

# THE Freethinker

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True words are not pleasant; pleasant words are not true.—LAO-TZE.

## Vivisection.

"FREETHOUGHT," says Mr. H. S. Salt, in his excellent pamphlet on *Tennyson as a Thinker*,—"Freethought has done more for the humanitarian movement than all the churches put together." On this point, at any rate, Mr. Salt is a high authority. And one is glad to remember his testimony when one sees "Rationalists" like Mr. Eden Phillpotts and Dr. M. Eden Paul championing Vivisection and sneering at Anti-Vivisectionists. Both these gentlemen appear to be Socialists too, and they have ventilated their views in the *New Age*. Dr. Paul had a long letter on "Socialism and Anti-Vivisection" in the last issue of that journal. He ended it with a solemn warning. If one party or the other—Vivisectionists or Anti-Vivisectionists—had to drop out and the former would "march on to victory," for the latter were "enemies to the spirit of science," and science was the basis of Socialism. Now we, for our part, are not concerned with the Socialist interest in this controversy; but as Dr. Paul calls himself "a Rationalist" we think we do not intrude in mind that the greatest Freethinkers, from Voltaire, Bentham, and Schopenhauer, down to Ingersoll and Bradlaugh, have been entirely opposed to the torture of animals in the supposed interest of medical science.

Dr. Paul talks about "the spirit of science" and evidently thinks that all pursuit of knowledge is justifiable. If it were, vivisection of animals would be justifiable, and so would vivisection of men and women, who are only higher animals,—that is to say, when they are higher. But we challenge Dr. Paul's assumption. Not even the pursuit of knowledge can be exempted from the rule of morality, which is, after all, the practical aspect of the principle of humanity. There are legitimate knowledges and illegitimate knowledges, permissible knowledges and impermissible knowledges, innocent knowledges and criminal knowledges. There are things that no man has a right to know; for instance, the contents of other people's letters, or how a woman looks under ravishment, or the expression on a human being's face as the knife is being drawn across his throat. These things belong to that "experimental pathology" which Dr. Paul is so proud of, but they would never be permitted and countenanced except in a society of scoundrels. Dr. Paul may reply that he would draw the line at such experimental pathology; but if he draws the line at all, he must draw it on some principle, and what other principle can he lay down except that very moral law of which his letter betrays not even a conception?

We defy Dr. Paul to formulate any moral justification of the vivisection of animals which would not also justify the vivisection of human beings, including himself. The vivisection of human beings, indeed, would be far more illuminative to "medical science" than the vivisection of inferior animals. Now man's only right to vivisection animals is his power to do so. Nobody ever heard of any other. We

challenge Dr. Paul to assign any other. Well then, if men, because they have the power, may vivisection animals in order to find out information that may be useful to the vivisectionists, why may not the majority of men, by virtue of the same right of might, vivisection the minority of men—such as criminals, old people that cost the nation pensions, mischief-making Freethinkers, and discontented revolutionary Socialists? The same noble object—namely, the supposed benefit of the persons who inflict the vivisection—is subserved in both cases; and the same beautiful principle applies in both cases,—namely, that no "living animal" (to use Dr. Paul's expression) has any right whatever to the peaceable and happy enjoyment of his own existence when his sufferings, in the opinion of other "living animals," may minister to the health and comfort of the said other "living animals."

Hypocrisy has been called the homage that vice pays to virtue. It is in the light of this epigram that we must regard Dr. Paul's, and other vivisectionists', euphemistic language when they refer to the plain fact of the torture of animals. They refer to it as "experimental physiology," "experimental pathology," and so on. We should respect them more, in a certain sense, if they used plainer terms; if they said, "Yes, we do torture animals, and we mean to go on doing it, unless pestilent humanitarians stop us, because the pain of these animals promotes our own pleasure." This would at least be straightforward. American Indians tortured prisoners to death for the pleasure of watching their agony. Vivisectionists torture animals to death for the sake of their health,—though they grandly call it "medical science." And both forms of torture are only possible through the lack of civilisation.

The baseness of Vivisection is clearly proved by the baseness of the Vivisectionist's appeal to the utter selfishness of his auditors. Dr. Paul conjures up a vision of "a hundred weeping mothers, a hundred unfortunate children with gaping throats, gasping, the death-rattle at hand,"—all through the Anti-Vivisectionist's folly in trying to rescue "one rabbit which has had to receive a little blood of a dog into its abdomen." (Which, by the way, is another of those exquisite euphemisms in which Vivisectionists delight.) But what end is there to the possible poltroonery of human nature under the influence of a skillfully created fear? Such an appeal deserves the utmost contempt. If one's wife or child could be saved from death by the deliberate torture of another sentient being, one might consent to the bargain, but one would despise oneself afterwards. And why (we repeat) stop at rabbits? If one's wife or child could be saved from death by the deliberate torture of *Dr. Paul*, one might also consent to that bargain. The better the victim the better the deed.

It has never been proved that Vivisection has helped the "progress of medical science." Even if it has done so, you have still to prove that it is right. Physical health is not to be purchased at the expense of moral health. The denial of this proposition would throw society back into savagery. And it is therefore well for the Vivisectionists to understand that Humanitarians mean to put a stop to their pursuit of impermissible knowledges, their peculiar method of promoting the "progress of medical science." It



is now permitted *by law*—and it will be put a stop to *by law*.

We are proud to recollect that one of the Immediate Practical Objects of the National Secular Society is "the extension of the moral law to animals." We admit that the lower animals have no rights that they can *enforce* against men and women, but neither have children; and if helplessness abolishes moral rights, children have no more moral rights than dogs and rabbits. The fact is that a right on one side involves a duty on the other. It is our moral duty to respect the moral rights of the lower animals. If we deny those moral rights by refusing to recognise them we lower our characters—which is the heaviest penalty one always pays for wrongdoing. We should object to profiting by the deliberate torture of our "poor relations," not merely because it inflicts upon them an injury without any compensating advantage, but also because we do not wish to sink in the scale of being. We decline to become more callous and selfish. We refuse to become less tender and humane. We shrink from cementing the edifice of our happiness with the sufferings of our fellow inhabitants in this world. They have a personal and social life of their own, they think in their degrees, and their feelings only differ from ours in a possible intensity which we have no means of measuring. Let us, then, accept the greater responsibility that attaches to greater power and opportunities; let us be benefactors rather than tormentors to these inferior beings who are so much at our mercy; and, above all, let us not corrupt our own natures by clothing our cruel pride in the stolen raiment of science and humanity.

G. W. FOOTE.

### The Great Lying Creed.

HEINE said that the Christian era would one day be known as the sickness period of humanity. With equal truth it might be described as the Great Lying Period; for during no other era has there ever been so much persistent, and in a way consistent, lying as during the Christian centuries. Every variety of lie, and every kind of liar, has been well represented. There has been the lie direct, the lie by implication, the lie by suggestion, the lie by suppression, the lie inferential, and the lie circumstantial. The poor modern who may happen to set out with the ambition of building up a reputation as a first-class liar finds himself doomed to play, at best, the part of an imitator. Everywhere he finds the great army of the pious has forestalled him. If ever an enterprising publisher wishes to issue an Encyclopædia of Lying, his staff need do no more than make a detailed study of Christian records to render their work complete and final.

One writer has given the opinion that mankind has a natural tendency to falsehood. As usual, the word "tendency," like the word "instinct," is used to cover hazy or inaccurate thinking. If there is a tendency anywhere, it is in the opposite direction. For people always lie for a purpose. It may be from the fear of consequences should they tell the truth, for the purpose of gain, in order to assume a certain position before their hearers, or for various other objects; but there is always some purpose in lying. True, people may go on misstating events because they are utterly careless whether they are giving a correct version or not; but in this case we have an instance of the effect of training, of education; and our search for the purpose of lying is only pushed back a step. Another writer in one of our religious weeklies—in order, presumably, to diminish the part played by religion in what he calls the epidemic of lying—says that our teaching institutions have been among the chief propagators of lying. But this hardly expresses the truth. The schools of science may have taught things that later knowledge dismissed as inaccurate, but they have never manufactured evidence or deliberately falsified

the facts. Nor have they ever taught that men should turn away from the search for truth or decline to put accepted teachings to the test of verification. Religion alone has persistently done these things, and of all religions the records of Christianity in this direction are the very worst.

The writer mentioned says that the damage has been done because the Church preferred the wonderful to the plain statement. There is, however, much more than this in it. When one starts with a belief for which there is no producible evidence, against which much evidence may be produced, there is only a limited number of ways by which such a belief may be preserved. It must be held as above examination, beyond criticism, and evidence against it must be suppressed. And if *some* evidence in its favor is needed, then it must be manufactured. The Church did all these things, and they are still practising the old methods so far as circumstances permit. We do not know, and we never shall know, to what extent the early Church succeeded in stamping out hostile criticism. All we do know is that its success was tolerably complete. Some of the writings of its enemies are known to us only by the stray references to them in Christian polemical writings. The very vigor of Christian writers is thus made to furnish indisputable testimony against their creed. How much Christianity invented in its earlier periods we have a more certain knowledge of; although here, again, our information may never be complete. But in the admitted inclusion of passages in the accepted New Testament writings, in the number of Gospel writings rejected as spurious, and in the number of Pagan writings that have been "doctored" to suit the necessities of the Christian Church, we have unimpeachable evidence of the unscrupulous lying practised in the interests of religion and morality.

To please the credulous and induce belief, miracles were manufactured by the hundred and saints by the thousand. Stories to the discredit of non-Christians were invented and circulated broadcast. Some Christians may now reject these and express their horror at their circulation, but they all benefit by their existence. Christianity cannot help benefiting by them. For they all served their purpose in inducing belief, and giving to the Christian creed a sacred, an unimpeachable character to the vulgar. And it may be observed that this manufacturing of religious evidence did not cease while it proved itself possible and profitable. It ceased only when the temper of the age made that particular form of imposture impossible and too dangerous to practice. And by that time its work was done, not for one church, but for all churches. Advanced Christians to-day may reject the resurrection, the miracles of the Old and New Testaments, and those of the early Church. But it was these, with other impostures, that made people believe, and but for these there would be no Christian faith nowadays for our liberal theologians to work on.

These practices had an influence in a much wider sphere than that of religion. They affected the whole of life. It is a poor psychology which pictures the mind as composed of a number of detached qualities in such a way that their use or disuse on matters of religion will not affect their exercise on other directions. The same qualities of mind used in relation to religion are precisely those that are exercised in relation to other matters. One cannot discourage criticism and independence of mind in one direction without discouraging them in all. And could the balance be properly adjusted, no small degree of our social and political troubles might be properly set down to the fostering of mental habits which, while favorable enough to religion, are fatal to efficiency in general life.

Christianity had thus an adequate purpose for the dissemination of falsehood, and for the suppression of examination and verification. It was an expression of its struggle for self-preservation. But, in



addition to this, it was entirely lacking, as a system, in the incentive to mental cultivation. It is true that there has been much talk with Christianity of the necessity of getting truth, but it was *the* truth that was meant, the truth, that is, as laid down once and for all in the Christian faith. Of the desire for truth, careless whether it conflicted with accepted teaching or not, it has always been strangely lacking. Such a sentence as the following, reported of Buddha, and, at all events, part of the Buddhist teaching, is quite foreign to the Christian temper and teaching.

