

THE Freethinker

Edited by G. W. FOOTE.

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It is a Preposterous thing, that Men can venture their Souls where they will not venture their Money: For they will take their Religion upon trust, but not trust a SYNOD about the Goodness of Half a Crown.

—WILLIAM PENN.

Comic Opera "Blasphemy."

MOST of my readers will have seen by the newspapers what was the upshot of the Boulter case. But as I was in court all the time I may as well state what really happened.

First of all, with regard to the action of counsel. Mr. Cooper was represented as retiring from the case, but that was not precisely what occurred, and I correct the misstatement in order to remove a false impression. It might be, and doubtless was, imagined that Mr. Cooper threw up his brief in court. But that was not so. I announced last week that "it was arranged that Mr. Frank Sherwell Cooper should represent the defence on points of law, and that the rest should be left to Mr. Boulter himself." "This was done," I added, "at Mr. Boulter's request." Technically, of course, Mr. Cooper had to retire from representing his client; otherwise Mr. Boulter could have said *nothing*,—for a prisoner and his legal representative cannot *both* address the court. The judge was bound to ask the prisoner if he had anything to say why sentence should not be passed upon him, and that was Mr. Boulter's opportunity.

It is not everyone who can speak with perfect self-possession in the prisoner's dock, and Mr. Boulter (whom I had never heard speak) was probably a long way from being in his best form. But he said then, as he might more advantageously have said sixteen months before, that a Freethought speaker could hardly open his mouth without offending a Christian, and that he had as much right to express his opinions as Tariff Reformers and other people had. He said nothing about his having given an engagement, and broken it; and it was this fact that gave the bitterest edge to the judge's censure. He referred to Mr. Boulter as a man who had no respect for his own word, and declined to believe that he represented Freethinkers in general in that respect. I listened with pain to that part of the judge's speech, and I felt how much better it would have been (1) if Mr. Boulter had given no undertaking at all, or (2) if having given it, and made up his mind no longer to respect it, he had sent the authorities notice to that effect. The result might have been the same, but his own position would not have been equivocal.

Mr. Justice Darling did not seem a very ferocious judge. He began speaking softly but severely, and it looked like "six months." As his severity increased, it looked (to me) like twelve months or a trifle. As his severity increased still further, I felt sure the sentence would be microscopic. I saw what his lordship was working up to. He meant to treat the case contemptuously and smother the prisoner with a decision. The sentence was a month's imprisonment. And as all sentences date from the first day of the sessions, and fourteen days had already

expired, this meant a sentence of thirteen days—which scores of "suffragettes" laugh at. As I walked out of court I could not help feeling that Mr. Justice Darling had scored. He had turned it into a comic opera martyrdom. But where was the dignity of the bench? And where was the dignity of English jurisprudence? Mr. Boulter's offence was serious or it was nothing. And if it was *nothing* the Blasphemy Laws ought to have been long ago abolished.

There was one mistake in Mr. Justice Darling's brief speech. He said that the law of England recognised the truth of Christianity. I deny this. I say it is inconsistent with Lord Chief Justice Coleridge's statement of the Common Law of Blasphemy at my own trial in 1883. I say it is inconsistent with Mr. Justice Phillimore's summing-up at Mr. Boulter's trial. A very little reflection shows its absurdity. Jews and Atheists now sit in Parliament to make the laws of this country. I need not mention names—the fact is universally known—and the law has been altered to admit "unbelievers." It is absurd, therefore, to say that the law of England recognises the truth of Christianity *now*. Mr. Justice Darling committed an obvious blunder.

If counsel for the prosecution and the two judges meant what they said, it follows that "blasphemy" can only be committed to-day by shocking religious people's ears at street-corners. In halls, and in journals, Freethinkers may say what they please. But *do* these gentlemen mean what they say; or are they straining the point in order to cover this particular case securely? I advise the Freethought party to keep on its guard. "Blasphemy" is, after all, a matter of interpretation; and we shall never be quite safe until the Blasphemy Laws are positively repealed.

While the Blasphemy Laws exist, my course, at any rate, is perfectly clear. They are directed solely against Freethinkers. Christians can be as vulgar and insolent as they choose with impunity. Christian Evidence lecturers, every Sunday, say the vilest things about Freethought and Freethinkers,—things highly calculated to provoke a breach of the peace,—things quite unprintable in any decent paper,—yet they are never interfered with, and are even countenanced by "respectable" organs of what is facetiously called "public opinion." Such laws, directed against Freethinkers, and operated by Christians, are intolerable. It is folly or cowardice to put up with them a moment longer than is necessary.

Directly after Mr. Boulter's sentence the National Secular Society's cheque for £2 was forwarded to Mrs. Boulter for the ensuing week. A similar cheque covers the rest of the term. Perhaps I may be allowed to put in a human touch here; it was *her* face that excited my sympathy.

My last word, for the present, is this. The Blasphemy Laws have become contemptible. Formerly, the leaders of Freethought were prosecuted; now the attack is against the comparatively weak and friendless. Formerly, sentences were draconic,—three years' imprisonment and heavy fines; now the sentence works out at thirteen days—after a costly Old Bailey trial! To go beyond that the Christians will have to start a public competition with a prize for the best blasphemer.

G. W. FOOTE.

The Myth of a Sixth Sense.

PERHAPS the cheapest, and ultimately the most stupid, reply of the Christian to the Freethinker is that of assuming his opponent's want of belief in religion to be due to lack of development. A is an unbeliever because he lacks a certain quality or faculty that B, a believer, possesses. A represents an organism lower in the scale of development; B is a more fully developed specimen of humanity, and can look down on the non-development of the other with a certain commiseration born of a conscious superiority. The position is so flattering to the egotism of the religious person that there is small wonder it is, under various forms, so popular. Yet it is, as I have said, both cheap and stupid. It is cheap because anyone is able to utilise it; and it is stupid because it never really meets the Freethinker's attack. To say to the Freethinker, who is ready and able to explain the origin and development of religious beliefs, "You do not believe as I do because you are in an undeveloped stage; I have developed a sense which is lacking in you," is often little more than impertinence; it is never in any case worthy of being seriously called an argument.

In the *Christian Commonwealth* for June 9 there is an article by the Rev. K. C. Anderson on "The Sixth Sense of Man," by means of which man knows God; and in the same issue there is the report of a lecture by Mrs. Besant which takes up substantially the same position, although it is expressed in a rather different manner. One of Mrs. Besant's proofs—I will deal with her before coming to Mr. Anderson—is a very good illustration of the way in which the evidence for the development of a sixth sense is built up. She tells us that to-day nervous diseases are on the increase with us; this it seems is due to the rapid development of the nervous system, and that with future generations the nervous system will grow more delicate still. The sense organs will then grow keener and keener until finally new organs altogether will make their appearance. Why an intensification of existing organs must lead to the rise of altogether new organs is a point upon which I am completely in the dark, and so leave that for what it is worth.

But I do question very seriously the grounds of this assumption, namely, that there is any absolute increase in nervous diseases. If I were to ask Mrs. Besant for proof of this increase of nervous diseases she would in all probability refer me to statistics of disease compiled by health authorities and the like. And there is no denying that these do show that a larger number of people suffer from nervous disorders than was formerly the case. But does this prove that people are now more subject to nervous diseases? I do not think it does. To put the matter as briefly as possible; our having a larger number of people amongst us who are afflicted in this particular way may be due to either an absolute increase in the number of persons who are so afflicted, or to the cessation of certain causes that have in earlier years eliminated from our midst a portion of the class susceptible to nervous diseases. Now there exists no evidence that I know of to justify a belief in the first condition. There does, however, exist much evidence to warrant belief in the second. For observe that modern knowledge does nothing, or next to nothing, to check the reproduction and multiplication of the neurotic type. But modern knowledge does a deal to suspend the operation of causes that helped to eliminate the neurotic type from our midst. Our knowledge and sympathy enables us to patch and repair the debilitated organism that in an earlier generation would have ceased to exist. Our medical science, our knowledge of drugs and of the beneficial operation of hygienic agents, all enable us to lower the death rate, not by increasing the actual stock of health in the community, but by keeping alive a number of people who would, formerly, have died at a much younger age than they do now. In this way the larger number of people suffering from

nervous diseases may be—I believe is—due, not to the race becoming more neurotic, but to the suspension of those eliminating causes that have hitherto served to keep the neurotic type within smaller limits. Mrs. Besant's proof for the dawning of a hypothetical sixth sense is built upon a survey of a case that ignores a most important portion of the available data.

Mr. Anderson's argument is of a different nature, but, if possible, less conclusive. His argument is that men—some men; that is, because there are certain favored individuals who are lifted above the common ruck—do not appreciate spiritual things because their spiritual sense is still undeveloped. Man's ability to interpret the universe, he tells us, has been a gradual development. "Primitive man did not see in the universe what we are able to see in it, and that because of the fact that he had not the faculties adequate for the purpose." And then follows a long description—not always accurate—in the manner in which the various senses have gradually developed, followed by the inconsequential conclusion that some men do, and all men one day will, possess a sixth sense, by means of which they will perceive the deeper spiritual things of existence.

On which one's first comment is that between the development, or education, of an existing sense, and the creation of a new one, there is a quite impassable gulf. Develop touch, smell, taste, hearing, or sight to their utmost conceivable capacity, and they still remain touch, smell, taste, hearing, and sight. You cannot get a qualitative difference out of a mere quantitative increase. Mr. Anderson's argument is only another form of the familiar Christian absurdity, that because Jesus was the most perfect man that ever lived, therefore he was not a man at all. And what are the "faculties" that modern man possesses that primitive man did not possess also? I know of none. Mr. Anderson instances the development of a social consciousness. "Never," he says, "was there such a social consciousness as there is to-day.... Personality, we are discovering, is essentially social in its origin and nature, and the power it manifests rises in proportion to the social development of the race to which the individual belongs." But personality is not now, in its essence, more than, or different from, what it always was. Social consciousness is not something that the race acquired at a late stage of its development. A social consciousness has been operative ever since there has existed human beings, and exists also in the sub-human and animal world. All we have here is an expansion of the area covered by the social consciousness, an education of human intelligence and feeling, until it covers all with whom each is brought into contact. But there is no creation of any new sense, such as that for which Mr. Anderson is arguing.

It certainly says something for the gravity of Mr. Anderson that, looking at the people who profess this conviction of a sense of communion with God, and who claim to perceive these "higher, deeper realities," he should seriously argue that they represent a more developed stage of humanity than that expressed by a Shelley, a Darwin, or a Spencer. To take a Methodist local preacher, or any score of our prominent theologians, and present them to the world as specimens of that superior type towards which the race is evolving, is a spectacle that can only be looked at with a straight face for the reason that long usage has divested absurdity of its quality of incongruity when it is associated with religion.

