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*Every man should be the intellectual proprietor of himself, and intellectually hospitable.*—INGERSOLL.

## God's Gleanings.

CHRISTIANITY teaches an exclusive salvation. Its divines have very rarely doubted that non-Christians would be damned. The wisest and best of the "heathen" were all doomed to everlasting perdition, for no man could possibly be saved except by faith in Christ. It was in Hell, and not even in Purgatory, that Dante saw Brutus, and Saladin, and the great Aristotle, the "master of them who know." "Firmly believe, and doubt not at all," said Saint Augustine, "but that not only all pagans, but also all Jews, heretics, and schismatics, that end this present life without the Catholic Church, shall go into eternal fire, which is prepared for the devil and his angels." The Church of England articles declare that "they are to be held accursed that presume to say that every man shall be saved by the law or sect which he professeth, so that he be diligent to frame his life according to that law and the light of nature." The Book of Homilies admits that "Jews, heretics, and pagans do good works; they clothe the naked, feed the poor, and do other good works of mercy." Yet, because these good works are "not done in the true faith," the doers of them are "lost." The whole doctrine is vigorously and logically summed up by Bishop Beveridge in his *Exposition of the Thirty-nine Articles*. "Let a man," he says, "be never so strict a Jew, never so strict a Mohametan, never so strict in any other religion whatsoever, unless he be a Christian he can never be saved. So that, though many Christians may go to hell, yet none but Christians can ever go to heaven."

Every missionary society presupposes this. Nothing else could excuse the diversion of such vast sums of money from Christian countries, where so many people need relief from destitution and misery. Just as you might leave a hungry man for a while in order to save a man who was in immediate peril of being burnt to death, so you might leave a suffering white man who had a chance of heaven to save a happy black man who was going straight to hell.

Besides, if you admit that anybody but a Christian can go to heaven, you destroy the necessity of Christianity altogether. If every honest man is entitled to a seat in paradise, what is the use of all those myriads of churches and chapels, all those armies of priests, and all those substitutes of sermons. Salvation by good works subverts the very foundations of priestcraft by making churches and preachers superfluous. This is clearly perceived by the professional men of God of every denomination. It is true that the Catholic Church allows a certain efficacy in good works, but it does not admit their sufficiency; while the Protestant Church denies the efficacy of good works altogether, and derives salvation entirely from the free grace of God. Both Churches, therefore, assert the necessity of faith; in other words, they affirm, by implication if not explicitly, that it is impossible to go to heaven without being a Christian.

Now, if only Christians go to heaven, and many Christians go to hell, the question arises, What is

the real number of those who are saved? Here again we are met by the general opinion of Christian divines in all ages that the saved are few in comparison with the lost. Many are called, few are chosen. The way to heaven is narrow, and few there be that find it. Jeremy Taylor, our English Chrysostom, declares in the plainest terms that the future lot will be "bad to the greatest part of mankind." He confesses it is "fearful consideration," but instead of seeking to soften it he presents it in all its rigorous horror. "The greatest part of men and women," he says, "shall dwell in the portion of devils to eternal ages."

Thomas Watson called the saved "God's Gleanings." That cannot be beaten. It is the last word on this wonderful doctrine. The alchemy of genius transmuted a world of verbiage into "one entire and perfect chrysolite" of simile. We picture the Devil reaping the big field with glad triumph, and God humbly and painfully picking up the scanty leavings, like Lazarus feeding on the crumbs that fell from Dives' table; and we commiserate the poor deity who is doomed to such unprofitable labor in the field which he himself ploughed and sowed—nay, created.

What a pitiable thing this Christian doctrine makes of God! It is a wonder that the believers in it do not have a lucid interval to laugh at their own absurdity. Many of them succeed but poorly in life, but none of them fail as ignominiously as their God. He who foresees everything is disappointed! He whose power is infinite is baffled! He whose wisdom is infinite is circumvented! He who made and sustains everything is almost a beggar in his own dominion! Could anything be more ridiculous?

What reason do these people assign for their belief? Nothing but a cock-and-bull story about Adam and Eve, who were tempted by the Devil in the Garden of Eden, who sinned by eating forbidden apples, and thus entailed what is called "original sin" on all their posterity. Every educated person knows that this story is false, and the doctrine founded upon it is equally so. It is not even true that man is in any sense fallen. According to evolution he has risen. His faults of sensuality and temper do not spring from the temptations of a devil. They spring from his strong passions, weak judgment, and lack of self-control. They are not an intrusion upon his primitive innocence; they are a legacy from his far-off animal origin, and they gradually disappear in the upward course of his development.

If there be a God it is inconceivable that he is eternally baffled by one of his own creatures called the Devil. It is incredible that he should desire the happiness of all his children, and yet allow the Devil to lead the vast majority of them to everlasting misery. Those who argue that this arrangement is part of an infinitely wise and good plan, and even that God has a right to do as he likes with his own, are guilty of intellectual absurdity and groveling immorality. That cannot be wise and good in God which is foolish and wicked in man. The real blasphemers are not those who denounce the puerilities of theology, but those who affirm that there is a God, and represent him as possessing the intelligence of an idiot and the character of a criminal.

G. W. FOOTE.



### A Critic in a Fog.

MRS. PARTINGTON and her mop is once again at work. The type, of which this famous old lady is the recognised representative, is never discouraged by failure—at least, it never appears to be discouraged. No matter how often the rising tide of Freethought may force a retreat, the professional Partingtons of the religious world—whom Sidney Smith said were neither men nor women, but only clergymen—take their stand just beyond water mark and brandish their mops with apparently unabated confidence. True, the evolutions are very familiar to those who have lived long enough, either in years or experience, to recall similar performances. But there are some to whom these heroic endeavors appeal. True, also, the mop is getting very worn and frayed, but something must be attempted even though nothing is done. And when the mop-head is entirely worn out one may safely anticipate the theological Partingtons brushing away as vigorously as ever. The apologetic mop may be worn quite away by the waves of science, but if only the handle be left that is at least something to clutch.

The latest of these Partingtonian performances is in course of appearance at Manchester. The Manchester and District Congregational Board has arranged for a course of lectures which are expected to—well, I am not sure what they are supposed to achieve, but doubtless it is hoped they will do something. Each lecture, as delivered, is being printed in pamphlet form, and judging from the two a friend has been good enough to send me, Freethinkers have no cause for alarm. They may arrest the advance of a few Christians who were beginning to move. A few may be induced to refrain from any advance whatever; but they will certainly bring no one back to the fold. The causes that make for the disintegration of religions are not likely to experience any check by "The Deansgate Lectures."

One of the lectures sent me is by the Rev. Dr. Warschauer, late of London, but now of Bradford, on the subject of Determinism. It is not a bad sample of Dr. Warschauer's method, because, while markedly superficial in character, the subject is handled with an air of cocksureness and finality that is doubtless not without its influence on such audiences as this gentleman is in the habit of addressing. Those who read the lecture calmly and critically, and with some knowledge of the nature of the problem that Dr. Warschauer believes he is discussing, will wonder what it is all about. For not merely is his polemic ineffective against a rational Determinism, there is no proof that Dr. Warschauer understands what a scientific Determinism is. There is misconception, misrepresentation, and assertion. But the first two can only impose on the unwary; and assertions that Determinism involves this or that or the other, without the slightest proof offered, is conclusive only to those whose rule of logic is, "When I say a thing three times it's true."

Dr. Warschauer presents us with the usual slipshod use of such words as "free," "will," "choice," "responsibility," etc., without the slightest attempt to say what he means by them. All he does tell us is, that if you are a Determinist you have no right to use these words, being, apparently, under the impression that in some way the dictionary belongs to the Anti-Determinist. And, as a result of not saying what he means by the cardinal terms used, and so not being under the necessity of keeping these meanings before his mind, he makes statements that—whether Determinism be true or false—are the most palpable nonsense. For example:—

"If you yourselves have ever felt praiseworthy or blameworthy, if you yourselves have ever experienced the emotion of gratitude, it is because you believe you are free. If you feel indignant with sweaters, with the brutes and worse than brutes who are engaged in the White Slave traffic, it is because you believe you are free. If with all the consciousness of your own imperfections you believe you can do better, it is because you believe that you are free."

Now, it would not be a valid argument, but it would at least resemble an argument, if it were said that these feelings are contradictory to Determinism. But, as stated, it is not an argument at all; it is not reasoning; it is sheer babble. Put Determinism on one side, for a moment, altogether. Does Dr. Warschauer—who has managed to acquire the degree of Doctor of Philosophy—really expect his hearers to believe that an emotion of indignation or approval, of pleasure or pain, is dependent upon a belief in the "freedom of the will"? And does he really believe that these emotions would not be felt if we were all convinced Determinists? Really a Doctor of Philosophy ought to have some notion of what is the nature of an emotion. Dr. Warschauer will not, I think, deny that Determinists experience all the emotions indicated in the sentence quoted. He would probably reply that the Determinist ought not to have these emotions; and if he has, it is a proof that his philosophy is false. His feelings and his actions do not square with his beliefs. But if that be so, the reply destroys Dr. Warschauer's position. His argument is that certain feelings spring from a belief in "freedom." Confronted with the fact that Determinists have these feelings, with a different belief, his only possible reply is that the feelings are contrary to the belief. But in that case it is clearly not safe to argue from feelings to belief. The feelings may be independent of the belief. But if this be true of one, it is true of all. If the feelings of the Determinist may be contrary to his beliefs, why may not the feelings of the Indeterminist be contrary to his belief? For a Doctor of Philosophy the position is crude.

Those who question this "instinctive belief" (What on earth is an instinctive belief?) we are assured, say "there is neither choice nor responsibility in any, or for any, of our acts." This is a sheer misstatement. No theory is responsible for misstatements made in its name, whether they come from foolish friends or disingenuous enemies. Determinists have a perfectly legitimate meaning and use for both these terms. They deny neither choice nor responsibility. They admit both, and claim that their interpretation is in strict accord with the facts. Their explanation may be right or wrong, but to say that they deny certain facts because their explanation is not accepted puts Dr. Warschauer's controversial methods in a very sinister light.

Dr. Warschauer gets into a sad tangle over heredity, environment, and their bearing on Christian belief in Indeterminism. Most students of heredity and environment, he says, will tell you that environment is the stronger. He quotes Dr. Saleeby as an authority for the last statement, and this may be taken as an example of Dr. Warschauer's apparent inability to state an opposing philosophic position fairly. In his *Parenthood and Race Culture* Dr. Saleeby has a section discussing the relation of heredity and environment, and in this he specially protests against those who incorrectly argue that environment is practically everything. And he concludes that normally "heredity is the weightier of the two factors." I do not say that Dr. Warschauer could not find writers who make the environment everything. I have myself dealt with such, and pointed out the weakness of the position. But why cite Dr. Saleeby? And why saddle Determinism, as a theory, with the extravagances of some of its supporters?

