

# THE Freethinker

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*The intellectual light of Europe is not only due to great luminaries whom everyone can name, but to millions of thoughtful persons, now utterly forgotten, who in their time loved the light, and guarded it, and increased it, and carried it into many lands, and bequeathed it as a sacred trust.*—P. G. HAMERTON.

## Who Killed Christ?

WITHOUT committing ourselves to a full acceptance of the Gospel story of Christ's death, with all its monstrous miracles and absurd defiance of Roman and Jewish legal procedure, we propose to take the story as it stands for the purpose of discussing the question at the top of this article.

The ordinary Christian will exclaim that Jesus was murdered by those infernal Jews. Ever since they had the power of persecuting the Jews—that is, ever since the days of Constantine—the Christians have acted on the assumption that the countrymen of Jesus did actually cry out before Pilate, "His blood be on our heads!" and that they and their posterity deserved any amount of robbery and outrage until they unanimously confessed their sin and worshiped him whom they crucified. It made no difference that the contemporaries of Jesus Christ could not transmit their guilt to their offspring. The Christians continued, century after century, to act in the spirit of the sailor in the story. Coming ashore after a long voyage, Jack attended church and heard a pathetic sermon on the Crucifixion. On the following day he looked into the window of a print-shop, and saw a picture of Jesus on the cross. Just then a Jew came and looked into the window; whereupon the sailor, pointing to the picture, asked the Hebrew gentleman whether he recognised it. "That's Jesus," said the Jew, and the sailor immediately knocked him down. Surprised at this treatment, the Hebrew gentleman inquired the reason. "Why," said the sailor, "didn't you infernal Jews crucify him?" The poor son of Abraham admitted the fact, but explained that it happened nearly two thousand years ago. "No matter," said the sailor, "I only heard of it yesterday."

Now, it is perfectly clear, according to the Gospels, that the Jews did *not* kill Jesus. He was put to death by Pontius Pilate. But if they *did* kill him, were they without justification? Was not Jesus, in their judgment, guilty of blasphemy, and was not that a deadly crime under the Mosaic law? "He that blasphemeth the name of the Lord," says Leviticus xxiv. 16, "shall surely be put to death." Were not the Jews, then, carrying out the plain commandment of Jehovah?

Nor was this their only justification. In another part of the Mosaic law (Deut. xiii. 6-10), the Jews were ordered to kill anyone, whether mother, son, daughter, husband, or wife, who should entice them to worship other gods. Now it is expressly maintained by the overwhelming majority of divines that Jesus asserted his own godhead. He is reported as saying, "I and my father are one," and, as St. Paul says, "He thought it no robbery to be equal to God." Were not the Jews, then, bound to kill him if they could?

Let it not be supposed that *we* would have killed him. We are not excusing the Jews as men, but as observers of the Mosaic law and worshipers of Jehovah. Their God is responsible for the death of Jesus, and if Jesus was a portion of that very deity, he was responsible for his own death. His worshipers had learnt the lesson so well that they killed their own God when he came in disguise.

Some friends of Jesus lay the blame of his death on Judas Iscariot. But the whole story of his "betrayal" of Jesus is a downright absurdity. How could he *sell* his master when the commodity was common? What sense is there in his being paid to indicate the best-known man in Jerusalem? Even if the story were true, it appears that Jesus knew what Judas was doing, and as he could easily have returned to Galilee, he was accessory to his own fate. It may also be pointed out that Judas only killed Jesus if the tragedy would not have occurred without him; in which case he was the proximate cause of the Crucifixion; and consequently a benefactor to all who are saved by the blood of Christ. Instead of execration, therefore, he deserves praise, and even the statue which Disraeli suggested as his proper reward.

Who killed Christ? Why, himself. His brain gave way. He was demented. His conduct at Jerusalem was that of a maniac. His very language showed a loss of balance. Whipping the dove-sellers and money-changers, not out of the Temple, but out of its unsanctified precincts, was lunatic violence. Those merchants were fulfilling a necessary, reputable function; selling doves to women who required them as burnt offerings, and exchanging the current Roman money for the sacred Jewish coins which alone were accepted by the Temple priests. It is easy to call them thieves, but they were not tried, and their evidence is unheard. If they cheated, they must have been remarkably clever, for all their customers were Jews. Besides, there were proper tribunals for the correction of such offences, and no one who was not beside himself would think of going into a market and indiscriminately whipping the traders and dashing down their stalls. Certainly any man who did it now would be arrested, if he were not lynched on the spot, and would either be imprisoned or detained at His Majesty's pleasure.

Quite in keeping with these displays of temper was the conduct of Jesus before Pilate. A modicum of common sense would have saved him. He was not required to tell a lie or renounce a conviction. All that was necessary to his release was to plead not guilty and defend himself against the charge of sedition. His death, therefore, was rather a suicide than a martyrdom. Unfortunately the jurisprudence of that age was less scientific than the one which now prevails; the finer differences between sanity and insanity were not discriminated; otherwise Jesus would have been remanded for inquiries into his mental condition.

As a man Jesus died because he had not the sense to live. As a God he must have died voluntarily. In either case it is an idle, gratuitous, enervating indulgence in "the luxury of woe" to be always afflicting ourselves with the story of his doom. Great and good men have suffered and died since, and other lessons are needed than any that may be learnt at the foot of the Cross.

G. W. FOOTE.



## Sir Oliver Lodge and the Christian God.—II.

(Concluded from p. 515.)

IN the opening of his essay Sir Oliver Lodge remarks that he has been engaged for over forty years in mathematical and physical science, and during half that period in exploring unusual psychic development "as opportunity arose." As one result of these labors he has

"learned to regard the universe as a concrete and full-blooded reality, with parts, accessible and intelligible to us, all of it being capable of being understood and investigated by the human mind, not as an abstraction or dreamlike entity whose appearances are deceptive. Our senses do not deceive us; their testimony is true as far as it goes. I have learned to believe in Intelligibility."

If I may say as much without being considered offensive, I would remark that this statement certainly seems "full-blooded" without being over intelligible—that is, in relation to the Christian conception of God. Whether the world we know is a world of reality or of mere appearances is not vital to Christian Theism. "God" might as well exist in the one case as in the other. And as to "Intelligibility," that, I presume, is something we all believe in—that is, when it is not hypostatized and printed with a capital letter, as though it were more, or could be more, than the name of a mental process. The universe is intelligible because we are able to give a coherent account of all we see and feel and experience. In any other sense one is merely playing with a word.

Again, our testimony is true as far as it goes. Only let us be quite certain what that testimony is. Let us be sure what the facts are, and not confuse facts with inferences. The facts upon which religion builds are not questioned by anyone. They are the common property of all. And it is not the facts that constitute religion; it is the inferences derived from the facts that make a religion. More; the feelings the religious man experiences may also be admitted as real things. But, again, it is the interpretation of these feelings that is vital. It is a question of balancing the reasonableness of rival explanations, or of dismissing all that are offered, and of waiting the development of a fuller knowledge.

Let us take an example of Sir Oliver Lodge's method of confusing facts with inference. He says:—

"The Doctrine of Uniformity and Determinism is supposed to be based upon experience. But experience includes the experience of human beings; and some of them certainly appear to be of a capricious and undetermined character..... Watch the orbits of a group of flies as they play; they are manifestly not controlled by mechanical laws as are the motions of the planets. The simplest view of their activity is that it is self-determined, that they are flying about at their own will and turning when they choose..... Here we see free-will in its simplest form..... Why not assume, what is manifestly the truth, that free-will exists and has to be reckoned with, that the universe is not a machine subject to outside forces, but a living organism with initiations of its own."

I have italicized certain words in the above passage because they appear to be peculiarly instructive as illustrating Sir Oliver Lodge's mental characteristics. Thus undetermined action, which only appears to occur with man, of whose impulses we know a deal, becomes much more certain in the case of the fly, of whose impulses we know hardly anything. So a highly contentious opinion becomes manifestly the truth, the whole being buttressed up by a misuse of terms, and concluding with a statement that may be justifiable as a metaphor, but which is simply untrue as a statement of fact.

Again, no one ever asserted that the motions of any living creature, even of a fly, are governed by mechanical laws. Such an expression can only result in confusion. It suggests the movements of an externally coerced body, as in the case of a mass of

matter. But to the laws of pure mechanics one must add, among other forces, chemical and vital forces, and the deterministic proposition is, not that the movements of any living creature are controlled by mechanical laws, as are the motions of the planets, but that the conduct of the fly and of the human being are as much the outcome of forces resident within, and operating on, the organism, as the movements of the planets are the expression of ascertainable mechanical laws. Consequently, Sir Oliver Lodge either fails to see what is the Deterministic position, or he fails to state it correctly.

The introduction of the expression "self-determined" only adds to the confusion. There is a sense in which the phrase is quite acceptable to the Determinist, as there is a sense in which it conveys nothing intelligible. If by self-determined it is meant that what an organism does is the outcome of its peculiar constitution, that it does what it chooses because it is what it is, the Determinist would be the last to deny the truth of the proposition. It is because a fly is what it is that it twists and turns in its play; and it is because a man is what he is that he plays cricket or football. In this sense what each one does is self-determined. The question at issue is not whether the man can determine or choose what he will do, but whether he determines or chooses without his decision admitting of explanation by reference to his innate tastes and capacities, and without reference to the influence of a given environment? That we can seldom, if ever, give this explanation is due to the complexity of the factors that are concerned in all human, and even animal, conduct; but the complexity of a problem is the worst of all reasons for abandoning the only principle by which we can ever hope for its solution.

The triumphantly worded conclusion is really startling. Why, instead of Free Will being "manifestly the truth" it is as questionable a theory as any that exists. And what is meant by calling the universe "a living organism" one quite fails to see. True it has initiations of its own, in the sense that as the universe includes all, all must belong to it; but why a living organism? One can hardly avoid the suspicion that Sir Oliver Lodge's religious faith depends in no small measure upon the use of words which, while devoid of scientific warranty and permissible as metaphors, suggest to the user a concrete application that is quite unjustifiable.

Sir Oliver Lodge returns to an illustration to enforce the idea of deity, of which much was made by the religious press when it was first used. Imagine, he says, one of the white corpuscles in the blood endowed with intelligence and discoursing of itself and the universe. They speculate on themselves and their surroundings, and might assume the existence of a deity whose purpose they served. "So far they could speculate, and so far they would be right." But if they went further and surmised that the only aspect of the universe was the one known to them, they would be wrong. "If they surmised that there was no personality, no feeling, no locomotion, no mind, no purpose, apart from them and their kind, they would greatly err."

