

THE Freethinker

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PRICE TWOPENCE

Measure the man without his stilts; let him put off his riches and his honors; let him show himself in his shirt. Has he a body fit for its functions? What kind of a soul has he? Is she fair, vigorous, happily provided with all her faculties? Is she rich in what is her own, or in what she has borrowed?—MONTAIGNE.

Edward the Seventh.

WE have neither the desire nor the intention of merely adding to the many obituaries that have followed the death of Edward the Seventh. Genuine sympathy with the bereaved marks one of the best aspects of human nature, although those who shed copious tears—on paper—over the death of a King pass unnoticed those partings in a humbler sphere of life where death may mean the loss of the bread-winner and often precedes the disintegration of the family. Formal obituaries leave us unmoved. They are turned out by the ream on occasions such as the present, and, however suitable they may be to their special subject, they lose weight from the universal manner in which they are applied. The virtues of a monarch are as hereditary as the throne; his successor assumes them with the crown; and already of the same papers that have chronicled the virtues of the seventh Edward have dwelt upon the valuable qualities of the fifth George.

We say this without wishing to detract from the many good qualities of the dead King, and with full recognition that many of the good things said about him were deserved. For during his brief reign he gave ample evidence that he appreciated the duties of a constitutional monarch—perhaps the most difficult of all positions to fill worthily. And his personal influence—so far as this weighs in the affairs of nations—appears to have been cast wholly on the side of peace. Regret has been expressed that he was called to the throne so late in life; but this in reality was his salvation. He brought to the office a judgment matured by experience and made tolerant by personal contact with more than one aspect of life. His age freed him from the dangerous ambition and headstrong wilfulness of a younger man. His relation to the reigning families of Russia, Germany, Spain, Denmark, combining with his years, enabled him to exert a stronger personal influence on international affairs than would have been possible to another and younger man.

Of Edward the Seventh's religious views nothing very definite can be said. They were probably neither excessive nor oppressive. To the narrower forms of religious belief, particularly of our English Sabbatarianism, he was no friend. Whatever religious opinions he may have held sat very lightly upon him. Mr. Hall Caine, in an article detailing his personal intercourse with the King, and written in his usual heavy and stupid manner, says "Without being in the accepted sense of the word a religious man, I think he always regarded religion with a deep reverence, and the differences of faith with toleration." "I think," may, we think, be read "I hope"; while the testimony of his regarding religious differences with toleration may be taken as meaning that he cared very little about any of them.

Although he bore the title "Defender of the Faith," one cannot easily conceive his defending it with any striking amount of fervor. Had he been so disposed, his later life would hardly have been so useful as it was.

Naturally, the official representatives of religion in the country are making all possible use of the King's death. Before his demise, the Archbishop of Canterbury, as in duty bound, hurried to the Palace, and afterwards telegraphed to all diocesan bishops to offer up prayers for the King's recovery. The Roman Catholic Bishop of Westminster issued similar instructions to his regiments. The President and Secretary of the Free Church Council, not to be behind hand, asked all Nonconformist ministers to "beseech Almighty God on his behalf." Those who have faith in the efficacy of prayer might, not unreasonably, have expected that something would happen. And something did happen. A few hours after all these praying experts had set to work to ask for the King's recovery, his death was announced.

Monday's papers provided yards of sermons on the King's death, all turned out on the same plan. From this mass we select two. The Dean of Westminster said that King Edward "realised, and set forth in a conspicuous manner, the truly Christian ideal." One may contrast this with Mr. Hall Caine's opinion that the King was not religious in the accepted sense of the word. The Bishop of London told an audience at St. Paul's that "Nothing could have been more Christian than the passing of the great King"—a statement calculated to make one open one's eyes. It is true that prayers were said in the room in which the King lay dying, but as he was unconscious for some hours before his death, "Christian" could have reference only to the other persons in the room. A Christian death—the kind of death made familiar to us in thousands of sermons—is one where the dying man puts away from him all thoughts of earthly things, and busies himself with the destiny of his immortal soul. But King Edward did not act in this manner. It does, indeed, add to his credit that, while he could, he concerned himself with the secular duties of his office. And this is far more creditable than any amount of "spiritual preparation." And among the reported last utterances of the King is one that we are certainly not in the habit of looking on as Christ-like. I quote from a daily paper of May 7:—

"The King was remarkably calm and in good spirits all day, despite his serious condition. At five o'clock in the afternoon he asked if his horse, Witch of the Air, had won at Kempton, and was greatly pleased when told it had."

Then came, soon after, unconsciousness and, without a break, death.

And this last inquiry concerning his horse, we would point out, is one that really shows the King in a far more amiable light than would have been the case had his mouth been filled with the cant of a formal piety. The same contempt of the puritanical spirit, by far too powerful in England, that caused him to keep up his racing-stables kept him the tolerant man of the world we believe him to have been. A bigot might have presented fewer obvious moral flaws in a long life, but he would have been a much less like-

able man, and an altogether inefficient English monarch.

This is not the place, nor have we the desire, to eulogise the *King*. Kingcraft and priestcraft are, to us, twin branches from the same stem of primitive superstition; and the divinity that doth hedge a king is but a reflection of the supernatural power that clothed the primitive priest with authority. When mankind can lay full and unquestionable claim to the title of "civilised," both kingcraft and priestcraft will, we believe, disappear. But meanwhile there is the man behind the King, and our objection to the office need not prevent our recognising whatever good qualities are possessed by him who fills it.

C.

The Offence of the Cross.

THERE are professing Christians not a few to whom the orthodox doctrine of salvation is a continuous stumbling-block. They wonder "whether a God of love could justly allow his innocent Son to suffer death for the sins of others," and how such a death could secure anybody's salvation. The Rev. Harry Bisseker, in the *Methodist Times* for May 5, makes a heroic attempt to convince them that their difficulty arises from the fact that they "take their theology from the refrains of popular hymns rather than from the teaching of Scripture." But is not the popularity of such hymns a conclusive proof that the theology embodied in them is the theology most acceptable to the majority of Christians? Besides, if the theology of such hymns is false, on what ground can their constant use in all Churches be justified? But are "the refrains of popular hymns" out of harmony with the teaching of Scripture? Mr. Bisseker does not furnish a single instance in support of his assertion, and, indeed, it is not too bold an act to characterise the assertion as a gross exaggeration. One hymn says:—

"We were sinners doom'd to die
Jesus paid the penalty."

Does Mr. Bisseker hold that there is no Biblical authority for those two statements? Does not the Apostle Paul teach that all men are sinners, lying helpless under the wrath of holy God? Do we not read in the Fourth Gospel (iii. 36) that "the wrath of God abideth" on everyone who refuseth to believe on his Son? Are not believers informed (Eph. ii. 3) that previous to their conversion they "were by nature children of wrath, even as the rest," and that they "were saved from the wrath of God" through Jesus Christ (Romans v. 9)? Surely such expressions fully justify the line, "We were sinners doom'd to die." But has the other line, "Jesus paid the penalty," any foundation in Scripture? In Matthew xx. 18 we read: "The Son of Man came not to be ministered unto but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many." Now, ransom is the money or price paid for the redemption of a prisoner, the penalty, the suffering, exacted in order to legalise the release of a captive. Paul tells the Roman Christians that they "were bought with a price," and Peter says to his readers, "Ye were redeemed, not with corruptible things, with silver or gold, from your vain manner of life handed down from your fathers, but with precious blood, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot, even the blood of Christ." In another place, Peter says that Jesus "his own self carried up our sins to the tree, that we, having died unto sin, might live unto righteousness." In 1 John ii. 2 we find the statement that Christ "is the propitiation for our sins; and not for ours only, but also for the whole world."

Now, who was it that needed to be propitiated, conciliated, or appeased, to whom was it necessary to give a ransom, before mankind could be set free? The answers to that question are many and conflicting; but the fact remains that, according to the teaching of Scripture, mankind were by nature in a position from which extrication was possible only by

payment of a ransom or penalty, and that the only acceptable ransom or price was the life of the only begotten Son of God. As Paul says in Galatians, we were under "the curse of the law," and could be redeemed from it only at the cost of Christ's becoming "a curse for us." Mr. Bisseker endeavors to remove the offence of the Cross by doing away with the Cross; but that is a task that cannot be accomplished. To say that the Cross means nothing but vicarious suffering, as known among ourselves, is to play fast and loose with most of the New Testament, particularly with the teaching of Paul, Peter, and John. God either could not, or would not, save the world except at the infinite expense of sacrificing his only begotten Son; and, as history abundantly shows, the stupendous sacrifice was made practically in vain.

The value of vicarious suffering in human life is incalculable. It "is the strongest redemptive influence" known to us. On this one point we are in complete agreement with Mr. Bisseker. But as Dr. Dale, in his scathing criticism of Bushnell's theory of the Atonement, so clearly proved, the sufferings of Christ on Calvary were expiatory, not simply vicarious; a satisfaction to the Law of Eternal Righteousness, or to God in person, not merely sympathetic. Trench also, in his *Greek Synonyms* of the New Testament, comes to the same conclusion, and it is difficult to understand how any honest exegete can arrive at any other conviction. It is beyond all doubt, however, that Mr. Bisseker, though a Wesleyan minister, cannot conscientiously endorse the Apostolic doctrine of the Atonement any more than his correspondents. He quietly ignores it, and offers something else, radically different, in its place, and claims, without even attempting to verify it, that *this* is the genuine apostolic teaching. He is quite right in rejecting the theory of propitiation propounded by the New Testament writers, but is it not rather dishonoring to the Holy Trinity to represent the second member of it as descending to the earth and becoming man in order to give the world a spectacular lesson in vicarious service? Why, there had been a vast deal of that beneficent ministry for countless ages before he came, and there has scarcely been an increase of it since his departure. Hence, if he came for that purpose, he came wholly in vain; and if he came to do the work attributed to him by Paul, Peter, and John, his advent was equally fruitless.

The question is often asked, "Does or can the Cross save?" Without a moment's hesitation we answer, It neither does nor can. A few years ago Dr. Horton waxed exceedingly angry with some young Congregational minister who was suspected of denying the saving power of the Cross, and the denunciatory language employed was more strong than elegant. But not even Dr. Horton, honestly contemplating the conditions of life in London today, can have the temerity to affirm that Christianity has been a success, or that the Cross has exerted the omnipotent power to save attributed to it. For whatever good the Cross is said to have done the credit belongs to the Church; and the amount of that good work is so dismally meagre that the Church ought to be ashamed to ascribe it to the so-called omnipotent Christ. Conversions are so few and far between, and often so disappointing in their results, that to regard them as the work of the Holy Ghost is to be guilty of the most vulgar blasphemy. The Church cannot boast of her achievements, even looking upon them as exclusively her own; but to praise God for them is to offer him an unpardonable insult. In reality, the Cross is nothing but another name for the Church, and the offence of the Cross is the result of treating it as if it were something else. Christians often sing, with great fervor,—

"When I survey the wondrous Cross
On which the Prince of glory died,
My richest gains I count but loss,
And pour contempt on all my pride"

but either they do not mean what they say with such feeling, or meaning it, forget it the next moment. Such singing amounts to a culpable waste

of emotional force, for which there is so much need in other directions.

