

THE Freethinker

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Think not that any good act is contemptible, though it be your brother's coming to you with an open countenance and good humor.—MOHAMMED.

"It Is Finished."

WE were going to write on the Church Congress this week, but that subject will keep till next week. We have something more serious to write about. In the words of Othello—

"It is the cause, it is the cause, my soul."

The cause—our cause, the Freethought cause—is threatened with extinction. And as self-preservation is the first law of nature, I must let the Church Congress slide and deal with the imminent danger to our very existence.

August was a fine month this year, but it is going to be a fatal month in 1907. There is no question of earthquakes or volcanic eruptions this time. The trouble will be far worse than that. It is not the crust of the earth, but human society itself, that is to be convulsed. We have it on the authority of "Old Moore," whose profound and prophetic *Almanack* has just been brought to our attention. We fear we have neglected this important publication too much in former years, but we are going to make amends now.

What will happen next year, and principally, we gather, in August, when the dog-days rouse up evil passions and prompt men to desperate deeds, is symbolised in the aforesaid scientific *Almanack* by a woodcut at the top of the page devoted to the month which is called after Augustus Cæsar. The said woodcut is not exactly artistic, but it is expressive. On a slight eminence is a broken cross; beneath are three naked human beings, with the faces of men and the bodies of fat babies, lying under the folds of a big three-headed serpent, who is spitting like anything at a figure of death, that sits warming its skeleton hands over a wood-fire. This is admitted to be "a very unpleasant picture for August," but it was "selected" by "the Prophet," who appears to be kept on the *Almanack* premises, and who certainly ought not to roam about like a common mortal.

Below this soul-shuddering picture there is a column of calendar, and then a column of "Predictions," written, we presume, by "the Prophet." This column begins with a tragic note. It declares that 1907 will be "a year of trouble in many parts of Europe"—which we can well believe. A certain old book says that man is born for trouble, as the sparks fly upward, and the European man lives up to the general reputation of the race. Yes, it is safe to prophesy that there will be trouble in many parts of Europe; you might even go to the length of saying in all parts of Europe.

But the trouble in many parts of Europe, as indicated by "the Prophet," is to be of a special character. "Socialism, Anarchism, Atheism," we read, "will crawl over the earth, crushing all who come in contact with the foul monster"—though we dare say "Old Moore's" office will survive the catastrophe. Of course neither Socialism nor Anarchism is our concern in these columns, and it is only our deep respect for "the Prophet" that prevents us from

suggesting that both these "isms" are rather arbitrarily bound up with Atheism. Two-thirds of the three-headed serpent must crawl about "on its own" as far as we are concerned. We can only deal with the other third, which we understand is going to be very lively. It seems to be booked for a fine career—for a time. "The broken cross—the sacred emblem," we read, "will be treated with contempt." Which we take to mean that the cross will be badly knocked about and trampled under foot. "But the Church," the Prophet continues, "need not fear even the most blasphemous attacks of the advanced freethinker." Happy Church! How it must fold its hands in sweet satisfaction after this reassuring announcement! And we, who may fairly regard ourselves as representing "the advanced freethinker," can only bite our thumbs (both of them) in sheer disgust at being apprised in this way of the miserable failure that awaits us.

"The hooded death seated before the fire" in the picture "points to sudden extinction at least for a time of these pests of society"—of which "the advanced freethinker" is doubtless the worst. Our shocking doom stares us in the face. We tremble! We expire! We are extinct! But our extinction, after all, is only "for a while"—and is that really extinction? We avail ourselves of this loophole. We escape from the abyss. We evade annihilation. We breathe again. But it was a very close shave.

How we are to be extinguished, temporarily, is not too clear. "The Prophet," like all his tribe, keeps something up his sleeve. It does not do to be too free and condescending. But the very next sentence in the "Predictions," without a break of any kind except the inevitable fullstop, begins with—"The vital question of the London water supply." From which it might be inferred that Atheism is to be extinguished in cold water, and that this will (naturally, of course) affect the water supply of London. And if this is to take place next August, in the dry season, it will be a great trial to the Christian inhabitants of the metropolis.

"The Prophet" goes on to say that he (or is it a she?) would be "little surprised if London were threatened with an outbreak of fever of the most malignant kind: the result will be an alarming death-roll." We presume this will be the upshot of drowning Atheism in the water supply. We venture to suggest, therefore, that Atheism might be conveniently spared this melancholy execution. This is an excellent reason for mercy, and we hope "the Prophet" will relent. Clarence was drowned in a butt of malmsey, but it is not recorded that anybody had to drink the liquor afterwards. People can do without wine—at a pinch, but they cannot do without water. They must drink it, when there is no other, even if Atheism were drowned in it. So to avoid the malignant fever, and the alarming death-roll, it would be better to spare Atheism, after all; and perhaps "the Prophet" will think it over between this and next August.

Meanwhile we will try not to be downhearted. It may be hoping against hope, but that sentiment, as the poet says, springs immortal in the human breast. Even "the Prophet" of "Old Moore" must have bowels and may let us live. We trust we shall not appeal to him in vain,

G. W. FOOTE.

Democracy and Religion.

OVER nineteen centuries ago, according to the accepted chronology, the Jesus of the New Testament was born. He was born with a definite mission, and died, so runs the official story, having accomplished his task. He founded a pure religion, one that brought back health and life to a dying world, and has ever since been the motive power of all that is good in the history of civilisation. Nineteen hundred years after his death a discovery, or rather two discoveries, are made. The first is, that in spite of its obvious, almost obtrusive virtues, in spite of its beneficent work Christianity is not holding its own. Many who did believe it have given it up, others who profess belief are little influenced by it, while new comers will have nothing to do with it. This is the first discovery, and the only surprise is that it excites astonishment on behalf of those who wish it otherwise. The second discovery is that we have all been on the wrong track. All the writers of the New Testament, all the Christian fathers, the great Christian writers of all ages, the official confessions of faith, all the Churches, all, in short, who have held that Christianity is primarily an affair of man's salvation in the next world, are in the wrong. The real object of Christianity is social reform. That for which Jesus was crucified, for which Churches were organised, and for which sects have battled, is that people might have a proper view of the drink question, the housing question, the municipalisation of tramways, or the nationalisation of land.

Such is the legitimate inference from an article on "Democratic Religion" in the *Christian World* of Sep. 27. The discovery is important—if true; and if true it is vastly pitiful it was not made earlier. Discovered in time it might have saved from ruin the municipal institutions of the Roman Empire; saved Paul teaching perfect obedience to all constituted powers, good and bad alike, and prevented Christian organisations always and everywhere championing vested interests against the rightful claims of the people. Discovered to day, when the democracy has become of political importance and is fast separating itself from Christianity, because both history and experience has taught it not to expect help from that quarter, people are not unnaturally inclined to place such a discovery on the same level as the timely finding of celestial messages by the early Catholic Church, when its condition demanded some such aid to faith. Nay, even the fact that these democratic movements within the Churches have not been hailed as true Christianity until they were numerically strong, may also awaken suspicion among the sceptically inclined.

The *Christian World* article is *apropos* of the Conference of Pleasant Sunday Afternoon Societies, recently held in London, and it professes to regard the Conference as "a triumphant answer to the allegation that religion is losing its hold on the working classes." It admits that the working man has no taste for the Anglican Churches, and that he has just as little for the regular Nonconformist services, but adds that this does not mean that he is hostile to religion. The word "hostile" may be passed for the reason that it may be granted that hostility would assume a far better appreciation of the injury done by religion than most people seem to possess. But if we substitute "indifference" for "hostility" we shall be nearer a truer statement of the case. For the indifference is undeniable. The average working man takes religion as part of the established order, and accepts its existence with a species of indolent contempt, almost as deadly as avowed hostility would be. He is not attracted by it and he is not interested in it. Almost unconsciously he perceives that it has no vital bearing on the important problems of life, while whatever reading he has done and whatever experience he has undergone, has familiarised him with the fact that the bitterest opposition to his improvement has come from religious influences. The truth of this is shown in the fact that the new

labor movement is in the main indifferent to religion, while among its leaders the clearest thinkers are for the most part in active hostility to it.

How does the P. S. A. Conference prove that the working man is attached to religion? If the movement comprised the bulk of the working classes, and if these had taken no interest in religion until the P. S. A. came along, there might be something in the claim. But everyone who knows anything of these movements knows that neither of these things is the case. These movements grow by acquiring recruits from existing church or chapel congregations, and are each in turn hailed as a fresh growth or a new conquest. At one moment it is Christian Endeavor, at another a Pleasant Sunday Afternoon Society, at a third some gigantic mission. But there is no increase in strength, only a new combination of existing Christians. At the most such movements only stop one here and there from falling away, but they make no impression upon those outside, nor do they seriously check the exodus from Christianity to Freethought.

The *Christian World* is of opinion that you can get the working classes to church if the subjects dealt with are such as really interest them, that is, with social and legislative matters. Probably, but this is only another way of saying that he will attend a religious service if religion is left out. He is attached to the play of *Hamlet*, but prefers it minus the prince of Denmark. Of course the Churches may be driven to place social matters in front and relegate religious ones to the background, but to cite their doing so as a proof of the strength and vitality of religion is to act like a tradesman who advertises that his business is in a flourishing condition at the very time he is compelled to call his creditors together. A tradesman who obtained new credit under such conditions would meet with a sharp reprimand at the hands of the Official Receiver. Unfortunately religious morality has not yet reached the level of commercial ethics, faulty as is the latter. The truth is that when a religion is driven to depend upon a social and political propaganda as the only condition of maintaining its hold upon the people, it acknowledges itself beaten, and is to all practical intent defunct. It may continue to exist as a corporation able to buy advocacy and careless how it lives so long as it does live, but it is dead as a genuine conviction.

Another strange delusion is that these P. S. A. gatherings help to break down caste and class barriers. At these gatherings, says the *Christian World*, "the worker is surrounded with his mates, and is as much at home as by his own fireside." Probably; but to any decently self-respecting working man nothing could be more objectionable than this method of treating him as a distinct species, one who must of necessity feel out of place amid any of the refinements of life, and who must therefore be kept free from their influence. A Christian preacher no doubt finds something very attractive in this picture of well-to-do people who condescendingly come down from their lofty pedestals and spend a few hours in religious gatherings with the working classes, in much the same spirit that they would visit the Zoological Gardens to inspect a newly imported animal. And there are doubtless many among the working classes who feel happy under this sort of patronage. Such gatherings do not destroy class distinctions; they intensify them. Those who patronise are always conscious of their condescension, and the patronised are equally aware of the extended favor.

A genuine friend of the democracy, who had neither a political axe to sharpen nor a sectarian interest to promote, would realise that the greater good is done, not by surrounding the workman with a typical working-class environment, but by lifting him out of it and above it, if only for the briefest possible period. It needs to be realised by all that there are certain refinements of life from which, by the conditions of their existence, large numbers of working men are excluded. And it should also be seen that there is no absolute reason why this should

be so. There is no reason, in the nature of things, why the working man should not be a "gentleman" in the best sense of that much-abused word. Thousands are already, I am glad to say; and there is no reason why more should not be so. But if he is to become such he will have to realise that his aim must be, not to carry the atmosphere of the workshop around him and strive to perpetuate it in all his intercourse with his fellows, but to treat it as part of his life only, and a part that is only of value so far as it serves to unlock the comforts and refinements that are still too much the property of a class. Personally, I distrust both politician and preacher whose addresses are redolent of workshop slang, or who, in gatherings of working men, acts on the principle of ignoring many of the more subtle refinements of life. Whether he be politician or preacher, such a man is not to be trusted. The best that can be said of him is that he is acting in well-intentioned ignorance, the worst that he is consciously trading upon a weakness and ignorance he should help to destroy.

