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PRICE TWOPENCE

*With all her tongues of life and death,
With all her bloom and blood and breath,
From all years dead and all things done,
In the ear of man the mother saith,
"There is no God, O son,
If thou be none."*

—SWINBURNE.

Mr. Asquith's Mistake.

MR. ASQUITH is a lawyer, and we never yet heard of a lawyer who was a great statesman. Mr. Asquith is also a very able speaker, but he talks too much like a man speaking from a brief. You admire the cleverness and clear-headedness; at the same time you see no particular reason why it could not be used on the opposite side. You miss the passionate note of a great conviction, the thrill of a magnetic personality. You feel that he would never lead a forlorn hope. To make a mark he must voice the opinions and sentiments of a considerable party. He is rather a spokesman than a leader. There is nothing extravagant about him. He is always sane—and it must be added respectable. He is sure to take a practical view of things. But he will be practical in the common sense of the word. He will not recognise that the highest practicality, in the long run, is a steady adherence to first principles.

All these characteristics came out in Mr. Asquith's recent speech on the Education question at the hundredth general meeting of the British and Foreign School Society. He admitted that, as a matter of logic, Bible reading and dogmatic teaching fall into the same category. Having too much brains to be silly, he could not descend to the clap-trap of the average Passive Resister. Even "the existence of a Supreme Being or of another world," he said, is as much a dogma as "the number of the Sacraments or the Immaculate Conception." There never was a religious doctrine founded on reason. Every religious doctrine is founded on faith. So strong and lucid an intelligence as Mr. Asquith's is bound to perceive this. It is impossible for him to endorse the absurd idea that there is an essential difference between the inspiration of the Bible and the inspiration of the Church, or between the doctrine of the Virgin Birth and the doctrine of Transubstantiation. Mr. Asquith denies these differences as a matter of practice. He is willing to forget them as a matter of logic. Which only shows that he fails to grasp the truth that the compromise which is so necessary in the world of interests is really impossible in the world of ideas. It is all very well for Mr. Asquith to say that "if you are to have a working educational system you must desert the altitudes of logic and come down into the street." There is a logic of facts, a logic of events, and a logic of principles, and the man who fancies that either of them can be permanently evaded is grievously mistaken. And are we not hearing too much about "the man in the street"? It is right to put things so that he can understand them. It is right to study his welfare. It is right to take note of his views and prejudices. But it is wrong to hand the ship of state over to his

guidance. It is wrong to ask him what he wants, to call that the voice of the people, and to cry that the voice of the people is the voice of God. This is demagoguery of the worst description. It is mobolatry. It is the vilest travesty of statesmanship that is conceivable. This talk about "the will of the people" is foolish, craven, despicable. A real statesman would not trouble his head about anything of the kind. If the will of the people is for the wrong, it should be opposed; if it is for the right, it does not *make* the right. Truth and right are independent of any man's will, or of any number of men's wills. And if a sound principle cannot be carried out to-day it may be carried out to-morrow; and a true man will not work against it in the interim, but help to prepare for its triumph and realisation.

Mr. Asquith seems to lack imagination. If he could put himself in the position (say) of the Roman Catholic, he would see the absurdity of dividing Christian doctrines up into two classes—those on which Christian denominations agree, and those on which they differ, and then proposing to teach the former and drop the latter. As a matter of fact, there is not a single doctrine on which all Christian denominations agree—that is, there is no doctrine which they all hold and teach in the same sense. Nor is that all. Doctrines have a vital relationship to each other in a general scheme of conception. The Catholic theory involves one view of the inspiration of the Bible, for instance; the Protestant theory involves another view. Nominally both parties have the same doctrine; virtually they have two different doctrines. The word "inspiration" is really the only thing they have in common. And this difference manifests itself at every point of the compass. The Catholic Church's doctrine of the deity of Christ is not the doctrine of the Rev. R. J. Campbell. And to seek some view of it which both could hold in common is more hopeless than the discovery of the North Pole.

Mr. Asquith appears to think that the logic of Secular Education is perfectly impregnable. But he prefers to come down into the street again, and talks once more about teaching "a body of simple truths held in common by a vast majority of Christian people." It does not occur to him to enquire what right they have to teach such simple truths (if they exist) in institutions contributed to (compulsorily) by citizens who disbelieve them. When he mentions the Conscience Clause as a safeguard he simply means that one injustice should not be capped by another. The primary abuse of power by the majority is left untouched.

Supposing the aforesaid "simple truths" are taught in the State schools, through the machinery provided by those who disbelieve them as well as by those who believe, is that the end of the matter? Let us hear Mr. Asquith:—

"There will always be some parents who, thinking these truths inadequate, will desire the teaching of them to be supplemented and enlarged. Very well, again, I say, they also are entitled to be heard, and as far as I am concerned I should be very glad to see sufficient provision made for such supplementary or enlarged teaching, provided it is given to the children not within, but either before or after, school hours."

Mr. Asquith may think that this is clear, but it is not so. It sounds simple enough, but the matter is extremely complex. Who is to provide this supplementary teaching? Who is to give it? If

the reply is that it is to be given by outside teachers, this is the "right of entry" to which the Nonconformist leaders are vehemently opposed. If the reply is that it is to be given by the school teachers, the proposal bristles with difficulties. How are the teachers to be selected? Would not any process of selection involve the application of a religious test? Who is to decide what shall be taught? If it is to be left entirely to the parents would not the result be chaos? If it is left to other persons, would you not be establishing a dogmatic religious authority? Then there is the question of the hour at which this supplementary teaching should be given. If you fix it *after* school hours, you run the risk of having a microscopic attendance. The children who were expected to attend would feel that they were "kept in." And if you fix it *before* school hours, you have to face the vexed question of when the school register is to be marked, to say nothing of the objection that would almost certainly be raised against taking a child's brightest and freshest morning hour for that particular purpose.

Mr. Asquith thinks it will be "a national disgrace" if "some concordat of the kind cannot be arrived at." We think it would be a national disgrace if it *were* arrived at. And what we want to know is this. What right has Mr. Asquith to use our money to promote what *we* regard as a disgrace, any more than we have to use his money to promote what *he* regards as a disgrace? We are willing to be fair. We want no more, and we will be satisfied with no less.

Now let us see what are the difficulties conjured up by Mr. Asquith in the way of Secular Education:—

"But the proposal is that secularism, which is now optional, but not adopted, should become compulsory. That means that the teacher, the person who is brought every day into contact with the children, and from whom children take their inspiration, is to be absolutely and compulsorily dumb in regard to all matters of this kind. Such religious instruction as is given, if it is to be allowed at all, would be given after school hours—by, I suppose, the representatives of the different denominations. The practical question is: Are the people of England prepared for that? I very much doubt it."

Now the last question is no part of the argument. It is simply a part of what Mr. Asquith fondly regards as statesmanship. The other questions only show that Mr. Asquith has not thought the subject out.

In the first place, he uses two important words improperly. "Secularism" is not a synonym for "Secular Education." The former is positive, the latter is negative. Secularism is a definite principle. Secular Education is merely the absence of religious education. And this leads us to the awful word "compulsory." When a man is serving behind a counter it is compulsory that he should not spit in the customers' faces. But who would not laugh if he paraded this as an infringement of his personal freedom? There are always certain things to be done in a certain situation, and certain things to be avoided. This applies to school teachers as well as to other people. Teachers are not allowed to tell children what they think of Mr. Chamberlain. Why should they be allowed to tell the school children what they think of Jehovah—or any other deity? The fact is there are many subjects on which school teachers must hold their tongues. Religion, under Secular Education, will merely be one of them.

In the second place, it is not exactly true that children "take their inspiration" from their school teachers. It is doubtless true, and happily true, in some cases. In some cases the teachers have no "inspiration" to give. In any case the main "inspiration" of children is derived from their parents, their home life, and the little "world" in which they live, and move, and have their being. And the idea that moral or spiritual teaching (call it which you will) should be handed right over to an utter stranger, simply because he happens to pursue the scholastic profession for a living, is one of the most pestilent heresies ever generated by carelessness and

cowardice, and is one of the worst signs of our national decay.

In the third place, Mr. Asquith does not say, but his argument assumes, that the alternative is religious teaching in the day schools or no religious teaching at all. But what are the Sunday-schools doing? What are the myriads of ministers of religion doing? Must they everlastingly preach to adults? Could they not turn their attention to the children? More money is spent on religion in England than on education, yet we are told that unless the educational machinery is used for religious purposes we shall soon have a godless generation. Personally we think that would be a good thing, but from the point of view of our opponents it is a shocking confession. It shows the utter artificiality of the Christian faith.

We take it that Mr. Asquith is arguing from the Nonconformist brief, and that he is quite open to a change of instructions. We believe that the change is likely to come in the not too dim and distant future. When a party speaker like Mr. Asquith feels it necessary to oppose Secular Education—not on principle, but on "practical" grounds—it is perfectly certain that Secular Education is recognised as an imminent danger. That is the real lesson of Mr. Asquith's speech.

G. W. FOOTE.

Religion in Russia.—II.

(Concluded from page 323.)

CONSCIOUSLY or unconsciously, the policy of the Russian Government and the Russian Church has been one of demoralisation and brutalisation. Demoralise in order to govern has been the rule, and, in carrying this out, the most effective instrument, as has already been pointed out, has been the influence of the Christian Church in Russia. Drunkenness has met with every encouragement, secret and open, education has been systematically obstructed, independence of thought and freedom of speech vigorously suppressed, and, along with this, the inevitable development of a number of unlovely characteristics that, while they exist in other countries, nowhere exist to the same degree as in Russia.

I have used the word "demoralisation" in the above sentence, and, while this stands for a truth, it does not stand for the whole truth. For the Russian people have been not so much deposed from the state attained by the people of other civilised countries, as prevented from reaching that condition. The Russian people—who have all the elements of a great people, just as the country under proper conditions might become one of the greatest countries in the world—suffer chiefly from the fact of non-development. The manners and customs of the people, their mental characteristics, all remind one irresistibly of a condition of things that obtained in other parts of the Christian world about eight centuries ago. While other countries have gone forward, Russia has been kept back, and this has been accomplished by a religion and a rule that has always recognised freedom of thought as an enemy to be crushed at all hazards.

This fact is brought out very clearly in a study of the Dissenting sects in Russia—particularly of the less-known ones. Led away by a similarity of name, English Dissenters have, with obvious want of knowledge, upheld Russian Dissent as an element of enlightenment in the country. This is, however, far from being the case. In England, where some freedom of political action has always been possible, opposition to the State Church drove religious Dissenters into an accidental alliance with advanced parties—provided they were not *too* advanced—and Nonconformists have not failed to make capital out of a mere political accident. But in Russia, where freedom of political action was not tolerated, Dissent has shown all the mystical, and even sexual, extravagances characteristic of early Christian sects. As a

body, the "Raskol" or the "Schism" have been strongly opposed to all modern, and particularly foreign, ideas. They pride themselves on being content with the old Russian devotional literature, and, like the earlier Nonconformists, tie themselves down to the Bible in a rigidly literal, or equally rigid, mystical manner. As a whole, Russian Dissent has always been narrow, sectarian, and extremely bigoted. This much, however, may be said in their favor. Unlike our own Dissenters, they have not used a liberal phraseology to cover almost illiberal practice.