The curious thing is, however, that the Cross is neither the creation nor the discovery of Christianity. As a matter of fact, the Cross was supposed to possess saving qualities many centuries before the time of Christ. Who has not read of the Cross of ancient Mexico, on which there was a figure representing the Savior-God? In Isaiah xiv. 1 Cyrus is called a Messiah or Christ, and Diodorus Siculus tells the story of his crucifixion. Attis, Osiris, Dionysus, and Mithra were all Divine Saviors who became such by dying, generally on the Sacred Tree, or Cross. In Persia, Egypt, Carthagina, India, Scythia, as well as in Greece, magic virtue attached to the Cross from immemorial times. It is undeniable, therefore, that in Christianity the Cross is a borrowed symbol, and possesses no more real virtue than it did in the Pagan religions. The Persians believed it to be a charm against evil and death, while to others it was a solar symbol aglow with creative and fructifying power. The Christians, in making it the symbol of the self-sacrifice of God for the world's redemption, only slightly modified its Pagan significance, and in so doing rendered its symbolism more mysterious and unreal than it had ever been before. The God-man of Palestine is quite as mythic as the Savior Gods of Heathen mythologies, and more impossible in that he is clothed with more definite and personal attributes. The idea of supernatural persons becoming incarnate and dying to set humanity right is laughably absurd. For one thing, humanity has never yet been set right. Neither the Pagan nor the Christian Cross has done more than mark a stage in its history. For another thing, nobody can tell us what the Cross is, or what it signifies to be saved by it. Indeed, theologians do little but quarrel among themselves as to its nature and work, and the differences between them are enormous. The only Church that is anything like unanimous on the interpretation of it is the Catholic, while the Protestant sects all agree in condemning the Catholic version and totally disagree with one another as to the correct one. Are we not fully justified, then, in regarding the Cross itself as an intolerable offence, and in doing our utmost to rid the world of it? Whether in orthodox or heterodox forms it is a mischievous symbol, in that it diverts the minds of men from the actual interests of life by causing them to concentrate on dreams of the fancy as if they were veritable realities. Great Britain is still, to its own detriment, the battle-field of the creeds. The Cross makes for divisions and factions and angry disputations; and it has never made for anything else.

J. T. LLOYD.

A Politician on the Bible.

THE House of Commons does not encourage an ostentatious display of piety. It is true there are certain religious formalities connected with its proceedings, such as members taking a religious oath on a book which tells them to swear not at all; and there is also, I believe, a chaplain who offers up prayers that the proceedings of the House may be marked with wisdom, etc.—which tends to make one discount the efficacy of prayer. There is, too, a room set apart for a daily prayer-meeting; but as the room only accommodates about twenty-five persons, obviously no great rush of members is anticipated. But in its proceedings the House does not encourage displays of piety. It did this once—a long time ago—but it is never likely to repeat the experiment. Nowadays no one ever dreams of backing up an argument with a profession of religion, and no member would base his support of a Bill upon purely religious grounds. Wise, or otherwise, the proceedings go on with sole reference to man's secular welfare, and to the secular concerns of the State. Which is as it should be.

The impossibility of venting their religion in the House of Commons may be one of the reasons why some of our members of Parliament spend their off-time in preaching or teaching religion. Freed from their labors of managing the affairs of the Empire, they proceed in their spare moments to arrange the affairs of the universe. After discussing the Housing Question this side of the grave, they dilate upon the mansions we may occupy in the New Jerusalem. Whether politics gains from piety or piety from politics is not easy to determine. Probably the profit is mutual. An M.P. at a religious meeting is a good advertisement, and if in the midst of a prayer to Our Lord he should address him as "Mr. Speaker" it will only be taken as proof of absorption in the nation's affairs. And, on the other hand, the reputation of a "good religious worker" will stand one in good stead at election times. If a Dissenter, he will have the chapels on his side, and they will work for his return as a victory for themselves against the Established Church. And if an Episcopalian, the reputation of a good Churchman—other things equal—will rally another class to his support. For a politician who merely aims at getting on, an avowed interest in the welfare of the Christian religion is, perhaps, as good an investment as can be made.

Among those politicians who devote their off-time to religion is Mr. George Harwood, M.P., a report of whose address on "The Bible as a Book" appears in a recent number of the *Bolton Evening News*. Only a summary of the address is given, but I assume that it fairly represents Mr. Harwood; though if I were a friend of that gentleman I should hope to the contrary. For when one finds Mr. Harwood leading off with the remark that the Bible is "the best authenticated book in the world," and also that it is possible to put the Bible together—including the New Testament—"without a break within fifty years of the events recorded," while such statements lack nothing on the score of courage, they are such that not even a clergyman with a reputation to lose would venture to make. On a similar level of accuracy is the statement that the incidents narrated in the Bible "can be checked by other literatures and histories, and the accuracy of any incident related therein cannot be disproved." One wonders whether Mr. Harwood is really ignorant of the fact that one of the very early objections to Biblical stories was just this absence of corroboration in outside histories. One would really like to know the history that narrates the Mosaic miracles at Pharaoh's court, or the three days' darkness that overspread the earth at the time of the resurrection. And unless "visions are about" one of the surest things is that, whenever it has been possible to bring Biblical stories to the test of ascertained truth, they have been decisively shown to be wrong—that is, whenever there was a decent possibility of their being wrong.

But I do not dwell upon these points, because as a Freethinker I can well afford to allow that the Bible and New Testament can be traced back to quite the times of the incidents related, and also that other histories relate the same kind of miracles. And when Mr. Harwood has gained this, all he has obtained is a handful of dust to throw in the eyes of those who look to him for guidance. For the credibility of certain Biblical stories does not depend in the least upon whether the portion of the Bible recording them was written at the time, or near the time, when these events are said to have transpired. Let us suppose, for instance, that we possessed an authenticated document, signed by ten thousand persons, declaring that Mary, the wife of Joseph the Carpenter, had given birth to a divinely-begotten boy. Would the event be any the more credible because of this? Suppose we possessed a similar document in which an equal number of people expressed their belief that a certain man had risen from the dead, or had cast seven devils out of a possessed person; would these stories be more credible than they are now? It would only shift the issue, superficially, from the credibility of the story to that of the narrators. I say superficially because

both are really one. Stories of miraculously-born saviors are not narrations of so many objective facts, but statements of subjective convictions. We do not disbelieve in a universal deluge because we have no actual evidence of this particular one in the Bible, but because we know it to be an impossibility. We do not believe in men raised from the dead for the same reason. We refuse to credit stories of demoniacal possession because we see the same phenomena to-day in cases of epilepsy or insanity. The question of whether the accounts of miracles were written by eye-witnesses or not is of practically little importance, save to distract attention from the real issues. We know that miracles do not occur, and contemporary evidence is proof only of contemporary ignorance.

Or assume—what is really the truth—that stories similar to all those in the Bible are found elsewhere. Does that bring us any nearer accepting them as true? Quite the contrary. The widespread traditions of a deluge do not prove the truth of the Noachian story—they only prove the existence of similar culture stages over a wide area. The wonders attributed to Roman Catholic saints—often attested by contemporaries—the marvels that constitute part of the religious beliefs of savages and semi-civilised people to-day, the belief still surviving in European countries in witchcraft, or in the evil eye—none of these prove their truth, but only that belief in them exists. And this, as I have already indicated, reduce the whole subject to the question, What are the mental conditions that give rise to this class of beliefs? In other words, the study of religion is really a study of mental evolution. We are all the time engaged—or ought to be engaged—in considering the causes that gave rise to these beliefs, the conditions that favored their retention and development, and the causes of their modification and rejection. The question of when the books of the Bible were written may be an interesting literary question, but it is of no value whatever so far as proving the truth of the Biblical stories is concerned. There is no need to even question the honesty of the writers of those stories; it is their actual knowledge of science, their precise place in the history of human culture, that is in question.

One statement of Mr. Harwood's is of a more serious character. He is reported as saying:—

"He remembered talking with Huxley a little while before he died. Huxley confessed as he grew older he saw a wonderful harmony between the underlying teaching of the Bible, from a scientific point of view, and the most modern revelation of science."

It is wonderful how these statements concerning prominent scientific heretics crop up *after* they are dead. And if Mr. Harwood's words are to be interpreted at their full value, I am bound to say, quite plainly, either Huxley was poking fun at Mr. Harwood or he did not mean what Mr. Harwood says he meant, or the conversation owes its origin to Mr. Harwood's imagination. It is simply inconceivable that the man who had so clearly and so constantly demonstrated the unscientific character of Bible teaching should have chosen a casual conversation to give the lie to so much that he had written. For, short of a really supernatural revelation, the "most modern revelations of science" simply could not have been known to the Biblical writers. And no one would have realised this with greater clearness than Huxley himself. A man who believed what Mr. Harwood says Huxley confessed he believed would write himself down an out-and-out supernaturalist, and, as a mere act of common sense, there is required something more solid than any individual's bare word to entitle a statement such as this to credence. It is curious that, at a time when even the clergy are giving up claiming accuracy on matters of science for the Bible, Mr. Harwood should make a man like Huxley support its claims.

Mr. Harwood's final remark is that his Labor and Socialist friends owe their justification to the Bible, because "the word 'right' is a Christian word, not to be found in any literature before Christ." I am

not sure whether Mr. Harwood means ethical or social "right"—from the context it is the latter—but the man who seriously argues that people were unacquainted with either before the time of Christ can hardly claim the *right* to be taken seriously. If Mr. Harwood will tear himself away from his Bible-classes for awhile, and pay a little attention to some of the cheap and handy editions of pre-Christian writers, he will be saved from making such ridiculous statements in the future. He will find the writings of Plato, for instance, full of the discussion of this question of "right" in both its ethical and political aspects. And if he turns to the fifth book of Aristotle's *Ethics* he will find that section devoted exclusively to this topic, and giving a far more helpful and suggestive account of it than anything to be found in the Bible from Genesis to Revelations.

Perhaps, after all, one ought not to be too hard on Mr. Harwood. He was addressing a Bible-class, and a Bible-class expects certain things, and possibly Mr. Harwood was too considerate to disappoint. Still, if he was serious, and if his power as a reasoner on the philosophy of religion is any indication of his value as a politician, one feels that his constituency deserves the sincere sympathy of the general public.