Anyway, Dr. Warschauer merely supplies a misstatement of another kind. There is, he says, the environment, and heredity, and there is "the man himself who is played on." Nothing of the kind. If man is "played" on by heredity and environment, where on earth does the man come from to be played on? While he is out correcting the ignorance of Determinists, Dr. Warschauer should at least set an example of exactitude. Biological heredity consists of the converging lines of living beings of which man as a mere organism is the product. Social heredity is made up of all those social forces that are active in the society into which the organism is born,



including the co-existence of similar organisms. The physical environment is made up of climatic, geographic, and similar conditions. And man, as a finished, or partly completed, individual, is the product of all these factors acting and reacting on each other. Whether the social or the biological factor will in any one case prove the stronger, it is next to impossible to say. In one case one will dominate, in another case it will be to the contrary. But to say that "there is one power stronger than even environment, and that is man's power to alter environment," and to make this true of all individuals, as does Dr. Warschauer, is nonsense. Man collectively is stronger than his environment. But individually everyone knows of cases where the environment is too strong for the individual. It would be easy to prove the truth of this out of Dr. Warschauer's own mouth.

We have not yet reached the end of the tangle. Christians, we learn, are not so "foolish" as to deny the force of heredity and environment. These are "obvious facts and factors," whose "tremendous influence comes home to the meanest intelligence." They "are universally admitted, as they are universally operative." Dr. Warschauer should really be more careful. The title of his lecture is "The Unfettered Will." And the presumption is that man's will, being unfettered, can act in a given way despite heredity and environment. But what kind of an unfettered will is it that is subject to the incidence of an universally operative force? If this force is inoperative at any point it is not universally so. It ceases to operate when it comes into conflict with at least some wills. If the force is really universally operative, the will is not unfettered. You simply cannot have it both ways, even in theory. If you try to conceive an irresistible force impinging on an immovable object, you will soon find a need to recast the terms of your proposition.

Dr. Warschauer's difficulty is a hopeless one. That environment exercises some determining power is obvious to all. To deny this is to question whether twice two equals four. To escape the force of this, Indeterminists argue that the environment is not *all*-powerful. Well, I do not say it is, nor is it necessary to the Determinist case that I should say so. But, on the other hand, it is necessary to the Indeterminist case to assert the absolute impotence of the environment in face of a settled volition. Question this, admit that the environment has ever so slight an influence on conduct or on character, and the case against Determinism breaks down utterly. It is not a question of how much or how far man's volitions are determined, it is a question of whether they are determined in any degree whatever. Whether in any particular instance the organism imposes itself on the environment to a greater degree than the environment imposes itself on the organism, is an interesting problem in social or moral mathematics. It has no bearing on the broad question at issue between the Determinist and the Indeterminist. In admitting the "tremendous" and "universally operative influence" of environment, Dr. Warschauer gives away the whole of his case. He saves himself from slaughter by an act of suicide.

C. COHEN.

(To be concluded.)

### A Dean's Novel Theodicy.

FROM the times of Plato, Aristotle, and Job down to the present day, believers in God have felt that his character is continually in need of vindication; and this feeling of continuous need of vindication is a convincing proof that all past vindications have failed to give satisfaction. Of all these the most famous is the one formulated by the great philosopher, Leibnitz, at the commencement of the eighteenth century, in which a bold attempt is made

to demonstrate that this is the best possible world. It was in order to mock Leibnitz's curious theory that Voltaire wrote his inimitable *Candide*. The absurdity of the theory advocated in the distinguished metaphysician's *Theodicee* is undeniable; and yet if God is just and good ours must be the best of all possible worlds, however unable to realise the fact we may be. The admission that the world is imperfect necessitates the conclusion that God is either not all-good or not all-powerful. Leibnitz acknowledged the existence of evil in the best of all possible worlds; but in his system evil is represented as an essential condition of the self-manifestation of God. There are three kinds of evil—the physical, the metaphysical, and the moral. Physical evil, or pain, is conditionally willed by God, either as means of greater good, or as punishment; metaphysical evil, or imperfection, is unconditionally willed by God as essential to created beings; while moral evil is not willed but merely permitted by the Deity, because it had been foreseen that the world with evil would nevertheless be better than any other possible world. Besides, evil is necessary for the purpose of setting off the good in the world, just as night is necessary to set off the day. It was moral evil alone that puzzled Leibnitz, and his system entirely broke down in dealing with it. In reality, however, the three kinds of evil are equally inconsistent with the idea of a perfect Creator and Ruler of the world; and it is this that accounts for the endless multiplication of theodicies.

A few Sundays ago the Very Rev. Dr. Inge, Dean of St. Paul's, discussed this subject in a sermon preached before the students of the Manchester University, a lengthy report of which appeared in the *Manchester Guardian* for November 25. Dr. Inge has been unjustly dubbed by the newspapers the Doleful or Dismal Dean; but it must be candidly admitted that in the discourse under consideration he is neither doleful nor dismal, but thoroughly optimistic. This is what the report says:—

"Dr. Inge said that if there were a God he must be a righteous God; for the idea of God included the idea of righteousness. An unrighteous God would not be God. If he were indifferent we should call him natural law; if malignant, the Devil. Further, if there were a God he must govern the world; a God who did not govern the world would be no concern of ours. And yet we did not find that the world was governed in accordance with our ideas of justice. Hence, the problem."

Dr. Inge does not believe that this is the best of all possible worlds, because we ourselves have formed a conception of a much better one. We cherish an idea of justice according to which the so-called Judge of all the earth does not do right. The Dean thinks that our idea of justice is correct, and yet he wants us to believe in the righteousness of God. The question is, how we can retain our own idea of justice and at the same time hold that there exists a just God who always does what is right? For the most part Nature recognises no difference between right and wrong, good and evil. She permits the most horrible cruelties, the most blood-curdling crimes, and the very worst forms of scoundrelism, without ever expressing the slightest disapprobation or inflicting the lightest punishment. The sun shines on all alike, fire makes no distinction between the righteous and the wicked, and water bears the swindler, provided he can swim, quite as readily as the philanthropist. Towers are not in the habit of falling when criminals and Atheists happen to be walking under them. The Dean spoke of the "blind cruelty of Nature," and he might have alluded to her utter indifference to moral questions. This is what he is reported to have uttered on that point:—

"The plain truth was that Nature had no diseases ready for the worst scoundrels. She punished the drunkard, and in a very random and blind manner the less heinous forms of impurity. The most horrible offences under this head entailed no physical danger. It was therefore absolutely indefensible to use the blind cruelty of Nature to reinforce the motive for clean living. The law of heredity had been shorn of much of



its moral force. Acquired tendencies were probably not transmitted, so that except by bad example a father was not liable by his misconduct to taint the character of his son. Nature had a morality, but her methods were rude and clumsy."

It does not seem to have occurred to the Dean that in thus describing Nature and her methods he was pronouncing judgment upon God, because, according to theology, Nature is an expression of God. Whatever Nature does or does not do, she simply represents her Maker and Governor. Her indifference, her blindness, her cruelty, her rude and clumsy methods, are all his; he is directly responsible for all that Nature is and does. So far as the *Guardian's* report is concerned, Dr. Inge conveniently ignored this point.

The Dean is a skilful evader of difficulties, and the method by which he endeavored to pass by the difficulty just mentioned on the other side was exceedingly ingenious; but we are bound to characterize it as the deceptive method of the priest and the Levite. As they pretended not to be aware of the existence of the robbed and half-dead traveller on the road-side, so Dr. Inge pretended not to see that whatever is true of Nature must be equally true of Nature's God. This is how he passed by on the other side:—

"But what a false abstraction it was to speak of Nature apart from humanity. Humanity was part of Nature. Our reasoning faculties, which enabled us to conquer Nature by obeying her, were part of Nature. Our affection for our fellow-men, our sense of justice, our sense of pity, our self-respect which made us abhor things which our lower appetites desired, our belief in a Heavenly Father who could hear our prayers—all these things were a part of Nature. Nature, apart from man, knew nothing of human injustice; but then Nature was not apart from man. This was a good world for us because God had given us the great privilege of making it better."

Thus, in avoiding one difficulty, the good Dean landed himself in another of a much more serious character. Nature, apart from man, is confessedly indifferent to moral issues, and her methods are rude and clumsy; but it was God who made Nature and her methods what they are, and consequently he alone is responsible for them. Such is the truth which the Dean would not look at; but he turned his gaze on something else far more damaging to his case. He told his hearers that God made Nature and her methods what they are in order that he might confer upon man the unspeakable privilege of making them better, thereby representing God as a sort of play-actor. It is perfectly true that human beings, with all their magnificent faculties and senses, are part and parcel of Nature. It is perfectly true that thus endowed we possess the power to make the world a little better while we are in it. But we are what we are as the outcome of countless ages of evolution; and we therefore represent Nature at her highest and best. Does Dr. Inge really mean to affirm that our Heavenly Father produced non-moral and, from our point of view, immoral Nature, with her hideous struggle for existence, which went on in all its repulsiveness for millions of years before man appeared? Does he honestly believe that a God of love governed Nature during countless millenniums of pre-human evolution, when the sword of Natural Selection eliminated the unfit in such bloody fashion? Is it his assured conviction that a Being of infinite compassion and tenderest mercy presided over the pitiless process of evolution until it eventuated in the appearance of the human race, and that his justice and goodness and love, in relation to the whole process, are adequately vindicated by the alleged fact that, at last, he has given us the great privilege of making the world better? It is difficult to realise that a sane person is capable of sincerely holding and proclaiming such an irrational view. The relics of prehistoric men clearly show how severely savage their life was; how they struggled against their enemies and strove with one another whenever their interests clashed; and how for thousands and thousands of years war-

fare was their normal state of existence. Was it a good world, a God-governed world, in which such a terrible life was possible? The more we study Nature and her methods, even for long æons after man has become a part of her, the more closely we examine history, the more incontrovertible it becomes that the Dean's theodicy is a screaming farce.

"Our belief in a Heavenly Father who can hear our prayers" is a delusion and a snare. Can you imagine a Heavenly Father, invested with omnipotence, holding the reins of government in Europe at this moment? Such an idea is intolerably grotesque. Nature, including man, is still red in tooth and claw, still maintaining the cruel struggle for existence. No progress is made except at the point of the sword. Rights are secured only by persistently fighting for them. "This is a good world for us because God has given us the great privilege of making it better." If there were a God, would it not awfully humiliate him to find man capable of bettering his own work? The world is still governed, not by eternal love, but by selfishness and greed; and the profession still held in highest esteem throughout the Christian world is that of the man specially trained to kill his fellow-men. What the world needs is, not a revival of religious faith, but the enthronement of the social idea in the minds and hearts of the people, and the persistent training of all children in the high art of being loving helpers, instead of destroyers, of one another. Let God go and help man to come into his own.

J. T. LLOYD.

## The Passing of Jesus.—IV.

(Continued from p. 774.)

"The Christian story, as the Gospels narrate it, is a big bubble. You approach it critically, and it bursts. Dogmatic Christology built upon it a paper balloon kept afloat by gas. All so-called lives of Christ, or biographies of Jesus, are works of fiction, erected by imagination on the shifting foundation of meagre and unreliable records."—RABBI J. M. WISE, *The Martyrdom of Jesus of Nazareth*, p. 123.