And if I may call Mr. Anderson's attention to anything so commonplace and mundane as facts, I may point out to him that the belief in God and a future life is not something that man develops towards, but something he moves from. The stage of human civilisation in which Mr. Anderson pictures man as without certain "faculties" that he now possesses—a stage in which his reason was certainly not so developed and educated as is the case now—is the stage at which he is most certain concerning the existence of these "higher, deeper realities." To read Mr. Anderson one would imagine that the bulk

of the human race are non-religious, and that a few select individuals only have reached the stage of believing in God and a future life. And one may readily admit that, were this the case, were it true that a perception of these "higher, deeper realities" only commenced with individuals who represented the flowering of the higher civilisations, something might be said for Mr. Anderson's thesis. But this is not the case. It is the higher civilisations that reject these beliefs. It is the lower that originate and cherish them. Those people who, on Mr. Anderson's showing, were undeveloped, mere promises of what man might become, are also those who reach the perception of truths which we are asked to believe it needs a highly developed sixth sense to appreciate!

Mr. Anderson's use of the favorite illustration of color-blindness is quite beside the point. One person may not be able to distinguish certain colors. But normally constructed individuals never find any difficulty in persuading the one who is color-blind that such colors really exist. That he can see at all provides him with enough warranty for believing other people as to the superior range of their vision. And even though he were blind, his other senses will serve equally well the same purpose. Besides, sight can only be understood in one way. But all that can be claimed as due to a religious sense may be shown to be fundamentally a misreading of man's normal capacities. We have no need for the hypothesis of a religious sixth sense, except to provide an excuse for retaining the surviving remnants of early superstition.

Finally, the existence of Freethinkers in our midst quite disproves any such theory as that advocated by Mrs. Besant and Mr. Anderson. It is as true of Freethinkers individually as it is of the race historically, that they are not moving towards religion, but have developed away from it. Their rejection of religion cannot well be due to their not having yet developed to the level of the average religionist, for the reason that most of them have been religionists, but have now seen the error of their ways. And if we are to judge the position from the point of view taken up by Mr. Anderson, it is the Freethinker who represents the more developed organism, while the religious person serves as a living reminder of an earlier stage of mental evolution. Where the religionist is the Freethinker was. He can appreciate the feelings of the believer in relation to religious beliefs, the believer cannot so easily or so well appreciate the feelings of the unbeliever. The Freethinker does not believe in the necessity or the existence of this sixth sense because he knows that this is no more than mere mystical jargon, and mysticism represents the dry rot of religious belief. Mysticism is not the beginning but the end of religion—an indication that reason is expressing its dissatisfaction with current beliefs. Many Freethinkers have gone through all these phases of disintegration. Their hope now is that others will pass through the same stages. But while we recognise that hope springs eternal in the human breast, we also realise that folly is always pressing it hard for premier position.

C. COHEN.

The Consolations of Freethought.

ONE of the most favorite arguments for the truth of the Christian religion is derived from the numerous consolations with which it seeks to cheer up its huge army of distressed professors. It has a perfect genius for issuing big promises with the object of capturing and retaining the simple and unwary. To begin with it assumes the existence of God as maker and ruler of mankind. By whatever method this assumed Deity created, whether by that of sudden catastrophe or that of gradual development, his human workmanship somehow or other turned out a woeful disappointment; but instead of putting the blame on the Creator, Christianity ascribes it entirely to the creation, and represents the worker as being

infinitely angry, not with himself for producing a piece of work that proved imperfect, but with the piece of work for being or becoming less than ideal. Thus was invented the doctrine of sin, apart from which Christianity would have been an impossibility. Christianity assumes that man is a sinner against his Maker, and that the sin is unto death. Then it assumes the Trinity, the second person in which is represented as offering himself a sacrifice to the first, in order to induce him to cancel man's sin and restore him to his favor. The first consolation offered by Christianity, therefore, is Pardon, or the remission of sin. But on analysing this consolation we learn that it is essentially immoral. When a preacher tells a man that he is a lost and ruined sinner, but that if he believes that God the Son made amends on his behalf to God the Father, he will at once be treated as if he had never been a sinner, he is simply charging God with immoral conduct, and fooling the man with a very poor fairy tale.

God the Son having thus mechanically reconciled God the Father to his own imperfect, sinful creature, God the Holy Ghost is said to enter the forgiven sinner's heart to repair the damage wrought by the sin, and this entrance effected by the Holy Ghost is described as eventuating in a life-long residence of purging and sanctifying efficacy. And this cleansing presence of the Holy Ghost is the second consolation which Christianity provides for the saints. Upon careful examination, however, this consolation is seen to be as unreal and mythical as the first. Sin being a pure invention of theology, and the atoning sacrifice of Christ a second invention suggested by the first, it follows that pardon and sanctification are imaginary facts, and cannot be sources of genuine consolation. But it is the third Christian consolation that is the most disastrously spurious. It is fully admitted that the present life is characterised by numerous imperfections, sufferings, sorrows, and evils which the reason cannot harmonise with the belief in an infinitely holy, good, and loving God. That the belief is absolutely true is an assumption that cannot be surrendered, and the apparent contradiction to it involved in the facts is declared to be due to the blindness of the reason in its unregenerate state. At this point faith comes to the rescue with the assurance that all things work together for good to those who love and put their entire trust in God. To them even the very worst evils become positive means of grace. All things are ordained by Eternal Love into the gracious ministry of sanctification. "I am plunging helplessly about in deep and mighty waters of affliction," the believer cries; "and I am afraid every moment of being finally submerged." "True," he is told; "but your Heavenly Father knows all about it, and will never suffer you to sink. Whatever you do, keep on trusting him. He loves you, and his seemingly sinister treatment of you is only his paternal method of washing out the dross from your character. Try to cultivate the beautiful grace of quiet resignation, and you shall soon wear the golden crown of eternal victory upon your brow."

Such are the consolations of Christianity, and merely to describe is to condemn them. The Church's employment of them was for many ages the secret of her prosperity, but it proved the undoing of the world. The doctrine of forgiveness alone has wrought incalculable mischief. People have abased themselves before the Almighty, calling themselves undone sinners, deserving only of endless damnation, and abjectly cried for mercy, when they would have dealt a fellow-man a severe blow in the face had he ventured to refer to a slightest flaw in their character. On their knees they were miserable sinners, craving for pardon, but on their feet superior persons, who lorded it over their brethren. Thus is exposed the essential insincerity of their most sincere confession of sin and appeal for remission, and thus is also made manifest the artificial nature of their belief in God. In the popular religion, the very goodness and love of the Supreme Being are

converted into sentimental but wholly illogical excuses for all the existing evils of the world, and for the moral supineness of Christians. Believers are but the sheep of God wandering in the wilderness of this world, and the present evils but so many dogs employed by the Divine Shepherd to guide the various flocks into the heavenly fold.

Now, to persons trained from infancy in Freethought nothing can be more illogical and ethically injurious than the consolations of the Christian religion. It is utterly incomprehensible to them how people, naturally endowed with reason, can so demean themselves as to believe such rank absurdities. But surely, in place of the false consolations of the Church, Freethought must have real consolations of its own to recommend. Clearly, then, the first consolation afforded by Freethought is the assurance that the Christian God does not exist. To multitudes of distressed minds this assurance brings unspeakable relief. As one highly qualified to speak on the subject well says:—

"I am not surprised that not a few persons wracked with pain, in the quiet of a sick room, perhaps stricken in the prime of life and vigor, should suddenly begin to question and doubt the rationality of adoring a personal Deity as supreme Sovereign Will, however arbitrary and disguised it may be. Once a man has gone so far, and won thereby sufficient courage and moral freedom to go forward, he soon finds that he must honestly deny that the Universe is held at the mercy of a personal decree whose essence is Love, while he knows that this Universe is so full of sorrows and agonies. He must see that such a Being is either capricious, malevolent, or 'the baseless fabric of a vision.'"

That paragraph not only expresses an intellectual conviction, but is a moral summing up of evidence based on an exceptionally remarkable experience. To people who dare to think for themselves, while drinking the bitter "waters of Mara," what a strong consolation it must be to be relieved of the necessity of believing in a God of Love. Here is one who has lain upon a bed of ceaseless bodily torture for the space of twenty years. What unmixed mockery it would be for such an afflicted person to be forever trying to persuade himself that the horrible disease which is cruelly killing him by the inch was sent to him by a loving Heavenly Father for his everlasting good. In such cases Atheism does serve as a most welcome city of refuge. Such sufferers are the victims of natural law, not the playthings of a personal tyrant, masquerading as Eternal Love. The belief that they are in the hands of impersonal and irresponsible Nature is infinitely more tolerable than the forced conviction that they are being painfully fashioned by a Father's hand for eternal life and glory.

Freethought offers a second consolation of still greater practical value. Having driven the Christian Deity out of existence, Freethought becomes scientific and concentrates its attention upon the grand potentialities wrapped up in human intelligence. The motto of faith has always been—Wait. Of deliverance from the manifold evils of life in this world there is no glimmer of hope; but God is good, and will surely make ample compensation to all patient, trusting souls in the world to come. This is the worst species of building castles in the air, for who can tell that the God who made this world ever has made, or ever will make, a better one? We can only judge him in the light of experience. But the motto of Freethought is, Investigate, study existing conditions, and ascertain how they arose, and by what means they can be modified and improved. In science, resignation is the last resort of a fairly baffled intellect, not the prime duty of a quietly accepted slave-existence. As Nietzsche so aptly said, Christianity calls us to a life of mean, submissive slavery. A Christian's first obligation is to suffer with Christ in this world that they may both be glorified together in another. Freethought visits such a cowardly conception of life with well-merited contempt, and brings to our notice a radically different ideal, according to which our first duty is, not to endure in silence, but to fight;

not to be resigned under a crushing load of wrongs and diseases and sufferings and sorrows, but to take up arms and march boldly against all the foes that menace the safety and joyousness of our life. Science confidently informs us that all diseases are curable, all wrongs removable, all reasonable grievances redressable, and all iniquities rectifiable. All that is required to bring about such a happy consummation is sound scientific education in the science of social life, and then intelligent and hearty co-operation in converting the science into a universally practised art. Some religious fanatics aver that Science is already almost at the end of its powers, whereas the truth is, according to all its devotees, that it is only at the commencement of its emancipating, initiating, and directive mission. The science of evolutionary ethics is only in its infancy; but already, in spite of all theological and sectarian opposition, it is working like leaven in our national education and quietly transforming it, and its light is beginning to shine and chase away the darkness of superstition even in the most conservative quarters.

We are sometime told that the world is just now on the crest of a wave that is going to land it in a newer, wider, and more satisfying theology. We cannot believe it for a moment. We prefer to think that we are on the crest of a wave that is going to deliver us from the dominion of all theologies alike, and introduce us to that deeper, saner, wholesomer knowledge of the future in which alone lies our hope of social salvation. This is a consolation born of courage, undaunted and undismayed, a consolation that makes us strong for highest action, and brave to make defeat itself a stepping-stone to victory.

J. T. LLOYD.

"Buchanan's Day."

JUNE 10, 1909.