C. COHEN.

"Thus Saith the Lord."

In the twilight dawn of Grecian history we seem to discern the figures of the gods lurking behind every tree, moving freely through earth and air and sky, mingling constantly in the assemblies of men, distributing blessings and calamities far and wide with their own mighty hands. As the age of Homer slowly gives place to the inquiring times of Herodotus and Aristotle, the gods recede more and more to inaccessible Olympian heights; and, instead of their active intervention in the affairs of men, we have the voices of prophet and of priest loudly proclaiming what they affirm to be the will of Zeus, and breathing threats of dire punishment against all who may refuse to listen to their words. In ancient Jewry, as portrayed in the Bible, we see a succession of similar phenomena. If we read the old legends aright, God seems to have spoken face to face with the patriarchs,—Adam, Noah, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob,—but the later and more inquisitive Moses is kept at a distance, and is only, as a special favor, vouchsafed a glimpse of Jehovah's hinder parts. And as we descend from the shifting mirage of legend and folklore to the sure ground of history, we find this too-familiar God has disappeared into some far-off heaven; he has become the High and Holy One that inhabiteth eternity, and speaks only to his people through the mouths of his prophets and priests, who preface all their messages with the resounding phrase, "Thus saith the Lord."

If it were possible for these ancient superstitions and old-world seers to reappear in the world to-day, we should slay them with ridicule or with neglect. Yet their spiritual successors are amongst us, wearing the garb of Christian ministers, adapting their language somewhat to twentieth-century ears, but abating scarcely one jot of the arrogant pretensions of their ancient prototypes. And they tell us that the world needs them, is crying out for them. The Rev. J. H. Jowett, speaking at the recent meeting of the Free Church Council at Hull, declared that the world "seeks the prophet," and he urged his pulpit brethren to become "authoritative messengers," who are conscious that they have been "near to the Lord." What is this but the language of ancient superstition toned down to please the modern ear? Abraham had been "near to the Lord" when he set forth to offer up his son Isaac; Jacob was "near to the Lord" when he wrestled with "a man" at Peniel; Moses was "near to the Lord" in the fiery mount. Mr. Jowett and his colleagues, no doubt, seek the Lord in the solitude of the closet, and in the deep recesses of these ministerial hearts the world is to find the

hidden springs of divine inspiration for which it thirsts. Shall the modern world, which would not give credence to Greek and Jewish prophets even if they rose from the dead, listen with respect to the "authoritative" utterances of these latter-day prophets, who are egotistical enough to imagine that when they hold communion with their own hearts they are communing with God?

In one sense, it may be true that, as Mr. Jowett says, "the world wants more than the talker—it seeks the prophet." The less-instructed portion of mankind have always found attraction in the magician's wand, and in the tales of wonder and of mystery, and the promises and prophecies which the Cagliostro and the medicine-men of all religions and all nations are ever ready to pour into the human mind. But the harvest-time of the mystery-man and the prophet is passing away, and the world turns more and more to the shrines of art, of literature, of philosophy and science for inspiration and guidance, and is learning to distrust the hollow voices of the sacred oracles and the mystic spells of temple priests and religious prophets.

And what message do these self-constituted latter-day prophets bring? The Rev. J. H. Jowett, apparently, would take us back to the days of the apostles. He is "growingly amazed at the fulness and glory of the apostolic witness and preaching, which more and more allures him." This is the language of gross exaggeration, but perhaps it may be regarded as a fitting prelude to the hyperbole and dithyrambs which naturally fall from the lips of the prophets of God. "The apostolic witness and preaching," so far as they are known to Mr. Jowett, have been before the world for perhaps eighteen hundred years. Churches innumerable have adopted them, repeated them in various forms, thrust them with endless persistence upon the wearied ears of unwilling congregations, until familiarity has bred contempt and the message itself has grown stale and pointless. Is Mr. Jowett "allured" by the message of Peter, as recorded in the Acts of the Apostles?—"Jesus of Nazareth, a man approved of God among you by miracles and wonders and signs, which God did by him in the midst of you, as ye yourselves know." There is not a clause of this brief extract that is not called in question by Christian ministers themselves. Some of them deny the miracles; some, bolder still, doubt or deny that Jesus of Nazareth ever existed at all. Even if the message was spoken as it is recorded in the Acts, and even though it made a truthful and unanswerable appeal to the listening crowd, it is only hearsay to the twentieth century, which does not, and cannot, know that God did miracles and wonders and signs by Jesus. Paul's gospel of Christ crucified is a stumbling-block, and, indeed, little better than foolishness, to a world which has accepted the doctrine of evolution. If in Adam men do not die, how shall they all in Christ be made alive? How can any duly instructed Christian minister preach the Pauline gospel of an atoning Jesus in the face of the theories and discoveries of modern science? And yet Mr. Jowett talks about the "vastness" of the apostolic message, and tells us that when he turns to it he feels "as though he was in Alpine country." Far more than it needs and seeks for prophets the world needs and seeks for men who will speak words of truth and soberness. Where is there any "vastness" or wild Alpine grandeur in the speeches of Peter or the epistles of Paul? Mr. Jowett does not like "to hear the great evangel of redeeming love recited with the metallic apathy of a gramophone." This, then, is the message of our twentieth-century prophets,—they are burning to proclaim the "great evangel of redeeming love."

As if that evangel had not been preached for nearly two thousand years, until the whole civilised world is familiar with the story! As if this grotesque gospel of redeeming love had not been riddled by textual criticism, undermined by science, and condemned by the expanding ethical conceptions of the race! "God so loved the world that he gave his

only begotten son." Who will venture now to preach this old-world doctrine? To talk of God having an "only begotten son" is a piece of barbarous anthropomorphism which is reminiscent of pagan gods. And where is the evidence that God is love? Not in the pages of the Bible, which tells us that God led innocent, newly created man and woman into temptation, which he knew beforehand would be their ruin; not in the phenomena of nature, which sweep along unmindful of man or any other living creature; not in the facts of contemporary life, where we see that one event befalls both just and unjust, and no helpful, loving hand is stretched forth to save the man of God who has shattered his nervous constitution in the service of his Divine Lord. The Rev. Dr. Warschauer, who also claims, or desires, to be a prophet, says that the prophet must be "filled with the conviction that God does not stand far off from the affairs of this world, but cares for, and watches over, all." Yet there is nothing to prompt or justify such a conviction except the wish that it might be based on truth. There is no evidence that God has ever interfered in the affairs of man and the universe. The "prophet" who is able to acquire "convictions" which are diametrically opposed to evidence is not likely to be a safe guide in any field of thought or action. Dr. Warschauer says that the "prophet" must have a sense of "direct and intimate dealings with Him who is the source of all being; without this intimacy he can neither receive nor transmit communications from God to man."

Thus the prophet will also be a priest. He will not only convey the word of God to man,—he will transmit the communications of man to God. Just as the Ethiopian cannot change his skin, nor the leopard his spots, so the priest, in all essentials, remains the same to-day as in the days of ancient Israel, Egypt, and Greece. He alone must enter the holy of holies, commune with God, lay the needs and petitions of the people before their deity, and, with his confident "Thus saith the Lord," transmit the messages and commands of God to men. The language of prophet and of priest is out of date. No man, no leader, no teacher, no reformer may seek to gain acceptance for his message on the ground that it comes from God. Let us turn from the phantoms and terrors of a supernatural world to the friendly, helpful faces of our fellow-men, and let us seek redemption where only it may be found—in the strivings and the work of human hearts and hands and brains.

W. B. COLUMBINE.

What we are is in part only of our making; the greater part of ourselves has come down to us from the past. What we know and what we think is not a new fountain gushing fresh from the barren rock of the unknown at the stroke of the rod of our intellect; it is a stream which flows by us and through us, fed by the far-off rivulets of long ago. As what we think and say to-day will mingle with and shape the thoughts of men in the years to come, so in the opinions and views which we are proud to hold to-day we may, by looking back, trace the influence of the thoughts of those who have gone before.—Sir Michael Foster, "History of Physiology."

There is no such enemy to mankind as moral cowardice. A downright, vulgar, self-interested, and unblushing liar is a higher being than the moral cur whose likes and dislikes are at the beck and call of bullies that stand between him and his own soul; such a creature gives up the most sacred of all his rights for something more unsubstantial than a mess of pottage—a mental serf too abject even to know that he is being wronged, whose jejune timidity and want of vitality are thus omnipresent in the most secret chambers of his heart.—Samuel Butler.

There is beauty in simple self-sacrifice when its hour has come unsought, when its motive is happiness of others; but it cannot be wise or of use to mankind to make sacrifice the aim of one's life, or to regard its achievement as the magnificent triumph of the spirit over the body.—Maeterlinck.

Acid Drops.

A great deal has appeared of late in Christian papers concerning the rapid progress Christianity is making among the Koreans. An article in the *Japan Times* for April 9 throws some much needed light on the situation. The writer states that an "enormous fund" is at present being invested in missionary work in Korea, the number of European missionaries engaged in the work being 450. It is also true that a large number of Koreans have embraced Christianity; their reasons for doing so, however, will not be very pleasing to the home subscribers. One reason for many joining is that they are political malcontents, and hope "to shelter themselves under the roof of a foreign religion." In illustration of this, the writer points out that the assassin of Prince Ito and of Premier Yi were both members of a Christian Church. The Koreans are also under the impression that the foreign missions are in Korea, as in China, independent of the native government:—

"The trouble is that the native missionaries and believers entertain a vague idea that they will be sheltered by extra-territoriality by conversion to Christianity, and they often dare to show a disquieting attitude in their speech and doings, some going to the length of opposing by force the tax collectors, from the wrong notion that the Government has not the power to levy taxes on Christians.....In short, the greater part of Christian converts in Korea are malcontents, or else such Koreans as are aiming at some selfish emolument."

Japan, however, is not China, and the converts soon discover they cannot defy the law with impunity. With the result that "Many native Christians are now leaving Christianity, as they are disappointed with the material advantages they expected to derive." And that is how the milk came in the coconut.

