

# THE Freethinker

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*He who saves the wolf kills the sheep.*  
—VICTOR HUGO.

## The Unknown God.

*God the Known and God the Unknown.* By Samuel Butler.  
London: A. C. Fifield.

MR. BERNARD SHAW seems to think he has discovered the late Samuel Butler—the second of that name in English literature. I beg to assure him that he has done nothing of the kind. Butler was always known to the elect; that is to say, by the really good readers, who find out for themselves what is of sterling value in the world of books. Mr. Shaw resents "cacklings" about himself in relation to Ibsen and Nietzsche; he protests that Butler has influenced his later plays far more than the Norwegian and the German. He speaks of *The Way of All Flesh* as "an extraordinary study of English life," the neglect of which "drives one almost to despair of English literature." But the book appears to have sold fairly well, and has just passed into a second edition; so that it must have found readers, even if it did not find critics; which, by the way, is not an unusual occurrence. I read it when it was published, some six or seven years ago, with great relish, and I printed some extracts from it in the *Freethinker*. The appearance, much about the same time, of an amplified edition of *Erewhon*, and the first publication of *Erewhon Revisited*, which also appear to have found purchasers and presumably readers, must have given a fillip to Butler's reputation. The truth about him, I take it, is that he had a fresh, original mind distinctly turned to satire, in which he achieved a great success. I do not think, in spite of Mr. Birrell, that *Erewhon* is quite in the same street with *Gulliver's Travels*; for Swift was a splendid story-teller, and his masterpiece can be read by children for its narrative as well as by adults for its satire. But the three great works of Butler's, already mentioned, secure him, in my judgment, a distinguished place in a field which is never likely to be overrun with dangerous competitors. That he will ever be popular I do not believe, but I am sure he will have a considerable influence over a select body of readers, some of whom, being writers themselves, will transmit it to a far wider circle.

Besides being a man of letters, Butler was a voluntary and irresponsible champion of the old pre-Darwinian evolution. I am not aware that he had any scientific training, but he took himself quite seriously in his opposition to the great Charles Darwin. Book after book upon this subject proved his industry and fertility. What more they proved I do not know—except that Butler saw which theory of evolution fitted in best with his own ideas of God and the Universe. But it happens that Mr. Shaw, who is, I imagine, rather less scientific (if anything) than Butler was, takes the author of those anti-Darwinian works as seriously as he took himself— and apparently for the very same reason; for Mr. Shaw has enlisted as a prophet, he celebrates the blessings of religion, calls himself a mystic, and pours scorn on all the horde of miserable materialists; although at this point he is at variance with

his master, who pooh-pooched mysticism, derided the idea of a spiritual Deity, and declared that God was just as material as his worshippers.

## II.

The contents of the little volume before us first appeared as a series of articles in the *Examiner* in May, June, and July, 1879. Butler revised them for publication, but it is evident from p. 62 that he would have had to revise them again, and even to reconstruct the whole essay; for he had based his argument on the distinction between the organic and the inorganic, and he subsequently found that this distinction was imaginary. I do not know whether this illustration of Butler's scientific accomplishments has in any degree shaken Mr. Shaw's discipleship. I rather fancy not. But I should appreciate a little information on the point from his own lips. It would also be interesting to learn if Mr. Shaw accepts this compendium of Butler's philosophy of religion. One would like to say one's hardest things in the ears of the dead religionist, with a feeling that they applied just as well to the living religionist, to whom one could show the most pleasant politeness. Killing two birds with one stone has always been reckoned a more than allowable practice.

But before I go any further I must deliver myself of a horrid suspicion. Butler was a great satirist, but his satire was less obvious than Mr. Shaw's. He splendidly wielded that most difficult of all weapons—irony. Now I am wondering whether the master's irony may be too subtle for the disciple. One feels that Butler ought to be serious in his efforts to prove the existence of God; one also feels that he is serious,—yet a note of interrogation flashes on one's mind's eye every now and then. Was it Butler's object, after all, to bring theology into what the "blasphemy" indictments call "disbelief and contempt"? Was he poking the most quintessential fun at it? He once wrote a big book called *The Fair Haven* in defence of the Resurrection, which was really an ironical attack on that doctrine; and the irony was kept up so superbly that it deceived many persons of more than common intelligence. Is this little book a production of a similar character? If so, it must be admitted that irony is carried to its *ne plus ultra*. But as I must not assume this, I must proceed to deal with Butler as a serious theologian.

## III.

I once began collecting materials for a treatise on the Suicide of Theology. It would have been a capital idea if I had only the leisure to carry it out. I get wild sometimes at the thought of the drudgery which has occupied my time, absorbed my energy, and rendered so many ideas of mine abortive. This particular idea was worthy of a better fate. I intended to array the theologians against each other. Every theological argument has been supported by some theologians and attacked by others. My idea was to print their mutually destructive utterances in parallel columns. On the left side, a certain argument would be described as perfectly conclusive; on the right side, it would be described as a contemptible fallacy. Thus the theologians would be left to answer each other, and the reader would feel at the finish that he had witnessed one of the finest Kilkenny-cat performances ever offered to human delectation.

Butler's little book on God (*his* God) reminds me of that old project. He attacks and demolishes other people's Gods with great vigor, gusto, and success. He smashes them up like a lot of wooden dolls and throws them on the dustbin. Then the glad proud look on his face changes into one of apology and deprecation. "I have," he seems to say, "a nice doll of my own. You may not think much of it, but I hope you will. I smashed up all those other dolls out of love for this one. Please do give it a chance—for my sake. It isn't all it might be; I am painfully aware of its defects; but it is better than those other things,—and, really, if you don't accept this one, I don't see how you will have any doll at all."

Butler goes for Pantheism first. Those who hold that "God is everything, and everything is God" are no better than Atheists; in fact, they are Atheists without knowing it. Everything cannot be a person, and God is a person—or nothing. He must have personal qualities, capabilities, and limitations:—

"No conception of God can have any value or meaning for us which does not involve his existence as an independent Living Person of ineffable wisdom and power, vastness, and duration both in the past and for the future. If such a Being as this can be found existing and made evident, directly or indirectly, to human senses, there is a God. If otherwise, there is no God, or none, at any rate, with whom we need concern ourselves. No conscious personality, no God. An impersonal God is as much a contradiction in terms as an impersonal person."

Pantheism is unintelligible. It uses language which cannot be realised in thought. And if this is true of the ancient Pantheists, it is still more true, if possible, of the modern ones. Butler says that Kant, Schelling, Fichte, and Hegel, when we read them, give us the feeling that "we are with men who have been decoyed into a hopeless quagmire; we understand nothing of their language—we doubt whether they understand themselves, and feel that we can do nothing with them but look at them and pass them by." So he passes them by—on the dustbin.

Pantheism being thrown out ignominiously, it becomes the turn of Theism. The Christian doctrine of God is expeditiously settled.

"Not only must the 'perfect man,' who is the second person of the Godhead according to the orthodox faith, and who subsists of 'human flesh' as well as of a 'reasonable soul,' not only must this person exist, but he must exist in some place either on this earth or outside it. If he exists on earth, he must be in Europe, Asia, Africa, America, or some other island, and if he were met with he must be capable of being seen and handled in the same way as all other things that can be called perfect man are seen; otherwise he is a perfect man who is not only not a perfect man, but who does not in any considerable degree resemble one. It is not, however, pretended by anyone that God, the 'perfect Man,' is to be looked for in any place upon the surface of the globe.

If, on the other hand, the person of God exists in some sphere outside the earth, his human flesh again proves to be of an entirely different kind from all other human flesh, for we know that such flesh cannot exist except on earth; if in space unsupported, it must fall to the ground, or into some other planet, or into a sun, or go on revolving round the earth or some other heavenly body—or *not be personal*. None of those whose opinions will carry weight will assign a position either in some country on this earth, or yet again in space, to Jesus Christ, but this involves the rendering meaningless of all expressions which involve his personality.

The Christian conception, therefore, of the Deity proves, when examined with any desire to understand our own meaning (and what lawlessness so great as the attempt to impose words upon our understanding which have no lawful settlement within them?) to be no less a contradiction in terms than the Pantheistic conception."

Unitarians will say that this does not hit *them*. But their turn is coming. They are Deists, or, if they like, Theists. And what of the God of pure Theism?

G. W. FOOTE.

(To be concluded.)

## A Plea for Honesty.

THERE is a certain copy-book maxim to the effect that honesty is the best policy. In a large and general sense this expresses a truth, but in a large and general sense only. Given time, truth will triumph over falsehood, honesty over dishonesty, right methods over wrong ones. This must be so, since the operation of the evolutionary process is such that right action and life-preserving action tend to become identical, and the insistent pressure of facts finally breaks down all opposition. But in this process of realisation there occurs thousands of cases in which the outward and visible rewards that should accrue to the honest man become the property of the dishonest one. The wicked often wear fine raiment while the virtuous sit in rags. The successful swindler flaunts his victories in the light of day while his deluded victims hide themselves and their miseries from the public gaze. Triumphant rascality, having acquired wealth, retires on its laurels, and ends with a halo of unctuous respectability. In spite of our copy-book maxim, honesty of thought, speech, and action remains about as expensive a luxury as one can purchase.

And one strongly suspects that those who use this maxim have in view only the cheaper, commoner, and least valuable form of honesty and dishonesty. They deprecate strongly the dishonesty of stealing a purse, or non-payment of debts; and with actual material dishonesty their concern seems to stop. But beyond this region of malpractice their lies another of infinitely greater importance to human welfare. The dishonesty of professing beliefs that one knows to be false, the cowardliness of refraining from speaking the truth as one sees it, represent forms of dishonesty far more reprehensible than those practised by the common thief. Let a man steal a watch and his wrongdoing stops substantially with the action. At most the injury is limited to himself and his victim. But he who tampers with truth, who conforms to established beliefs because he wishes to stand well with his fellows, or because he is too mentally lazy to look into things for himself, is exerting an influence on all around him, the evil consequences of which no one can accurately calculate. The very worst forms of vice are not those of which the law takes cognisance. These always have and always will escape legislation. Society may easily protect itself against the thief or the murderer; its greatest danger comes from those who, while not breaking any law, are yet daily and hourly trampling underfoot all those principles on which the higher life of a nation depends.

Fortunately for our maxim, there is an inward satisfaction that comes from honest practice which can be neither bought nor sold. That no one can ultimately injure a man but himself is a saying that contains a truth of which it is well not to lose sight. But it is well also to remember that it is only the rarer types of humankind that enjoy the supreme felicity of a character which lifts them above the world's rewards and penalties. The average man breaks down—not always at once, but ultimately—beneath the sense of undeserved injury and the weight of social censure. Happiness, said Spinoza, is not the reward of virtue; it is virtue itself. To one of Spinoza's serene detachment of mind the consciousness of being honest to himself was enough. Nothing could take its place, and no material thing could add to its value. But we are not all cast in this heroic mould, and with the mass the knowledge that the world looks coldly on our efforts, even punishes us on that account, results in sourness, cynicism, and demoralisation. And after all, the average character of humanity plays its part in the world's development equally with that of its more brilliant specimens.

