

# THE Freethinker

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*Compassion is the master feeling of all great souls.*  
—W. R. PATERSON (Benjamin Swift).

## Where is God?

It is one of the most common commonplaces of old age, and even of advanced life, that the world is neither as wise, as good, nor as happy as it was some thirty, forty, or fifty years ago. Men speak too much from their own feelings. They are the victims of their own personal equations. They attach too much importance to their own real or fancied experience. And when the pessimistic mood is upon them a slight earthquake portends the approaching end of the world, or a war between two countries is the last herald of the universal Armageddon. The truth is that human progress is definitely perceptible only by comparing different stages of society separated by considerable intervals of time. You cannot see a plant growing by watching it. Strangers perceive the growth of children more clearly than their parents. And husband and wife who love each other, spending their lives in intimate intercourse, fail to notice as others do the traces of the hand of time upon each other's face and form. How, then, is a man who knows only his own age, and that chiefly from the newspapers, which are read to-day and forgotten to-morrow, to tell whether the world is improving or deteriorating? What he has to say can only serve as ballast for newspapers that are short of cargo, and almost anything does in the "silly season."

A correspondent in a certain discussion managed, however, to ask a very serious and pertinent question. Seeing, as he thought, that things were going from bad to worse on this distracted planet, he put the query, "Where is God?" Now a brisk debate on that question would be worthy of a better time than the "silly season." It would brighten up the pages of a common newspaper. But what newspaper would admit it?

Where is God? He does not seem to be discoverable for love or money. The clergy talk about him a great deal, but that is a trick of their trade. What they know about him would not fill a volume; no, not even a sheet of note paper, and probably not the space of two lines. They pretend to know what he is, they set forth his attributes, they ticket him, so to speak, like an exhibit in a museum. They say he is this, that, and the other. They tell us he is all-wise, all-good, and all-powerful; also that he is omnipresent, which means that he is everywhere, and what is everywhere must be everything—a Pantheistic conclusion that is enough to make the ordinary man of God stand aghast and throw up his hands as if in presence of the abomination of desolation. Yet how can that conclusion be resisted? If the alleged Deity is everywhere, then God is all, and all is God.

But the gentleman who put that pertinent question did not mean, we take it, to ask *where* God is, but rather what he is *doing*. If he created the world, why did he not make a better job of it? If he rules the world, why does he not regulate its affairs more wisely and benevolently? If he watches over the world, why does he not interfere on behalf

of justice and humanity? That seems to be the gentleman's idea, and we defy all the ministers of religion to give these questions a satisfactory answer.

Thomas Carlyle, in his old age, said despondingly to Mr. Froude that "God does nothing now." The philosopher of Chelsea need not have taken so long to discover this truth. He might have perceived it fifty years sooner if he had not been blinded by the religious prejudices—or, as they are generally called, the religious principles—of his early training.

It is perfectly idle to try to burke this question. The people are going a good deal further on the road of scepticism than the clergy imagine. Besides the men who go to church, there are the men who do not go, and never will go; and they have their thoughts on the subject of religion, although they do not confide them to the ears of the professional soul-savers. Many years ago, on the top of an omnibus, we overheard a couple of men talking about a shocking murder. They were rough fellows with honest instincts, and, without being able to use fine language, they could see a point as well as a clergyman. "Well," said one of them, "they may talk about religion, but I don't see why somebody or something didn't chip in when a poor innocent girl was being trapped to her death. I wish I'd been behind the blackguard." It was a natural wish, and a sensible reflection. God was behind the blackguard, if we are to believe the clergy; yes, and beside him and before him, and under him and above him. God was with him when he fetched the poor girl from her home, God was with him when he went into the chemists' shops and bought the ounces of oxalic acid, God was with him when he took his intended victim into the parlor of his father's house, God was with him when he went out to the scullery to fetch the coal hammer, God was with him when he tore the clothes from the poor girl's body in his brutal and insane lust, God was with him when he forced her raiment down her throat, God was with him when he hammered her head into bloody ruin. God was there all the time. Yes, but how much better for her if a policeman had been about, or any other man with a heart and hand to interfere.

We do not deny, we are not concerned to deny, the Pantheism of a Spinoza, or the idea of God as a vast irresponsible power, governing the universe by general and unchangeable laws, and working out far-distant ends without a special attention to the individual happiness or misery of his sentient creatures. Such was the deity of Pope, who sneeringly asked "Shall gravitation cease as you go by?" He overlooked the fact that the constancy of gravitation is a poor relief to the man whose head is broken by a falling chimney-pot. He also overlooked the fact that the God behind such a law does not come into any sort of moral relationship to his "children." Indeed, it is nonsense to call them his children. He is not even their step-father. To call him "Our Father" is a wretched abuse of language. But the other God, the God of the clergy, the God who sees and hears and notices all that happens—that God is fairly entitled to be called a Devil. To know that outrage and murder are to be committed, and not to move a finger to prevent them, is the sublimation of infamy. The outrager is inspired by his lust, the murderer by his passion, but the callous onlooker is the lowest of the three in the sink of degradation.

G. W. FOOTE.

### The Witch Mania.—III.

(Concluded from p. 371.)

It is a significant comment upon the belief that Protestantism, as a form of religious belief, was the product of a more enlightened rational life, that it was only with its rise that witchcraft assumed an epidemic form. Partly this may have been due to the greater direct dependence on the Bible, which is simply saturated with the belief in Satanic intercourse—the New Testament even moreso than the Old. The position taken up by the Roman Catholic Church did, in a way, bring it into more direct contact with life, and thus while the practice of exorcism continued as a regular part of the offices of the Church, sorcery was, so to speak, a normal factor of the religious environment. Protestantism, apart from other things, brought people into direct contact with Biblical teachings, and Satanic agency became an obsession. Wherever Protestantism established itself there was an immediate and marked increase in the number of prosecutions for witchcraft. In England, if we except a law passed in the tenth century, and upon which some doubt has been cast, there was no regular law against witchcraft until 1541. From that date until the last judicial execution in 1712, it is computed that nearly 50,000 persons, mostly women, were put to death for this offence. Seventeen years after the first-named date, the famous Bishop Jewell, preaching before Queen Elizabeth, lamented,—

“that witches and sorcerers within these few years are marvellously increased within your Grace's realm. Your Grace's subjects pine away even unto the death; their color fadeth, their flesh rotteth, their speech is benumbed, their senses are bereft. I pray God they never practice further than upon the subject.”

A further measure was passed through Parliament in the same year, making enchantments and witchcraft felony.

With scarce an exception, the leaders of Protestantism encouraged the belief in witches and urged their extermination. Luther was obsessed by the idea of the Devil. He saw him everywhere, in everything. The Devil disturbed him at night by rattling pans, appeared to him while writing, and was received by Luther throwing an inkpot at his head—the mark made on the wall by which, was, until recently, shown as a corroboration of the story. When a storm arose Luther declared “’Tis the Devil who has done this; the winds are nothing else but good or bad spirits.” Suicides, he said, were often those strangled by the Devil. Moreover, “The Devil can so completely assume the human woman when he wants to deceive us, that we may very well lie with what seems a woman of real flesh and blood, and yet all the while ’tis only the Devil in the shape of a woman.” The Devil could also become the father of children. Luther asserts that he knew one such case, and added, “I would have that child thrown into the Moldan at the risk of being held its murderer.”\*

The influence of Protestantism in America was of the same character as elsewhere. Increase Mather and his celebrated son, Cotton Mather, were the principal agents in stirring up the belief to frenzy point, and a commission was appointed to rout out witches and suppress their practices. One woman was charged with “giving a look towards the great meeting-house of Salem, and immediately a demon entered the house and tore down part of it.” It seems that a bit of the wooden wainscoting had fallen down. In the case of Giles Corey, who refused to plead guilty, torture was used. He was pressed to death, and when his tongue was pressed out of his mouth the sheriff thrust it back with his walking stick. Many people were executed, and the ministers of Boston and Charlestown drew up an address warmly thanking the Commission for their zeal, and expressing the hope that it would never be relaxed.

Certainly the commission worked hard enough while it lasted. A shipmaster coming to Maryland with emigrants encountered unusual strong weather. An old woman, one Mary Lee, was drowned as a witch in consequence. One woman walked a long distance over muddy roads without her dress being dirty. “I scorn to be drabbed,” she said, and was rewarded by being hanged. George Burroughes could lift a barrel by inserting his fingers in the bung-hole. He was hanged as a wizard. Bridget Bishop was charged with appearing before John Louder at midnight and grievously oppressing him. Louder also saw a black pig approach his door, and when he went to kick it the pig vanished. He was also tempted by a black thing with the body of a monkey, the feet of a cock, and the face of a man. On going out of the back door, the said Bridget Bishop was seen going towards her house. Another witness said that, being in bed on the Lord's Day, he saw a woman, Susanna Martin, come in at the window and jump down on the floor. She took hold of the witness's foot, and drawing his body into a heap, lay upon him for nearly two hours, so that he could neither move nor stir. Eventually, they not only confessed, under torture, their intercourse with Satan, but also accused others of being their associates. As these were men in high places, and even ministers of religion, the need for discrimination was realised. Once a critical judgment was aroused, the mania died down—Cotton Mather fighting manfully for the belief to the end.

The impetus given to witch-hunting is nowhere more clearly seen than in Scotland. Scotch witchcraft, says Lecky, was the offspring of Scotch Puritanism, and faithfully reflected the character of its parent. The clergy nowhere possessed greater power, and nowhere used it more assiduously to fan the flame against witchcraft. Says Buckle:—

“Of all the means of intimidation employed by the Scotch clergy, none was more efficacious than the doctrines they propounded respecting evil spirits and future punishments. On these subjects they constantly uttered the most appalling threats. The language which they used was calculated to madden men with fear, and to drive them to the depths of despair.....It was generally believed that the world was overrun by evil spirits, who not only went up and down the earth, but also lived in the air, and whose business it was to tempt mankind. Their number was infinite, and they were to be found in all places, and in all seasons. At their head was Satan himself, whose delight it was to appear in person, ensnaring or terrifying everyone he met. With this object he assumed various forms. One day he would visit the earth as a black dog; another day, as a raven; on another, he would be heard in the distance roaring like a bull. He appeared sometimes as a white man in black clothes, and sometimes he came as a black man in black clothes, when it was remarked that his voice was ghostly, and that one of his feet was cloven. His stratagems were endless. For, in the opinion of divines, his cunning increased with his age, and having been studying for more than 5,000 years, he had now attained to unexampled dexterity.”\*

Having thus sown the seed, the clergy were not long in reaping the harvest. As in England, a special body of men, “Prickers,” sprang into existence, whose business it was to detect witches. Anonymous accusations were invited, the clergy “placing an empty box in church, to receive a billet with the sorcerer's name, and the date and description of his deeds.”† The lives of thousands of people were rendered unbearable, and the complaint of one Margaret Miall that “she desyres not to live, because nobody will converse with her, seeing she is under the reputation of a witch,” must have been common. Nothing that could whet the appetite for witch-hunting was neglected. William Johnston, baron, bailie, “of the regalitie and baronie of Broughton,” was granted the goods of all who should be “lawfullie convict be assyses as notorious and common witches, haunting and resorting devilles and witches.”‡

\* *History of Civilisation*, ch. xix.

