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*Nothing in the world is single,
All things by a law divine
In one another's being mingle.*

—SHELLEY.

Tolstoy's Flight.

FOR a modest man Tolstoy has a curious way of keeping his personality before the world. Every now and then he is reported to be dying, but he always recovers with astonishing promptitude. It may be that when he sees the use that has been made of his bad cold, or some other complaint that the old age is liable to, he is ready to exclaim, in the language of his favorite book, "An enemy hath done this." But it gets done again, all the same, at the next opportunity. His latest advertisement, however, positively takes the cake. His flight from home, at his time of life; his making tracks for a convent full of women, after all he has written about the distance that Christian men and women should keep from each other; his leaving a sorrowful old wife and family behind him; his setting off again to take up his residence with a colony of his own followers near the Black Sea; his falling ill in the train and having to be nursed at the railway station, with a temperature of a hundred and four; his travelling with only £8 16s.—which his considerate daughter surreptitiously increased by £80; all this is calculated to excite the deepest interest and curiosity. We are far from saying that Tolstoy meant anything of the kind, but he is in front of the footlights again in the great world-theatre.

Tolstoy's motives in this rather theatrical flight are probably mixed. Like many another good man, he seems to have been sadly pestered by the horde of parasites whom the good God (as the French say) creates to plague his benevolent children. "Give to everyone that asketh" is a pious motto which delights the hearts of the great army of tramps and wasters. In front of Tolstoy's house there is a large tree called the Poor's Tree; beggars gathered there from all parts of Russia, ostensibly to obtain his blessing, but really to get hold of his money. Christ-like as he was, or tried to be, Tolstoy found this perpetual siege too much for his generosity, and even too much for his patience. Sadly, but certainly, he had to refuse some of these lusty beggars, who showered upon him abusive and threatening letters; and it is reported that he is glad to turn his back upon the whole tribe of them. It is also reported that his life has been made miserable by the showmen of all countries, including the photographers who minister to the public entertainment in "picture palaces." These gentlemen want to earn an honest penny by giving their customers a sight of Tolstoy in the flesh, and "in his habit as he lived."

Another motive of Tolstoy's flight may be found in the "quietism" of his later ideas and writings. An ever-growing withdrawal from the "world" is apparent in them. This is partly, no doubt, owing to the advance of old age, exhausting vital energies, and occasioning a deeper desire for peace and retrospection. As men grow old they live more and more in

the past—that is to say, in memory; and if they are of intellectual mould they are often obsessed by certain ideas, whose dominance becomes at length a perfect tyranny. For many years Tolstoy's mind has been withdrawing from the "world" and the great human drama, and dwelling ever more and more in the central religious ideas of God and Immortality, from which he has never been able to escape. Tolstoy is built on a large scale, he cannot be or act like a little man, yet he is, after all, pursuing the policy prescribed by priests for little men and women in the famous text, "Prepare to meet thy God." We call it a policy for little people, because, if there be a God, who is the father of all of us, we should always be ready to meet him by living an honorable and useful life, and not by going through an artificial process of preparation at certain stages of our existence—notably when we have reason to believe it is drawing to a close.

We have no desire to enter into the alleged misunderstandings and differences between Tolstoy and his family on money matters. Private matters of that kind are of no legitimate concern to the outside world. It would be much better if people minded other people's business a great deal less than they do. It is certain, however, that Tolstoy has left his wife and family in a state of mental distress. We might know that by inference from our knowledge of human nature, without trusting to newspaper reports for information. Even the attempts at suicide by the Countess, which one reads of in the public press, are easily intelligible. It must be a great grief to her to find herself abandoned; for if Tolstoy is bent on spending his last days "with God," he is obviously leaving her to the same loneliness. And with less powerful imagination than he possesses, she is probably of a more sympathetic nature, and is more intensely moved by the material experiences of life than he is. For it has always seemed to us that the man in Tolstoy remained singularly undisturbed behind the agitations of the artist and the thinker.

The sexual views of Tolstoy are probably another reason for his flight. A man who believes that sex and evil are essentially identical, who believes that men and women should have no other than spiritual intercourse, who believes that there is no such thing as Christian marriage, and who regards children as symbols of human weakness or wickedness; such a man must naturally, as age extinguishes desire and blunts the goad of passion, look upon woman with an ever deepening if secret aversion. That he should flee from her, and assign other reasons for his movements, is not unnatural. Even wife and daughters must become at last, to such a man, a kind of oppression. We maintain that Tolstoy is only showing the real nature of Christianity. From the first it dissociated the spirit from the flesh, blessed the one and cursed the other, and thus perpetuated and intensified an antagonism which was in itself but a symptom of the advance of human evolution—a dissonance between the forward-looking and the backward-looking elements of man's nature. Christianity turned this into an eternal quarrel, and simply succeeded in aggravating the evils of the "flesh" by alienating from it the society of the "spirit."

G. W. FOOTE.

A Great Illusion.

(Continued from p. 723.)

THE theory of a possible relation of body and mind that may allow for survival, which is thought by Dr. Mellone as "likely to become of increasing importance as time goes on," was stressed by Professor William James in his Ingersoll lecture on "Human Immortality." He admits the truth of the materialistic statement, "Thought is a function of the brain," but retorts that "function" may be productive or it may be permissive. It is the former when we refer to steam as a function of a tea-kettle, the latter when a piece of glass allows light to pass through. On this basis Professor James offers a superb example of the art of inventing facts to suit a theory, without, of course, stooping to so commonplace a method as first of all establishing the facts.

Suppose, then, that the world, as we know it, is not the real world—that the real world is one of life or consciousness "behind the veil." Suppose, further, that human bodies stand in the same relation to this real world that the panes of glass in a cathedral do to the light that passes through them, and which becomes blue, or red, or yellow in accordance with the color of the glass. The function of the human brain would then be transmissive. Consciousness would not be produced by the nervous system, it would merely be transmitted. And as it would be individualised by the human organism, its expression would be determined by structure, exactly as the color of light is determined by the kind of glass through which it streams. Consequently, the destruction of the organism would no more destroy life or consciousness than the breaking of a window would destroy light. "The sphere of being that supplied the consciousness would still be intact," and might, "in ways unknown to us, continue still."

Certainly, if we only assume all we require at the beginning we shall not fail to get all we need at the end. But if we ask what reason is there for assuming the existence of this world-consciousness, and that the brain merely transmits it, the answer is, none whatever. Or, rather, the only reason is that we need something to support a belief that is otherwise without foundation. Dr. Mellone says that this transmissive theory "has at least one logical merit—it cannot be disproved." Well, we cannot disprove quite a number of things, but that gives us no basis for belief in them. I cannot disprove the statement that Mars is inhabited, and that its inhabitants are at present in the throes of a general election. I can only ask on what verifiable grounds such a statement is made, and decline to accept it in the absence of satisfactory evidence. Besides, no one can disprove the statement that mind exists as a productive function of the nervous system. Dr. Mellone, and others of the same class, simply demand that the statement shall be supported by positive proof of the most unmistakable character. And surely, if inability to disprove has any logical value on the one side, it must be of equal value on the other. Or, if demonstration is needed to show the causal connection of two things never found apart, we certainly require it in support of a theory on behalf of which no evidence whatever is forthcoming.

But a still more deadly criticism is that, even though one were to grant all the theory requires—a world-soul, the transmissive character of the brain, etc.—it would still not establish any presumption in favor of human immortality. The assumption that mind, as a mere unindividualised, characterless force, continues to exist, is not what we mean when we speak of human immortality. Dr. Mellone rightly says that "to believe in personal immortality, or a future life, is to believe that human personalities, as such," will continue to exist. But, on the transmissive theory, this is exactly what does not, and cannot, take place. For if the human brain merely transmits consciousness, and therefore death is merely as the breaking of a vessel that contains

water, it is still the brain that *produces* that which we know as human character or human personality. The brain is the individualising organ or condition. It is that alone which creates individuality, and its destruction means the annihilation of personality quite as surely as is the case if mind and character are the veritable products of a purely material organisation.

Dr. Mellone tells us that the purpose of his book is to show that "the universe which has produced us is rational, and therefore has not endowed life with the highest possibilities simply in order that they may perish." This passage occurs in the preface to his book, and it has the advantage—or disadvantage of putting in a plain and brief form a number of fallacies that are apt to escape the observation of both writer and reader when scattered over a number of pages. First of all there is the curious expression, "the universe is a rational universe," an expression greatly beloved by rationalising theologians. What exactly does it mean? When we talk of man as a rational being we mean that he is a being who can consciously weigh his experiences, one against the other, and pronounce judgment. And in this we imply the existence of a nervous system and a brain, with its concomitant function, mind. Now, obviously we cannot speak of the universe as being "rational" in this sense. There is no reason whatever for assuming that the universe—apart from animal life—possesses any intelligence or reason in the only sense in which these words convey any meaning.

Perhaps by the phrase "a rational universe" it is meant that man can give a rational or coherent account of the succession of natural phenomena. This, I think, is usually what is meant by the phrase, although those who use it seldom condescend to explain what they really mean by it. Well, a man may give a rational or intelligible account of the size of a heap of stones, of the number in the heap, and of the kind of stones that make the heap; but no one would be absurd enough to argue that, therefore, the heap of stones is a rational heap. Take away the heap of stones and substitute the universe. Is there any more reason for calling matter dispersed through space rational than there is for calling matter rational when collected on a given plot of ground? In either case the rationality is not in the objects described, but in the man who is describing.

What is probably at the back of this much-used phrase is the fact that the phenomena of nature admits of orderly grouping, and which by a figure of speech is called an *intelligent* grouping. But even this grouping—expressed in natural law—is not a quality of extra human nature, but of human nature itself. Our knowledge of the universe is strictly conditioned by our sense organs—the finest instrument being only an extension of them. And consequently our expression of the order of nature may be, for aught we know to the contrary, a product of our organisation. At any rate, some manifestation of phenomena is inevitable so long as anything exists; whatever that manifestation may be will constitute its "order," and to call the universe "rational" can legitimately mean no more than that we are able to give a coherent account of our sensible experiences. The misuse of the phrase "rational universe" consists in first of all justifying it in the sense pointed out, and then applying it as though rationality were something exhibited as a quality of the universe in the same sense that it appears as a quality of animal organisation.

Dr. Mellone's elaboration of the thesis that the universe has not endowed man with the highest possibilities in order that they may perish, takes the form of dwelling upon the imperfections of this life, and the necessity for another life in which opportunity shall be furnished for the perfecting of human character. With all that Dr. Mellone has to say concerning "the disproportion between the abilities and just deserts of men, and the recognition given to them in this life," I can agree, although from the non-Theistic standpoint this need not give rise

to either an intellectual or moral pessimism. These facts are grave and obvious enough in all truth. As our author says, "we cannot number the individuals who in this life have suffered incalculable wrong." Still I quite fail to see in what way this furnishes evidence that goes to prove the truth of another life beyond the grave. If anything, such facts provide an impeachment of Dr. Mellone's position that the universe is rational, and is certainly an impeachment of the wisdom and goodness of God—granting he exists.