Well, the certain thing about this illustration seems to me that Sir Oliver Lodge certainly errs if he believes these arguments vitally affect critics of Theism. It is uncontroversially foolish to assume that the only aspects of the universe possible are those known to us. But no Atheist say so, because no Atheist is called upon to say so. The Atheistic corpuscle would argue that the question at issue between himself and his brother corpuscle of Theistic tendencies is not really whether other aspects of existence may not obtain, but whether or not certain known aspects of existence—mind, purpose, etc.—can exist apart from conditions under which they are always found to exist. And he would argue that mind and purpose as known to him and his fellow-corpuscles are simply inconceivable apart from the special conditions with which they are always associated; and, therefore, to talk of an aspect of the universe where mind and purpose is



not precisely what is meant by mind and purpose in the world of white corpuscles, is like talking of an aspect of the universe under which the three angles of a triangle are together not equal to two right angles. That is they would not be triangles at all.

Sir Oliver's Theistic corpuscle is, in fact, guilty of precisely the blunder with which the Atheistic corpuscle is charged. It assumes that the conditions prompting and governing its own activities are the conditions prompting and governing the non-corpuscular universe. Instead of allowing for other aspects of cosmic activity, it insists that only one aspect is valid. Its reasoning is that, inasmuch as its own activities are accompanied by intelligence and purpose, therefore activities outside self must also be accompanied by intelligence and purpose. And to this the Atheistic corpuscle rightly objects. He points out that allowance must be made for other possibilities, and that the fact of mind being a quality of animal organisation furnishes no reason whatever for assuming it to be a quality of the universe at large.

Sir Oliver Lodge has great faith in the future of the world. "In good time" it is going to be the theatre of so magnificent a development of human life as to "more than compensate for all the pain and suffering, all the blood and tears that have gone to prepare the way." Very pretty—until one asks what all this means. Who is going to be compensated? In the usual way, when we speak of compensation we mean the making good—as far as is possible—to someone injury or loss that has been sustained. We do not talk of granting a farm to one of our present-day peasantry as compensation for injury done to his ancestor in the days of Richard the First. Sir Oliver's compensation is to be "in good time"—probably millenniums hence. Myriads of people are to be born, suffer, and die. The pain and suffering, the blood and tears, are theirs. They die and their story is done. But in "good time" a generation of beings is born who offer "a magnificent development of human energy." And Sir Oliver says this "more than compensates" for all the suffering by the way. But they have no right to compensation. The suffering has not been theirs. They are reaping a benefit they have done nothing to secure, as their forbears have been reaping injury they have done nothing to deserve. To call this compensation a sheer abuse of language. And Sir Oliver's scientific training should at least have taught him that accurate thinking is impossible so long as words are used in the loose and indefinite manner which I am bound to say—is characteristic of his religious pleadings.

C. COHEN.

### The Company We Keep.

A CLERGYMAN recently uttered a word of advice to the doubting, timid spirits that might be among the hearers and readers of his sermon. The value of that advice may be gathered from a statement made at the close of the discourse to the effect that Jesus Christ, having begun his work, will complete it if the people concerned will but help him *by doing it all themselves*. His exhortation to those who had the misfortune of being unbelievers was this: "Keep company with your superiors." "Do you live much," he asked, "with the defeated, or do you strive after the society of the sovereigns and conquerors of the spiritual world? It is a good rule, I am told, that we should seek for the society of men who are a little better than ourselves. Of all perilous positions, that of king amongst your inferiors is perhaps the most perilous." Was there ever a real king who was not the superior of those over whom he reigned? Surely it was his superiority that gave him his pre-eminent position. The preacher virtually admitted this when he asked, "Do you live with the masters of the spiritual world?" "The masters of the spiritual world" is an exceedingly ambiguous phrase;

but the allusion to masters implies that they are superior persons, whom it would do us good to know and associate with, however perilous for them it might be to have anything to do with us. But what and where is the spiritual world, and who are its masters, or rulers? When and by what means did they conquer and take possession of it? We, doubters, know nothing about such a world, not even that it exists, and times without number we have besought the preacher to impart to us some definite information concerning it. Hitherto he has utterly ignored our appeal; but he always talks quite glibly about those who are alleged to have mastered and made it their own. The clergyman we have now in mind said, "If you and I are wise we shall seek to dwell with them," and then mentioned three of them, namely, Jesus Christ, St. Paul, and Catherine of Siena. Jesus Christ occupies the supreme place, while St. Paul and Catherine of Siena stand extremely high among "the dominating personalities of the realms of the spirit." And such as these are the sovereigns whose company we are urged constantly to keep; and, of course, everyone is known by the company he keeps.

The principle enunciated by the preacher commends itself to our judgment; but we are bound to quarrel with his application of it. To tell us that if we associate closely with "the masters of the spiritual world" we shall be cured of our scepticism is to waste precious breath. We deny that there is any evidence whatever of the existence of a spiritual world, and we characterise its so-called conquerors and masters as conscious or unconscious impostors. Take the Gospel Jesus. The record does not furnish a single shred of proof that he had any knowledge of a spiritual world, though he is represented as asserting that he had descended from the good part of it, while his enemies had come up from the wicked portion. He said nothing about either God or Devil that had not been said a hundred times before by men equally as ignorant as himself. The same thing is true of Paul. In one of his Epistles he speaks of "visions and revelations," and tells us that once he "was caught up into Paradise, and heard unspeakable words, which it is not lawful for a man to utter." No doubt he verily believed in a spiritual world; but that he had no knowledge of it is proved by the fact that he could not convey any information about it to his disciples.

Now, both Jesus and Paul were supernatural dogmatists who could brook no contradiction. Jesus roundly cursed all who would not leave all to follow him. His opponents were children of the Devil, and the religious and political guides of the nation were "inwardly full of hypocrisy and iniquity." Unbelievers in him were "fools and blind," who "strained the gnat and swallowed the camel." Paul was not one whit better. The grand eulogium on love in First Corinthians is attributed to him; but Paul's own love embraced only "the brethren." At Paphos, Barnabas and he were requested to explain their new creed to the proconsul, Sergius Paulus, which they readily did, with the result that he was converted to the Christian Faith; but a man named Elymas, possibly a representative of another Jesus-cult, vigorously "withstood them, seeking to turn aside the proconsul from the faith." Surely, this man had a perfect right to hold and to express freely contrary views to those championed by the apostles. But Paul did not think so; and this is what the record relates:—

"Saul, who is also called Paul, filled with the Holy Ghost, fastened his eyes on him, and said, O full of all guilt and all villainy, thou son of the Devil, thou enemy of all righteousness, wilt thou not cease to pervert the right way of the Lord? And now, behold, the hand of the Lord is upon thee, and thou shalt be blind, not seeing the sun for a season. And immediately there fell on him a mist and a darkness; and he went about seeking some to lead him by the hand. Then the proconsul, when he saw what was done, believed, being astonished at the teaching of the Lord."

That is a most illuminating extract, for, while doubtless largely legendary, it clearly shows of what



spirit Christians inevitably are. Intolerance and persecution are a necessity of their creed, as the blood-red history of the Church abundantly testifies. Thus, belief in a spiritual world has often been morally a crime, as well as the source of some of the darkest crimes on record.

We now come to Catherine of Siena. Poor St. Catherine, one's heart bleeds for her at the thought of what the spirit of Jesus and Paul compelled her to be and to do. From the age of five she is said to have indulged, with morbid pleasure, in the most cruel methods of self-mortification. At six years of age, she habitually flogged herself, and induced other children to do the same. At seven, whenever a Dominican monk passed the window at which she watched, she rushed out to kiss the spots of the pavement on which he had placed his feet. She refused to eat, to wash herself, or to comb her hair. In other words, she insisted upon being a half-starved and dirty child to the glory of God. In the article on her in the tenth edition of the *Encyclopædia Britannica* we read thus:—

"About the twelfth year of her life, Catherine wholly abandoned the use of animal food. At fifteen she left off wine. At twenty she gave up bread, living only on uncooked vegetables. She used to sleep but one quarter of an hour in the four and twenty. She always flogged herself till the blood streamed from her three times a day. She lived three years without speaking. She wore a chain of iron round her body, which gradually ate its way into her flesh. And, finally, she remained wholly without food for many years."

Catherine owed her saintship to a mighty miracle, by which she is said to have received the *stigmata*—the scars of the wounds caused by the nails which fastened Jesus to the cross. Those marks on her hands and feet and heart, however made, or whether ever really produced or not, were her chief title to recognition as an exceptionally saintly character. The only observation our preacher makes touching her is that she "knows what it is to rule her spirit as a baron may rule his castle," which, to say the least, is not a specially complimentary one.

Now, what we contend is, not only that keeping company with Jesus, Paul, and St. Catherine would never be the means of converting genuine doubters, but also that those three are by no means the best company one can keep. To Jesus, for example, if we must choose, we much prefer Confucius and Gotama as at once saner and safer guides. Jesus made much of heaven and hell beyond the tomb as incentives to faith in himself; but Confucius and Gotama declined to discuss gods, spiritual beings, death, and a hereafter, with their disciples, on the ground that this life and its many problems were such as to fully engage the energies of the human race. Gotama drew up a list of questions which were never to be answered nor even discussed, and called them Indeterminates, such as whether the world is eternal or not, whether the world is infinite or not, whether the soul is the same as the body, or different from it, and whether a man exists in any way, or not, after death. We hold that Confucius and Gotama are much better company than the Gospel Jesus. To Paul, again, we emphatically prefer Epicurus and his eloquent disciple, Lucretius. Epicurus taught high ethics in his beautiful garden at Athens. He is often sadly misrepresented by prejudiced and ignorant critics; but his teaching was sublime and fascinating. He maintained that the object of life is to be happy, and it is said that his garden bore as an inscription, "Stranger, here will it be well with thee: here pleasure is the highest good." But this is entirely different from what is usually supposed to be the motto of Epicureanism—"Let us eat and drink, for to-morrow we die," although there is a sense in which even this motto is appropriate enough. Why should we not eat and drink to-day because we are to die to-morrow? But, according to Lange in his *History of Materialism* (vol. i., p. 103), Epicurus associated pleasure with virtue, and definitely taught that no man can be happy "unless he is wise, noble, and just." Therefore they who enjoy the society of

Epicurus are in the very best company. When we join Lucretius we are almost in the times of Paul, but how much wholesomer is the former's philosophy. With what scorn he refutes the fallacy that Materialism would lead people into "the paths of immorality and sin." Why, he says, religion has been the fountain from which has flowed a putrid stream of the most damnable abominations. How merrily he laughs, with a fine twinkle in his eye, at the fear of death. They who carefully study his great philosophical poem, *De Rerum Natura*, are in touch with one of earth's noblest sons, fellowship with whom is bound to elevate the mind. Such men have appeared in all ages and countries, though for centuries the Church had neither room nor use for them, and glorified God by burning them. And without a doubt any woman who loyally attends to her rights and duties as a member of the human race is infinitely better company than Catherine of Siena, who was a frightful abnormality, and who, on more than one occasion, must have been guilty of fraud.

Coming to modern times, is it possible to conceive of more profitable company than Shakespeare, Shelley, Swinburne, Whitman, Meredith, and many others that might be named, all thoroughgoing Freethinkers? Intellectual giants they are, converse with whom raises life's level, brightens dull minds, comforts sorrowful hearts, and fertilises barren lives. The absence of the supernatural taint renders possible clearness of conception, straightness of vision, and soundness of judgment, and these qualities constitute greatness, and impart distinction to their possessors.

