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*Justice is truth in action.*—JOURBERT.

## Sir Oliver Lodge's "Catechism."

*The Substance of Faith, Allied with Science. A Catechism for Parents and Teachers. By Sir Oliver Lodge, F.R.S., Principal of the University of Birmingham. London: Methuen & Co.*

"OH for a lodge in some vast wilderness," sang Cowper; and present-day Christians sing the same tune with slight variations. In the vast wilderness of their intellectual desolation they cry out for the great Lodge, who runs to their assistance and affords them a kind of shelter from the fierce heat of modern criticism. All sects are alike in this touching recourse to a man of science—all except Catholics, who have a perfectly sufficient faith of their own. Anglicans, both High and Low, and likewise Broad-Dissenters of every species, Wesleyans, Baptists, Presbyterians, Congregationalists, and all the rest of them on the long and lengthening list—creep under the shadow of the Birmingham scientist and exclaim, "We are safe at last." So vital is their necessity that they put up with the grave lectures he reads them on their past imprudences; their taking the old Creation and Fall legends as real cosmogony and history, and Bible wonders generally as facts instead of fictions—their clinging to a vicious and mischievous doctrine of Atonement—and their cumbering the divine Life of Christ with improbable and not very decent stories of a non-natural birth. They listen with bent heads as he reprimands them; they hate his superior airs, but they dare not answer him back. He is their refuge, their present help in time of trouble; they must make the best they can of him—and one way of doing this is to sing his praises lustily and say nothing at all about the *per contra* account. Accordingly he is paraded as a great and friendly figure at Church Congresses and at Free Church Congresses. Wherever trembling Christians are gathered together, Lodge is in the midst of them and that to bless them. He pronounces a benediction, and the reassured children of Faith say, "Now we know that Science is with us."

But this falling away from Faith, of which the Bible is full, to Science, of which it is empty, is bringing about its own nemesis. Sir Oliver Lodge is taking himself too seriously. He throws his mantle over the shivering Christians with too much condescension. He lets everybody see that the Christian religion is under his immediate patronage. He is getting filled with the spirit of prophecy. He is setting up as an oracle "on his own," and poaching upon the preserves of the old practitioners. In short, he is on the high road to becoming a nuisance instead of an auxiliary; and we believe the time is not very far distant when he will be told that he would be more usefully occupied in minding his own business. In the meanwhile, however, he will run his course and give the world more little books on religion, which will have their vogue for a day and then be forgotten. For there is nothing in them to make them live. Their literary merit is not great; they are lit up by none of those flashes of insight or imagination that render some ineffective pleas for

religion so interesting and valuable; they sound no troubled abysses of the human heart; they reach no conspicuous height of ethical inspiration; they are indeed, to tell the plain truth, rather prosy; and what they retain of the old faith is as essentially irrational as what they discard. The very title of this new Catechism is a warning to reasonable men. Nothing can be more certain that if Faith and Science are both realities they must be apprehended by different faculties. Faith cannot teach Science, and Science cannot teach Faith. Neither can Faith ever be *allied* with Science. It was a remark of Beaconsfield's that where knowledge ends religion begins. He did not mean it cynically, but seriously. He expressed a universal truth in an epigram. And even Sir Oliver Lodge, with all his futile and foolish efforts as a "reconciler" between things that have nothing in common, occasionally catches a glimpse of this truth. He admits, for instance, in his Introduction, that a creed deals with "matters partially beyond the range of scientific knowledge," and "must always reach farther into the unknown than science has yet explored." This is a glimpse, and a confused glimpse, of a great verity. The matters that Faith deals with are not *partially*, but *entirely*, beyond the range of scientific knowledge—that is to say, if they have any actual existence at all; and it is misleading to talk of Faith and Science as both reaching, but the one farther than the other, into the unknown; for the unknown that Science reaches into is simply the unknown that may be known, whereas the unknown that Faith reaches into is the absolute unknown, or, as Spencer called it, the Unknowable.

At the end of this Catechism there is a list of Sir Oliver Lodge's "Works." There are several on mathematics and electricity. On those subjects he speaks as an expert, or what some people call an authority, and is entitled to be heard with the greatest respect. But what special qualification has he for writing on religious problems? That is what puzzles us. The fact is, we take it, that he is trading upon the muddle-headed notion that a "great man" is great at everything, that a great chemist is an oracle if he talks about telepathy, or that a great electrician is an oracle if he talks about a future life. It was this muddle-headed notion that led the British public to accept the late Mr. Gladstone as a great authority on religion and the Bible, just as it now leads the same public to accept Sir Oliver Lodge as a powerful champion of Christianity. And perhaps the most curious feature of the case is that Sir Oliver Lodge never finds proofs of religion in electricity; he usually finds them in biology or psychology, where he is as much an amateur as any decently educated man that you might catch in the street. There is, indeed, a world of significance in this fact, if the British public could only see it. We venture to think it is absolutely decisive on the whole argument. For what could be more detrimental to religion than the fact that nearly every distinguished layman who upholds it finds evidences of its truth in precisely those subjects with which he is least acquainted?

There is another list in the early part of this Catechism, at the end of the Preface. It is a list of "References to Quotations." Sir Oliver Lodge is fond of quoting bits of verse; he apparently thinks

they are more convincing than prose—which perhaps they are when the argument is weak; and as he does not give references at the foot of the page, he considerably gives them all together in a striking mass. But they do not amount to much when analysed. Browning is quoted thirteen times, Tennyson twelve times, Mrs. Browning once, Wordsworth twice, Byron once, Coleridge once, Morris once, and Shakespeare once. Now a discerning reader might guess Sir Oliver Lodge's religious beliefs from that list of quotations.

We now come to the Preface of this Catechism. Sir Oliver Lodge refers to the difficulty of instructing children "in the details of religious faith, without leaving them open to the assaults of doubt hereafter, when they encounter the results of scientific inquiry." This difficulty, he says, he endeavors to meet. And, with his help, teachers in elementary schools may impart religious instruction to their pupils without fear of offending their parents or other children's parents. Any little trouble of that sort, even if it arises, is better than sheer Secular Education:—

"One danger is imminent:—a danger lest the nation, in despair of a happier settlement, should consent to a system of *compulsory* secularism; and forbid, in the public part of the curriculum of elementary schools, not only any form of worship, but any mention of a Supreme Being, and any quotation from the literature left us by the Saints, Apostles, Prophets, of all ages."

This "ghastly negation" is what Sir Oliver Lodge dreads. But he should not abuse the English language in expressing it. There is no party that we know of in favor of "*compulsory* secularism." No "ism" whatever is involved in Secular Education. It excludes all "isms." It leaves the teachers freedom to impart the *knowledge* that all citizens agree about, without any of the *opinions* on which they all differ. There are other places in which those opinions can be taught—churches, chapels, mission rooms, and Sunday-schools. If these were forcibly closed, Secular Education would be "*compulsory* secularism," but while they are left open this is but a trick-phrase intended to confuse and mislead the public mind.

Sir Oliver Lodge is just as wrong with regard to the details of Secular Education. Who proposes that the word "God" shall be cut out of every passage of literature which comes before the eyes of children in elementary schools? It will be sufficient to debar the teachers from talking about "God" to them. Care would have to be taken, of course, that religious teaching was not brought in under the disguise of literature; but that is a very different thing from systematic emasculation. Nor will quotations from Saints, Apostles, and Prophets be tabooed; but such quotations will have to be of *human* and not of *distinctively religious* value. On the whole, it appears to us that Sir Oliver Lodge is setting up a bogey to frighten people from a rational conclusion.

G. W. FOOTE.

(To be concluded.)

### Modern Problems.

THE Rev. Thomas Phillips, of Bloomsbury Chapel, read an interesting and highly-suggestive paper on the above subject before a session of the Free Church Council at Leeds. He told the audience that he spoke "as a working minister only and not as an expert," and that "all he could hope to do was to report his experience." It is his aim to "find out what the young men are thinking about," and he has discovered that "the outstanding characteristic of the age is its intense practicality." Metaphysic is at a discount, and there is "a decided slump in introspection." Prior to writing his paper, he "sent a personal letter to three hundred men in Central London outside organised Christianity altogether, asking them to state why they fought shy of the Churches." He did not mention what proportion of

the three hundred complied with his request. He merely said that he had received "a large number of replies," and that in only two of them was there any reference to theology. The only legitimate inference is, that the majority of people in Central London have lost all touch with supernatural religion. They stay away from the Churches simply because they do not believe in them. Mr. Phillips addressed a club "composed of a hundred young fellows," and the secretary warned him that they did not wish to hear anything theological or abstract, their one concern being with secular problems, or the facts of everyday life. The multitudes are sick and tired of theology, and of acrimonious theological controversies.

And yet the question asked by all theologians and preachers is, "How can God become a force in life and character?" The indisputable fact is that God is not, and never has been, a force in life and character, except in an indirect and feeble way; and judging the future by the past, all attempts to make him such are bound to fail. Of course, at Bloomsbury Chapel, under the present *régime*, great things are being done. "Last Thursday," Mr. Phillips proudly stated, "an Independent Labor leader, who a few months ago was an Agnostic, stood up at Bloomsbury Chapel and prayed; and within the last two months men who had been Agnostics had at Bloomsbury come over to faith." Mr. Phillips admitted that the faith to which these Agnostics had come might be a thin, nerveless, starving sort of thing, "but," added the preacher, and thereby gave his whole case away, "if I can bring a man into touch with Christ and God, I can trust Christ to do the rest." Mr. Phillips does not perceive the utter absurdity of the position he holds. "The truth that captured these men," he said, "was the Divine immanence, but an immanence that recognised the fact of sin." The only intelligible meaning of the Divine immanence is that God is within every man; and yet no man is aware that he is entertaining so exalted a guest until some other man comes and declares the fact to him. Does it not stand to reason that if God were within a man he could make his presence known and felt without the assistance of a third party? Yet Mr. Phillips went to his Agnostics and said, "My friends, God is within you and is anxious to be of service to you"; and the Agnostics readily answered, "Yes, dear Mr. Phillips, so he is; ever so many thanks to you for telling us." And now those Agnostics, by the help of the God within, stand up at Bloomsbury Chapel and pray to the God beyond them. Had it not been for the merciful interposition of the minister of Bloomsbury Chapel, or of some other compassionate friend, those poor, benighted Infidels would have gone to their graves without knowing that they were God's hosts!

But that is by no means all that ought to be said. Although indwelt by the Deity, mankind are in a deplorable state of lostness. Not only are they unaware of the Divine presence within them, they are also living in active antagonism to the Divine will. They are in successful opposition to the God within them, and the God within them is completely powerless. So, in his infinite love, the God beyond sent his only begotten Son into the world to effect a reconciliation between them and the God within. The Son came, clothed himself with human flesh, accomplished his appointed work, and in consequence, became the Savior of the world. But not even the Son, not even Christ crucified, can get into touch with the people he came to save without the intervention of the preacher. Christ cannot come into touch with lost sinners: he must wait until the preacher, the evangelist, or the revivalist brings them into touch with *him*. The moment the preacher succeeds in doing this, he says: "Here they are, O loving Savior; I have done my part, I can trust thee to do the rest." If Christ can do the more important portion of the work, why cannot he do the part which Mr. Phillips undertakes at Bloomsbury Chapel? Why should there be such an institution as Bloomsbury Chapel, St. Paul's, or Westminster Abbey? If the Infinite and Eternal Christ verily exists, all these

Churches, with their ministers, evangelists and revivalists, must be an insufferable offence in his sight, and a fatal reflection on his character as the all-powerful Savior.