Could anything be more absurd than the argument—reduced to plain language—that God's work in this world is so unsatisfactory that we have a right to demand of him the creation of another world wherein the arrangements will be of a more satisfactory character? For this is really what the argument comes to. There must be another life in which justice rules because it does not rule in this. Well, but who made this world? On the Theistic hypothesis, the same God made this and all possible worlds. And what right have we to assume that he has made any other world in which justice will be any more certain than it is here? Or what purpose can be served by delaying justice until after we are dead? Obviously we come back to the old Theistic dilemma. Either God could or he could not have so made things that truth and justice would have prevailed this side the grave. If he did not do so because he could not, there is no reason for assuming that he will have any greater power elsewhere. If he would not, we have no reason for assuming that he will be better intentioned in any other life. The nature of gods and men must be judged from what we know of their production, for the reason that we have no other standard by which to arrive at an estimate.

Dr. Mellone argues that the real question is not so much what men are, as that of what it is possible for them to become. It is the unexhausted capacity of man, the possibility of continued progress, that gives vitality to the demand for another life "in which the mistakes of this life may be retrieved, and the results of its misdeeds and sins be wrought out and destroyed, and knowledge, goodness, and wisdom grow." Animals reach, we are told, the highest existence possible to them; man does not. Now I do not know that this statement is any truer—taken in any reasonable sense—of animals than it is of man. All animals are more or less educable. Their physical structure admits of being more perfect than it is. As in individuals, animals may grow in intelligence within certain limits. Of course, animals lack the social medium possessed by mankind, and so cannot transmit their experience by means of a literature and a language; but as we are dealing with *individual* immortality this consideration may be set on one side. But, we are asked, taking animals as we know them now, could we think of them as thinking as Shakespeare or Newton thought? No; but I can conceive some individual animals reaching a degree of mental development as much above their fellow-animals as Shakespeare and Newton were above the mass of their fellow-men. And, question for question, can we, taking men as we know them now, think of them all becoming Shakespeares or Newtons? And, if not, what is the value of the illustration? I agree that the possibilities of *human nature* are not exhausted in the life of any individual; but this is because the individual is ultimately an expression of human nature. And it is really on the confusion of human nature, conceived as an organic whole, and human nature as expressed by a particular organism, that Dr. Mellone is resting his case.

C. COHEN.

(To be continued.)

The Fall in the Worst Light.

THE New Theologians say that the Old Theology is obsolete, which is not true. It is the Old Theology that holds the field everywhere, while the New is dying in its infancy. At any rate, the senility of old age has overtaken it before it has ceased to glory in being young. Already it has split up into several little sects, which are distinguished by well-marked lines, and which are likely to disappear altogether before there is the least chance of their amalgamating. The least logical but most emotional of these parties is under the leadership of the Rev. R. J. Campbell, who seems to be returning, by a circuitous route, to the orthodoxy in which he was brought up. He is a long way off it, as yet, but, undoubtedly, his face is in that direction. In proof of this a recent sermon, published in the *Christian Commonwealth* for November 9, may be cited. The subject is the Fall, and its treatment is, to say the least, peculiar. Here is a specimen:—

"Whether all the wretchedness and woe through which humanity has been called to pass during unnumbered ages is a terrible mistake or not is a problem of which no final solution is as yet forthcoming. Our text, taken with its context, seems to indicate that some dreadful blunder did actually take place, some cutting-off from God; and the whole trend of Christian dogma is toward insistence upon the belief that it was an unmitigated calamity which Christ has come to remedy."

The Genesis story of the Fall, however, must not be taken "as it stands." "It is not history, it is something better," because "the men who wrote it down here were cultivated and intelligent men." From what source has Mr. Campbell derived his information about the writers? Is not Genesis an anonymous work and largely a compilation? Is it not also agreed among scholars that it is a composite document? Furthermore, is there anything to indicate that the writers did not take the story "as it stands"? Adam and Eve are said to have begun life in a delightful orchard, a garden planted by the Lord, which yielded its products freely, and in which the couple "lived a life of ideal happiness." This belief was by no means exclusively Semitic, but was shared by Persians, Indians, Greeks, and Romans. They all pictured a golden age as standing at the commencement of history. Mr. Campbell says:—

"Do you think it likely that when they wrote of a tree of knowledge or a tree of life they meant an actual material tree whose fruit should be plucked and eaten?"

Why not? It was an universal tradition. As Canon Driver says:—

"The idea of a garden upon earth, which is God's own abode, and in which supernatural gifts are conferred by means of the fruits of trees, is akin to (though not identical with) the representations in India and Persia, according to which the dwellings of gods and genii on the sacred mountains contained wonderful trees able to confer many different kinds of blessings, especially immortality."

Instead of contenting him with the admission that the story is not historically true, Mr. Campbell dogmatically asserts that the writers did not intend it to be taken as historically true. We submit that this is an entirely groundless assertion. But, whilst rejecting the historicity of the *story*, the reverend gentleman accepts the historicity of the *fact*, of the Fall. As a Christian minister he cannot get on without some doctrine of a fall. If he dispensed with it altogether he would be preaching a needless and meaningless Gospel. Well, he offers us *his* story of the Fall, though it is anything but new. He believes that man existed before he ever entered a tabernacle of flesh, "the paradise of Eden being a figure of man's condition before his descent into matter." He says:—

"Our real fall, speaking of the race as a whole, consists in having to live under conditions wherein the struggle between good and evil is inevitable and unescapable. I say that to have come into a world like this at all is a fall from something higher. Try to imagine for a moment what life would be like if you

had never heard of such a thing as wrong-doing, but that just as the sun rises or the tides flow everybody was doing the proper thing, and doing it happily, without having to reflect about it or make any effort. Imagine a world in which there was no suffering, no cruelty, no selfishness, no desire for personal aggrandisement. Would it not be glorious? and, as you see, it is not absolutely inconceivable; we can at least imagine the possibility of such a world."

That is absurdly far-fetched. A man must be in a desperate plight when he takes refuge in so utterly baseless a speculation. The Genesis story, which is essentially the story told by most primitive peoples, is discarded because science has proved it to be false. Believe me, the City Temple preacher in effect declares, the man you see with your eyes and touch with your finger-tips, the man that is composed of bones and muscles and a nervous system of amazing complexity, culminating in a highly educable brain—this man has never fallen, but has slowly risen. But this is not the real man, but only his habitation, the temple in which he resides for a season. The real man is invisible, a pure spirit, a fragment of Deity; and this man has descended from above "The first man is of the earth, earthy, the second man is of heaven"; and when the latter came down and entered into the former, he underwent a humiliating drop from a higher into a lower state of existence. Such is Mr. Campbell's doctrine of the Fall, and he recommends it as the truth which the writers meant the Genesis story to convey to its readers.

The first criticism upon such a doctrine is that there is absolutely no evidence in support of it, beyond the dire necessity of a preacher who lacks the courage to set himself in opposition to the verdict of science. To save his sermonic head, Mr. Campbell takes the Fall out of science's reach, as if saying: "Yes, science is right, and Genesis is right, too, if you put the correct interpretation upon it." How marvellously clever this is, to be sure. But, in this instance, the preacher has fled into a refuge of lies, and if he remains in it he will become an universal laughing-stock. He cannot even tell us when this stupendous fall occurred. He admits that there was a time when man was not a man, but a mere animal; but with the same breath he speaks of man as occupying a spiritual paradise, doing good instinctively, and with ecstatic delight, without possessing any knowledge of evil. Such was man's condition, he assures us, "immediately before his descent into matter." When he made the descent, into what kind of matter did he enter? Was it into what is called vegetable matter, and may we say that the grass of the field, the flowers of the garden, and the trees of the forest are but man in the making? Or did he descend into a piece of matter when it began to move in the water, so that we are justified in believing that protozoa, fishes, reptiles, wolves, tigers, and apes, tailed and tailless, are but man in the making? Mr. Campbell confesses that, "according to science," man belongs to the tiger, the beast, side of things, and he acknowledges that science is right; but he hastens to "strongly affirm that the religious view is the righter." Surely a man who speaks in that fashion must be hopelessly befogged. Early in his sermon he expresses a disbelief of evolution as applied to man, and then, later on, pronounces science right in allying man to "the tiger, the beast, side of things." If this is not reckless trifling with a great subject, pray, what is it? For what he describes as the "religious view," he adduces not even the shadow of evidence, but he has the effrontery to exclaim, "I believe with all my heart that this is the truth behind the Genesis narrative."

No, Mr. Campbell's view is Plato's, not the Bible's, and it can be consistently held only by those who regard man as a special creation of the Almighty. In Mr. Campbell's hands it is most offensively grotesque. Let us face the issue. According to the reverend gentleman, *the fall of man was the act of God*. Man did not descend into matter of his own accord; it was the hand of a just and holy God that put him there. And yet the Bible, and Mr. Campbell too, treat him as a sinner, and threaten to punish him

for being where he was placed, without his consent, by another. Why he was transferred from a higher into a lower state of existence even Mr. Campbell does not know. He is not absolutely sure that it was not a mistake. He hopes—he even believes, though not *very* firmly—that the outcome of it all will be transcendently glorious. But think of the awful injustice and cruelty of humiliating a being who was in every way perfect, and to whom life was an unmixed enjoyment, by thrusting him into conditions that necessitated the degradation and pollution of his whole nature and the filling of his lot with pain and sorrow. It is impossible to conceive of a loving Heavenly Father doing anything of the kind. Mr. Campbell himself thinks that he is more or less to be blamed for it, for he grants that "there is a certain undeniable truth in the grim and almost irreverent challenge of Omar Khayyam":

"Oh, Thou, who Man of baser Earth didst make
And ev'n with Paradise devise the Snake:
For all the Sin wherewith the Face of Man
Is blacken'd—Man's forgiveness give—and take."

In Mr. Campbell's theory there is no room for sin except on God's part; and, if he were logical, the reverend gentleman would avow himself a Fatalist and immediately retire from the Christian pulpit. His philosophy mocks his gospel, and his gospel belies his philosophy. To call upon man to repent and receive God's forgiveness is to be guilty of ineffable hypocrisy.