From the time of Socrates until our own day it has been so much the custom for the honest man to pay a price for his honesty that people have come to look upon it as quite the proper state of affairs. One

authority informs us that it is the lot of minorities to suffer. Another that genius must expect to be misunderstood, and labor in difficulty that others may live in ease. And the people treat the man who stands by his convictions with a kind of contemptuous pity, and an unexpressed admiration for their own superior astuteness in pulling with the tide. The most striking thing to-day, said a Scotch preacher in a recent sermon—a sermon, by the way, considerably above the average in the amount of common sense it contained—"is the remarkable lack of incentive or inspiration, or even recognition, given to the honest man fighting life's battle with back against the wall, toiling uphill in the face of fierce temptation, striving often against fearful odds to hold the truth towards God and man, and laboring with agony of heart and mind to overcome and rule his passions." This comment was chiefly concerned with the lower aspect of the subject I have touched, but it may be used to illustrate the higher phase. And if this preacher were to carefully study the history of the creed he is championing he would find that it is in no small measure responsible for the evil he deprecates. In the aspect dealt with by him his indictment of the attitude of the ordinary Christian is unanswerable. He says:—

"There is not probably a church in all our land where you will fail to get a score of people running to help the drunken man who yields, for one who thinks it worth his while to love and cheer the sober man who overcomes; there is not probably a town within the realm where you will not find a dozen agencies for seeing to the unemployed, dishonest or deserving. I do not know a dozen agencies throughout the land which make it their one aim and end to help and strengthen the overweighted and the overwrought—those who labor honestly and cleanly, too often, much too often, alas, with one foot in the grave."

This is perfectly true, and the preacher is warranted in the conclusion, hinted rather than clearly expressed, that the outcome of organised Christian effort is not to decrease the number of the unfit, the helpless, and the undeserving, but to add to their quantity. The sober, industrious, honest man is of no particular value to those Christian organisations that live on their much-advertised slum work, or enlist sympathy by a spectacular display of converted cases. It is the drunkard or the burglar, gloating over his past misdeeds before a thoughtless public, who is of value; the better man must wait until he joins the ranks of the fallen before he can hope for active expressions of help or sympathy.

Christianity has indeed made for the survival of the unfit, not only in a material sense, but, worse still, in a mental sense. Just as in the one direction its morbid devotion to saving the lost has led to an almost exclusive attention to rescuing a few doubtful specimens from the army of the physically ruined, while completely ignoring the conditions that produce a continuous stream of recruits to this same army, so in another direction its effect has been to breed a lower mental type and put every possible obstacle to a man living a clean, healthy, mental existence. Christians have written hundreds of volumes, full of their dwelling upon these records has never had the effect of teaching them to value conscientious convictions when held by others, nor to encourage independence of thinking amongst themselves. There is not in the whole of Christendom a single church that really loves an independent thinker. Conditions are such that nowadays many of the churches are bound to tolerate some degree of independent thinking, and few of them dare to be openly hostile to such; but the principle of childlike faith is still held up as an ideal, and it is this type of character that receives the real homage of religious organisations.

In Great Britain to-day the worst charge that can be brought against a public man is that he is an Atheist. It is not now said as commonly as it used to be said, that the Atheist is a bad man; the offence is simply that he is not a Christian. True, if he keeps his Atheism to himself, and tacitly connives at

the perpetuation of a belief which he believes to be fraught with grave danger to the best interests of the race, his offence may be, to some extent, forgiven. As the churches can no longer forcibly suppress the unbeliever, something is gained if they can force him or bribe him into silence. But if he continues to speak out—that is, if he insists on being honest—public life becomes a practical impossibility. There is hardly a constituency in Britain where an active and militant Freethinker would stand a chance of election for Parliament or for any municipal body. The Christian conscience may put up with a Freethinker who keeps his opinions concerning Christian beliefs to himself; what it will not tolerate is one who declines to sacrifice a shred of his mental independence for the sake of power or popularity. Dissimulation or hypocrisy may be tolerated; it is unflinching honesty that is promptly and severely punished.

Yet it is the Freethinker, more than anyone else, who gives the to public clearest and strongest proofs of his mental honesty. Wrong he may be, but it indicates an almost inconceivable degree of stupidity to argue that he is mentally dishonest. A man who professes belief in Christianity, and who appeals for public support, may be honest. No one can be sure, because no one has any means of forming a certain judgment. But the man who braves public prejudice has given the world an unmistakable proof of his genuineness, and the world, were it wise, would not lightly disregard the pledge.

The whole policy of Christianity, carried out by burning, torturing, imprisoning, boycotting, and bribing, just as occasion offered, has resulted in placing a tax upon honesty and a premium upon cowardice, hypocrisy, and an unintellectual conformity. Whether this has been aimed at consciously or not, matters little. The result is the same. And by striving to secure conformity in religious belief it has helped to demoralise the whole of our life. The figure of the mind, as being split up into a number of water-tight compartments, is quite a misleading one. The brain functions as a whole, and if the qualities of courage and honesty are discouraged in one direction, they are more or less discouraged in all. People who are not encouraged to be honest and independent in religion will not be likely to make any conspicuous display of these qualities in politics or in social life. Mankind in the average will be honest as they will be anything else—if the difficulties in the way are not too formidable. And if we would develop an intellectually honest people, and so pave the way for all forms of honesty, it must be done by reducing to impotence a religion that has always treated mental independence as the greatest of crimes.

C. COHEN.

### Apologetic Fallacies.

IT is ever becoming more and more obvious that Christianity is intellectually indefensible. Being in its very essence contrary to reason it of necessity stands for ever condemned, and all attempts to defend it are bound to prove futile. It is in the light of this fact alone that the existence of Christian apologists is intelligible. Although the Christian religion has been in the world for nearly two thousand years, it is even more necessary to offer apologies for it to-day than ever, and the apologies presented are becoming less and less convincing. Justin Martyr's or Tertullian's *Apology* is absolutely valueless now; so likewise is Paley's. Nothing is more incontrovertible than the fact that from its first appearance in the world until now Christianity has signally failed to be its own justification; and this fact fully explains the failure of all the professional Apologies. If those who still profess to be Christians only allowed this fact to have its due weight in their minds they would soon find the foundations of their faith giving way and the ardor of their piety cooling down. It would gradually be borne in upon them that whenever they

endeavored to justify their beliefs at the bar of reason they were simply attempting the impossible. They would also discover that the arguments which professional theologians employ in defence of religion are utterly fallacious. If Christianity were true it would not need to be defended. The very fact that it still requires the service of the apologist is the strongest possible proof that its claims are false.

Let us examine a portion of the work of a twentieth century defender of the faith. He affects large and just views, he pretends to be universally sympathetic and appreciative, and he illustrates the largeness and justness of his views and the breadth of his sympathies by representing God as a despicable respecter of persons. He assures us that all religions are of Divine origin, but that only one is perfect and calculated to satisfy all human needs. He quotes Justin Martyr to the effect that "Christ is the Logos [or Word] of whom the whole human race are partakers," and that "those who lived according to reason are Christians, even though accounted Atheists. Such among the Greeks were Socrates and Heraclitus, and those who resembled them." But that quotation is rendered worthless by the addition that Christ "cleansed by his blood those who believed on him." Justin never got rid of his Platonism; and in certain parts of his *Apology*, his Platonism is in greater evidence than his Christianity, which accounts for his numerous contradictions. But our modern apologist asserts that "Christ was the light of the world ere ever he appeared," as if any light *could* shine without appearing. Then he adds: "Precisely as their Law had been for the Jews a schoolmaster to bring them to Christ, so had their philosophy been for the Greeks." Well, it is a notorious fact that neither the Law nor anything else ever brought the Jews to Christ, and it is equally true that had Greek philosophy retained its ancient glory we would never have heard of the Greek Church. Furthermore, if "Christ was the light of the world ere ever he appeared," what sense is there in saying that "their Law had been for the Jews a schoolmaster to bring them to Christ, as had their philosophy been for the Greeks"? Or, if "Christ was the light of the world ere ever he appeared," what need was there for his appearing? If his appearing as Jesus of Nazareth ever happened, it meant the localising of the universal, and the limiting of the absolute, a folly of which a God worthy of the name would have been incapable.

Again, if people can be Christians without possessing the least knowledge of Christ, why should Christ be preached as the one in whom all must believe in order to be saved? If Jesus "says that those who are ignorant of God, yet love their fellows, are unconsciously loving God," what are we to make of this other saying attributed to him, "This is eternal life, that they should know thee the only true God, and him whom thou didst send, even Jesus Christ"? The Rev. Dr. David Smith refers us to the picture of the Last Judgment in Matt. xxv. 31-46, from which he draws the inference that philanthropy is the whole of religion, and that "no one will be condemned for not believing in a Savior of whom he never heard"; but Dr. Smith forgets that Matt. xxv. 31-46, and a few other passages in the Acts and the First Epistle of John are in direct conflict with the uniform teaching of the rest of the New Testament. Everywhere else acceptance with God is possible only through faith in Christ. Faith is declared to be the sole condition of salvation, and this all-essential faith is spoken of as the direct gift of God. Even James teaches that salvation apart from faith is impossible. It follows that Matthew's picture of the Last Judgment is completely out of harmony with the general tone of the teaching ascribed to Jesus in the Gospels, and made so emphatic in Paul's Epistles. But the use made of the exceptional teaching by the modern apologist not only fails to rehabilitate the moral character of the Deity, but also robs Christianity of its pre-eminent position as the only infallible instrument of the world's redemption, and

makes the present position of foreign missions ineffably absurd.

But what is Christianity? Dr. Smith says:—

"There are earnest men in our day who are hostile, as they suppose, to Christianity. In truth, however, it is not Christianity that they reject, but a caricature of it. It has been presented to them, perhaps in their childhood, in a perverted and unlovely form, and their hearts have revolted from it. You know what barbarities were perpetrated on the American Indians by their Spanish conquerors. There is an instructive story of an Indian who had been tied to the stake and was being importuned by a Franciscan friar, crucifix in hand, to turn Christian, and then he would go to heaven. 'Are there any Spaniards in heaven?' he asked. 'Certainly,' answered the friar, 'it is full of them.' 'Then,' said the victim, 'I had rather go to hell than have any more of their company.' And this sort of thing is always happening."

"And this sort of thing is always happening." Why? Because Christianity is not, and has never been, what it claims to be, the power of God unto salvation. Instead of Christianity making its professors anew we see its professors, according to Dr. Smith, corrupting and degrading Christianity, which ought to be an utter impossibility. In the New Testament, and by any orthodox Church, Christianity is represented as a supernatural force wielded by supernatural agents for the reorganisation of human society; but so ineffectual is this supernatural power in the hands of supernatural persons that the people for whose benefit it was brought into being succeed, not only in preventing it from accomplishing its Divinely appointed work, but also in making a caricature of it. Does it not occur to Dr. Smith that in thus speaking of the Christian religion he is presenting its opponents with an irrefragable argument against its divinity? Christianity, ostensibly energised by God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Ghost, is yet so incredibly impotent that ignorant and feeble men and women manage to turn and twist it into a laughable caricature. Surely, such a religion cannot be God's power unto a world's salvation.