† Dalryell, *Darker Superstitions of Scotland*, p. 625.

‡ *Darker Superstitions of Scotland*, p. 628.

\* Michelet, *Life of Luther*, ch. vi.

The following bill of costs for burning two women, Jane Wischert and Isabel Cocker, in Aberdeen, has a certain melancholy interest:—

Item	£	s.	d.
Item for 20 loads of Peatts to burn them	2	0	0
„ for ane boll of Colles... ..	1	4	0
„ for four tar barrells ... ..	1	6	8
„ for fir and win barrells ... ..	0	16	8
„ for a staick and the dressing of it ...	0	16	0
„ for four fathoms of tousis ... ..	4	0	0
„ to Jon Justice for their execution ...	0	13	4

With the last quarter of the seventeenth century witchcraft as an epidemic came to an end. The last witch in England was burned in 1682, although the last one actually condemned was in 1712. But in this case, on the representation of the judge who tried the case, the verdict was set aside. It was not, however, until 1736 that the Witch Act of 1604 was formally repealed. In Scotland the last witch legally executed was in 1722. Captain Ross, Sheriff of Sutherland, has the doubtful honor of having condemned her to the stake. In Germany the last witch executed, by beheading, was in 1749. The last legal case of witchcraft in America was in Massachusetts, in 1793. After that date trials for witchcraft in America were abolished. These dates refer, of course, to the legal abolition of the offence only. Every now and again a case crops up of old women who are accused, and sometimes maltreated in consequence, of sorcery. But these are mere reminiscences of a mania that was responsible for some of the darkest and most degrading chapters of European history.

In what has gone before I have given little more than a mere description of the witch mania. A scientific history of European witchcraft, one that will make plain all the factors and circumstances that led to its outbreak, and favored its development, has yet to be written. One thing is certain. Such an epidemic could not occur save among a people whose minds were saturated with superstition. Thanks to the long reign of Christianity, the mass of the people of Europe were in such a condition. And access to the Bible only worsened the disease. My point has been to drive home the lesson that it is precisely such outbreaks as these that favor the perpetuation of religious beliefs as a whole. The particular form of a belief that is prevalent for a period may disappear, but the temper of mind remains. Whether we see the Devil on all hands, or God on all hands, is, after all, a mere question of terminology. It is the supernatural that is the raw material of both; and the belief in witches capering through the air on a broom handle, or changing themselves into black cats or lean dogs, absurd though these and similar stories may be, they have yet played their part in strengthening and perpetuating the frame of mind on which religion lives.

C. COHEN.

### The Scientific Chart.

EIGHT years ago the omniscient *Daily Mail* declared that science is a failure, that after destroying "the faith in Christianity of countless souls" it has absolutely nothing to offer them in its place, and that, in fact, one of its chief exponents had just admitted this by saying that "the mystery of life remains as impenetrable as ever." The writer was the well-known journalist whose initials are "H. H. F.," and the article showed conclusively either that he knew practically nothing about science, or that he was deliberately playing to the *Daily Mail* gallery. He exclaimed lachrymously: "At the door of science and her votaries thousands among us lay the bitter complaint of Mary at the sepulchre, 'They have taken away my Lord, and I know not where they have laid him.'" He concluded thus:—

"The Huxleys and Renans of the Universe can get on without having a complete scheme of life, past, present, and future, handed to them as a whole to be kept intact and followed throughout existence. They

make their own schemes. The mass of the people cannot do this. They have neither the time nor the brains. If they have no chart provided for them, they roam hither and thither like a ship without a steersman; they are at the mercy of every shifting wind. Science has a vast responsibility to bear. It has thrown so much doubt on the existing charts that numbers of people have come to count them valueless. Yet it supplies no chart of its own."

The chief feature of the *Daily Mail* article was its complete ignorance, real or assumed, of the nature and aims of science. Every honest thinker knows that science has not failed, and everyone who says that it has is, in Scripture language, "a liar, and the truth is not in him." In the May number of the *Forum* there is an article by Dr. Hellems which gives the lie direct to the *Daily Mail's* silly production. Dr. Hellems, in eloquent and well-informed terms, proclaims the triumph of science, and asserts that it does provide for the people the only sane and safe chart of life. He entitles his article "The Serene Evangel of Science," and he justifies the bold title in the following bold and true manner:—

"If my ears have heard aright, science is standing before the congregation of combined mankind and declaring this gospel: 'Come unto me, and ye shall not labor with wrung hands unto bitterness, nor be heavy laden unto faintness. Come unto me, and for the peace which passeth understanding I will give you the peace that is based upon reason and knowledge. Come unto me, and for the inveterate hope of a life to be, ye shall learn the glorious meaning of the life that is.'"

That is also the evangel of Freethought, for Freethought is nothing but applied science. To us there is nothing new in Dr. Hellems's article, the only thing new about it being its appearance in the *Forum*.

Naturally, the Christians are in a state of consternation. The purport of the *Forum* article is that science teaches people to get on quite well without God and without the hope of immortality. Science says, "Come unto me, and for your need of an Omnipotent Kindness to save you from sin and shame, I will teach you the beauty and dignity of human nature." "Man will find under the new regime all he needs for happiness." To break the force of this new attack upon religion "J. B.," in the *Christian World* for June 12, reminds his fellow-believers that similar onslaughts have always been made, and have always failed to rid the world of it. He even admits, in opposition to the late Professor Blackie's interpretation of it, that "it is impossible to read the *Prometheus* of Aeschylus without seeing in it a veiled attack upon the popular religion." He also alludes to the *De Rerum Natura* of Lucretius, in which religion is cursed as man's worst enemy and this life treated as man's all in all. But it is idle to argue that the people who assail religion as such, and not merely the popular religion of their day, have a certain part of their nature in a state of atrophy, and are therefore incompetent to judge rightly. "J. B." is a minister of religion, and one does not expect him to attack it; but does this entitle him to ask, "Does anyone, who has really looked into life, believe that the carrying out, to its utmost success, of a program of this sort, will secure to man his ultimate satisfaction"? The cruel implication here is that Dr. Hellems and the thousands who agree with him have not "really looked into life," which is equivalent to saying that those who differ from "J. B." and his fellow-believers lack something in the absence of which they cannot arrive at a sound judgment on religion. He contends that Gotama, the founder of Buddhism, began his career in the midst of all the conditions of human welfare laid down by Dr. Hellems. As a matter of fact, Gotama did nothing of the kind. For one thing, he was not "a royal prince," and to call him such betrays a lamentable lack of up-to-date knowledge of the most authentic Buddhist literature. There is nothing to show that he "possessed everything that riches could secure." He lived, rather, in the midst of suffering and sorrow, and the object of his

renunciation and retirement was to seek a remedy for all the ills of life. And what remedy did he find? The very one recommended by Dr. Hellems in the *Forum*—science. Early Buddhism was a wholly Godless religion, and taking Buddhists as a class they are a Godless people. It is certainly a mistake to imagine that the Buddha spoke of poverty as a condition of human welfare. "J. B." speaks in glowing terms of the renunciations practised by Bernard, Ignatius, and Loyola; but does he think that those men made any serious contribution to human wellbeing?

It almost looks as if "J. B." is bent on misrepresenting Dr. Hellems's teaching. Sarcastically he says:—

"To day we have the vast spectacle of 'the comfortable classes.' There is a whole world of well-to-do people. For them the hunger and poverty, the abolition of which, according to our prophet, will make religion superfluous, have been non-existent. What science is to do for the race has here already been done. Has it proved for them the full satisfying Gospel of which we hear?"

That is a deliberate travesty of the article under consideration. Hunger and poverty are only two out of the innumerable ills of life. The rich are indeed free from those two scourges; but if they did their duty, if they obeyed the dictates of scientific philosophy, poverty and hunger would be non-existent in all the land. It is culpably false to represent science as teaching that "human happiness is to be obtained by a supply of bodily necessities, by the provision of physical comfort and security; but "J. B." will surely agree with the statement that in the absence of "bodily necessities" and "physical comfort and security" there cannot be full happiness. No Freethinker has ever dreamed that happiness is to be obtained by material supplies *alone*. We believe in art, poetry, music, friendship, social intercourse, and love, and "J. B." himself mentions the fact that Dr. Hellems advocates their cultivation as indispensable conditions of happiness. We agree with Emile Souvestre when he says that "the world is full of peoples without agriculture, without commerce or manufacture, but you will never find one without its singers, its poet"; but we totally disagree with "J. B.'s" addition that "you will never find one without its religion." Taking the word "religion" in its ordinarily accepted meaning, we affirm that the world is full of people without it. It is true that science at its highest achievement gives us law and force, and offers us ourselves, but it is not true that it introduces us to "a lonely, voiceless world." No, the world revealed to us by science is a strange mixture of beauty and ugliness, of music and discord, of harmonies and disharmonies; but it is neither lonely nor silent, and we are in it to conquer and make it our servant, abounding in beauty and poetry.

"J. B." is perfectly justified in saying that "man's supreme need is companionship, the sense of personality, of something, of someone who cares, who has love to answer his own craving for love"; but he goes seriously, hopelessly astray when he asserts that this need can be adequately supplied only from a supernatural source. We hold, on the contrary, that the belief in supernaturalism has engendered in man many false or abnormal needs, and that the attention given to the task of satisfying these has resulted in a serious warping and twisting of his nature. The search for God and his companionship has been so assiduously pursued that the search for man has scarcely yet begun. "J. B." quotes from Wundt, who until very recently was a Materialist, from Kepler and Copernicus, who flourished in the red dawn of modern science, and from Michelet and Hugo, both of whom were Freethinkers, and who, like all Freethinkers, enthrone love, human love; and the quotations are not arguments, nor does a single one of them even attempt to prove that the belief in God is good for man. It is a belief that has caused the bitterest of controversies, the bloodiest of wars, the cruellest of persecutions, and the worst of corruptions in all the

walks of life. We conclude, therefore, that Dr. Hellems has made good his thesis that "we can know our duty, and live our life without the help of voices heard so faintly that we cannot be sure whether they belong to truth or to hope"—voices which many of us firmly believe are never heard at all except in fancy.

J. T. LLOYD.

## Christianity and the Chinese.—VI.

(Continued from p. 374.)

"The Chinese think that Europeans have neither religion nor morals nor manners, and only worship force as represented by big armies and navies. They say that, while we profess Christianity, its spirit influences our actions far less than do economic considerations; that Christianity is even less to us than is Confucianism to them; and that it is like our impertinence to send missionaries to China."—REV. E. J. HARDY, *Chambers' Journal*, April, 1912.