But one can hardly expect preachers to be influenced by such considerations. To begin with, their real aim is to add to the strength of religious organisations. And all is legitimate that furthers this end, whether it be brass bands, theatrical displays, sensational revivalism, or a pretended interest in social problems. For it will be noted that this interest of the social welfare of the people is displayed only where sectarian interests demand it. Christianity shows no such interest in Russia or in Spain, or showed no such interest during many centuries of its existence. It evinces this interest only in England, or in America, or in places where the developing intelligence of people leads them to realise that really religious questions can wait for solution until all else is settled. Then the Churches discover that they have a social gospel to deliver, and that this is all-important. Such tactics may delude weaklings, such as have not reached intellectual maturity, but they will impose on none other. The wide-awake ones will see the pretended social reformer dominated by the religious evangelist. And behind him they will catch a glimpse of those sinister vested interests that to-day form the real life-blood of the Churches, and for which they will continue to fight so long as they stand to gain by the advocacy.

C. COHEN.

Pulpit Sophistry.

THE Rev. Canon H. Scott-Holland, D.D., preaching in St. Paul's Cathedral the other Sunday afternoon, from Matthew vi. 24, exercised his ingenuity to the utmost in the attempt to give a plausible appearance to a fundamentally fallacious argument. The words, "No man can serve two masters," and "Ye cannot serve God and Mammon," are in themselves perfectly true. Indeed, no words could be more true. To serve two masters is a natural impossibility; and with the first half of Canon Scott-Holland's discourse no fault is to be found. The truth is so obvious that it was a culpable waste of time to dwell on it at all. The following passage is so true as to be a truism:—

"We all know what we must do, how we must behave, if we are to walk upright along a road, for instance; or if we are to live on intelligible terms with our neighbors; or if we are to keep ourselves in health by food and sleep. There are conditions to which everyone must conform as a matter of common-sense. There are things that we can do, and things that we cannot. We all recognise this, and accept the limitations; and abstain, if we are reasonable beings, from silly defiance of the universal experience of mankind. Eyes and hands, and feet and brain, instinctively fall in with the habitual assumption on which all action here proceeds. A man would be a fool if he ignored, or traversed, the natural law governing his motions."

This is a point that cannot be argued. It is an

axiom, a foundational truth. Take another passage growing out of the former:—

"So in the matter of allegiance—of loyalty (for instance), he who knows the conditions under which alone action is possible, does not pronounce us wrong in attempting to serve two masters. He does not propose to argue us out of a decision which he condemns. He does not pledge himself to prove to us that his own way is better. He goes behind all this, and says: 'It is not a choice open to you. You have not even the power to go your own way; for there is no such way to go. No man can manage it. It does not fall within the lines of human experience. It is forbidden by the nature of our circumstances. No man can serve two masters.' No man can serve two. Yet everyone must serve one. Allegiance is a necessity of our being."

What is Canon Scott-Holland doing in this part of his sermon? Laying the foundation of Secularism, repeating the alphabet of Freethought, going over the rudiments of pure Rationalism. Let us follow the reverend gentleman one step further:—

"No! No man can serve two masters. Our own ordinary experience is enough to prove the futility of the attempt. How can anyone handle life effectively unless he has some measure of valuation by which to test it? Facts must have their worth given them by some standard or scale. Then he can use them to some purpose. But what if the scales shift? What if the worth of an incident is in debate between two irreconcilable estimates? What if there be no ultimate test? The man is lost in distraction. He is divided against himself. How can his kingdom over himself stand?"

Canon Scott-Holland has now reached the parting of the roads. For a moment he seems to hesitate, and then plunges into a vigorous defence of other-worldism. At the crossing, he deliberately takes the wrong road, and follows it to the end. He recognises the existence of two distinct worlds. "We live and move and think and work," he says, "in two worlds that appear to have no connection with one another." There is first "the world of common life, the world of business, the world of politics, the world of society," and there is also "the Kingdom of God, the vision of Christ, and hopes of the spirit"—the world beyond the veil. Now, according to the Canon, we must make our choice between these two worlds, because we cannot serve both at one and the same time. The one we choose we shall hold to and honor; the one we reject we shall hate and despise.

But the worthy Canon ignores the context, and misses the point of his Master's teaching on the subject in question. To the Gospel Jesus there were not two worlds, but only one. This world was almost at an end, in its last gasp, and the heavenly world was at hand. That was his great message. In the Sermon on the Mount, he was laying down rules, not for the earthly life, but for the heavenly. That was why he pronounced a benediction upon poverty. The poor were blessed because their hearts were free. On the morrow, or the day after, the Kingdom of Heaven was due; and once it came what would be the use of earthly treasures? Jesus said: "Invest your all in the coming kingdom; uproot your affections from the earth, and transfer them to heaven; do not admit the passing world into your hearts, but reserve all the accommodation therein for the world to come." From Jesus' point of view, such teaching was profoundly logical. But Canon Scott-Holland does not need to be reminded that the idea of Jesus and his apostles as to the nearness of the end was totally false, or that it is fair neither to the Master nor to his immediate successors to interpret their teaching as if it were intended for people destined to live comparatively long lives on earth. And yet this is the very point the reverend Canon utterly forgets. Jesus exhorted his hearers to lay up for themselves treasures in heaven that they might be able to enter into the new kingdom at once, for where their treasures were there their hearts would be also. Canon Scott-Holland repeats the exhortation, though he knows full well that the end of the world is not at hand. In taking a text it is never safe to ignore the context.

By *mammon* Jesus meant earthly treasures, money, worldly possessions. His only fortune was his brain.

He looked upon the rich with unspeakable contempt. On this point Canon Scott-Holland does not agree with his Lord. He has a large salary, and his emoluments from the press are by no means inconsiderable. In this respect, he is not a disciple of Jesus. He is not a Franciscan Brother, solemnly wedded to perpetual poverty. By *mammon* he means, not money, but the present world as distinguished from the world to come; and his teaching is that no one can serve this world and the other world, that it is not possible to make the best of both worlds, or that to win one world is to lose the other. "One must win," he cries. "One must win—and which?"

Now, let us look at the present world, "the world of common life, the world of business, the world of society." Its reality no sane man would dream of denying. But Canon Scott-Holland seems to regard it as an inherently defective and wicked world. According to him it is a world without "ideals," without "righteousness," without "a brotherhood of love," and without "self-sacrifice." "When we plunge into the affairs of this world," he says, "we find ourselves compelled to leave all this visionary existence behind. The experience in the street, in the office, in the rough and tumble of practical matters, refuses to conform to those ideal conditions; it will not admit them into work; it has other standards of its own, and other scales of valuation that cause different faculties to come into play." It is difficult to keep within reasonable bounds while characterising such a horrible travesty! There is not one word of truth in the definition. Why, it is the brotherhood of love that makes society possible. The world of business would have been a heap of black ruins long ago had it not been built upon a foundation of righteousness. Even the world of politics, despite all its terrible corruptions, is at bottom not wholly bad. "We have our ideals," says the Canon; but we have them as natives and denizens of this world; and we have won them all from experience. They are our earthly treasures, and we have set our affections upon them. Both Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde were men of this world, both products of the earth.

Of course, as a matter of fact, the life recommended by Canon Scott-Holland is simply impossible. Human beings are so constituted that they cannot live effectively in one world if their hearts are in another. Not all the preaching in the world can undermine the facts of Nature. We admit that the present is "another world altogether from the world of the [immortal] soul and of God and the kingdom of heaven"; but it is the only world worth clinging to, being the only world we know. It is by no means the best of all possible worlds, nor do we hold that human life in it is the happiest of all possible lives; but we earnestly maintain that the only way to improve the world and its life is by putting into them all the heart we possess. We must love the world and the things that are in it before we can turn them to the best account; and as the Apostle John says, the love of the world excludes the love of God and eternity.

J. T. LLOYD.

The Sacrifice of Christ.

THE three principal ingredients of religious worship are prayer—that is, supplicatory prayer, praise, and sacrifice. Protestantism has dropped out the offering of sacrifice from its scheme of religious worship, but it is the oldest part of religion, and it is still retained in a modified form in the Roman Catholic system. Protestantism holds that the immolation of Christ, the Son of the living God, on Mount Calvary in mediation for the sons of men was the great supreme sacrifice which rendered any further offering of expiatory sacrifice unnecessary. The ransom of the sinner has been paid, and no more remains to be done in that way. But the Roman Catholic Church, while she stoutly maintains that the shedding of one drop

of Christ's blood was more than enough to save a thousand worlds like this, still goes on day after day offering what she calls the unbloody sacrifice of the body and blood of Christ in the mass for the sins of humanity. Which seems a trifle superfluous. Like the theatrical manager who made the transpontine tragedienne "die over again" to please the audience, the Catholic Church makes Jesus Christ die over again every day for the entertainment of the faithful. And the one exhibition of dying is as much a bit of make-believe as the other. In the matter of long runs, however, the theatrical representation called the mass undoubtedly holds the record. And for coining money its equal has never been staged either in tragedy or farce.

It is instructive to note that, although the Catholic Church teaches that the sacrifice of the mass is an exact repetition of the sacrifice of Calvary, it seems to require an inordinate number of masses to rescue the souls in purgatory. If one drop of Christ's blood be sufficiently precious to redeem the whole human race, it might be expected that one mass would suffice to empty purgatory. But thousands upon thousands of masses have been offered annually for centuries in behalf of the souls in purgatory, and for all the priests tell us to the contrary, purgatory is as full as ever. Which makes us suspect that the sacrifice of the mass is not quite so efficacious as they pretend it is. Or can the base insinuation be true that masses for the dead were encouraged because there was money in the game?*

The doctrine of Sacrificial Atonement, which is an inseparable concomitant of the Christian religion, is one of those numerous constituent follies which, taken in the gross, form the one gigantic folly called Christianity. Amongst many other apologies for argument put forward by defenders of Christianity it has been urged that the Christian religion is obviously of divine origin inasmuch as it contains many things that could not have arisen spontaneously in the mind of man. Perhaps the Atonement is included in the catalogue of those moral and religious truths that man could never have hit upon for himself, and for which, consequently, a divine revelation was necessary. But as it is a very absurd, and irrational, and monstrously unjust doctrine, those who think it impossible that man should have conceived it entertain a higher opinion of the general rationality of mankind than there seems any real warrant for. It seems highly probable, to say the least, that such a very puzzle-headed doctrine as the Atonement *did* have its origin in the poor puzzled and puzzling brain of man. Not that it originated fully formed in the mind of any one individual. No dogma or doctrine ever did. Every religious doctrine and dogma in its modern shape is the outcome of innumerable generations of thought and speculation playing upon the central germ of that doctrine or dogma. Christians like Dr. Horton, and Dr. Smith and Harold Begbie, who absurdly and unnecessarily tell us that no one could have "invented" the teaching of Christianity or the figure of the Christ, are only betraying their ignorance of the fact that there is evolution in the world of ideas as well as in the world of matter. Who ever says that Christianity as it stands to-day was "invented"? One might as well talk of the invention of the British Constitution.

