judges to be a good propagandist pamphlet; but the former is something more than that—it is what Mr. Blatchford, in reprinting it in the *Clarion*, called "a manly and temperate" vindication of Paine and Ingersoll against Dr. Torrey's infamous accusations. This pamphlet has done, is doing, and will continue to do its work. Dr. Torrey is in the toils, and he knows it. Some of his fellow Christians know it too. The case against Dr. Torrey, the case for Paine and Ingersoll, is so overwhelmingly strong that it has made some of his professed friends feel very uneasy.

I have had to hold my hand with respect to the third pamphlet I announced on "Dr. Torrey's Converts." I can hardly state the reason, but my friends will have sufficient faith in me to await an explanation. Something is happening which may supersede the necessity for that pamphlet; in short, the whole affair may at any moment take a new turn, and I earnestly hope it will do so. I do not propose to wait very long, however; and I may be moved to go to press with the new pamphlet any day. More than this I cannot say till next week.

G. W. FOOTE.

### The Sunday Lecture Question.

AS I explained last week, Mr. Justice Warrington has given what was very desirable, namely, a straight judgment under the old Act of George III., which had several times been raised in court without any satisfactory result. Mr. Justice Collins dismissed the Queen's Hall action, some ten years ago, on the ground that there was no evidence before him to prove that there was no free admission. This was a negative judgment, and therefore only of negative value. Mr. Justice Warrington could not help himself. He was bound to give a positive judgment, and he gave it. He decided that lectures followed by debate, on any subject whatever, on Sundays, to which there is payment for admission, are illegal. He also said that he should have no hesitation in deciding, if the case were before him, that Sunday lectures, without debate, came under the head of "entertainments" within the meaning of the Act. We may take it, therefore, that the Act of George III. can still be set in operation; and that Sunday lectures

of any kind, on any subject—outside a registered place of worship, or not under the management of a registered religious society—are strictly illegal, if admission to them is by payment at the door, or by tickets for which payment is made.

Many years ago Charles Bradlaugh had to disallow discussion after his lectures at St. James's Hall, Manchester, in consequence of a threat by the local Sabbatarian society. He said that he had two big lawsuits on already, and that he was not prepared to take on a third, although he would gladly do so later on, when he would be delighted to tear the Act into shreds. Far be it from me to set a limit to Bradlaugh's legal capacity. But the fact that the threat was made, and was operative, shows that there was danger. We were really never safe. Now we know that others are not safe either. The law which has been worked for a long while *against* us, and *for* less unpopular parties, cannot be worked so any longer after Mr. Justice Warrington's decision. The danger is a common one to *all* parties. And if the law is ever set in actual motion against us, our policy will be clear; we shall have to set it in motion against others (for the action of the police is not necessary), and convince them of the wisdom of joining forces with us in getting the foolish old Act abolished.

But I do not think there is any cause for alarm. Taking the two judgments of Mr. Justice Collins and Mr. Justice Warrington together, I have very little doubt that there is a loophole of escape. We can admit people to "paid" meetings *free*, but we are not bound to find them *seats*—though it might be wise, by making assurance doubly sure, to provide even a few free seats—say one row, not, of course, in the most eligible situation. What we have to do, therefore, is to advertise—"Admission Free. Seats 1s., 6d., and 3d."—or whatever other price is fixed upon.

Should this statement require any further elucidation I shall be happy to give it. I wish to make the matter perfectly clear to those who conduct Free-thought meetings.

G. W. FOOTE.

Catholics have an infallible Church, and the Protestants an infallible Bible. Yet as the teaching of the Bible becomes a question of interpretation, the infallibility of each Church resolves itself into the infallibility of its priesthood. Each asserts that *some* belief is necessary to salvation. Religious liberty, therefore, has never entered into the imagination of either. The Protestants who revolted against the Papacy openly avowed the principle of persecution. Luther, Beza, Calvin, and Melancthon, were probably more intolerant than any Pope of their age; and if the Protestant persecutions were not, on the whole, so sanguinary as those of the Roman Catholic Church, it was simply due to the fact that Catholicism passed through a dark and ferocious period of history, while Protestantism emerged in an age of greater light and humanity.

