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The miraculous has become the absurd, the impossible. Gods and phantoms have been driven from the earth and sky. We are living in a natural world.—INGERSOLL.

Poor Shelley!

SHELLEY is done for. One of the great Chesterton brothers has spoken. Sentence is passed upon the poet. All that remains between now and the morning of execution is mere detail.

The Chesterton brothers are popular entertainers. "G. K. C." is a very illustrious personage. He supplies paradoxical fireworks to the dull and deadly *Daily News*. Of course he writes for other journals too, but this is the one in which he most bravely disports himself. He takes fresh views of everything, even if he has to stand on his head to get them. Nothing ever tempts him to disappoint the fine expectations of the Dissenting preachers, Bible-class leaders, and Sunday-school teachers—to say nothing of the noble army of Passive Resisters—who buy the halfpenny organ of the Nonconformist Conscience as the best intellectual answer they are able to find to the prayer of "give us this day our daily bread." "G. K. C.," following this metaphor, may be likened to the pinch of salt that gives the bread a flavor, or the leaven that saves it from being useful to the artillery.

Cecil Chesterton has a minor share of his brother's complaint. We fancy he has a minor share of his brother's everything. He goes after paradox as a duckling goes after water. He is a Christian. He is also a Socialist. He is likewise a Churchman. We believe he is even a High Churchman. And over all these ingredients there is a certain dash of natural or cultivated seriousness, such as you may see in the modern variety of curate, who can talk of God, Christ, and the Bible amidst drinks and smokes and jokes, but suddenly becomes solemn at the mention of that high and holy thing "the Church."

In pursuit of his mission as a Christian and a Socialist this gentleman lately addressed the Fabian Society on "Shelley"—his lecture being the second of a series on "The Prophets of the Past Century." An excellent summary report of it appears in the *Fabian News*, and is evidently accurate within its limits.

Mr. Chesterton began in the Chestertonian manner. He said that when the prophet was being stoned he was alive; when his sepulchre was built he was dead—spiritually as well as physically. This comes of having to be smart. There is a certain small truth in it, but in the main it is thoroughly false. It is true enough in the sphere of religion, where brutal persecution generally comes first and gross idolatry afterwards—and both from the same principle, the worship of old use and wont. It is untrue in other spheres. Spinoza is not dead because his reputation is vindicated; Bruno is not dead because a public monument has been erected to him at Rome; neither is Shelley dead because it is now admitted that he was both a great poet and a great and good man.

Mr. H. S. Salt's three views of Shelley—first, as a fiend; second, as a "beautiful but ineffectual angel"; third, as the prophet of a new and nobler humanity—are all dismissed by Mr. Chesterton in favor of a fourth; namely, that Shelley was "a man who devoted great genius and fine moral enthusiasm to the propagation of views essentially unsound." This

must be comforting to people with less enthusiasm and no genius. Mr. Chesterton assures them that other criticisms may fail, but one criticism cannot fail; the only thing to be said against Shelley is that he was wrong.

Mr. Chesterton *says* that Shelley was wrong. We cannot see that he produces any other evidence. We therefore incline to think that Shelley with his "great genius" may have been right, and that Mr. Chesterton without the "great genius" may be wrong.

Shelley's first offence was a shocking one. He was "a child of the English landed aristocracy." He had the aristocratic virtues, and the aristocratic limitations. He was indifferent to money, but he had "the aristocrat's incapacity to entertain even the idea of working for his living." In one withering sentence, "He lived on Unearned Increment." It is simply awful. We grasp at Mr. Chesterton's assurance that "under Socialism we shall produce no Shelleys"—for on this point we feel very much like agreeing with him. On second thoughts we venture to suggest that Mr. Chesterton is too hard on Shelley. The poor offender really could not choose his parents. He had to get born as he could. Moreover he came into the world before the days of Karl Marx and other profound "thinkers" of the Socialist persuasion. We plead for an allowance on this account. It was a grave defect on the part of the philosophers of antiquity (as Swift remarked) that they knew nothing of the Thirty-Nine Articles and were absolutely ignorant of the principles of the British Constitution. In the same way, Shelley knew nothing of *Das Kapital* and was absolutely ignorant of the principles of the Fabian Society. But do not let us be uncharitable. It was less his fault than his misfortune. He was a victim of chronology.

Shelley lived on "Unearned Increment." We do not know what Mr. Chesterton lives on. Few of the Fabians we have known ever wheeled a barrow. After all, Shelley did not live on *much* of that Unearned Increment. He lived chiefly on bread and water—too much so for his health. He produced on that cheap diet (cheap enough to satisfy *any* Socialist) a great collection of magnificent poetry, which has incalculably enriched the higher life of the world.

Mr. Chesterton might be better employed than in kicking poor Shelley in this way. He might try to solve the problem of how Socialism will deal with men of genius. Is there a case on record of a great poet who earned his living in the ordinary way? Shakespeare ran a theatre and lived to a considerable extent on other people's Unearned Increment. The truth is, we believe, that a poet is more likely to be found fighting in the streets than following a humdrum occupation. Villon seems to have turned thief, and Marlowe was by no means a "respectable" character; but where is the fine poet who made boots or kitchen tables? Mr. Chesterton himself displays no passionate attachment to these plainly useful avocations. He prefers to wield a pen. And when the millennium he dreams of arrives, and the Committee of Public Works, or whatever its name is, tells him to get hold of an awl or a chisel, we can imagine what melancholy will pervade his soul, and how he will then regret having been so fierce with poor Shelley.

We are next informed that Shelley's philosophy "led him to make an appalling mess of every human crisis with which he was faced." This is a very large statement without any particulars. Shelley made one "mess"—if the word must be used—in regard to Harriet Westbrook; but it was not due to his philosophy; it was due to his chivalry. He went and married her. Any other young "aristocrat" living on "Unearned Increment" would have enjoyed the favors (such was the language of the age) of a pretty lower-class girl who almost threw herself into his arms, but he would not have made her his wife. Had it not been for that marriage the world would never have seen any "appalling mess," or any "mess" at all, in Shelley's life. We admit that he was bound to come into conflict with the world's conventions. In the first place, he was not built to take advantage of others; in the second place, he disdained the essentially illicit and loveless intercourse between the sexes which is so common in Christian countries. He could not consort with prostitutes; he would not keep a mistress; the partner of his bed had to be the partner of his home. When the hour struck for separating from Harriet—and this can easily be proved to have been inevitable—it was not a case of ceasing to visit brothels, or of providing for a mistress; the deed had to be done in the sight of the world, for the woman was his wife; and the great gross hypocritical world, which loves to do its morality vicariously, threw heaps of stones at the wicked young poet (who was, alas, an Atheist), and then went on as before with its bawdy houses and kept women—and its multitude of homes haunted by the shadows of treachery and vice.

Mr. Chesterton asserts that Shelley "never made allowance for the complexity of the problem" of sex, and never "faced the problem of the child." But who did in those days? Darwinism, Evolution—call it what you will—has taken possession of the field since then. It has made many moral and social revelations, and these have steadied the thoughtful. We now see that the child is really the centre of civilisation, and when we get to the bottom of things we see that marriage itself is a device for securing the child's welfare. Shelley's ignorance in this direction was the necessary ignorance of his time. And then he was only twenty-nine when he died.

Shelley is next blamed, curiously enough, for *being* an Evolutionist. It was the "evolutionist doctrine," Mr. Chesterton says, that "made Shelley an enemy to violence." In this he was utterly wrong. All revolutions are brought about by force; in no other way can they be brought about. Such is Mr. Chesterton's argument. It is nothing but assertion; and, assertion for assertion, we prefer Shelley. And there is Tolstoy to be answered. More important still for Mr. Chesterton, there is Jesus Christ—or at least one of the Jesus Christ's of the four Gospels. "Resist not evil"—"Whoso taketh the sword shall perish by the sword"—these are the teachings of "a greater than Shelley," of one whom Mr. Chesterton believes to be God.

The statement that Shelley "associated the advanced movement with fads and with a false humanitarianism" can only be discussed on the production of instances. Mr. Chesterton may be alluding to Shelley's vegetarianism and abstinence from alcohol. But to call these things "fads" is an ill-conditioned evasion of the responsibilities of debate.

Shelley's most terrible crime seems to have been that he "had no knowledge of the world and no humor." How often this absurdity has figured in Shelley criticism! Shelley was too unselfish to look after his own interests effectually, but when he had to serve a friend he was [clear, swift, and resolute. He did not know the world exactly as Byron did, but he knew it better in some respects; and the proof is that, whereas Byron's dramas are abortions *as* dramas, Shelley wrote the one great drama in our literature since the age of Shakespeare. Byron was indeed a great humorist, but to say that Shelley had "no humor" is sheer silliness. Byron himself could not have bettered, in some respects he could not have

equalled, the satire on Wordsworth in the fourth part of *Peter Bell the Third*. Three of the stanzas are exquisitely fine. And the translation of the "Hymn to Mercury" is perhaps the most perfectly sustained piece of delicate humor in the English language.

With regard to Shelley's religious views, Mr. Chesterton honorably repudiates the idea that he was "a sort of unconscious Christian." On the other hand he denies that Shelley was "an Atheist in the ordinary sense." But as he does not state what this "ordinary sense" of Atheism is, we have no alternative but to accept Shelley's own declaration that he *was* an Atheist.

Finally, Mr. Chesterton allows that Shelley "gave to the essential Revolutionary Passion the noblest expression it has ever received." This is true as far as it goes—and we congratulate Mr. Chesterton on coming to his senses at last. But it is far from being all the truth. Byron was the born revolutionist; Shelley was much more than that; he was the greatest modern prophet of Humanity. One has only to read the last chorus in *Hellas*—with its beautiful music, its noble imagery, and its infinite longing—to see that Shelley looked beyond the tumult of revolt to the peace of a renovated society.

G. W. FOOTE.

God's Ways.

IT may be safely assumed that the Bishop of London is as cognisant of what God is doing and why he is doing it, as is any clergyman in Great Britain. There are one or two other gentlemen in the same business who receive larger salaries than the Bishop; but in spite of his smaller, and as he explained, insufficient income, I maintain that his knowledge on this point is co-extensive with theirs. It would sound like prejudiced partizanship to say that he knew more on this subject than others, but common justice calls for the vindication of his equal knowledge. It is therefore, with full recognition of the nature and extent of Mr. F. W. Ingram's information in this direction—in virtue of which he is presumably dowered with a seat in the House of Lords—that I call attention to a recent utterance of his concerning the query "What is God doing?"

