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If progress be the peculiar law of humanity, it is not less certain that AGITATION is the main-spring of progress, and that, as a general rule, all agitations, however disagreeable they may have appeared to contemporaries, have advanced the world.—C. G. LELAND.

“What Price God?”—II.

MR. DAVIDSON is completely emancipated from the God idea. He sees that “the theological system of the Universe is an error of man’s ignorance” and that “the true theonomist finds the study of God to be a branch of mythology.” He smiles at the metaphysical puzzles about phenomenon and noumenon. No doubt he would agree with Berkeley that metaphysicians raise a dust and then complain that they cannot see; and that, after all the learning of the schools, the highest wisdom is common sense. What lies behind the visible and tangible is an idle fancy. As well guess the color of a woman’s eyes on some unknown planet. Mr. Davidson speaks out bravely:—

“I have no system; I have no dogma: it is a new poetry I bring. For me there is nothing immaterial; for me everything matters; for me there is nothing behind phenomena: the very ‘thing in itself’ is phenomenon; phenomena are the Universe.”

Nor will he have any dealings whatever with the “spiritualists,” who are always seeking to turn the reality of things into a dream of the imagination:—

“Man is Matter; mind and soul are material forces; there is no spiritual world as distinct from the material world; all psychical phenomena are material phenomena, the result of the operation of material forces.”

Mr. Davidson knows and loves his Shakespeare. He may remember the beautiful and pregnant lines in what is by no means one of the greatest of those wonderful Sonnets which, if the Plays had all perished or never been written, would have revealed the greatest of English poets:—

“The summer’s flower is to the summer sweet,
Though to itself it only live and die.”

This means more than the context might indicate. Everything, like the summer flower, lives and dies to itself, however sweet (or bitter) it may be to others. It has no Whence, except as a question in Science; it has no Whither, except as a problem in Superstition. This truth was in the mind of George Meredith when he wrote “The Question Whither” in *A Reading of Earth*. After declaring that Nature honors the deed and rewards labor, the poet concludes:—

“Then let our trust be firm in Good,
Though we be of the fasting;
Our questions are a mortal brood,
Our work is everlasting.
We children of Beneficence
Are in its being sharers;
And Whither vainer sounds than Whence,
For word with such wayfarers.”

The questions of Whence and Whither have been carried beyond Man to the Universe itself. Theologians ask where Everything came from—as though Everything did not fill Everywhere. All this is verbal jugglery to amuse the multitude and keep

them off serious problems. Mr. Davidson will have none of it. This is what he says:—

“Whence is the Universe and Why? The Universe itself is the only answer to these questions. Whence is the Universe? There is no whence; it fills space. Why is the Universe? It cannot tell: it is neither necessary nor unnecessary: it is. There are, properly, no answers to these questions; therefore these questions are not. The Universe says always and only, ‘Here and Now.’”

Mr. Davidson recognises one thing as quite certain about the Universe; it has “no moral order”—he even puts it that “the Universe is immoral”—and one may admit the fact without endorsing the epithet. It seems to me, at least, that the word “immoral” means the opposite of moral, and is as much a positive term as “moral” is. For my part, I should say that the Universe is “non-moral”—without relation to morality at all. Only those beings can be immoral who can be moral; and the conception cannot be applied to the totality of existence. I conceive that Mr. Davidson is sometimes wayward in his use of terms. It is really not open to a writer to use a special dictionary of his own. He must condescend to use the common dictionary of his age and nation. Mr. Davidson is ill-advised in trying to make the word “Immorality” equivalent to “the restless ebb and flow of the eternal tide of Matter.” He is just as ill-advised in asserting that “Man is inhuman”—meaning by this, apparently, that man is an animal. This is true, but man is “the paragon of animals,” as Hamlet calls him; and it is precisely because he is human that he can be inhuman; which may sound like a paradox, but is a straightforward and serious truth. I admit that Mr. Davidson’s pages on this topic are very powerfully written; at the same time, I consider that they betray a certain mental confusion, which detracts from their philosophic importance.

Perhaps I may be allowed to say also, in this connection, that Mr. Davidson’s diatribe against Natural Selection is of just the same importance as his opinion that it is “unlikely that Matter has become conscious anywhere else than on our earth.” One may enjoy Mr. Davidson’s vigorous poetical picture of the clash of the elements leading up to the state of things in this world, and yet turn a deaf ear to him when he delivers peremptory judgments where he is no sort of authority. And one may agree that man is in a sense “the whole universe become conscious and self-conscious” (which is the old idea of the Macrocosm), and that “there cannot be anything higher than man” (essentially), without accepting the fantastic notion, put forward by Mr. Davidson now as previously by Dr. Russel Wallace, that this earth of ours is the proud centre of the universal drama. To all who take that curiously anthropomorphic view of the world one may best reply in the language of the man in the street—“There are others.”

But let us return to our principal object. We have seen that Mr. Davidson bows God out of the Universe. Nevertheless, he shrinks from the designation of “Atheist” and justifies himself in the following peculiar manner:—

“I am not an atheist. The words atheist and atheism, infidel and infidelity, seem to me misnomers, mere childish nicknames, unpoetical, inapplicable, feebly malignant; you cannot disbelieve in what is not; so

violent a reaction as disbelief intimates the existence of that which is antagonised: one might as well say, 'There is no Hamlet; there is no Don Quixote,' as affirm the nonentity of God."

Mr. Davidson asserts that "now man knows that there is no God." Man *knows* it! Yet the writer who says so denies that he is an Atheist! That, however, is precisely what he is, whether he likes the word or not. An "Atheist" simply means a person "without God." Mr. Davidson is without God—therefore Mr. Davidson is an Atheist. It might almost be said that he is *more* than an Atheist. He is a *dogmatic* Atheist. He does not merely know nothing of God; he knows that there is *no* God. He puts God in the same category as Hamlet and Don Quixote, as an imaginary character. And if this be not *disbelief*, will he kindly tell us what *disbelief* is? For the rest, I cannot help regarding the statement that "you cannot disbelieve in what is not" as a curious ineptitude. Most of us disbelieve in witchcraft; does that "intimate the existence" of witches? Of course, it is true that disbelief is often a "violent reaction" when the conception which is disbelieved is still widely held and potent for evil; and that it loses its intensity as the false and mischievous idea declines and disappears. It is even arguable that if Theism died out Atheism would die out with it. But this would be only superficially true. If you have no God, you are "without God," whether you are conscious of the fact or not. You are more conscious of health, for instance, when you are recovering from an illness; and you lose consciousness of it as your recovery approaches completion; but will it be said that you have really no health when there is no occasion to talk about it?

A long and wide experience assures me that the adoption or rejection of "Atheism" is very much a matter of courage. Charles Bradlaugh called himself an Atheist. There was no beating about the bush with him. He was the most courageous man in England. Professor Huxley called himself an Agnostic. Now anyone who followed Huxley's career, and has read his Life and Letters, knows that he had not a tithe of Bradlaugh's courage. On the fundamental questions of God, the Soul, and a Future Life, he observed a very discreet reticence; and he was always anxious to have it understood that he had no sort of association with popular Freethought in general or with Bradlaugh's in particular. He put on a very brave appearance when he went into the arena to fight, and ordinary people looked upon him as a tremendous gladiator. But those who understood the case better knew that the adversaries he attacked were more than half dead already in the minds of the public he addressed. He fiercely assailed the Mosaic account of Creation, and more politely and warily the Bible miracles. For a long time he spoke of the Mosaic account of Creation as the Miltonic theory—which was irresistibly comic, though it was not intended to be so. Only towards the end of his life when his position was absolutely assured, and when (which was more important still) the spirit of Freethought had made immense progress in England, did he venture to speak out a little more clearly. The difference between Bradlaugh and Huxley is the measure of the moral difference between Atheism and Agnosticism. I know it may be urged that Ingersoll, who had plenty of courage, called himself an Agnostic. Yes, but he defined Agnosticism as meaning the same as Atheism; and he frankly stated that every Atheist was an Agnostic, and every Agnostic an Atheist. There was no concealment, subterfuge, or evasion in his case.

I am not charging Mr. Davidson with cowardice. He has proved his courage by writing and publishing a book like *The Theatrocrat*. I only suggest that he shrinks from using a hated name. Being known to be an Atheist is not as bad as *calling* yourself one. That clinches the matter, and leaves no room for doubt, or the small consolations of the wounded vanity of faith in face of the declarations of instructed disbelief. Grant Allen wanted to call his book *The*

Evolution of God, but he took Herbert Spencer's advice and called it *The Evolution of the Idea of God*. There was no difference between the titles to a thinker; but few people *are* thinkers—and the difference in phraseology left it an open question to the muddle-minded whether Grant Allen was an Atheist after all. And there was some comfort in that.

Mr. Davidson expresses himself with the utmost plainness with regard to the main ideas of Christianity. What he says of God we have already seen, and also what he says of Man as being nothing but Matter. Heaven and Hell he explains as man's unconscious reminiscence of the calm of the original Ether and the "infernal tumult" through which the solar system was evolved. This is rather poetical than practical—for man's early experience *as man* is quite sufficient to account for his ideas of Heaven and Hell, when he had once come to believe in a future life. But let that pass. It is Mr. Davidson that I want to expound at present. His view of the idea of Sin will certainly not please the theologians:—

"Conviction of Sin, alike in the offspring of worn-out stock—epileptics, consumptives, neuropaths, mattoids, weak-bodied and weak-minded people generally—as in ordinary healthy natures, is the effect of the exhaustion of the Material forces of the Matter of man. The exhaustion may proceed from dissipation, from prolonged domestic or financial worry, or—not to multiply instances—it may be the result of the enormous discharge of nervous energy and the upheaval of the whole nature in the commission of a murder or the betrayal of a friend."

Neither will it please an evolutionary anthropologist. But let that pass too. With regard to Christ, Mr. Davidson is deferential, though I do not quite understand how much his deference is worth. But he entertains the lowest opinion of Christianity. The Bishop of St. James's (who speaks for Mr. Davidson) says it is first necessary to "know the truth about the lie." "What is the truth about it?" asks Sir Tristram Sumner, and the Bishop (*what a Bishop!*) answers:—

"This:—

That Christianity is the foe of life,
Of health, of wealth, of intellect and strength;
The friend of all the feeble, the diseased,
The low, the loathsome, the depraved, the dirt,
The offal of mankind."

The same Bishop says elsewhere:—

"I never preach

The man of sorrows now....I grasp my theme:
Give me your eye and ear, your heart and brain.
Jesus of Nazareth—no, the Son of Man;
Because this Jesus is a sloppy word,
Mainly a sponge to wipe the tiresome tears
Of foolish people."

Even a wastrel of genius, like Warwick Groom, the actor, is made to say that he is filled with loathing and dread—

"To see the stage corrupted by the church,
Debauched by bland religion, venomous
Betrayed of the spirit; and foul with creed,
The helpless necessary excrement
Wherewith religion sullies everything."