The doctrine of the Atonement is but the modernised and more or less refined and sublimated survival of the primitive savage's sacrifice to his gods or to the spirits of his ancestors. The belief—

* So recently as the 12th of August we sat in the Church of St. Francis, Glasgow, and heard a Franciscan monk preaching on this very subject. He asserted that one mass was sufficiently meritorious not only to empty purgatory but to convert every sinner in the world. He did not tell us why there had been such a poor result from the 2,500 masses which, he assured his hearers, had been offered during the past year in the single church we were sitting in. Think of it! Two thousand five hundred masses—equal to two thousand five hundred Crucifixions—offered up in one chapel alone in a twelvemonth! Yet the preacher wound up by earnestly impressing on the simple-minded auditors the necessity for more masses. Oh! for the pen of a Voltaire to do justice to the incident.

like all other beliefs—had a perfectly natural origin in the dim and distant past. To-day it is reminiscent of a barbarism that assorts but ill with our more highly developed sense of justice. There are various attempted explanations of the Christian doctrine of the Atonement. Common to all of them is the central idea that an innocent person can form an acceptable and adequate substitute for a guilty one. Such a theory is utterly abhorrent to our sense of what is just and right. Waiving for the present all consideration of whether man has any need whatever to seek reconciliation with God or to endeavor to intercept his vengeance, the ends of justice can never be served by the suffering of the innocent. This is a rule to which we can admit of no exception if we are to retain a clear and consistent conception of the principles of justice.

Curiously enough, it is from the critical standpoint of the Freethinker, and not from that of the Christian, that the immolation of Christ on Calvary for the sins of men can be made to square with the principles of justice. Because if Christ is God, and if God made the world and all it contains, then he is responsible for mankind and for all the evil man has perpetrated since the creation. So that the execution of God on Calvary was really the execution of the guilty party in the whole business. Though, as one of the results of the Crucifixion was to send God expeditiously back to the joys of that heaven which he had only left for the short space of thirty years or thereabouts, it scarcely seems a case of making the punishment fit the crime. But at any rate Freethought may claim to have furnished a slight basis of justification for the death of Christ—a basis of justification that is absolutely inconceivable on the Christian hypothesis that he was an *innocent* victim. As God he was responsible for all that has happened, and may therefore be adjudged guilty. The idea embodied in the foregoing may be commended to such Christians as find a difficulty in reconciling the Atonement with a strict conception of justice.

So good a religious authority as Cardinal Newman confessed his complete inability to conceive how the justice and anger of God could be appeased by the sacrifice of an innocent victim. Of course he believed the doctrine—as he was bound to do—nevertheless. The only superficially plausible excuse made by the orthodox believer is that God's standpoint is different from our's, and his standard of justice not as our's is. But this plea—though it satisfies countless thousands—is really arrant nonsense. Its acceptance tacitly implies the negation of all sane reasoning and argument. Because if God's justice is something different from our ideal of justice, then it is idle to talk of justice at all. We simply do not know what justice is. When we ascribe the attributes justice, mercy, and love to God, we attach the same meaning to these attributes as we do when we say a human being is just, and merciful, and loving. Otherwise our words are meaningless and our ideas chaos.

There has been uttered a tremendous amount of cant and bathos in connection with the alleged sufferings and death of Christ. The oceans of tears and cheap rhetoric and false sentiment that have been poured forth over the fate of Christ during the last eighteen hundred years are really appalling to contemplate. And yet when you come to think of it calmly, thousands upon thousands of men and women since our race appeared have endured ever so much more than Christ is reported to have suffered, and have died much more cruel and horrible deaths than that of the cross. Not only so, but a great proportion of the human beings who have been tortured and done to death in the world's history have had their pains and torments inflicted on them in the name of Christ and Christianity, and for the glory of God. This is one of the reasons that cause Atheists to love Christianity and the Churches with a love that passes all understanding.

In any case, what was this much-vaunted sacrifice on the part of Christ? There can be seen nothing stupendously remarkable or praiseworthy about it. In the circumstances how could Christ—as the Son

of God, or God, or whatever he was—do less than he did? If, in the inscrutable decrees of Providence, his death was essential for the redemption of the world, who but he should have laid down his life? An ordinary man would do as much for a much smaller stake. And of course Jesus knew, as no other being who has trod this earth *could* know, that the grave is but the gateway of eternal bliss. Death could have no sting for him. Surely he could well afford to leave his abode of celestial joy for a few brief years in order to redeem a world he had allowed to go wrong, and to save the souls of countless men, women, and children from everlasting hell-fire—especially as he knew he was going right back to heaven as soon as he had accomplished his task. Why, so far from falling down in adoring worship of Christ because of what he did for the world, it should seem that, since he was the only one who *could* do it, he would have been an infernal monster if he had not done it. And as for the magnitude of his sufferings, there have been common men, born of decent human parents, who have faced far more than Christ did for just the love of a woman or for the sake of truth and honor. And that without being buoyed up with any such pleasant assurance of eternal happiness as Christ is supposed to have possessed. Worshipers of Jesus talk about the unexampled sufferings of the Christ, yet they are but an infinitesimal drop in the illimitable ocean of human suffering which sends its perpetual moaning re-echoing through the corridors of infinite space age after age.

When one thinks of the inane drivel one has read and listened to in orthodox days in connection with this so-called supreme sacrifice of Calvary it is enough to make one sick, or angry, or laugh. Perhaps it is better to do the latter. Every art of exploitation is employed by the Catholic Church to stimulate in her adherents feelings of sympathy and pity for Christ in his death and passion. All sorts of legends have been grafted on the Gospel story. Children are gravely taught that Jesus was so peculiarly constructed physically as to be more susceptible of pain than any other man who ever lived. They are seriously informed that the palm of Christ's hand was as tender as the surface of an ordinary person's eyeball. And other nonsense of that description is put forward with a view to magnifying the extent of his suffering. It was revealed to St. Bridget that during his scourging he received over 5,000 stripes. One wonders how he survived the ordeal if his body was such a delicate organism. Doubtless God his Father gave him strength to endure it, just as God will require to enable the damned in hell to support *their* torment. But what insufferable balderdash the whole story is!

It has been more than once pointed out that Christians have spoiled any sweetness and pathos that might have attached to the figure of the Christ by making a God of him. Supposing the story of his fate to be true, a crucified man we could sympathise with, but why should we weep for a crucified God? And considering him solely as a man, he is only one amongst millions who have suffered. The figure of a Bruno, murdered by the Church of Rome in one of the most cruel fashions, is a much more pathetic figure than that of the Christ, or than that of any of the Christian martyrs. Bruno went in calm and lonely grandeur to his awful doom without any consoling belief in the supernatural, or hope of a glorious resurrection. *He* had no expectation of an eternity of bliss as the reward of a few hours' constancy. He died simply for the truth of his opinions.

G. SCOTT.

The most ignorant nations have always been found to think most highly of themselves. The Deity has ever been thought peculiarly concerned in their glory and preservation; to have fought their battles, and inspired their teachers; their wizards are said to be familiar with heaven; and every hero has a guard of angels as well as men to attend him.—*Goldsmith.*

Acid Drops.

The Hibernian Bible Society presented the Dublin Corporation with copies of the Bible in Irish to be placed in the Public Libraries. We suppose it was a translation of the Protestant edition of the Word of God. Anyhow, it was speedily denounced by Mr. Harrington, M.P., and other Home Rulers, as "a bogus copy of the Bible," and was ignominiously kicked out. This shows how true it is, as we have always contended, that "Simple Bible Teaching" is simple nonsense. Jews, Catholics, and Protestants have different Bibles; and who on earth is to decide which of them shall be used in the public schools? Dr. Clifford would like to do it, of course, but his opponents wouldn't let him. Neither would he let them. So *that's* all right.

The Nonconformist Conscience never forgave Lord Rosebery for winning the Derby. We see it is now rejoicing over the probable conversion of King Edward from the old error of his ways. Rev. Dr. Townshend, addressing a meeting of the Chester and Crewe Federation of Free Churches, according to the Liverpool *Evening Express*, said that—"It was understood that his Majesty was about to give up his racing stud, and he trusted that would be followed shortly by the King absenting himself entirely from all race-courses." No doubt the reverend gentleman hopes his Majesty will become a good Nonconformist in time.

Epworth, the birthplace of John Wesley, had its ghosts in his time, and it seems never to have been without one since. Singular doings are reported at the house of a farmer, whose wife died a short time ago after a long illness. Since her death the house has been upset. Scratchings and knockings went on under the bed, and afterwards in different parts of the building. A chair and a clothes box have been thrown down. As a climax the ghost of the departed woman, dressed in white (of course!), appeared at the top of the stairs and walked down in the sight of three persons. But the rector of the parish was brought in to "lay" the ghost, which he did, and since then the noises have not been heard. Such is superstition in England in the twentieth century!

The Epworth ghost, like all other ghosts, appears in a quiet sequestered place. You never hear of a ghost in a crowded thoroughfare of a big city—say Cheapside, Fleet-street, or the Strand. A London ghost would be sure to be in the suburbs. Do you understand, reader? A wink is as good as a nod to a wise man.

A Long Eaton clergyman, presumably a Catholic—we will not advertise him further—having received a copy of Mr. F. Bonte's *From Fiction to Fact*, returns it to the publishers, with the sweet Christian message: "Don't send such black-guard rot to me." He has written "rot" across several pages. No doubt he is an authority on that subject. He also intimates that the author "deserves hanging." This will probably increase Mr. Bonte's satisfaction at having escaped from such a Church.

The Rev. Dr. Whyte, of St. George's United Free Church, Edinburgh, has been spending his holiday at Loch Alsh, N.B.; and while there what struck him most was the religious disunion that characterises the district. "In Edinburgh," he writes, "things are bad enough, but you must come to the Highlands to see poor distracted Scotland as she really is. This morning I worshiped in a lovely little Highland village, whose one church could easily hold the whole community, and where one hard-working minister, with one or two assistants, would soon turn the whole parish into a garden of the Lord. And how does it stand at present? There are seven Christian congregations, all singing the same Psalms, all reading the same New Testament, and all praying in the name of the same Mediator, but so separated, and so alienated, and so embittered against one another, that they will not worship together on Sabbath days, and are scarcely civil to one another on week-days. What is to be done to redeem and to reclaim our dear fatherland from all this sin and misery?"

But surely Dr. Whyte cannot be ignorant of the fact that Scotland has never enjoyed religious peace and harmony, that her towns and villages and country-sides have always been the scenes of bitter and never-ending theological and ecclesiastical controversies, that religion within her borders has occasioned greater divisions and animosities and fatal wrangles than all other causes combined, and that most of the bloody wars that were once so common between Scotland and England had for their main object the settling of religious

disputes. Dr. Whyte himself is one of the sweetest, purest, and most peaceable and loving of men; but does it never occur to him that there is really no hope for his "poor, distracted Scotland" until she abandons her theology, her churches, and her religion? People have always quarreled about the unknown and unknowable, and always will quarrel as long as they bother their heads about it. When England, Scotland, and Wales renounce the supernatural and devote themselves to solving the various practical problems of the natural, then we may hope eventually to see a calm, self-possessed, united, and happy Great Britain; but not before.