What Secularists maintain is that both the Old Theology and the New are equally untrue, and equally an affront to human intelligence. The God of either is a being to be ashamed of, and to be eliminated from the minds of men as soon as possible. Science politely bows him out of existence. Evolution is logically the end of Christianity. The Rev. Dr. Newton Marshall imagines he disproves that statement by referring to the fact that, in answer to the question, "Is there any real conflict between the facts of science and the fundamentals of Christianity?" a hundred and twenty-five eminent scientists have returned a negative answer. But why ignore the more important fact that almost as many thousands of first-class scientists, whose reply, if obtained, would have been in the affirmative? And every divine knows full well that during the last fifty years the Protestant Churches have surrendered fully one-half of what previously had always been regarded as the fundamentals of Christianity.

J. T. LLOYD.

Pseudo-Criticism.—VII.

(Continued from p. 733.)

WITH regard to the alleged pseudo-criticism of the book of Daniel, Sir Robert Anderson says:—

"The critics start with the assumption that any book which records a miracle or contains a prophecy must be false; and their effort is, not to inquire whether Daniel is genuine, but to prove that it is a forgery. They are compelled to maintain, therefore, that the book was written in the days of Antiochus."

Here Mr. Anderson is in error. It is the Christian advocate and apologist who start with the assumption that the book is genuine; and their effort is, not to get at the truth, but to maintain its authenticity and historicity against all evidence—even that which clearly proves its fictitious character. The question of miracle and prophecy is solely one of evidence, and in the case of Daniel we have ample proof that two of the kings in whose reigns both miracle and prophecy are alleged to have taken place are purely imaginary beings. What more can anyone with a grain of sense require? But why are critics "compelled to maintain" that the book was written in the days of Antiochus Epiphanes? As Mr. Anderson is discreetly silent upon this point, I will see if I cannot find the answer to the question in the present paper.

The first thing we have to do is to turn to the facts of real history in the book of Daniel. These have reference chiefly to the position of the Jewish kingdom in Palestine in relation to the more powerful kingdoms to which it was subject, from the time when Daniel is stated to have been living in Babylon down to the days of the author of the fictitious history. During this long period the Jews were tributary, first to the kings of Babylonia, next to the rulers of Persia, next to the sovereigns of Egypt, and lastly to the kings of Syria—the suzerainty of the latter monarch dating from 203 B.C. The author of Daniel has represented his hero as seeing visions which foreshadowed the future history of the Hebrew nation to the end of time; but, as a matter of fact, these so-called revelations or predictions all end with a veiled reference to a calamitous event which occurred in the writer's own day—the reign of Antiochus Epiphanes (176-164 B.C.). This event was an attempt made by the last-named king to compel the Jews to change their religion.

In the year 170 B.C. Antiochus came to Jerusalem, plundered the city, and slaughtered many thousands of its inhabitants. Two years later, he sent an army under Apollonius with orders to forcibly suppress the worship of Yahveh, and to set up in its place that of the gods of Syria. A detailed account of the means employed to carry out this measure is given by Josephus (*Antiq. xii., v., 4*). It need only be said here that Jerusalem was pillaged, the temple left bare, the daily sacrifices to Yahveh prohibited, altars to other gods erected in every city and village of Judæa, and the chief men in each locality called upon to sacrifice swine upon them, all who refused to do so being condemned to suffer torture or death. Moreover, an image of Jupiter Olympias was placed in the holy temple at Jerusalem, and swine were offered in sacrifice upon the holy altar of burnt-offering. The latter acts of sacrilege were in the eyes of every pious Jew the greatest insult that could be offered to the god Yahveh, and, when coupled with the desolation brought upon the whole country, were from that day spoken of as "the Abomination of desolation." This state of things continued for over three years, but about the middle of that period an aged priest named Mattathias, with his five stalwart sons, set up the standard of revolt against the Syrian monarch, and were soon joined by a considerable number of patriotic Jews. Contrary to all expectation, this heroic band, under the leadership of one of the sons of Mattathias—Judas, surnamed Maccabæus—obtained complete success, and, after routing three Syrian forces, came to Jerusalem, and restored the worship of Yahveh (165 B.C.).

Never before, in the whole history of the Jews, had such a terrible calamity come upon that nation. Never before had a religion been imposed upon the Jewish people by any monarch to whom that people had become subject. Hitherto, the payment of the prescribed annual tribute had secured complete freedom in religious observances. During the three years of this reign of terror, pious Jews asked each other why "the Lord" permitted a heathen king to afflict his chosen people, who alone among all the nations served and obeyed him. Pious minds were exercised in finding an adequate cause for the persecution which did not militate against the reputed justice of "the Lord." Amongst these was the author of the book of Daniel, whose object in writing was to keep his countrymen steadfast in their fealty to their tribal deity by showing them that "the Lord" was able and willing to protect them, as he had done in the case of Daniel with the lions and the three men in a furnace. The afflictions they endured were to be regarded as chastening for sins recently committed, and when these were atoned for, the persecution would cease.

The pleas made on behalf "the Lord" may be seen in the prayer put in the mouth of Daniel (ix. 8-19), which prayer has reference, not to Jerusalem in the time of the captivity, but to Jerusalem and Judæa in 168-165 B.C. The whole of this prayer should be

read, but the following short extracts are to be particularly noticed:—

"O Lord, the *great and dreadful* God.....unto us confusion of face, *as at this day*, to the men of Judah, and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem.....therefore hath the curse been poured out upon us.....by bringing upon us a great evil: for under the whole heaven hath not been done as hath been done upon Jerusalem.....Therefore hath the Lord watched over the evil, and brought it upon us.....Let thine anger and thy fury, I pray thee, be turned away.....from thy city Jerusalem.....thy people are become a reproach to all that are round about us.....Cause thy face to shine upon thy Sanctuary that is desolate for the Lord's sake.....Open thine eyes and behold our desolations and the city which is called by thy name.....O Lord, *hearken and do; defer not for thine own sake, O my God,*" etc.

At the time when this supplication is represented as offered, Jerusalem was uninhabited and in ruins, and had been so for half a century. Nothing new had occurred in connection with that city, whose former inhabitants were exiles scattered throughout the Babylonian empire, their condition in most cases being one of comparative comfort. It is plainly evident from the prayer that the writer was living in Judæa, where also lived the Jewish people he was praying for. The prayer, in fact, is an agonising cry of despair called forth by the afflictions borne by the faithful during the infamous persecution of the tyrant Antiochus.

All the simulated "visions" ascribed in the book to Daniel, as well as the "image" in Nebuchadnezzar's dream, are merely enigmatical allusions to events in the world's history from the age in which Daniel is represented as living down to the reign of Antiochus Epiphanes. With the "Abomination of desolation," and the restoration of the worship of Yahveh three years later, the so-called "visions" end, the writer being unable to carry the history farther than his own time. We thus arrive at the date 164 B.C. The following table shows the history referred to in the book of Daniel:—

BABYLONIAN MONARCHY.
(Nebuchadnezzar—Belshazzar.)

PERSIAN EMPIRE.
(Darius, Cyrus, and three other kings.)

EMPIRE OF ALEXANDER THE GREAT.
(Succeeded by four kingdoms, including Syria and Egypt.)

SYRIAN MONARCHY.	EGYPTIAN MONARCHY.
Antiochus Theos.	Ptolemy Philadelphus
Seleucus Callinicus.	Ptolemy Euergetes.
Seleucus Ceraunus.	Ptolemy Philopater.
Antiochus the Great.	Ptolemy Epiphanes.
Seleucus Philopater.	Ptolemy Philometer.
Antiochus Epiphanes (176—164 B.C.)	
168 B.C. Jerusalem captured—"Abomination" set up—daily sacrifices stopped.	
165 B.C. Jewish worship restored—holy place purified and "anointed."	

Jewish kingdom of "everlasting righteousness."

The foregoing table indicates the world's history, as understood by the author of Daniel; it is, therefore, not strictly accurate. The writer did not know the number or the names of the kings of the Babylonian dynasty; similarly, he thought there were only four kings of the Persian dynasty after Darius I. (*Dan. xi. 2*); whereas, as a matter of history, there were nine. Of the four kingdoms into which the empire of Alexander the Great was broken up, he notices only the Syrian and the Egyptian—these two being called a "divided kingdom," because reigning contemporaneously—the other two kingdoms having no interest for him, as they never came into contact with the small Jewish state. He also thought that the Syrian and Egyptian kingdoms commenced with Antiochus Theos and Ptolemy Philadelphus, thus making eleven kings (*Dan. vii. 28*), the six kings of Syria being designated in one of his visions "kings of the north," and the five sovereigns of Egypt

"kings of the south" (Dan. xi.). Here, again, it is evident that the writer was living in Palestine, Syria being to the north of that country, and Egypt to the south. Needless to say, he knew nothing of a Roman empire, which empire Christian advocates and commentators read into the visions, and put in the place of the Syrian and Egyptian dynasties.

One of the objects which the author of Daniel had in view was to bring comfort to his countrymen by making it appear that the tribulation of the reign of Antiochus Epiphanes had been revealed nearly four hundred years before to a prophet named Daniel, to whom it had been further revealed that the Jewish people would ultimately overcome all their enemies, and after regaining their independence, would become the greatest nation upon earth. The latter is the only prophecy in the book. From the time when Daniel is said to have lived in Babylon down to that of the "Abomination of desolation," all was past history—though the writer's knowledge of the earlier portion of the period was imperfect and faulty. But, it is most probable that he firmly believed that his countrymen, with the help of "the Lord"—and the material assistance of Judas Maccabæus and his brother Jonathan—would succeed in establishing their independence, more especially since they had already done so temporarily at the time he wrote. Then would come a Jewish kingdom of "everlasting righteousness," when no more visions or prophecies would be needed, "the Lord" himself being their king and protector, with the highest human authority vested in "the Lord's anointed"—the high priest. The writer being a pious and patriotic Jew, naturally gave credence to the ancient predictions in the Hebrew prophetic writings known in his day, which writings were believed to be sacred and inspired by God. The following is a sample:—

Isaiah ii. 2-3.—"And it shall come to pass in the latter days that the mountain of the Lord's house shall be established in the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills: and all nations shall flow into it. And many peoples shall say, Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob: and he will teach us his ways, and we will walk in his paths: for out of Zion shall go forth the Law, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem."

This grand prediction, like that made by the author of Daniel, was destined never to be fulfilled. Christian commentators and others try to make out that the reference is to the kingdom of Jesus Christ; but this is pure perversion. The "many peoples" were to be taught "the ways" of the "God of Jacob," as recorded in "the Law," and they were to walk in the "paths" therein prescribed: that is to say, they were to become converts to Judaism. If we turn to Isaiah lxvi. 18-23 and Zech. xiv. 9, 16, we shall find that the worship included "priests and Levites," the observance of the "New Moon" and "Sabbath," and the "keeping the feast of Tabernacles."

ABRACADABRA.

(To be concluded.)

GOT BACK AT HIM.