While in other parts of Europe Dissent has usually originated in a revolt against ancient practices, in Russia it has generally been the other way about—a blind reverence for the past, and a revolt against the slightest alteration in the form of religious service conducted. But, once started, it has repeated all the extravagances of the early Protestant sects, and duplicated some of the most obnoxious of the primitive Christian bodies. Those who require a detailed account of these curious religious organisations will find a fairly full account in Mr. Heard's *Russian Church and Russian Dissent*. For the present a brief sketch of some of the more curious must suffice.

Superstition of the rankest kind—belief in the evil eye, witchcraft, exorcism, incarnations of Deity in the persons of their leaders, etc.—are common among these sects, as among the Russian peasantry in general. But the most extravagant forms are reached in questions that refer to the relation of the sexes. The question of the desirability of marriage is as much discussed as it was among the early Christians, and opinions quite as numerous and as fantastic are expressed. One community, the Feodocians, expresses its creed in the following statement, which leaves nothing to be desired on the score of brevity. "Being married, get unmarried; not married, never marry." And a popular catechism expands this into, "The youth should never take wife, the husband should never possess the wife; the maiden should never marry, the wife should never bear children." And with this teaching the results were exactly the same as followed from the Roman Catholic teaching of celibacy. Of course, a sect like the Feodocians could never perpetuate itself for long in any numbers; but that it did have a large following less than a century ago, and still has disciples, is significant enough.

The following opinion of women, from one of the religious writings of the Dissenters, is strongly reminiscent of the early Christian Fathers:—

"Woman is the weakest creature, the receptacle of all woes, the red-hot coal of dissension, the baneful toy, the enemy of the angels, an insatiable animal, an abyss of credulity, a bunch of obstinacy, vanity of vanities, an attraction in the distance, an angel in the street, a devil at home, a magpie at the gate, a she goat in the garden."

That is all!

Apart from the main body of the Raskolniks, although springing from them, are a number of sects that have not been content to allow their religious illumination to stop at mere teaching. A few years ago the Russian authorities were striving to suppress a sect whose teaching was the duty of suicide. In one case as many as eighty-four people shut themselves in a cavern amid a mass of straw and faggots, and then set fire to the pile. Death by starvation, drowning, and burying alive are other results of the same teaching; and even now suicide in order to save the soul from damnation is far from uncommon.

Another curious dissenting sect is found in the "Khlysti," from Khlyst, a whip, and derives its name from the practice of flagellation. This sect claims to be of divine origin, God Almighty having become incarnate in the person of its founder, during the reign of Peter the Great. By union with a woman over a hundred years of age—which quite puts Sara in the shade—he begat a son whom he proclaimed to be the Christ. Since then there has been a succession of Christs, each one revered as a living incarnation of deity. The Khlysti also denounce marriage as unclean. A curious feature of this sect is its ceremony of dancing, the description

of which tallies closely with the more sensual dances of the Eastern mystical sects.

An offshoot of this sect, the "Shakoumi," or "Jumpers," openly teach that the only way to conquer the temptations of the flesh is by unbridled satiety. The ceremony commences with singing accompanied by a slow jumping movement, which gradually quickens.

"The audience, arranged in couples, engaged to each other in advance, imitate his [the leader's] example, the bounds and singing grow faster and louder as the frenzy spreads, until, at its height, the elder shouts that he hears the voices of angels; the lights are extinguished, the jumping ceases, and the scene that follows in the darkness baffles description. Each one yields to his desires, born of inspiration, and therefore righteous, and to be gratified; all are brethren in Christ, all promptings of the inner spirit are holy; incest, even, is no sin. They repudiate marriage and justify their abominations by the biblical legends of Lot's daughters, Solomon's harems, and the like."

Another sect at Smolensk took to dancing in a state of nudity, and was nicknamed by the people "Cupids." And still another sect, the "Skoptsi," or "Eunuchs," take their stand on Matt. xix. 12 and xviii. 8, and carry out a practice not unknown to early Christianity. With a logic peculiar to the Russian peasant they argue that emasculation is the most effective form of asceticism, as it removes all incentive to indulgence. Man, they say, should be like the angels, without sex and without desire. This sect, a comparatively recent one, since its founder died as late as 1832, is in all probability a reaction against the license of the "Jumpers," from whom they originated.

It would need a volume to describe all the strange religious sects of modern Russia; it is enough to have noted the characteristics of some of them. They are all, however, typical of the unhealthy mental condition of the country, and ought not to be without their lesson. The student of social phenomena will, indeed, find nothing strange in their existence. They are simply an illustration of the principle, then, when the mind is not allowed a healthy outlet for its energies, vent will be found in an abnormal or unhealthy manner.

It is always in periods of decadence and decay that religion gains strength. In antiquity, Rome, while healthy, had no room for Eastern mysticism and superstition. These only gained a foothold when the social structure began to decay. Perfect bodily health rejects disease, and perfect social health rejects superstition. And in the dark ages of Europe the gross superstition that prevailed was again symptomatic of the absence of sane social conditions. It is exactly the same phenomenon one sees in Russia. Denied by the Government any healthy outlet for energies that must be dissipated somehow, extravagant and indecent religious teachings arise and spread. The only element that could prevent their growth is suppressed; Church and State recognise that demoralisation is the condition of their rule, and this is a game that no Government can play with impunity.

The lesson of Russia ought not to be lost to Free-thinkers, nor even to Christians. For the function performed by religion in Russia is the function it fulfils all over the world. The only distinction is this. In other countries its operation is disguised to a greater extent, and its influence is checked by secularising forces. In Russia it is comparatively unchecked and open in its operations. Christianity there has had a free hand for centuries, and the result is seen in the perpetuation of ignorance, cruelty, and superstition; in the keeping back of a people who might under sane institutions have been in the front of European civilisation.

The Russians, remarks a religious contemporary, are a profoundly religious people. They are. Russia is the most Christian country in the world. It is more Christian than even Spain; and a study of its history and present conditions prove that to destroy its claim to this description is the first step towards effective improvement.

C. COHEN.

“What Think Ye of Christ?”

IN Christendom, as at present constituted, a discussion of the above question is always timely. It should be borne in mind, however, that Christendom is by no means identical with the world. There are many Christian apologists who habitually speak, not in their own names only, but in the name of humanity at large. They have the audacity to claim that they represent the intelligence and the conscience of the entire race, and that the whole human family is unconsciously but most really hungering and thirsting for “the knowledge of the truth as it is in Jesus.” This is presumption at its lowest and worst, in condemnation of which no terms can be too strong. But in Christendom the subject of Christ and his religion is never out of date; and, strangely enough, this subject is never out of date because it is a subject on which men have never been able to agree. Not only have there always been positive unbelievers, but the believers themselves have ever been divided into different schools which have never been able to dwell together in the beauty and strength of brotherly love. On the contrary, between these opposing schools there has ever raged the bitterest and most brutal controversy. At present the war may not be quite so fierce as it used to be; but it is still going on, and the warriors are at heart as determined and obstinate as at any former period.

Recently, the Rev. W. T. Davison, M.A., D.D., Connexional Editor of the Wesleyan Methodist Church, took part in the discussion of this subject at the Central Hall, Manchester. Dr. Davison is nothing if not orthodox. He is a modernised Athanasius who has neither sympathy nor toleration for the present-day Arius. According to him, everything turns upon a man's personal relation to the Founder of the religion he professes. Consequently, it follows that all who do not hold the orthodox views as to the person and work of Christ, are outside the pale of salvation. “Unitarianism has lacked the essential quality of saving power.” Dr. Davison says further: “The Theists who are known as Unitarians hold a sublime creed, and often live upright and devoted lives worthy of all praise. Some of them, like Dr. Martineau, have been saints, and have held so lofty a view of Christ that it has seemed to differ but little from orthodox doctrine.” But was Dr. Martineau, for example, a “saved” man? Dr. Davison would be loth to answer in the negative, but he does not hesitate to affirm that “Dr. Martineau towards the close of his life had shed a large part of the creed which had inspired and ennobled his teaching in earlier days.” Then he adds: “History proves that bare Theism, without the doctrine of a special revelation and an Incarnate Savior, has only too readily passed first into a cold Deism, and afterwards has lost itself either in Pantheism or Agnosticism.” Nothing, therefore, possesses the quality of saving power except the orthodox doctrine.

Such is the position occupied by Dr. Davison in the lecture under consideration. Non-Christian scholars do not count. Their very learning is vitiated and rendered valueless by their unbelief. We presume to differ entirely from this doctor in divinity, though we may be told that we are “not worth counting in this discussion.” Mr. John M. Robertson is *not* the only scholar who doubts the historicity of the Gospel Jesus. There are Professors of New Testament Exegesis, men of undoubted and authoritative learning; there are ministers of the Gospel, in dignified and influential positions, who cherish the same doubt. To deny the Virgin Birth and the literal Resurrection from the tomb is, to that extent, to deny the historicity of the Four Gospels. No matter what Dr. Davison may say to the contrary, such doubters *do* count, because their number is rapidly growing, and they are having an increasingly large following.

But we are wasting time and space. Dr. Davison will not condescend to argue with outsiders. He will not discuss the divinity of Christ with a man

“who does not believe in the existence of God, or who thinks that if there be one we cannot possibly know him.” “The existence of a personal God; of man made in the image of God—that is, able as a spirit to enter into communion with God who is Spirit; and the condition of mankind as now in a state of grievous moral degradation and spiritual need—these things must be pre-supposed when we are inquiring into the person of Christ.” But there is something radically wrong about this claim. The contention of theology is that it is in and through Christ alone the knowledge of God is possible. And yet Dr. Davison says that he cannot discuss the divinity of Christ, or talk about the Incarnation with “a materialist or monist,” with the hope of accomplishing any good. We readily believe him. But let us see how he argues with Unitarians and other heretical believers.

Dr. Davison puts Jesus “in a class by himself amongst mankind.” What a sublime isolation is involved in being the sole member of a class. Surely the sense of loneliness must be unbearable. To be the one God-man in the universe! The consciousness of it must be heart-breaking in the extreme. In point of fact, however, Jesus has the companionship of Buddha, Alexander the Great, Scipio Africanus, Augustus, and multitudes of other deified men—all virgin-born. Indeed, the God-men of antiquity are practically innumerable. But the idea of a God-man is contrary to all reason, and absurd. Dr. Davison declares that Jesus was truly man. But if He were truly man he would be a member of the human family—one of many, and not the only one of the kind. To believe in the true humanity of Christ is to believe that He was bone of our bone, and flesh of our flesh. On the other hand, to believe in his divinity, in the orthodox sense, is to declare that He was not a true man. Dr. A. T. Pierson stated, the other Sunday evening, that He who sat on Jacob's Well on his way to Galilee was the Creator and Sovereign of the Universe. But surely the Creator and Sovereign of the Universe was not a man. But, in any case, Jesus cannot be put in a class by himself, because if He is divine, in the orthodox sense, He is not alone, but the Second of the Holy Three.