But Dr. Smith is mistaken. Earnest men in our day are hostile to Christianity, not because "it has been presented to them, perhaps in their childhood, in a perverted and unlovely form," not because they judge it by a miserable caricature, but because they are solemnly convinced that all its theological doctrines are false, and calculated to retard, rather than to help, the mental and moral progress of the race. It is Christianity itself that they reject, not a caricature of it, and they reject it, not merely because it has failed, but because it is a late and exceptionally virulent offshoot of the general superstition that crept into existence in times of gross ignorance and slavish fear. Christianity is only one among many religions constructed on the same essential plan. It has not a single doctrine or claim peculiar to itself. It belongs to a large family, all the members of which bear a remarkable resemblance to one another. Let it be distinctly understood, then, that the overwhelming majority of those who are now hostile to Christianity base their hostility on a deep-seated conviction that, as a supernatural religion, it is wholly false. Its moral failure does not trouble them in the least. Being untrue, it was bound to fail; whereas, had it been true, nothing could have prevented it from being a complete success from the first. "And this sort of thing is always happening," simply because Christianity is not true, because its God of boundless love, its ever-living, omnipotent Christ, and its Holy Ghost, the Comforter, are nothing but dreams.

"We are often told," says one of Dr. Smith's correspondents, "and we read in even evangelical reviews, that an Atheist may as easily be a religious man as any real, pious Christian; that believing in good, and doing good, in fact he believes in God without knowing it." What unendurable nonsense! And yet one frequently hears it uttered from the pulpit, on street corners, and in the parks; and Dr. Smith endorses it. The truth is, however, that the preacher is entirely wrong. There are tens of thou-

sands of people who have absolutely no belief in God, who do not, and cannot, love him, consciously or unconsciously, and who yet do consciously believe in goodness and in the high privilege of daily practicing it; and it is their firm and unalterable persuasion that goodness would flourish much more abundantly were the God-idea to vanish forever from the earth.

J. T. LLOYD.

### "A Stepson of Fortune."

*A Stepson of Fortune: The Memories, Confessions, and Opinions of Henry Murray.* Chapman & Hall; 1909.

THIS is one of the most interesting and outspoken books we have read for many a long day. It has the supreme merit of being an honest autobiography, one of the rarest features in a publication of this kind.

Most men gloss their faults and accentuate their virtues. Mr. Henry Murray does neither. He actually dubs himself a "scribbler" instead of an author, and the man who can do that in the first page of his autobiography may have many faults, but he can never be dull.

Mr. Murray's account of his childhood is not pleasant reading. Of his mother, who was very pious, he says:—

"I never knew her religion to inspire her to walk a mile or to spend a sixpence for the relief or comfort of any living being, but it was a most efficient and adaptable instrument for the annoyance of everybody about her. And this, I have been led to believe by such knowledge of history as I possess and such scrutiny of my neighbors as I have been able to make, is true of most that passes by the name of religion. It is like the lost articles one sees advertised in the newspapers, 'of no use to anybody but the owner.'"

Some of the maternal characteristics appear to have been reproduced in the person of one of Mr. Murray's elder brothers, David Christie Murray, the well-known journalist and novelist. The following pen picture by his brother is worth reading:—

"Had he found himself alone with any other human creature on a rock in mid-ocean, with one loaf of bread and one jug of water between them, he would have eaten the last crumb of the loaf, drunk the last drop of the water, and would have wondered—quite honestly wondered—at the unconscionable selfishness of the other person had he dared to object."

When we remember that the subject of these ironic lines was "Merlin" of the *Referee*, who wrote miles of unctuous sermons on altruistic orthodoxy, and reproached Freethinkers for years with want of moral perception, the sarcasm is accentuated.

Mr. Henry Murray has had to put up with the slings and arrows of outrageous fortune, and some of his experiences are very amusing. At one period of his life he shared a room with another man, and when money was very short they had only one coat and waistcoat between them. Since the other man was much the bigger, and that coat and waistcoat were his, when Mr. Murray wore them it was a case of David in Saul's armor.

If there were periods of ill-fortune, there were occasional periods of prosperity. Mr. Murray met a number of well-known people, and they figure in the pages of his book; but the man who appears to have exercised the most influence on him was Robert Buchanan. Many pages are devoted to the poet, and we get some delightful pictures of the two friends. Buchanan, like the great Damas, was very hospitable. Mr. Murray went to see him, and stayed two years. When he mooted the subject of his departure the poet would not hear of it, and so the weeks and months flew by.

During this period the two authors collaborated, and wrote a novel and a play together. Adulation is not a weakness of Mr. Murray's, but his testimony to Buchanan's sterling character is whole-hearted. He was, he says—

"the best man I have ever known, the bravest, the most honest, the most cordial, the most kindly, the wisest in counsel, the readiest in help."

At Buchanan's house he met Herbert Spencer, Hall Caine, John Coleman, and George R. Sims. The good things Sims said at Buchanan's supper-table were endless, but only one is quoted. It is so excellent a bon-mot that we should have liked more.

Mr. Murray once had the great good fortune to spend a day with George Meredith. As a journalist he had naturally met thousands of people, but he says of the author of *Richard Feverel*:—

"I had been rather afraid of meeting him, for I considered, and still consider him, very much the greatest man I have ever had the privilege of encountering in intimate converse."

The meeting took place in 1889, and here is a summary of Mr. Murray's description of the great writer:—

"A tall old man, whose extreme leanness made him appear of more than his actual height. He was loosely clad in grey tweeds and a soft felt hat, and carried a crooked oaken walking-stick. His features were strongly masculine, and expressed physical and intellectual virility of the highest and keenest sort. It was the face of an intellectual gladiator rather than that of a poet, and had nothing in it of the ascetic or the saint. He had a curious and memorable voice, a voice which gripped the ear somewhat as chianti grips the palate. His manner might be described as 'old fashioned,' with a breadth, repose, rotundity, and stateliness seldom met with nowadays. He spoke with a marked drawl, and with the accent common to the English gentleman. He had a huge tuft of obstinate grey hair bristling over his forehead, and he had the habit of constantly endeavoring to smooth it back into its place. He had a way of divagating suddenly from dialogue into monologue, and of adding cryptic asides. He would have been a trying associate to an intellectually lazy man."

There were several other guests, including Leslie Stephen and some young people:—

"The host seemed to be as young at heart as anyone among them, and was obviously a huge favorite at dinner. One of the guests would drink nothing but mineral water, and Meredith warned him against that habit with solemnity, illustrating its dangers by a horrific story about a fellow collegian at Dusseldorf, 'when I was studying medicine there,' who had fallen a victim to any unbridled thirst for that class of beverage. The unfortunate youth had died in agony, and Meredith had performed the autopsy. 'When I made the first incision,' said the great writer, 'suiting the action to the word with pantomimic gusto on the joint he was carving, 'the glitter of the stalactites in the poor fellow's gastric cavity positively blinded me—I had to wear blue glasses for months after.'"

As the title of his autobiography shows, Mr. Murray regards himself as "a stepson of fortune." We hope that this latest publication of his will belie his epithet. The book is full of interest and caustic comment on men and things. If there is a cynical tone in many pages there is also a deeper note struck which shows clearly the sensitive poetic nature underlying the tone of the man of the world.

The beautiful and touching dedication of the book to his wife is the thing which most clearly remains in our mind as we put down this fascinating book of the memories of a literary man. VERDANT GREEN.

Nothing calmer than smoke, but nothing more startling. There are peaceful smokes, and there are evil ones. The thickness and color of a line of smoke marks the whole difference between war and peace, between fraternity and hatred, between hospitality and the tomb, between life and death. A smoke mounting among the trees may be a symbol of all that is most charming in the world—a hearth at home; or a sign of that which is most awful—a conflagration. The whole happiness of man, or his most complete misery, is sometimes expressed in this thin vapor, which the wind scatters at will.—*Victor Hugo.*

The Catholic Church says the most irreverent things about matters which are sacred to the Protestants, and the Protestant Church retorts in kind about the confessional and other matters which Catholics hold sacred; then both of those irreverencers turn upon Thomas Paine and charge him with irreverence. This is all unfortunate, because it makes it difficult for students equipped with only a low grade of mentality to find out what Irreverence really is.—*Mark Twain.*

## Acid Drops.

Rev. R. J. Campbell has been treating his City Temple congregation to a diatribe against the Czar. This is all very well in its way. We have stated our own opinion of that pious gentleman—who, by the way, is a very good Christian; and we stated it some time ago, when the opinion we have of him was not so fashionable as it is now. No great courage is needed on Mr. Campbell's part to denounce the Czar to-day. Nevertheless he is entitled to all the proper credit of his performance. But we venture, on the other hand, to ask him a question. If he is so fond of freedom, why has he said nothing about the tyrannous acts of the British Government in India, where men are arrested, deported, and even permanently imprisoned without being brought to any form of trial? And here is another question. Why has Mr. Campbell uttered no word of protest against the latest application of the Blasphemy Laws? Amongst the "blasphemies" in Harry Boulter's indictment was a passage quoted literally from Mr. Campbell's *New Theology*. Upon that indictment Harry Boulter is suffering a month's imprisonment. Properly speaking, two or three days (at least) ought to be done by Mr. Campbell. But he affects to know nothing of the matter. "Mum's," the word. On the whole, the reverend oracle of the New Theology reminds us of Hosea Biglow's friend of freedom:—

"I du believe in Freedom's cause  
Ez fur away ez Paris is."

Distance lends enchantment to the view.

Mr. Campbell says there are militant Freethinking Socialists who would rejoice if they could drive every religious person out of the movement. We question this very strongly, and imagine that Mr. Campbell is endowing Freethinkers with a Christian's prejudices. Our observation has shown us that the boot is on the other foot. It is Christian Socialists who have, all over the country, tried to make the movement impossible for Freethinkers, and in some places have succeeded. Freethinkers are usually willing to co-operate with anyone who agrees to co-operate in the work that is immediately in hand. It is the traditional religious policy to demand agreement in religious doctrine as an essential basis for co-operation in social effort.

Mr. Campbell says it is Christian Socialism that is making all the headway that has the future with it. If that is so, it would seem as though Socialism was on its last legs. Or it may be that the Oracle is mistaken in his diagnosis.

It was very edifying, so soon after the complaints made against the National Secular Society being allowed to hold a perfectly orderly meeting in Picton Hall, Liverpool, on Whit-Sunday, to see the two great divisions of Christians, Catholic and Protestant, fighting each other like wild cats in the streets of that great city. The battle began on a Sunday,—no doubt on the principle of "the better the day the better the deed." The police put a stop to it after great exertions, charges by mounted men, and the arrest of dozens of violent disciples of the religion of love. But the battle was resumed on the Monday and Tuesday, and mothers and children were drawn into it, so that fifty schools had to be closed by the Education Committee. Such is the sweet temper of the dear religionists who want to exclude peaceful Freethinkers from the common rights of citizenship.

Pastor George Wise, of Liverpool, is an Orangeman. He loves the Catholics with a Protestant love, and they reciprocate the feeling from their own standpoint. Pastor George Wise is not only an Orangeman, but a bold Orangeman. In spite of the recent religious riots, and the Lord Mayor's warning against assembling in the public streets at present, Pastor George Wise declared that he would—yes *would*—hold his Bible Class parade on Sunday afternoon. The police brought him up by warrant before the City Justices, and the case was adjourned until the following Thursday to enable him to prepare his defence. But when the bold Orangeman found that the Stipendiary would not grant him bail, his courage began to fall towards freezing point; after a little experience of being under lock and key, he promised to abandon his Bible Class procession, and was released with two sureties. For this remarkable heroism he was carried shoulder high round the aisles of his church on Sunday afternoon.