Mr. Davidson would have the children taught "a knowledge of the poetry of evolution," which is "already subconscious in the Matter" of which they consist—"instead of a myth." They would then—

"Light-heartedly reject everything in the shape of system from Aristotle to Herbert Spencer, and all doctrine from Buddha to Christ, and from Christ to Nietzsche. The insane past of mankind is the incubus: the world is really a virgin world awaking from a bad dream."

"This is a high and a great thing," Mr. Davidson says of his view of Man and Matter, "and when the general mind and imagination live in it, the mood of the world will undergo an unparagoned change." But is not Mr. Davidson's imagination rather than his mind responsible for the statement that the new view "will destroy all existing religions, governments, institutions, morality and all moralities, all philosophy, all literature, all art"? Passionate "discoverers" often prophesy in that way, but it never comes to pass. There will be great changes, un-

doubtedly, and the existing religions will all certainly go—in time; but how long will it take the emancipated mind of man to go beyond Phidias and Titian, or Marcus Aurelius and Spinoza, or Æschylus and Shakespeare? Man will never break with his past in that fashion. The roots of his being are too much in the graves of the dead generations. It will indeed be a clear gain to “know that there can be no first cause, no metaphysic; that there can be no Other World; that man is the Material Universe become conscious.” I agree with Mr. Davidson that “thereafter man could be and do something,” but I do not agree with him that “heretofore he has been and done nothing.” Mr. Davidson thinks highly, very highly, of Wordsworth; and he will remember what the poet says about “the still sad music of humanity.” Still and sad—but yet *music*. And it was the same Wordsworth who said that there is “but one great society on earth—the noble living and the noble dead.” When I think of the past I do not believe that man has been and done nothing. I hear through the ages the marching footsteps of the great Army of Progress; I salute the nameless, indomitable rank and file, and I bow with reverence before the named and mighty leaders who planned and dared, and made the world brighter by their genius and grander by their heroism.

G. W. FOOTE.

Christianity's Future.

SOME people are of opinion that the great question of the future will be the adjustment of the relations of capital and labor. Others that it will be that of the settlement of the relations between the individual and the State. Others, again, consider the battle of science with disease, or the organisation and application to practical life of our accumulated knowledge to be the most important questions with which the immediate future will have to deal. According to the Rev. Dr. Eaton, an American preacher over here on a holiday, the really important question of the future will be, “What to do with Christ?” In the future “the minds of men everywhere” will be occupied with the question, and their being concerned with it will, in some unexplained and wholly mysterious manner, lift the whole of life into a region of undreamed-of loftiness and purity.

Now it is exceedingly easy to prophesy—so easy, and so useless, that most wise people leave the occupation to others. It is also easy to understand that Dr. Eaton, being in the religious business himself, naturally feels that the “minds of men everywhere” ought to be occupied with the question of Christ more than is actually the case; and we all know the old adage as to the relationship often existing between a wish and a thought. Only an outsider does not find any very clear indication of mankind being everywhere obsessed by such a topic. People are not everywhere concerned about Christianity; indeed, the united efforts of thousands of parsons and their helpers cannot get anything like a majority of the people to take a steady interest in Christ. Certainly a newspaper correspondence on a religious topic brings forth an abundance of letters, and these are often cited by preachers as proof of the burning interest taken by people in religious subjects. But there are several considerations against such a conclusion. In the first place, it is not clear that the people interested really do constitute a majority of the population. Those who are not interested do not write, while those who do also do the shouting, and lose sight of the silent remainder. In the next place, only one side is generally allowed to appear in these discussions. If all those who had definitely renounced Christianity were to write, and if their letters were published, a very different complexion would be placed upon the matter. And, finally, theology is just one of those

subjects upon which any and every fool feels able to express an opinion. On a scientific, a literary, or even a political question, the majority of people feel that some preparation in the shape of study and knowledge is necessary before one can publicly express an opinion. But is there anyone who feels that way in relation to religion? Is there a fool in the United Kingdom who does not feel himself more or less qualified to express an opinion on religion? If there is, I have hitherto failed to meet him or hear of him. My experience, personal and otherwise, is that, on theology, the bigger the fool the more confident his exposition of religious subjects becomes.

Science, says our American preacher, must explain Christ. By this he means that scientific criticism must explain the New Testament figure of Jesus Christ so as to satisfy Christian preachers. As though that were possible. For the only explanation they will accept is their own. When any other explanation is offered, it is denounced as worthless and absurd, and the cry still goes up that science must explain Christ. But, to unprejudiced minds, science has explained Christ, and to a growing number of people there is no question for the future to settle. When we remember that all the stories that cluster round the New Testament Jesus, from the miraculous birth to the resurrection, with all the preachings and sayings of Jesus, belong to preceding and contemporary characters and times, and that the central figure of the New Testament represents a growth spreading over nearly a couple of centuries, the only question really left for solution is the nature of the conditions which made the synthesis inevitable. Or, if there is any further question, it is that of the origin of all those mythical stories which did duty in the world of religion centuries before they were associated with the name of Jesus Christ.

What a myth it is that people are deeply interested in Christ or Christianity, or even in religion generally! To judge by numerous articles and sermons, one would imagine that religious questions formed the chief interest of the lives of most people. Of course, this is not the case. In England, at least, it is considered more or less of an example of bad taste to introduce religion during social intercourse. Questions of art, science, literature, or politics are quite as attractive as subjects of meditation as is religion. Most people pursue their material interests with much greater regard than they do their spiritual welfare. The number of people who devote their lives to religion is certainly not on the increase; while the type that does so grows decidedly poorer. It is the constant lament of preachers, century after century, that religious considerations are not permitted to dominate life; while to-day, religion pure and simple, is so far from attractive that it must be sandwiched between all sorts of social and political topics in order to draw an audience.

Why, then, should it be so confidently asserted that the topic of Christ and Christianity will be in the “minds of men everywhere”? What new influence is there that is likely to bring this about? Of course, Dr. Eaton would like this to come to pass, so would every other parson; but this is because it suits their professional interests; and while clerical influence is strong it is fortunately not strong enough to overcome the general tendency of social development. Dr. Eaton thinks the development of commercial life will help to make Christianity paramount—which is certainly a discovery, if true. He says: “In America, it is not generally supposed that there is any close connection between religion and business. It is assumed that the business world knows little and cares less about Christianity.” I quite agree with Dr. Eaton, although for different reasons, in believing this to be an error. In America, there is some connection between religion, and business men do care about Christianity. The fact that keen business men like Mr. Rockefeller take so deep an interest in Christianity, proves that they do not consider it inimical to their interests. Nay, the fact that so large a proportion of American money-

kings are ardent supporters of one church or another, would lead one to conclude that they consider Christianity a very serviceable ally. I, for one, decline to believe that these men, keenly alive to their own interests as they are, give the churches their moral and financial support save under the conviction that they get value for their time and money. And I should be the last one to question that they get a very handsome return for their expenditure. Every clergyman receiving a salary from a church means, with rare exceptions, a man paid to divert attention from social and political issues to religious ones. Every religious organisation—Christian Endeavor, Pleasant Sunday Afternoon's, etc.—means, in the main, that numbers of people are kept from pressing for political and social reform, or, at all events, have their demands minimised as much as is possible. And if this will not induce American money-kings to take an interest in Christianity, what will? Besides, have not American laymen recently sent abroad a deputation to consider how missionary enterprise can best be promoted and extended? And may not this also bring its due reward in the shape of new markets for American goods?

Dr. Eaton's reason for believing that commercial development will result in the omnipresence of Christianity is that business is now world-wide in its ramifications, and implies a certain amount of mutual confidence and honesty. And he asks, "According to whose moral code is business to be done, that of Brahma, Confucius, Mahomet, or Jesus?" Well, I am not aware that either Brahman, Confucian, Mohammedan, or Christian are wholly, or even largely, ruled by religious considerations; but I am certain of one thing, and that is that either of the first three—other things equal—will act as honestly in their commercial relations as will the fourth. Indeed, so far as one of the four is concerned, Chinese business men have a much better character for commercial rectitude than have either English or Americans. And certainly the business rectitude of Greek Christians is not in any way superior to that of their non-Christian neighbors. It is true that commercial developments will influence conduct in the future, as it has in the past, but it will be more in the direction of breaking down religious prejudices and weakening religious convictions than in strengthening either one or the other.

There is also one aspect of the statement that the world in the future will have to reckon with Christianity, which contains a truth. But this is, again, not in the sense intended by Dr. Eaton. What the world will have to seriously consider is whether it cannot do quite as well without a religion which for centuries formed one of the most effective barriers to progress, and which, even to-day, continues to divert time, energy, and money in a wholly useless direction. The world will have to face the question of dealing with the maintenance or dissolution of an army of men without a single useful lesson of its own to impart, whose existence as a class is based upon principles that most educated people disown, and upon beliefs of which nearly all are growing ashamed. Above all, it will have to take in hand the organisation of social life upon the conscious basis of human co-operation and well-being upon this side of the grave. And when once this task is taken seriously in hand, Christianity, in common with all other superstitious survivals of a pre-scientific age, will find itself faced with the doom that is the fit reward of all shams and impostures.

C. COHEN.

What of the New Testament?

THE most noteworthy discourse delivered at the Summer School of Theology and Applied Religion, recently held at Penmaenmawr, was by the Rev. K. C. Anderson, D.D., of Dundee; and its subject

was "The New Testament in the Light of Modern Criticism." Dr. Anderson never lacks the courage to speak out clearly, emphatically, and uncompromisingly on whatever topic he takes up. In Scotland, he is exceedingly well known and highly respected as a strong and fearless opponent of the prevailing orthodoxy, and he has done not a little to emancipate his beloved country from the clutches of ecclesiastical tyranny. His great speech at Penmaenmawr was a compendium of his general teaching as a Christian minister. The very first sentence or two made his whole position perfectly plain:—

"The New Testament, in the light of modern criticism, is a part of the world's literature, and does not belong to a category by itself. This is the fundamental pre-supposition that underlies the whole critical movement, without which it could not take a single step."

Orthodoxy has persistently refused to see either the New Testament or the Old in the light of criticism. It even denounces criticism as an arrogant and impudent enemy of God and his truth. God's book cannot be judged by man except at the peril of his soul. But orthodoxy is now in the minority throughout Christendom, and criticism is proving the Bible to be, in every sense, exclusively the product of the human mind, like all other books. There are now a few orthodox divines who are themselves higher critics, so far as the Old Testament is concerned. They may not accept the conclusions of extremists, like Canon Cheyne, but they do admit that Old Testament history and science are not always to be relied upon. This admission logically cuts the ground for ever from under the contention that the Bible is the inspired and infallible Word of the Lord; but orthodox divines hurl logic down the wind the moment it threatens the security of their pet dogmas. Even such eminent scholars as Principal Dods and Professor George Adam Smith, while endorsing the majority of the findings of a timid and reverent criticism, still claim that the Word of the Most High is discernible even in the Five Books of Moses and the two Chronicles.

