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PRICE TWOPENCE

Virtue is the health of the soul.—Joubert.

Christian Accuracy.

It is my intention to write at some length on the Rev. R. J. Campbell's book on "The New Theology." But I think I had better not begin my criticism of it during the holiday week, when so many of my readers will be scattered beyond reach of their *Freethinker*. This week, therefore, I will deal with another topic; one which has a peculiar interest of its own, and is pregnant with very valuable lessons.

Some twenty years ago I wrote an article for the old *Secular Almanack* on "No Faith With Heretics," in which I told the story of how a silly, though vicious, slander was perpetrated by the pious Richard Cumberland against Anthony Collins, the author of the famous *Discourse on Freethinking*, who was in a certain sense the father of English Free-thought. Collins was a man of exemplary life and manners. The great John Locke, who praised his love of truth and moral courage, made him one of his executors. Yet it was this man of whom the saintly Bishop Berkeley said that he "deserved to be denied the common benefits of air and water"—simply for criticising the Christian faith in language of the utmost moderation. Collins's principal antagonist was the famous Dr. Bentley, a man of extraordinary learning and also of extraordinary ill manners as a controversialist. A grandson of Bentley was Richard Cumberland, the novelist and play-writer, who was, on the whole, a very estimable man; but, like most other Christians, he had next to no sense of honor where an "infidel" was concerned. Cumberland started the ridiculous slander that Collins sought and obtained Bentley's assistance in adversity. Collins never was in adversity; he was possessed of an ample fortune; and Cumberland's mistake was pointed out to him by Isaac D'Israeli, who told him that the person he meant was *Arthur Collins*, the historical compiler; but, like a good Christian, Cumberland perpetuated the slander, remarking that "it should stand, because it could do no harm to any but to Anthony Collins, whom he considered little short of an Atheist."

When an otherwise excellent man like Richard Cumberland could act in that way, no one need be astonished at the hooliganism of a bitter and malignant creature like Dr. Torrey.

There is, of course, a great difference between Dr. Torrey and the Rev. R. J. Campbell. The latter appears to be a gentleman. But there is something in the very profession of a preacher which militates against exact utterance. Those who discourse from "the coward's castle of the pulpit" in a place where a question would be disorder and criticism is never known, are naturally liable to be loose in their statements. A man must have a positive passion for truth who takes the trouble to be always accurate although he is never liable to be corrected. This is the most charitable explanation of certain slips in Mr. Campbell's new book.

One of the most careless of these slips is the mentioning together (p. 153) of "drunken debauch," "sinful follies," "blank atheism," and "foul blas-

phemies." The word "blank," of course, is mere silliness; it is one of those "question-begging epithets" against which Bentham hurled the shafts of his logic and satire. But for the rest these expressions, in such connection, are specimens of that Christian charity which is so common, although it has no relation to the virtue which Paul so splendidly eulogised in the thirteenth chapter of the first of Corinthians. Atheism has no more connection with drunkenness or other vices than the New Theology has; and we have no doubt that Mr. Campbell knows it as well as we do.

Mr. Campbell speaks (p. 174) of "Julian the apostate." This word is offensive, and is meant to be offensive. Julian abandoned Christianity for Paganism; Constantine—at least, if his conversion was real—abandoned Paganism for Christianity; and why was one more of an apostate than the other? We suspect that Mr. Campbell, in this respect, like the baser sort of Christians, uses the word "apostate" to stain the memory of one who gave up Christianity on a principle of conviction.

"Julian the apostate" is said by Mr. Campbell to have cried, "Thou hast conquered, O Galilean!" Now, on a point like this, the oracle of the City Temple ought to be better informed. Gibbon is an easily accessible author, and Mr. Campbell might find in that great historian's twenty-fourth chapter what the dying Emperor did talk about to the friends and attendants around his couch. The Christian fable that Julian cried, "Thou hast conquered, O Galilean!" was not deemed by Gibbon to be worth mentioning. He dismissed it in one of those footnotes which are the delight and the despair of succeeding historians. "The calumnies of Gregory," he wrote, "and the legends of more recent saints, may now be *silently despised*." After the lapse of a century and a quarter, one of the pious legends that Gibbon thought could be *silently despised* is repeated as historical truth by a leading preacher who aims at an ethical reformation of Christian theology. I believe he is sincere in that aim; but it is evident that the ethical reformation should be extended farther than he imagines. Accuracy is really a form of veracity. Mr. Campbell should reflect on this, and help to wipe away that reproach which induced Herder to declare that "Christian veracity" deserved to rank with "Punic faith."

In his first chapter (p. 7) Mr. Campbell repeats a long-discredited old story of the French Revolution:—

"In France during the Revolution the populace turned frantically upon the established faith, tore it to shreds, burlesqued it, and set up the worship of the goddess of Reason, as they called it, typified by a Parisian harlot."

Every word of this is false. I do not call it a lie, because I think Mr. Campbell is simply repeating what he has read in religious books, without taking the trouble to find out the facts for himself. This is an unpleasant, but a common, Christian characteristic. It is such a pity to disturb a story that tends to edification!—in other words, to the disgrace of your opponents.

I do not wish to insinuate that Christians are incorrigible. They do learn in time—though the time is often enormous. The Parisian "harlot" used to be "naked." But that circumstance has

been dropped of late. The "harlot" still remains, but that is just as true as the "naked."

There was, indeed, a Festival of Reason organised at Notre Dame in Paris—with which, however, the French Convention had absolutely nothing to do. Those who organised it were not Atheists. There was no Goddess of Reason in the ceremony. There was a Goddess of Liberty, represented by an actress, whom Carlyle names, but who really cannot be identified. That she was not properly clothed, or that she was a harlot, is an invention of those who found Reason and Liberty equally detestable. Mr. Campbell, who is not exactly a fool, might have recognised the absurdity of this part of the story. Can he believe that any body of Frenchmen ever selected a whore as the central figure of a public ceremony? The thing is too ridiculous for words.

I have only to add that "the French people" never did the other things that Mr. Campbell attributes to them. If he doubts it, let him read Aulard; or let him read the excellent pages on the subject in Mr. J. M. Robertson's *Short History of Freethought*.

One of Mr. Campbell's opponents in the "New Theology" agitation is the Rev. F. B. Meyer. This gentleman also is no model of accuracy. Preaching in the Metropolitan Tabernacle on Good Friday, Mr. Meyer expressed his belief in the Divine glory of Jesus Christ, and was thus reported in the *Daily Chronicle*:—

"For us, we cannot use of Him the words that Drummond used to Moody when he spoke of him as 'the greatest human' he had ever known. We must speak of him as Charles Lamb did, when he said to friends gathered in his room: 'If Shakespeare or Plato or Goethe were to enter we should all stand up to show them reverence; but if Jesus Christ entered we should fall down to show Him our absolute reverence as God.'"

I hardly know whether to call this slipshod or lying. I have a very poor opinion of Mr. Meyer, and good reasons for it. Still, he may not be a deliberate liar; he may possess a romantic memory—which has been operating, perhaps, under the stress of what Professor James calls "the will to believe."

Ten to one Mr. Meyer has never read Charles Lamb. Had he done so he would have known that Lamb was a sceptic. This could be proved over and over from his Letters, and especially from those to Thomas Manning. Besides, the fact was notorious to all his friends, and was once the occasion of something like a quarrel between him and his old friend Southey. Probably Mr. Meyer has read something in the pages of a Christian writer, and amplified it for Tabernacle consumption. The kernel of his story may be found in Hazlitt's essay "Of Persons One Would Wish to Have Seen." After a long conversation with a company of friends on such persons, Lamb mentioned Judas Iscariot, and then concluded:—

"There is only one other person I can ever think of after this. If Shakespeare was to come into the room, we should all rise up to meet him; but if that person was to come into it, we should all fall down and try to kiss the hem of his garment."

Meyer's amplification of the original is a good instance of Christian accuracy. Plato and Goethe are worked in for effect; Jesus Christ is mentioned, although Lamb did not mention him; trying to kiss the hem of his garment is omitted altogether; and "to show him our absolute reverence as God" is a purely pious addition.

Lamb's words, in Hazlitt's report, are quite consistent with his Deistic opinions. Trying to kiss the hem of the garment of Jesus is less a sign of reverence than of affection. Many a man has done as much to a sweet-souled woman. Deists have often entertained an extraordinary admiration for Jesus as a man. Mr. Campbell carries this admiration to the point of extravagance, yet he does not regard Jesus "as God" in Mr. Meyer's sense of the words. Neither did Charles Lamb, and Mr. Meyer should be aware of the fact. In any case, he should not put his own words into Charles Lamb's mouth.

G. W. FOOTE.

Christianity and Woman.—IV.

(Concluded from p. 197.)

I HAVE made rather a lengthy digression from Principal Donaldson's book, but trust that it has not been without its value. At any rate, it is important to remove the idea that might seize upon the mind of an unprepared reader, that Christian influence upon the position of women had not a lasting effect. Principal Donaldson simply shows Christian opinion during its formative period; I have given some glimpses of what it was afterwards. And having done this, we can now return to one or two other aspects of the matter touched upon by the author of the book that has furnished the occasion for these articles.

There is hardly a more depressing chapter of human history than that which deals with the Christian teachings concerning celibacy. Principal Donaldson seems puzzled to account for the rapid growth of the feeling in favor of celibacy, and remarks that "no one, with the New Testament as his guide, could venture to assert that marriage was wrong." But on the other side, it has to be borne in mind that the New Testament is curiously deficient in teachings concerning family life, and which, therefore, relegates it to a subordinate position. The central figure, Jesus, is a celibate; Paul is unmarried and counsels others to remain likewise. If marriage is permitted it is only to avoid something worse. And in the picture in Revelations xiv., where 144,000 saints wait on "the Lamb," we are told they were "not defiled with women but were virgins." There is, therefore, good grounds supplied by the New Testament for believing marriage to be an inferior condition, and this might easily be drawn out to greater lengths by enthusiastic disciples.

And this was actually what happened. It is noted that the sentiment in favor of "despising and rejecting" marriage can be traced to a very early date in the history of the Church, and this sentiment was nourished by the example of Jesus, the explicit teaching of Paul, and the teaching that it was necessary to mortify the passions by shunning all forms of earthly enjoyment. It was not on this earth, as Gibbon said in a famous sentence, that Christians aimed at being either happy or useful. Marriage was rapidly reduced, in the eyes of Christian teachers, to the one function of the perpetuation of the race; and even that view of the matter was questioned. For the world was nearing its end and the need for multiplication no longer existed. It is from this point of view that Tertullian describes children as "burdens which are to us most of all unsuitable, as being perilous to faith," and wives as women of the second degree of modesty who have fallen into wedlock. Jerome was still more explicit, and avowed his aim to "cut down by the axe of virginity the wood of marriage." "Marriage," he also says, "is at the best a sin, all that we can do is to excuse and purify it." Tatian asserted that "every union of the male with the female is unclean." Augustine said that "celibates will shine in heaven like dazzling stars, while the parents who begot them will resemble stars without light." On the other hand, Eustathius, Bishop of Sebastia, in Cappadocia, declared that "married people were incapable of salvation." Saturnius, a Gnostic leader, taught that marriage was instituted by the Devil to perpetuate his partizans, and it was the duty of divinely led men to frustrate him. Origen, one of the greatest of the Christian writers, said that all marriage was unclean; and taking Matthew xix. 12 as his warranty, mutilated himself so as to avoid temptation. In this he was followed by a whole sect of Christians, the Valesians, who procured proselytes by force whenever possible. The constancy of these tendencies in Christian history may be noted by the existence, in our own day, of a curious Russian sect, the Skopsis, who practice mutilation as a religious duty; and also by a recent enquiry to the Bishop of London from an intending candidate for holy orders

asking how could he possibly preach on purity of life if he were married?