Only last week, the *British Weekly* declared that "the triumph of Unitarianism would mean the death of Christianity." The same authority declared further that "no reform is possible for the Papacy." "The infallible Church," it added, "must go on setting truth and reason at defiance in intrigues for political supremacy till she either breaks in pieces, or withers away, or sinks into some gulf of anarchy." We find the same spirit everywhere; and as long as religion lasts, this spirit must prevail. As long as people imagine that they know the unknowable, they will continue to disagree and to fight.

Dr. Robertson Nicoll takes great pains to show that free people cannot feel at home in the Catholic Church, because "Romanism stands out more and more distinctly in uncompromising and relentless antagonism to the legitimate exercise of the human reason." Dr. Nicoll is doubtless right; but he forgets or is blind to the fact that the same objection is applicable to all other Churches. Every Church is founded on superstition. The only difference between the various denominations is that some are based on more and some on less of superstition than the others. The nature of the foundation is the same in all; and it is quite impossible for intellectually free people to patronise any of them. They all alike blindfold the reason.

A Church that changes with the times is not Biblical. A theology that allows itself to be modified and modernised by scientific discoveries and critical results is not a revelation from heaven. Dr. Nicoll blames Pius X. for endeavoring "to purge the Church of the intellectuals"; but surely the Pope is much more consistent than Dr. Nicholl, in that he adheres with resolute devotion to the New Testament idea of the Church. Pius the Tenth is a loyal Christian, not a cunning politician; a literal vicar of Christ, not a disciple of changing schools. Therefore, "it is not surprising that a French Freethinker should say, 'Our hope is in Pius X.'"

How very Christlike some people are! Jesus said: "Resist not evil; but whosoever smiteth thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also." Dr. Len. Broughton, of Atlanta City, says: "In our town I heard of a young fellow who objected because the mother entered the parlor, where the girl was with him, without knocking. If I had been that girl's mother I'd have knocked next time. I'd have cracked his head." Dr. Broughton is said to wield an enormous influence in the States of America—is that the reason why there are so many white ruffians in his own city, who recently carried on a campaign of brutal massacre against the Blacks? We read that "according to a conservative estimate, eighteen persons have been killed and more than a hundred injured." Well, when the ministers approve of cracking heads, is it any wonder that their people go a little further, and murder their colored "brethren" in the most heartless and lawless fashion possible?

Can anyone imagine a Roman Governor receiving a deputation and telling them that if one fatal accident happened in a public quarrel he would "steep the city in blood"? Yet this is what General Kaulbars told the representatives of the municipality of Odessa lately. "In the event," he said, "of the assassination of even one member of the Union of the Russian People, Odessa will be inundated with blood"—or as another correspondent translates it "steeped in blood." Of course this ruffian is a Christian.

Mr. Andrew Carnegie, the great professional philanthropist, has added a new industry to the Free Library business. He is now providing churches and chapels with organs. Is it beyond his power to provide them with sense?

Herbert Bryan wrote a sensible letter to the *Daily News* on the Edna May-Camille Clifford squabble. He asked if it was really true that Edna May got £200 a week, and pointed out that her bills were carried about by sandwichmen who were paid one shilling and twopence a day. "If she knows this," he remarked, "I wonder if it ever causes her

any inquietude." We may add that Edna May's £200 a week and the sandwichman's 1s. 2d. a day are a very good measure of our civilisation. And we may add one thing more. This is a Christian country.

Isaac Watts, the pious poet, said that—

"Satan finds some mischief still
For idle hands to do."

But really idle hands wouldn't do it for him. They would see him in—well, in his own place first. It is the busy people who do most of the mischief in this world. Pascal, in his great days, before he fell a victim to the disease of superstition, declared that half man's troubles in this world resulted from his inability to sit still. He must be *doing* something; he can't stop and *think*. Unctuous orators—generally on the make—appeal to the great heart of the people. But it would do more good to appeal to the great fat head of the people.

Just look at President Roosevelt. He is always taking up a fresh charge. Now it is the Trusts, now it is the English language, and now it is Cuba. He has a go at one thing, then a go at another, and then a go at something else. He is not a stayer—except in office. Perhaps some light upon "Teddy" is shed by the following cutting from a contemporary:—

"The restlessness of President Roosevelt is well known, and has received amusing confirmation in a story which is now being circulated in Washington. An eminent sculptor was desirous of obtaining a cast of the President's face, and did his best to gain the good offices of Mrs. Roosevelt. 'How long would it take to make the cast?' she asked. 'About twenty minutes,' replied the sculptor. 'Then that settles it,' said Mrs. Roosevelt; 'you will never be able to get it done, for no human power could induce Mr. Roosevelt to remain still for twenty minutes.'"

Mr. Roosevelt cannot keep still for twenty minutes. May be that is why he never has time to correct his own blunders. Five minutes' quiet might enable him to correct his foolish blunder about Thomas Paine, whom he called (in print) a "dirty little Atheist." It has been pointed out to him again and again that Paine was fastidious about his personal appearance while he could look after himself, that he was some inches taller than Mr. Roosevelt, and that he wrote against Atheism with great eloquence. "Teddy's" description of Thomas Paine is therefore like the definition of a crab given in a certain French dictionary. "A crab," it said, "is a red fish that walks backward." Cuvier, being consulted about it, said that a crab was not a fish, it was not red, and it did not walk backward; but with those three exceptions the definition was admirable. We may say the same of Mr. Roosevelt's description of Thomas Paine. But he will never revise it. He cannot sit still long enough. We understand now.

At the top of Chatham Hill there is a strange sect known as the Jezreelites. They are under the leadership of "Prince Michael." Their one ambition is to live according to the Mosaic law, and to have their children trained in the same. They despise the ways of this world. They applied recently to the Gillingham Education Committee for permission to open a school of their own, so that their children might be brought up "not according to the ways of this world"; and the Gillingham Education Committee informed them that "they had no power to refuse or comply." It is to be feared that the Jezreelites will have to emigrate to some *Godly* planet, if such there be, before their children can have educational fairplay.

The Rev. Dinsdale T. Young is a Wesleyan minister of the genuine old sort. He is given to beating "the evangelical drum rather fiercely." He is nothing if not orthodox. He says that "hard theology makes sunny optimists, while to deny the Lamb that was slain spells anarchy, and is an insult to God." Mr. Young knows exactly what God's feelings are, and how easy it is to hurt them. As the orthodox folk are now but few and far between one is bound to feel profoundly sorry for God, for he must be in a perpetual huff with the bulk of his own representatives. Poor, unfortunate, belied, insulted Deity!

The Catholic party is not satisfied with the new Education Bill. One of its objections is clearly stated in the pastoral letter, signed by the Catholic Archbishop and Bishops of the Province of Westminster, and read in all churches and chapels on Sunday:—

"In the case of about half of our schools all public aid is refused, though rates will still be demanded of us, part of which will be devoted to a religious teaching alien from, and in many things opposed to, the teaching of the Catholic Church. These schools will be starved to death by the action of the Liberal Government, in defiance of all the principles to which it owes its appellation."

A man must be badly prejudiced who does not see that this is a real grievance. To refuse people the religion they want, and to use their money to pay for the religion they don't want, is both plunder and tyranny. We heartily wish the Catholics freedom from the despotism of Dr. Clifford and his gang of hypocritical oppressors. At the same time we venture to suggest that their own claim of "Catholic schools, Catholic teachers, and Catholic tests" is inconsistent with the rights of other taxpayers, and that the only just settlement of the problem is Secular Education.

Cromwell's statue in Parliament-square offends the Irish members, and they were going to move for its expulsion; but the job is to be undertaken, after all, by two English Roman Catholic Liberal members—Colonel Ivor Herbert, who represents South Monmouthshire, and Mr. Hilaire Belloc, who represents South Salford. It is announced that these gentlemen will move, on the reassembling of the House of Commons, that the statue of Oliver Cromwell, erected at Westminster by "a private gentleman," be removed from the precincts of parliament. Well, we hope the motion will fail. Cromwell was a very great Englishman, anyhow; and the Irish Catholics make far too much of his Irish "massacres." The loyalist garrisons whom his victorious army put to the edge of the sword were not Irishmen at all; they were, at least for the most part, Englishmen and Scotchmen who had been left there by the King and his friends. For the rest, party passion ought not to vent itself over the whole field of history; and a great nation can afford to honor the memory of great men of all parties. In any case, Cromwell's place in history does not depend on a vote at Westminster. Mr. Hilaire Belloc, for one, ought to know this; and we are sorry to see a man of his mark pandering to Catholic bigotry.

"The Dean and Chapter of Truro Cathedral," a press paragraph ran, "yesterday elected Dr. Stubbs, Dean of Ely, Bishop of the diocese of Truro in succession to the late Dr. Gott." What a farce this is, to be sure! The new Bishop is first practically appointed by the King, or rather by the Government, and then he is elected by the Dean and Chapter. They meet together, receive the name of the royal nominee for the vacant bishopric, and then proceed to consult the Holy Ghost on the matter; and they invariably find that the Holy Ghost cordially agrees with the King and the Government. And this is the religion which some people, who don't even believe it, ask us to respect!

Rev. F. B. Meyer, from his name, is probably a German Jew turned into an English Christian, either at first or second hand. Anyhow, he is a rare old joker. At the recent gathering of the Pleasant Sunday Afternoon movement he said that "in the past the Church had allowed the working man to work out his own salvation. If she did not now lead this movement, instead of standing aside and watching it, she would lose her last opportunity of bringing Christ to the masses and the masses to Christ." Poor masses and poor Christ! Fancy their being unable to get together without the help of the Church—that is, of gentlemen like Mr. Meyer! And those poor working men, left to work out their own salvation; how they must suffer! But they might suffer more if they entrusted the job of working out their salvation to the Church. Yes, on the whole, they had better keep the job to themselves. And we rather think they will

One speaker sadly fluttered the doves at that P. S. A. gathering. It was Mr. Arthur Henderson, M.P. "He caused a sensation," the *Tribune* report read, "by stating that the first craze for gambling was fostered in hundreds of lives by raffles at church bazaars." 'Tis true, 'tis pity, and pity 'tis 'tis true.

We are friends of freedom, whichever side persecutes and whichever side suffers. That is why we protested against the Catholic Archbishop of Malta being allowed to stop the Protestant mission services held in the Teatro Royal by Mr. John McNeill. We are glad to see that the Secretary of State for the Colonies has given this matter his serious consideration, and has come to a just decision upon it. Lord Elgin informs the Governor of Malta that, "The only basis which his Majesty's Government can admit for the settlement of the question is that all denominations should be treated with perfect equality." Henceforth there is to be no difference—not even in respect to religious ceremonies held in public; and the Government trusts that the people of Malta will recognise the principles of religious toleration which inspires Lord Elgin's dispatch.

"J. B." tells us, in the *Christian World* for September 27, that "we are only at the beginning of ethics." "Our

Bibles, prayer-books, and other spiritual directories," he says, "grew up in times so much younger than ours." Free-thinkers are always saying the same thing. This is the teaching of Science; but it is not Christian teaching. According to theology, there are no "undefined moralities." For once, "J. B." is *wholly* sensible, and his article is worthy of careful perusal. With only a few verbal alterations, it might have been written by a Secularist. But what will the custodians of the Faith say to it?