"Do not believe in traditions simply because they have been handed down for many generations; nor in anything which is rumored and spoken of by many; or because the written statement of some old sage is produced. Do not believe that is truth simply because you have been attached to it by habit, on the authority merely of your teachers and elders. But after observation and analysis, and when the thing agrees with reason and is conducive to the good and benefit of all, then accept it and live up to it."

One simply cannot conceive such a teaching as this finding a place either in the New Testament or in orthodox Christian teaching. There are, indeed, very few books on behalf of which the claim to be a moral guide for man is made, that pay less regard to intellectual culture than does the New Testament. Nowhere is the disinterested search for truth inculcated, and nowhere does independence of thinking receive less encouragement. Belief in a prescribed teaching is the essential thing, and disbelief in it is the one unforgivable offence. Had the Buddhist teaching, as given above, been the teaching and practice of the Christian Church, the history of the last fifteen centuries would be far different from what it is. The world would have been spared the sight of scientific men afraid to give the results of their labors to the world, often minimising the implications of their labors when they were published; or, in earlier generations, paying the penalty of months or years of weary imprisonment for the crime of instructing their fellows. All the energy, too, that has been spent in breaking the power of an organised mass of fraud, imposture, and superstition would also have been placed at the disposal of a humanity that stood so sadly in need of it.

The modern world prides itself upon its greater love of truth, upon its greater freedom from systematic falsehood. The boast may be justifiable, and, if so, it is interesting to observe that this increased love of truth is coincident with a decline of the influence of theology. It is said that "the spirit which to-day animates our highest men is filtering down. It is entering our schools, our literature; it is moulding unconsciously the thoughts of men. It is altering our whole view of the past, revaluing it, and creating a future that will be widely different." This, again, may be true, but, if so, we owe no thanks to Christianity on this account. This sane and healthy influence, wherever it exists, comes not from our religious teachers, but from non-religious science. And it is part of the irony of things that, while the Christian Churches have claimed, and still claim, to be the great moral teachers of the people, it is the often banned and persecuted science that is chiefly responsible for the sweetening and moralising of our lives. Science holds no vested interest in any particular teaching. Its sole interest is to search, to discover, to verify. Its teaching is not "Blessed is he that hath not seen and yet hath believed," but "Cursed be he that believes without seeing, and who assents without understanding." Against this teaching and temper Christianity has made a long and inglorious fight. On behalf of its ridiculous dogmas it has lied, and forged, and practised a thousand and one deceptions. And, in spite of all that it has done, the mental dis-assertion that was for so long suppressed has so far more to their tissue of falsehoods by claiming it as a product of their own creed.

C. COHEN.

## Immortality.

NOTHING new can be said on the subject of a future state. All that can be advanced both for and against it has been advanced innumerable times already. It is a theme concerning which no knowledge is obtainable. And yet the belief in a personal God renders the belief in immortality a grim necessity. This belief is at once the hope and the despair of theology; its hope, because the present life discredits all its teaching, and its despair because there is nothing to indicate that the alleged author of a first life, which is a deplorable failure, is capable of providing a second which will be a complete success. It is admitted by many eminent divines that "we are not in the right attitude toward this profound and urgent problem unless we recognise that there is no proof of immortality." Only two Sundays ago the Rev. Dr. Horton stated that "for the last thirty years, at any rate, science had given no countenance whatever to the thought of life after death," and that "the conclusion at which science had arrived might have some foundation in truth." "It seems to me," the reverend gentleman added, "that what science is doing to-day is to call attention to a dangerous superstition into which we have fallen." And yet, with the usual theological inconsistency, Dr. Horton is reported to have asserted that "the soul which has lost faith in the beyond must wither." Another theologian concedes that the argument for immortality is "inferential, not demonstrative."

Let us analyse this inferential, non-demonstrative argument, and see what it really is. We are told that its being non-demonstrative, so far from creating a prejudice against it, "puts it in the category of supreme and transcendent truths." It is true that very few things are logically demonstrable, and it is also true that our inability to demonstrate them does not put the stamp of unreality upon them; but our inability to demonstrate the existence of a known object gives us no licence to assert the existence of an unknown one. Philosophers from Protagoras to Berkeley may have reasoned that we cannot prove the life that now is, but that does not entitle us to believe in a life to come. The deep things of life may be "matters which cannot be clearly defined and completely comprehended," but their being so is no justification of the belief in another life out of sight and touch. The theologian reasons from the opposite point, saying, "What wonder that we cannot prove the life to come when we cannot prove the life that now is?" The wonder is, not that we cannot prove the life to come, but that anybody believes in it in the absence of all evidence. Whatever the present life may be, whether a reality or a dream, it exists, whereas of the existence of a life beyond there is not a shred of evidence. To expatiate on the mysteries by which we are surrounded as denizens of the earth yields not the lowest presumption that at death we shall become the citizens of another planet. As Dr. Horton says, people "talk as if they were all certain that we shall rise from the dead," while in reality nothing is more improbable. Another preacher, however, while granting that the belief in immortality is not a theorem, claims that it is "an instinct of the soul," and that "while it is indemonstrable by the processes of logic, it is justified and confirmed by a multitude of convergent attestations." We, however, emphatically deny that it is "an instinct of the soul," or that it is "justified and confirmed by a multitude of convergent attestations."

1. We are assured, for example, that the belief in immortality is "in line with the order of Nature." It is true that many natural processes are extremely marvellous, that "everything in this wonderful world is transformed, though nothing perishes," that "the fallen leaf, the withered flower, is taken into the laboratory of Nature, and there refashioned and re-produced in undreamed-of ways"; but it is not true that living beings die and come to life again on this globe. Individuals perish, and the various species endure only by the ceaseless production of fresh



individuals. Not a single instance of the reappearance of beings after death can be cited in the whole history of the world. It is incontrovertible, therefore, that the doctrine of immortality is *not* "in line with the order of Nature."

2. It is also maintained that the hope of immortality "springs out of the limitations and sufferings of this mortal life." This is in flat contradiction of a former statement that the belief in a future life is "an instinct of the soul." If it were "an instinct of the soul," all mankind in all ages would have possessed and exercised it. As a matter of fact, the doctrine of immortality is conspicuous in the Old Testament only by its absence. Millions of orthodox Buddhists for twenty-four centuries have been devoid of it. All Atheists are without it. How, then, did it ever arise? It sprang out of the hopeless predicament in which believers in a personal God of infinite goodness and love found themselves while face to face with the sufferings and sorrows of the present life. To Theists belief in the next world became essential because of the dismal failure of this. It was as a believer in a loving Heavenly Father that R. L. Stevenson burst into this expression: "We must needs invent heaven if it had not been revealed to us; there are some things that fall so bitterly ill on this side Time."

Two debasing fallacies underlie the theory of a future state. The first is that the present life is God's creation and ordinance and that he meant it to be just exactly what it is. The second fallacy is that whatever a man's lot may be it is his one duty to be content therewith, regarding it as a holy discipline. "A discipline for what?" asks a servant of the Lord, and answers, "It is a mockery if it have not an eternal issue." It is a horrible mockery in any case, if a good God there be; and it is the good God alone that is mocked.

3. We now come to the most irrational and childish assertion conceivable: "The supreme attestation of immortality is Jesus." To realise the utter fatuity of that sentence we must supply its context:—

"The supreme attestation of immortality is Jesus. He never demonstrated it; he *declared* it. He stood among the troubled children of men, oppressed by 'the weary and the heavy weight of all this unintelligible world,' and he said: 'Let not your heart be troubled. I know what lies behind the Veil. The Father is there, and the Father's Heart, and the Father's House. Take my word for it. In my Father's House are many mansions. If it were not so I would have told you.'"

In the first place, notice that the quotation from Jesus is not to be found in any canonical document. It is what might be called a *spiritual* quotation, a quotation from the *mind* of Jesus which the quoter claims to have in perpetual possession. Secondly, observe that some clauses in the quotation are from the Fourth Gospel which many critics pronounce unhistorical, and which multitudes of devout disciples interpret poetically, or parabolically. Thirdly, even if the alleged quotation were wholly genuine, presenting words actually spoken by Jesus, of what evidential value would it be? The question then would be, Can we take the word of Jesus? What did he know about the Father, the Father's Heart, and the Father's House? The truth is that, taking the Four Gospels as they stand, they contain absolutely nothing that was new to the world. As Professor Flinders Petrie clearly shows in his *Personal Religion in Egypt before Christianity*, the ideas embodied in the New Testament had been well-known for many centuries, and some of them for thousands of years prior to the Christian era. But what evidence is there that the doctrine of immortality is true by whomsoever taught? One divine says: "Its guarantee is that, when we trust it and rest upon it, we find peace and rest." But who can honestly and wholeheartedly "trust it and rest upon it" in the absence of any proof whatever of its truth? If a person can believe a lie to be truth, he will doubtless find peace and rest. But here comes a most luminous and illuminating utterance: "It proves itself reasonable and true if only it is put to the test." Has anybody

ever been able to put the belief in immortality to the test? The only convincing test would be for a man to die, spend a couple of years in heaven or in hell, and then return to earth, and submit a minute report of his experiences. But this has never been done. Like God, the Great Beyond has never once broken its silence. The Father, the Father's Heart, and the Father's House exist alone, so far as any rational evidence is concerned, in the imagination of people specially trained in their childhood.

Now, the belief in a future life is declared by the same divine to be at once "an instinct of the soul" and an experimental acquisition. That it cannot be both is self-evident. If it were an instinct there would be no need of acquiring it; and even its acquisition is represented, and by the same theologian, as conditioned by a prior acquisition. Reference is made to a saying of one of Cicero's friends about Plato's argument for immortality: "When I read I assent; but as soon as I lay down the book all the assent is gone." Then our divine ends his discourse thus:—

"Jesus is the Christian argument for immortality and all the splendid hopes which gives life value. In his presence faith lifts up her head and lives; away from him she sinks and perishes."

No attempt at erecting the doctrine of immortality on a firm and permanent foundation could be more foolish and futile. Our race does not know its own Father, not even that it has a Father, unless he is made known to it by a third party. When this third party appeared, the race was already so many thousand years' old; and his credentials were such that, even to-day, two thousand years later, only a few here and there take him for what he pretended, or was made to pretend, to be. And yet we are solemnly warned that unless we believe in him as the revealer of the Father and his Heart, faith in immortality is altogether beyond us, though it is defined as "an instinct of the soul." Such is Christian theology's most unique and infallible teaching. And here comes Dr. Horton to inform us that only those who accept Christ as Savior and Lord shall enjoy the supreme privilege of living for ever. All others he coolly pronounces unworthy of so sublime a privilege. If he correctly represents his Master, and if his Master as represented by him was right, it follows that for 1,000,000,000 of the people living to-day death will end all, while barely 500,000,000 shall inherit eternal life. Is it any wonder that the multitudes are sick and tired of the strange vagaries of the Christian pulpit and no longer pay any serious heed to them?

