

THE Freethinker

Edited by G. W. FOOTE.

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We must laugh at men to avoid crying.—NAPOLEON.

Is There a Hell?

THIS is the title of a shilling book with a sensational cover, edited by that voluminous author Mr. Anonymous, and published by Cassell & Company—who appear to believe that there is money in it, as we dare say there is, for it has been the subject of correspondence in half the newspapers in Great Britain, and the theme of sermons in thousands of pulpits.

Not for the first time has money been made out of Hell. The clergy have made most of their money out of it from the beginning. Nobody was ever found hurrying to Heaven. That was only the other place. People were anxious to keep out of Hell, and Heaven was the only alternative. It had no great attraction of its own. The real question was whether you were to be "lost" or "saved." "Lost" meant going to Hell. "Saved" meant giving it the slip. You simply put up with Heaven. You would much rather have continued living on earth,—if you could, but, alas, you couldn't.

But to return to our muttens—as the French say. This book is called "A Symposium by Leaders of Religious Thought." The description may be correct. We shall not dispute it. Not one of the contributors to this volume *knows* anything about Hell. They say "I believe" or "I think" or "I hold" or "It seems to me." The know-nothings address the ignoramuses. The blind lead the blind. But there is nothing new in that. It has been a constant characteristic of religious history. All that the blind leaders wanted was more "cheek" than the blind who were led.

We are going to give some attention to *Is There a Hell?* It is very instructive in its way, and sometimes amusing, though that is not intended. Its contributors number sixteen; they are all professional workers in the Lord's vineyard; they belong to various Christian Churches; and they show collectively what the "leaders" of the Christian world are driving at. They have all sorts of views about Hell, but they are all for keeping it. That is their one agreement.

But before we go through this book we venture to reproduce our own views on Hell, written some twenty-five years ago. This article will be new to the great majority of our readers. When they have read it, and then read what the sixteen clerical defenders of the faith have to say, they will understand how long it takes the Christian Churches to reach even the rear positions of the Army of Freethought.

WHERE AND WHAT IS HELL?

This is a question of great importance, or at least of very great interest. According to the Christian scheme of salvation, the vast majority of us will have to spend eternity in "sulphurous and tormenting flames," and we are naturally curious as to the situation of a place in which we shall experience such delightful sensations.

But there is hardly any subject on which we can obtain so little information. The clergy are becoming

more and more reticent about it. What little they ever knew is being secreted in the depths of their inner consciousness. When they are pressed for particulars they look injured. Sometimes they piteously exclaim "Don't." At other times they wax wroth, and exclaim to the questioners about the situation of hell, "Wait till you get there."

Just as heaven used to be spoken of as "up above," hell was referred to as "down below." At one time, indeed, it was believed to be underground. Many dark caves were thought to lead to it, and some of them were called "Hell Mouth." Volcanoes were regarded as entrances to the fiery regions, and when there was an eruption it was thought that hell was boiling over. Classic mythology, before the time of Christ, had its entrances to hell at Acherusia, in Bithynia; at Avernus, in Campania, where Ulysses began his journey to the grisly abodes; the Sibyl's cave at Cumæ, in Argolis; at Tænarus, in the southern Peloponnesus, where Hercules descended, and dragged Cerberus up to the daylight; and the cave of Trophonius, in Lebadea, not to mention a dozen less noted places.

The Bible always speaks of hell as "down," and the Apostles' Creed tells us that Christ "descended" into hell. Exercising his imagination on this basis, the learned Faber discovered that after the Second Advent the saints would dwell on the crust of the earth, a thousand miles thick, and the damned in a sea of liquid fire inside. Thus the saints would tread over the heads of sinners, and flowers would bloom over the lake of damnation.