It would be inexcusable folly to assert that no good work is being done in the Churches, or that individuals derive no benefit from such missions as those conducted by "General Booth and Collier of Manchester"; but while the service rendered to society may be a credit to the Churches and the missions themselves, its amount is so infinitesimal that it would be an infinite disgrace to an infinitely good and loving God. Mr. Phillips is doubtless exceedingly honest and sincere; but can he conscientiously affirm that the existing conditions of life in Central London are to the glory of an immanent God? The Deity he believes in and proclaims is not, and never has been, supreme in London. Indeed, Mr. Phillips openly declared that a characteristic of our time is the worship of power, and that Sandow is its patron saint. He went further and stated that "Nietzsche is everywhere in Central London." But if Nietzsche is everywhere God is nowhere, and Bloomsbury Chapel is a failure. Does not Mr. Phillips see, how can he help seeing, that if what he says about Central London is true, both the Old Theology and the New are founded on a lie, the God-idea being an illusion? An impotent God, or a God wholly dependent on incompetent instruments, is worse than useless. To preach the absolute sovereignty of a completely powerless Deity is an act of gross immorality—an unforgivable blasphemy against the holy spirit of humanity.

Mr. Phillips was quite right when he announced that the outstanding characteristic of the age is intense practicality, and that the problems demanding solution are secular ones; but is he not also aware that no secular problem has ever been supernaturally solved? All the good ever done in this world has been done by men and women impelled by the spirit of philanthropy. "But look at the miracle of the changed life," cries the missionary. We have looked at it times without number, and having carefully examined it from every point of view, our firm conviction is that it is not a miracle performed by a supernatural person or influence, but a natural result of united and concentrated human action. All moral reclamations are the outcome of social effort. Drunkards and libertines are never rescued except by their own exertion stimulated and energised by the active sympathy of their friends. What society requires, therefore, is not more theology, old or new, not a revival of interest in religion, Christian or Pagan, but a deeper and stronger sense of its own responsibility, and of the power latent within it, by the development and application of which it is capable of reorganising itself. What the young men so frequently referred to in Mr. Phillips's paper really need is, not a keener sense of God, not greater dependence on the Holy Ghost, not a fresh vision of an unseen, spiritual world, but a more adequate knowledge of the laws of life, and of the value of self-reliance in conjunction with social sympathies. Their difficulties are purely practical, and the most valuable service we can do them is to convince them that the strength to surmount the difficulties comes alone from themselves and their fellows. One preacher passionately exclaimed: "Jesus establishes his uniqueness and his divinity by what he does for the lives of men." Emotionally delivered, that sentence was most moving in its effect on the emotions of the congregation; but the statement it contains is worthless, because it cannot be proved that Jesus does anything for the lives of men, and because it can be proved that he has not established his uniqueness and his divinity in any country under the sun. If men desire to have anything done for their lives they must do it themselves, or it will remain undone.

Of the truth of this contention, the recent meeting of the Free Church Council at Leeds furnishes abundant evidence. The delegates were not agreed as to what the Christian Gospel really is. Mr. Phillips is a moderately orthodox divine and believes

in evangelical emotionalism. The Rev. Frank Ballard censured the Superintendent of the Bloomsbury Mission for his sentimental optimism and observed that, "unless they could adapt their theologies along such lines as were indicated by Sir Oliver Lodge the men with heads would remain outside their reach." Mr. W. R. Lane and the Rev. S. Collier emptied the vials of their wrath on poor Mr. Ballard's head. It made Mr. Lane "shiver to hear good men, who talked as if those who clung to the old Gospel did so because they did not think. He believed the old Gospel because he *did* think." Mr. Collier, of Manchester fame, seemed rather thankful that there was but one Ballard, and as for himself he "prayed God with all his heart that there might come into the Church a mighty revival of what their fathers called unktion." There is no eternal, unchangeable Gospel: each preacher makes his own gospel, or merely repeats what he learned at the schools; and the success of any gospel is measured by the ability of its preacher, and by nothing else. Because the people are finding this out they desert the Churches and attack the problems of life on purely scientific and common-sense lines.

J. T. LLOYD.

## Christianity and Woman.

*Woman: Her Position and Influence in Ancient Greece and Rome, and Among the Early Christians.* By the Rev. Principal Donaldson.

THERE are two features connected with the present agitation over Woman's Suffrage worthy of note—by Freethinkers. The one is that the women themselves have made no appeal to Christian theology; the other that professional Christian theologians have been practically silent on the subject. Both features are somewhat unusual. In this country, there are very few movements nowadays in which someone will not drag in Jesus Christ as a kind of warranty for his conduct, whether the introduction be justifiable or not. And, on the other hand, many of the clergy, with their readiness to pander to the feeling of the moment, will usually succeed in mixing their professional teaching with any agitation that commands a following and holds out promise of being successful. But in this case neither have made an appeal to religion. The women have been silent, probably from the perception of the fact that they had nothing to gain from invoking either Christian tradition or Christian authority. And the clergy have been silent because it was too dangerous a subject to meddle with, Christian sentiment being too plainly all on one side—and that the wrong one. One day, when the possession of the vote by women is an accomplished fact, the clergy will discover that it was gained for them by Christian influences; but that day is not yet. And meanwhile the safest plan is to lie low and "say nuffin'."

On the general question of the relation of Christianity to the position, the clergy are not, and have not been, silent. Only they confine themselves to general statement, being careful to avoid giving anything like a date or place by which their statements might be tested. We are asked to believe that in some mysterious way Christianity has powerfully influenced the position of woman for good, although no one appears to know just how or where or when this influence was exerted. And when a man, such as Principal Donaldson, sets himself to carefully examine the facts, he finds them pointing in quite the other direction. The nearest one comes to a statement of fact from the champions of Christian claims, is a picture of what they imagine the awful immorality of pre-Christian times to have been, and then another picture of the position of woman today, with the assumption that all that has occurred between these two periods is wholly due to Christian influences. This is a highly convenient way of stating the case, only it leaves out of sight two important considerations.

The first is the obvious fact of the period covered by the two pictures. Nineteen centuries is a long time, and it requires no vivid imagination to realise that much might have happened during that period had Christianity never been heard of. Woman's position might have grown either better or worse during this long time—it could hardly have remained stationary; and it really will not do for anyone but a Christian Evidence-monger to assume, as though it were unquestionable, that woman would have remained as degraded as some are pleased to think she was before Christianity appeared. Not that the picture is as painted by many Christians, and believed by the majority; but of that later.

The next is that the history of woman, like human history in general, is an evolution. Freedom, independence, an ideal position, is not something that woman, or man, is born to, but a state that is acquired. Human life, developing slowly from animal-like forms, necessarily progresses but slowly, and will often have attaching to it ideas and institutions that, like so many rudimentary organs, are more reminiscent of outgrown conditions than evidences of the best contemporary ideas and feelings. We may, therefore, reasonably expect to find in any society of a couple of thousand of years ago much that would meet with disapproval to-day. It is quite as likely that our descendants twenty or thirty generations hence will view with profound disapproval much that now passes muster without opposition. But to take this as evidence of degradation or depravity is sheer stupidity. It is simply one of the inevitable conditions of human historical development.

Even as it is, the extravagance of many of the Christian statements concerning the position of pre-Christian womankind is self-destructive: The unit of social life is far more the family than the individual, and had Pagan life been as corrupt as Christians have painted it, social existence would have been an impossibility. Careful and impartial students will note that the authorities quoted in support of the statements of the wholesale depravity of Pagan life, themselves testify to an opposite conclusion. For the authorities cited are either satirists or moralists lashing or deploring the faults of their age. But satire is never intended to be taken literally, and something must also be allowed for the austerity of the professional moralist. Besides, satire implies an audience; and the very fact of satire argues that there was a large audience to whom it appealed, and who were not of the class satirised. Principal Donaldson notes that the very writers who are quoted as depicting women as vile, furnish other sayings "in which women are praised to the skies." It would, as he says, be quite easy, to-day, "from the reports of the divorce and police-courts and newspaper paragraphs, to draw together such materials as might lead one to assert that women were treated with the greatest cruelty, and that the age was one of the most licentious." And to do so would only be to act on the same principles as animate most Christians when dealing with ancient civilisations. Consider what a "plum" the Thaw case would be to a Christian apologist had he found it in all its details in a history of Rome or Greece, instead of in the records of a contemporary Christian city. Even as it is, there is no picture (to quote once more) drawn by ancient writers of Pagan Rome that can compare with the "licentiousness of Christian Africa, Rome and Gaul," as drawn by contemporary writers.

All the evidence brought forward by Principal Donaldson goes to prove that in both Greece and Rome women were rapidly outgrowing the restrictions fashioned during that period of the world's history, when mere brute force was the chief consideration, and, both in public opinion and legal usage, were beginning to play a more dignified and responsible part in life. The customs differ in various places, but the tendencies in all are the same. In Greece, the married women were, by custom, condemned to a more or less secluded life, as the result of the ideal of the city state, which aimed at preventing

intermarriage, and thus maintaining the citizen blood in all its purity, tended to perpetuate. It is to this that we owe the development of that remarkable class of women in Athens who, remaining unmarried, were the companions of philosophers, poets, artists and statesmen. Many of them, says Principal Donaldson, "were women of high moral character, temperate, thoughtful, earnest, and were either unattached or attached to one man, and to all intents and purposes, married." But laws on the subject of married women must have been often more honored in the breach than in the observance, for what Principal Donaldson says of an earlier period in Greek history, that when we look at the actual facts, apart from laws, we find that "nowhere in the whole range of literature are women subjected to a sway so gentle, so respectful, so gracious..... We see nothing but affection, regard, and even deference" applies to a deal, if not the whole, of later Greek life. And the author's conclusion seems a sound one "The Greek race was the finest race that ever existed in respect of physical development and intellectual power..... A race of healthy, finely-formed women is the natural antecedent of men possessed of a high physical and intellectual organisation."

In Rome, the regulations preventing marriages between Roman citizens and strangers, and even between patricians and plebians were finally disposed of about 440 B.C. We have little but tradition to guide us as to what was the condition of women during the early period of Roman life, but there is a very definite tradition that meets us in the beginning of reliable history, and there can be little question of its accuracy. According to the picture preserved by Roman poets and historians—

"The Roman matron was mistress in her own household. As the husband took charge of all external transactions, so the wife was supreme in household arrangements. The marriage was a community in all affairs, and within the home the utmost diligence and harmony prevailed. The wife sat in the atrium, or principal hall, dispensing the wool to the maidservants, and herself making the garments of her husband and family. She did not cook or do what was regarded as menial work. She dined with her husband, sitting while he reclined, when they were alone. She received the friends of her husband and dined with them also. She walked in and out with great freedom and brought up her own children."