"I believe it to be strictly within the limits of truth to say that foreign missionary effort in China has been productive of far more harm than good. Instead of serving as a link between Chinese and foreigners, the missionaries have formed a growing obstacle. As travellers in the East well know, Oriental peoples are especially susceptible upon two points, of which their religion is the chief. We have forced the inculcation of an alien and a detested creed upon the Chinese, literally at the point of the bayonet."—SIR HENRY NORMAN, *Peoples and Politics of the Far East* (1900), p. 304.

WE have just seen a notice of a book, entitled *How England Saved China*—we shall see, later on, how England came within measurable distance of ruining China—by Mr. J. Macgowan (probably the Chinese missionary of that name), in which he discourses at large, in the well-known missionary style, upon the "Horrors of Foot-binding" and "Child Murder in China." As we have stated, foot-binding is discountenanced by the Reform party now ruling in China, and is rapidly dying out. Mr. Macgowan declares that the destruction of baby girls is "widely practised by every class of society," and is even more common in the homes of the well-to-do than among the very poor. We have seen, in our previous article, that, as a matter of fact, infanticide is no more prevalent in China than in England. We now add the testimony of Mr. H. A. Giles, Professor of Chinese at Cambridge University, who for some time acted as our Consul at Ningpo, in China, and, therefore, has a first-hand knowledge of the subject, and who says emphatically:—

"Among other atrocious libels which have fastened upon the fair fame of the Chinese people, first and foremost stands the charge of female infanticide, now happily, though slowly, fading from the calculations of those who seek the truth. Fifty years ago it was generally believed that the Chinese hated their female children, and got rid of them in early infancy by wholesale murder."

The Professor goes on to observe that it may be admitted that boys are preferred to girls, because they carry on the family line and see that the worship of ancestors is regularly performed; also because girls require dowries. The term, "lose-money goods," as jestingly applied to girls—against which may be set another term, "a thousand ounces of gold"—is commonly used of a daughter:—

"To return to the belief formerly held that female infanticide was rampant all over China. The next step was for the honest observer to admit that it was not known in his own particular district, but to declare that it was largely practised elsewhere. This view, however, lost its validity when residents 'elsewhere' had to allow that no traces of infanticide could be found in their neighborhood; and so on. Luckily, still greater comfort is to be found in the following argument,—a rare exception of proving a negative—from which it will be readily seen that female infanticide on any abnormal scale is quite beyond the bounds of the possible. Those who have even a bowing acquaintance with Chinese social life will grant that every boy, at about the age of eighteen, is provided by his parents with a wife. They must also concede the notorious fact that many well-to-do Chinese take one or more concubines. The Emperor, indeed, is allowed seventy; but this number exists only on paper as a regulation

maximum. Now, if every Chinaman has one wife, and many have two, over and above the host of girls said to be annually sacrificed as worthless babies, it must follow that the proportion of girls born in China enormously outnumber the proportion of boys, whereas in the rest of the world boys are well known to be always in the majority" (H. A. Giles, *The Civilisation of China*, pp. 96-98).

In Christian England we are obliged to have a Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children, "the very name of which," says Professor Giles, "would make an ordinary unsophisticated Chinaman stare. Chinese parents are, if anything, over-indulgent to their children" (p. 96).

If more proof is needed, it will be found in the chapter on "Infanticide" in Sir Hiram Maxim's drastic exposure of Chinese missions, entitled *Li Hung Chang's Scrap Book*, where it is well said:—

"The almost generally accepted belief in the West that there is a vast amount of infanticide in China is as untrue as the old story of the vices of Babylon or the more recent legend of the murderous Juggernaut-car in India" (p. 219).

Another subject upon which the missionary waxes eloquent is the opium question. He finds it useful in two ways. First, as an excuse for his presence in China, where he is required to combat the awful effects of this baneful drug by inoculating the sufferer with the germs of Christianity; and, secondly, he explains that the reason the poor missionary is so disliked by the mass of the Chinese people is because our Government have forced the unwilling people of China to accept our Indian opium by force of arms. In fact, our wars with China have been dubbed "Opium Wars." Both these statements are grotesquely untrue. Lord Curzon has observed of the latter:—

"The pretence that China is hostile to the British people or to Christian missions because we introduced her the opium habit (which she had already practised for centuries) is about as rational as to say that the national soreness that sometimes arises between England and France is due to our resentment at having to cross the Channel for our best brandy."\*

Although it is popularly believed—thanks mainly to missionary propaganda—that opium is a most pernicious drug, yet there is no such unanimity among those who are entitled to hold an opinion. Even experts differ upon the subject, as any one may see who has studied the Report of the Royal Commission appointed by the Government to investigate the subject. Some high authorities are of the opinion that, so far from being harmful, it is beneficial. Mr. A. H. Smith, the missionary, speaks of it as "a foe to the Chinese race, as deadly as war, famine, or pestilence combined."† Dr. Morrison, the Australian medical man, on the other hand, declares:—

"During the nine months that I was in China I saw thousands of opium-smokers, but I never saw one to whom could be applied that description by Lay (of the British and Foreign Bible Society), so often quoted, of the typical opium-smoker in China 'with his lank and shrivelled limbs, tottering gait, sallow visage, feeble voice, and death-boding glance of eye, proclaiming him the most forlorn creature that treads upon the ground.' This fantastic description, paraded for years past for our sympathy, can be only applied to an infinitesimal number of the millions in China who smoke opium. It is a well-known fact that should a Chinese, suffering extreme emaciation of disease, be also in the habit of using the opium-pipe, it is the pipe and not the disease that in ninety-nine cases out of a hundred will be wrongly blamed as the cause of the emaciation"‡

Dr. Morrison gives us a specimen, from personal experience, of what the opium-smoking Chinese coolie is capable of in the way of work. Twenty-three and a-third miles may be accounted a good, stiff walk for one day, and that was the distance covered to Tak-wan-hsien on March 30. Says Dr. Morrison:—

"I was carried all the way by three chair-coolies in a heavy chair in steady rain that made the unpaved track

as slippery as ice—and this over the dizzy heights of a mountain pathway of extraordinary irregularity. Never slipping, never making a mistake, the three coolies bore the chair, with my thirteen stone, easily and without straining. From time to time they rested a minute or two to take a whiff of tobacco; they were always in good humor, and finished the day as strong and fresh as when they began it. Within an hour of their arrival, all these three men were lying on their sides in the room opposite to mine, with their opium-pipes and little wooden vials of opium before them, all three engaged in rolling and heating in their opium-lamps treacly pellets of opium."

Two of the men were past middle age and the third was twenty-five:—

"All three men were physically well-developed, with large frames, showing unusual muscular strength and endurance, and differed, indeed, from those resurrected corpses whose fleshless figures, drawn by imaginative Chinese artists, we have known for years to be typical of our poor lost brothers—the opium-smoking millions of China. For their work to-day, work that few men out of China would be capable of attempting, the three coolies were paid sevenpence each, out of which they found themselves, and had to pay as well one penny each for the loan of the chair."\*

At Tali the landlord of the inn introduced Mr. Morrison, with much pride, to his aged father. The old man was eighty years of age:—

"He had smoked opium, he told Mr. Smith, the missionary, for fifty years, but always in moderation. His daily allowance was two *chien* of raw opium, rather more than two-fifths of an ounce; but he knew many Chinese, he told the missionary, who smoked daily five times as much opium as he did without apparent injury" (p. 208).

These are the sort of facts you do not get from the missionary platform in this country.

To speak of an opium-smoker as a worthless and degraded creature, as the missionaries are in the habit of doing, is as untrue as it would be to denounce every man as a drunkard who drank a glass of ale with his dinner or supper. And as for over-indulgence in the opium habit, the vast majority of the millions of China could not afford to over-indulge themselves, even if they had the wish. As we have seen, one smoke, after a hard day's labor, seems the general rule, and there is not the least doubt that, taken under those conditions, the drug is not harmful, but very beneficial.

W. MANN.

(To be continued.)

#### FLASHES FROM NIETZSCHE.

What? A God who loves men, provided that they believe in him, and who hurls frightful glances and threatenings at him who does not believe in this love! What? A conditioned love as the feeling of an almighty God! A love which has not even become master of the sentiment of honor and of the irritable desire for vengeance! How Oriental is all that! "If I love thee, what does it concern thee?" is already a sufficient criticism of the whole of Christianity.

Christianity made use of the excessive longing for suicide at the time of its origin as a lever for its power; it left only two forms of suicide, invested them with the highest dignity and the highest hopes, and forbade all others in a dreadful manner. But martyrdom and the slow self-annihilation of the ascetic were permitted.

After Buddha was dead people showed his shadow for centuries afterwards in a cave,—an immense frightful shadow. God is dead: but as the human race is constituted, there will perhaps be caves for millenniums yet, in which people will show his shadow. And we—we have still to overcome his shadow!

"God himself cannot subsist without wise men," said Luther, and with good reason; but "God can still less subsist without unwise men,"—good Luther did not say that.

\* Lord Curzon, *Problems of the Far East*, p. 283.

† *Chinese Characteristics*, p. 145.

‡ G. E. Morrison, *An Australian in China*, pp. 45-6.

\* *An Australian in China*, pp. 92-94.

## Acid Drops.

Mrs. Besant, like Saul, is among the prophets. She has been prophesying at Queen's Hall the early restoration of "the mysteries." Perhaps she is right. She is one of "the mysteries" herself.

One of the Rev. Dr. Horton's objections to Theosophy strikes us as rather odd. He says that although Theosophist leaders know everything they do not agree; indeed, they often quarrel, and sometimes very bitterly. Well, didn't Christian leaders know all, when they burnt each other to death—to say nothing of still worse heretics? Nothing less than omniscience was involved in such proceedings. As for the Christian know-alls ever agreeing, they have offered the world the spectacle of a bear-garden in every age of their history. They only begin to agree a little now, when they are finding out that their Churches are all doomed.

Dr. Horton's diatribe against the doctrine of reincarnation is extremely unfortunate. That doctrine was quite common even amongst the Jews in the time of Jesus—who, by the way, never said a word against it. When the miracles of Jesus attracted attention, and "his name was spread abroad," and Herod heard of it, the monarch said "it is John whom I beheaded: he is risen from the dead." This may be thought to extend to no more than resurrection, but another verse (Mark vi. 15) clearly goes further:—

"Others said, That is Elias. And others said, That is a prophet, or as one of the prophets."

Here were the countrymen of Jesus believing that he was a reincarnation of Elijah or some other ancient prophet. Dr. Horton's surprise at the doctrine, from a Christian or New Testament point of view is somewhat surprising. It provokes the question, Do these Christians really read their own Scriptures?

The cheek of these Christians! The National Free Church Council, the other day, entertained the Chiefs from Nigeria to breakfast at the Memorial Hall. The dusky visitors were plied with all sorts of questions. One was with reference to the large importation of spirits into the colony. The hypocrisy of *this* question could hardly be beaten. No wonder the black chiefs answered—"Your people are primarily responsible; until Europeans introduced spirits, our people were unacquainted with them." With regard to polygamy, high ground was taken in some of the replies. It appears that the orthodox churches insist on native converts putting away all their wives but one, and the native argues "Am I to give up my wives whom I have legally bought, and who have borne me children—to save my own soul?" This is a very pointed reply. But the cream of the joke is that the Bible does not contain a single word against polygamy. African natives can be thoroughly sound Bible Christians while keeping as many wives as they can afford.

