

THE Freethinker

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PRICE TWOPENCE

The priest is only half man.—VICTOR HUGO.

Catholic Toleration.

THE *Catholic Times* of last Friday (September 10) published a long statement by the Liverpool Catholic Emergency Committee, under the heading of "Terrorism in Liverpool." Complaint is made of the aggressive bigotry of the Liverpool Protestants who swear by the name of the great George Wise. It is alleged that the district of which Netherfield-road is the centre has been for some time in a constant state of terrorism and outrage," and the following instances are given:—

"At times even in the performance of the most sacred duties a priest cannot walk along, not merely a side or obscure street, but along a leading thoroughfare like Netherfield-road, except at the risk of his life.

When recently a priest, called to attend a poor person dying of fever in Netherfield-road Hospital, was attempting to leave, he was beset by a furious mob. The authorities of the hospital would not permit the priest to leave the premises until an escort of police had been telephoned for to conduct him safely from this savage quarter.

Recently, after a meeting at the St. Domingo Pit, a rabble of Wise's followers proceeded to the convent of the teaching Sisters in Everton Valley and there continued shrieking, yelling, and wrecking the premises of these terrified ladies until nearly half-past eleven at night.

It is known that in this neighborhood the homes and shops of Catholics have been wrecked wholesale, sometimes merely because the Catholics would not sign the petition in favor of George Wise's release.

Nay, so far has the bitterness gone that an attack was made by an Orange mob in the same district upon offending Catholic children whose tableau formed a striking feature of the recent procession organised on behalf of the hospitals of the city."

This sort of thing, of course, is very regrettable. We may even call it a disgrace to Liverpool, and indirectly to the whole of England. Such a state of affairs ought to be dealt with firmly. Mob violence should not be tolerated for a moment in a civilised community. It makes no difference whether Catholics attack Protestants, or Protestants attack Catholics, or both of them attack Freethinkers; the first duty of the public authorities is to maintain public peace and order and secure to every citizen the free exercise of his rights. If it takes all the police in the place to do this, and the soldiers behind them, it should be done. There should be no temporising. Disorder should be sternly suppressed. Those who attack their fellow citizens in the name of religion, or anything else, are waging war against human society; and mere self-preservation dictates that they should be brought to heel as promptly as possible, and with all the severity that may be necessary. We would protect the Liverpool Catholics at all cost, just as we would protect Protestants, Jews, Freethinkers, or any other denomination.

It will be seen, therefore, that we are at one with the *Catholic Times* in hoping that a more civilised state of affairs will soon obtain in Liverpool. Having made that clear, we proceed to ask why it is that the Christian religion breeds such an intolerant temper amongst its rival bodies of adherents. People are often bitter enough in political and social differences, but their bitterness is far worse in religious differences. They seem to hate each other

with a perfect hatred, and it is a short and easy step from hatred to bloodshed.

We refer our Catholic contemporary to a report which appeared in the *Liverpool Express* of September 9. Application was made for bail for a young woman who was remanded on a charge connected with the riots. It was pleaded that she was "a young girl and a good girl." Whereupon the Stipendiary Magistrate, Mr. Shepherd Little, remarked: "It seems to me that all these people are good. It appears to be the people of no religion who behave properly. They all come here and tell me they are Catholics or Protestants, and that they are very good people. Yet these are the people who break windows and assault their neighbors. It is one of the phases of religion I never had any idea of." The last sentence would suggest that Mr. Little is totally unacquainted with Christian history; but perhaps he was only speaking from personal observation. He was speaking in that way, of course, when he uttered the preceding sentence, which we venture to repeat in italics: *It appears to be the people of no religion who behave properly.*

We have another question for the *Catholic Times*. Why is it that Catholics plead for toleration when they are in the minority and practise intolerance when they are in the majority? We are bound to express our belief that Catholic leaders are deliberately hypocritical in this respect. When they plead for toleration they appeal to principles which they intend to violate when they have the opportunity

Look at what is happening at Barcelona. The clerical—that is, the Catholic—party, which rules Spain and holds that poor creature, King Alphonso, in the hollow of its hand, allows as little religious liberty as it can throughout the country; while in Barcelona, which is now controlled by priests and soldiers under the anarchic despotism of "military law," heretics in general, and Atheists in particular, are being arrested, imprisoned, and even murdered, under the pretence of "public safety." Senor Ferrer is amongst them. Three years ago the Catholic party attempted his destruction. He was accused of complicity in the Morral outrage. For twelve months he was kept in prison without trial. When his trial was forced on by the public opinion of the civilised world he was acquitted. There was not a shred of evidence against him, as the Catholic party very well knew. They were bent on getting him out of the way; because he was the leader of the Secular Education movement in Spain. Now they have got hold of him again, and they are manufacturing evidence of his complicity in the late Barcelona riots. What they want is to gain a color of justification for shooting him after a drum-head trial. But protests against this infamy are being raised all over Europe. "If Francisco Ferrer be executed," Anatole France says, "the civilised world will say that his judges have been compelled to obey the party which cannot forgive Ferrer for having devoted his life to a system of non-clerical education of the young." Europe may be startled at any moment by the news of his assassination. But whether this great crime be committed or not, the Ferrer case is enough to show us that the Catholic Church may be trusted to slander and slay its enemies whenever it can.

G. W. FOOTE.

The Nature of Religion.—III.

(Continued from p. 580.)

IN what has already been said it has, I hope, been made clear that to define religion in terms of ethics, of metaphysics, or as the craving for an ideal, is wholly misleading. It is reading history backward, and attributing to primitive human nature feelings and conceptions to which it is quite foreign. A further definition of religion as consisting in a craving for "fullness of life"—first given, I think, by Professor Fiske, but since largely used—must be dismissed as equally faulty. For if by "fullness of life" is meant the desire to make life morally and intellectually richer, the reply is that this is nothing more than the product of a civilised social life, of which current religion stands as the adulterated expression. Apologetically, it is an attempt to so state religion that it may evade criticism of its essential character. From one point of view it is gratifying to find religious belief assuming a social guise and appealing for sanction to a purely social and utilitarian end, but it is of no assistance when the end in view is a determination of the essential nature of religion. How little religion discharges the function of developing a greater "fullness of life" is best seen when we remember how blindly obstructive to new ideas it is in all stages of social growth.

Great play has been made by a certain class of writers over Charles Bradlaugh's statement that all men are originally Atheists. And yet, using the word in its legitimate sense of an absence of belief in God, it represents no more than the simple truth. Those who speak of man as a religious being are using language much better calculated to confuse than to instruct. That men are nowhere found without religion, if only in a rudimentary form, the evolutionist cheerfully admits. Indeed, his reading of mental evolution leads him to expect that such will be the case. Man is a religious being in exactly the same sense that he is a clothes-wearing, a tool-using, or an inventive being. He has the capacity for acquiring religion, and does acquire it, owing to causes that will be indicated. But every line of research indicates that religion is acquired, is the result of education, as gained by the individual or the race. Deaf mutes, who have one of the principal channels of education closed to them, are found to be destitute of religious ideas. When they are brought under instruction they have to be taught to believe in a God and a future life exactly as all children are taught. Left alone, there is no reason for believing that a deaf mute who received instruction in modern branches of knowledge would be anything but an Atheist to the end of his days.

Religion is something that is acquired. Every book on the origin of religion assumes this to be the case; and all impartial investigation confirms the assumption. The question is as to the mode of acquisition. And here one word of caution is necessary. The wide range of religious ideas, their existence at a low culture stage, precludes us assuming that religious ideas are generated in the same conscious manner as are the theories of a scientific mind reflecting upon a given collection of facts. In an ordinary way, even with ourselves, beliefs concerning life in general do not arise as the result of elaborate reflection. They are generated subconsciously, and are only consciously formulated when circumstances render this necessary. And if we are to understand religion aright we must be on our guard against attributing to primitive humanity a degree of reflective power or of scientific curiosity not common with the mass of civilised humanity. We have to allow for what one writer well calls "physiological thought," thought, that is, rising subconsciously from repeated and insistent experiences.

A comprehensive survey of religious beliefs shows that there are only two that can be said with any plausibility to be common to all systems of religion.

They differ in teachings, in the conception of the nature of deity, in doctrines, in modes of worship. But all religions possessing any degree of organisation believe in a deity or deities, and in a continued existence beyond the grave. I emphasise the use of the phrase "continued existence" for the reason that the idea of immortality is a philosophic rather than a religious one, and represents the reaction of late philosophic speculation on existing religious ideas. It may also be questioned whether one ought not to exclude the idea of deity altogether, since there are some tribes of savages who, while believing in certain ghostly intelligences, have not yet given these spiritual beings the status of gods. But for the present we may take the belief in deity and the belief in a future life as constituting fundamental religious ideas.

Reflection shows that our analysis may be pushed a step further. The belief in a future life involves the idea of something existing which, while attached to the material organism, is yet independent of it. It is somewhat inaccurate to use the word "spiritual," which carries with it certain misleading connotations; but, for want of a better word, one is bound to use it, always bearing in mind that with savages "soul" is but a more rarefied form of body. The root, then, of the belief in a future life is the belief in spiritual existence.

By similar analysis the belief in deity brings us to the same position. The belief in gods involves the belief in invisible, super-material, or spiritual beings, like and yet superior to man. We may, then, still further reduce the belief in a future life and in deity to the common term of a belief in spiritual existence. It is for this reason that one may accept Professor Tylor's definition of religion, "the belief in spiritual beings," as representing the most comprehensive, and therefore the most scientific, definition yet given. It is the one point on which all religions, from the most savage to the most civilised, agree; and it must for this reason be regarded as their essential feature.

The question, then, of the origin of religion resolves itself into that of, How did mankind come to believe in this super-material, or in modern language spiritual, existence? And the cause, if it is to be found, must be found in some factor or factors that are as general as the phenomenon it is intended to explain.

What is there in primitive human experience to suggest the existence of unseen beings? Well, there are at least two sets of experiences—one normal, the other abnormal—that would suggest to the savage mind the existence of a double or ghost. The first is connected with the universal act of dreaming. The savage is, in his way, a severely practical person. As Tylor says, he believes what he sees, he sees what he believes. Knowing nothing of the distinction we draw between a fact and an illusion, ignorant of the functions or even the existence of a nervous system, the dreams of a savage are as real to him as his waking experiences. Consequently, when he dreams that he has been anywhere, or that someone has come to him, either or both experiences are treated as objective facts. Like the Biblical characters, he does not say "I dreamed I saw So-and-so," but "I saw So-and-so in a dream," two forms of expression which carry all the difference between fact and fancy. One thing is, therefore, to the savage mind, obvious. Something escapes from the body, wanders about, and returns. Such a belief does not represent the conclusion of a genius speculating upon the meaning of hitherto unexplained facts; it is a conviction steadily built up in the presence of unvarying experience—as steadily and as imperceptibly as the belief that fire burns or that water is wet. The very universality of the belief proves it to have had this sub-conscious origin.