Carlyle once referred somewhat contemptuously to a God who created the world and then sat up aloft seeing it go. Carlyle's was, of course, an unofficial utterance, and might, therefore, have failed to carry conviction. The bishop's answer is an official one, and while it smacks somewhat of Carlyle's answer, it is framed, as some would say, "more reverently." He says that when people ask why does not God put things right, he answers: "He is waiting." And when he asks himself "What is He waiting for?" "I know.....that he is waiting for someone to come and help him."

Now I am far from denying that waiting may not be a virtue. Very often more good would be done—if one only had enough patience and courage—by waiting than by rushing into action. But the waiting is a virtue only as the result of our weakness. We wait to act because we lack knowledge, or because we cannot force circumstances, or because we expect assistance in a task that is too great for our unaided powers. But a God who is cramped by none of these limitations, who should be independent of all advice and help, and who is yet waiting, does not strike one as either dignified or wise. But it is to be observed that the bishop tells us why he is waiting. He tells us of the evils of prostitution, gambling, want of employment, and unbelief; and says God does not destroy these things because he is waiting for someone to help him. Now I do not say this statement is incorrect. My knowledge of what God is doing is positively *nil*. But it certainly seems—if the statement be correct—that if God is waiting for someone to come along and destroy these evils, that he is really waiting to take the credit for other

people's work. Which I assume is what generally has happened.

But why wait for someone to help? Surely God—an all-powerful, all-wise deity—does not need the help of any ordinary Tom, Dick, or Harry, to accomplish his desires? Let us suppose that anyone—Bishop Ingram himself—could destroy prostitution, or drinking, or gambling, or provide work for the unemployed, or above all, destroy unbelief. Would he hesitate to do it? Would he say, "I can do it, but I prefer to wait until someone else comes along and lends a hand." The supposition is absurd. If we assume that he is doing all he can to remove what he considers evils, we may safely assume he would do more if he could; would abolish them altogether had he opportunity. And why should God act differently? I do not say that the deity is not acting as Bishop Ingram says. He is one of God's official agents on earth and therefore ought to know. Only it is clear that the defence throws anything but a favorable light on God's character.

And what, meanwhile, of the people themselves who need helping? Drunkards, gamblers, prostitutes, are left with their vices. The unemployed are left in a state of semi-starvation, children are being born and developed amid body and mind-destroying conditions, and God still waits for someone to come along and do something! The bishop might reply that God does not do the work himself because it is ours. Well, suppose we grant that it is our proper work to purify society. Most of us would if we knew how; but anyway, the reply would not touch the people who need helping. And so God says to these people: "It is true you ought to be helped, and I could help you if I would. But your fellow-creatures ought to help, and if *they* will not I will not. And you, and your children, and children's children, shall be punished because other people will not do as they ought."

The bishop explains at some length how affected he was on seeing almost a mile of unemployed marching along. His carriage was pulled up to allow them to pass. It must have been a most affecting picture. The preacher of the blessings of poverty and meekness and suffering sitting in his carriage watching a mile of people whose only cry was for work and bread! The man in the carriage preached the blessings of poverty. Those outside knew the blessings of poverty, and were quite willing to exchange them for a day's work. The follower of the meek and lowly Jesus has declared his inability to make ends meet on £10,000 a year. Any one of the mile of unemployed would have considered himself passing rich on thirty shillings a week. Well, others besides God are waiting. Many are waiting for the time when it will be realised that the bishop's carriage and the mile of semi-starved men are both symbols, and that there is more than a casual relation between the two.

So much for the bishop. But there are others beside he who claim to know much of God's ways; and it is a striking characteristic of this class that the arguments are much of the same kind, whether used by a bishop or by a local preacher. Mr. Shirley Herrick—a name that suggests a great deal more of literature than is apparent in his sermon—explained, about the same time as the bishop, God's connection—or want of connection—with the Charing Cross disaster. People ask why did not God prevent the accident? Because, replies Mr. Herrick, God had nothing to do with it. "To think that God decreed that particular accident at that particular time is to go against all common sense." With which I heartily agree. But had God nothing to do with it? In spite of the remark quoted above, Mr. Herrick sees it will not do to put God out of it altogether, and so he puts in two pleas. First, it was an accident. But in a world God governed, where nothing could exist against his wishes, accidents should be out of place—should, in fact, be impossible. Next, Mr. Herrick having put God out of court through the door, reintroduces him by way of the window. "God governs this world by law." And as the accident

was an expression of "law," this is really finding God guilty after he has been formally acquitted. God governs through the law that produced the accident; so that the authorship of the accident is not destroyed. It is only moved one stage further back. Suppose one man shot another. He might say, "I did not cause the man's death; it was the pistol. All I did was to pull the trigger." Even a local preacher might be expected to see that in the Charing Cross case "law" was the pistol, and God pulled the trigger.

"There is a law," says Mr. Herrick, "which says that iron may become corroded and so weakened that when a strain comes upon it it shall give way." And when this point is reached it matters not how many people, whether they be young or old, good or bad, be underneath. Down comes the roof, and these people suffer for no fault of their own, from something they had no responsibility whatever. It is true enough as a statement of fact. But if it is true, what becomes of a special providence? What becomes of the protecting benevolence of God? What is the use of praying to God for this, or that, or the other? Or what is the use of a God at all?

"Our attitude towards Providence" proceeds our preacher, "should be not to think of everything as of necessity coming direct from the hand of God, so much as to try to learn the lesson of each event." Well, this is sensible enough, although it is somewhat marred by what immediately follows. But what are the lessons of disasters like the fall of the roof of Charing Cross Station? Well, the first is that if you are constructing a building, or in fact doing anything in this world, your opinions on deity and a future life, are not worth a brass farthing. Natural forces operate on all and for all with absolute impartiality. Second, this being the case, the question of God is ruled out of court as of no practical importance whatever. As there is no protecting providence, as human safety is a question of understanding, controlling, applying natural forces, and as we cannot get behind or beyond them, it does not matter whether there is a God or not. If there is not, natural force is all, and if there is, natural force is still all that we are concerned with. Thirdly, and finally, if the above be true, religion is a huge mistake or a gigantic imposture. For religion has all along taught that natural force is not all, that God does direct natural forces, and direct them in particular ways to particular ends. Why not then have done with the imposture at once and for ever? Why not, instead of troubling about a God who does nothing, and who apparently can do nothing, apply our energies in the only way from which good can result? The God who is waiting for man to help him cure social evils, may see that help materialise sooner or later. But the man who waits for God to help is awaiting the arrival of the impossible.

C. COHEN.

"The Consciousness of Jesus."

AT this season of the year it cannot be inappropriate to discuss anew some aspects of the personality of Jesus. No. 13 of the *Essays for the Times*, entitled "The Consciousness of Jesus," by the Rev. Charles Moinet, M.A., D.D., opens with the assertion that "the best argument for Christianity is Christ," and that "if the forces of Naturalism are to be routed, it must be from this as our base of operations." Dr. Moinet tells us that "the scepticism of to-day reverences the person of Jesus." As a matter of fact, much of the scepticism of to-day does not believe in the historicity of the Four Gospels. There are Christian scholars who regard more than two-thirds of their contents as utterly untrustworthy; and surely it cannot be surprising to find that many sceptics reject the remaining third. To admit that portions of the Gospel story are legendary is to destroy the argument for the historicity of the whole. What we maintain is that the Jesus of the New Testament was a creation of the primitive

Church, and not by any means a historical character. What historical elements, if any, lay behind the mythical person it is impossible now to determine. On this point there will always be different opinions. Is it not clear, therefore, that we have no means of ascertaining who or what Jesus was? And if we do not know who or what He was, how can we reverence him? We may reverence much of the moral teaching attributed to him, just as we reverence much of the moral teaching attributed to other masters; but we are not so foolish as to waste our reverence on a character we consider largely, if not wholly, un-historical.

Dr. Moinet is a thoroughly orthodox divine, and he reads his orthodoxy into the Gospels. To him, Jesus is God. He has put his Christology in this nutshell: "He who created man in his own image and with a definite conception of his history, and whither it should lead, He alone can re-create him so as to restore him to all that he has lost, and re-conduct him to the pathway from which he has wandered." Jesus "is greater than the greatest of the sons of men. The difference is not only in degree, but in kind." Jesus "stood clear of the obligations" under which all men lie. This is the Christology in which Dr. Moinet was trained, and in which he has always stood. As a philosophy of the religion of Redemption, it is the most logical in existence. As a system no fault can be found with it. My only contention concerning it is that it passed through a long process of evolution before it assumed its present form. Certainly it is not to be found in the synoptic Gospels, and the Unitarians allege that it is not taught even in the Epistles. Whether the Unitarians are right or wrong, Dr. Moinet is undoubtedly wrong in reading the Christology of later ages into the first three Gospels.

Dr. Moinet confines himself to a few of the sayings ascribed to Jesus about his mission. The first selected is this: "Think not that I came to destroy the law, or the prophets; I came not to destroy, but to fulfil" (Mat. v. 17). Into this simple utterance our essayist reads the sinless perfection of the teacher. All previous teachers had confessed and mourned over their sinfulness, had failed to realise the ideal they held before the people; but Jesus lived up to his teaching, or realised the ideal. Surely that is a curious interpretation to put upon the word *fulfil*. On the lips of a teacher *to fulfil* would mean to make full or complete, the opposite of *to destroy*. The only legitimate inference from the passage is that Jesus did not intend to break with Judaism, that He was not an iconoclast in relation to the past, or that it was not his purpose to fling out a new ideal of life. The Kingdom of God which He preached was in no sense a new kingdom. Its constituent elements, righteousness, peace, and joy, had been proclaimed by both the law and the prophets; and in the synoptic Gospels Jesus is not represented as being anything more than a preacher of such a kingdom. Referring to the summary of the law and the prophets which He is said to have given, Dr. Moinet observes: "His words imply that He was more than either a prophet or a legislator." Did it require a supernatural Being to say that love was the greatest thing in the world? Why, it was in the law and the prophets that Jesus found his summary. And yet Dr. Moinet asks this question: "Was not He who said, I am come to fulfil, conscious of being something different from any man who ever had been, or who ever would be?"