But genuine criticism pays no heed whatever to the scruples of traditional theologians. In its sight the New Testament is no more sacred than the Old. It treats all books alike, its one object being to discover the truth about them. Some argue that, when applied to the Bible, criticism must be reverent; but, of necessity, a reverent criticism would be prejudiced, and therefore unreliable.

Now, then, studying the New Testament as literature, treating it as if it were an ordinary book, what do we learn concerning it? One of the first real critics of it was the famous Bauer, of the so-called Tübingen School. He is said to have "destroyed for ever the traditional view that all the New Testament Gospels and Epistles were written by the men whose names they bear. He left nothing standing of this traditional view except the four great Epistles—Romans, 1 and 2 Corinthians, and Galatians." But Bauer's criticism was crippled by his reverence for the Hegelian theory that "all development is brought about by the conflict of two opposing ideas, which results in a higher synthesis. In Primitive Christianity, therefore, he found the opposition of two views of the new Faith, the first apostles being the representatives of the one, and the apostle Paul the representative of the other. To the former, Christianity was simply a new form of Judaism; to the latter, it was a development from Judaism into a universal religion. Bauer found evidence of the strife between these two schools throughout the apostolical age, and the four great Epistles—Romans, 1 and 2 Corinthians, and Galatians—were Pauline, because in them the opposition to Jewish Christianity was pronounced." Later critics, freed from the Hegelian bias, came to the conclusion that none of the canonical Pauline Epistles are by Paul. This was the position held with much erudition by Professor Manen. But it is only fair to mention that Harnack differs from Manen in that he defends the Pauline authorship of four, and perhaps six, of the thirteen Epistles traditionally attributed to the

apostle of the Gentiles. That pronouncement by Harnack thrilled the orthodox camp with joy unspeakable and full of glory. He was hailed as the greatest critic ever known, and his praises were enthusiastically sung everywhere. It was believed that he had saved the situation. Writing five years ago, the Dean of Canterbury said: "Nowadays, those theories (of Bauer and Manen), at all events, are at an end, and the substantial truth of the New Testament is established." But the Dean was radically mistaken. Harnack has done nothing towards establishing "the substantial truth of the New Testament." He is, in reality, as far away from the orthodox estimate of the contents of the volume as was Bauer himself. From the traditional standpoint, the Berlin scholar is "an enemy of the Bible and a shameless Infidel." He pronounces the Gospels largely unhistorical. He rejects the birth-stories of Matthew and Luke, denies the bodily resurrection of Jesus, regards the fourth Gospel as of no historical authority except as touching the view of Jesus' person prevalent at the time it was written, and treats the Epistles as human compositions. In other words, Harnack is a New Theologian of the most advanced school.

We now come to Dr. Anderson's own critical pronouncements. In the first place, we find that, with Manen, he rejects the Pauline authorship of all the Epistles traditionally ascribed to Paul. "It is sad to think of such a slaughter of the innocents," he says, "but I see no help for it; they will have to go. The name Paul will have to pass into a pseudonym used by a number of master-minds in the Church of the second century when the first great works of theology were produced—men who took the name of the hero who carried the message out of Palestine, out of pure reverence for it, in strict harmony with the literary habit of the time." Then he adds:—

"Now as to the arguments which have convinced me of this view, suffice it to say that what first seemed a probability has grown to be a conviction, and I believe that the time is not far distant when it will seem as absurd a thing to say that the wandering preacher of the Acts was the author of Romans, 1 and 2 Corinthians, and Galatians as that Moses was the author of the Pentateuch. The fundamental principle of modern criticism is the harmony of a writing with the time in which it was produced, and it is unbelievable, when the problem is fairly presented, that such a ponderous Epistle as Romans, filled to overflowing with the discussion of questions that could not possibly arise, could have been written in the lifetime of a man who was a contemporary of Jesus."

Dr. Anderson doubts that there were any Christians in Rome in the year 60; but if there were he is absolutely certain that such an abstruse treatise as Romans would have been entirely unintelligible to them. The reverend gentleman contends that his conclusion as to the date and authorship of the Pauline Epistles ought not to be regarded as in any real sense destructive, and in so doing he is undoubtedly right. Paul, the author, may be given up without in any way affecting the merits or demerits of the documents concerned, or without doing any injury to Paul the missionary. Up to this point, Dr. Anderson has not done anything to endanger the safety of the Christian religion; but what about his treatment of the Gospels, the great citadel of the faith once delivered to the saints? Can a Christian minister enter the holy of holies of the New Testament with his critical eye wide open, and not do any damage to the contents? What will he do with Jesus, called the Christ? At first, Dr. Anderson is timid and cautious, but gathers courage as he proceeds. He says that "we do not have in the Gospels a biography of Jesus, nor even the materials for the construction of one." By this he does "not mean merely that the stories of miracles are the product of the myth-making faculty, but that the parables of Jesus, and even the Sermon on the Mount, are pervaded by elements which could not have originated with Jesus himself, but are the result of the Christology of the Christian community, so that it is impossible to separate the one from the other." "In many cases, if not in all," he

adds, "we cannot tell what came from Jesus and what came from others." The emphasis put on the person of Jesus is declared to be unreasonably exaggerated. In the fourth Gospel, Jesus is represented as indulging in an "attitude of self-assertion that seems the very insanity of egotism." Indeed, "we cannot get back to the actual Jesus and be sure that the word he speaks is his own word." We must give up, therefore, the theological notion that Jesus was a perfect or ideal man; a perfect man has never appeared on earth. Jesus was in no sense unique, nor was he the founder of Christianity. "The Jesus of many modern theologians whom they picture as the ideal man, the founder of Christianity, is no more historical than is the Christ of the Church."

Here we must stop. In Dr. Anderson's opinion, the Bible is a product of the human mind, and this is the opinion of all Freethinkers. On this point he and they are fully agreed. In Dr. Anderson's opinion, just as the Bible is a part of the world's literature, so Jesus is not unique, but, if he ever lived, belongs to humanity; and here again, even Atheists are at one with him. As a critic, the reverend gentleman is perfectly straightforward and admirably courageous. The mystery is, however, how such a clear-headed, unfettered critic can be a theologian, new or old. Whence does he derive his God, personal or impersonal? Why is he a minister of Jesus Christ when he admits that Jesus Christ is not a historical character, but the creature of human fancy? To bring the Bible down to the level of ordinary human books is to destroy the foundations of all theologies. Dr. Anderson says that the Church of the future "shall shut out no heart that believes in goodness"; but does he not know that thousands of people believe in goodness who are out-and-out Atheists? With all their hearts do they admire and appreciate "a beautiful life" whenever they see it; but to say that such a life is "an incarnation of God" is to indulge in a form of dogmatism quite unworthy of so sane a thinker as Dr. Anderson. Love may be "the greatest thing in the world," though we see so little of it; but to assert that the Universe is indwelt by a God who is love is to "darken counsel by words without knowledge," and ignore the present condition of the world. Was not Newman right when he stated that Atheism is the only rational philosophy, and that the only refuge from it is the reward of complete subjection to some infallible external authority? If the New Testament is a purely human document, and if the Church cannot speak with authority, the claim that Christianity is a Divine religion falls to the ground, and preachers of the Gospel are deprived of their commission.

J. T. LLOYD.

PROTESTANT TOLERATION.

I say it is not only lawful to punish to the death such as labor to subvert the true religion, but the magistrates and people are bound to do so unless they will provoke the wrath of God against themselves.—*John Knox.*

For Faith and Virtue are within
Prohibited degrees of kin,
And therefore no true saint allows
They should be suffered to espouse.

—*Butler.*

I do not know that I ever met with a human being who seemed to me to have a stronger claim on the pitying consideration and kindness of his Maker than a wretched, puny, crippled, stunted child that I saw in Newgate, who was pointed out as one of the most notorious and inveterate little thieves in London. I have no doubt that some of those who were looking at this pitiable morbid secretion of the diseased social organism thought that they were very virtuous for hating him so heartily.—*Oliver Wendell Holmes.*

All that is rational is real, and all that is real is rational.—*Hegel.*

Acid Drops.

A fortnight ago we referred to an *Academy* article by Mr. Arthur Machen, in which that gentleman called Freethinkers "imbeciles," "gibbering ignoramuses," "impudent blockheads," "hooligans," and "larrikins." And we remarked that these were singular "flowers of Christian courtesy" from an apostle of what boasts itself to be "the religion of love." Last week's *Academy* informed its readers that "the *Freethinker* is a good deal annoyed." Nothing of the kind; we were tickled and amused. We have had too extensive an experience of Christian manners to be much annoyed at them. We have long outlived that feeling.

The *Academy* represents us as saying it was "unchristian and uncharitable" to call Freethinkers all those names. We said nothing of the kind. We should never think of saying it was "unchristian."

Curiously enough, the *Academy* justifies its own language by quoting something a trifle worse from the Book of Revelation (xxii. 15):—

"For without are dogs, and sorcerers, and whoremongers, and murderers, and idolators, and whosoever loveth and maketh a lie."

(The same elegant language, by the way, appears in the eighth verse of the previous chapter). What the *Academy* doesn't explain is how John's (of course, it *wasn't* John) calling certain people whoremongers justifies Mr. Machen in calling Freethinkers "imbeciles," "gibbering ignoramuses," and "impudent blockheads." We fail to see the connection.

It is to be hoped the *Academy* editor understands the meaning of the word "dog." In the Old Testament the "price of a dog" was not to be cast into the sacred treasury. It means the price of a certain unnatural vice—which appears to have found patrons amongst professed Christians when Paul wrote his epistle to the Corinthians.

What the *Academy* means, apparently, is that Freethinkers are "persons who persist in speaking with incoherent fluency on subjects as to which they are very imperfectly informed." This sort of thing is easily said. No one was ever able to make it good against the writers in the *Freethinker*. We invite the *Academy* to appoint one of its most coherent and well-informed writers to attempt the task.

Someone has sent us a marked copy of the full report of a public debate held in Brockwell Park on Sunday, June 23, 1907, between Mr. Joseph McCabe, representing the South London Ethical Society, and the Rev. A. J. Waldron, apparently representing himself, on "The Independence of Ethics." It is said to be "revised by both disputants." Mr. McCabe's revision was quite honest. Mr. Waldron's was like himself. In the debate, he said that France had only increased her population by 2,000,000 since the battle of Waterloo. This he silently corrected to 4,000,000—as the reporter felt bound to point out in a footnote. That is to say, a silly statement was brought a little nearer the truth by a sly falsehood. The reporter, however, quietly settles Mr. Waldron's hash by giving the real figures of the French population from *Chambers's Encyclopædia*, showing that the increase during the nineteenth century was from 27,500,000 to 38,218,903—excluding 1,600,000 in the two provinces ceded to Germany in 1871.