A second class of experiences lead to the same conclusion. In temporary losses of consciousness the savage again sees evidence of the existence of a double. In cases of epilepsy or insanity there is offered proof that some other spirit has taken possession of the individual's body. We may note, too, in passing, that well on in the eighteenth century the

belief that catalepsy, epilepsy, and apoplexy were due to obsession maintained a fairly strong hold in civilised countries. And both these classes of experiences are enforced by the belief that the shadow of a man, his reflection in water, etc., are all actual things. The proofs that the belief in a soul does originate in this manner are now so plentiful that exact reference is unnecessary. Examination of primitive beliefs all over the world yield the one result, without any evidence being in the contrary direction.

Primitive philosophy does not stop here. From the belief that man possesses a ghost or double, an extension is made until it covers almost everything else. The general doctrine of souls is, as Tylor says, "worked out with remarkable breadth and consistency. The souls of animals are recognised by a natural extension from the theory of human souls; the souls of trees and plants follow in some vague partial way; and the souls of inanimate objects expand the category to the extremest boundary." Whether animism—the vitalising of inanimate objects—had an independent origin, or whether, as Spencer holds, it is derived from ghost worship, need not detain us now. Either position does not affect the belief in the gods having originated in the ignorance of primitive man. Personally, however, I do not believe that men would ever have given a soul to trees or natural objects unless they had first given them to living beings, and thus become familiarised with the theory of a double.

At present, however, we are on the track of the gods. The belief that every human being, and nearly every object, possesses a soul, ends in surrounding primitive man with a cloud of spirits against which he has to be always on his guard. The general position is well put by Miss Kingsley, who gives a picture of the West African that will well stand for the savage world in general.

"Everything happens by the action of spirit. The thing he does himself is done by the spirit within acting on his body, the matter with which that spirit is associated. Everything that is done by other things is done by their spirit associated with their particular mass of matter.....The native will point out to you a lightning-stricken tree and tell you its spirit has been killed. He will tell you, when the earthen cooking pot is broken, it has lost its spirit. If his weapon failed him, it is because someone has stolen or made its spirit sick by means of his influence on other spirits of the same class.....In every action of his life he shows you how he lives with a great, powerful spirit world around him. You see him before running out to hunt or fight rubbing it in his weapon to strengthen the spirit that is in it; telling it the while what care he has taken of it; running through a list of what he had given it before, though those things had been hard to give; and begging it, in the hour of his dire necessity, not to fail him..... You see him bending over the face of the river, talking to its spirit with proper incantations, asking it when it meets an enemy of his to upset his canoe and destroy him.....or, as I have seen myself in Congo Francaise, to take down with it, away from his village, the pestilence of the spotted death."

It is this ever-present world of ghosts or spirits that provides the seed plot for the birth of all the gods the world has ever known. When Feuerbach said "The realm of memory is the world of souls" he was expressing in a striking figure an actual scientific fact. For it is in the land of dreams that the gods begin; and their development into veritable nightmares is but a natural result of the play of a distempered imagination.

C. COHEN.

(To be continued.)

The Infallible Guide.

HISTORY demonstrates the impossibility of securing anything like unity in the Christian Church apart from the attribute of infallibility. To concede the right of private judgment is to sound the death-knell of the Christian religion. Protestantism is crumbling

because of the absence from it of the infallible note, and the Catholic Church holds together because she has it in all its fullness. The present Romish revival in Great Britain is largely due to the fact that all the priests see eye to eye as to the meaning and message of Christianity. In the Anglican Church there is an endless diversity of opinion and teaching, one clergyman recklessly pulling down what another so elaborately builds up. The Thirty-Nine Articles, so readily sworn to at ordination, are deliberately trodden upon ever after, except by a steadily dwindling minority. Nonconformity is split up into innumerable hostile camps, each one of which claims to be in the enjoyment of Heaven's special favor. Even in the same sect we often find conflicting "isms" not a few. When in America recently, the Rev. J. H. Jowett, of Birmingham, made a ferocious attack on his brother-minister, the pastor of the City Temple. Campbellism he described as not being "sufficiently inspirational to make people benevolent." Mr. Campbell often, and sometimes bitterly, returns the compliment by charging orthodoxy with colossal inefficiency. In the *Staffordshire Herald* for September 4, a writer who signs himself "M. C. L.," puts this point with delightful aptness. He is dealing with a correspondent, "A. J.," who accuses him of assailing his private judgment as applied to the interpretation of the Bible. He says:—

"Why is his interpretation of Scripture to be accepted as the true one? What are his qualifications for interpreting? Where is his proof that he knows, and others do not, the correct punctuation and the actual meaning of Scripture? Why is he more of an authority than, say, Canon Henson? He is not quite fair in asserting that I referred to the Canon's statements regarding resurrection by way of evading a text (1 Cor. xv. 18) that is obviously against my position. The reference to Canon Henson's interpretation of those texts was by way of further illustrating the vagaries of error and the curious inventions mothered by Protestant necessity in order that Scripture may harmonise with this or that Protestant opinion. 'A. J.' interprets Scripture to one meaning, Canon Henson to another. Both interpreters claim to derive their conflicting theories from the same Book. Which of them is right? The Canon may justly plead that his private judgment is as sound and as authoritative as 'A. J.'s'; and 'A. J.' may justly plead that his is as good as the Canon's. Who is to decide between them? Similarly, Wesley taught one thing, Fox another; the Unitarian quotes one text in denial of Christ's Divinity, his neighbor responds with another in proof of it, each claiming that his interpretation is the only true one. Again, who is to decide between them? How may we know which has the truth? All of them may be wrong, but all cannot be right."

That is an accurate description of the situation in the Protestant world. Mr. Jowett charges Mr. Campbell with perverting the Gospel, Mr. Campbell characterises Mr. Jowett as misinterpreting Christ's evangel, and a third, a rigid Calvinist, calls them both enemies of the saving Cross. Says "M. C. L.":—

"If there were no infallible authority to decide what is the true meaning of Scripture, alas for Christendom. Happily, there is that authority, the Catholic Church, the living, speaking, infallible authority, capable of declaring the Divine Revelation, and commissioned by God to touch it. Since some interpret Scripture to a number of opposite meanings, the logical, spiritual necessity for an Infallible Guide, a final authority, is so apparent that one marvels how any thinking being, in earnest about his salvation, fails to see it."

The complete situation is now before us, and we hasten to point out its only logical implication. As we have seen, it is the contention of all Christians, whether Catholics or Protestants, that there is a God, a Supreme Being, who regards all mankind with boundless affection, and who is anxious to get into intimate touch with everyone of them. From the first he eagerly desired to make himself known to them. Somehow or other they had gone deplorably astray, and were in a state of rebellion against him. Erelong he chose a small, insignificant Semitic tribe, and addressed himself to a few individuals in it, known as seers and prophets; and those conveyed to the whole tribe whatever God told them in secret. The Jews

* *West African Studies*; 1901; pp. 394-5.

were thus the Lord's elect, chosen people, but his dealings with them was never direct but always through prophets or priests as intermediaries, while with the rest of the world he held no communication whatever. Such was the case for some fifteen hundred or two thousand years. Then there came a change. Having for so long spoken to Israel "in the prophets by divers portions and in divers manners," at last God spoke unto them "in his Son, whom he appointed heir of all things, through whom also he made the worlds." This Son was the second person in the Trinity, and he was sent into the world and became man that he might "save his people [Israel] from their sins." He, too, like the prophets, recognised no other nation than the Jewish. His message was exclusively to his countrymen. It was with great reluctance that on one occasion he rendered assistance to an outsider, and the reluctance was rooted in the conviction that it was "not meet to take the children's [Israel's] bread and cast it to the dogs."

The curious thing is, however, that God's chosen people declined to listen to God's beloved Son. They refused to take him for what he claimed to be; and their resentment against him was so violent that they had him put to death for blasphemy. Thus they deliberately rejected their Savior, whom their God had sent to them. Then the question began to be discussed, "Is God the God of Jews only? Is he not the God of Gentiles also?" In the end, the answer was given, "Yea, of the Gentiles also." This verdict resulted in the formation of the Gentile Church, which was really a schism from the Jewish Church. It seized the Oracles of God which the Jews had always cherished as their own exclusive possession, and in course of time it prepared other Divine Oracles which were said to contain God's message of salvation to a lost world in his Son Jesus Christ, of both which sets of oracles it declared itself to be the sole custodian and authoritative interpreter. As time went on, it was found that the Church had two Heads, one in heaven, and one on earth representing the one in heaven. It was as the earthly Head of the Church that the Pope won his way to the seat of authority. He sat there as the Divine Son's vicar, vicegerent, lieutenant. What he said and did in that chair Christ said and did. Thus the Church, or the Pope as its official Head, became the Infallible Guide. God communicated with the world exclusively through the Church, and with the Church alone through the Pope. In such circumstances there can be no such thing as private judgment, and to claim it as a right would be an act of high treason against heaven. The Christian message can have but one meaning, and Christ himself, acting through his earthly representative, is the only one who can decide what that meaning is. It is as the outcome of acting on this principle that the Catholic Church has survived and maintained its unity, and it is in punishment for departing from this principle that the Protestant communions are marching to their ruin.

Now, a moment's reflection will show us that the three ecclesiastical conceptions of God, the Jewish, the Catholic, and the Protestant, inevitably land us in Atheism. Logically, no other conclusion is possible. In Protestantism, God is everlastingly contradicting himself. Both Mr. Jowett and Mr. Campbell speak in God's name, and they deliver two flatly contradictory messages. The only inference which an unprejudiced thinker can draw is that God speaks through neither. Any God worth believing in would be at least self-consistent. The Catholic Church is certainly self-consistent in its representation of the Divine Being, but what it exhibits to the world is the miserable spectacle of an infinite God of boundless love living in a tiny cage, absurdly limited and restricted in all his actions. To imagine the existence of such a Deity is to insult our own nature beyond forgiveness. Instead of ruling the world, this God is being ruled by the Church. Instead of being an Infallible Guide to the Church he is subjected to the humiliating indignity of being at her

beck and call. He only does what he is told to do. Without a moment's hesitation, we boldly deny the existence of such a puppet-God.

The Infallible Guide is a chimera. He has never set foot on our planet. The belief in him has preserved the Christian Church, but it has seriously checked the progress of humanity. It has been the salvation of the priesthood, but has meant the degradation of manhood. The reliance on an imaginary Infallible Guide, residing in the skies, but often represented on earth by a wretchedly fallible man, has prevented mankind from learning the beautiful art of self-reliance. But we are at last outgrowing the silly superstition. We are throwing it off as an insufferable puerility. Dr. Aked says that "if a man wants to know whether Christianity is true let him try it"; but surely the reverend gentleman cannot be ignorant of the fact that multitudes have honestly tried it, and finding it wanting, have given it up. Possibly, Dr. Aked has never really tried it himself, and is on that account able to preach it as if it were true. What we say of the theories of Christianity is, not that they are "outworn," but that they are impracticable and false; not that they are too ideal to be put into practice by so imperfect a race, but that they are ethically so crude and out of perspective, and resting on a theological background so absurdly mythical, that if put into practice they would cause a complete deadlock in social life.

J. T. LLOYD.

Self-Help.

It is not my purpose to write chirpy little, self-satisfied notes on this topic after the manner of the late Dr. Samuel Smiles. The term Self-help has fallen on somewhat melancholy times. It was once welcome to the life of every honest man. Now it is the exploited captive of the Charity Organisation Society and Anti-Socialists; and he who hesitates to wear it as a badge is suspected of a desire to set up a new Peruvian slavery. Some of the most independent and energetic men I know smile at the suggestion that Self-help is a virtue. That is because a political school have annexed it as their motto.