The progress of Mohammedanism in Africa is "attributed chiefly to the fact that, while acknowledging the one God it permits polygamy." Christianity allows only one wife, but several gods—at least three. And the African likes the Mohammedan arithmetic best.

At the annual meeting of the Christian Evidence Society it was stated that the aim of this organisation "is to provide a Christian platform wherever Secularists are attacking Christianity," and that "last year over a thousand open-air lectures were delivered under its auspices." The main subject discussed at the meeting was "Some Aspects of Contemporary Unbelief." Canon Masterman was of opinion that it is "much less aggressive, and much more open to conviction than formerly." The Rev. C. L. Drawbridge differed from the Canon, and maintained that "Materialism was by no means a back number." Mr. Drawbridge was right. What is called Materialism is steadily spreading, a process which, in our opinion, the Christian Evidence Society is, unintentionally, doing very much to assist. Its defensive policy is thoroughly corrupt, and the more intelligent hearers, on finding this out, are both intellectually and emotionally shoved towards unbelief.

Some days ago the Burton-on-Trent railwaymen had their annual parade, which culminated in a religious service at St. Paul's Church. The preacher was the Rev. Dr. Temple, Headmaster of Repton School, whose subject was the Bible. According to a report in the *Burton Evening Gazette*, Dr. Temple is a well-informed Higher Critic, who contends that the Bible, though containing many grave discrepancies and mistakes, historical and otherwise, is yet God's Book, and

should be studied devoutly. But while making that highly irrational claim for Holy Writ, the reverend gentleman was sorrowfully obliged to admit that the great writers of the present day are devoid of religious convictions and ideals. Faith, confidence, and hope seemed to have gone out of their minds. Knowing far more than their fathers did of the horrors of life, of the savagery of Nature, the struggle for existence, and the survival of the fittest, they found it difficult, if not impossible, to believe in a good and loving God. Of course, Dr. Temple himself was fully convinced that the only remedy for the mental disease of the age was Jesus Christ.

Dr. Temple knows very little about Rationalism and Rationalists. He is reported to have said that "there was nothing to be afraid of in Rationalism, if it would only go on long enough, for at the close the Rationalist would find himself repeating the Christian creed." Will the reverend gentleman be good enough to name six genuine Rationalists who ended their lives as Christian believers? In a matter of this kind we demand verified facts, not general assertions. We never knew before that Rationalism was only a roundabout road to the bosom of the all-loving Redeemer, and we are not convinced of it now.

Sir Edward Carson and his Ulster colleagues have taken "O God, our help in ages past" as their battle hymn. They are not only going to govern Ireland on their own, but to nobble "God" as well. What a poor puppet this "God" is to be sure!

The amount of interest the Churches have in the labor movement when they have no ulterior purpose to serve was illustrated at a meeting of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church of Ireland the other day. The meeting was held in the pious city of Belfast, and a Mr. Hamilton tried to get the Assembly to give an expression on the conditions of labor. It seems from published reports that some women in Belfast are engaged in labor for which they receive a penny or a halfpenny per hour. Children of eight and ten years of age are employed at an even lower wage. After a little discussion, and on its being pointed out by the Rev. Dr. McKean that women "welcomed the labor as a means of adding to their husbands' earnings," it was unanimously resolved that the Assembly pass to the next business. Thereupon the gathering of divines proceeded to discuss the necessity for a revival of religion in Ireland. The wholesale sweating of women and children can, apparently, take care of itself. That is, unless it will be attended to when King Carson comes into his own.

In the latter portion of the eighteenth century, when attention was being directed to the discovery of fossil remains of extinct animals, a favorite religious explanation was that God had manufactured imitations of genuine animals, and buried them, in order to deceive the geologists. Something of the same kind of apology has been put forward by the *Catholic Times* with a view to destroying the anthropological attack on religious beliefs. There is to be a "Week of Ethnology" at Louvain, conducted by Catholics, when the *real* truth of the subject will be explained. Meanwhile, the *Catholic Times* demolishes "the pestilent rubbish which disfigures the pages of Mr. Grant Allen, Mr. Edward Clodd, and Mr. J. M. Robertson" by the *naïve* method of pointing out that the information on which anthropologists base their theories is quite untrustworthy. Missionaries, it appears, are the only reliable witnesses as to what uncivilised peoples really believe, and a very fancy picture is drawn of the "scientific expert, who sails serenely from Europe to catechise—often through interpreters—the natives of savage countries." The consequence is that the natives invariably amuse themselves by "pulling the white man's leg, and the white man gravely publishes the fantastic stories told him."

Now, this is very, *very* thin. As a matter of fact, a great many of the customs and beliefs with which anthropologists deal are furnished by missionaries, who are often good enough observers of the people among whom they dwell. In the next place, to assume that natives in all parts of the world are miraculously inspired—for nothing short of a miracle would do it—to tell substantially identical stories to travellers should be too much for even Catholics to believe. Finally, the beliefs of savages often enough receive illustration from customs and beliefs that still exist in civilised countries, many cherished in the Catholic Church itself. There is really little need to marvel at the superstitions of savages when we have similar superstitions among ourselves. The truth is that the Catholic Church is recognising that it is from anthropology that the greatest blow to religion has come. That kills religion by explaining it. Above all, it

proves that there is no such thing as a civilised religion. Religion may exist in a civilised country, but it is alien to civilisation. It begins with savages; its true nature is only to be discovered by studying savages, and its perpetuation among civilised peoples is as reminiscent of a lower phase of culture as rudimentary ear muscles are of our animal ancestry.

It seems as difficult to keep people in the Churches as it is to keep lunatics in an asylum or criminals in prison. If they leave England for the Colonies, and are not carefully watched on arrival, there is a complaint that they are lost to Church or Chapel. Accordingly, arrangements are made to keep an eye on them until they embark, and also when they disembark. But one would imagine that they were quite safe between ports. This, however, it seems, is not the case. So the Nonconformist Churches are arranging for "pastoral oversight" of emigrants while they are on board ship. Ministers will accompany them and see that the religious habits contracted at home are not broken. The moral seems to be that religion is such an essential part of human nature, and people crave so for it, that if the slightest opportunity presents itself they throw it overboard altogether.

The Bishop of Southwark told an audience the other day that he believed the next fifteen years would settle once for all whether or not Church schools were to be a permanent and abiding part of the educational machinery of the country. Maybe; but if the next fifteen years does settle the question, it can only be in the negative. In no other way could the settlement be permanent. Once the people of this country, whether it be fifteen or fifty years hence, decide on keeping religion out of the recognised educational establishments, we have no fear of that being reversed. It is too much in line with the whole tendency of European civilisation. There are some things that a people never go back on, and this question will be one of them.

The Bishop also said that the English people as a whole were determined that whatever educational system was ultimately devised it should have a religious basis. This is sheer professional humbug. The Bishop does not know, no one knows, that the English people have come to any such conclusion. They have never been asked. People in Church and Chapel may so decide, but they do not number the whole of the people by a very long way. The largest body of organised opinion in this country, the Trades Union Congress, has over and over again definitely decided in favor of Secular Education. It is part of the impertinence of Christians to hold a church meeting, and then take its decision as the voice of the people. There were once three tailors of Tooley-street—but we daresay our readers know that story.

In spite of a strong trade protest from the clergy and ministers of the town, Blackpool has decided to allow picture shows to open on Sunday. But they are to be open from 8 to 10 o'clock only, so that they will not enter into competition with the Churches. It was pointed out on the Watch Committee that some of the chapels had musical entertainments on Sunday evenings, and one of the artistes at the Winter Gardens had been engaged to sing at one of them. The clergy point out that this is only the thin end of the wedge. Of course it is. But people do not usually become rational all at once. They proceed by degrees; and we hope that Blackpool will go on improving.

A quarrel over Sunday pictures is going on in Lincoln. We are glad to see the Trade and Labor Council on the right side. The Church of England and the Free Church are acting together (professionally, of course) against Sunday freedom and innocent recreation.

The Rev. Dr. Dixon, of Spurgeon's Tabernacle, went to the Derby, but not to witness the races. He went there to preach against racing. "In that awful crowd he saw no happy face outside the party that was with him." A happy face among racing people would have belied his narrow Gospel; therefore he saw none. He and his friends were the only happy people present. This is absolutely false, but it doesn't matter; it is orthodox Christian teaching. A man who believes in a material hell-fire in the next world is bound to be a kill-joy in this.

A writer in the *British Congregationalist* for June 12, in attempting to justify Foreign Missions, falls into several grievous errors. He says that "missionaries introduce neither rifles nor spirits"; but both rifles and spirits follow them as surely as echo follows song. The writer admits

that there is a grain of truth in this, but we contend that it is composed of nothing but truth. Furthermore, all missionaries represent countries in which rifles and spirits are in full and constant evidence. This writer also avers that the missionary "stands for a higher and better civilisation than could otherwise be initiated." We do not know what he means by civilisation; but we have it on the authority of the President of the Free Church Council that European civilisation is antagonistic to the Christian religion, and we believe he is right. We are prepared to go to the length of saying that civilisation is steadily killing Christianity in the West; and in proportion as the East adopts Western civilisation, its own religions die. These two facts are really beyond dispute.

The most disastrous blunder in the article just mentioned is the statement that "missionary work is not only a success, but a triumphant vindication of the power of the Gospel and the teaching and example of Christ." So far is this from being true that it is frankly admitted by many zealous Christians that missions have been, and are, a conspicuous failure; and there is no exception. Besides, nothing short of the complete conversion and transformation of every country in which they are at work would constitute "a triumphant vindication of the power of the Gospel." Such a glorious consummation is a thing utterly unknown even where Christianity has achieved its greatest successes, and even *there* Christianity is now in the interesting process of passing away.

A Bangor (North Wales) preacher has been complaining about people grumbling at the weather. He told his hearers that the weather was a heavenly gift. We have very often heard people describe it as "hellish."

Lord Haldane says he does not believe that there is indifference to-day to religion. We wonder what rational explanation he has to give of the decline in Church attendance. His reason for his belief is given, apparently, in the statement that there is the same intensity to-day as ever, and the same obstinate questioning of what Wordsworth called "things of sense and outward things." But this is a mere trick of language, suitable to the pulpit but quite unworthy of Lord Haldane's intelligence. Intensity of thought, the sincere questioning of things, the search for "reality," is, as Lord Haldane well knows, characteristic of some of the greatest of non-religious thinkers. And, we repeat, it is a mere trick to use religious thinking as synonymous with earnest and serious thinking. We do not say that religious thinking may not be both; but we do deny that religion monopolises them. Lord Haldane knows this as well as we do. If directly challenged he would probably admit its truth. Why, then, should he imply otherwise? The way in which our prominent public men pander to the prejudices of a comparatively unintelligent clergy is one of the saddest features of English public life.