The doctrine of salvation by faith has been more mischievous than all other delusions of theology combined. How true are the words of Pascal: "Jamais on ne fait le mal si pleinement et si gaie-ment que quand on le fait par un faux principe de conscience." Fortunately a nobler day is breaking. The light of truth succeeds the darkness of error. Right belief is infinitely important, but it cannot be forced. Belief is independent of will. But character is not, and therefore the philosopher approves or condemns actions instead of censuring beliefs. Theology, however, consistently clings to its old habits. "Infidels" must not be argued with, but threatened; not convinced, but libelled; and when these weapons are futile there ensues the persecution of silence. That serves for a time, but only for a time; it may obstruct, but it cannot prevent, the spread of unbelief. It is like a veil against the light. It may obscure the dawn to the dull-eyed and the un-inquisitive, but presently the blindest sluggards in the penfolds of faith will see that the sun has risen.

## The Book of Daniel.—VIII.

(Concluded from page 269.)

We have now examined the bogus visions in the book of Daniel, and find that they all refer to events from the age in which the fictitious Daniel has been placed down to the religious persecution under Antiochus Epiphanes, and not only so, but that they all end there. It is quite clear, then, that if the Daniel named in the book were the writer, his prophetic powers, or the revelations made to him, did not extend beyond the reign mentioned. The most important events in the later history of the Jewish people were not revealed to him. He had no foreknowledge of the siege of Jerusalem, with all its attendant horrors, by Titus (A.D. 70), nor of the still more disastrous war under the Jewish Messiah Bar Cochba (A.D. 132) in which multitudes of his countrymen were slain or enslaved, and the remainder scattered throughout the known world, without a country they could call their own. Instead of predictions respecting these and other momentous events of real history subsequent to the time of Antiochus Epiphanes, we are treated to childish vaticinations of a great Jewish kingdom, to arise immediately after the reign of that king, which should subjugate all the surrounding nations, and endure for ever. History has proved these silly predictions to have been but a wild hope, an egotistical dream, destined never to be realised. These "visions," moreover, profess to give all the notable events in the future history of the Jewish nation to the end of time. This is evident from the words put in the mouth of the angel Gabriel, as will be seen from the following:—

Dan. viii. 17, 19.—"Understand, O son of man; for the vision belongeth to the time of the end.....Behold I will make thee know what shall be in the latter time of the indignation: for it belongeth to the appointed time of the end."

Dan. x. 14.—"Now I am come to make thee understand what shall befall thy people in the latter days."

Dan. xii. 4, 9, 13.—"But thou, O Daniel, shut up the words, and seal the book, even to the time of the end.....Go thy way Daniel; for the words are shut up and sealed till the time of the end.....But go thy way till the end be."

Unless the visions were supposed to contain allusions to all the most important events in the subsequent history of the Hebrew nation, the words here quoted have no meaning. It is plain, however, that the writer believed he had referred to all the great historical occurrences affecting the Jewish kingdom down to "the latter days" and "the time of the end." To one living in the days of Antiochus Epiphanes, that reign, with a few added years of futurity, would naturally be considered "the latter days"—as we find was actually the case.

There remains now but to consider the logical inference from the following fully proved facts: that the author of the book of Daniel had no knowledge of the persons or events in the age in which he has represented his imaginary hero as living; that he possessed no knowledge of the Persian dynasty; that he had a fairly accurate knowledge of the Syrian and Egyptian kings for five reigns prior to that of Antiochus Epiphanes; that he had a full and detailed knowledge of persons and events in the reign of the last-named king; that, finally, he had no knowledge (or foreknowledge) of any events subsequent to the time of this Antiochus. Now, it must be plain to every unprejudiced reader who gives the subject a moment's consideration that these facts can lead to but one conclusion—that the writer of the book lived in the days of Antiochus Epiphanes, and composed his veracious history during the religious persecution in that king's reign (B.C. 168-165); that is to say, some portions were written during the time the Jewish Sanctuary was profaned, and the remainder a year or two later, during the war of independence carried on by Judas Maccabæus and his brother Jonathan. And, strange

as it may perhaps appear, this was the opinion expressed by the third century philosopher, Porphyry, in a work written against Christianity—which work the early Christian Church very carefully destroyed.