J. T. LLOYD.

## The Narratives in Genesis—X.

AFTER THE DELUGE.

(Continued from p. 508.)

If we believe the Priestly writer of Gen. ix. 1-17, the whole human race, up to the time of the Flood, had been vegetarians. That mythical event being now a thing of the past, Elohim gave to man as food "every moving thing that liveth." There had been shepherds and herdmen, it is true, before this time. Abel is said to have been a keeper of sheep, and Jabal an owner of cattle, and the descendants of the first man for sixteen centuries had doubtless followed the same occupation. But this employment, we are to understand, was carried on merely for amusement. Men did not kill and eat the sheep, goats, and oxen that composed their flocks and herds; they kept them and tended them just to fill up their spare time and to have an animal ready to offer to the Lord occasionally in sacrifice.

After this gratifying concession to herbivorous man, Elohim introduced a law for the capital punishment of manslayers. Though he himself had been so lenient in the case of Cain, he now ordained that "whoso sheddeth man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed." This law was to apply, not only to man,



but to "every beast" as well. If a beast so far forgot himself as to kill a human being, the Lord said he would "require" the blood of that heedless beast—"At the hand of every beast will I require it." The beasts that had just come out of the Ark heard, no doubt, this new decree; but it does not appear to have affected them much. The divine threat does not, at any rate, deter the great carnivora from attacking and killing any of the human race they can get at. From that day to the present, hundreds of thousands of human beings have fallen victims to the rapacity of these animals; yet in no single instance have we evidence that the Lord "required it" of them. During the Middle Ages and later, however, the Christian Church took the matter into its own hands, and tried and executed various animals (mostly of the domestic kind) for the murder of members of the human family. Researches have brought to light ninety-two cases against animals, tried in the French courts alone, between A.D. 1120 and 1740. The penalty, on conviction, was death: some animals were mutilated and afterwards hanged, and some were burnt. A bull, for instance, was tried for killing a girl, a boar for eating a child, a sow for killing and partly eating a child, a horse for killing a man, etc. Wild beasts were exorcised and excommunicated, and then banished.

Returning to the Bible narrative, Elohim next made a covenant with Noah and his posterity and with "the fowl, the cattle, and every beast of the earth." As a sign of this covenant he placed in the sky a rainbow, which was to be a token to "every living creature of all flesh" that he would not again bring a flood upon the earth. It is, however, quite possible that many of the animals, sheep and cattle for instance, have not the faintest idea what that phenomenon is a token of. Elohim further added that the sight of the rainbow in the clouds would recall to his remembrance his covenant with man and the other living creatures.

It had not been revealed to the sacred writer that the Rainbow was merely an effect produced in the atmosphere by the refraction and reflection of the sun's light from rain-drops falling in a quarter opposite the sun. The writer appears to have thought that the phenomenon was a supernatural creation—something tangible placed in the sky by the god. It also appears to be implied that the Rainbow was then placed in the sky for the first time—"I do set my bow in the clouds," etc. Moreover, the Yahvist writer has told us that in the earliest times "the god Yahveh had not caused it to rain upon the earth..... but there went up a mist from the earth, and watered the whole face of the ground" (Gen. ii. 5-6). We know, however, from geology that there was plenty of rain before the Deluge, and even thousands of years before man first appeared upon the earth. During the first Triassic period many distinct impressions of rain-drops have been discovered upon the strata. In a portion of the New Red Sand Stone, for instance, the whole surface was found pitted by the marks produced by a heavy shower of rain. Similar marks have been found in the same stratum as wide apart as Lancashire and various parts of the United States. Traces of the ripple of water, exactly the same as may be observed in the sand of the seashore to-day after the fall of a tide had laid it bare, are also accurately preserved, as well as the footprints of animals supposed to be birds of the wading kind.

After coming out of the Ark Noah, as already stated, set free the birds, beasts, and creeping things that had been miraculously preserved from hunger, thirst, asphyxia, typhoid, and other ills that would have killed any other living creatures in less than a week. These animals now began to disperse all over the globe, each pair taking their way to the locality for which they were best fitted. Some did not go far; others took very long journeys; in the course of time every part of Europe, Asia, and Africa contained its own particular species. Some of the animals went as far as North, South, and Central

America; some went to Australia; some went to Tasmania, Borneo, Madagascar, and other islands; though how they got to these places will for ever remain a mystery. They were certainly not taken by man; for when the places mentioned were first discovered, the animals were there already, besides some races of men unknown to the sacred writer—men unlike any in the Old World. Seas and oceans would seem to have been no impediment to the miraculously preserved animals; for they appear to have crossed them with ease. A few thousand miles of land or sea had apparently no terrors for them.

The glutton, the reindeer, musk ox, Newfoundland dog, and Arctic fox emigrated to the cold regions of North America, as well as to other places. They probably skirted the southern shore of the Mediterranean until they came to the Atlantic Ocean, then swam for 2,000 miles, and landed on the other side. The grisly bear, the buffalo, racoon, skunk, red fox, lynx, wapiti, and rattlesnake, also went to that continent, taking, no doubt, the same route: even the hare and little field-mouse by some means managed to find their way there. The polar bear and Esquimeaux dog selected Greenland and Iceland, and made a bee line for those countries, passing through Asia Minor, across Europe to Denmark, and taking a northerly direction through the North Sea.

The red howling monkey, coaite, and the monkeys with prehensile tails went to South America, and took up their abode in the immense forests of Brazil and Guiana, whence they were joined, later on, by the marmoset, grison, and armadillo. The journey, which was entirely by water, must have taken them some considerable time; for, passing down the Persian Gulf, they had to cross the Indian Ocean towards the Cape, then, turning northward into the Atlantic, made a straight course across to Brazil—the distance being about 9,000 miles. The red wolf, caygote, pampas cat, chati, llama, tapir, chinchilla, spectacled bear, vampire bat, and boa-constrictor followed soon after, steering the same course, and landed safely in the South American continent: even the sloth, that cannot crawl a single foot on level ground, but spends his whole life hanging from trees, would not be left behind, but contrived by some means to cross the ocean and take up his abode in the forests of Brazil—a feat which covers this animal's name with glory.

The pongo, orang-outang, tiger cat, and gigantic bat took a land journey through Persia, Afghanistan, Hindostan, and Further India to the Malay Peninsula, and then crossed over to the islands of Borneo and Sumatra. The lemur, indri, aye-aye, and galet took a trip by water to the island of Madagascar, the distance being only about 3,200 miles. These gone, the Cape mole made his way under the Indian Ocean, and, after burrowing 5,000 miles, came up in Cape Colony. He might, perhaps, have gone overland through the Isthmus of Suez; but he knew there were great deserts in North and Central Africa which he never could have crossed. Next, the cougar, jaguar, puma, ant-eater, and peccary took a journey to tropical America, going straight through the deserts of Central Africa to the Atlantic, and then crossing over—a distance, in all, of about 7,000 miles.

Shortly afterwards, several other animals, chiefly marsupial, emigrated to Australia, going across the Indian Ocean in a south-easterly direction for about 6,000 miles. The chief of these were the kangaroo, the kangaroo rat, the vulpine opossum, the bandicoot, flying squirrel, wombat, the duck-billed ornithorhynchus, and the phascogale, a kind of marsupial mouse. Some of these, later on, took up their abode in Tasmania, to which place had already gone, by water, the native devil, the pouched wolf, and the phalanger, the latter a large species of mouse.

Many birds also went to all the places mentioned, distance being of no account, and amongst others several species of ostrich, whose wings could not render them much assistance on the journey. The nandu arrived safely in South America, the cassowary in Sumatra, and the emu and black swan in Australia. The turkey went to North America, and,



after a time, large flocks roamed that continent wild.

The inspired writer does not say anything about these emigrations; but we know they must have taken place. Many people think that all the animals named lived in the localities they now inhabit before the Deluge, and that they had to cross the oceans to go into the Ark; but this does not necessarily follow: it is just possible that they *may* all have lived on the Old Continent. If the Bible story is true, they had to find their way to those places after the Flood; of that there can be no question. In any case, this is only another sample of the difficulties and impossibilities connected with that mythical event.

Here I must leave the "Narratives in Genesis" for the present, but hope to take them up again very shortly—say, in two or three weeks.

ABRACADABRA.

(To be continued)

### Acid Drops.

We have succeeded in giving the *Christian Commonwealth* a lesson in English. It used to announce "an exclusive article" in its columns weekly by Mr. Philip Snowden, M.P., and we pointed out that this was sheer nonsense; what it meant was that Mr. Snowden's article was contributed exclusively to the C. C. The New Theology organ pretended not to notice our comment; we repeated it more than once, and still it took no notice; it had its "dignity" to preserve. But we see now that it has silently accepted the correction. Mr. Snowden's "exclusive article" has disappeared, and he now "contributes an article every week exclusively" to the C. C. So much for "cultured Christians" and "illiterate Infidels."

The *Christian Commonwealth* classes Haeckel with the "dead dogs." Most dogs would have better manners than this. Our pious contemporary says that it has beaten dead dogs itself. We don't believe it ever beat a living one—face to face.

Our pious contemporary laughs at an orthodox Christian who objects to the Rev. Bernard J. Snell's "daring blasphemy." But hasn't the orthodox Christian as much right to call Mr. Snell's opinions "blasphemy" as our pious contemporary and Mr. Snell have to call Mr. Boulter's opinions "blasphemy"? It will not do to reply that they *don't* call his opinions "blasphemy." They *do*. They allowed him to go to prison for "blasphemy" against their faith without uttering a word of protest.

Mrs. Besant's science does not seem as good as it used to be. "Twenty years ago," she says, "when nobody was thinking of wireless telegrams, I learned from Madame Blavatsky that it is possible to send communications through the ether—which, of course, is precisely what is now done under the name of wireless telegraphy." There is just enough analogy in the two cases to enable a clever talker to impose on the ignorant. Is it possible that Mrs. Besant imagines that wireless telegraphy is performed without material apparatus?

The interviewer (for a Christian paper) asked Mrs. Besant when "the Master," the new "Christ," looked for by the Theosophists might be expected. The lady put on her best manner—a blend of infallibility and reticence—and said: "I do not care to suggest an exact date within the present century." Of course she doesn't. She is not so foolish, or not so daring, as old Prophet Baxter.

Mrs. Besant wound up with some remarks on India, which do not strike us as very profound. One thing she said, however, which is true enough, though she can claim no novelty for saying it. She said that "Christian missions gain many converts among the outcasts, but make no headway amongst the educated classes." "India," she added, "will never accept dogmatic Christianity." No doubt she believes that India will accept Theosophy. It is another case of the wish being father to the thought.

The *Christian Advocate* (American) says of John Calvin that "All authorities agree that there is but one blot upon his memory." The *Truthseeker* (New York) remarks that if this were true, which it isn't, "the same could be said of many a man who has been hanged."