Dr. Davison's logic is defective. He admits that “religious truth cannot be ‘proved’ at all”; and yet he claims that “religious truths may be said to be established when adequate evidence is adduced for them, considering the conditions and possibilities of the case.” But is not adequate evidence, in every case, the only proof that is required? All who doubt the divinity of Christ would become ardent believers in it at once if only adequate evidence were forthcoming. But such adequate evidence Dr. Davison does not adduce in this lecture. He even goes so far as to agree with the late Dr. Dale in the statement that “when faith in Christ as very God of very God has been lost or shaken, it is not to be restored by arguments.” But the presentation of adequate evidence would be an argument that would inevitably convince any man of common sense. It is the lack of adequate evidence that accounts for the widespread unbelief that prevails. Dr. Dale said: “Men must discover for themselves that Christ is ‘the Lord of conduct, the Propitiation for the sins of the world, and the Giver of eternal life.’” But how can men discover what they firmly believe to be untrue? Dr. Davison tells us that “the supreme argument for this, as for other Christian doctrines, is, Try it.” But how can we try what we thoroughly disbelieve? “Put it to the proof,” he adds. But how can we put to the proof what we are convinced is non-existent? The suggestion is wholly illogical. We reject the Christian God-man, as well as all other God-men, for the simple reason that we can find no evidence whatever that such a being has ever existed. We unhesitatingly reject the Gospel accounts as untrustworthy records of facts, and we reject the claim of the Church that the Christ of the Gospels has won the world.

Dr. Torrey is in the habit of saying, “Either Jesus was divine, or He was an impostor, or a

lunatic," which is only a vulgar paraphrase of Canon Liddon's famous dictum in his Bampton lectures, "Either Jesus was divine, or He was not a good man." "I do not like these harsh, crude statements," says Dr. Davison, "and greatly distrust the soundness of logical alternatives so baldly and trenchantly expressed. Fine spiritual issues cannot be so summarily determined." But, on the supposition that the Gospels are historically credible, we can see little to object to in the language either of Dr. Liddon or Dr. Torrey. On that supposition, Jesus could have been neither an impostor nor an idiot, but God himself tabernacling in human flesh. But as we are utterly unable to entertain such a supposition, our conviction is that the Jesus of the Gospels never existed. *Him*, at any rate, we pronounce a pure myth. In this pronouncement we have the support of Professor Schmiedel and Canon Henson, and a whole host of other progressive Christian thinkers of to-day. To reject the Virgin Birth and the literal Resurrection is certainly to "reject the Gospel accounts as untrustworthy records of facts." In other words, there is no logical half-way house between orthodox Christianity and Secularism.

We fully agree with Dr. Davison that if Arius had been victorious at the Council of Nicaea in the fourth century Christianity would have been utterly doomed. Carlyle was perfectly right when he jibed at "the Christian world torn in pieces over a diphthong." Athanasius cried, *Homo-ousios*, of the same substance with the Father, while Arius cried *Homo-i-ousion*, of like substance, only the smallest Greek letter, *iota*, dividing them; but, as Carlyle, who was not a Christian, perceived afterwards, "Christianity itself was at stake." But to-day the supreme quarrel is, not over a Greek letter, not between different forms or schools of belief, but between faith and no faith, or between the supernatural and the natural. The Gospels must be either true or false. If true, Jesus was born of a virgin and rose from the grave on the third day; if not true, the Jesus whom they portray never lived at all. Once the historicity of these documents is discredited, no certain knowledge of Jesus can remain. It is a wonder that Dr. Davison does not realise this. Well, the result of the work of literary criticism upon the Four Gospels is that Christianity is now at last dwindling away to a legend, and that the intelligence of the age is repudiating it altogether.

Dr. Davison maintains that the grand aim of Christianity is the salvation of man through the love and self-sacrifice of God. But we maintain that the idea of salvation, as held by the orthodox Church, is an insult to human nature, and has been productive of incalculable mischief. What we want is, not salvation from the wrath to come, not deliverance from the displeasure of a Supernatural Being, and from the liability to punishment in a future life, but education, practical instruction and training in the fundamental principles of individual and social life in this world. What Dr. Davison dreads above everything else is the loss of the saving power of Christianity; and he is persuaded that this loss will inevitably take place when Christ is accounted no more than a good man. We sincerely believe that he is right in this persuasion. We believe that the Christian ideas of God, the forgiveness of sins, and immortality are essentially immoral. Dr. Davison asserts that once Christ is accounted no more than a good man, "however high a standard of conduct is preserved, the nerve of the motive power enabling men to follow it is cut." But that is a mischievous delusion. What is the real nerve of the motive power that enables men to follow a high standard of conduct? Philanthropy. What is the nerve of the motive power that impels a man to fight for his country? Patriotism. As a rule, Godliness tends to interfere with the right performance of social duties. The more pious a man is the less interest he takes in the affairs of this world. The saint is so often a sublime visionary or a grand

dreamer, and makes but a poor citizen of the earth. Our business is not to overcome the world and get out of it into a better, but to understand and improve the world, and so make it pre-eminently worth living in. Even as a saving power Christianity has been a signal failure, while as a reforming power it has never been known. Indeed, it has usually acted as a damper on the reforming instincts of humanity. It has often discouraged and even opposed the struggle for freedom and justice and fairplay. Its successor, humanism, duly informed and instructed on purely scientific and ethical lines, furnishes a much wholesomer, stronger, and nobler motive to the attainment of a high standard of living.

We admire Dr. Davison's courage. His loyalty to the New Testament is heroic. As an orthodox Christian he occupies the first rank, and his zeal for evangelicalism is worthy of all praise. But the fates are against him. Science, history, criticism, even modern theology, many of the most popular preachers—all are against him. The Christ of theology is rapidly disappearing, the Christianity of history is in the valley of the shadow of death, the Church is losing its hold upon the masses of the people, and the tide of natural knowledge, natural instincts and impulses, and natural philanthropy, is flowing in, with social union, healing, and uplifting in its train.

J. T. LLOYD.

Providence.—II.

(Concluded from page 326.)

ACCORDING to science the universe moves and has its being under a reign of inexorable law. Every part of it, as well as the whole, is ruled by law. Science knows of no exception or a possibility of suspension or change. Were there any doubt or uncertainty in the operation of law, no science would be possible. In the whole of nature there is no such thing as chance.

But providence implies the possibility of changing, not nature only, but God also. If God cannot be influenced to change his mind and alter his actions it is folly to pray to him. And if the laws of nature cannot be altered or suspended, and causes be prevented to produce their natural results, there is no room for providence.

There are a few verses that teach the immutability of God, such as: "For I am the Lord, I change not" (Malachi v. 6); "Jesus Christ the same yesterday and to-day and for ever" (Heb. xiii. 8); "Every good gift and perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the father of lights with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning" (James i. 17). But these are isolated passages, and are in direct contradiction to the general tenor of Bible teaching. The very foundation of religion is the possibility of influencing God to change his mind and course of action in order to interfere with the working of laws, to prevent them producing their usual natural effects. Unless God and nature can be changed by the devotion of man religion is nothing better than a delusion and a sham.

To show that the Bible teaches the possibility of influencing God and nature a few Bible quotations may be useful. James is very strong on this point. "Elias was a man subject to alike passions as we are, and he prayed earnestly that it might not rain; and it rained not on the earth by the space of three years and six months. And he prayed again and the heaven gave rain, and the earth brought forth her fruit" (James v. 17-18); "Is any sick among you? let him call for the elders of the Church; and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord; And the prayer of faith shall save the sick, and the Lord shall raise him up" (James v. 14-15). The only inference from these verses is that if Elias had not prayed there would have been no drought, and if he had not prayed again the drought would have continued. The same

with the sick man; if the elders had not prayed the Lord would not have raised him up.

According to the Gospels, Jesus, in plain language, taught the possibility of influencing God by prayer to alter the course of nature. "Verily I say unto you, if ye have faith as a grain of mustard seed, ye shall say unto this mountain, remove hence to yonder place, and it shall remove; and nothing shall be impossible unto you" (Matt. xvii. 20). "In my name shall they cast out devils; they shall speak with new tongues; they shall take up serpents; and if they drink any deadly thing it shall not hurt them; they shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover" (Mark xvi. 17-18). According to this teaching, prayer and faith make man into a God, and enable him to suspend the laws of nature and alter the mind and purpose of God.

And the miracles of the Old and New Testament embody the doctrine that the acts of God are determined by the acts and conduct of man. What will happen depends on how a man will behave. That is the whole essence of religion. If man obeys the Lord, he will have long life. If he serves God he will never want. That is the testimony of the psalmist. "I have been young and now am old; yet have I not seen the righteous forsaken, nor his seed begging bread" (Psalm xxxvii. 25). The fire of the fiery furnace did not hurt the three Hebrews in Babylon, because they served the Lord; but the men who cast them in were slain by the flames. Throughout the Bible it is abundantly clear that the providence of God depends on the providence of man.

The same doctrine is the creed of the Church. As the Church is founded on the Bible, any other faith would be a denial and rejection of God's revelation. In theory, at least, all Christians profess to believe that their prayers and devotions can influence God, and cause him to do what he would not do without them. I say in theory, because I think there is cause to doubt the reality of the profession. In the case of advanced men, who accept evolution and the teaching of science, it is certain a profession of belief in Providence is nothing but a sham. And the conduct of most Christians shows that they have more faith in the providence of man than in the providence of God. Pray to God with all your might, but keep your powder dry, is the principle that guides most Christians, notwithstanding their profession of faith in the providence of God.

But the only consistent Christians are those who believe and act on the belief that prayer and devotion can, and does, influence God to move and provide in a special way in answer to their supplications, such as the Peculiar People. What is the use of praying unless an answer is possible? Could any sane man pray for rain or dry weather if he knew his prayers would have no more effect on the weather than the weather on his prayers? All the religions of the world are identical in the belief that their devotions and offerings will influence the God they worship to manipulate his providence in their favor. Every religion is selfish. The saints always pray for themselves, the Church, and other saints. The blessings are all for the faithful and the good. All the miracles are for believers. There are no special providence and blessings to the sinner, who is in most need of them.

But is it true that there is a Providence as taught in the Bible and believed by Christians? Do the facts of nature and life agree with the belief? The Providence of religion is partial, working for the benefit of the pious. Is a Providence that leaves the bulk of mankind uncared for just? Would a just God act unjustly? Is there any evidence that God in nature favors a saint more than a pagan? Does not the sun shine the same on the just and unjust? The few that escape from a shipwreck are said to be providentially saved. If that is true, it must be true also that the many are providentially drowned. It is not at all likely that the few who escape are all good, nor that all the lost are all wicked. Besides, is it not as easy for God to save all

as to save a few? Is it not as easy for God to stop the storm and save the ship as to save a few from the ship?