The general result of such teachings was, as Lecky points out, that, in spite of two or three admirable descriptions of marriage contained in the mass of early Christian writings, "it would be impossible to conceive anything more coarse or more repulsive than the manner in which they regarded it..... Marriage was regarded almost exclusively in its lowest aspect. The tender love which it elicits, the holy and beautiful domestic qualities that follow in its train, were almost absolutely omitted from consideration.....It was.....a condition of degradation, from which all who aspired to real sanctity should fly."

Necessarily there went with this an ignoring of the advantages of home life. Dean Milman said that he could not recall a single instance in all the discussions on the comparative merits of marriage and celibacy, where the social aspect appears to have occurred to the writers. "They seem quite unconscious of the softening and humanising effect of the natural affections, the beauty of parental tenderness and filial love." Principal Donaldson also notes "the striking absence of home life in the history of Christians," and adds that "perhaps this absence of domestic affection, this homelessness, may account in some degree for the striking features of the next century, and especially the prevalent hardness of heart." This is a striking comment—the more so because unconscious—on the claim that Christianity acted as a revivifying force on a decaying civilisation. The period during which it was, as a religious conviction, strongest, created, as a result, the unlovely, and anything but civilised, effects of succeeding centuries. That the teachings noted must have had a demoralising effect on posterity is obvious. There is no need now to dwell upon the effect of the teaching that, while men and women were by nature evil, the woman was the more evil of the two—a teaching that found deplorable expression in the wholesale witch-burnings of the Middle Ages. It is enough to note that, at the best, the teaching concerning celibacy would affect those who were best qualified to carry out the social function of parentage. Marriage, being branded as more or less of a degradation, it would be shunned only by those whose natures were capable of the better class of feelings. Not all of this class would shun it, but other things equal, celibacy would draw its adherents almost exclusively from this class. The result would be a survival of the morally and mentally undesirable. It would, as Principal Donaldson hints, develop a coarseness and hardness of nature that would persist long after the teachings concerning the superior value of the celibate life had lost their force.

Much might also be said on the immorality that these teachings involved. It is curiously instructive that, despite the readiness of Christians to vaunt their superior morality, the charges of sexual misconduct and extravagance have pursued it from the earliest times. Principal Donaldson notes it as a striking fact that in the second century the Christians were universally believed by Pagans to be guilty of licentious conduct, and to be more or less loose in their sexual relations. Among the many curious sects into which Christianity subdivided there was undoubtedly some warrant for the belief; but the fact that it should have been used by Pagans against Christians is evidence of the moral sense of the Pagan world to which it appealed. Such a charge would have carried no weight whatever in a society so hopelessly corrupt as many Christians picture the non-Christians of the first three centuries. Tertullian distinctly asserts that even in the second century infanticide was resorted to as a result of the secret immorality among professing virgins. Numerous regulations were made in the hopes of bringing about an improvement, but, apparently, without much result, for in the middle of the fifth century a Christian Bishop, Salvianus, draws a frightful picture of Christian Spain, Africa, Gaul,

and Italy, and sorrowfully contrasts the comparative purity of the non-Christian barbarians. That matters had not improved three hundred years later is shown by the Bishop of Orleans forbidding the clergy to reside with mother, aunt, or sister, "in consequence of the crimes so frequently perpetrated with them at the instigation of the Devil." In the eleventh century Abelard's picture of the condition of things inside the Church tells the same tale; and, after making all possible allowance for the exaggeration of Protestant writers, there remains enough to prove that in the sixteenth century Christendom was well provided with plentiful examples of all the vices with which Christian advocates have charged non-Christian peoples.

What has been said above will also cast a light upon the value of the apology, often made by semi-Freethinkers, that Christianity elevated woman by the development of Madonna-worship. It was a worship of the divine aspect of motherhood, say these people. Doubtless it may become so with some, and certainly the worship of motherhood antedates Christianity; but that it was so with the leaders of Christianity during the Dark and Middle Ages is the wildest of delusions. One need only bear in mind that with them parentage was more or less of a degrading function; that the superior sanctity of the celibate life has been one of the most persistent of Christian ideas, from the earliest times to our own; that men shunned woman as an agent of the Devil, and family life as a snare to distract their thoughts from heavenly things, to see how foolish is the teaching that the Christian Church sought to elevate woman through the worship of the Madonna. Bearing in mind the fact that it was the monks who paid their devotions to the Virgin, while nuns paid theirs to Jesus, and bearing in mind also the erotic nature of the prayers of both when directed to the respective objects of their adoration, it would be far more correct to say that eroticism, or perverted sexual feeling, had far more to do with the growth of Madonna-worship than aught else.

I do not think that any religion, or any system that has attained to any degree of importance, has ever taken a lower view of woman and her functions than has Christianity. Necessarily the views held could not be put literally and universally into practice; but while this was not possible, they affected her social and legal position as we have seen. These views, as Principal Donaldson points out, were strong enough to divest her of all the freedom and independence she possessed under Pagan rule, and did it within the brief space of a couple of hundred years. What happened in after centuries I have hinted rather than described—nothing less than a volume could do the subject justice. While the power of Christianity remained unshaken, the subjection of woman was assured; her partial liberation only commenced with its weakening, and has grown with its decline. The modern world is slowly realising that freedom and independence are as essential to the healthy development of woman as it is of man; that the State properly rests upon the home, and that the home in turn is dependent for its rational health upon the feelings of personal dignity and responsibility being thoroughly developed in all its members.

C. COHEN.

Mischievous Lying.

IT would take a large volume to exhaust the list of evils for which *Prejudice* is directly or indirectly responsible. Prejudice perverts the intellect, blinds the judgment, and renders social justice impossible. The prejudiced man is of necessity a conscious or unconscious liar. The truth is not in him, nor is he in a position ever to find it. The fact is there, right under his nose, staring him in the face; but he cannot, or will not, see it. The poor fellow is totally blind in relation to all that lies outside the small

circle of his own beliefs and opinions, or his own outlook upon life and character. He belongs to a party, and to all not included in his set he is atrociously unjust. He persistently tells lies about them, and never has a single qualm of conscience. His party is absolutely right and all others must be absolutely wrong.

As an example of the truth of that statement I will refer to the Rev. David Smith's "Correspondence Column" in the *British Weekly* for March 21. "A Local Preacher" wishes to know whether conversion is essential or not. His own opinion seems to be that it is not, though he grants it may be highly advantageous; because, according to him, "Christ brings out the best in man." "But," he says, "there is so much sin, and so many appear to live and die without Christ, that I find it hard to believe that conversion is a necessity. Thus I feel very insincere in preaching, because I am in doubt whether I ought to preach Christ in relation to time or to eternity." Of course, Mr. Smith pronounces conversion "supremely essential." With that pronouncement I have nothing to do just now; but in his elaboration of it Mr. Smith allows his prejudice to warp his judgment thus:—

"Realise the greatness of man's need. 'Many,' you say, 'appear to live and die without Christ.' Yes; but how do they live, and how do they die? I am constantly impressed by the sadness of Christless men. They live unsatisfied, and ill at ease. Their very laughter is hollow, and their assurance is mere bravado. 'Well, doctor,' a young woman once said in my hearing to a man of science who was scoffing at her faith, 'I cannot answer your arguments, but I've got peace. Have you?' His face flushed, and he turned away."

That is a fair sample of what one constantly hears from the pulpit, and reads in religious journals. Mr. Smith writes from prejudice, not from knowledge. He believes that all "Christless men" ought to be miserable, and then takes it for granted that they are. His reference to the man of science who scoffed at a young woman's faith shows conclusively that he does not understand the situation. To wield formidable arguments, which cannot be answered, against the faith, is not to scoff at it. The man of science may have argued out of sheer pity for his young friend in her bondage to superstition, and with the object of emancipating her. But if her sentimental question caused his face to flush from inward dissatisfaction and uneasiness, he was not much of a man of science after all. At evangelistic and revival meetings such silly anecdotes are always told by the score, but they possess no evidential value whatever. If they were all literally true—which many of them are not—they would prove nothing at all. Evidently Mr. Smith's knowledge of non-Christians is extremely limited, and in his ignorance he misrepresents them without a scruple. Nothing would be easier than to introduce him to at least a hundred unbelievers in his beloved Scotland, who not only enjoy a deep, calm, mental peace, but also are indebted for that sublime peace to their lack of faith. It would not be true to say that all Atheists are always happy, but it would be perfectly accurate to state that their misery is never the outcome of their Atheism. In their unbelief they are supremely at rest.

In all probability the people whom Mr. Smith characterises as miserable and dissatisfied are not theoretical unbelievers at all, but belong to that large class of whom the most we can say is, that they are religiously indifferent. In the background of their minds faith still lurks, only in a state of quiescence or suspended animation. Sometimes, when a Dr. Torrey or a Gipsy Smith comes round, this slumbering faith is revived, and there occurs, a second or third or sixth time, what is called conversion. These lapsed masses are the material on which the revivalists always work; but it is seldom, if ever, that genuine Secularists are to be found among the so-called lapsed masses. It may well be that the religiously indifferent, who are not theoretically unbelieving, may "live unsatisfied and ill at ease," and

that "their laughter is hollow, and their assurance is mere bravado"; but if Mr. Smith would only visit a Scottish Secular Society—say the one at Glasgow—he would come in contact with noble-minded and tender-hearted men and women, whose laughter is not "hollow," but full of sweet music and ringing merriment, whose assurance is not "mere bravado," but the reward of intellectual sanity and ethical tranquility, and who live, not "unsatisfied and ill at ease," but rooted and grounded in the love and delight of doing good.

Only the other day a lady said that she had been trained in the belief that Freethinkers are the most abandoned characters on earth. At home and in the church she had heard them described as vile reprobates who are beyond the possibility of salvation, and whose Atheism is only an opiate to stupify an accusing conscience. Up to a year ago she had never met a single one of the abandoned race; but at that time circumstances brought her as a guest into a Secularist home, in which she came into close touch with veritable Atheists, who, however, to her surprise, turned out to be neither wicked nor miserable, but true-hearted and happy philanthropists. She had been told gigantic lies concerning them by people who really knew nothing about them. At present, this lady attends Freethought lectures without being shocked, and reads Freethought literature without being injured. If Mr. Smith followed her example, he would soon be convicted of the sin of bearing false witness against his neighbor; and then he, too, would have "a living experience, in his own soul, of the reality and the blessedness of conversion." He would then know how grossly ignorant and blind he was when he penned his answer to "A Local Preacher."