Sir John Maundeville, a most engaging old liar, says he found a descent into hell "in a perilous vale" in Abyssinia. According to the Celtic legend of "St. Brandon's Voyage," hell was not "down below," but in the moon, where the saint found Judas Iscariot suffering incredible tortures, but let off every Sunday to enjoy himself and prepare for a fresh week's agony. The master of bathos, Martin Tupper, finds this idea very suitable. He apostrophises the moon as "the wakeful eye of hell." Bailey, the author of *Festus*, is somewhat vaguer. Hell, he says, is in a world which rolls thief-like round the universe, imperceptible to human eyes:—

"a blind world, yet unlit by God,
"Rolling around the extremest edge of light,
Where all things are disaster and decay."

Imaginations, of course, will differ. While Martin Tupper and other gentlemen look for hell in the direction of the moon, the Platonists, according to Macrobus, reckoned as the infernal regions the whole space between the moon and the earth. Whiston thought the comet which appeared in his day was hell. An English clergyman, referred to by Alger, maintained that hell was in the sun, whose spots were gatherings of the damned.

The reader may take his choice, and it is a liberal one. He may regard hell as under the earth, or in the moon, or in the sun, or in a comet, or in some concealed body carcering through infinite space. And if the choice does not satisfy him, he is perfectly free to set up a theory of his own.

Father Pinamonti is the author of a little book called *Hell Open to Christians*, which is stamped with the authority of the Catholic Church, and issued for the special edification of children. This book declares that hell is four thousand miles distant, but it does

not indicate the direction. Anyhow, the distance is so small that the priests might easily set up communication with the place. But perhaps it only exists in the geography or astronomy of faith.

Father Pinamonti seems particularly well informed on this subject. He says the walls of hell are "more than four thousand miles thick." That is a great thickness. But is it quite as thick as the heads of the fools who believe it?

Our belief is that hell is far nearer than the clergy teach. Omar Khayyam, the grand old Persian poet, the "large infidel," as Tennyson calls him, wrote as follows—in the splendid rendering of Edward Fitzgerald:—

"I sent my soul through the invisible,
Some letter of that after-life to spell,
And by and bye my soul returned to me,
And answered, I myself am heaven and hell."

Hell, like heaven, is within us, and about us in the hearts of our fellow-men. Yes, hell is on earth. Man's ignorance, superstition, stupidity, and selfishness, make a hell for him in this life. Let us cease, then, to dread the fabled hell of the priests, and set ourselves to the task of abolishing the real hell of hunger, vice, and misery.

The very Churches are getting ashamed of their theological hell. They are becoming more and more secularised. They call on the disciples of Christ to remedy the evils of this life, and respond to the cry of the poor for a better share of the happiness of this world. Their methods are generally childish, for they overlook the causes of social evil, but it is gratifying to see them drifting from the old moorings, and little by little abandoning the old dogmas. Some of the clergy, like Archdeacon Farrar, go to the length of saying that "hell is not a place." Precisely so, and that is the teaching of Secularism.

G. W. FOOTE.

The Religion of Sir Oliver Lodge.

MORE than the usual amount of anticipatory interest, and much more than the usual quantity of newspaper paragraphs, have been forthcoming concerning Sir Oliver Lodge's address as President of the British Association. This was not due to the public or to journalists suddenly awakening to the importance of scientific research. To the former, science still remains a more or less harmless kind of hobby; and to the bulk of the latter, something useful for providing wonder-raising paragraphs or rhetorical flourishes about the greatness of human ingenuity and the unconquerable strength of man's intelligence. The interest centred mainly in the fact that Sir Oliver Lodge is one of the few men of science that stand forward as an apologist for religious beliefs—that is, so long as he is allowed to define and express religion in his own way. If his religious beliefs were properly tested by the doctrines taught in any of the churches in Christendom, they would be condemned with hardly less severity than are those expressed in this journal. Between Sir Oliver's God and the Christian God there is all the generic resemblance that exists between Monmouth and Macedon. There is a similarity of sound; and if the genuine thing cannot be obtained, the next best thing is to get something with the same name.