Another saying of Jesus chosen by the essayist is this: "The Son of man came to seek and to save that which was lost" (Luke xix. 10). Concerning the title, the Son of man, Dr. Moinet asks, "Is it descriptive of the holder of an office, viz.: the Messianic, or is it descriptive of the nature and character of him whom it designates?" His answer is, "Probably it is both." But what if probably it is neither? In the Old Testament and the Apocrypha it is repeatedly used as a synonym of man. Consult such passages as the following: Numbers liii. 19; Is. li. 12; lvi. 9; Jeremiah xlix. 18; l. 40; li. 43;

Psalms viii. 5; lxxx. 18; cxlvi. 2; Job xvi. 21; xxv. 6; xxxv. 8. Such is the meaning of the term in Hebrew literature. It is employed in a poetic sense. The only exceptions are in Ezekiel and Daniel. In Aramaic also the term is very frequently used as a synonym of man. In Greek, of course, it is found as the translation of the Aramaic, and the natural inference is that Jesus could not have used it as a self-designation; and modern scholars deny the authenticity of the passages in which it so occurs. Then there are innumerable conflicting theories as to the sense in which the title, if ever appropriated by Jesus, should be understood. In spite of all this Dr. Moinet has the audacity to say: "In any case it expresses a unique relation to the race." Critically such a sentence is utterly condemned, however valuable it may be theologically.

Equally unwarrantable is Dr. Moinet's interpretation of the term *lost*. Evidently Zacchaeus was lost until he came into contact with Jesus. He was lost in that he had done wrong, and he was saved when he repented and turned over a new leaf. According to Luke, Jesus was specially attracted to the publicans and sinners. Wherever He went they crowded round him and heard him gladly. Now the three parables, the lost sheep, the lost piece of money, and the lost son, were spoken in justification of his attitude towards people who were looked down upon and despised, justly or unjustly. It was his nature to compassionate and help the downtrodden, whether sinful or not, just as it was the nature of Wilberforce to work for the emancipation of the slaves. But there was nothing in that to indicate that Jesus was more than man: He would have been less than man had He been otherwise inclined. The object of the three parables is to show that the finding of the lost always affords deep joy to the owner. So likewise the finding of lost men fills God's heart with delight. Therefore God was on Jesus' side, and not on that of the Pharisees and the Scribes. "Jesus did not look upon himself as the absolutely perfect man," says Professor Schmidt, of Cornell University, and it is certain that, according to the synoptic Gospels, He did not regard himself as God. Dr. Moinet draws a very pathetic picture of the sins and sufferings and sorrows of the world, of the "masses who have sunk or plunged themselves into the abyss of self-indulgence, who think of nothing but to eat and drink, and satisfy their animal appetites," of the "millions who are born and die in the darkness of ignorance and superstition, whose lives have no horizon, and who are the mere drudges of hunger and thirst," and of the "vast and infinite waste of humanity that fulfils no purpose worthy of itself." "And who had ever thought of this, except to stagger under the thought, or dismiss it as the burden of an insoluble problem? But here is One who declares He has come to solve it." But judging by the synoptic Gospels Jesus never declared such a thing. He merely said that the supreme object of his life was to seek and to save the lost, and that He wished his disciples to be afire with the same noble ambition. He never once defined the meaning of the word "lost," only the people He sought were the publicans and sinners.

Another saying of Jesus examined by Dr. Moinet reads thus: "The Son of man is not come to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many." On the assumption that these words are genuine, it is only a hypothesis that they refer to death. To give one's life is not necessarily to part with it. A man may give his life to some great mission, he may lose it in the service of the community, and he may even sacrifice it in the interest of the mission. Death may be the ransom he will have to pay for devoting himself to the welfare of others. Dr. Moinet, however, finds in these words the orthodox doctrine of the Atonement, and a positive proof of the divinity of Christ. He says that Jesus knew beforehand that his death would be a ransom for the race, that He would die as a propitiation for the sins of the world. Here Dr. Moinet attributes his own theory of the Atonement to Jesus

himself, well knowing that there are many other theories in existence, and that each of them claims to be a fair deduction from the words of Jesus.

The inference drawn from the sayings thus considered is that Jesus was conscious of being more than human. He knew He was God wearing a veil of flesh. He had entered *into* the race from above, and while in it He was separate from it. His disciples have just been singing throughout Christendom:—

“Late in time behold him come,
Offspring of a Virgin's womb,
Veiled in flesh the Godhead see!
Hail, the incarnate Deity!
Pleased as man with man to dwell.”

What I contend is that there is nothing in the first three Gospels to justify such an inference. Apart from the birth stories at the beginning of Matthew and Luke, Jesus is invariably spoken of as the son of Joseph and Mary, who by the power of God resting upon him, performs many wonderful deeds. The doctrine of his divinity has no place in these early documents. The further back we penetrate, the simpler and more natural becomes the story; but we cannot trace it to its source. We cannot find the historical Jesus anywhere. From the very first, fable and myth hide him from view. If He lived at all no one can tell what He was like. This Christmas-tide Christ is adored as God by millions of people, but the Christ of the Church is not the Jesus of history. To speak of the consciousness of a being so thickly veiled with legend is a species of impertinence.

From a theological point of view Dr. Moinet's essay appears excellent; but from the point of view of criticism it seems exceedingly faulty. To unbelievers it is wholly without meaning. To them Jesus is one of many similar creations of myth-loving people. When the myths were well developed, the philosophers came and elaborated them into dogmas which all must believe or be damned. But different schools of philosophy put different interpretations upon the myths treated as facts, and so there arose conflicting systems of theology. Each system of divinity claims to be the only permissible interpretation of the mind of Jesus. The truth, however, is that no theologian knows anything about the mind of Jesus, because Jesus and his mind are irretrievably lost. The moral teaching attributed to him was the property of the world many centuries before his day, and when He, as a supernatural person, has vanished, the ethical harvest of the ages will still remain.

J. T. LLOYD.

Bradlaugh.

ONE of the most interesting books that I have come across for a long time I acquired the other day for six shillings at an ordinary bookseller's: *Parliament Past and Present* (London: Hutchinson & Co.). The size of the book may be gathered from the statement that its contents embrace no less than 643 illustrations; and these, by the way, are of the finest, being, in fact, copies of the masterpieces having reference to the House and its members.

The Victorian Parliaments are naturally dealt with very fully, the celebrities of the time from Wellington to Salisbury being duly portrayed. I must confess to rather a nervous turning over of the pages in fear of discovering a notable omission, but I was agreeably disappointed, for—Bradlaugh is there!

The letterpress references to the member for Northampton are quite fair—I was about to say accurate; but strict accuracy appears to be impossible with any writer who deals with that strange muddle called by Bradlaugh the “Parliamentary struggle.” The editors rightly say: “Never before in the memory of the oldest member or official had such scenes taken place,” and (here is where they err) “the controversy was not finally settled until a new Parliament met, when Mr. Bradlaugh was allowed to take the oath without interruption.” As a matter of fact, the Gladstone Parliament of 1880

was superseded by the Conservative ministry of 1885, but it was not until the following Parliament (January 13, 1886) that Bradlaugh succeeded in occupying the seat, the new Speaker, Mr. Peel, refusing to allow any interference.

Turning to the illustrations, we find a splendid photograph of Bradlaugh on page 510. I should say that it must have been taken about the year '78. Sergeant-at-arms Gossett shares the page; and the next one shows the tall, broad-shouldered Secular leader in graceful, striking, commanding attitude, addressing the members from the Bar of the House. The picture, surely a notable one in the history of religious and constitutional history, revives a memory, for I think it is a reduced reproduction of a page of a contemporary *Graphic*; and it probably refers to the first of the four speeches at the Bar.

I would have given worlds, so to say, to have heard that speech. Mr. Joseph Leicester, who sat in the Parliament of '80, used to say it was Bradlaugh's finest effort; it indicated his attitude to a nicety; and whether viewed from the standpoint of dignity, of self-restraint, or of policy, it is certain that no one but Bradlaugh could have delivered it. The following passage in the speech occurs to me as I dwell on the picture. The rebuke aims at Sir Henry Tyler's reference to Mrs. Besant:—

“I have to ask indulgence lest the memory of some hard words which have been spoken in my absence should seem to give to what I say a tone of defiance, which is far from my wish should be there at all; and I am the more eased because there were words spoken which I had always been taught English gentlemen never said in the absence of an antagonist without notice to him, yet there were also generous and brave words said for one who is at present, I am afraid, a source of trouble and discomfort and hindrance to business. I measure the generous words against the others, and I will only make one appeal through you, Sir, which is, that if the reports be correct that the introduction of other names came with mine in the heat of passion and the warmth of debate, the gentleman who used those words, if such there were, will remember that he was wanting in chivalry, because, while I can answer for myself, and am able to answer for myself, nothing justified the introduction of any other name beside my own to make prejudice against me.” (Cheers, “Question!” and “Order.”)

Musing over a newspaper, meditating whether these few lines would be worth sending to the *Freethinker*, several items in the journal set up a train of thought on what might have been. Naturally, the Right Honorable John Burns' name suggested a colleague; while Mr. Labouchere's contemplated retirement from Northampton recalls his splendid services in the cause of the junior member. And, curiously enough, the same sheet reviews a book on occult chemistry by the gentle lady who is the subject of the extract from the First Speech at the Bar.

W. B.

Irrational Rationalists.

“I have learnt from experience that many false opinions may be exchanged for true ones, without in the least altering the habits of mind, of which false opinions are the result.”—JOHN STUART MILL, *Autobiography*, p. 238.

“No one can have argued against a superstition without noticing an entire insensibility to the plainest evidence when it opposes a conviction.”—GEORGE HENRY LEWES.

ONCE upon a time, as they say in the fairy tales, in a country town in the centre of England, we struck acquaintance with a gentleman who, in confidence, confessed himself to be a “reverent Agnostic,” but who thought it not inconsistent to rent a pew and take a Bible-class in the town. We used to meet occasionally, and like Heine and the Winecellar Master of Bremen—

“We spoke of high mysterious things.”

Not, of course, that our discourses were in any way to be compared with that most brilliant of scoffers.

I was once reading to him that magnificent passage in Colonel Ingersoll's *Oration on the Gods*, beginning, “In that vast cemetery called the past are

most of the religions of men, and there, too, are nearly all their gods,"—in which he passes in review the old religions and gods who are dead and gone, and points out that the religion of our day and country is no more exempt from the sneer of the future than the others have been. When I had finished, my friend heaved a sigh and said: "Don't you think it is very sad?" That remark enlightened me as to the true state of affairs more than any amount of argument could have done. I perceived that he was really sorry to see so much religion exploded, although he knew perfectly well it was all false.