In his *New Theology* (p. 70) Mr. R. J. Campbell says: "It is no use trying to put Jesus in a row along with other religious Masters." That statement is altogether untrue. As a matter of fact, many great scholars do so place the founder of Christianity, and they fully justify their action. There is no foundation whatever for the statement that "in our day most people are agreed that in Jesus we have the most perfect life ever exhibited to humanity." It would be more accurate to say that "in our day most people" are discovering that the life of Jesus was never exhibited to humanity. Ripe Christian scholars are at last admitting that it is supremely difficult, if not impossible, to distinguish between fact and fable in the four Gospels. Nothing but ignorant and reckless prejudice can be responsible for the assertion that outside all Churches "everyone, or nearly everyone," regards Jesus as the one spotless character and faultless teacher in history. Jesus the man, if he ever existed, is utterly unknown, and Jesus the teacher is discredited by the practice even of his own disciples. We are told that the "name of Jesus, which stands for a moral ideal which is the very negation of materialism, commands a reverence, and indeed a worship, the like of which no other has ever received in the history of mankind"; but what is the value of a reverence or a worship which does not produce a corresponding practice? The worship of a being whose commandments are not heeded is morally degrading; it is hypocrisy of the worst type; it is also the only blasphemy, and it inflicts its own punishment. Indeed, the moral perfection of Jesus is a product of the religious imagination, and not at all ascribable to the Jesus of the four Gospels. Theologians still talk unbounded nonsense about the absolute uniqueness of the Galilean; but instead of proving it they merely say that "history has settled that question for us," or that "the civilised world has already made up its mind on that point, and by a right instinct recognise Jesus as the unique standard of human excellence." But this is rhetorical lying, and its effect upon character is most mischievous. If Jesus still lived, and were cognisant of what is going on in Christendom, he would curse all this sentimental, shallow worship, unaccompanied by obedience to his words, and fling it from him as

intolerable mockery. "We have only seen perfect manhood once," shouts the impassioned preacher, "and that was the manhood of Jesus." You are entirely mistaken, O preacher; we have *never* seen perfect manhood, not even once, the manhood you attribute to Jesus being the creature of your own brain, or of the brains of your fore-runners. You are preaching the Christ of theology, not the Jesus of history—if there was one.

And yet, mischievous as all this lying undoubtedly is, perhaps it is not utterly destitute of good results. Sooner or later every lie will be found out, and every detected lie weakens the cause of the liars. Many of the lies told all through the ages about the Bible stand now fully exposed by criticism, and the consequence is, that the blind worship of the Bible is rapidly dying out even in the Churches. Not a few Christians have already learned that the delineation of Atheists by Christian ministers is almost wholly false, with the result that ministers are no longer held in reverence as they once were. When people began to realise that the exaltation and glorification of Jesus in the pulpit was largely a rhetorical performance, it became a notable fact that their interest in the ministrations of the Church was decidedly on the wane. At last the masses of the people are getting into the habit of doing their own thinking, instead of letting priests and ministers do it for them. Natural knowledge is slowly gaining ground, and there is a corresponding slump in supernatural belief. The facts of history, the grim realities of life, are being laid bare in the face of the world, and the dreams, so long treated as realities, are passing away. We are now in the transition process. Some ministers, aware of this, are doing their utmost to make the transition as smooth and imperceptible as possible. They are dismissing the dreams as gently as they can. They are telling fewer lies and more truths without calling attention to the fact. The New Theology is still *theology*, but its real emphasis is on the *non-theological*, on morality as a social relation. It still speaks of God, but by God it means love, and by love care for the public welfare. It talks glibly about the life Divine, or the life of the Deity, but what it has in its mind is the ideal life of humanity. Yes, we are in the transition process from dreams to realities, from fancies to facts, from lies to truths. Secularists are interested spectators of this subtle and salutary change, and they ought to do all they can to hasten its consummation.

J. T. LLOYD.

The Making of the Gospels.—V.

(Continued from p. 205.)

THE CHILDHOOD OF JESUS.

TWO more Gospel events complete the life of the child Jesus—according to Matthew. These are the flight into Egypt and the return to Palestine, both suggested by Old Testament passages. As regards the first, the story ran that to escape the massacre at Bethlehem Jesus was carried by Joseph into Egypt, "and was there until the death of Herod: that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the Lord through the prophet, saying, Out of Egypt did I call my son" (Matt. ii. 14-15). The passage here alleged to have been fulfilled is Hosea xi. 1—"When Israel was a child, then I loved him, and called *my son* out of Egypt." The reference is, of course, to the Israelites, who, when young as a nation, were called by the Lord out of the bondage of Egypt.

With regard to the return to Palestine, it was stated that the Carpenter "came and dwelt in a city called Nazareth; that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophets, that he should be called a Nazorite" (Matt. ii. 23). The last word is mistranslated "Nazarene." According to the old legend preserved by Hegesippus, James "the Lord's brother" was a Nazorite. Jesus was also believed to have been a Nazorite, and is so styled (in the Greek) in

eleven places in the New Testament. Mark is the only writer who invariably calls him "the Nazarene." As an illustration, in the first two Gospels a maid is represented as saying of or to Peter:—

Matt. xxvi. 71.—"This man also was with Jesus the Nazorite" (Nazoraïos).

Mark xiv. 67.—"Thou also wast with Jesus the Nazarene" (Nazarenos).

The vow of the Nazorite (or Nazirite) is given in Num. vi. 2-6. The passage which suggested the Gospel story was probably Judges xiii. 5; but in any case a residence in Nazareth did not constitute the resident either a Nazorite or a Nazarene. The Gospel-maker's statement is pure nonsense.

To the foregoing events should be added the Magi and the Star—a story copied from the "Protevangeliium of James" (par. 21). In the latter account, which is almost verbally the same as Matt. ii. 1-12, the star is described as resting over the cave in which the infant Jesus lay. Furthermore, a story of Jesus, when twelve years old, sitting in the temple questioning the Jewish "doctors," was added by Luke (ii. 41-52), who took it almost verbatim from the "Gospel of Thomas" (par. 19). The source of the stories in these two apocryphal Gospels is uncertain.

THE FORERUNNER.

According to the Mosaic ritual the Levites commenced their duties in the temple at thirty years of age (Num. iv. 3, 23, 30). In accordance with this alleged custom Jesus was represented as commencing his public ministry at the same age (Luke iii. 23). Furthermore, certain old Testament passages were interpreted by the Gospel-maker as predicting a forerunner: Jesus Christ, therefore, must have had a forerunner, and who so likely and suitable as John the Baptist. It would appear from Josephus that the last-named personage was really a historical figure; but there is no evidence that he ever saw Jesus, or was anything more than a self-constituted street preacher who had a craze on the subject of baptism.

The passages selected as predicting a forerunner for Jesus were: Isaiah xl. 3-4, Mal. iii. 1, and Mal. iv. 5. The first of these is quoted in all four Gospels, and in one of them (John i. 23) John the Baptist is represented as claiming to be the person foretold. The passage in Isaiah reads:—

"The voice of one that crieth, Prepare ye in the wilderness the way of the Lord; make straight in the desert a high way for our God. Every valley shall be exalted, and every mountain and hill shall be made low; and the uneven shall be made level, and the rough places a plain," etc.

The reference in the foregoing passage is to the pioneers who prepared the way through a rugged or almost impassable country for the march of a king and his army. The king in this case was Yahveh, the god of the Jews, who was to bring back the Jewish captives from all the countries to which they had been deported.

The second passage (Mal. iii. 1) is quoted in the three Synoptical Gospels as a prophecy referring to John the Baptist, and in two of them Jesus is represented as publicly declaring the Baptist to be the person foretold. He is made to say:—

"This is he, of whom it is written, Behold, I send my messenger before thy face, who shall prepare thy way before thee" (Matt. xi. 10).

If we desire to know whom Malachi referred to as the Lord's "messenger" we have but to turn to Mal. ii. 7:—

"For the priest's lips should keep knowledge, and the people should seek the law at his mouth: for *he is the messenger of the Lord of hosts.*"

The third passage (Mal. iv. 5) reads:—

"Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet, before the great and terrible day of the Lord come."

This prediction Jesus is also made to apply to the Baptist (Matt. xvii. 10-13). More than eighteen hundred years later a miserable old fraud named Dowie set himself up as the promised seer, and was

received as a prophet by a considerable number of followers. The coming of Elijah was predicted, probably, because it had been recorded in 2 Kings that he had been carried up to heaven without dying, and could therefore easily return to the earth. The "day of the Lord," so often referred to by the Hebrew prophets, was the day when the god Yahveh should take vengeance on the enemies of his chosen people. This period was doubtless believed by Malachi to be close at hand.

The account of John the Baptist in the Gospels is a fiction from beginning to end, and was suggested by the passages mentioned and the Old Testament history of Elijah. The last-named prophet was bold and fearless; so also was the Baptist. Elijah reproved king Ahab; the Baptist rebuked Herod Antipas. Ahab's wife, Jezebel, slew the Lord's prophets and made attempts upon the life of Elijah; Herodias, the wife of Antipas, brought about the death of the Baptist. Even the dress of the hero of the fiery chariot was of assistance in making Gospel history. It had been written of Elijah: "He was a hairy man, and girt with a girdle of leather about his loins" (2 Kings i. 8). An alternative reading for "a hairy man" was, in some MSS., "a man with a garment of hair." The latter reading was in the Gospel-maker's copy. He therefore described the Baptist as having "a raiment of camel's hair, and a leathern girdle about his loins" (Matt. iii. 4).

THE BAPTISM OF JESUS.

According to the Mosaic ritual, the priests were commanded to wash their hands and feet before entering the Tabernacle or temple (Exod. xxx. 20); it was therefore deemed fitting that Jesus should wash, or be baptised, in the Jordan before commencing his public ministry. Amongst the Old Testament passages selected by the Gospel-maker as predictions relating to Jesus Christ were the following:—

Isaiah lxi. 1-4.—"The spirit of the Lord God is upon me; because the Lord hath anointed me to preach good tidings unto the meek; he hath sent me to bind up the broken-hearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound; to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord, and the day of vengeance of our God," etc.

Psalms ii. 7-9.—"I will tell of the decree: The Lord said unto me, Thou art my son; this day have I begotten thee. Ask of me, and I will give thee the nations for thine inheritance.....Thou shalt break them with a rod of iron; thou shalt dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel."

In the first of these passages the writer—who was *not* Isaiah—declares he is inspired by the spirit of God to proclaim the release and return of the Israelites who had been carried captive to Babylon and other cities. "And they shall build up the old wastes, they shall raise up the former desolations, and they shall repair the waste cities, the desolations of many generations." This was his "good tidings."