The mild business man was calmly reading his paper in the crowded tramcar. In front of him stood a little woman hanging by a strap. Her arm was being slowly torn out of her body, her eyes were flashing at him; but he constrained himself in silence. Finally, after he had endured it for twenty minutes, he touched her arm and said:

"Madam, you are standing on my foot."

"Oh, am I?" she savagely retorted. "I thought it was a portmanteau."

SHE WANTED THE CREDIT.

Freedom of the will is a doctrine which children can understand and appreciate. The little girl in this story was not willing to have all her naughty ingenuity ascribed to supernatural sources.

"It was Satan," said a mother to one of her children, "who put it into your head to pull Elsie's hair."

"Perhaps it was," replied the little girl, "but kicking her shins was my own idea."

Acid Drops.

Rev. A. J. Waldron progresses, but he never was a thinker, and there is always a chaotic quality about his utterances. He has lately been denying that "the theatre was a suburb of hell." But he doesn't reflect that only in religious circles is such a denial necessary. Mr. Waldron says he "knows many leading actors who are regular church-goers"—as if that were the supreme guarantee of themselves or their profession! Mr. Waldron also says, "After having all the responsibility of a big parish, I like to go to a theatre and have a good laugh." We don't think he can really have all the responsibility in Brixton. It would be a very sad thing, for Brixton as well as himself, if he had. Nor is affording a tired clergyman a good laugh quite the highest function of a theatre. Mr. Waldron's final advice to "support good actors" we readily endorse. When he adds "pray for them" he is mixing up his own business with theirs.

The *Christian World* refers to the want of ventilation in churches. But what does that matter in this brief pilgrimage? There will be plenty of ventilation in heaven, and unlimited draught in the other place.

We reprint the following from the *Birmingham Daily Mail*:—

"CONTRADICTING A STIPENDIARY.

West Bromwich Witness's Strange Behavior.

There was a curious incident at the West Bromwich Police-court to-day during the hearing by the Stipendiary (Mr. N. C. A. Neville) of a charge of being drunk and disorderly, which was defended.

Mr. Darby, for the defence, called a witness named Fereday, who was sworn but refused to kiss the Testament, asserting that he would affirm to tell the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth. He also declined to be sworn in the Scottish fashion.

The Stipendiary: What is your religion, Fereday?

I have no religion at all.

The Stipendiary: Do you believe in a Supreme Being at all?

Fereday: You are not justified in asking me that question.

The Stipendiary: Yes I am.

Fereday: No you are not.

The Stipendiary: Then go out of court.

The witness at once left the court, and the man for whom he should have given evidence was subsequently fined ten shillings and costs."

The Stipendiary Magistrate in this case committed every fault that was open to him. The witness had a perfect right to affirm, under the (Bradlaugh) Oaths Act. His statement that he had no religion covered all the ground on which, under the Act, his claim was based. The Stipendiary had absolutely no right to ask him whether he believed in one God, or three, or fifty. The witness had already said that he had no religion. He was quite right in denying the Stipendiary's right to ask him any further questions. Neither had the Stipendiary a ghost of a right to order him out of court. And he never could have any right to insult a witness. We strongly advise the witness in this case, if this should meet his eye, to write out a clear statement of his case, and send it to Mr. Horatio Bottomley, M.P., at the *John Bull* office, with a request that he would bring it to the notice of the Lord Chancellor.

Ella Anker's article in the *Contemporary Review* on "Björnson and His Christianity" is one of those pieces of gushing sentimentalism which are so often written nowadays about distinguished Freethinkers. Common-garden Freethinkers are simply wicked or perverse, but orchid-house Freethinkers are good men gone wrong, and Christians without knowing it. Björnson wrote against Christianity; he translated Ingersoll's slashing essay, *The Christian Religion*, into Norwegian. But the romantic lady gets rid of those awkward facts in a single sentence. "Björnson," she says, "did not call himself a Christian, but the lotus of his poetry was watered by the River of Jordan." How pretty! And how silly! When the pious lady adds that "He sat at the feet of Christ, listening to the Sermon on the Mount," one wonders what is the matter. But one looks again at the name of the magazine, and at the editor's name (the Rev.—we beg pardon, Sir Percy Bunting) and one smiles and understands.

One ceases to smile when one reaches the end of the article and comes to the pitiful attempt to convert the dying, unconscious Björnson. The lady says that "he had been lying unconscious for days when he was roused by artificial means, and exclaimed, 'Oh, why did you do this? I had just met God.'" We do not believe a word of it.

These tales are so common (in Christian circles) about dying Freethinkers. But even if it *were* true, what would it really matter? Utterances in such abnormal circumstances, as Heine remarked, belong to the region of pathology.

In a more lucid interval the lady tells the direct and simple truth about Björnson. "He did not believe," she says, "in the continued life of the personality so far as we can judge of it. Instead of the continued existence of the individual he placed that of the race." What is the use, after that, of claiming that he was "serving the Christian ideals in his poetical visions"?

Mr. Arthur Spurgeon writes a preface to a volume reporting the proceedings of the Conference on Public Morals held in July last. Dealing with the use of the word "noxious," he says:—

"The word 'noxious' must be defined, and here comes the rub. One man will consider advanced political opinion as noxious, while another will condemn Walt Whitman's *Leaves of Grass*. The question is often asked, Why is it Mr. Thomas Hardy has not written another book since *Jude the Obscure*? I believe the answer is to be found in the outrageous treatment to which the book was subjected by the critics in the name of morality. There are passages in the book which are not intended to be read in the family circle; but, in my opinion, there is no book in the English language which more graphically describes the awful deterioration that follows a man's departure from high ideals. If we are to begin with condemning publishers who issue books containing objectionable passages, we shall have to start with the British and Foreign Bible Society. We must consider the trend of a book, and also the object for which it is written and published."

Unfortunately the object for which a book is published is either not considered by our consors of public morals, or the object itself is considered "noxious," particularly if it be religion that is attacked. And the unfortunate thing is that those who spend their lives spying out obscenities, immoralities, and the like, usually succeed in making unclean that which is perfectly clean, without cleansing the admittedly indecent. It is a matter that should be in the hands of level-headed men of trained judgment, whereas it is customarily taken in hand by faddists of narrow outlook, and little or no discretion.

Bishop Welldon has been expressing himself vigorously concerning the baneful influence of a certain class of novel on readers. He also spoke of the contradiction involved in excluding Zola's works from the libraries at the time the novelist himself was being treated as an honored guest. There was irony in the situation of Zola's publisher being sent to prison and Zola himself being entertained; but there is far more irony in the circumstance that the Church, of which Bishop Welldon is a distinguished member, forces the beastliness of the Bible into the hands of little children. No modern novelist dare imitate the unornamental filth of "God's Word."

Agnostics appear to have some use in the world. According to the *Southend Telegraph*, the Rev. Dr. Lindsay, of St. Erkenwald's Church, Southend, has a letter from an "Agnostic" who visited this church in 1907, saying that he "spent a pleasant quarter of an hour in this beautiful church." We have seen this building, which resembles a furniture repository or the back side of a goods' station, and think that the "Agnostic" stayed there fifteen minutes too long.

The National Free Church Council "considers the observance of a weekly rest day, altogether apart from Sabbath considerations, as essential to the national well-being." So do we. We are even prepared to double the dose. But our concern is for a real day of rest, not a special day of enforced idleness for the whole community, which is not really a day of rest at all. Rest for one section of the people—in the truest sense of the word—involves, in a civilised community, labor on the part of others. The real purpose of the Council is disclosed in its protest against any measure involving *Sunday labor*. In our opinion, Sunday labor is no better and no worse than Monday labor or Tuesday labor. And we would offer the fullest liberty to work on Sunday, while making the regulations as stringent as possible against any person being employed more than six days in the week. But it is useless expecting either reason or straightforwardness on this subject from a body like the National Free Church Council.

"You have only to look in the paper any morning," says the Rev. Dr. Watkinson, "to see how, if men are not sustained by a supernatural hope, they go under." Really! Our own impression is that the morning papers are always

providing plenty of evidence in the other direction. Dr. Crippen, for instance, was never without the "immortal hope," and at present he has a special religious guide told off to see that it does not languish between the date of his conviction and that of his execution. Probably Dr. Watkinson means that those who are sustained by this immortal hope prove that it does sustain, and those who are not sustained prove—nothing at all. Which is a typically Christian piece of logic.

Dr. R. F. Horton says it is a peculiarity of the Christian religion that the worship is neglected by the men, and left, to a very large extent, to the women. We congratulate Dr. Horton on his discovery of the obvious, and his rare courage in voicing the irrepressible. Students know the reasons for this phenomenon, and they are such as reflect small credit on Christianity. Dr. Horton's explanation, however, is that "Christianity made women. It was Christianity that first gave woman her place in humanity," and woman's attachment to it is consequently an expression of her gratitude. Unfortunately for this theory, the same causes that have alienated from Christianity the support of men are also alienating the support of women. Women, as women, do not support Christianity more than men; it is simply that, owing to certain causes, there are at present a larger proportion of women than men. And that proportion is being steadily reduced.

We do not deny that Christianity gave woman a place in humanity, but it is a place against which women of strength and character have always revolted. We would advise Dr. Horton to convince Miss Christabel Pankhurst, for instance, that the place of woman as indicated by Paul, or by the early Christian Fathers, or by such later leaders as John Knox, is one for which women ought to be grateful, and should satisfy all their legitimate desires. Dr. Horton might also find food for reflection in the fact that for types of noble womanhood Greek and Roman literature is so superior to the Christian Bible that there is hardly any comparison. And the people who created these types—even in imagination—could not have been as degraded as uneducated and miseducated Christians have been taught to believe. Great art and great literature spring from the life of a people, and where greatness in art and literature is found, greatness in national life will never be far to seek.

"We know," says the Rev. Newton H. Marshall, "that Jesus of Nazareth has brought to mankind that which by no searching could we find for ourselves." Well, we beg to state that we know nothing of the kind, or rather we know quite the contrary. There is nothing in the life or alleged teaching of the New Testament Jesus that is new, and that mankind had not found out for itself long before the date given for his teaching. We challenge Dr. Marshall to name any new incident or teaching connected with the mythical Jesus of the Gospels. And we should have imagined that anyone who claimed to know anything of the teaching of other creeds would have been too familiar with the facts to make such a ridiculous claim as that put forward by Dr. Marshall.

The *Record* is grieved. The Keeper of the Ashmolean Museum announces that in 1911 the Museum will be open from 2 till 4 on Sunday afternoons. The *Record* is surprised at this being done in a city like Oxford. Well, it is an advance for a university city, but we expect it will survive such a tremendous revolution as the one threatened.

A Conference on "Christian Unity" has just been held in Liverpool. This is quite appropriate, for rival Christian bodies at Liverpool are notorious for their desire for each other's company. It is the harassed policeman who is most desirous of keeping them at a fair distance from each other.