The exclusion of the *Freethinker* from the Free Public Library reading-rooms in Camberwell has recently taken a fresh turn. Mr. F. R. Theakstone, a Camberwell ratepayer, wrote asking the Chairman of the Libraries Committee why this journal was no longer obtainable at the Central (Pockham-road) Library. He received a reply from Mr. C. W. Tagg, the Town Clerk, informing him that this journal was excluded "by order of the Libraries Committee, who are the Authority who decide what books and papers shall be placed in the public libraries in the Borough." Mr. Theakstone begged to be supplied with "the reason" of the Committee's action; for the paper had been allowed a place on the tables for years, and, judging from its well-thumbed condition, it was "one of the most widely read papers in the newsroom." The Town Clerk laid this letter before the Committee, and after the lapse of nearly a month he forwarded that holy body's reply, which was to the effect that "the above paper" was withdrawn on account of "a paragraph of an objectionable nature." But this explanation Mr. Theakstone found bewildering. He wrote again, pointing out that the Committee systematically blackened objectionable paragraphs in newspapers, yet the newspapers still remained on the tables. Why was not the objectionable paragraph in the *Freethinker* blackened in the same way? Why was the paper itself treated in this exceptional manner? This was a very awkward question, and the Committee felt it to be so, for it took refuge at once in "dignified silence." Mr. Theakstone was informed that the Committee "had nothing further to add." To this he replied that he had really received no sort of answer to his inquiries; he had not even been told what the objectionable paragraph was, and he was really anxious to know. This letter was formally "received" by the Committee, who were apparently rather proud of their pig-headed folly. Such are the silly bigots who arrogate the right to dictate what their masters, the Camberwell ratepayers, shall and shall not read. And the ringleader of the whole wretched business seems to be a pious publican, with a head like a rice-pudding and a heart like a sponge.

Mr. Theakstone has done this, if he has not done more: he has pricked the "objectionable paragraph" bubble. We were not aware that objectionable paragraphs were blackened out in newspapers from time to time, and Councillor Moss appears to have overlooked it. In the case of one "objectionable paragraph" in one number of the *Freethinker* the officials had a regular remedy. They did not take it, however, but started a crusade against the paper itself—that is, against future numbers of the paper which could not possibly be found fault with, as they were not yet in existence. We thank Mr. Theakstone for performing this little exposure of the "anti-infidel" gang, and performing it so neatly. And we venture to suggest that he should now tackle the Free Church Council which aided, abetted, and even incited the Borough Council bigots in their hypocritical policy.

The Rev. J. Morgan Jones, of Aberdare, calls *Philemon* "this precious little leaflet," simply because it is an appeal to a Christian slave-owner to receive back a runaway slave who, during his absence, had himself become a Christian and proved helpful to Paul in his imprisonment at Rome. Mr. Jones praises the Apostle's wisdom in not making any public declaration against the institution of slavery. Had the early Church lifted its voice against that great evil, Christianity, he believes, would have been destroyed. In their hearts, the Apostles detested slavery, but thought it the better policy not to utter a word against it, lest by so doing they might jeopardise the future of the new religion. Does Mr. Jones imagine that thoughtful people will be deceived by such sophistry? Why cannot preachers be honest and frankly admit, with Harnack, that "the New Testament epistles already assume that Christian masters have slaves, and gives no directions for any change in this relationship; and that, on the contrary, slaves are earnestly admonished to be faithful and obedient"? (*Expansion of Christianity*, vol. i., p. 207).

The Rev. E. Shillito believes in a Supreme Being, who is, of course, all-good, all-wise, and all-powerful. And yet, this omniscient divine informs us, "God can be thwarted"; he can be successfully resisted; the door he wants to enter at can be finally slammed in his face. If this is not a roundabout way of denying the existence of a Supreme Being, will Mr. Shillito kindly tell us what it is?

We note, what indeed was inevitable, that the Select Committee of the House of Commons on the imprisonment of debtors has found two things; first, that the penalty falls entirely upon the working classes; secondly, that grossly



excessive credit is given to the wage-earning classes in view of the power to imprison. The Committee recommends, generally, the abolition, in County Court cases, of the power to order imprisonment for non-payment of debt. We hope this question is now going to be dealt with satisfactorily. It is not a political question at all, or we should not be referring to it in these columns. Many thousands of people are imprisoned every year, belonging to all political and social sects. Their only common characteristic is their poverty.

The special correspondent of the *Daily News* at Barcelona says that "The crowds, without leaders, without guidance, one way or the other, set themselves to the burning of convents and churches as a protest against the clerical oppression that weighs so heavily on the country." This is regrettable, of course, but it is very intelligible. It was not, however, a bloodthirsty crowd. "Cruelty," this correspondent says, "was completely absent from their mood; and they were always careful to turn out the inmates before setting fire to the premises. Crucifixes, images, and statues of saints were thrown into the bonfires." Which, by the way, was an exact imitation of what the Protestant "Reformers" did in the sixteenth century. The fact is that Catholicism, when it has the power, is such a frightful curse that people hate it bitterly, and they naturally show their hatred when they get a chance.

The "cruelty" lies with the clerico-military party. They took crowds of prisoners and have been shooting them in batches after the farce of a trial under martial law, which, as the Duke of Wellington said, is no law at all. The cruelty of the people is tame beside the cruelty of the reactionaries. It was always so.

Mr. Henry W. Nevinson, writing to the *Daily News* again from Barcelona, draws further attention to this action of the "revolutionists." "By far the strangest thing in the whole revolution," he said, "has been the attack upon the churches and religious houses. The rest has been exaggerated, but there is no exaggeration here. Thirty-seven churches, monasteries, and convents have been destroyed by fire. I have been from one to another, and there the black and roofless ruins stand to witness if even the refugees have lied. Most of them were new and hideous stone buildings, some not even finished. But many are in the old city, and the biggest wonder of the whole thing is that the city was not destroyed, for the old streets are narrow, lofty, and built of lath and plaster. The whole city would blaze like a Guy Fawkes, but the revolutionaries allowed the firemen to keep the neighboring houses soaked with water, and themselves carried buckets to assist, while the firemen who tried to put out a monastery were shot." Mr. Nevinson points out that the revolutionists committed no pillage. He hears that they throw a thief into the flames. "Why," he asks, did they "burn a few silly monasteries when there were banks and jewellers' shops to hand?" Mr. Nevinson knows the reason, we believe, but does not care to state it in the *Daily News*.

Mr. Cohen sends us a note with respect to the "Acid Drop" in our last issue concerning the Rev. A. J. Waldron's alleged triumph over an Atheist in "a big debate in a north-country town." The note is as follows: "Unless the same incident occurred twice, I believe I am the Atheist, and the 'north country town' was Chester, date—as nearly as my recollection serves—ten or eleven years ago. I say nothing about the 'triumph' for obvious reasons. The debate was there, the Atheist was there, the *Descent of Man* was quoted, and the passage referred to was read. So far the statement is accurate. The correction necessary is that when Mr. Waldron cited the passage, I challenged its accuracy. Mr. Waldron had not the book with him, but I sent for the book while the debate was proceeding, and before its conclusion was able to read the passage and prove to the audience that the alleged quotation was quite a misrepresentation of Darwin's views. From the cheers and laughter when I had finished reading I fancy it was not with the Atheist that the audience was disgusted. Mr. Waldron is notoriously economical of the truth, and I would advise him to be careful in future not to be so detailed in his statements. It involves risks of detection—as at present." We have not heard yet from Mr. Waldron. We suppose we must give him till next week.

Mr. Keighley Snowden reports Mr. Bernard Shaw as saying, in his evidence before the Censorship Committee, that "Even with the strongest conviction that you should allow liberty of speech, there are certain cases where prosecutions should take place for obscenity or blasphemy." We confess we do not understand this, and we hope that Mr. Shaw is

misreported. He has called the Blasphemy Laws a disgrace to the nation, and we have heard that at the time of the "blasphemy" prosecution, eighteen months ago, he wrote a letter on the subject to the *Daily News*, which was too strong for the nerves of the organ of the Nonconformist Conscience, and was refused insertion. We know, of course, that Mr. Shaw is opposed to Anarchy, but we trust his hatred of one extreme is not making him in love with the other. To all real intents and purposes, we believe Mr. Shaw is as much an Atheist as we are, in spite of his talk about "religion"; and how on earth an Atheist can defend prosecutions for "blasphemy" passes our comprehension. Would it be too much to ask Mr. Shaw to explain?

Mr. Foote's "Comic Sermons" were considered "dreadful blasphemy." The real trouble was, of course, that he was acting as a pioneer. Being ahead of the time was his actual offence. We see that the idea is now being taken up in Mr. Blatchford's paper. We congratulate him on borrowing this leaf out of our old book. But we suggest that a little more—shall we say "blasphemy"?—would give a better point to the parody.

"Religion and Morality" is the subject of the Rev. R. J. Campbell's last printed sermon, and after reading it we feel that he is really progressing. We also feel more than ever the oddity of his calling himself a Christian. Mr. Campbell plainly declares that "It is not true that morality is dependent upon religion." He says it is no more dependent upon religion than upon mathematics. He laughs at the orthodox bogey which is meant to frighten people into believing that morality will die with the death of theology. "Society," he says, "holds together, and men try to behave decently and honorably, for quite other reasons than that they are afraid of the judgments of God in some future state." This is not new, of course; but it is new in a pulpit. Freethinkers have been saying it all along, and it was splendidly said by Ruskin, who was not a Freethinker, but an honest man of genius, with sound and noble instincts. Mr. Campbell is finding salvation rather late—but he is finding it. Some day or other he will relish Heine's story of how he asked Hegel about the compensations of virtue in the life to come, and how Hegel asked him if he wanted a *pourboire* (drink-money, a tip) for not murdering his father and mother.

Mr. Campbell is very near going the whole hog. He does include the bristles, though he shrinks from the tail. He does not hesitate to confess that unbelievers are better, instead of worse, than Christians. Just look at this. "Let us be quite clear," he says, "on one thing; it simply is not true that morality depends upon religion; it does not; most moral gains are made in the teeth of religion, or at least in the teeth of religion as popularly understood, and very often the pioneers of the advance are men who are not specially religious. That has been conspicuously the case with regard to the awakening social consciousness of to-day; among its foremost exponents have been men who are commonly dubbed materialists, and among its fiercest opponents have been champions of religious orthodoxy." He goes even farther than that. "No cause in modern times that has meant the uplifting of the unprivileged," he says, "has been initiated and championed by organised Christianity." He puts it more strongly still. "Official Christianity," he says, "has, on the whole, lagged behind morality—that is to say, it has generally stood for a lower form of morality than that which has been the highest in any given age." The doctrine of salvation by belief, for instance, is "distinctly immoral," it has logically led to persecution, and has been "responsible for more cruelty and oppression than almost anything in the whole range of human blunders." All which justifies us in saying that Mr. Campbell goes the whole hog, including the bristles. But see how he stickles at the tail. "Christianity itself," he asserts, "is not synonymous with a lower morality than the best that has been revealed in any given age." *Christianity itself!* What is that? The New Theology, of course. All the other forms of Christianity are tainted; Mr. Campbell's form of it is the only one that is sweet and sound. Orthodox Christianity, organised Christianity—in other words, historic Christianity—has had nearly two thousand years of ignominious failure. Well, if this be true, the very name of Christianity should be banned and banished from every place but the museums. To make a fresh start at this time of day is really *too absurd*.