In the second passage the Lord is represented as taking Israel, from that day, as his son (as in Hos. xi. 1), and promising to make the nation victorious over all its enemies. The Gospel-maker, however, following the custom of the time, selected just what he thought suitable for his purpose, ignoring all the rest. In the narrative of the baptism of Jesus "the Spirit of the Lord God" was described as descending upon him "as a dove" in the sight of the people, and "a voice came out of heaven, Thou art my beloved son, in thee I am well pleased" (Luke iii. 22). The account of this event in the primitive Gospel ran as follows:—

"And when the people were baptised, Jesus also came, and was baptised by John. And when he came up from the water, the heavens were opened, and he saw the Holy Spirit of God in the form of a dove, which descended and came upon him. And a voice came from heaven, saying, *Thou art my beloved son; in thee I am well pleased: to-day have I begotten thee.* And immediately a great light shone round about the place. And John, when he saw it, said to Jesus, Who art thou, Lord?"

The words italicised are quoted by Justin from his copy of an uncanonical Gospel (A.D. 150). At a later day the words "To-day have I begotten thee" were struck out, and the whole paragraph revised. It may also be noted that the "great light" which "shone round about the place" and the question "Who art thou, Lord?" were afterwards utilised in the fictitious history of Paul in the Acts of the Apostles.

ABRACADABRA.

(To be continued.)

Acid Drops.

The Salvation Army's Self-Denial Week has produced £72,653—a slight increase of last year's amount. London contributed £13,925. William Booth could well afford to send a congratulatory telegram on the result from Winnipeg. It ran as follows: "I consider self-denial result magnificent. I congratulate you. Your offering must be as acceptable to God as it is delightful and encouraging to your General. Everlasting gratitude." How the Grand Old Showman bubbles over with unction when he talks of money! But when he calls that £72,653 the result of self-denial he must know that he is indulging in hypocritical falsehood. Most of the money was cadged from the British public at railway stations, on tram-cars and buses, and in the streets. During Self-Denial week, as they facetiously called it, all the male and female Salvation Army seemed to be turned loose—with collection boxes.

In its early days, the Salvation Army women used to delight in playing tamborines. They go in for a more pleasant music now—the rattle of the money-boxes. Like every other religious organisation the world has ever seen, the Salvation Army ends in cash.

Readers of Mr. Foote's *Bible Romances* may remember how, in the chapter on the Resurrection, he shows at length the contradictory and absurd narratives of the post-mortem appearances and the ascension of Jesus. No answer to Mr. Foote's drastic criticism of that part of the Gospel story has ever been attempted. And now we have the Oracle of the "New Theology" admitting that the dreadful editor of the *Freethinker* is right. Mr. Campbell does not mention us by name, of course; the "advanced" men of God can't afford to do that, because it might lead people to see that the "blaspheming infidel" was in front of them all the time, and that they are only copying him now. But let us hear Mr. Campbell:—

"We may as well admit at the outset that the Gospel accounts of the physical resurrection of Jesus are mutually inconsistent, and that no amount of ingenuity can reconcile them. Matthew speaks of a Galilean appearance, and says nothing about the ascension. Luke says a great deal about the Jerusalem appearances, nothing about Galilee, and tells us that the ascension took place from Bethany. The original ending of Mark's Gospel has been lost, and the last few verses of the existing version are a summary of the accounts in the other Gospels concerning the post-resurrection appearances of the Lord. John's version is, of course, less historical than the synoptists, and puts the last appearance at the sea of Tiberias."

That's all right. Mr. Campbell says now what we said, far more thoroughly, twenty-five years ago. And his followers think him a sort of a Columbus.

Stay. While that quotation from Mr. Campbell is all right in the main, it is all wrong on one particular point. He says that the account in the fourth Gospel is less historical than the account in the three other Gospels. But that is impossible, Mr. Campbell; that is impossible. There is no history in it at all, so one account couldn't be less historical than the others.

What a change has taken place in Christian apologetics in three hundred years! We have in our library a book written by a much abler and more courageous man than the Rev. R. J. Campbell. We refer to the *Christian Directory* written by Robert Parsons, the English Jesuit, who narrowly escaped martyrdom in the reign of Elizabeth. Parsons was a fellow of Balliol College, Oxford, but he resigned his fellowship in consequence of religious scruples, and left England for the Continent, travelling to Antwerp, Louvain, Padua, and Rome, where he joined the Jesuits in July, 1575. In 1580 he was ordered to England with the famous Campion. It was a dangerous mission, which none but brave men would undertake. Campion was arrested and executed, but Parsons

escaped the tender mercies of Elizabeth's sharp-toothed Protestant beagles, and he never set foot on his native soil again. The rest of his life was spent in teaching at various Catholic colleges in Europe, and he died at Rome on April 15, 1610. He was the author of many learned and controversial works, amongst them being the aforesaid *Christian Directory*, which is not written against Protestantism, but for the purpose of promoting the faith and piety of Catholics—or, as he would probably have said, true Christians. On the whole this book is a very meritorious performance. The didactic and hortatory part is written with considerable power and eloquence; and the style has often a curiously modern air, in comparison with most of the Protestant books written in England at the same time. The reason of this may be that Parsons' travels and wide experience in many lands amongst people of many languages had toned down his English dialect, if we may so call it, and imparted a certain cosmopolitan character to his composition. Anyhow, the fact remains, and it is very noticeable, and really deserves an explanation.

Parsons has a long chapter on "Proofs of Christianity." Some of them are very amusing nowadays. Criticism had not begun its work then, and Christian apologists could produce, in perfect good faith, "evidences" that have been laughed out of court for the last hundred years. He quotes the Sibylline oracles, and the passage in Josephus, and gravely adduces Pilate's letter to the Emperor Tiberius, on the authority of Tertullian and other early Christian writers, who are treated as infallible guides to truth. With regard to the forged letter from Pilate to Tiberius, and the Emperor's reply, our readers may like to see Parsons' own words. After stating that Pilate investigated the story of the empty tomb and the Roman soldiers being bribed by the Jewish priests to say that the disciples of Jesus stole his body while the guard slept, Parsons proceeds as follows:—

"All this wrote Pilate presently to his lord Tiberius, then emperor of Rome. And he sent withal, the particular examinations and confessions of divers others, that had seen and spoken with such as were risen from death at the same time, and had appeared to many of their acquaintance in Jerusalem; assuring them also of the resurrection of Jesus. Which informations, when Tiberius the emperor had considered, he was greatly moved, and proposed to the senate, that Jesus might be admitted among the rest of the Roman gods; offering his own consent, with the privilege of his supreme royal suffrage to that decree. But the senate would in no wise agree thereto. Whereupon Tiberius, being offended, gave license to all men to believe in Jesus that would; and forbid, upon pain of death, that any officer, or other, should molest, or trouble such, as bore good affection, zeal, or reverence to that name."

All these statements, based upon what are known to be rank forgeries, were then devoutly believed.

"Christian Evidences," as they were presented three hundred years ago, were so utterly false and foolish that there is no accounting for them except on the theory that Europe had been for centuries in the intellectual night of the Dark Ages. Stories like that of Pilate and Tiberius were started by early Christian "fathers" and repeated (and added to) by subsequent Christian "fathers," until at last they became firmly established in the credulity of the Christian world. We refer the reader who wishes to pursue this subject to the chapter on "Pious Forgeries" in our *Crimes of Christianity*. In the meantime, we wish to point out that Tiberius was one of the last of men to trouble about gods—much less to manufacture them. It was he who answered a demand that someone should be prosecuted for blaspheming the gods by saying, "No, let the gods take care of themselves."

"Christian Evidences" have been melting down for three hundred years, and there is very little left of them now. Father Parsons, in the reign of Elizabeth, thought the proofs of Christ's resurrection were simply perfect. Christians like Mr. Campbell in the present age recognise that the proofs are practically worthless. Yet it is asserted that Freeclass thought is a failure! Why, it has changed the Christians, changed Christianity, changed the world! It has brought about all the vast difference between Father Parsons and the Rev. R. J. Campbell.

Before we leave Father Parsons we will refer to a very important point. In dealing with the famous Tacitus passage about Christ, in our *Sign of the Cross*, we observed how very modern it was. Tacitus is said to have written it eighteen hundred years ago, yet no one ever heard of it for nearly fourteen hundred years afterwards. The *Annals* of Tacitus, in which the famous passage occurs, were first discovered and printed in the fifteenth century. There is not a single reference to it, even in Christian literature, before that time. Nor, as Mr. W. R.

Ross (brother of Ross the astronomer) remarked, in his *Tacitus and Bracciolini*, were the *Annals*, although printed in the fifteenth century, "generally known till the sixteenth and seventeenth." The truth of this remark we instanced from Fox's *Book of Martyrs*, which was first published in 1563. Fox relates that Nero slaughtered the Christians, but he does this on the authority of Eusebius, Hegeppus, Sulpicius Severus, and Orosius—who were all *Christians*. He refers in a footnote to Suetonius, but he does not refer to Tacitus. This is clear proof that Fox had not seen the famous Tacitus passage about Christ. Now it is also true that Father Parsons ignores Tacitus. The *Christian Directory* was first published in 1583, twenty years later than Fox's work; yet there is still no mention of Tacitus. As far as England is concerned, we may safely say that the Tacitus passage, as a piece of "Christian Evidence," is not more than three hundred years old. Which means much—and is really worth thinking about.

Considering that Christianity has still the control of education in this country, after enjoying that advantage for so many hundred years, there was a remarkable article by Mrs. Charles Marshall, M.C.A., in last week's *Christian World*. The article was entitled "The Work Put Out," and dealt with the thriftless and pleasure-seeking spirit which prevails in middle-class homes—the very class, that is, amongst whom Christianity is strongest. Mrs. Marshall ended with these sentences:—

"Children are the playthings of their parents. They are proud of them if they are clever or good-looking, and will show them off much as people used to exhibit the engaging tricks of their pet dogs; but in the case of the mother, particularly, duty is a forgotten word, and the most important work, the home-training, is now put out."

What a confession to make in a Christian country, where there are laws against criticising Christianity too freely! What this country wants is a revival of Paganism—including the domestic virtues that made nations great before Christianity existed. And unless we get a Pagan revival this country is going to the dogs.

Christianity is an utterly played-out thing. If it ever had any good influence it has such no longer. It is now an unmitigated evil, and, what is worse, a hindrance to something better that might take its place. It began by trampling upon the honest sexual nature of men and women, cursing what it was pleased to call "the flesh," and crying up what it was pleased to call "the spirit." There was no element of real social discipline in such a religion. And now, when the people who profess it don't believe it, we see the natural result; the gradual creeping in of social chaos.

A terrible ancient punishment for terrible offences was chaining the living criminal to a corpse, till the prisoner died of hunger or went mad. Modern society is chained up to the corpse of Christianity.