"Liberal Christianity cannot sacrifice the pious preacher, Jesus of Nazareth; it wants to know what the religion of this Jesus was; and for these reasons it clings passionately to the meagre remnants which the critics believe can still be saved from the general wreck."—EYSINGA, *Radical Views about the New Testament*, p. 25.

"That strange and sickly world into which we are introduced by the Gospels—a world as if taken from a Russian novel in which the outcasts of society, nervous affection and childish idiotism, seem to have appointed a rendezvous."—NIETZSCHE, *The Antichrist*; 1889; p. 284.

"It is in the religious system of Babylonia and Assyria, as we know it through the cuneiform inscriptions, and through the monuments of the empires of the valley of the Tigris and Euphrates, that we must seek the origin of the religions of Syria, Phœnicia, and Palestine."—JULIUS SOBYR, *The Religion of Israel*; 1881; p. 1.

WE are told that the history of Jesus in the Gospels must be true because no one could have invented it. Professor Schmiedel, of Zürich, in his contribution to the *Encyclopædia Biblica*—which created such a sensation among the pious in this country at the time it was published—after eliminating all the mythical and unhistorical parts of the Gospels, such as the virgin birth, the atoning death, and the resurrection, along with the miracles, declared that there was an irreducible deposit remaining which it was impossible for anyone to have invented. This sifted residuum consists of nine texts, seven in Mark and two in Matthew. These texts all deal with Jesus as just an ordinary man: Mark iii. 21, where his relations declare "He is beside himself"—that is, that he was mad; Mark vi. 5, where it is said that in his own country "he could there do no mighty work"; Mark xv. 34, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" and so on. If a chemist had such a small deposit left from such a mass of material he would term it "a trace."

As Professor Drews well remarks of Von Soden's claim of an individuality for Jesus that could not



have been invented:—

"As if there was any such thing as what cannot be invented for men with imagination! And as if all the significant details of Jesus' life were not invented on the lines of the so-called Messianic passages in the Old Testament, in heathen mythology, and in the imported conceptions of the Messiah! The part that is professedly 'uninventible' shrinks continuously the more assiduously criticism busies itself with the Gospels; and the word can at present apply only to side-issues and matters of no importance. We are indeed faced with the strange fact that all the essential part of the Gospels, everything which is of importance for religious faith, such as especially the passion, death, and resurrection of Jesus, is demonstrably invented and mythical; but such parts as can at best only be historical because of their supposed 'uninventible' nature are of no importance for the character of the Gospel representation."

If Schmiedel's nine texts could be proved to be historical, how would that support the tottering foundations of Christianity? How can religious fervor be inspired by the spectacle of a man declared by those who knew him best to be mentally deficient, and who did not discover the nature of his delusions until it was too late, and then cried, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?"

As Kalthoff observes of Harnack's doctrine—that Christianity started with an original purity, but afterwards degenerated—it is quite alien to methods of historical science.

"It forfeits the very name of science. Clearly, it was not scientific, but sectarian, principles from which theology started when it endeavored to remove from the older figure of Christ all the features that had become distasteful to the theologians of the nineteenth century, and to ascribe them to later historical influences."\*

And, as he further observes, we can only regard it as a relic of the Rousseau idea of perfection in the earliest stages of life "when we find theologians seeking a primitive personality or a primitive principle of the Christian system, so as to place at the beginnings of its history the ideals that really arise only in the course of its further development." "Why should we say that the streams that flowed from Rome and Greece into the broad bed of Christian culture were impure, and that only the stream issuing from Jerusalem was pure?" (pp. 8 9). Kalthoff is demonstrably right when he says "the way was prepared for Christianity on every side. The figure of Christ is drawn in all its chief features before a line of the Gospels was written" (p. 115).

The truth is that the Gospels are the final result of a process of evolution that was in progress more than five thousand years before the time when they were written. Even Professor Smith, who declares his opposition to Kalthoff and Robertson (*Ecce Deus*, p. 8), admits in the same work that—

"all the conditions were present in the beginning of our era, or even before, in measure and degree never equalled, for the germination and growth of precisely such an idea as we have found embodied in Christianity. For it is well known and freely recognised that there was all around the Mediterranean an immense and intense yearning for a Savior. The evidence is already printed, and accessible, and referred to, so that we need not dwell on the point longer" (p. 68).

Dr. Frazer, our most learned and trustworthy authority upon these ancient faiths, tells us in his *Adonis, Attis, Osiris* (p. 5):—

"Under the names of Osiris, Tammuz, Adonis, and Attis, the peoples of Egypt and Western Asia represented the yearly decay and revival of life, especially of vegetable life, which they personified as a god who annually died and rose again from the dead. In name and detail the rites varied from place to place: in substance they were the same. The supposed death and resurrection of the oriental deity, a god of many names but of essentially one nature, is the subject of the present inquiry."

We learn further that the worship of Adonis was practised among the Babylonians and Assyrians,

from whom the Greeks received it in the seventh century before Christ. His true name was Tammuz; the name Adonis—from Adon, meaning "Lord"—was merely a title of honor by which his worshipers addressed him; the Greeks, through a misunderstanding, converting a title of honor into a proper name. In the Old Testament, continues Frazer, "the same name Adonai, originally perhaps Adoni, 'my lord,' is often applied to Jehovah." And further:—

"At Byblus the death of Adonis was annually mourned with weeping, wailing, and beating of the breast; but next day he was believed to come to life again and ascend up to heaven in the presence of his worshipers. This celebration appears to have taken place in spring."\*

At this season the red earth, washed down by the rain, tinges the water of the river with a blood-red hue, and this was believed by his worshipers to be caused by the blood of the dying Adonis. This discoloring of the waters has been observed by travellers at the end of March, which would closely correspond to our Easter, when Christ is said to have suffered, to have been mourned for by the women, and, like Adonis, "to come to life again and ascend up to heaven in the presence of his worshipers."

In an article in *Knowledge* for March, 1895, Mr. Theo. G. Pinches gives a translation of a lament for the death of Tammuz, which, he says, "presents to us at first hand what the Babylonians of the oldest times believed concerning the myth of Adonis and Aphrodite." He places it earlier than 8,800 years before Christ. It is as follows:—

"Shepherd, lord Tammuz, husband of Istar,  
Lord of Hades, lord of the Shepherds' abode;  
Seed which in the furrow has not drunk the water,  
Its stalk in the desert has not brought forth flower;  
Branch which in its bed has not been planted,  
Branch whose root has been removed;  
Grain which in the furrow has not drunk water."

The remainder is wanting, but enough has been recovered for us to see that Tammuz was known as the "Lord" and the good "Shepherd"; he is also the "Branch," a name frequently applied by the Hebrew prophets to the coming Messiah. Isaiah (ix. 1) foretells that "a Branch shall grow out of his [Jesse's] roots," and "he shall grow up before him as a tender plant, and as a root out of the dry ground" (liii. 2). Again, Jeremiah (xxiii. 5) and Zechariah (iii. 8) speak of the Messiah as the "Branch."

Mr. Pinches, in the same article, also gives a translation of a lament for Tammuz on his descent into Hades, which alludes "to the rising of the Lord." Christ is also supposed to have descended into hell. Mr. St. Chad Boscawen, of the British Museum, tells us that "the legend of the descent of Istar is in reality a species of miracle play, which was part of the liturgy of the great festival of the mourning for the dead Tammuz, so universal throughout the East."†

The miracle play of the descent of Christ into hell, so popular during the Middle Ages, was no doubt a continuation of this Pagan play, with Christ for the hero. Professor Sayce says of the worship of Tammuz:—

"It was a myth which was the common property of the whole Canaanitish race. Even within the courts of the Temple of Solomon, in a chamber where the elders of Judah sat, surrounded by the images of their totems upon the walls, Ezekiel (viii. 14) saw the women weeping for Tammuz."‡

So that this myth had been celebrated in Canaan at least 3,000 years at the time of Ezekiel, and in his time was celebrated even in the Temple of Solomon, the very heart and centre of the national religion of the Jews.

It has often proved a mystery to students how the Christians obtained their idea of Christ being a Redeemer for the sin of eating fruit in the Garden

\* Frazer, *The Golden Bough*, vol. i., p. 280.

† Boscawen, *The Bible and the Monuments*; 1895; p. 163.

‡ *Contemporary Review*, September, 1883.

\* A. Kalthoff, *The Rise of Christianity*; 1907; p. 7.



of Eden. The source is revealed by the Babylonian tablets. In the third tablet of the Creation series, translated by Mr. Boscawen, we read:—

"The command was established in the garden of the god.  
The Asnan [fruit] they eat, they broke in two,  
Its stalk they destroyed;  
The sweet juice which injures the body.  
Great is their sin. Themselves they exalted.  
To Merodach, their redeemer, he appointed their fate."

"It is impossible," says Mr. St. Chad Boscawen, "not to see in this fragment the pith of the story of the Fall, while the last line at once brings Merodach before us as the one who would defeat the Tempter and restore the fallen."\*

In a Babylonian prayer, entitled "The Complaints of the Repentant Heart," we find the following: "God, who knowest the unknown, in the midst of the stormy waters, take me by the hand; my sins are seven times seven, forgive my sins."† Everyone will at once call to mind Peter's calling to Christ to save him from the stormy waters, and the sins that are to be forgiven "seven times seven."

"Symbols," says Mr. Boscawen, "already familiar to us appear in Assyrian and Babylonian mythology, such as the 'Marriage Feast,' the 'River of Life,' the 'Throne of God,' and other conceptions; but all have a new and truer meaning in the teaching of Christ."‡

We must confess that we are unable to see any newer or truer meaning in the teaching of Christ, having relinquished the spectacles of faith. We also remember that when the Hebrew legends in Genesis were discovered to have been filched from the Babylonians we were told by Cheyne, Driver, and Ryle—who broke the news gently—that in the hands of the Hebrews they also bore a "new and truer meaning," a fact which no one would have discovered independently.

The part of this article dealing with the Tammuz myth is taken from an article the present writer contributed to the *University Magazine* (January, 1898) fourteen years ago, entitled "The Babylonian Origins of Christianity." Since then much evidence has been brought to bear on the subject completely bearing out our view of the origins of Christianity, as we shall see.

Mr. Edwards had a year previously written an article in the *Free Review* (January, 1897) on "The Babylonian Father, Son, and Paraete," and we have given Mr. Boscawen's contribution to the subject; but we believe we were the first to declare for the Babylonian origin of Christianity.

(To be concluded.) W. MANN.

The creed which accepts as the foundation of morals Utility, or the Greatest Happiness principle, holds that actions are right in proportion as they tend to promote happiness, wrong as they tend to produce the reverse of happiness.....In an improving state of the human mind, the influences are constantly on the increase which tend to generate in each individual a feeling of unity with all the rest; which feeling, if perfect, would make him never think of, or desire, any beneficial condition for himself in the benefits of which they are not included. If we now suppose this feeling of unity to be taught as a religion, and the whole force of education, of institutions and of opinion directed, as it once was in the case of religion, to make every person grow up from infancy surrounded on all sides both by the profession and by the practice of it, I think that no one who can realise this conception will feel any misgiving about the sufficiency of the ultimate sanction for the Happiness morality.—*John Stuart Mill.*

Who can compute what the world loses in the multitude of promising intellects combined with timid characters who dare not follow out any bold, vigorous, independent train of thought, lest it should land them in something which would admit of being considered irreligious or immoral?—*John Stuart Mill.*

\* *The Bible and the Monuments*, p. 89.