The doctrine of Providence will not stand investigation. Under analysis it collapses like a bubble. At best it is only a refined survival of ancient superstitious delusions. Nature gives no indication of any god or gods interfering with its operations. The earthquake and blizzard treat good and bad, old and young, rich and poor exactly alike. Throughout nature law reigns alone and supreme.

As far as we can see, the only real Providence is the providence of men. Men can and do provide. Houses and furniture, clothing and food, are providence of men. Schools and colleges, hospitals and infirmaries, are providence of men. Much is done by mutual help to provide protection for the weak, guidance for the ignorant, health for the sick, provision for the old. But much more remain yet to be done in the near future. When men become good enough to combine and co-operate for the good of all, their providence will be powerful enough to make the earth a secular heaven for all the people.

R. J. DERFEL.

Acid Drops.

Rev. Dr. Aked, of Liverpool, finds fault with Dr. Torrey's idea of prayer. He feels sad at the thought of "the frightful disappointments in store for the uneducated and simple people who accept Dr. Torrey's gospel and try to live by it." Dr. Aked says that he used to pray for success before going fishing, but when he found that he had to rely entirely upon his own skill his "faith received a rude blow," and he went to hear Harriet Law, Annie Besant, and Charles Bradlaugh. "In the long run," he concludes, "all men and women with brains will have to choose between a more spiritual religion and Agnosticism." No doubt. And those with brains enough will choose Agnosticism.

Mr. Alexander has told how he once wanted a suit of clothes very badly, and prayed to God for it, and God sent it in the very nick of time. Fortunately the musical soul-saver does not need to trouble God now. Having married the wealthy daughter of the late Richard Cadbury, of cocoa fame, he has no further apprehensions about his tailor's bills.

Dr. Torrey, according to the New York *Truthseeker*, did trust to prayer some years ago. Two of his children were ill, and he refused to call in a doctor, and left them in the hands of the Lord—and they both died. This is what our contemporary says. We do not vouch for it. And if it be not true, we will gladly publish Dr. Torrey's denial. At the same time, we are bound to say that the action attributed to him is quite in keeping with his public utterances on the subject of prayer.

The *Brixton Free Press* of Friday, May 19, devoted a couple of columns to the Torrey-Alexander mission. We note that "the number of converts at each meeting has diminished." An instance is given of Dr. Torrey's want of humor. A man at Detroit came to one of Moody's meetings and asked if he did not think that Christ had returned already. "Mr. Moody," Dr. Torrey said, "didn't have time to fool round with such people, so he turned him over to me." And the Brixton audience laughed. They saw the joke. But the preacher didn't. "Mr. Moody," he solemnly added, "always handed such people over to me." Perhaps he had Torrey's measure.

Dr. Torrey was down on the Unitarians as usual. Referring to the second coming of Christ, he said: "The Unitarians won't have any show on that day." Poor Unitarians! We suppose Dr. Torrey will have a show. He ought to. The occasion would just suit him—especially if it happened on the first of April.

The last of the *Brixton Free Press* paragraphs is delicious:—

"Dr. Torrey's peroration on Tuesday afternoon was powerful in the extreme. He would like the mission to end that day. He prayed that the Lord would come soon. He gave a vivid picture of what would happen if He should come at that moment. 'I should be here preaching. The theatres will be in full blast. Dancing and card-parties will be taking place. Picnics will be going on. Suddenly the last trump will be heard! We who are ready will go up through the roof to meet our Lord in the air! Suppose that

should happen this afternoon. I should not wonder if it happened while I was preaching. I should rather like it to be. We should find ourselves going up through the roof and find the concourse of our loved ones coming from the cemeteries all around.' 'Friends,' continued the preacher abandoning his inspired rhetoric and adopting a matter-of-fact confidential tone, 'some of you would not go along. You would be left behind. Let us all look to the Lord in prayer. Will anyone here accept the Lord Jesus?' The reporter, without knowing it, perhaps, was describing an excellent piece of comedy.

"Lieutenant" Sarah Scrivener, of the Salvation Army, according to report, has been sentenced at Slough to a month's imprisonment for stealing two gold bracelets. Another case for Dr. Torrey.

Landor's fine and famous passage in *Gebir* says that if you take a sea shell and

then apply
Its polished lips to your attentive ear,
And it remembers its august abodes,
And murmurs as the ocean murmurs there.

Every now and then one has a similar experience with the *Morning Leader*. One feels sometimes that it remembers the "august abode" of Freethought with which it was once familiar. Only the other day it came out with a clever satirical description of the Welsh revival meeting in Fleet-street, conducted in Prophet Baxter's big printing room by three of Evan Roberts's female auxiliaries. To be properly appreciated this description should be read in its entirety. Incidentally it alluded to Charles Bradlaugh as "the greatest of our atheists." Good!

When that Fleet-street revival meeting had to end it did so with great decision. "Then two o'clock struck," the writer said, "and all the fury of religious testimony was stopped as suddenly as the gas goes out when the tap at the meter is turned off." Could anything show more clearly how the "spontaneous" revival is reduced to a business footing?

That histrionic person, the Rev. W. Carlile, advertised his subject for last Sunday evening's sermon as "Fry's Feats." It was also announced that Mr. P. F. Warner would read the lessons—but that item did not appear on the actual program. We suggest that Mr. Carlile should try the effect of a new photograph. The one depicting him in the pulpit, in clerical robes, with a trombone in the left hand and the right hand held up in all its narrow ineptitude, and the head thrown back in its equally narrow ineptitude—this one is getting stale. There is room for a photograph of the reverend gentleman as a cricketer. If he is too weak to look well in that costume he might try a cockswain's costume. We make no charge for the suggestion.

Under the heading of "A Modern Mission" some satirical verses by "A. W." on this "Fry's Feats" business were published in Monday's *Daily Chronicle*. The last verses were these:—

For thus the new evangelist
Has found the soul, through eye and wrist,
And reads the spirit in the "glance";
Uprightness counts for less than "twist,"
And saints are those who never missed
A "chance."

We tell the folks who come inside
That all the "gates" of pearl are "wide,"
And talk of that sweet by-and-by,
When, after our last ball is "skied,"
Either we shall be glorified
Or Fry!

The last line is A 1.

Vauvenargues, one of the finest of French moralists, and a Freethinker, was the author of the noble epigram, "Great thoughts spring from the heart." The writer of a column headed "Borrowed Epigrams" in the last number of *T. P.'s Weekly* seems to think that Vauvenargues "lifted" that epigram from Sir Philip Sidney, who had written "centuries before" of "High erected thoughts seated in the heart of courtesy." Now it is extremely unlikely that Vauvenargues had ever read Sir Philip Sidney, nor is there any real resemblance between these two expressions. Even if there were, it is possible for the same thought to occur to different minds. One would imagine, to hear some people, that thoughts were like guineas, which could not be in the possession of different persons at one and the same time. As to "centuries before," it is sufficient to remark that Sidney was born in 1554 and died in 1586, while Vauvenargues was born in 1715 and died in 1747. There is not room for "centuries" between these dates. But should

one expect accuracy in these cheap literary slop-writers for the million?

In a brief notice of *The Japanese Spirit*, which was the subject of our first article last week, the *Christian World* observes that "The shadow over the future of the Japanese race is the absence of religion." We like that "shadow over the future." Evidently the shadow is not over the present, or our contemporary would say so. Its criticism, therefore, is a kind of prophecy—which George Eliot so well said is the most gratuitous form of error.

The *Christian World* is quite comic a few lines further on. While admitting Japan's "marvellous material progress" it says that this wonderful nation "is in urgent need of the steadying control of religion." This is enough to make a rhinoceros laugh. Russia has the religion which Japan lacks. Is it Russia, then, that displays the *steady control*?

We recently corrected the *Daily Mirror* for referring to Landor's quarrels with Byron and Shelley in Italy. We told our contemporary that Landor had no personal acquaintance with either of these great poets. Now we have to correct the *Mirror* again. It states that Mrs. Besant "used always to address Bradlaugh in French when she spoke to him in the hearing of others." That she did so sometimes is very likely; that she did so always is perfect nonsense. We know better.

After a reference to Mrs. Besant's advocacy of Freethought in co-operation with Bradlaugh, the *Mirror* perpetrates the following imbecility. "Freethinkers," it says, "are, as we know, generally not those who think freely, but those whose minds are free from thought." Now the *Freethinker* is written for the people thus described, and the *Mirror* is written for—well, for other people. Which of the two is the more "free from thought"? And as the papers are so are their publics. That is a pure necessity.

Father Ignatius, preaching at Portman Rooms lately, said that it was no use criticising the Old Testament—it was outside the pale of all human criticism. We are afraid that Father Ignatius is in the same position.

"Some of the infidel side," Father Ignatius said, "had stated their heresies with such boldness that ignorant people were led to believe they were right." Father Ignatius is much mistaken if he fancies that any infidel book was ever addressed to an audience more ignorant than his own. Some things do not admit of discussion. They are simply impossible.

Smith's Weekly (who is Smith?) prints one of Ingersoll's purple patches—his reflections at the tomb of Napoleon, calling it "a fine piece of writing" and a "magnificent panorama." This is followed by an editorial paragraph on Ingersoll, from which we make the following extract:—

"This remarkable piece of prose was written by the late Robert Ingersoll. Ingersoll was an atheist. He believed in no God, no Creation. Instead of putting his genius, for he was a real genius, on the side of Creation, he preached the doctrine of Destruction—the destruction of all religious belief.....It is hard to picture in the mind's eye any infidel sitting with children upon his knees and chatting with his wife as she knits. Yet Ingersoll was a model man."

This is a bit better than Torrey, anyway. But what an idea the writer has of an "infidel." We beg to assure him that "infidels" have as much human nature as Christians—and give it a better chance. We beg to remind him, too, that the love of offspring is a natural fact, which owes nothing whatever to religion. It is in Christian England that a Society is necessary to protect children from gross cruelty. Such a Society would be perfectly unintelligible in Japan, which is a children's Paradise.

The House of Commons, we believe, contains a frightful percentage of folly to the square yard. Just look at Mr. J. Compton Rickett, M.P. This gentleman has just been gravely assuring the Leeds and District Federation of Free Church Councils that many evils, both physical and moral, are due to the influence and bodily possession of malevolent spirits. Is it any wonder that lunacy is increasing in England?

Archdeacon Craven, of Bradford, assigns several reasons for the "general decline in the observance of Sunday." One of them is the following:—"Utter weariness as to all religion in consequence of the ceaseless public disputes which have colored the last fifty years on questions of faith and practice." There is something in this. We believe he quarrel among the Churches over the question of

religious education in State schools has done a great deal towards producing scepticism and indifference. Fortunately the quarre seems likely to continue.