Furthermore, this conclusion has been reached by the strongest kind of evidence that can be had—that of the writer's own words in the book itself. In a case of "breach of promise," for instance, the most emphatic denial of such promise upon oath will not for a moment stand against the evidence of a letter, in which occur some words or allusions which plainly imply that an offer of marriage had been made. So in the case of the book of Daniel, all the internal evidence points to the same period and event—the three years persecution of the Jewish people in the reign of Antiochus Epiphanes.

In bringing these papers to a close I shall trouble the reader with but one more argument—drawn this time from external evidence. The book of Ecclesiasticus professes, according to the prologue, to have been translated into Greek in the reign of Ptolemy Euergetes (B.C. 247-222). Whether this were so or not, some additions were evidently made at a later period, for we find a reference to Simon the high priest who died 195 B.C. The book, as a whole, was therefore written shortly after this date, say B.C. 190. Now in this so-called apocryphal writing six chapters (xliv.-xlix) are devoted to a panegyric notice, in chronological order, of the most illustrious men named in the Hebrew sacred books. The following extracts contain the names of all these scripture heroes. The reader is asked to take particular notice of the eulogies bestowed upon the prophet Daniel.

xliv.—"Let us now praise famous men, and our fathers that begat us. The Lord manifested in them great glory, even his mighty power from the beginning..... Enoch pleased the Lord, and was translated..... Noah was found perfect and righteous..... Abraham was a great father of a multitude of nations, and there was none found like him in glory..... In Isaac also did he establish..... the blessing of all men, and the covenant: and he made it rest upon the head of JACOB."

xlv.—"And he brought out of him a man of mercy .....beloved of God and men, even MOSES..... He exalted AARON, a holy man like unto him, even his brother..... And PHINEHAS the son of Eleazar is the third in glory, in that he was zealous in the fear of the Lord."

xlvi.—"JOSHUA the son of Nun was valiant in war, and was the successor of Moses in prophecies..... Also the Lord gave strength unto CALEB..... SAMUEL, the prophet of the Lord, beloved of the Lord, established a kingdom, and anointed princes over his people."

xlvii.—"And after him rose up NATHAN to prophesy ..... So was DAVID chosen out of the children of Israel ..... SOLOMON reigned in days of peace..... that he might set up a house for his name."

xlviii.—"Also there arose ELMIAH the prophet, as fire, and his word burned like a torch..... And ELISHA was filled with his spirit..... HEZEKIAH fortified his city ..... and was strong in the ways of David his father, which ISAIAH the prophet commanded, who was great and faithful in his vision."

xlix.—The memorial of JOSIAH is like the composition of incense prepared by the work of the apothecary ..... JEREMIAH, whom they entreated evil, and yet he was sanctified in the womb to be a prophet..... It was EZEKIEL who saw the vision of glory which God shewed him upon the chariot of the cherubim..... Also of the TWELVE PROPHETS..... may the bones flourish again out of their place: for they comforted Jacob, and delivered them by confidence of hope. How shall we magnify ZOROBABEL? And he was as a signet on the right hand: so was JESHUA the son of Josedek: who in their time builded the house, and set up a temple holy to the Lord..... Also of NEHEMIAH the memorial is great; who raised up for us the walls that were fallen..... and raised up our homes again."

"Nehemiah" closes the list of revered and honored names, and brings the history down to a century after the time of Daniel and the return from the Exile. But where is the greatest prophet of all, the holy and immaculate Daniel? Where is the commendatory notice of the great seer who saw more wonderful visions than all the other prophets put together? Where is the praise of the prophet who

foretold so many events with such marvellous accuracy, who was filled with such piety that he chose rather to be devoured by lions than to renounce praying to his God, and who of all the Hebrew prophets was the only one of whom it is recorded that he was "greatly beloved" by "the Lord"? What praises are sung of such a prodigy of wisdom, holiness, and faithfulness? None: *the writer of Ecclesiasticus had never heard of him.* He knew no more of Daniel than of the three men, Ananias, Azarias, and Mishael, who for remaining faithful to the god Yahveh were preserved by that deity from the flame of the seven times heated "fiery furnace." The prophets Isaiah, Jeremiah, and Ezekiel, as well as the twelve minor prophets, from Hosea to Malachi, are known; but the great Daniel whose exalted position and wonderful visions transcend everything recorded of any other personage in the Old Testament is conspicuous by his absence. This omission can only be accounted for by the fact that the book of Daniel had not yet been written; for it may safely be affirmed that had the book been in existence from the age in which Daniel has been represented as living down to the days of the compiler of Ecclesiasticus, that compiler—who was well acquainted with all the Hebrew scriptures—could never have omitted a laudatory notice of Daniel and his three incombustible companions. The book of Daniel was therefore written after the compilation of Ecclesiasticus.