It is useless to argue with such people. If you put a patch of reason over one error, they immediately break out in another place. Probably it was with the recollection of some such experiences in his mind that led Herbert Spencer to declare that "In my earlier days I constantly made the foolish supposition that conclusive proofs would change beliefs. But experience has long since dissipated my faith in men's rationality."

We all know the type of Freethinker who is always looking out for a clergyman on whom to bestow a testimonial and a benediction, while deprecating any but the mildest form of propaganda by his own party; forgetful that, as Byron wrote to Moore: "The bigots are not to be conciliated; and if they were, are they worth it?"

Then there is the Rationalist who poses as the candid friend, who gives away his case from press and platform, and has the satisfaction of seeing his remarks reproduced in the religious press, to show how Secularists are coming round to Christ, under the heading "An Infidel's Testimony to Christianity." We do not see why these gentry should escape the criticism they would justly receive if they labelled themselves Christians, simply because they wear the livery of Freethought or call themselves Rationalists. Accordingly, we propose to examine one of these "candid" effusions which appeared a few weeks ago. It runs as follows:—

"I am prepared to assert that, in some respects, it (Christianity) has been a noble and useful force in the world's evolution. I believe that Christianity developed the spirit of pity and tenderness. I have read the story of Christian religious wars and persecutions, but it does not shake my belief that, in Christian history, there appears a new spirit which I do not find in the older times. Three types of character may be cited as illustrations, two Catholic and one Protestant, namely, Saint Elizabeth of Hungary, Saint Francis of Assisi, and John Howard. I believe that Christianity has helped millions of quiet natures by its message of consolation for the interior life; such a message as is conveyed by the *Imitation of Christ*, written by a medieval monk and still read by a wide-spread Christian public. I believe that Christianity, in its best days (the twelfth and thirteenth centuries especially) did a grand work in setting up the moral power of the Church to check the brutality of the feudal and material power. I believe also that Christianity assisted the transformation of the ancient slavery into serfdom, and of serfdom into the partially emancipated proletariat of the modern age."

Far be it from us to assert that there have never been any good Christians; there are good men in every religion. No association—religious or otherwise—could hold together for long if it were composed of all bad men. There are good Buddhists, good Mohammedans, good Confucians, and so on. If Christianity had never existed there would still have been plenty of good men of benevolent and humanitarian natures during the last nineteen centuries.

John Howard is cited as a typical example of the effect of Christianity. He travelled all over Europe inspecting the prisons, devoting his life to bettering the condition of prisons and prisoners, and at last died at Kherson, on the Black Sea, of a fever contracted during the course of his benevolent labors.

People who claim that Howard's labors were the result of his Christianity, are apt to forget that the abominable state of the prisons and the terrible treatment of the prisoners reflects no credit upon Christianity considering that Christianity had been established fifteen hundred years. The prisons were

built by Christians, administered by Christians, and filled by Christians with Christians, and the result was a hell on earth. And what caused John Howard to devote his life to their amelioration? His Christianity, say the followers of that creed. Not a bit of it. The facts of the case are these: Howard—who was a wealthy man—during a voyage to Lisbon, was captured by the French and remained for some time in captivity, and it was his own bitter experience that led him to devote his life to bettering the condition of prisoners. If he had never gone through that experience his religion would never have suggested that he should devote his life to the philanthropic work in the way he did. As a matter of fact, Christianity does not lay any stress upon the amelioration of the evils of this life, it concentrates attention on the life to come. Further, when Howard's philanthropy is claimed as the result of his religion, we must point out that Howard was a tyrant in his own household. Now if his religion made him a philanthropist in relation to strangers, why did it not operate in his own home, where charity—as the old adage advises—should commence?

Then Saint Elizabeth of Hungary and Saint Francis of Assisi are held up for our admiration as types of the new spirit inculcated by Christianity. Here then, we have the very flower of Christian perfection; let us see what there is to admire.

The first exploit related of Saint Francis is that as a lad he stole one of his father's horses, loaded it with cloth from his father's warehouse, and sold the lot in a neighboring town, giving the money to a priest for religious purposes; his father, who naturally objected to this and some similar exploits, brought him to the bishop to be admonished, whereupon Francis stripped himself naked, declaring that he renounced his father and that henceforth he only recognised as his father, God in heaven; by this act renouncing all earthly possessions and earthly ties. At Gubbio he entered the hospital of lepers, washing their feet and *kissing* their ulcers. Not, be it observed, that the kissing would do them any good, but simply because being a revolting act it would be pleasing to God, thereby laying up for himself treasure in heaven. The Rev. Alban Butler,* the great authority for the lives of the Saints, tells us that "He scarce allowed his body what was necessary to sustain life, and found out every day new ways of afflicting and mortifying it." Kissing ulcers being, I suppose, one of the most efficacious, as it was certainly the most disgusting. If any part of his rough habit felt soft he sewed it with pack-thread. He used a piece of wood or stone for a bolster when he slept. Unless he was sick he rarely ate cooked food, "and when he did, he usually put ashes or water upon it; often his nourishment was only a little coarse bread, on which he sometimes strewed ashes.....He called his body little Ass, because it was to carry burdens, to be beaten, and to eat little and coarsely." In treating with women, he kept so strict a watch over his eyes that he scarcely knew any woman by sight, declaring that "To converse too frequently with women, and not suffer by it, is as hard as to take fire into one's bosom and not to be burnt." Butler also tells us that "He was endowed with an extraordinary gift of tears. His eyes seemed two fountains of tears, which were almost continually falling from them, insomuch that at length he almost lost his sight." These tears, however, were not shed for the sorrows of mankind, but for the sufferings of Christ.

If we desired to imitate the flashy, shallow, paradoxical style of Mr. Chesterton, we should say that Saint Francis was never happy unless he was miserable. It is a pity that those half-and-half Rationalists who are so enamored of Saint Francis cannot have the opportunity of living with him for a few months and sharing his meals. The first week would take the edge off their enthusiasm.

He made a vow never to refuse alms to any

* *The Lives of the Fathers, Martyrs, and other Principal Saints.* We are taking all our particulars of the lives of Saint Francis and Saint Elizabeth from this highly orthodox Roman Catholic work.

beggar who asked it in "God's name." If the beggar asked an alms in the name of common humanity, he got nothing; Francis evidently believing that God made a mental note of each transaction for future reference. This was what Lecky has stigmatised as "selfish charity," where "men gave money to the poor, simply and exclusively for their own spiritual benefit, and the welfare of the sufferer was altogether foreign to their thoughts." A practice which gave rise to a multitude of impostors and mendicants, "and," continues Lecky, "after the mendicant orders had consecrated mendicancy, the evil assumed gigantic dimensions." Francis, who first started the mendicant orders and set the example must, in so far, be held responsible for the resulting evils. "The poverty they have relieved," says Lecky, "has been insignificant compared with the poverty they have caused."*

Milman says, "Whether Francis would have burned heretics, happily we know not, but he would willingly have been burned for them."†

Yes, to suffer was his chief aim in life. When he was told that it was necessary for him to be operated upon with a searing iron—to save his eyesight—he was greatly pleased, on the ground that the more suffering here, the greater the reward in the future life. To suffer martyrdom would have crowned his greatest ambition; as the martyrs—so the Church taught—occupied the place of honor in the next world.

But whether Francis would have burned heretics or not, it is perfectly certain that he did not object to their being killed, for it was in 1207 that Pope Innocent preached the crusade against the heretic Albigensians; a crusade, says Milman, where never was war waged with such "implacable hatred, and pitiless cruelty played a greater part." In 1209, at the very time when Francis was establishing his order, the Crusaders arrived at Beziers. Inquiring of Arnold, the Papal Legate and Captain-general of the army, how they were to distinguish the Catholics from Protestants, he replied: "Kill them all; God will know his own." Seven thousand were burnt in a church, and twenty thousand massacred; and although it is recorded that Francis pronounced a malediction upon a fierce swine which had killed a young lamb, he never once raised his voice against the handing over a whole country to murder and rapine.

Again, during his lifetime the Crusades to the Holy Land were in full blast. In 1216—four years after Francis established his order—the sixth Crusade started for the Holy Land. These gentle soldiers of Christ besieged Damietta for eighteen months, and when at last they forced an entrance, ready to massacre the inhabitants, they found the city a vast charnel house. Of the seventy thousand inhabitants, only three thousand were living, the pious conquerors marching through a pestilential vapor caused by the dead bodies which cumbered the streets. Yet Francis had no word of condemnation for such massacres as this.

It is noteworthy that our apologist asserts that "the twelfth and thirteenth centuries"—when these atrocities were committed—were the *best* days of Christianity. We are not disposed to dispute the statement; but what hellish days the rest must have been!

Like all the rest of the saints, Francis had a supreme contempt for knowledge. "He despised and prohibited human learning," and the only other malediction recorded of him was uttered "against a provincial who encouraged profound study at the University of Bologna."‡ This hatred of science, combined with its intolerance, have been the two great curses of Christianity; and they are an integral part of the faith.

The life of Saint Elizabeth, who is also held up for our admiration, is almost a replica of the life of Saint

Francis. "Even from her cradle," says the Rev. Alban Butler, she "was so happily prevented with the love of God that no room for creatures could be found in her heart"; as a child she "in her very recreations studied to practise frequent humiliations and self-denials"; she had a "perfect contempt of all earthly things," "esteeming the vanity of the world as filth and dung." She used a prayer commencing "O sovereign Spouse of my soul, never suffer me to love anything but in Thee, or for Thee. May everything which tends not to Thee be bitter and painful, and Thy will alone sweet." Like Francis, she highly approved of the Crusades, sending her husband to accompany the Emperor Barbarossa to Palestine in 1227—this ambition, however, being frustrated by a malignant fever contracted on the way, and of which, says Butler, he "expired in great sentiments of piety" when about to embark at Otranto.

She exhausted the revenues of the country on beggars and mendicants, and died at the early age of twenty-four, worn out, like Francis, by asceticism and privation.