Sir William Robertson Nicoll delivered a pietistic speech at a missionary meeting recently held at the Queen's Hall, London, the substance of which appeared in the *British Weekly*. The reverend knight enlarges upon two points which loudly contradict each other. The first is that the task of converting the world to Christ is entrusted to Christians. It is infinitely beyond them in their own strength; but the omnipotence of God is at their disposal. "We are called upon to do impossible things," Sir William says, "to solve problems that are beyond us, to undertake labors and sacrifices that are infinitely beyond our strength. What then? We are driven back on a strength not our own, on the power of the risen Christ, the power of the Holy Ghost." We venture to affirm that Christians have never done anything of a superhuman character. It is a well-known fact that Foreign Missions are palpable failures. Unquestionably missionaries are not "reinforced by the Holy Spirit." Has anybody the hardihood to assert that Home-ministers are Divinely equipped when their Churches are dying in spite of all their labors on their behalf? The Christian claim to almighty power is laughed to scorn by all the facts of life.

Sir William's second point is that the task of saving the world is God's, not ours. He is out in the wilderness seeking his lost sheep. "Christ is the great Seeker," the reverend gentleman exclaims. "We may fail, but he will not fail, and if he cannot work through us he will work over us." If Sir William's God exists, is he not an infinite criminal? He redeems the world—finds his lost sheep—neither "through" Christians, nor "over" them, and thereby proves his non-existence.

From the beginning Christians have been notorious for their bitter wrangles and useless contentions. Even at

Corinth, under Paul, they were divided into four irreconcilable parties, and the bone of contention between them was the Gospel. They are at it still. There is an acrimonious controversy in progress in the Wesleyan Methodist Church over the appointment of the Rev. George Jackson to the principalship of Didsbury College, because he has ventured to introduce a little common sense into his talks about the Bible. Nothing can be more scandalous than the violent hatred which Catholics and Protestants cherish and express towards one another, especially in Ireland at this moment; and everybody is familiar with the humiliating fact of the mutual mud-throwing indulged in by Church and Dissent in Wales over the contemplated disestablishment of the former. Religious squabbles are, of all squabbles, at once the most heated and the most contemptible. And yet, in spite of all this, ministers and others persist in the claim that Christianity is pre-eminently a religion of love.

Some statements made about missionary work are too strong for even some of the missionaries themselves. A returned missionary from India, the Rev. W. E. S. Holland, published an account of the work in India in which he said of the "out-castes" of India that "any missionary working among them will tell you he can baptise as many thousands as he likes; the only limit is the number he can teach and pastor." This is quite an affecting picture of thousands of Hindoos waiting to be baptised, the only difficulty being the need for more missionaries, which means, of course, more subscriptions. As we said, the dose is too strong even for some missionaries, and one of them, writing to the *Church Times* from St. Boniface College, Warminster, says that, having been thirty years among these people, he has no hesitation in saying that such statements "convey an utterly wrong impression." He says that the poor people of India are willing to listen because "they hope to gain material advantages." That is, they come to the missionary for what they can get, and if nothing is forthcoming they, presumably, leave again. Each real conversion, he says, "is a miraculous display of the Holy Ghost." That settles it. Every conversion is a miracle, and miracles, by their very nature, are rare occurrences.

The Actors' Church Union held its annual meeting the other day, with the Bishop of Winchester presiding and Sir Herbert Tree as one of the speakers. The Bishop of Winchester made the usual unctuous, patronising speech, and said that the Church, which was responsible for the higher ideals of mankind, should be able to raise the actors' profession accordingly. His principal suggestion towards this was securing the right kind of lodgings for actors on tour. Perhaps his lordship contemplates utilising the curates for conveying actors and actresses to their lodgings—and it is far from unlikely that the curates would enjoy the job. Seriously, we are astonished that self-respecting actors and actresses do not resent the fussy and impertinent patronage of churchmen. The general attitude taken up is that while those in the "profession" are not such a bad lot as some people think, still they require a good deal of "uplifting," and the clergy are the ones cut out for the work. We should have thought that actors were old enough to look out their own lodgings, and, in any case, would resent the air of moral superiority assumed towards them by such persons as the Bishop of Winchester. Sir Herbert Tree professed himself delighted to find that Church and Stage went hand in hand. Perhaps he recognised the clergy as brother performers. And we were not aware that Sir Herbert's religious opinions were of such a "churchy" character.

Reports from Macao show that there was much havoc wrought by the recent whirlwind. Numerous junks and sampans foundered, and over a hundred people were drowned. The Chinese boatmen fired bombs and let off crackers to avert the anger of the gods. Terribly silly, of course; but much thriftier than the English method of doing the same business. A few bombs and crackers, when the need arises, don't cost as much as our huge religious establishments—Anglican, Catholic, Wesleyan, Presbyterian, etc., etc.—with their vast armies of well-paid intermediaries between God and Man. These gentlemen are that or nothing. If they are of no use for that purpose they are certainly of no use for anything else. We decidedly prefer the Chinese plan.

We have heard a vast deal lately about what is called the Eternal and Universal Christ; and because they know absolutely nothing about such a being preachers, wax exceptionally brilliant in their descriptions of him. Mr. R. J. Campbell has just taken a step in advance of all others by asserting that Christianity itself is eternal, and that the living and the dead are most deeply indebted one to another.

His utter lack of knowledge of the dead only adds to the eloquence of his delineation of their enjoyments and expectations.

"There are more ways of destroying a book than burning it. The old monks were adepts at another form of destruction with what they considered laudable motives. Vellum was costly, and they were indefatigable in erasing the best works of the Greek and Latin to make room for a life of some saint or other on the same sheet. In the Vatican, one of the books of Livy can be faintly discerned beneath a missal, and Cicero's *De Republica* was lost to the world for centuries underneath a mass of monkish writing. And the quality of the monk's composition was seldom comparable with what he destroyed."—*Daily Chronicle*.

The following is from Mrs. Archibald Little's article in the *Daily Chronicle* on "The State of Misrule in the Balkans" (not under the Turk this time):—

"The one great work the Greeks have undertaken in Salonica has been a census, having previously driven out all Bulgarians as far as possible. This census will probably show surprising results.....The Servians started by expelling Roman Catholics as well as American missionaries. Yet they pride themselves upon their religious tolerance..... At Monastir a Bulgarian map may not be sold, and the position of the Bulgarians they nominally came to deliver is worse under the Servians than under Turkish oppression." We prophesied all this at the beginning.

The Church Missionary Society is not going to stand its financial deficit in a meek and lowly temper. It is going to make a big effort to raise a special fund of £100,000. We hope it will fail in this godly enterprise—for the sake of the poor heathen. Why should they be worried?

More poor Christites! Rev. Thomas Robert Terry, rector of East Isley, Berkshire, left £4,251. But that's not much—as Othello says. Here is a bigger hump for the needle's eye. Rev. John Champion, of 5 Station-road, Annan, formerly vicar of Rocliffe, Boroughbridge, Yorkshire, left £20,829.

Dr. Havelock, medical superintendent of Sunnyside Asylum, Montrose, fluttered the Managers lately by telling them that "the victims of so-called religious mania were becoming less numerous," and that "the intensity of religious emotion, and its influence on daily life and character, had been steadily diminishing since the creed of a personal Devil, with its accompaniment of perpetual hell-fire, was discredited." One or two reverend gentlemen couldn't agree with Dr. Havelock. They appeared to think that he should keep such things to himself. Very likely! He was giving their game away.

What Biblical character ought to have been an aviator? Aaron ought. But he wasn't. We recollect but two aviators in the Bible,—Elijah in the Old Testament and Jesus in the New.

The Canterbury Diocesan Conference, under the presidency of the Archbishop of Canterbury, has been discussing whether the English nation is declining in the sense of moral obligation. Mr. Ian Malcolm, M.P., bewailed the disregard of the sanctity of marriage; meaning, apparently, that people marry according to the law of the State instead of the counter prescriptions of the Church. The same speaker deplored "the appalling decrease in the birth-rate." What the remedy is for this "appalling" evil he did not say. We fancy there are several. First, let the working classes have higher wages and better conditions of life generally. They'll keep up the population right enough then; at least as high as it should be kept. Secondly, when we get rid of the war fever and all its follies, there will be myriads of able-bodied men in the very prime of life available as husbands for some of the million women who have to go without husbands now. Thirdly, there are thousands of celibate clergy who ought to be looking after the shortage of population of which their Church is always complaining. High Church curates are much to blame in this respect. So are Catholic priests. Father Vaughan is always preaching the virtue of large families. But he does nothing to help. We suggest that the Pope should grant the priests a dispensation from their vows for one generation. Or he might revive the old priestly privilege of keeping concubines.

King George's private secretary, Lord Stamford, informs the editor of the *Church Family Newspaper* that his Majesty has made a rule (as reported) never to travel on Sundays unless it is "absolutely necessary"? But what is absolutely necessary? "Ay, there's the rub."



**Mr. Foote's Engagements**

(Lectures suspended till the Autumn.)

**To Correspondents.**

PRESIDENT'S HONORARIUM FUND, 1913.—Previously acknowledged, £146 2s. 5d. Received since:—A. J. Fincken, £5; Mrs. Ellery, 2s. 6d.

E. BURKE.—Thanks for your appreciative and encouraging letter. Your surmise is correct. We would rather edit the *Freethinker* than have all the honors and wealth in the world. We agree in a general way with what you say in the *Sentinel* about gambling. Its greatest condemnation is that one man's gain is another man's loss under it. But the gambling instinct seems very deep and very strong, and it is at least arguable that a public lottery is the best (that is, the least harmful) way of providing for it. Lotteries are illegal in England, and there is probably far more gambling here than in any other part of the globe.

E. B.—Thanks for drawing our attention to the printer's slip of *magnus opus* (instead of *magnum opus*) in the article on Haeckel in last week's *Freethinker*. These blunders will occur. Publications without printer's errors do not exist. You will recollect that a Bible was once published—and by the King's printers too—omitting the negative from the seventh commandment, and thus making it read "Thou shalt commit adultery." Much obliged for cuttings.

H. E. TURNER.—Glad your curiosity has been whetted by "picking up a copy of the *Freethinker* the other evening in the train."

C. E. HEARSON.—See "Acid Drops." Thanks.

J. ALWARD.—Theoretically, the answer to your question is in the affirmative: practically, we believe, the answer is in the negative.

F. FREWETT.—Always glad to receive useful cuttings.

W. J. MOLINEUX.—Thanks for your good wishes. We shall try not to overdo it this time.

W. P. BALL.—Many thanks for cuttings.

R. CARTER.—We have given Mr. Marsh all the attention we intend to, and more than he deserves. If Miss Vance wishes to pursue him further, we leave her on the warpath—with our usual good wishes.

The new secretary of the Edmonton Branch is Mr. James Wright, 109 Kimberley-road, Upper Edmonton, N.