Our readers are familiar with the Rooseveltian description of Thomas Paine as a "Dirty little Atheist." It is not, therefore, wonderful that the Ex-President of a democratic State, who can lie so strenuously for the glory of his creed, should be made much of by the religious papers. The *British Weekly* tells its readers that Mr. Roosevelt is the voice of America, that he has set up a lofty standard of morality, that his religious convictions are serious, that he has every social virtue and is a true friend of peace—not in the Quaker sense, be it remembered, the peace he prefers being that which follows the death-rattle of Maxim-guns. The *Guardian* is less ingenuous and less enthusiastic, as becomes the more dignified organ of the English Church by law established, but still it takes the Ex-President quite seriously. The other side of the case, the protest against Roosevelt and everything he stands for, comes from an American. Professor G. D. Herron, in the *New Age*, claims that he only says what many thoughtful Americans know, but dare not say. Nothing could be more instructive than the contrast between the eulogies of the religious, the semi-religious, papers and the following indictment:—

"He (Roosevelt) is the embodiment of man's return to the brute. He is the glorification of what is rotten and reactionary in our civilisation. Whatever he does, he will never fight you fair; he will never strike a blow that is not foul. The majority of men have still some rudimentary feelings about truth, which saves them from any foolish attempt to compete with Roosevelt in the art of clothing flagrant falsehood in the garb of moral pomp. No man would be found with the controversial weapons of Theodore Roosevelt upon his person. He stands for a life that belongs to the lower barbarian, to the jungle. His psychology is that of the savage at one time and of the hysteric at another."

The *Literary Post* is a new weekly journal which was ushered into the world with a great blare of advertising brass. If it does not see to its writers it will soon be fizzling out like a damp squib. In its eighth number it places Mr. G. K. Chesterton under the critical microscope, and contrives to say some good and many silly things in a pretentious jargon that bears a close resemblance to the writing of Mr. Thomas Secombe. The critic tells us that Mr. Chesterton is "hide-bound and doctrinaire," but honest for all that. "He emits the formulas of missionaries, babes and sucklings. Christianity has become his favorite plaything, and he will not part from it. Very rightly, for without religion, as anyone can see who visits present-day England, man is lower than the beasts." If the last sentence is supposed to be sarcasm, we must confess to being too dull to see it; if it is meant to be serious, it has the ponderous futility of the *British Weekly* and the *Academy*. The writer, if serious, is evidently one of those ignoramuses so common in the world of cheap journalism who make up by bluster and emphasis for what they lack in intelligence and knowledge. The less certain they are of their facts, the more dogmatic their tone.

The lie direct is the only answer; for argument would be wasted on them.

We have often had occasion to note of late years that there seems to be as many Freethinkers within the Churches as without. The *Guardian*, in reviewing a volume *On Faith*, by the Rev. Dr. Inge, points out to its Christian readers that there are phrases in the book that indicate a distinct tendency to Pantheism. Dr. Inge seems not to make a clear distinction between man and his supposed Creator, which distinction, the *Guardian* says, is the basis of Christianity. "We note this," it goes on,

"as the author declares in another place in favor of the cosmo-centric as against the anthro-centric standpoint. What this precisely means we suppose nobody can say, but it is certainly very easy for the cosmo-centric to pass into the merely evolutionary view; and of that again to become a mere Pantheism, with no place for those realities of our faith, the soul and its sin and its Savior, and no possibility of miracles."

What is precisely meant by *mere* Pantheism we do not propose to inquire, but we do know that Pantheism without the *mere* is not very far removed from Atheism. So that the reverend doctor is well on the way to become a Freethinker if he has any regard for honesty.

There is no mistaking the "spiritual" force of Christianity—particularly of the Nonconformist variety. Sir Robert Perks, recently informed a reporter of the *New York World* that the power of Nonconformity was greatly underestimated in England. The proof is that,—so says Sir Robert,—in Kensington Park Gardens, out of twenty-six houses only five of them contain people belonging to the Established Church. He did not believe that a single Church of England member lived in Park Lane. We fancy, from the names of some of the residents in Park Lane, that they are not all members of the Dissenting chapels either. But Sir Robert's proof of the power of Nonconformity is interesting. It is upon a strictly cash basis. The ultra-fashionable residences are, he believes, in the hands of Nonconformists. Blessed be ye poor!

"Is there a depression in the Bible trade?" asks a New Zealand paper, the *Auckland Star*. And it proceeds to answer the question in the affirmative. It states that a leading bookseller in Melbourne used to be good for a £200 Bible order annually. Now it only amounts to £20. "Bibles are not being bought and not being sold, and every Australian bookseller tells the same story." In New Zealand there is little or no demand for the Bible. A number of clergymen have been interviewed on the subject, and attribute it to the prevalence of the Higher Criticism, to the exclusion of the Bible from the schools, to the indifference of the multitude to religion, decline of home worship, etc. In a number of different ways all these agents for the "Blessed Book" admit the one and important thing, which is, that people are growing more indifferent to the attractions of the Christian religion. After all, as Lincoln said, you can't fool all the people all the time. It is only a question of time for every imposture to be unmasked.

The Rev. Mr. Duncan, although blatant and abusive, is doubtless an honest believer in his religion. This is, however, more than can be said of many members of the Established Church of Scotland, if we are to accept as trustworthy the evidence of a recent novel of character, *At the Sign of the Burning Bush*. This novel, the *British Weekly* assures us, has great outstanding qualities of animation and keenness. But what is more to the point, it does not find the descriptions of clerical types substantially untrue. The writer is, we believe, a lady, the sister of a Scotch clergyman, and doubtless she has had many opportunities of studying the depravity of clerical human nature. The following delightful sketch of the principal character in the novel, the Rev. Ian Mackenzie, is from the *British Weekly*:—

"We begin with Mr. Mackenzie as a Divinity student living with two other Divinity students in Glasgow, Pink and De Stuyner. Mackenzie starts by saying, among many other things, that 'the Old Testament's not fit to read, you know. If it were published nowadays, people would say a woman must have written it.' 'To Mackenzie and to most of his fellow-students—not to mention his professors—the Westminster Confession and the Catechism were mere jest books.' 'So far from feeling sure what God was, he could not even imagine what He ought to be.' 'To go into the Church you must sign the Confession, but you deceive no one in so doing. Did not the Fathers of the Church declare that they saw falsehood in the Confession?'"

This promising youth becomes enamored of his landlady's daughter, goes to learn dancing with her, and marries her. He becomes the minister of a parish in the Highlands, Glenmaruiel. He tells his people that he does not

know for certain that there is a God. He also says that the Westminster Confession is a lie, that most ministers get their livings by telling lies, and that Sunday-schools are humbugs, and that there is jingoism in the Bible. The people begin to get a little uneasy; but, in the first place, a large portion do not go to church; in the second place, a large percentage do not ever listen to the sermon; and in the third place, a large percentage of the people who do listen do not take the trouble to understand what the minister is saying."

It is said by good authorities to be a true picture of one side of Scotch clerical life. To anyone who has had the misfortune to look into the feminine fiction of, say, *Victoria Cross*, and some others, the suggestion that the realistic portions of the Bible, if published nowadays, would be claimed as the work of a woman, is both acute and witty.

The Tract and Colportage Society of Scotland is greatly distressed at learning that "sums of money are being left for the propagation of Agnosticism," and that "by the aid of bequests the country is flooded with cheap reprints of books which, in the minds of young people, are sowing the seeds of unbelief." This Society thinks that "legislation can do much" to check the dissemination of such dangerous literature. It agrees with Lord Halsbury that all sceptical books should be suppressed by the law. We thus find that the persecuting spirit is still abroad. Christians are by nature intolerant bigots. They are the only people fit to live. Any book that expresses views of which they cannot approve is too vile to be noticed in such a newspaper as the *Scotsman*. And yet Scottish divines are amazed and shocked to find that such crowds of intelligent people are turning their backs upon the Churches.

Christian Socialists generally claim Christ as the first and ideal Socialist. This is a discovery which was made less than twenty years ago, and on the strength of it many irresponsible pulpiteers declare that no one can be a real Christian without being a Socialist. Into this small but growing camp of fanatics, the Rev. Professor Moulton, of Manchester, who, we believe, is himself a Socialist, threw a bomb the other day, when he said that "nothing could be more certain than that Christ, in whose name the Church must always try to speak, gave no detailed directions as to the means whereby the regeneration of human society should be accomplished." According to Dr. Moulton, Christ did not concern himself in the least with economics. Then the reverend gentleman made a statement with which we are in absolute agreement: "Men must use their own brains to discover the best way to the social New Jerusalem." That is common sense. Is it not also common sense to add that such an admission logically involves the negation of Christianity?

Dr. Moulton spoke wisely about the best methods of dealing with social evils and class warfare; but why should the Church of Christ bother her head about such things? If the Church should always try to speak in the name of Christ it follows, on Dr. Moulton's own showing, that she has no message on social questions. Therefore, it is her duty to devote herself to the so-called spiritual and eternal interests of mankind, and relegate social problems to social science.

The Lord Mayor of Manchester said recently, in the presence of a company of divines, that "religion and science were now reconciled." The clergymen nodded their approval. We have no information whatever as to the Lord Mayor's qualification to speak for both religion and science; but we do know that he was talking sheer nonsense. Science stands to-day, in relation to religion, precisely where it stood fifty years ago. Science has never made the slightest attempt to come to terms with religion. It has pursued its own work without turning to the right or to the left for a moment. But religion has played the hypocrite and the coward. It has dropped dogma after dogma, surrendered position after position, and having done all that under the pressure of advancing scientific knowledge, it has the effrontery to say, "Science at last has turned religious," or "The conflict between religion and science is now at an end," or "Religion and science are at length reconciled." Fudge!

It may well be said that the newspapers are full of horrors. Here is Father Bernard Vaughan telling the people of Brighton that "on a third-rate planet such as we have to-day.....it is very difficult not to be disappointed." Really, Reverend Father, is that the measure of your respect for the work of our very own Jehovah of Genesis? Let us tell you, sir, that it will be anything but a third-rate whip of scorpions that our friend Peter will lay about you when you essay to enter the golden gates.

The alliance between alcohol and orthodoxy never received a better illustration than that supplied by the vicar of Hubberholme, Skipton, Yorks. In that parish there is a public-house that has belonged to the Church for over a century. The licensing authorities have just ordered improvements to be made in the property that will cost nearly £500. To meet this expense the vicar has taken £200 from the funds of the living, contributed £20 himself, and has sent round a circular inviting sympathisers to contribute the remainder. The Church and the public-house often work together as allies, but we do not remember seeing before a case in which the vicar of the parish and the owner of the village inn were one and the same person.

We are glad to see the *Christian World*, through its Berlin correspondent, expressing great uneasiness at the condition of Christianity in Germany, and still more pleased to know that its concern is warranted by facts. Germany, it says, is no longer fighting the battle between Luther and the Pope, but the contest is one of both these combined against unbelief. There is, first of all, the scientific enemy, represented by Professor Drew and his army, although behind him stands the great and imposing figure of the venerable Professor Haeckel. Professor Drew has been travelling over Germany delivering Freethought lectures—a very taking one being on the subject of "Did Jesus ever Live?"—in large halls that are "always crowded from floor to roof." Discussion is invited after each lecture, and as, apparently, the German clergy have either not learned the wisdom of discretion, or because they have more courage than the English clergy, this is usually forthcoming, with the result that the Freethinker scores heavily off his opponent. The *Christian World* regrets that pastors and professors of divinity should be drawn into those "unseemly discussions." We do not see what there is necessarily "unseemly" about such discussions. Men who are really desirous of discovering the truth do not shrink from an interchange of opinion. It is only convicted falsehood, or a falsehood afraid of conviction, that does this.