The *Methodist Recorder* says it has "often wondered at the spectacle of a broad-minded and intellectual Roman Catholic who tries to explain away the tyrannies of his Church." Well, so have we; and we have also wondered at the spectacle of "broad-minded and intellectual" people who can so readily distinguish the faults of Roman Catholicism and remain so blind to the evils of their own Church. After all, Roman Catholicism is only an extreme form of an evil that exists with all Christian Churches. It shows these faults most clearly because it has had greater opportunities for expressing them, and because it is less accommodating than other Churches in the matter of doctrine. And if the phenomenon was not such a common one we should be inclined to wonder at any really intellectual man or woman seriously accepting the Christian religion as a valuable truth.

The National Union for Christian Social Service—which ought to be called "The Union for Capturing Social Sentiment in the Interests of Christianity"—has been holding a conference, and some of the speakers, including the Dean of Norwich, made some remarkable discoveries. It was said that training colonies for wastrels on the Continent had failed because they were carried on under secular auspices. Now, so far as our information goes, the continental experiments in this direction are far more successful than ours precisely because the religious element is not allowed to rule the roost. In England, where religious bodies like the Salvation Army are given a free hand, the statistics furnished are not adequately checked, and they have a convenient habit of leaving on one side the really difficult cases and busying themselves with such as may offer good advertising materials. Some of the speakers pointed out that, since the State is likely to establish Labor Colonies in the near future, it is necessary that the right kind of men be chosen for supervision. Which means, we presume, that these colonies are to be used as places to force Christianity upon a class of people whose unfortunate condition is in itself a strong proof of Christianity's failure as a civilising force.

We called attention last week, at some length, to that fatuous gentleman, Mr. Harold Begbie. We have no intention of burdening our readers' attention with him indefinitely, but there are one or two remarks in the second of his articles on "Christianity in Action" that call for notice. Starting with the common and stupid pulpit expression that without the Fatherhood of God there is no greater folly than the brotherhood of man, he discusses our armaments, and asks, "Why is it that the Materialists and Agnostics in Parliament do not advocate using them against weaker nations?" We might answer this question by another. Why is it that Christian nations have created these huge armaments? And why is it that the more Christian the nation the more powerful the armament? If Mr. Begbie studies these questions he will probably discover that the "Materialists and Agnostics" in Parliament and out of it, in this country and out of it, are chief amongst those who protest against the military madness of the Christian nations of the world.

Mr. Begbie says he has never met an "Agnostic democrat" who could tell him why he gives his life to the work of reform. We must assume that Mr. Begbie's acquaintance with "Agnostic democrats" is very limited—or perhaps they are about as real as many of his cases of instantaneous change of character. The reason for, and the justification of, social reform lies in man's social nature and his relation to all those around him. As Ingersoll said, the way to be happy is to make other people happy. Man's nature, when not distorted by religious teaching or defective social conditions, demands the presence and well-being of others as the conditions of its own complete development. And it is only shallow writers and thinkers like Mr. Begbie who can see no reason for social endeavor unless it is based upon a creed that is repugnant to a properly educated intelligence.

We cannot pillory all the absurdities in Mr. Begbie's article, but we give a final one. He says "the existence of insurance offices testifies to a religious self-sacrifice on the part of parents for their children." No one but a Christian would talk of a parent who insures his life for the benefit of his children as manifesting "self-sacrifice." Any parent who looks after his children gains far more than he loses. And *religious* self-sacrifice? Why, if people were properly religious they would not insure at all. They profess to believe in a God who looks after the widow and the orphan, and if sincere they would leave him to see to his work. Insurance offices are really so many evidences of the worthlessness of religious trust.

Dr. Cook, the notorious Yankee adventurer, who pretended to have discovered the North Pole, has been exposed. The testimony of the Eskimos has thrown his claim to the winds. Cook's fable deceived a very large number of people in the twentieth century. Yet people are astonished that the Christian fables found acceptance two millenniums earlier.

The Romanising tendency of the Established Church is having its effect. The Rev. D. Ewart James, one of the foremost of Essex Congregational preachers, speaking at the P. S. A. Anniversary at Braintree, said that he favored religious education in schools; but if the inclusion of the Bible in education meant the presence of the priest, then he advocated the secular solution.

Charles Bradlaugh was not a prophet, nor the son of a prophet; yet some of his forecasts are coming true. He

said that the fight of the future would be between Catholicism on the one hand, and Freethought on the other. Well! Eighty per cent. of the Church of England is rapidly travelling Romewards, and the Free Churches are becoming more ecclesiastical every day.

Judging by newspaper paragraphs, the Baptists seem in a very bad way in England. The *Baptist*, the most important paper connected with that body, has stopped publication, and there are rumors of amalgamation between the Baptists and Congregationalists.

The Rt. Hon. John Burns has been suggesting that millionaires might do better than build libraries. Certainly they might see that they were properly stocked after they are built. Too many, we know, are filled with tenth-rate novels and theological rubbish.

Mr. Eustace J. Kitts, in his newly published *Pope John XXIII. and Master John Hus of Bohemia*, gives a lively picture of the Council of Constance and the prelates who decreed the doom of the famous reformer. Here is a piquant passage:—

"Musicians, actors, merry-makers, strolling players, and the like, came in their hundreds. There was abundance of public amusement all through the Council; dancing, singing, and music went on all through the day, and far into the night in the squares. There were peasants' plays from the Tyrol, and miracle plays; coursing, tournaments, visiting, and excursions were the order of the day. There being so many ghostly fathers assembled, troops of naughty damsels, light o' love, flocked in from all sides to minister to their pleasures; one report says there were fifteen hundred of them. Dacher counted seven hundred and then discreetly stopped. They lived thirty in a room; they put up in bath-rooms or sheds; and those who could find no better lodging were content with the empty wine-butts which lay about in the streets. Women who could sing were special objects of wonder and curiosity. When Sigismund, the 'beadle of the Empire,' was away, business slackened, and pleasure became more rife. The prelates took to making picnics in the neighboring forests; their cooks prepared their food and drink at some shady place in the glades, *neque decrant meretrices*. Every man, even the most severe, could amuse himself at Constance."

What a picture! Drinking, whoring, theology, and the burning of heretics! We hope Christ would know his own.

Madame Adam had her knife into Gambetta for some time before his death, apparently because he did not make enough of her. We see by the *Catholic Times* that she is now striving to blacken his memory. Our pious contemporary gloats over her statement that Gambetta gave his portrait to a lady, and wrote upon it "To my little Queen whom I love more than France." This is treated as sufficient to damn him in the eyes of the French nation—as though a man in love is expected to speak as if on affidavit! And in France, too!

General Booth keeps on saying that he wants the Government to lend him the price of an ironclad. A Government that would lend money to General Booth ought to hold Cabinet Meetings in Colney Hatch.

A TRUE TALE.

A little girl was incurably mendacious. Coming home, one day, she said: "Mother, I met a lion to-day walking in Central Park."

"Now, Mary," her mother said, "you know that's a lie. Go in your room and pray for forgiveness."

The child obediently went, returning in a few minutes with a beatific expression; and, when her mother asked if she had prayed God to be forgiven, she said: "I did, and God said to me, 'Never mind, Miss Jones, I've often met that dog in Central Park, and have mistaken him myself for a lion.'"—*Mrs. T. P. O'Connor, "I Myself."*

THE MODERN CHRIST.

Not Baal, but Christus Jingo! Heir
Of Him, who once was crucified!
The red stigmata still are there,
The crimson spear wounds in the side,
But raised aloft as God and Lord,
He holds the money-bag and sword.

A wondrous god! most fit for those
Who cheat on change, then creep to prayer;
Blood on his heavenly altar flows,
Hell's burning incense fills the air,
And death attests in street and lane
The hideous glory of his reign.

—Robert Buchanan.

Mr. Foote's Engagements.

November 27, Shoreditch Town Hall.

To Correspondents.

- C. COHEN'S LECTURE ENGAGEMENTS.—November 20, Shoreditch Town Hall. December 4, Manchester; 11, Liverpool; 18, Abertillery.
- J. T. LLOYD'S LECTURE ENGAGEMENTS.—November 20, Manchester; 27, Leicester. December 4, Battersea; 11, Rhondda; 18, West Ham.
- PRESIDENT'S HONORARIUM FUND, 1910.—Previously acknowledged: £263 14s. 1d. Received since:—C. Heaton, 5s.; Nemo, 1s.; T. M. Mosley, 2s.; R. T. Nichols (2nd sub), £2 2s.; Anti-Christ, £1 1s.; W. R. Munton, £2.
- A. FAGE.—Many thanks for cuttings.
- W. P. BALL.—Much obliged for cuttings.
- ANTI-CHRIST, sending cheque from Ireland, says: "I sincerely hope the President's Honorarium Fund will reach the £300 this year. A man capable of editing such an intellectual treat as the *Freethinker* is worthy of £3,000 a year." We won't dispute it. Our correspondent wonders if the circulation of this journal makes any headway in Ireland. It does a little. But it is only too true that "the clergy have such a grip on the people that it will be very difficult to oust them."
- V. K. WHITTY.—Published at Dublin. Sorry we cannot be more precise.
- G. R. BALLARD.—See the circular printed elsewhere in this week's issue.
- A. E. WOOD.—Mere twaddle, beneath notice; its pious authors are really too absurd.
- G. EVANS.—The Cohen-Gun debate starts at 8 p.m. The time is stated on the tickets. It is odd that it was not included in the advertisement. Your second postcard answers your first with regard to the "miraculous births." By including Jesus you complete your "four."
- J. MUIRHEAD.—We will bear your "Shakespeare" suggestion in mind. E. P. Meredith's *Prophet of Nazareth* deals effectively with the Messianic prophecies. But the subject is rather antique now. The new and cheaper edition of the *Bible Handbook* will be published early in the new year. We are afraid that Mr. Foote would hardly be able to visit Darvel. Glad you find the *Freethinker* so helpful.
- J. PARTRIDGE.—Pleased to hear that Miss Kough had good audiences at Birmingham, notwithstanding the wretched weather, and that you all hope to hear her again.
- V. HARDY.—We quite understand your indignation at those clerical flies buzzing maliciously about the memory of Byron. But try to possess your soul in patience. He is bound to be remembered; they are sure to be forgotten. Only such insects could preach paltry little sermons over the last verses that Byron ever wrote—on completing his thirty-sixth year. "The last poem he ever wrote," as we said many years ago, "showed the troubled stream of his life running pure at its close. Noble and sincere in its language, it was a fitting farewell to the world; and although the poet did not find his 'soldier's grave,' he died none the less for the cause to which he had pledged his fortune and the remnant of his strength."
- G. HARVEY.—Always glad to receive cuttings on which we can found a paragraph.
- C. HEATON.—Much pleased to hear from one who has read the *Freethinker* from its first number, who still regards it as the best paper he knows, and to whom "each issue seems more enjoyable than the previous one."
- W. MAUGHAM.—The debate will not be reported in the *Freethinker*, except, perhaps, in a summary, descriptive way. As there is a charge for admission, it is not a public meeting, and the speeches are the private property of the disputants.
- J. B. C. B.—Thanks for your pleasant letter. You will see your question answered in our comments on the incident in "Acid Drops."
- T. M. MOSLEY.—We didn't begrudge the few minutes. We knew what it must have cost you in time and money to go over to Leicester from Chesterfield. Your suggestions shall not be forgotten.
- J. B. C. B. AND H. JESSOP both renew their desire to fulfil their promises towards making up the deficit on the President's Honorarium Fund, and express surprise that others have not been induced to join them promptly in this effort.
- T. MOULT.—Article in printers' hands. Mr. Foote will be writing you very shortly.
- CHARLES MELBOURNE.—Freethought organisation is not as simple and easy as you appear to think it. Theory and practice are often so very different. Still, we thank you for taking so much trouble; and we suggest, on our part, that you join a London Branch near your address and try to carry out some of your ideas.
- R. HARBURN.—All's well that ends well.
- J. W. MEE.—Thanks for your interesting and encouraging letter.
- J. W. WHITE.—We replied, as you say, but don't recollect hearing anything subsequently. Glad you got such verses in your local press.
- 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.