Just as prizes and certificates will some day disappear from the sphere of education, so will theological rewards and commendations. "Honor thy father and thy mother that thy days may be long in the land," is a prize principle, and one that belongs to a barbaric stage in our civilisation. "This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased" is a testimonial which should be unnecessary when a worthy sonship shines in its own sincerity and beauty without the advertisement of a voice from heaven. Theology is patronage; which neither encourages us to do a good deed for its own natural value, nor lets our better qualities appear without claiming the credit of their origin. It is feudalism of the soul, only permitting us to live in small dwellings clustered about the castle of the gods, and compelling us to remain on its estates and give our serf-labor to the cultivation of the divine glebe. We are allowed no holdings of our own, and possess no merit by virtue of our native character.

Slowly, very slowly, the gods have relinquished the kingship of the various realms of knowledge. The realm of mathematics was once considered divine. There was a holy mystery in number—in the number Seven for example. When Pythagoras discovered that the squares on the two sides of a triangle which contained a right angle were equal to the square on the side opposite to the right angle, he offered a sacrifice to heaven, in acknowledgment of the permission to see one of its geometrical secrets. To-day the mathematician calculates without the intervention of the celestials. Take astronomy. Each planet had its god once upon a time, and the sun-god trundled his wheel—which is now ignored by the Lick Observatory, and is degraded to the Three-legged symbol of the Isle of Man (the

"Swastika"). Physics, again. Formerly the gods gaily played, in their free-and-easy method, with light and air and sound and heat and weight (Elisha, the man of God, made iron swim); but to-day this department is de-theologised. You look into the laboratory. You see a Joule, an Edison, a Kelvin, a Helmholtz, but no gods. Pass to chemistry. In the days of antiquity, the Supernaturals turned water into wine; but now the laws of action and reaction of substances are left to the human experts—our Daltons, Liebig, and Dewars. Then biology. Special creation was once the order of the day, and the legless snake took his peculiar form from the command "Upon thy belly shalt thou go." We have changed all that. The gods have retired from the management of animals and plants; and the kingdom of life is administered by natural selection, and the laws of generation revealed by Abbot Mendel and Weismann and their colleagues in research. Sociology used to afford splendid scope for deities, who made and unmade kings, empires, and cabinets, and even influenced the course of trade. They robbed Tyre of its commerce, decreed the fall of Rome, and arranged the winds that damaged the Spanish Armada. But they have resigned this domain also, for Montesquieu, Condorcet, Comte, Buckle, Spencer, Le Play, Lester Ward, and a long line of sociologists have revealed the progress of mind and the evolution of human communities under purely natural influences.

Thus, one by one, the departments of mathematics, astronomy, physics, chemistry, biology, and sociology are transferred from divine to human governorship.

Yet another world remained for the spirit of man to conquer—the world of ethics and politics and economics—that is to say, the issues of conduct, personal, civic, and industrial. Here, the Will of God still exercises considerable, though diminishing, sway. God, for instance, placed the English in charge of India, and if we are not sure of the blessed truth, Rudyard Kipling will confirm our faith. The Indian National Congress and the Swadeshi movement and Dhingra's revolver are symptoms of growing doubt as to the Kipling creed. Poverty, till recently, was held to be the unmistakable work of the Supreme, who "raiseth up and palleth down." Even our Winston Churchills gently hint that the British Government ought not to acquiesce in the destitution of so many millions of Britannia's children. But, speaking generally, the supporters of the theological system may rest fairly satisfied with the control still exercised over the mind of the masses by the gods who have abdicated the throne of astronomy and are now the merest sleeping-partners with Darwin and De Vries in the business of biology. In the personal life, theological education succeeds in creating the impression that the psychology of the individual—the soul and its movements—is regulated by the Evil One or by Grace, as the case may be. Hence, Temptation drags a man down, and Conversion elevates him, and Preaching and the Power of the Holy Ghost regenerate the sinner and the rake. In the social life, also, the Eternal Hand and Eye conduct affairs with more or less competence, and more or less subject to the remonstrance of prayer and the flattery of praise. Thus, in politics and economics the mass of the people are singularly amenable to the conception of authority. God has decreed this or that, and one has to obey. The same habit of obedience is called into recognition when one assures the masses that capitalism is necessary to the welfare of society, and imperialism is writ as a sacred law in the book of fate, and armaments are a necessity of civilisation.

I pause a moment to warn myself not to diverge into the burning problems of Militarism and Socialism.

No, I agree to halt at the threshold of the debatable questions. But what I insist on is, that the prime civic need is Self-help as against the servile attitude inculcated by the theological systems of the past—Catholic, Anglican, Wesleyan, Unitarian, and even (half regretfully I say it) the New Theology of

the City Temple. As long as you teach the people that there is a Supernatural Providence over-ruling empires, local government, Free Trade, and Protection, and even the extension of machinery, so long do you lessen their capacity for combining, revolting, re-organising. Fully aware as I am that many Freethinkers hold the contrary view, I am of opinion that theology in the past has been, on the whole, a useful phase in the development of those many generations of our race which constitute (as Pascal says) "One man, ever living and constantly learning." But the age of Self-help, which has evidently arrived in the region of Physics and Biology, is now due in the region of morality and civics. If I were a Sultan, Czar, Rothschild, or Carnegie, I should show my appreciation of the gods by means of mosques, theological chairs at universities, and subscriptions for circulating Unitarian tracts. It would not matter what form the support took. The object, in any case, would be to oppress the brain of the people with the sense of an inevitable law, a pre-ordained plan in the production and distribution of wealth. When the populace grew seditious, I should point to heaven, and to pronounce the name of God would be (and actually is, all over the civilised world) equivalent to reading the Riot Act. At the sound of this fateful syllable, the mob disperse. Of course, I talk figuratively. I mean that the God doctrine is to-day an efficacious method of preventing political and economic emancipation.

Pray do not take me as asserting that the mere riddance of the God idea liberates all the bonds that fetter manhood. God is to be conquered (if I may so speak) not by Not-God, but by Man. And what is man? Ay, what is man! The way to the realisation of Self-help is through understanding what the Self is. It has been finely observed that courage is the discovery of our powers. We only dare so far as we can. Adequately reveal to man what he is, in the height and depth and breadth of his capacities—intellectual, moral, physical—and you will endow him with an impulse, an energy, a victorious passion that will create new worlds from old confusions, and give to humanity a stride that will mock the tottering steps of the Gods of the past.

In the mediæval fable, the Devil saw the sign of the Cross and quailed.

In the drama of our evolution, God will shrink into negation and silence when the book of Human Nature is opened, and truth flashes from its page.

F. J. GOULD.

Church and State.

PRESIDENT GARFIELD said in Congress, June 22, 1874: "The divorce between the Church and the State ought to be absolute. It ought to be so absolute that no church property, anywhere, in any state, or in the nation, should be exempted from equal taxation; for if you exempt the property of any church organisation, to that extent you impose a church tax upon the whole community."

PRESIDENT GRANT said in his annual message, 1875: "In connection with this important question, I would also call your attention to the importance of correcting an evil that, if permitted to continue, will probably lead to great trouble in our land before the close of the nineteenth century. It is the accumulation of vast amounts of untaxed church property. In 1850, I believe, the church property of the United States, which paid no tax, municipal or state, amounted to about \$83,000,000. In 1860, the amount had doubled; in 1875 it is about \$1,000,000,000. By 1900, without check, it is safe to say this property will reach a sum exceeding \$3,000,000,000. So vast a sum, receiving all the protection and benefits of government, without bearing its proportion of the burdens and expenses of the same, will not be looked upon acquiescently by those who have to pay the taxes. In a growing country, where real estate enhances so rapidly with time as in the United States, there is scarcely a limit to the wealth that may be acquired by corporations, religious or otherwise, if allowed to retain real estate without taxation. The contemplation of so vast a property as here alluded to, without taxation, may lead to sequestration without constitutional authority, and through blood. I would suggest the taxation of all property equally."

Acid Drops.

Tolstoy's secretary has been arrested for circulating Tolstoy's literature. He was arrested in Tolstoy's house. They dared not touch Tolstoy, but they took poor Gooseff. Surely it was a most astonishing tragi-comedy; an extraordinary mixture of tyranny, cowardice, and hypocrisy. And this is the result of nearly two thousand years of Christianity in the Western world, and of more than a thousand years of it in Russia. It is enough to make the name of Christianity stink. Yet Tolstoy declares that what is wanted is more Christianity—Christianity as he understands it, which nearly everybody else sees is no Christianity at all, but Tolstoyism wearing the label of Christianity.

Tolstoy's secretary's nominal offence is "distributing revolutionary literature." This is what Rabelais would call a sanguinary joke. Tolstoy preaches the gospel of non-resistance. Yet the Czar and his Government (all professed Christians) regard this as a crime. It is a crime to resist the Government, and a crime to teach that it ought not to be resisted. Which is worthy of Bedlam. And what creates the Bedlam? Christianity. If the Russians were Free-thinkers the Czar's Government would not last twenty-four hours.

There is a brief Preface to Tolstoy's new pamphlet, *The Law of Violence and the Law of Love*, published in English by the Free Age Press. Here it is in full:—

"Why do I write? The wretchedness of the life of Christian peoples is plain to all. The cause is the absence of a general understanding of life, and of the guidance for conduct that should flow therefrom. The means of liberation from wretchedness is to be found in the acceptance of the true Christian teaching."

The true Christian teaching! And what is that? "What I am telling you," says Tolstoy. "Nothing of the kind," says Nicholas,—and he is backed up by the Church. What is the use of Christianity, then, if there is no agreement as to what it means, even after the lapse of nineteen centuries? One is bound to respect Tolstoy's character, as well as his literary power; but he would have been far more effective if he had thrown over the old faith and all its shibboleths. What the world in general wants, what Russia in particular wants, is not a new brand of Christianity, but a new idealism based upon science and humanity. Neither a dead God nor a dead Jew is now necessary. And the non-recognition of this is Tolstoy's fatal mistake.

General Booth produced no effect, or not such as he expected, on the Trade Union Congress by his Pecksniffian letter. Replying to the Parliamentary Committee, with regard to the Hanbury-street Elevator, where "sweating" is notoriously carried on, he said that he must continue to tread the old path, as he could not do otherwise "without doing violence to the elementary instincts of humanity, as well as disobeying the laws of God." There was a time when pious cant of this sort would have influenced the Trade Union Congress, but we are glad to see that it can do so no longer. The following resolution was carried by an overwhelming majority:—

"We emphatically condemn the sweating and underselling revealed, and in view of the unsatisfactory result of the inquiries made we consider it necessary to take steps to demand from the Government a public inquiry into the conditions of labor at the Hanbury-street factory."

Even that did not satisfy the Congress. It was decided that the inquiry should be extended so as to include all labor colonies organised by religious bodies. That's the thing.

What on earth is the meaning of the expression "the official Congress sermon," which is said to have been preached by the Rev. John Gleeson in St. Nicholas Congregational Church, Ipswich? Are we to understand that this sermon is arranged for by the Trade Congress officials? Can anybody inform us? We should be glad to know the actual facts of the case.