A vulgar overheated stove (in June, too!) set fire to the holy St. Aiden's Church, Roker, Sunderland, on Sunday morning, just at the conclusion of early Communion. In spite of the efforts of the fire brigade the sacred edifice was destroyed. More "Providence"!

Canon Ransford, at a recent Rochester Diocesan Conference, told a story of a little boy who asked his mother one Sunday morning, "Mummy, is Heaven on the telephone, because I want to ask God if he really minds me playing a game." Canon Ransford does not appear to have given the mother's answer. Nor does he seem to have said what his own answer would be. If the clergy have not telephonic communication with heaven they are a set of rank impostors. They live on their supposed intercourse with the Deity.

Last week's *John Bull* contained an article by Theodore Dable on the Boulter case. We confess it was not what might have been expected in our lively contemporary. Laborious witticisms seem rather out of place when men's liberties are at stake. The situation is not at all comic to the man who is in prison—even for a month. Theodore Dable fills a column without saying anything to the purpose. He commits himself to nothing, except that "prosecutions of this sort are not to his personal liking." Without explicitly saying so, he manages to convey the impression that Mr. Boulter is justly incarcerated for "observations which he thought fit to make against the Deity on Clapham Common." Now we are not in love with Mr. Boulter's methods of speech; to put it as mildly as possible, he lacks subtlety and elegance. But, as a matter of fact, he said nothing about "the Deity" on Clapham Common. He did say some disagreeable things about Jehovah, but Jehovah is only one of the great multitude of figures in the world's Pantheon, and is by no means "the Deity." Moreover, to tell the plain truth, what Mr. Boulter said about Jehovah was quoted, first from Mr. Robert Blatchford, and secondly from the Rev. R. J. Campbell. A good part of his month is due to adopting those gentleman's "indiscretions." And as men of honor and courage they ought to say a word on behalf of their scapegoat.

"In the view of the majority of the population," the *John Bull* writer says, "as expressed in the law of the land, to call the Deity names by which he is not generally known, is blasphemy. Mr. Boulter is really guilty of libel." Nonsense! And pestilent nonsense too. If the Deity is libelled, the Deity should protect his own character. Is it supposed that he is incapable of doing so? In that case, has he given anyone a power of attorney to act on his behalf? When the Roman emperor Tiberius was asked to allow a prosecution for libelling the gods he replied, "No. Let the gods protect their own honor." That was not so very far from two thousand years ago. How much have we advanced since then, judging by Theodore Dable's article in one of the most pronounced Radical organs of to-day?

We quite agree that Mr. Boulter—like a good many Christian speakers—is less considerate than he might be. What we dissent from is the view that he ought to be punished while the Christian speakers go scot free. That is punishing him because he is a Freethinker. You may call it as many fine and pleasant names as you like, but it is simply *persecution*.

At the Primitive Methodist Conference, held at Southport, it was decided that women were not eligible to attend the meetings of that august body as delegates. Members of the American delegation upheld the decision; and behind both there is the authority of the New Testament. The case against female enfranchisement is, therefore, complete and irrevocable.

The *Christian World* says that theologians must move slowly if they would carry the common mind with them. This is an imperfect representation of a certain truth. Theologians always have the "common mind" with them. For the sufficient reason that they belong to it by nature. Real thinkers seek to develop the common mind. The aim of all theologians is to utilise it.

Mr. Josiah Nix, travelling evangelist—in a motor car—reports having had a most "wonderful time." We believe him. A motor car ride through England during the summer time has many advantages. There are many less comfortable ways of "serving the Lord."

Colonel Fishwick, President of the Association of Education Committees, has followed the President of the National Union of Teachers in pronouncing in favor of Secular Education. He pointed out that the longer the Churches delay settlement, the nearer comes the secular solution. And he adds, "In fact, some of us are beginning to see so many advantages in it that we begin to love it for itself alone." The *Christian World* remarks on this that it "should be a

waring to those who desire to preserve religious instruction in the schools." In other words, the *Christian World* warns religionists that if they delay long enough for the public to recognise the advantages and justice of Secular Education the game is up.

Says Mr. Runciman, "Nowadays, the subject of education without the vexed question of denominational instruction loses its interest when raised in the House of Commons." This quite bears out all we have said on the subject. Those who are shrieking up and down the country over the action or inaction of the Government are not really concerned with education; their concern is for religious instruction solely. Everything else is a means to an end—one of the most contemptible ends conceivable.

Rev. Dr. Clifford, with other Paddington "passive resisters," was summoned before the magistrates on June 24 for non-payment of the quarter's general rate—their objection being to the educational, or, as they called it, the *sectarian* portion. Dr. Clifford explained that their new policy was to make a protest and pay up at once. That suited the magistrates nicely; they heard what the comic-opera "martyr" had to say, and made the usual order. The reverend gentleman said that the Act of 1902 inflicted a grievous wrong on Nonconformists. It compelled them to pay a new Church rate in order to maintain in thousands of schools teachings which they abhorred. Of course, it never occurs to him that either of the Bills which the present Government has introduced, with the full support of the Nonconformist, would have compelled all non-Christians to pay for teachings which they abhor. Paying for what you abhor is only a grievance in the case of the Nonconformists. When it is arranged for other people by Nonconformists, it is perfectly just and reasonable.

The Protestant Dissenting Deputies, a body of Nonconformists with a right of personal approach to the King, held their annual meeting lately at the Memorial Hall, and passed a number of resolutions—all in the sectarian interest of Nonconformity. The last resolution stated that the education controversy is now as pressing as ever it has been, and urged the Government to pass, once and for all, a Bill which will establish a single system of public education under public control, and free from all dogmatic teaching and doctrinal tests. It is pitiable to see Nonconformists clinging to this hypocritical verbiage to the very last. They know quite well—at least their leaders do—that religion cannot be taught except dogmatically, and that doctrinal tests are inevitable under any system of religious teaching. The tests may not be open, but they are all the worse for being surreptitious.

Principal Garvie informed a large congregation on Sunday, June 6, that "man is everywhere religious," and that this "is a fact which is now put beyond doubt or question." The reverend gentleman ought to be ashamed of such an assertion. Herbert Spencer, in his *Principles of Sociology*, proves, by numerous quotations from the highest authorities, that peoples have been found, and fully communicated with, who are utterly devoid of all religious ideas and practices. He cites a long conversation between Sir Samuel Baker and the chief of a Nile tribe, during which the chief avowed his total unbelief in any existence after death, as well as in any spirits superior to man or beast. He also quotes from the Rev. Samuel Smith, who had twenty-eight years' almost daily contact with deaf-mutes, to the effect that "it has not been found, in a single instance, that an uneducated mute has had any conception of the existence of a Supreme Being as the Creator and Ruler of the Universe." From such testimonies Spencer draws the entirely reasonable inference that religious ideas and practices have a purely natural origin. Dr. Garvie ignores all such testimonies, and asserts the opposite.

Dr. Garvie further states that "all the reasons for belief are not accessible to us until we have believed." But this is like putting the cart before the horse. How on earth can a sane person believe without knowing the reason why? To believe without evidence is simply to play the fool. We do know that specific experiences spring from belief, but we know also that the belief fully accounts for them, while apart from the belief they are unknown.

Professional missionaries look down with unspeakable pity upon the shocking heathenism of the great centres of Christian countries. A worker of "long and varied experience at home and abroad" says: "I never came in contact with worse heathen in foreign mission-fields than I find in some districts of New York City. 'Do you know the Savior?' a

little waif was asked. 'I never heard about that man,' was the answer. 'Do you know who God is?' 'Yes,' he replied, 'I know. God is the man who, if you say a few words to him before you go to sleep, he won't hurt you in the night.' " Judging that "little waif" by the answers he made to his pietistic catechiser, we should pronounce him a bright and promising young humorist. Christendom has heard too much, and known nothing, about the Savior, while the tiny chap's description of God well shows up the absurdity of belief in him.

A silly, incredible story is going the rounds as to how a Protestant lady defeated a Romish priest in an argument about Transubstantiation. The lady's husband was dying, and the priest recommended the administration of the Holy Sacrament. Not having any wafers with him, the wife was requested to prepare bread and wine for the occasion. She did so, but on being assured by the priest that, subsequent to their consecration by him, the bread and wine would be changed into the Body and Blood of Christ, and could do the participants no harm, she informed him that she had mixed some arsenic with the bread, and invited him to partake, as, being now the Body of the Redeemer, it could not poison him. The priest, however, declined to make the experiment, and went away crestfallen and ashamed. The explanation was that only the bread, but not the arsenic in it, would, on consecration, become the Body of Christ. How very interesting and instructive!

Spain, being a most Christian country, still maintains its brutal and brutalising bull-fights. Recently, the bulls have been getting level with their tormentors by killing and wounding a number of professional matadors. The action of the Spanish Government on this is what one might have expected. The Minister of the Interior has in view a series of regulations that will secure the appearance of such animals that are not likely to injure the performers. By this means a Christian populace will have its appetite for a brutal spectacle satisfied without the life of the superior animal, man, being endangered. We hope the bulls will discover some new method of circumventing the proposed regulations.

We all know how powerful a check on wrong-doing is the presence of religion. It is the only thing that keeps people moral. This will account for a number of complaints of theft from the Sardinian Chapel, Lincoln's-inn-fields. After some watching, a thirteen year old girl was detected stealing a purse from one of the lady worshipers. The report does not state whether the girl attended Sunday-school or not.

The Bishop of Southwark says that preachers of all denominations would be astonished to find how little the matters they were at pains to set forth in the pulpit were believed in by the people in the pews. Quite true; and the people in the pews would be surprised to find out how little of what they preach the people in the pulpit believe. The whole thing is largely a game of solemn make-believe. The people in the pulpit continue preaching certain things because they believe those in the pews have not found out their falsity. When they discover their mistake, and the congregation begins to show signs of restiveness, they begin to talk about "liberal Christian doctrines," and of the necessity of a revision of Christian teaching in the light of the larger spiritual life of to-day. Meanwhile, the people in the pews keep up the pretence of believing, solacing themselves with the reflection that church attendance offers certain social advantages, while the clergy serve as a useful auxiliary to the police force. It is all an elaborate piece of humbug, and, naturally, its supporters are terribly angry with the few who are honest enough to denounce the imposture.

Mr. Rattenbury says of the Wesleyan Methodists: "We are spending our energies to-day in building chapels, in paying debts, in raising funds, in perfecting machinery, and we are largely powerless." If Mr. Rattenbury admits this as true of his own Church, he is not likely to question its truth when applied to others. They are all failures. They raise funds from their members, they build new churches—despite the fact that existing ones are not filled—and they group and re-group their followers, like the members of a stage army. But the outside world goes its own way, with an increasing number of recruits. Mr. Rattenbury thinks that their only hope is that God will interfere on their behalf—and those who can only trust in God are usually in a critical condition. He also says that, "If every Methodist in this country were to seriously pray that God would manifest his power in England during the present year, I seriously assert that the condition of England would be seriously changed." Evidently it must be Methodists or

God would not pay attention. No others need apply—unless a letter of introduction from Mr. Rattenbury would secure the attention of the Deity.