J. T. LLOYD.

### Alleged Misdeeds of the Divinity.

THE terror inspired, and the havoc and ruin wrought, by earthquakes upon the just and the unjust, with such impartial indifference, are absolutely incompatible with any theory of a wise and merciful providence. Throughout the historic period, the Iberian Peninsula has been one of the most notable areas upon which the blind forces of nature have displayed their callous indifference to human suffering and sorrow. The lower valley of the River Tagus, upon whose banks the beautiful seaport and city of Lisbon stands, is cursed with a lengthy record of appalling earthquakes. The most terrible of these calamities occurred in 1309, 1531, and 1755. Of all the earth-tremblings which have affected what is now the Republic of Portugal, the disastrous event of November, 1755, occupies the leading place. Indeed, it was one of the most frightful of all recorded horrors of its kind. Without the slightest warning, save that of a deep sound resembling distant thunder, which seemed to proceed from the bowels of the earth, the city of Lisbon was shaken to its very foundations. In the short space of six minutes sixty thousand people were sent to their long account. The dust which arose from the ruins of the shattered city almost instantaneously choked the atmosphere and turned day into dark night. But the darkness was soon lightened by the fires which broke out in every direction, and the horrors of the earthquake were intensified by a vast conflagration, and the pillage of the overwhelmed city by its criminal population. The details of this disaster dismayed intellectual Europe. Voltaire was hard put to it to defend his cherished divinity; Goethe, at that time a child, received his first lesson in Freethought. Dr. Johnson dimly realised that his deity was on trial. He seemed to feel that such an outrage upon humanity as the Lisbon catastrophe was morally indefensible, and refused to admit that it had really taken place.

As in the majority of preceding earthquakes, the direction taken by the shocks on this terrible occasion was from the south-west to the north-east. Large masses of the Portuguese coast crumbled and fell into the sea, and immense damage resulted to



the shore between Cape St. Vincent and the mouth of the River Guadiana. The mountain range which borders the Tagus was rent and torn in a most remarkable manner, and giant avalanches of rock were hurled into the valley below.

In the city itself a few buildings escaped destruction, though on all sides surrounded by desolation and woe. The newly constructed quay in Lisbon Harbor had been built entirely of marble, and there a vast crowd of people had gathered in fancied security when it suddenly sank beneath the bay with its human freight. Not one of them ever returned to revisit the glimpses of the moon.

When the earlier shocks had expended their force, the waves of the sea retreated from the shore, hurrying the vessels and other watercraft upon their tumultuous surface. But the sea rapidly returned as a colossal wave sixty feet in height, which destroyed those parts of Lisbon which the earthshocks had spared. Professor Hobbs writes:—

"This great sea-wave, the mightiest that has ever been described in connection with an earthquake, is reported not only to have washed the coast of the Iberian Peninsula, but to have extended with destructive violence to the coasts of many distant countries. At Kinsale, in Ireland, it was strong enough to whirl vessels about in the harbor and to pour into the market-place, and it was of great violence also at the island of Madeira."

The effects of the combined earthquakes and sea-quakes which accompanied this visitation were felt in the Alpine ranges, the Baltic Sea, and in Northern Germany; the shocks were almost as severe at Algiers and Fez as in Spain and Portugal.

Another much earthquake-haunted land is Italy. From the dawn of history to our own times Italia has suffered severely from the rumblings and eruptions of the teeming earth. The tragedy of the burial of Pompeii and Heraculaneum beneath volcanic lava was but one among many similar horrors. In Southern Italy alone some twenty thousand people perished in 1688; forty-three thousand in 1693; and thirty-two thousand in 1783; totalling nearly one hundred thousand in a single century. This last disaster was not preceded by the slightest warning. In the space of two minutes, however, it threw down the secular and sacred edifices in innumerable towns and villages scattered throughout Calabria and North-eastern Sicily. And the numerous catastrophes which have since occurred in the same area point to the permanent operation of those forces which make earthquakes periodically inevitable.

Seismological displays on a vast scale are of periodical occurrence throughout the earthquake zones of Asia. In 1819 a part of the delta of the River Indus was subjected to a series of shocks which extended over four consecutive days. During these disturbances an area "some two thousand square miles in extent subsided so as to be covered by the sea, while a neighboring belt, fifty miles long and sixteen miles wide, rose about 10 ft."\* At Kangra, also in India, an earthquake occurred in 1905 which affected an area of nearly a million and three-quarter square miles, and caused the death of some twenty thousand people.

Very naturally, the physical energy which—

"Shakes the old beldam earth, and topples down Steeples and moss-grown towers,"

has in all ages stimulated the sense of fear and wonder in mankind. Robert Mallet, the celebrated seismologist, informs us that the almost unvarying succession of phenomena recorded of severe earthquakes is primarily an earth-trembling, then a heavy shock, which is succeeded by vibrations which gradually but rapidly die away. As a rule, the shocks last a few seconds only, but the tremblings that follow are sometimes experienced for days, weeks, or even months. In these circumstances little wonder need be expressed that earthquake phenomena have materially moulded the super-natural systems of men. The great German ex-

plorer and Freethinking philosopher, Alexander von Humboldt, although in constant touch with the marvels revealed by modern science, lost his sense of reality when he experienced his first earthquake. If such a highly trained and disciplined intellect as his was overwhelmed with amazement, we may easily imagine the feelings of a savage or a peasant in the presence of a phenomenon which appears to prove that the stability of the solid earth is a complete illusion.

The islands which form the empire of Japan are probably the most unstable in the world. As a matter of fact, between 1885 and 1892, the number of major and minor earthshakings recorded by the instruments of the numerous Japanese observing-stations averaged over one thousand per year. These perturbations were for centuries attributed to the movements of an enormous subterranean spider, though this superstition has in more recent times assumed a modified form. Among the uncultured, earthquakes are now traced to the machinations of a giant catfish. This superstition has doubtless grown up from the fact that the fissures and faults arising from the earthquakes resemble the track of an immense mole. In the Celebes and throughout Mongolia this underground monster assumes the form of a pig; in India, it is a colossal mole; some of the redskins of North America favored a giant tortoise, while many South American savages preferred a whale.

With the ancient Greek races the ocean divinity, Poseidon, was also the earthquake god. The Peloponessus was his dwelling-place, and all the surrounding countries were sacred to him. He was feared and propitiated in every city as a leading divinity. The sea coasts of Achaia were only too familiar with the manifestations of his activities, and along their shores a series of sanctuaries was dedicated to his honor and glory.

"Once, when a Spartan army was in the field, and King Agesipolis was standing with his officers to pour a libation after a meal, the ground was suddenly shaken by an earthquake. With great presence of mind, the king and his officers started a popular hymn to Poseidon, and the soldiers taking up the refrain, the whole army was soon singing the psæan."\*

The countries which so extensively influenced our own divine revelation have, from prehistoric times onwards, been the theatre of disastrous seismological disturbances. Syria and Palestine bear abundant geological witness of past volcanic activities. The region which environs the Dead Sea and the waters of Gennesaret was an important contributory cause of these phenomena. Josephus describes an earthquake which occurred during the Battle of Actium that destroyed the lives of thirty thousand people, in addition to those of countless lower animals. A serious earthquake visited the same area in 1837, while the shock which shook Jerusalem three years earlier did not scruple to damage the Holy Chapel of the Nativity at Bethlehem. As a mere matter of course, the Hebrews ascribed these occurrences to the anger of their offended God. In the Psalms we read, "Thou hast made the earth to tremble; thou hast broken it; heal the breaches thereof; for it shaketh." Or, again: "Tremble thou earth at the presence of the Lord, at the presence of the God of Jacob; which turned the rock into a standing water, the flint into a fountain of waters." Even in the most polished period of Roman civilisation, the rabbis regarded earthquakes as divine chastisements for the performances in the circuses and play-houses of the pagans.

Such pre-scientific views as these have given rise to a host of myths and legends in all parts of the world. Only in quite recent years have the natural forces responsible for earthquakes and volcanic eruptions been submitted to scientific examination. I hope in another article to deal with the results of physical, geographical, and geological investigations in this department of nature. Suffice it to say that

\* Prof. Salisbury, *Physiography*.

\* Prof. W. H. Hobbs.



every seismological fact so far established points to the reign of unvarying natural law. And the day is in all probability not so very far distant when the man of science will be in a position to predict the occurrence of an earthquake with approximate accuracy, and thus help to guard humanity against the terrible experiences of horror, destruction, and death which have hitherto accompanied these perturbations of nature.

T. F. PALMER.

### Dr. Magalhaes Lima, Portuguese Patriot.

It is one of the satires of history that the struggle for the effective chieftainship of the Portuguese people—once the chosen victims of the Holy Inquisition—is now between two distinguished heretics, both of them staunch Freethinkers—to wit, Dr. Theophilo Braga and Dr. Magalhaes Lima. In spite of the curses of the Catholic Church, the Lusitanian Republic has come to stay, and is—let us hope—destined to prompt the Spanish people out of the ruts into which monarchy and religion have confined the energies of the great race which gave the world Cervantes, Servetus, and Ferrer.

The change which has thus come over the scene in these lands which some of us thought but a few years ago were for ever delivered over body and soul into the murderous hands of the Catholic Church, is the eternal justification of those hopes of human progress with which so many hearts have been kindled since the torch of Freethought lit up the dark places of the earth, and been the light to lighten the Christian and other barbarian nations along the path of progress.

No man has done more for Portugal by way of cleansing the Augean stables of monarchist corruption, or by way of disseminating the glorious principles of peace, international solidarity, and Freethought than our distinguished confrère, Dr. Magalhaes Lima. In the darkest days of his country's degradation, when the obscene Carlos and the Church were in holy league with Franco and his corrupt gang in order to strangle every manifestation of political and intellectual life in Portugal, Magalhaes Lima bore the brunt of the battle, and suffered fine, imprisonment, and banishment.....and yet maintained the flag of liberty flying all through the struggle, he fought as a Freethinker, as the editor of a Freethought journal (*A Vanguardia*), and as the Grand Master of the Portuguese Freemasons. His unflagging energy, his moving eloquence, his splendid gifts of organisation rallied the broken ranks and ultimately won for his country the most complete, and at the same time the least bloody, of all modern revolutions. If to-day the Portuguese Republic is a *fait accompli*, that fact is mainly due to the brilliant generalship of Dr. Magalhaes Lima.

In the circumstances, it is not surprising to learn that an influential section of the Portuguese Republican party has put forward the candidature of Dr. Magalhaes Lima, in competition with that of Dr. Theophilo Braga, as first President Elect of the Republic. Copies of the Manifesto published on behalf of this candidate have just reached our hands. It is issued by four numerous groups—one consisting of old and tried Republicans, another of Freemasons, another consisting of Carbonari, and another of Freethinkers. In the eyes of the Church each group is Anathema Maranatha, and therefore all the more likely to consist of good and worthy men.