Mr. Gleeson's sermon is said to have given great satisfaction. Well, if Trade Union leaders like to applaud pious platitudes, they have a right to do so, but they ought not to do it in connection with the Annual Congress. Mr. Gleeson declared that the Churches wanted to get "back to Christ" and they were evidently going to take the working classes with them. Well, we don't believe it. The people won't "go back" to Christ, or anybody else. They won't go back at all. They are going forward.

Mr. Gleeson assured his congregation that "Christ had the deepest compassion for the unfit." But who made the

unfit? Christ himself, if he is God. And if he isn't God what cackle it is to talk about his compassion for the unfit! If he isn't God, he's dead. A good many people doubt if he ever lived—which is still worse.

Here is the wind-up of the "official Congress sermon":—

"Apart from Christ, the great labor movement which has awakened to a sense of its tremendous power will become a giant body without a soul. But in subjection to Christ labor will prove irresistible. The world will realise that the Carpenter of Nazareth has come a second time—this time to set up His kingdom on the earth."

It is sickening to see Trade Unionists listening to—yes, and applauding—such impudent twaddle. They make themselves the laughing-stock of their Continental comrades.

Mr. Keir Hardie's politics are no concern of ours, but we have often had occasion to criticise his religious utterances. We see by a report of his recent speech at Norwich that he carried his comical imitation of Christ to the point of prophecy. "This generation shall not pass away without seeing Socialism established in England." Christ used that very expression in the prophecy of his second coming. But that generation did pass away without seeing his arrival; and, as a matter of fact, he hasn't arrived yet. Socialists will probably hope that Mr. Keir Hardie is a better prophet than his Master. Some of them, perhaps, will feel inclined to remind him of George Eliot's saying that prophecy is the most gratuitous form of error.

"This generation" is a good phrase for poets—or prophets, but it is a poor phrase for political thinkers. Strange as it may sound to many people, there is really no such thing as this generation. The human race does not move forward in generations. It moves forward by the daily elimination of death and the daily renovation of birth. The change is gradual and continuous. Human beings of one period—whether a day, a month, or a year—are of all ages, from a second to a century. It was always the same, and it always will be the same. "Generation" is therefore a purely fanciful expression. And we suggest that Mr. Keir Hardie should think the matter out before he perpetrates his next vaticination.

The latest Bradlaugh story—latest in the telling rather than in the form—comes to us from the *Joyful News*. It is told by the Rev. Samuel Chadwick, who says it was told to him. A converted pugilist named Sam Thomas went to hear Bradlaugh lecture on "Miracles." When the lecture was concluded, Thomas rose, and, after giving an account of his past evil life, described what a saintly character he had become, and finished by asking, "How does he account for the miraculous change in a man like myself?" The speech and the question would be so startlingly new to a Free-thought speaker that we are not surprised to hear how nonplussed Bradlaugh was. But, pulling himself together, he admitted he could not judge, but if it was true, "I hope the same miracle may be worked in me." Mr. Chadwick says that Bradlaugh was "impressed even to tears at the living miracle of saving power, and he never lectured in Huddersfield again after that day." The picture of Bradlaugh mingling tears with the converted pugilist is very affecting, and so true to life. Mr. Chadwick adds, "The same Christ is still in Huddersfield, and still working the same miracles of salvation." And we add, the same liars are still telling the same lies, and the real miracle would be if their conversion taught them a little regard for truth and decency.

Dr. Aked, of New York, is notoriously fond of indulging in extravagant utterance. Preaching in Dr. Clifford's Church the other Sunday, he took as his subject, "Christ regnant in the world." Of course, the reverend gentleman knows as well as we do that Christ is not, never was, and never will be regnant in the world; and his applauding congregation knew it too. But, in consequence of the diseased condition and misdirected activity of their emotional nature, it makes the preacher happy to declare, and his audience to hear, that, in spite of the emphatic contradiction that comes from all the facts, Christ is regnant in the world. To believe the palpable lie is an act of highest piety, and yields "joy unspeakable and full of glory."

The extravagance of Dr. Aked's speech is passing strange; it is almost incredibly absurd. "We may multiply our phrases of adoration," he said. "He [Christ] is still King of the Jews, the Messiah of the Hebrew people." This will be news to our Jewish friends. They deliberately refused to recognise him, and relentlessly scorned all his claims, when he lived amongst them, and they have had absolutely

nothing to do with him from that day to this. Dr. Aked waxes bolder still and dogmatically asserts that this Christ is "the desire of all nations [though most nations know nothing about him, and others won't accept him when he is urged upon them], and the Savior of the world." If all nations *did* desire him they would have welcomed him long ago, and if he *were* the Savior of the world, the world would have been saved nineteen centuries ago. The American climate is evidently intensifying Dr. Aked's natural characteristics.

Mr. Aked having denied having said, as reported, that Christianity in England is rapidly approaching a vanishing point, the editor of the *Quiver* now reproduces excerpts from a sermon of Mr. Aked's last year in which he said:—

"The decline of Christianity is universal. In England, France, Germany, Spain, and Italy, we hear the same cry. Only lately I was talking with an English clergyman. He told me that not merely was there a great falling off in the number of church-goers in England, but that the class of people who frequented churches is becoming inferior."

We do not know whether Mr. Aked will repudiate this or not; but his repudiation will not affect the truth of the statement. And we do not see why clergymen should be so upset in being occasionally detected in voicing a easily verifiable truth.

"We need often to remember," says an American divine, "that God is not dead and his sovereignty in the world is worthy our confidence." True, O preacher, and to quicken people's memory on those points is your profession. You are forever dinning it into their ears that God is not dead, and they are forever forgetting it. "I admit," you confess sometimes, "that appearances, the well-nigh unanimous testimony of the facts of history, and our own experience, are dead against me; but let appearances, and history, and experience be hanged; your business is to believe me when I tell you that God is very much alive and occupies the throne of the Universe." You may continue saying it until you are blue in the face, but the people *won't* believe you, and you don't half believe yourself. The day is breaking.

Christianity is a religion of authority. That is why every denomination of Christians hates reason, with an intensity proportioned to the degree of orthodoxy. There is no essential difference between Catholics and Protestants in this respect. Even the *Christian World*, a journal that prides itself on its liberality, illustrated this truth in its last issue. "With such men," it said, "as Sir Oliver Lodge and Lord Kelvin more and more on the side of faith, the flimsy arguments and cheap sneers of aggressive Rationalists rattle harmlessly as peas on the side of a Dreadnought." Our contemporary takes shelter behind great names. This is the principle of authority carried out to its most ridiculous conclusion. It is overlooked that there are *other* great names. But the true Freethinker will not take shelter behind them. He does not believe in the truth of authority; he believes in the authority of truth.

There is another thing to be said. Are the precise Christian doctrines accepted by Lord Kelvin and Sir Oliver Lodge, and also what proof does science—genuine science, we mean—offer in support of *any* religious belief held by these gentlemen? Scientists before Sir Oliver Lodge and Lord Kelvin have called themselves Christians, but that did not save Christianity from growing weaker. A greater than either of these, Sir Isaac Newton, wrote in defence of Christianity; but who bothers nowadays about Newton's theology? Some of the phenomena that Newton said pointed distinctly to a designing mind were shown, less than a century after his death, to be the necessary result of physical forces. And a few years hence we imagine people will recall with gratitude the scientific work of Kelvin and Lodge, while a kindly pity will bury in oblivion their theological aberrations.

Our esteemed contributor, "C. E.," writes to us;—"I see 'Simple Sandy' is raising the point of the title 'Reverend.' A lot of us want to know what right the Nonconformist crowd have to those clerical titles. The Catholics and the Anglicans have some kind of claim to such titles, but the ranters are merely usurpers and imitators. We know that the style of 'Dr.' used by some of these tubthumpers has been assumed without any proper authority; and the question remains as to what they are doing with any other handle to their names."

"It has been pointed out," the *Christian Commonwealth* says, "that Ruskin was the pioneer of old-age pensions." We did not know that Ruskin lived before Thomas Paine. A pioneer might have passed muster. But "the pioneer"!

Paine proposed (see pp. 486-90, *Rights of Man*, Conway's edition) that the pension should start at fifty, instead of our present seventy; and he not only said it ought to begin then, but he showed how the English people with a reasonable budget could do it with ease.

"Christ in the Ether," is the title of an article in the *Christian Commonwealth*. We presume this is a pious and roundabout admission of the attenuated character of modern Christianity.

The new play at the Lyceum, we note from a review in the same issue of the *C. C.*, contains a mixture of supernaturalism and cheap sentiment well calculated to appeal to a certain type of theatre goers. The power of the Cross is much in evidence, and the *C. C.* remarks that there is to be seen at the Lyceum a "greater demonstration of the power of the Cross than is possible at any purely religious service." It is "the most remarkable play seen in London since the 'Sign of the Cross,' and the appeal of the Cross is ever strongest when given in the simplest language." Well, as the *Christian Commonwealth* is continually tilting against the crude supernaturalism of the pulpit, we fail to see any reason for its commendation when placed on the stage. The truth is, that a mixture of the marvellous and the sloppy sentimental will always appeal to the crowd, and the managers of the Lyceum are, as the Yankees say, there for business. The Lyceum is filled on Sunday evening with a religious crowd, and we have no doubt the potentialities of this audience for week night utilisation is not lost upon the management. "Demonstration of the power of the Cross" is, by the way, an illuminating phrase. It is an indication of what is regarded as proof where religious belief is concerned.

Rev. R. J. Campbell is getting on. He now undertakes to explain "the meaning of the whole cosmic drama." It reminds us of Pope's line about certain persons who rush in where angels fear to tread. "We are here," Mr. Campbell says, "to glorify God by bringing into the open, as it were, the good and beautiful that He eternally is." Poor God! Fancy his depending on Campbell & Co. to bring him "into the open"! Yet there is a certain truth in it; for if they didn't bring him into the open he would drop out of sight—and out of mind. Realities take care of themselves, but dreams have to be nursed.

Pilate asked Christ "What is truth?" and received no answer. Mr. Campbell's "God" is just as communicative. The reverend gentleman repeats the old falsehood that Conscience is the voice of God—whereas it is the voice of human experience. But in explaining it he explains it away. God says to us "Do right." If we ask him "What is right?" he says "Find out." That is the substance of Mr. Campbell's hundred lines on the subject. It hardly seems worthy of an infant-school.

Gipsy Smith saved America last winter. He is going back this winter to do it again. We can quite understand that America takes a lot of saving. It will probably last out Gipsy Smith's time.

A correspondent writes to the *Times* deeply regretting that in many of the Boy Scouts' camps no arrangements are made for prayers. From the point of view of the end for which these are designed, we agree this is a regrettable omission. Praying and brute force fighting have always gone well together. And both belong to the lower strata of civilisation.

The *Catholic Times* says the Pope is the physician who can successfully prescribe for the social sickness. In that case the remedy is easily worse than the disease.