We now turn to the First Book of Maccabees, which gives a record of events from the time of Antiochus Epiphanes (B.C. 175) to the death of Simon Maccabæus (B.C. 135) and was therefore written subsequent to the latter date. Assuming the book of Daniel to have been composed at the time indicated in the internal evidence, that book would have been in existence about thirty years when 1 Maccabees appeared. We might therefore possibly find some reference to Daniel in the last-named work. And this expectation is fortunately realised, as will be perceived by the following passage:—

1 Macc. ii. 59-61.—"Ananias, Azarias, and Mishael believed, and were saved out of the flame. Daniel for his innocency was delivered from the mouth of the lions. And thus consider ye, from generation to generation, that none that put their trust in him shall want for strength."

It will thus be seen that in one short generation the book of Daniel was accorded a place amongst the Hebrew historical writings, and, of course, was believed by all pious Jews to be the inspired word of God. We know also that in later times it was so regarded—the historian Josephus being a notable example. It is, however, scarcely necessary to pursue the matter farther. The external evidence is in perfect agreement with the one clear and obvious conclusion derived from all the internal evidence we have examined: the book of Daniel is a work of fiction written by a patriotic Jew in the reign of Antiochus Epiphanes. The holy prophet Daniel is, in fact, the great Humpty-dumpty, who, in the words of the nursery-rhyme, "sat on a wall" and "had a great fall," and respecting which accident it is stated that "all the king's horses and all the king's men cannot put Humpty-dumpty back again." And this being the case, I leave his restoration to the well-known ingenuity of professional Christian apologists.

ABRACADABRA.

#### THAT AWFUL SHELLEY.

He was said to be keeping a seraglio at Marlow; and his friends partook of the scandal. This keeper of a seraglio, who, in fact, was extremely difficult to be pleased in such matters, and who had no idea of love unconnected with sentiment, passed his days like a hermit. He rose early in the morning, walked and read before breakfast, took that meal sparingly, wrote and studied the greater part of the morning, walked and read again, dined on vegetables (for he took neither meat nor wine), conversed with his friends (to whom his house was ever open), again walked out, and usually finished with reading to his wife till ten o'clock, when he went to bed. This was his daily existence.—*Leigh Hunt, "Autobiography."*

#### Fetishism and Christianity.

[Monsieur N. Simon has a humorous article on "Fetishism and Christianity" in *La Raison* of Sunday, April 2, in which he compares the fetishes of the savage with the superstitions of the Roman Catholic, considerably to the disadvantage of the latter. After a long list of canonised saints, each with his own speciality, to be consulted for every ill of men and animals, from St. Blaise, unequalled in his skill at bringing calves safely into the world, to St. Giles, a distinguished specialist at the birth of little pigs, the article concludes as follows.]

A CROWD of Frenchmen, and, above all, Frenchwomen, who think themselves infinitely superior to the negro, pray fervently to their worthy saints, burn candles in their honor, have masses said at their altars, drink the water of their fountains, and conduct their children thither.

They are enchanted to touch shrines which are supposed to contain their remains. Nevertheless, those venerated shrines often contain but the bones borrowed simply from the nearest cemetery, belonging, perhaps, to an abominable Freethinker, condemned to eternal flames in the other world, yet not hesitating, the animal, to usurp divine honors in this.