† Laing, *Human Origins*, p. 130.

‡ *The Bible and the Monuments*, p. 176.

## Acid Drops.

We cannot devote another article to the Divorce Commission's Report; but, having dealt at some length with the Majority Report, we ought perhaps in justice to give the Minority Report a little attention. It is signed by the Archbishop of York, Sir William R. Anson, M.P., and Sir Lewis T. Dibdin. These gentlemen are not particularly likely to overrun with sympathy for the poor. The Archbishop of York's salary is £10,000 a year. Sir W. R. Anson is Conservative member of Parliament for Oxford University. Sir T. L. Dibdin is Judge of the Arches Court of Canterbury and of the Chancery Court of York. What his official income is we are unable to ascertain. But such a man's connections would naturally pertain to the ecclesiastics and the upper classes.

The Minority Report is very brief in comparison with the Majority Report, but it deals only with special points arising out of the inquiry. One of its first statements is that "About 61 per cent. of marriages in England are solemnised in Church." Of the other 39 per cent. rather less than half take place in Nonconformist places of worship, while "purely civil marriages, without any religious ceremony, amount to about 20.5 per cent. only of the total number of marriages in a year." This "only" is evidently regarded as very important; and it would indeed be so if the figures were stationary. But they are not. The marriages that take place in Church are a constantly diminishing number, while the marriages that take place before registrars are a constantly increasing number. This is a fact to be borne in mind in the course of the argument which is afterwards based upon these percentages.

The Minority Report makes use of these figures in the following way:—

"To those, and they form the great majority of the nation, who profess allegiance to the Christian faith in one form or another it will be almost axiomatic that our Lord's teaching as to the true conditions of family and social life was intended to promote the general welfare of the world, and has for all Christian people a pre-eminent authority and an imperative claim to their loyal acceptance."

Suppose this were granted, how would it entitle "the great majority"—which, remember, is an ever-decreasing majority—to make a marriage law for the minority? Making a law, based upon a certain religion, binding upon those who dissent from it or reject it altogether, is simply despotism. What the Christians are entitled to do is to have as much religious ceremony as they please, to make as many religious promises as they please, to undertake as many religious duties as they please, and to eschew divorce and all its ways. They are not bound to take advantage of the law of divorce; they can remain married to the same partner, in spite of every unhappiness and humiliation to the end of the chapter. But why should they try to impose their own choice on the hearts and consciences of their fellow citizens who entertain a very different persuasion? Besides, they contradict themselves and each other. They declare that Christ taught that "marriage ought to be indissoluble." But he allowed certain exceptions. And what were they? "Oh, never mind that," say the Archbishop of York and his two Church friends. But that is the very point at issue. On what grounds, apart from adultery, is divorce permissible to a Christian? The Minority evade that point; in doing so they put themselves outside the rules of honest controversy; and the Majority Report holds the field invincibly against them.

Another point is raised by the Minority Report. The State makes laws permitting divorce, and allowing divorced persons to marry again. The Church refuses to recognise the State's action in this matter, and clergymen refuse to re-marry these divorced persons. What is to happen then? Why, this will happen; the State that made the Church will break it. Let there be no doubt about that. The Anglican Church, in flaunting the law of the land, is merely seeking trouble. It is inviting Disestablishment and Disendowment.

Finally, the Minority Report protests against the idea that "the State should in all cases require and concern itself only with a civil ceremony of marriage." "We desire to say," they continue, "that in our opinion the abolition of the religious solemnisation of all, or of a great majority of marriages would be a very great evil." No doubt it would be a very great evil in the eyes of an Archbishop. But it seems to us great nonsense to talk about "abolition" without compulsion. In instituting universal civil marriage the State would not abolish religious marriage; it would merely



decline to be associated with it, and the option which exists now would exist then; those who wanted religious marriage would be free to have it as a completion and consecration of their civil marriage. The fact is, however, that the Archbishop of York and his two Church friends are after special privileges. "It ought to be the aim of statesmen," they say, "to attach the religious sanction to marriage." That's it. Hand over as much well-paid business as possible to the Church. Give it all the power and influence you can. Precisely so. That is the perennial cry of every Church on earth.

It now appears that, in spite of parades of fanatical clergymen in Piccadilly and prayers in English churches, Santa Sophia will not revert to the uses of Christian worship. More, King Ferdinand's pious declaration that the war with Turkey was a war between the Cross and the Crescent is now seen in its true nature as a piece of theatrical bluff. It probably served its purpose with an ignorant peasantry, and it certainly did its work with the sloppy, sentimental British public, than whom there is no public in Europe more easily fooled. It now seems extremely likely that in the near future there will be an alliance between Turkey and Bulgaria—an informal one is practically certain—and the Cross and the Crescent will unite against the representatives of the Cross in other quarters. Finally, the *Telegraph* now blurts out the truth that the real root of the trouble in Macedonia lies in the fanatical hatred between two forms of Christianity. This has been obvious all along to those who really understood the position. The Christians hated the Turks, but they hated their brother Christians still more. And Christian hatred has always held a prominent place among the ugly aspects of human nature.

The Rev. Walter Wynn, in the course of a lecture on "If a man die shall he live again?" made reference to Charles Bradlaugh that is worth a word or two of comment. He said:—

"Bradlaugh was one of the finest men this England of ours ever produced—a man of noble parts, but a man of logic, deduction, induction, syllogistic reasoning, one stone on the other.....No imagination in him—that was the secret of his scepticism; no intuitional faith in him—that was the secret of many sorrows in his life."

We must confess to not being over-impressed by this belated praise of dead Freethinkers. We should be much more pleased had justice been done Bradlaugh while alive, or, having really *felt* the injustice done to a dead Freethinker, Christians showed a greater readiness to do justice to living ones. Not to speak evil of the dead is a good enough rule, but to speak justly of the living is a far more valuable one. It is really safe to praise Bradlaugh now. His work is done, and his place is assured with those who have any vital conception of the forces that make for progress. Had many people been better citizens and worse Christians, Bradlaugh's days might have been longer and his life easier.

Having said so much, we confess to a feeling of curiosity about the sorrows Bradlaugh experienced and which would have been removed by "intuitional faith"—whatever that may happen to be. It was neither his own faith nor lack of faith that ever caused Bradlaugh any sorrow. He did experience much trouble from the faith of Christians, and from their lack of faith in sincerity and justice. As to his being without imagination, well, that is sheer nonsense. A quick and lively imagination every reformer must have, otherwise he could never be a reformer. A devotion to reasoning is not inconsistent with imagination—in its better aspects reasoning cannot go on in the absence of imagination; and the great imaginative minds of the world have built their ideals upon the most rigorous reasoning. To take any kind of fiction for truth is not really exercising imagination; fiction is often accepted for truth because people have not imagination enough to grasp its nature as fiction. Mr. Wynn seems to be under the impression that you prove the possession by ignoring reasoning altogether. And we are not surprised at him saying that "Nearly all the great [religious] truths I hold I have never reasoned very much about." Had he done so he would probably not hold them.

The Irish Protestant meeting at the Memorial Hall to protest against the importation of religious bigotry into the discussion of the Home Rule Bill was certainly Irish, but how about the "Protestant"? Several speakers, including Mr. Bernard Shaw and Sir Conan Doyle, are Protestants in the sense of not being Catholics; but what specific claim have they to the designation? Sir Conan Doyle, whether in calls himself an Agnostic. Mr. Bernard Shaw, whether in joke or earnest, calls himself a religious man, but he is

certainly an Atheist to the religion of every other man or woman on this distracted globe.

Mr. Shaw is a licensed speaker—and not for a good reason, but rather a bad one. People have got to look upon him as a public entertainer without a grain of seriousness. They are mistaken in this, but it must be admitted that he has done a vast deal to produce the false impression. His story of his own Catholic nurse was partly pathetic and partly humorous, but the former quality would hardly strike an ordinary audience, while the latter quality would "catch on" instantly. He told the Memorial Hall audience that his father and mother were "sanguinary Protestants" but his nurse was a Catholic, and she sprinkled "G. B. S." with holy water every night when she put him to bed. What he has to do now is to tell us how she got the holy water. And would it not be well if he dropped talking about his parents in public? After all, they couldn't help preceding him in the Shaw genealogy, and if they did no more for him they gave him the cleverness that renders him conspicuous and procures him wealth.

People are always asking, says the Rev. Mr. Rattenbury, "Is Christianity true?" Quite so; and the fact that people are always asking the question would suggest to anybody but a clergyman that the proofs offered are of an extremely unsatisfactory character. And then Mr. Rattenbury goes on in the good old muddle-headed way to offer evidence which, if it proves anything at all, does not prove Christianity to be true. He trots out cases of drunkards that have been made sober, etc., etc., all through believing in Jesus. But if all these cases are genuine, both as regards quality and quantity, they do not touch the question which he says people are always asking. At most they would only prove Christianity to be useful in the same way that a perfectly innocuous preparation is held to cure rich people—because they felt better after taking it. It is the kind of evidence that establishes the value of a quack medicine. A thing may be useful because people believe in it. But a thing is only true when its veracity can be established by a rational procedure that appeals to all alike.

"Excalibur," writing in the *Methodist Times*, quotes someone as saying that Ingersoll made him a Christian, and adds, "I am not surprised." Well, we are, but we are quite prepared to risk something. Our work is to stop people becoming Christians, and convert those who are Christians already. The work of "Excalibur" lies in the contrary direction. Now, if he really believes that a reading of Ingersoll makes Christians of people, will he help us to put his writings into circulation among those people whom we confess to having some difficulty in reaching. The risk is evidently on our side, but we will venture. Will "Excalibur" please join with us in making Christians—by giving them Ingersoll's pamphlets?

A rather strange story is told in the *North China Herald*, and repeated in the *Christian World*, concerning an occurrence near Canton. An attempt was made to clear out the idols from a Taoist temple in order to put the building to a more rational use. The proposal met with some opposition, and eventually it was decided to settle the matter by a public discussion. Certain priests dwelt upon the power of the idols, and were replied to by an appointed speaker. The popular verdict was in each case that the defenders of the idols were defeated, and they were ordered to be cleared out. The temple is now to be turned into a rest-house for travellers. If the story is true, it is a tribute to the reasonableness of the Chinese. The *Christian World* sees in the incident an "unparalleled opportunity" for Christianity. Well, if the Chinese serve the Christian idols in the same way that they served the native article, it will have a short shrift indeed.