Now we wish to ask Mr. McCabe a plain question. He is a scholar and a gentleman—and we ask him what good he thinks he can do by debating with a person like Mr. Waldron? We have read the reverend gentleman's two speeches in this debate, and we find them to be precisely on the level of the street-corner Christian Evidence lecturer. His ignorance is amazing, his effrontery is a match for it, and he is no more capable of looking steadily at a mental point than a monkey is capable of looking steadily at a visible object. Mr. McCabe fights, so to speak, under Queensberry rules; Mr. Waldron fights like a ruffian. What is the use of an encounter between two such opponents?

We have had one of Mr. Waldron's statements about France. Here is another. "France," he says, "recks with the infamy of its immorality." That is how vicious Englishmen, who visit Paris for a private "good time" (as they reckon it), and find out the society that suits them, naturally talk about the great French nation.

The present Prime Minister of France is an ideal husband and father, as he was an ideal son. His sword was the

keenest and brightest in the Dreyfus battle. He fought day by day with a deft and tireless wrist, and a bright, confident smile. He helped mightily to win a magnificent victory for truth, justice, and humanity. And when he came into power himself he did a thing that rang like a fresh challenge to the beaten hosts of evil. It was one of the most dazzling vindications in history. He made General Picquart—the Bayard of the Dreyfus movement—his Minister of War. Clemenceau is human, and, being so, he cannot possibly be perfect; but he is a MAN—and he is an Atheist.

The previous paragraph is not written for the benefit of Mr. Waldron. Nobody could do him any good. It is for the benefit of those of our readers who may not know all the facts.

The Rev. Dr. P. S. Campbell, a Professor in McMaster University, Toronto, is now on a visit to this country, and has been preaching in London. He delivered a sermon, a few Sundays ago, at the Denmark-place Baptist Church, which contained most curious and antiquated theological teaching. He told his hearers that morality does not count. "You might even surpass many who claim to know Christ," but it will do you no good unless you accept Christ as your Savior. Then he informed them that if they accepted Christ, they would know that their sins were forgiven, and they would appropriate God's character. "God confers his own spotless righteousness" on every one who becomes his child through faith in Jesus. How convenient! We only have to accept Christ, and all will be done for us, and we shall march straight on to the glory-land without moving a finger. Is it any wonder that Christianity is dying? It ought to have been dead and buried eighteen hundred years ago. Then we would have been much better off to-day.

The Rev. F. B. Moyer is still at the old game of reporting his own miracles. He has been setting the Americans right for some weeks now. At some great Conference, he has had "the great privilege of giving an hour daily, and this in addition to a course of lectures" at two other centres. He and a Professor of Chemistry did wonders:—

"We made an iron bar to float in the air to show how the spirit of life makes us free from the law of downward [a fine adjective this—*downward!*] gravitation; compelled a wheel to revolve rapidly by a stream of electricity to illustrate how Paul wrought according to the working that worked in him mightily; showed the unity of white light and the trinity of the three component colors; heard in the response of one tuning fork to another the answering pain of Christ to the woes of his suffering Church; learnt marvellous lessons from the X-rays, the arc-light, and the ultra-violet rays."

Surely, the man of God must be going mad. At any rate, a larger quantity of rank nonsense was never before packed into so small a space.

"Unhappy is he who takes his holiday away from the fellowship of his Lord," cries the *Methodist Times*. But the *Methodist Times* ignores two momentous facts. The first is that there are many Christian people who, during their holidays, and at other times too, enjoy themselves so much that they forget all about their Lord. The other day a Christian said: "I was so immensely happy last night that I went to bed without saying my prayers." How often we hear the significant remark, "I enjoyed life so much that I never thought of God." The truth is that religion, in any orthodox form, acts as a damper, or a wet blanket, on real happiness—or, in other words, that profoundly religious people go through the world without once experiencing the joy of life.

The other fact forgotten by the *Methodist Times* is that the very need to warn its readers against taking their holidays "away from the fellowship of their Lord" proves the artificiality of all religious exercises. Why is it unnecessary to warn people against neglecting their meals? Why is a man never told not to forget to breathe? Well, if we had souls, as the preachers say we have, do you imagine it would be necessary to remind *them*, as the preachers are always doing, to take *their* meals with due regularity? Prayer is said to be the soul's breath; but, if that were true, is it reasonable to suppose that the soul *could*, even if it *would*, stop breathing while away on holiday? If God existed, there would be no parsons telling their parishioners not to forget him. The very existence of the priest, the pastor, the preacher, the exhorter, is the most convincing argument for Atheism. Will our pious contemporary give its serious and prayerful consideration to this point?

Which paper is the biggest liar? It is a hard question, but the *Christian Herald* would be sure to come out well in an open competition. A recent number of old Prophet

Baxter's organ tells a yarn about the Rev. John Wilkinson, under the heading of "How Secularists were Won to Christ." The reverend gentleman was invited to meet a company of Secularists at Northampton. There were about 400 of them. For half an hour he told his experiences of answers to prayer. They clamored for more, and he had to go on for another half-hour. Now for the pious climax: "Bible classes of from twenty to fifty were formed, and many accepted Christ." Evidently the Rev. Mr. Wilkinson has accepted Christ, and something else; for he would hardly invent these romantic narratives for nothing.

America is going to have a rich treat. The Bishop of London is sailing across the Atlantic to visit Quebec, Montreal, Ottawa, Toronto, Niagara, Washington, Boston, and New York, besides looking in at Yale and Harvard. We like America very much, and we are quite willing, for our part, to let it keep the Bishop of London altogether.

General Booth addressed the prisoners in Gloucester Gaol as "you dear fellows." But there are dearer things than they are in England—and the Salvation Army is one of them.

Sergeant Tom Jones is the whole Salvation "corps" at Monmouth. He has been so for fifteen years. That is how the Army progresses there.

Christians have always been fond of quoting "infidel testimonies." We all know what use they have made of occasional unguarded utterances of "infidels" like Mill and Huxley. General Booth has been carrying round his little lot lately. According to the "special correspondent" of the *Daily News*, when the General was at Portsmouth the other day "he was especially delighted by the fact that Mr. Bernard Shaw had declared that the Salvation Army band was the finest in the world for rendering religious music." But which Salvation Army band did Mr. Shaw mean? We hear one sometimes and wish it was ten miles away.

Sir Edward Fry, senior British delegate at the Hague Peace Conference, submitted a resolution on behalf of the British Government last Saturday (Aug. 17) concerning the reduction of armaments. In the course of his speech he pointed out that the war expenditure of the European Powers, the United States, and Japan, in 1898—the year before the first Hague Conference—was £251,000,000; and that the war expenditure of the same countries for 1906 was £320,000,000—an increase of £69,000,000. "Such," Sir Edward Fry said, "is the excessive expenditure which could serve to a better end; such is the weight under which our populations groan; such is the Christian peace of the civilised world in the twentieth century." *Such is Christian peace!* Columns of talk could not add to the force of that exclamation.

The Christian Brothers, Mount Sion, Waterford, are raising the wind—they do it annually—by means of a Bazaar, which appears to be simply a raffle. The tickets are sixpence each, and a wide sale is expected, for the bills have been sent round, quite indiscriminately; in fact, a packet of them was delivered at our private address. We see that the patrons are the Roman Catholic Bishop of Waterford; Thomas Sexton, Chairman of the *Freeman's Journal*; John E. Redmond, M.P.—all of whom would probably object to lotteries. The prizes are numerous and varied, the second being a motor-car presented by Thomas Sexton, and the first a "beautiful framed picture of His Holiness the Pope," the gift of His Holiness himself. That ought to draw the sixpences.

Every now and then we are told of University professors, distinguished scientists, and renowned philosophers who, in some confidential moments, have confessed that they would give anything, everything, for the ability to believe in the Christian religion; but it is a significant fact that their names are always suppressed, *unless they are dead*. Everybody is aware that Professor Huxley was an uncompromising opponent of Christianity. He threw it overboard bodily, and vigorously wrote against it to the end of his life. And yet the Rev. Dr. Adam, of America, preaching at Westminster Chapel, said that a friend of his (it is always a friend, or a member of the family) had a long talk with the great scientist one Sunday morning, the subject of which was religion, and that it was brought to a close by the Professor saying, with tears in his eyes, "I would give my right hand if I could believe that, but I can't." That story is flatly contradicted by the testimony of all Huxley's published works, of his *Life and Letters* by his son, and of Sir W. T. Thiselton Dyer's article on him in the *Encyclopædia Britannica* (vol. xxix., p. 372); and we respectfully decline to believe it.

Every Freethinker knows that the New Theology is not one whit saner than the Old, and that no two of its advocates are agreed as to what it really is. Mr. Allanson Picton labels himself a Christian Pantheist, Dr. Warschauer wishes to be known as a Pantheist, while Mr. Campbell is never quite sure what to call himself. It was highly amusing to notice how the utter unreality of the whole thing was continually showing itself during the meetings of the Summer School of Theology just held at Penmaenmawr. Every speaker differed on most essential points from every other, and the main business of the conference consisted in challenging opinions stated. "We ought not to allow the last speaker's statement of the case to pass unchallenged" was a remark often indulged in. How *can* people agree when they discuss subjects which transcend all knowledge?

The Rev. Dr. Crapsey, of New York, spoke for an hour and a half on God's immanence. He pretended to know all about it; but in reality his speech was nothing but a violent attack on supernatural religion. He dwelt on the absurdity of prayer, he laughed at sin, calling it "the stock-in-trade of the Christian minister and priest," and he ridiculed the Church and its sacraments. Having thus got rid of prayer, sin, and the Church, Dr. Crapsey said that all we have to deal with is the "Sum of the forces of the Universe." That is to say, in bowing prayer, sin, and the Church out of the way, he politely dismissed God at the same time. Thunder-struck by such a bold deliverance, Mr. Picton and Mr. Campbell admitted, in effect, that the only God we know is Nature, only Mr. Campbell, as is his habit, instantly contradicted himself by saying that, after all, he "had an intense belief in the efficacy of prayer."

One of the speakers, the Rev. T. Rhondda Williams, of Bradford, waxed bolder than all his fellows. He bluntly said that they "are not at the point of view of any New Testament writer." He went further even than that, and stated that "if we could know for certain what the point of view of the historic Jesus was, we could not expect that to be our point of view to-day." In other words, the New Theologians are not Christians in any historical acceptance of the term. By retaining the old name, they only throw dust into the eyes of the public. Why should they cling to the name when they have cast off the reality? Why hug the shadow when they have renounced the substance? At present, they are Freethinkers sailing under false colors. Their advent, however, only hastens the final doom of Christianity.