ON the anniversary of Robert Buchanan's death-day it is the habit of the dead poet's friends and admirers to honor his memory by placing flowers upon his tomb in St. John's Churchyard, Southend. It is a pretty custom, and the arrival of Buchanan's Day reminds us once more of the personality of the poet. Robert Buchanan always bulked largely upon the literary horizon of his own day. He was not only a poet, but an accomplished dramatist, a successful novelist, and a slashing critic. Even during the most strenuous part of his career he never forgot his high aims; he always put good work into what he did. Once, perhaps, in one of his articles he uttered something like a cry of despair. He quoted the line from De Musset, "The dead young poet whom the man survives." This line, pregnant with meaning and sad in the extreme, would apply to so many writers who have started on their careers full of enthusiasm, but who have outlived their early ideals. But Buchanan, notwithstanding his strenuous career, was always full of enthusiasm, and he retained his youthfulness to the last.

In Browning's expressive phrase, Buchanan was "ever a fighter." Cradled in poverty, he fought his way at the pen's point to an enviable position in the world. Much of his tenacity he owed to his father, who was a militant Freethinker in those days when it was dangerous to hold anti-Christian views. In 1859 young Buchanan came to London and commenced that struggle with fortune in which he was ultimately victorious, although his early privations left a deep impress on his sensitive nature.

Like most men of genius, Buchanan had a good conceit of himself. One publisher, it is said, declared of Buchanan at that time, "I can't stand that young fellow. He came into my office, and he talked to me as if he were Almighty God or Lord Byron."

There can be no more honorable epitaph inscribed over the grave of a writer than "No compromise." That was the story of Robert Buchanan. For years

he worked with the scantiest recognition and the smallest reward. For a time he used journalism as a crutch. Even so it was hard to live; but his courage and tenacity prevailed, and he eventually stormed the bastions of success.

He had to fight unaided. He was a literary Ishmael, and every man's hand was against him. This position had at least one advantage. Buchanan kept his sword sharp, and always struck hard. His appearance in the literary arena always meant real fighting. When he attacked Christianity he threw himself against the personality of the Nazarene and penned in *The Wandering Jew* the most tremendous poetical indictment of Christ in English literature. In the dialectical encounter which followed, Buchanan held his own bravely, and his opponents left the arena hurriedly. Always a most sensitive and humane man, his objections to Christianity were as much ethical as intellectual. He often got some very startling effects in his writings by this union of intellect and emotion. Listen to his description of "God in Piccadilly":—

"Poisonous paint on us, under the gas
Smiling like spectres, we gather bereaven,
Leprosy's taint on us, ghost-like we pass,
Watched by the eyes of yon pitiless heaven!
Let the stars stare at us! God, too, may glare at us
Out of the void where He hideth so well—
Sisters of midnight, He damned us in making us,
Crest us like carrion to men, then forsaking us,
Smiles from His throne on these markets of Hell!"

The same idea is elaborated in a sonnet addressed to "Our Father in Heaven":—

"Oh, Thou art pitiless! They call Thee Light,
Law, Justice, Love; but Thou art pitiless.
What thing of earth is precious in Thy sight
But weary waiting on and soul's distress?
When dost Thou come with glorious hands to bless
The good man that dies cold for lack of Thee?
When bringest Thou garlands for our happiness?
Whom dost Thou send but Death to set us free?
Blood runs like wine—foul spirits sit and rule—
The weak are crushed in every street and lane—
He who is generous becomes the fool
Of all the world, and gives his life in vain.
Wert Thou as good as Thou art beautiful
Thou could'st not bear to look upon such pain."

This mocking attitude annoyed the Christians exceedingly. They saw quite clearly that the underlying ethical appeal would be a more dangerous weapon in his hands than any more intellectual test. Here is another sample:—

"Oh, what have sickly children done to share
Thy cup of sorrows? Yet their dull, sad pain
Makes the earth awful; on the tomb's dark stair
Moan idiots, with no glimmer on the brain;
No shrill priest with his hangman's cord can beat
Thy mercy into these—ah nay, ah nay!
The angels Thou hast sent to haunt the street
Are hunger and distortion and decay.
Lord! that mad'st man, and sendest him foes so fleet,
Who shall judge Thee upon Thy judgment day?"

Buchanan always rated his poems more highly than his other work. Certainly his personality came out in his poems more vividly than in his prose. He had a keen sense of the joy of life. His passion for nature, his enjoyment of life, was at the root of his objection to Christianity, and he has voiced his passion and his joy in most melodious language. He was one who loved to roam the world afoot under all skies, to be in the long grass, to wander through the aisles of forests, to feel the sun or rain on his face, and to glow in consciousness with nature.

He was buried in the loveliest month in the year, whilst the fragrance of the June roses was in the air. The lilacs were still lingering and waving their white and purple plumes, the laburnums dropping their golden chains, the may perfuming the ways, and the thrushes singing in the tree-tops.

Robert Buchanan lies there always, within sound of the sea he loved so well. As the queen of months returns, our thoughts go to the grave of one of the most romantic and striking personalities of our time, who, to use the beautiful lines of Shakespeare carved upon his tomb,—

"After life's fitful fever, sleeps well."

VERDANT GREEN.

Free Thoughts.

BY LEMUEL K. WASHBURN.

WHAT we need most is a revival that will kill Christianity and turn men and women from superstition to common sense.

Christians do not lay up their treasures in heaven to-day, but, instead, they put them in a safe deposit vault.

The faith that moves mountains has to have an engineer behind it.

Jesus did not say, Sell what thou hast and buy a Merry Widow hat and come and follow me.

A man can get more information, more entertainment, and more benefit generally out of a good Sunday paper than out of any church on earth.

To condemn a man for having no religion is like condemning him for having no poison in his food or drink.

According to the Christian preacher, a man is saved by his ignorance and lost by his knowledge.

The sea of theology is not the place in which to fish for truth.

A clean heart may please the Lord, but a clean face and clean hands add to the joy of the world.

Man must deliver us from the gods.

The Church is a prison for the mind.

What is wanted now is a new St. Patrick to banish the priests from Ireland.

The man who can perform miracles needs watching.

It is time to stop fighting about God and learn what we are fighting for.

Roman Catholic priests never meddle in politics—where you can see them.

"Our father which art in heaven"! Well! He does not seem to be anywhere else.

Perhaps, if men could see things as they really are, they would worship the sun or the stars as readily as they now worship God.

It does not add glory to a thing to declare it a mystery. Much that is unknown is not worth knowing.

When a thing becomes too sacred to be criticised, it is time to get rid of it.

People who know nothing can believe anything.

Salvation here and take a chance "over there" is preferable to damnation here and take a chance "over there."

When God died on the cross for the redemption of man, was his sacrifice only for the inhabitants of this planet, or was it for other planets? Did God know that the earth was not the only life-bearing planet in the universe? As it has taken more than two thousand years to spread the intelligence of the divine tragedy of the cross over the earth, how long would it take to inform other planets and other suns of this divine act? If any Christian dogma is calculated to make a mule laugh it is this dogma of vicarious atonement.

We need a faith—that will keep men's hands out of our pockets.

More penance ought to be done in the light.

You cannot get knowledge enough out of the Bible to make a bootjack.

Would it not be a good idea to catch God before worshipping him?

It is a pity that God ever said anything. Every time man has attempted to advance, to correct the order of things, he has been confronted by God's word and reminded that it was blasphemy to ignore a divine command. No opinion is so sacred as is the right to change one's opinion. There is no holy word in any language; that is, no utterance from which humanity may not appeal. A divine text has stopped human progress too often. What the soul says to-day must not prevent it from saying something different to-morrow.

—*Truthseeker* (New York).

They who, deluded by no generous error, instigated by no sacred thirst of doubtful knowledge, duped by no illustrious superstition, loving nothing on this earth, and cherishing no hopes beyond, yet keep aloof from sympathies with their kind, neither rejoicing with human joy nor mourning with human grief; these, and such as they, have their appointed curse. They languish, because none feel with them their common nature. They are morally dead. They are neither friends, nor lovers, nor fathers, nor citizens of the world, nor benefactors of their country. Among those who attempt to exist without human sympathy, the pure and tender-hearted perish through the intensity and passion of their search after its communities, when the vacancy of their spirit suddenly makes itself felt. All else, selfish, blind, and torpid, are those unforeseeing multitudes who constitute, together with their own, the lasting misery and loneliness of the world. Those who love not their fellow-beings, live unfruitful lives, and prepare for their old age a miserable grave.—*Shelley*.

Acid Drops.

The Philistines are on thee, Thomas Paine! There was an article on Paine in last week's *Reynolds'* "by a member of *Reynolds'* staff," in which it is said that "Paine was no Anarchist, and he certainly was no Infidel." But he *was* an infidel, in the Christian meaning of the word. He challenged, attacked, and ridiculed Christianity—precisely as we do in the *Freethinker*. There is evidently a desire to tone Thomas Paine down for a large half-baked public who are neither orthodox nor heterodox. Paine was not an Atheist. He went far enough a hundred years ago—too far for his comfort and reputation. He would go farther if he were living to-day. And, after all, the remarkable thing is not the quantity of religion he retained, but the quantity of religion he discarded. He did not empty the ship, but he threw most of the cargo overboard.

The *Reynolds'* writer thinks, or affects to think, that Paine has only just been vindicated. "Thanks," he says, "to two courageous reformers—Mr. Moncure D. Conway and Mr. John M. Robertson, M.P.—the world is now in possession of a true, life-like portrait of Thomas Paine, who, one hundred years after his death, now takes rank as one of the most remarkable men of the eighteenth century." We are grateful for Mr. Conway's monumental biography of Paine, though we are not aware of any special service rendered by Mr. Robertson to Paine's memory. But we protest against the implied idea that nothing was done before Mr. Conway. Paine's greatness had been maintained by many biographers from Rickman to Linton, and by articles in every Freethought paper that ever existed in England. It was also maintained, in the most effective way, by keeping his *Rights of Man* and *Age of Reason* always before the public. For doing this scores of undoubtedly "courageous" men and women rotted in English (and Scotch) prisons. The bulk of Richard Carlile's nine years and seven months' imprisonment was on account of publishing the *Age of Reason*. No courage is needed to publish it now.

Two bits of news on the same page of a London morning paper on Monday were disquieting. Protestant speakers were arrested at Motherwell, in Lanarkshire, on Sunday evening for attempting to address "a sectarian gathering in the park"—that is, for attempting to express (to people who wanted to hear it) their candid opinion of Roman Catholicism. The authorities had issued a muzzling proclamation against these orators; and this proclamation, of course, is based upon the theory that Roman Catholics must not be annoyed even by speeches at Protestant meetings. That was the first bit of news. And now for the second. At Walworth, London, on Sunday afternoon the Rev. Father Lutz, of Rodney-road Church, carried the Host in procession through the streets. Crowds of people watched it—probably as a performance, and a large number of policemen (with League of the Cross Guards) kept the line of route. The carrying of the Host through the streets is illegal in England, yet the London police connive at it, while Protestant speakers are arrested elsewhere. There seems to be a growing disposition on the part of the authorities to countenance Roman Catholic insolence, and snub Protestant opposition. For our part, we do not love either side; but we love fair-play, and we detest the idea of giving special advantage to the Great Lying Church.