Could any Pagan nation ever have made such a miserable muddle as Christian England has of the education of the people? Century after century there was no education for the people at all provided by the State. At last the State woke up to its duty and set about building schools and filling them. But all efforts were vitiated by two great mistakes; first, it thought education consisted in pumping useless knowledge into boys and girls—for three-fourths, at least, of what they learn, or are supposed to learn, at school is perfectly useless to the vast majority of them in after years; second, that no education was any good unless it was either directly or indirectly under the control of the Churches. Erudition has been regarded as education, which it is not; and the religious controversy, by occupying the field and inflaming men's minds, has destroyed whatever chance there was of bringing about a better state of things.

Just look at this squabble over some alleged "infidel" teaching by the mistress of Fishlake school. The West Riding County Council actually appointed a committee to inquire into the matter. They found that the lady had not said anything against the existence of God or the deity of Christ; and that, in the Scripture lessons, due weight had been given to Bible teaching on those subjects. Fancy a County Council committee gravely inquiring into such matters! The only thing worth troubling about is whether (in Ruskin's language) the children are so trained as to be "happy, busy, beneficent, and effective in the world." In that sense of the word, myriads of English peasants are better educated than the vicar who caused all that rumpus at Fishlake.

According to an apparently "inspired" newspaper paragraph there is going to be a Jewish Passive Resistance

movement of a peculiar kind. There is a Jewish Religious Education Board, under which some 10,000 Jewish children in London are educated in the faith of their fathers. But dissatisfaction exists as to the character of the Board—or rather its composition. Sir Samuel Montagu, a strictly orthodox Jew, has refused to pay to the New West-end Synagogue, of which he was the principal founder, the rate levied on the seat rents for the funds of the Board. He complains of the presence of two "freethinkers" on the Board. On the other hand, the Synagogue intends to proceed against members who are in arrears; so we may hear more of those two "freethinkers."

Professor Huxley is doing "nine months' hard." But it isn't the Professor Huxley, raised from his grave at Highgate. It is a gentleman called Sidney Fisher Huxley, who called himself "Professor Huxley," and started a bogus Company. We breathe again.

Mr. W. S. Caine, the teetotal champion in parliament, whose biography has just been published, was a Methodist, we believe; and one Sunday afternoon, when he was to address a men's meeting in Yorkshire, a pious old man volunteered to offer prayer in the vestry. "O Lord," he said. "bless this man that's come to speak to us. Give him unction, Lord; give him gumption, Lord; Thou knows he needs both." Not very flattering. But if prayers are answered, it was a useful one.

Mr. Caine wrote congratulating Mr. John Morley when he became Irish Secretary. Mr. Morley replied: "After praise comes prayer. Pray for me, as I am sure you do, in this tangled piece of business." This is, alas, so much like Mr. Morley, who never, so far as we can make out, acted up to his own book *On Compromise*. Mr. Morley must have known very well that Mr. Caine's prayers could not help him in the Irish Secretary business. Why then did he ask Mr. Caine to pray?

Some time afterwards, Mr. Caine met Mr. Morley on board the Holyhead mail-boat going to Dublin. They had a long talk on "the difficulties and dangers of the task the Irish Secretary had undertaken," and when they parted, Mr. Caine was "impressed with the feeling that, in the highest and broadest sense, that task would be performed in a truly religious spirit." Such things are like sawdust in the mouth.

Old Dowie's death has drawn some opinions from Dr. J. M. Buckley, editor of the *American Christian Advocate*. "Dr. Dowie's fall," that gentleman says, "will not diminish the number of false prophets. His success will dazzle them, and we predict that in less than twenty years other forms of fanaticism will be developed, and in less than half the time a most demoralising form of religion will be subtly taught in the English-speaking nations. Already as it is seeds are being planted." This is cheerful. Hadn't we better get rid of religion altogether, before it is too late?

Rev. R. J. Campbell has come out on a Liverpool platform with Mr. Keir Hardie as a brother Socialist, and he appears to have been welcomed with thunders of applause. Mr. Campbell spent most of his time talking about Jesus. He had also something to say about Mr. Robert Blatchford. We quote the following from the report in the *Christian Commonwealth*:—

"Robert Blatchford has a theology. (Cheers.) And, you know, I am rather keen on Robert Blatchford. I have an impression that he has done high service for England. (Loud cheers.) He has preached the Kingdom of God—(hear, hear)—and, as my friend Dr. Horton said in Manchester a year or two ago to the Free Church Council, the man who wrote *Merrie England* had the moral passion of Christianity in him, no matter by what name he calls himself. (Cheers.)"

We are astonished at Socialists cheering such stuff. Socialists wouldn't do it in Germany, France, Italy, or any other country in Europe. They only do it in the land (we mean Great Britain) of Mr. Keir Hardie. Not only was what we have quoted wretched stuff, but it was insolent stuff too. Mr. Campbell would recognise it as such at once if the positions were reversed, and if Mr. Blatchford were to claim him as a very good Atheist without knowing it. But your Atheist is never guilty of that peculiarly offensive form of impudence. He leaves it to the Christians.

The *Labor Leader* welcomes Mr. Campbell to the Socialist ranks. But it makes a certain not too flattering reservation. "Whether," it says, "he will prove a strong or a fragile reed remains to be seen." Our *Labor* contemporary, however, rather plumes itself on the reverend gentleman's declaration

that "the Labor party is the true Church, and Socialism the true religion of the people." And then it goes on to anticipate the "coming intellectual and moral reunion of mankind, in which the barriers of creed will disappear in consuming zeal for human perfection and happiness." We hope this *is* coming; we have *always* hoped it—though we never expected it to arrive in a hurry. But since the *Labor Leader* has a prophet on its staff we venture to ask *how soon* the millennium is "coming"?

We should fancy that many Socialists are sick of this pious Keir Hardie-ism—this talk about the Labor party being the true *Church*, and Socialism the true *religion*. Robespierre, the leading spirit of the "Reign of Terror" in the French Revolution, was perpetually talking of his "Etre Suprême"—his Supreme Being; until a Revolutionist said to him one day, "*Tu m'embête avec ton Etre Suprême*"—You sicken me with your Supreme Being. It is about time that some Socialist said something similar to Mr. Keir Hardie.

The *London Star* reports Mr. J. J. T. Ferens, Sheriff of Hull, as saying: "Thank God for a Thaw and a Rayner, who are prepared to give their lives in order to rid the world of such pests to society as White and Whiteley." All we want to say is that Mr. Ferens' theology is a little odd. Why does he "thank God" for Thaw and Rayner? If they were sent by God, did not God also send White and Whiteley? Besides, if God wished to settle the hash of White and Whiteley, he could surely have managed it without danger to Thaw and Rayner. A thunderbolt would have done the job as well as a bullet; not to mention smallpox, typhoid fever, and appendicitis—or a nice, quiet, untraceable disease such as ptomaine poisoning through an over-tasty sausage. Even a motor-car might do the trick. God could easily have managed to have White and Whiteley run over. Many innocent people find it *too* easy.

Music during meals is all right. But the Rochdale paupers object to religious services during mealtime in the work-house dining-hall. They don't mind victuals going down their throats, but they dislike other people's religious views being sent down the same channel. So they have kicked—and the religious busybody who upset them during the sacred dinner hour is "outside."

A nasty crack is visible in the south tower of Exeter Cathedral. Digging and other investigation fail to reveal its cause. There is no mystery, however, about the "crack" in the minds of the people who worship in the sacred edifice.

Hatless bridesmaids were forbidden to enter St. Mary's Church, Scarborough. It was all because of a gentleman called Paul, who talked about what he did not understand, nearly two thousand years ago. When the subject was women Paul was a foolish old fogey.

The Lord Bishop of Bristol took off his holy vestments the other day and wielded a spade. He was cutting the first sod for a new mission hall. Had the digging taken place in a potato field, we should have congratulated the Bishop on doing a bit of useful work for once in his life.

The following is a recent death announcement:—

"POWNALL.—On the 21st inst., at Cress Deep, Twickenham, Frederick Hyde Pownall, in the 76th year of his age, fortified by the rites of the Church."

Fancy being seventy-six years a Christian and requiring to be fortified at the finish! What a religion it is for conquering the fear of death!

Hull has been polled on the question of Sunday Closing. Many ratepayers did not vote at all, and there were 4,000 spoiled papers. But there was a big majority, in the circumstances, in favor of Sunday Closing. Perhaps the good Christians of Hull, remembering Saturday night, thought a sober interval was necessary to prepare them for Monday morning.

HE HAD NONE.

Friend (to newly-made widow).—"I suppose you are going to erect a lasting monument to your husband's memory?"

Widow.—"To his memory, no. Poor Isador had none. It was only yesterday that in turning out one of his old coats I found the pockets full of letters I had given him to post."

Mr. Foote's Engagements.

April 14 and 21, Queen's Hall, London; 28, Manchester.
May 5, Liverpool.

To Correspondents.

- C. COHEN'S LECTURE ENGAGEMENTS.—April 14, Glasgow; 21, Workman's Hall, Stratford; 28, a. Victoria Park, e. Workman's Hall, Stratford.
- J. T. LLOYD'S LECTURE ENGAGEMENTS.—April 21, Failsforth.
- A. G. LYX.—Thanks for letter and cutting, and see paragraph. We hope for the best and are pleased at the line you have taken.
- R. H. ROSETTI.—See paragraph. Thanks.
- R. BLANCHARD.—We stated last week that the subscription to the Secular Education League is optional. Every member subscribes as much, or as little, as he pleases. We hope a large number of Secularists will join. Copies of the League's prospectus, including the Manifesto, with forms of membership for joining, can be obtained of the N. S. S. secretary, Miss E. M. Vance, or at the *Freethinker* publishing office—both at 2 Newcastle-street, E.C.
- G. J.—Glad the passage tickled you so.
- J. CLAYTON.—You would be able to see us at the N. S. S. Conference on Whit-Sunday.
- N. LEVEY.—Pleased to hear the Edinburgh Branch is having open-air lectures every Sunday at 3 and 7, during the summer months, in the Meadows, and hope the local "saints" will give the effort their hearty support.
- G. WINTROP.—You say that man has a sense of responsibility; we said so too in the very article you mention. We intend to deal with the whole question, but we must have the necessary leisure first of all—and we may get it presently.
- THE COHEN "SALVATION ARMY" TRACT FUND.—Previously acknowledged, £16 6s. 9d. Since received: Parresiades, 5s.
- J. R.—Your criticism is not altogether unjust. It was amusing.
- R. J. HENDERSON.—We are not going to discuss the Rayner reprieve. All the newspapers have been "having a go at it." Nor shall we be tempted to unpack our mind just now with regard to capital punishment, except to say that both those who would abolish it and those who would retain it generally overlook important elements of the problem.
- H. R. CLIFTON.—Freethinkers have to be thankful for small mercies. Remember the proverb:—Blessed is he that expecteth nothing, for he shall not be disappointed.
- BESSIE BROUGH.—Thanks for the cuttings. It was good of you to take the trouble in your husband's absence. Happy is the man who has a friend in his wife's head as well as in her heart.
- L. D. HEWITT.—Yes, it is a correct quotation from Sir Oliver Lodge's book, which we have just been reviewing. Thanks for good wishes.
- E. HUGHES.—See our answer to another correspondent on the same subject.
- J. GARVEN.—A scratch correspondence on "Christ and History" in a paper like the *Daily Express* is not likely to be very valuable. There may be a good letter now and then—"P. M.'s" is one—but if the *Express* meant business it would let two competent debaters carry on a set discussion. A good fight is one thing; a scramble is quite another.
- E. LECHMERE.—Thanks.
- W. P. BALL.—Your welcome cuttings have not reached us lately. We hope you are not unwell.
- B. STEVENS.—We did not say that the day was called "Good Friday" out of "mere caprice." We regard it as an exhibition of gross selfishness. Neither can we help your failing to see that a spring festival, the date of which is determined by an astronomical calculation, cannot really be the anniversary of an historical event. The Jewish Passover does not celebrate an historical event either. We repeat that the Jews never were in Egypt as their sacred writings allege—and we calmly await evidence to the contrary.
- A. WILKINS.—You say that the friend to whom you gave a copy of the *Freethinker* says that he "never thought there was such a bright paper till he read it." There are thousands like him, ignorant of what they would enjoy; and our readers should try to reach them. We can't do it by unlimited advertisement.
- T. FISHER.—Your letter was too late for a reply in our last. You are quite right. The forged passage in Josephus is the only contemporary evidence of the Resurrection that the Christians can produce outside their own Scriptures.
- RICHARD MORRIS.—Pleased to hear you find the *Freethinker* "a rare treat" and walk a mile every week to fetch it. We have found your letter interesting in other ways. Bigotry is rampant and bitter in your part of Wales, and we can well understand that you have lost many "friends" by becoming a Freethinker; but most of them could hardly have been worth retaining, and you are amply compensated by finding a few fresh friends of a more sterling character.
- LETTERS for the Editor of the *Freethinker* should be addressed to 2 Newcastle-street, Farringdon-street, E.C.