A. DAVIDSON.—Too stale let us have something fresher.

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

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

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

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

ORDERS for literature should be sent to the 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 to any part of the world, post free, at the following rates, prepaid:—One year, 10s. 6d.; half year, 5s. 3d.; three months, 2s. 8d.

**Sugar Plums.**

There has been some serious talk amongst Mr. Foote's provincial friends, who saw him at the Whit-Sunday Conference, about inducing him to take a long holiday, perhaps a long sea voyage, and dropping work altogether for say three months; and it was thought that the money for this object could be raised privately, one friend promising £20 to start with. Mr. Foote was sorry to disappoint these generous friends, but he was obliged to say "No" to them—at least for the present. It is simply imperative that he should be working on the *Freethinker*, and in the business connected with it, at present. He really cannot afford to go away. Advice to the contrary only breaks against an adamantine wall of inevitable facts. This is all Mr. Foote can say this week,—except that he is getting stronger and stronger, and that he is holidaying all he can consistently with the minimum instead of the maximum of work.

We stated last week that the London County Council had come to a just and wise decision at last with regard to the matter of collections at meetings in the Parks and other open spaces under the Council's control. *Bona-fide* societies are to have "permits" as before for making such collections, and that is all that the friends of freedom demanded. We

may say that all's well that ends well. But it is necessary to add, without laboring the matter, that the attitude and action of the National Secular Society, with the aid of the *Freethinker*, were the governing factors on the public side of the dispute. Raising money for a legal fight, if necessary, gave a greater seriousness to the whole quarrel. We suggest that the balance in hand (that is, in *our* hands) should be handed over to the National Secular Society. We shall, indeed, do this, unless we hear from any subscribers to the "Fighting Fund" to the contrary.

The Bradlaugh Fellowship makes its sixth annual visit to Charles Bradlaugh's grave at Brookwood Cemetery on Sunday, July 6. Details will be found in our advertising columns. The railway fare is 2s. 6d., but tickets will be supplied at half that price to those applying, not later than Monday, June 30, to W. J. Ramsey, 146 Lansdowne-road, Hackney, N.E., or to H. Reeve, 107 Green-street, Bethnal Green, N.E.

Mr. H. G. Farmer, whose name will be remembered by many of our readers, writes to us as follows:—"Dear Mr. Foote,—Looking through one of Dobell's catalogues of manuscripts, autograph letters, etc., I came across an interesting extract which may not have come to your notice. It is contained in a letter of George Meredith's to a well-known London publisher (Dec., 1900), which runs as follows:—

'Frank Harris is one of the men who can stand on their merits. It would be absurd for me to appear as an indicator to them in his case. I cannot consent to have my privately expressed opinion serve as an advertisement.'

I think this extract ought to be a final answer to some of your critics (*re* Meredith), as from this it would appear, that in ordinary circumstances, Meredith refused his name and opinion as an advertisement. Yet where *you*, the *Freethinker*, and the *best of causes* were concerned, he had no such reserve, as may be seen from his letter to you."

We wish to congratulate most heartily Mr. F. W. Walsh upon the exceedingly lucid and exhaustive paper which he has written on "Auguste Comte and the Religion of Humanity," which was recently read before the Leamington Literary and Philosophical Society, and afterward published in full in the *Leamington, Warwick, Rugby and County Chronicle*. Excellent as the paper itself was, the author's reply to a criticism of it by the Rev. L. G. Berrington was more brilliant and effective still, extending to two-and-a-half closely printed columns in the journal just mentioned. As most of our readers are aware, Mr. Walsh has for many years been an inmate of the Leamington Home for Incurables, and is paralysed to such an extent that he can use neither hands nor feet. He often suffers excruciating pain, and loses consciousness for many hours at a time. Yet he is a veritable student, science and philosophy being his favorite subjects. He writes and paints amazingly well, though he has to guide both pen and brush with his teeth. He is a strong Freethinker and a member of the National Secular Society; and we consider it a great privilege to cry "Bravo!" at his marvellous literary achievements last month.

We are always glad to hear of, and especially to hear from, Freethought advocates in other parts of the British Empire. Mr. H. Scott Bennett, who writes to us from Auckland, New Zealand, dating from the Working Men's Club and Mechanics' Institute there, carries a good introduction in his face, which is printed on the back of one of his lecture bills enclosed with his letter. The letter itself runs as follows:—

"My Dear Sir,—I have just finished reading your most excellent article on the late George Meredith, and cannot refrain from writing you in order to express my thanks, not only for a further great service to the 'good old cause,' but also for the intellectual delight it has given me and, I feel quite sure, hundreds of other people.

"You will be pleased to hear that the *Freethinker* finds a ready sale at my lectures, and that its contents are as much admired here as they are in England. The lectures, I might add, are attended very well, audiences of one thousand being the average.

"Again most heartily thanking you for the article and your really great work in the cause of mental freedom,—I am, dear Sir, yours very truly,

H. SCOTT BENNETT."

Mr. Bennett's photograph shows him to be a young man of energy and ability. There should be a fine future for him in the work of intellectual freedom and progress. We congratulate him on his good audiences, which argue that he is a good speaker. We congratulate him particularly on his appreciation of George Meredith, which opens up for him a perpetual fountain of pleasure and inspiration.

## Christians and the Old Testament.

CHRISTIANS do not like the idea of repudiating the Old Testament as part of the Christian faith, but sometimes they seem to be heartily ashamed of it. When the clergy are making a present of the Holy Bible to a young Christian, they will say:—

"This book is God's most Holy Word; read a chapter from it every day; ponder over it; treasure all that you read in the inmost region of your soul; you will find the memory of it most precious to you in your daily life, and a great comfort and solace to you in the hour of death."

But if you ask this same clergyman to defend some of the passages from this precious document, in debate with the unbeliever, he will nod his head and say:—

"No, I cannot do that. I do not feel myself called upon to defend everything that appears in the pages of the Bible—especially in the Old Testament. I know that some of the passages are hard to explain in the light of modern knowledge, and some appear to be quite indefensible when viewed as the utterances of a wise and good and powerful God. But then we Christians have faith, and everything will be plain in God's good time."

The question is: Are we to consider the Old Testament as the Word of God at all? If "Yes," how are we to discriminate as to what is true and what false, if we are not allowed to use our own reason?

On the other hand, if the Old Testament is not intended for our acceptance, why is it preached and enforced as God's Word? Only a few weeks ago a representative of the Young Men's Christian Association wrote to the *Daily Telegraph* and said that Christians, at least, had not ceased to read the Bible regularly and diligently. In fact, in every bedroom in their great buildings all over the country there was a Bible, and there was plenty of evidence that the Holy Scriptures, contained within this precious volume, were read by their members. But the question is, were these members told that they must accept the whole of it as equal in authority and value, or that they could reject any part of it that seemed to them to be unreasonable—and still remain Christian? And if they were free to discriminate about passages in the Old Testament, were they equally free in respect to passages in the New?

Suppose Christians were allowed to eliminate from the pages of the Old Testament all that the most enlightened among them considered unreasonable, or all that they considered repugnant to their moral sense, a great deal of what they formerly held as necessary parts of the Christian faith would have to be unceremoniously taken out, or expunged from the pages of this so-called holy volume. First of all, Jahveh—the old tribal God of the Jews—would have to go. Many of the clergy of the Established Church would be glad to get rid of him; for they know that he is described in the Pentateuch as a most vacillating, petulant, and revengeful God, unworthy of the esteem of honest men. The Rev. R. J. Campbell is not only disgusted with old Jahveh, but he says that in the Old Testament—

"they seem to have two Gods—whom we call one, but who, by no possible stretch of the imagination, could be combined in one person.

"The first is a sort of old woman, who made the world and man as though he expected everything to go right and no evil or mischief to mar the work of his hands. But he laid his plans so badly that the whole scheme went awry and heaven has been mourning ever since.

"Poor God! He is not to blame, the theologians tell us; it is wicked man, more especially woman, who has put everything wrong. God has done his best, and the result has been untold ages of chaos and unimaginable suffering. All God can do is to provide a Redeemer and save a few out of the wreck, and so keep on pleading with humanity: 'O prodigal child, come home.' You will, I am sure, forgive me the seeming irreverence of saying that that kind of God is a fool. And the other God, or God with the other face, is not much better.

"This other God has prepared a hell for his poor, helpless victims of what is called his righteous wrath. He has made it big enough to contain the whole race, and into it the whole race will have to go unless they repent in time and avail themselves of the sufferings which he has graciously inflicted upon somebody else for their benefit. He has been sitting up there in heaven ever since creation first went wrong brooding darkly over what he means to do to perverse and rebellious man when the time comes" (*Daily Chronicle*, January 10, 1908).

There; that is as strong an indictment of the Hebrew God as any Freethinker has written in prose; but Shelley's indictment in *Queen Mab* is more powerful.

Who wrote the books containing the description of the character and conduct of the God of the Jews? Freethinkers do not know; Jews do not know; even Christians do not know, although they say they do. They say it was Moses, although there is not an atom of evidence in support of their statement, and there is plenty of evidence to the contrary. Thomas Paine, more than a hundred years ago, established the fact that Moses could not have been the author of the Pentateuch; and Bishop Colenso showed that more than one author must have been responsible for the early chapters of the Book of Genesis—to say nothing of Exodus, Leviticus, Deuteronomy, and Numbers. There is a good deal of controversy to-day on the question of the authorship of the plays attributed to Shakespeare—plays that have thrilled so many thousands by reason of the human interest that pervades every scene, and which have commanded the admiration of the greatest thinkers and philosophers, as well as the applause of the masses. Frankly, I confess that I do not know who wrote those wonderful plays. I believe, upon what seems to me sufficient evidence, that Shakespeare wrote them; but I dare not dogmatise upon the subject. But whoever wrote them must have been a man with a great intellect, a commanding personality—a man swayed by human sympathies, understanding human frailties, painting virtue in the purest and most beautiful colors, describing vice and all its attendant horrors with vivid power and marvellous skill, and causing the profoundly wise to bow their heads in humble reverence before the greatest dramatic genius England, and probably the world, has ever known. But can we admire or reverence the writings of the authors of the Pentateuch in the same way? Certainly not.

I will not dispute that many pure, high-minded persons who call themselves Christians still regard the Bible as the greatest and best book that has ever been written. They think it so, not because Moses or any other of its numerous authors contributed to its pages, but because they believe it to be God's inspired word. And they would believe in the Koran or any other so-called sacred book if they happened to be born in the country in which such book or books formed the subject-matter of the religion of that country.

Christians are now aware that the Bible gives a description of God which not only cannot be defended, but which is an insult to their noblest thoughts and purest aspirations. If the Bible is God's inspired word, may we not ask if God has inspired men to write a wicked libel concerning his nature and his conduct? Would God instruct men to say that he was of a jealous disposition, visiting the sins of the fathers upon the children, if he wished us to understand that he was a God of love? Would he instruct the Israelites to make slaves of the heathen round about them if he wished us to believe that he was the Father of us all, and that all men were brothers? Would he command the Jews to slaughter inoffensive and undefended people if he intended us to regard him as supremely just and good? And would he expect us to regard him as infinitely wise if he destroyed all the human beings that did not go into the ark, and the animals also, because they possessed qualities of nature with which he endowed them, and which he must have known, if he were all-wise, would lead them into

the course of conduct that would lead to their destruction?