"Blessed are ye that hunger," said Jesus Christ. That was nearly nineteen hundred years ago. It is different now. Some "Hunger Marchers" wanted to get into the Mission Service held in Fulham Palace grounds on Sunday afternoon, but the police kept them out, and earned the thanks of the Bishop of London and the 15,000 "respectable" Christians inside.

"Providence" has been giving France a turn. The earthquake has caused much destruction and loss of life. It is not so good as the Messina performance, but it keeps "Providence" in practice for a more favorable occasion.

After the speeches of Lord Rosebery, Sir Edward Grey, Mr. McKenna, and Mr. Balfour, we suppose it must be assumed that for some years this country is in for a career of lavish expenditure on naval and military armaments. The policy of this journal precludes comments upon certain aspects of the question, but there is one that is not likely to receive much notice elsewhere. Every one of the countries that are engaged in this senseless competition of armaments is a Christian country. And the two that are most prominent in the race, Great Britain and Germany,

are the two that are most ostentatious in their display of Christianity. Turkey, Japan, and China are the only non-Christian Powers that by the wildest stretch of imagination could be regarded as enemies to the peace of Europe. But as a matter of fact not one of them figures in that capacity. Turkey has only recently shown Europe its power to engineer a revolution in a practically peaceful manner. Japan was forced by Christian aggression and cupidity into entering the arena of international militarism, and since it has beaten back the forces of Holy Russia has turned its attention to its own domestic concerns. China has never been a military nation, and if ever it becomes such it will be because the aggressive action of Christian countries compels it to repel force by force. It is the Christian countries of the world that furnish proof upon proof, if any be needed, of their inability to trust to the honor or humanity of each other. It is the foremost Christian countries of the world that are spending more year by year upon naval and military forces, and it is from the same countries that there comes the impudent assurance that Christianity stands for peace, brotherhood, and justice.

Lord Rosebery trusted that one day the workmen of the European countries would rise and effectually protest against this growing burden of armaments. We observe he did not appeal to the European clergy. Yet if the clergy of Great Britain and Germany really meant business, and devoted their energies to the subject for only three months, public opinion might be given a healthy stimulus that would not easily be overcome.

A number of the evangelical papers are crying out for a similar "outpouring of the spirit" to that vouchsafed to the Church in 1859. We haven't the ghost of an objection. Apart from the tremendous growth of Freethought during the past fifty years, 1859 was the year of the publication of the *Origin of Species*. Another blow like that dealt by Darwin's work would about wind up the ghost business in Great Britain.

"Sunday stands for freedom, for home, for God, and for the people," says Canon Bickesteth Ottloy, and he adds: "In the observance of the Sabbath we have the bulwark of the people's liberties and the breakwater against sin." Accuracy is never a characteristic of the clergy, but in this instance the Canon has surpassed himself. Putting aside the fact that freedom and liberty were most sharply curtailed under the older Sabbatarian *regimé*, it is surely a queer illustration of freedom to shut people out of their own institutions and place all sorts of vexatious restrictions on their day of rest. Considering, too, the laments over the decadence of home-life, the remark about the Sabbath preserving it sounds peculiar. In non-Sabbatarian France the Canon might see a much larger number of the French working-men, with their wives and children, enjoying themselves on Sunday, than he would have the good fortune to observe in pious England. Sunday in England may stand for God, but that is a point on which we are not seriously interested. All we do know is, that it is precisely the security of the English Sunday that has been largely responsible for the "sin," the drunkenness, and boozing of a section of the English population. And the talk about more labor is either "bluff" or ignorance. Continental workmen are more than ever resolved to have their day of rest, but they are not at all inclined to curtail the opportunities for rational enjoyment, and thus render nugatory the benefits derived from a cessation of labor.

A large number of conversions are reported from Orissa, India. "A deep impression" was made upon them by exhibiting a picture of the resurrection. After seeing the picture there was no longer, we presume, room for doubt upon the subject. We suggest that a bottle of the darkness that overspread the earth at the time of the crucifixion would still further strengthen the belief of these converts.

An agent of the London Missionary Society admitted the other day to an interviewer that the inhabitants of Madagascar "are indebted to France for many things. Since their occupation of the island the French have made roads across it in every direction. They have spanned the rivers with many handsome bridges. They have opened up telegraphic communications between most of the towns. They have constructed railways, and have established motor-car services between the capital and the coast, and in many other ways they have improved the conditions of life on the island. As regards the administration of justice, too, the Malagasy people are much better off than they were under the old *regimé*. In those days justice was unknown, and bribery was rampant. All legal questions were invariably

decided by the longest purse. But all this corruption has now been abolished." Nevertheless, the missionaries are very bitter against the French, and, so far as one can get at the truth, it seems to be due to the fact that the French are not encouraging missionary work. At least, that is how we read the complaint that there is manifested "an indifference towards Christianity," and the statement that it is said openly "that Paganism is equally as good, and has done as much good, as Christianity." And, of course, the missionaries cannot overlook this.

The *Weekly Oregonian*, published at Portland, Oregon, U.S.A., seems to be a very free-spoken journal, not even mincing its words in relation to the men of God, who appear to be even a worse lot in America than they are over here. The following cutting from our Oregon contemporary will explain what we mean:—

"That scallawag preacher known as Rev. G. S. Summers, who was arrested in Douglas County while in charge of a Methodist church last summer, and taken back to Texas for trial on the charge of obtaining money under false pretences, has been acquitted of that offence, but deserves punishment for a greater. He deserted a wife and three children down there and came north with his pretty organist. Now the young woman and her child are being cared for by her parents, and Summers has the insufferable gall to write to deluded friends a whining letter telling how much he loves his victim. He uses all the cant usually employed by an unwhipped whelp that serves the devil in the Lord's livery, promising to marry her as soon as he secures a divorce and perhaps return to Oregon. Oregon has no room for such pups."

It is about time that what rank sentimentalists call "love" were hissed off the earth. And religious sentimentalists are the worst dogs in the whole pack.

A speaker at a recent meeting of the Bible Society declared that far from Jesus being under any intellectual limitations, he was "the only one of his time who knew that the earth was round and went round the sun." We are not in a position to say what Jesus did not know, but if he possessed this knowledge he certainly managed to disguise his information in the most successful manner. And one wonders how on earth the reverend gentleman secured his information on the subject.

In point of honesty and ability the above is matched by the editor of one of the Sunday papers with which the Amalgamated Press play on a credulous public. He informs a correspondent that the reason why we have none of the original manuscripts of the New Testament writings is that if Providence had preserved them, people would be inclined to make fetishes of them. For sheer impudence this is hard to beat. We can only assume that the editor accurately gauges the mental calibre of such as write to him for information.

"We doubt," Dr. Robertson Nicoll says, "whether the Churches in England were ever in possession of the working-classes." But why "doubt"? The truth of the matter is clear enough.

An example of the power of prayer comes from Russia. A Baptist minister, Pastor Fetler, finding that the members of his sect were not treated as he thought they should be treated, offered a prayer that "the Lord will give understanding to the Prefect of this City and touch his heart, so that he may liberate the innocent persons who are now in prison." As a result of this prayer, over two hundred Baptists were arrested and imprisoned. The incident furnishes a shocking example of the state of things in Russia; but then Russia is one of the most Christian countries in Europe, and the great blessing of Christianity cannot be enjoyed without certain trifling inconveniences. Still, it is a clear example of an answer to prayer. Had Pastor Fetler not prayed the Baptists would not have been imprisoned. It is one more example by means of which the sceptic may be confounded.

This incident reminds one of a story concerning a North country butcher. Business had been steadily declining, owing chiefly to a rival having set up on the opposite side of the street. At length the man who was experiencing the ill results of competition confided to his minister that he saw nothing left but to close his shop and leave the town. The man of God inquired if he had made any serious effort to retain the trade. The butcher replied that he had done all he knew, without success. "But," said the minister, "have you tried prayer?" No, the butcher had not tried prayer, and after a further talk he promised to give this a trial before putting up his shutters. A week elapsed, and then the minister called on the butcher to find him radiant with delight. "Well," he asked, "did you try the power of

prayer?" "Oh, yes," replied the butcher, "and I wish I had tried it before. I prayed the night you left me, and on the following morning the beggar over the road broke his neck."

A man of God exclaimed, the other day: "Our misfortune in this age is that we have lost the Holy Ghost. That loss accounts for all our failures. But, my friends, the Holy Ghost will return if we earnestly entreat him; and, once he reappears, we shall carry all before us. Oh, my friends, believe in the Holy Ghost, pray to the Holy Ghost, lean on the Holy Ghost. Yes, my friends, *lean on the Holy Ghost*, and all shall be well with you." A ghost is a fine, substantial thing to lean upon. It is no wonder the Church has lost him—and itself.

The Rev. Dr. D. M. Ross, of Glasgow, opposes "the proposal to increase the Sunday train service from Glasgow to Gourock, and to initiate a Sunday steamboat service from Gourock to various coast towns," because it is the first instalment of encroachment on their Sabbath quietude. Dr. Ross is a philosopher, and his philosophy is true. The said proposal is but an instalment, and the instalments, now a commencement is made, will follow in quick succession, until the Sabbath has been completely secularised. Dr. Ross has cause to feel uneasy, for the tyranny of the pulpit is surely coming to an end; a sad event for its occupants, but one of humanity's happiest riddances.

"God is not dead yet," cried a zealous preacher. "No," answered an irreverent listener, "but he is suffering from an incurable disease, and all the doctors are agreed that the end cannot be far off." We should like the said preacher to answer this question: "How do you know that God ever lived?"

The minister is the most dishonest beggar in the world. Instead of frankly saying, "It is your duty to support me, you must really make up the arrears of my stipend," he whines in some such pietistic fashion as the following: "You should show a readiness to contribute, and that in a regular, ordinary way, the way in which a man pays taxes to his country or rates to his municipality; exactly as regularly, though, of course, more voluntarily; you ought all to pay a fixed proportion of your income to the service of Christ and his Church." These are the terms in which the Bishop of Birmingham does the begging on behalf of a well-known Clergy Fund. This is an attempt to empty people's pockets by guile, or to get money by false pretences.

The Revs. Campbell Morgan and Silvester Horne are about to give Jesus Christ a chance in Central London, or, rather, they are going to deprive him of his chance, by holding a "Great Mission" there. Perhaps Jesus Christ will have his chance, after all, as this special mission does not come off till November. If Jesus Christ does his own alleged work in the meantime, the appointed missionaries will have nothing to do.