The accuracy of this picture receives ample endorsement from what is positively known concerning Roman civilisation. Marriage was a contract, civil in its essence, but might be accompanied by religious ceremonies. A dowry accompanied the bride, but in the case of a divorce not due to faults on the wife's side, this was returned. The wife was bound to give her consent to the marriage, the arrangements being conducted by a family council. A dissolution of marriage might be initiated by either husband or wife, but again the services of the family council were requisitioned. The net result of these arrangements was to place woman "on a practical equality with man." The inequalities of our modern divorce laws were thus avoided, while as regards the general marriage arrangements, our author asserts that we are bound to conclude that "the Roman ideas of marriage had not a bad effect either on the morals or the happiness of the women." In saying this Principal Donaldson is only endorsing the opinion of Sir Henry Maine, Mr. Lecky and others, and also that of a later, but important writer, Mr. Samuel Dill, whose testimony is:—

"The Roman Matron from the earliest times had secured to her by family religion a dignified and respected position..... In the early years of the Empire..... her status, both in law and in fact, really rose. There can be no doubt that the Roman lady of the better sort, without becoming less virtuous and respected, became far more accomplished and attractive..... She became more and more the equal and companion of her husband, and her influence on public affairs became more decided."

C. COHEN.

(To be continued.)

## Joshua at Jericho.

JOSHUA besieged Jericho. It was a city of fifty thousand inhabitants, and was five miles in circuit. The defenders numbered ten thousand men of arms. They were amply provided with slings and javelins as well as with swords for a close encounter. Joshua's army numbered six hundred thousand and swarmed on the plain like locusts.

All Jericho was astonished that Joshua's army did not attempt to scale the walls. Instead of doing so, they marched round the city at a safe distance from the strongest slings. They were headed by their priests, blowing rams' horns and carrying their fetish in a box. Six days this procession moved round Jericho, the defenders on the walls wondering at the performance, and shouting to them to come on like men. On the seventh day the procession went round Jericho seven times. Seven out of the twelve priests dropped out from sheer exhaustion, and more than half the army limped off, faint and footsore, to their tents. Suddenly the five remaining priests blew their horns with all the breath left in them, the army emitted a feeble shout, and the walls of Jericho fell down of themselves. Joshua's soldiers immediately rushed into the city from all points of the compass. The defenders who were not buried under the ruins of the walls, fought gallantly until they were all killed. Then, with shouts of "Jahveh, Jahveh!" the besiegers fell upon the other inhabitants. Men, women and children were involved in a promiscuous massacre. Pregnant matrons were ripped open, babies were tossed out of the windows and caught on spears. Even the cattle were exterminated. Dogs were thrust through, and if a few cats escaped it was only owing to their surprising agility. Night fell upon the doomed city and covered its bloody streets with a pall of darkness.

Joshua revelled in the king's palace with the chiefs of Israel. They drank the royal wines, and regretted that Jahveh's orders had necessitated the slaughter of the royal wives and concubines. The rest of the army, or as many as could be accommodated, were feasting in the various houses, with no remorse for the day's butchery.

But one of Joshua's soldiers did not share the general merriment. He was a fine young fellow of twenty-five. Married only a year ago to a beautiful girl whom he loved and worshiped, he had revolted at the sight of women hacked to pieces; and when he saw babies cut and slashed, he thought of the darling infant at his young wife's breast, and turned with loathing from the hideous scene. He was now wandering about the city, having no taste for the revelry of his callous companions. Suddenly, as he approached a house nearly ruined by the fallen wall, he heard a moan from within. He entered and saw a man's corpse on the floor, and bending over the body was a shapely young woman with a baby in her arms. The dead body was that of her husband, who had been slain in the massacre. She had crept with her babe into a recess in the upper room, and as the place looked a ruinous heap the savage soldiers had omitted to search it. When all was quiet she crawled out of her hiding-place, and for hours she bent moaning over her husband's corpse.

The young Jewish soldier looked pitifully on the scene at his feet. The woman raised her eyes to his face, and they were so like those of his young wife! The baby, ignorant and innocent, laughed at him and cooed. Claspings the child to her bosom the woman was about to cry for mercy, when he whispered, "Hush! I will save you. Come with me. Take bread and water with you for the journey. I will lead you beyond the city wall, and then you must flee under cover of the night. Michmash is only ten miles distant. You are young and strong, and you and your babe will be there before dawn."

Cautiously they picked their way, and they were just reaching safety when a door was flung open by a dozen quarrelling soldiers. The light fell upon the three figures outside. "Hullo!" exclaimed they, "what's this? Leading the girl off, eh? A baby, too! Were you going to adopt the little one? Treason, treason! Our order was to slay all, and leave alive nothing that breatheth."

The young woman was seized, and half a dozen hands were laid on the young man, who knew resistance was useless and therefore offered none. An hour later they were brought before Joshua. The general's eye kindled at the sight of the woman's beauty, but religion conquered and he resolved to obey his God.

"What were you doing?" asked Joshua.  
 "Helping her to escape," answered the young soldier.  
 "Why?" asked the general.  
 "Because I have a wife and child of my own, and these are like them."  
 "Traitor!" exclaimed Joshua, "all three of you shall die!"

The woman shrieked, but Joshua's sword was unsheathed, and one sweep of his muscular arm sent it through the body of the child deep into the mother's breast. Then, without wiping the bloody weapon, he raised it again. The young soldier smiled scornfully, and his expression added fresh fuel to the flame of Joshua's anger. With one blow he severed the head from the body; and standing over the three corpses, his frame dilating with the passion of bloodshed and piety, he exclaimed, "Thus saith the Lord!"

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

## Acid Drops.

That extraordinarily foolish person, the Bishop of London, has been dealing with "doubts" in connection with his East-end Mission; and a long report of his address to 1,500 people in Hackney Parish Church appeared in the *Daily Telegraph*, which evidently regards him as an accomplished scholar and a profound philosopher. Here is one of his wonderful observations. "Do you know," he said—and we can imagine the seraphic silly smile upon his face as he said it—"that Jesus Christ is mentioned by the historian Tacitus? This is evidence quite apart from Christianity." Evidence of what? And why did his lordship not state, if he knew, that the Tacitus passage has been challenged, and that nobody ever heard of it until the fifteenth century—that is, considerably more than a thousand years after the time when it is supposed to have been written?

Another observation of the Bishop's must have been made with a similar expression of countenance. "Then, again," he said, "take Sunday. The bare fact that there is a recognised Sunday is evidence of Christianity." Fancy paying a man £10,000 a year to talk such folly as that. Sunday is not a Christian institution. Sunday, the Sun's Day, the *Dies Solis*, was the weekly day of rest in the Roman Empire before Christianity was born; and it was called the Sun's Day by Constantine, the first Christian emperor, three hundred years after the alleged death and resurrection of Christ. The early Christians held their religious services on Sunday, just as Freethinkers hold their meetings now on Sunday, because it was the only possible day. They did not discover it, they did not invent it, they simply made use of it. And they never could have pretended otherwise if Paganism had not been suppressed, and the true history of things been buried under a mountain of ignorance and misrepresentation.

Here is a sample of the Bishop of London's science. "When I lift my watch," he said, "I modify, without breaking, the law of gravitation." Now the law of gravitation can no more be "modified" than it can be "broken." It is universal and inevitable. Indeed, the idea of "modifying" a law of nature is sheer nonsense. No definite meaning can be attached to it. What the Bishop meant—only he hadn't the patience or the sense to say it—was that the result of the combined action of two or more laws (properly *causes*) is different from the result of either of them acting singly. Here endeth our criticism of this £10,000 a year ignoramus.

It is a significant fact that the Rev. R. J. Campbell received an ovation at the first business meeting of the National Council of Evangelical Free Churches at Leeds. When he rose to move the adoption of the Secretary's report, he was welcomed with a roar of applause, which was repeated again and again. "Volleys of cheers," the *Daily News* report says, "were succeeded by loud 'Hurrahs,' and some time elapsed before Mr. Campbell was able to commence his address. When he closed," the report continues, "the demonstration which marked his rising was repeated." It is evident that not Mr. Campbell, but the bitter opposition to him, is in disfavor with Free Churchmen. From which we may judge that the Old Theology is played out—as the New Theology will be in the course of time.

Having applauded Mr. Campbell in public, the Free Church Congress (or rather the more bigoted part of it) took a secret revenge by refusing to vote him on the Council Committee. The vote was by ballot. This is equivalent to saying "Outside!" But they cannot put Mr. Campbell outside his own church, and while he is secure there he can smile at their hatred.

Mr. Campbell lectured (or preached—which was it?) to the members of the Union of Ethical Societies the other evening. What he said was not reported in the newspapers,

but they chronicled some of his answers to questions—probably as being more exciting. One question was this: "Why does Mr. Campbell designate God by the masculine gender?" We presume Mr. Campbell is a Scotsman; anyhow, he answered like one. "As things are going nowadays," he said, "we may have to address Him as She by-and-by." This provoked laughter—of course; but it was not very profound. The Catholic Church dealt with this matter much more successfully than Mr. Campbell does. It followed the "tip" of the ancient religions which provided feminine deities for their worshipers, and set up the "Blessed Virgin," the "Mother of God," who splendidly provides for the "She" element while leaving the "Him" untouched. Mr. Campbell's God must be He or She. The God of the Catholic Church is He and She. Which is a vast difference.

Mr. Campbell denied that prayer was self-hypnotism; he said it was "reaching up to the infinite." But isn't it both? The subjective hocus-pocus is matched by the objective insanity. Reaching up to the infinite is doubtless a very pretty phrase, but try to realise it and see what follows. The only picture that thoroughly satisfies the description is a lunatic stretching his body (as he thinks) for miles, or a man lying upon his back—sick.

Questioned as to miracles, Mr. Campbell replied that most of the Bible miracles were "poetry." He said that you must not expect exact statement in an Oriental book. Nevertheless, he accepted the New Testament miracles of healing. They were due to the "tremendous personality" of Jesus. But how does this account for the cure of the blind man by means of a clay-and-spittle poultice? Mr. Campbell doesn't understand the miraculous yet, though he may do so by-and-by. All miracles belong to the same category from a scientific point of view. It is no use trying to pick and choose amongst them. They are all fairy-tales.

Mr. Campbell was asked why God, if he has power, allows evil and suffering, such as the *Berlin* disaster. His reply was the old facile evasion: Only the form perished; the life went back to the universal life. Suppose this be true, how does it reconcile the evil and suffering with the Benevolence and Wisdom of an Almighty God? Mr. Campbell's answer leaves the problem untouched.