The more popular side of the movement is represented by Joseph Sonthheimer, an account of whose trial and sentence appeared in last week's *Freethinker*. These two arms of the Freethought forces in Germany are making a most determined attack on Christian beliefs, and are meeting with considerable success. Judging from the accounts, they are not faced with the difficulties that beset Freethought propaganda in this country. There is less timidity on the part of prominent men in avowing their opinions, and there appears to be more liberty in the public press in the shape of reports of meetings. England, which boasts of its political freedom, really possesses less freedom in intellectual matters than many other countries that have, politically, less liberty. There is probably no other country in Europe where an intellectual heresy finds it more difficult to attain publicity than is the case in Great Britain.

Mademoiselle Claire de Bratz, in a recent work dealing with the education of French girls, remarks that after a visit to London she was able to understand "why those English people of the middle classes who can afford it make frequent trips to Paris, to be cheered up at the Moulin Rouge and those similar establishments which are kept up solely for their benefit." Quite a nasty blow for our morally superior Britisher, and one we believe that is well deserved. Our suspicions are always aroused by the English visitor to Paris who manages to discover so much vice during so brief a stay.

The Archdeacon of London believes that "religion and medical science should always co-operate, while the ultimate responsibility must rest with the accredited physician." Quite a convenient arrangement for the Archdeacon. If the patient recovers it will be due to the prayer of the parson and the faith of the patient. If he dies, it is the doctor's fault. Heads I win, tails you lose.

The great aim of both Mohammedanism and Christianity is to convert Africa—so says the Bishop of Manchester. But, he adds, "at present the decision is vastly in favor of Islam." The Bishop does not add that the beneficial influence of Mohammedanism on its African converts is superior to the influence exerted by Christianity. The African converted to Mohammedanism is cleaner and more industrious than one converted to Christianity, and, of course, not so prone to drunkenness. In addition Mohammedanism retains a much larger percentage of its converts than does Christianity.

General Booth says, "What the Army covets and needs is to be understood." Well, a great many people have been trying for years to get out of General Booth the information that would enable them to understand just what the Army is doing. Hitherto their efforts have been quite unsuccessful. Perhaps the wily old General thinks he may deter others from making the same request, as well as allay the now widespread feeling of distrust by crying out that the Army only desires to be understood.

A correspondent sends us a copy of the *South Pacific Mail* containing the report of a lecture by Mr. W. J. Bryan, late candidate for the Presidency of the United States. Mr. Bryan says he is much more interested in religion than in government, and it had been "suggested to him that the advanced thought of the world had discredited the idea there is a God." So he prepared an address, and "delivered it in many lauds, in the hope that it might shame some young men out of the conceit that it is smart to be sceptical." After reading the address, we have come to the conclusion that if Mr. Bryan is no better as a politician than as a theologian the people of the United States showed considerable judgment in selecting someone else for the presidency. There is not an original thought in his lecture, though there is a deal of theology that anyone but the most ignorant of street corner preachers would be ashamed to father. Whether it is "smart" or not to be sceptical, Mr. Bryan demonstrates right through his address that no abnormal degree of intelligence is needed to be religious.

A number of peasants in Russia have been sentenced to a week's imprisonment each for burying their relatives without a religious service. Alive or dead, the Russian Church means to keep a hold on its subjects, although in this instance we imagine burial fees may have something to do with the case.

Cardiff has just been invaded by two professional revivalists from America, Dr. Chapman and Mr. Alexander, and they are reported to have taken the town by storm. Of course, Cardiff has been captured for Christ many times before; but hitherto Christ has not been able to hold it. The probability is that the Devil will soon win it back this time also. He is by far the stronger of the two. At any rate, he is still in proud possession of two-thirds of the human race. The Devil is "the strong man fully armed" guarding his own possessions; and as yet "a stronger than he" has not come upon him, and conquered him, and taken from him his whole armor wherein he trusteth. In plain words, if there be a Christ, he is a signal failure, and if there be a Devil, he is almost all-victorious.

And yet, according to Dr. Chapman, there is no easier work in the world than soul-saving. He tells the story of a sceptical young lawyer in America, who, when visited and argued with by "a distinguished church officer," surrendered to Christ at once. "He ["the distinguished church officer"] was shown up to the room, and when the door was closed he said to the young fellow, 'So you have intellectual difficulties?' 'Yes,' replied the young man. 'Well,' said the distinguished church officer, 'so had I once. Tell me what yours are.' So he told him what one difficulty was, and it was as if the man had brushed away a cobweb. Then he told him of a second and a third, and by ten o'clock all the difficulties were cleared up. How delightfully simple. The wonder is that there are any unbelievers left. Dr. Chapman has his quiver full of such revivalistic arrows, and they serve his purpose admirably.

A Mr. Thomas Payne is a bright and shining light in the soul-saving profession. He carries all before him, easily beating down all resistance. He was recently at St. Helen's and Swinton. "The closing meeting at the latter place," says the *Christian Herald*, "was a never-to-be-forgotten time. So great was the power of conviction that the whole congregation broke down and sobbed aloud." Thomas Paine was an intellectual force of the first magnitude, the fruit of whose original and vigorous thinking upon political and social problems the world is still reaping; but Thomas Payne, the evangelist, is an emotional fanatic, a neuropath, whose work makes for stupid hysteria, and, if prolonged, insanity.

Addressing a fashionable West-end audience the other day, Father Vaughan said: "If you and I had our rights, and rights only, the gate of heaven would be closed against us. You and I would now be in hell." Father Vaughan loves silly sensationalism. Later on he exclaimed, "We have dismissed hell with costs." What a boon it would be if hell could be dismissed, either with or without costs. But hell is

indispensable to the priest. Without it his profession would be gone. Sin, heaven, and hell have always been, and still are, the Church's practical trinity. When these are seen to be nothing but theological myths, or priestly inventions, the Church will suddenly cease to be.

"Can we find a place for laughter in heaven, or is it a land of no laughter? We may try to answer the question, though the solution may be part of the mystery that lies behind the veil." Thus the solemn editor of the *British Weekly* apropos of Mark Twain. After a column or two, which is nothing at all to the purpose, he tells us what kind of laughter will be excluded:—

"There cannot be the hideous laugh of insolent triumph. It is a laugh that comes soon and readily, and it is an expression of what is basest in the nature. Cruel, wanton, poisonous laughter, the laughter that is never heard without hurting some poor heart, that laughter we may be sure is banished. Sarcasm, irony, satire—these may have their place in the clash of this warring world, but we cannot think of their use or their survival in the world to come."

This elimination being made, and the healthy laughter of a child being suggested as the form of mirth most suitable for heaven, the late editor of the *Spectator*, R. H. Hutton, a gentleman of colossal dullness, is brought in to show that the Jesus of the Gospels could be ironical at times, and Mr. Chesterton, to the contrary, had a keen eye for moral and intellectual incongruities—in fact, was a gentler kind of Bernard Shaw. What was good enough for Jesus is good enough for heaven, and therefore the humorous man will not be likely to find his occupation gone when he gets there.

Yet even this probable conclusion does not satisfy the serious mind of the religious Scotch editor. The upshot of his article is that we can know nothing about the subject; and, that being so, Sir William might have saved himself the trouble of writing five columns of balderdash. There is no doubt that many people take the editor of the *British Weekly* quite seriously now; but when the scales have dropped from their eyes, and they see him to some extent as he is seen by his Maker, they will know him for the funniest old woman of letters in the heavenly kingdom. And not less funny because unconscious of the gap between his real self and the part he chooses to play. His memories of Meredith, Swinburne (how the shade of Rabelais would laugh at the association of Swinburne with the *British Weekly*!) and other Atheists and Freethinkers, will be an endless source of amusement in celestial literary circles. If it is incorrect to say that he is witty and humorous himself, he is at least the cause of wit and humor in others.

The reports of the Schools Medical Officers in various parts of England contain very disquieting details concerning the dirt of the children, which clearly proves that the present educational system is very imperfect. If the time now wasted in teaching the children Bible fables were devoted to hygiene this reproach of want of cleanliness would soon be removed.

The hysteria manifested in the English press concerning the death of Edward VII. is simply nauseating. What a chance these editors lost in not being alive when the "King of Kings" was nailed to two pieces of wood with three ten-penny nails.

Some of the clergy are clamoring for new bishoprics. If the proposed "Fathers in God" are to be as liberally rewarded as the present holders, we can quite understand the excitement of the "cloth."

Aviation having come to stop, as the Americans say, the theological professors will, doubtless, soon find that the Bible has some valuable advice concerning aeronautics. Unfortunately, Our Savior, who is the foremost aviator mentioned in the Bible, made an ascent and never returned. Elijah tried a similar experiment with a chariot and horses; but that breed of geegees seems to be as extinct as the dodo.

"He doeth all things well"; but the Ragged School Union Cripples' Association seems to do things better in looking after some 7,500 of the Almighty's failures.

A man's honest, earnest opinion is the most precious of all he possesses: let him communicate this, if he is to communicate anything.—*Thomas Carlyle*.

It is in our past that destiny finds all her weapons, her vestments, her jewels.—*Masterlinck*.

Mr. Foote's Engagements.

(All early dates cancelled until further notice.)

To Correspondents.

PRESIDENT'S HONORARIUM FUND: 1910.—Previously acknowledged, £208 9s. 1d. Received since:—G. L. B., 5s.; James Garrett, 12s. 6d.; J. Burns, 10s.; C. Mc. Reddie, £1 1s.

SELLING MONTHS (the Figures mean the number of Shillings).—W. Stevenson, 1; R. Wylie, 1; John Deacon, 5; J. de B. (S. Africa), 5; R. D. Scoular, 5. *Per Miss Vance: J. A., 2½.*

Will correspondents please note that all letters not meant for Mr. Foote personally, but which contain matter of an editorial character, notices of meetings, etc., should be addressed "Editor of *Freethinker*"? Otherwise they cannot be dealt with in time for the following week's issue of this paper.

JAMES GARRETT.—Thanks for hearty good wishes. Do you mean that Mrs. Wright (née Goynes) is with you at Birmingham again just now? If so, kindly convey to her Mr. Foote's best compliments.

JOHN DEACON.—Yes, yes; very far from "played out" yet. The doctor assures Mr. Foote he will be better than before, when he has fully recuperated his strength.