"The most devout Christian," says the *Methodist Times*, "must acknowledge that there are great numbers of men around him to-day who are neither lacking in intelligence nor slaves of immorality, to whom the possibility of continued immaterial existence seems quite incredible." We suppose the writer of that would regard it as an indication of Christian generosity. To us, it is merely an illustration of Christian insolence. Of course, the man who admits that an unbeliever may be a decent individual, is better than the one who makes unbelief and immorality synonymous terms. But that they should ever have been regarded as synonymous is an illustration of the essentially poor type of mind and character that Christianity breeds. For what connection is there between immortality and morality? The belief in immortality may be valid or invalid, but it has no more necessary connection with morality than has the belief in a fourth dimension of space. Christian malignity and stupidity have established a connection between a lax morality and unbelief, and those who have at least the wit to perceive how false to fact this is, imagine they correct it by patronisingly admitting that unbelievers may be decent people. Whereas, it is only too often an aggravation of the initial impertinence.

The Rev. J. E. Rattenbury has found some practical use for the doctrine of the Trinity. He says its practical value is enormous, because "it is a belief in a society of Persons in one God." We are not dealing with a "lonely Being," or with an abstract first cause; "we are dealing with a social Deity." Mr. Rattenbury appears to have an impression that this conception of the Trinity will help us considerably in dealing with social questions. The connection is not, how-

ever, clear. No doubt many who believe in God might feel comforted on learning that God is not a "lonely Being"—a wifeless father with a son as old as himself—but is living in a small and select society of three. To that extent heaven bears a more sociable aspect. But what on earth does it matter to man whether God is living alone or in company? The main question is, it seems to us, what does God, sociable or solitary, do for man? Mr. Rattenbury also adds the information that this Trinity of Gods are not "differing in opinion and sometimes positively hostile to each other," but are in perfect harmony, inasmuch as the three are one. All we regret to note is that although the sex of two of the three social deities is indicated, no mention is made of that of the third. We trust the third belongs to the female sex, for a society without ladies leaves much to be desired.

Renegade Sims still airs his shallow wit and deep ignorance in the *Referee*. Last week he had some foolish remarks on Bacon and Shakespeare. One of them was a very old wheeze. Bacon, in his *Advancement of Learning*, represents Aristotle as saying that "young men are not fit auditors of moral philosophy." Shakespeare, in *Troilus and Cressida*, represents Aristotle as thinking "young men unfit to hear moral philosophy." Now the word *moral* in both cases (we are told) should be *political*, and the double misquotation of Aristotle proves that Bacon wrote Shakespeare's plays. Well, it proves nothing of the kind. Sims's remarks prove, instead, that "a little learning is a dangerous thing." Mr. Sidney Lee deals with this parallelism in the second Appendix to his *Life of William Shakespeare*. By political philosophy, he points out, Aristotle in this instance meant "as the context amply shows" no more than "the ethics of civil society, which are hardly distinguishable from what is commonly called 'morals.'" A summary translation of Aristotle into English in 1547 gives the general drift of the passage referred to as "a warning that moral philosophy is not a fit subject for study by youths who are naturally passionate and headstrong." Bacon and Shakespeare may both have read this book. In any case, its "interpretation of Aristotle's language is common among the sixteenth and seventeenth century writers." Even if this were not so, it is quite possible that Shakespeare read the *Advancement of Learning* before writing *Troilus and Cressida*. We should say it was probable. Shakespeare, as Emerson says, must have been a great reader; he doubtless knew of Bacon, very likely had seen him, and would have curiosity enough to turn to a production that was a good deal talked of. Bacon's greatest English work was published in 1605. This particular play of Shakespeare's was registered in 1609, and was probably written in the previous year. Here, then, is a natural explanation—if, indeed, one is requisite—without resorting to the miraculous Baconian theory.

Lord Morley was one of those who assisted at the monstrous farce of burying George Meredith (or his ashes) at Dorking as if he were a Christian. "Honest John" is still progressing. It would be amusing, if it were not worse, to see him upholding an Ordinance in India, under which a native may be arrested and deported or imprisoned for life without any form of trial. "Honest John" is quite astonished at anybody objecting to this sort of thing. The Viceroy of India and two or three members of his Executive Council superintend the operation of this Ordinance, and that is enough for "Honest John." "Were they to believe for a moment," he asked a partisan meeting the other day, "that men like those were going to act without sufficient evidence?" All he has to do now is to declare that Indians deported or imprisoned for life at the will of those officials ought to feel profoundly thankful and highly honored. No wonder "Honest John" has nothing to say against the Blasphemy Laws.

Lieutenant Shackleton is a fine fellow, but men of action are not always thinkers. He has been telling a Reuter representative how, on a very critical occasion, he and his party received divine assistance. "Providence came to our rescue," he says, "and strong southerly blizzards helped us along. Over and over again there were times when no mortal leadership could have availed us." But is a change of wind a proof of supernatural leadership? And if Providence looked after Lieutenant Shackleton, why didn't he, she, or it take him to the South Pole?

A New Theology advocate, the Rev. Eric Davies, has been preaching at Abercromby under the auspices of the Progressive League of Theology. He strongly denounced "the practical Atheism" of false and greedy Christians, and the sentiment itself does him honor; but why drag in Atheism? Is it fair to make Atheism an unsolicited and unwelcome present of the vast crowd of Christians who are not as good

as they ought to be? These people are not Atheists—practical or otherwise. "Not one man in ten thousand," said Coleridge, "has strength of mind or goodness of heart enough to be an Atheist." The Rev. Eric Davies might ponder this saying. In the meanwhile, we wish him to recollect that Atheism does not display a notice, "Rubbish shot here!" Christianity must keep its own refuse.

"They met at a Bible class." This was stated of Samuel Woolhouse, plaintiff, and Charles Wragg, co-respondent, in a recent divorce case. There is no moral. They were not Freethinkers.

Alexander Edmonstone, sentenced to death at Perth for the particularly brutal murder, with robbery, of a boy clerk at East Wemyss, wrote letters home to his parents after the crime, "apparently inspired by deep religious convictions." What a curious thing religion is, to be sure!

The Brixton *Free Press* seems to be edited by a Roman Catholic, for it innocently calls the Rev. A. J. Waldron "his reverence," which, we believe, is a description never applied to Protestant parsons. We note, also, that the *Free Press* doesn't believe in giving "blasphemers" the opportunity of posing as "martyrs," but, at the same time, it invites the authorities to give them "more attention." Just as if the Christians could have it both ways! You can't prosecute a man without advertising him. Even the Brixton *Free Press* ought to be able to remember that.

"Atheism Rampant" is the heading of an article in the Wigan and District *Catholic Magazine*. The writer calls upon the local authorities to "put a stop to the blasphemous utterances of that foul-mouthed bigot, Percy Ward," who appears to have been lecturing in Wigan lately. "Sorely," the writer adds, "it is a disgrace that such things as he dares to say should be tolerated in a Christian country." The gentleman—probably a reverend gentleman—has our sympathy. He is suffering from a bad attack of intolerance, but we hope he will recover. In any case, we venture to suggest that a Christian champion might try to answer a Freethought lecturer instead of calling for the constable. Locking a speaker up is a remarkably crude way of replying to him. It may be Catholic, but it is not civilised.

Liverpool bigots are still protesting against the Picton Hall being let, at the usual rate, to the Secularists for the large and orderly meeting they held on Whit-Sunday evening. But why don't these people attend to what should concern them more nearly? Liverpool is disgraced and cursed by Christian faction fights. The stipendiary magistrate recently sent two Protestant rowdies to prison for seven days each on account of their riotous behavior while taking part in one of the foolish Mr. Wise's anti-Catholic processions. "I always like to see," the magistrate remarked, "how savages on both sides put themselves under the name of Christianity." There were no savages in Picton Hall. Secularism affords them no opportunity.

Mr. Viner Hall has been holding forth at Lichfield on "The End of the World," and the local *Mercury* gravely reports his solemn nonsense. The lecturer wound up by stating—no doubt from information received—that the Lord Jesus Christ was coming again soon. We wish it could be authoritatively added "to fetch Mr. Viner Hall." And it would be no loss to the world if old Prophet Baxter were included in the job lot.

The *Dundas Courier* of June 8 had a special article on "Tom Paine." It is largely laudatory, but Paine the politician is one person and Paine the religious reformer another person. The *Age of Reason* is referred to as a book whose "results for evil may have been enormous." In other words, it led people away from Christianity, which was precisely its merit. "Years afterwards," we are told, "Paine himself realised its utter vanity, and with the generosity of an expansive nature exclaimed: 'I would give worlds, had I them at my command, if it had never been published.'" Such is the Christian method of writing history! We are sorry to see this absurd and contemptible legend still doing duty in respectable newspapers.

Rev. T. Raymond James, rector of Luckington, near Chippenham, was found dead in a friend's house at Bristol, where he was staying. He had shot himself with a revolver. There is no moral. The moral would have been obvious if he had been a Freethought lecturer.

Mr. Foote's Engagements

(Lecturing suspended during the Summer.)

To Correspondents.

THE PRESIDENT'S HONORARIUM FUND: Annual Subscriptions.—Previously acknowledged, £211 12s. Received since.—T. Raff (Australia), £2; T. C. Kiglin, 3s. 6d.; Libertas (Sydney), 10s.; H. E. Voigt, 10s.

S. F. PATE.—Pleased to have your letter from far Japan. Thanks for the cutting, and your hope that we shall get "a hundred or two advertisements before long"—though they don't come along rapidly "up to yet," as the comic song says. Paper shall be sent as requested.

J. L. WILLIAMS.—You refer to correspondence in the *Leader* on our Aboard lectures. We have not seen it. If you forwarded papers, did you mark what you wished us to see? Thanks for cutting.

R. Y. B.—Thanks for cuttings, etc.

W. HÖFER.—We cannot insert now a report of a Darwin meeting at Prague on March 19. We aim at being rather more up-to-date.

P. S. S.—The writer stated that the Byron poems, from which he quoted in our issue of August 16, 1908, were in his own possession. We know the writer, and his word can be relied upon; but we do not possess copies of the poems, and, as they are not published, we cannot tell you where you can obtain them.

J. W. EVANS.—See paragraph. Thanks.

BRIXTON.—We have dealt with it.

W. P. BALL.—Many thanks for cuttings.

J. JOHNSON.—See paragraph. Thanks.

J. H. RATCLIFFE.—We wish the Nelson Branch success, but your lecture notices must be sent in on separate paper, on the model of what we print in that column. We cannot extricate lecture notices from correspondents' letters.

W. A. YATES.—Thanks for cuttings and good wishes.

W. ALLAN.—Sorry your query was overlooked. The wonder is we overlook so little. Dr. Willis's *Calvin and Servetus* ought to be obtainable in your local Free Library.

J. A. B. MITCHELL.—Kindly send future orders direct to the Pioneer Press (Manager) and not to Mr. Foote, who appreciates your good wishes all the same.

S. COHEN.—We ceased issuing a weekly contents-sheet, as so few copies ever got displayed, but we will forward one of our permanent placards. Pleased to know you derive "inexpressible pleasure and moral guidance" from our "deeds, words, and writings." To help one man to be happier and better is not to fail in life.

JOSEPH AYRES.—The N. S. S. secretary will write to you on the matter. You do not waste our time by writing to us.