Besides, it has been necessary to find somewhere or other ten heads of John the Baptist, which the Church venerates in her sanctuaries. Everyone has not the faith of that Abbé Marolles, who, embracing one of those heads in the Cathedral of Amiens, cried devoutly, "God be praised! This is the sixth I have kissed in my life." The Church has not gathered ten heads from the shoulders of her saint. A saint with ten heads (seven more than Cerberus) had surely been too well endowed. It has also been necessary to discover the sixty fingers of the same saint, which the Church offers for our veneration. Twelve hands is surely an exaggeration. On the other hand, where have they found the two heads and three bodies of St. Barbara, the seven legs of St. Ignatius, the thirteen arms of St. Stephen, two heads, four bodies, and sixty-three fingers of St. Jerome, the thirty bodies of St. George, the five bodies, ten heads, and twelve hands of St. Matthew, the three bodies and seven hands of St. Gregory, etc.? This absolutely remarkable multiplication of bodies, heads, legs, arms, etc., seems to us a much greater miracle than the multiplication of bread. Nevertheless, the clergy never speak of it, nor do they like to hear it spoken of. Another peculiarity which strikes infidels very much is that the wood of the true cross sold to the faithful is found to be of various species. Indeed, according to Calvin, if the fragments were stacked altogether there would be a cargo for several large ships. After the multiplication of heads, arms, and wood, certainly nothing is impossible to God.

It has been thought proper to place among the relics a cup which served at the marriage feast of Cana, a piece of the money pocketed by the traitor Judas, the gridiron of St. Agatha, the sponge offered to Jesus on the Cross, a feather of the Angel Gabriel, one of the stones cast at Stephen, the Virgin's milk and her comb, thirty-three winding sheets of Jesus, the tear which he shed on hearing of the death of Lazarus, etc. Everyone knows to-day the amusing history of the eleven thousand virgins, of old St. Ursula and St. Undecimella (in Latin Undecimillia) which signifies 11,000. The error was produced by a copyist or *mala droït* translator who took the proper name undecimilla for a figure. He wrote or translated Ursula and eleven thousand virgins which the Church with assurance fearlessly added to the calendar. It was an immense increase made by a single scratch of the pen in the number sent to Paradise. Poor Undecimilla, victim of her name, disappeared completely from the celestial army. The Church did not hesitate to show the remains of those 11,000 virgins. A church in Paris contains three heads, and a church in Cologne has innumerable relics of that veritable army of virgins of which the gathering together and the verification would present some difficulties. Incredible impiety asked to see the relics. Horror of horrors, they were the bones of men. The holy relics in their gold and venerated sarcophagus had, one knows not why—witchcraft of the devil perhaps—changed their sex.

The fetishist places himself under the protection of some object or other. It is naïve and direct. Contemporaneous Catholicism copies the negro. At the basilique of Montmartre, for example, holy tinware is sold. A plaque lying before me represents Jesus holding his heart in his hand. Millions of prospectuses addressed everywhere invite the faithful to place this charm on their walls. "This amulet safeguards our interests, draws down on us the benediction of heaven, protects our furniture, puts to flight sickness and the pest, and preserves us from accidents and evils."

The Church associates the Eternal Father and her divinities with her little business. Her Gods give to her productions their finish and efficacy. That of the plaques derives its virtue by being placed before the most holy

sacrament during a night. Their price is doubtless arranged with heaven, and varies from fifty centimes to sixteen francs.

Between the fetisher, dirty, strong smelling, and tainted, selling a charm to a naked stupid negro in the depths of the forest, and the Catholic priest, this dealer in metals, selling on the threshold of a superb temple *Porte Bonheur* plaques to fine ladies calling themselves civilised, there is absolutely no difference.....Catholicism has also then its innumerable fetishes, and besides has invented a supernatural world a thousand times more populous than the universe.

It is the perfected lie applied to millions of non-existent beings. Frauds those twenty-five thousand saints whom they invoke; dead centuries ago, they are nothing but dust. Frauds those three millions of angels with white wings. Frauds those horned, hairy devils. Frauds those cauldrons of hell and flames of purgatory; those myriads of souls who are said to people the Houses of Correction. Certainly it requires less naiveté to be convinced of the virtue of a shell or a stone than to believe in the existence of a colossal supernatural world, of which the priest can give no shadow of proof. Mock, if you will, at the savage who believes in phantoms and shades of the dead, but, by heaven, let us laugh with all our heart at the Catholic angel-guardian, that comical foot-soldier, that celestial Indian cock, that winged monk who, according to the Church, mounts guard at one side, so that in France we have thirty-eight million holy poulets charged with our behavior!