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.

Sugar Plums.

In spite of the wretched weather, Mr. Foote had fine audiences at Liverpool on Sunday. Every inch of standing room was occupied in the evening, and a considerable number of people had to be turned away from the doors. We are sorry for them, especially for those who came from distant places, but they will remember that we warned them of the advisability of securing tickets beforehand. Mr. J. Hammond, the Branch president, who acted as chairman at both meetings, made an appeal for new members, and said that the crowded meeting at the "Bradlaugh" lecture, following the fine meeting in the afternoon, augured a Free-thought revival in Liverpool this winter. Mr. Foote being in good form, and good voice, the audiences were intensely "live," a good number of persons standing for nearly two hours at the evening meeting, and not one moving away in spite of the heat as well as other discomforts. Altogether it was a "red-letter day," as the chairman called it.

Mr. Hammond announced a goodly list of special lectures at Alexandra Hall this side of Christmas. Mr. F. A. Davies delivers his first lecture at Liverpool to-day (Nov. 20). Those who have had a taste of his quality at Conference public meetings will know what to expect. Others may take our word for it that Mr. Davies deserves good audiences and a cordial welcome. His subjects are tempting ones: "Faith and Finance" and "Christ and the Labor Movement."

Mr. Lloyd's audience at Shoreditch Town Hall on Sunday evening was a very good one, considering what a dreadful disadvantage wet weather is to meetings in London. Mr. Lloyd's lecture was a very good one too, and his replies to questions were much relished. The third lecture of this course will be delivered this evening (Nov. 20) by Mr. Cohen, who is so well known and popular in East London, and is pretty certain to have an excellent audience.

Dr. R. T. Nichols evidently thinks there is no time to be lost now in arrangements for making up the deficit on the President's Honorarium Fund. He sends on a cheque as his second donation for the present year.

American Freethinkers have not forgotten their approval of the attitude of the N. S. S. and its President towards the last "blasphemy" prosecution in England. Mr. George Macdonald refers to it once more in the New York *Truthseeker* of October 15. Replying to Mr. Henry Frank, who looks upon destructive work as "rowdy Rationalism," Mr. Macdonald says:—

"We are irritable on those points, because we see a great deal of superstition yet to be destroyed. We cherish the profoundest respect for the pioneers of Freethought, and so do not wish to approve without qualification a movement which starts with the proposition that they are to be relegated to oblivion as rowdy Rationalists. That was our criticism of Mr. Frank's talk about organisation. He quotes Mr. Joseph McCabe as being in exact harmony with him. We were aware of Mr. McCabe's position, made manifest during the Boulter blasphemy prosecution of a year or two ago. We had hoped then to see Mr. McCabe move up to the fring-line in defence of the freedom of speech, but were neither surprised nor seriously disappointed when he failed to do so, long experience having taught us not to expect too much. Besides, there happened to be in England a man—we refer to Mr. G. W. Foote, President of the National Secular Society and editor of the *Freethinker*—who ignores literary equations when the charge is blasphemy, and who was on the spot to waive aside questions of grammar and style and to uphold the principle at stake. It is a great thing to be able to do this. It is a great thing to side with the right at the risk of odium; and when a man takes that stand unflinchingly, as Mr. Foote did, we soon forget to inquire what language he used or what defended."

Mr. George Macdonald is slowly, but we hope very surely, recovering from his late serious illness. We trust he will long be captain of the good ship under the *Truthseeker* flag. He understands what Freethought is. And there are many who misunderstand it in America as there are in England.

The Moral of the Brussels Congress.

Le Congrès de Bruxelles et la Manifestation Ferrer. (Brussels: 350 Chaussée de Boendal; 62 pp., 10 centimes.)

EVERY Freethinker who reads French—the language of free spirits—should procure this interesting pamphlet. It contains a fund of information, pithily put, as to the Freethought movement in various lands. It will at least serve to refresh our memories of those stirring days—from August 20 to 24 last—when the life of Brussels throbbed with the enthusiasm of Freethought. One feels, reading this pamphlet, that next to the Ferrer manifestation in the Grand' Place the most singular and significant circumstance in connection with the Congress was the emergence of the Czechs, some five years ago, as a great world-force in our movement. I have already given facts and details in the *Freethinker** concerning the strength and vitality of Czech Freethought both in its native Bohemia and in the United States. At the Brussels Congress Dr. Vojan spoke as the delegate of 300,000 Czech Freethinkers in North America. As I write, the post brings to my doors the *Volné Listy*,† dated October 8, a splendidly printed Czech Freethought paper of 16 pages, containing a fine full-paged photograph of Ferrer and a series of articles solely dedicated to the exposition of Ferrer's life-work. The fact that our contemporary, *Volné Listy*, is now well in its nineteenth volume (it publishes fortnightly) is significant of two encouraging truths—first, that the work of Freethought is of wider range and deeper intensity than many, even the best informed amongst us, imagine; and, secondly, that an enthusiasm for great ideals has long been spreading through the most distant parts of the earth, and working in the hearts of the most diverse races and peoples.

A pamphlet‡ handed to me at Brussels, and distributed widely amongst the delegates, contains information concerning the Freethought movement in Bohemia which is of startling significance. The first Czech Freethought Society in Europe was founded at Prague after the Rome Congress as a result of the enthusiasm engendered in the mind of Karel Pelant, who came to the city of the Popes the sole delegate from the land where John Huss was burnt to death. The Society received the name, "Augustin Smetana," after a Catholic priest—a great writer and philosopher who renounced the Church. Last year the Society was dissolved by the Government because of its protest against the murder of Ferrer. After that blow of bigotry the organisation of the Czech Freethinkers was started as a branch of the International Freethought Federation, and immediately began its phenomenal work. Since 1905 it publishes two monthly journals, and will soon launch a weekly journal. The following statistics will exhibit its striking activities: They have published 462,000 copies of *Volná Myslenka* (Freethought), and 314,000 copies of *Volná Skola* (the Free School), 3,754,000 copies of their fortnightly *Havlicek* and 812,000 copies of books, pamphlets, and leaflets—in a word, more than 5,340,000 copies of publications since 1905. No wonder, with such evidences of enthusiasm and vitality, that the Czech Freethinkers issue their invitation to their brethren in every land to attend the International Freethought Congress which will be held at Prague in 1915 on the occasion of the 500th anniversary of the *auto-da-fe* of John Huss.

The world-wide movements of Freethought arising—almost mysteriously—out of the enthusiasm awakened in sincere souls by these International Congresses—Geneva (1902) begat Rome (1904) and its collateral movements, on the one hand at Prague in 1905 and 1907, and, on the other hand, at Buenos Aires in 1906, in each case producing a permanent and growing enthusiasm for Freethought in the lands where the several Congresses met—all these circumstances justify the convocation of these Congresses,

the utility of which must be judged rather from their after effects than from what appears at first on the surface. Certainly the recent Freethought Congress at Brussels was a remarkable gathering. Considered either from the point of view of its historical and ethical significance or from the standpoint of international good fellowship and solidarity of sentiment, it was an event big with the promise and potency of mighty social and political changes in our conceptions of men and things. It marked a solemn international reprobation of one of the greatest crimes in the history of religious persecution—the judicial murder of the Counts of Egmont and Horne—but was specially remarkable from its apotheosis of Francisco Ferrer. As all affronts to intellectual freedom are assaults on the common conscience of mankind, it was proper that this great act of civic and public reparation should receive the sanction and seal of an international vindication.

Less than three and a half centuries separate the beheading of the two patriot Flemish counts and the shooting of the humble Spanish educationalist. In both cases the victims suffered at the hands of religious bigotry, and in both cases the instruments of slaughter were blessed by the Church. But in 1568 the international conscience of mankind had not yet been evolved, and the headsman's blow was scarcely heard beyond the historic precincts of the Grand' Place. In 1909 the ear and heart of humanity had become quick to hear and sob forth its indignant sympathy with the death-cry of the Martyr of Montjuich, so that the echoes of the rifle-shots that slew Ferrer were caught in the farthest regions of the world and awakened an unexampled protest in every land. Henceforth the name of Ferrer becomes inextricably interwoven with the history of Brussels, and the consecration of his memory an act of civic piety, not only for the inhabitants of that beautiful city, but for every nation whose citizens participated in that great act of reparation of a flagrant wrong.

It is this fact that lends significance to the recent Freethought Congress at Brussels. More telling than the attendance of numerous delegates of Freethought organisations from many lands—from France, Germany, Italy, Hungary, the Argentine, North America, Algeria, Portugal, and Spain—more significant than the many thousands of Freethinkers who had made heavy sacrifices of time and money to attend the Congress, was the enthusiastic reception which the population of Brussels—children of the men who were mute when the Counts Egmont and Horne were butchered—gave to the Congressists. Equally significant were the splendid arrangements made by the municipality for the order and convenience of the ceremony in the Grand' Place. The solemn words in which, a few days later, the Burgomaster indicated in the palatial Hôtel de Ville his splendid act of personal and official homage to the memory of Ferrer, and justified before the delegates, his invited guests, the doctrine of open-handed justice to all—to Freethinkers equally with Catholics—have only been outweighed in civic and national importance by the recent public utterances of the Portuguese President, Dr. Theophilo Braga in favor of Freethought. In both cases that element of prestige which counts so much with the outer world added weight and importance to the Congresses of Brussels and Lisbon. The Burgomaster of Brussels, by identifying himself with the philosophical principles of the Congress, added immensely to the lustre and significance of this epoch-making event. Excluding mere sectarian feeling, one may well rejoice—apart from all accidental differences of creed, taste, or opinion—that the twentieth century shows itself strong enough and honest enough to expiate its crimes almost as soon as committed, and to wash its hands of complicity with the crimes of the sixteenth century, especially after the revival of these crimes had manifested itself in Spain.