B. B.—The articles you refer to are almost stupid. Darwin never pretended to "solve the problem" the Catholic writer talks about. He was a scientist, not a theologian, and dealt with facts, not fancies.

A. D. HOWELL SMITH, Upton House, Prince of Wales-road, Batterssea, S.W., wishes to hear from local Freethinkers willing to join him and some friends in forming an N. S. S. Branch; a fighting Branch, to assist in checking the reactionaries' campaign.

J. ANGE (Leicester).—Next week.

H. W. WALLACE.—We cannot answer such letters by post. Read Haackel's *Riddle of the Universe* and write us again.

A. F. BULLOCK.—Next week.

H. E. VOIGT.—We wish the Iconoclasts' Cricket Club success this season.

A. J. R.—Your letter has given us pleasure. We value nothing more highly than the appreciation of thoughtful good women. For the other matter, next week. We are considering what may be necessary.

JOHN SUMNER.—Received, but stands over till next week.

J. PARTRIDGE (Birmingham).—Glad to hear Mr. Ward had good audiences at Birmingham, but why did you tax him with three lectures in one day? We thought we killed that old practice seven years ago. The other matter is held over.

E. GURNEY.—Such a clause in a will would not hold good in the present state of the law.

FREETHINKER (Deri).—What do you mean by "the characteristics of Christianity"? We cannot answer your vague query.

G. ROLEFFS.—Thanks for cuttings. The "Indignant Ratepayer" is a liar and a coward to the last.

WE repeat that we do not reply to anonymous letters.

W. GREGORY.—Pleased to hear that Miss Kough was so successful, both as to her lecture and her audience, at Kingsland. Other London Branches, as you say, should take a taste of her platform quality. Glad, too, that you are "all proud of the President" in relation to the Boulter case as in other matters.

H. SMALLWOOD.—We have no trace of it.

F. W. W.—The matter is still in our mind, and your request is being attended to.

J. R. LICKFOLD.—Thanks. But he might plead necessity on that occasion.

LIBERTAS (Sydney).—The packet has just arrived safely. Glad to hear your "interest in the *Freethinker* increases with every number," and that "its weekly arrival is looked forward to with constant pleasure."

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.

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Sugar Plums.

The Paine Centenary Celebration was a glorious success. The beautiful new St. James's Hall was crowded on Tuesday evening, June 8—the hundredth anniversary of the death of Thomas Paine. It had been intended that, as the Celebration had been organised by the National Secular Society, the President should take the chair, but he himself preferred to pass the honor on to Mr. Herbert Burrows; and the two first speeches, after the chairman's, were allotted to non-N. S. S. representatives, Mrs. Bradlaugh-Bonner and Mr. Harry Snell. The N. S. S. speakers followed, and the President came last of all.

The *Star* admitted that the meeting was very enthusiastic from beginning to end. It was often red-hot and sometimes at white heat. Mr. Herbert Burrows made an ideal chairman, in spite of his not being too well. His introductory speech was just of the right length, and thoroughly to the point in every sentence, and of course it was warmly applauded. Mrs. Bradlaugh-Bonner, as Charles Bradlaugh's daughter, had the reception that might have been expected. Her speech was highly appreciated, and loudly cheered when she resumed her seat. Mr. Harry Snell's speech palpitated with passion and stirred the meeting up bravely. Mr. A. B. Moss's speech bristled with dramatic points which were much applauded. (At this point the collection was taken up, and it was a good one.) Mr. F. A. Davies won quick warm cheers by reminding the audience of the way in which Paine's character had been defended against the Rev. Dr. Torrey's libels a few years ago. Mr. C. Cohen came at a difficult stage in a meeting that had already lasted so long, and whose nerves must have been getting somewhat wearied; but his well-known platform ability carried him through the ordeal triumphantly, and, to tell the truth, the President had kept him back for that purpose. Mr. Foote, who had a great reception, wound up the evening's oratory amidst a scene of intense enthusiasm. The chairman, in apologising for the absence of Mr. George Greenwood, M.P., who was unable to attend, remarked that in the whole course of his experience he had never listened to speeches that afforded him such an intellectual treat, or taken part in a meeting that gave him greater pleasure.

We have made no attempt at a summary of any of the Paine speeches, and indeed it would hardly be fair, for it would do the speeches a sad injustice by depriving them of life and color. But this fact should be noted. After more than two hours' talking about Paine, by various speakers from various points of view, the meeting's interest in Paine was still fresh and inexhaustible. What a tribute to his greatness and fascination—a hundred years after his death!

Mr. J. T. Lloyd, who has been enjoying a week's holiday at Tonyrefail, South Wales, was induced, at the last moment, to deliver a lecture on Freethought. The notice was short, the bills being out only for one day, but on Sunday evening, June 13, the Instituto Hall was crowded with over four hundred people, among whom there was a considerable sprinkling of ladies. The number of avowed Freethinkers in the village

is under twenty, and this was the first Freethought lecture ever given there; yet the large audience followed the speaker with closest attention for upwards of an hour. A few questions were asked and answered, but there was no discussion. Mr. Thomas Williams, of Porth, occupied the chair.

The Iconoclasts' Sunday Cricket and Tennis Club.—Cricket and tennis are played every Sunday on the Club's ground at Hanwell. Ladies or gentlemen wishing to join are requested to apply to Mr. E. H. Newson, hon. sec., 22 Margravine-gardens, Baron's Court, W. Donations towards the Club's heavy expenses are welcome.

Mr. Foote has an article in this week's *John Bull* on Mark Twain's new book, *Is Shakespeare Dead?* Mr. Foote's article is headed—"Is Mark Twain Dead?" It deals with Mark Twain's support of the theory that Bacon wrote Shakespeare—which ought to be counterbalanced by the theory that Shakespeare wrote Bacon.

The *Times* of June 8 had a remarkable article on Thomas Paine under the heading of "The Greatest of Pamphleteers." It was very ably written, but the writer kept praising and blaming Paine in alternate passages. One passage is worthy of special notice:—

"If greatness is to be measured by direct, immediate effect, Paine was the greatest of pamphleteers; more potent in influence on affairs than Swift, Beaumarchais, or Courier, more varied in his activity than any of these; his words influencing the actors in two of the chief political revolutions of the world and prime movers in a religious revolution scarcely less important. With little learning or culture, and in youth no contact with political life, he had the gift of divining the needful or longed-for word and laying his finger upon the central difficulty."

Well, that is genius.

Early Christianity.

A LITTLE shilling book, published by Messrs. Constable, on *Early Christianity*, by Mr. S. B. Black appeared a few months ago, and, notwithstanding its very limited size—not a hundred pages—it is so compact and useful that I venture especially to recommend it. To describe it as popular would be hardly correct. References to learned Germans and to critical literature are frequent, and require a little previous knowledge of Biblical and mythological scholarship if one is to follow intelligently. But with that proviso I have no hesitation in saying Mr. Black's manual deserves ample circulation. His pages are peculiarly fertile. At every step he drops facts and hints that provoke to reflection and open up new avenues. For instance, even in the brief preface, he throws a casual light upon burial customs as indicating an old dread of returning ghosts. Why do some folk wear white, or black, or rub themselves with yellow ochre after a death has occurred in the house? In order that the ghost of the departed may not recognise them and inflict an injury. In some savage tribes men disguise themselves as women; or the people take refuge in a subterranean cave. Or later on windows were barred, and doors bolted. "In modern times," says Mr. Black, with the suspicion of a smile, "it is thought sufficient to draw the blinds." We are thus prepared at the outset for very interesting interpretations of New Testament beliefs and phraseology by means of the magic-lore of the early Christians. To-day we are so used to speaking of "spirit" in a figurative manner that we are apt to take the term in a merely moral sense when it is employed in the Pauline epistles. But Mr. Black admonishes us to be more observant:—

"The keynote, in fact, of early Christianity is that given in *Ephesians* vi. 12.—'For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against the principalities, against the powers, against the cosmic-rulers [*kosmo-kratoras*] of this darkness, against the pneumatics of wickedness in the heavenly places.' It is against these powers that Christ wages unceasing warfare."

As an illustration of this spirit-doctrine, the author quotes from the First Epistle to the Corinthians

(ii. 8), where Paul declares that "none of the rulers of this world know the Divine Mystery else they would not have crucified the Lord of Glory." The ordinary reader supposes this passage to allude to the High-priest Caiaphas or the procurator Pilate. It is not so. The "rulers" are the bad spirits who oppose God and Goodness. Magical suggestions appear also in Paul's warnings against taking part in heathen sacrificial meals. The first Christians believed that devils lurked in the meats and drinks of Pagan ceremonial feasts, and whoever ate and drank would be affiliated, so to speak, with devil nature. And even if a man comes to the Lord's Supper in a careless and irreverent temper, he may suffer physical penalty. "For this cause," says Paul (1 Cor. xi. 30), "many among you are weak and sickly, and not a few sleep,"—that is, many had been smitten with illness and some had even died through the evil effects of improper participation in the holy Meal. A magical idea explains the curious remark of Paul about being "baptised for the dead" (1 Cor. xv. 29). It seems the early Christians used to perform baptisms of the ghosts of the dead who had not had the advantage of the watery rite. Such ghosts had slept in unconsciousness in the other world till Christian philanthropists carried out the postponed ceremony. The spirits then awoke to the divine life. Another magical curiosity is the power of names. Devils are expelled from human bodies in the name of Jesus. Peter has to pronounce the name of the dead woman Tabitha, otherwise his summons does not affect the ghost. And the reporter of the miracle of raising the daughter of the ruler of the synagogue must needs repeat in Aramaic the exact words *Talitha cumi* which Jesus uttered, evidently attaching special virtue to the vocables.

Mr. Black's chapter on Jesus is perhaps the shortest ever written, proportionately to the length of the work on Christianity in which it occurs. It is a conglomerate of questions. Doubts buzz through it like bees in a hive. Did Jesus claim to be the Messiah? Did he ever exist? Were the Gospels really intended for history? May they not have been composed deliberately as an allegory, in the manner of Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress*, or the second century *True History* of Lucian? Besides, the records differ:—

"There are altogether 2,339 manuscripts of the Greek New Testament at present in existence, and so far are these from containing the same texts that there are probably 200,000 different readings. Which of these then is the inspired text?"