The Manifesto is issued to "the Portuguese people and to the National Constituent Assembly." The opening paragraph is instructive:—

"The new constitution of the country is now being discussed, and in the event of its approval the election of a President of the Republic will be proceeded with. We are, then, about to have a Presidency, notwithstanding that a great part of the nation is of contrary opinion. In this large section we include ourselves, as we also are contrary to the institution of the Presidency."

In spite of this view, the Committee make a virtue of necessity, and propose the man of their choice.

After stating that "the fullest meed of justice, and the most deserved homage, were paid to the eminent *savant* and great Democrat, Dr. Theophilo Braga, in naming him the President of the Provisional Government," the Manifesto declares that the record of Magalhaes Lima's struggle for Portugal has immense popularity, and his unselfish devotion to the national warfare entitle him to be the choice of the Constituent Assembly, even as he would—as is urged—be the undoubted choice of the country at large if the election to the Presidential chair were determined by universal suffrage. The Manifesto recalls the long list of Lima's services to his country, culminating in the fact that he was the prime mover and inspiring genius that made possible the successful preparation of the memorable revolution of October, 1910. It was in his house wherein the plans of the revolutionists were elaborated by the men—like Candido dos Reis, Dr. Miguel Bombarda, Machado dos Santos—who took a decisive part in overthrowing the monarchy.

There is no doubt as to the popularity of Dr. Lima, nor as to the eminence of his services, not only to the Portuguese nation, but to the cause of peace and international solidarity.

Away from the scenes where these events are happening, and out of touch with the men and the actual circumstances—political, economic, social, and religious—in which the two protagonists are moving, it is difficult, if not invidious, to award the palm of merit to the one or the other. But of this one can feel well assured, that should the choice of the Convention fall upon Magalhaes Lima as the first President Elect of the Portuguese Republic the cause of national progress in Portugal and all liberal movements in every land will find him a wholehearted and conscientious supporter. WILLIAM HEAFORD.

### RELIGION.

Look on this spot—a nation's sepulchre!  
Abode of gods, whose shrines no longer burn.  
Even gods must yield—religions take their turn:  
'Twas Jove's—'tis Mahomet's; and other creeds  
Will rise with other years, till man shall learn  
Vainly his incense soars, his victim bleeds;  
Poor child of Doubt and Death, whose hope is built  
on reeds.

Bound to the earth, he lifts his eyes to heaven—  
Is't not enough, unhappy thing, to know  
Thou art? Is this a boon so kindly given,  
That being, thou wouldst be again, and go,  
Thou know'st not, reck'st not to what region, so  
On earth no more, but mingled with the skies!  
Still wilt thou dream on future joy and woe!  
Regard and weigh yon dust before it flies;  
This little urn saith more than thousand homilies.

—Byron.

Some persons have little knowledge of humanity except keyhole knowledge, and those they don't know they judge by those they do. A Christian cannot understand a Freethinker any more than a slave can appreciate freedom. A Christian is incapable of getting any sublime satisfaction out of doing right. He lives for a reward, and walks in the narrow path for the sake of the dollars here and heaven hereafter. He could not be good unless it paid. He would not worship God unless God would save his soul. The Christian superstition fosters only a jackal appetite.

What is good-breeding for but to save hypocrisy from honest and just criticism? But may not good-breeding sometime cost the world more than it comes to? Why should honesty wear a mask? Why should man apologise for speaking the truth? Is lying such a virtue that punishment must be meted out to him who will not repeat the lie? Frankly, why is there heroism in Christian hypocrisy and cowardice in the confessions of a Freethinker? Is not the world praising the wrong man?

Man to-day is not to set an example by going to church, but by his acts in the world. Sunday is not enough by which to judge of conduct. Man may be a hypocrite for one day, but he cannot be for six days. A man's business, a man's occupation, shows what he is, more than his religion. We cannot take a man's dealings with God for an estimate of his character, but rather his dealings with his brother-man.—L. K. Washburn.



## Acid Drops.

"Salvation Army Finances" was the heading of an article in last week's *Christian World*. Its value may be inferred from the following extract from the opening paragraph:—

"Critics of the Salvation Army have from the beginning frequently stated that General Booth does not issue a balance-sheet, and that he uses the funds supplied by a generous public in a manner that seems to him most desirable, without regard to the intentions of donors. This criticism is very much beside the mark, for a well-known firm of chartered accountants has certified the accounts every year and vouched for their accuracy."

These stale old "gags" satisfy or confuse the general public. Nobody has charged General Booth with not issuing a balance-sheet; the charge is that the balance-sheet contains no satisfactory information. The charge which is *never* made is met—*easily* met; the charge that *is* made is always ignored. That is the way of the Salvation Army—and the way of General Booth; and to understand it you have only to look at his eyes and nose. As to the "chartered accountants," does the *Christian World* writer really believe that they have either the means or the wish to prevent General Booth from spending the Salvation Army funds, from whatever sources they come, in any direction he pleases? Mr. Manson has proved that "the Chief" does exactly as he pleases in this respect. Moreover, the talk about "vouchers" is all blarney. Of course the vouchers are kept for the auditors, and are the basis on which the auditors' voucher is given. But that only proves that the money is *spent*. And who denies *that*? General Booth is not accused of peculation. But he is certainly guilty of double-dealing in his replies to his critics.

It is all very well to talk about "the improving position of the Army in all parts of the world." That is "Colonel" Bates's bluff, and the *Christian World* takes it all as gospel. Assuredly the position of the Salvation Army is not improving in England. "Self-Denial Week" has come to a standstill, and worse; meetings get smaller and smaller, and while the Army talks as big as ever it is less influential. These things are obvious to every ordinary citizen who keeps his eyes open.

General Booth is accorded too much credit. We do not deny his ability, such as it is; the ability of a showman and a business organiser. But two other human beings had as much, and perhaps more, to do with the success of the Salvation Army. One a woman, who is dead; the other a man, who is still living: Mrs. Catherine Booth and Mr. W. T. Stead.

The *Christian World* says that "with the temperature at 85 in the shade, rising to 88 and 90, the yellow sands are calling, and the woods, and the mountains." Yes, they call those who can go. But the vast majority of the people *can't* go. They have to swelter in their mean dwellings in town. It is not so easy for them, as it is for a lucky Christian journalist, to see the goodness of God in this melting weather.

"Christianity," this leader-writer says, "is the Religion of Light." Yes, it was, when it lighted public places with burning heretics; but that day is past. Christianity is now the religion, not of light, but of light-headedness. It has a big heart (enlarged!) and a small brain (decayed!).

At the recent Catholic Congress, Archbishop Bourne presiding, the Rev. C. C. Martindale read a paper on the anti-Rationalist campaign, in which he told the following story:—"A young Catholic, being told that Christianity was a rehash of older religions and mythology, replied: 'You're a damned liar, and I'll give you my reasons for saying so in a month.' (Laughter) In the interval he wrote to me to support him in his contention." (Laughter). How natural it sounds! We all know that Catholic young man with his heavy stock of ignorance and impudence.

Professor Windle, Principal of Cork University, told the Catholic Congress that "Darwinism as a philosophy was dead" and that "Modern scientists were on the side of Christianity." The best answer to this was forthcoming immediately afterwards. The Duke of Norfolk pleaded for £500 to circulate "cheap literature in answer to the detractors of Christianity."

Many a true word is spoken in jest. Mr. Harold Begbie's rather laborious humor in the *Daily Chronicle* concerning Lord Hugh Cecil includes the statement that "He is regarded

by the country not as a politician, but as a Christian." We should be sorry to dispute it.

Necessity knows no law. The Pope ordered a total suspension of the Church laws of fasting and abstinence in Rome so long as the tropical heat lasts.

Another Christian bigot speaks from the grave. Mr. Ebenezer Gibbons, of Fir Tree House, Silver-street, Enfield, by a special clause in his will "disinherits any member of his family who shall embrace the Roman Catholic faith, or shall mortgage or assign or otherwise charge his or her share of his estate for the benefit of the Roman Catholic faith, or any of the objects thereof." We are decidedly of opinion that such conditions in wills should be rendered invalid by law, just like secret trusts and other conditions contrary to the public welfare.

The following Police-Court "Scene" is taken from the *Aberdeen Evening Express*:—

"A witness created something of a 'scene' in the Police Court to-day before Baillie Todd. Witness when asked to take the oath and to repeat the words—'I swear by Almighty God,'—said 'I know nothing about Almighty God' (Sensation.)

The Fiscal (Mr. Robert Lamb)—Are you an atheist?—No, sir.

The Fiscal—What are you?

Witness—I am an agnostic, I think.

The Fiscal—Do you decline to take the oath?

Witness—I decline to take the oath, but will tell the truth so far as I know it.

The Fiscal—Do you believe in a God?

Witness—I know nothing about it.

The Fiscal—Take him away.

Witness then left the box after creating an unusual scene.

The witness was re-called, and the Fiscal, addressing him, said—You said you declined to take the oath because of the reference in it to Almighty God.

Witness—I decline to take the oath because of the reference to God Almighty.

The Fiscal—You will then repeat this, sir (commencing to read over to witness the words of the affirmation to tell the truth).

Witness agreed to make the affirmation to tell the truth, after which he proceeded to give evidence."

The *Express* published a pungent letter on this subject from the pen of Mr. W. P. Adamson, which is brief enough to be reproduced in full:—

"Sir,—The fiscal (Mr. Robert Lamb) in this case had absolutely no right to ask the witness whether he believed in one God, or three, or fifty. The witness had already said that he was an agnostic, which is simply an atheist with a tall hat on—in short, the word is respectable. Further, the fiscal exceeded his powers when he insulted witness by saying, 'Take him away,' and then recalling him.—I am, etc.,

Portsoy, 7th August, 1911.

W. P. ADAMSON."

There is really no more to be said except that judges and magistrates ought to be well aware of the Bradlaugh "Oaths Act" which was passed some twenty-five years ago. Christian bigots do take a monstrous time learning what other people already take for granted.

Rev. J. Warschauer has written a pamphlet—or is it a printed sermon?—in reply to the Rev. R. Roberts's pamphlet on "The Collapse of Historical Christianity." Mr. Warschauer's tolerance consists in stating that he has a "loathing for intolerance," and his "Christian spirit" consists in being as offensive as possible to the writer he is criticising. "In this case," he says, "it is impossible to separate criticism of an argument from criticism of a man." "I could wish it were otherwise," he adds with a Pocksniffian sigh. Of course personalities are necessary *in this case!* The present case is generally an exception from the law of impersonal discussion. Mr. Warschauer warns those who challenge Christianity that they must not be surprised if they "find themselves subjected to a somewhat frank scrutiny." This is only a loss honest way of repeating the Rev. Dr. Wace's statement to Huxley that it ought to be "uncomfortable" for unbelievers.