Mr. Hall Caine, who has made a pile of money out of Christianity with his sentimental novels, has just been orating at Douglas—from the stage of the theatre. He indignantly denied the assertion of an American professor that the English drama had been dead for two hundred years. He said it was very much alive now. His own drama, *The Bondman*, was a brilliant success. Very likely! But as Mr. Hall Caine was speaking from a commercial point of view, and the American professor from an artistic point of view, the question remains where it was.

Mr. Andrew Carnegie posed as a sort of Agnostic in America, but we never heard that he had given a cent to the Agnostic cause. In England, he varies his Free Library policy with gifts to places of worship. A press paragraph announces that he has promised £150 towards an organ for the Baptist Church at Bishop's Stortford. Saint Andrew's gifts are always well announced.

According to a semi-official communication published in Athens last week, a Bulgarian band from Skrytzovon killed four Greeks of the village of Silino. One of them was flayed alive and his eyes put out. They were all Christians—on both sides. How they love one another! What the Turk did in hot blood these good Christians do with cool deliberation.

Wonderful are the ways of "Providence." Mrs. Cox, of Forest Hill, was entertaining a number of friends in celebration of her 105th birthday on Wednesday, August 14, and "Providence" sent a wasp to sting her on the neck, so that she died the same night. It was rough on the old lady. She might have been allowed to peg out peacefully at that age.

The rector of Lowestoft has been addressing an outdoor crowd at the Sparrow's Nest, and his remarks were reported in the local press. They do not give us a high opinion of his intelligence. He said he had been to Lerwick on a drifter to hold services. He wanted to get at the fishermen. He wanted to remove the impression amongst them that

parsons brought them bad luck. Some of them were so superstitious that they believed parsons and pigs were unlucky, but he begged to assure them "it was not so." We suppose the reverend gentleman was speaking for the pigs.

The rector observed that fishermen were shy. "I held a meeting amongst them once," he said, "and I spoke about fish. I told them that there was one kind of fish that I liked very much, and that was latchet, and if at any time they had any they did not want I should be pleased to receive it at the rectory. I did receive some—one little bit. As a matter of fact, they were too shy to send any to me. On another occasion, I had staying with me some bishops and clergy, and I informed the fisher folk that they liked fish. They would not take the hint, and during that whole week I did not receive any, but a piece came along the very day after the clergy left." Fancy a "scholar and a gentleman"—one "endowed with the Holy Ghost"—talking in this way! The reverend gentleman might as well inform the bakers that he likes bread, and the grocers that he likes butter; he might also remind the butchers that he has no objection to meat, and the coal merchants that he has no objection to "household selected" to cook it with. There is no end to the development of this little dodge.

"Suffer little children to come unto me." This is one of the really divine texts in the New Testament. But the managers of a certain East Suffolk school have their own ideas on the subject. They granted a holiday to Church of England school-children who wanted to attend their Sunday-school treat, and refused the same privilege to Nonconformist children. Was it not Swift who said that most men had religion enough to make them hate each other?

A fund has been opened in aid of "a few young ministers" who have been "driven from their pulpits" for being too sweet on the "New Theology." "Driven from their pulpits" is good. One would have thought that churches which pay the piper have a right to call the tune.

Mr. Douglas Story has been the special correspondent of the *Tribune* during General Booth's latest motor-car trip, and he has made some important confessions. "Wales, as a whole," he wrote, "has not responded to the General's presence to the extent which the emotional qualities of its national composition would have made possible." The reason is that Wales is suffering from the inevitable reaction after the revival. "The people," Mr. Story says, "are weary of evangelical excitement. They are suffering from religious anesthesia, the result of over-stimulation. To the General and his officers this is matter for grave consideration. There is nothing they dread more than emotional paralysis. A couple of years ago, Wales was shaken by a convulsion of revivalism. The feelings of the people were stirred to the uttermost. The pit-workers sang themselves into a frenzy of self-immolation.....The Welsh still sing, but the evidence of the clergy and of serious observers of the signs of the times is that the effervescence of evangelisation has past and left a small modicum of permanent good to justify the amount of nerve-force expended." By "a small modicum" Mr. Story appears to mean a minus quantity; for he cites the authority of Mr. Brooks, a leader of the Baptists in Abercarn, and the chairman of one of General Booth's meetings, for the statement that "for every church-member added to the list by the revival three members have since been expelled."

All this is precisely what we predicted would happen. We said that the revival was a debauch of excitement, and that it would be followed by a commensurate reaction and depression. Our words have come true. We also said that Evan Roberts was sure to break down—and our words have come true in that respect also. Welsh religion has lost by the revival, and Evan Roberts is a physical and mental wreck. Such was "the hand of God" on the Welsh churches!

When we were told to look at the way in which the Welsh revival emptied the public-houses, we replied that this was simply due to the counter excitement of crowded night meetings, with unlimited singing, and praying, and testifying. And we were right again. Public-house receipts sank to nothing; but they have gone up again. "The practical good," Mr. Story admits, "has not been permanent. To-day, these public-houses are more prosperous than ever. The moral pendulum has swung back beyond the point at which it began when the movement first affected the country."

The moral of the story is that another revival in the near future would pretty well settle the hash of Welsh Christianity. But, as a matter of fact, there cannot be another revival in the near future. Wales has a revival once every fifty years. It takes that time to recover from the effects of the previous orgie.

Richard Brinkley, the prussic-acid murderer, was duly executed. Of course, the "reprievers" went to work upon him, but capital punishment is still the law, and there never was a more cold, callous, and calculating scoundrel. His last letter to his solicitor was full of pious expressions. He had lived a righteous and sober life, and he was ready to meet his God. Of course, he kept up the pretence of his innocence, for while there was life there was hope; but the fellow was lying with the name of God upon his lips, for the evidence of his guilt was perfectly clear. Richard Brinkley's case is enough to make "religion" stink in the nostrils of all decent people.

Rev. W. H. Warrington, vicar of Arretton, Isle of Wight, has been trying in vain to find "a priest for the Wootton district." He is not surprised. Quite the contrary. He can only offer £90 or £100 a year, and "can we expect a gentleman to live" on that? Note the business tone of the argument. Soul-saving is not the object of the men of God. They are in the Church for a living, and if they can't get what they want the lost souls may save themselves.

A man walked about Yarmouth in his night-clothes. He was arrested, and inquiries proved that he was a Leytonstone school-master, suffering from religious mania. There is no moral.

Mr. Cox, the organist at Stoke Bruern Church, Northampton, was arranging his music on Sunday morning, when he was observed to collapse and fall from his seat. An attack of heart disease had proved fatal. Canon Cox fainted in the vestry, some members of the congregation followed suit, and the service was abandoned. More "Providence"! God's servants are not safe in God's own house.

Monday evening's *Westminster Gazette* had a brightly-written article by Margaret Wynne Nevinson, reporting the conversation of a characterful old woman not far from her end through bronchitis. One of her observations, at least, will interest our readers. "Yes," she said, "I know what I'm talking about, ma'am; didn't I spend Sunday afternoon for nigh on twenty years amongst them poor lunies at Colney Hatch, which shook my faith considerable? How the Almighty allows madness, when He can strike dead, always puzzles me."

A few weeks ago, an Irishman and a Scotchman met at a graveside in Gateshead cemetery, where the deep-grave system has recently been adopted. They were discussing the new system, and the Irishman said he did not see that it mattered how many were buried in one grave. "What," said the Scotchman, "wad ye like to be standin' there on the resurrection mornin' and see your wife come out o' there wi' twa men?"

ONE ON ST. PETER.

St. Peter sottin' at the gate;

Nigger passin' by—

St. Peter up and sez to him,

"How did you come to die?"

"Go ax the man wut helt de gun

A-pintin' at dat roos';

Go ax de dog whut helt my foot

An' wouldn't turn hit loose!"

"And so," St. Peter sez to him

"You was kotched in the ac'?"

Dat nigger turnt an' looked at him

An' spon's: "Hit is a fac'!"

"Down in de deep den you mus' go

Fer stealin' uf dat hen!"

The nigger scratch his haid right hard;

St. Peter had him den!

But d'rockly, liftin' up his arms,

He flop 'em on his sides,

An' 'zactly like a rooster crow

Three times out loud he cries.

St. Peter hung his haid wid shamo—

He 'membered uv his sin—

An' grabbin' up a great big key,

He let dat nigger in!

—Picayune (New Orleans)

Mr. Foote's Engagements.

(Suspended during June, July, and August).

To Correspondents.

ENQUIRER.—(1.) Your letter is very well written, but the verse enclosed is a long way behind it. You have an emotion and an idea to express, but you don't do them justice, for the simple reason that you have not acquired command of the medium of expression. The writing of good verse doesn't come merely by nature. Shakespeare himself must have spoiled reams of paper before his work was "fit for publication." (2.) Glad you were so pleased with our Davidson article. (3.) We consider Mr. H. G. Wells a very much overrated writer. He has a pretentious manner, which often gives the commonplace an air of profundity—to many people.

J. CHAMBERS.—Thanks for cuttings.

CONVERTED CHRISTIAN.—We have ordered the mistake to be rectified. Sorry it occurred. The cuttings are useful. Thanks.

H. B. DODDS hopes the Parris Fund will "enable the veteran to pass the rest of his days in peace and comfort."

J. CHICK sends subscription "in memory of many excellent lectures given on the Freethought platform by Mr. Parris."

F. S.—Thanks for the American paper, but the article on Clemenceau is evidently the work of an enemy, and some of the alleged facts in it are completely at variance with all that we have read and heard, for many years, about the great French statesman. The writer admits that Clemenceau was "always an Atheist," and this is likely to prompt a good deal in the way of misrepresentation.

S. M. PEACOCK.—Much obliged for the reference. We noted gleanings from the *Freethinker* in that publication some months ago.

COHEN "SALVATION ARMY" TRACT FUND.—J. Chambers, 2s.

P. C. STEWART.—The *Pioneer* was dropped long ago. The word "hymn" has nothing to do, essentially or etymologically, with the Christian or any other religion. Amongst the Greeks, it appears to have been a festive song. Freethinkers may sing hymns (if they choose) as well as other people.

GERALD GREY.—Change of address noted. Thanks for good wishes, which we cordially reciprocate.

THE TOUZEAU PARRIS FUND.—Third *Freethinker* List:—F. Bonte, £2; G. Newman, 2s. 6d.; C. J., 10s.; J. L., 5s.; J. Pruett, 2s. 6d.; H. B. Dodds, 2s. 6d.; A. G. Scopes, 10s. 6d.; J. W. de Caux, £1; W. P. Kennedy, 5s.; Arthur Powell, 5s.; R. J. Henderson, 2s. 6d.; J. Chick, 10s.; J. H. Gartrell, £1; Election, 2s. 6d.; A Woman Freethinker, 10s.; W. P. K., 2s. 6d.; J. Brough, 1s. 6d.; J. D. Stones, 2s. 6d.; C. J. Peacock, 10s.; J. E. Banks, 5s.; F. Wood, 5s.; J. Roberts, 10s.; W. H. Harrap, 2s. 6d.; J. Jones, 10s.; A. B. Moss, 5s.; R. E. D., 5s.