There are some terrible fools in the clerical profession. Take the Rev. S. S. Henshaw, for instance. This gentleman spoke the other day at the Primitive Methodist Mission anniversary, and was received with "immense applause" as a Passive Resistance martyr who had been twice in Armley Gaol. "He roused cheers and laughter," the report says, "by contrasting the position of women under Christianity and Mohammedanism. Mohammedans regarded women as little better than their donkeys." There was more of the same sort—as silly as silly could be. It is men of this sort, so stupid, so ignorant, and so reckless, who undertake the task of converting Mohammedans and other "heathen" to Christianity. No wonder they provoke the contemptuous derision of the people they go to "save." The man who talks about Mohammedans and their women-kind as Mr. Henshaw does may make a very good Nonconformist "martyr," but in other matters, or at least in this particular one, he should take the advice that Hamlet gave to Polonius, and play the fool nowhere but in his own house.

Canon Scott Holland presided lately at a meeting of the Christian Social Union at which the question of a national theatre was discussed. The reverend gentleman, as well as the other speakers, overlooked the fact that there are national theatres already. They are called churches, and the clergy are the performers.

A most unusual complaint has been made against the vicar of Thornthwaite and Braithwaite, Cumberland. A parishioner, at the annual vestry meeting, said that the reverend gentleman's sermons were too short. On Easter Sunday he only preached for five minutes. He replied that he wanted to shorten the service, as he understood that people from a distance liked to get away early. A most considerate vicar! Many churches would be glad to have one like him.

Dr. Bond, Archbishop of Montreal, and Primate of All Canada, has protested against the letters on the Higher Criticism which has been sent to the clergy of the Church of England in Canada, signed by the leaders of the movement in England. He closes by saying that the signatories of the higher criticism document can only save their honor by leaving the Church. Very likely! But how are they going to save their salaries? After all, the Higher Critics have just as much right in the Church as their opponents. Why discuss the more or less in a profession which is a rank imposture?

The Evangelical Alliance has also issued a manifesto against the Higher Criticism as "subversive of the truth of God's Word." But what is the use of a manifesto? It is like firing a popgun at a comet. Comforting, perhaps, to the party firing, but of no importance from any point of view.

According to a despatch from Algiers there is a wonder-worker at Ruisseau who is causing a great excitement. He is a peasant named Jean Baptiste Pons. He claims to be in direct communication with the Almighty, which is probably as true as—it usually is. His home has been visited by 10,000 pilgrims, who swear that he has given sight to the blind, hearing to the deaf, and agility to paralytics. Evan Roberts must look to his laurels.

The Archbishop of Canterbury lately uttered a financial jeremiad at the Merchant Tailors' Hall, in the City of London, in connection with the annual dinner of the Corporation of the Sons of the Clergy. He said it was a perfect conundrum that there should be so much poverty among men whom England trusted as she did her national clergy. Well now, it does not strike us in that way. To our mind the conundrum is the other way about. Instead of being surprised at the poverty of the clergy, we are surprised at their wealth. Clergymen ought to be poor—the poorer the better. Those who preach "Blessed be ye poor" ought to enjoy the blessing themselves. The really staggering thing is that England pays the Archbishop of Canterbury £15,000 a year as the top preacher of the gospel of poverty. He ought to be the poorest of the lot.

"There is an ingrained idea in the average Englishman," the Archbishop said, "that there is some heaven-sent source that would provide for the support of the clergy." Judging by the facts this is not exactly true. If it were so it would show that the average Englishman had more sense than we give him credit for. Why should not God

pay his own servants? And see how easily he could do it! All this cadging from strangers is positively disgraceful.

We do not know why the Ancient Order of Foresters should have a Church parade. This was the case lately at Portsmouth, and the Foresters, who perhaps never saw a forest, listened to a sermon by a Christian preacher who perhaps never tried to be a Christian. The Bishop of Southampton did not choose for his text "Take no thought for the morrow." Had he done so the Foresters might have smiled at the old-fashioned teaching of the blessed Savior.

Rev. Chancellor Espin, D.D., has been regretting the increase of civil marriages in England. "He said," the newspapers report, "that the Registrar-General's returns for the period from 1880 to 1902 showed that such marriages had increased from 24,180 in the former year to 42,761 in the latter. The increase had been continuous. The number of marriages solemnised in church by licence showed a decrease. A decrease had also taken place in marriages solemnised in chapels. This increase in civil marriages was a state of affairs which all religiously-minded men ought to regard as very grave." Men who are not religiously-minded will, of course, view the matter in a different light.

Some of the Labor leaders speak the truth about religion occasionally. Mr. Philip Snowdon was recently reported in the *Manchester Guardian* as saying at Bradford that "we had a country which was the heaven of the rich and idle and the hell of the poor and industrious; where heavenly religion was calculating selfishness making the best of both worlds by getting a fortune in this and relying on a vicarious sacrifice to get a good place in the next." Mr. Snowdon should keep on in this vein.

Calamities for which nobody is responsible are regarded legally as "The Act of God." This was pleaded in a recent case at Brentford County Court. Through the fall of a coping stone a lady was ill for six weeks, and she claimed damages. Defendant set up the "Act of God" defence—which implied that the lady should have sued the Almighty. Judgment, however, was given for the plaintiff; his Honor failing to see that God was responsible.

The *Herts Leader*, published at Watford, reports a lecture by the Rev. Thomas Waugh in reply to Mr. Robert Blatchford. In the course of this lecture Mr. Waugh said that "when he came into the Christian church twenty-nine years ago he came from the infidel camp." Did he now? What part of the world was it in? We have been ourselves in the "infidel camp" in this country for thirty-seven years. For thirty years we have been tolerably well known, and have had a tolerably wide knowledge of the Freethought party. But we do not recollect ever hearing of Thomas Waugh.

Mr. Waugh boasts of having been an infidel. So does Mr. Reader Harris, K.C. So do a number of enterprising men of God. It is becoming quite a fashionable trick in clerical circles. But most of the boasters have treacherous or imaginative memories. They remind us of an old story about Haydon the painter and the Prince Regent, afterwards George IV. Somebody talking to Haydon mentioned the Prince Regent as a friend of his. "No friend of mine," said Haydon, "I don't know him." Haydon was told that the Prince spoke as if he knew him. "Oh," said Haydon, "that is only his brag." Messrs. Waugh, Harris, and Company can work out the application of the story for themselves.

LOGIC WINS.

After all, logic has always the last word in this world. Concessions to the absurd, or at least to the relative, may sometimes be necessary in human affairs—a truth which the French revolutionists are wrong in not comprehending—but they are always transitory. Error is not the goal of the human mind; it must be reckoned with, it is useless to disparage it bitterly, but it should not be venerated. Large and logical spirits are always sure of being followed, provided you give them centuries to draw humanity onward. Truth can wait; she always remains young, and she is always sure to be recognised some day. Sometimes, in the long night-marches, soldiers sleep while walking, yet without halting; they continue to advance in their dream, and only wake at their place of destination to begin battle. Thus also advance in sleep the ideas of the human mind; they are sometimes so torpid that they seem dead; we only feel their life and force by the progress they have made; at length the day breaks and they stand revealed; they are recognised, and they are victorious.—*Guyau, "L'Irréligion de l'Avenir."*

Mr. Foote's Lecturing Engagements.

Whit-Sunday, N. S. S. Conference.

To Correspondents.

- C. COHEN'S LECTURING ENGAGEMENTS.—Address, 241 High-road, Leyton.—May 28, a. and e., Victoria Park; June 4, Dalston; 11, Conference at Liverpool.
- J. LLOYD'S LECTURING ENGAGEMENTS.—May 28, Manchester; June 4, Merthyr Tydvil; 11, Liverpool Conference.
- E. G. ELIOT.—The difficulty you now point out is a different thing. When you said that children were "punished" for not attending religious instruction we understood you to mean *officially*. We are quite aware that children may, and do, suffer indirectly. As a matter of fact, we have always pointed out that the Conscience Clause is apt to make children martyrs at an age when they can feel the smart without being able to understand the principle for which they suffer.
- W. A. SHORT.—Yes, we have obtained a copy of the much-lauded book called *The Trial of Jesus* by Giovanni Rosadi. We have not had time to read it through carefully yet, but a summary glance assures us that it does not merit the praises lavished upon it. We intend to deal with it shortly.
- YOUNG RECRUIT.—Christians appear to be constitutionally incapable of strict veracity where Freethinkers are concerned. We have repeatedly denied the nonsense some of them circulate as to the "death-bed change" of Charles Bradlaugh. No such change took place; the story is purely romantic. Charles Bradlaugh was tended in his last illness by his only daughter then living, Mrs. Bradlaugh-Bonner, who was assisted by a professional nurse. Mrs. Bradlaugh-Bonner has the nurse's affidavit that he never spoke to her at all on the subject of religion. The testimony of his daughter is that he was an Atheist to the very end. What the "Christian brother" of Charles Bradlaugh may choose to say on the matter cannot be of the slightest importance. Charles Bradlaugh had given him up (rightly or wrongly) as a bad egg for many years, and had declined all communication with him; and when the "Christian brother" knocked at the door, during Charles Bradlaugh's last illness, Mrs. Bradlaugh-Bonner refused him admittance and sent him packing. His report of what occurred in the death-chamber must, therefore, be quite imaginary, and no more worthy of attention than the report of the most distant stranger.
- J. CLOSE.—Thanks for fresh list. Ingersoll was an Atheist. He said that the Atheist was an Agnostic and the Agnostic was an Atheist. See our own pamphlet, *What is Agnosticism?* Considering where the view of Ingersoll appears it is fairer than might have been expected. To say that he was "a model man" is to say a great deal. There are not many model men about.
- E. LARKINS.—Always glad to receive cuttings.
- W. J. LIVINGSTONE ANDERSON, writing to us on "Mutilated Reprints," says: "I have received greater pleasure from the perusal of Miss Vance's letter and your comments thereon than I have from anything I have read for some considerable time." We are so full of matter at the moment that we are unable to find room for the rest of this correspondent's forcible letter. He advises the boycott of sham publications.
- X. Y. Z.—See paragraph. Thanks.
- H. HOYE.—You will see we have dealt with it.
- A. RIVETT.—Cuttings always welcome; see "Acid Drops."
- J. ARNOLD SHARPLEY.—Everything has its disadvantages. They are a part of the price. One disadvantage of newspaper controversy is that disputants deal so frequently with subsidiary points and side issues. You seem to have experienced this truth in your recent discussion in the *Liverpool Post*.
- E. SMITH.—We have no time to answer such questions by post, if that is what you wish. How can we possibly tell you how much better you are now that you are an "infidel?" That is a personal question. You should not let your Christian friends drag you into a ridiculous discussion like that. The only point you should discuss with them is the truth or falsehood of Christianity. Pamphlets sent.
- C. E. SMITH.—All right; such accidents will happen.
- E. PALMER.—The passage occurred in Disraeli's *Life of Bentinck*.
- H. G. FARMER.—Many thanks; may find it useful.
- E. F. REMINGTON.—Much obliged; hope to make use of it next week.
- M. R.—Verses not quite up to our level.
- W. BINDON.—We cannot answer such controversial questions in this column.
- J. L. G. MACKINNON.—Thanks; see paragraph.
- OUR ANTI-TORREY MISSION FUND.—Previously acknowledged, £116 19s. 2d. Received this week:—C. J. Whitwell 2s., J. Pruett 2s. 6d., W. A. Rogerson 2s. 6d., S. Leeson 5s., Hardup 2s. 6d.
- ROBERT DENNY, 66 High Park-road, Southport, a laborer out of work for two months in consequence of his opinions, wants a job in order to feed his children. Can any Freethinker help him to it? We hope so.
- W. P. BALL.—Thanks for your valued cuttings.
- G. WEIR.—In our next.
- W. P. PEARSON writes: "I am glad to see your outspoken remarks about the 'editing' of Ingersoll. It is disgusting, and those responsible ought to be made to feel ashamed of themselves."