Mr. Warschauer haughtily informs Mr. Roberts that he ought not to use the title of *Rev.* "while doing his utmost to discredit the religion of Christ," for "Rev." is a title belonging to "a Christian minister"—a statement with which the Rev. Charles Voysey would hardly agree. Mr. Roberts has precisely the same right to use the title of "Rev." that Mr. Warschauer has. Strictly speaking it belongs to clergymen of the Church of England. Dissenters are allowed it only by courtesy. Moreover, Mr. Roberts is, like Mr. Warschauer, a Congregationalist, and every single Congregationalist Church is autonomous. Neither have the Congregationalists any official creed. It is a "go as you



please" arrangement. And when Mr. Warschauer talks about "certain lines drawn and instinctively recognised by ordinary good sense and good feeling," he is merely displaying his customary egotism.

Petty niggling criticism is Mr. Warschauer's forte. One of his greatest triumphs over Mr. Roberts lies in accusing him of misspelling an author's name in some previous publication. The real point at issue, the collapse of Christianity, is for the most part evaded. He admits, however, that "Christianity is passing through important doctrinal changes," but this is not a retreat, it is an advance, and is a proof not of "decay" but of "vitality." Mr. Warschauer actually argues, though he does not quite seem to realise it, that Christianity has not collapsed because it never existed. "The world," he says, "has never been Christian but is slowly growing more so"—which is an obvious Hibernicism. Mr. Roberts is "looking for his Christian age in the past,"—"We," his critic says, "are looking for it in the future." No doubt! It is so easy to see things in the future. All you want for that is faith and fancy. To see them in the past is not so easy,—especially if they never happened. We quite understand Mr. Warschauer's view that Christianity is not played out. He agrees with General Booth that it is just being played in—nearly two thousand years after Christ!

Mr. Warschauer has one simple method of historical criticism: Every good thing that happens is due to Christianity. The peace movement, therefore, is a sign that Christianity is not "collapsing" but is "preparing for ever greater victories and conquests." This is cool indeed. Why, it may be said that the peace movement was almost created by Freethinkers. This is true in England; it is conspicuously true in France. We remember Charles Bradlaugh's peace demonstration in Hyde Park, when England's guns were threatening Egypt. Pious rowdies nearly killed him there. And what were the Warschauers doing? Lying low in the interest of the Gladstone government, and sneering at the "vulgar Atheist." We heard Mr. Cremer say, at one of Bradlaugh's St. James's Hall meetings, that he had circularised all the Nonconformist ministers in Greater London, and that only three had so much as taken the trouble to respond.

"Buddhism is without God, and therefore without hope." Thus writes Mr. Warschauer in the *Christian World*. Greater nonsense was never penned. And what is the meaning of *hope* in this passage? Mr. Warschauer expects to live for ever. That is his hope. That is really all he wants a God for. The Deity is but the head of Mr. Warschauer's life-assurance firm. It does not even occur to the reverend gentleman that his living for ever is no particular advantage to the universe. We suggest that so much Warschauer may be objectionable, and that the universe might be better for a change.

Religion is often a good thing to labor your adversary with. This was recognised by Mr. George Brown, a member of the Socialist colony at Arden, near Wilmington, Delaware. Having a quarrel with another member of the colony—Mr. Upton Sinclair, the novelist—he laid an information against that gentleman and nine other leaders of the colony for playing lawn tennis and baseball on Sunday. All ten were sentenced to one day's detention in the workhouse. They wore the prison clothes, had prison fare to eat, underwent the prison bath, and worked at stone-breaking. We suppose they understand now why Sabbatarianism and other religious mischief should be opposed.

Mr. Campbell has been reading "a treatise on the philosophy of nescience" and "a work on Christian mysticism," and he says it was such a relief to turn from one to the other,—which shows that he has nothing of the temperament of a thinker. But let us hear Mr. Campbell:—

"After reading a few pages of the testimony of St. Catherine of Genoa and St. John of the Cross, I involuntarily exclaimed, One such illuminating spiritual discovery as these great souls possessed is enough to shatter to pieces all the arguments of all the atheists that have ever lived. Mind you, I am not speaking about their theology; their theology may have been all wrong or it may have been all right; I am speaking of a transcendent fact, the fact that in their exalted moments they had an immediate and absolutely undeniable realisation of the presence and the love of God."

In their exalted moments! Quite so. But it might as well read "their mad moments." If you are only "exalted" enough you can realise anything. And the Catholic mystics often were exalted enough; that is to say, mad enough. Mr. Campbell has probably never thought of the questions, Why are there no Protestant saints? Why are there no first-

class Protestant mystics? The answer is, because Protestants are not mad enough—and Catholics are. When one understands that one may smile at Mr. Campbell's reference to the arguments of Atheism; or, as he hectically puts it, "of all the atheists that have ever lived."

Rev. R. J. Campbell has "longings that earth can never satisfy." What a wonderful man he is—in his own estimation!

The New Theology weekly chuckles over what a grain of sagacity would have shown to be a printer's blunder in the *Freethinker*. We pointed out that our contemporary had wrongly quoted a text of Peter's and put it into the mouth of Paul. "The text," our printer made us say, "is in the fifteenth verse of the third epistle to Peter." The "to" is, of course, a silly blunder for "of," and the words "chapter of the first" were left out between "third" and "epistle." Such omissions are common blunders in composing rooms, as every pressman knows. That is why it is so necessary to read proofs by copy; a precaution that is sometimes ignored in the case of late paragraphs.

The drought in India threatens the most serious consequences. In the Punjab the ball worm is spreading unchecked, and unless it can be stopped in some way the cotton crop is doomed. "Good old "Providence"!

There is a moral in the following extract from the *Daily Chronicle* of August 10:—

"Toulon, Aug. 9.

Two French sailors, named Lemarechal and Guegen, who murdered a comrade in order to rob him, were executed here this morning.

The elder of the two, Lemarechal, showed great callousness, but the younger, Guegen, was in a state of partial collapse. He kept repeating "Oh God, my poor mother!"

Both men attended Mass and took breakfast with a glass or two of wine. Their greatest dread was that they would be guillotined, but they received a military execution. They were conveyed to the parade-ground in chains, and both smoked cigarettes until they were shot down.—*Reuter*."

The moral is that a readiness to attend Mass, and eat the body of Christ, is no security against the vilest crimes.

Monday's newspapers in London contained long reports of the horrible lynching of a negro, Ezekiel Walker, at Coatsville, thirty-five miles from Philadelphia. There was no "white woman" in the case; the black man shot a white policeman, who attempted to arrest him for robbery. When the posse overtook the fugitive he tried to shoot himself; he did not die, but his injuries were such that he had to be taken to the hospital, where he was chained to his cot. A mob of five hundred lynchings took him out of the hospital, cot and all, as they could not unlock the chains. A pyre was made outside the town and the negro (on his cot) was burnt alive. It took fully five minutes to finish him. Three times he struggled out of the flames, and three times he was thrust back, the last time with pitchforks pushed into his body. His agony was watched with delectation by a crowd of two thousand people, including plenty of women—and all of them, we suppose, of the Christian persuasion. But one feature of this case was decidedly novel. As the procession to the pyre went along it passed several churches. "Evening service was terminating," says the *Daily Express*, "and many worshipers joined the throng, shouting curses at the black." What a beautiful illustration of the softening and refining influence of religion!

We do not wonder at the rioting in Liverpool—without discussing whether the police or the strikers (or the hooligans) really began it. A riotous temper has been cultivated in Liverpool as in Belfast—the two great strongholds of Orangeism. Catholics and Protestants have disgraced Liverpool for many years with their vulgar and bitter quarrels. Every now and then these Christian bigots (disciples of the "religion of love"! ) turn the streets where they most meet each other into a perfect pandemonium. The police are used to fighting the crowd, and the crowd are used to fighting the police. The strike has only given a fresh direction to the game and widened its area.

Mr. Winston Churchill, the American novelist, according to the *Christian World*, "does not care whether a politician is a Democrat or a Republican—but he must be a good man. And to him that means a Christian man." The cheek of these Christians! To be good is to be like them. They monopolise virtue, and talk as though they invented it.



### Mr. Foote's Engagements.

October 1, 8, 15, Queen's Hall, London; 22, Birmingham Town Hall; 29, Liverpool.

November 5, Leicester; 12, Manchester.

### To Correspondents.

**PRESIDENT'S HONORARIUM FUND, 1911.**—Previously acknowledged £281 3s. 9d. Received since:—Bishop of Ipswich, 2s. 6d.; G. F. Dixon, £1; J. W., 10s. 6d.; H. Good, 3s.

**THE VANCE TESTIMONIAL FUND.**—Previously acknowledged, £112 16s. Received since:—F. Goodwin, 2s.; W. E. Page, 2s.; J. Ratcliffe, 1s.; Charles Pegg £5; Bishop of Ipswich, 2s. 6d.; G. B. Taylor, £1; W. McKelvie, 2s.; Elizabeth Lechmere, 10s.; Miss Baker, £2; G. F. Dixon, £1; Augusta Forrer, 10s.; W. Horabin, 10s.; H. Good, 3s.

**BISHOP OF IPSWICH.**—Thanks for all your good wishes.

**A. H. WATERMAN.**—There was no political bias in the paragraph. We have criticised Mr. Asquith's religious utterances just as trenchantly as we have criticised those of Lord Hugh Cecil and Mr. F. E. Smith. Is it the "monkey lord" that you object to? Well, it seems to us (of the two) most rough on the monkey. What simian would spend a lot of time shouting "vide, vide" while the Prime Minister was trying to address the House of Commons? Hooliganism is hooliganism, and free speech is an essential of civilisation. Are you not intolerant yourself in dropping the *Freethinker* because you differ from one paragraph? We venture to think you will be the principal loser.

**W. C. INGLIS.**—Thanks for your interesting letter. We are very glad to hear of the progress of Freethought in S. W. Scotland. No doubt the world is bad enough, but is your remedy likely to be beneficial? If tender-hearted men refrain from marriage and fatherhood are they not simply leaving the continuation of the species to the hard-hearted? And how will that make the world nicer to live in?

**F. WILKINS.**—Glad you have derived so much benefit from reading the *Freethinker*. Somebody has been practising on your Christian friend's simplicity. There is a passage about Jesus in the works of Josephus, but scholars, including Christian scholars, are almost unanimous as to its being an interpolation. It does not refer, however, to "the transfiguration of Christ." See the chapter on "Pious Forgeries" in our *Crimes of Christianity*.

**J. W. DAWSON.**—Pleased to hear you say of the *Freethinker* that your only regret is that you "did not commence taking it much earlier." We should be glad to hear further about the new N. S. S. Branch at Sheffield and its outdoor work.

**W. E. PAGE.**—Thanks for your report of Mr. Bates's successful month's work in the Nelson and Colne district, though it does not materially add to what we have already published. Glad to have your thanks for "many happy hours spent in reading the *Freethinker*."

**JOSEPH BATES.**—Thanks for the Warschauer pamphlet. We had not heard of the Leeds prosecution. You do right, being so near, in attending the court to watch the proceedings. Kindly communicate again as promptly as possible.