We are glad to see a protest in the *Church Times* against the use of children in connection with begging for religious purposes. But the protest is very curiously worded. The writer appeals to people "to abstain from giving money to children unless they are accompanied by some responsible person." This may, of course, secure that the funds go in a specified direction; but we do not see how this saves the children. Our objection is not to the purpose for which children are sent from door to door begging, but to children being sent on such an errand for any purpose and under any conditions. The only reasons for employing children at such tasks are that it saves expense and excites a more ready response. But the evil effect on the children remains. And in our opinion it is nothing short of villainous that churches and chapels should use children for such a purpose. It is not a question here of whether one believes in religion or



not; it is a question of protecting childhood from degradation. And we should be more hopeful of a response if it were connected with any other subject than that of religion.

At Westminster County Court the Rev. Mark Hayford, a colored clergyman, claimed £100 from Mr. J. Oppon, a colored exporter, of Salt Pond, Gold Coast Colony, being 10 per cent. commission on cocoa sold to Messrs. Fry & Sons, of Bristol. Pious expressions were mixed up with the plaintiff's business letters. "God" was helping him all along the line. Not at the finish, though, for Judge Woodfall spoke contemptuously of the correspondence "with its nauseating and blasphemous references," and gave judgment against the plaintiff on his claim for commission, though awarding him £60 damages for prevention of the execution of a contract.

The South London Presbytery of the Presbyterian Church of England has unanimously passed a resolution (we quote from the *Westminster Gazette*) "deploring the action of the London County Council in again sanctioning the Sunday opening of picture palaces and other places of amusement, as being inimical to the religious and, therefore, the national welfare." That "therefore" is delicious. The peculiarity of the clerical tribe is that they combine a keen eye for the main chance with the most solemn-faced hypocrisy.

The better the place the better the deed. Henry Proctor, sixty-eight, a club collector, collapsed and died while praying aloud at a meeting of the local Evangelical Society at Preston. There is no moral. There would have been if the deceased gentleman had been officiating at a Freethought meeting.

Lord Hugh Cecil was one of the speakers at a Church meeting the other day in connection with religious education. Dealing with the "Secular System," he said it was commonly assumed that the religious beliefs of the community would remain untouched. This was not true, because it would destroy the religious atmosphere and the "old, simple, non-rational faith of an uneducated child," and take away the opportunity of acquiring the faith of an educated mind. This is an argument that will only appeal to those who place the inculcation of religion before the administration of justice. The fundamental basis of the claim for Secular Education is that in a State composed of people holding all sorts of opinions on and about religion, the only just policy is the maintenance of a strictly neutral attitude. Whether religion will gain or lose by this policy is quite irrelevant to the issue. If religion cannot live in an atmosphere of social justice, so much the worse for religion. The only "atmosphere" that the State is concerned to create is one in which the social virtues will flourish. The Church, and perhaps the home, is the place for the inculcation of religion. The liberty of the parent and of the Church to teach religion remains unrestricted; but the liberty to use the power and sanction of the State to force upon children an "atmosphere" that only a section of the community consider healthy is to demand something that conflicts with all rational ideas of equity.

Camberwell Borough Council has had another entertainment. It appears that a new cinematograph hall is being erected in Wells-street, and a deputation of godly citizens—perhaps ratepayers, perhaps not—waited upon the Council with a view to protesting against the new show being opened on Sundays. Their spokesman, the Rev. Mr. Latham, of St. George's, Camberwell, offered three reasons for Sunday closing. The first reason was a general protest against unnecessary Sunday labor; necessary and unnecessary evidently to be interpreted by the reverend gentleman and his friends. The second reason was that the Council should help to teach children that Sunday was a day of worship. This bit of professional clericalism was followed by something still more impudent. "In a democratic community," Mr. Latham urged, "they ought to give great weight to the large religious element of the community." Quite so, when they attend to their own business, but not when they interfere with other people's business. Camberwell parents have as much right to take their children to an entertaining and instructive picture show on Sunday evening as other Camberwell parents have to take them (say) to St. George's Church, where the show is not entertaining and not instructive. Mr. Latham's theory, stated in plain language, is that the Sabbatarian Christians shall veto all other ways of spending Sunday but their own. This is what he calls Christian liberty. Well, so it is,—the only liberty that Christians ever understand.

Fortunately there was someone present who understood liberty a great deal better than Mr. Latham and his deputa-

tion. It was our old friend Mr. A. B. Moss. In the course of a trenchant speech against Sabbatarian tyranny, he plainly declared that "the Church was afraid of cinematograph entertainments because they attracted the people." That is the whole affair in a nutshell. Councillor Dyer followed Mr. Moss in a mountebank fashion. He seems to have thought that he was discussing the question by indulging in personalities about Mr. Moss and the Freethought movement. His great point was this. Christians have buildings of their own, and Christians have money; Freethinkers have no buildings of their own (which is false), and Freethinkers have no money (which is false too); and therefore there ought to be no Sunday picture shows in Camberwell. What a *therefore*. Surely the pious and illogical Councillor Dyer should have said *argal*.

Councillor Brookes was unintentionally comic. He said he had as much right as Mr. Moss to have what he thought to be truth respected; just as though Mr. Moss was asking the Council to shut up the churches. He wanted to shut up nothing—not even the foolish mouths of his stupid opponents. He respects their natural right to be silly. It's the way they're built.

We said last week, in commenting on that commercial missionary enterprise "Papuan, Limited," that while the investors and the missionary societies might benefit by the development of native labor, the benefit to the natives themselves was not quite so evident. From a further statement, issued as an inducement to subscribers, we now learn that the industries have been so organized that "not only the Papuan men, but the women and children can tender help." We are responsible for the italics, and we quite fail to see how any people are to be benefited by a commercial undertaking that has arranged for the labor of children. We know what child labor became at home. And we can guess at what it may become with a people who are practically helpless in the hands of their employers.

Dean Inge has made the discovery that fear has died out of the modern Christian's religion. True. But why? Because the belief in hell has died out. In other words, there is nothing to be frightened about. A painted devil and pictorial flames frighten nobody. It's only a cinematograph show.

A proposal to have boating and band music in Cannon Hill and Small Heath Parks, Birmingham, was defeated at a Birmingham town's meeting. A poll of the inhabitants is to be taken on the matter. The Corporation is favorable, and it is stated that the Bishop of Birmingham has expressed his approval of Sunday music in the two parks. The chief opponents, of course, are Free Church ministers and publicans. Church parsons, having their livings assured, don't so much dread Sunday rivalry.

The Blackburn Chamber of Commerce is anxious to see Sunday trading suppressed, and has carried a resolution to that effect. But we cannot make out from the local press report what kind of Sunday trading it is that is objected to. We suppose, however, it is the newspaper, tobacco, lemonade, and lollipop businesses which excite such pious indignation. These businesses open because the public want them, and it is difficult to see how they come into competition with the ordinary businesses, either in Blackburn or elsewhere. Sabbatarianism wears all sorts of disguises.

Rev. Charles Haro Simpkinson De Wesselow, of Epsom, formerly vicar of Holy Trinity, Greenwich, left £20,266. Rev. Canon Dr. Wm. Tate, of Stradbroke, Eye, Suffolk, left £8,587. The £1,990 left by the Rev. Dr. John Edward Moffat, of Upper Rathmines, Co. Dublin, is scarcely worth mentioning. But the list is restored to respectability by the £25,618 left by the Rev. Robert Ashington Bullen, of Tonbridge, Kent.

Mr. Borden, the Canadian Premier, in his speech introducing the proposal to give (or is it lend?) those three battleships to Great Britain, made a sad confession. "In this twentieth century of Christianity," he said, "in this age which boasts its civilisation, the increasing tendency of nations to arm themselves against each other is not only regrettable, but depressing and alarming." What a confession after nearly two thousand years of the reign of the alleged Prince of Peace! Countless men and women have been murdered and tortured for doubting the truth of Christianity and the "moral perfection of Christ." And the miserable statement of Mr. Borden's is the upshot of it all.



### Mr. Foote's Engagements

Sunday, December 15, Queen's (Minor) Hall, Langham-place, Regent-street, London, W. : at 7.30, "The Real Meaning of Christmas."

### To Correspondents.

**PRESIDENT'S HONORARIUM FUND, 1912.**—Previously acknowledged, £260 10s. 1d. Received since:—"Mac," 5s.; C. W. Thomas (Westport, N. Zealand), 5s.

*Correction:* W. J. Coudoy, 7s. 6d., in last week's list should have been W. J. Conroy, 7s. 6d.

**BENEVOLENT FUND.**—Miss E. M. Vance acknowledges with thanks a parcel of useful clothing from Mr. and Mrs. A. J. Fincken.

"Mac."—You say you subscribe to both the "Foote and Fighting Funds," but you add that the two different words have the same meaning. We have always kept our face to the foe, anyhow; and that's enough to claim in a world like this.

**J. PARTRIDGE.**—Glad to hear Mr. Heaford had a good meeting at Birmingham, and that his Ferrer lecture was highly interesting.

**WILLIAM OWEN,** the Glasgow Branch secretary, writing about the destruction by fire of the Society's meeting-place, says: "By the way, wasn't it a tame ending? A debate on Single Tax v. Socialism—and then burnt out! Had it been a lecture by yourself now!"

**E. B.**—Much obliged for cuttings. It is surprising, as you say, how little even educated Christians know of the character and history of their own faith. Mr. Balfour said in the House of Commons years ago that if Turkish rule were abolished in Macedonia some other rule would have to be supplied, merely in order to prevent the rival Christian sects from murdering each other. We recollect this, but the Christians don't. They have convenient, if useless, memories.

**L. J. SIMONS.**—Thanks, but Mr. Heaford had already written on the subject.

**A. MILLAR.**—We admit that our "Literary Gossip" is "uncommon," and note that you regard it for that reason as "very valuable." It is a shameful thing, but it is only too true, that commercialism speaks through every line of literary criticism in ordinary periodicals, except when the reader is regaled with stock chatter about established favorites.

**MARK MELFORD.**—Sorry you got into this column as "McGord" but we don't feel very guilty. It is astonishing what trouble people will take to disguise their signatures. At the end of a perfectly clear letter we sometimes find a signature which would baffle a thousand experts. Our answer to your letter remains. Such praise of Mr. Foote in relation to his bearing at the Old Bailey before Mr. Justice North in 1883 might run the editorial gauntlet if it were called for by any attack made upon him, but it is really apropos of nothing just now. Besides, nobody has ever included cowardice amongst Mr. Foote's faults. We think you must see, on reflection, that your letter might more fitly appear in some other journal.

**J. W. GOTT.**—Delighted to hear of Sunday's success at Bolton. It shows that the Northern Tour work has told. The new Branch will be supported as far as funds permit.

**M. METCALFE.**—You are mistaken. The lecturers you mention were not speaking at Bolton for the N. S. S. or the Secular Society, Ltd. Mr. Lloyd was; so was Mr. Jackson. We believe you are mistaken on the other matter too. Mr. Lloyd has no "spiritualism" about him to our knowledge.

**ROBERT MEARNS.**—Glad to hear there were so many ladies at the Bolton meetings.

**W. J. CONROY.**—Sorry, but blunders will happen. The wonder is they don't happen oftener.

**T. A. BATTEN.**—A School-Board squabble at Pretoria in the middle of November loses any interest it may have had for our readers by the middle of December. The only real interest in such squabbles lies in the personalities that take part in them. Haven't you overlooked this? Thanks for your efforts to promote our circulation in South Africa.