The magnificence of the temples, the sound of the bells, the harmony of the organ, the perfection of the singing, the richness of the vestments, these only constitute the superiority, purely decorative, of Catholicism over the worship of the savages. It is the lie gilded, ornamented, costumed—the theatrical musical lie. But at bottom it has always the same stupidity of conception, the same folly in its dogmas, the same charlatanism in its practices, and the same intellectual poverty.

—Translated by E. H.

## Correspondence.

### FREETHOUGHT AT THE ANTIPODES.

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE FREETHINKER."

SIR,—The following few lines from Australia might interest your Freethought readers.

On Friday, March 10, between 4 and 5 o'clock in the afternoon, Mr. Charles Green, a very old resident of Newcastle (N.S. Wales, Australia), died at his late residence, in Dawson-street, a staunch Secularist up to his last dying moments. Born in Newcastle, England, on March 21, 1811, he was within a few days of being 94 years of age. When a young man Mr. Green led an active life, and enlisted in the British Legion, commanded by Sir De Lacy Evans, which took part in the Carlist Wars in Spain in 1835-8. While with the Legion he saw some warm work, but came through it all without serious injury, being only once wounded by a spent bullet. He took a prominent part in the attack on the fortress of San Sebastian, and Salvaterra and other parts, for which he received two medals. He was also awarded a life-pension, but accepted a lump sum instead. Returning to England after the war, Mr. Green settled down for a time. But when the Chartist movement was started he took an active part in it, a fact of which he always spoke with pride. Nearly fifty years ago Mr. Green left with his wife to come to Australia. Staying in Sydney a few months, they came on to Newcastle, and made their home here. Mr. Green was a basket-maker, and for a long time carried on his trade in Market-street. A man of jovial disposition, he dearly loved a joke, and his comic cartoons at election times some thirty years ago were a feature of the campaigns in Newcastle. They are still remembered by the older residents of the city. Mrs. Green died six years ago. In 1901 Mr. Green went home to celebrate with his friends and relatives in England his ninetieth birthday. On his return his niece, Mrs. J. Seigenberg, accompanied him, and in his declining years she has given him every care and attention. During the past nine months Mr. Green had been confined to his bed with illness, caused by the weakness of old age, but did not suffer much pain. He possessed wonderful vitality, and to the very last enjoyed his pipe and a chat with friends and relatives. The cause of death was senile decay. He leaves a son, two daughters, several grandchildren and great-grandchildren. The funeral took place on the following day, Saturday afternoon, under the Secular Burial Service, during the intervals of which such still hale and hearty and well-tried Secularists as Mr. Daniel Wallwork, eighty years of age, and Mr. Joseph White, eighty-three years of age, spoke of the deceased in eulogistic terms, as indeed Mr. Green was highly respected by everyone in the district, whether religious or not.

It was owing to his initiative that the "Secular Society of Newcastle" was inaugurated twenty-five years ago: we therefore looked upon him as the "Father of Freethought" in the Newcastle district. And although the Society has of late years become defunct and even lost their meeting hall for want of a lecturer and leader, more than through any other cause, we still live in hopes of seeing the "Secular Society of Newcastle" revived, if a lecturer from England could see his way clear of coming out here and taking up the work of organisation, although we could not offer a guarantee of a fixed salary. So that we appear somewhat in the light of a forlorn hope in the Secular cause, and, growing older, separated instead of united, and in the death of Mr. Charles Green we have lost our best moral and financial supporter.

ALEXANDER RICHTER.

1 Corlette-street, Newcastle, N. S. Wales, Australia.

### THE UNANIMITY OF THE MOB.

True unanimity is that which proceeds from a free judgment, arriving at the same conclusion, after an investigation of the fact. Now, by far the greater number of those who have assented to the philosophy of Aristotle, have bound themselves down to it from prejudice and the authority of others, so that it is rather obsequiousness and concurrence than unanimity. But even if it were real and extensive unanimity, so far from being esteemed a true and solid confirmation, it should even lead to a violent presumption to the contrary. For there is no worse augury in intellectual matters than that derived from unanimity, with the exception of divinity and politics, where suffrages are allowed to decide. For nothing pleases the multitude, unless it strike the imagination or bind down the understanding with the shackles of vulgar notions. Hence we may well transfer Phocion's remark from morals to intellect; "That men should immediately examine what error or fault they have committed, when the multitude concurs with, and applauds them." This then is one of the most unfavorable signs.—*Lord Bacon.*