Mr. Black does not stay to answer this baffling question. He hurries on to his chapter on Paul. Here, too, are anxious problems. Possibly none of the Pauline epistles were written by Paul. It does not matter! Fifty or sixty years ago, a scholar who wrote in such an off-hand style would have been flung into outer darkness,—that is to say, into the company of Charles Southwell, "the man Paterson," Robert Taylor, and the rest of the heretic crew. In 1909 nobody turns a shade paler. Mr. Black's examination of Paul is extremely valuable. As he says, most people would affirm Paul's central doctrine to be that of Justification by Faith. But the essential doctrine is that of obsession by the Spirit of Christ. The Christians believed that a man could be obsessed, or occupied, by an evil spirit. So Paul believed that the Spirit of Christ was introduced into a man's being, and effectively began, then and there, the experience of Eternal Life. That is why Paul set aside any obligation to fulfil the Jewish law, or any written moral code, the "Spirit" being all-sufficing. In this respect Paul would resemble the Quakers and Mystics who believed in the Inner Light, and, indeed, Mr. Black compares the Apostle with the celebrated Spanish mystic, Saint Teresa. Such a theory of the religious life gives significance to the question of Paul's relation to Jesus. If we could get nearer to Paul's mind we should very likely find that he did not recognise the Gospel Jesus at all. There certainly was a split somewhere. The epistle to the Galatians affords us a glimpse of Paul

disputing heatedly with other Christian leaders; and, though the note is brief, and we only catch the hubbub of their arguments at a half-open door, the evidence suffices to assure us that Paul taught a unique Christism which highly offended other propagandists of the new faith.

Among other very acute observations on the history of the Church, Mr. Black adduces facts to show that the Christians framed their plan of Christ's Kingdom on the model of the Roman administration. Christ's advent was called his "parousia," the term used for royal visits to towns, or an imperial arrival in a province, as of Hadrian in Greece in the year 124 C.E. Just as, to Romans, "Caesarianus" meant a slave of Caesar, so Christ's name meant a slave of Christ. Other examples are quoted, and Mr. Black adds:—

"The day which the Romans had consecrated to Romulus and Remus as the founders of the city, appears in the new calendar as the Festival of St. Peter and St. Paul, the founders of the new religion. The visit of the Wise Men from the East, related by Matthew, is perhaps a copy of the visit of Tiridates to Rome in the reign of Nero (66). All this proves clearly a deliberate imitation of the political forms of the Empire, and accounts incidentally for the persecution of the early Christians by the State."

The little history closes with a notice of Clement (of whom I wrote in the *Freethinker* under the heading of "A Lecturer in White" a few months ago) and of the heretical Origen. No wonder that, in spite of his learning, the Church suspected Origen's tendency. The future bodies of the saved, according to this Early Father, will be circular! In that case, Carlyle's gibe at the "forked radish" will lose its double point!

Mr. Black's book is one of a considerable series of volumes on *Religions: Ancient and Modern* (published by Constable), all of which I have read, and some of which are very good; but I think Mr. Black's is by far the best. That it can be issued from the press of a publisher who is not professedly a Freethought agent, is a consoling sign of the times.

F. J. GOULD.

The Narratives in Genesis—II.

THE TWO CREATION STORIES.

(Continued from p. 379.)

It has often been pointed out by advanced Biblical critics that there are two Creation stories in the book of Genesis, each complete in itself, and each independent of the other. This statement, when made, is usually received by orthodox believers with smiles of incredulity, and its truth stoutly denied; but it is a fact that has to be reckoned with all the same. The first Creation story is recorded in Gen. i. 1 to Gen. ii. 4; the second in Gen. ii. 4 to the end of the chapter: so that in Gen. ii. 4 we have the end of the first story and the beginning of the second. This, of course, is due to the later compiler, who pieced the two stories together.

The first Creation story commences as follows:—

Gen. i. 1-2.—"In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth. And the earth was waste and void; and darkness was upon the face of the deep: and the spirit of God was hovering upon the face of the waters."

After completing the story the writer adds, as a finish, the following words:—

Gen. ii. 4.—"These are the generations of the heaven and the earth in the day when they were created."

The words italicised are employed in the same way by the same Priestly writer in Gen. v. 2; so there can be no doubt as to the authorship of the passage.

The second Creation story commences as follows:—

Gen. ii. 4-5.—"The Lord God made earth and heaven. And no plant of the field was yet in the earth, and no herb of the field had yet sprung up: for the Lord God had not caused it to rain upon the earth, and there was not a man to till the ground."

The first point to which I wish to draw attention is that the writers of these stories do not credit their God with originating this globe, but only with fashioning it. The matter of which the earth is composed is assumed to be there. The God, it is true, is represented as bringing into existence the sun and moon, and the little twinkling stars; but the creation of these diminutive objects was considered a small matter compared with the origination of all the solid and liquid matter that make up this big earth.

The first sentence in each of the Creation accounts is not a record of work done, but is merely a statement—like the heading of a chapter—of what is about to be related in the narrative that follows. The earth was there, but was in darkness and covered by water, and was without animal or vegetable life. This condition was not *after* an alleged creation by God, but was the original state of things *before* anything had been done. The Hebrew word *Bara*—translated "created"—does not signify to produce something that did not exist out of nothing, but merely "to cut or carve," and so form or fashion existing material. The word *Asah*—translated "made"—means properly "to feel or press"; hence to form or construct with the hands, as "the Lord God" is represented as doing when making a clay man.

The words *bara* and *asah* are employed by the writer of the first Creation story as interchangeable terms, as will be seen by the following examples: the writer of the second story does not use the word *bara* at all:—

Gen. i. 1.—"In the beginning God *created* the heaven and the earth."

Gen. i. 7.—"And God *made* the firmament."

Gen. i. 16.—"And God *made* the two great lights"—the sun and moon.

Gen. i. 21.—"And God *created* the great sea-monsters," etc.

Gen. i. 25.—"And God *made* the beast of the earth after its kind," etc.

Gen. i. 26.—"And God said Let us *make* man in our image," etc.

Gen. i. 27.—"And God *created* man in his own image."

For confirmation of the correctness of the view here suggested it is only necessary to ascertain when "the heaven" of verse 1 (Heb. *Shamayim*) is said to have been "created" or "made." This will be seen from the following:—

Gen. i. 6-8.—"And God said, Let there be a firmament (*rakia*) in the midst of the waters.....And God made the firmament (*rakia*).....And God called the firmament (*rakia*) Heaven (*shamayim*). And there was evening and there was morning, a second day."

We see from the foregoing that though it is stated in verse 1 that God, in the beginning, "created the heaven and the earth," the first named of these two creations—"the heaven"—was not actually made until the second day; to which may be added, that the so-called creation of "the earth" formed the work of the succeeding days. The writers of the Creation stories were not so destitute of common sense as to imagine that the enormous quantity of matter composing the Universe could be produced out of nothing; they therefore assumed the earth, whose bulk and size they had some small idea of, to have been always in existence, though not in its present form.

In a large and imposing work entitled *The Evolution of the Universe*, by W. W. Howard, the author, in defending the scientific accuracy of the Creation accounts in Genesis, says (p. 208):—

"The absolute origination of world-stuff is so hard to realise in thought, and the evidence for it so difficult to grasp, that no cosmogony except the Genesis has dared to assume the position.....We find no cosmogony in either Turanian, Aryan, or Semitic languages, the Hebrews alone excepted, of the ancient world, that is not instinct with the pre-suppositions of pre-existent matter, and that does not show that creation was conceived simply as formative and not originative."

This statement is, of course, perfectly true so far as the ancient Gentile world is concerned; but the

lauded cosmogony of the Hebrews forms no exception.

The ancient Babylonians, like the Jews, had two Creation stories—one written in Semitic Babylonian, the other in the older Akkadian language. The first of these, which may perhaps be said to correspond, in some measure, to the Creation story in Gen. i., is inscribed on seven tablet books, six of which (or rather, portions of the six) have been recovered and translated. The second or Akkadian story is written on the front and back of one tablet, which in parts is somewhat damaged and illegible. The correspondence between the Babylonian legends and the Creation stories in Genesis is not, however, sufficiently close to warrant the inference that the latter were derived from the former, though the Babylonian stories are, of course, the more ancient.

The following will give some idea of the first, and more important, Babylonian story, which will be seen to have some resemblance to Milton's *Paradise Lost*.

Tablet 1 commences:—

"At that time the heaven above had not announced, or the earth beneath recorded, a name. The unopened Deep was their generator; Mummu-Tiamat [the chaos of the sea] was the mother of them all. Their waters were embosomed as one; the cornfield was unharvested, the pasture was ungrown. At that time the Gods had not appeared; by no name were they recorded.....Then the great Gods were created," etc.

Tablet 2 describes the assembled Gods as taking counsel to overthrow the great dragon Tiamat, with her consort Kingu, and their army of demons.

Tablet 3 narrates how the Gods, under the leadership of Merodach, open hostilities against Tiamat and her army, who had enveloped themselves in a cloud of darkness for concealment. Merodach, having illuminated the darkened space with his thunderbolts, puts to flight the demon army under Kingu.

Tablet 4 concludes the account of the battle between Merodach and Tiamat. Upon the death of the latter the demons take flight, but are captured by Merodach and imprisoned under the earth. The victor then flays the vanquished Tiamat, and stretches her skin above and across the earth to form a firmament, over which he stores large bodies of water. He also places light in the region above the firmament, which he appoints as a residence of the Gods.

Tablet 5 states that Merodach "fixed the stars," and placed the Sun and Moon in their proper positions "that they might know their bounds, that they might not err, that they might not go astray in any way."

Tablet 6 has not been recovered—which leaves a break in the narrative.

Tablet 7 relates that the assembled Gods "created the beasts.....the mighty monsters.....the living creatures of the field.....the cattle of the field, the wild beasts of the field, and the creeping things of the field." The concluding portion of this tablet—which, no doubt, recorded the creation of man—is wanting.

Setting aside the conflict between Merodach and Tiamat in the Babylonian legend (which the Priestly writer of Gen. i. would not be likely to copy), the points of resemblance between the Genesis and Chaldean Creation stories are the following:—

GENESIS.

Earth waste and void—spirit moving on the face of the waters—darkness upon the face of the deep.

God made light.

God made a firmament, and placed water above it.

God separated land from water, and caused vegetation to grow.

BABYLONIAN.

Tab. 1. Earth waste (no harvest, no pasture)—waters embosomed as one—the unopened Deep.

Tab. 3. Evil spirits concealed by darkness.

Tab. 3. Merodach produced light.

Tab. 4. Merodach made a firmament, and placed water above it.

[About one-third of Tablet 5 wanting.]

GENESIS.

God made, and placed in position the sun, moon, and stars.

God made fish and fowl.

God made beasts, cattle, and creeping things.

God made man.

BABYLONIAN.

Tab. 5. Merodach placed in position the sun, moon, and stars.

[Whole of Tablet 6 wanting.]

Tab. 7. The Gods made beasts, cattle, and creeping things.

[Concluding portion of Tablet 7 wanting.]

It will thus be seen that so far as the recovered portions of the Babylonian tablets go, the account of the Creation in Gen. i. is in precisely the same order as the Chaldean. Furthermore, the writer of the Genesis story does not say that the God Yahveh had performed this work; but only "God," and Merodach was a "God."

Of the older Akkadian Creation story the following lines need only be cited:—

"The glorious house, the house of the Gods, in a glorious place had not been made; a plant had not been brought forth, a tree had not been created.....the whole of the lands were sea.....Merodach bound together a foundation before the waters; he made dust, and poured it out with the flood.....He made mankind.....he made the beasts of the field and the living creatures of the desert. He made the Tigris and Euphrates, and set them in their place."