The Lord's Day Rest Association is again on the warpath. This time it is petitioning Mr. Arthur Henderson, M.P., to do all in his power to stop the holding of demonstrations on Sunday. No doubt this will suit the interests of many who would like to stop public demonstrations altogether. If demonstrations are to take place at all, Sunday is by a long way the most favorable day for them. It is true that demonstrations on this day interfere with Church and Chapel, and with all the professed interest by religious preachers on social questions they are not likely to encourage anything that interferes with the success of their own peculiar profession.

"Quartus" in the *Manchester Guardian* (understood to be Canon Hicks) makes some reasonable observations on Roman Catholic processions with the Host. Roman Catholic processions, in themselves, are as legitimate as other processions, but the carrying of the Host is a different matter altogether, and in our opinion it ought not to be permitted. "Quartus" says:—

"Here is a ceremonial act which makes a demand on all who witness it, not only for sympathy but for active approval. Roman Catholics, as the Host is passing, fall on their knees in worship. No reverent bystander will like to remain covered. The occasion is embarrassing to all who decline to believe in Transubstantiation. It is a challenge to everyone openly to declare assent or disbelief. It is surely an act of incivility to force the crowd in a street to declare themselves on one side or another. No public procession can be allowed and assisted by public authorities which is thus intentionally provocative."

It is obvious that if Catholics may worship the Host in the public streets, Protestants, Jews, and Freethinkers have an equal right to laugh at it in the public streets; and it is equally obvious that such a state of things is highly dangerous to the public peace. Religious rites of all kinds should be confined to religious buildings or to public places specially set apart for such performances.

"Quartus" also refers to the decline in church attendance. "I observe," he says, "that nearly all the Nonconformist bodies are discovering statistical evidence of a falling-off in numbers. Their Sunday scholars are fewer; their Bands of Hope are not expanding; their church attendance, especially in the mornings, is shrinking." This writer adds that "the Church of England is by no means without her difficulties." Quite so. The decline is general. The dry rot in the pews answers the drier rot in the pulpits.

What is truth? asked Pilate, and Jesus Christ gave him no answer. Some would say he dodged the question. Professor William James is less timid or less squeamish. He has written a book entitled *The Nature of Truth*, which will be published shortly. It is sure to be interesting, and it is a pity that Pilate is unable to read it.

The world may breathe freely. The weekly organ of the New Theology assures us that "God is not opposed to Social Democracy." Hypercritical people might suggest that God should be allowed to speak for himself; but such people are unworthy of attention.

We venture to assert that God will always be on the most powerful side. Few propositions are less open to dispute.

Judge Willis is a pious gentleman; otherwise we should strongly advise him to stick to the truth. When he says that there is no imprisonment for debt, he ought to know that he is talking in the very teeth of the law. When he says that people are only imprisoned for disobeying an order when in a position to pay, and that judges are always careful that there is direct evidence of ability to pay before they issue a committal order, he says what everybody off the bench knows to be ridiculously (or frightfully) untrue. Twelve thousand people wouldn't go to gaol every year sooner than pay if they were able to do so. Anyone who has ever watched County Court proceedings is aware that the "evidence" of ability to pay is often of the flimsiest description; frequently the bare word of the creditor, who as often as not applies for a committal order with the object of forcing the debtor to make a general whip-up amongst his friends and relations—in other words, of blackmailing the debtor's sympathisers. And, after all, it is only poor people who are sent to prison in this way. People who owe larger sums are free from all danger of such penalties.

A newspaper headline: "A Deacon Accused of Theft." Impossible! Incredible! Unthinkable! How could a man "full up" with the only true religion go wrong? Those newspapers will print anything.

Bernard Isaac Robert, who is doing eighteen months for his share in the "D. S. Windell" case, wavered in his determination to carry out the fraud, through "spiritual elevation" acquired at a Buddhist meeting. Another time, he turned the matter over in his mind while gazing at Holman Hunt's picture of Christ in St. Paul's Cathedral. Did that decide him? Anyhow, it didn't keep him from doing the deed.

White Christians have produced a hell in the "heathen" Congo. There was a review in last week's *Athenæum* of a new book by M. Challaye, who was attached to the staff of the De Brazza mission, and the following terrible extract is given:—

"The civilisation brought from Europe to the natives oppresses them, crushes them, kills them.....The words of Dante come to the mind. Here there is no more hope;—streams of blood, deepest depth of suffering, regions of eternal wailing. 'I see in the valley new torments, new torturers.'.....Throughout my life I shall retain the sadness of having seen with my own eyes real hell."

Horrible! Most horrible! And that Christians can perpetuate this hell is a sufficient condemnation of Christianity.

Some of the Russian Duma members went to St. Paul's Cathedral on Sunday morning and heard the Rev. C. H. Sharpe preach. This gentleman told them that the origin of the Duma "showed marks of the moving hand of God." This may have been flattering to the Duma members present, but how about the two hundred odd Duma members whom the Czar has sent to Siberia?

The latest Spanish royal baby has been christened. Jordan water was used for the purpose. It is supposed to be specially efficacious—probably because J. C. once dipped in the holy river. No doubt the flunkies of Society (with a capital S, of course) will patronise Jordan water presently. Perhaps it will be used with "Scotch"—for internal application.

"Who are heathens?" asked the Sunday-school teacher. "Heathens are people who don't quarrel over religion," answered the scholar. Evidently the Liverpool people in the late scrimmage are not "heathens." They are fanatical Christians.

#### FREE THOUGHTS.

If the Lord God wishes to prove his divine existence to an unbelieving world, let him select some old bachelor, who has not been able to find a wife, and take a rib from his anatomy and supply said bachelor with "an helpmeet" made from said rib, and the thing would be done.

To-day a man believes what he sees, not what he reads in the Bible.

Is the Trinity "three of a kind"?

When Jacob said: "I have seen God face to face" there is not a man or woman living to-day but believes that he lied.

Why did not Jesus ask his father in heaven for those twelve legions of angels, which he boasted would be given him for the asking? Jesus played his bluff game and lost.

Nothing can be proved by the Gospels until the Gospels are proved.

Wherever the word "God" is used there is confusion and misunderstanding.

The twentieth century denies the first. When across the desert of a thousand years comes the voice, God said this and God said that, man stands up and says: It is false; God has said and done nothing. All we see is the work of man and all we hear is the voice of man. Everything that contradicts Nature is false.

To tell us of Job's sufferings does not reduce our sufferings. But, that is what we want. Dead men don't help living men. It is the school, not the grave, that we must look to. A dead Jesus has nothing to save the world; it is the living scientist, the living discoverer, that the world must depend upon to find relief from its miseries and sufferings.

Dr. Eliot, Harvard's retiring president, says: "There is no proof of immortality." Facts all point that way.

A father on earth is worth the whole trinity in heaven.

The more man finds out, the less God seems to know, if the Bible is the index of divine knowledge.

It is hard work to sell religion to-day, even by giving trading stamps.

—L. K. Washburn, "Truthseeker" (New York).



**Mr. Foote's Engagements**

(Lecturing suspended during the Summer.)

**To Correspondents.**

**THE PRESIDENT'S HONORARIUM FUND:** Annual Subscriptions.—Previously acknowledged, £217 16s. 6d. Received since.—H. E., £1 1s.; George Dixon, £2 2s. From Kimberley: H. Swift, 2s. 6d.; H. Ward, 2s. 6d.; F. Blake, 2s. 6d.; W. A. Jones, 2s. 6d.; W. Harriaman, 1s.; A. E. Allnutt, 3s.; H. Schwazschild, 1s.; H. Shepherd, 2s. 6d.; N. O. Ruffel, 2s. 6d. A. J. Balzans, 5s.; Nameless (Saskatchewan), 3s.

**CHARLES WATSON.**—Why should we waste our time over the reverend gentleman? Suppose he wrote to the papers that the earth was flat. Would you have us occupy our pages in proving he was wrong? Would it not be better to advise him to go to an evening school? He is simply an ignoramus.

**W. P. BALL.**—Many thanks for cuttings.

**SIMPLE SANDY.**—Quite safe with us. Glad you "have the highest admiration for Meredith" and that you "much enjoyed" our articles on him.

**ALBERT LOVELL.**—May be useful.

**A. E. ALLNUTT.**—Shilling Month closed some time ago. The subscriptions have been credited elsewhere, as you will see—and approve.

**W. H. SPIVEY.**—Thanks for the extract. Cassell's *History of England* was written a long while ago by William Howitt, we believe.

**J. BYRON.**—Not up to our mark for publication.

**A. WEBBER.**—It is not in print now.

**A. CLARKE.**—Sorry to hear that Wymans' agent at No. 5 platform, New-street Station, Birmingham, treats the *Freethinker* in such a cavalier fashion. Perhaps he will learn better in time, but bigotry is rather an intractable disease in adults. You would probably do well to carry on your efforts to promote our circulation through another agency.

**E. J. BASKERVILLE.**—Pleased to learn that the Newton Abbott Free Library has accepted your offer to supply a copy of the *Freethinker*. We are obliged to you for securing the supply at your own expense, direct from our office.

**W. J. (Liverpool).**—Such an obituary notice would have been more appropriate in a Socialist or Anarchist journal.

**HYPERBOLIC.**—Mr. Horatio Bottomley was born (as a matter of fact) on March 23, 1860. Though not related to Charles Bradlaugh, he was related to G. J. Holyoake, his mother being that gentleman's sister. We did not bring these facts into our article, which destroyed the fable it was directed against by other means, and in the facetious vein that seemed most appropriate. It doesn't do to be quite solemn over foolish cackle. We have a horror of sending our readers to sleep.

**A. J. BALZANS (W. Australia).**—Joseph Symes's remains were cremated. His widow returned to Melbourne. We have no recent news of her.

**NAMELESS (Saskatchewan).**—Our circulation is several times your hypothetical figures. We cannot adopt your suggestion of printing our last week's circulation under the title. If you print it when it goes up, you have to print it when it goes down, or drop it out altogether, as we have seen done.

**R. S. P.**—Will deal with it next week. Thanks.

**L. CHEETHAM.**—We cannot answer your question yet. Your suggestion had better wait awhile. Thanks.

**S. COHEN.**—We are obliged. Shall be attended to.

**E. LECHMERE.**—Next week.

**THOMAS YOULT.**—Shall appear. Shall be pleased to hear from you as you suggest. Glad to have your appreciation and good wishes. What a funny idea the good Christians have of us and our "illiterate" readers! The comic side of their faith balances the tragic.

**J. B. C. B.**—He shall have a "Drop" next week.

**R. J. ROWLEY.**—Mark Twain cannot be an orthodox Christian. That is all we can say. The joke is a "chestnut."

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

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

**ORDERS** for literature should be sent to the Manager of the Pioneer Press, 2 Newcastle-street, Farringdon-street, E.C., and not to the Editor.

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

**The "Blasphemy" Case.**

The National Secular Society saw the Boulter case through. After paying all the expenses, amounting to nearly £200, in the early part of last year, it has now paid the cost of representing Mr. Boulter during his late appearances in Court, prior to his month's imprisonment. This bill amounts to £19 8s. In addition there is £8 paid to Mrs. Boulter during the

four weeks of her husband's absence from home. This makes a total of £27 8s.