Roman Catholics are again working their very hardest against the Secular Education resolution of the Trades Union Congress. The *Catholic Times* protests that a Trades Union Congress has no right to pass any resolution that offended the religious convictions of its members. With this we agree in a general way. But when members allow their religious opinions to encroach on other matters it is difficult to see how offending such opinions can be avoided. Presumably there is nothing in the Catholic members forcing a resolution in favor of Secular Education on the opinions of other members of the Union. Moreover, the Trades Union resolution does not express any opinion on the truth or the value of religion; it simply asks the State to leave it alone. And in doing so it is not forcing any member of the Union to support any teaching in which he does not believe. It is offering the largest common measure of agreement, and wisely leaving the rest to individual judgment and initiative.

"What the future life will be we cannot fully know," says a religious writer, "but it has its beginnings and type in the present life." What a wonderfully original observation, as if a *second* life could help having its beginnings in the *first*. What no writer has yet succeeded in making clear to us is that there *is* a future or second life. To describe a life before knowing that it exists is worse than putting the cart before the horse.

According to a pious tract which is being circulated from the Gospel Hall, Nightingale Vale, Woolwich, there are no public-houses, no theatres and entertainments, no Sunday excursions, no political meetings, no infidels, and no lunatic asylums, in hell. It seems a remarkably well conducted establishment. And if it were not for the absence of lunatic asylums we should expect the Christians to go there in shoals.

The Rev. J. A. Sharrock, a missionary and principal of two colleges in India, thinks that the English Government has been too tolerant in India. He thinks that if we had destroyed every Hindu and Mohammedan temple in India, and built and endowed English cathedrals, everybody would have respected us for the right religious fervor we displayed. We have not the least doubt that this is what many missionaries would like, and as a matter of fact it was the agitation on these lines, carried on by the missionaries before the outbreak of the Mutiny, that had a deal to do with the production of that outbreak. Such statements help us to realise what valuable assets for the maintenance of peace in the empire are our missionary agencies.

The British government "protects" religious prejudices in India, even when they involve gross cruelty to the lower animals. An article by A. M. Lennox in the *Animals' Friend* contains the following passage on this subject:—

"Religious sacrifices in India are often conducted with inhuman cruelties. In October is the festival of Kali or Doorga, the goddess of blood and death, known to all Anglo-Indians as the Dussera or Doorga Pujas. During this festival millions of animals are done to death in Hindoo towns and villages all over the country.

Many other forms of cruelty to animals are perpetrated in the name of religion, and in these the British Government refuses to interfere on the plea of not infringing upon the religious liberty of the people. Act XI. of 1890, known as 'The Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act, 1890,' specially stipulates at Section 11, 'Nothing in this Act shall render it an offence to kill any animal in a manner required by the religion or religious rites and usages of any race, sect, tribe, or class,' and until this section of the Legal Act is altered or annulled, barbarous cruelty will run riot over India. And why cannot it be annulled?"

Can anyone answer that question?

Rev. J. H. Jowett is in America. He has been giving his opinion of the Rev. R. J. Campbell and the New Theology movement. It is not complimentary. He says that the movement has fizzled out. Mr. Campbell was going to do many things, but he has done nothing, and the Churches are practically untouched by his effort. All this, of course, may be true, and yet Campbellism may be symptomatic of an undercurrent of scepticism running in all the Churches.

Sir Arthur Conan Doyle's new book is to be entitled "Hell on the Congo." Christians preach hell, and carry it with them wherever they go. The Congo alone is a sufficient condemnation of Christianity. That its professors should commit such horrors, after it has been in the world for nearly two thousand years, shows its real value when it is not surrounded by secular civilisation and a healthy public opinion.

The province of Catania, in Sicily, has been swept by an earthquake, which wrecked 300 houses and buried 60 people alive. "Providence" was quite indiscriminating. In the central square of Scordia the famous marble column with its image of the Madonna forty feet high was blown bodily yards away, and the mortuary chapels in the cemetery of Santa Maria were laid waste. "He doeth all things well."

More floods in Mexico, four cities being overwhelmed, and hundreds of people drowned. "For his tender mercies are over all his works."

The *Daily Chronicle* has the hardihood to entitle an article "The Harmful, Unnecessary Fly." Fancy a respectable newspaper thus publicly falling foul of the Creator's handiwork! If a thunderbolt or something doesn't soon descend upon Whitefriars, we shall be astonished. We

do hope that the *Chronicle* will steady itself before it gets to hinting that the tiger's teeth and claws were not divinely adapted to the due enjoyment of buttock steak, or that it was not the merciful providence of our Father in heaven that endowed the elusive flea with its marvellous gift for "hopping the twig" after stealing human blood.

Rev. J. H. Townsend, D.D., of St. Mark's Church, Tunbridge Wells, is a theological dodo. He has been telling his congregation that Moses did write the Pentateuch because Jesus Christ said so—and he prefers "the testimony of Christ" to the learning of the Higher Critics. Well, the Higher Critics know what are damaged goods, and the Tunbridge Wells preacher doesn't. That is all.

Rev. W. H. Seddon, vicar of Painswick, is very solicitous about the sexual morality of his parishioners. He is going to debar from "the Lord's table" the parents of all illegitimate children, and even of those who come into the world a bit earlier than they should have done after the performance of the marriage ceremony. In some of the latter cases the vicar might have to decide a very nice problem. We suppose he will keep a book of dates and events, and pray for divine assistance at times of perplexity. He will have to take care, however, that he does not get knocked down or the ten commandments engraved on his countenance. For these are ticklish matters to look into too closely, and even a clergyman may be treated as a Paul Pry. Mr. Seddon's motto should be "I hope I don't intrude."

Edward Graville Acton, aged fifty-seven, stated to be a Christian Scientist, and formerly one of the City organists at Leeds, was found wandering abroad while of unsound mind, and was ordered to be sent to a lunatic asylum. He was singing and praying at large. A quantity of Christian Science literature was found at his house. Perhaps it will help to prepare other victims.

Rev. Archibald Fleming gets near the bull's-eye. He says that church attendance declines because the clerical profession does not attract a sufficiently large proportion of men of first-class mental attainment. In other words, the Church is dying through want of brains. And also, we should say, because there are better brains outside pulpits than inside them.

Sir Herbert Tree has been telling an interviewer that it "has always seemed" to him "that to be good merely with a view of getting to heaven is rather a selfish proceeding—morality at three per cent." We quite agree with the sentiment, which is a commonplace amongst Freethinkers. But the percentage is scarcely correct. The man who expects to get an everlasting reward for behaving decently is counting on more than "shent per shent."

Even in the House of God religious people will quarrel. We clip the following from the Welsh edition of the *Manchester Guardian* of September 7:—

"At last Sunday evening's service in a Montgomeryshire parish church a policeman, who attended as a worshipper, was called upon to keep the peace. For a number of years a lady parishioner had been accustomed to occupy a certain pew. But recently a family from an adjoining parish became attendants at this church and took their seats in the pew. Some unpleasantness arose, and when the lady went to the Sunday evening service she found the entrance to the pew blocked by two maid servants. After some difficulty she succeeded in pushing her way past. However, both the vicar and his congregation were disturbed, and in the course of his sermon the clergyman was compelled to pause and reprimand one of the pew occupants. At the bidding of the vicar also the local police constable marched from the rear of the church and went 'on duty' in a seat immediately behind the pew."

The happy household of faith!

That wicked Budget so affected the Rev. Edward Adams, Congregational minister, of Scarborough, that he was obliged to reduce some of his charitable bequests. Of course! He left £34,418.

Rev. Charles Alfred Jones, of Dedham, Essex, left £31,149. He must be in a dry climate now—if the New Testament is to be believed.

Divine service was going on in the church at Carmarvon, in the Department of Tarn, when a storm burst over it, and the priest was struck down by lightning at the altar. The upper powers care no more for priests than for "infidels."

Mr. Foote's Engagements.

Sunday, September 19, St. James's Hall, Great Portland-street, London, W.: at 7.30, "Shakespeare's View of Evil"—in *Othello*, *Macbeth*, etc.

September 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; 28, Birmingham.

To Correspondents.

J. T. LLOYD'S LECTURE ENGAGEMENTS.—October 3, Manchester; 10, St. James's Hall; 24, Glasgow. December 19, Leicester.

THE PRESIDENT'S HONORARIUM FUND: Annual Subscriptions.—Previously acknowledged, £240 12s. Received since.—P. Rowland, £1; J. Dunlop, £1.

D. BAXTER.—See paragraph. Thanks.

A. JOHNSON.—We do not recollect that Bradlaugh ever called himself a Materialist. What is your authority? He called himself a Monist.

H. GEORGE FARMER writes: "There must be many like myself who have been looking forward to the promised book on Shakespeare from your pen. Why not satisfy us temporarily with a series of articles, a *resumé* of your St. James's Hall lectures." We will bear the suggestion in mind.

GEORGE BRADFELD.—Glad to see your excellent letter in the local paper. We wish Freethinkers would make more use of their local press in this fashion. We suppose the Israelite party you ask about are those who believe that the English people are descendants of the "lost" ten tribes. Of course, the twelve tribes are purely imaginary.

J. P. FRANCIS.—We are nearly tired of asking those who send in lecture notices to frame them on the model of our printed list, instead of putting the facts in the form of a letter and expecting us to pick them out.

C. D.—See "Acid Drops."

WALTER LLOYD.—Shall be sent. Thanks. Glad to hear you "would not miss the *Freethinker* for three times twopence," though yours are only "an ordinary workman's" wages. Also that you became a regular reader through having a free copy sent to you nearly three years ago. The "Acid Drops," which you so enjoy, have always been a speciality of this journal. Tart and sweet together.

W. P. BALL.—Many thanks for cuttings.

J. DUNLOP.—Christian and liar are almost convertible terms where "infidels" are concerned. Thanks for your good wishes. Mr. Foote is well at present.

S. TAYLOR.—Shall be sent. Thanks.

L. C.—"Vanoc" is hardly worth frequent attention, and to correct him every time he goes wrong would be an endless business.

W. C. INGLIS.—Glad to hear the Govan newsagent, who took six copies of the *Freethinker* on your guarantee, sold them all in twenty-four hours. We are perfectly satisfied that this journal would find plenty of purchasers if it were only as accessible as other papers. The boycott, which is fortunately slackening a bit now, has kept us poor and struggling for nearly thirty years. But perhaps we shall have the credit of the uphill fight after we have passed through the crematorium. We shall be glad to see you and your Irish "converts" at our Glasgow lectures.

WHITENOSE & Co.—Advertisement duly revised. We hope you will be doing good business with our readers now the holiday season is drawing to a close. They ought to patronise those who help to keep the *Freethinker* going.

J. W. REPTON.—By all means get a shake-hands with Mr. Foote after one of the lectures. Pleased to have your letter. The verse on Meredith would have been more seasonable three months ago.

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

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.

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Sugar Plums.

Sunday evening's audience at St. James's Hall was an improvement on the previous Sunday's in point of numbers, and we see no reason why the improvement should not be steadily maintained until the end of the course. The N. S. S. branches are not doing all that they should towards the success of these meetings, but publicity is being effected through the usual form of advertisement, and people are being drawn to Mr. Foote's lectures. The second discourse on "Shakespeare's Philosophy of the World—in *King Lear*, etc.," was listened to with that profound attention which is the highest compliment that can be paid to a

speaker. Mr. Harry Jones, the chairman, made the usual invitation to the audience, and several questions were asked and answered.