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

**G. B. TAYLOR.**—Sailing about the world, as you do, it is enough to "look in" at the subscription list at some time. A good many, with no such disadvantage, don't look in at all. As for grammar and spelling, never worry about them, as long as you are not a professional writer. Brains and sense are ever so much more important. The average preacher is not the equal of a ship's captain simply because he swears in more classical language and talks nonsense in better English.

**J. KING.**—We know Cobbett's *English Grammar* quite well. It is the best extant. His *French Grammar* is of similar merit. With regard to Shakespeare, you miss our point. We did not say or suggest that the Master is above criticism, but merely that he made pedantry subservient to a higher law. "Replaced" in the passage you quote is a vulgarism. We never use it in that way ourselves.

**J. B.**—Thanks for cuttings. See "Acid Drops." We have not forgotten Dixon. We will attend to him presently. Nothing can be done in this tropical (and holiday) weather.

**W. P. ADAMSON.**—Very well done.

**I. SHAW.**—Your situation, surrounded as you are by bigots, evokes our sympathy. But you are young, and the future may be brighter. "Be strong," an old book says; we add, "Be brave." Mr. Lloyd won't mind your making use of his article in your letter to the local press.

**W. E. PAGE.**—As the bench considered there was no intention to defraud, and that the offence was technical, we have nothing to say. Ours is not a personal crusade against Christians.

**MISS BAKER,** daughter of the late Daniel Baker, "has very great pleasure in contributing to the Miss Vance fund, and sends sincerest wishes for her speedy recovery."

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

### Sugar Plums.

London Freethinkers will bear in mind that Mr. Foote starts the new three-months' course of lectures at Queen's (Minor) Hall in October. He will be followed by Mr. Cohen, Mr. Lloyd, and Mrs. Bradlaugh Bonner.

The Bradlaugh Dinner takes place this year on Wednesday, September 27, at the Holborn Restaurant. Mr. Foote has accepted the invitation to preside.

We renew our appeal to intending subscribers to the Vance Testimonial Fund. The Fund cannot very well be closed at the end of August, as we hoped it might be; an extension to the end of September is inevitable; but the presentation really ought to be made in October. Perhaps it could be made at the "social" which is being arranged to take place at Anderton's Hotel during that month. Some six-weeks remains for intending subscribers to actualise themselves in the subscription list. Surely that is long enough—considering the time that has already elapsed.

The Wood Green and Edmonton Branches have arranged to have an outing to Chingford on Sunday, August 27. The members of these Branches would be pleased if any member or friend of the N. S. S. would join them. Tea at Butler's Retreat at 5 p.m. Train leaves Harringay Park at 2.15 p.m. Tickets, including rail and tea, 2s.; tea tickets, 1s.; may be obtained from the secretaries, Mr. Grant, 34 Chiswick-road, Edmonton, and Mr. W. Stewart, 78 Carlingford-road, West Green.

The Liverpool Branch holds its annual picnic to-day (August 20) to Thurston. Tickets, including lunch and tea, are 3s. 6d. each; cyclists 2s. 3d. Waggonettes leave Woodside Ferry at 10 a.m. Local "saints" are earnestly invited to apply for tickets to the hon. secretary, Mr. W. McKelvie, 49 Penrose-street, Everton, Liverpool.

The next "social" for London Freethinkers, under the auspices of the N. S. S. Executive, will take place at Anderton's Hotel, Fleet-street, on Thursday evening, October 5. Members of the N. S. S. have free entrance and the privilege of introducing a friend. Non-members unable to be so introduced can gain entrance by applying to the Secretary, at 2 Newcastle-street, E.C., for a complimentary ticket.

We present our best compliments to the outdoor lecturers, who have had a hard task lately in the heat of this wonderful summer. One of them, a lady speaker, tells us that heat is a great relaxer of the voice—which, of course, we know before by personal experience. Miss Kough will lecture this afternoon (Aug. 20) at Victoria Park. She has only one lecture this Sunday, and she will get through that all right. It is the hottest part of the day, but we expect the local "saints" will give her a large audience and a hearty welcome.

Mr. Lloyd conducted the annual services of the Failsworth Secular School on Aug. 13. During the day he had the pleasant duty of "naming" Ethel, the infant daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Pattinson.



## The Fall of Eve.

Do we believe there was a first woman? Certainly not. We are Darwinians. We cannot allow that there was a particular female specimen among the ape-like progenitors of the human race that could be called the first woman, any more than we can allow that there is a particular moment when a girl becomes a woman or a youth a man. The first woman we are concerned with at present is Mrs. Eve, the wife of Mr. Adam, whom Tennyson calls "the grand old gardener," and whose glorious life, noble actions, and wise and witty sayings, ought to have been recorded in the book of Genesis, only the author forgot them. Instead of representing Mr. Adam as a grand old gardener, the inspired biographer represents him as a grand old fool. Like Charles II., in Rochester's epigram, Mr. Adam never did a wise thing; but, unlike the merry monarch, he never said a wise one either. A collection of his utterances, throughout a long life extending to nearly a thousand years, would be the smallest and baldest treatise to be found in the whole world.

Mrs. Eve was the result of an afterthought. God did not include her in the original scheme of things. He threw her in afterwards as a make-weight. Poor Mr. Adam was all alone in his glory in the Garden of Eden, king of the dreariest paradise that ever existed. Monarch of all he surveyed, his right there was none to dispute: except, perhaps, a big-mouthed alligator, a boa-constrictor, a stinging wasp, or an uncatchable flea. Walking abroad and surveying his kingdom, he saw that all the lower animals had partners. Some of the males had one wife, and some a fine harem, but none was without a mate. Mr. Adam was the only male unprovided for, and he was besides a poor orphan. Never had he climbed on his father's knee. God was his father, and his legs were too long. Never had he felt a mother's kiss on his brow. He watched the amorous couples frisking about, the doves billing and cooing, and his solitary heart yearned for a partner. Lifting up his hands to the sky, from which his heavenly parent used occasionally to drop down for a conversation, he cried aloud, in words that were afterwards used by poor diddled Esau, "Bless me, even me also, O my father."

Day after day poor Mr. Adam pined away. In less than a month he lost two stone in weight, and the Devil had serious thoughts of offering to purchase him as a living skeleton for his show in Pandemonium. At last God took pity on him. Forgetting that he had pronounced everything good, or not foreseeing that Moses would be so mean as to record the mistake, he said it was not good for Mr. Adam to be alone, and resolved to make the orphan-bachelor a wife. But how to do it? God had clean forgotten her, and had used up every bit of his material. All the nothing he had in stock when he began to make the universe was exhausted. There was not a particle of nothing left. So God was obliged to use over again some of the old material. He put Mr. Adam into a deep sleep, and carved out one of his ribs. It was the first surgical operation under chloroform. With this spare rib God manufactured the first woman. How it was done nobody knows, but that it was done everybody knows, except a few wretched, obstinate, perverse infidels, who deserve imprisonment in this life and hell-fire in the next. Why God took a rib, instead of a leg or an arm, has never been decided; but Christian commentators say it was to show two things; first, that the man should love the woman, as coming from near his heart, and secondly, that the woman should obey the man, as she came from under his arm. As our Church of England marriage service says, the husband is to love and honor his wife, but the wife is to love, honor and obey her husband!

Mrs. Eve was probably a very pretty creature, or the painters have belied her; and some poets have

declared that God was so much in love with her himself, that he regretted his pledge to give her to Adam. Her attire was remarkably scanty, but beauty unadorned is adorned the most, and her husband's wardrobe was as limited as her own. This gentleman woke up at the proper moment, minus a rib and plus a wife; an awkward, yet after all, a pleasant exchange. He had never seen a woman before, but he recognised Mrs. Eve as his wife straight off. It was the shortest courtship on record.

Directly Mrs. Eve appeared the mischief began—as might be expected. Woman was made for mischief. There is mischief in her bright eyes, and dimpled smiles, and braided hair. She sets the world on fire; that is to say, she kindles the energies of the lubberly creature who calls himself her superior; makes him look spruce and lively, clean his teeth and finger nails, put on a clean shirt, and go courting.

According to the old Hebrew story, Old Nick tempted her to eat the forbidden apples that grew upon Jehovah's favorite tree in the orchard of Eden. But this is doubtless a mistake; a legendary corruption of the original history. Women are not fonder of apples than men; why, then, should the Devil wait for the advent of Mrs. Eve before attempting a stroke of business? John Milton, indeed, following in the wake of Saint Peter, represents her as the weaker vessel; but this is sheer nonsense, and surprising nonsense too, when we recollect that John and Peter were both married.

There cannot be the least doubt that the Devil tempted Mrs. Eve with a *trousseau*. She grew tired, and rather ashamed, of being naked, and yearned to run up a milliner's bill. Besides, she noticed that her Hubby was cooling off in his affection. He did not absolutely neglect her, but he went fishing more frequently, and had long confabulations with arch-angels, to which she was not invited, on account of the supposed inferiority of her intellect. During the honeymoon he could never feast his eyes enough on her loveliness; but after the honeymoon he looked more upon the birds, the trees, the hills, and the sky. One day, however, using a pool for a mirror, she did up her hair, which had previously wantoned over her shoulders. This produced a striking effect on Mr. Adam. He started with pleasure, and the old honeymoon look came back to his eyes. But the effect wore off in time, and poor Mrs. Eve sighed for a fresh means of attack on his imagination.

It was in this condition that she fell an easy prey to the Devil. A beautiful morning filled Eden with splendor. The branches of the trees waved in the refreshing wind; the birds flashed amongst them in their gay plumage; animals of every variety sported in their cageless menagerie; and flowers of every form and hue completed the living picture of paradise. Mrs. Eve hung fondly upon Mr. Adam's breast, but he said he would go fishing, and catch something for dinner.

When he was out of sight, Old Nick appeared in the form of a milliner's assistant. With a smirk and a bow he opened fire on the citadel. From a large portmanteau he produced a lovely wardrobe, which he laid on the grass, together with a book of costumes; and then withdrew while the lady dressed herself. In a quarter of an hour she was attired like a Parisian belle; witching and provoking, from dainty boots to saucy hat; so that when Old Nick returned he felt downright jealous, and cursed Mr. Adam for a dull-eyed booby.

"What have I to pay you?" asked the lady, with a delighted smile. "Nothing, madam, I assure you," replied the tradesman. "It is an honor," he continued, "to serve such an illustrious customer. It will bring me no end of business in other quarters." Then, with another smirk and bow, he retired; exclaiming *solto voce*, "You pay me nothing, but I guess you'll have to pay him."

When Mr. Adam returned, and found his wife so exquisitely adorned, he was unable to restrain his rapture. His passion more than revived; he cooed on this beautiful creature. And this led to his



expulsion from Eden. Jehovah saw himself completely cut out. When Mr. Adam should have been casting his eyes to heaven, he was watching the flicker and listening to the *frou-frou* of Mrs. Eve's skirts on the grass; or drinking delight from her sweet, blue eyes, as they gleamed through the shadow of her broad-brimmed hat. "I'll not stand it," said Jehovah, and they were evicted from the holding.