It is useless for Mr. Campbell to ask us to give Christ a new trial after all those wasted opportunities. He talks of the "wisdom of Christ" in "making love the goal both" of religion and morality. But this is based upon a partial reading and an arbitrary interpretation of the New Testament. Christ spoke words of love; he also spoke words of



hate. Christ spoke words of liberality; he also spoke as a narrow-minded persecutor. And if he did not teach the doctrine of everlasting punishment in hell we may as well close the New Testament altogether, and regard his alleged utterances as meant only to darken counsel.

Duchemin is a good name for a tramp. It is the name of the horrible creature who was guillotined at Paris for murdering his mother; one of those crimes at which one shudders unspeakably. The poor mother worked hard for a living, but had saved £17. He went and asked her for money, and she refused to give him any; so he strangled her, and as she did not die quickly enough he took out his knife and cut her throat; after which he spent the £17 in a jollification. It is horrible creatures like this matricide who complicate the question of capital punishment. Is it worth while keeping them alive? And what are you going to do with them? And then there is another question. What was God doing when he made a world that produces a Duchemin?

"Have you anybody belonging to you?" the magistrate asked, and the poor old woman, eighty-four years of age, answered, "Not a soul. Only God above." An intelligent policeman had brought her up to the Tower Bridge Court and charged her with the awful crime of begging. Somebody had actually given her four farthings, and such exploitation of the public had to be sternly put down; although this is a Christian country, and Christ said "Give to everyone that asketh." Poor old soul! Not a friend in the wide world. Only God above. And what *that* friend was worth to her is, alas, too easily estimated.

Never since the old *Pall Mall Gazette*—not the new one—discovered poor old Dan Chatterton and treated its readers to long, sanguinary extracts from his pamphlet called *Blood, Bullets, and Bayonets*, do we recollect anything quite so good as the *Daily Express's* discovery of a "blasphemous" pamphlet issued by the Anti-Christian Socialist League—which we believe is one of the many airy organisations that have sprung from the brain of "Comrade" Gott. Of course the *Express* doesn't care twopence about the "blasphemy," simply because it doesn't care twopence about religion. It "exposes" this "despicable pamphlet" for political reasons. It doesn't mind making itself a laughing-stock to those who are "in the know" as long as it can frighten the "respectable" classes into the protecting arms of Toryism.

How the leader of the Tory party will laugh in his sleeve at the *Express's* discovery, though he may affect to treat it gravely enough! Balfour is one of the least solid, and at the same time one of the slimmest, politicians of modern times. We believe he has as much religion as a courting cat, but he is capable of miauling to the tune of the tabernacle in order to reassure his followers. Of course he laughs at them too—under the rose.

The *Catholic Times* is concerned about the prospects of Christianity in Madagascar. It appears that both Catholic and Protestant missions suffer through getting no assistance from the French Government, which is accused of "carrying on an Anti-Christian crusade in the island." What this really means is apparent a little later on. "They have forbidden schools," we read, "to be kept up any longer in the churches, where for many years past all the primary schools have been taught." In other words, the French Government is secularising elementary education, which deprives the missions of the privileges they once enjoyed, and hence these tears. When religious bodies have to live under the law of justice they always weep. They know how hard it is to live under such conditions. We are not surprised to learn that "three fourths of the Protestant mission schools have been closed." Such a fact would rather please the *Catholic Times* in other circumstances, but as it wants the help of the Protestants in Madagascar it weeps into the same basin with them.

"The French enemies of Christianity," the *Catholic Times* says, "have been sapping and mining at home and abroad." Quite true. But their object is simply to destroy the privileges of Christianity and to make it exist, if it can manage to do so, under the rule of justice and equality. Our contemporary says that their work against the French Church "deserves to be called a devastation." Which simply means that the French Church is a lot poorer than it was. But it ought to be grateful for that, since poverty is the first of Christian virtues, according to the teaching of Christ.

The *Catholic Times* gives this heading to its leader on the Barcelona trouble: "The Massacre of the Clergy and the

Nuns." This is how the Church writes history—for its dupes. There was no massacre of clergy and nuns. It is an ecclesiastic dream; or shall we say another pious fraud?

Some time ago a Catholic paper chortled over a procession in the Hatton Garden district, which was powerfully supported by the Italian ice-cream merchants who haunt that locality. The procession was said to have made a great impression upon the non-Catholic spectators, and it was hinted that an abundance of such processions would lead to the Catholic conversion of England. We note, however, that the Right Rev. Monsignor Brown is unable to see any good effects that have sprung from the great Eucharistic Congress of last year and its famous procession, which invited and received an official slap in the face from the Prime Minister. "Frankly," Monsignor Brown says, "I do not think the Eucharistic Congress did much to turn the average Anglican mind in the direction of the Catholic Church." "Since the Congress," he laments, "a wave of bigotry has swept over Scotland and parts of England, and there has been a renewal of pulpit attacks upon the Church, the Holy Father, and upon the doctrine of the Eucharist." That word "bigotry," by the way, speaks volumes. It is piety on the part of Catholics to oppose Protestantism; it is "bigotry" on the part of Protestants to oppose Catholicism. There you have all the "cheek" of the Catholic Church in a nutshell.

Rev. Dr. John Wesley Hill, pastor of the Metropolitan Temple, New York City, preached in the Marylebone Presbyterian Church last Sunday, and delivered himself of the following utterance, which we hardly know whether to attribute to the power of the Holy Ghost or not. "The time is coming," he said, "and is not far distant, when the Union Jack and the Stars and Stripes, floating together, will make it impossible for a gun to throw a bullet beyond its muzzle, or for a soldier anywhere on the globe to lift his foot against the peace of the world, unless the order is given in the English tongue." Why the order to disturb the peace of the world should be any the better for being given in English passes our comprehension. No doubt Britishers and Yankees are the chosen people, in succession to the Jews; but we should be very loth to see them dominating the whole world in this fashion. We like variety. As the man in the street says, "There are others." Why should the likes of John Wesley Hill govern this planet—even if they do it in the name of Christ?

Thomas Paine has been dead a hundred years, yet the Central News wires a message from New York to London to the effect that Dr. C. W. Eliot, late president of Harvard, says "the Bible is not infallible." We shall get a wire presently reporting the decease of Queen Anne.

A lady gave a valuable crucifix to the Church of All Saints, Child's-hill, Cricklowood, in memory of her husband. Thieves have broken in and stolen it, with other articles, on which they could realise. The deity who is supposed to reside in the holy edifice raised no objection. Perhaps he was asleep, perhaps he was on a journey, perhaps he had turned aside,—to use the elegant language of Elijah to the priests of Baal.

Rev. Stephen Jones, a well-known Congregational minister of Bridgend, has been committed for trial on the charge of obtaining various sums of money, by means of fictitious demand notes, from the Great Western Railway. There is no moral.

Melbourne has a funny way of dealing with the case of the missing liner *Waratah*, with 300 people (called "goals") on board. Melbourne offered up prayers for "those at sea" last Sunday. The pastime did not affect the rate of insurance.

The Bishop of Manchester has been telling his foolish auditors on Blackpool sands that he has read all that John Stuart Mill and others have said, but his theology was not shaken. Well, who thought it would be? It would take something like a miracle to shake a man's theology when it brings him in four thousand pounds a year.

Tuesday morning's "Wills" included the following:—Rev. Theodore Marshall, D.D., Moderator of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland, left £10,588; Rev. Richard Broadbent Dowling, of St. John's Vicarage, Nottingham, left £19,564; Dr. George Henry Rouse, of the Baptist Missionary Society, left £8,395. "Blessed be ye poor!"



## Mr. Foote's Engagements.

September 5, 12, 19, 26, St. James's Hall, London.  
 October 3, Glasgow; 10, Leicester; 17, 24, and 31, St. James's Hall, London.  
 November 7, Manchester; 14, Liverpool.

## To Correspondents.

THE PRESIDENT'S HONORARIUM FUND: Annual Subscriptions.—Previously acknowledged, £230 13s. 6d. Received since.—D. Clark, 1s.; J. Parks, 1s.; C. Masson, 2s.; T. McClure, 2s.; J. Clark, 2s.; James Cartwright, 2s. 6d.; J. and R. Miller, 2s. 6d.

"BLASPHEMY" DEFENCE FUND.—James Cartwright, 1s.

THE BOULTER FUND.—We have received:—George Payne, £2 2s.

F. W. RICHARDSON.—Sorry we cannot oblige. We are publishing a new edition of the story of our imprisonment, however, probably before Christmas.

C. W. STYRING.—Perhaps next week.

H. B. SAMUELS.—Too late for this week, anyhow.

T. A. MOSLEY.—Mr. Cohen's address accompanied his list of lecturing engagements, which has not reached us lately. Any communications sent to him or Mr. Lloyd at our office will be forwarded.

A. A.—Pleased to receive the postcard. We wish you happiness and success.

W. F. CLARK.—You probably refer to Ecclesiastes iii. 19-22.

G. F. H. McCUSKEY.—Pleased to see that the reverend gentleman admires George Meredith. Whether he understands him is another matter.

T. McCLURE.—Glad that you and your friends find the *Freethinker* "an intellectual treat." It would be better, as you say, if all Freethinkers would speak out and do something for the cause; but they have been born and bred in a Christian country, and have not always escaped the infection of its cowardice and hypocrisy.

W. LEARS (Montreal).—Pleased to hear from one who has "found the light" partly through our writings. With respect to immortality, the question is not whether it is desirable, but whether it is a fact. The truth of any proposition is not affected by our wish that it were true, or that it were not true. Have you not got hold of the wrong end of the stick in this case?

T. SHOLE.—Thanks for the reference, though we never heard before of Thomas Paine's having kept a shop in High-street, Woolwich, and should like to know the *Daily News* writer's evidence for the statement.

H. E. VOIGT.—Thanks for photo of the Iconoclasts Cricket Club. They seem a likely lot. Glad to hear that you have now forty members, and "will have to get more spacious premises next year."

"GARIBOLDI."—Why do you take a great man's name in vain? The Tolstoy pamphlet on Shakespeare is the greatest silliness we ever saw in print. And the question about Shakespeare and the working-classes is the silliest silliness of all. The working-classes, in the modern sense of the word, had not emerged in Shakespeare's day. There were poor people, however, and the attitude of the rich towards them is strongly censured in *King Lear* and elsewhere. We shall hear Shakespeare denounced presently because he didn't read *Justice* and the *Clarion*.

W. BLOOR.—Glad you have read this journal since Christmas and "would not miss it now"; also that you are recommending it to your friends. If all our readers would do this our circulation would double and our financial troubles would be at an end. We might almost ask the price of the Rev. R. J. Campbell's old motor-car when he is buying a new one.