At this time of day, ministers of the Gospel are asking and differently answering the question, "Does the Cross save?" As a matter of fact no two of them are wholly agreed as to what the Cross *is*, and how can they be agreed as to what it *does*, or does not? Mr. Meyer has one view, Dr. Horton another, Mr. Sadler another, and Mr. Garmon Roberts another, while the Secularist has a different one still. The *British Congregationalist*, in the columns of which the discussion is carried on will have reached a ripe old age before the ministers have arrived at anything like an unanimous opinion.

The Grand Old Showman of the Salvation Army held a big meeting recently at the Albert Hall. It was a "memorial service for our officers in heaven"—where William Booth is perfectly sure that *his* officers go. According to all reports the thing was splendidly stage-managed. There was a characteristic address by the "General" and any amount of hymn-singing. The following was sung to a jaunty tune:—

'Tis Jordan's river and you must go across,
'Tis Jordan's river and you must go across,
'Tis Jordan's river and you must go across,
But Jesus will be there."

Here is another beautiful gem:—

"Praise God, I'm saved,
Praise God, I'm saved,
All's well, all's well,
He sets me free."

Brains are still not "The Army's" strong point. Let us hope Salvationists improve in this respect on the other side of Jordan.

William Booth, at that Albert Hall meeting, expressed his personal dissent from the divine judgment. Referring to some foreign officers who died during the past year, he said: "We felt that they ought to stay with us and help us, but they had to go. The selections of death are very mysterious, and they are sometimes contrary to my notions. I feel sometimes that if I had the direction of this divine system I should act differently." This was sailing very near the wind, and the Grand Old Showman had to luff a bit. He admitted—and it was a *great*, a *remarkable* admission—that God Almighty might know more than he did. "If my thoughts," he said, "were his thoughts, I should, no doubt, do as he does." God Almighty breathes again.

As is well known, the Rev. R. J. Campbell, in the capacity of president, has just presented to the Congregational Board of London Ministers, a statement of Theology-up-to-date, which it was explained to them they ought "fully and frankly to accept." Out of Up-to-date theology many doctrines are to be dropped, such as the Fall, Original Sin, and Salvation. We are assured that "popular presentations of the remission of sins by faith in the finished work of Jesus are untrue, unethical, and contradicted by the facts of everyday life." The *Christian* observes: "And this has the effrontery to call itself 'Evangelical.'" We agree with Mr. Campbell in his strictures on the old theology, but would remind him that his own theology is quite as emphatically "contradicted by the facts of everyday life."

How magnificently vague Mr. Campbell's statement is. Take this as a sample: "That man is saved who is trying to live for God, that is for love, that is for the common life instead of for self and material gain." One would naturally infer that *God*, *love*, and *the common life* are interchangeable terms. But Mr. Campbell speaks of God often, in terms of personality, as if he looked upon him as a being to whom we owe our supreme allegiance. Sometimes he calls God *all that is*, in which case he cannot be a person. The *Christian* is, indeed, fully justified in describing the statement as "this extraordinary farrago."

The Rev. J. R. Day, Chancellor of the University of Syracuse, is a Puritan of the Puritans. All the scholarships in connection with that seat of learning, he announces, are to be granted only to non-smokers and non-theatre-goers. What a mighty pillar of pure, unadulterated Christianity. Syracuse has to guard its morals! But why leave the teetotallers out?

Mr. Lloyd-George is back from his holiday and on the warpath again. His speech to a large public meeting in Zion Chapel, Llanelly, was worthy of the occasion; and his language showed how little the Christian politicians have reason to rail at the style of the *Freethinker*. Dealing with the Education controversy, Mr. Lloyd-George said: "Ever since the Bill appeared the clergy had been perfectly epileptic. They had been a little calmer lately; they had become temporarily exhausted. The petrol had run out." If we referred to the clergy as "epileptic" it would be considered "just like our manners." It is perfectly proper, however, on the part of Mr. Lloyd-George. He is a Christian.

"Their language," Mr. Lloyd-George said of the clergy, "if used by anyone else, I would call blasphemous; but being used by them in the way of their trade or profession, it is privileged." This sally was greeted by the Nonconformist audience with "loud cheers." It did not occur to them that Dissenting ministers follow a "trade or profession" just as much as Church clergymen. For our part, when they talk of each other in this way, we feel like Voltaire when he heard two old women slanging each other. "I believe them both," he said.

Gluttony and drunkenness are the peculiar vices of Christian countries—we mean as far as vices are mentionable in a paper for general reading. To say that a man is a Mohammedan is to say, at least, that he is a teetotaler. To say that a man is a Christian is to say nothing whatever of a moral character about him. And this very fact, without going a step further, disposes of the claim of Christianity to be the best religion in the world. It isn't even the second best.

Christians let the truth out about their religion occasionally. The other morning, for instance, the *Daily Chronicle* printed some editorial paragraphs about Crete, which is now under international control. Our pious contemporary—for such it is—gave a signal proof of the benefit of the change from the old government of the Sultan; who, by the way, never drinks anything stronger than coffee. "Under the recent rule of the Turk," the *Chronicle* said, "even the wine industry fell into decay; but all that is now, happily, changing, and the wine business is booming." Exit the teetotal Turk! Enter the Christian boozier! We congratulate our pious contemporary on its lucid moments of candor.

Mr. Will Crooks, M.P., seems to have "Christ on the brain" ever since that Poplar inquiry. His latest utterance is to the effect that he doesn't mind being railed at, for there are people who hate even Jesus Christ. Mr. Crooks has only one more rung to climb. He will have to compare himself with God the Father next.

"Merlin," in last week's *Referee*, wrote thusly: "To my own poor thinking, a man who attempts to destroy the faith of a Christian is a malignant fool." We do not dispute the statement that Mr. Murray's thinking is poor. Neither will we imitate his manners and call *him* a malignant fool. The adjective would be quite unfair.

According to a notification in the *Liverpool Express* the wife of the Rev. J. Gough McCormick, of St. Paul's Vicarage, Prince's-park, presented him with twins "at the hour of evening prayer." The reverend gentleman might have exclaimed, as Spurgeon did on a similar occasion,

"Not more than others I deserve,
But God hath given me more."

But this might provoke the Lord to send triplets next time.

Alfred Guy, a farm youth, sued his Employer, Edmund Brown, of High Fothergill, at the Richmond County Police Court, Yorkshire, to recover the sum of £10 for wrongful dismissal. The defendant appears to have thought the plaintiff responsible for the wet weather during haytime. He told him that he was a sinner and had devils in him, and this was the cause of the unwelcome rain. As the rain continued, and the "darkness" in Guy communicated itself to the elements, he was dismissed. When the young man wrote about his wages the former replied that "the Lord would not let him pay them." This convenient theory was useless in court, and the Bench gave a verdict for the plaintiff for the full amount, with costs, including the solicitor's fees. Farmer Brown will have to get a settlement from the Lord—if he can.

Rev. W. Edwards objects to Brentford Free Library being opened on Sundays. He says that Free Libraries opened on that day degenerate into courting halls for young men and women. We presume Mr. Edwards wants them to do their courting in church.

Mr. Foote's Engagements.

Sunday, October 7, Secular Hall, Brunswick-street, Glasgow : 12 (noon), "A Searchlight on the Bible"; 6.30, "Shelley and Robert Burns: A Study in Poetry and Progress."

October 14, Manchester; 28, Leicester.
November 18, Birmingham.

To Correspondents.

C. COHEN'S LECTURE ENGAGEMENTS.—October 7, Liverpool; 14, a., Brockwell Park; c., Camberwell; 21, Tyneside Lecture Society, Newcastle; 22, Hetton-le-Hoet November 4, Birmingham. December 2, Forest Gate; 9, Glasgow; 16, Belfast.

J. LLOYD'S LECTURING ENGAGEMENTS.—October 21, Glasgow. December 2, Liverpool.

MR. SYMES'S LECTURING ENGAGEMENTS.—October 14, Glasgow; 28, Manchester. November 4, Nelson; 11, Liverpool. December 2, Birmingham; 9, Leicester; 16, Newcastle.

WATCHFUL.—Your notes are good, but H. L. Hastings' pamphlet is hardly worth your trouble.

R. J. HENDERSON.—You are astonished at the *Freethinker* being excluded from the Bristol and other Free Libraries while the works of Huxley, Spencer, Max Nordau, etc., are admitted. But the reasons are very simple. In the first place, the bigots who are forced into toleration up to a certain point, must "draw the line somewhere, don't you know," in order to give some gratification to their silly pride. In the next place, the writers of more or less expensive books are not supposed to be as dangerous as the writers in cheap weekly publications. The real offence is appealing to the people. Appealing to the classes doesn't so much matter. Nearly all the "blasphemy" prosecutions of the past hundred years have been aimed at the editors of Freethought papers. The writers of books have escaped. Do you understand now? We thank you for your encouraging letter, and are glad to make the following extract: "I am very thankful that I came across your excellent paper; it seems to me the only one I ever saw that sticks to the truth."

J. M. SULLIVAN.—We presume that Smith & Son's agent has executed your order, as their *tabu* of the *Freethinker* seems to have been removed. Our shop manager, Mr. W. A. Vaughan, called at our request at Wyman & Sons' head office, and managed, with some difficulty, to interview one of the head officials who is responsible for their boycott of this journal. It was certainly odd, and as certainly not civil, to supply you with the *Freethinker* for nearly nine months, and then to refuse to supply you any longer, and also to refuse you any explanation. We judge from Mr. Vaughan's report that the aforesaid official is a bigoted person, who resents the idea that people should read anything he does not approve. First, he said that complaints as to the sale of this journal had been made by some of their customers; then he said that they refused to supply any "filthy or obscene" publications; lastly he said that they had issued instructions that the *Freethinker* was to be supplied when ordered. This is a sad confusion, and we hope Wyman & Sons will return to a common-sense position on this matter. The official said, "We don't want publicity." Very likely. But we do want it. Publicity is our only defence. All we have to add, at present, is that any of our readers who cannot obtain the *Freethinker* from Wyman & Sons should promptly transfer their orders to Smith & Son, who have shops in all the towns where Wyman and Sons have taken over the railway bookstall.

T. D.—Shall be sent as requested. Thanks for the cutting: see "Acid Drops." Glad to hear you find the *Freethinker* such a weekly treat. Few papers ever had such an attached body of readers.

HIDE PARK "SAINT."—The subject was dealt with in last week's "Acid Drops." Of course papers like the *Daily Express* do not aim at a really representative correspondence. You might have known that your letter would not be inserted.

T. W. ALLISON.—See paragraph. Thanks.

E. B. WOODHEAD.—Your edition may be a fairly full one, and probably is; but we could not say it is complete without examining it. We have a complete Voltaire (French, of course) in our own library. The translation you send us is excellent as a first effort, but it would need revision by someone with a greater mastery of idiomatic English. Why not go on for your own amusement? You would find it good practice.

V. G. DUNCAN.—The single name of Darwin outweighs all the names in your list. And what is the use of citing Faraday as a believer? Faraday deliberately refused to apply his reason to his religious belief. He belonged to a curious sect, which we believe is nearly extinct now.