G. L. B.—Initials only, as you request, no doubt for reasons which are too common in a smug, hypocritical Christian country like this. Mr. Foote promises to be as well, presently, as you wish him. He is sure that he has the good wishes of the women of the Freethought movement, not only now, but always.

J. DE B.—Best compliments to yourself and wife. We hope more prosperous times are approaching in South Africa.

A. W. HURRY.—Thanks for your interesting and sympathetic letter. Mr. Foote is very sorry his illness prevented his visit to Newcastle. He hopes to pay it a visit early next winter.

F. ROBERTS (Castleford).—Pleased to hear of the steady work you are doing in your district. We trust it will bear good fruit. If you communicate with Miss Vance she may be able to place at your disposal some literature for distribution.

J. CABRUTHERS.—Thanks for cuttings, which we are always pleased to receive.

D. C. M. (South Wales).—The publishers of the collected edition of Ingersoll's Works are the Dresden Publishing Co., New York. The published price is, we believe, five guineas. The set could be obtained through the Pioneer Press, 2 Newcastle-street, Farringdon-street, London, E.C.

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

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

When the services of the National Secular Society in connection with Secular Burial Services are required, all communications should be addressed to the secretary, Miss E. M. Vance.

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

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

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

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

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

The *Freethinker* will be forwarded direct from the publishing office, post free, at the following rates, prepaid:—One year, 10s. 6d.; half year, 5s. 3d.; three months, 2s. 8d.

Special: From the President.*Monday night, May 9, 1910.*

BARRING accidents I shall certainly be present at the National Secular Society's Annual Conference, and at the evening public meeting in St. James's Hall. I am now moving about freely out of doors, and am in every respect making satisfactory progress. But it cannot be expected that one's old physical energies can be recovered in a week or two. Complete recuperation will take some time. More than this I need not say at present. What I have to add will be said at the morning session of the Conference, if the delegates and members do me the honor of re-electing me as President,—and will be reported fully in next week's *Freethinker*. Of course it will appear in the *Freethinker* in any case. Meanwhile I am engaged on my first bit of work since the

commencement of my illness,—the Annual Report, which is always written and read by the President.

Just a final word. I repeat the hope that the London "saints" will do their best to get St. James's Hall crowded on Whit-Sunday evening.

G. W. FOOTE.

Sugar Plums.

Our date of publication prevents all but a reminder of the National Secular Society's Conference, which is to be held to-day. The business meetings are fixed for 10.30 and 2.30, and will be held in the St. James's Hall. Members of the N. S. S. attending will please make a point of bringing their membership cards with them. A luncheon will be provided at the Bay Malton Hotel, opposite the meeting-place of the Conference, at 1 o'clock. Further announcements will be made at the Conference itself.

We again take the opportunity of reminding London Freethinkers of the Demonstration to be held at St. James's Hall, Great Portland-street, W., this evening (May 15). In view of recent events it is essential to the success of the gathering that Freethinkers should attend and, if possible, bring their more orthodox friends with them. The speakers are Messrs. Foote, Cohen, Lloyd, Davies, Heaford, and Moss. Admission to the hall is free, but there will be a few reserved seats. The doors open at 7 o'clock, and from 7.15 to 7.30 there will be a selection of music. The speaking will commence at 7.30 prompt. We sincerely hope that all Freethinkers will do their best to see that the seating capacity of this large hall is taxed to the uttermost.

We are glad to learn that the bigots in Chicago have not succeeded in closing Mr. Mangasarian's mouth, as they had hoped. They have succeeded in turning him out of the Orchestra Hall, where his meetings have been, for five years, in the highest degree successful; but his Society has secured the Studebaker Theatre for the coming lecture season. This is a smaller building than the one previously occupied, but it is an attractive and centrally situated hall, and we imagine that the annoyance to which the Society has been subjected will rally round it many new and earnest supporters. We congratulate Mr. Mangasarian both on the manner in which he has met the attack and on his success in frustrating it.

The International Freethought Congress is fixed this year for Brussels, and is to be held on August 21 to 24, in the large hall of La Madelaine, Rue Duquesnoy. One of the principal questions down for discussion is "Liberty of Conscience and its guarantees in different countries," a subject that should present a much-needed synopsis of the legal position of Freethought in Europe. Among other interesting features of the Congress are a visit to the Freethought Orphanage, a visit to the Exhibition, and a demonstration in favor of Secular Education, with the unveiling of a memorial to Ferrer and other martyrs to liberty of conscience; the proceedings to terminate with the presentation of a banner to the Belgian Freethought Federation. Other functions are either arranged or in course of arrangement, particulars of which will be furnished to our readers later. The N. S. S. will in all probability be represented at the Congress, in which case a party similar to that which journeyed to Rome and Paris may be arranged. The conditions under which delegates' and visitors' cards to the Congress are to be obtained may be had of Miss Vance, at the National Secular Society's office.

The *Dial*, the well known American literary journal, has just completed its thirtieth year of publication. The editor, in congratulating himself and the paper on their mutual longevity, remarks that there are few journals that have been conducted by the same hand for so long a period. Quite so, but among the few we may be permitted to pride ourselves that the *Freethinker* takes a place. And the difficulties in maintaining an ordinary journal are slight compared to those which beset one that stands for the most unpopular of all causes.

We are pleased to record that at the Liberation Society's Annual Meeting a resolution was moved by Lord Sheffield, of Roscommon, affirming that no system of national education was satisfactory unless it recognised that the State had no right either to impart or pay for religious instruction. Lord Sheffield added that Mr. Runciman needed some education in the principles of State abstention from religious teaching. He does; but the unfortunate thing is that he

and those Nonconformists that support him seem to understand by religious equality nothing better than overcoming a sectarian rival.

For some time Mr. R. H. Rosetti has been trying to maintain a Freethought campaign in Laindon, Essex. Quite recently a hall was placed at his disposal for a lecture, but on the bigots of the place becoming aware of the fact, in spite of posters being out announcing the meeting, the landlord of the hall was compelled to withdraw his offer owing to the pressure brought to bear upon him. We are not aware of the conditions under which the hall was promised, and so are unable to say whether the owner was legally justified in his action. Not to be thwarted, however, Mr. Rosetti has now arranged for an open-air meeting in a field "opposite Duff's Hairdressing Saloon," the lecturer being Mr. Rosetti himself. The meeting is announced for 6 o'clock, and Miss H. Pankhurst is to take the chair. Laindon is a pretty spot, and Freethinkers who would care for a half-day excursion might do worse than spend it there and at the same time assist the meeting by their presence. There is a frequent service of trains from Fenchurch-street.

A Bishop who was Lynched.

"Our ancient word of courage, fair 'St. George.'
Aspire us with the spleen of fiery dragons."

—SHAKESPEARE, *Richard III.*

ON the back of a half sovereign, that painfully rare object, you may see a design of a man on horseback apparently killing a cockroach with a carving-knife. This is meant to portray St. George and the Dragon, and St. George is facetiously supposed to be the patron saint of our "tight little island." The inclusion of the harmless, necessary Union Jack among the sacred symbols of our most holy religion has led to a renewed interest in the personality of St. George. It was, indeed, fondly hoped that, by the help of the Almighty and the editor of the *Daily Mail*, many otherwise decent citizens might be persuaded to observe St. George's Day by wearing roses.

The suggestion, as might have been expected, fell flat; but it may prove interesting to many to be informed who St. George was, his connection with English history, and his association with our national flower. We regret exceedingly to find that the saint's biography is by no means pleasant reading, and quite unsuited for the perusal of the young person. Historians agree in disclosing a pitiable story of a misspent life. From the highest to the lowest, from Gibbon to a certain Dr. William Smith, they describe St. George as an unadulterated rascal. Even that cultured Bostonian idol, Emerson, can find no redeeming traits in the saintly sinner's character. Hear what Emerson has to say:—

"George of Cappadocia, born at Epiphania, in Cilicia, was a low parasite, who got a lucrative contract to supply the army with bacon."

This is decidedly unsettling; but for the present we refrain from levelling the guns of our criticism at this saintly army contractor.

"A rogue and informer, he got rich and was forced to run from justice."

This seems to suggest that St. George sold pigs which had died natural deaths, was a swindler, and had learnt the art of sprinting at the psychological moment.

"He saved his money, embraced Arianism, collected a library, and got promoted by a faction to the episcopal throne of Alexandria."

Like the army contractors who did business at the time of the South African war, St. George had his saintly head screwed on the right way. As for his collecting a library, his previous commercial reputation was sufficiently bad to prevent the booksellers allowing the saint any credit. We may be equally certain that his ordination as a right reverend father in God was against the public interest.

"When Julian came A.D. 361, George was dragged to prison."

We were just getting ready some powerful adjectives to express our feelings when we read of George

getting into trouble. Julian did not arrive a moment too soon.

"The prison was burst open by the mob, and George was lynched, as he deserved."

There is something particularly distressing in the idea of a bishop being "jerked to Jesus." If the saint had died of *delirium tremens* we might still have remembered that even bishops are but human. This lynching, however, is a dreadful business.

Now for Emerson's peroration:—

"And this precious knave became in good time Saint George, of England, patron of chivalry, emblem of victory and civility, and the pride of the best blood of the modern world."

A lemon-hearted cynic might liken the history of the patron saint of England to a page out of the earlier books of the Bible or the *Newgate Calendar*. Some modern historians, realising the disgraceful nature of St. George's career, have made desperate attempts to whitewash the holy man. They have succeeded in deceiving themselves that George was not George, but another gentleman of the same name in the same line of business. Criticism, sharp as Shylock's knife, cuts their nonsense to pieces. The tutelary saint of England was a blackguard, and there is an end of it.

So far from recommending any citizen to wear a rose in honor of St. George, we rather suggest that it would be a kindness to strew the poppy of oblivion on the grave of such a sacrosanct scoundrel.

MIMNERMUS.

The Narratives in Genesis.

(Conclusion.)

IT is, I think, nearly time these papers came to a close, more especially since there appears to be nothing of any importance remaining to be noticed. The result of this somewhat protracted examination of the narratives in Genesis is precisely that which any unprejudiced person might reasonably have anticipated. All these ancient Jewish legends, from the opening chapter to the end of the book, are destitute of any historical foundation whatever. There is, indeed, one short prophetic statement which all naturalists must admit to be true. This is found in the Story of the Fall, and is to the effect that on and after the date of that mythical event serpents should no longer move from place to place by hopping alternately on their heads and tails (Gen. iii. 14). Beyond this small item of Natural History, there is not a single fact in the book that can be called historical; all the narratives are legendary and fictitious.

In bringing these papers to a conclusion, it may not be out of place to notice certain statements contained in the narratives which may perhaps throw some light upon the probable date of their composition. And, in so doing, I will commence with the two passages noticed by Thomas Paine.