Heaven itself seemed to lend splendor to the glittering scene of that Sunday morning of August 21, 1910. It was a faultless sun that shed radiance and warmth upon the moving waves of well-ordered men

* *Freethinker*, June 7, 1908.

† New York: 217 East 66th-street. Editor, V. Rejsek.

‡ *Les Tchèques et la Libre Pensée.* (Prague: 1910.)

and women of all nationalities who, with bands playing and some 400 banners flying, marched through the streets of Brussels to the Grand' Place. Flippant Frenchmen were even heard to say that God Almighty had evidently become a Freethinker. When the procession halted before the balcony of the Maison du Roi, the memorial stone was unveiled bearing the following inscription:—

"To the memory of the Counts Egmont and Horne, beheaded in this place by order of Philip II. in 1568, for having defended liberty of conscience; this Marble was dedicated by the International Committee appointed to commemorate the heroic death of Francisco Ferrer, shot at Montjuich on behalf of the same cause, in 1909."

The inaugural speech delivered by M. Emile Vinck, in the name of the Ferrer Committee, was a masterpiece of moderation and eloquence.

M. Vinck evoked the memory of the scene enacted on that same spot—the Grand' Place—at 10 o'clock of the morning of the 5th June, 1568, a large platform serving as a scaffold, and around it the Spanish lancers armed *cap a-pie*, ready with their lances to sweep the crowd away on the first signal of revolt, and on the scaffold the two condemned Counts, attended by a priest. By a supreme act of hypocrisy the men who sent their victims to the scaffold came there to offer them the insult of their consolations.

After the lapse of nearly three centuries a different scene is enacted. Ferrer is assassinated in the moat at Montjuich by bigots who had not the courage to openly commit their crime. During fourteen hours of mortal agony their victim is placed in the *chapelle ardente*, surrounded by priests plying him with prayers and endeavoring—all in vain—to obtain the retraction of his philosophic opinions.

The speaker claimed that Ferrer's death marks a new stage in the upward march of humanity.

We are no longer concerned—like the Luthers of old—in interpreting the meaning of revelation. Our task is to learn to read the pages of the great book some new texts of which Science is unfolding to us every day, and the poetry of which reveals itself to him who can understand the beauty and the majesty of human endeavor and the infinite possibilities of its perfectibility.

Ferrer sought to teach the youth of Spain to comprehend the prayers of this new religion of Humanity. This was Ferrer's crime.

While Count Egmont, kneeling and his hands clasped, cried out before his death: "Lord, into Thy hands I commend my spirit," Ferrer dies erect, facing his executioners, and exclaims: "Aim straight. I am innocent. Long live the Escuela Moderna."

At the conclusion of his moving address, from which we have culled a few sentences, some well-chosen words in Spanish, on behalf of the Freethinkers of the Peninsula, were spoken by Dr. Simarro, the well-known professor of experimental psychology at the University of Madrid and author of a recent work, *El Proceso de Ferrer*,* which amply vindicates Ferrer's innocence. His speech was instantly translated into French by Professor Tarrida del Marmol who, years ago, narrowly escaped torture and death at the hands of the modern Inquisition at Montjuich.

The intervention of Professor Marmol, the friend and untiring vindicator of Ferrer, gave almost an official status to England at this great function, Professor Marmol having long been resident in this country, which he passionately loves because of the comparative freedom of its institutions, and because of his English wife and the children, speaking our English tongue, born to him during his exile in our midst.

Conspicuous amongst the spectators was Madame Soledad Villafranca, sad and beautiful, her intelligent face now and again radiant with triumph as she beheld the magnificence of the homage paid to the memory of the heroic man by whose side she had labored for the intellectual freedom of Spain and for the rationalist education of the neglected children

of her native land. Some weeks before the murder of Ferrer she was driven into exile to Teruel, with the other professors and officials of the Escuela Moderna, exposed to the insults of a fanaticised population, and brought to the verge of starvation by the calculating inhumanity of her tormentors. In those dark days—unknown to all but a few in the outer world—she was isolated from the effectual help and sympathy of her friends and the admirers of the brave man with whom her lot was cast. But on that eventful Sunday in Brussels she stood the cynosure of thousands of admiring eyes amidst the 500 chosen delegates of Freethought organisations from every part of the world, the most sympathetic figure in this great spectacle of international fraternisation. The quick revolt of modern civilisation against the crime of October 13, 1909 (the date of Ferrer's murder), and the instant vindication of the innocence of the Martyr of Montjuich are facts that mark for the historical student the vast strides that humanity has taken since a quiescent world looked on at the beheading at Brussels of the Counts Egmont and Horne. To-day it quivers with horror and indignation when it thinks of the assassination of Ferrer consummated in stealthy silence at Barcelona. Save for the slow but sure education of the public conscience, wrought by the processes of time and thought during the intervening centuries, Soledad Villafranca and her phalanx of sympathisers assembled in the Grand' Place would have met the fate the dread of which cowed the spirit of rebellion in the breasts of the burghers who witnessed the execution of the patriot Counts.

In those evil times thought was gagged and its expression made a crime. To-day a Freethought Congress meets at Brussels, with Haeckel and Anatole France—the two greatest names of the age in Science and Literature—as Honorary Presidents of these very uneclesiastical conclaves. The leading newspapers in Brussels gave lengthy reports of the proceedings, and the spirit of fair-play and universal toleration pervaded the land as though its soil, and the soil of all its neighbors, had never been soaked with the blood of heretics and unbelievers. Delegates from every country met to discuss the one question which occupied the attention of the Congress—"the state of the law in the different countries in reference to liberty of conscience and the legal guarantees of its exercise." The inaugural address, delivered by Professor Hector Denis, dealing with the "Philosophic Bases of Liberty of Conscience"—a masterly presentment of the historical and ethical foundations of the principle of intellectual freedom—has already been dealt with by Mr. Lloyd in the columns of the *Freethinker*. This little brochure is of special value inasmuch as it presents the full text of Hector Denis' admirable address. For that reason, and because of the many encouragements and salutary lessons which these International Parliaments of Freethought enshrine, and which Brussels so eloquently taught, we hope many of our readers will obtain this interesting pamphlet.

WILLIAM HEAFORD.

Secular Education at South Shields.

At the South Shields By-Election both candidates were asked if they were in favor of Secular Education. The Unionist candidate, Mr. Vaughan Williams, replied that he was in favor of parents securing for their children that education which they desire. Let the Secular parent have his child taught in a secular way and let the religious parent have his child educated in his religion by those who believe in it. Don't ask anyone to teach a religion in which he does not believe; you will make the man a hypocrite and the child an Atheist. The Liberal, and successful, candidate was asked at the Trade Unionists' meeting if he would support the Secular Education resolution which had been carried by huge majorities at successive Trades Union Congresses, and answered that he was being driven unwittingly to a secular solution of the education problem, though he should have preferred Mr. Birrel's Bill if they could have carried it.

R. C.

A Just God.

BY W. W. COLLINS.

PREACHING recently on "Misconceptions of God," the Rev. Dr. Gibb asserted that Nature revealed no Brothers Cheeryble, "but rather a stern inexorable Being Who rendered to each man according to his deeds." It seems to us that this assertion is due to an entire misconception of Nature. If Dr. Gibb would have us believe that Nature reveals a Being who renders to each according to his deserts, we should have to decline on the grounds that any such assumption is disproved by Nature herself. The fact is, Nature reveals no such being, nor does it anywhere suggest a Being who is in any way concerned regarding man's deeds or his needs. If a man take poison, or, if unable to swim, he gets into deep water, Nature takes his life, and that without the slightest regard as to whether he did this by design or by mischance, of set purpose or by accident. Nature *is* inexorable. But a Being who rendered the same punishment to deeds irrespective of the circumstances by which they came to pass, would be as wanting in morality as in intelligence. In this world some men succeed and some fail, but it is not the virtuous man who always achieves success, nor is it the villain who always ends disastrously. The fact everywhere stares us in the face that Nature cares nothing for the circumstances which compel the attention of justice and mitigate its renderings. Nature never discriminates between innocence and guilt, she is as inexorable as an avalanche, as merciless as a tiger, and as conscienceless as an iceberg, and whether her moods impress us as tender and kind or as stern and cruel, they never reveal ought but her own inexorable forces and immutable laws.

Scarcely a day passes but news comes to hand of some fresh calamity or some new overwhelming disaster. In Italy another earthquake has wrought serious damage to no fewer than seventeen towns and villages, many of the inhabitants being killed while asleep, and buried in the ruins of their houses. Even the beautiful cathedral of Bovino has been damaged, showing that earthquakes are quite as regardless of religious sentiment as they are of human sufferings. In Hungary more than a thousand lives have been lost, these including a hundred and fifty school children. Houses, farms, and cattle have been swept away. Serious damage by flood has also been done in Switzerland, where twenty-six fatalities are reported. From Bavaria also comes intelligence of bridges swept away, houses destroyed, and bodies carried down into the rivers. In spite of such irresistible evidences of Nature's callous indifference to human sufferings, preachers will continue to tell us that Nature is God's handiwork, that Nature's laws are the expression of God's will, and that God's tender mercies are over all his works. Even if all this were true, it would be but poor consolation to the sufferers by earthquake and by flood. In view of such calamities as these, all talk of Nature revealing a Being who renders to man according to his deeds, sounds what it really is—mere hollow and pretentious verbiage. Have those who have been drowned by flood, and those buried beneath the ruins of their dwellings, been rendered to according to their deeds? What deeds had the one hundred and fifty drowned school children done to bring such rendering upon them? Nature's inflictions are hard enough to bear, but if we thought they were the renderings of any revealed Being we could scarcely regard him as other than mercilessly cruel and unjust.—*Examiner*, Christchurch, New Zealand.

"Mamma, when I say my prayers to-night, may I pray for rain?"

"Of course, dear. But don't you think we've had enough rain?"

"Not quite. Jennie Jones is going to have a picnic to-morrow, and I ain't invited."

Correspondence.

THE FUTURE OF FREETHOUGHT.

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE FREETHINKER."

SIR,—I am an Atheist, a Socialist, and a pessimist. I am not a pessimist by temperament, but through bitter knowledge of mankind I have been forced into that point of view, which I have held now for about ten years.