Then we are asked to admire the "message of consolation for the interior life" conveyed by the *Imitation of Christ*. Here are a few samples taken from that work:—"He is truly wise that counteth all things as dung, that he may win Christ" (ch. iii.); "Keep thyself a stranger and pilgrim upon the earth, and as one to whom the affairs of this world do nothing appertain" (ch. xxiii.); "Thou oughtest to leave thy dear ones for the Beloved; for Jesus will be loved alone above all things" (ch. viii.). This sort of thing may appeal to the interior life of this pseudo-Rationalist, but it does not appeal to ours. We infinitely prefer the teachings of Colonel Ingersoll, that the place to be happy is here and the time now; that our affections should be given to our family and our fellow-men, not wasted upon a dead Jew who perhaps never existed.

We are asked to believe that this Christianity "did a grand work in setting up the moral power of the Church to check the brutality of the feudal and material power." Trash, sir; trash. After twelve hundred years of Christianity we find the Church urging the feudal and material power to devastate other countries who were not of the same faith. Later on this faith, which we are gravely told "developed the spirit of pity and tenderness," established the horrible Inquisition, where such infernal ingenuity in applying torture was displayed that the helpless victims shrieked for death to end their agonies.

Lastly we are told that "Christianity assisted the transformation of the ancient slavery into serfdom, and of serfdom into the partially emancipated proletariat of the modern age."

This is mere pulpit rhetoric. Slavery was condemned by the later Pagan moralists, especially by the Stoics. Renan says "It was to the slaves especially that Antoninus and Marcus Aurelius showed themselves beneficent. Some of the greatest monstrosities of slavery were corrected." He points out that—

"People placed humanity against the rigor of the law, often against the letter of the Statute. In point of fact, from the time of Antoninus, the jurisconsultate, imbued with Stoicism, considered slavery as a violation of the rights of nature, and were inclined to restrict it. Enfranchisement was favored in every way."*

On the other hand, as he says, "The idea never came to the Christian doctors to protest against the established fact of slavery.....The rights of men were not in any way a Christian affair. St. Paul completely recognised the legitimacy of the masters' position. No word occurs in all the ancient Christian literature to preach revolt to the slave, nor to advise the master to manumission." They declared that "For the few hours that life lasts, what matters the condition of man?"† Under the first Christian emperor, Constantine, as a matter of fact, says

* *History of European Morals*, vol. ii., p. 94.

† *History of Latin Christianity*, vol. vi., p. 34.

‡ Milman, *History of Latin Christianity*, vol. vi., p. 43.

* *Marcus Aurelius*, p. 16.

† *Ibid*, p. 347.

Renan, "the favor of liberty appeared to retrograde. If the movement which dates from the Antonines had continued in the second half of the third century, and in the fourth century, the suppression of slavery would have come about as a legal measure and by redemption money."

So that the truth is that Christianity, so far from assisting in the liberation of the slaves, really retarded the movement for several hundred years; and Lecky—who is by no means unfriendly to the claims of Christianity in this connection—admits that slavery lasted in Europe for about eight hundred years after Constantine, and that "the number of men who were subject to it was probably greater than in the Pagan Empire."*

In our own West Indies slavery has been abolished during comparatively recent times, and then not by the slave-owners discovering that slavery was incompatible with Christianity, but by the payment by this country of twenty million pounds for their liberation. In America, negro slavery assumed gigantic proportions, accompanied by barbarities unmatched even in the worst days of Paganism, and was only abolished after a bloody war in which six hundred thousand lives were sacrificed, at a cost of eighteen hundred millions sterling; and then the Christians were only following in the footsteps of "Infidel France," for, as Professor Newman observes, "the first public act against slavery came from republican France, in the madness of atheistic enthusiasm."†

Christianity has not "been a noble and useful force in the world's evolution." It has not "developed the spirit of pity and tenderness." It did not "check the brutality of the feudal ages." It did nothing to mitigate slavery. It persecuted without pity and without remorse to the utmost extent of its power. It cursed and tried its utmost to stifle science. Genuine Christianity is opposed to all civilisation; for Christianity teaches that this life is worthless, that our thoughts should be centred upon the eternal life to come. "The Cross," says Nietzsche, has been "the rallying sign for the most subterranean conspiracy that has ever existed,—against healthiness, beauty, well-constitutedness, courage, intellect, *benevolence* of soul, *against life itself*." When we look upon that river of blood and tears called Christian history, we feel that throb of burning indignation which inspired Nietzsche when he wrote at the conclusion of *The Antichrist*: "This eternal accusation of Christianity I shall write on all walls, wherever there are walls,—I have letters for making even the blind see. I call Christianity the one great curse, the one great intrinsic depravity, the one great instinct of revenge for which no expedient is sufficiently poisonous, secret, subterranean, *mean*,—I call it the one immortal blemish of mankind."

W. MANN.

Acid Drops.

A correspondent sends us the *Grand Magazine* containing Sir Frederick Treves's article on "Is Disease a Blessing?" and ask us to reply to it. We have read the article, which contains nothing particularly new, and we do not see what there is to answer. No doubt it will set some half-witted religious people rubbing their hands with joy. But what does it come to? Sir Frederick Treves argues that disease is a blessing in disguise, that "its motive is benevolent and protective," that "without it the human race would soon be extinct," and that—in his concluding words—"the workings of Nature are not quite so ill-intending as we are often disposed to consider them to be." Now it is evident that this is a purely medical article except so far as the introduction of the teleological expressions of "blessing," "benevolent," and "intending" give it a twist in a religious direction. Various attacks are made upon the human organism by hostile microbes, and what is popularly called "disease" is the effort to defeat them. When a man coughs, for instance, he gets rid of mischievous matter. Therefore a cough is a

blessing—and a bad cough, we suppose, is a great blessing. Well, in a certain sense the cough *is* a blessing. It is a blessing relatively. The patient would be worse if he could not cough away the encumbrance. But obviously this only shifts the argument a step farther back. Absolutely speaking, the curse is not the cough but the microbes whose action necessitates it. Here is the point at which the religionists and the sceptics have to join issue. All that Sir Frederick Treves really does is to indicate the point. He does not decide the battle. He does not even take part in it.

Let us show what Sir Frederick Treves's contention really comes to by changing—though not essentially—the ground of the illustration. Instead of a human organism being attacked by hostile microbes and defended by the leucocytes, or white corpuscles, of the blood,—we will take the case of an invaded territory. Hostile troops swarm into it, native troops defend it, and the result is social disease in the shape of various miseries to the inhabitants—miseries ranging from unsettlement up to bereavement, destitution, and death. Now a gentleman comes along and argues that all these miseries are blessings in disguise. They are the result of the country's efforts to repel invasion. Things would be still worse if the country were conquered. True. And the upshot is simply this, and nothing more; namely, that one evil may be less than another, and may therefore be preferred to it. But this is an immemorial commonplace of human experience. And how on earth does it help to prove the goodness of God?

According to a well-known newspaper, Mr. George Herring, who has placed £100,000 at the disposal of General Booth, and who might as well have thrown the cash into the streets, made his money in the first place as a Turf commission agent and afterwards on the Stock Exchange. Both the making of the money and its expenditure are a part of the disease of our "Christian civilisation." After all, the great thing to be done, as Mr. John Davidson the poet is now saying, is to get rid of Christendom altogether.

Our correspondent "F. S.," having been abroad for some time, sends us an important and interesting article he met with in a newspaper during his travels. The newspaper is the *Egyptian Gazette* and the article is headed "The Dangers of Proselytising." Something like a riot occurred in Cairo in consequence of the zeal of Protestant missionaries, and the *Gazette* remarked that: "This sort of thing wants nipping in the bud, otherwise we may hear before long of bloodshed in connection with the missionary work, and stringent regulations being needed in the future to prevent its recurrence." The worst sinners appear to be the American societies, and the *Gazette* hints that "a strong check will have to be placed upon their proceedings." And if they complain of native bigotry they are reminded of the rumpus caused in England by General Booth and the Salvation Army, although they were Protestants among Protestants.

In the course of the *Gazette* article reference is made to the means used to obtain support for missionary societies from (in General Tulloch's words) "the kind-hearted old ladies at home who so liberally subscribe to the conversion of the poor benighted heathen who bow down to stocks and stone." Of course there are no such "benighted heathen" in Mohammedan countries, where the sternest Monotheism prevails, and where the Roman Catholic worship of the Virgin Mary and a host of male and female saints would be looked upon with disgust as blasphemous idolatry.

A striking extract is printed in the *Gazette* article from a Cairo missionary report for 1904. "Tangible spiritual results," it is confessed, "are few indeed, and were these our only guarantee of success, and were it not for the knowledge that results are in higher hands, it would be truly hard, having put one's hand to the plough, not to look back." Such is the pious humbug by which the subscribers are kept subscribing in the absence of converts. A sensible person would say at once that if the "results are in higher hands" the missionaries should leave them there, and go home to their own countries immediately.

Another extract is from "a statement by a medical missionary working among the mountains of North India." "I have been at work now," he says, "for fifteen years. I do not believe I have made one sincere convert, but I have operated for stone on over a thousand natives." Comment would only spoil this delicious confession—which ought to be printed in big gold letters and hung over the platform at Exeter Hall when missionary meetings are in full swing.

* *European Morals*, vol. ii., p. 70.

† *Phases of Faith*, p. 108.

Mr. Foote's Engagements.

Sunday, December 31, Secular Hall, Humberstone-gate, Leicester; 6.30 p.m., "What Has Christianity Done For Russia?" Admission free.

January 21, Glasgow.

To Correspondents.

J. SMITH.—Thanks for cuttings.

H. G. CHURCH (New York).—Your postcard reminds us of our visit to America in 1896—just ten years ago. How the time flies! Accept our thanks for all your good wishes.

W. J. LIVINGSTONE ANDERSON.—We find it impossible to criticise the case without full details. It all depends on *what* the old man's offence was. This is not stated.

E. ANDERSON.—We shall return to the matter, and shall probably refer to your letter then.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Sugar Plums.

Owing to the Christmas holidays this number of the *Freethinker* had really to be prepared for the press last week. That is why there is a failure in some of the customary features of the *Freethinker*. It was no use printing a lot of behind-date "Acid Drops" and the material for "Sugar Plums" was naturally lacking. We hope to compensate for all this in our next (New Year's) number.

Mr. Foote pays his annual visit to Leicester to-day and lectures in the Secular Hall on "What has Christianity done for Russia?" People had to be turned away from the doors the last time Mr. Foote lectured there. Those who want to make sure of a seat this time should go early.