1. The city of Dan (Gen. xiv. 14). In this passage it is stated that Abraham and his servants, after defeating Chedorlaomer and his allies, "*pursued them unto Dan.*" There was no place named Dan in the time of Abraham, nor even in the time of Moses or Joshua. From Judges xviii. we learn that 600 armed men of the tribe of Dan "came unto *Laish*, unto a people quiet and secure, and smote them with the edge of the sword, and burnt the city with fire." Then, after rebuilding the city, "*they dwelt therein; and they called the name of the city Dan, after the name of Dan their father.*" The words italicised give us some unknown date during the period of the Judges.

2. The kings of Edom (Gen. xxxvi. 31-43). After recording "the generations of Esau," the writer says: "And these are the kings that reigned in the land of Edom, *before there reigned any king over the children of Israel.*" Then follows a list of eight kings of Edom. The paragraph could not, of course, have been written *earlier* than the reign of king Saul;

though there can be no doubt that it was composed many reigns later. The expression "before there reigned *any* king over Israel" implies that more than one king, if not a succession of kings, had reigned over Israel when the paragraph was written. The thirteen verses that form this paragraph are the same, word for word, as 1 Chron. i. 43-54; there can therefore be no doubt as to the fact that one paragraph was copied from the other. The first book of Chronicles was written many years after the return from the Exile in Babylonia; for it gives a list of the descendants of Zerubbabel for several generations (1 Chron. iii. 19, etc.), as well as of many who lived in the days of Nehemiah (1 Chron. ix. 10, etc.). As to which of the two paragraphs was taken from the other, there are several good reasons which tend to show that the paragraph in Genesis was copied from the Chronicles. This would give a date many years after the return from the Exile.

8. A line of kings to be descended from Abraham's wife Sarah. In Gen. xvii. 16 the Hebrew god is represented as saying of this mythical nonagenarian:—

"Yea, I will bless her, and she shall be a mother of nations; *kings of people shall be of her.*"

This pretended prediction gives us some unknown date during the period of the two rival kingdoms of Israel and Judah.

4. The Edomites to become subject to the Israelites. In Gen. xxv. 23 "the Lord" is stated to have said to Isaac's wife Rebekah:—

"Two nations are in thy womb.....the one people shall be stronger than the other people; and *the elder shall serve the younger.*"

This fraudulent prediction was written at some unknown date *after* David had subjugated the Edomites (2 Sam. viii. 14).

5. The Edomites to regain their independence. In Gen. xxvii. 40 the mythical patriarch Isaac, when blessing his son Esau, is represented as saying:—

"By thy sword shalt thou live, and shalt serve thy brother; and *it shall come to pass* when thou shalt have the dominion, that thou shalt break his yoke from off thy neck."

This bogus prediction was also written after the event; that is to say, the writer knew, as an undoubted historical fact, of the successful revolt of the Edomites in the reign of Jehoram, king of Judah (2 Kings viii. 20 and 22)—"So Edom revolted from under the hand of Judah *unto this day.*" The words "unto this day" refer to a period after the Exile. (See also Gen. xxxv. 20)

6. The expression "wrought folly in Israel." In Gen. xxxiv. 7 it is stated that when Jacob's sons heard that the son of Hamor had ravished their sister Dinah, "they were wroth, because he had *wrought folly in Israel.*" Here "Israel" is spoken of as a nation, and in precisely the same terms as in Josh. vii. 15, Judg. xx. 6, 10, and Deut. xxii. 21, in all of which that somewhat peculiar phrase is employed to denote the commission of an act which might bring punishment upon the whole nation, or upon a portion of it.

7. The curse pronounced upon Canaan (Gen. ix. 25-26). This reads:—

"Cursed be Canaan; a servant of servants shall he be unto his brethren.....Blessed be the Lord God of Shem; and Canaan shall be his servant."

The story relating to this curse could not have been written until after the Canaanites had been subjugated by the Israelites—which conquest was not achieved until after the time of David. Note, for example, the Jebusites of Jerusalem (Josh. xv. 63; Judg. xix. 10-12; 2 Sam. v. 6-9; 2 Sam. xxiv. 18-24).

8. Moab, Ammon, and Ishmael to be fathers of great nations (Gen. xix. 37, 38; xxi. 18; xxv. 16). The stories in which these predictions are made could not have been composed earlier than the period of the Judges.

9. Ephraim to be a stronger and more important tribe than that of Manasseh (Gen. xlvi. 19). During the period of the kings this tribe is frequently referred to as the dominant one in the kingdom of

Israel; the name Ephraim, in fact, is repeatedly employed as synonymous with "Israel" (Isa. xi. 13; Hos. v. 3-14; vii. 1; xi. 12, etc.). This gives us a date some time after the revolt of the ten tribes and the setting up of the kingdom of Israel under Jeroboam.

10. The institution of the Sabbath. In Gen. ii. 3 it is stated that

"God blessed the seventh day and hallowed it; *because that in it he rested from all his work* which he had created and made."

Rest from labor on the seventh day was a very ancient custom in Canaan. Its observance is commanded in the earliest Hebrew code of laws, "the Book of the Covenant" (Exod. xxiii. 12). This command reads:—

"On the seventh day thou shalt rest: that thine ox and thine ass may rest, and the son of thy handmaid and the stranger may be refreshed."

We know from various incidental statements that the Sabbath was duly observed (2 Kings iv. 23; Hos. ii. 11; Amos viii. 5; etc.). We are, however, now concerned only with the reason assigned for its institution in Gen. ii. 3. In the Deuteronomic code, which first became known in the eighteenth year of king Josiah (B.C. 621), the Sabbath is commanded to be observed because of the alleged deliverance of the Israelites from bondage in Egypt (Deut. v. 15). It is only in the later Priestly Code, written after the return from the Exile, that we find the reason assigned for its observance the same as that given in Gen. ii. 3 (see Exod. xx. 11). The passage in Genesis therefore gives us a date after the Exile.

11. The reference to the "sceptre" departing from Judah. In Gen. xlix. 10 the mythical Jacob, who is represented as blessing his sons, is made to say:—

"The sceptre shall not depart from Judah, nor the ruler's staff from between his feet, *until Shiloh come,*" etc.

The words italicised are corrupt: Shiloh being the name of a place, and not of a person, could not "come." The Septuagint Version reads:—

"A ruler shall not fail from Judah, nor a prince from his loins, until that which is stored up for him shall come," etc.

Shiloh was the name of the city in which the god Yahveh's "ark of the covenant" had been stationed from the earliest times to the reign of David. In the days of Jeremiah it was in ruins and deserted. The last-named prophet predicted that Jerusalem and the temple should be "as Shiloh"—viz., waste and desolate (Jer. vii. 12, 14; xxvi. 6). The words put in the mouth of Jacob thus appear to be that "the sceptre should not depart from Judah until the land of Judah became *as Shiloh*"—a prediction which was fulfilled when Zedekiah, the last king of Judah, was deposed by Nebuchadnezzar and the majority of his subjects deported to Babylonia. No king of that tribe ever reigned again. The Asmonæan kings were priests of the tribe of Levi, and Herod the Great was an Idumean. The writer of the prediction undoubtedly knew that a line of kings of the tribe of Judah had reigned until the Exile, and that the sceptre had departed from Judah at that time. Needless to say, he wrote after the event—which gives us a date of the time of Ezra or Nehemiah (B.C. 455-480), at which time Jerusalem and Judæa were "as Shiloh."

12. Reference to commands in the so-called "Law of Moses." Under this heading may be classed various acts and statements ascribed to fictitious characters in the narratives which presuppose the existence of the Mosaic legislation. Amongst these are the following: Tithes to be given to priests (Gen. xiv. 20; Num. xviii. 21).—Tithes to be given to "the Lord" (Gen. xxviii. 22; Lev. xxvii. 32).—The "firstlings" of the flock, including "the fat thereof," to be offered in sacrifice to "the Lord" (Gen. v. 4; Deut. xv. 19; Lev. i. 12; iii. 16; etc.).—The distinction between clean and unclean animals (Gen. vii. 2; Deut. xiv., Lev. xi.).—Birds offered in sacrifice not to be "divided" (Gen. xv. 10; Lev. i. 17; v. 8).—The

duty of a husband's brother (Gen. xxxviii. 8; Deut. xxv. 5).—Taking an oath in the name of Yahveh (Gen. xxiv. 3; Deut. vi. 13).—An adulteress to be "burnt with fire" (Gen. xxxviii. 24; Lev. xxi. 9).

To sum up, there cannot be the smallest doubt that the Book of Genesis, in its present form, must be placed as late as the time of Ezra or Nehemiah. The compiler has pieced together a number of documents of an earlier date—those by the Yahvist and the Elohist composed many years before the Exile, those by the Priestly writer composed soon after the return from the Exile—and, in so doing, he has omitted portions of the earlier documents when he thought necessary, and added short paragraphs himself wherever required to render the narratives continuous. The result of this pious editing is our present "First Book of Moses, commonly called Genesis."

ABRACADABRA.

The Religion of the Future.

BY CHARLES W. ELIOT.

As a rule, the Protestant Churches, Roman, Greek, and Protestant, have heretofore relied mainly upon the principle of authority, the Reformation having substituted for an authoritative Church an authoritative book; but it is evident that the authority both of the most authoritative Churches and of the Bible as a verbally inspired guide is already greatly impaired, and that the tendency toward liberty is progressive, and among educated men irresistible.

It is hardly necessary to say that in the religion of the future there will be no personifications of the primitive forces of nature, such as light, fire, frost, wind, storm, and earthquake, although primitive religions and the actual religions of barbarous or semi-civilised peoples abound in such personifications.....

The love of nature mounts and spreads, while faith in fairies, imps, nymphs, demons, and angels declines and fades away.

There will be in the religion of the future no worship, express or implied, of dead ancestors, teachers, or rulers; no more tribal, racial, or tutelary gods; no identification of any human being, however majestic in character, with the Eternal Deity. In these respects the religion of the future will not be essentially new, for nineteen centuries ago Jesus said, "neither in this mountain, nor in Jerusalem, shall ye worship the Father.....God is a Spirit; and they that worship him must worship in spirit and truth." It should be recognised, however, first, that Christianity was soon deeply affected by the surrounding Paganism, and that some of these Pagan intrusions have survived to this day; and secondly, that the Hebrew religion, the influence of which on the Christian has been, and is, very potent, was in the highest degree a racial religion, and its Holy of Holies was local. In war times, that is, in times when the brutal or savage instincts remaining in humanity become temporarily dominant, and good-will is limited to people of the same nation, the survival of a tribal or national quality in institutional Christianity comes out very plainly. The aid of the Lord of Hosts is still invoked by both parties to international warfare, and each side praises and thanks him for its successes. Indeed, the same spirit has often been exhibited in civil war caused by religious differences.