As I have always lived in the intellectual backwoods of the United States, up to a year ago, I naturally knew nothing of the *Freethinker*. From the very first number I bought, I have admired the strength and ability with which the paper is handled. Moreover, I have just heard you lecture on "The Eye of Faith and What It Sees." This lecture, too, I admired; but I still confess myself sceptical and pessimistic about your success.

At the present moment there are two great changes going on in the Christian Churches. The first is on the part of the clergy, who are everywhere admitting, in greater and greater numbers, that all the attacks of science are justified; that they neither know anything about God or heaven, but that they find it desirable to believe in both. In other words, they admit with Paul that "faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen"; that it makes them happy to believe, and unhappy to doubt, is enough for them. In short, Agnostic Christianity is in the air, and you find men of science like Sir Oliver Lodge giving it their blessing, and using their ability in fostering it.

At the same time there is a second movement on the part of the laity. These are going out of the Churches in ever greater numbers. They are sick of their slavery.

Apparently all this looks like Christianity cutting its own throat. But I am sceptical, as it becomes every pessimist to be. I have very little confidence in the "fat head" of humanity, as you call it.

Suppose, for instance, that once the congregations get outside the churches, where they can see the facts of the universe, how will those facts strike them, after their brains have been kept in subjection for so many centuries by the priests? The facts will strike them as things too terrible for man ever to dream of conquering. They will see the terrible evils of Nature, and how Nature still dominates and brutalises man. Then they will become Determinists, and dream of subduing and controlling Nature in a short time. This dream will prove false, and in despair they will turn to the old lying dream again—the dream of heaven and God—and faith will be "the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen." The children will be brought up in greater ignorance than ever, except, perhaps, in the case of the intelligent, the wealthy, the aristocrat caste, the Brahmins of England. Once again the mob will grovel, as in the Middle Ages.

Now how do you know that this is not likely to occur? I want to ask. As a matter of fact, in conservative England it is more likely to occur than anywhere else—this great reaction, this blind falling-back on mere credulity. And there is a school of thinkers in England to-day who are publicly advocating this return to ignorant superstition for the mob, and enlightenment for the few. I refer to the followers of Nietzsche, Dr. Robert Levy, Mr. J. M. Kennody, and Mr. Anthony M. Ludovici, who are all extremely industrious in circulating their propaganda.

I admit that it is the dark hour for Christianity. Particularly is this true on the Continent, where the Roman Church has gone too far and been more open in its backing of reactionary politics than the various sects have been here. But it may be true that the dark hour of Christianity is that just before the dawn. And the bright days of Christianity are always the dark days of humanity.

There are thousands of "Christians" to-day in England who are in reality pure Agnostics. Yet they stay in the churches, partly through cowardice, partly through sheer conservatism and fear of any change. The moment the priest-caste is broken, they think, that moment anarchy will break loose.

Moreover, as the woman who debated with you the other Sunday evening said, if you take the most degraded of humanity, and bully them into thinking that God will punish them if they don't behave, then *some* of them *will* behave. But, unless you do make their minds grovel before some idol of this sort, they will not listen to all the reasons in the world. Another argument for the priests.

In short, you must fight harder than ever. Christianity has not surrendered. Christianity never surrenders. It has merely retreated with heavy losses from its position fifty years ago to an unknown ground, which you may find out to be an immensely favorable one. So I hope you will not listen to those who would have "Acid Drops" omitted and the paper softened. The more bitterly you attack, the better. You have weathered the great storms of outer

ocean: the sunken reefs of the shore await you. The Christians at any moment may say that your ethics are purely Christian, that you are entirely Christian without knowing it, that all your talk about the priests is old-fashioned prejudice, and that the whole situation is altered now, the priests being merely good ethical lecturers of your type, who get no more money for their efforts than you do. And there will be an end of your power and influence. This catastrophe must not occur.

JOHN G. FLETCHER.

Rationalist Peace Society.

38 Cursitor-street, London, E.C.

DEAR SIR OR MADAM,—

The Rationalist Peace Society has been formed to carry on a propaganda in the interest of International Peace on essentially and avowedly Rationalist lines, without reference to religious sanctions of any kind. On this basis its special objects will be:—

- (a) To promote International Peace by the advocacy of International Arbitration;
- (b) To oppose Militarism in all its forms;
- (c) To promote friendly understandings between the various nations.

It is not intended to act in any way antagonistically towards any existing Peace organisations; rather to cooperate with them, on the lines laid down, on every possible occasion.

Believing that you will sympathise with our efforts and methods, we venture to appeal to you for your support, and hope that you will become a member of the Society and induce others to join us.

The annual subscription has been fixed at a minimum of one shilling, and any persons who already subscribe to existing Peace bodies may, if they choose, become members of the Rationalist Peace Society without paying any subscription to its funds. But we must remind you that the amount of work we are able to do will depend to a great extent on the amount of financial support we are able to obtain.

Yours faithfully,

HYPATIA BRADLAUGH BONNER, Chairman.

EDWARD G. SMITH, Hon. Secretary.

(On behalf of the Committee.)

Reply to G. K. Chesterton and Hilaire Belloc.

You say you want tradition. Well,
What nobler is than ours
That ran from dawn in Greece until
It gained its present powers?

'Tis true another one there is,
Of cruelty and shame;

This, too, you damn; and it is *this*
That "Catholic" you name.

"You and your foes to us are rogues,"
From off your fence you cry;

'Tis granted, then, that you are true?
This is our one reply.

In one breath you affirm all things,
The next you deal them blows;

In what you call "authority"
Your weary hopes repose:

While God's irrational and man,
And contradiction mocks,
The earth is bedlam running loose,
And life is paradox!

Go, get you gone and take your stand
Upon the other side!

Call not your creed democracy,
When progress you've denied:

Call yourselves anything you like,
To glorify your "ism";

"Romance for romance" sake is best,
Or "Catholic cynicism":

Yours is the force that makes its way
Against tradition's might,
The dogma blocking every day
Man's struggle to the light.

JOHN G. FLETCHER.

A NICE RELIGIOUS BOY.

One servant proving terribly inconvenient, it was necessary to get a Buttons to open the door, clean the boots, and make himself generally useful. Knowing the unregenerateness of the genus boy, I determined on a nice religious one, brought up by the "Christian Brothers." William was his name. He was represented as all I desired, good, quiet, conscientious, obedient, and no relatives. So the treasure came. He was a hopelessly dirty boy. The first thing that he did was to make a black streak on the blue wall-paper from the top to the bottom of the stairs. His face was continually like the face of a sweep with coal-dust, he broke every particle of china that he touched, and he had an instinctive aversion to opening the door. One afternoon, I was busy, with my sleeves rolled up, arranging a cupboard, when I heard the door bell ring several times. Then I called, "William," and after an interval the door was finally opened, and William appeared in my room with a navy blue face from grime and dust, and said sulkily—"There's an old woman downstairs." "Where is she?" I asked. "On the mat," said William, and only when I had finished the cupboard and pulled down my sleeves, did I descend to find the Baroness Burdett Coutts standing in the hall!

I explained that William's only recommendation was his religion, that he had neither knowledge nor manners, and I begged her forgiveness for his rudeness. A few days after her visit, my little son Toodie said to me, "If I tell you something, you won't tell anybody?" I promised, and he said, "William says he is not going to clean his teeth with your brush any more—it's so hard it makes his gums bleed." And I fancy the brush had served more purposes than one, for I once found a round black object in it, which, on examination, proved to be a bird-seed. So I returned William, accompanied by my toothbrush, to the Christian Brothers.—Mrs. T. P. O'Connor, "I Myself."

THE DEAD JESUS.

Dead, His crown of thorns beside him,
In His sepulchre He slumbers—
Dust to dust, ashes to ashes,
Never can He wake again!

Yet the lies His folly fathered
Live and multiply above Him:
Lie the first! A life hereafter
Shall redeem the wrongs of this.

Lie the second! Love thy neighbor
As thyself! The dream, the fancy!
Were it true, each soul's existence
Would be proved by self-negation.

Lie the third! About the morrow
Take no heed—sufficient ever
Is the evil of the moment—
Take no trouble to redress it!

Lie the fourth! Lord God the father
Loves His children and redeems them
He?—the loveless, pulseless, deathless,
Impotent Omnipotence!

Well, He staked His life and lost it!
Flock on flock of sheep have followed
The bell weather of the masses
Into darkness and despair!

Love each other, help each other,
Juggle not with dreams and phrases—
Make ephemeral existence
Beautiful, in spite of God!

—Robert Buchanan.

Obituary.

JUST as the *Freethinker* is going to press we hear, with profound regret, of the death of Mrs. J. Donaldson, of Beechwood, Partick, Glasgow. She was a lady of singularly open, loyal, and generous nature; a model mother, beloved by all her family; one of the *élite* even amongst the noble band of good women, who do more to save the world than all other agencies and influences together. Her face revealed intelligence as well as goodness. She read and reflected, she was an ardent Freethinker, and she never concealed her opinions; indeed, in a private way, she was always doing missionary work for Freethought, besides supporting it with handsome donations. We knew her personally for some twenty-five years, and were always proud to recollect that it was the *Freethinker* that brought her over from Christianity. Mrs. Donaldson died of a seizure on Friday, November 11. The funeral took place on the following Monday, without any religious ceremony, amidst respectful and impressive silence.

SUNDAY LECTURE NOTICES, Etc.

Notices of Lectures, etc., must reach us by first post on Tuesday, and be marked "Lecture Notice" if not sent on postcard.

LONDON.**INDOOR.**

SHOREDITCH TOWN HALL: 7.30, C. Cohen, "Man's Search for God."

WEST HAM BRANCH N. S. S. (Public (Minor) Hall, Canning Town): 7.30, W. J. Ramsey, "The God Idea."

OUTDOOR.

ISLINGTON BRANCH N. S. S. (Highbury Corner): 12 noon, S. J. Cook, a Lecture.

COUNTRY.**INDOOR.**

GLASGOW SECULAR SOCIETY (Hall, 110 Brunswick-street): 12 (noon), Class; 6.30, Miss Freda Kerry, G.D., "Eugenics and the Family."

LEICESTER SECULAR SOCIETY (Secular Hall, Humberstone Gate): 6.30, Concert.

LIVERPOOL BRANCH N. S. S. (Alexandra Hall, Islington-square): F. A. Davie, 3, "Faith and Finance"; 7, "Christ and the Labor Party."

MAESTIG BRANCH N. S. S. (Jenkin's Coffee Tavern, 171 Caerau-rd): 6.30, Tim Dincer, a Lecture.

MANCHESTER BRANCH N. S. S. (Secular Hall, Rusholme-road, All Saints): J. T. Lloyd, 3, "Religious Liberty and the Revolution in Portugal"; 6.30, "History Cooked to Christian Order." Tea at 5.

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