Dear Mrs. Eve! She did not fall, she rose. The incident was misrepresented by penurious curmudgeons who hated the sight of milliners' bills. Without the "fall" of Mrs. Eve there would have been no clothes, and consequently no civilisation; for houses are only, as it were, extended suits of clothes, larger garments to shield us from the weather, and create for us a *home*. It was after all better to take part in the great Battle of Life, with all its difficulties and dangers, than to loll about eternally in the Garden of Eden, chewing the cud like contemplative cows. "Doing nothing," said a shrewd Yankee, "is the hardest work I know—if you keep at it." Mrs. Eve made life more bearable by giving us something to do. And when the ladies reflect that, if she had not "fallen," and resigned nakedness for clothing, there would have been no Worth and no Madame Louise, they will rejoice that she turned her back on the Garden of Eden.

G. W. FOOTE.

### Religious Tyranny.

(From the Italian of Alfieri.)

WHATEVER idea man has conceived or entertained respecting things he does not understand, such as the soul and deity, that idea, I say, is often one of the firmest supports of tyranny. The idea which has been generally formed by the vulgar of a tyrant so resembles that which nearly all peoples have falsely conceived of a God, that one may infer that the first tyrant was not the *strongest*, as is generally supposed, but the most cunning and the most learned in human nature, and hence the first to give them any notion of deity. It is for this reason that among the majority of peoples religious tyranny has engendered political tyranny. Often they are united in a single head, but they have never failed to render each other mutual support.

The Pagan religion, in multiplying without end the number of the gods, in making Olympus a kind of Republic, in subordinating Jupiter himself to the laws of Fate, in making him respect the customs and privileges of the celestial court, was calculated to be, and in effect was, very favorable to liberty. The Jewish religion, and afterwards the Christian and the Mohammedan, which admitted only one God, the terrible and absolute master of all things, were calculated to be, and always are, much more favorable to tyranny.

I pass lightly over these things, which are not my proper concern, and which others have said before me. I return to my subject. I shall not examine any other religion than ours, and that only in relation to its influence on the tyrannies of Europe.

The Christian religion, which is that of nearly the whole of Europe, is not in its nature favorable to liberty, but the Catholic religion shows itself altogether incompatible with liberty. It will suffice, I think, in order to prove the truth of the first of these propositions, to point out that Christianity neither calls, exhorts, nor leads men to liberty; and yet men should receive the first impulse towards an object so important from religion itself, since there is nothing which has so much power over their souls, or engraves any idea so strongly on their hearts, or which incites them so powerfully to execute great designs.

In fact, in Pagan antiquity, Jupiter, Apollo, the Sybils, the Oracles, commanded the various peoples that worshiped them to emulate each other in love of country and of liberty. Born amongst a people slavish, ignorant, and already entirely subjugated by

priests, the Christian religion knows only how to enjoin the blindest obedience, and is unacquainted even with the name of liberty; and the tyrant, whether priest or layman, it likens unto a God.

If we inquire in what manner Christianity was propagated, we shall find that it spread and established itself more readily under despotisms than in Republics. It could not establish itself in the Roman Empire until liberty had been entirely destroyed by military power; and, at the fall of the Empire, the barbaric nations that first occupied and afterwards established themselves in Italy, in France, in Spain, and in Africa, under their various leaders, soon embraced the Christian religion. And this seems to me the reason. Those leaders wished to remain tyrants, and their followers, accustomed to freedom when not engaged in war, would only render obedience as soldiers to their captains, and never as slaves to their masters. Christianity entered among these conflicting humors as a means whereby the people might be convinced of the necessity of obedience and tyrant-captains be assured of despotic power, provided they were ready to yield a portion of their authority to the priests. In proof of this, it will suffice to observe that those of the Northern peoples who remained poor, simple, and free in their native forests, were the last in Europe to embrace Christianity, and even then they were converted more by violence than persuasion.

The few nations outside Europe that accepted it were nearly always constrained by force and fear; for example, the various countries of Africa and America. But we may plainly perceive from the ferocious fanaticism with which it was received and embraced in China, and still more in Japan, how it would have grown and prospered under those two despotisms. The great number of abuses it includes in the course of time obliges some peoples, much more prudent than enthusiastic, to mitigate it by divesting it of its worst superstitions; and those peoples, distinguished, therefore, by the title of heretics, thus opened for themselves a road to liberty, which returned amongst them, after being long banished from Europe, and brought happiness in its train. Switzerland, Holland, some German towns, England, and America, prove the truth of this. But the peoples who, not daring to bridle this religion, consent to preserve it intact, deprive themselves for ever of the means to regain their liberty. When I say intact I do not mean as it was preached by Jesus, but as disfigured by fraud, falsehood, and violence through his successors. I shall not at present produce all the reasons, but only the principal ones, from which it appears to me impossible that a Catholic State could become free, or remain so, while it continued to be Catholic.

The worship of images, the real presence in the Eucharist, and the other dogmatic points, are assuredly not those which, whether believed or not, have any influence on political liberty; but the Pope, the inquisition, purgatory, confession, indissoluble marriage, and the celibacy of priests, these are the six links of the sacred chain which give to the secular chain such strength that it becomes heavier and harder to break. Beginning with the first of these, I say that a people who believe that there can exist a man who directly represents God, a man who can never *err*, such a people must necessarily be stupid. But if, not believing it, they come to be plagued, persecuted, and compelled by a superior and effective power, it will happen that the first generation will believe in the Pope through fear, their children through habit, and their grandchildren through stupidity. This is the way in which a people who remain Catholic must necessarily, by the influence of the Pope and the Inquisition, become the most ignorant, the most stupid, and the most slavish of peoples.

But, I shall be answered, the heretics believe in the Trinity, and the Trinity appears to the eyes of common sense still more absurd than the things enumerated above; the heretics are then not less stupid than the Catholics. I reply that the Romans



also believed in the flight and cackle of birds, which is even more puerile and absurd, and yet the Romans were great and free. They only became stupid and vile when, stripped of their freedom, they believed in the infamous divinity of *Cæsar*, of Augustus, and of the tyrants still more wicked. In like manner, our Trinity, not being an element of experience, whether believed or not, can never influence political life. But the authority more or less of a man, authority without limits over matters of the highest importance, authority which conceals and covers itself with the sacred mantle of religion, produces great results; results, indeed, of such a nature that every people who believe or admit such an authority, enslave themselves for ever.

(Here comes a trenchant criticism of the six practical dogmas of Catholicism, which we omit as of less special interest to our readers.)

I know not whether we owe to sacerdotalism the first invention of respecting political despotism as something *holy* and *sacred*, or whether despotism created the idea in favor of sacerdotalism. However that may be, this reciprocal and deceitful idolatry is very ancient, for we see in the Old Testament the priests and kings giving each other the title of *sacred*; but never have these two usurping orders called *sacred* the natural and incontestible rights of human society. The truth is that almost all the peoples of the earth have been, are, and alas, perhaps, ever will be, oppressed and dominated by those two classes of men, who, although recognising each other as iniquitous and tyrannical, none the less continue to make themselves respected as sacred. Their crimes have sometimes been unveiled; the people have abhorred them; but, alas, they have always regarded them as divine.

It is a well-known fact that in our century professed Catholics have little belief in the Pope, that the Inquisition has lost nearly all its power, that none but idiots go to Confession, that Indulgences are no longer bought except by some pious and vulgar thieves. But at present, among the Catholics, the military, and the military alone, easily maintains the Pope, Confession, purgatorial offerings, and the rest; that is to say, the tyrant obtains now through the terror inspired by his numerous armies the same results which he formerly obtained through the superstition and the gross ignorance of his people. It matters little to him now whether we believe in God or not, it suffices the tyrant that we believe in him; and to assist that belief, more degrading to us and much less consoling, he employs the *persuasion* that lies in the standing armies which he maintains at our expense.

There are, however, still in Europe some tyrants who, to cover their actions with a mask of hypocrisy, proclaim themselves the supports of religion; whether to gain a reputation for piety, or to please the majority, whose belief in and respect for religion have not died away. Every prudent and cunning tyrant must act thus: either not to deprive himself, by useless incredulity, of that precious branch of absolute power which springs from the fury of the priesthood directed by him, and, *vice versa*, of his own directed by them; or because he fears, in acting otherwise, that some religious fanatic will arise to fulfil the duty of a fanatic of liberty, and these religious fanatics are less rare and more audacious than the others. Why are the fanatics of liberty more rare? Because the name of religion is in all mouths, while that of liberty is in the mouths of only a few, and in the heart of almost none.

The sublimest and most useful of all fanaticisms, that which would produce greater men than any who have yet lived, is the fanaticism which should create and propagate a religion whose God, under the gravest penalties, present and future, commanded all men to be free. But the men who have fanned the fire of fanaticism in the hearts of others have scarcely ever been fanatics themselves, and they have had too great an interest in proclaiming the religion and a God that have severely commanded all men to be slaves.

## A Famous Funny Fellow.

A COLD-BLOODED ESSAY FOR THE HOT WEATHER.

WE have nodded many times over that volume which some wag once described as "the source of England's greatness." The Holy Bible is not altogether so lively as we could wish, except in some places, which are "blue" enough to paralyse the green readers of the *Pink 'Un*. The Grand Old Volume is usually classed as sober fiction. There is, however, a sprinkling of fun, a day's march between each joke. But what of that? A pearl is none the less a pearl even if it is surrounded by an intolerable deal of oyster—which, by the way, is a simile of solemnity. The Bible starts in a sufficiently cold-blooded manner; but the fun commences with the account of Adam, the father of the human race. If the yarn be true he is a relation to all of us—true, a very distant one, but still a relation. Adam was the first man—if he had been a shoemaker instead of a gardener, he would also have been the last man. His education was neglected sadly, for he started life as an adult. It is not everybody who can throw half-hundredweights about on their first day on earth. But think of what he had missed. He never learned to keep fruit and sweets in his mouth without the schoolmaster noticing it. Neither did Adam learn to make noises like cats, or to smoke cheap cigarettes without feeling very ill.

Adam was placed in the Garden of Eden, and acted as park-keeper and gardener. All the clothes he had for a long time was the close of the day, while the mantle of night was his bed-clothing. It did not much matter, however, for as yet the County Council was not. He made the acquaintance of his staff, including wasps. He ceased to be on speaking terms when he found they had darning-needles in their tails.

Adam was the only human being employed in this situation, and later a lady was added to the show-room. Her name was Eve; but Mr. Moses, the Hebrew gentleman who wrote the account of the affair, has forgotten to tell us whether she was a blonde or a brunette. We could have dispensed so easily with Moses's account of his own funeral for a few salient facts concerning Eve's personal appearance. She was a most exceptional woman. It was doubtless unpleasant to commence life as the result of the operation of being carved out of Adam's rib whilst he was asleep; but subsequent operations under chloroform have been of immense service to the human race.