"Now glory to the Lord of Hosts, from whom all glories are!
And glory to our sovereign liege, King Henry of Navarre!"

It is not many years since an archbishop of Canterbury caused thanks to be given in all Anglican churches that the Lord of Hosts had been in the English camp over against the Egyptians. Heretofore the great religions of the world have held out hopes of direct interventions of the deity, or some special deity, in favor of his faithful worshipers. It was the greatest of Jewish prophets who told King Hezekiah that the King of Assyria, who had approached Jerusalem with a great army, should not come into the city nor shoot an arrow there, and reported the Lord as saying: "I will defend this city to save it, for my own sake, and for my servant David's sake." "And it came to pass that night that the angel of the Lord went forth and smote in the camp of the Assyrians an hundred fourscore and five thousand; and when men arose early in the morning, behold, they were all dead corpses." The new religion cannot promise that sort of aid to either nations or individuals in peril.

The new religion will not teach that character is likely to be suddenly changed, either in this world or in any other—although in any world a sudden opportunity for improvement may present itself and the date of that opportunity

may be a precious remembrance. The new religion will not rely on either a sudden conversion in this world or a sudden paradise in the next to lift a man from out a sensual, selfish, or dishonest life. It will teach that repentance wipes out nothing in the past and is only the first step toward reformation and a sign of a better future.

The religion of the future will not be propitiatory, sacrificial, or expiatory. In primitive society fear of the supernal powers, as represented in the awful forces of nature, was the root religion. These dreadful powers must be propitiated or placated, and they must be propitiated by sacrifices in the most literal sense; and the supposed offences of man must be expiated by sufferings, which were apt to be vicarious. Even the Hebrews offered human sacrifices for generations; and always a great part of their religious rites consisted in sacrifices of animals. It will be an immense advantage if twentieth century Christianity can be purified from all these survivals of barbarous, or semi-barbarous, religious conceptions, because they imply such an unworthy idea of God.

The religion of the future will not perpetuate the Hebrew anthropomorphic representations of God, conceptions which were carried in large measure into institutional Christianity. It will not think of God as an enlarged and glorified man, who walks "in the garden in the cool of the day," or as a judge deciding between human litigants, or as a king, pharaoh, or emperor, ruling arbitrarily his subjects, or as the patriarch who, in the early history of the race, ruled his family absolutely. These human functions will cease to represent adequately the attributes of God. The nineteenth century has made all these conceptions of deity look archaic and crude.

The religion of the future will.....believe in no malignant powers—neither in Satan nor in witches, neither in the evil eye, nor in the malign suggestion. When its disciple encounters a wrong or evil in the world, his impulse will be to search out its origin, source, or cause, that he may attack it at its starting point. He may not speculate on the origin of evil in general, but will surely try to discover the best way to eradicate the particular evil or wrong he has recognised.

Every man makes his own picture of God. Every age, barbarous or civilised, happy or unhappy, improving or degenerating, frames its own conception of God within the limits of its own experiences and imaginings. In this sense, too, a humane religion has to wait for a humane generation. The central thought of the new religion will therefore be a humane and worthy idea of God, thoughtfully consistent with the nineteenth century revelations concerning man and nature, and with all the tenderest and loveliest teachings which have come down to us from the past.

The scientific doctrine of one omnipresent, eternal Energy, informing and inspiring the whole creation at every instant of time and throughout the infinite spaces, is fundamentally and completely inconsistent with the dualistic conception which sets spirit over against matter, good over against evil, man's wickedness against God's righteousness, and Satan against Christ. The doctrine of God's immanence is also inconsistent with the conception that he once set the universe a-going, and then withdrew, leaving the universe to be operated under physical laws, which were his viceregents or substitutes. If God is thoroughly immanent in the entire creation, there can be no "secondary causes" in either the material or the spiritual universe. The new religion rejects absolutely the.....entire conception of man as a fallen being, hopelessly wicked, and tending downward by nature; and it makes this emphatic rejection of long-accepted beliefs because it finds them all inconsistent with a humane, civilised, or worthy idea of God.

The religion of the future will approach the whole subject of evil from another side, that of resistance and prevention. The Breton sailor who had had his arm poisoned by a dirty fishhook which had entered his finger made a votive offering at the shrine of the Virgin Mary and prayed for a cure. The workman to-day who gets cut or bruised by a rough or dirty instrument goes to a surgeon, who applies an antiseptic dressing to the wound and prevents the poisoning. That surgeon is one of the ministers of the new religion. When dwellers in a slum suffer the familiar evils caused by overcrowding, impure food, and cheerless labor, the new religionists contend against the sources of such misery by providing public baths, playgrounds, wider and cleaner streets, better dwellings, and more effective schools—that is, they attack the sources of physical and moral evil. The new religion cannot supply the old sort of consolation; but it can diminish the need of consolation or reduce the number of occasions for consolation.

A further change in religious thinking has already occurred on the subject of human pain. Pain was generally regarded as either a punishment for sin or as a means of moral training, or as an expiation, vicarious or direct. Twentieth century religion, gradually perfected in this respect during the last half of the nineteenth century, regards human pain as an evil to be relieved and prevented by the promptest

means possible, and by any sort of available means, physical, mental, or moral; and, thanks to the progress of biological and chemical science, there is comparatively little physical pain nowadays which cannot be prevented or relieved. The invention of anæsthetics has brought into contempt the expiatory, or penal, view of human pain in this world.

The younger generations listen with incredulous smiles to the objection made only a little more than sixty years ago by some divines of the Scottish Presbyterian Church to the employment of chloroform in childbirth—namely, that the physicians were interfering with the execution of a curse pronounced by the Almighty. Dr. Weir Mitchell, a physician who has seen much of mental pain as well as of bodily, in his poem read at the fiftieth anniversary of the first demonstration of surgical anesthesia, said of pain:—

"What purpose hath it? Nay, thy quest is vain:
Earth hath no answer: If the baffled brain
Cries, 'Tis to warn, to punish, Ah, refrain,
When writhes the child, beneath the surgeon's hand,
What soul shall hope that pain to understand?
Lo! Science falters o'er the hopeless task,
And Love and Faith in vain an answer ask.'....."

A similar change is occurring in regard to the conception of divine justice. The evils in this world have been regarded as penalties inflicted by a just God on human beings who had violated his laws, and the justice of God played a great part in his imagined dealings with the human race. A young graduate of Andover Theological Seminary once told me that when he had preached two or three times in a summer in a small Congregational church on Cape Cod one of his deacons of the church said to him at the close of the service: "What sort of sentimental mush is this that they are teaching you at Andover? You talk every Sunday about the love of God; we want to hear about his justice." The future religion will not undertake to describe or even imagine the justice of God.

The new religion will.....not venture to state what the justice of God may or may not require of himself or of any of his infinite creatures. This will be one of the great differences between the future religion and the past. Institutional Christianity, as a rule, condemned the mass of mankind to eternal torment; partly because the leaders of the churches thought they understood completely the justice of God, and partly because the exclusive possession of means of deliverance gave the churches some restraining influence over even the boldest sinners, and much over the timid. The new religion will make no such pretensions, and will teach no such horrible and perverse doctrines.

Do you ask what consolation for human ills the new religion will offer? I answer the consolation which often comes to the sufferer from being more serviceable to others than he was before the loss or the suffering for which consolation is needed; the consolation of being one's self wiser and tenderer than before, and therefore more able to be serviceable to human kind in the best ways; the consolation through the memory, which preserves the sweet fragrance of characters and lives no longer in presence, recalls the joys and achievements of those lives while still within mortal view, and treasures up and multiplies the good influences they exerted.

All these objects of worship have greatly moved the human soul and have inspired men to thoughts and deeds of beauty, love, and duty. Will the new religion do as much? It is reasonable to expect that it will. The sentiments of awe and reverence and the love of beauty and goodness will remain, and will increase in strength and influence. All the natural human affections will remain in full force. The new religion will foster powerfully a virtue which is comparatively new in the world—the love of truth and the passion for seeking it, and the truth will comparatively make men free; so that the coming generations will be freer, and therefore more productive and stronger than the preceding. The new religionists will not worship their ancestors; but they will have a stronger sense of the descent of the present from the past than men ever had before, and each generation will feel more strongly than ever before its indebtedness to the preceding.

The two sentiments which most inspire men to good deeds are love and hope. Religion should give freer and more rational play to these two sentiments than the world has heretofore witnessed; and the love and hope will be thoroughly grounded in and on efficient, serviceable, visible, actual, and concrete deeds and conduct. When a man works out a successful treatment for cerebro-spinal meningitis—a disease before which medicine was absolutely helpless a dozen years ago—by applying to the discovery of a remedy ideas and processes invented or developed by other men studying other diseases, he does a great work of love, prevents for the future the breaking of innumerable ties of love, and establishes good grounds for hope of many like benefits for human generations to come. The men who do

such things in the present world are ministers of the religion of the future. The future religion will prove, has proved, as effective as any of the older ones in inspiring men to love and serve their fellow-beings—and that is the true object and end of all philosophies and all religions; for that is the way to make men better and happier, alike the servants and the served.

The future religion will have the attribute of universality and of adaptability to the rapidly increasing stores of knowledge and power over nature acquired by the human race. As the religion of a child is inevitably very different from that of an adult, and must grow up with the child, so the religion of a race whose capacities are rapidly enlarging must be capable of a corresponding development. The religion of any single individual ought to grow up with him all the way from infancy to age, and the same is true of the religion of a race. It is bad for any people to stand still in their governmental conceptions and practices, or in the organisation of their industries, or in any of their arts or trades, even the oldest; but it is much worse for a people to stand still in their religious conceptions and practices.

The modern man would hardly feel any appreciable loss of motive power towards good or away from evil if heaven were burnt and hell quenched. The prevailing Christian conceptions of heaven and hell have hardly any more influence with educated people in these days than Olympus and Hades have. The modern mind craves an immediate motive or leading, good for to-day on this earth. The new religion builds on the actual experience of men and women, and of human society as a whole. The motive powers it relies on have been, and are, at work in innumerable human lives; and its beatific visions and its hopes are better grounded than those of traditional religion, and finer—because free from all selfishness, and from the imagery of governments, courts, social distinctions, and war.

—*Truthseeker* (New York).

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Old Jonas Lashworthy looked up. He sat up. The voice of that holy man put strength into his aged limbs, and he stood up. He was reserved for a better fate than to die like a neglected dog: Mr. Lashworthy was hanged for braining a minister of the Gospel with a boot-jack. This touching tale has a moral.

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