At the close of the heckling, Mr. Campbell won the hearts of the Ethicists by a clever bit of flattery. "The Ethical Society," he said, "is a society formed deliberately for the purpose of encouraging the realisation of the common God, of the Kingdom of God. You are a Church." This was greeted with "loud cheers." It went home; it touched the spot. Yes, the Ethicists were also a Church; they too were in the great swim, they likewise wore of the clect. But we venture to think that they are mistaken. The great blunder of the Ethical movement is the belief that ideas do not matter, whereas every institution and every lasting policy in the world ultimately rests on *ideas*, and on nothing else. "Be as good as you can" is a pleasant motto, but no Church can exist on *that* foundation. Comte aspired to build up a Church, but he had the historical knowledge and the intellectual capacity to recognise that it would have to rest upon a foundation of *principles*. Now the Ethicists have *no* principles. That is their weakness—and it is fatal.

Bangor religious bodies (bless them!) have uttered their protest against the local neglect of Sunday observance. They held a big meeting for the purpose. But a critic crept in in the person of Professor Arnold, of the University College of Wales. He declared that there was hardly a building used for religious services on Sunday evening in Bangor which would be allowed to be used by a sanitary inspector. Churches and chapels were attended by a considerable number of persons suffering from contagious diseases, such as tuberculosis, and no precautions were taken. From beginning to end the observance of Sunday in Wales was the neglect of the primary laws of health. Many children were kept without the bodily exercise which was so essential to health. So said Professor Arnold. And when he had done the Rev. E. Evans got up and said, "I don't believe a word you say, sir. We ought to stop people from going for walks instead of going to places of worship on the Sabbath." Of course the Welsh preachers would like to do that. But there is one drawback. They can't.

The Manchester Licensing Justices have issued their mighty fiat against social and political debating societies holding their meetings on licensed premises on Sunday evenings. According to the police reports, there was drinking going on (of course!), but apparently no rowdyism. Sir

Thomas Shann, however, said that debating on Sundays was not harmless, for "It annoyed people who had different views as to how Sunday should be kept." Just like those Sabbatarians! Nobody must be allowed to do what they don't like on Sunday.

The Rev. Silvester Horne believes that if John Calvin were alive to-day he would very likely say that some of the conclusions of modern science confirmed what he taught. Well, Mr. Horne is in the faith business and his personal stock of that article may be very large. Besides, it is a tolerably safe kind of statement to make—in a church. Only John Calvin did not show himself quite so friendly to the modern science of his own day that we ought to expect much of him if he lived in ours. Mr. Horne should study Calvin's relations with Servetus and the science of his day before he ventures on another prophecy of this kind.

It may be useful to note what really was the attitude of John Calvin to the developing science of his day. He accepted the literal accuracy of the Bible, and used as an argument for burning Servetus, the latter's description of Palestine as a land barren, meagre and inhospitable; thus conflicting with the biblical description of it as "a land flowing with milk and honey." He opposed the teaching of Copernicus and condemned all who denied that the earth was the centre of the universe. He protested against attributing insanity to its true cause, and asserted that those who denied demoniacal possession were "refuted both by sacred and profane history." In fact, there was not a single development of the new science of his day that Calvin did not oppose as fervently as the most bigoted Roman Catholic. Of course, Calvin to-day might be different from what he was then; but there is obviously nothing in Calvin's career to justify his statement. All it bears out is another statement in the same sermon that, "Every charlatan who rises up finds a whole constituency of fools who are ready to accept anything they may tell about destiny"—and other things. and on this point Mr. Horne may be merely expressing experience.

If Sir Oliver Lodge reads all the reviews of his new catechism, a full account of his feelings thereat should be interesting. Most of the religious papers accept it with a very patronising young-man-with-a-deal-of-promise kind of an air, which must give the author material for a laugh, if his sense of humor is keen, and which must be rather galling if it is not. In either case, Sir Oliver has brought his fate on himself. Not that his qualifications for writing a religious catechism are not as good as those of anyone else. He might, indeed, safely challenge his critics to show that they know any more about the existence and purpose of God than he does; and as none of them know any more, he is obviously as well fitted as any to inform the public on the subject. It is also true that none of them know any *less* about it than he does, and therefore there is a true equality established among them—an equality of ignorance on a topic concerning which the greatest philosopher that ever lived knows no more than the veriest fool. So while Sir Oliver gains the patronage of the religious world, he will receive the laughter of the scientific, while the student of life will simply vote his case as that of the aberrations of an otherwise able man. If only it were possible to have a few pages from Huxley—in Huxley's best style—on Sir Oliver's reconciliation of religion and science!

"If you want a short cut to hell," an evangelist says, "dance." We suppose he speaks from experience. But he forgets that other persons may not be so inflammable.

Rev. S. Chadwick, a Leeds minister of the Wesleyan variety, while not endorsing that evangelist's dictum, declares, after his own sixteen years' experience of mission work: "I never danced in my life, but this I will say, that of all the fallen women we have reached in this mission in Leeds, there has not been, I think, one who did not say that she took her first step downwards in dancing." Well now, supposing this statement to be true, the reverend gentleman ought to see that it is a reflection upon his own Blessed Book. The Psalmist, addressing the children of Zion, and exhorting them to praise the Lord, says: "Let them praise his name in the dance" (cxliv, 3). Jeremiah (xxxix, 13) mentions it as a mark of holy joy, resulting from the favor of the Lord, that "the virgin shall rejoice in the dance." But it appears that Jeremiah, although inspired, was very much mistaken. According to the Rev. S. Chadwick, the virgin who dances does the most dangerous thing in the world as regards her virginity.

Mr. Chadwick might also turn to the story of the prodigal son in the New Testament (Luke xvi), where he will see that

the returned scapegrace was welcomed to his father's home with "music and dancing." Were the men and women of that household taking a short cut to hell? One wouldn't have thought so.

According to the chairman of the Macclesfield Ruridical Conference, a part of the blame for local drunkenness must be laid on the Clarion Club; but this statement is challenged in the local press by Mr. J. Taylor Clark, who has been connected with the Club ever since it started, twelve years ago, and who says "there has never been any sale of intoxicants" on the premises. Evidently that pious chairman spoke in haste—unless he is a deliberate liar. Perhaps he wanted to annoy the "infidels" and didn't care how he did it.

*Vulcan*, a trade journal, prints a photogravure of the "Destructive Effects of a Kitchen Boiler Explosion at Accrington." It is one of the most comical pictures we ever saw. Over the wreck of the boiler and the rest of the kitchen, the mantelpiece is still adorned with a large card text—"Have Faith in God." They had. And two persons were killed and four seriously injured.

Rev. Edward Canney, rector of St. Peter's, Saffron-hill, writes to the *Daily News* with regard to the Salvation Army shelters. A destitute old man, on a bitter cold night, asked for alms to enable him to pay for a shelter for the night. He said he would go to the Salvation Army shelter hard by, in Cross-street, Hatton-garden, and the price there was five-pence. Mr. Canney could scarcely believe this, so he went to the shelter himself, and found that the destitute old man's statement was quite correct. The rest may be told in the reverend gentleman's own words:—

"I told him [the head of the shelter] that the charge was a scandal; that collections were being made this week by people in the streets for the Army's work on behalf of the most destitute, and yet here was a destitute old man who could not obtain a night's shelter at one of their places unless he paid fourpence for it.—What has the Salvation Army to say to this? It asks for charity on all hands ceaselessly. What does it do with the immense amounts it receives? How much really goes to the relief of the destitute poor?"

Yes, how much? Booth had better answer such questions than go gallivanting round the world.

"Commissioner" Nicol replied to Mr. Canney's letter. Here are a few sentences from his long-winded epistle: "Our house in Cross-street is not a shelter in the proper sense of the term. It is of a higher grade. It is a Poor Man's Metropole..... Within easy walking distance, there are two Salvation Army shelters, where accommodation is provided for 500 to 600 men at 2d. per night." What a pity Mr. Canney was not told that on the night in question! And it would have been just as well to state what is required of the destitute men in these shelters after easing them of their twopences. Is it meant that the twopence clears them through? We have repeatedly been told otherwise.

God is faring very badly at the hands of his official representatives just now. They all claim to be his specially ordained spokesmen; but at present, while thus presuming to speak in his name, they are vilifying one another on his account. According to Dr. Robertson Nicoll, in a recent number of the *British Weekly*, God is above the world and nothing can hinder him from fulfilling his will in it. Nature is occasionally too strong for man and prevents him from achieving his ends in it. But Dr. Nicoll declares that "it can never prove refractory to God. It can never baffle his purpose. It can never be anything but a pliable instrument in his hand."

That language sounds sweetly pious, and it may pass for good Calvinism; but it isn't true, and Dr. Nicoll knows it isn't true. He knows that Browning's famous lines—

"God's in his heaven  
All's right with the world"—

are a lie. He knows that what he calls sin has always been in the world, and is as prominent a feature in human life today as it was ten thousand years ago; and he also knows that the active existence of sin is a contradiction and repudiation of his God. He admits that it is possible for men "to refuse to co-operate with God, and by so doing to lead a life which he can only and absolutely and forever condemn." Thus man is not a pliable instrument in the Divine hand. God is not above man, neither is his will fulfilled by man. In Dr. Nicoll's own hands, God's transcendence utterly breaks down.

Yet to those other men of God who perceive and proclaim the falsity of his Calvinism, Dr. Nicoll shows no mercy

whatever. His heart is full of stinging bitterness towards them, and he denies their right to be called Christians. Dr. Nicoll asserts that God is supreme, the Sovereign of the Universe, which is a pliable instrument in his hand; but in the very next breath he acknowledges that man can and does baffle his Sovereign's purpose. Well, Mr. R. J. Campbell, face to face with the imperfections and wrongs and evils and contradictions rampant in the world, teaches that the God within the Universe is necessarily limited and conditioned, and is entirely dependent upon his instruments.

But why this finite and imperfect Universe? "Why the conditioned mode of the being of God?" Mr. Campbell's answer is this:—

"The finite Universe, with human life as the highest reach of it we are yet able to conceive, is a means to the self-realisation of the Infinite."

But such an answer explains absolutely nothing. Surely an infinite, eternal, unchangeable and perfect Being could not realise himself in a finite, temporary, ever-changing and imperfect creation. The existing Universe would quickly break his heart and make his life an intolerable burden to him. But Science tells us that the Universe is both infinite and eternal, in which case, there can be no God beyond it, nor could there be a God before it.

Are not these self-constituted men of God aware that their ignorant controversies are a source of boundless amusement to outsiders? The cocksureness that characterises their conflicting and mutually destructive statements about that concerning which they know nothing has become the laughing-stock of the world. What they all profess to have is the knowledge of God received as a gift from himself; and yet scarcely any two of them possess the same knowledge of him. Indeed, the world teems with mutually nullifying knowledges of the Divine Being; and is it not incontrovertible that knowledges which nullify one another are not knowledges at all, but empty intellectual speculations which are practically worthless? When will the divines realise that theology, of all forms and schools, is built upon and composed of naked assumptions, not one of which is worth the paper on which it is printed?