Eve did not say where she came from, but her boxes were marked "Arabia." Adam fell in love and abjured fat bacon. Maybe this is the reason the chosen people do so to the present day. Adam had not been in love for very many years before a lot of small creatures began to creep about the premises and fall into pails and drink boiling water, put soap in the teacups, and swallow tinctures. This accounts for the origin of the human race.

Eve was not a good housekeeper, for she soon cooked up trouble for Adam about some apples, and as a consequence the grand old gardener and his wife both got into trouble at the first assizes. The worry of this business did not shorten Adam's life, for we are told that he lived to the very ripe age of nine hundred and thirty years. It is to be hoped that he was not afflicted with gout or rheumatism during his declining centuries. Let us hope he was tolerably well, for he was intolerably old. The saddest part of the whole affair is the fact that Adam and Eve were never married. As we draw a veil over this part of their lives let us prayerfully ask every reader of this respectable journal if he doesn't feel like blushing when he remembers that Adam forgot that marriage certificate, and that, in consequence, the whole human race is illegitimate?

MIMNERMUS.

There is something inexpressibly sad about the music of a church organ—while the collection is proceeding.



## THE PESSIMIST'S SERMON.

O melancholy Brothers, dark, dark, dark!  
 O battling in black floods without an ark!  
 O spectral wanderers of unholy Night!  
 My soul hath bled for you these sunless years,  
 With bitter blood-drops running down like tears:  
 O dark, dark, dark, withdrawn from joy and light!

My heart is sick with anguish for your bale;  
 Your woe hath been my anguish; yea, I quail  
 And perish in your perishing unblest.  
 And I have searched the heights and depths, the  
 Of all our universe, with desperate hope [scope  
 To find some solace for your wild unrest.

And now at last authentic word I bring,  
 Witnessed by every dead and living thing;  
 Good tidings of great joy for you, for all:  
 There is no God; no Fiend with names divine  
 Made us and tortures us; if we must pine,  
 It is to satiate no Being's gall.

It was the dark delusion of a dream,  
 The living Person conscious and supreme,  
 Whom we must curse for cursing us with life;  
 Whom we must curse because the life He gave  
 Could not be buried in the quiet grave,  
 Could not be killed by poison or by knife.

This little life is all we must endure,  
 The grave's most holy peace is ever sure,  
 We fall asleep and never wake again;  
 Nothing is of us but the mouldering flesh,  
 Whose elements dissolve and merge afresh  
 In earth, air, water, plants, and other men.

We bow down to the universal laws,  
 Which never had for man a special clause  
 Of cruelty or kindness, love or hate.  
 If toads and vultures are obscene to sight,  
 If tigers burn with beauty and with might,  
 Is it by favor or by wrath of Fate?

All substance lives and struggles evermore.  
 Through countless shapes continually at war,  
 By countless interactions interknit:  
 If one is born a certain day on earth,  
 All times and forces tended to that birth,  
 Not all the world could change or hinder it.

I find no hint throughout the Universe  
 Of good or ill, of blessings or of curse;  
 I find alone Necessity Supreme;  
 With infinite Mystery, abysmal, dark,  
 Unlighted ever by the faintest spark  
 For us the fitting shadows of a dream.

O Brothers of sad lives! they are so brief;  
 A few short years must bring us all relief:  
 Can we not bear these years of laboring breath?  
 But if you would not this poor life fulfil,  
 Go, you are free to end it when you will,  
 Without the fear of waking after death.

—James Thomson, "The City of Dreadful Night."

## ORIGINAL SIN.

As an excuse for tyranny, as a justification for slavery, the Church has taught that man is totally depraved. Of the truth of that doctrine the Church has furnished the only evidence there is. The truth is we are both good and bad. The worst are capable of some good deed, and the best are capable of bad. The lowest can rise, and the highest may fall. That mankind may be divided into two great classes, saints and sinners, is an utter falsehood. In times of great disaster, called it may be by the despairing voices of women, men, denounced by the Church as totally depraved, rush to death as to a festival. By such men deeds are done so filled with self-sacrifice and generous daring, that millions pay them the tribute, not only of admiration, but of tears. Above all creeds, above all religions, after all is that divine thing, Humanity; and now and then, on the wide wild sea, or mid the rocks and breakers of some cruel shore, or where the serpents of flame writhe and hiss, some glorious heart, some chivalric soul does a deed that glitters like a star, and gives the lie to all the dogmas of superstition.

—Ingersoll.

Every natural growth is more or less a struggle with other growths, in which, in the long run, the fittest survives. Some are, and must be, wiser than the rest; and the enunciation of a thought in advance of the moment provokes dissent and thus promotes action. Discussion is therefore one of the motive powers of life.—Tyndall.

## An Unholy Alliance.

THE manner in which the admonitions of Holy Writ are carried out in this twentieth century of the Christian era are many and various. And they are most of them interesting.

In the building of the American Tract Society, at 150 Nassau-street, there are a large number of loan sharks. They lend money to those in need at rates of interest varying from 120 to 300 per cent. William H. Henry & Co. lend money at 120 to 288 per cent. interest. Post & Co., in the same building, are more liberal, their maximum being 133 per cent. interest.

There are many others in the building, all doing a thriving business. So many are in the building, indeed, that it is known all over the downtown section as "the loan shark hive." And these facts are equally well known to the American Tract Society, which owns the building and draws a heavy rental from its tenants.

The facts were brought to the attention of Rev. Dr. Swift some time ago, and he expressed surprise and horror. It was a *Globe* reporter who interviewed the reverend doctor on the subject, and the doctor begged for silence.

According to the *Globe* reporter, the doctor asked for silence, not because he was ashamed of the traffic carried on in the building dedicated to the spread of the Gospel. Not at all.

"Publication of these facts," said Dr. Swift, "might cost this society \$100,000 or more in legacies and donations. Many persons are now about to send in their donations for the year's work. Others, who are drawing their wills with the intention of including this society as a beneficiary may be deterred from doing so, and we would lose valuable bequests in that way."

Dr. Swift has, perhaps, told on many occasions that story of Christ in the Temple, when he scourged from its shelter the money-lenders. It is a fine story, and Dr. Swift has doubtless told it with all the dramatic force and with that ring in his voice that carries conviction. It would be interesting to hear Dr. Swift tell that story again.....

But, in the meantime, what is the reason for the American Tract Society harboring the sharks? It is this, and it is simple:—

The society exists "to do good." That is, it goes where there is poverty and crime, and offers words of consolation. It does a charitable act.

If, now, it should happen that crime and poverty and wickedness were abolished, what would be left for the worthy society to do but to get out of business? For this reason these things are necessary to its existence. It must have them, and keep getting more of them, or cease to exist.

Knowing this, and knowing that the loan sharks contribute in some small degree to the total of human unhappiness, the result is that the sharks and the gossellers find themselves with a mutual interest. Hence, they are under the same roof, and apparently happy in their several works.

FREDERICK S. BOYD, in *New York "Call."*

## SCIENCE OF GOD.

It seems to me impossible to obtain from science any clear ideas respecting the ways or nature of the Deity, or even respecting the reality of an Almighty personal God. Science tells us nothing of the infinite attributes of an Almighty Being; it presents to us no personal infinities, whether of power, beneficence, or wisdom. To speak in plain terms—so far as science is concerned, the idea of a personal God is inconceivable (*I mean these words to be understood literally*), as are all the attributes which religion recognises in such a Being.—R. A. Procter.

## Obituary.

ON August 13, 1911, at All Saints' Cemetery, Newcastle-upon-Tyne, the remains of the late George Scirving, aged 83, were laid to rest. The deceased was both Chartist and Secularist, and took an active interest in the Freethought movement in the early 'sixties, and was a well-known attendant at lectures in Newcastle and Shields, usually accompanied by his old Chartist friend, the late Mr. Thos. Thompson, of Shields. He was possessed of exceptional intellect, a calm and genial manner; he made many friends, and was widely respected. Fully conscious that his end was near, he arranged with his friend, Mr. Elijah Copland, to read a secular service at his grave, which request was duly carried out by Mr. Copland. The South Shields Branch of the N. S. S. was represented by Mr. R. C. Chapman and Mr. Fothergill.—J. G. BARTRAM.



**SUNDAY LECTURE NOTICES, Etc.**

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

**LONDON.****OUTDOOR.**

BETHNAL GREEN BRANCH N. S. S. (Victoria Park, near the Fountain): 3.15, Miss Kough, a Lecture; 6.15, Mr. Saphin, a Lecture.

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

EDMONTON BRANCH N. S. S. (The Green): 7.15, E. Burke, "The Case for Secular Education."

FINSBURY PARK: 11.30, F. A. Davies, a Lecture.

ISLINGTON BRANCH N. S. S. (Highbury Corner): 12 noon, Ivan Paperno and Walter Bradford. Newington Green: 7.30, Ivan Paperno, a Lecture. Highbury Corner: Wednesday, at 8, Ivan Paperno, a Lecture.

KINGSLAND BRANCH N. S. S. (Ridley-road): 11.30, A. B. Moss, "The Religion of the Future."

NORTH LONDON BRANCH N. S. S. (Parliament Hill): 3.30, F. A. Davies, a Lecture.

WEST HAM BRANCH N. S. S. (outside Maryland Point Station, Stratford): 7, W. J. Ramsey, "By their fruits shall ye know them."

WOOD GREEN BRANCH N. S. S. (Jolly Butchers Hill, opposite Public Library): 7, Mr. Allison, "Secularism and Death."

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

ALFRETON AND DISTRICT BRANCH N. S. S.: Joseph A. E. Bates—Thursday, Aug. 17, at 7.30, "Origin of the Christ Myth" (with diagrammatic illustrations). Friday, Aug. 18, at 7.30, "Credulities in Decay."

HUDDERSFIELD BRANCH N. S. S. (Market Cross): 8.45, Geo. T. Whitehead, "Christology Above Criticism." Saturday, at 8, Geo. T. Whitehead, "More of Our Friend Judas."

MANSFIELD, NOTTS (Market Place): Joseph A. E. Bates—Monday, Aug. 21, at 7.30, "Dusk of the Gods." Tuesday, at 7.30, "Kingcraft—Past and Present." Wednesday, at 7.30, "Old Wine in New Bottles." Thursday, at 7.30, "Atheism and Death."

**BUSINESS CARDS.**

Short advertisements are inserted under this heading at the rate of 2s. per half inch and 3s. 6d. per inch. No advertisement under this heading can be less than 2s. or extend beyond one inch. Special terms for several continuous insertions.

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*Secretary—Miss E. M. VANCE.*

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

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

The liability of members is limited to £1, in case the Society should ever be wound up and the assets were insufficient to cover liabilities—a most unlikely contingency.

Members pay an entrance fee of ten shillings, and a subsequent yearly subscription of five shillings.

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

The Society's affairs are managed by an elected Board of Directors, consisting of not less than five and not more than twelve members, one-third of whom retire (by ballot) each year,

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

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