W. P. ADAMSON says that our "very fine article" on Freethought and the Law should be "published in pamphlet form and disseminated as widely as possible."

C. W. GEDDES.—The West London Branch does hold Sunday meetings at the Marble Arch. Glad to hear Mr. Davies' lecture was so highly appreciated by a big audience.

W. A. YATES.—Rev. Dr. McCann is still alive, we believe; the last we heard of him was from Jersey. Thanks for cuttings.

W. P. BALL.—Much obliged for cuttings.

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

Friends who send us newspapers would enhance the favor by marking the passages to which they wish us to call attention.—Orders for literature should be sent to the Manager of the Pioneer Press, 2 Newcastle-street, Farringdon-street, E.C., and not to the Editor.

PERSONS remitting for literature by stamps are specially requested to send *halfpenny stamps*.

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## Sugar Plums.

The summer having at length arrived—though the Lord knows how long it will stay—Mr. Foote has gone off to spend his annual week with his old friend, and veteran Freethinker, Mr. J. W. de Caux, at Great Yarmouth. He has seen this week's *Freethinker* through the press, and will be back in time to see next week's through; for a weekly paper is like a wheel—you cannot miss a single revolution. Mr. Foote will write for the paper as usual during his "week off."

We have to postpone till next week the full announcement of the course of Sunday evening Freethought lectures in the beautiful new St. James's Hall during September and October. Meanwhile we once more beg the London "saints" to make a note of the same, with a view to attending the lectures themselves and inducing as many as possible of their friends and acquaintances to do so likewise. We invite them to make a great effort to fill St. James's Hall this time. They can do it if they only exert themselves reasonably.

Mr. Cohen takes part in the Annual Services at the Fails-worth Secular Sunday School to-day (Aug. 15), delivering two lectures, afternoon and evening. The services include a capital musical program, and collections will be made in aid of the School funds.

Some of the London Branches that carry on open-air propaganda during the summer do their best to sell the *Freethinker* at their Sunday meetings, and wherever an effort is made to sell it the paper finds purchasers. Other Branches, however, make no more effort to sell the *Freethinker* than if it were a Christian Evidence paper. Why is this? We do not mention names, but the negligent Branches will be able to put on the cap for themselves—and the active ones will know that it does not fit them.

The Newcastle-on-Tyne Branch holds its annual picnic at Ponteland to-day (Aug. 15). Train leaves Manors North at 1.10 p.m. and returns from Ponteland at 9.16 p.m. Tea and return fare 2s. 6d.; children half price. Tea only 1s. 3d. Those who intend going should communicate with Mr. Dodds, 243 Harbottle-street, Byker.

The *Blue Grass Blade*, Lexington, Kentucky, is one of our welcome exchanges. The last number to hand contains an editorial article headed "Wanted—A Leader." A call is made for Freethought organisation in the United States. It is expected that if the initial steps are taken to form such an organisation "the leader will be found." "In England," our contemporary says, "the late Charles Bradlaugh saw and felt the great power that lay in organisation, and he constantly urged the Freethinkers to organise and give mutual aid and mutual strength to the cause. President G. W. Foote, of the English Secular Society, is now pursuing the same policy with increasing success." Reference is made to Ingersoll's recognition of the necessity of organisation, and his holding aloof during the later years of his life "for reasons only too well known." May we suggest that those "reasons" should be borne in mind. Ingersoll rightly objected to a Freethought organisation which every now and then compromised its members on outside questions. Freethought organisations should confine themselves to the actual questions of Freethought.

A paper called the *Sunday Journal* reaches us all the way from Tientsin, North China. It is sent us "with compliments from a Scottish Freethinker" living there. To our great astonishment it opens with a large-type special article on Thomas Paine. It is highly laudatory, praising not only his character and his political work, but also his *Age of Reason* as "perhaps the most convincing and irrefutable exposure of the greatest of all frauds." Galileo said that the world still moves; who can doubt it after this?

There are not many "Sugar Plums" this week. August is the deadly dull season for all sorts of propaganda. But there are things going on behind the scenes, which will mature for announcement in or before October, including several new books and pamphlets issued by or through the Pioneer Press.



## The Renaissance of the Pagan Gods.

"The isles of Greece! the isles of Greece!  
Where burning Sappho loved and sung,  
Where grew the arts of war and peace,  
Where Delos rose and Phœbus sprung:  
Eternal summer gilds them yet,  
But all, except their sun, is set."

—LORD BYRON, *Don Juan*.

"Wilt thou yet take all, Galilean? but these thou shalt  
not take.  
The laurel, the palms, and the pœan, the breasts of  
the nymphs in the brake.

Ye are fallen, our Lords, by what token? we wist  
that ye should not fall.

Ye were all so fair that are broken; and one more  
fair than ye all."

—SWINBURNE, *Hymn to Proserpine*.

"Alas! their quarrel will be voided never;  
Beauty and truth at war have ever been;  
The host of men to Time's far end will sever  
Into two camps—barbarian and Hellene."

—HEINE, *The Poet's Last Vision*.

IN one of the rooms of the Vatican at Rome there is a fresco symbolising the triumph of Christianity over Paganism, which is represented by a crowd of beautiful statues all smashed to pieces. The destruction of these glorious sculptures was such a recognised and praiseworthy proceeding, that it was considered worthy of being recorded in stone.

But why should the Christian converts destroy the beautiful statues of Paganism? Mr. Conybeare—who is a Christian scholar, and has spent twenty years in the study of early Christian literature†—gives us the reason. He says:—

"We are apt to suppose that conversion to the religion of Christ signified and brought with it a disbelief in the gods of Paganism. Nothing could be further from the truth. The convert continued to believe in the gods as firmly as before, the only difference was that he now came to regard them not as benevolent beings, but as malevolent ones. They were the fallen angels, ministers of Satan lying in wait to destroy men, and often for that end taking up their abode in, and disguising their natural foulness under, the most beautiful statues. Such was the nemesis which in the decadence of Greek thought overtook the faith and art of Phidias and Scopas."‡

As he remarks, "Intellectually, then, the early Christians were but a short remove from the Paganism they denounced."

This was the cause of the enormous destruction of Pagan art; for, as Mr. Conybeare observes,—

"the obvious way of scotching a foul demon was to smash his idols; and we find that an enormous number of martyrs earned their crowns in this manner.....and as soon as Christianity fairly got the upper hand in the fourth century, the wrecking of temples and the smashing of the idols of the demons became a most popular amusement with which to grace a Christian festival. As we turn over the pages of the martyrologies, we wonder that any ancient statues at all escaped those senseless outbursts of zealotry."§

The remnants of that marvellous world of art, to be found in our museums to-day, is but a mere fragment of what once existed, and many of its finest examples have been recovered from the earth, where they had been buried to preserve them from Christian fanaticism. Then ensued the long night of the Dark Ages, when Art, Science, and Literature disappeared from Europe for a thousand years. "There was the literature of Greece and Rome," says the historian Buckle, but the monks of the Middle Ages—

"were unable to feel even the beauties of their style, and they trembled at the boldness of their inquiries.

\* McIntock's translation.

† *Myth, Magic, and Morals*, p. 15; 1909.

‡ *Monuments of Early Christianity*, p. 10; 1896.

§ *Ibid.*, p. 13 (the italics are ours). This was one great cause of the so-called persecution of the early Christians, before the fourth century. Renan says: "It was not rare to see a Christian stop before a statue of Jupiter or Apollo, and say to it as he struck it with his staff: 'Ah well, you see, your god does not avenge you!' The temptation was strong in such a case to arrest the sacrilegious one and to crucify him, saying, 'And does your god avenge you?'" (*Marcus Aurelius*, p. 35).

At the first glimpse of the light, their eyes were blinded. They never turned the leaves of a Pagan author without standing aghast at the risk they were running; and they were in constant fear lest, by imbibing any of his opinions, they should involve themselves in a deadly sin."\*

Some of the parchment manuscripts of these masterpieces were actually scraped, and then written over with the Gospels; specimens of these palimpsests, as they are called, can be seen in the British Museum to-day.

Many of the old authors were altogether lost, others disappeared until the fifteenth century, when—as a popular Encyclopædia somewhat poetically puts it—"the wind wafted precious fragments of classical literature to Italian shores from the conflagration of the Eastern Empire," with the result that "Calvary was deserted for Olympus, Galilee for Corinth." The artist "who depicted Mary fainting on Calvary turned to wed Ariadne to Bacchus with his brush.....On their canvas the lean saints grow lusty and strong, the Virgin rivals Venus, and Christ, as Pulci observed, becomes 'a crucified Jupiter.'" Thus Newnes' *Oracle Encyclopædia* (article "Renaissance"). But it was not for letting out the truth in this fashion that you were knighted, Sir George: the exploitation of pious sentiment by *The Way of the Cross* and *The Art Bible* proved the royal road to wealth and title, rather than the retailing of the profanities of Pulci.

And how glorious were the Olympian gods and goddesses created by the Greeks; they are truly immortal, in the sense that all the great creations of art are immortal.

Swinburne, in one of the most beautiful of his poems, the *Hymn to Proserpine*, laments—through the mouth of a Pagan worshiper, after the proclamation in Rome of the new Christian religion—the passing of the old gods. He compares the Virgin Mary with his own goddess:—

"Not as thine, not as thine was our mother, a blossom of  
flowering seas,  
Clothed round with the world's desire as with raiment,  
and fair as the foam,  
And fleetier than kindled fire, and a goddess, and mother  
of Rome.  
For thine came pale and a maiden, and sister to sorrow;  
but ours,  
Her deep hair heavily laden with odor and color of flowers,  
White rose of the rose—white water, a silver splendor, a  
flame,  
Bent down to us that besought her, and earth grew sweet  
with her name.  
For thine came weeping, a slave among slaves and re-  
jected; but she  
Came flushed from the full-flushed wave, and imperial,  
her foot on the sea."

Will any poet ever raise a lament like that for the cold Christ and his tearful mother when they also have joined the great majority of defunct gods and goddesses? We think not.

Heine declared that the melancholy new gods filled him with rage, and that he would rather sacrifice to the old. Schiller wrote a poem to them, and lamented:—

"Alas they went, and with the gods are gone  
The hues they gazed on and the tones they heard;  
Life's melody and beauty."

Matthew Arnold wasted his prose in trying to bolster up a moribund superstition in which he did not believe: but he reveals his true affinity in his poetry—by which posterity will remember him. In his *Strayed Reveller* the gods turn their shining eyes on the earth and men:—

"They see the Heroes  
Sitting in the dark ship  
On the foamless, long-hoaving  
Violet sea:  
At sunset nearing  
The Happy Islands."

And Ulysses, sitting on the warm steps looking over the valley, catches glimpses of the immortals:—

"Ah, cool night-wind, tremulous stars!  
Ah glimmering water—  
Fitful earth—murmur—  
Dreaming woods!  
Ah golden-hair'd, strangely smiling Goddess."

\* Buckle, *History of Civilisation*, p. 154; 1904.