Mr. Foote's third lecture this evening (Sept. 19) will be on "Shakespeare's View of Evil" as displayed in *Othello* and *Macbeth*. These plays lend themselves more to selections than *King Lear* does, and Mr. Foote's rendering of these should prove attractive to those who like to hear his Shakespearean readings. Mr. A. B. Moss takes the chair on this occasion.

After the fourth and last of these Shakespeare lectures the St. James's Hall platform will be occupied by Messrs. Cohen and Lloyd, whose subjects will be duly announced. We hope the London "saints" will make a special rally at these two lectures. Mr. Foote occupies the St. James's Hall platform again on the third, fourth, and fifth Sundays in October.

Glasgow "saints" will note that Mr. Foote opens the Branch's winter lecturing season on the first Sunday in October, at the Secular Hall, Brunswick-street. His subjects will be announced next week.

Our old friend, Mr. J. W. de Caux, of Great Yarmouth, does not contribute as many letters to the local papers as he used to, but he writes one now and then, and his right hand has not lost its cunning. His recent letter in the *Independent* dealt with the Rev. A. E. Smallwood, curate-in-charge of St. James's Church, who had been referring to himself as "God's Fool," and is reminded that "Whatever sort of a 'fool' that may be, it is certain that many a true word is often spoken in jest." The reverend gentleman invited a friend of Mr. de Caux's to come to church and hear him preach. We will both come (the veteran Freethinker says) whenever the preacher is going to answer the simple questions: Did such persons as Adam and Eve ever live? Is the story of the Fall true? If the story be not true, what need is there for a Savior? We fear the fish won't bite.

The *Glasgow Herald*, far more than most of the London newspapers, devotes space to literature. In its issue for September 9 there appeared a long article by Professor Hugh Walker on "James Thomson the Second"—the James Thomson of the nineteenth, not him of the eighteenth century, the James Thomson who wrote as "B. V." and, besides being a true and powerful poet, was a champion of Atheism. Professor Walker's article is good and fair. He pays a warm tribute to Thomson's genius, and when he has to mention Mr. Foote's name he does so without the regulation pious shudder. We beg to assure Professor Walker, though, that he is quite mistaken in supposing that Bradlaugh was to some extent responsible for Thomson's negative attitude towards theology. No man ever thought more for himself than Thomson did. His convictions were entirely personal. And he went, if possible, even farther than Bradlaugh; making one of the characters in the *City of Dreadful Night* offer as consolation to the suffering and despairing the assurance that "There is no God"—which Bradlaugh never asserted. We might also observe that Professor Walker does not attach proper importance to Thomson's work as a Freethought journalist. He had principles, and he fought for them. He resembled Shelley in that.

Talking of Shelley, there is a curious remark in a review of Mr. Roger Ingpen's new collected edition of Shelley's Letters, in the very next column to Professor Walker's article on Thomson. The reviewer says that the late Francis Thompson's posthumous essay on Shelley "must have revived an interest" in that great poet. *Revive* an interest in Shelley. Good heavens! As well talk of reviving an interest in the sunrise.

We are glad to see a capital letter by "W." in the *Yorkshire Observer* in reply to the Rev. S. Chadwick's ridiculous story about Charles Bradlaugh, which is dealt with in our "Acid Drops" this week. "Surely," this correspondent says, "we can 'let the dead lie' peacefully without the living lying as well."

Now that the longer evenings are coming in, and people will be reading more, we invite our friends to send us further names and addresses of persons to whom we might advantageously post six consecutive specimen copies of the *Freethinker*. We will gladly forward the paper for six weeks running if our friends will only take the trouble to send us the names and addresses. We have made many subscribers in this way in the past, and shall doubtless do so in the future.

A Dire Phase of Superstition.

THE relatively recent universal belief in the malign influences exerted upon the lives of men by the satanic agencies of wizardry and witchcraft, constitutes one of the most appalling chapters in the annals of human credulity and superstition.

This degrading phase of supernaturalism finds its philosophical and scientific interpretation in terms of mental and social survival from a more primitive past. The belief in ghosts and goblins originally constituted the sole religious scheme of savage man. Indeed, Herbert Spencer, in his monumental *Principles of Sociology*, has advanced a mass of evidence, gathered from all quarters of the inhabited globe, which practically demonstrates that the earliest gods of savages were the evilly-disposed and all-powerful spirits of the dead. He proves to demonstration that not only is ancestor and spirit-worship the fundamental basis of all existing savage cults, but in addition shows that these identical phenomena played a large and important part in the classic religions of Greece and Rome. Moreover, a most striking object-lesson is still presented in the surviving ancestor and spirit-worship displayed by Buddhism in China and other Asiatic countries. And if we select an instance much nearer home, we readily recall the circumstance that the apotheosis of a dead Jew and Jewess furnished the foundations for the prevailing religions of Europe and America.

It is quite idle to imagine that the masses of the people in classic antiquity were ever in the slightest degree, at any period of their history, emancipated from religious superstition. As a matter of fact, the depth of supernatural belief prevalent in the most enlightened periods of the glory that was Greece and the grandeur that was Rome, possesses no parallel in our more secular civilisation, even among the illiterate Catholic peasantry of Italy, Spain, Russia, Austria, and Ireland. It is true that the educated classes, then as now, smiled contemptuously at the popular mythology, and, so far as the Augustan Age of Rome was concerned, Gibbon's inimitable sneer that the time had then arrived when to "the multitude religions were all equally true, to the philosopher all equally false, and to the magistrate all equally useful," was true in substance and in fact. But the subsequent fall of the Roman Empire, and the triumph of barbarism and religion, proves to the hilt the contention that the sane and civilising influences of Freethought were confined to a small and select intellectual aristocracy.

The fading influences of Rome's Pagan civilisation made themselves felt for a time even among the clergy of the rising Christian Churches. While mentally influenced by the philosophic views of the sages of Greece and Rome, a few individual Christians, as well as sundry provincial councils, had pronounced sorcery, witchcraft, and compacts with the Devil as sinful, heretical, and heathenish beliefs. But the inherent belief in demonology, to which so much countenance was given by the story of the Witch of Endor recorded in the Book of Samuel, supplemented by the later graphic accounts of demoniacal possession contained in the New Testament, gradually gave the stamp of orthodoxy to the earlier Jewish and Pagan beliefs in ghosts and demons; and with the ultimate extinction of classical civilisation, mental and moral darkness sat enthroned for a thousand years, in the name of Christianity, upon the ruins of the Roman Empire.

That the overwhelming mass of Christians had persistently cherished a belief in spiritual obsession and possession is sufficiently proved by the fact that the power of casting out devils granted to the apostles by Christ continued in the Church as a special grace. So early as the third century, Pope Cornelius speaks of the exorcists as a special order of the clergy, and the Fourth Council of Carthage (396) prescribes a form for their ordination, which is in substance that given in the Roman Pontifical, and employed at the present day.

With the establishment of the Papal Inquisition in the thirteenth century, witchcraft was officially recognised as an unquestionable fact. It then came fully within the province of the Church, and was regarded as a correlative with heresy. These crimes were forthwith considered as the outcome of the agencies of the Devil and Hell, when these were maliciously employed to pervert the faithful from the true religion, and therefore justly and properly met with punishment in the shape of torture and death at the stake. The appalling social misery of the eleventh and twelfth centuries, the menacing development of Waldensian and kindred heresies, the terrible effects of the Black Death which devastated Western Europe in the fourteenth century, with its pathological concomitants, the Flagellant and Dancing manias, all served to strengthen the conviction of the dire reality of satanic interference in human affairs.

The belief in witchcraft, having received the sanction and encouragement of the Church, attained extraordinary power from the fourteenth to the seventeenth centuries, and when the belief began to decline, as Lecky and others have abundantly proved, the reaction against this deadly superstition is to be exclusively traced to the growing light of rationalism and the modern secularisation of the human intellect. In his great masterpiece, *The Golden Bough*, Professor J. G. Frazer has moralised upon the fact that throughout the ages there has been no limit to human credulity and folly; that deeply imbedded religious and magic beliefs adapt themselves successively to every outward and visible form of supernatural faith; and when we peer beneath the superficial networks of Christianity we quickly discover all the sorcery of primitive savages as part and parcel of our own divine religion, simply turned to new account in the popular conception of the machinations of the Devil and his imps. And while the mass of mankind remains unacquainted with the scientifically recognised processes of natural causation, ample scope will ever remain for the chartered charlatan who trades in hypothetical causes of a metaphysical and supernatural character.

The vast sum of unrecorded misery for which the wholly imaginary sin of witchcraft was responsible can never be totalled. A high authority has computed that from the promulgation of the Bull of Innocent VIII. in 1484 down to 1782, in which year a servant-girl at Glarus, in Protestant Switzerland, suffered judicial murder at the hands of a Calvinist tribunal—some 800,000 women endured torture and death as witches in Europe alone. Within the range of Catholicism, so late as August 20, 1877, five witches were burned alive at San Jacobo, in Mexico, "with the consent of the whole population."

With that marvellous period which witnessed the re-birth of science and the revival of learning, with the Renaissance of culture and civilisation, re-emerged that humane and sceptical spirit which has done so much to broaden and deepen the humanitarian consciousness of modern times. It is therefore with little surprise that we discover religion arrayed in reactionary garb, and Freethought championing the cause of enlightenment. The great wit and humanist, Montaigne, in his essay "Of Cripples" (1588), strikes the fundamental note of modern rationalism on the subject of witchcraft and sorcery. But the stern and unbending injunction of the Mosaic Law (Exodus xxii. 18), the unmistakable utterances of Jesus concerning demonology, the traditions of the Jewish and Christian religions, strengthened by the conservative instincts of the race, impelled Romanist and Protestant alike to defend and uphold the general doctrines of demonology and witchcraft.

A striking illustration of this fact occurred in England in 1664 when the humane, enlightened, but deeply religious Sir Matthew Hale tried and condemned two women at Bury St. Edmunds for the crime of bewitching children, the opinion of one of the greatest medical men of the day, Sir Thomas Browne, who was in court, weighing heavily against

the prisoners. The last trial in England was that of Jane Wenham, convicted at Hereford in the reign of Queen Anne, but not executed.

But the popular belief lingered down to our own time in the eastern counties, and in secluded districts still survives. In 1865 a poor paralysed Frenchman was swum as a wizard by the mob at Castle Hedingham, in Essex, shortly afterwards succumbing to the shock. Again, in 1879 at East Dereham, in the neighboring county of Norfolk, a man was fined for assaulting the daughter of an old woman who had bewitched him with a "walking toad"; and so recently as April 12, 1890, we read in that date's *Daily News* that at an inquest on the body of a child at Fressingfield, in Suffolk, the parents were thoroughly convinced that its death was due to the witchcraft of its step-grandmother, who predeceased it by a few hours.

The evidence of survival of once universally accepted beliefs, which the above facts furnish, also indicates the tendency of superstition to seek shelter in regions far removed from modernising influences. It was long since observed that the faculty of second sight was alleged to survive in the Highlands of Scotland, long after its rejection in the Lowlands, as an old wives' fable. Goethe, with characteristic insight concerning the failings and frailties of mankind, has recorded his convictions about superstition, as a whole, in the following weighty words. "Superstition," he says, "is of the very essence of humanity, and when we think we have completely extinguished it it has merely retreated into the darkest nooks and corners, ever ready to emerge at the earliest opportunity."