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

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

Sugar Plums.

Mr. Foote has arranged to deliver two more Sunday evening lectures at Queen's Hall on April 14 and 21. Small announcements of these lectures, convenient for easy distribution, are being printed, and a supply of the same will be forwarded to any London "saints" who can make use of them. Apply to the N. S. S. Secretary, Miss E. M. Vance, at 2 Newcastle-street, E.C. We rely upon our metropolitan friends doing all they can to advertise these lectures and render them successful. We sometimes think that a Freethinker who never does anything for Freethought may just as well be a Christian.

The National Secular Society's Annual Conference will be held, as usual, on Whit-Sunday. The place of meeting this year is London. The business sittings (morning and afternoon) will take place in the Chandos Hall, 21A Maiden-lane, Charing-cross—which has kindly been let for the purpose by its permanent occupants, the Social Democratic Federation. The Queen's (Minor) Hall has been engaged for the evening public meeting, which will be addressed by Messrs. Foote, Cohen, Lloyd, and other N. S. S. speakers.

The Chandos Hall will be used on the Saturday evening as a reception room for the delegates and other visitors from the provinces. The situation is very central, and is easily approached from all the great London stations.

The N. S. S. Executive, under whose care the Conference will meet in London, will be glad to receive suggestions for the usual Excursion on Whit-Monday.

We hope the N. S. S. Branches will make a special effort to be represented at this London Conference, and also a considerable number of individual members from various parts of the provinces. The President will have some cheerful news to impart in the Annual Report.

The *Consett Chronicle* gives a good report of Mr. Lloyd's lecture on "Does Secularism Safeguard Morality?" in the Victoria Theatre, Stanley. Some of the Shields friends went over to hear Mr. Lloyd. His lecture was highly appreciated.

Mr. Frederic Lees contributed "Some Personal Recollections of the late Marcelin Berthelot" to the *Westminster Gazette*. The concluding paragraph will be specially interesting to our readers:—

"The subject of Freethought and the attitude of the French Republic towards the Church of Rome was one upon which Marcelin Berthelot loved to talk for hours; and I vividly recollect the vigorous defence that he made of his right to reason and to defend himself and others against the attacks of the Church. Rome had only itself to blame for its separation from the State. It had interfered in French politics then as in the past, and the time had come when a stop must be put to such a proceeding. France, he was glad to say, was rapidly becoming a Freethinking nation. The male portion of the population were almost entirely Freethinkers, thanks to laical education; and now that laical schools (he referred to the girls' lycées which he himself had aided in forming) were already so numerous, the female part of the community would rapidly come under the influence of sound-thinking men and women."

This side of the Great French scientist has been steadily ignored by the English press; for what reason our readers can easily judge for themselves.

The late M. Berthelot was the subject of the "Literary Causerie" in last week's *Academy*, the writer being Mr. John Butler Burke. Berthelot, it is well-known, was a lifelong friend of Renan, and a profoundly interesting correspondence between them was published a few years ago. "They were both," Mr. Burke says, "enemies of Christianity." That is a frank admission. Renan is frequently called the finest French prose writer since Voltaire, and Berthelot was the

greatest French scientist of his age; and "they were both enemies of Christianity."

The Coventry City Council has had a discussion on the use of the assembly hall of the Public Baths for Sunday meetings. For some time the Labor Church has held Sunday meetings there; the Secularists also have had an occasional look in; and all the meetings have been perfectly orderly. The bigots, however, wanted these meetings put an end to; but they did not dare to avow their real object, so they pretended a most deadly hatred of Sunday labor—just as though they ever think of that when they go to church or chapel on the blessed Sabbath. Fortunately there was some plain speaking when the Baths Committee's report came before the Council; and, more fortunately still, when the vote was taken, seventeen bigots were confronted by seventeen friends of fair play. It was a tie; and the mayor, declining to decide the matter himself, gave his casting vote for its going back to the committee for reconsideration. We hope to hear that the friends of fair play have won, if only by a single vote.

Southampton Harbor Board lately, by a majority of two, decided to discontinue Sunday evening music on the pier. A special meeting was called, however, to reconsider this decision; and twenty-two voted against twenty for the rescinding of the Sabbatarian resolution. The band will therefore play on the pier this summer as usual. The bigots who don't want to hear it are perfectly free to stay away. But perhaps they won't.

The *Christian World* says that "The Secular Education League, founded last month, has opened its campaign with a strong manifesto." We are glad, for special reasons, to hear it is "strong." Our contemporary goes on to say that "almost every one of the League's Council is a well-known man," and that "they represent almost every form of religious faith." Yes, and the non-religious are represented too; for this League is a citizens' League, and not a sectarian League. We hope Secularists will join it in large numbers. Copies of the League's manifesto, and forms of membership, can be obtained at the *Freethinker* office.

We are always glad to receive the *Humanitarian*, the little monthly organ of the Humanitarian League. It is always bright and interesting, and is also a register of the progress of a great principle. One item in the April number is a notice of Mr. Sydney Olivier's book on *White Capital and Colored Labor*. Mr. Olivier is, of course, an authority on Jamaica, and he makes a statement concerning it which we are extremely glad to read. He says that if you speak to the native Jamaican with reasonable civility you will be surprised at their courtesy and goodwill. "A young white woman," he says, "can walk alone in the hills, or to Kingston, in daylight or dark, through popular settlements of exclusively black or colored folk, without encountering anything but friendly salutation from man or woman. Whatever may be the cause, it is the indisputable fact that Jamaica, or any other West Indian Island, is as safe for white women to go about in, if not safer, than any European country with which I am acquainted." The reason is that the blacks are treated humanely. There are no savage punishments, no terrorism, no illegal discrimination against the colored. Things are different in the United States, and for the opposite reason. Both blacks and whites have Christianity, but something better than that is lacking between the two races.

John O'Leary, the ex-Fenian, who died at Dublin the other day, was a highly accomplished man, as well as a true lover of his native land. "He was a great reader of books," a friend of his writes to a newspaper, "and, I fear, a great dreamer of dreams"—which is often a virtue rather than a fault. "He was a Roman Catholic," this friend continues, "in early life, but he abandoned acknowledgment or recognition of the Catholic or any other Church or section of Christianity, for which he was nicknamed Pagan O'Leary. To him the Pope was, if possible, a more hateful intruder than the worst of the scheming politicians of England. He always protested against Clericalism as the bane and the curse of Ireland." He appears to have been a man of simple character and stainless honor.

"Japanese naval discipline," says a Naval Correspondent in the *Daily Chronicle*, "is a marvellous thing to English eyes. There are no ship police, and there is practically no code of punishment. An officer remonstrates with a faulty man, reminds him of his ancestors, and appeals to his love of country. If the man is recalcitrant the officer slaps his face once or twice, and that brings him to his senses." A wonderful people! And they manage without Christianity!

Real Hell.

"When we consider him (God) as a free agent presiding over the circumstances of their lives, and try him by any standards of justice and common sense, we find that if there is any evidence to show that he is wise and good, there is evidence no less abundant to show he is brutal and stupid. Who has been able to discover in the history of the world, as a whole, any consistent scheme of just and benevolent government, by which individuals invariably receive their deserts, and are placed in the circumstances most favorable to their highest moral development? What man in his senses will maintain that such an event as the earthquake of Lisbon, if it were possible to impute it to a king, and to regard it as evidence of his character, would fail to show that his character had elements in it of the idiot or the blackguard? And if it would prove this with regard to a king, it proves, so far as it goes, the same thing with regard to God."—W. H. MALLOCK, *Fortnightly Review*, July, 1902; p. 146.

DURING the Middle Ages, as is well known, it was believed that the earth was flat—like the top of a round table—and that hell was situated under the earth. In a mediæval text-book we read, "Why is the sun so red in the evening?" The grim answer being, "Because he looketh down upon hell." Volcanoes were regarded as the portals of hell. A hermit had actually seen the soul of the arian emperor Theodoric dragged down to hell by devils through the volcano of Lipari, "one of the flaming mouths of the infernal world"; and considering the fearful effects of an eruption, it was a very natural inference. Earthquakes are awful enough, but they cannot compare with a volcanic discharge on a large scale. Here nature assumes her most terrifying aspect, and poor humanity is of no more account than chaff driven before the storm.

One of the most terrific explosions of modern times occurred at Krakatoa, an island lying in the Strait of Scinda, between Sumatra and Java, once the seat of volcanic activity. There had been no outbreak for two hundred years, and the volcano was regarded as extinct; but in the spring of 1883 deep rumblings and earthquakes gave warning that the old volcano was again to burst forth after its long period of rest. At first the eruption did not appear to be of any serious type. At Batavia a party chartered a steamer for a pleasant picnic to the island, and some of the more venturesome climbed to the volcano summit, there to behold a vast column of steam pouring forth with terrific noise from a profound opening about thirty yards in width.

As the summer advanced, the vigor of Krakatoa steadily increased, until the explosions could be heard ten miles distant, then twenty miles, until the roar of the great volcano developed into thunders that could be heard by the astonished inhabitants over an area as large as Great Britain. Such was the quantity of matter discharged into the air that for a hundred miles around the darkness of mid-night prevailed at midday.