**T. HODGSON.**—You ask if *Flowers of Freethought* "represents our present-day opinions unaltered and unchanged by years." This is the most extraordinary question we were ever asked. We can only reply that, in a general way, we are quite willing to repeat our signature to the contents of those two volumes. And since you ring us up, as it were, we venture to say that there is more of the very essence of Freethought in these two volumes than in any other two volumes in the world. There now!

**W. ADDISON.**—Seventy isn't a "great" age. You'll probably hear many Freethought lectures yet.

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.

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

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

### Our Fighting Fund.

[The object of this Fund is to provide the sinews of war in the National Secular Society's fight against the London County Council, which is seeking to stop all collections at the Society's open-air meetings in London, and thus to abolish a practically immemorial right; this step being but one in a calculated policy which is clearly intended to suppress the right of free speech in all parks and other open spaces under the Council's control. This Fund is being raised by the Editor of the *Freethinker* by request of the N. S. S. Executive. Subscriptions should therefore be sent direct to G. W. Foote, 2 Newcastle-street, London, E.C. Cheques, etc., should be made payable to him.]

Previously acknowledged, £72 19s. 9d. Received since:—"Mac," 5s.; J. H., 2s.; J. Capon and friends, 4s.

*Correction:* W. J. Coudoy, 7s. 6d., in last week's list should have been W. J. Conroy, 2s. 6d.

### Sugar Plums.

Mr. Foote's last lecture this year at Queen's Hall will be delivered this evening (Dec. 15), his subject being "The Real Meaning of Christmas." London "saints" should try to bring some of their more orthodox friends to this lecture. It is a great eye-opener to the ordinary Christian—if he would only hear it.

The conduct of the Sunday evening meetings at Queen's Hall this winter is largely experimental. During the first five Sundays the audience went on increasing, but a halt had to be cried to the bill of expenditure on advertising. Too great a lurch, apparently, was then made in the opposite direction, and other changes were made in the method of announcement. The result was that the audience began to fall away. The *public* were less and less represented at the meetings. Evidently the advertising will have to be increased again to some extent. The problem is an extremely difficult one. Ordinary rules of advertising throw no light upon it. Freethought lectures are an absolute speciality. What has to be discovered is how to advertise effectively to the select public that might be attracted to them, without wasting a lot of money on the vast body of indifferents. Fresh efforts will be made in the new year on improved lines, if possible. We shall return to the subject very shortly. Meantime the London "saints" will please note that the Queen's Hall will be closed during the Christmastide—on December 22 and 29 for certain.

Mr. Cohen lectures to-day (Dec. 15) in the Secular Hall, Rusholme-road, Manchester. South Lancashire "saints" will please note—and tell their friends.

There are few lady lecturers in the Freethought movement to-day. We have all the more pleasure, therefore, in announcing that Miss Kough lectures at King's Hall, Corporation-street, Birmingham, to-day (Dec. 15). We hope the local "saints" will give her a good audience and a cordial welcome.

Mr. Lloyd had good audiences last Sunday on the occasion of his first lecturing visit to Bolton. Mr. Gott, who has been working the town and district with Mr. Jackson in connection with the Northern Tour, writes enthusiastically of the Bolton meetings. He adds that the audiences were delighted with Mr. Lloyd's lectures, and are looking for early visits from other speakers. What can be done shall be done, of course; but oh if that Freethought millionaire would only come along.

The Liverpool Branch is in the thick of its work again. This afternoon (Dec. 15) at 3 Ex-Rev. E. Morris Young will lecture at the Alexandra Hall, Islington-square, on "Reason and Faith," and in the evening at 7 on "The Penalty of Honest Heresy." Local "saints" should do their best to make Mr. Young's first visit encouraging.

Last week's news was only too true. The Glasgow Secular Hall is burnt out. The whole building literally went to blazes. The Glasgow Branch has lost all its property, including a library full of old but interesting books, and a complete set of Voltaire published at Glasgow in 1768. A lantern and screen are lost that cost £30, and all the "tea-fight" utensils are gone. Fortunately the Branch has a bank balance to fall back upon. It is even believed by some that the Society will rise like a phoenix with new life from its ashes. In the meantime, however, the lecture program is entirely cancelled. The Committee meets to-day (Dec. 15) at Mr. Baxter's, 32 Brunswick-street, at 12 noon, to consider the situation.



## Canalejas and the Spanish Clericals.

THE murder of Canalejas was one of those senseless and mysterious acts of outrage the determining cause of which it is exceedingly difficult to discover with legal and mathematical exactitude. The Anarchist may safely be eliminated as the reputed *fons et origo* of the crime. It is far more sagacious and far safer to suspect the Church, and the reactionary parties in Spain that are controlled by the Church, as the determining cause of Canalejas' death. It is certain that the Anarchists in Spain have had no scores to wipe out in the late Premier's blood, whilst the Church, which, all during her history has either employed wholesale murder or private assassination as its *modus operandi*, and even to-day winks at the murders and outrages committed by the Carlist *requetés*, had grievous cause to consider Canalejas as better dead than living. The Pope has already stated in a cryptic manner that the assassination is "the result of stamping out religion"—a statement which deserves to be read in conjunction with the pious diatribes that called for the "stamping out" of the irreligious Canalejas. In all these cases where the cause of crime is admittedly mysterious, the true scent to follow is that laid down by the discriminating Latin proverb: *Cui prodest?* The advantage of continued life and rule by Canalejas was all with the advanced political, *i. e.*, Freethinking element in Spain, and any gain likely to be reaped from Canalejas' extermination would clearly fall into the hands of the clerico-conservative reactionary and hyper-religious party, represented politically by Maura and ecclesiastically by Holy Mother Church. In fact, under cover of the fallen body of Canalejas, the reactionary party—bitterly and brutally pious—are even now calling for extensive powers in repression of freedom of thought, in order the more effectually to gag the voice of public opinion on the glaring abuses of Church and State in Spain. The intimate connection between reactionaries-cum-religionists in Spain and the Terrorists\* was patent to all the world in the Rull case at Barcelona in 1908, and this celebrated case, in which bombs and true religion went hand in hand, must never be lost sight of whenever, as in the mysterious murder of Canalejas, we find a man in the front rank of liberal thought and progressive politics in Spain struck down by the hand of the assassin.

A little homely history in these matters may enable us to see these modern developments in a truer light. Almost within our own days, we have seen the life of Isabel II. attempted by the Carlist priest, Merino, who, dagger in hand, sought to play the Ehud trick (Judges iii. 20-22) upon the then Queen of Spain, and was properly hanged for his pains. Later on, King Amadeo was fired at in the Calle del Arenal at Madrid by a degenerate in the pay of the reactionaries for the crime of being the son of Victor Emanuel, who, on September 20, 1870, put an end to the temporal power of the Popes. The life of Ruiz Zorrilla, again, the great Spanish reformer, Freethinker, and Republican (for whom Ferrer for some years acted as private secretary), was also attempted by an assassin, the plot having been hatched in the alcoves of clericalist reaction. The great Py y Margall, in 1874, the renowned Spanish Freethinker whom Bradlaugh so much admired, was also attacked for his life by a priest, the motive here, as in all these aggressions, being religious hate, the least lovely of all hates. Luckily, Py y Margall was too quick for the pious scoundrel, and promptly sent him to kingdom-come. Then, to close a short list amongst a long catalogue of clerical crimes, one of the prime movers in the Spanish Freethought cause, Garcia Vao, the intimate friend of Ramon Chiés, and one of the chief writers on the staff of *Las Dominicales*, was basely assassinated by a scoundrel in the streets of Madrid, egged on by the Jesuits. In all these cases, not to cite the inter-

minable list of atrocities committed by the clericals during one of the most cruel religious wars in all history—the Carlist war or series of wars in the last century—religion, heavenly maid! did not disdain the chivalrous aid of the assassin, nor dream that God was dishonored by the ruthless killing of his enemies. The Church, which boasts its *semper eadem* policy, must be judged by its record, and its virtuous protestations of innocence checked by its evil traditions.

The comments of the Catholic press in Spain upon this act of assassination are more than suspicious. They presuppose that the Church and the reactionaries know more about the genesis of this crime than they are willing to divulge. For instance, here is the comment of *El Correo Espanol* (cited in *El Radical* of November 29):—

"We and our colleagues 'believe' that the Providence of God rules and governs all things in this world, and that by *unknown channels*, or by means which are beyond the limited comprehension of man, the lofty designs of God are accomplished. And the belief that the assassin's dagger or the revolver of the scoundrel are sometimes the instruments of divine justice, the tremendous lessons of Providence, may be uncomfortable for the proud people who do not believe in God nor in his justice, and only recognise and acknowledge the blind forces of nature, but for us this belief is as evident as the sun when its splendor shines in the lofty vault of heaven."

Another Catholic and reactionary organ, *La Monarquía Federal*, argues in the same strain, as thus:—

"The dagger of the assassin, the revolver of the Anarchist, are without doubt the instruments of divine justice."

How far the revolver fired by Pardinás collaborated with the clericals, and how accurately it secured their party ends, may be seen from the fact that now that the hated Canalejas is out of the way, reaction has uplifted his head, and the law relating to religious associations, the Ley del Candado, and the long-promised amnesty of political (*i. e.*, Freethinking) prisoners are being relegated to the Greek Kalends. Again, the adage *Cui prodest?* helps us to understand what a "providential instrument" was working for the Catholics when the neo-Christian Pardinás fired at Canalejas.

*El Progreso* (Barcelona), of November 21, cites a long telegram from Madrid, appearing in *La Vanguardia* of November 13, which sheds a lurid light upon the possible motives actuating the deed of Manuel Pardinás, the mysterious assassin of Canalejas. It appears from the papers found on the body of Pardinás that he was born on January 4, 1880, at El Grado (Huesca); that his baptism did not take place there, nor about that date; that, in fact, he was not baptised until September of this present year, 1912. Now, it is important to remember that at the very time when Pardinás was initiated into the bosom of the Catholic Apostolic and Roman Church, the higher clergy, the *Defensa Social*, and the religious associations throughout Spain were moving heaven and earth against the projected Ley del Candado proposed by Canalejas in restraint of the claims and aggressions of the Catholic Church. Nor must it be forgotten that when the Supreme Tribunal of War and Marine decreed the restitution of Ferrer's goods to his legitimate heirs, the religious and reactionary press raised a tremendous clamor against Canalejas, who was known to have been largely instrumental in facilitating the rendering of this honorable act of justice. The very last public act of Canalejas was his courageous resistance to clerical entreaty which demanded the exercise of the governmental veto upon the great Ferrer demonstration at Madrid on November 10. Canalejas gave the required permission for the meeting, and two days afterwards his assassination shocked Spain and the whole world. The brand-new Christian Pardinás, who "was born again" in baptism in September last, and on November 12 became the assassin of the statesman so vigorously hated by the Church, may safely be

\* See *Freethinker* article of April 5, 1908.



regarded as one of the latest triumphs of Christianity.