And surely we are reminded of the undying truth of Goethe's judgment by the periodical recrudescence of animism in one or other of its varied forms—all our boasted civilisation and progress notwithstanding. In this modern so-called scientific age, the spectacle is from time to time presented of the resuscitation of occult beliefs and practices once regarded as hopelessly discredited, and dismissed to the limbo of exploded superstitions. Many broad-minded and easy-going rationalists lay the flatteringunction to their souls that the Roman Catholic Church is on the eve of dissolution. There is much less evidence for this in 1909 than there was in 1848, to mention no other critical periods in her extraordinary career. And even if Holy Mother Church were to lose many of her adherents in her conflict with Science and Modernism, it is fairly reasonable to suppose that Spiritualism, Theosophy, Christian Science, and the various fancy faiths will gain largely by the change of religious outlook. Thousands of people who are admittedly dissatisfied with the reigning religion are so permeated with inherited and environmental superstition that they are—in any case, for the time being—quite incapable of becoming fit candidates for Freethought philosophy. The triumph of pure reason in its warfare with undisciplined religious emotion will not be secured with the mere weakening of the Christian faith, and those rationalists who vainly imagine that they may now safely sheathe their swords are basking in a paradise not remotely distant from the fool's. The writer of this article once heard the great mental pathologist, Dr. Henry Maudsley, declare that, in his matured judgment, the torch of civilisation is held aloft in Europe and America by some 500 men, and that, were their influence eliminated, the entire Western world would steadily revert to barbarism. And one need not be a pessimist in order to admit the substantial accuracy of Maudsley's contention. Every triumph recorded in the chronicle of human development has been achieved by the labors and sacrifices of tiny minorities. The services of all unshattering but unshattering reformers are therefore as necessary as ever for the maintenance and enlargement of civilisation's scope.

T. F. P.

There is no world, no star, no heaven, no hell, in which gratitude is not a virtue and where slavery is not a crime.—*Ingersoll.*

The Narratives in Genesis.—XI.

NOAH'S CURSE: THE NATIONS.

(Continued from p. 518.)

ACCORDING to the Priestly writer, "Noah lived after the Flood 350 years. And all the days of Noah were 950 years: and he died." It is quite a relief to know that this long-lived patriarch died at last. We are not done with him, however; for the Yahvist writer records an incident in his later life which, to say the least, does not redound much to his credit. The following is his account of this:—

"And Noah began to be an husbandman, and planted a vineyard; and he drank of the wine, and was drunken: and he was uncovered in his tent. And Ham, the father of Canaan, saw the nakedness of his father, and told his two brethren without. And Shem and Japhet took a garment, and laid it upon both their shoulders, and went backward, and covered the nakedness of their father."

This story may be taken as an illustration of how easily blame may be imputed to a perfectly innocent person. Ham, going into his father's tent, presumably to speak about some matter of business, found that pious patriarch lying senseless—intoxicated and naked. Coming out, he mentioned the fact to his two brothers who chanced to be outside. For so doing he is set down by the writer as a thoroughly depraved character, and is cursed (in the person of his son Canaan) by his angry father.

"And Noah awoke from his wine, and knew what his youngest son had done unto him. And he said, Cursed be Canaan; a servant of servants shall he be unto his brethren.....Blessed be Yahveh, the god of Shem; and let Canaan be his servant. God shall enlarge Japhet and he shall dwell in the tents of Shem; and let Canaan be his servant."

Commenting upon this incident, Professor Driver says: "Deeply moved by what had occurred, and discerning from it the characters of his sons, Noah in an elevated, impassioned strain, pronounces upon them a curse and a blessing."

Nearly every word of this grandiloquent statement might be questioned; but it would be waste of time to do so. It is sufficient to notice how a discreditable event can be twisted into an act of righteous indignation. Instead of cursing one of his family, Noah ought to have been thoroughly ashamed of himself. When the Yahvist says that Noah "knew what his youngest son had done unto him," he meant, of course, that the ancient patriarch had been told what this son had omitted to do. The other two sons carrying the mantle must also have seen their father; for going into his tent backwards, they must have turned their heads to see where he was, otherwise they might have fallen over him. The whole affair is simply ridiculous, and Noah had only himself to blame for the occurrence.

In the narrative the Yahvist writer seems to imply that Ham ought to have known by intuition that sixteen centuries later a code of laws (Lev. xvii.-xxvi.) now termed the "Law of Holiness" should be written, in which would be found a chapter devoted to matters connected with indecent exposure of the person. By merely going into Noah's tent Ham was considered to have committed the sin forbidden in Lev. xviii. 7, and to have thereby incurred the penalty pronounced in verse 29. If Ham knew nothing of the *Law of Holiness*, the writer of the story did—which fact accounts for the cursing. From the sacred writer's point of view it was no sin for an old man to get drunk and lie insensible and naked in his tent; but it was an unpardonable sin for a son to see, even unwittingly, his father in that beastly condition. Furthermore, the writer in his narrative makes the other two sons act as he considered best in the circumstances.

The next question requiring elucidation is—Why was Ham's son Canaan cursed, when Ham himself was the offender? Upon this point Dr. Driver says:—

"The opinion has gained ground that the narrative is no longer in its original form. Originally, many

critics suppose, the author of the misdeed was *Canaan*, who may even, in the oldest form of the tradition, have been treated not as the grandson of Noah, but as the youngest of his sons."

It is, of course, quite possible that in the original narrative *Canaan*, and not *Ham*, may have been named as the person who entered Noah's tent; but this is a mere conjecture, suggested probably by the manifest injustice to *Canaan*, as the story stands.

But why does Professor Driver speak of *Canaan* or *Ham* as "the author of the 'misdeed'?" There is no "misdeed" in the narrative except the drunkenness of Noah, and no "author of the misdeed" save Noah himself.

But the critics who suggest that *Canaan's* name may have appeared in the earliest account seem to have forgotten that the curse pronounced by Noah is in harmony with the Lord's favorite method of punishing his people. The Lord himself says in his commands afterwards given to the Israelites: "I, Yahveh thy god, am a jealous god, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children, and upon the third, and upon the fourth generation" (Deut. v. 9). Noah acted in accordance with this decree: if he had never heard of it, the Yahvist writer had—which accounts for the curse being pronounced not upon *Ham*, but on *Canaan*.

There is, however, another reason why *Canaan*, and not *Ham*, should have been cursed. "It was an ancient belief that a father's curse or blessing was not merely the expression of an earnestly felt hope or wish, but that it exerted a real power in determining a child's future" (Driver). This ancient superstition was undoubtedly one of the beliefs of the Jews who lived in Old Testament times, and it accounts for many Bible stories, otherwise pointless. We see, for instance, why Jacob schemed to get the blessing intended for his elder brother *Esau* (Gen. xxvii.). In this case, the purblind father, after he had learnt the deceit practised upon him, says to *Esau*: "I have blessed him: yea, and he shall be blessed." There was no recalling the blessing when once given. Moreover, in verse 37 it is plainly implied that every word of the blessing would be literally fulfilled—as had actually been the case in the writer's days, otherwise he could not have written the story. An example of cursing may be found in the story of *Balaam* (Num. xxii.-xxiv.). In this case *Balak*, king of *Moab*, sent for *Balaam*, a priest or prophet of *Yahveh*, to get him to curse the Israelites before he ventured to attack them. "For I know," he said, "that he whom thou blessest is blessed, and he whom thou cursest is cursed" (xxii. 6). Here, however, the god *Yahveh* intervened, and would not allow him to curse his people. The reason why *Canaan* was cursed, and not *Ham*, is that the *Canaanites*, in the writer's time, had been subjugated by the Israelites, who traced their descent from *Shem*; while other nations supposed to be descendants of *Ham*—the *Egyptians*, for instance—were free and powerful, and not likely to become "servants of servants" to the Israelites or to any other nation descended from *Shem*. If the curse, then, was to be effective, it must fall on a son of *Ham* whose posterity had become slaves to a nation descended from *Shem*. And this brings us to chapter x.—a chapter which professes to give a list of the posterity of Noah, by whom the earth was repopled after the Deluge.

The names in this chapter, when examined, are found to be not those of historical persons, but eponyms; that is to say, names representing the reputed founders of the nations known to the Israelites before the Exile. Upon this subject Professor Driver says:—

"The nations and tribes existed; and imaginary ancestors were afterwards postulated for the purpose of exhibiting pictorially the relationship in which they were supposed to stand to one another. An exactly parallel instance, though not so fully worked out, is afforded by the ancient Greeks. The general name of the Greeks was *Hellenes*, the principal subdivisions were the *Dorians*, the *Æolians*, the *Ionians*, and the *Achæans*; and accordingly the Greeks traced their

descent from a supposed eponymous ancestor *Hellen*, who had three sons, *Dorus* and *Æolus*, the supposed ancestors of the *Dorians* and *Æolians*, and *Xuthus*, from whose two sons, *Ion* and *Achæus*, the *Ionians* and *Achæans* were respectively supposed to be descended."

In this chapter the Priestly writer contributes twelve verses, *i.e.*, 1 to 7, 20, 22, 31, and 32. The compiler adds verses 16, 17, and 18 (first 9 words). The remainder is from the pen of the Yahvist. Many of the names of these eponymous ancestors are not those of persons at all, but are the names of cities or countries, as will be seen in the list that follows. And first, the appellations *Shem*, *Ham*, and *Japhet*—or, more correctly, *Shem*, *Kham*, and *Yepet* or *Ipet*—are not the names of sons of Noah or of anyone else. The Assyrians traced the three races of mankind known to them from *Samu* "olive colored," *Kham-mu* "burned black," and *Ippat* "the white race." These imaginary ancestors were borrowed by the Hebrew writers and labelled "the sons of Noah." All three races were in existence before the date of the mythical Flood, but that is a mere detail. The majority of the names in this chapter have been identified, the following being the most important:—

NATIONS DESCENDED FROM JAPHET.

- GOMER.**—The *Gimirrai* of the inscriptions; the *Kimmerians* of classic writers.
MAGOG.—The land and people of *Gog*—supposed to be the *Scythians*.
MADAI.—The *Medes*—tribes east of *Kurdistan*.
JAVAN OR YAVAN.—The *Greeks*, or more properly, the *Ionians*.
TUBAL AND MESHACH.—The tribes *Tabali* and *Mushku* of the inscriptions, in which they are associated together as in the Old Testament (Ezek. xxvii. 13; xxxii. 26; xxxviii. 2, etc.).
TOGARMAH.—The *Armenians*.
TARSHISH.—A place in Spain beyond the Straits of Gibraltar—the *Tartessus* of the Greeks.
KITTIM.—An important city of *Cyprus*—the *Kition* of the Greeks.

NATIONS DESCENDED FROM HAM.

- CUSH.**—*Ethiopia*, *i.e.*, *Nubia* and *Southern Arabia*.
MIZRAIM.—The general Hebrew name for *Egypt*.
PUT.—The western part of *Lower Egypt*.
CANAAN.—The coast and lowlands of *Palestine*; hence the *Canaanites*.
LEHABIM.—The people of *Libya*—the extreme west of *Lower Egypt*.
PATHRUSIM.—The people of *Pathros* or *Upper Egypt*.
CAPHTHORIM.—The people of *Caphtor*—the part of *Egypt* near the *Delta* called *Kestur*.
ZIDON.—An important city of the *Phœnicians*.
HRTH.—The great nation of the *Hittites*.