This is the last time but one that we shall be able to call attention to the London Freethinkers' Annual Dinner at the Holborn Restaurant on Tuesday evening, January 9. We hope there will be a big rally of metropolitan "saints" on that occasion. There are many reasons why there should be. One reason is that it naturally helps to encourage the President and his colleagues in their hard and difficult work. This is a thing which is too apt to be forgotten, so we ask the "saints" to bear it in mind. Mr. Foote will preside at the dinner, and will be supported by Mr. Cohen, Mr. Lloyd, Mr. Davies, Mr. Roger, and other well-known Freethinkers. Miss Vance, as secretary, will of course have her hands full of business. The dinner itself is sure to be a good one; and, in addition to a few brief speeches to toasts, there will be some good vocal and instrumental music. The price of the tickets is only four shillings.

The Liverpool Branch has Mr. Joseph McCabe lecturing for it to-day at the Alexandra Hall. His subjects are fresh and attractive, and we hope he will have first-rate meetings. Mr. McCabe was once a Catholic monk; he is now known

as the English translator of Haeckel. He is a man of great ability and many accomplishments. Readers of the *Freethinker* in Liverpool and the neighborhood should all go to hear him.

Some time ago we announced that Mr. Horace Parsons had forwarded the Birmingham Branch a cheque for £10, immediately after Mr. Foote's meetings in the Town Hall, as his protest against the bigotry with which the Branch had been treated by the "authorities." What really happened, we understand, was this. Mr. Parsons informed the Secretary that he would pay all the local expenses of the Town Hall meetings himself, in the hope that other friends of Secularism might be induced to follow his example. His cheque for £10 was on account of this promise. He has since paid the balance of those expenses to the last farthing. Mr. Parsons has hit upon a capital idea. We should like to hear of similar help being given to Branches in other parts of the country.

Many of our readers may like to hear more of Mr. R. J. Derfel, whose death was announced in our last issue. We reproduce the following from the *Manchester Guardian*:—"The Welsh community in Manchester lost an interesting personality, and the cause of Socialism an advocate of rare industry and devotion, by the death on Saturday in this city of Mr. R. J. Derfel, at the age of 81. Mr. Derfel was born at Llandderfel, a Merionethshire village, on July 24, 1824, and at an early age came to Manchester to seek his fortune. He represented a city firm in the North Wales district for some years, but his interests being literary rather than commercial he invested his savings in a bookselling business, with a large department devoted to Welsh publications. He also took up printing and publishing, but in neither branch was he very successful. In his earlier years he competed at the Welsh Eisteddfod and won several prizes for odes, one of which was on 'Kossuth, the Hungarian Patriot.' At one time he was a preacher with the Baptists, but by degrees he became an Agnostic, and this to some extent created a bar between him and his fellow-countrymen. Henceforth he gave up his time and sacrificed his own financial interests in advocating Socialism as a remedy for poverty and many other ills. His advocacy took the form of songs and essays, and for a man of his means and opportunities his output was astonishingly large. He wrote and published no fewer than 800 songs in Welsh on different subjects and about 500 in English. The more important of his works were a series of letters on 'The Pope's Encyclical and Socialism'; 'An Unauthorised Programme, showing how to abolish poverty without doing injustice to anyone or leaving a feeling of wrong behind'; several volumes of collected letters and essays on social topics; and tracts on 'Right Methods in Teaching Socialism' and 'Common Misconceptions.' His autobiography was in course of publication by a Welsh labor organ, *The Labor Voice*, and had been completed all but three chapters. Only on Thursday last he wrote to a friend from his sick room expressing a hope that he would be spared to complete the work. Mr. Derfel was much respected by the few who knew him well for his unselfish qualities and high character."

Man's dread of fire has been artfully seized upon by the priests. All over the world these gentlemen are in the same line of business—trading upon the credulous terrors of the multitude. They fill hell with fire, because it frightens men easily, and the fuel costs nothing. If they had to find the fuel themselves Hell would be cold in twenty-four hours. "Flee from the wrath to come," they exclaim. "What is it?" ask the people. "Consuming fire," the priests exclaim, "nay, not consuming; you will burn in it without dying, without losing a particle of flesh, for ever and ever." Then the people want to get saved, and the priests issue insurance policies, which are rendered void by change of opinion or failure to pay the premium.

There is an old story of a man who was plagued by the Devil. The fiend was always dropping in at inconvenient times, and making the poor fellow's life a hell on earth. He sprinkled holy water on the floor, but by-and-bye the "old 'un" hopped about successfully on the dry spots. He flung things at him, but all in vain. At last he resolved on desperate measures. He plucked up his courage, looked the Devil straight in the face, and laughed at him. That ended the battle. The Devil could not stand laughter. He fled that moment and never returned.

The Book of the Acts.—V.

ITS UNAUTHENTIC AND UNHISTORICAL CHARACTER.

(Continued from p. 828.)

HAVING duly considered all that has been advanced in support of the authenticity and credibility of the Acts according to the traditional view, I proceed now to an examination of the book from a more rational point of view. And the first matter that demands attention is the authorship of the work. That the Third Gospel and the Acts were written by one named Lucanus or Lucas may be set down as certain; for it is obvious that when this Third Gospel first made its appearance the name of the compiler was known, and his name would from that time be used to distinguish it from several other Gospels then in circulation (Luke i. 1). There would, in fact, be no way of getting rid of the compiler's name; for the book would be handed down from generation to generation as the Gospel "according to" Luke. Had the name of the writer *not* been known, then, beyond the shadow of a doubt, the authorship would have been ascribed to Peter or James, or some other apostle. The only thing that later generations could do to give the compilation apostolic origin and sanction was to identify the writer with the Luke named in Col. iv. 14, Philemon 24, and 2 Tim. iv. 11—and this, as we know, they did do. Thus, the writer of the Acts became a fellow laborer of Paul.

Now, we have seen that this writer has stated by implication in the Preface to his Gospel that he did not live in apostolic times; that the legends he has recorded had been handed down to his time. We know also, that the first three Gospels—the Synoptics—are not original documents, but are merely revised copies of an earlier Gospel. The statement of Irenæus that Mark wrote his Gospel from the preaching of Peter, and Luke from the preaching of Paul is pure nonsense. So likewise, is the apologetic contention that the book of the Acts was written by a companion of Paul.

Again, when we come to examine the contents of the Acts we find that the book is made up of three parts which bear evidence of having been taken from three different documents. The first part narrates the doings of Peter and some of the other apostles connected with the church at Jerusalem. The second part relates the missionary journeys of Paul, narrated in the third person—Paul and his colleagues being spoken of as "they" and "them." The third part consists of a portion of the travels of Paul describing journeys by water, dovetailed within the other, but written in the first person—the writer employing the terms "we" and "us."

According to the traditional view, the whole book of the Acts is an original document, composed by a companion of Paul, who accompanied that apostle in those portions of his journeys written in the first person. Having been present on those particular occasions, the writer, it is said, naturally spoke of Paul and his party as "we" and "us." Now this view, when all is said, is nothing more than a theory, and it is one without a scrap of evidence that can be called to support it. This theory is further shown to be false by the Preamble to Luke's Gospel. Under these circumstances I make no apology for propounding another.

The Book of the Acts, then, is a compilation made from three older documents, Luke being merely the second century editor. We know from occasional references by early Christian writers that amongst the apocryphal writings in circulation in the second century (but not now extant) were books professing to record the Acts of Peter, the Preaching of Peter, the Acts of Paul, the Travels of Paul, the Travels of Peter and Paul, and several others. Luke's work was simply that of taking three of these veracious histories, revising and re-writing them, and forming them into one continuous narrative—our present Acts of the Apostles. The first of these apocryphal histories was one recording the preaching and acts

of Peter, which doubtless narrated most of the events now contained in Acts i.-xii. It will be noticed that in this portion of the Acts we have an account of a persecutor named Saul, who is miraculously converted to Christianity, and then is heard of no more. The second apocryphal work was one relating the acts and travels of Paul, from which probably were derived all the events narrated in the third person that are now recorded in Acts xiii.-xxviii. In the first of these chapters (xiii. 9) Luke has taken the liberty of identifying the Apostle of the Gentiles, Paul, with the persecutor Saul of the other history. The third apocryphal writing was one which professed to relate the travels of Peter and Paul. This is the portion of the Acts narrated in the first person, in which the writer employs the pronouns "we" and "us." And it is to this portion—which all critical scholars allege to have been written by a companion of Paul—that I now desire to draw the reader's attention.

Now, as I have had occasion already to remark, when the writer in this third narrative uses the terms "we" and "us," he does not refer to himself and Paul, or to himself and Paul's colleagues, as our orthodox critics contend; he employs those pronouns to designate himself and a companion or himself and several companions, who were quite distinct from the Pauline party. This will be seen by the following passages:—

Acts xvi. 17.—"a certain maid.....the same following after Paul *and us* cried out saying"—

Acts xx. 4-5.—"And there accompanied Paul..... Sopater of Berea.....and Aristarchus and Secundus, and Gaius of Derbe, and Timothy.....and Tychicus and Trophimus. But these had gone before, and were waiting for *us* at Troas."

Acts xx. 13-14.—"But *we*, going before to the ship, set sail for Assos, there intending to take in Paul..... And when he met *us* at Assos, *we* took him in, and came to Mitylene."

Acts xxi. 17-18.—"And when *we* were come to Jerusalem, the brethren received *us* gladly. And the day following Paul went in with *us* unto James; and all the elders were present."

Now those who give the subject a moment's consideration will see from the foregoing passages that the writer was not a fellow laborer of Paul nor even one of Paul's party. When he says "we" he refers to himself and his own party, who sometimes met and accompanied the Pauline party, but held a higher position and were quite independent of that party. In the second and third of the passages quoted Paul and seven companions leave Philippi and proceed to Troas, where they wait for the "we" writer and his colleagues. The latter party then set sail for Assos, and there wait for the Pauline party. In the last passage the two parties travel together to Jerusalem, and on their arrival the "we" party, who are known to the apostles in that city, are immediately welcomed by the brethren and "received gladly"; while poor Paul, who is unknown to the apostolic party in Jerusalem, had to wait until the next day to be admitted into the presence of the apostles, and was then introduced by the "we" travellers to the president James. It thus becomes clearly evident that the "we" party consisted of two or more of the apostles, say Peter and his brother Andrew, or Peter and some Jewish colleagues.