J. H. GARTRELL.—Overcrowded this week; in our next.

A WOMAN FREETHINKER, who wishes to remain anonymous, says:—"I am a mere nobody, but my sympathy is generally awakened when you appeal for aid in some cases of sad distress, and it gives me pleasure to do what little I can in response."

W. P. BALL.—Many thanks for batches of cuttings.

H. P. WARD.—We had only a little space left on Tuesday morning.

G. ROLEFFS.—Pleased to hear that the Liverpool Branch was so well represented at Professor Ferrer's reception. It was an occasion for unity.

H. INGERSOLL MAYER (Milan).—Thanks for copy of *Asino*. We are astonished to hear that it has a million readers. Are you sure of the fact? We are not likely to get that number of people to read the *Freethinker*; besides, modern Englishmen don't take kindly to caricature, unless it is "elegant"—and ineffective.

J. BROUGH.—If all who could afford it did a little the fund would be large enough.

R. IRVING.—John W. E. Chubb, in the *Hastings and St. Leonards Observer*, must be romancing. He represents us as saying that his father was "one of the most fair-minded Deists" we had met—though we don't recollect him; and this "Deist" father of his was "a Christian Evidence lecturer"—which is an absurdity. He represents his father as debating "Socialistic doctrines" with "Bradlaugh, Hyndman, and others of the Stonecutter-street party"—but Bradlaugh was an anti-Socialist and Hyndman never belonged to the "Stonecutter-street party."

J. D. STONES, subscribing to the Parris Fund, says: "I am glad you have taken this fund in hand, and I trust the result will be a substantial amount for the benefit of our old friend."

J. E. BANKS is of opinion that Freethinkers should "rally in their thousands" to the help of an old afflicted comrade like Touzeau Parris.

G. JACOB.—We are glad to see it, but the new friendship does not alter the fact of the old estrangement.

J. ROBERTS says: "I hope the Parris Fund will meet with the success it deserves. Your ever-readiness to place the columns of the *Freethinker* at the service of such appeals is worthy of all commendation."

F. J. ANDREWS.—Sending as desired. Glad to hear of the three fresh readers.

A. B. MOSS.—We are sure you wish it could be "twice as much" for Mr. Parris.

R. E. D.—You say the withdrawal of the *Freethinker* would leave quite a blank in your life. This is the sort of compliment we appreciate. We have not a vast crowd of readers, but we have some very attached ones.

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

THE NATIONAL SECULAR SOCIETY'S office is at 2 Newcastle-street, Farringdon-street, E.C.

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

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

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

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

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

Sugar Plums.

Our friends will be pleased to hear that the *Freethinker* has not experienced the usual summer drop this year. Some will say that this is due to the fact that there has been no summer. But there has been summer-time, anyhow; and long days, and holidays. Our circulation, however, has increased instead of decreasing. During the past few months it has beaten all late records, and we begin to hope that the day of the *Freethinker* is surely, if slowly, arriving. Even now, if the same justice were shown it by newsagents as to other papers, this journal would be a good property, and the editor would almost be able to sport a motor-car, like "General" Booth, and "New Theology" Campbell, and most of the Bishops. Fancy!

Joking aside, the increasing circulation of the *Freethinker* is a good thing from every point of view; good for the movement, good for the non-millionaire contributors, and good for the poor editor, who has borne for so long the heat and burden of the day, and of course is not getting younger with the passing of the years. We hope, therefore, that our friends will go on doing their best to bring the *Freethinker* to the notice of their friends and acquaintances, and even to that of strangers. They could also send us the names and addresses of persons they know of who might become regular readers of the *Freethinker* if they only knew of its existence and character. We will post a free copy of the paper for six consecutive weeks to all such addresses.

The holiday season is the best in the year for introducing this journal to outsiders. While away from home, on pleasure bent, you run against all sorts of people, and get into more than ordinarily free conversation with them. Opportunities thus arise of finding out liberal tendencies of mind which are generally kept in obscurity; and at the psychological moment the production of a copy of the *Freethinker* may be the means of what the orthodox call "saving a soul." Hundreds of our regular readers met with the paper quite "accidentally."

Freethinker subscribers must not blame us when their copy does not arrive. Our shop manager has had several complaints lately—as many as nine in one week. It seems futile to complain to the Post Office officials. They invariably reply that they are sorry they can do nothing; which is a polite falsehood, for they are not sorry at all. No private firm would dare to do business in such a fashion. For our own part, we are always ready to forward another copy of the *Freethinker* in place of the missing one, whenever we are informed of its non-arrival. A postcard will do.

There is to be a Freethought Demonstration, under the auspices of the N. S. S. Executive, in Victoria Park this afternoon (Aug. 25) at 3.30. The speakers from the platform (at the old spot) will be Messrs. C. Cohen, J. T. Lloyd, and F. A. Davies, and there should be a big attendance. In the evening at 6 o'clock Mr. Cohen will lecture from the Branch platform.

Mr. H. S. Wishart's report from Bristol, where he is on a fortnight's Freethought mission under the auspices of the N. S. S. Executive, only reached us on Tuesday morning, and we are not able to give it the space we desired. Mr. Wishart pitched his platform in the "Horsefair" or "Haymarket," and has had some capital meetings on Saturday and Sunday, with a fair sale of Freethought literature. He will try to start a working Branch of the N. S. S., and we hope some of the old "saints" in the city will rally round the flag this time. Mr. Wishart will be lecturing on Saturday (Aug. 24) at 8 p.m.; on Sunday at 11 and 7; and on Monday at 8. We shall give a longer account of his mission in our next issue.

A crowded meeting of local "saints" welcomed Professor Ferrer at the Alexandra Hall, Liverpool, on Thursday evening, August 15, all sections of the Freethought movement being well represented. Professor Ferrer—speaking in Spanish, which was translated by a N. S. S. member—was cheered again and again when he said that he should carry on, with even greater energy than ever, the work of Secular Education in priest-ridden Spain.

We had a chat at our office, a few days ago, with an interesting and intelligent young Boer, who has been studying at Edinburgh, and is now on his way back to South Africa. He is a thorough Freethinker, and he says that there is more Freethought amongst the Boers to-day than is generally imagined. Some of the Boer women burnt their Bibles after the war; they had trusted it, and it had deceived them. We were very glad to hear him say that South Africa was settling down, and that Boers and Britishers would find their way together under self-government, if the outside mischief-makers only left them alone. We were also glad to hear him say that one of the things that he, and his Boer friends, liked in the *Freethinker* was "its sound English." We shook hands very cordially with this young Boer, who seemed much pleased with the interview. He said that the *Freethinker* would follow him wherever he went. And as we said "Good-bye" we felt that Freethinkers all over the world belong to the same nation.

The *Blue Grass Blade* (Lexington, Kentucky) does not reach us regularly. We wish it did. The last number to hand reproduces on its front page two articles by Mr. Foote and Mr. Cohen from the *Freethinker*.

La Vita, an illustrated newspaper published at Rome, gives the *Freethinker* as its authority for the announcement that a Civil List Pension has been granted to "Ouida."

La Raison, edited by Victor Charbonnel, one of the most eloquent and disinterested of French Freethinkers, is now published in a very neat form as a monthly. It will be amongst our exchanges, and we shall note anything in it which is likely to be of special interest to our own readers. A recent issue of *La Raison* reproduces the words and music of many of the songs of the great Revolution.

Dr. John Emerson Roberts, whose addresses we have reproduced occasionally from American exchanges, is now acting as Minister to the Church of This World, in Kansas City. This Church is now eleven years old. Its meetings were held last winter in the Schubert Theatre, and ranged from seventeen hundred to two thousand. Music was discoursed by the Carl Busch Orchestra, often to the "passionate delight of the applauding multitude." Next winter the meetings are to be fortnightly instead of monthly. Dr. Roberts' addresses to the Church of This World are to be printed in a monthly magazine he has started, called *Here and Now*. We wish it all the success it should command under such a brilliant leader. It will be amongst our exchanges.

So long as there are heroes and cowards there will be a nobility.—*Novalis*.

Let people talk: stand firm as a tower, which never bends its crest to the blowing of the winds.—*Dante*.

Don't shiver over last year's snow—or last year's troubles.

I have known men of lax faith pure and just in their lives, as I have known very loud professing Christians loose in their morality, and hard and unjust in their dealings.—*Thackeray*.

A Look Backward and a Prophecy.—II.

BY THE LATE COL. R. G. INGERSOLL.

(Concluded from p. 523.)

THERE is another fact that should be taken into consideration. All religions are provincial. Mingled with them all, and at the foundation of all, are the egotism of ignorance, of isolation, the pride of race, and what is called patriotism. Every religion is a natural product—the result of conditions. When one tribe became acquainted with another, the ideas of both were somewhat modified. So when nations and races come into contact a change in thought, in opinion, is a necessary result.

A few years ago, nations were strangers, and consequently hated each other's institutions and religions. Commerce has done a great work in destroying provincialism. To trade commodities is to exchange ideas. So the press, the steamships, the railways, cables, and telegraphs have brought the nations together and enabled them to compare their prejudices, their religions, laws, and customs.

Recently, many scholars have been studying the religions of the world, and have found them much the same. They have also found that there is nothing original in Christianity; that the legends, miracles, Christs, and conditions of salvation, the heavens, hells, angels, devils, and gods were the common property of the ancient world. They found that Christ was a new name for an old biography; that he was not a life, but a legend; not a man, but a myth.

People began to suspect that our religion had not been supernaturally revealed, while others, far older and substantially the same, had been naturally produced. They found it difficult to account for the fact that poor, ignorant savages had, in the darkness of nature, written so well, that Jehovah, thousands of years afterwards, copied it and adopted it as his own. They thought it curious that God should be a plagiarist.

These scholars found that all the old religions had recognised the existence of devils, of evil spirits, who sought in countless ways to injure the children of men. In this respect they found that the sacred books of other nations were just the same as our Bible, as our New Testament.

Take the Devil from our religion, and the entire fabric falls. No Devil, no fall of man. No Devil, no atonement. No Devil, no hell.

The Devil is the keystone of the arch.

And yet for many years the belief in the existence of the Devil—of evil spirits—has been fading from the minds of intelligent people. This belief has now substantially vanished. The minister who now seriously talks about a personal Devil is regarded with a kind of pitying contempt.

The Devil has faded from his throne, and the evil spirits have vanished from the air.

The man who has really given up a belief in the existence of the Devil cannot believe in the inspiration of the New Testament—in the divinity of Christ. If Christ taught anything, if he believed in anything, he taught a belief in the existence of the Devil. His principal business was casting out devils. He himself was taken possession of by the Devil, and carried to the top of the temple.