The Christians destroyed the statues, but the gods have been amply avenged. The very sight of them seems to inspire enmity to the Christian faith. We have had occasion to notice this in the course of reading several recently published biographies.

Richard Jefferies began to lose his religion at the same time that he began to take an interest in Greek art. As he recovered from an illness at the age of twenty, says Mr. Edward Thomas, "his letters gradually lost the religious phrasing. He read the Greek Testament, and his thoughts seem to have travelled perversely, not to Judea, but to Greece. 'Everything beautiful is Greek,' he writes; 'the greatest poet was a Greek—Homer. The most beautiful statues—those at Rome in the Vatican—were sculptured by Greeks. The Greek cast of countenance is the most beautiful; when perfect, it is almost divine.'"

And again:—

"The lips and hair of Cythera, 'Juno's wide back and medial groove,' slake the same thirst. These were they, he says of the Greek men and women, 'who would have stayed with me under the shadow of the oaks while the blackbirds fluted and the south air swung the cowslips.....These had thirsted of sun, and earth, and sea, and sky. Their shape spoke this thirst and desire like mine.'"

As the Rev. Robert Hall observed, "an enthusiastic admiration of the Iliad of Homer is but a bad preparation for relishing the beauties of the New Testament."

Lafcadio Hearn—that strange offspring of a passionate love-match between a beautiful Greek lady and a handsome officer in the English army—the man who cast off our civilisation and became a naturalised Japanese, has left a vivid account of his first acquaintance with the Pagan divinities. When his parents separated, he was handed over—at the age of seven—to the care of a pious, well-to-do aunt, under whose care he read a good deal in the lives of the saints and legends of the Church.

But lo! one glorious day, Lafcadio—he was named after a Greek island—discovered in an unexplored corner of the library several beautiful books about art; folios containing figures of the gods and demigods, nymphs, fauns, nereids, and all the charming creations of Greek mythology. He records:—

"How my heart leaped and fluttered on that happy day! Breathless I gazed; and the longer that I gazed the more unspeakably lovely those faces and forms appeared. Figure after figure dazzled, astounded, bewitched me. And this new delight was in itself a wonder,—also a fear. Something seemed to be thrilling out of those pictured pages,—something invisible that made me afraid. I remembered stories of the infernal magic that informed the work of the Pagan statuaries. But this superstitious fear presently yielded to a conviction, or rather intuition—which I could not possibly have explained—that the gods had been belied because they were beautiful."†

If a primitive Christian had read this it would have confirmed his worst suspicions as to the Satanic possession of the Pagan divinities. "And these had been called devils!" says Hearn.

"I adored them—I loved them! I promised to detest forever all who refused them reverence.....Oh! the contrast between that immortal loveliness and the squalor of the saints and the patriarchs and the prophets of my religious pictures!—a contrast indeed as of heaven and hell."

In that hour, he says, "the mediæval creed seemed to me the very religion of ugliness and hate." But the boy was not to enjoy the company of his new-found divinities for long. His aunt, who was a strict Roman Catholic, placed him under religious tutelage, and his reading was subjected to a severe examination. One day the beautiful books disappeared, and he was afraid to ask what had become of them. After many weeks he was overjoyed to find them

returned to their former place; but his joy was of brief duration. The censor had been through them with erasing-knife and quill pen, and corrected all that offended his sense of propriety. Says Hearn:—

"I can still recall one beautiful seated figure, whose breasts had been thus excised. Evidently 'the breasts of the nymphs in the brake' had been found too charming: dryads, naiads, graces, and muses—all had been rendered breastless. And in most cases, drawers had been put upon the gods—even upon the tiny Loves large baggy bathing-drawers, woven with strokes of a quill pen, so designed as to conceal all curves of beauty,—especially the lines of the long fine thighs."

But they could not erase the effect from his mind. For he tells us: "Now, after I had learned to know and to love the elder gods, the world again began to glow about me. Glooms that had brooded over it slowly thinned." And even after he grew to manhood he tells us that "the words 'heathen' and 'pagan'—however ignorantly used in scorn—revive within me old sensations of light and beauty, of freedom and joy."

Hearn thus became acquainted with that horror of "the world, the flesh, and the Devil" so characteristic of the pious-minded. And later on we find him using this knowledge, jokingly, to horrify his confessor. One day, at confession, he says:—

"I told the ghostly father that I had been guilty of desiring that the devil would come to me in the shape of the beautiful women in which he came to the anchorites in the desert, and that I thought I should yield to such temptations. He was a grim man who rarely showed emotion, my confessor, but on that occasion he actually rose to his feet in anger 'Let me warn you! let me warn you! Of all things never wish that! You might be more sorry for it than you can possibly believe!'"

His earnestness tempted Hearn to believe that the temptation might actually be realised; "but," he concludes, "the pretty *succubi* all continued to remain in hell."

But the Roman Catholic faith is not alone in its hatred of the Pagan divinities. The Puritan hates the Church of Rome, but he shares its horror of Paganism. Mr. Edmund Gosse, the librarian of the House of Lords, tells us, in *Father and Son*—that interesting study of a Puritan father—that he never saw a work of sculpture until he was thirteen, when he saw a few steel engravings of statues in a gaudy gift-book. "These," he said, "attracted me violently, and here for the first time I gazed on Apollo with his proud gesture, Venus in her undulations, the kirtled shape of Diana, and Jupiter voluminously bearded." The book stated that these figures were the old Greek gods, but gave very little information about them; so the boy asked his father to tell him about these "old Greek gods." "His answer was direct and disconcerting." He said:—

"the so-called gods of the Greeks were the shadows cast by the vices of the heathen, and reflected their infamous lives. 'It was for such things as these that God poured down brimstone and fire on the Cities of the Plain, and there is nothing in the legends of these gods, or rather devils, that it is not better for a Christian not to know.' His face blazed white with Puritan fury as he said this—I see him now in my mind's eye in his violent emotion. You might have thought that he had himself escaped with horror from some Hellenic hippodrome."

About this time a girl in their village, named Susan Flood, the daughter of a shoemaker, attended some revivalist meetings, and became "converted" in the noisiest way, "with sobs, gasps, and gurglings." After this, Susan went up to London to pay a visit to an unconverted uncle and aunt, who took her to the Crystal Palace for a treat. While passing through the sculpture gallery, her sense of decency had been so shocked by the sight of the nude figures that she laid about them with the handle of her parasol before her horrified companions could stop her. Says Mr. Gosse:—

"She had, in fact, run amok among the statuary, and had, to the intense chagrin of her uncle and aunt, very

\* Richard Jefferies, p. 64; 1909.

† Ibid., p. 195.

‡ *Life and Letters of Lafcadio Hearn*, by Elizabeth Bisland, vol. i., p. 27; 1906.

\* *Life and Letters of Lafcadio Hearn*, pp. 31-38.



worthy persons, been arrested and brought before a magistrate, who dismissed her with a warning to her relations that she had better be sent home to Devonshire and 'looked after.'

Susan Flood's return was a triumph, and she was ready to recount to everyone "how she had been able to testify for the Lord 'in the very temple of Belial,' for so she poetically described the Crystal Palace." 'As for me,' says Mr. Gosse,

"I had gathered by persistent inquiry enough information to know that what her sacrilegious parasol had attacked were bodies of my mysterious friends, the Greek gods, and if all the rest of the village applauded iconoclastic Susan, I at least would be ardent on the other side. But I was conscious that there was nobody in the world to whom I could go for sympathy. If I had ever read *Hellas* I should have murmured—

'Apollo, Pan, and Love,  
And even Olympian Jove,'

grew weak when killing Susan glared on them."

In a former article on "The Gods of Greece" (April 22, 1906) we have shown how the Pagan gods exercised a similar influence over Sir Richard Burton, Heine, and Dr. Taylor, the Platonist, who actually revived the worship of them.

Nietzsche, whose volcanic force exercises so vast an influence to-day, held that "The Greeks are the leading event in the history of civilisation."\* And he attributes the origin of that civilisation to the union of the qualities and feelings which the Greeks symbolised by the gods Dionysus and Apollo. The Dionysean instinct is the intoxicating joy of mere existence, the exuberant feeling of life and energy; the Apollonian instinct a sort of dream of beauty. "The art and the civilisation of Greece," says Nietzsche, "were originally Apollonian; it was a beautiful visionary world, and moderation was its axiom. Later on the Dionysean instinct became united with the Apollonian, and together they gave rise to the greatest works of art."† He compares the religion of the Jews with that of the Greeks. Of the Jewish God he says:—

"This oriental God in heaven does not mind the natural consequences of a deed, if only His slave rolls repenting in the dust; sin is a crime against Him, not against mankind! How much more admirable is the Greek conception, compared to which ours is that of slaves."‡

"Nietzsche," says Havelock Ellis, "came of a long line of Christian ministers." He was trained in the Lutheran faith. His mother, who was a preacher's daughter as well as a preacher's wife, regarded him as logically destined for a preacher's career. "At nine he was already versed in the lore of the reverend doctors," says Mencken. "The awakening came to him when he made his first venture away from the maternal apron-strings and fireside."§

Richard Jefferies was trained in the faith of the Church of England, in which he was a believer until the age of twenty.

Lafcadio Hearn—like Swinburne—was brought up as a Roman Catholic.

Mr. Edmund Gosse was trained in chapel-going Nonconformity.

Thus all phases of Christian faith are here represented—the Catholic, the follower of Luther, the Church of England, and the Puritan. One cannot point to the other and say, "This is the result of your teaching! Mine is the only true faith."

The fact is that Christianity is antagonistic to human nature; it is the religion of sadness and sorrow; it teaches the worthlessness of this life in comparison with the life to come. If Christianity is true, then Wesley was right in saying:—

"No room for mirth or trifling here,  
For worldly hope or worldly fear,  
If life so soon is gone:  
If now the judge is at the door,  
And all mankind must stand before  
The inexorable throne!"

\* *The Twilight of the Idols*, p. 217; 1899.

† Mugge, *Life of Nietzsche*, p. 105; 1908.

‡ *Ibid.*, p. 181.

§ Mencken, *The Philosophy of Friederich Nietzsche*, p. 4.

The Greek religion, on the contrary, was a religion of joy. As Professor Mahaffy remarks:—

"We admit and even extol the joys of religion, though we but rarely feel them. In the infancy of European civilisation it was far different; the joys of Greek religion were many and intense, its sadness and solemnity were long kept in the background."\*

The Greeks fancied that the gods were like themselves, a race of stronger and brighter Greeks, sometimes mingling in disguise with mankind. Says Freeman Clarke: "They projected themselves upon the heavens, and saw with pleasure a race of divine Greeks in the skies above, corresponding with the Greeks below."†

"Thou wert fair in the old fearless fashion  
And thy limbs are as melodies yet"

sings Swinburne. What wonder, then, that the modern mind turns with disgust from the contemplation of the figure hanging on the gibbet, and from the verminous saints and savage hermits to which it gave rise, and looks back with longing to the beautiful creations of Greek mythology.