F. BONTE writes: "Your article on the Japanese Spirit is deeply interesting and will afford all your readers sincere pleasure. The sanctions of morality are a constant subject of discussion, and it is pretended that morals are necessarily based on dogmas. Japan is an object-lesson showing that the highest morality may flourish without any supernatural basis. It is to be hoped you may find occasion to enforce this lesson." We hope so too.

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

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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*.

THE *Freethinker* will be forwarded direct from the publishing office, post free, at the following rates, prepaid:—One year, 10s. 6d.; half year, 5s. 3d.; three months, 2s. 8d.

SCALE OF ADVERTISEMENTS: Thirty words, 1s. 6d.; every succeeding ten words, 6d. *Displayed Advertisements*:—One inch, 4s. 6d.; half column, £1 2s. 6d.; column, £2 5s. Special terms for repetitions.

The Torrey Pamphlets.

AFTER getting last week's *Freethinker* off my hands I felt fatigued. I have been working at a great rate lately, and I thought I had better take Nature's hint to "go slow" for a bit. To be quite frank, I was bound to take it. I had to give up the idea of doing much, if anything at all, at the fag-end of the Brixton mission. But we shall be all right for the Strand mission. I have finished one of the new pamphlets—"Dr. Torrey's Converts," a very careful piece of writing—and got it set up in type, and it will be machined to-morrow. The other new pamphlet, proving that Dr. Torrey *did* say those wicked things about Paine and Ingersoll, is also partly written, and I expect to finish it within the next twenty-four hours. We shall bombard Dr. Torrey at the Strand mission with these three pamphlets—and he will not feel easy. I know he is feeling very *uneasy*. He is being pressed hard by his own party (I mean Christians) to say something in his own defence, or else to withdraw and apologise. It is for us to keep up our part of the pressure. And in order that this may be done effectively I appeal to the Freethought party for continued financial support. The three pamphlets should be circulated by myriads on myriads during June, and this cannot be done without money. Not that I *wait* for the money. I am going on, anyhow. The money must follow.

G. W. FOOTE.

Tuesday, May 28.

Sugar Plums.

Freethinkers all over the country should be considering whether they cannot co-operate in making the National Secular Society's Annual Conference a great Freethought Demonstration. The evening public meeting in the fine Picton Hall ought in itself to be worth all the cost and trouble of attending. It is not every day that a band of speakers like Messrs. Foote, Cohen, Lloyd, Ward, and Davies can be seen on the same platform. This, with some people, ought to be the treat of a lifetime. But there are other considerations. Liverpool itself is well worth a visit, and there are places of interest and beauty within easy reach of it. Then again, it will be remembered that the Archbishop of Canterbury has invited the clergy to pray hard for divine assistance on Whit-Sunday. On the principle, therefore, that the better the day the better the deed, this ought to be an ideal day for a Freethought Conference. Freethinkers should regard the Archbishop's plan as a challenge, and act accordingly.

The Liverpool Branch, which has fought a big uphill battle, and emerged into the clear light of victory, would be still further encouraged by a strong rally of British Secularists on Whit-Sunday. The officers, the committee,

and all the members, would feel fresh enthusiasm for further battles in the immediate future if a lot of their comrades came along and shook hands heartily and said "Well done!" and "Go ahead!" Freethinkers have feelings like other folk, and there is no need to be ashamed of them. It is really not wrong to be warm and enthusiastic. Let us not be afraid to throw emotional energy into the work.

There is to be an excursion to Chester on Whit-Monday. This will give the Branch delegates and visitors a fine opportunity of fraternising. Chester is a quaint and engaging old city in the midst of rich scenery. The journey will be by rail, and the price of the tickets (including dinner) will be 3s. 6d. or 4s. Those who wish to join the party should give early notice to Mr. H. Percy Ward 4 Redgrave-street, Kensington, Liverpool, as arrangements will have to be made with the Great Western Railway for reserved carriages. Some of the Welsh "saints" might induce Evan Roberts to pray for fine weather on Whit-Monday.

Delegates and visitors requiring hotel accommodation or lodgings should also write to Mr. Ward as soon as possible. Stewards, wearing the old Bradlaugh colors, will meet them at the stations and take them to their "diggings." There will be a reception at the Alexandra Hall, Islington-square, on the Saturday evening. Arrangements are also being made for a Sunday's general dinner at 2s. 6d. and tea at 1s. Fuller particulars of these functions will appear in our next issue.

We find it quite impossible to print the Agenda of the N. S. S. Annual Conference in this week's *Freethinker*. It will appear in our next issue. Meanwhile copies will be forwarded by post to Branch secretaries, and individual members who may apply for same.

The Liverpool *Daily Post*, in announcing Mr. Joseph McCabe's lectures for the Liverpool N. S. S. Branch, said that "The Secularists are the only enterprising body" in bringing speakers of importance to the city on Sundays. It should be added that the Liverpool Branch practises intellectual hospitality. Next Sunday afternoon (June 4) its platform will be occupied by Sheikh Abdullah Quilliam Bey, who will lecture on "The Balkan Question To-Day." There will be discussion as usual.

A Cycling Club is contemplated in connection with the Liverpool Branch. Those wishing to join are asked to communicate with Mr. T. E. Rhodes at the bookstall.

Mr. Lloyd visits Manchester to-day (May 28) and delivers two lectures. These meetings close the present indoor season at the Secular Hall. We hope the local "saints" will rally round Mr. Lloyd in strong force on this occasion.

Mr. H. Percy Ward has had a successful week's Free-thought Mission at Coventry. The audience increased nightly, and was, on the whole, very sympathetic. The indoor lectures on Sunday were well attended. Messrs. Partridge, Whitwell and Shield, came over from Birmingham to render assistance. Several new members were enrolled.

The *South London Press* reported Councillor Arthur B. Moss's celebration of his fiftieth birthday at the Surrey Masonic Hall. It speaks very highly of Mr. Moss as "a man of versatile talents" and "a prominent man in social and political movements in South London." The report is accompanied by a portrait. Mr. G. R. Sims, who could not attend the celebration, wired "Heartiest congratulations upon attaining years of discretion."

Mr. F. J. Gould has given notice that he will move the following resolution at the meeting of the Leicester Education Committee on June 26:—

"Notice of motion for June meeting of Education Committee:—

That this Committee recognises the desirability of confining the education under the control of local authorities to secular instruction only, and resolves to submit to a special sub-committee the following points for consideration and report:—(1) The manner in which the policy of Secular Education would affect the methods now carried out in the Council Schools of Leicester; (2) The manner in which the policy of Secular Education would affect the relations between the Council and the Non-provided Schools of Leicester. The Sub-committee to add any recommendations it may think fit."

Cambridge University Union Society has just debated "the abolition of religious instruction in State-supported elementary schools." The voting was 48 for and 55 against. This nominal defeat is a virtual victory.

The Opposition of Religion and Science.

"The positive opposition which religion offers to true or scientific progress is well known, and consists in open hostility to the advancement of knowledge which threatens to explain away the necessity for supernatural powers, and thus to sap the foundations of religion itself."—LESTER F. WARD, *Dynamic Sociology*, vol. ii., p. 297.

"The injury which the theological principle has done to the world is immense. It has prevented them from studying the laws of nature."—HENRY THOMAS BUCKLE, *Miscellaneous Works*, vol. ii., p. 61.

"Extinguished theologians lie about the cradle of every science as the strangled snakes beside that of Hercules."—PROFESSOR HUXLEY, *Lay Sermons*, p. 277.

"Religion in any form hates and fears Science."—VON HARTMANN, *Religion of the Future*, p. 31.

As Buckle remarked, theology has prevented men from studying the laws of Nature; for, as he points out in his great work, the *History of Civilisation in England*:—

"As long as men refer the movements of the comets to the immediate finger of God, and as long as they believe that an eclipse is one of the modes by which the Deity expresses his anger, they will never be guilty of the blasphemous presumption of attempting to predict such supernatural appearances" (vol. i., p. 347).

Lecky, in his *History of Rationalism*, has also noticed the same fact. He says:—

"As long as abnormal and capricious phenomena are deemed the direct acts of Deity, all attempts to explain them by science will be discouraged; for such attempts must appear an irreverent prying into the Divine acts, and if successful they diminish the sources of religious emotion" (vol. i., p. 281).

Grote has remarked that to the early Greeks "the description of the sun, as given in a modern astronomical treatise, would have appeared not merely absurd, but repulsive and impious," and he says of Socrates that "physics and astronomy, in his opinion, belonged to the divine class of phenomena, in which human research was insane, fruitless, and impious."*

Pliny (*Nat. Hist.*, ii., 26) thought Hipparchus impious in making a catalogue of the stars, and Anaxagoras was persecuted for showing that an eclipse was nothing but the stoppage of light by the opaque body of the moon or earth, instead of a supernatural miracle, as was then the orthodox creed.† Aristarchus was charged with blasphemy for his researches on the sun and planets.

As Herbert Spencer remarked:—

"Of all antagonisms of belief, the oldest, the widest, the most profound and the most important, is that between Religion and Science. It commenced when the recognition of the simplest uniformities in surrounding things set a limit to the once universal superstition."‡

It is well known that the triumph of Christianity was marked by the total suppression of science in Europe; in fact, the destruction of science was an indispensable condition of its very existence. When the bestial monks of Alexandria clubbed to death the beautiful science teacher, Hypatia, on the steps of the Academy, because she attracted too large an audience, the fact was proclaimed that henceforth no science was to be tolerated under Christian rule. As Draper says:—

"The quackeries of miracle-cure and shrine-cure were destined to eclipse the genius of Hippocrates, and nearly two thousand years to intervene between Archimedes and Newton, nearly seventeen hundred between Hipparchus and Kepler. A dismal interval of almost twenty centuries parts Hero, whose first steam-engine revolved in the Serapion, from James Watt, who has revolutionised the industry of the world. What a fearful blank! Yet not a blank, for it had its products—hundreds of folios filled with obsolete speculations, oppressing the shelves of antique libraries, enveloped in dust, and awaiting the worm."§

To the dread of scientific inquiry, which discovers natural causes where people had formerly seen the

* *History of Greece*, vol. i., p. 498.

† Rev. Baden Powell, *The Order of Nature*, p. 17.