Thousands and thousands of people have ceased to believe the account in the New Testament regarding devils, and yet continue to believe in the dogma of "inspiration" and the divinity of Christ.

In the brain of the average Christian, contradictions dwell in unity.

While a belief in the existence of the Devil has almost faded away, the belief in the existence of a personal God has been somewhat weakened. The old belief that back of nature, back of all substance and force, was, and is, a personal God, an infinite intelligence, who created and governs the world, began to be questioned. The scientists had shown

the indestructibility of matter and force. Büchner's great work had convinced most readers that matter and force could not have been created. They also became satisfied that matter cannot exist apart from force, and that force cannot exist apart from matter.

They found, too, that thought is a form of force, and that consequently intelligence could not have existed before matter, because without matter, force in any form cannot, and could not, exist.

The creator of anything is utterly unthinkable.

A few years ago, God was supposed to govern the world. He rewarded the people with sunshine, with prosperity and health, or he punished with drought and flood, with plague and storm. He not only attended to the affairs of nations, but he watched the actions of individuals. He sunk ships, derailed trains, caused conflagrations, killed men and women with his lightning, destroyed some with earthquakes, and tore the homes and bodies of thousands into fragments with his cyclones.

In spite of the Church, in spite of the ministers, the people began to lose confidence in Providence. The right did not seem always to triumph. Virtue was not always rewarded, and vice was not always punished. The good failed; the vicious succeeded; the strong and cruel enslaved the weak; toil was paid with the lash; babes were sold from the breasts of mothers, and Providence seemed to be absolutely heartless.

In other words, people began to think that the God of the Christians and the God of nature were about the same, and that neither appeared to take any care of the human race.

The Deists of the last century scoffed at the Bible God. He was too cruel, too savage. At the same time they praised the God of nature. They laughed at the idea of inspiration, and denied the supernatural origin of the Scriptures.

Now, if the Bible is not inspired, then it is a natural production, and nature, not God, should be held responsible for the Scriptures. Yet the Deists denied that God was the author, and, at the same time, asserted the perfection of nature.

This shows that even in the minds of Deists contradictions dwell in unity.

Against all these facts and forces, these theories and tendencies, the clergy fought and prayed. It is not claimed that they were consciously dishonest, but it is claimed that they were prejudiced—that they were incapable of examining the other side—that they were utterly destitute of the philosophic spirit. They were not searchers for the facts, but defenders of the creeds, and undoubtedly they were the product of conditions and surroundings, and acted as they must.

In spite of everything, a few rays of light penetrated the orthodox mind. Many ministers accepted some of the new facts, and began to mingle with Christian mistakes a few scientific truths. In many instances they excited the indignation of their congregations. Some were tried for heresy and driven from their pulpits, and some organised new churches and gathered about them a few people willing to listen to the sincere thoughts of a honest man.

The great body of the Church, however, held to the creed—not quite believing it, but still insisting that it was true. In private conversation, they would apologise and admit that the old ideas were outgrown, but in public, they were as orthodox as ever. In every church, however, there were many priests who accepted the new gospel—that is to say, welcomed the truth.

To-day, it may truthfully be said that the Bible in the old sense is no longer regarded as the inspired word of God. Jehovah is no longer accepted or believed in as the creator of the universe. His place has been taken by the Unknown, the Unseen, the Invisible, the Incomprehensible Something, the Cosmic Dust, the first Cause, the Inconceivable, the Original Force, the Mystery. The God of the Bible, the gentleman who walked in the cool of the evening, who talked face to face with Moses, who revenged himself on unbelievers, and who gave laws

written with his finger on tables of stone, has abdicated. He has become a myth.

So, too, the New Testament has lost its authority. People reason about it now as they do about other books, and even orthodox ministers pick out the miracles that ought to be believed; and, when anything is attributed to Christ not in accordance with their views, they take the liberty of explaining it away by saying "interpolation."

In other words, we have lived to see Science the standard instead of the Bible. We have lived to see the Bible tested by Science, and, what is more, we have lived to see reason the standard not only in religion, but in all the domain of science. Now all civilised scientists appeal to reason. They get their facts, and then reason from the foundation. Now the theologian appeals to reason. Faith is no longer considered a foundation. The theologian has found that he must build upon the truth, and that he must establish this truth by satisfying human reason.

This is where we are now.

What is to be the result? Is progress to stop? Are we to retrace our steps? Are we going back to superstition? Are we going to take authority for truth?

Let me prophesy.

In modern times, we have slowly lost confidence in the supernatural, and have slowly gained confidence in the natural. We have slowly lost confidence in gods, and have slowly gained confidence in man. For the cure of disease, for the stopping of plague, we depend on the natural—on science. We have lost confidence in holy water and religious processions. We have found that prayers are never answered.

In my judgment, all belief in the supernatural will be driven from the human mind. All religions must pass away. The augurs, the soothsayers, the seers, the preachers, the astrologers and alchemists will all lie in the same cemetery, and one epitaph will do for them all. In a little while all will have had their day. They were naturally produced, and they will be naturally destroyed. Man at last will depend entirely upon himself—on the development of the brain—to the end that he may take advantage of the forces of nature—to the end that he may supply the wants of his body, and feed the hunger of his mind.

In my judgment, teachers will take the place of preachers, and the interpreters of nature will be the only priests.

Anthony Collins.—I.

BY THE LATE J. M. WHEELER,

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

JOHN LOCKE, writing in his seventy-first year to a young friend, declared—

"If I were now setting out in the world, I should think it a great happiness to have such a companion as you, who had a relish for truth, would in earnest seek it with me, from whom I might communicate freely what I thought true. Believe it, my good friend, to love truth for truth's sake is the principal part of human perfection in this world and the seed plot of all other virtues, and, if I mistake not, you have as much of it as I ever met with in anybody."

This young friend and disciple, who was made one of the trustees in Locke's will, and who was declared by him to be in the first rank of those he left behind, was Anthony Collins, the son of Henry Collins, a gentleman of fortune. He was born at Heston, near Hounslow, June 21, 1676. He was educated at Eton, and King's College, Cambridge. Upon leaving college, he came to London to study law, but had greater taste for literature and philosophy. He was married in July, 1698, to the daughter of Sir F. Child, Lord Mayor of London, and had two sons and two daughters. Locke evidently regarded him with great affection as the man who would carry on the torch of truth when it had fallen from his own hand.

This Collins endeavored to fulfil, though it has been questioned if the master would have approved of the direction taken by the disciple. Locke, in his *Reasonableness of Christianity*, had raised the great Protestant question, which underlay all subsequent theological controversies, the right of reason to be heard in matters pertaining to religion. It was to this question that Collins directed himself in his first important work published in 1707. It was entitled *An Essay concerning the Use of Reason, in Propositions the Evidence whereof depends upon Human Testimony*. The arguments which Archbishop Tillotson had advanced against the Romanists, that no miracle can prove a doctrine to be divine which is repugnant to our natural ideas, was adroitly turned against the orthodox with the conclusion that as a revelation was not immediate but dependent upon testimony, we were at liberty to reject it if it contradicted our reason. The essay, in fact, contained in germ Hume's famous essay on *Miracles*, and an incidental discussion also introduced the question of liberty and necessity, afterwards dealt with by the sceptical philosopher. This was followed by a controversy with Dr. Samuel Clarke, on the immortality of the soul. That learned but eccentric theologian, Henry Dodwell (the elder), had put forward a treatise, somewhat on the lines of the modern Christadelphians, contending from the Bible and the Fathers of the Church that the soul was naturally mortal, but that it received immortality by virtue of the Holy Spirit received in baptism, and hence that no one since the apostles had power to bestow immortality save the bishops.

At a time when the Nag's Head ordination of Parker and the English bishops was credited, such a treatise was well calculated to please the profane and grieve the godly. Several opponents to Dodwell appeared, foremost among them Clarke, who essayed to demonstrate the natural immortality and immateriality of the soul. This gave occasion to Collins to call attention to the difficulties of the question, and to show how far they were from being cleared up by Clarke's "demonstration." Collins pointed out that Clarke failed to define his terms, and since he allowed that God might bestow the power of thinking upon matter, we could not conclude it was therefore immortal. He hinted moreover that scepticism as to the existence of Deity began when the Boyle lecturers undertook to prove it. Swift, who in the twelfth chapter of the *Memoirs of Martin Scribnerus*, pokes fun at some of Collins's arguments, hits the metaphysicians quite as heavily as he hits Collins, and his illustrations of the meat-roasting quality which inheres in a jack, though neither in the fly, the weight, nor in any particular wheel, and of Sir John Cutler's pair of black worsted stockings "which his maid darned so often with silk that they became at last a pair of silk stockings," tell as strongly against the metaphysical view as against inadequate physical explanations of psychological processes. Huxley, in his article on Bishop Berkeley, in the "Metaphysics of Sensation" in *Critiques and Addresses*, p. 324, says:—

"I do not think anyone can read the letters which passed between Clarke and Collins, without admitting that Collins, who writes with wonderful power and closeness of reasoning, has by far the best of the argument, so far as the possible materiality of the soul goes; and that in this battle the Goliath of Freethinking overcame the champion of what was considered Orthodoxy."

In 1709, Collins published a pamphlet entitled *Priestcraft in Perfection*, in which he gives reasons for believing that the clause "the church hath power to decree rites and ceremonies, and authority in controversies of faith," was fraudulently foisted into the twentieth article of the Church of England, and not contained in the articles as sanctioned by law. This pamphlet was reprinted in 1865, with a preface by the Rev. F. Saunderson, an agitator for the revision of the Prayer-book, but without any indication as to its author. The work, indeed, like all the rest of Collins's productions, was published anonymously. He followed this pamphlet up with another, in which

he endeavors to carry the matter further and show that the consent of law had only been given to those articles which confirmed the confession of the true Christian faith and the Doctrine of the Sacraments. This engendered a smart controversy, in which, happily, no one not a clergyman need concern himself now.

In 1710, appeared *A Vindication of the Divine Attributes*, in answer to Archbishop King, the contention of which was that truth, goodness, and justice in God must be the same as that which we apprehend in ourselves. King, he declared, gave up the question of Manicheism to Bayle.

"Only Mr. Bayle continues to believe God is good and wise against the force of all human reasoning; and his Grace supposes God is neither wise nor good: which two do not much, if at all, differ but in words; for Mr. Bayle's good and wise against evidence and argument is much the same with being neither good nor wise."

In 1711, Collins visited Holland, where he became acquainted with Le Clerc and other learned men, and after his return, two years later, he published *A Discourse on Freethinking*, "occasioned by the growth of a sect called Freethinkers." The very title was a flag presaging battle to theological authority and supernaturalism. It was the manifesto of a new cause, a plea for the right of exercising the Protestant principle of private judgment on the Protestant fetish of revelation. In the controversy that ensued Collins was sadly overmatched. The Church champions attacked him violently. Even "the Socinian bishop," Hoadly, felt it necessary to controvert the Freethinker. Against such as Hoadly, or his own former tutor, Hare, or Whiston, Collins might have held his own, but his anonymous treatise had the singularly infelicitous fortune of drawing out two anonymous adversaries, one a prince of critics, the other the king of satirists. Bully Bentley, in the guise of a Leipsic Freethinker, fiercely attacked the discourse.