"What ailed us, O gods, to desert you  
For creeds that refuse and restrain?  
Come down and redeem us from virtue,  
Our Lady of Pain."‡

That is, from the Christian virtue of asceticism, which restrains from partaking in the legitimate joys and pleasures of life for fear of losing eternal happiness hereafter.

We ask the Christians of to-day, who look forward to a Christian world, and babble of a time when every knee shall bend to their Savior, how they reconcile their belief in a coming Christian world with the fact that all the best and finest minds trained in this faith desert it directly they are old enough to use their own judgment? What is the use of sending missionaries out to convert savages to Christianity when the best thought of the world is rejecting and condemning it?

Nothing can revive the worship of the gods of Greece. There is no resurrection for gods, any more than there is for men. The mythology of Greece and Rome was suppressed by Christianity, and Christianity itself is now called before the bar of science and humanity. But when the supernaturalism of the old mythology had evaporated, it left behind the majestic and lovely figures of the gods and goddesses, which are still the wonder and delight of the world. When Christian supernaturalism evaporates, what will it leave behind? Nothing but amazement that men could have deserted such glorious creations for the pale saints, distorted martyrs, and flat-chested, long-footed virgins which we see in the art of the Middle Ages.

We cannot do better than conclude with the aspiration expressed by James Thomson ("B. V.") in his beautiful Proem:—

"O antique fables! beautiful and bright  
And joyous with the joyous youth of yore;  
O antique fables! for a little light  
Of that which shineth in you evermore,  
To cleanse the dimness from our weary eyes,  
And bathe our old world with a new surprise  
Of golden dawn entrancing sea and shore."

W. MANN.

Under the domination of the Christian Church, woman became the merest slave for at least a thousand years. It was claimed that through woman the race had fallen, and that her loving kiss had poisoned all the springs of life. Christian priests asserted that but for her crime the world would have been an Eden still. The ancient fathers exhausted their eloquence in the denunciation of woman, and repeated again and again the slander of St. Paul. The condition of woman has improved just in proportion that man has lost confidence in the inspiration of the Bible.—*Ingersoll.*

\* *A Survey of Greek Civilisation*, p. 105; 1897.

† *Ten Great Religions*, p. 269.

‡ Swinburne, *Dolores*.



## Correspondence.

## THE BISHOP AND THE ATHEIST.

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE FREETHINKER."

SIR,—I think it was Mr. Belfort Bax who described the Christian Deity as the celestial policeman. If we accept the descriptions of certain mild-mannered Christian apologists, he is more of a "sweet little cherub who sits up aloft keeping watch o'er the life" of poor humanity. I take it that there must prevail many different conceptions of God. The lawyer will regard him as a glorified Judge; the doctor as a glorified Professor of Anatomy; the sailor as a glorified Captain; the soldier as a glorified General (such as William Booth—dear old soul!); the author as a successful Publisher; the footman as a resplendent Aristocrat. In spite of the dogmas of Christianity, it is still true that each man makes his own God and his own religion. After all, my own inner consciousness will determine the character of God for me, as that consciousness is influenced, colored, and moulded by my particular experience of life, my upbringing, education, and training, and my consequent preconceptions and prejudices.

But I cannot think that the idea of God which has been formed by the Lord Bishop who preaches on the sands at Blackpool is calculated to help the cause of Christianity. This right reverend brother in God has rather put his foot in it. It is evidently possible to overdo enthusiasm. While preaching at Blackpool recently this gentleman is reported to have told a story of two Lancashire miners who were working in a coal-mine. One was a Christian, the other was an Atheist. Lumps of coal began to fall from the roof of the mine, and, according to the story of the Christian miner, his Atheistic fellow-worker fell on his knees and, holding up his clasped hands, cried out: "Oh Lord, save me!" The Christian miner's comment was: "Ay, theer's nowt like clobs o' ewoal for showin' up Atheists!"

The Christian miner did not say what he was doing to dodge the "clobs o' ewoal." Possibly he was out of the danger zone, and was thus enabled to study the terror of his fellow-workman.

But what are we to think of the character of the Christian God after the Bishop's story? Is this a typical example of the Love of God? Nay, I am afraid we must hold that even Mr. Bax' description is altogether too mild. The Christian Deity must take a greater delight in terrorising his creatures than we had supposed to be possible. No martinet, be he policeman, Captain, General, or Duke can come up to him. The Bishop believes in a God who is an intolerable and cowardly bully and tyrant. What other inference is possible from the story with which he has been regaling the holiday-makers at Blackpool?

And this God has delegates and deputies on earth to do his work and execute his decrees. Need one be surprised, therefore, that they have had resort to a policy of persecution, cruelty, and terrorism?

SIMPLE SANDY.

## The Wider Sepulchre.

[The remains of George Meredith are not to be permitted to lie in Westminster Abbey.—*Cable.*]

Lie in the good, brown earth, where the world-winds blowing  
Mix with your dreams; hills bloom and the plover go by;  
Out in the night blue-domed with the gold stars glowing,  
Here, oh masterful, if you are ever to, die!

Slammed is the door of their temple upon your coming!  
What if you knew it, oh you of the laughing brain?  
Would you chant in their solemn marches and proud harp-  
strumming  
Or walk with the weather—a-dream in the wind and the  
rain?

Splintering temples of ritual—truth slow-breaking,  
You knew what these and the manners of men were worth,  
Or the pitiful priestly dream of an after-waking,  
And you went down joyous to your own mother, the earth.

Some for their doctrinal dream or a war-earned glory  
Lie in the sacred vaults by their faith's own might—  
You, who pitied their posture in poem and story,  
Go, sleep with the hills and the streams that are yours by  
right!

What if they turned you adrift? Is the world not wider,  
Fresher than all of their templod ritualry?  
Sleep in men's spirits and pity an old god-rider;  
Sleep with the world that is yours and will always be!

—*Sydney Bulletin.*

FURNLEY MAURICE

## The Christian Conscience.

MAGISTRATE LEROY B. CRANE, in the Centre-street Police-court, lectured a man for repeating the story of a poor youth's miss-step in life when the youth was seeking a new job.

The man was John Conron, of Conron Brother's Company, commission merchants, with a score of places in this and other cities and with headquarters at No. 40 Tenth-avenue. Mr. Conron attended court in the custody of a policeman, having refused to recognise a summons issued by the magistrate and served by Chester Allison, twenty-one years old, of No 73 Gansevoort-avenue. Allison stole a ham while in Mr. Conron's employ, was arrested and released on his promise never to do the like again.

Several days ago Allison told Magistrate Crane he had lost so many jobs through Mr. Conron telling his employers of the theft of the ham that it seemed like persecution. Magistrate Crane told the youth to bring Mr. Conron to court. Allison reported that Mr. Conron had torn up the court summons. Magistrate Crane issued a warrant for Mr. Conron.

"What is your reason for persecuting this young man?" the Magistrate asked.

"I am not persecuting him," answered Mr. Conron. "He proved himself a thief when in my employ, and I would not trust him again."

"And do you go around telling everybody that you know that he is a thief?"

"No, I do not; but when people come to me for reference about him I tell them the story of his stealing the ham."

"You are a successful business man—a millionaire?" queried Magistrate Crane.

"I have been successful in life," was the answer, "because I have always been strictly honest."

"But you have no pity in your heart? Can you not realise you are hounding this young man and doing all you can to prevent his earning an honest livelihood?"

"My conscience is clear, perfectly clear, in this case," replied Mr. Conron. "I am a Christian and try to do my full duty."

"I can't understand such a Christian spirit, especially in a man of the world, as you appear to be," said Magistrate Crane. "Is it possible that in all your business career you have never broken one of the ten commandments?"

"Not that I can recall just now," said Mr. Conron.

"You know the commandments?"

"Most assuredly I do."

"Recite the first one," said the Magistrate.

"Thou shalt not steal," Mr. Conron began; but the Magistrate broke in. "No, that is not the first commandment," he said.

At this Mr. Conron became confused and said he wasn't sure if he ever committed them to memory.

Magistrate Crane got Mr. Conron to promise that the next time he was asked about Allison he would not tell voluntarily of the theft of the ham.—*New York World.*

## THE PRODIGAL SON'S PHILOSOPHY.

"Mid pleasures and palaces,  
Though we may roam,  
When the stomach is empty,  
"There's no place like home."

## ICONOCLASTS C. C. V. ALPHA C. C.

The return match with the Alpha C. C. was played on our ground at Hanwell on Sunday last in delightful weather, and in the presence of a large number of spectators. This proved to be a very even game, as when our ninth wicket fell the score stood at 74. Amid great excitement the Iconoclasts eventually won by 3 runs. Score:—Iconoclasts, 78; Alpha C. C., 75.—J. H. MINETT, I. C. C.

## The Boulter Fund.

Previously acknowledged, £17.—R. Young, 10s.; F. J. Pinnell, 2s. 6d.; T. Judge, 2s. 6d.; E. Raggett, 2s. 6d.; A. Listener, 6d.; J. Milton, 2s. 6d.; Guis, 1s.; Albert Howe, 2s.; W. Kingston, 2s. 6d.; B. Lavigne, 2s. 6d.; J. W. de Caux, 10s.; W. Waymark, 3s. 6d.; Collection at Seven Sisters Corner, 2s. 6d.; J. S. Norman, 5s.; T. Griffiths, 5s.—N. J. EVANS (Treasurer), 122 City-road, London, E.C.



**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, Arthur B. Moss, Lectures.

KINGSLAND BRANCH N. S. S. (Ridley-road): 11.30, a Lecture.

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

WEST HAM BRANCH N. S. S. (Outside Maryland Point Station, Stratford): 7, W. J. Ramsey, "Crucifixion and Resurrection."

WEST LONDON BRANCH N. S. S. (Marble Arch, Hyde Park): 11.30 and 6.15, H. B. Samuels, Lectures.

WOOD GREEN BRANCH N. S. S. (Spouters' Corner): S. Cook, 11.30, "The Philosophy of Charles Bradlaugh"; 7, "The Design Argument Fallacy." Corner Seven Sisters'-road (2nd station): 7, N. J. Evans, "Miracles."

WOOLWICH BRANCH N. S. S. (Beresford-square): 11.30, Miss K. B. Kough, a Lecture; 6.30, A. Hyatt, a Lecture.

**COUNTRY.****INDOOR.**

LIVERPOOL BRANCH N. S. S. (Alexandra Hall, Islington-square): 7, H. Percy Ward, "When We Die are We Dead?"

**OUTDOOR.**

BRISTOL BRANCH N. S. S. (Durdham Downs): 7.30, B. G. Brown, "Is Christianity True?—The Pagan Sources."

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

FAILSWORTH (Secular Sunday School, Pole-lane): 2.45 and 6.30, C. Cohen, Lectures.

LIVERPOOL BRANCH N. S. S. (Edge Hill Lamp): Wednesday, August 18, at 8, H. Percy Ward, a Lecture.

WIGAN BRANCH N. S. S. (Market-square): Monday, August 16, at 8, H. Percy Ward, "When We Die are We Dead?"

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