The National Secular Society has acted entirely on principle, for Mr. Boulter is not, and never has been, one of its members. The Society's Executive thinks as I do, that its poor exchequer ought not to be taxed to this extent. I have, therefore, to ask the friends of Freethought, and the enemies of the Blasphemy Laws, to recoup the N. S. S. for this expenditure. It is not a large sum, and I venture to hope that it will be covered by the date of the next *Freethinker*. Subscriptions should be sent to me, at 2 Newcastle-street, Farringdon-street, London, E.C. They will all be acknowledged in these columns, and finally paid over in bulk to the N. S. S. treasury.

G. W. FOOTE,  
President, National Secular Society.

**Sugar Plums.**

Mr. Fredoric Harrison, at the annual meeting of the members of the London Library, paid a handsome tribute to the memory of the late George Meredith, who was a member of the Committee. After referring to the old *Fortnightly* days Mr. Harrison said:—

"In those days the great public had not learned to judge Meredith aright; his audience was fit, though few. But he was ever the stout-hearted, generous, inimitable, indomitable lover of justice, beauty, and truth, the kindly satirist of meanness, affectation, and self-love. The English-speaking world, which now devours his tales and his poems, at last knows how much genius, how much wisdom, how much courage lay wrapped up in the showers of epigrams and portraits he flung about him so freely.

But we who knew the man himself, who heard him in the world and in his home, could understand what a passionate sense of right and wrong, what a high heart he could keep in all his early struggle to be recognised for what he was, what determination burned within him never to yield one jot of his own ideas and methods to any public demand, or any pecuniary object. And I often think that in this self-reliance, in his ideals, in his grand humanity, George Meredith enables us better to sympathise with and to understand the kindred genius of Leo Tolstoy."

Mr. Haldane, who was elected to fill Meredith's place on the Committee, added to Mr. Harrison's tribute:—

"Mr. Haldane said he was there through the loss of one who was a leader of thought. George Meredith was a unique figure. Perhaps the secret of his greatness as a writer was that his marvellous personality was always present in what he wrote. Whether it was poetry or prose, it could have been written only by one man in the world, and that man was George Meredith. The distinctive characteristic in his writing was that he was present in every line he penned, and the sincerity and inevitableness which characterised everything he wrote was impressed in that manner on the reader."

Meredith was always himself. He never wrote a word with an eye to any ulterior object. He said what his genius and convictions prompted. No more and no less. This absolute honesty and sincerity marks him off from most of the writers of his age. One's mind looks round for another, and sees—Swinburne.

The Council of the Guild of St. Matthew passed the following resolution at their last meeting:—"That the Council of the Guild of St. Matthew desires once again to make its protest against the recent prosecution and conviction under the Blasphemy Laws. The Council is convinced that there are laws sufficient to maintain the decencies of public speech without having recourse to laws which place the Christian apologists in an invidious position of legal superiority when dealing with an Atheist opponent."—(Rev.) STEWART D. HEADLAM, Warden; (Mrs.) VACY LYLE, Hon. Sec.

Rev. R. B. Drummond, B.A., discoursed at St. Mark's Unitarian Church, Edinburgh, last Sunday morning on Thomas Paine. Handbills invited the public to attend and "hear an account of this strenuous advocate of Liberty, Justice, and Truth, the famous author of the *Rights of Man* and the *Age of Reason*, to whom the world owes so much and has hitherto acknowledged so little."

The Liverpool Branch goes on picnic to-day (July 4) to Eastham. A specially chartered steamer leaves Liverpool Landing Stage at 10 a.m. Tickets (including fare, lunch, and tea) 8s. Apply to J. Hammond, 99 Belmont-road.

The Darwin celebration at Cambridge was an interesting event. His genius and achievements were represented at many points. But one point was not represented at all—

and in the long run it may prove to be the most important. Darwin as a convinced Freethinker was entirely ignored. But the world will not forget him in that aspect. After the verdict of Cambridge there remains the verdict of History. And it will declare that Darwin was a revolutionist in more than biology. That quiet country gentleman, in that quiet Kentish village, where he kept in practical touch with the common (and eternal) life of his kind, was doing more to change the current of human thought, and therefore the stream of civilisation, than all the loud "leaders" of men in the great cities of England.

Correspondents are asking us whether Dr. E. B. Foote's *Home Encyclopedia* is a good work and worth buying. Our answer is decidedly in the affirmative. We made the author's personal acquaintance, which ripened into friendship, when we visited America twelve years and a half ago. He was one of the best Freethinkers in the United States and one of the firmest financial pillars of the Freethought cause. He was universally respected; and we have said more than once that (always after Colonel Ingersoll) we liked him the best of all the men we met over there. He was a real, not a quack, doctor, a thinker, and a philanthropist. His death, two or three years ago, was a great loss to the cause of liberty and progress. His work is being carried on by an able and devoted son bearing the very same name.

"The recent death of Swinburne and Meredith has brought out facts with which the public was unacquainted during their lives. The following is of unusual interest to Freethinkers. A few years ago, Miss Eva Ingersoll Farrell (now Mrs. Brown), a niece of Mrs. Ingersoll, wrote to the great poet and the great novelist requesting their autographs. Meredith responded succinctly and expressively: 'The name of Ingersoll commands me.—George Meredith.' Swinburne wrote:—

'Dear Miss Ingersoll Farrell.—I am greatly obliged to you for the pleasure given me by the knowledge that your uncle, Colonel Ingersoll, the man whom, above all others, I should have hoped and wished to meet if I visited America during his lifetime, found something in my work worthy of his regard or sympathy.—ALGERNON SWINBURNE.'

This was written in 1900, four years after Ingersoll's death. Swinburne and Ingersoll admired each other because both had done worthy work, and they were in sympathy because of their equal rejection and profound dislike of the popular religion, Christianity. In this sense 'deep answered unto deep.'—*Truthseeker* (New York).

### For the Love of God.

"I will say this much for the nobility; that, tyrannical, murderous, rapacious and morally rotten as they were, they were deeply and enthusiastically religious."—MARK TWAIN, *Yankee at Court of King Arthur*, ch. xvii.

MAN, it is true, has been fearfully and wonderfully made—or evolved, to use the correct word. In the development of the race Nature has been terribly prodigal. With all her wondrous machinery of destruction—cataclysms, earthquakes, cyclones, inundations, etc.—she has wrought havoc among her microscopic subjects, mankind. Nature is unmoral; she is neither kind nor cruel. She heeds not our curses, she requires not our adoration, she is deaf to our lamentations and blind to our sufferings. She is exacting and inexorable, and it is our duty to try and understand her motives and actions—not to belaud or condemn them. Up to a century ago Nature was a nonentity. Back of all things vague and inexplicable was God. If aught occurred that intelligence could not grapple with, Nature was never consulted or considered—it was God. God was invented during the earth's period of childhood to explain all the enigmas and incongruities of life. The infant mind of man gloried in brutality and exhibitions of suffering. God, his own creation, was, naturally, cruel also. It obviously follows that the more pious a person was, the more bestial and brutal he was likely to be, and history bears this out. In the ancient world the human race was enveloped in the clouds of ignorance and credulity; and God, being the explanation of all things, it is little wonder that the race invariably selected the worst type of mind, the biggest fiend, to fill the sacred office of priest. Every expression of Nature's handiwork—rain, crops, wind, pain and pleasure—were but manifestations of God's power. To dispel the enchantments of evil spirits, to keep them at bay and to look well to the supply

of good signs and auguries, was the ordinary occupation of the priest; his more solemn and specific function was to slake with blood the thirst of the deity and his million and one satellites, the imps, gnomes, goblins, and good spirits that roamed the forests and caverns of the earth. He never looked so august and supreme as when officiating at the sacrifice of infants or young maidens. Blood! Blood! The gods called for blood, the earth demanded blood to fertilise the crops, and the shedding of the holy blood was the noblest and most pleasing duty of the priest.

Sacrifice has always played a part of supreme importance in religion. The more precious and rich the blood, the greater the service to the deity; and human blood was ever the more vital and fecund. There must always be a goodly supply of victims ready at the priests' hands, and there generally—*I might say always*—was. Playmates, lovers surprised behind the hedges, old women accused of witchcraft, so-called sorcerers and social malefactors were dragged off. "Brothers sold their sisters,"\* and the holy shambles never lacked its attractions.

Here is a description of a religious rite common among the almost forgotten tribe of Khonds:—

"Ten or twelve days before the ceremony the patricians and notables purified and bathed themselves, according to ritual, in the sacred groves of the primitive forest. The deity was warned to hold himself in readiness, the feast was preparing.

The victim has been crowned with flowers, anointed with oil and melted butter, and painted with yellow saffron, the color of the spirits of light and of heaven. And now the people fall down and worship her, for she is now the deity incarnate.

It is on this principle that the Khonds and their like set up their victim as a divinity, flatter her, laud her beauty, sing her praise, dance around her. At nightfall they rush towards her and touch her. The unhappy creature brings good luck.

In the twinkling of an eye she is stripped of her raiment, which is torn to pieces amongst those who contend for it. They scent their hands in her hair, scrape off her cosmetics; entreat some spittle, which they will carefully spread over their faces. Thereupon the multitude withdraws, leaving the victim tied to her stake, her throne, her column of glory; they leave her alone, hungry, trembling, naked, in the chill of night, amid the terrors of the forest, to await the horrible tragedy of the morrow. What a vigil! The immense solitude, the frightful silence broken only by the yells of wild beasts, the mysterious voices of the forest uttering words unknown, what have these to say to the poor child?

In the morning the whole village returns to make an end. Music, fifes, gongs, little bells: deafening shrieks and screams. The people surround her, pity her, and remind one another that only yesterday she was treated as a pet. 'How merry she was.' 'How she loved to sing and laugh.'"

"She was your boy's sweetheart." More than one paterfamilias, who would be in despair should the victim escape, weeps, is moved to pity as much or more than the rest; he thereby is enabled to shed some exquisitely sweet tears, and cause other kindly souls to weep too, and, what is far more, make the victim sob, which is a good omen. When the emotion is at its height, the officiating priest gives the signal; the multitude grows calm and arranges itself around in orderly manner. The divine spirit enters into the priest and inspires him, causes him to tell of the origin of the sacred institution:—

"In the beginning was the earth a formless mass of mud, and could not have borne the dwelling of man or even his weight; in this liquid and ever-moving slime neither tree nor herb took root. The God said:—Spill human blood before my face! and they sacrificed a child before him. Falling upon the soil, the bloody drops stiffened and consolidated it, and by virtue of the blood shed, the seeds began to sprout, the plants to grow, the animals propagate. And God commanded that the earth be watered by blood every new season to keep her firm and solid.

All living things must suffer, and would'st (addressing himself to the victim) thou be exempt from the common

\* Arbuthnot.

anguish? Thy blood poured forth, oh *meriah*, will slake the thirst of the world, and she will be animated with new vigor.