The second Creation story in Genesis commences, as we have seen, like the Akkadian—"No plant of the field was yet in the earth; no herb of the field had yet sprung up"—and also agrees with the Akkadian in man being formed before the other living creatures; but it is in direct conflict with the first Creation story in Genesis. The acts of creation which it records are the following:—

Gen. ii. 7.—"The Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground."

Gen. ii. 9.—"And out of the ground made the Lord God to grow every tree that is pleasant to the sight, and good for food."

Gen. ii. 19.—"And out of the ground the Lord God formed every beast of the field and every fowl of the air; and brought them unto the man to see what he would call them."

Gen. ii. 21-22.—"And the Lord God.....made a woman."

The discrepancies between the first or Priestly account (P) of the Creation in Genesis, and the second or Yahvist account (Y) are the following:—

P.—Birds and beasts are created before Man.

Y.—Man created before the birds and beasts.

P.—The "winged fowl" are produced out of the waters.

Y.—The "fowl of the air" are made out of the ground.

P.—Man is created in the image of God.

Y.—Man is made of the dust of the ground, and it is only after having "sinned" that the Lord God knew that "man is become as one of us, to know good and evil."

P.—Man was created the lord of the whole earth.

Y.—Man was placed in a garden "to dress and to keep it."

P.—Man and Woman were created together, as the closing and completing work of the whole creation, and were created in the same way, and blessed together.

Y.—Man was made first; then the beasts and birds; lastly, the woman was made out of one of the man's ribs, and brought to him as a help-mate.

These discrepancies are fully accounted for by the fact that the two Creation stories were the work of different writers.

ABRACADABRA.

(To be continued.)

Maternity is inexplicable; you cannot argue with it. That it is which renders a mother sublime; she becomes reasoning; the maternal instinct is divinely animal. The mother is no longer a woman; she is a wild creature. Her children are cubs. Hence in the mother there is something at once inferior and superior to argument. A mother has an unerring instinct. The immense mysterious Will of creation is within her and guides her.—Victor Hugo.

Murdered for Sabbath-Breaking.

It is the duty of the upholders of the New York Sunday Law, which prohibits the sale of groceries on the first day of the week, to come to the defence of Policeman James Dillon, of the Adams-street precinct, Brooklyn. In the exercise of his discretion as enforcer of the Sunday law, Dillon found it necessary to commit a murder, for which he is now in jail.

On Sunday, May 2, Dillon found the store of Isaac Prober at 217 Myrtle-avenue open and doing business. He had noted the same state of affairs on other Sundays, but the Probers had always squared themselves by submitting to petty grafting by the officer, whom they allowed to carry away for his own use as many eggs or as much fruit as he wanted. On this particular Sunday he was told by Grocer Prober that he (the grocer) would give up no more, for Dillon's demands had grown until there was no longer any profit in opening the store. The policeman swore, ordered the place closed, and assaulted the proprietor, whose nineteen-year-old son, Louis, rushed to the telephone to ask headquarters for protection from an officer either crazy or drunk. Thereupon Dillon, who had already drawn his revolver, turned it upon the boy and shot him, inflicting a wound from which he died on the following day. The officer then made complaint against the father for violating the Sunday law, and against the other members of the family for resisting an officer. On the way to the station he slashed his uniform with a knife so that he might produce evidence that he had been attacked.

The only criticism that the Sunday law people can pass upon Policeman Dillon is that he delayed too long the discharge of his duty—that he should have tried what virtue there was in bullets in the beginning instead of adopting the persuasive method of grafting. The Probers had bought him off so many times with duck eggs and fruit that they imagined themselves privileged. They thought him their friend, whereas he was such only so long as they continued to give up. He stood toward them in the position of the clergy toward malefactors of great wealth, whose good works are counted for righteousness as long as the contributions are satisfactory, but whose money becomes tainted when there is not enough of it coming their way. Had Dillon kept on shaking down the Probers, had he allowed them to keep on doing a Sunday trade, he could have expected nothing but denunciation from the Sabbatharians; but he has redeemed himself now in their eyes; he really closed the store, not only putting it out of business for the rest of the day on which the murder occurred, but securing that at least one of the Sabbath-breaking family should violate the Sunday law no more. Surely this servant of the law, and of the Lord, whatever may have been his previous shortcomings, made good at last by the conscientious discharge of his duty and the destruction of the malefactor.

We prepared and published not long ago a book—*A Short History of the Inquisition*—describing and picturing the crimes of the Church when governments were its partners and accomplices, when the masses of the people were ignorant and superstitious, and when the idea of religious liberty had not become popular. People read that book, and lift up their voices or their minds in thankfulness that such horrors are no longer possible, and that the era of religious freedom has come to stay. They rejoice that the agents of the Inquisition are no longer abroad, and that every man can now practice his religious faith according to his conscience. Some, even, viewing the abandon of the times, wonder if we are not a little too free in this country—a fact which suggests to us that perhaps when the Holy Office was at the summit of its reign, and when orthodox conformity was the only protection for property or life, there must have been some who complained that there was too much liberty, and protested that while they believed in liberty they would not defend licence.

Our boasts are premature and vain so long as we have Sunday laws on our statute books which put every merchant and every other man who caters to public needs at the mercy of religious fanatics acting as complainants under these laws, and of armed brutes on whom is conferred the discretion of enforcing them. In the conduct of the Inquisition the most despicable parts were enacted by informers and "familiaris." The informer fulfilled the office which in the application of our modern Sunday laws is taken by the lay or clerical complainant, while the policeman making an arrest for Sunday violation corresponds to the "familiaris." The whole machinery of the Holy Office is reproduced, the courts becoming for this purpose the tribunals of the Inquisition. Even the police protection and grafting which notoriously exist find their counterparts in the history of that infamous institution, the proceeds of corruption passing upward to king and pope as they now do to the higher

officials. No matter what outrage might be committed by the familiars, they were under the protection of their superiors, and the Inquisition gave them sanctuary. Judging from the immunity of our police, affairs are not so very different to-day.

The murder of Louis Prober ought to arouse this community to a sense of the danger in the Sunday law as it is administered, and as it is bound to be administered so long as it endures. The victims of the law are not criminals. The acts for which they suffer injure no one in person, property, or reputation. They offend only against a fetish set up by our mystery-mongers and medicine men who, in the interest of their salaries, wield the power of the State, the club and revolver of the policeman, to secure observance of the day on which they have placed their taboo.

The hands these reverends raise in their pulpits in the mockery of benediction are stained as indelibly and as guiltily with the blood of Louis Prober at those of Policeman Dillon in his cell.—*Truthseeker* (New York).

Correspondence.

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE FREETHINKER."

SIR,—With reference to the trade boycott of the *Freethinker*, might I make a suggestion that you should get a number of intellectual city men and others, with time to spare and possessing the necessary appearance and diplomatic ability, to thoroughly and systematically canvass the wholesalers and retailers in their respective neighborhoods? Personally, I think it would do a great amount of good if properly carried out. We have prominently shown and pushed the paper here for years, and yet our Catholic and Protestant friends still come in and pick their respective papers from out a little nest wherein rest, side by side, the *Freethinker*, *British Weekly*, *Catholic Times*, and *Clarion*. Why not? Why not, so long as the men who fancy the one are not called upon to pay for the other?

17 Caledonian-road, King's-cross, N. F. C. HOLDEN

THE PAINE MEETING.

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE FREETHINKER."

SIR,—May I suggest that President Roosevelt's (shall we say ignorant or malevolent, or to please his audience, "immortal," so far as we know his memory will be on this earth) words, that "*Thomas Paine was a dirty little Atheist*," be printed in your refreshing paper *large*? Pity the great audience at St. James's Hall last night were not told that "*Thomas Paine was not dirty in body or mind; not little—he was a tall man; not an Atheist—he believed in a God.*" All the three will be proved by his books, etc.

What a splendid meeting! And what splendid speeches. All short, and to the point—as usual. Probably Roosevelt has not read any of his books, and, like the people, calumniate him (Paine) *without knowing one word of his books*, etc.

"*He never read Infidel books*" said a street-orator parson a few days ago to a friend of mine who offered to him the *Age of Reason*. The parson street-orator had, just before, been vilifying Thomas Paine to the crowd in the street.

What a splendid reception Mr. Foote had! Everyone listened with close attention—"you could have heard a pin drop." And, fortunately, the weather was fine, and smiled on the "un-Godly" or "ungodly."

G. GROVE.

It has always been asserted or implied that at the birth of Christianity there was, outside the Jewish race, either no belief in nor knowledge of God at all, or no idea of his real attributes. But nothing could be farther from the truth. The Pagan world was by no means in that state of theological darkness which the early Christian missionaries, ignorant for the most part of Greek or Roman literature or philosophy, imagined or believed. The theological difference between the new faith and the old touched rather the surface than the substance of thought; nor is there a single attribute now ascribed to the Deity that the tomb-inscriptions of Egypt do not prove to have been ascribed to him fully 6,000 years ago. To the conception of the unity of God nothing was added by Christianity that had not for centuries been familiar to the educated classes of the world. The Fathers themselves sometimes admitted this, as when Tertullian says that the greater part of the human race, though they know not even the name of Moses, yet knew the God of Moses.—*J. A. Farrer*.

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): 3.15 and 6.15, C. Cohen, Lectures.

CAMBERWELL BRANCH N. S. S. (Brockwell Park): 3.15 a Lecture; 6, F. A. Davies, "Blasphemy: a very Serious Crime."

KINGSLAND BRANCH N. S. S. (Ridley-road): 11.30, C. Cohen, "The Benefits of Unbelief."

NORTH LONDON BRANCH N. S. S. (Parliament Hill, Hampstead): 3.30, W. J. Ramsey will lecture.

WEST HAM BRANCH N. S. S. (Outside Maryland Point Station, Stratford): 7, A. Hyatt, "The Miracles of Jesus the Works of the Sun."

WOOD GREEN BRANCH N. S. S. (Spouters' Corner): 11, a Lecture.

WOOLWICH BRANCH N. S. S. Beresford-square: 11.30, F. A. Davies will lecture.

COUNTRY.

Huddersfield Branch N. S. S. (Trade and Friendly Hall, No. 9 Lodge Room): Tuesday, June 22, at 8, Meeting.

LIVERPOOL BRANCH N. S. S. (Alexandra Hall, Islington-square): 7, H. Percy Ward, "Holy Matrimony."

OUTDOOR.

DALKEITH (High-street): Saturday, June 19, at 7, a Lecture.

EDINBURGH SECULAR SOCIETY: Leith Links, 2.30, a Lecture; The Mound, 6.30, a Lecture.

Huddersfield Branch N. S. S. (Market Cross): Saturday, June 19, at 8, G. Whitehead will lecture.

LEITH (Foot of the Walk): 6.30, a Lecture.

LIVERPOOL BRANCH N. S. S. (Edge-hill Church): Wednesday, June 23, at 8, H. Percy Ward will lecture.

WIGAN BRANCH N. S. S. (Market-square): Monday, June 21, at 8, H. Percy Ward will lecture.

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