NATIONS DESCENDED FROM SHEM.

- ELAM.**—A country east of *Babylonia*—the *Elamites*.
ASSUR.—The oldest capital of *Assyria*; hence the *Assyrians*.
ARPACHSHAD.—The name signifies "the border of *Chaldea*."
LUD.—*Lydia*—the extreme west of *Asia Minor*.
ARAM.—The "high lands"—the *Aramæans* of *Syria* and *Mesopotamia*.

Many of these nations are correctly grouped as regards race; but many are not. The Jews traced their descent from *Shem* (through *Arpachshad*) and that of the *Canaanites* from *Ham*; but, as a matter of fact, the two nations were of the same race and language. If, then, the *Hobrews* were descended from *Shem*, so also were the *Canaanites*—and Noah's cursing a son of *Ham* could in no way affect the last-named people.

ABRACADABRA.

(To be continued.)

The Bible is said to be inspired, but the man who reads it is not. The consequence is that he deduces from it a creed in harmony with his own taste, temper, fancy, and intelligence. He lays emphasis on what fits in with his creed, and slurs over all that is opposed to it. Every one of the various conflicting Protestant sects is founded upon one and the same infallible book. "The Bible teaches this," says one; "The Bible teaches that," says another. And they are both right. The Bible does not contradict each other? They do. What is the explanation, then? Why this? The Bible contradicts itself.—G. W. Foote, "The Book of God."

Correspondence.

THE GOOD OF RELIGION.

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE FREETHINKER."

SIR,—In the *Freethinker* of August 29, there appears an interesting article by Mr. Cohen entitled "Religion and the State." May I be permitted to enter my dissent from one passage in that article? Mr. Cohen says:—

"It is true we—that is, Freethinkers and Nonconformists—talk of religion as being a private matter, one on which the State has no right to obtrude its power and presence. But this is merely because we recognise—Freethinkers consciously and Nonconformists unconsciously—that men and women may be as well off without religion as with it."

In the first place, I should like to say that I cannot agree that Nonconformists all accept the view of religion presented by Mr. Cohen. I know there are a great many Nonconformists who believe in what they call a National Religion, though they do not believe in any individual sect being established as a State institution and upheld by State support. It may, of course, be said that a Church which professes to represent the National religion in any country cannot do so unless it is established as a State institution and receives State support. But there you are. The mind of the average Christian is a marvellous thing, and if it thinks it possible that a National religion can exist though no Church receives State recognition and support, who are we that we should dispute its conclusions?

But the most important point in Mr. Cohen's article is suggested by his remark that "We recognise.....that men and women may be as well off without religion as with it." My point is that men and women must always and everywhere be better off without religion than with it. Some Freethinkers seem to imagine that a person may be religious and still be as well off as the man who is irreligious. This is a dangerous and misleading supposition. Religion is not harmless. It is positively harmful. The religious man surrenders his reason and accepts falsehoods. He degrades his manhood and insults the dignity of his own personality. It is not merely foolish to be religious, it is injurious to mind and character. All who deviate from the truth and encourage intellectual sloth are doing a serious wrong to humanity. Freethinkers, if they are to advance their cause, must proclaim the dangers of being religious; they must show how weakening and degrading religion is, and what debasing effects it has upon character. To be religious is to be immoral. To be identified with any religious sect is to approve of organisations which retard human development and condone not mere petty acts of dishonesty but the most serious crimes. To be religious is not to be negative, colorless, weak, harmless. The religious individual, as well as the religious organisation, is an obstacle to progress and an enemy to truth. Freethinkers must carry the attack into the enemy's camp. You, Sir, have always advocated a militant policy. Let there be no quarter given to the insidious enemies of truth.

What is accepted as morality in the Christian Churches is in reality immorality. Let us recognise this; and if we do recognise this we must publish it. The battlements of Ecclesiasticism must be stormed by Freethinkers.

SIMPLE SANDY.

ERNEST PACK AND HARRY BOULTER.

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE FREETHINKER."

SIR,—Among the "Acid Drops" in your issue for September 5, in which you refer to me under cover as "an Englishman," suppressing my name, but plainly placarding me by quoting from a recent article of mine to the *New York Truthseeker*, you declare that I was not one of "those who assisted" Mr. Boulter as concerning the maintenance of "the 'blasphemer's' home" during his imprisonment. Indeed, I renounced my own meetings in Finsbury Park to attend to others on Clapham Common, and paid over to Mrs. Boulter out of the collections for the four Sundays during her husband's absence the sum of £3 8s. Further than this, at two Thursday evening meetings at Hyde Park my appeal from the platform resulted in a profit on *Freethinker* sales amounting to 11s., by which Mr. Boulter's family benefited.

It is exceedingly distasteful to me to be compelled, by your attempted exposure of my alleged unfriendly attitude towards my colleague, to thus advertise the small share in the matter of financial assistance for which I was responsible, and, as matters stand, it certainly did occur to me that at least one individual other than myself would step out and deny your statement. I was a fool to think so. Seemingly, I am reminded but I was unaware that it had become fashionable to blare these things from the very housetops through a megaphone.

I must "think on." I trust my denial will be as publicly stated as your charge. You will hardly expect me to send you Mrs. Boulter's receipts. I did not care to ask for any.

ERNEST PACK.

[We did not think it necessary to mention Mr. Pack's name, but since he puts the cap on he may wear it. We regret that he did not read our paragraphs more carefully. There is really nothing in his letter which substantially contradicts any of our statements. All he has to say is that he personally obtained £3 19s. for Mrs. Boulter during her husband's imprisonment. This is a very different thing from undertaking, not only the legal costs of Mr. Boulter's defence, but the maintenance of his home during whatever term of imprisonment he might have had to suffer. We are glad to know that Mrs. Boulter benefited to the extent stated, but we fail to see how it affected the situation.—EDITOR.]

The Boulter Fund.

Previously acknowledged, £24. Four Yorkshiremen, 4s.; E. J. Chamberlain, 1s.; Clarionette, 1s.; J. F. Collins, 1s.; J. Taylor, 1s.; Ex-Sunday School Teacher, 2s.—N. J. EVANS (Hon. Treasurer), 122 City-road, E.C.

PROFITABLE RELICS.

The Pope is negotiating with the new government of Turkey for the purchase of the exhibit called the Holy Sepulchre at Jerusalem, for removal to Italy. It is a source of annoyance to his holiness, who is a dealer in fake relics, that the profits from this best drawing one of all, considered as a show, are gobbled by Infidel Mohammedans. Certainly, it would be a winner if he could only instal Christ's tomb in the Vatican for exhibition purposes; and he might add to it that other hole in the ground, the Tomb of Adam, where Mark Twain was once discovered bewailing his ancestor. The actual thing the Pope is trying to buy is a tomb manufactured for the purpose to which it is put—that of gulling the gullible. It is covered by a church, alleged to be built on "Mount Calvary," but a half dozen Christian sects are forever quarreling about the site of the crucifixion, no two agreeing within half a mile. The place of the crucifixion is unknown, but the place of this fiction, the holy sepulchre, is arbitrarily fixed, and here come the faithful and comport and prostrate themselves in a way that causes a sane spectator to blush for his species. As many different objects connected with the crucifixion as names can be attached to are gathered here—among them the stone the angel rolled away from the tomb. There is even an apertured fragment called "the cleft in the rock," a relic of phallism, which is exhibited as a rock that was rent by the earthquake at the time of the crucifixion. These relics have been sold and replaced, probably more than once, and some of them are already in Rome, where the Pope wants to fetch the "holy sepulchre." The "true cross," in quantities sufficient to load a ship, can be found in the churches of Europe and Asia. True crosses became so numerous that long ago the theory of "miraculous multiplication" was evolved and adopted by Catholics. There might be a multiplication also of holy sepulchres; were the one in Jerusalem to be removed, who can doubt that the exhibitors would supply another and that myriads of Christians would supply the faith to make it genuine? The Pope can afford to pay almost any sum for the desired object, for he would get his money back, showing it, inside of ten years. If human fragments purported to be wrist-bones of St. Anne have enough drawing power to support churches here in New York, in Quebec, and in other places, the Holy Sepulchre must prove a mint. Once in the hands of the Catholics, they would have it working miracles all the way from the Jordan to the Mediterranean. They say pilgrimages to Rome are not what they used to be. This would revive a decaying custom, and the Catholics of Italy would experience a new baptism of faith and fraud.—George Macdonald, "Truthseeker" (New York).

If judgment depends on the will, it is through the will amenable to motives; consequently, the way to promote correct opinions is to promise rewards and threaten punishments. But if judgment does not depend on the will; if it is necessarily determined by the laws of reason and evidence; then it is an absurdity to bribe and intimidate.—G. W. Foote, "The Book of God."

All the meanness, all the revenge, all the hatred, all the infamy of which the heart of man is capable, grew, blossomed, and bore fruit in this one word—Hell. For the nourishment of this dogma, cruelty was soil, ignorance was rain, and fear was light.—Ingersoll.

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.

INDOOR.

ST. JAMES'S HALL (Great Portland-street, W.): 7.30, G. W. Foote, "Shakespeare's View of Evil—in *Othello*, etc."

OUTDOOR.

BETHNAL GREEN BRANCH N. S. S. (Victoria Park, near the Fountain): 3.15, C. Cohen, a Lecture.

CAMBERWELL BRANCH N. S. S. (Brockwell Park): 3.15, a Lecture.

KINGSLAND BRANCH N. S. S. (Ridley-road): 11.30, F. Schaller, "Christianity Played Out."

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, E. C. Saphin, a Lecture.

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

WOOD GREEN BRANCH N. S. S. (Spouters' Corner): 11.30, a Lecture. Seven Sisters' Corner: 7, a Lecture.

WOOLWICH BRANCH N. S. S. (Beresford-square): 11.30, F. A. Davis, a Lecture; 7.30, W. J. Ramsey, a Lecture.

COUNTRY.

INDOOR.

BISHOP DUCKLAND: Meeting at Musgrave's Tea Rooms, John-street, Spennymoor, at 3, Business and Discussion.

BIRMINGHAM BRANCH N. S. S. (Bull Ring): Thursday, September 23, at 8, F. C. Berkeley, "The Budget Proposals of Thomas Paine."

GLASGOW SECULAR SOCIETY: 12 noon, Adjourned Business Meeting to Consider Financial Report.

LIVERPOOL BRANCH N. S. S. (Alexandra Hall, Islington-square): 7, H. Percy Ward, "Christian Persecution in Spain." With special reference to the Ferrer case.

NOTTINGHAM (Cobden Hall, Peachey-street): 9 p.m., Meeting in connection with formation of Branch.

OUTDOOR.

EDINBURGH SECULAR SOCIETY: The Meadows, 3, a Lecture; The Mound, 6.30, a Lecture.

OGMORE VALE: Mr. Bennett, afternoon, "Is the Bible the Supreme Word of God?" evening, "Christianity Reconsidered."

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