E. MOONCROFT.—Protestants burnt Catholics in England, and outlawed them for centuries afterwards. The Act of Catholic Emancipation was only carried in the nineteenth century. John Calvin was a Protestant, and he was chiefly responsible for the burning of Servetus. Protestants persecuted bitterly in New England, and even put Quakers to death. It was in Protestant England that Richard Carlile spent nine years and seven months in prison, mainly for publishing Paine's *Age of Reason*; and that George Jacob Holyoake and G. W. Foote were imprisoned for the fictitious crime of "blasphemy."—Thanks for

cuttings. We note that the Rev. Ralph Atkinson, of America, is coming over to save Liverpool, with a recommendation in his pocket from Dr. R. A. Torrey. No doubt he expects to have something else in his pocket when he leaves.

E. A. DAVIES.—See paragraph. Thanks.

A. A.—Mr. Lloyd has been helping us with "Acid Drops" lately, and the paragraph you refer to was one of his. In a certain sense, it is correct to say that "As a matter of fact we never do what we do not like." This does not mean that we always like what we do, for the act may be in itself disagreeable, but that we like—in the sense of choosing or preferring—to do what we do rather than accept the alternative. Men have eaten boiled boots in sieges, not because they liked boiled boots in the abstract, but because they liked boiled boots better than perishing of starvation.

W. P. BALL.—Thanks for your valued cuttings.

J. BROGH.—Of course you don't *blame* the Bishop of Manchester for getting up a protest meeting against the Education Bill in such an attractive place as Bellevue Gardens at sixpence a head. It shows he knows his business—and his public too.

E. G. MOODY.—Glad to hear that the Japanese friend at Yokohama, to whom you have been sending the *Freethinker* for some time, has become a subscriber.

T. J. THURLOW.—Obliged to shorten it a little; it arrived on Tuesday.

H. HOYE.—We agree with you as to the prospect of Freethought audiences in West Ham. Our big meetings at the Stratford Town Hall are got without any help from the local press or from any of the local parties, except, of course, the N. S. S. Branch.

J. WOODALL.—Thanks.

E. FENTON.—Shall be sent as requested. We appreciate your efforts to promote our circulation, and are glad to hear that some of your friends, to whom you have introduced the *Freethinker*, are "quite taken up with it."

D. F. GLOAK.—Very sorry to hear of Mr. McLean's death. He wrote us only a couple of months ago about a remedy for insomnia, but did not give us the idea that he was in any immediate danger. He was a stalwart Secularist.

A. MOLE.—The subject was on the list offered to the Manchester Branch for selection. We do not know their choice at the time of writing.

E. J. JONES.—We didn't think you would get your letter into the *Labor Leader*. Mr. Keir Hardie and some of his friends love real discussion as the Devil is said to love holy water.

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.

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

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.

Sugar Plums.

Mr. Foote opens the Freethought winter season in Glasgow to-day (Oct. 7) with two lectures in the Secular Hall, Brunswick-street. No doubt the local "saints" have seen that a good advertisement has been given, privately as well as publicly, to Mr. Foote's visit. The subject at 12 noon is "A Searchlight on the Bible," and at 6.30 "Shelley and Robert Burns: a Study in Poetry and Progress." For the evening lecture, especially, those who wish to secure seats should be in very good time.

A copy of Mr. F. Bonte's *From Fiction to Fact* was sent by Mr. W. Heaford to Professor Lucien Anspach, of Brussels, who edits the series called "Bibliothèque de Propagande Libérale." Professor Anspach is delighted with Mr. Bonte's pamphlet, and begs leave to translate it for the "Liberal Propagandist Library." Of course leave has been given. The translation will be made from the new (second) edition.

Mr. Cohen opens the winter season for the Liverpool Branch to-day, lecturing afternoon and evening in the Milton Hall, Daulby-street. We hope the local "saints" will rally strongly on this occasion, and try to bring some of their Christian friends along with them to the lectures.

Mr. Cohen delivered the last of the special course of Stratford Town Hall lectures on Sunday evening to a capital audience. We hear that he was in excellent form. Unfortunately there was not enough discussion, but the one opponent was ably answered.

The North London Branch has induced Mr. Symes to deliver the last lecture of the season at Parliament Hill this afternoon (Oct. 7) at 3.30. Local "saints" should make the meeting known.

Mr. Joseph Symes will be pleased to deliver lantern-lectures on Science, on Bible Manuscripts, on Discoveries in Babylonia, Egypt, etc., on the Catacombs of Rome, etc., wherever such may be desired.

The Lovaine Hall, Newcastle-on-Tyne, has been used for Freethought meetings occasionally during many years. One of the N. S. S. Conferences was held there some fourteen years ago, and three courses of Sunday lectures by Messrs. Foote, Cohen, and Lloyd were delivered there not long since. Application was made for it for lectures by Mr. Foote and Mr. Symes this side of Christmas, but the Tyneside Geographical Society, which owns the building, instructed its secretary that the Lovaine Hall was not to be let again "on Sundays for such purposes." Considering that a Geographical Society ought to consist of persons above the average in intelligence, this decision is amazing. Such a piece of bigotry may be commended to the attention of those who keep telling us that the battle of Freethought is over. It is not owing to such critics that it was ever begun. Of course the Newcastle friends are looking round for another hall.

The members of the Mountain Ash Branch send us a written appeal for publication, but we are obliged to make a summary of it. They want to engage a lecturer and organiser for the various Branches in South Wales. The salary they mention is 30s. a week, but they can hardly expect to find a genius at that price, and we suppose that feature of the project is open to revision. The members, who are nearly all working men, generously subscribed £7 10s. at one meeting, and they are prepared to go on subscribing, but they feel that they will not be able to raise all the money themselves; so they want to know if there are any Freethinkers in other parts of the country who are willing to render assistance. They say that the Welsh revival has prepared the ground for active Freethought work in their district, and that whatever is expended in Freethought propaganda there will be a good investment. Letters in reply to this appeal should be addressed to Mr. William Thomas, 9 Harris-view, Penrhiwceiber, Mountain Ash, Glam., S. W.

One of our readers, who attended out Stratford Town Hall lecture, and had not heard us before for some time, writes: "I was delighted to see you in your good old form. What a grand meeting! A miserable opposition—but what a splendid reply! An old chap sitting next me asked who you were. He was visibly affected. He said he never knew there was such a man. I went home two inches taller." We quote this for the sake of the old man incident. It helps to show the good that such meetings do, and how necessary it is to sustain our propaganda.

"F. S." was so pleased with Mr. Cohen's recent article on the Salvation Army that he suggested that it should be reprinted as a leaflet and distributed broadcast throughout Great Britain. We did not judge that the article as it stood—able and valuable as it was—would quite serve the purpose intended, and Mr. Cohen agreed with us. But a little alteration and a little amplification would make it all it should be as a leaflet, and this is being done. "F. S." promises to contribute towards the cost of producing the leaflet. Are there any others ready to follow his example? If so we should be glad to hear from them immediately.

It is pleasant to find touches of Freethought in unexpected quarters. We have been favored with a cutting from a military paper called the *Regiment*. It deals with the question: "The Lawyer, the Parson, or the Soldier: Who is the least Wanted?" Naturally the answer is not "the soldier." The following passage about Parsons is headed "Coin Collectors":—

"The only thing the parsons ever seem to have done is to split straws and take up collections. And this same straw-splitting mania has caused more hatred, malice, and uncharitableness in nations and in families than all other things put together. It has destroyed armics, communities, and congregations. It has divided allies and tribes, and separated man from man and woman. Hovering round our christenings, our confirmings, our marriages and deaths, demanding toll for the praying of a prayer, and fees for the gabbling of a few lines; they toil not, neither do they spin. Yet they claim the fattest of feeding, the finest of cloth, and the softest of down whereupon to lay their heads. Of what use are they for all the practical purposes of life? I do not ask the question in a spirit of vindictiveness. I wish them no harm as men, but when we speak of the survival of the fittest, the parson, as well as the lawyer, must go before the soldier."

We hope the spirit of this passage is spreading in the army.

Several "Sugar Plums" were crowded out in the make-up this week, and have to stand over till the next issue.

My Twenty Years' Fight in Australia.—III.

(Continued from p. 619.)

FINDING it impossible to put a stop to lectures or to my charging for admission thereto, the government of Victoria determined, in 1885, to stop my *Liberator*. Early in the last century the British government, then at its lowest depth of wickedness, had made a law to prevent any poor man issuing a newspaper. Not content with their horrid taxes on journals, they required every man or body of men who were about to publish a newspaper to furnish, beforehand, two sureties, in £200 each (I think), that they would pay all fines which might be inflicted upon them for publishing blasphemy or sedition. This diabolical and pious law was duly adopted by the government of Victoria, and vastly improved by making the sureties £400 each instead of £200. Mr. Bradlaugh had compelled the British government to abolish this godly law in 1868 or thereabouts; but, "by God's especial grace," the Victorian government still retains it for the glory of God and the salvation of that State.

Well, when I proposed to start the *Liberator* many of our friends felt concerned about this law, and demanded what I intended to do. I informed them that I should ignore it. "I shall be publishing what they call blasphemy and sedition both in every issue of the paper," said I; "and if such sureties are given, the rogues who rule us will very soon get the money. I cannot ask, I couldn't permit, anyone to run such a risk for me; but apart from that, I intend to defy them to put such a law in motion. Let them do their worst."

After hesitating for months, the police came and bought five copies of the *Liberator*, which I myself sold to them. No two of those copies were consecutive, in fact, there was more than the interval of a month between each two of them. This ought to have been fatal to the prosecution, but the judges came to the rescue of the government and most shamelessly racked and tortured the law—to ruin me, as Acting Chief Justice Higinbotham openly declared. But I am forestalling.

I was sued for the non-furnishing of the aforesaid sureties for my paper, and the case was heard before Mr. Justice Holroyd and a Jury of six. I conducted my own case. I told the Judge that I never could obey this law. "You will have to obey it!" he gravely replied. "No, your Honor," said I. "I never could look the world in the face again if I obeyed it. It is the only law known to the statute-book which punishes a man beforehand. This law is grossly insulting. It assumes that you are going to commit an offence, and demands payment of your fines before you have even the opportunity of offending. I shall never submit to it. Neither I nor my paper were ever in penal servitude; and I'll take out a ticket of leave to please nobody."

Then I pointed out to the court that the prosecution was a blunder and must therefore fail. The Act describes a newspaper as a publication appearing at intervals of at least twenty-eight days, and sold for less than sixpence per copy. Now the copies produced and prosecuted are not consecutive, and there is nothing whatever to show that they are issues or copies of one and the same newspaper, for they are over twenty-eight days apart in their dates. There is no proof possible that the five numbers are so much as one newspaper, or parts of one; and yet I am charged with publishing five newspapers, and a fine is demanded for each of them! Even if it could be proved that they all belong to one and the same newspaper, still, they would be parts of only one newspaper; and I could not be made liable for more than one, whereas the prosecution is demanding a fine each for five separate newspapers.

The Judge, in his wisdom—and he was the best Judge in Victoria—overruled all that I pleaded, and told the Jury that they must regard the five numbers as five newspapers. I replied that it would be quite

as reasonable to say that every separate copy of a given issue was a separate newspaper.