We know from the most authentic of the Pauline Epistles that Peter and Paul were the leaders of two antagonistic sects, and that they certainly never went about preaching together; yet in one of the works of fiction in circulation in the second century they were represented as doing so, and such was the general belief of that period. Thus, Dionysius, Bishop of Corinth (A.D. 170) writing to the Bishop of Rome, says of Peter and Paul: "These two apostles, indeed, came into our Corinth, and taught us in common, then sailed together towards Italy, to teach there in concert, and to suffer martyrdom about the same time" (Eusebius. Eccl. Hist. ii. 25). Here we have the journey by water which terminated at Rome, in the account of which the pronouns "we" and "us" appear. Peter was the narrator, and recounted his

travels accompanied by some of his own party, in the course of which he met Paul and his co-workers, with whom he kept in touch until they reached Rome. This account, or a portion of it, Luke has inserted within the longer narrative of the journeys of Paul, and Peter being the narrator his name, of course, would not appear.

Lastly, with regard to the "we" narratives in the Acts, it has never been explained, why this writer accompanied Paul in these portions of his travels only, or why, upon reaching Philippi, he left Paul, and did not meet that apostle again until five years later—and then at the same city at which he had formerly parted from him. Now, if it be as I have suggested, that this part of the Acts has been taken from another history—say, the Travels of Peter and Paul, in which Peter was represented as the historian—the narrative of events in the first person is at once accounted for. And this theory is further shown to be correct by the fact that the first two portions of the "we" narratives, though separated in the Acts by several chapters, will be seen when placed together to be continuous; so that the writer did not take leave of Paul at Philippi at all. He did not share that apostle's imprisonment in this city, and so could not in describing the incidents that occurred there employ the terms "we" and "us"; but after Paul's release and departure, he left Philippi and joined the Pauline party at Troas.

The places visited in the "we" narratives are the following:—

Acts xvi. 9-40.—Troas, Samothrace, Neapolis, Philippi.
Acts xx. 4—xxi. 19.—Philippi, Troas, Assos.....
Cæsarea, Jerusalem.

Acts xxvii. 1—xxviii. 16.—Cæsarea.....Rome.

The end of the first "we" narrative and the beginning of the second, when joined together, read as follows:—

Acts xvi. 40; xx. 4-6.—"And they [*i.e.*, Paul and Silas] went out of the prison.....and when they had seen the brethren, they comforted them, and departed. And there accompanied Paul as far as Asia Sopater..... and Aristarchus and Secundus, and Gaius of Derbe, and Timothy.....and Tychicus and Trophimus. But these had gone before, and were waiting for *us* at Troas. And *we* sailed away from Philippi after the days of unleavened bread, and came unto them [Paul and his companions] to Troas."

From the last sentence it would appear that the "we" or Jewish party remained at Philippi during the Passover week, and doubtless celebrated the feast with the orthodox Jews of that city, as did the apostolic party at Jerusalem. Paul's colleagues and converts were Gentile Christians and kept no Jewish festivals.

Similarly, if it be borne in mind that the "we" writer and his companions suffered no arrest at Jerusalem and no imprisonment at Cæsarea, and that this writer in relating briefly the apprehension of Paul and his appeal to Cæsar (as implied in the story) would have to write this portion in the third person, then, taking these circumstances into account, the second and third portions of the "we" narrative will also be found to be continuous.

ABRACADABRA.

(To be continued.)

Christian Insignificance.

THE whole of Christian thought, though affecting humility, is an outrageous glorification of the individual. Everything centres round the supernaturalist's little self. The infinite universe was created that he might use it as a stage to fume and fret away his little breath upon. His omnipotent god must take human form and actually commit suicide on two crossed sticks to snatch him as a brand from the burning. His god must specially interfere with his own fixed eternal laws to aid the beseecher. An upward cast of the eye is sufficient perhaps to disturb the laws of gravitation. His god must critically

watch and tenderly care for all his little ways. The puny breath of this human ant is to be eternally prolonged in another world because he shrinks from the grave. In one way or another, the whole infinite and eternal universe has been especially designed and called into being for the particular benefit and peculiar welfare of Tom Brown, Methodist, or Jack Robinson, Catholic.

As a matter of fact, Nature gives him no ground for such fond reveries, and only a slight acquaintance with her methods would severely discourage such sickly effeminacy. At the outset, he is ushered into the world unasked and unwarned. When he gets here he soon finds he is born without a silver spoon in his mouth. He is as helpless as a kitten, and has to rely upon the tender mercies of a Christian environment to survive. If during the first few years he can escape the awful dragon of infant mortality, perhaps he does well, and perhaps he does not. As he grows older Nature forces it on him that she is a ruler, a stern ruler, by general laws without the least exception; and he begins to experience, to his individual cost, that Nature deals with mankind in the mass and pampers none. For instance, the same sanitary laws are for one and all, and if the individual will not heed them instead of calling to a ghost for help, he pays the penalty of his ignorance; there is disease for him and his grave is soon filled and he can test his dream of the next world sooner than he wished. Also, there are moral laws for the good of the mass; let the individual try to kick over the traces, the result is the same as before.

Still later in life, the same individual manages to fall in love. This is pleasant for a time, and he is apt to congratulate himself. But it is always premature, for the outcome is as a rule the care of a wife, and, if he is foolish, a numerous progeny. He discovers when the illusion has vanished that this move was a good one for the race, but converts the individual into a packhorse for the good of others. Then there is Nature's general method in the inorganic world, where she makes a fine theatrical display of tempests, fires, earthquakes, volcanoes and other showy articles. If the individual gets in the way of these incidents, so much the worse for him. The natural forces take no more notice of him than if he did not exist; less indeed than an elephant does of a worm in its path. The husband may adore his wife, the darling of his heart during the honeymoon and the steamship trip to Margate, but if she falls into the water, its asphyxiating qualities will not heed his agony one iota. The mother may shriek, and keep on shrieking for her child the sweetest and loveliest creature that ever lived, but if the child is in the burning house, the flames will be remorseless. An architectural genius may have spent the best and brightest years of his life on the construction of some magnificent and sublime ideal of his that is more to him than his very heart's blood; nevertheless, if the callous earthquake comes, it falls a horrible and desolating ruin. Whoso sleeps in the crater of a volcano or at the foot of the burning mount, need not think that the fiery lavas will turn aside the least fraction of an inch from their law-determined course because he happens to be in the way. Nature does general work, and the individual as such is utterly unnoticed and unheeded.

It is the scientific truth that the individual only exists as a means of perpetuating and perfecting the species; with Nature it is the species that counts and not the individual. The very details of his birth, marriage and grave are settled for the individual with reference to their bearing on the race and because of their value, not to the individual himself, but to the species. Even the very captivating times of courtships and honeymoons are complete traps for the individuals ensnared, but exceedingly useful for the perpetuation of the species. It will be found in the final analysis that every physical and mental characteristic we have is not for ourselves as individuals but once more for the welfare of the race. The whole of our character, physical and mental, has been brought about by the evolution of the species in

the past; we continue from our parents the evolved products in ourselves, and really have them to pass them on to our prosperity intact, nay bettered; in truth, we are the heirs of all the past and the trustees of all the future, and are important only as representative of the race. In our individual aspect, we have little significance. In each generation innumerable variations of individuals take place, but the vast majority are ruthlessly crushed out in the struggle for existence, involving untold disappointment, pain, misery and a plentiful supply of fodder into the insatiable maw of the grave. This wholesale, and for the individual, murderous process being one for the perfecting of the species by the continual survival and repetition of the fittest. The individuals only come out of the struggle at the cost of great exertion and pain, and just by the skin of their teeth; and are only conserved because they happen to be the representatives of the future species.

Thus the Christian and the scientific conception of the individual's destiny and importance are quite contradictory. Jehovah exalts the individual, Nature abases him. There is conceit and pride in the Christian's view of himself; there is true humility and usefulness in the natural view of one's individual aspect. The Christian dreams that the world is for him; the scientist knows that it is more correct to say he is for the world.

If we regard Nature's ways as the basis of truth and the rule of life, then the individual's imagination of his own wonderful importance is not warranted. It is an illusion. If Nature treats us as insignificant in comparison with the race, then to be in line with Her the Christian should regard himself in the same light, and put the earthly welfare of the race before his selfish soul-salvation. If Nature favors the species at the individual's expense, then to be in line with Her the Christian must be willing to favor humanity at his own individual expense; and if he adopted this position he would soon see that he was indeed altruistic and carrying out the highest morality. But I am afraid this is far too much for the soul-saver: he may prate indeed about "living unto others," but he is utterly incapable and unwilling to follow Nature's road to that end; and, of course, there is no other.

Christians are fond of pretending that the scientific view of the world is disastrously immoral. But if, as we have just shown, that to be in line with Nature the Christian must live for the welfare of the race at the expense of his own individuality when necessary, he will find that this would necessitate on his part heroism, which is the greatest deed of morality, for it is the subordination of one's individuality for the good of the greater world around us. Now the Christian view is just the very reverse of all this. "What shall it profit a man if he gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?" is his self-centred thought. With him Number One always comes first, either in this world or the next. He is overcome either with worldliness in the bad sense here or "other-worldliness" in a worse sense there, and he is often the victim of both. The bloated and exaggerated importance he gives to his own individuality leads him to evolve from his inner consciousness extravagant schemes of individual redemption in the next world for a minority, which, of course, will include for certain his own precious soul; and to get at this selfish position he does not mind conniving at the wholesale damnation of the majority. The same idea of individual salvation leads him likewise in this world to individualistic institutions of every kind, and their consequent cut-throat competitions, resulting in the wholesale damnation of poverty for the majority and the economic salvation of monopolised wealth for an unscrupulous minority. Their spiritual heaven and hell is but a reflex of their sordid heaven and hell below. The whole position is the logical outcome of the overdone importance of the Christian in his own disordered and unscientific imagination.

It is necessary to teach the Christian the necessity of minimising this morbid individualism that riots

in distempered visions of impossible heavens and hells, Jehovahs and Christs, all ministering to his inordinate self-conceit. These follies enthrall him and yet destroy him like a lascivious dream. He is the pitiable victim of a disordered pride and knows not his utter insignificance as an individual in the general scheme of things. His only value, if he would realise it, is to know that he is the necessary part of a greater whole, and is only important if he recognises the greater importance of that whole above the concerns of his own little self when they are antagonistic, and that soul-salvation is horribly antagonistic to the natural welfare of man. Let him cultivate a wider view of himself, attach himself to more general interests. Let him put his faith in self-diffusion rather than in self-contraction, and find happiness in absolutely identifying himself with the welfare of the race here below. The progress of science and mechanical invention is knitting the whole world into one vast organism with identical interests, and the pressure of all this must ultimately drive the supernaturalists out of their individualistic consciousness into a common consciousness of mankind, all having a common aim to be attained by common effort or co-operation. And this aim, when science is completely realised, can be nothing else but an Earthly Paradise.