Many Christians would like to expunge from the pages of the Bible the horrible tales of slaughter that are narrated therein (see Exodus xxxii. 26-28; Numbers xxxi. 7-18); but, though the Old Testament has undergone several revisions, the revolting passages still remain. Throughout the whole of Judges, Samuel, and Kings stories of bloody deeds perpetrated in the name of the Lord abound—stories in which men and women, and even children, are cruelly murdered. Christians know of these passages, but they cannot cut them out; for if they once begin the process of weeding out all that is untrue, all that is wicked, all that is atrocious, where will they end? Shelley truly said:—

“Barbarous and uncivilised nations have uniformly adored, under various names, a God of which they themselves were the model—revengeful, bloodthirsty, grovelling, and capricious. The idol of the savage is a demon that delights in carnage. The steam of slaughter, the dissonance of groans, the flames of a desolate land, are the offerings which he deems acceptable, and his innumerable votaries throughout the world have made it a point of duty to worship him to his taste.”

How long will the multitude of Christians continue to worship the savage Deity of the Bible? Until the Freethinkers of the world have made them ashamed of such a God—and then they will abandon Jahveh as other nations have abandoned their gods; for they will have no further use for him, nor for the book in which his character and conduct are so faithfully described.

ARTHUR B. MOSS.

### Mr. Foote's Address at the Funeral of Joseph Mazzini Wheeler.

Sub Editor of the "Freethinker" and a Vice-President of the National Secular Society. Interred at Finchley Cemetery on Saturday afternoon, May 14, 1898.

Verbatim Report by Mr. H. CLIFTON.

(Reprinted by Request.)

JOSEPH MAZZINI WHEELER is dead. To those who knew him, especially to those who knew him well, that single sentence involves everything. There is no necessity for more to be said. Yet we feel on these occasions that there is a relief to the living in giving some kind of articulate expression of our respect for the dead, and of our thoughts in the presence of death. Mr. Wheeler would have been the very last to sanction any cowardice. There are those who, when they have emancipated themselves from the thralldom of superstition, still shrink with perhaps an old inherited instinct of awe from Death. But our friend knew that death is as natural as birth. He would have thought it cowardice to hide from, and shudder at, what is inevitable, and is also connected with all our sympathies and affections. For death is the lot of all, and as we enter life we must leave it. The sun which is shining upon us now might, if we had a darker philosophy, seem a solemn mockery of our grief. He whose mortal remains we here consign to earth would have felt that this was something morbid. It is the duty of all of us to live our lives with the utmost usefulness to Humanity, and that cannot be done except by discarding useless, however natural, grief for the dead, by refraining from indulgence in the luxury of woe. Mr. Wheeler would have thought more of any grief for him that expressed itself in loving service to the living he left behind him, than of the grief which shed an ocean of tears at his death.

Our friend was as good a man as ever breathed. The frailties of mortality clung to him as to all of us; but in his case they were never dark frailties, they were only the frailties of our common imperfection. There was nothing malignant about him. He had no taste for cruelty. He was full of loving kindness. He was always ready to sympathise with another's trouble, and to help where help could be

given. He was gentle. There was a certain delicacy about his mind as there was about his physical constitution. Nothing impure—certainly nothing approaching to baseness—could ever have found a harbor in his mind. I speak from a full knowledge. He was my friend of thirty years. I knew him almost from boyhood. I speak from knowledge and long experience, and I say that no gentler or more beautiful spirit inhabited the earth. He was also a brave man. He had the soul of a hero. It was enshrined in a frail casket, and yet I am sure that if it had ever fallen to his lot to meet the martyr's doom, he would never have quailed. In a sense he has met a martyr's doom, for undoubtedly what strength he had was sorely smitten by the sad events of fourteen or fifteen years ago. It is not pleasant to open recollections of bigotry and fanaticism on such an occasion as this, but we who know how he suffered, and what dealt the blow, will feel that his life was shortened by his devotion to principle in the hour of danger.

I can say from intimate knowledge of him that there was not a shadow of cowardice about his nature. His intellectual gifts, his wonderfully wide reading, his large powers of work, would in all probability have gained for him a wider distinction and a higher pecuniary reward in the great world of literature at large. But he preferred to devote all his gifts—without himself recognising that he had many—to a poor, unpopular cause. In serving it, he asked for no more, he expected no more, than a soldier's wages and rations, so that at least he might continue living to do his work. He wanted no more; he got no more. And when one thinks of men without a tithe of his knowledge and capacity who earn large incomes by flattering all the vested interests of society and pandering to ancient superstitions which they do not themselves believe, one feels that the loss of such a warrior for freedom as this was a terrible one to the cause which had the devotion of his life. There is no one to fill his place. He was unique. Yet, at such a moment, he would have been the first to recognise that intellectual gifts are as nothing compared with character; with strength, devotion, and loyalty to one's convictions. In all that he excelled—not so much in a popular way, because he wielded the pen and not the tongue. But thousands of readers, I should imagine, will recollect his writings for many, many years. And as he always said what he thought, and as what he thought was always the result of profound research and long meditation, he has enriched the intellectual life-blood of a large number of his fellow men and women. And in that he would feel—notwithstanding all the painful circumstances of his death, and the other painful circumstances that long ago preceded them—that he had his reward. He wanted no other reward than the soldier's acclaim of "Well done!"

We shall never see him again, but it will be long before we shall cease to think of him. So beautiful a mind, so gentle a character, will be a delightful memory with us as long as we live. We shall forget this coffin and this heaped earth, and all the adjuncts of his burial. We shall think of him as he was. What we leave in the grave is, as I said, but the mortal part of him. The immortal part of him is the word and deed that have entered into the general life of humanity. Death comes with its final consecration, and all that is mean and poor and petty falls away, and only that which is eternal remains. And the eternal part of him—his work for the world, his fine example—remains with us. If ever we are tempted to shirk our duty, to mask our principles, to hide our convictions, it would shame us to think that one who had so many difficulties in life to face, one who was not altogether treated kindly by nature or the world, nevertheless acted so bravely. If he was brave, should we be cowardly and weak? Let us leave this place feeling that we have buried the mortal part of a true warrior of progress, a valiant soldier in the great army of human liberation. All of them fall in time. He has fallen; but he was fighting to the end. He met, so to speak, a soldier's

death. We may say that he died upon the battlefield. He was fighting to the very last for the highest interests of mankind.

We shall always think of him, the beautiful, the gentle man whom we have all lost, as the loving friend. He will linger in our minds as long as memory lasts. To me this duty is painful, but it must be fulfilled. I know how, with that modesty of his, he would have been glad to think that the one whom, by mere accident of fortune he called his chief, should speak the word of fond farewell at his grave. I was not his chief in any other sense. He was not my subordinate in any other sense. He was my brother soldier, and he has fallen. And I stand, and you stand. And our highest duty is to pledge ourselves by his open grave to be as brave and true as he was, to emulate his fine, generous, and noble example. When our time comes may those we leave behind us be able to say that we did so.

But perhaps that is too personal a note to depart from this grave with. Over us all—the dead and the living—is the great Humanity, like the sky which is stretched over our heads. It is in that we live, and move, and have our being. And just as birth and fatherhood and motherhood touch us at life-points with the sense of human fellowship, so death touches us at the last point, and gives a solemn consecration to all the rest. It is just now that our dead brother has entered finally into communion with that great Humanity. In Shakespeare we read:—

“The evil that men do lives after them;  
The good is oft interred with their bones.”

But that is not so, and probably Shakespeare himself did not think so. Just as Nature takes all corruption and covers it in and works her beautiful green grass over it, so in the course of time all vile and evil things get covered in and forgotten, except by the student of the past. It is only the true and the good which live on for ever and ever. And in that eternal existence our friend is now sharing. He will live in our recollections. We shall speak of him to others who never saw him. Something of him will pass, perhaps, into the recognition of future history. And even if his name should be utterly forgotten, as most names must be, nevertheless the good he did, the beautiful life he led, will have influenced all who knew him, and through them it will influence all whom they affect until the end of time. Therefore, in the name, not only of Freethought—for which our brother lived and died—but in the name of Humanity, I say:—Farewell here, but your life still lives in us, and the thought of you will always be with us as a benediction.

### The Life and Labors of Haeckel.—III.

(Concluded from p. 379.)

THE literary output of this noble and courageous, but still greatly abused and misrepresented, man is imposing in its magnitude. Nearly twenty years ago, when Haeckel's sixtieth birthday was celebrated at Jena, he had written forty-two works, which consisted of 18 000 pages, besides numerous scientific memoirs. His contributions to the *Zoology of the Voyage of H.M.S. Challenger*, which were undertaken at the request of the leading representatives of British science, comprehend four volumes of that magnificent work, enriched with 230 splendid plates. This natural philosopher, who has been pictured as a completely isolated speculator by various ignorant and spiteful persons, is in reality surrounded and supported by practically all the younger and more enlightened students of organic existence. The name of Haeckel is now better known throughout the entire civilised world than that of any other living man of science. In 1900 he was acclaimed as one of the glories of nineteenth century humanism by a few thousand thoughtful men and women in Europe, Australia, America, and the Far East. The *Riddle of the Universe*—a popular summary of his scientific and philosophical achievements—has since

carried his name and fame to every class of society in all parts of the civilised globe. At the close of the nineteenth century Haeckel, like Herbert Spencer, thought that the world was declining towards reaction. Impelled by a passionate desire to do something which might help to stem this retrogressive tendency, Haeckel penned what he then regarded as his last will and testament. The success of the *Riddle of the Universe* is without parallel in the history of science. Its circulation among the German-speaking peoples ran into hundreds of thousands. Fourteen translations into as many languages were in eager demand, and it carried a plain account of the doctrine of Evolution to the minds of millions to whom that doctrine was previously little more than a name. “Answers” to this iconoclastic work appeared in profusion, but all of them are either dying or dead. The *Riddle* remains, and still finds purchasers and readers, and is likely to be treasured and remembered when its enemies have been long forgotten.

In certain obscurantist circles much spiteful capital has been made of the fact that Haeckel, in an early edition of this book, mentioned an English journalist as an authority on Biblical criticism. One might have imagined that a busy man of science, who has discovered and described thousands of new species of Radiolaria—all representing separate acts of special creation, according to the theological legend—the man who produces monumental monographs on sponges and corals, who teaches for forty-three years in a German university, and who replies personally to thousands of correspondents, in addition to travelling extensively in Europe and Asia in search of new forms of life, cannot reasonably be expected to possess an encyclopædic knowledge of all the innumerable dwellers in Fleet-street.