Mrs. Despard, being a Catholic, went to "the Catholic Chapel"—she means the Catholic service in the common chapel—at Holloway. While there she touched a pale prisoner on the hand and said "Cheer up." She complains that a wardress rebuked her for speaking. Well, that is only carrying out the prison rules. Perhaps there will be no prison rules at all when we are all Catholics—like Mrs. Despard.

On her release, Mrs. Despard was "presented with three beautiful bouquets," one being "from a school-girl sympathiser and admirer." Why not a few bouquets from infant-schools? And the newspapers that print this hysterical nonsense absolutely boycott the Freethought movement. It appears to us that England is fast running into neuroticism—largely by the assistance of the "glorious free press"—and that the Freethinkers are becoming the only rational "remnant."

A correspondent sends us two cuttings from one issue of the *Daily Express*. According to the first, Lord Normanton and other persons are subscribing to increase "the miserable stipend" of the rector of Crowland, which is only a little over three pounds a week. On that miserable sum—which is probably more than Jesus Christ and all the twelve Apostles had between them—this poor man of God drags out a wretched existence; preaching "blessed be ye poor," and being only three pounds a week removed from absolute poverty himself. And now for the second cutting. It states that the Rev. Edgar Sheppard, Sub-Dean of the Chapel Royal, has been appointed to the Canonry of St. George's Chapel, Windsor, in succession to the Marquis of Normanby, who has resigned. The appointment is worth £1,000 a year, with a house, presumably rent free. These two cases together show that the parsons are still in clover in comparison with the ordinary inhabitants of this Christian country.

Rev. Joseph Walker, of Averham Rectory, Newark-upon-Trent, left £44,190. "It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of heaven." This reverend gentleman's fate may be left to imagination.

Rev. P. D. Ayre, vicar of Scarborough, plainly tells the Archbishop of York that the Church of England "does not reach the men." Perhaps his Grace is satisfied if it reaches the women.

A constable, in a recent police-court case, said that when the charge was read over to the prisoner he replied "Amen." Probably it was a reminiscence of earlier days: But it served the turn. The police couldn't make much out of "Amen"—and they can make a lot out of most things.

Freethinkers are often accused of blasphemy. Of course, in the usual sense, Freethinkers cannot commit the crime of blasphemy; but Christians can and always do. In a tract called *Love and Truth*, we find this sentence: "His (Christ's) precious blood at once avails to make us safe, and covenant relation with God being formed, we start upon our pilgrim path feasting on the roast Lamb, and so are made strong for our journey." Roast lamb is very delicious, but continual feasting even on roast lamb must become terribly monotonous. But fancy a Christian speaking of his blessed Redeemer and ascended and glorified Lord as "roast Lamb!"

According to the *Christian Herald* (Prophet Baxter's paper), Torrey is doing good business in America, but Alexander has left him and engaged in commercial enterprises. What has become of the Birmingham heiress?

A Lenten sermon by the Archdeacon of Durham, the Venerable H. W. Watkins, was recently reported at length in the *Durham County Advertiser*. In the course of it the preacher said that, black as the county of Durham was in regard to drink and the vices and crimes that go with it, the city of Durham was blacker still. As chaplain to the High Sheriff of the county, he had sometimes to sit on the bench with the judge, and to hear men charged with offences which he had no idea could even exist. "He had heard children, little girls of nine and eight, stand up and accuse their own fathers, and he had seen those fathers convicted for the most fearful offence a man could commit against a woman, fathers against their own children." He would not call them beasts, for that would be an insult to the beasts; neither would he call them savages, for he never heard of savages sinking so low. To think that in a Christian country men could sink to these depths! Well, we agree with the Archdeacon that this state of affairs is absolutely shocking. But why is he so astonished at finding it in a Christian country? It is simply a Christian prejudice that Christian countries are better than others in the matter of morality.

The Free Church Congress does not encourage unofficial speakers. A man got up in the gallery at Leeds and wanted to say something about old age pensions. He was told to sit down. Glaring through his spectacles, he exclaimed: "I will speak. The spirit of truth prompts me to do so. I have a higher authority than yours. I speak in the name of Jesus Christ." In the name of Jesus Christ they put him out of the building.

Mr. Silas K. Hocking, Dissenter and novelist—of a sort—indulged in some singular figures of speech at the Free Church Congress. He was holding forth on the House of Lords. First, he said that the House of Lords was "composed of antediluvian fossils, who breathed an atmosphere in which freedom could not live." This is the first time we ever heard of breathing fossils. But the great Silas went one better than that. "Samson," he said, "was shorn of his locks by that antiquated menagerie the House of Lords." Fancy a menagerie in the hair-dressing business! We begin to think that Silas's novels must be entertaining.

Mr. Stephen Phillips, the poet, took a house at Egham, and found it was haunted, although the probability is that he was haunted. There was no complaint made by the previous occupant. Anyhow, Mr. Stephen Phillips cleared out, and it has been impossible to sell or let the place since. Its evil repute was spread far and wide by a report in the *Daily Mail*, and the consequence is an action for damages brought by the owner of the property against the proprietors of that journal. We do not hear that the ghosts were summoned as witnesses. Their presence would have made the case supremely interesting. But ghosts were always shy of public appearances.

Major-General Sir Owen Tudor Burne, in his recently-published *Memories*, gives the following prayer as offered up by a pious Plymouth merchant some fifty years ago:—

"O Lord, enable the bank to answer all their bills, and make all my debtors good men. Give a prosperous voyage and return to the *Mermoid* sloop which I have insured. Thou hast said that the days of the wicked are short, and I trust thou wilt not forget thy promises, having purchased an estate in reversion of Sir J. P., a profligate young man.

Lord, keep our funds from seeking; and, if it be Thy will, let there be no sinking fund."

We have always said that religion is very little else than sublimated selfishness.

"The Church *versus* Science" was the title of a lecture delivered by the Rev. John Gerrard, Jesuit, before a University audience at Dublin. There is a summary report of it in the *Irish Independent*. We read that Father Gerrard "described at length the real attitude of the Church towards Galileo, Copernicus, Kepler and Giordano Bruno." What humbug this is! It is like a murderer who, being found out, declares that he did it for his victim's good; and, on second thoughts, that he didn't do it at all—the victim made away with himself.

Father Gerrard went on to say that the Church had no fear of any truths that science could disclose. Nevertheless, he declared that Evolution was not scientifically proved, and that it did not account for the origin of species. We need not follow him any further. On the whole, perhaps, it was prudent on his part to say these things in Dublin instead of in London. We are the more persuaded of this by the fact that his audience gave him an enthusiastic vote of thanks.

The Salvation Army has started a "Suicide Bureau." It has only been two months in operation, yet the newspapers are already puffing its wonderful success. Of course, the record is supplied by the Salvation Army itself—so our readers can judge of its value. We are gravely told that the cases dealt with by the officer in charge of the bureau are classified as follows:—

The lonely class	...	...	...	50
Victims of money troubles	...	...	...	350
Persons criminally involved	...	...	...	50
Victims of the morphia and drug habits	...	...	...	80
Other cases	...	...	...	70

It is a wonder the zealous officer does not say that he has saved all those persons from committing suicide. What we are told is that a suicide department is to be instituted at headquarters and that its activities will be spread all over the world. It will be interesting to note what difference will be made in the general statistics of suicides. Booth hasn't bankrupted the publicans yet or starved the tobacconists.

Dowie died almost as soon as Booth landed in America. The astute William wants another million and doesn't mind how he gets it. He says there is no "tainted" money. He is quite ready to accept cash from John D. Rockefeller—or from Old Nick. "Bring it along," says Booth.

Near our private residence last Sunday afternoon the Salvation Army band played Sabbath tunes at street corners, while the soldiers went from door to door begging. This is what they call Self-Denial.

Mr. J. Ramsay Macdonald, M.P., the well-known Labor representative, is reported as telling an audience in the Hyde Theatre Royal that he was one of those who could not conceive of any foundation of Socialism except the foundation of the Gospel; Socialism was the economic counterpart of the morals contained in the Sermon on the Mount. Well, it is none the better for that; and we believe that Mr. Macdonald would never talk in that way before a French or German audience. Apparently he knows his British public.

Rev. E. A. Hutton, vicar of Hargrave, has been ordered to pay Miss Keir, a schoolmistress, £42 for slander. Probably he did not think the luxury was so expensive.

There are some foolish busybodies on the Chiswick Public Library Committee. It appears that a book on Christian Science was recently presented to the Library and placed upon the shelves, where its rest was probably very little disturbed. But the mind of Councillor Deeley was disturbed. He began to feel that, as Christian Science was (in his opinion) a mischievous doctrine, the book ought to be removed from its resting-place. He moved a resolution to that effect at the next Committee meeting, and was supported by Mr. C. Shattock, who did not see why the Library should be used to poison people's minds. This gentleman forgot the old proverb about what is poison to one person being meat to another. Both the mover and seconder of this resolution should get rid of the ridiculous idea that Providence, or anybody else, has appointed them to look after the opinions of the inhabitants of Chiswick.



## Mr. Foote's Engagements.

May 6, Liverpool.

### To Correspondents.

- C. COHEN'S LECTURE ENGAGEMENTS.**—March 17, Camberwell. April 14, Glasgow; 21, Workman's Hall, Stratford; 28, a. Victoria Park, e. Workman's Hall, Stratford.
- J. T. LLOYD'S LECTURE ENGAGEMENTS.**—March 17, Manchester; 24, West Stanley. South Devon.—The plaintiff in the Waldron case was represented by a solicitor, one practising in the court where the case was heard. With respect to the paragraph, you read it amiss, overlooking the capital letter and inverted commas; besides, we are not going to explain and justify a witticism; you take it or you do not—and it must end there.
- F. S. EDWARDS.**—There is no end to the "cheek" of these soul-savers. They profess humility but are the most impudent fellows on earth. Thanks for your trouble.
- W. P. MURRAY.**—Thanks for the long report of the Waldron case in the *South Western Star*, which may be useful. You say you have twenty years' numbers of the *Freethinker* in your possession and never saw anything in them to which "indecent" and "filthy" could be applied. Of course not. There never was anything of that sort in the *Freethinker*. Our old Bible cartoons were "blasphemous," but clean. As we explained in our leading article last week, the Christians use the word "indecent" out of its proper meaning in our case. Nobody attaches any importance to anything Waldron says. He is the man who was caught in a City church stating that he visited the late Charles Watts on his death-bed, and heard him recant his Atheism. When he was tackled on the subject he backed down and said he must have been misreported; whereas he simply lied, because he thought he was safe, and cried off when he found he wasn't.
- R. J. HENDERSON.**—Please tell your newsagent that the *Freethinker* is, and always has been, supplied to the trade on "sale or return" terms; and advise him to put pressure on his wholesale agent, who has no right whatever to mark it on the list as "no returns." We believe a little steady pressure will put an end to this nonsense. With regard to your strong remarks on the Waldron case, we have not the slightest doubt that if the assaulter had been a *Freethinker*, and the assaulted a Christian, the magistrate would have given a reverse decision, and probably adorned it with some vigorous reprehension. Thanks for your good wishes.
- W. WYND.**—Your letter is attended to. Thanks for your efforts to promote our circulation.
- J. BROUGH.**—Thanks for good wishes, which are being slowly realised.
- OLD ADMIRER.**—Yes, the death of from 400,000 to 600,000 persons from sleeping sickness in Africa is a heavy list, and hardly another proof of "Providence." But we sometimes wish we had a little of that same sleeping sickness when we are pestered through long hours with insomnia; not enough of it to kill, but enough of it to stupefy.
- THE COHEN "SALVATION ARMY" TRACT FUND.**—Previously acknowledged, £15 8s. 9d. Since received: A. W. Laing, 5s.; J. McAra, 3s.
- A. BURTON.**—What more can be said? That the "Congo horrors" still continue shows that England, as well as European countries, has lost its power of moral indignation. It doesn't care. Hideous crimes and awful suffering no longer touch its feelings. The Christian dry-rot is pretty nearly complete at last.
- E. MOORECROFT.**—We may deal with the question in the *Freethinker* as you suggest.
- W. P. BALL.**—Thanks for your ever-welcome cuttings.
- E. LECHMERE.**—Shall be glad to see the letter if it appears. Thanks.
- C. W. STIRLING.**—Your letter is dated March 9, but when did you post it? It reached our office on Tuesday morning.
- W. C. SCHWEIZER.**—In our next.
- G. WINTRIF.**—Will look through them.
- J. PARTRIDGE.**—Pleased to hear that Mr. Lloyd had "good audiences" at Birmingham and "gave two splendid lectures." We will deal with the other matter next week. Meanwhile, what does the Branch propose to do?
- W. COOPER.**—The sentence you quote from Mill is worthless now that Darwinism has shown how eyes really came into existence. Anything written on the design argument in pre-Evolution days is antediluvian.
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## Sugar Plums.