‡ *First Principles*, p. 11; 1884.

§ Draper, *The Intellectual Development of Europe*, vol. i., p. 387; 1891.

finger of God, the Christians added two more formidable obstacles to the progress of science. The first was the dogma that the Bible was the Word of God, and contained the beginning and end of all sound science. The second was the distinctively Christian teaching of the worthlessness of this life in comparison with the life to come. They did not wish to improve this present life; all their energies were concentrated upon reaching the kingdom of heaven; and they regarded science and art as so many wiles of the Devil to distract their attention from heavenly things.

Eusebius, Bishop of Cæsarea, speaking of investigators, said: "It is not through ignorance of the things admired by them, but through contempt of their useless labor, that we think little of these matters, turning our souls to better things" (*Præp. Ev.*, xv., 61). Basil of Cæsarea declared it "a matter of no interest to us whether the earth is a sphere or a cylinder or a disk, or concave in the middle like a fan" (*Hexameron*). Lactantius referred to the ideas of those studying astronomy as "bad and senseless." St. Augustine asked, "What concern is it to me whether the heavens as a sphere enclose the earth in the middle of the world or overhang it on either side?"* Tertullian went further still. He roundly accuses the philosophers of being the "patriarchs of heresy," and their doctrines rather those of devils than men. "What," he asked, "has Jerusalem to do with Athens? What connection is there between the academy and the church?..... We want no researches beyond Jesus Christ. Once believing, we require no extra belief; for this is one of the primary articles of our faith, that there is nothing which we ought to believe beyond it" (*De Præscrip.*, Hær., vii.). And he exhorts his hearers to "Let curiosity give place to faith, vainglory to salvation; to know nothing against the rule of faith is to know everything."† In the Fourth Century—when Christianity had become the established religion—Moshem says that the Church "considered all learning, and especially philosophical learning, as injurious to true piety and godliness."‡

It will not avail to say that this opposition to science was one of the later corruptions of a primitive purity; it was there from the very commencement. St. Paul warns his hearers against the "oppositions of science falsely so called" (1 Timothy vi. 20), and Hallam, the Christian historian of the Middle Ages, admits that "From the primitive ages, however, it seems that a dislike of Pagan learning was pretty general among Christians," and "All physical science, especially, was held in avowed contempt, as inconsistent with revealed truths."§

The Fathers of the Church made the first chapters of Genesis the final test of thought upon the universe and all things therein. "St. Augustine, preparing his *Commentary on the Book of Genesis*, laid down in one famous sentence the law which has lasted in the Church until our own time: 'Nothing is to be accepted save on the authority of Scripture, since greater is that authority than all the powers of the human mind.'"|| As Draper remarks, "The authority of the Fathers, and the prevailing belief that the Scriptures contain the sum of all knowledge, discouraged any investigation of nature..... So great was the preference given to sacred over profane learning, that Christianity had been in existence fifteen hundred years, and had not produced a single astronomer."¶ For over a thousand years Europe returned to barbarism. "Indeed," says Dr. Tylor, the great anthropologist—

"mechanical science, after the classical period, shared the general fate of knowledge during the long dead time when so much was forgotten, and what was left was in bondage to the theology of the schoolmen....."

Physical science might almost have disappeared if it had not been that while the ancient treasure of knowledge was lost to Christendom, the Mohammedan philosophers were its guardians, and even added to its store. For this they have not always had due praise" (*Anthropology*, p. 324).

The historian Lecky bears similar testimony. He says:—

"It is, indeed, marvellous that science should ever have revived amid the fearful obstacles theologians cast in her way.....everything was done to cultivate a habit of thought the direct opposite of the habits of science. The constant exaltation of blind faith, the countless miracles, the childish legends, all produced a condition of besotted ignorance, of grovelling and trembling credulity, that can scarcely be paralleled except among the most degraded barbarians."*

As Hallam has remarked, the scholastic method of reasoning "after three or four hundred years had not untied a single knot or added one unequivocal truth to the domain of philosophy."

Dr. Andrew White declares that "for twelve hundred years the minds in control of Europe regarded all real science as *futile*, and diverted the great current of earnest thought into theology."†

In the year 1163 Pope Alexander III. issued a papal bull, in which he expressly forbade "the study of physics or the laws of the world,"‡ to all ecclesiastics; and it must be remembered that almost the only readers and writers of those days were to be found among the ecclesiastics, and not many among them.

W. MANN.

(To be continued.)

Out-Door Christianity.

MODERN JOB.

MODERN JOB is like his ancient namesake—very patient. He comes out, Sunday after Sunday, year out and year in, in most valiant style, and attacks, in their turn, Catholicism, Atheism, and Toryism. He works—and begs—in the interest of "The Protestant Forward Movement," yet he talks as if he and it were one. The Society publishes a little periodical called the *Protestant Advocate*. He talks as if he and it were one, too; yet it is edited by "Cato," and published by his (Job's) chairman. He is a most admirable beggar, and each time the collection stops he contributes a penny out of his own pocket by way of example. He denounces the Catholics for their dire persecutions. "If the Catholics ever get the power again, they will burn us. I belong to an anti-burning society, and come out to try and stop them." Would he persecute? Oh dear no! Not if he could save his own life by it. Does he believe in individual and full religious liberty? Why, bless you, yes. He only wants to defend himself. And pressed as to how, from time to time, this is his method:—Imprison the Pope for life as a dangerous lunatic, and banish every Catholic to some uninhabited region in South Africa. Forbid them ever to step over the border, and give them Home Rule. And is this persecution? His reply is a thundering No! He has also expressed a desire that Atheist lecturers should be as summarily disposed of as he would have the Pope. Such his reason, such his logic, such his tolerance. Yet this man's thunderous voice and stern ways; his now pleading, now furious, argumentative, scientific, or witty eloquence; his quick repartee and his facial expression, which varies between anger, joviality, and cunning, secures him large audiences and a wide sympathy in Victoria and Finsbury Parks, where he holds forth, while his opponents are generally derided. He denounces Catholicism for its persecuting spirit, yet he fervently believes in the Bible as the Word of God. And that same God, according to the Bible, gave these laws to Moses: "He that sacrificeth unto any god, save unto the Lord only, he shall be utterly

* Dr. Andrew White, *The Warfare of Science*, vol. i., pp. 91-114.

† Mackay, *The Rise and Progress of Christianity*, p. 199.

‡ *Ecclesiastical History*. Century IV.

§ Hallam, *Europe During the Middle Ages*, pp. 309-310.

¶ White, *Warfare of Science*, p. 25.

|| Draper, *The Conflict Between Religion and Science*, pp. 157-8.

* Lecky, *History of Rationalism*, vol. i., p. 274.

† White, *Warfare of Science*, vol. i., p. 381.

‡ *Warfare of Science*, p. 386.

destroyed" (Exodus xii. 20). "And he that blasphemeth the name of the Lord, he shall surely be put to death, and all the congregation shall certainly stone him: as well the stranger as he that is born in the land, when he blasphemeth the name of the Lord shall he be put to death" (Leviticus xxiv. 16).

He condemns the Catholic Church for burning witches, yet the Bible says: "Thou shalt not suffer a witch to live" (Exodus xii. 18). He vigorously protests against the Catholic doctrine of Transubstantiation, yet Jesus himself said: "Take, eat; this is my body"; and ".....Drink ye all of it; for this is my blood of the New Testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins" (Matthew xxvi. 26, 27, 28). And Modern Job believes in the same Jesus as his Catholic co-Christians believe in. He believes in the same God—Jehovah. In the same Holy Ghost, who used to come down in the shape of a pigeon (or was it a dove?). It is the same Holy Trinity—one in three, and three in one conundrum—and they believe in the same Holy Book (with a few insignificant alterations). Then where is the row? Well, Modern Job's excuse is that of the schoolboy: "The other fellow began it."

This learned Job's long and learned dissertations upon the human body for the purpose of showing Divine design may be as briefly answered as the foregoing. Children are, he argues, provided with the various organs for ready use when they are ready to use them. On the face of it, it is an absurd statement, seeing that not one child is ever able to use one of its limbs or organs till some time after birth. Further, if the limbs and organs of the children who survive birth have evolved during the nine months of gestation for the set purpose of being put to use after birth, to what purpose did the limbs and organs of the children who do not survive birth evolve? There are children who die before, during, or shortly after birth. For what purpose are they furnished with their various organs? There are also children who are born into the world blind; some deaf, others dumb, and others deaf and dumb. Why have the blind ones the eyes and yet lack the sight? Why are the deaf ones provided with the instruments wherewith to hear and yet lack the ability? Again, worst of all, children are born with diseased brains, the result being maniacs instead of men. When the matter is thus presented to Modern Job, this saint, forgetting the example which his holy prototype set him, flies into a passion. "Oh," he exclaims, "the crimes of the parents are blamed unto God." (Poor God!) It was ever thus. When a rat is driven into a corner it turns and bites—and is caught. And Modern Job is caught, for by so saying he admits that the child is the product, not of God, but of its parents, thus rendering unnecessary the retort, that God had equally made the parents, including their capacity to err.

He is extremely fond of lecturing on the supreme wisdom of God as shown in the marvellously harmonious composition of the human body, and as he explains the purpose of the various items he constantly recurs to one point, namely: "If this were not so, such and such a calamity would happen," etc. The argument of the design of this "harmonious whole" may be briefly disposed of. One "great calamity" occurs at the end of each life, and there are as many short lives as long ones, and more. And small calamities occur daily and hourly, as our hospitals testify. God's handiwork has to be continually tampered with and pampered, doctored and cured by men in order that it may be kept going.

No sooner is a child born than we begin to cut its tonsils that it may breathe, cut something else that matter may not accumulate, and to fill it with medicines to arrest the progress of various diseases; and thus we have to continue throughout our existence, if we wish to retard the inevitable dissolution. And this I tender as a reply to an hour's discourse of Modern Job.

Then as to his theory of the origin of life. And

here I will refute him on his own admissions. "The earth," he says, "was once a ball of fire." He gets that from science, and not from the Bible. The Bible says: "In the beginning God created"—not a ball of fire, but "the heavens and the earth." But more of that anon. "Well," he proceeds, "there could be no life then, as no life can exist in fire. How did life originate, if not from God?" Query: And how did God's life originate? "Oh," he replies, "God, space, and duration are the trinity that was from everlasting to everlasting." *The Trinity*, mind. Father, Son, and Holy Ghost are for the moment forgotten. Christian Job has succumbed to Job the rational argumentarian in a supreme effort to rescue his perishing creed. He has even said that Space and Duration are eternal necessities. This is an important admission. And now will he go one step further? Will he admit that the natural law which says that two plus two equal four is an eternal necessity? If, not, why not? This rule in nature is just as eternal and just as necessitous as those he mentioned. Further, is he prepared to take the inevitable step and say that the law of gravitation is an eternal necessity? If not, why not? The law of gravitation is as much an eternal necessity, and as much innate in, co-eternal with, and part and parcel of nature as Space or Time itself. And so are all natural laws. Consequently God is superfluous. And now I will tell him *how* life arose. When the earth had sufficiently cooled down and there existed upon, in it, and throughout it, a combination of heat, cold, and moisture, adapted to produce life, life was naturally produced by this trinity; on land in the form of plants and insects, and in the sea of plants and the lowest form of life. How do I know that? We know that plants *do* grow as a result of the natural blending of the three elements mentioned. As a farmer I know that different and entirely alien plants and grasses will grow in the soil each time the acres are ploughed down, and that mushrooms are naturally produced from manure without the sowing of seeds. There is talk of the theory of the organic being produced from the inorganic being exploded. Yet organic plants are daily produced from inorganic earth.