Scarcely are these invocations at an end before the priest seizes his hatchet and approaches the *meriah*. She must not die in her bonds, since the death is voluntary—of her own free will, as they say. He loosens her from the stake, then breaks her elbows and knees with the back of his hatchet. Then they suspend her over the opening of a pit by the heels and neck. That she might not be strangled, she instinctively clutches at the sides of the trench with her hands, and the priest with his carving-knife sets about slashing her arms and legs and back; at the seventh stroke he cuts her throat, and the blood is spurted all over the ground.”\*

Perpetrated in the name of God! Is it any wonder that beings with a spark of human feeling smouldering in the heart, and the light of reason illumining their brain, should hate, loathe, and detest the very name of God or priest? Shelley's dictum, “The name of God has fenced about all crime with holiness,” is terribly true. The one instance I have quoted is not an isolated one. The history of religion is the history of horror. It is one long panorama of bloodshed, torture, agony, and fearful lust. It was born of the children of darkness, cradled in ignorance, and nourished at the breasts of barbaric cruelty and vanity. The psalms and hymns of religious devotion howled from fifty million throats are drowned ignominiously by the shrieks of agony from its victims of the past:—

“There is a fountain filled with blood  
Drawn from Emmanuel's veins.”

It is impossible to separate the association of religion with blood or fear or agony. They are synonymous terms. Even to-day, though no longer powerful enough to practise their horrid butcheries and barbarities, the symbols are still retained. One has merely to visit an ordinary church to witness the spectacle of otherwise gentle and sane people masticating the flesh and blood of their deity at the communion-table, and singing most murderous imprecations from the Psalms of David to that same deity, all unconscious of the fact that it is energy expended in the cause of a useless anachronism. Man, however, is gradually becoming more and more reconciled with facts, and the days of the priest are numbered. The thumbscrew of the priest is now the vice of the carpenter; the rack has been converted into a windlass; crucifixion no longer fashionable, the cross has been utilised for the suspension of telegraph-wires, and from the stakes, where numberless victims writhed in pain, little children now laugh and babble as they swing backwards and forwards in the air. The race is progressing, and the instruments of priestcraft dedicated to the glory of God are fast becoming, one and all, adapted by science to a much better function—*For the use of man.*

JOHN S. CLARKE.

## The Narratives in Genesis—IV.

THE BIBLE CREATION  
STORIES AND SCIENCE.—*Concluded.*

(Continued from p. 413.)

CONTINUING our examination of the Creation story, we come to the record of the fifth day's work. This, the writer says, was the creation of fish and fowl.

“And Elohim said, Let the waters bring forth abundantly the living creatures, and let fowl fly above the earth on the face of the expanse of the heaven.”

It should be noticed that the water population and the air population were created simultaneously, the two being called into existence at one and the same time. This done, Elohim blessed the two classes of animals together. The writer does not say anything about the food for the fishes; he probably thought they lived on water. As a matter of fact, an

immense number of the smaller species of the finny tribes must have been created for no other purpose than to furnish food for the larger species. The water population being exceedingly voracious, and nearly all preying upon each other, would require a large supply of the smaller fry from the first hour of their existence. Small fish, such as the pilchard, smelt, and goby, feed upon still smaller fish, and on crustacean and testacean animals. Somewhat larger fish, such as the mackerel, pike, and dory, live on any small fish, spawn, and crustacea they can get hold of. Those a little larger, such as the cod and salmon, feed on all kinds of small fish, including sand-eels, small crabs, whelks, and limpets. Those larger still, such as the halibut, ling, and turbot, devour cod, haddock, mackerel, skate, herrings, lampreys, etc. The great porpoise lives on mackerel, salmon, and herrings. The narwhal feeds on large fish of the turbot and skate kind; the ray, on any sort of fish it can catch, its jaws being able to crack the shell of a large crab. The shark swallows the largest fish whole, including seals, and does not even object to man. The whale, though such a large animal, lives on the smallest swimming mollusca; but it takes in a shoal of these at once, and so must have consumed an immense number on the very first day.

In the creation of fishes a clear case of design may be seen; for the stomachs of this class of animals are fitted for performing the whole work of assimilation without any preparation of the food by the mouth, so that their prey can be swallowed whole. To devour and be devoured was thus the first law implanted in the animal world. Elohim doubtless considered this an admirable arrangement, and so while all the hungry fish were catching and devouring the smaller fry, he saw that his work was good, and blessed his newly made creatures, the eaters, and those about to be eaten or already eaten, alike.

On the sixth and last day of creation Elohim made “the beast of the earth after its kind, and the cattle after their kind, and everything that creepeth upon the ground after its kind,” and having seen that “it was good,” he turned his attention to the creation of man. Moreover, the food for all the land animals created was not forgotten. Elohim is reported as saying:—

“And to every beast of the earth, and to every fowl of the air, and to every thing that creepeth upon the earth, wherein there is life, I have given every green herb for meat.”

This, no doubt, was very good of him; but he appears to have forgotten that the carnivorous animals could not live on raw vegetables; for, as a matter of fact, their teeth and their internal arrangements are not fitted for such diet. All the birds of prey—the eagle, condor, vulture, buzzard, kite, falcon, kestrel, sparrowhawk, harrier, owl, and all the rest of this class—would require a very large number of the smaller birds or quadrupeds for food from the first hour of their creation. The birds who lived on insects would also require an immense number of the last-mentioned creatures. The lion, tiger, leopard, jaguar, puma, hyena, wolf, jackal, wild-cat, alligator, boa, cobra, and all the other carnivorous animals, would require vast numbers of the smaller animals for their daily food. No provision having been made for any of the flesh-eating birds, beasts, or reptiles, those animals were reduced to the necessity of providing for themselves, and from the first hour of their existence they began to prey upon the more defenceless herbivorous animals. Here, again, there is a truly beautiful design shown in the creation of this class of animals, more especially in regard to the teeth, beaks, claws, and talons with which they are furnished.

Leaving, for the present, the Priestly writer's account of the creation of man, we will look at the second Creation story. In this narrative the god Yahveh—“Yahveh elohim”—“formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life: and man became a living soul.” The writer of this account appears to have imagined that the external form was all that was necessary.

\* *Elie Reclus, Primitive Folk.*

He had evidently never considered the formation and working of the internal organs, and knew nothing of the elaborate net-work of veins, arteries, and nerves that ramified through every part of the human body. One solid lump of clay, fashioned into the outward form of a man, was all he thought of. The model completed, by breathing into it it was brought to life—like Pygmalion's statue.

This writer further tells us that "out of the ground the god Yahveh 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: and whatsoever the man called every living creature, that was the name thereof. And the man gave names to all cattle, and to the fowl of the air, and to every beast of the field." This is a truly wonderful story. In the first place, we behold the god Yahveh making with his own hands clay models of every kind of bird and beast. However expert he may have been, this work must have taken him a very considerable time. The number of known species of our present fauna (exclusive of insects and fishes) is, roughly speaking, about 2,000 mammals, 8,000 birds, and 1,600 reptiles; to which must be added about twice that number of extinct species. All these animals were certainly not fashioned in the two days assigned to the work in the first Creation story. The "Lord God" must have been busily engaged on his clay models for several years.

The next matter that is truly wonderful is the man giving names to "every living creature," and each name, once given, being the proper name of the creature. How was this done? How did the man think of ten thousand different names? And how did he remember the names he had given when he happened to see the animals afterwards? Did he take out a note-book, and make in it a small sketch of each animal, and write underneath (in indelible ink) the name it was to bear? If not, what system of mnemonics did he employ? For myself, I set down his story as a big, big—statement not in harmony with fact.

We are now in a position to compare the narratives in Genesis with the well-known facts established by Geology and Astronomy. Now, after carefully reviewing all the statements made in the two Creation stories, it soon becomes apparent that upon one point only are the narratives (or rather, one of them) in harmony with science. This is: that Man appeared upon the scene last of all. Upon every other point those narratives are flatly contradicted by fact. Is it true, for instance, that there was the light of day, and "evening" and "morning," before the creation of the Sun? Is it true, again, that light and darkness can be "separated" and confined in different places? Is it a fact that there is a solid "firmament" just above the clouds, upon which is stored immense quantities of water to be utilised as rain? Is it true that all kinds of vegetation were brought into existence upon the same "day," or even in the same "age"? Is it in accordance with fact that the Sun and Moon and the whole stellar universe were created later than this globe? or that they were made simply for the purpose of giving light upon this planet? Is it true that the water population and the air population came into existence upon the same "day" or in the same age? Is it a fact that all mammals and "creeping things" appeared upon this earth at the same period? or that none of either class was in existence before the appearance of birds? Is it true that the whole work of creation was performed in six solar days of twenty-four hours duration, each having "an evening and a morning" as at present? In a word, are all these Bible statements true? The answer, of course, is "No; not in a single instance." They are, one and all, merely the crude ideas of the age in which the writer of the stories lived.

Instead of the special creation of Vegetation, Fishes, Birds, Mammals, and Reptiles, once for all, upon three consecutive days (or ages), as described in Genesis, we find, as a matter of historical fact, that in the animal and vegetable kingdoms alike,

there was a steady and continuous evolution from the simplest forms to the most perfect and complex, with the ultimate survival only of the fittest. Moreover, instead of this "creation" being the work of six consecutive days, the process mentioned occupied at least twice that number of ages, each of thousands of years duration. The following is a brief sketch of the evolution of animal and vegetable life from the earliest times to the present day:—

AGE.	FLORA.	FAUNA.
1. (None.)		Zoophytes (lowest type of animal life).
2. Marine plants (seaweed, etc.).		Many genera of small Mollusca.
3. Land plants allied to club mosses.		New genera of Mollusca; small Fishes.
4. Ferns and coniferous plants.		New Mollusca and Fishes; several species of Flies.
5. Forests of tree ferns and cone-bearing trees.		New Mollusca, Fishes, and Insects; Reptiles and gigantic lizards.
6. New land and marine plants.		New genera of same orders as last; the oyster and sturgeon families.
7. Flora similar to preceding age.		New genera of Mollusca, Fishes, and Reptiles; Tortoises and small marsupial mammals.
8. Pines, cypresses, yews, etc.		New genera of Mollusca, Fishes, Insects, Reptiles & Mammals.
9. Corn-bearing plants (true grasses); Trees as in preceding age.		New Mollusca, Fishes, Reptiles, and Mammals; Wading Birds.
10. Oaks, beeches, elms, palms, etc.		New Mollusca, Fishes, Reptiles, Mammals, and Birds.
11. Fruit trees (plum, walnut, the vine, etc.).		New Mollusca, Fishes, Reptiles, Mammals, Birds, and Insects.
12. Apple, pear, cherry, peach, raspberry, strawberry, &c.		New Mollusca, Fishes, Reptiles, Mammals, and Birds—allied to existing fauna.
13. Animal kingdom evolved nearly into their present form.		
14. Primitive Man—though he may have lived at an earlier period.		

The geological ages (numbered 1 to 14) in the foregoing sketch are (in order): the Laurentian, Cambrian, Silurian, Devonian, Carboniferous, Permian, Triassic, Jurassic, Cretaceous, Eocene, Miocene, Pliocene, Quaternary, and Recent.