Some excellent essays and articles lie buried in the volumes of our ancient monthly magazine, *Progress*, the youngest of which is some twenty years old. We intend to reproduce some of them in the pages of the *Freethinker*, and we are sure our friends will find them good reading. We begin this week with the article on "Voltaire in England," by our dearest old friend and colleague, the late Joseph Mazzini Wheeler, who dropped from our side nearly nine years ago.

Mr. John Lloyd delivers two lectures to-day (March 17), afternoon and evening, in the Secular Hall, Rusholme-road, All Saints, Manchester. The district "saints" will please note and do their utmost to secure him good audiences. They should advertise the lectures well by word of mouth amongst their friends and acquaintances, and even try to bring some of them along to the meetings.

"Public Conferences" are being held on Wednesday evenings under the auspices of the South Place Ethical Society at South Place Institute, near Moorgate-street, E.C. Doors are open at 7, the chair is taken at 7.30, and the admission is free. Next Wednesday evening (March 20) the Conference will be opened by our old friend and fellow Freethinker, Mr. Thomas Shore, whose subject will be "Some New Features of the Marriage and Population Questions." Mr. W. H. Cowan, M.P., presides.

Some months ago, a Frenchman residing at Liverpool, sent us several letters protesting against our attitude on the Separation trouble in France. We explained to him that he did not really understand our attitude. We had said again and again that the authors of the Separation Law acted very wisely and very generously, but at a certain point they made a bad mistake, and when it comes to *consequences* Nature makes no distinction between blunders and crimes, so that it is not sufficient to plead good intentions in the face of unfortunate results. Private persons may plead good intentions, but public persons must be judged by their policy and its results. We pointed out where, in our opinion, all the trouble began. The Separation Act provided machinery for the future relations between Church and State, mainly in relation to the use of the churches and other ecclesiastical property, which were technically the property of the State. That machinery was devised by one party to the divorce, but no very profound sagacity was needed to recognise that it could not possibly be accepted by the other party; and the attempt of the State to coerce the Church into accepting that machinery was an act of tyranny, no matter how many times it was called legal; for most of the tyrannies in the world have had the sanction of what is called law. Of course, it is the nature of one wrong step to necessitate another, and so the French Government pursued its arbitrary course until the common sense of the nation cried "Halt!" The great majority of Frenchmen don't want war—not even civil war, and there was something sinister in the spectacle of a Republican government carrying on a campaign against its own subjects. Since then better counsels have prevailed, and we do not despair of seeing an honorable peace brought about by the practical men of all parties. Certainly the end is not yet, but the prospect is decidedly more hopeful than it was.

Every fresh turn the quarrel took proved that our reading of the situation was accurate. Bit after bit of the Government policy of coercion was abandoned, and, above all, the Separation Bill had to be supplemented in order to give a legal burial to the ridiculous Associations Cultuelles. Well, the course of events appears to have been too much for our excellent young Frenchman at Liverpool. He now writes us a kind of apology. "Your further articles," he says, "have shown that you had indeed a really good view of the question. I now declare that you have given an instance, among many others, of the strength of opinions resting on principles.....We should be certainly no Freethinkers if we did unto Churches what they have done unto our fathers

and forefathers, and are still doing unto ourselves now." So all's well that ends well.

On one point our French friend is still a little perplexed. He agrees with us that Freethinkers don't want churches, and that "we may leave to the Faithful the entire use of those buildings." But then, he says, the buildings are public property, and public property ought not to be alienated in favor of certain individuals or private bodies. Now we admit that this *sounds* all right, but does it bear a close examination? Sometimes the letter of justice is the worst injustice. And principles are one thing while formulas are often another. In what *sense* are all those churches State property? In what *sense* are all Church seminaries State property—so that soldiers may be sent (as they *have* been) to turn professor and pupils into the street and sequester everything of any value (in some cases thousands of pounds) found within the walls of the buildings? The State did not build those churches—the State did not build those seminaries—the State did not raise the funds by which they were maintained. These things belong to the State technically—and technically only; and the difference between technical right and substantial justice should be recognised and provided for in an Act of Separation. Why, the English Courts nowadays will not grant a husband a divorce, even when his wife is clearly guilty, without stipulating for some kind of provision for her future. Abstractly this may be wrong—for there is no end to abstract argument; but practically it is right—and everybody but the husband (perhaps) feels it to be so. Even a divorce ought not to be a sentence of death, or the absolute ruin that leads to it. Surely as much, at least, may be said for a Church when it is divorced by the State. And let it be remembered that if the Concordat was sinful, the sin of the State was quite equal to the sin of the Church.

We are of the opinion that we have expressed all along. It would have been better—far better—if the State had enacted security for the preservation and accessibility of certain historic buildings like Nôtre Dame and the Cathedral of Amiens, and for the rest, had handed over the churches unreservedly to the Catholic Church. Suppose the buildings are allowed to fall into ill repair; suppose they are allowed to go to the dogs; what does that matter to the State? They are in the hands of the only people they are of use to. Why should other people trouble about what becomes of them? The real truth is that Freethinkers *don't* care what becomes of them; only the more fanatical ones, who remember past wrongs without recollecting present principles, *pretend* to care, in order to worry and injure the Catholic Church. One must admit that their resentment is natural, but at the same time we must say that revenge is a very bad policy. It simply perpetuates evil, instead of abolishing it and burying it out of sight for ever. We appeal to Freethinkers to show a nobler example than their enemies have ever done.

The March number of the *Humanitarian*, organ of the Humanitarian League, contains many interesting features. On the last page is a letter from Mr. R. B. Cunninghame Graham, from which we extract the following:—

"A socialist teacher is reported to have delivered himself thus in Saxony last week. Speaking on the brutalities of the German Colonial rule in South-West Africa, he referred to the case of the fifty Hottentot children thrown into the rapids of the Nachtigal river at the instance of some German officer, no doubt a devout Christian, as is customary among the Junker class. He then took up a copy of the New Testament and read the passage commencing 'Suffer little children.' Then he threw the book on the floor, and putting his heel on it, said, 'This is the way that a Christian Government allows its Christian officers to behave.'"

The pious Kaiser will have a fit if he reads this.

The *Times* correspondent at Hanoi, Tongking, is greatly impressed by the spread of Western education in China. "In every town of importance," he says, "and often in villages, there are schools with foreign fittings for teaching Western learning. Large numbers of temples, often every temple except the city temple and the Confucian temple, are being converted into schools and colleges." Fancy! This is the awakening of China.

The Symes Memorial Fund is now closed. It realised £302 11s. 11d. Mrs. Symes wished us to hold the bulk of the money for her until the eve of her departure. We settled up with her on Monday morning, paying her the last penny, without the deduction of a farthing for "expenses." She is very grateful, but very sad, and our own heart sank as we said good-bye to her. On Tuesday she left London for Manchester, and on Thursday she sailed from Liverpool by a White Star liner for Melbourne.

## The Making of the Gospels.—II.

(Continued from p. 148.)

WE have now to see what historical facts relating to Jesus or the early Christian Church may reasonably be deduced from the Pauline Epistles. From an examination of the most authentic of these documents we learn that in the days of the writer (whom I will call Paul) there were two separate and hostile parties engaged in preaching the Christian religion. The first and original propagators of this superstition were a small company of Jews, whose headquarters were at Jerusalem, the leaders or elders of the sect being "James, the Lord's brother," John, and Cephas, all three being "reputed to be pillars." The other party consisted chiefly of Gentiles, the followers and converts of Paul, which teacher was held by the Judaists to be an innovator and an apostate.

The Judaistic or Apostolic party taught that circumcision, the abstaining from meat offered to idols, and other matters connected with the Mosaic law, were essential to salvation. The Apostle of the Gentiles (Paul), who had set himself up as a teacher in opposition to the Judaists, taught that simple belief in Jesus Christ was all-sufficient. This self-constituted teacher had never seen or heard the Jesus whom he preached; when, therefore, his authority as a preacher was questioned by the Apostolic party—as was frequently the case—he justified his teaching by a special "revelation" from heaven—a plea which could not in that age be disproved.

As to the reputed founder of the Christian religion, it would appear that there really was a historical Jesus—an ignorant Jewish fanatic known to James, John and Cephas—whom a later generation credited with the possession of miraculous powers of healing and the utterance of a large number of wise sayings. Unfortunately, we have no writings that can with certainty be ascribed to members of the Apostolic party who professed to have known and held intercourse with this much-lauded personage, except possibly the Apocalypse or Book of Revelation. The last-named book was undoubtedly the work of a Jewish Christian belonging to the Judaizing party; but there is nothing to show that the writer had been personally acquainted with Jesus—and he has very little to say respecting that individual. The same remarks apply to the Epistle of James, which, however, is of a later date, and has nothing to say of Jesus at all.

From all the evidence we possess it seems tolerably certain that the original Christians were a branch of the Essenes who practised the Nazarite vow and were known as Nazarones. Jesus was merely one of the prominent members of the sect; his brother James was another; so also were John and Cephas. The names of the twelve "apostles," given in the Gospels, are probably mythical. In any case, nothing was known of them. There may, of course, have been twelve elders in the sect to which Jesus belonged, James, John and Cephas being the most notable. In the Gospel lists there is no "James the Lord's brother" and no "Cephas." We find "James the son of Zebedee" and "James the son of Alphaeus"; but not the James who was known to Paul as president of the church at Jerusalem. Yet, strange to say, a reference to the historical James, the natural brother of Jesus, is found in the first two Synoptical Gospels. In the earliest of these compilations we read:—

"Is not this the carpenter, the son of Mary, and brother of James, and Joses, and Judas, and Simon? and are not his sisters here with us?" (Mark vi. 3).