J. K. MAAGAARD.

Capital Punishment and the Whipping Post.

BY COLONEL INGERSOLL.

Question. What do you think of Governor Roosevelt's decision in the case of Mrs. Place?

Answer. I think the refusal of Governor Roosevelt to commute the sentence of Mrs. Place is a disgrace to the State. What a spectacle of man killing a woman—taking a poor, pallid, frightened woman, strapping her to a chair and then arranging the apparatus so she can be shocked to death. Many call this a Christian country. A good many people who believe in hell would naturally feel it their duty to kill a wretched, insane woman.

Society has a right to protect itself, but this can be done by imprisonment, and it is more humane to put a criminal in a cell than in a grave. Capital punishment degrades and hardens a community and it is a work of savagery. It is savagery. Capital punishment does not prevent murder, but sets an example—an example by the State—that is followed by its citizens. The State murders its enemies and the citizen murders his. Any punishment that degrades the punished, must necessarily degrade the one inflicting the punishment. No punishment should be inflicted by a human being that could not be inflicted by a gentleman.

For instance, take the whipping post. Some people are in favor of flogging because they say that some offences are of such a frightful nature that flogging is the only punishment. They forget that the punishment must be inflicted by somebody, and that somebody is a low and contemptible cur. I understand that John G. Shortall, president of the Humane Society of Illinois, has had a bill introduced into the Legislature of the State for the establishment of the whipping post.

The shadow of that post would disgrace and darken the whole State. Nothing could be more infamous, and yet this man is president of the Humane Society. Now, the question arises, what is humane about this society? Certainly not its president. Undoubtedly he is sincere. Cer-

tainly no man would take that position unless he was sincere. Nobody deliberately pretends to be bad, but the idea of his being president of the Humane Society is simply preposterous. With his idea about the whipping post he might join a society of hyenas for the cultivation of ferocity, for certainly nothing short of that would do justice to his bill.

THE GOD IDEA'S STRENGTH AND WEAKNESS.

Children easily believe that their father can do everything, that he works miracles; a word of his, and the world is shaken; *fiat lux*, and day is born; his will makes good and evil, his prohibition violated entails chastisement. They judge of his power by their own feebleness before him. So with primitive men. Later there arises a higher conception; man, in rising, raises his God, he gives him a more moral character; that God is ours. We need a smile from him after a sacrifice; the thought of him sustains us. Woman above all, who is younger in this respect than man, has had more need of the father who is in heaven. When we are despised of God, when we are emancipated from the celestial tutelage, we suddenly find ourselves orphans. A profound verity may be seen in the great symbol of Christ, of the dying God whose death must enfranchise human thought; this new drama of the Passion only enacts itself in our consciousness, and it is not the less heartrending; we grow indignant, we think of it through long days, as we think of a father who is dead. We feel the promised enfranchisement less than the lost protection and affection. Carlyle, that poor genius so strange and unhappy, could eat no bread but that prepared by his wife, made by her own hands and a little of her heart. We are all so; we need daily bread mixed with love and tenderness. Those who have not an adored hand to receive it from, ask it of their god, their ideal, their dream; they make a family for their thought, and invent a heart in infinitude.—*Guyau, "L'Irrigation de l'Avenir."*

Cast thy thought along the Ages!
Walk the sepulchres of Nations!
Mourn, with *me*, the fair things perish'd!
Mark the martyrdoms of men!

Say, can any latter blessing
Cleanse the blood-stain'd Book of Being?
Can a remnant render'd happy
Wipe out centuries of sorrow?

Nay, one broken life outweigheth
Twenty thousand lives made perfect!
Nay, I scorn the God whose pathway
Lieth over broken hearts!

Man, thou say'st, shall yet be happy?
What avails a bliss created
Out of hecatombs of evil,
Out of endless years of pain?

—*Robert Buchanan.*

HOLY RULERS.

What, indeed, must go on in the head of some Wilhelm of Germany—a narrow-minded, ill-educated, vain man, with the ideals of a German Junker—when there is nothing he can say so stupid or so horrid that it will not be met by an enthusiastic "*Hoch!*" and commented on by the Press of the entire world as though it were something highly important. When he says that, at his word, soldiers should be ready to kill their own fathers, people shout "*Hurrah!*" When he says that the Gospel must be introduced with an iron fist—"Hurrah!" When he says the army is to take no prisoners in China, but to slaughter everybody, he is not put into a lunatic asylum, but people shout "*Hurrah!*" and set sail for China to execute his commands. Or Nicholas II. (a man naturally modest) begins his reign by announcing to venerable old men who had expressed a wish to be allowed to discuss their own affairs, that such ideas of self-government were "insensate dreams"—and the organs of the Press he sees, and the people he meets, praise him for it. He proposes a childish, silly, and hypocritical project of universal peace, while at the same time ordering an increase in the army—and there are no limits to the laudation of his wisdom and virtue. Without any need he foolishly and mercilessly insults and oppresses a whole nation, the Finns and again he hears nothing but praise. Finally, he arranges the Chinese slaughter—terrible in its injustice, cruelty, and incompatibility with his peace projects—and, from all sides, people applaud him, both as a victor and a continuer of his father's peace policy. What, indeed, must be going on in the heads and hearts of these men?—*Tolstoy.*

People, as a rule, only pay for being amused or being cheated, not for being served.—*Ruskin.*

OLD-TIME REVIVALS.

In those days ministers depended on revivals to save souls and reform the world. In the winter, navigation having closed, business was mostly suspended. There were no railways and the only means of communication were wagons and boats. There were no operas, no theatres, no amusement except parties and balls. The parties were regarded as worldly and the balls as wicked. For real and virtuous enjoyment the good people depended on revivals. The sermons were mostly about the pains and agonies of hell, the joys and ecstasies of heaven, salvation by faith, and the efficacy of the atonement. The little churches, in which the services were held, were generally small, badly ventilated, and exceedingly warm. The emotional sermons, the sad singing, the hysterical amens, the hope of heaven, the fear of hell, caused many to lose the little sense they had. They became substantially insane. In this condition they flocked to the "mourner's bench"—asked for the prayers of the faithful—had strange feelings, prayed and wept and thought they had been "born again." Then they would tell their experiences—how wicked they had been—how evil had been their thoughts, their desires, and how good they had suddenly become.....Well, while the cold weather lasted, while the snows fell, the revival went on, but when the winter was over, when the steamboat's whistle was heard, when business started again, most of the converts "backslid" and fell again into their old ways. But the next winter they were on hand, ready to be "born again." They formed a kind of stock company, playing the same parts every winter and backsliding every spring.—*Ingersoll.*

FOR THE PRIMARY CLASS.

See the man.
What is the man carrying in his arms?
He is carrying a pitcher wrapped up in a newspaper.
Is there anything in the pitcher?
Yes. The pitcher is full of beer.
Why does the man wrap the pitcher up in a newspaper?
He wraps it up so the policeman on the corner will not know that he has been buying beer in a saloon on Sunday.
And does the policeman know?
Oh, no! When he sees the pitcher wrapped up in the newspaper he thinks the man has been buying milk. Is it not a shame to fool the poor policeman?
—*Detroit Tribune.*

HE GOT PLUCKED ALL AROUND.

Three small boys were arrested recently for robbing a 25 cent gas meter. The youngest of the trio, an urchin of seven, promptly turned state's evidence.
"De twouders histed me up," he sobbed, "an' I sneaked de dough."
"How much did you get?" he was asked.
"Dey was ject \$3.25 cents in de meter. I give it all to dem."
"How much did they give you back?"
"A cent."
"And what did you do with that?"
"P-put it on de c'lection plate in S-Sunday school," was the tearful reply.

A correspondent sends us the following extract from the pious petition of a good old colored brother in a Georgia settlement: "Lawd, we wants a blessin' fer ever' one, 'cept one; en dat one is a yaller nigger, what boarded de railroad train, en runned off wid de whole collection what wuz took up ter pay my salary wid! Lawd, please make de train jump de track—don't hurt de yuther passengers, but take off one leg fum dat nigger.—*Atlanta Constitution.*"

BOSTON IN A.D. 2000

Give me a spoon of oleo, ma,
And the sodium alkali,
For I'm going to make a pie;
I'm going to make a pie;
For John will be hungry and tired, ma,
And his tissues will decompose.
So give me a gramme of phosphate,
And the carbon and cellulose.
Now give me a chunk of caseine, ma,
To shorten the thermic fat,
And give me the oxygen bottle, ma,
And look at the thermostat;
And if the electric oven is cold,
Just turn it on half an ohm,
For I want to have the supper ready
As soon as John comes home.

SUNDAY LECTURE NOTICES, etc.

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

LONDON.

WEST HAM BRANCH N. S. S. (Liberal Hall, Broadway, Forest Gate, E.): 7.30, Concert.

OUTDOOR.

BATTERSEA BRANCH N. S. S. (Battersea Park Gates): 11.30, Guy A. Aldred, "The Case for Materialism."

FINSBURY BRANCH N. S. S. (Clerkenwell-green): 7, Guy A. Aldred, "The Trial of G. W. Foote."

BETHNAL GREEN BRANCH N. S. S. (Victoria Park, near the Fountain): 3.15 and 6.15, C. Cohen.

CAMBERWELL BRANCH N. S. S.: Station-road, at 11.30, A Lecture; Brockwell Park, 3.15, E. B. Rose, "The Parsons and Torrey"; Brockwell Park, 6.30, E. B. Rose, "Earthly Stories with Heavenly Meanings."

KINGSLAND BRANCH N. S. S. (Corner of Ridley-road, Dalston): 11.30, Mr. Davies.

COUNTRY.

BIRMINGHAM BRANCH N. S. S. (Coffee House, Bull Ring): Thursday, June 1, at 8, E. V. Deakin, A Paper.

LIVERPOOL BRANCH N. S. S. (Alexandra Hall, Islington-square): 3, H. Percy Ward, "Nonconformist Hypocrisy and Secular Education"; 7, "Christianity and Slavery." Members' Meeting after evening Lecture *re* New Rules.

MANCHESTER BRANCH N. S. S. (Rusholme-road, Oxford-road, All Saints): 3, J. Lloyd, "If a Man Die, shall he Live Again?"; 6.30, "What is Christianity?" With special reference to the Central Hall Wesleyan Lectures. Tea at 5.

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