Mr. Jean Van Gestal, one of the persons sent by the Dutch Government to make scientific observations on the spot, visited Krakatoa in May, by which time the eruption could be seen at a distance of fifty miles away as an immense column of fire and smoke. Immense fragments of incandescent stone were hurled into the air, when they burst with a loud explosion. Upon nearer investigation they discovered what they supposed to be a river was a torrent of melted sulphur. At a distance of half a mile their skin roasted and cracked, and they saw issuing from the crater, in an ascending column, an uniform white-hot mass of flame of dazzling brightness, above a mile and a half in diameter. This continued night and day until August.

On August 12, Mr. Van Gestal, standing on a mountain slope behind the city of Anjer, thirty miles from Krakatoa, was admiring the beauty of the scene. The birds were singing, and the fishermen's boats were lying in the bay at anchor. Suddenly he became aware that all the little boats were moving in one direction. In an instant, to his intense surprise, they all disappeared. Running higher up the hill, he again looked out to sea:—

"Instantly a great glare of fire, right in the midst of the water, caught my eyes, and all the way across the

bay and the strait, and in a straight line of flame to the very island of Krakatoa itself, the bottom of the sea seemed to have cracked open so that the subterranean fires were belching forth. On either side of this wall of flames, down into this subaqueous chasm, the waters of the strait were pouring with a tremendous hissing sound, which seemed at every moment as if the flames would be extinguished; but they were not. There were twin cataracts, and between these two cataracts rose a great crackling wall of fire, hemmed in by clouds of steam of the same cottony appearance which I have spoken of before. It was in this abyss that the fishing-boats were disappearing even as I looked, whirling down the hissing precipice, the roar of which was already calling out excited crowds in the City of Anjer at my feet.*

While Mr. Van Gestal stood, spellbound, gazing at the terrific calamity being enacted before his eyes, an immense and deafening explosion partially stunned him:—

"Darkness had instantly shrouded the world. Through this darkness, which was punctuated by distant cries and groans, the falling of heavy bodies and the creaking disruption of masses of brick and timber, most of all the roaring and crashing of breakers on the sea, were audible. The City of Anjer, with all its sixty thousand people in and about it, had been blotted out; and if any living being, save myself, remained, I did not find it out then. One of these deafening explosions followed another, as some new submerged area was suddenly heaved up by the volcanic fire below, and the sea admitted to the hollow depths where that fire had raged in vain for centuries."

Seeing the awful surge of the ocean, Van Gestal ran up the mountain-side. For hours and hours he fled up the road in darkness, until between four and five in the afternoon he reached the City of Serang, where he was the first to bring the news. Regarded as a lunatic for two days—and, in truth, his experience was enough to unhinge the strongest mind—he was soothed by drugs into sleep, and soon afterwards recovered. When he returned, he found that every life and bit of vegetable had been consumed, and every living creature blasted and burned up. Six hundred miles away it was necessary to burn lamps all day. The City of Anjer lay one hundred feet under water.

This, however, was only the preliminary. The overture, as it were, before the grand performance, which occurred a fortnight later. On the night of Sunday, August 26, says Sir Robert Ball,

"The Krakatoan thunders were on the point of attaining their complete development. At the town of Batavia, a hundred miles distant, there was no quiet that night. The houses trembled with the subterranean violence, and the windows rattled as if heavy artillery were being discharged in the streets. And still these efforts seemed to be only rehearsing for the supreme display. By ten o'clock on the morning of Monday, August 27, 1883, the rehearsals were over, and the performance began. An overture, consisting of two or three introductory explosions, was succeeded by a frightful convulsion which tore away a large part of the island of Krakatoa and scattered it to the winds of heaven. In that final effort all records of previous explosions on this earth were completely broken."†

The thunders of the explosion were heard three thousand miles away; and such was the enormous energy developed by this supreme convulsion, that matter was driven twenty miles above the surface of the earth. At the same time a gigantic wave inundated the coasts of Java and Sumatra, destroying 300 villages, causing the loss of 36,500 lives, and then swept round the entire globe.‡ The north-east coast of Java was covered six and seven feet deep with ashes, destroying all crops and vegetation and causing terrible hardships and starvation. Van Gestal considers that, at a very moderate estimate, two hundred thousand people lost their lives in Java and Sumatra through this eruption.

This was not the first time this region had been visited by a volcanic eruption. In April, 1815, the volcano of Tomboro, on the island of Sumbawa, near

Java, burst into activity, and out of a population of twelve thousand only twenty-six escaped destruction. "I have seen it computed," says Sir John Herschel, "that the quantity of ashes and lava vomited forth in this awful eruption would have formed three mountains the size of Mont Blanc, the highest of the Alps; and if spread over the surface of Germany, would have covered the whole of it two feet deep! The ashes did actually cover the whole island of Tombock, more than 100 miles distant, to that depth, and 44,000 persons there perished by starvation, from the total destruction of all vegetation."* "At Sang'ir," it is added, "the famine occasioned by this event was so extreme that one of the Rajah's own daughters died of starvation."

Another terrible eruption was that which occurred at St. Pierre, in the island of Martinique, May 8, 1902. This, like the earthquakes of Lisbon and Antioch, happened during a religious festival. Special services were being held in all the churches of the city. Grand Mass was being said at the cathedral, and many people had come over to St. Pierre to attend it. The city was wearing its festival dress.

The following description is taken from the journal of the Very Rev. G. Parel, Acting-Bishop of the diocese of Martinique:—

"Suddenly, at ten minutes before eight o'clock—as shown by the hospital clock, which stopped precisely at that instant, and which alone has remained providentially standing above the ruins, as if to mark through all history the second at which the justice of God had struck—a tremendous detonation shook the whole colony, and an enormous mass was seen to mount with vertiginous rapidity straight into the air from the north of the crater..... 'Everything went down before it,' said to me a witness who was in a good position to see; 'everything went down, and everything caught fire.' Deep night spread over the land, but it was immediately illumined by the flames of this inferno. From the grass of the savannas to the produce of the fields; from the houses and edifices of the city to the ships in the roadstead; everywhere, on sea and land alike, there is but one great conflagration consuming thirty thousand human lives! Oh how dreadful in this terrifying clamor must have been the moment of death-agony of a whole population! Who will ever describe the lamentations that must have risen from the dying city into the bosom of a merciful God?"†

"Into the bosom of a merciful God." What a remarkable phrase to use in such a connection. Where was the mercy exhibited in striking thirty thousand people dead with a fiery cloud? And then we are told the hospital clock "remained providentially standing" to mark "the second at which the justice of God had struck." It seems that what represents itself to the religious mind as mercy and justice, when attributed to God, is known as the height of wickedness, cruelty and injustice when practised by man. Moreover, if God providentially spared the hospital clock, he must also have providentially destroyed the inhabitants. In fact, the Rev. G. Parel asserts that the clock was preserved to mark the time through all history when he did do it. He also gives another curious instance of God's mercy. He tells us that when he visited the town on the 10th he saw—

"Among the seared branches of a fallen tamarind-tree, which proved inadequate to protect him, we find the body of a poor creature lying on his back, with his head raised, and his arms stretched to heaven in a gesture of supplication. The legs are drawn and twisted, the flesh has been torn away from the entrails. That gesture of supplication alone consoles us as we look upon the dread sight. God was merciful to him. May he rest in peace! At my suggestion, a photograph is taken of the body."

"God was merciful to him." Well, if that is a sample of God's mercy we do not wish to participate in it, and we can only marvel as to what his revenge would be like. As for the photograph of the poor fellow, struck to his death amidst fiery torment

* G. Gore, *Scientific Basis of Morality*, 1899; p. 139.

† Sir Robert Ball, *The Earth's Beginning*, 1901; p. 180.

‡ Chambers' *Encyclopaedia*, art. "Krakatoa."

* Sir John Herschel, *Familiar Lectures on Scientific Subjects*, 1867; p. 36.

† *The Century*, August, 1902.

in the very act of supplicating the mercy of God, we suggest that it would serve as a frontispiece to a work upon "How God Answers Prayer."

The Quebec liner, *Roraima*, arrived two hours before the disaster, and Mr. Scott, the Chief Officer, has given a graphic account of what occurred. It was a beautiful day; the sun was shining, and the officers grouped forward on deck, were enjoying the view, when suddenly "a conflagration came right out of the mountain in one grand burst, with a noise so terrible that, beside it, a thunder-clap would sound like a pistol-shot alongside the roar of a twelve-inch gun. Then it came rolling down the mountain, over the intervening hills—the molten slag, flame and smoke, one immense cloud of it, luminous, awful, rolling down like fire. It took just a moment. As it came sweeping down, there seemed to be an inexhaustible supply following it—an endless tornado of steam and ashes and burning gas." He describes it as "an explosive whirlwind, setting fire to everything as it went. It was only a few seconds of time, but as it rolled over the intervening miles towards the city that city was doomed. Lava, fire, ashes, smoke, everything combined, swept down on us in an instant. No railroad train could have escaped it." Then came darkness, blacker than night, as the awful ruin struck the *Roraima*. The iron smoke-stack came off short, and the two steel masts broke clean off like pipe-stems. "We had started to heave the anchor, but it never left the mud. There we were struck fast in hell. The darkness was something appalling. It enveloped everything, and was only broken by the burning clouds of consuming gas which gave bursts of light out of the darkness. The ship took fire in several places simultaneously, and men, women and children were dead in a few seconds of time."

Mr. Scott had the presence of mind to cover his head with a tarpaulin when he saw the storm coming, and that probably saved his life. The first blast was followed by a fall of hot ashes, soon followed by small hot stones, which in turn were followed by a rain of hot mud. The condition of the surviving passengers was pitiable in the extreme. "In some cases they were poisoned almost instantaneously by the noxious gas. In others they were drowned by the water which swept in hot through the open port-holes of the submerged state-rooms on the starboard side. Mr. Scott continues:—

"Gradually we collected the survivors and laid them on deck forward near hatch No. 1, all of them crying for water, but many of the unfortunates could not drink at all. The flaming gases had burned their mouths and throats, and even the linings of their stomach so terribly, that in many cases the passages of the throat were almost entirely closed, and many of the unhappy creatures could not drink at all. When we put the water into their mouths it stayed there and almost choked them, and we had to turn them over to get the water out, and still they would implore us for more. Fortunately the darkness was beginning to lift now, the flaming city supplying us with plenty of light. We broke open the ice-house door and hauled out blocks of ice and broke them into small pieces. These the sufferers could hold in their mouths when they could no longer drink. Several of them had their tongues burned out. The coatings of their mouths and tongues, and the linings of their noses, were, in some instances, entirely gone, so that the air, when they attempted to draw breath, would block their throat and nostrils and smother them. All this time the groans and shrieks of the sufferers were heart-breaking. You read about the rich man in the place of torment looking up and asking for water. Well, that is about as near as I can come to describing it."*

When at last they were rescued by the French man-of-war, the *Suger*, they left on board between twenty and thirty dead bodies, and Mr. Scott adds pathetically:—

"My own poor boy was there somewhere. From the moment of the explosion I never saw him again. He was a likely young fellow, and used to say how some day he would have a ship of his own and would take

me along as mate. As we went away, some of the bodies looked so awful that we could not bear to look on them. The only thing I think of is this: How did we ever come through at all and live to escape the mad-house?"