The four brothers of Jesus here named are given as distinct from the twelve who are called apostles. These "brethren" are again referred to in Mark iii. 31 and Acts i. 14. The author of the Fourth Gospel also mentions them as distinct from the apostles (vii. 5), and says that they had no faith in Jesus. Against this statement we have the fact that it was

Christ's brother James who became leader of the sect after the Crucifixion, and also that after the death of this James the "church of Jerusalem" was governed by other relatives of Jesus.

With regard to Cephas, it should be noted that the name of this great "pillar" of the Nazarene church is not found in the three Synoptical Gospels. We have in those books, it is true, accounts of Jesus changing the name Simon into Peter; but it is only in the Fourth Gospel that the name is said to be changed into *Cephas*—"which is by interpretation *Peter*" (i. 42). We thus have a disciple named Simon Cephas Peter—which is pure nonsense. The apostle whom Paul "withstood to the face" was known only as Cephas, and from the following paragraphs it seems more than probable that Cephas was not the same individual as Peter: Gal. i. 7-8; ii. 6-12. Paul would not be likely to speak of an apostle, in one and the same letter, first as Cephas, then as Peter, and then again as Cephas.

With regard to the doctrine of the primitive Jewish Christians, we learn, further, that they regarded the martyred Jesus not as a divine Being, but as the founder of their particular sect, and as one who had possessed the gift of prophecy. He was now, they believed, a son of God and a saint in heaven, and such would be the reward of every member of the sect who "overcame" the world or suffered martyrdom.

Irenæus tells us that the Nazarenes of his day "assert that Jesus was begotten by Joseph," and that they "do not choose to understand that the Holy Ghost came upon Mary, and the power of the Most High did overshadow her" (Heresies iii., 21, 1; v., 1, 3). There can be no doubt, then, that the story of the Virgin Birth did not originate with the Apostolic party.

We will now see what Gospel legends appear to have been known to Paul, or to have been in circulation in his time. It goes, of course, without saying, that any knowledge which the Apostle of the Gentiles exhibits respecting Jesus must have been derived from reports current in his day. Well, the knowledge displayed in the Pauline Epistles is very small indeed, and amounts only to the following bald statements:—

1. That Jesus Christ was "the son of God," was "born of a woman," and was of "the seed of David."
2. That Jesus instituted the Lord's Supper "the same night in which he was betrayed."
3. That the Jews had "killed the Lord Jesus," who suffered death by crucifixion.
4. That Jesus "died for our sins," was buried and rose the third day "according to the scriptures."
5. That Jesus was seen alive by many after his resurrection.
6. That Jesus was at that time "seated at the right hand of God."

Here we have the sum and substance of what was commonly reported of Jesus in Paul's time—long before any of the Gospels came to be written. These statements are not, of course, historic facts. Paul could not know that Jesus was "the son of God," that he was then "seated at the right hand of God," that he was of "the seed of David," or that he "died for our sins." Moreover, to say that Jesus was "born of a woman" is only to say that he was a human being; the statement implies no knowledge of the Virgin Birth story. There remain, then, but the alleged facts that Jesus had instituted the Lord's Supper, that he had been put to death, that he rose from the dead and was seen by many after his resurrection. The question now arises: Did Paul know even these few circumstances? The answer is—he did not. The account of the "Lord's Supper" (1 Cor. xi. 23-26) is evidently an interpolation, added at some later period from Luke's Gospel. The resurrection of Jesus was based upon the fact (or fiction) of a general resurrection of all men.

"But if there is no resurrection of the dead, neither hath Christ been raised.....For if the dead are not raised, neither hath Christ been raised" (1 Cor. xv. 13-16). Paul was a Pharisee, and believed in a resurrection.

The list of post mortem appearances of Jesus to his disciples was mere hearsay.

"For I delivered unto you first of all *that which also I received*, how that Christ died for our sins.....and that he appeared to Cephas; then to the twelve; then he appeared to above five hundred brethren at once..... then he appeared to James; then to all the apostles; and last of all.....he appeared to me also" (1 Cor. xv. 3-8).

The "appearance" to Paul was in a "vision": all the other alleged appearances were equally visionary. Paul "received" the account from someone; but who his informant was will never now be known. The appearances mentioned by Paul were, no doubt, the first that came into circulation, and they flatly contradict the later Gospel stories. Thus, judging by the silence of Paul, that Christian teacher knew nothing of the events and sayings now recorded in the Gospels, and, what is more remarkable, the author of the Book of Revelation was in the same blissful state of ignorance. The authentic "history" of Jesus was then unwritten.

I may, of course, be told that the silence of these two writers is no proof that they were unacquainted with the sayings and doings of Jesus recorded in the Gospels. This is certainly true: both writers *may* have had a full knowledge of all these matters, and both *may* have studiously avoided mentioning them. But this, I think, is very improbable indeed. Now, had Paul been acquainted with the sayings ascribed to Jesus in the Gospels, he could not well have written long letters of counsel, instruction and doctrine to the churches in Rome, Corinth, Philippi and Galatia without quoting or referring to some of them. Instead, for instance, of telling the church at Rome to "mark them which are causing the divisions and occasions of stumbling *contrary to the teaching which ye learned*," he would doubtless have said, "contrary to the teaching of the Lord Jesus." In his four great epistles the Apostle of the Gentiles gives no less than seventy quotations from the Old Testament, and in most cases, cites them in support of his teaching. Had he been acquainted with the sayings now attributed to Christ, he would, beyond all doubt, have quoted *them*, and not the Hebrew Scriptures, as his authority for the doctrines he taught. They would have been cited either for the purpose mentioned, or to remind his converts that they were not acting or living in accordance with the precepts of their Lord, or for a score of other reasons. He could not possibly have completely ignored them—as he undoubtedly does.

The same argument applies with even greater force to the author of the Book of Revelation, who was a member of the Judaistic party that professed to have been personal followers of Jesus. One fact is beyond all doubt: neither the Apostle of the Gentiles nor the writer of the Apocalypse appears to have been acquainted with any authoritative commands or precepts of Jesus to which he could appeal in support of his teaching. Each was his own authority for the particular form of doctrine he preached.

ABRACADABRA.

(To be continued.)

## Voltaire in England.—I.

BY THE LATE J. M. WHEELER,

Sub-Editor of the "Freethinker" and author of the "Biographical Dictionary of Freethinkers," etc.

No passage in the eventful life of Voltaire is more important or more obscure than his sojourn in this country. It was here he lit the torch of Freethought with which he fired the continent. Here he mastered the arguments of Bolingbroke, Toland, Shaftesbury, Collins and Woolston, which he afterwards used with such effect on the Christian superstition. Here he imbibed the philosophy of Locke and the science of Newton. Indeed, it may be said there is hardly one of Voltaire's important works but bears traces of his visit to our country. Yet of this momentous epoch

of his life, the records are scanty. When he grew famous, every letter and anecdote was preserved; but in 1727 Voltaire was but a young man of promise. Carlyle, in the tenth book of his *Frederick the Great*, says: "But mere inanity and darkness visible reign in all his Biographies over this period of his life, which was, above all others, worth investigating." Mr. Churton Collins, who with praiseworthy diligence has retraced the ground, has frequently to confess that in various particulars his research has been unrewarded. Even with regard to the length of his stay in this country some uncertainty prevailed; Carlyle said two years, Duvernet three. Mr. Collins fixes it at two years and eight months.

As Mr. Collins in his interesting monograph does not explain why Voltaire came to England, the story may bear re-telling. Dining at the Duke of Sully's table, he presumed to differ from the Chevalier de Rohan—Chabot, a relative of Cardinal Rohan. The aristocrat asked, "Who is that young fellow who talks so loud?" "Monsieur le Chevalier," replied Voltaire, "it is a man who does not bear a great name, but who knows how to honor the name he does bear." Picture that with Voltaire's flashing eye and deep majestic voice. It was insufferable that the son of a bourgeois should thus speak his mind to a Rohan. A few days afterwards, when again dining with the Duke, he was called down by a false message, seized and caned by ruffians until a voice cried, "Enough." That word was a fresh blow, for the young poet recognised the voice of the Chevalier. Burning with rage, he returned to the Duke and asked him to assist in obtaining redress. But his grace shrugged his shoulders and gave no assistance. Voltaire never visited the Duke again, but erased his ancestor's name from *La Henriade*. He retired to study English and fencing, then re-appeared with a challenge to the Chevalier, who accepted it, but informed his relations. It was against the law for a commoner to challenge a nobleman, and the next morning, instead of meeting de Rohan, he met officers armed with a *lettre de cachet*, consigning him to the Bastille. After over a month's incarceration, he was liberated on condition that he quitted France. No doubt Voltaire felt keenly the indignity to which he had been subjected. In a letter of instruction written from England to his agent, he says: "If my debtors profit by my misfortune and absence to refuse payment, you must not trouble to bring them to reason; 'tis but a trifle." Yet a book has been written on Voltaire's avarice.

Voltaire arrived in England on Whit-Monday, 1726. He disembarked near Greenwich and witnessed the Fair. All seemed bright to him. The park and river were alive with animation. Here there was no Bastille, no fear of the persecution of the great or the spies of the police. He had excellent introductions. Bolingbroke he had met in exile at La Source in 1721, and he had learnt to regard the illustrious Englishman who possessed "all the learning of his country and all the politeness of ours." Now their positions were reversed. Voltaire was the exile; Bolingbroke, at any rate for a while, the host. But he had other English friends, notably Mr. (afterward, Sir Everard) Falkener, from whose house at Wandsworth most of his letters are dated. For Sir Everard, Voltaire always retained the warmest feelings of friendship, and forty years later returned hospitality to his sons.

Pope was one of the persons Voltaire most desired to see. He had already described him as "the most elegant most correct and most harmonious poet they ever had in England." On his first visit, Pope could only speak French—like Russell of the *Scotsman* made jokes—with difficulty; and Voltaire could not make himself understood. The result being somewhat unsatisfactory, Voltaire retired to Wandsworth, and did not seek further company until he had fully acquired the language. An anecdote in Chepworth's *History of the Stage* relates that he was in the habit of attending the theatre with the play

in his hand, and that he confessed that by this method he obtained more proficiency in speaking the language in one month than he could otherwise have attained in four or five. Madame de Genlis had the audacity to assert that Voltaire never knew English, yet certain it is he could, before he was many months in this country, both speak and write it with facility. By November 16, 1726, he wrote to Pope, after that poet's accident while driving near Bolingbroke's estate at Dawley. In writing to his friend Thieriot in France, he sometimes used English, for the same reason, he said, that Boileau wrote in Latin, not to be understood by too curious people.

A few lines of verse, otherwise without merit, may show the facility with which he could express himself in our language.