A writer in *El Pais* (cited in *El Radical* of November 24) discovers the atmosphere that created this crime in provocations like that of the inflammatory sermon against Canalejas delivered in Gijon as far back as May, 1910. The preacher, who was inveighing against the late Premier on account of his anti-clerical legislation, delivered himself as thus:—

"This man has sprung up from hell itself. He will not sufficiently be repaid for the evil he is doing to religion and to our most Holy Father if even he were burnt alive and his ashes scattered to the winds."

*El Radical* declares that this was not the first nor the only occasion on which similar bloodthirsty invectives were vented against Canalejas on account of his projected anti-clerical legislation, and our contemporary puts on record the fact that one of the reactionary and religious journals recognised in Pardinás "the arm that executed the justice of God"! Thus we see that Pope and journalist think the same thing, but express their ideas in varying degrees of crudity. Political assassination was a holy institution in the Old Testament days.

No one will pretend that Canalejas understood anti-clericalism in legislation like M. Combes, nor that he retained when in power the high-souled democratic doctrines of his early Republican days. He suffered from the usual fatal limitations which Church and monarchy in Spain are always able to impose upon the Radical politicians of that country, but for all that he was the ablest and most honest Premier that Spain had produced for the last twenty years. Like Combes, he was a Freethinker; but, unlike Combes, he was surrounded by an all-embracing network of monarchical institutions, and his intentions were held in check by an unscrupulous and all but omnipotent Church. He rose to power after the ghost of Ferrer had banished Maura into political exile, and his whole ministerial career was bound up with Ferrer and his cause.

My distinguished friend, M. Georges Lorand, was only voicing the general sentiment of enlightened public opinion and of international Freethought when he wrote his splendid article in *L'Express de Liège* (November 14) on the great services rendered by Canalejas in the Ferrer case. M. Lorand very truly points out that Freethought owes to Canalejas an immense debt of gratitude, inasmuch as the restitution of Ferrer's property to his heirs was, above all things, due to the firmness and generous sympathy of the murdered Premier, no less than to his sense of justice and his profound regard for the honor of his native Spain in the eyes of civilisation. M. Lorand's words on this matter have more than a personal interest; they deserve to take their place in the final historical record of this unprecedented case of a modern martyr of Freethought whose death moved the whole world to tears:—

"When I arrived at Madrid [says M. Lorand] at the beginning of last winter, determined not to return until the sentence of restitution that had been promised me for two years past was delivered—a promise which Canalejas himself had made, and to which General Weyler had given his approbation—I went direct to see the President of the Council [Canalejas]. For a long time past I had been in communication with him, and had written to him often about the matter, and earlier I had had occasion to confer upon the same subject with his predecessor, Senor Moret.....It was Moret who, later on, recommended me to General Weyler, who, with pronounced military bluntness and with expressions so military that I am unable to transcribe them here, had recognised the justice of my claim, and had ordered the restitution of the property. But the military Auditor-General of Barcelona, who was also a militant Clerical, offered his opposition to the matter, and the question dragged on in spite of the interventions, the entreaties, letters, and visits which I reiterated and repeated.

"I arrived at Madrid at half past eleven at night. At midnight I was received at his house by the President, Canalejas, and explained to him the situation of the case."

I have no space here to reproduce Lorand's account of the interesting colloquy which he had with Canalejas, but the following words of the late President must be cited:—

"'You are right,' he said; 'the honor of Spain demands that justice be done, seeing that your claim is a just one.....I certainly agree with you that not to hand over to Ferrer's heirs his property and his books, his books above all things—those translations of the beautiful works of Reclus, which I myself have read and admired—would be a disgrace for Spain, and it shall not be suffered!'"

With every word of M. Lorand's homage to the memory of Canalejas in gratitude for his services to the cause of fairplay for Ferrer, I am in heartiest sympathy. And, let me add that, in the presence of the appalling difficulties that surrounded the work of the testamentary executors, I am to-day more convinced than ever that the two indispensable men for the present happy solution of the problem left to Senor Litrán and myself for settlement at Ferrer's death were Lorand and Canalejas, and my personal sense of gratitude to the memory of the great statesman is, naturally, not lessened by the conviction which I have that the death of Canalejas was wrought directly or indirectly by the machinations of the ruthless institution that contrived the assassination of Ferrer himself. The ecclesiastical leopard has not changed its spots.

WILLIAM HEAFORD.

### A Greek Ferrer: An Appeal for Zacchos.

A PARIS telegram in the *Daily Citizen*, of Dec. 4, states that an ardent appeal is addressed by the Federation of Trades Unions in Constantinople to the *Bataille Syndicaliste*, for efforts to be made to save the life of C. Zacchos, who has recently been arrested at Valos, Greece, and is under sentence of execution. Zacchos is called a Greek Ferrer, and as a Freethinker and educational reformer his case deserves special sympathy at our hands.

Zacchos aroused the hatred of clericals in Greece through his efforts to emancipate the workmen of his country by founding lay schools and organising trade unions. The outbreak of the Balkan war provided the long-coveted opportunity for his arrest. Zacchos is a barrister who had defended a number of workmen who had been arrested on the complaint of an archbishop as being Atheists and enemies of Christianity.

*Vorwärts* publishes a letter from the "Society for Social Studies" at Constantinople dealing all too briefly with this case, concerning which we await with anxiety fuller and more explicit details. The statement is made that the clericals (*i.e.*, the Greek variety of the ubiquitous enemies of mankind) have for a long time wanted the head of this new victim whose work of illumination (lay schools and trades unions) has been a thorn in their side. Apparently, no specific charge is made against Zacchos, the Greek Government no doubt utilising the war fever and the laws against democratic co-operation as the cover for this new act of aggression. In every country the liberty of the subject is open to insidious attacks (as witness Ferrer's own case) when the war panic seizes the rulers and the governing classes. The same thing would happen here in England in like circumstances, the only difference between one country and another being in the graduated virulence of the attack.

Perhaps before these lines are published, Zacchos may be no more—he is under condemnation to be shot. In the meantime, the International Freethought Bureau, the Ligue des Droits de l'Homme, both in France and Belgium, and our friends Lorand, Monseur, and Hins, not to mention our contemporaries, *Justice*, the *Daily Citizen*, the *Bataille Syndicaliste*, and others, are moving in arrest of execution, and are endeavoring to agitate public opinion for the prevention of what appears to be



an arbitrary act of vengeance on the part of the clericals and reactionaries in Greece. In this protest the *Freethinker* cannot be an abstentionist.

Freethinkers and all friends of secular education and social progress are, therefore, urged to stir public opinion in their different centres for the rescue of this threatened life, which is all the more valuable on account of its identification with the good cause of education and economic freedom.

All protests should be addressed as early as possible to M. Eugène Hins, 350 Chaussée de Bœndael, Brussels.

WILLIAM HEAFORD.

### Another Prodigy of Faith.

WONDERS will never cease. Evangelists of the type of Gipsy Smith, Evan Roberts, and the portentous Torrey must take a back seat. They are outclassed. The press informs us that a little nigger in South Africa, nine years of age, is on an evangelistic tour there, and is gaining numerous converts. What vain Rationalist will venture to say that the age of miracles is past? Here is a little piccaninny—not yet in double figures—proclaiming the glorious gospel and stirring the hearts of the people of South Africa! “Out of the mouths of babes and sucklings thou hast perfected praise.”

Truly, this is what in vulgar parlance is called a “knock out.” Why, it even beats the performances of Jesus himself. True, at the age of twelve, we are informed that the Son of God was putting ticklish questions to the Jewish Doctors of Law and Divinity. But this South African young gentleman is three years younger, and is already convincing multitudes of their sins!

We do not know what sober, calculating theologians think about this “phenomenon.” But we might suggest for their consideration the question why Jesus Christ did so little in the preaching way until he was thirty years of age? The gap between fourteen and thirty seems to have been filled up by useful carpentry work. But what about the higher claims of “his Father’s business”? Really, when one thinks of it, there was a lot of time “wasted” which might have been devoted to evangelisation by the one supreme authority on God and the problems of life and death. Possibly the paucity of the information we have about Christ is due to the shortness of his ministry.

Of course, it may be contended that we live in an age of youthful precocity. Children are now, we admit, encouraged to show their parts with a greater degree of freedom and confidence than was allowed to them in former times. When a youngster reaches the age of seven or eight, he sneers at Jack and the Beanstalk, Bluebeard, and the nursery rhymes which appealed to our youthful fancy. But the belief and interest in ghost stories seem to be perennial, and appeal to all people at all stages of life, with few exceptions.

May it not come to this, if the production of further prodigies goes on apace, that the cry in the preaching profession will ultimately be: “Too old at fifteen”? It is a charming picture which one’s imagination conjures up—that of the youthful professor of theology poring over a huge tome, with a lollipop in one hand and his favorite teddy-bear in the other. Must not the old young men and young old men of the Y. M. C. A.’s hide their diminished heads with shame? What are they doing for the cause?

Now, the really serious point which has to be weighed by the “teachers” of divinity in this connection is the contrast between the inspired youngster who, without any course of special training, is able to enthral and to stir the emotions of thousands of people, and the mature man who, after seven or eight years of preparation for the clerical profession, settles down in some sleepy parish to the routine of formal religious duties, perfunctorily performed, and a round of social

engagements, none of which has the slightest effect in transfiguring or even altering the mode of life of the mass of the individuals forming the community in which he moves and has his being. In how many instances can one find evidence of the electrifying power of an eloquent orator of outstanding genius? The religion of former days had an influence because the professors of it embraced without hesitation or question its great fundamental dogmas, and knew that everything depended upon getting at the most susceptible and impressible part of man’s emotions, by terrorising warnings and striking pictures of the world to come and an offended Deity, from whose wrath the only way of escape was by the sacrifice of Christ. In our time religion is losing its influence—slowly, perhaps, but none the less surely—because science has given it its death-blow. Many prominent professors of religion conceal, gloss over, and try to explain away the absurdities of its fundamental dogmas, and at the same time endeavor to reconcile “faith” with the demonstrations of science, deprecating the urgent appeal of other days to the emotions alone, and basing *their* appeal to men to believe on the suggestion that the religion they offer for acceptance is at once “natural” and “reasonable.”

It is notorious that children are governed in their mental processes much more by fancy than by fact. But for grown-up people to talk of religion being “reasonable” is a contradiction in terms. Will some of our teachers tell us the difference in meaning between “reasonable” and “rational”? *Faith* and *Reason* cannot be reconciled. A child may sincerely believe in the most fantastic and impossible things. He may honestly believe the story of Jack and the Beanstalk, and his religious friends laugh indulgently as they listen to his serious prattle about it. But let the kiddie begin to tell equally fantastic things about Jesus and God and angels with wings and harps and palms and golden streets and a bottomless hell; and the faces of the reverend seniors assume a look of interest and solemn admiration which develops into a glowing smile of reverent and ecstasitic joy. Thus the child in religious matters is so often the father of the man. And does not the Christian Bible teach this? “A little child shall lead them.” “Except ye become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven.” “Out of the mouths of babes and sucklings thou hast perfected praise.”