Having now seen the order in which animal and vegetable life actually appeared upon this planet, I will ask the Christian upholders and perverters of the Genesis story: (1) Which was the day (or age), prior to the first appearance of animal life, upon which "God" created every kind of vegetation, from grass to fruit-bearing trees, as stated in Genesis? (2) Which was the day (or age) upon which the same deity created all the inhabitants of the water, from the smallest shell-fish to the biggest sea-monster, as again stated in Genesis? (3) Which was the day (or age) upon which he created all the Birds, or all the Mammals, or all the Reptiles, as recorded in Genesis? There are, of course, no such days—or ages. Is it true, again, that Birds and Fishes came into existence upon the same day (or age), as stated in Genesis? Is it true that Reptiles did not appear until after Fishes, Birds, and Mammals had been called into existence, as related in Genesis? The answer is the same in every case: No, it is not true. The writer of the Bible story had not the smallest idea of the real order of "creation"; his inspiration was powerless to reveal to him the past history of the earth. We are indebted to Science, not to Revelation, for all the knowledge we possess.

ABRACADABRA.

(To be continued.)

#### LIKED THE TREATMENT.

A slater who was engaged upon the roof of a house in Glasgow fell from the ladder and lay in an unconscious state upon the pavement. One of the pedestrians in the street, who rushed to the aid of the poor man, chanced to have a flask of spirits in his pocket, and, to revive him, began to pour a little down his throat.

"Canny, mon, canny," said a man looking on, "or you'll choke him."

The "unconscious" slater opened his eyes, and said quietly, "Pour awa', mon, pour awa'; ye're dooin' fine."

## Swinburne's Religion.

SOME letters written by the late Algernon Charles Swinburne to Edmund Clarence Stedman have recently been published in the *Times*. In one of them Swinburne refers to Walter Savage Landor's unpublished "Imaginary Conversation" on the personal immortality of the soul, which he calls Robert Browning's "cherished dogma," though it was not Landor's:—

"Landor himself, I know from his own lips, had no belief or opinion whatever on the subject; 'was sure of one thing,' he said, 'that whatever was to come was best—the right thing, or the thing that ought to come'; I give the exact sense, if not the exact phrase. I think I may say that he would have agreed with me that any matter so utterly incognisable is one on which it is equally unreasonable to have or to wish to have an opinion."

In another letter, Swinburne refers to his own Anti-Theism, which was so obvious in the *Songs Before Sunrise*:—

"As my Antitheism has been so much babbled about, perhaps I may here say what I really do think on religious matters. Having been as child and boy brought up a quasi-Catholic, of course I went in for that as passionately as for other things (e.g., well-nigh to unaffected and unashamed ecstasies of adoration when receiving the Sacrament) then when this was naturally stark dead and buried, it left nothing to me but a turbid Nihilism; for a Theist I never was; I always felt by instinct and perceived by reason that no man could conceive of a personal God except by crude superstition or else by true supernatural revelation; that a natural God was the absurdest of all human figments; because no man could by other than apocalyptic means—i.e., by other means than a violation of the laws and order of nature—conceive of any other sort of Divine person than man with a difference—man with some qualities intensified and some qualities suppressed—man with the good in him exaggerated and the evil excised. This, I say, I have always seen and avowed since my mind was ripe enough to think freely. Now, of course, this is the exact definition of every God that has ever been worshiped under any revelation. Men give him the qualities they prefer in themselves or about them—e.g., the God of the Christians is good for domestic virtue, bad for patriotic. A consistently good Christian cannot, or certainly need not, love his country. Again, the god of the Greeks and Romans is not good for the domestic (or personal in the Christian sense) virtues, but gloriously good for the patriotic. But we no person, may worship the Divine humanity, the ideal of human perfection and aspiration, without worshiping any god, any person, any fetish at all. Therefore, I might call myself, if I wished, a kind of Christian\* (of the Church of Blake and Shelley), but assuredly in no sense a Theist. Perhaps you will only think this is clarified Nihilism, but at least it is no longer turbid. There is something of this, with much other matter in Matthew Arnold's *Literature and Dogma*—a book from which I cannot say that I learnt anything, since it left me much as it found me, not far from the point to which he tries to bring his reader; so that I was more than once struck by coming on phrases and definitions about "God" almost verbally coincident with those such as I had myself used, though not in public print, years before his book appeared. But it is a very good and fine book, and has done, I believe, great good already, especially, of course, among the younger sort. (Has it found any echo in America?) I think and hope that among the younger Englishmen who think at all just now, Theism is tottering; Theism, which I feel to be sillier (if less dangerous) even than theology."

Another extract from the same letter is also worth quoting:—

"I always feel the Greek history and mythology (in its deeper sense and wider bearing) much nearer to us even yet than those of the Jews, alien from us in blood and character. Even the poet of Job is a Semitic alien while the poet of Prometheus is an Aryan kinsman of our own; his national history of far more real impor-

\* That is, taking the semi-legendary Christ as type of human aspiration and perfection, and supposing (if you like) that Jesus may have been the highest and purest sample of man on record.

tance to us, his poetry far closer to our own thought, passion, speculation, conscience, than the Hebrew. This argument, if necessary, I may perhaps expand into a vindication of my choice in taking up what may seem, but is not and should not be, a remote and obsolete theme to work upon."

## Correspondence.

### THE ACADEMY AND MR. HARRY BOULTER.

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE FREETHINKER."

SIR,—Doubtless you noticed last week that the *Academy* waxed virtuously indignant with Mr. Frank Harris for calling attention to the sentence of "a month's imprisonment on a disreputable scoundrel of the name of Harry Boulter." As I have never heard Mr. Boulter lecture, I am not in a position to defend his choice of language in his attacks on Christianity. It may well be that it is as coarse as I am given to understand by many of my friends who are by no means mealy-mouthed. Still, the editor of the *Academy* should be careful not to invite comparison between his own writing and Mr. Boulter's. I distinctly remember reading an article in *La Revue Blanche* which, if it were translated and printed in the *Academy*, would cause pain and disgust to many of the young ladies who a little while ago found in the editor a champion of morality against the insidious doctrine of a trashy novel like Mr. Wales' *Yoke*.

The article is frankly an apology for Uranian or Greek love, homosexuality, or, to put it plainly for those who prefer a spade to be called a spade, sodomy. He asks why we have come to regard this relationship as unnatural. It is incorrect, he thinks, to ascribe the change of opinion to Christianity.

"Certainly, if Christianity did produce this result it was not the fault of Christ. No word against this divine love was ever pronounced by Christ, who, on the contrary, as Marlowe has noted, was himself an example of it, in his relation with Saint John. At all times Christians have misunderstood the simple and obvious teaching of their founder, and to the Church belongs a large share of the responsibility in the stupid persecution of men who are indeed the salt of the earth.....The greatest amongst the world's philosophers, poets, painters, warriors were Uranists.....From personal experience I have found that sodomists are generally intellectually superior to other men, and at Oxford they are to be found principally amongst the athletes. In our public schools Greek love is so general that those only are not sodomists who are physically unfit."

I could quote much more in the same strain, but the above is sufficient to show that the editor of the *Academy* has this in common with Mr. Harry Boulter—he causes pain and disgust. Let him print such stuff in the *Academy*, and his subscribers would vanish. Let him speak it in some open place, and he would be where Mr. Boulter is now.

FRANCIS WILLIAMS.

## National Secular Society.

REPORT OF FIRST MEETING OF THE NEW EXECUTIVE  
HELD ON THURSDAY, JUNE 24.

The President, Mr. G. W. Foote, in the chair. There were also present:—Messrs. J. Barry, E. Bowman, C. Cohen, H. Cowell, W. Davey, J. T. Lloyd, W. Leat, Dr. Nichols, C. Quinton, F. Schaller, H. Silverstien, S. Samuels, F. Wood, V. Roger, E. Charlton, R. Rosetti.

The first business was the re-election of Officers. *Secretary*, E. M. Vance; *Monthly Auditors*, Messrs. Samuels and Leat; *Benevolent Fund Committee*, Messrs. Roger, Wood, Leat, and Samuels.

New members were admitted for the New Liverpool and Bristol Branches, and for the Parent Society.

The President reported upon the Boulter prosecution, and it was resolved to ask the Editor of the *Freethinker* to open a Fund in that journal to cover the expenses incurred by the N. S. S. in the defence.

The Outdoor Lectures were discussed, and it was resolved that all London Branches having carried on a *bonâ fide* course of lectures during the season should receive a stipulated sum per lecture upon application to headquarters. Other routine business having been transacted, the meeting closed.

E. M. VANCE, *General Secretary*.

It is a beautiful thing to model a statue and give it life; to mould an intelligence and instil truth therein is still more beautiful.—*Victor Hugo*.

**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, F. A. Davies, Lectures.

CAMBERWELL BRANCH N. S. S. (Brockwell Park): 3.15 and 6, C. Cohen, Lectures.

KINGSLAND BRANCH N. S. S. (Ridley-road). 11.30, J. W. Marshall. "Looking unto Jesus."

NORTH LONDON BRANCH N. S. S. (Parliament Hill, Hampstead): 3.30, Miss K. B. Kough, "Does Christianity Uplift Women?"

WEST HAM BRANCH N. S. S. (Outside Maryland Point Station, Stratford): 7, E. C. Saphin, "A Few Coincidences."

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

WOOLWICH BRANCH N. S. S. (Beresford-square): 11.30, a Lecture.

**COUNTRY.****OUTDOOR.**

BIRMINGHAM BRANCH N. S. S.: Annual Picnic.

BRISTOL BRANCH N. S. S. (Durdham Downs): 7.30, B. G. Brown, "Thomas Paine: His Life and Work." Thursday, July 8 (Haymarket), at 8, "The Christian in Principle and in Practice."

DALKEITH (High-street): Saturday, July 3, P. Stuart, "The Salvation Army and the Public."

EDINBURGH SECULAR SOCIETY: The Meadows, 3, Mr. Stuart, a Lecture; Leith Links, 2.30, a Lecture; The Mound, 6.30, a Lecture.

NEWCASTLE BRANCH N. S. S. (Cathedral Café): July 7, at 7.30, Meeting.

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*Secretary—H. M. VANCE (Miss).*

The Society was formed in 1898 to afford legal security to the registration and application of funds for Secular purposes.

The Memorandum of Association sets forth that the Society's Objects are:—To promote the principle that human conduct should be based upon natural knowledge, and not upon supernatural belief, and that human welfare in this world is the proper end of all thought and action. To promote freedom of inquiry. To promote universal Secular Education. To promote the complete secularisation of the State, etc., etc. And to do all such lawful things as are conducive to such objects. Also to have, hold, receive, and retain any sums of money paid, given, devised, or bequeathed by any person, and to employ the same for any of the purposes of the Society.

The liability of members is limited to £1, in case the Society should ever be wound up and the assets were insufficient to cover liabilities—a most unlikely contingency. Members pay an entrance fee of ten shillings, and a subsequent yearly subscription of five shillings.

The Society has a considerable number of members, but a much larger number is desirable, and it is hoped that some will be gained amongst those who read this announcement. All who join it participate in the control of its business and the trusteeship of its resources. It is expressly provided in the Articles of Association that no member, as such, shall derive any sort of profit from the Society, either by way of dividend, bonus, or interest, or in any way whatever.

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but are capable of re-election. An Annual General Meeting of members must be held in London, to receive the Report, elect new Directors, and transact any other business that may arise.

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