"Hervey, would you know the passion  
You have kindled in my breast?  
Trifling is the inclination  
That by words can be expressed.  
In my silence see the lover;  
True love is by silence known;  
In my eye you'll best discover  
All the power of your own."

While in this country he wrote in English a portion of his tragedy, "Brutus," and two essays, one on the Civil Wars of France, and one on Epic Poetry. In the introduction he expresses his conception of his own position as a man of letters in a foreign country. As these essays, although popular in England at the time, are now extremely rare I transcribe a paragraph or two from them:—

"The true aim of a relation is to instruct men, not to gratify their malice. We should be busied chiefly in giving a faithful account of all the useful things and extraordinary persons, whom to know and to imitate, would be a benefit to our country. A traveller who writes in that spirit is a merchant of a nobler kind, who imports into his native country the arts and virtues of other nations."

In his *Essay on Epic Poetry*, Voltaire shows he had made a thorough study of Milton, though his criticism can scarcely be considered an advance upon that of Addison. He displays his constant admiration for Tasso, to whom he was doubtless in part attracted by his sufferings at the hands of an ignoble nobility. He says:—

"The taste of the English and of the French, though averse to any machinery grounded upon enchantment, must forgive, nay commend that of Armida, since it is the source of so many beauties. Besides, she is a Mahometan, and the Christian religion allows us to believe that those infidels are under the immediate influence of the devil."

I have cited these passages rather to show Voltaire's perfect acquaintance with the English language than for their own merit. But it is not without interest that it was in this essay (p. 104) that the well-known story of Newton and the apple-tree was told for the first time.

Writing of the assertion that Milton took the hint of his *Paradise Lost* from a ridiculous play on the fall of man, he says:—

"In the like manner Pythagoras owed the invention of music to the noise of the hammer of a blacksmith. And thus, in our days, Sir Isaac Newton, walking in his garden, had the first thought of his system of gravitation upon seeing an apple fall from a tree."

Mr. Collins, who points out that Voltaire has this credit, and that the story is told on the trustworthy authority of Newton's niece and her husband, John Conduitt, Newton's intimate friend, overlooks this passage, and says: "It is not, so far as I can discover, to be found in any publication antecedent to the *Lettres sur les Anglais*." But the *Essay on Epic Poetry* was antecedent to the Letters on the English. The story was told for the first time by Voltaire, but it was told in the English tongue in which he heard it. Perhaps an even more decisive test of his knowledge of English was his familiarity with Butler's *Hudibras*, portions of which he translated.

Voltaire had a great admiration for the comedies of Congreve. But the witty English dramatist held too mean a view of his profession to please his

French compeer. In their first conversation, Congreve spoke of his works as trifles beneath him, and begged his guest to consider him not as an author but as a gentleman. Voltaire answered with spirit, "If you had the misfortune to be merely a gentleman I should never have come to see you." It may have been through Congreve that Voltaire became acquainted with the Dowager Duchess of Marlborough, who, says Goldsmith, wished Voltaire to edit her memoirs. At any rate, he utilised her acquaintance, relating in his *Age of Louis XIV.* her story of Queen Anne having had a secret interview with her husband, James II., whom she offered to designate her successor if he would abjure the Church of Rome.

(To be concluded.)

## Correspondence.

"J. H." AND "OUIDA."

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE FREETHINKER."

Sir,—Your contributor, "J. H.," in his admirable article, entitled "An Indictment of the 'Fourth Estate,'" in your issue of the 3rd instant, refers to "Ouida" in such a way as to lead one to suppose that he holds a poor opinion of her writings. I must confess that I myself do not share this opinion. "Ouida" has done some good, sound, humanitarian and Freethought work, as witness the following extracts:—

"You know that I love no churches; and I was ill pleased that you steeped the child in the acid and the poison of creed. While women are nurtured in superstition, the men born of them will never reach their full stature."—*Tricotrin*, chap. vi.

"All we have is a hope—a hope that may be cheated at last. For none have come back from the grave to tell us whether that fools us as well."—*Ibid*, chap. xxxvi.

"The metaphorical poem of Eve.....the allegorical picture of Eden."—*Ibid*.

"The blessed bread and wine had been placed to the withered lips, which the religion that they symbolised had never fed during the famished hours of many bitter winters."—*Ibid*, chap. lviii.

"Lord's sake! I canna but wish that He'd a thocht of some ither way o' food.....than this way o' 'em murderin' one anither, from the man on the ox tew the sparrow on the worm."—*Puck*, chap. vi.

"All the religions of your earth are things of the lip, which scarcely influence the life."—*Ibid*.

"Janus, with his keys of peace and war, has passed into a mere memory, powerless and without worshipers; soon Peter, with his keys of heaven and earth, will have done the same."—*Ariadne*, chap. vii.

I could give many other extracts of an equally Freethought nature if space permitted.

ESS JAY BEE.

## Mad Faith-Healers.

(By the Berlin Correspondent of the "Daily Chronicle.")

An extraordinary case of religious mania is exciting much attention here.

An official named Sagave, in good circumstances, living with his wife and four grown-up children, two girls and two young men, has had differences with them lately on religious matters. Sagave is an invalid confined to bed and of a sceptical turn. His wife, despairing of her husband's recovery, and convinced of the uselessness of ordinary medical treatment, took refuge with faith-healers and Christian Scientists. The leaders of these sects succeeded in making a convert of Frau Sagave, who in turn convinced her children that the recovery of their father depended on their faith and the multiplicity of their prayers. The treatment of the sick man was continued for some time. Sagave protested, but his protests were regarded as manifestations of the Devil's presence and power. Their prayers took a more extravagant character. They began maltreating Sagave with the object of driving the Devil out of him.

Early yesterday morning, the neighbors were aroused by frantic shrieks proceeding from Sagave's apartment, accompanied by the noise of breaking furniture. The police and firemen were sent for, the door burst open, and Frau Sagave was discovered with her children in a paroxysm of maniacal frenzy. All five were engaged in smashing the furniture, burning their clothes, shrieking prayers and foaming at the mouth. Sagave was found on his bed covered with bleeding wounds. He was removed to a place of safety, and his unfortunate wife and children were removed to the Charité Hospital, where they were put under restraint. As they

left their house they cried out that Beelzebub was endeavoring to gain an entrance with the object of possessing himself of the soul of the sick man.

In consequence of this terrible outbreak, an agitation has sprung up here against the faith-healers and Christian Scientists. The papers demand that the police should interfere to cleanse Berlin of the leaders of these bodies, but difficulties are apprehended, as most of these persons are foreigners, chiefly Americans, of whose sincerity there can be little doubt. Not long ago there was a similar case in the village of Datten, not far from Berlin, where twenty of the inhabitants gave way to religious frenzy under the influence of one of their number who had returned from America to preach some strange faith. They were found parading on the village street "in the garb of Paradise," but were summarily removed by the police to a lunatic asylum.

## A GOSPEL FOR SCOUNDRELS.

Ah! my friend, let me assure you that there is hope for the vilest through the precious blood of Jesus. No man can have gone too far for the long arm of Christ to reach him. Christ delights to save the biggest sinners. O ye despairing sinners, there is no room for despair this side the gates of hell. If you have gone through the foulest kennels of iniquity, no stain can stand out against the power of the cleansing blood. You great sinners shall have no back seats in heaven! There shall be no outer court for you. You great sinners shall have as much love as the best, as much joy as the brightest of saints. You shall be near to Christ; you shall sit with him upon his throne; you shall wear the crown; your fingers shall touch the golden harps; you shall rejoice with the joy that is unspeakable and full of glory. Thirty years of sin shall be forgiven, and it shall not take thirty minutes to do it in. Fifty, sixty, seventy years of iniquity shall all disappear as the morning's hoar-frost disappears before the sun.—*Spurgeon's "Sermon to Open Neglecters and Nominal Followers of Religion."*

## MAN'S GARDEN-PLOT.

Each life is as a little plot of ground,  
Whose owner should not blankly wall it round  
To shut it in from others, shutting out  
Himself from those that neighbor it about:  
The plots must differ both in size and soil,  
The poorest will reward kind care and toil  
With fruits of sustenance and flowers of grace;  
All good, though varying in every case.  
Down with our dead walls!—let us all enjoy  
Our neighbors' industry without alloy;  
The bloom and odors of their fruit and flowers  
Which are so like and yet so unlike ours;  
The singing of the birds among their trees,  
The glancing butterflies and honey-bees:  
And sharing thus the pleasures of the whole,  
Tend that which is within our own control  
More cheerfully, more earnestly, lest weeds  
Disgracing ours, taint theirs with wafted seeds;  
And let us cherish kindly interchange  
Of help and produce in our social range.

—James Thomson ("B. V.").

## THE FUNCTION OF DEATH.

For the great labor of growth, being many, is one;  
One thing the white death and the ruddy birth;  
The invisible air and the all-beholden sun,  
And barren water and many-childed earth.

And these things are made manifest in men  
From the beginning forth unto this day:  
Time writes and life records them, and again  
Death seals them lest the record pass away.

For if death were not, then should growth not be,  
Change, nor the life of good nor evil things;  
Nor were there night at all nor light to see,  
Nor water of sweet nor water of bitter springs.

—Swinburne, "Genesis."

Those who believe that Heaven is, what earth has been, a monopoly in the hands of a favored few, would do well to reconsider their opinion; if they find that it came from their priest or their grandmother, they could not do better than reject it.—*Shelley*.

**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, C. Cohen, "Trying to Save the Faiths: An Examination of the New Theology."

WEST HAM BRANCH N. S. S. (Workman's Hall, 27 Romford-road, Stratford): 7.30, W. J. Ramsey, "The New Theology."

**COUNTRY.**

EDINBURGH BRANCH N. S. S. (Masonic Hall, 11 Melbourne-place): 6.30, a Lecture.

FAILSWORTH SECULAR SUNDAY SCHOOL (Pole-lane): 6.30, Willie Dyson, "The Teachings of Spencer."

GLASGOW BRANCH N. S. S. (Hall, 110 Brunswick-street): H. P. Ward, 12 noon, "France's Fight with the Pope"; 6.30, "The White Slave Traffic: An Indictment of Modern Christian Civilisation."

LEICESTER SECULAR SOCIETY (Secular Hall, Humberstone Gate): 6.30, J. M. Robertson, M.P., "Liberalism and Socialism."

MANCHESTER BRANCH N. S. S. (Secular Hall, Rusholme-road): J. T. Lloyd, 3, "Secularism or Christianity: Which?" 6.30, "Rev. R. J. Campbell and the New Theology." Tea at 5.

NEWCASTLE RATIONALIST DEBATING SOCIETY (Lockhart's Cathedral Café): Thursday, March 12, at 8, T. Dawson, "British Songs."

PLYMOUTH RATIONALIST SOCIETY (Foresters' Hall, Octagon): 7, Debate, "Is Meat-eating Immoral?"

SOUTH SHIELDS (Captain Duncan's Navigation School, Market-place): 7.30, "Ibsen as a Moralist."

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