Feel for the wrongs to universal ken  
Daily exposed, woe that unshrouded lies;  
And seek the Sufferer in his darkest den,  
Whether conducted to the spot by sighs  
And moanings, or he dwells (as if the wren  
Taught him concealment) hidden from all eyes  
In silence and the awful modesties  
Of sorrow;—feel for all, as brother Men!  
Rest not in hope want's icy chain to thaw  
By casual boons and formal charities;  
Learn to be just, just through impartial law;  
Far as ye may, erect and equalise;  
And, what ye cannot reach by statute, draw  
Each from his fountain of self-sacrifice.

—Wordsworth.

Calmly he looked on either life, and here  
Saw nothing to regret, or there to fear;  
From nature's temperate feast rose satisfied,  
Thanked Heaven that he had lived, and that he died.

—Pope.

We have but one simple method of delivering our sentiments, namely, we must bring men to particulars and their regular series and order, and they must for a while renounce their notions, and begin to form an acquaintance with things.—*Bacon.*

### ADAM'S OPINION OF EVE.

After all these years, I see that I was mistaken about Eve in the beginning; it is better to live outside the Garden with her than inside it without her. At first I thought she talked too much; but now I should be sorry to have that voice fall silent and pass out of my life. Blessed be the chestnut that brought us near together and taught me to know the goodness of her heart and the sweetness of her spirit!—*Mark Twain, "Adam's Diary."*

A few years ago, at a revival, a fine buxom girl was "converted" "born again." In her excitement she cried, "I'm married to Christ—I'm married to Christ." In her delirium she threw her arms around the neck of an old man and again cried, "I'm married to Christ." The old man, who happened to be a kind of sceptic, gently removed her hands, saying at the same time: "I don't know much about your husband, but I have great respect for your father-in-law."—*Ingersoll.*

**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.**

WEST HAM BRANCH N. S. S. (Town Hall, Stratford): 7.30, J. Lloyd, "Whence We Came and Whither We Go."

**OUTDOOR.**

BATTERSEA BRANCH N. S. S. (Battersea Park Gates): 11, a Lecture.

BETHNAL GREEN BRANCH N. S. S. (Victoria Park, near the Fountain): 3.15, J. Marshall.

CAMBERWELL BRANCH N. S. S.: Station-road, at 11.30, A. D. Howell Smith, B.A.; Brockwell Park, 3.15, A. D. Howell Smith, B.A.

**COUNTRY.**

BIRMINGHAM BRANCH N. S. S. (Coffee House, Bull Ring): Thursday, April 27, at 8, Members' Meeting.

GLASGOW SECULAR SOCIETY (110 Brunswick-street): 12 noon, Discussion Class. Business Meeting; 6.30, G. Scott, "The Catholic Truth Society and Rationalism."

GLASGOW RATIONALIST AND ETHICAL ASSOCIATION (319 Sauchiehall-street): 6.30 (corner of Wellington and Sauchiehall-streets), Charles Howat, "Modern Biblical Criticism."

LEICESTER SECULAR SOCIETY (Humberstone Gate): 6.30, J. H. Bonner, "Is Vaccination Dangerous and Useless?"

LIVERPOOL BRANCH N. S. S. (Alexandra Hall, Islington-square): 3, G. W. Foote, "The Last Fight for the Soul: with reference to Sir Oliver Lodge and other Immaterialists"; 7, The Falling Faith: Will Revivals Save It?"

MANCHESTER BRANCH N. S. S. (Rusholme-road, Oxford-road All Saints): 6.30, John Rhind, "Science and the Bible."

MOUNTAIN ASH (Glamorgan): 3, R. Rosetti, Muskin-road Schools, "The Russian Revolution and the Holy Czar"; 8, "How I Escaped Death and Siberia."

SOUTH SHIELDS (Tivoli, Laygate, High Shields): C. Cohen; 3, "The Truth about Free Will"; 7, "Holy Russia: Religion and the Modern State."

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