The eruption of La Soufrière on the adjoining island of St. Vincent occurred on May 7, 1902, a day before the St. Pierre catastrophe, and surpassed it in violence. Mr. Garrison, in his lectures on the subject, given at the London Institution last Christmas, states that this outburst "threw a million tons of mud on the island of Barbados, and cast dust on ships nine hundred miles away"; and he calculates that, in the terrible series of disturbances which occurred on our planet during 1902, at the lowest estimate, 130,000 people lost their lives!

How can any one reconcile these horrors with the existence of an all-wise and all-benevolent Deity? Read in the light of such expostions as those of Krakatoa and St. Pierre, the words of Professor Hitchcock, "My sixth geological argument for the divine benevolence is derived from the existence of volcanoes,"* read like a grotesque and brutal satire. A man who could profess to see, as he does, "the smile of infinite benevolence where most men see only the wrath of an offended Deity," would see benevolence in the Roman Inquisition or in the Russian prisons of to-day.

W. MANN.

"The Hypocrite."

IN a recent article in this journal I stated that it would not be surprising, if it were proved to be the case, that not a few of the ablest defences of Christianity were the work of journalistic egoists, *i.e.*, men who write professedly—this way or that—in fact, whichever way they can earn their bread and butter best. Little did I think that the misapprehension, through which I attributed the authorship of a novel entitled *The Hypocrite*, to Clement K. Shorter, would serve to supply me with a concrete example of my contention.

The author of the novel which I quoted as being antagonistic to Christianity is also author of an apology for it—*When It Was Dark*. Of course, both are written under different pseudonyms. I wonder if the Bishop of London, who took such an interest in Guy Thorn's *When It Was Dark*, would write a favorable front-cover advertisement for *The Hypocrite*, by C. Ranger-Gull? It is unnecessary to say more.

J. H.

DUALISM AND MONISM.

All the different philosophical tendencies may, from the point of view of modern science, be ranged in two antagonistic groups; they represent either a *dualistic* or a *monistic* interpretation of the cosmos. The former is usually bound up with teleological and idealistic dogmas, the latter with mechanical and realistic theories. Dualism, in the widest sense, breaks up the universe into two entirely distinct substances—the material world and an immaterial God, who is represented to be its creator, sustainer and ruler. Monism, on the contrary (likewise taken in its widest sense), recognises one sole substance in the universe, which is at once "God and Nature"; body and spirit (or matter and energy) it holds to be inseparable. The extra-mundane God of dualism leads necessarily to Theism; the intra-mundane God of the monist leads to Pantheism.—*Haeckel*.

The Catholic Church has several times extirpated opinions, by the efficient method of killing those who held them. In Spain, Bohemia, Italy and Belgium, Protestantism was stamped out, like the rinderpest, by prompt and persevering slaughter.....The Protestants have not been behind the Catholics in their willingness to persecute, but they have seldom had equal power. In Ireland, however, they nearly reached the highest level of performance in that line.—*J. Cotter Morison*.

* "The Tragedy of Martinique," *Strand Magazine*, Sept., 1902

* *The Religion of Geology*, p. 138.

Joseph Symes.

THE news of the death of this veteran champion of Free-thought, was received in Sydney with what can only be described as a feeling of consternation. In July last he lectured here to an immense audience, and old friends were remarking that he seemed as keen and vigorous as ever.

It is more than twenty-three years since he first went to Melbourne, and his record there is too well-known to Free-thinkers—aye, and to Christians, too—in both Great Britain and Australia, to need any recapitulation here. Having for just twenty years been identified with the Freethought movement in Australia, and having, during a part of that time, acted as secretary to the Sydney Branch of the Secular Association, I have followed Mr. Symes' career very closely. And never have I been more impressed with anyone's singleness of purpose and unswerving devotion to a cause. He could not compromise with principle. He could not pander to any movement or organisation or theory, for the purpose of gaining popular favor or rendering his own pathway smoother. This is the type of man who will always have bitter opponents and who will always, to a great extent, be misunderstood. Had he been willing to "let religion down lightly," he could have had a comparatively easy life in Australia; but that he could never permit himself to do, and the ferocious persecution and unprincipled opposition to which he was subjected by the pious Christians of Melbourne, only made him the more determined and the more aggressive. "The gentle disciples of gentle Jesus would burn Symes if they could," was a current phrase in the mouths of Free-thinkers in Sydney and Melbourne twenty years ago, and the truth of the remark was absolutely indisputable. It is true, even some members of the Secular societies thought he carried the aggressive spirit very far; but as he himself used to say, "Every man has his style and I have mine." After all, he never hit below the belt.

The solid work which he accomplished for our cause has already borne magnificent fruit. Though there is still a lot to be done before the enemy is thoroughly subdued; it is doubtful whether there is enough vitality left in any Christian body in Australia to inflict on any subsequent advocate of Secularism the injustice and cowardly treatment which were meted out to Joseph Symes between 1883 and 1893. It may be said that this result is not the work of any one individual, and that a gradual liberalising of the orthodox sects has been going on for several decades. But it is largely to the work of popular Freethought advocates that this liberalising is due, and the fact remains, that during the time Mr. Symes was in Melbourne, he made thousands of converts. Most respectfully do I lay my tribute on the English grave of the greatest fighter who ever carried the Freethought banner in the Island Continent.

Sydney, N.S.W.

A. D. McLAREN.

IN A GRAVEYARD.

In the dewy depths of the graveyard
I lie in the tangled grass,
And watch, in the sea of azure,
The white cloud-islands pass.

The birds in the rustling branches
Sing gaily overhead;
Grey stones like sentinel spectres
Are guarding the silent dead.

The early flowers sleep shaded
In the cool green noonday glooms;
The broken light falls shuddering
On the cold, white face of the tombs.

Without, the world is smiling
In the infinite love of God,
But the sunlight fails and falters
When it falls on the churchyard sod.

On me the joyous rapture
Of a heart's first love is shed,
But it falls on my heart as coldly
As sunlight on the dead.

—Colonel John Hay.

The essential idea of real virtue is that of vital human strength, which instinctively, constantly, and without motive, does what is right. You must train men to this by habit, as you would the branch of a tree; and give them instincts and manners (or morals) of purity, justice, kindness and courage.—John Ruskin.

VIRTUE AND VICE.

She was so good, and he was so bad:
A very pretty time they had!
A pretty time, and it lasted long:
Which of the two was more in the wrong?
He befouled in the slough of sin;
Or she whose piety kept him in?
He found her yet more cold and staid
As wedded wife than courted maid:
She filled their home with freezing gloom;
He felt it dismal as a tomb:
Her stedfast mind disdained his toys—
Of worldly pleasures, carnal joys;
Her heart firm-set on things above
Was frigid to his earthly love.

So he came staggering home at night;
Where she sat chilling, chaste and white:
She smiled a scornful virtuous smile,
He flung good books with curses vile.
Fresh with the early morn she rose,
While he yet lay in a feverish doze:
She prayed for blessings from the Throne,
He called for "a hair of the dog" with a groan:
She blessed God for her strength to bear
The heavy load,—he 'gan to swear:
She sighed, Would Heaven, ere yet too late,
Bring him to see his awful state!
The charity thus sweetly pressed
Made him rage like one possessed.

So she grew holier day by day,
While he grew all the other way.
She left him: she had done her part
To wean from sin his sinful heart,
But all in vain; her presence might
Make him a murderer some mad night.
Her family took her back, pure saint,
Serene in soul, above complaint:
The narrow path she strictly trod,
And went in triumph home to God:
While he into the Union fell,
Our half-way house on the road to Hell.

With which would you rather pass your life—
The wicked husband or saintly wife?

James Thomson ("B. V.")

THE ARMY SURGEON.

Over that breathing waste of friends and foes,
The wounded and the dying, hour by hour,—
In will a thousand, yet but one in power,—
He labors thro' the red and groaning day.
The fearful moorland where the myriads lay
Moved as a moving field of mangled worms.
And as a raw brood, orphaned in the storms,
Thrust up their heads if the wind bend a spray
Above them, but when the bare branch performs
No sweet parental office, sink away
With hopeless chirp of woe, so as he goes
Around his feet in clamorous agony
They rise and fall; and all the seething plain
Bubbles a cauldron vast of many-colored pain.

—Sydney Dobell.

Do not think of your faults; still less of others' faults: in every person who comes near you, look for what is good and strong: honor that; rejoice in it; and as you can, try to imitate it: and your faults will drop off like dead leaves, when their time comes.—John Ruskin.

The knaves are the cleverest; they profess to know everything; the fools believe them, and so they govern the world.—Shelley.

Obituary.

ON Thursday, March 21 (the first of spring), at Mount Pleasant, Station-road, Horsforth, died Sarah, the beloved wife of District Councillor Samuel Hudson. The interment at Horsforth Cemetery on Monday, March 25, was attended by a large number of relatives, friends, and the public, who were doubtless edified, if somewhat shocked, by the reading of Austin Holyoake's and Mrs. Besant's Service. Mr. Hudson displayed a good deal of moral courage at a very trying time by upholding his own and his late wife's principles in refusing to follow the usual custom of having a fashionable, if superstitious, ceremonial by an ordained supplicator. The service was conducted by Greevz Fysher.

SUNDAY LECTURE NOTICES, etc.

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

LONDON.

CAMBERWELL BRANCH N. S. S. (North Camberwell Hall, New Church-road): 7.30, *Conversazione*.

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

OUTDOOR.

CAMBERWELL BRANCH N. S. S. (Brockwell Park): 315, Debate, W. Allen and Louis B. Gallagher, "Determinism."

COUNTRY.

GLASGOW BRANCH N. S. S. (Hall, 110 Brunswick-street): Mrs. H. Bradlaugh-Bonner, 12 noon, "Votes for Women"; 6.30, "Conscience, Sin, and Immortality."

LEICESTER SECULAR SOCIETY (Secular Hall, Humberstone Gate): 6.30, *Operetta*, by Sunday School.

MANCHESTER BRANCH N. S. S. (Secular Hall, Rusholme-road): 6.30, W. Sanders, "Lord Rosebery and Socialistic Robbery."

NEWCASTLE RATIONALIST DEBATING SOCIETY (Lockhart's Cathedral Café): Thursday, April 11, at 8, C. Watson, "Has Mind a Physical Basis?"

PLYMOUTH RATIONALIST SOCIETY (Foresters' Hall, Octagon): 7, Tom Proctor, "Secular Education on a National Basis."

WEST STANLEY BRANCH N. S. S. (I.L.P. Institute, West Stanley): 3, Business Meeting.

OUTDOOR.

EDINBURGH BRANCH N. S. S. (The Meadows): 3 and 7, Lectures.

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