In truth, while the arguments of Collins were sound, his illustrations were sometimes faulty. Bentley delighted in exposing the inferior scholarship of his adversary, and made out that his bad Greek was the outcome of a wicked heart. "Inquire closely into their lives and you will find why they declaim against religion." He even hints that the magistrate should take care of Collins "either in a prison or a dark room," and suggests that the Government should "oblige your East India Company to take on board the whole growing sect, and lodge them at Madagascar, among their confessed and claimed kindred (since they make themselves but a higher species of brutes), the monkeys and the drills." This seems like an antagonistic anticipation of Monboddo. Bully Bentley left his work unfinished because the court refused to back him in his demand for certain academical fees, and he consequently discovered that "those whom he wrote for were as bad as those he wrote against." The phrase, says Leslie Stephen, supplies a queer confusion between the interests of the Church of Christ and those of the Court of George I.

Bentley's scholarship and browbeating, however, left the argument untouched. Collins's point as to the difference among divines about their infallible book was not destroyed by the prince of critics calling it "threadbare, obsolete stuff," and although the various readings in the Gospels are not of the importance Collins imagined, they do conclusively negative the theory of verbal inspiration.

The Freethinking bantling was healthy, but its father had dressed it so abominably that it was almost smothered with ridicule. Collins made mistakes in his historical illustrations. Addison had done no better. In his work on the *Evidences of Christianity*, as Macaulay reminds us, Addison "assigns, as grounds for his religious belief, stories as absurd as the Cock Lane ghost, and forgeries as rank as Ireland's Vortigern, puts faith in the lie about the Thundering Legion, is convinced that Tiberius moved the Senate to admit Jesus among the gods, and pronounces the letter of Agbarus, King

of Edessa, to be a record of great authority." Yet Addison was the pride of Oxford and his work in defence of orthodoxy was received with applause while the heresy of Collins was scouted with derision.

Swift, who in his *Tale of a Tub*, had treated the dogmas and disputes of theologians with Rabelaisian laughter, saw in Collins's discourse an opportunity for a slap both at the detested infidels and Whigs, and in the guise of a Whig he published *Mr. Collins Discourse of Freethinking put into plain English by way of Abstract for the Use of the Poor, by a Friend of the Author*. It was a masterly skit. But the irony of facts is more powerful than that of the great Jonathan. The joke now is that so much of Swift's satire can be retorted upon orthodoxy in earnest. Let the following specimen, abstracted from Swift's satire, bear witness:—

"There ought to be no restraint at all on thinking freely upon any proposition, however impious or absurd.If you are apt to be afraid of the devil, think freely of him and you destroy him and his kingdom. Freethinking has done him more mischief than all the clergy in the world ever could do; they believe in the devil, they have an interest in him, and therefore are the great support of his kingdom.....The Bible says the Jews were a nation favored by God, but I, who am a Freethinker, say that cannot be, because the Jews lived in a corner of the earth. The New Testament all along asserts the truth of Christianity, but Freethinking denies it, because Christianity was communicated to but a few, and whatever is communicated to a few cannot be true.The priests dispute every point in the Christian religion as well as almost every text in the Bible, and the force of my argument lies here, that whatever point is disputed by one or two divines, however condemned by the Church, not only that particular point, but the whole article to which it relates, may lawfully be received or rejected by a Freethinker."

Swift's satire evidently proceeded from his belief—let the reader call it misanthropical or simply just, according to his predilection—that "the bulk of mankind is as well qualified for flying as thinking." The admirable Bishop Berkeley attacked him anonymously in *The Guardian* (No. 3). He declared—

"He that should burn a house, and justify the action by asserting he is a free agent, would be more excusable than this author in uttering what he has from the right of a Freethinker.....As for my part I cannot see any possible interpretation to give this work, but a design to subvert and ridicule the authority of Scripture. The peace and the tranquility of the nation, and regards even above these, are so much concerned in this matter that it is difficult to express sufficient sorrow for the offender, or indignation against him. But if ever man deserved to be denied the common benefit of air and water, it is the author of *A Discourse of Freethinking*."—*The Works of George Berkeley*, vol. iii., pp. 144-147; 1871.

Had the articles in the *Guardian* been signed with the names of the contributors, probably the excellent Bishop Berkeley would have been spared the reproach which justly attaches to him for this incitement to persecution.

(To be concluded.)

Correspondence.

THE PALL MALL GAZETTE AND SECULARISM.

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE FREETHINKER."

SIR,—The *Pall Mall Gazette*, commenting on some remarks of Sir James Crichton Browne at the School Hygiene Congress, in which he spoke of the "decaying reverence among school-children," said: "They certainly do seem more wantonly destructive, more self-assertive, and less considerate for the feelings of others than they were fifty years ago." It is significant that in those fifty years the old blending of religion with education has been greatly modified in favor of purely Secular teaching. Yet the cry is for still more Secularism, and it is maintained because Nonconformity cannot curb its jealousy of the Church. Surely that jealousy is a poor excuse for undermining national character." Sir J. C. Browne is a brain specialist.

I wrote a letter to the *Pall Mall Gazette* pointing out that Secularism did not ignore ethics or good breeding, quite the contrary. I said it would be interesting to have the opinions of the medical members of the Congress on the subject, and as to what constituted "fundamental Christianity"—an expression frequently made use of by the *Spectator*. My letter was not inserted.

The manners of school-children are frequently not at all what they ought to be, but it will not improve matters by drugging their intellects with stories which they are bound to subsequently discover are legends. The scientific notes in the *Pall Mall Gazette* are written by Dr. Saleeby. It would be interesting to have his opinion on this subject; he is an evolutionist. It ought to be possible to teach children to be good without deluding them. The *Pall Mall Gazette* has published articles in which it was asserted that the Secular solution was the only logical solution of the religious wrangle. Is it really necessary for Conservative journals to be so inconsistent? The editor of the *Pall Mall Gazette*, Sir Douglas Straight, has been a judge.

J. A. REID.

Sunday in Canada.

TRYING TO DECIDE WHAT THE LORD'S DAY ACT ALLOWS PEOPLE TO DO.

An inexhaustible supply of new mental exercises for Canadian judges has been provided by the "Lord's Day Act," passed by the Dominion Parliament last year. The law was designed to spread the joys of the Ontario Sunday across the Continent. Sir Wilfred Laurier, the French-Canadian Premier, was rather under suspicion among the extreme partisans of that cherished institution, as a resident of a province in which Sunday had been observed with a certain human flexibility, and therefore he was peculiarly susceptible to pressure from the determined propagandists of the Lord's Day Alliance. He readily agreed to give them such a law as they wanted, but, with an eye on public sentiment at home, he put in a little clause allowing any province practically to nullify its restrictions. Quebec took advantage of this permission, but the rest of the provinces took their medicine to the bitter end.

Under this law, Canadians are barred from any Sunday amusements that cost money. No such thing as a Coney Island can be open on the first day of the week in all Canada, outside of Quebec. No Sunday papers can be printed, sold, or even brought into the country. No railroad trains can run, except under the most rigid restrictions. The question now is, what all these various restrictions mean. A barber was shaving a customer when the clock struck twelve on Saturday night. He finished the shave. That was a pretty clear case, and the criminal was fined. At Hamilton, the law met a check. A Greek was accused of selling ice-cream on Sunday evening. By some oversight, the law permits people to eat on Sundays; so the defence was set up that ice-cream was food. The magistrate held that this was true, and the miscreant got off.

At Fort William, the Canadian Pacific Railway and the Empire Elevator Company thought, for some reason, that they could handle wheat on Sunday—perhaps on the ground that wheat, like ice-cream, was food. "They have evidently made up their minds to defy the new act," said the Rev. M. C. Flatt, of the Lord's Day Alliance. The Alliance has taken the matter up, and it is expected that a test case will be made of it. Meanwhile, the Canadian Pacific's yard engines at Fort William keep puffing away seven days in the week, and gangs of men work in the freight sheds, although no attempt has been made as yet to unload vessels.

The Sunday newspaper had never taken root in most parts of Canada as a domestic institution, but the unholy craving for stimulants of that kind had been met by the importation of American papers, which had been a feature of every newspaper in the Dominion. The new law shut down on that. As soon as it went into effect, in March of this year, the stands went out of business on Sundays. Attempts have been made ever since to evade it in one way or another, but always without success. Boys have tried to sell American Sunday papers surreptitiously on trains, but the law has caught them. It has not even waited for the enemy to make its way into the country, but has camped at the frontier and seized bundles of papers that were being sent in for distribution. The question whether a Canadian could lawfully receive the news of the world on Sunday by a private wireless telegraph has not yet been decided; but, aside from that, his only recourse is to read it on Monday morning. Some of the Canadian papers make provision for his convenience in this respect by printing in their Monday issues the despatches that appeared in the American papers on Sunday.—*Collier's Weekly* (New York).

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.

OUTDOOR.

BETHNAL GREEN BRANCH N. S. S.: Victoria Park (near the Fountain), 3.30. A Freethought Demonstration—speakers, Messrs. Cohen, Davies, and Lloyd; 6, C. Cohen.

CAMBERWELL BRANCH N. S. S.: Station-road, 11.30, W. J. Ramsey. Brockwell Park, 3.15 and 6.15, W. J. Ramsey.

KINGSLAND BRANCH N. S. S.: Ridley-road, 11.30, W. J. Marshall, "The Practical Value of Christianity."

NORTH LONDON BRANCH N. S. S.: Parliament Hill, 3.30, Debate—Messrs. A. Allinson and A. E. Cook.

WEST HAM BRANCH N. S. S.: Outside Maryland Point Station (G.E.R.), 7, F. A. Davies, a Lecture.

WEST LONDON BRANCH N. S. S.: Hyde Park (near Marble Arch), 11.30, a Lecture.

WOOLWICH BRANCH N. S. S.: Beresford-square, 11.30, F. A. Davies, a Lecture.

COUNTRY.

OUTDOOR.

BIRMINGHAM BRANCH N. S. S.: Bottom of Key Hill, Hockley, 7, H. Lennard. Wednesday, Aug. 28, at 8.15, in the Bull Ring, H. Lennard.

EDINBURGH BRANCH N. S. S.: The Meadows, 3, meets for Discussion; The Mound, 7, a Lecture.

HUDDESFIELD BRANCH N. S. S.: Roberttown Common, at 3; Cleckhead Market-place, at 7—C. J. Atkinson and G. Whitehead. Market Cross, on Saturday, at 8, George Whitehead.

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