This, of course, is sheer emotionalism. But for the development of humanity we must turn to the scientific and discard the sensational. No one can help loving the artless innocence of little children; but every Rationalist deplores the dreadful effects which religious systems produce upon little children as they grow towards manhood and womanhood. There is no reason why we should not have the tenderness of a child’s heart allied in the same person, with the virility and knowledge of maturity. But, unhappily, we know that there is all the difference between the “child-like” and the “childish.” If the adult religious person does not remain the latter, he is in very few instances still the former, while he makes his beliefs square with his convenience and justifies courses and actions marked by envy, hatred, suspicion, jealousy, distrust, malice, uncharitableness, and intolerance.

We do not think the grave, learned, and reverend theologians of our land will do much to boom the little South African nigger evangelist.

SIMPLE SANDY.

Considering all the heresies, the enormous crimes, the wickedness, the astounding follies, which the Bible has been made to justify, and which its indiscriminate reading has suggested; considering that it has been, indeed, the sword which our Lord said he was sending; and that not the Devil himself could have invented an implement more potent to fill the hated world with lies, and blood, and fury; I think, certainly, that to send hawkers over the world loaded with copies of this book, scattering it in all places, among all persons, is the most culpable folly of which it is possible for man to be guilty.—James Anthony Froude.



## Literary Gossip.

It is a curious thing that the earliest spade work, so to speak, in the field of William Blake's reputation as a poet and seer was, for the most part, done by Freethinkers. Dante and William Rossetti, Alexander Gilchrist, Swinburne, and James Thomson ("B. V.") are prominent names in this connection. Now we find High Church parsons, and other orating Christians, especially the Christian Socialists, quoting Blake as an ideal Christian—though they seldom get beyond the tag about building Jerusalem in England's green and pleasant land.

\* \* \*

The famous first *Life of William Blake*, in two handsome volumes, on which Gilchrist, Linton, and the two Rossettis co-operated, was published in 1863. In 1865 a fine essay on "The Poems of William Blake," founded upon these noble volumes, was contributed by James Thomson to the *National Reformer*. This essay is not easily accessible at present, although it has twice been reprinted; once by Mr. Bertram Dobell, in 1884, but for private circulation only, and again in the volume of *Poems, Essays, and Fragments*, published by Mr. Dobell in 1892, with a preface by Mr. J. M. Robertson—which, we believe, has for some years been out of print. Thomson was then in the Theistic stage of his mental development, and expressions occur that would never have found a place in his later Atheistic period. The essay itself, however, is a remarkable piece of work, with great depth of thought and strength of style, and two or three magnificent purple passages, displaying lofty genius and very striking power of composition. Thomson closed this memorable essay with four verses; his own, of course, just like the prose they supplemented—the criticism, as it were, finally passing into panegyric:—

"He came to the desert of London town,  
Grey miles long;  
He wandered up and he wandered down,  
Singing a quiet song.  
He came to the desert of London town,  
Mirk miles broad;  
He wandered up and he wandered down,  
Ever alone with God.  
There were thousands and thousands of human  
In this desert of brick and stone: [kind  
But some were deaf and some were blind,  
And he was there alone.  
At length the good hour came; he died,  
As he had lived, alone:  
He was not missed from the desert wide,  
Perhaps he was found at the Throne."

We are not quoting these verses as the best, or among the best, that Thomson wrote, although they are singularly appropriate and have a certain haunting charm. We quote them, indeed, for quite another purpose—as the reader will see.

\* \* \*

Imagine our astonishment—but, after all, a tempered and half-smiling astonishment—at finding those four verses of James Thomson's reproduced in last week's issue of a pious paper called *Great Thoughts*, with the heading of "Alone" and William Blake's name at the bottom as the author. What a transmogrification! What the little poem must have gone through before it came to that! And what a peculiar knowledge of English literature obtains in some "literary" circles!

\* \* \*

The Fabian Society has published the first of a "Biographical Series" of pamphlets. It is entitled *Francis Place: The Tailor of Charing Cross*, and is a well-written and impartial account of the life of a really remarkable man, distinguished amongst the "Radicals" of the early part of last century. We wish it a wide circulation. The price is twopenno.

G. W. F.

## Tales of Our Times.

BY A CYNIC.

MANY ages ago there dwelt a tribe of men in the depths of a vast and gloomy forest. For thousands of miles in all directions the forest spread unbroken, and the small tribe of men in the midst of it had no idea where its confines lay or whether it had any limits at all. So thickly grew the giant trees and great twining creepers, so dense was their interlacing foliage overhead, that the full light of day never penetrated to the earth, and the forest-dwellers had never seen sun, moon, or stars. Their nights were pitchy black, and their days were only distinguishable from their nights by a faint, dull green twilight which filtered down

through the thick umbrageous roof a hundred feet or so above their heads.

None knew how they had originally come to dwell in this gloomy and depressing abode. All tradition of their past was lost, and they supposed that they had always dwelt in the forest, and always would dwell there. Indeed, a change of habitat would scarcely now have seemed desirable to them even if it had been possible, for the forest had set its mark upon them morally and physically. Their natures were as gloomy as the shades they lived in, mirth and laughter were unknown, and the eternal silence of the forest had evoked a corresponding mood in their habitual taciturnity. Moreover, the absence of light and of all opportunity for distant vision had affected their eyes through many generations, reducing them to such a state of weakness that the power of sight had been much impaired.

Thus the ages rolled on, till a slow climatic change began to affect the great forest. Its rank luxuriance declined; many species of trees died out; the umbrageous roof grew thinner; breezy open spaces and sunny glades appeared; and for the first time in their experience the forest-dwellers beheld the pure and perfect light of day.

But their weak eyes could not bear the light, so they covered them with shades of leaves, as their medicine-men assured them that the light would inevitably make them blind. And they were so careful to avoid the terrible consequences of the light that, on the advice of the medicine-men, all their children soon after birth had their eyes also carefully shaded with leaves, and this practice, once established, was rigidly kept up. The result was that their eyes remained as weak and degenerate as ever, and from infancy to old age these people groped about like men in darkness, though all around them shone the resplendent light of day and above them arched the glorious vault of blue which they feared to look at.

But in time a few individuals began to escape from this thralldom of unreasoning fear. Some of the bolder spirits disbelieved the medicine-men, and resolved to try the effect of discarding the leaf-shade which most of them deemed so necessary. And the result proved them to be right. So far from becoming blind, their eyes grew stronger, the light no longer hurt them, their vision improved, and they were soon able to enjoy without fear of discomfort all the majestic and wonderful sights of nature which lay around them.

Then they said to the others: "The medicine-men are wrong. The light will not harm you or make you blind. Get rid of your leaf shades as we have done, and face the light. You will feel some pain and inconvenience for a while, but that will soon pass off, and you will rejoice as we do in a strong and glorious power of vision. Or even if you grown-up folk fear to do this, at least refrain from binding these useless shades over the eyes of the children. Let them grow up seeing the light, and we shall soon be a happy, wise, and self-reliant people."

But the medicine-men used all their influence to prevent this. "These men are lying," they said to the people. "The light has really made them blind, and in their disappointment and vexation they want us all to share their blindness. Do not for a moment think of discarding your leaf-shades, especially in the case of your poor helpless children."

However, some here and there do follow the advice of those who have become used to the light, and their numbers are steadily increasing. So in course of time, perhaps, the entire tribe may be induced to give up wearing their ridiculous leaf-shades gathered in the great Forest of Superstition.

To love justice, to long for the right, to love mercy, to pity the suffering, to assist the weak, to forget wrongs and remember benefits, to love the truth, to be sincere, to utter honest words, to love liberty, to wage relentless war against slavery in all its forms, to love wife and child and friend, to make a happy home, to love the beautiful art, in nature; to cultivate the mind, to be familiar with the mighty thoughts that genius has expressed, the noble deeds of all the world; to cultivate courage and cheerfulness, to make others happy, to fill life with the splendor of generous acts, the warmth of loving words; to discard errors, to destroy prejudice, to receive new truths with gladness, to cultivate hope, to see the calm beyond the storm, the dawn beyond the night; to do the best that can be done and then be resigned—this is the religion of reason, the creed of science. This satisfies the brain and heart.—*Ingersoll, "The Creed of Science."*

### SWEET INFLUENCES OF PRAYER.

Justice of the Peace: "Your wife says you struck her. Have you any excuse to offer, Uncle?"

The Prisoner: "Ah suttinly has, Jedge. While I wuz prayin' fo' rain fo' mah gyardin, she starts in prayin' fo' fair wedder case she was gwine to wash!"



## SUNDAY LECTURE NOTICES, Etc.

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

### LONDON.

#### INDOOR.

QUEEN'S (MINOR) HALL (Langham-place, Regent-street, W.): 7.30, G. W. Foote, "The Real Meaning of Christmas."

WEST HAM BRANCH N. S. S. (Workmen's Hall, Romford-road' Stratford, E.): 7.30, J. T. Lloyd, "Our Heavenly Origin."

### COUNTRY.

#### INDOOR.

BIRMINGHAM BRANCH N. S. S. (King's Hall, Corporation-street): 7, Miss Kathleen B. Kough, "He hath a devil and is mad."

GLASGOW SECULAR SOCIETY: Committee will meet in Mr. Baxter's, 32 Brunswick-street, at 12 noon.

LIVERPOOL BRANCH N. S. S. (Alexandra Hall, Islington-square): E. Morris Young, 3, "Reason versus Theology"; 7, "The Penalty of Honest Heresy."

MANCHESTER BRANCH N. S. S. (Secular Hall, Rusholme-road, All Saints): C. Cohen, 3, "The Rule of the Dead"; 6.30, "The Cradle, the Altar, and the Grave." Tea at 5.

#### OUTDOOR.

LANCASHIRE AND YORKSHIRE: Thos. A. Jackson—Burnley (Market Place): Dec. 15, at 3, "The Atheist in the Market Place"; at 7, "The Crimes of God." Rochdale (Town Hall Square): 16, at 7.30, "Who Made God?" 17, at 7.30, "The Dead Hand." Bury (front of Circus): 18, at 7.30, "If I Were God"; 19, at 7.30, "Providence and the Police." Huddersfield (Market Cross): 20, at 7.30, "The Limitations of Jesus"; 21, at 7.30, "The Cause and Cure of Christianity."

PROPAGANDIST LEAFLETS. New Issue. 1. *Hunting Skunks*, G. W. Foote; 2. *Bible and Teetotalism*, J. M. Wheeler; 3. *Principles of Secularism*, C. Watts; 4. *Where Are Your Hospitals?* R. Ingersoll. 5. *Because the Bible Tells Me So*, W. P. Ball; 6. *Why Be Good?* by G. W. Foote. *The Parson's Creed*. Often the means of arresting attention and making new members. Price 6d. per hundred, post free 7d. Special rates for larger quantities. Samples on receipt of stamped addressed envelope.—N. S. S. SECRETARY, 2 New-castle-street, Farringdon-street, E.C.

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