Knowing that the case was certain to go against me, I asked the Jury to give me a verdict, notwithstanding. "If, however, you feel that you cannot give me a verdict, I will ask you to do the next best thing. The law leaves it to your discretion to inflict a fine of £25 for each number, or £5 for each. I ask you then to name the lowest fine possible, if you are going to inflict any fine at all."

The Jury decided against me, but they gave me the lowest possible fine. I gave notice of appeal to the Full Court; but before I proceed to relate that stage of the case I must notice a fact or two that will exhibit the moral character of the government at that date. I had subpoenaed the Registrar General as a witness. I asked him how many newspapers were published in the colony of Victoria. "About one hundred and fifty," said he. And how many of all those have furnished the required sureties? "About fifty," was his reply. "Then," said I, "you mean to tell the court that two-thirds of the newspapers in the colony are in exactly the same condition as the *Liberator*?" "That is so," said he.

Of course, I did not forget to show up the rascality of the government, nor to point out to the Jury that this law was used for nothing else but an engine of oppression and ruin against any man for whom the government felt a dislike or whom they might wish to crush just to gratify the clergy. A Romish newspaper had been published even then for thirteen years, without ever having been troubled for the sureties. But, to be sure, the Popish priests were circulating the worst poison in their organ and using it to perpetuate the vilest possible slavery. Therefore the wicked government favored it. My paper was spreading nothing but truth, light, and liberty; and therefore the parsons and their obedient tools in government did their best to crush it.

Of course, the Appeal to the Full Court did not mend matters. I never expected to get the judgment in the court below reversed, and never did. Among other things I laid before the three judges was the monstrosity of making five separate numbers of five separate newspapers. "Why," I said, "to treat a man so, to fine him for the separate issues as if they were so many distinct newspapers, was to ruin the said man, not to punish him in any rational sense or manner. Supposing such a man," said I, "were dependent upon his paper for his bread, and could but just make both ends meet, such a mode of fining him would mean his utter ruin. And we have no right to suppose the legislature meant to ruin a defendant, unless they said so clearly, or made it clear in some way, that that was their intention."

It was in reply to this part of my pleading that Mr. Justice Higinbotham openly and angrily declared that the legislature *did* mean to ruin such a man as myself, unless I obeyed the law. He had not forgiven my exposure of him in the former trial, when I so severely showed up his weathercock conduct respecting the Sunday Act.

Of course, the Full Court dismissed my Appeal, and definitely decided that five separate and disconnected numbers of a paper really did constitute, not only one newspaper, but five distinct newspapers! And that astounding judgment, made and confirmed by no fewer than four judges, still adorns the records of the Victorian Supreme Court.

I retired from the Full Court a beaten and crushed man—so everybody thought—and the holy newspapers and the pulpits jubilated over their victory. The amount of glory God acquired by this their triumph has never been weighed or measured.

But what gave rise to no little surprise, nobody seemed one penny the worse! I and my paper went on just as before; our circulation increased as a result of the prosecution, and the servants of God gradually opened their eyes to the fact that they had advertised Atheism as it had never before been advertised in that part of the world, and I openly thanked them all for giving me such a lift.

They were not yet satisfied, however, and several suggestions were laid before government as "sure and certain" means for accomplishing my destruction. Some called upon the government to refuse my paper passage through the Post Office, and this was, for a time, contemplated. But it came to nothing. Then, at the command of the parsons, the government hinted at the employment of force to put me down, but could never make up their minds as to what kind of force to apply; and so, in the course of a few months, they sullenly retired from the contest, leaving me ten times more powerful than ever.

Four or five months after the decision of the Full Court the Attorney-General sent me in a bill for about £125, including fines, costs, etc. In response thereto, I gave the Attorney-General a candid statement of my position and intention. In a letter, published in the *Liberator*, I informed him that, knowing him to be a dishonest man, I had provided for this emergency. "All the furniture I have," said I, "is on time-payment; so you cannot seize that. The rest of my estate consists of a sick wife, a few fowls, and a cat and a dog. You may seize these when you like. If these fail to satisfy you, you can take the carcass. If none of these satisfy you, I promise to pay at the resurrection, if you make the demand."

What may happen at the resurrection I really do not know, though I very much doubt if I shall rise at that date with money enough in my purse to pay the bill, especially if compound interest should be demanded! Considering the time (I mean the eternity) that must elapse before the resurrection arrives, my indebtedness will be something considerable—£125 at compound interest for more years than I could count in twenty lifetimes! Probably it may turn out to be the hugest debt ever contracted. It may, of course, be liquidated in the fire that is to burn up the universe; and I am hoping that I shall never, after that, be troubled about it. The bill has never been paid, and I think it never will be.

I may mention that Kerferd, the cowardly Attorney-General who, in obedience to the clergy, prosecuted me and my paper, just afterwards pitchforked himself on to the Supreme Court Bench, and became a judge, much to the disgust of all the best men in the colony. On a subsequent date I had the distinguished honor of appearing before his august personality. He was one of three judges who sat to hear an appeal of mine. That was the only time we faced each other, and he never opened his mouth from the beginning of the trial to the end. Not long after he died suddenly, and my long quarrel with him came to a close.

(To be continued.)

JOS. SYMES.

A Voice from Oxford.

IN *The Religion of All Good Men* (Constable; 5s. net.), H. W. Garrod, a tutor in one of the colleges of the great and ancient University, there is a refreshing evidence that Freethought is alive in the halls and cloisters of the beautiful old city, which to have lived in is to love it. Memories of men like Shelley and Jowett and Romanes are fragrant in those venerable precincts, and the intellectual life there is brightened by the sunshine of liberal thought, such as this volume displays. No danger now that the teachers or students of that famous seat of learning are in peril of the stake or the rack for their free opinions. Roger Bacon, could he come back again, would receive a welcome that would amply testify of the orb of thought that, nevertheless, it still moves, as Galileo said of the rotation of the globe.

Mr. Garrod is evidently an enlightened man. He does not hesitate, says the *Church Times* sadly and solemnly—perhaps sarcastically, as the manner of the bigot is—"to question the freedom of the will, to 'hold no brief for Theism,' to hold that God, being only a possibility, cannot be worshiped, to

assert 'Christ is not God,' or to question any life beyond the grave." Very dreadful this in an Oxford tutor! But better yet is his preference for "some kind of religion of all good men to orthodox Christianity." He inveighs against the moral ideals of the New Testament, and says: "We cannot abandon Christian dogmas and keep Christian ethics." They stand and fall together. Mr. Garrod exposes the fallacy of their union. Nor this, but he argues on the misconception of the kind of mission Jesus Christ believed himself to be invested, and as to the object in view of which he framed his moral teaching. "He never supposed himself to be the Messiah, or identified himself with the Son of Man; the Gospels are garbled and interpolated from party motives." He was only the herald of that expected personage, his precursor. The Cross quenched that fancy, and facts dispelled the legends and fancy stories of Resurrection and Ascension.

We may well query as to the actual existence of Jesus Christ, regarding him wholly as an ideal character built up out of many imaginations of the devout, as Goldwin Smith avers, and the fervor of Christians are ever adding to. But, granting him to have been an actual person, we can see how his life, his works, teachings, and death have been magnified, misinterpreted, and falsified. But the Savior whom religious ones appeal to so vehemently disappears in the cloud of sacred myth, and the vision of his glory, majesty, and wisdom fades away in the morning light of truth. Christ thought himself the forerunner of the true Messianic Son of Man, says Mr. Garrod, only that, and nothing more—a herald, a reformer to prepare the way. Not divine in any sense, but the bearer of a great message to humanity, which is very nearly like the advanced Unitarian view of the Nazarene.

And Christ founded no church. St. Paul was the real founder. "He understood Christ better, and his teachings better than Christ himself, and he organised it merely for the winding up, as it were, of mundane affairs. He would be astonished, could he return, to find it still here." For did not Paul asseverate that "the time is short"? Did he not prophesy the immediate Second Coming, when those of the faithful who remained should be caught up to meet the Lord in the air? And so shall we be "forever with the Lord. Amen! so let it be," says the hymn, *but it hasn't*, and never will be. Such strong delusions of Christianity die away as the ages roll on, leaving the magnified and erroneous ideal of the Christ as a product of the imagination, as "a fond thing, vainly invented."

Christ's ideal, says the author, is one "which will no longer bear examination." It is fictitious in moral value—it is, in short, unreliable and untrue, the author declares, in substance. What say the pious pundits of Oxford to this? For they are pious, some of them, and they are pundits most of them. A finer body of scholars it would be difficult to find, or a more courteous class of gentlemen. They are an honor to the University and the nation. Would that they welcomed the evidences of Freethought stirring in their midst!

"It follows," says our author, "that the criticism of Christianity on the ethical side has scarcely yet begun." And its moral side is to be rejected by the young men, who are to cast aside its ascetic, pleasure-forbidding precepts for the natural, healthy impulses and enjoyments. Christian teachings desire a repression and crucifixion of natural instincts, and would promote a Christianity suitable for angels rather than for men. These impossible demands are not to be heeded. "Even from the pulpit voices are heard proclaiming the limitations of Christianity as proclaimed by Christ. Great truths, of which Christ never dreamed, are put forward as truths of the Gospel. Teaching diametrically opposed to, is now 'reconciled' with, that of Christ. Words of Christ, which were false or mistaken, are left on one side or explained away. We are told that 'Christianity is progressive'—that is, the mind of man is progressive, and has grown out of a good deal that is

in Christianity.....What is wanted now daily is more of the *free spirit*, that we may be delivered from the bondage of the New Law."

Brave is this utterance from the cloisters of old Oxford, and he is brave who utters them. We shall see if he is made to suffer or is persecuted who has the courage to speak so boldly. Sitting in the exquisite gardens of the colleges, and thinking over these strong words of Mr. Garrod, is like feeling a refreshing breeze over the flowers and lawns of New and Trinity, of Merton and Magdalen, and along Christ Church meadows. In Addison's Walk at Magdalen we see another figure—that of a young enthusiast for truth—and we rejoice for the consolation. As Lowell said:—

"Truth crushed to earth shall rise again,
The eternal years of God are hers:
But error, wounded, writhes with pain,
And dies among her worshippers."

GERALD GREY.

The Fall of Eve.

Do we believe there was a first woman? Certainly not. We are Darwinians. We cannot allow that there was a particular female specimen among the ape-like progenitors of the human race that could be called the first woman, any more than we can allow that there is a particular moment when a girl becomes a woman or a youth a man. The first woman we are concerned with at present is Mrs. Eve, the wife of Mr. Adam, whom Tennyson calls "the grand old gardener," and whose glorious life, noble actions, and wise and witty sayings ought to have been recorded in the book of Genesis, only the author forgot them. Instead of representing Mr. Adam as a grand old gardener, the inspired biographer represents him as a grand old fool. Like Charles II., in Rochester's epigram, Mr. Adam never did a wise thing; but, unlike the merry monarch, he never said a wise one either. A collection of his utterances, throughout a long life extending to nearly a thousand years, would be the smallest and baldest treatise to be found in the whole world.