CARL QUINN.

Cæsar's Empire.

WHAT subtle mysteries lurk in forms of law;
What compacts, villainies, and tricks of state
Are done, to bolster up a throne: as one should say,
We have an empire great as Cæsar's;
We will defend and hold it inch by inch—
And with the naked sword—against the world!
The ministers and counsellors are wise,
Who seek to win and rule by force of arms,
For what the sword has won the sword shall hold.

Alas! alas! that crime should succour crime,
In ministering to the lust of bloody war;
And that the throned tyrant, whose foul deeds
Arise, and overwhelm us with the weight,
Should stand secure behind his palace walls
With doors double-locked and windows barr'd,
While he lets loose a horde of hungry wolves
To do his bidding. These crush, despoil, and slay
The peaceful citizens engaged in trade,
The mothers, daughters, wives; and worse than worst,
Those seeds of empire, smiling prattling babes,
And unoffending innocents, needs must die
Before their time, because it is his will.

Those rude and brutal, fierce, inhuman wolves,
The hated Cossacks—ignorant of good—
Deem it a worthy cause to serve the king,
And pillage and lay waste a fertile land,
Whose soil is red with blood. Yet, ere too late,
Take heed O potent Czar! the hour draws nigh
When Fate shall pluck the crown from off thy brow,
And wrest the sceptre from thy trembling grasp;
And thou, a fallen king, wilt weep salt tears,
Dishonor'd in thy death. Remember France!
Where, on a day, a proud unhappy king
Went forth to die amid the ribald shout
Of jeering tongues. And when the mighty voice
Of these revolting spirits shall proclaim
Their certain victory, and hands have pluck'd
The olive branch of well-deserv'd peace,
Nor councils, edicts, sword, nor axe, nor brand,
Nor all the powers that be, in Heaven or Hell,
Shall then avail, to save thee from like doom.

O brazen fronted vice!
O monstrous wickedness which doth outvie
The studied sophistries of State, and shows
Self-evident and palpable as day
To all the world; thus, to wage dreadful war
Against the *subject*, and to wrong the wronged,
And heap fresh wrongs upon them, till thy cry
For some redress, and give thee warning note
Of coming thunders in the gathering gloom,
The Furies are waiting to unleash.

As when the sea's rude surges chafe and fret,
 And clap their hands, and fling their foaming crests
 Against an iron crag, or rising, roar
 In sullen wrath, and threaten to submerge
 The high and beetling cliff; thy people roused,
 Break out in mad revolt, and threaten thee!
 Thy erstwhile trusted soldiers in the wars,
 Are now no longer the sure stay and prop
 That they were wont to be, when they did serve
 Thy purposed will. O, all-assuming will!
 The sailors mutiny and burn their ships,
 Or take their captains prisoners; and now,
 Here in the capital, are ominous signs,
 Omens, and portents dire, presaging ill.

Lo, Liberty hath risen to a height
 Of sublime daring, and her silver tongue
 Shrills like a bugle blast from isle to cape,
 And Freedom in her eagle eyry waits
 To snap the galling bonds of slave and serf;
 For, breaking out upon the humid air,
 To cheer sad hearts distress'd in their sad grief,
 And bid them hope, that seem to strive in vain,
 And bidding them stand fast, and be assured
 That nothing is in vain who follow right,
 Though following it imperil loss of friends,
 And how all fearful wrongs shall be redress'd—
 A million voices answer as one voice!
 But ever through the day and night there rings,
 Like dirges of the damn'd in sore travail,
 The cry of bitter woe, and loud lament,
 Of the oppress'd and bleeding multitudes—
 These thy subjects, who have sworn to avenge
 Their childrens' and their kindreds' blood on thee!

Ah villain, thou art shameless in thy shame!
 While honor, justice, truth, are set at naught,
 Or have become with thee mere idle words
 Wherewith to stop the gap of treason up;
 As those poor wretches who transgress, because
 The light of reason never yet did pierce
 Their understanding; but this crime in thee—
 These murders manifold done in thy name—
 Becomes the sovereign crime, the supreme curse,
 Which sets discord in place of gentle peace,
 And drenches, like persistent falling rain,
 Whole hearths and homes with seas of human blood.

An empire—

And you would build; begin again, and build
 Upon the loves, affections, faith and hope
 Of happy subjects; who secure in law
 Shall reverence the king as they themselves,
 Not for his kingship only, but because
 He is to them their friend and chief of men;
 Most wise in counsel, one whose every word
 Is honor's seal, and friendship's sacred bond;
 Who finds the path of duty, and of right,
 And dares to follow both; who fixes truth
 Above all aims to which his actions tend,
 In spite of baser knaves, that plot and strive
 To stem the onward tide of better days
 For these are not unlike malignant suns
 That suck up healthful dews; good deeds do salve
 The wounds of wrong, and mercy doth become
 The prince, and judge, or whosoever holds
 The scales of even-handed justice sure—
 Serving his conscience as he serves his God,
 With sweet orisons and all noble thoughts
 That pave a pathway unto noble ends;
 These bring the benediction and the balm
 To the bruised heart of kings.

My sympathy and pity go with kings
 Who sit in majesty, yet are afraid
 To face the censure of the clamorous mob;
 I hate them not, for men are brothers all,
 And some are weak, and others brave and strong
 In time of danger; we do not make ourselves;
 I do but raise my voice because I must,
 And wish them well, who fight in Freedom's cause.

WILLIAM EMSLEY.

Mark Twain on Thanksgiving Day.

MR. CLEMENS, while in Washington recently, gave the following to the press:—

Every year every person in America concentrates all his thought upon one thing—the cataloguing of his reasons for being thankful to the Deity for the blessings conferred upon him and upon the human race during the expiring twelve months.

This is well, and as it should be; but it is too one-sided. No one ever seems to think of the Deity's side of it; apparently no one concerns himself to inquire how much or how little he had to be thankful for during the same period; apparently no one has had good feeling enough to wish he might have a Thanksgiving Day, too. There is nothing right about this.

Do you suppose everything has gone to his satisfaction during the year? Do you believe he is as sweepingly thankful as our nation is going to be, as indicated by the enthusiasms which will appear in the papers on the thirtieth of this month from the pens of the distinguished persons appointed to phrase its thankfulness on that day?

We may be unstintedly thankful, but can that be really the case with him? If he had a voice how would he regard the year's results in Russia? What would he be thankful for there? The servants of that government in patriotic obedience to its commands, have lately killed and wounded 50,000 Jews by unusual and unpleasant methods, butchering the men and the women with knife and bayonet, flinging them out of windows, saturating them with kerosene and setting fire to them, shutting them up in cellars and smothering them with smoke, drenching children with boiling water, tearing other children asunder by the methods of the Middle Ages. Doubtless the most that he can be thankful for is that the carnage and the suffering are not as bad as they might be.

He will have noticed that life insurance in New York has gone tolerably rotten, and that the widow and the orphan have had a sorrowful time of it at the hands of their chosen protectors. Doubtless the most that he is thankful for is that the rottenness and the robberies have not been absolutely complete.

He had noticed that the political smell ascending from New York, Philadelphia, and sixty or seventy other municipalities has been modified a little—temporarily—and is doubtless thankful for that transient reprieve.

He has observed that King Leopold's destruction of innocent life in the Congo is not as great this year as it was last by as much as 100,000 victims, because of the diminishing material. He has also noticed that America and the other great powers—accessories before the fact and responsible for these murders, especially America—are properly thankful for these murders, and have been for nineteen previous Thanksgiving Days, and without doubt he is himself thankful that matters in the Congo are not as irretrievably bad as they might be, and that some of the natives are still left alive.

One is justified in fearing that the Deity's Thanksgiving Day is not as rosy as ours will appear when the thanksgiving sentiments blossom out in the journals, and that if he, now voiceless, should utter a sentiment it would be tinged with a pathetic regret.

Ingersoll Gems.

If there be an infinite God he cannot make that wrong which in the nature of things is right. Neither can he make an action good, the natural consequences of which are evil. Even an infinite God cannot change a fact. In spite of him the relation between the diameter and circumference of a circle would remain the same.

Whenever good men do some noble thing the clergy give their God the credit, and when evil things are done they hold the men who did the evil responsible, and forget to blame their God.

Praying has become a business, a profession, a trade. A minister is never happier than when praying in public. Most of them are exceedingly familiar with their God. Knowing that he knows everything, they tell him the needs of the nation and the desires of the people, they advise him what to do and when to do it.

The infidels have been the brave and thoughtful men; the flower of all the world; the pioneers and heralds of the blessed day of liberty and love; the generous spirits of the unworthy past; the seers and prophets of our race; the great chivalric souls, proud victors on the battlefields of thought; the creditors of all the years to be.

The Church is always anxious to have some King or President certify to the moral character of Christ, the authority of the Scriptures, and the justice of the Jewish God. Of late years, confessions of gentlemen about to be hanged have been considered of great value, and the scaffold is regarded as a means of grace.

SUNDAY LECTURE NOTICES, etc.

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

LONDON.

CAMBERWELL BRANCH N. S. S. (North Camberwell Hall, New Church-road) : 3.15, J. Somerville, "The Soul."

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

COUNTRY.

BIRMINGHAM BRANCH N. S. S. (Prince of Wales Assembly Rooms, Broad-street) : 5, Tea and Social.

FAIRFORTH SECULAR SUNDAY SCHOOL (Pole-lane) : 6.30, Home Service.

LEICESTER SECULAR SOCIETY (Secular Hall, Humberstone Gate) : G. W. Foote, 6.30, "What Has Christianity Done for Russia?"

MANCHESTER BRANCH N. S. S. (Rusholme-road, Oxford-road, All Saints') : New Year's Day, Annual Soiree ; tea 5.30, dancing 7.30.

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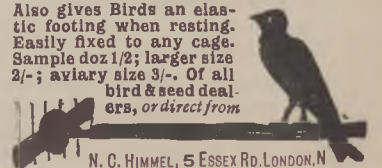
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