Knowing only too well that the religious beliefs of the human race have ever been a standing menace to science, Haeckel made a strong attack in the *Riddle* upon what he regarded as the leading, and, therefore, most dangerous aspects of superstition. These are, in his opinion, represented by the quite unscientific view of the earth as the centre of the material universe; the belief in a personal God, and a faith in the continuance of life after death. The earth is merely a fifth-rate planet of a tenth-rate sun. Man paints himself in his gods, and the divinity of the average believer is likened unto a “gaseous vertebrate.” Haeckel regards death as a transformation of matter. And he thus urges his objections to the theory of immortality:—

“The *physiological* argument shows that the human soul is not an independent, immaterial substance, but, like the soul of all the higher animals, merely a collective title for the sum total of man's cerebral functions; and these are just as much determined by physical and chemical processes as any of the other vital functions, and just as amenable to the law of substance. The *histological* argument is based on the extremely complicated microscopic structure of the brain; it shows us the true ‘elementary organs of the soul’ in the ganglionic cells. The *experimental* argument proves that the various functions of the soul are bound up with certain special parts of the brain, and cannot be exercised unless these are in a normal condition; if the areas are destroyed, their function is extinguished; and this is especially applicable to the ‘organs of thought,’ the four central instruments of mental activity. The *pathological* argument is the complement of the physiological; when certain parts of the brain (the centres of speech, sight, hearing, etc.) are destroyed by sickness, their activity (speech, vision, hearing, etc.) disappears; in this way Nature herself makes the decisive physiological experiment. The *ontogenetic* argument puts before us the facts of the development of the soul in the individual; we see how the child-soul gradually unfolds its various powers; the youth presents them in full bloom, the mature man shows their ripe fruit; in old age we see the gradual decay of the psychic powers, corresponding to the senile degeneration of the brain. The *phylogenetic* argument derives its strength from palæontology, and the comparative anatomy and physiology of the brain; co-operating with and completing each other, these sciences prove to the hilt that the human brain (and, consequently, its function—the soul)

has been evolved step by step from that of the mammal, and still further back from that of the lower vertebrates."

This certainly seems a formidable list of arguments against the theory of a future state. And what is, perhaps, equally obvious, each argument is securely entrenched in ascertained scientific fact. It may also be observed that none of Haeckel's sacerdotal or metaphysical antagonists has so far succeeded in invalidating any of his contentions in favor of the mortality of man.

It is constantly asserted that the facts and principles with which the name of Haeckel is associated are bywords in Germany. Yet we find that when the great Bismarck visited Jena in 1892, he treated its most famous professor with every mark of admiring respect. The name of Ernst Haeckel Strasse has been given to one of the finest thoroughfares in Jena. When Haeckel's sixtieth birthday was commemorated, Professor Oscar Hertwig, Germany's greatest contemporary biologist, unveiled a marble bust of the veteran evolutionist. Among the contributors to the fund raised for the purchase of this bust to Haeckel are to be found the names of five hundred university professors and heads of academic institutions in every part of the world. In their name Oscar Hertwig greeted his master as one "who had written his name in letters of light in the history of science."

Bitterly reviled as he has been, and is, by the clergy and metaphysicians, Ernst Haeckel shines forth as one of the outstanding intellectual glories of modern times. Ever a fighter, he never bowed nor desired to bow before the altar of authority. But he was a permanent and loving worshiper in the temple of truth. He recognised no revelation save that vouchsafed by nature when we woo her secrets from her. Although Wordsworth's wonderful pantheistic outpouring in *Tintern Abbey* was made to serve as a motto to the English edition of Haeckel's *History of Creation*, the greater lines of Shakespeare's *Winter's Tale* probably more fitly represent the eminent evolutionist's attitude towards nature. Haeckel's monistic philosophy most certainly does not embrace a belief in a special power whose "dwelling is the light of setting suns." But the following passage is in the completest harmony with his philosophy:—

"Yet nature is made better by no mean,  
But nature makes that mean: so, o'er that art,  
Which, you say, adds to nature, is an art  
That nature makes. You see, sweet maid, we marry  
A gentler scion to the wildest stock;  
And make conceive a bark of baser kind  
By bud of nobler race; this is an art  
Which does mend nature,—change it rather; but  
The art itself is nature."

In great evolving nature we live and move and have our being, and in Haeckel's theosophy the one and only divinity is that which permeates the manifold modes of substance to which we give the name of universal existence. Substance is the all-pervading reality of which organic and inorganic nature are alike composed. Haeckel writes:—

"Our monistic view that the great cosmic law applies throughout the whole of nature is of the highest moment. For it not only involves, on its positive side, the essential unity of the cosmos and the causal connection of all phenomena that come within our cognizance, but it also, in a negative way, makes the highest intellectual progress, in that it definitely rules out the three central dogmas of metaphysics—God, freedom (of the will), and immortality. In assigning mechanical causes to phenomena everywhere, the law of substance comes into line with the universal law of causality."

In terms dictated by ignorance or malice—very probably a sinister combination of each of these bad qualities—a more or less orthodox writer in a recent number of the *Nineteenth Century* has delivered judgment on the "exploded" doctrines of Spencer and Haeckel. What first-hand information this Solomon possesses of the work accomplished by these outstanding modern humanists seems difficult to discover. But that aside, when we remember

that all that matters in modern science and philosophy is thoroughly permeated with the spirit of evolution, we can afford to smile and pass on. When Congreve's play was hissed, he appeared on the stage before his demonstrative critics and contemptuously told them that "This play will be a play when you're all dead and damned." And in much the same manner, when the names of most of his critics have descended to the dust, the name of Ernst Haeckel is certain to remain as that of a brilliant and scientific genius who, being mortal, made slight mistakes here and there, but was, nevertheless, more largely instrumental in carrying the message of Darwinian evolution through the world than any other disciple of the English naturalist; he was also a great independent pioneer in realms that Darwin scarcely entered.

The concept of evolution has put fresh life into every department of human endeavor. All branches of physical science, every aspect of fruitful social change, all successful attempts to remedy economic ills, each of the various departments of sociological and historical inquiry are already largely, and are destined in the long run, to be completely dominated by the all-embracing principle of evolutionary growth. And this principle is slowly familiarising the general public with the idea of natural causation in every terrestrial occurrence. Supernaturalism in all its forms is being reduced to its proper position of insignificance.

In coming years, when the immense implications of evolution will be more generally understood, men will realise to a fuller extent than is at present possible the indebtedness of the human race to scientists of Haeckel's calibre. This man, despite all calumny and discouragement, unfalteringly pursued an encumbered path towards what he cherished as the good, the beautiful, and the true. In the stormy 'sixties opposition to Haeckel's teachings was so bitterly unrelenting that he offered to resign his professorship. But Professor Seebeck, at that time head of the governing body of Jena University, refused to listen when Haeckel intimated that he was better prepared to sacrifice his career than to recant his dearly held principles. The old professor humorously waved Haeckel's offer aside. "My dear Haeckel," he told him, "you are still young, and you will come to have more mature views of life. After all, you will do less harm here than elsewhere, so here you had better remain."

Whether Haeckel's views became "more mature" is a matter of opinion. But the little university town of Jena was his first and last love. Although Haeckel received pressing invitations to larger, more important, and better-paid University Chairs, he steadily refused to desert his heart's choice. Under the influence exerted by Haeckel, the comparatively small University of Jena rapidly rose in importance. Students of the natural-history sciences flocked to Jena from all parts of Europe and America. Many of the leading zoologists of the day were trained by Haeckel, and when the master is numbered with the mighty dead, his spirit will continue to speak and act in the persons of Oscar Hertwig, J. A. Thomson, Bolsche, Plate, and the other numerous distinguished naturalists who are engaged in spreading the glad tidings of evolution among the sons of men.

T. F. PALMER.

"Stop there!" said Mr. Dunnybrig. "Don't say the sins of the fathers should not be visited on the children, because that's to be like all these other slovenly, impious people who want to change the unchangeable.....God has made this view on the subject very clear, and so sure as a father eats sour grapes, so sure will his children's teeth be set on edge, sooner or late. As to marriage—cleaving as I do to the Book, and being an Old Testament man—I go with Jehovah there, through thick and thin, and have the courage of my opinions."—*Eden Phillpotts, "Widcombe Fair."*

## SUNDAY LECTURE NOTICES, Etc.

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

### LONDON.

#### OUTDOOR.

BETHNAL GREEN BRANCH N. S. S. (Victoria Park, near the Bandstand): 3.15 and 6.15, E. Burke, Lectures.

CAMDERWELL BRANCH N. S. S. (Brockwell Park): 3.30, Miss K. B. Kough, "Lying for the Glory of God."

CROYDON BRANCH N. S. S. (Katharine street, near Town Hall): 7, Miss K. B. Kough, "Lying for the Glory of God."

EDMONTON BRANCH N. S. S.: Annual Outing to Loughton. Leave Green 9 a.m.

KINGSLAND BRANCH N. S. S. (corner of Ridley-road): W. Davidson, 11.30, "The Dead Hand"; 7.30, "What Infidels Have Done."

NORTH LONDON BRANCH N. S. S. (Parliament Hill Fields): 3.15, Mr. M. Hope, a Lecture. Finsbury Park: 6.30, Mr. M. Hope, a Lecture.

WEST HAM BRANCH N. S. S. (outside Maryland Point Station, Stratford, E.): 7, F. A. Davies, a Lecture.

WOOD GREEN BRANCH N. S. S. (Jolly Butchers Hill, opposite Public Library): 7.30, J. Rowney, a Lecture.

### COUNTRY.

#### OUTDOOR.

BLACKBURN BRANCH N. S. S. (Market Ground): Joe McLellan, 3, "Is Religion a Barrier to Progress?" 6.30, "Mistakes of Jesus Christ." Monday, June 23, at 8, Arthur Thompson, "Bible Beauties."

BOLTON BRANCH N. S. S. (Town Hall Steps): Monday, June 23, R. Mearns, at 7.30, "Historic Christianity"; Saturday, June 28, at 7.30, "The Failure of Christianity."—Meeting at 47 Spa-road, at 3. Will all members and friends please attend?

BURNLEY BRANCH N. S. S. (Market Place): R. Mearns, 3, "The Philosophy of Secularism"; 6.30, "The Sermon on the Mount Examined."

FARNWORTH (Market Ground): Monday June 23, at 7.30, Gilbert Manion, "Atheism Defended."

LEIGH (Town Centre): Matt Phair, 3, "Socialism and Christianity"; 6.30, "Will Christ Save Us?"

NEWCASTLE-ON-TYNE (Town Moor): F. M. Wilkesbarre, 3, "Why I Reject Christianity"; 6.30, "Blasphemy Prosecutions."

PRESTON BRANCH N. S. S. (Market Square): Arthur Thompson, 3, "Bible Beauties"; 6.30, "The Sermon on the Mount."

SALFORD (The Broadway): Gilbert Manion, 11, "God"; 3, "Christ's Teachings"; 6.30, "Christian Socialism Exposed."

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The train leaves Waterloo South Station, No. 5 Platform, at 11.15 sharp. Addresses will be delivered after the visit to the grave.

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