Mrs. Eve was the result of an afterthought. God did not include her in the original scheme of things. He threw her in afterwards as a make-weight. Poor Mr. Adam was all alone in his glory in the Garden of Eden, king of the dreariest paradise that ever existed. Monarch of all he surveyed, his right there was none to dispute: except, perhaps, a big-maned lion, with hot carnivorous jaws, a long-mouthed alligator, a boa-constrictor, a stinging wasp, or an uncatchable flea. Walking abroad and surveying his kingdom, he saw that all the lower animals had partners. Some of the males had one wife, and some a fine harem, but none was without a mate. Mr. Adam was the only male unprovided for, and he was besides a poor orphan. Never had he climbed on his father's knee. God was his father, and *his* legs were too long. Never had he felt a mother's kiss on his brow. He watched the amorous couples frisking about, the doves billing and cooing, and his solitary heart yearned for a partner. Lifting up his hands to the sky, from which his heavenly parent used occasionally to drop down for a conversation, he cried aloud, in words that were afterwards used by poor diddled Esau, "Bless me, even me also, O my father."

Day after day poor Mr. Adam pined away. In less than a month he lost two stone in weight, and the Devil had serious thoughts of offering to purchase him as a living skeleton for his show in Pandemonium. At last God took pity on him. Forgetting that he had pronounced everything good, or not foreseeing that Moses would be mean enough to record the mistake, he said it was not good for Mr. Adam to be alone, and resolved to make the orphan-bachelor a wife. But how to do it? God had clean forgotten her, and had used up every bit of his material. All the nothing he had in stock when he began to make the universe was exhausted. There was not a particle of nothing left. So God was obliged to use over again some of the old material. He put Mr. Adam into a deep sleep, and carved out one of his ribs. It was the first surgical operation under chloroform. With this spare rib God manufactured the first woman. How it was done nobody knows, but that it was done *everybody* knows, except a few wretched, obstinate, perverse infidels, who deserve imprisonment in this life and hell-fire in the next. Why God took a rib, instead of a leg or an arm, has never been decided; but Christian commentators say it was to show two things; first, that the man should love the woman, as coming from near his heart, and secondly, that the woman should obey the man, as she came from under his arm. As our Church of England marriage service says, the husband

is to love and honor his wife, but the wife is to love, honor and obey her husband!

Mrs. Eve was probably a very pretty creature, or the painters have belied her; and some poets have declared that God was so much in love with her himself, that he regretted his pledge to give her to Adam. Her attire was remarkably scanty, but beauty unadorned is adorned the most, and her future husband's wardrobe was as limited as her own. This gentleman woke up at the proper moment, minus a rib and plus a wife; an awkward, yet after all a pleasant, exchange. He had never seen a woman before, but he recognised Mrs. Eve as his wife straight off. It was the shortest courtship on record.

Directly Mrs. Eve appeared the mischief began—as might be expected. Woman was made for mischief. There is mischief in her bright eyes, and dimpled smiles, and braided hair. She sets the world on fire; that is to say, she kindles the energies of the lubberly creature who calls himself her superior; makes him look spruce and lively, clean his teeth and finger nails, put on a clean shirt, and go courting.

According to the old Hebrew story, Old Nick tempted her to eat the forbidden apples that grew upon Jehovah's favorite tree in the orchard of Eden. But this is doubtless a mistake; a legendary corruption of the original history. Women are not fonder of apples than men; why, then, should the Devil wait for the advent of Mrs. Eve before attempting a stroke of business? John Milton, indeed, following in the wake of Saint Peter, represents her as the weaker vessel; but this is sheer nonsense, and surprising nonsense too, when we recollect that John and Peter were both married.

There cannot be the least doubt that the Devil tempted Mrs. Eve with a *trousseau*. She grew tired, and rather ashamed, of being naked, and yearned to run up a milliner's bill. Besides, she noticed that her Hubby was cooling off in his affection. He did not absolutely neglect her, but he went fishing more frequently, and had long confabulations with archangels, to which she was not invited, on account of the supposed inferiority of her intellect. During the honeymoon he could never feast his eyes enough on her loveliness; but after the honeymoon he looked more upon the birds, the trees, the hills, and the sky. One day, however, using a pool for a mirror, she did up her hair, which had previously wanted over her shoulders. This produced a striking effect on Mr. Adam. He started with pleasure, and the old honeymoon look came back to his eyes. But the effect wore off in time, and poor Mrs. Eve sighed for a fresh means of attack on his imagination.

It was in this condition that she fell an easy prey to the Devil. A beautiful morning filled Eden with splendor. The branches of the trees waved in the refreshing wind; the birds flashed amongst them in their gay plumage; animals of every variety sported in their cageless menagerie; and flowers of every form and hue completed the living picture of paradise. Mrs. Eve hung fondly upon Mr. Adam's breast, but he said he would go fishing, and catch something for dinner.

When he was out of sight, Old Nick appeared in the form of a milliner's assistant. With a smirk and a bow he opened fire on the citadel. From a large portmanteau he produced a lovely wardrobe, which he laid on the grass, together with a book of costumes; and then withdrew while the lady dressed herself. In a quarter of an hour she was attired like a Parisian belle; witching and provoking, from dainty boots to saucy hat; so that when Old Nick returned he felt downright jealous, and cursed Mr. Adam for a dull-eyed booby.

"What have I to pay you?" asked the lady, with a delighted smile. "Nothing, madam, I assure you," replied the tradesman. "It is an honor," he continued, "to serve such an illustrious customer. It will bring me no end of business in other quarters." Then, with another smirk and bow, he retired; exclaiming *sotto voce*, "You pay me nothing, but I guess you'll have to pay him."

When Mr. Adam returned, and found his wife so exquisitely adorned, he was unable to restrain his rapture. His passion more than revived; he doted on this beautiful creature. And this led to his expulsion from Eden. Jehovah saw himself completely cut out. When Mr. Adam should have been casting his eyes to heaven, he was watching the flicker and listening to the *frou-frou* of Mrs. Eve's skirts on the grass; or drinking delight from her sweet, blue eyes, as they gleamed through the shadow of her broad-brimmed hat. "I'll not stand it," said Jehovah, and they were evicted from the holding.

Dear Mrs. Eve! She did not fall, she rose. The incident was misrepresented by pugnacious curmudgeons who hated the sight of milliners' bills. Without the "fall" of Mrs. Eve there would have been no clothes, and consequently no civilisation; for houses are only, as it were, extended suits of clothes, larger garments to shield us from the weather, and create for us a home. It was after all better to take part in the great Battle of Life, with all its difficulties and dangers, than to loll about eternally in the Garden of Eden, chewing

the cud like contemplative cows. "Doing nothing," said a shrewd Yankee, "is the hardest work I know—if you keep a it." Mrs. Eve made life more bearable by giving us something to do. And when the ladies reflect that, if she had not "fallen," and resigned nakedness for clothing, there would have been no Worth and no Madame Louise, they will rejoice that she turned her back on the Garden of Eden.

—G. W. Foote, "Comic Sermons and other Fantasias."

SOLITUDE.

Happy the man, whose wish and care
A few paternal acres bound,
Content to breathe his native air
In his own ground.

Whose herds with milk, whose fields with bread,
Whose flocks supply him with attire;
Whose trees in summer yield him shade,
In winter fire.

Bless'd who can unconcern'dly find
Hours, days, and years slide soft away,
In health of body, peace of mind,
Quiet by day,

Sound sleep by night; study and ease
Together mix'd; sweet recreation,
And innocence, which most does please
With meditation.

Thus let me live, unseen, unknown;
Thus unlamented let me die,
Steal from the world, and not a stone
Tell where I lie. —Pope.

A good and wise man differs from a bad and idiotic one, simply as a good dog from a cur, and as any manner of dog from a wolf or a weasel. And if you are to believe in, or preach without half believing in, a spiritual world or law—only in the hope that whatever you do, or anybody else does, that is foolish or heastly, may be in them and by them mended and patched and pardoned and worked up again as good as new—the less you believe in—and most solemnly, the less you talk about—a spiritual world, the better.—John Ruskin.

Obituary.

BURIED at Manor Park Cemetery on Saturday afternoon last, Mr. Thomas Simson, aged sixty-nine years. The beautiful Secular Burial Service was most impressively read over the grave by one of his life-long colleagues in Bethnal Green Branch of the N. S. S., Mr. Doughty, both gentlemen having been members of the above Branch ever since its formation. The deceased gentleman endured the ordeal of a long and painful illness, leading up to a very trying operation, with the most patient fortitude. A number of his Secularist friends united with his two daughters and other relatives in paying their last tribute of respect at the graveside. Mr. Simson was one of that brave band, the Old Guard, upon whom Mr. Bradlaugh could always rely to stand by him when there was any prospect of rowdy opposition at his projected meetings. Of my own knowledge I can say that Mr. Simson was equally devoted towards Mr. Foote as to his great predecessor. In fact, in him the National Secular Society has lost one of its most loyal and respected members.

T. J. THURLOW.

It is with deep regret I record the death of Mr. William McLean, of Fairmuir Engineering Works, Dundee, who died on the 8th ult. In him the movement has lost a staunch friend and supporter. He was known amongst us as one of the most warm-hearted of men, whose sympathy never failed to take practical shape. In compliance with his own desire, Austin Holyoake's Funeral Service was read at the grave, in presence of a large following of relatives and friends.

D. F. GLOAK.

WE lose a useful supporter by the death of Mr. Ed. Handslip, of Westoe, which took place suddenly at the house of some friends at Birmingham on the 24th ult. Deceased was in his 70th year, and was well known among his personal friends as an uncompromising Freethinker. Keen in business and genial in private life, he had a varied and successful experience of trades and a wide circle of friends. He leaves a widow and daughter.

R. CHAPMAN (South Shields).

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): 7.30, *Conversazione*.

WEST HAM BRANCH N. S. S. (Liberal Hall, Broadway, Forest Gate): 7.30, F. A. Davies, "Did Jesus Mean What He Said?"

OUTDOOR.

BETHNAL GREEN BRANCH N. S. S. (Victoria Park, near the Fountain): 3.30, James Marshall.

CAMBERWELL BRANCH N. S. S.: Brockwell Park, 3.15, W. J. Ramsey, "The Atonement."

NORTH LONDON BRANCH N. S. S. (Parliament Hill, Hampstead): 3.30, Joseph Symes, "The Christian Heaven."

WEST LONDON BRANCH N. S. S. (Hyde Park, Marble Arch): 11.30, H. B. Samuels, "We Won't Give Up the Bible."

COUNTRY.

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

GLASGOW BRANCH N. S. S. (Hall, 110 Brunswick-street): G. W. Foote, 12 noon, "A Searchlight on the Bible"; 6.30, "Shelley and Robert Burns: A Study in Poetry and Progress." Committee meets at 1.30 p.m.

GLASGOW RATIONALIST ASSOCIATION (319 Sauchiehall-street): Wednesday, Oct. 10, at 8, Miss Jean S. Spence, "Woman."

LIVERPOOL BRANCH N. S. S. (Milton Hall, Daulby-street): C. Cohen, 3, "The Salvation Army: A Study in Deception and Credulity"; 7, "The Fate of Religion."

MOUNTAIN ASH BRANCH N. S. S. (Glyde's Restaurant, Commercial-street): G. T. Bennett, "Can a Christian be a Socialist?"

PORTH BRANCH N. S. S. (Secular Room, Town Hall): 6.30, J. Johns, "Jehovah Unveiled."

WEST STANLEY BRANCH N. S. S. (I. L. P. Institute, West Stanley): 3, T. H. Elstob, "Secular Education."

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