Particularly when the Christian world is in so critical a position. Once upon a time the Christian Churches were selective. They took care that only those who were in genuine agreement should enter their doors. It was the duty of the newcomer to prove that he agreed with the doctrines taught. Nowadays, the Churches are collective; their policy is to gather as many as they can without a too rigorous entrance examination. The entrant need not prove that he is a Christian; so long as he is not positively disreputable, the Churches will do that for him. They must collect all they can and be thankful for what they get. A man may mean by "God"

nothing but a nebulous, undefinable, unusable sort of an abstraction; and by "Christ" no more than respect for a Jerusalem Labor Leader; but if he will only use these words, it is enough. He will be claimed as a Christian by some church that seeks to atone for empty seats by claiming a large congregation that never attends. If he happens to be a man of the scientific standing of Sir Oliver Lodge, the threads of connection may be still more attenuated; hard-pressed theologians will treat them as though they were ropes of steel. For about scientists the Christian world is far from easy. Counting only those who openly call themselves Freethinkers, it claims all the rest as on the side of religion. There is a strong feeling—when there is no actual knowledge—that it is not so, but it comforts restive minds. It is felt more strongly that between scientific and religious teaching there is direct conflict; but, again, it professes a cheering conviction to the contrary. Consequently, when it was announced that Sir Oliver Lodge would speak—in part of his address—on the relation between science and religion, there was great jubilation, and it was assumed that the reference would amount to a reconciliation. And to theologians assumption is the equivalent of proof. The reconciliation would be attempted, therefore it would be done, therefore the latest deliverance of science was in support of religion, therefore to be non-religious was to be unscientific.

And, after all, those who looked for any startling revelations on religion—some papers were foolish enough to announce that Sir Oliver would produce proofs of a future life—were doomed to disappointment. As the *Times* curtly said, "The sensational disclosures expected in some quarters were not forthcoming." Sir Oliver did make a profession of faith in a future life, but he was careful—and properly careful—to point out that this was a personal confession. And with all possible respect to Sir Oliver Lodge, that is not of great importance. As a well-known man, there is, of course, a certain interest attaching to Sir Oliver's personal opinions; but as material for evidence, for or against, this personal confession carries no more weight than any other personal confession.

And when all was said, very little was said—certainly nothing that was in any way new or startling. The direct references to religion only came in at the very end of the address; by far the greater part being concerned with the present position of scientific speculations with which I am not now concerned, and concerning which no one has a greater readiness than myself to play the part of a very grateful listener and reader. But to say, as Sir Oliver did in concluding his speech, that we "are deaf and blind to the grandeur around us, unless we have insight enough to recognise in the woven fabric of existence, flowing steadily from the loom in an infinite progress towards perfection, the ever-growing garment of a transcendent God," is not science, but rhetoric. It seems, indeed, but a grandiloquent way of putting the old saying, "The fool hath said in his heart there is no God." The grandeur and beauty around us remain, and the story of development remains the same whether the universe is the garment of a transcendent God or not. Such expressions tickle the ear without illuminating the mind. The *Daily Mail* hit the nail on the head by quoting "a scientific listener" who remarked that it was just a "rhapsody on faith." And a rhapsody defies argument.

The *Daily News* illustrated its capacity for saying silly things where religion is concerned by remarking in the course of a leading article, "That such an address should be delivered is in itself significant." Why? Last year, at Dundee, Professor Schafer delivered an address that was a direct negation of all that Sir Oliver said on behalf of religion. The *Daily News* found nothing significant about that address, although plain speech on the subject is really most remarkable in this country. Moreover, it was undeniable that Professor Schafer had behind him the bulk of scientific opinion at home and abroad. What has occurred in the interval to make

the declaration of Sir Oliver Lodge remarkable? The *Daily News* says the address "indicates a profound change in the attitude of science to the problems of the universe." By the problems of the universe it evidently means the question of religion, for it is characteristic of the religious mind to consider religion as the only thing of importance. In what direction has this profound change occurred? Surely the fact of a scientific man making a confession of religious faith does not warrant such a statement. One swallow does not make a summer, and one Sir Oliver Lodge is not science; nor did he speak, in this respect, on behalf of science. The *Daily News* itself supplied the reply to its own rash generalisation. With a fine disregard of consistency between its news columns and its editorial, the summary of the British Association report was headed, "Plea for Tolerance by Scientists. A Fair Field appealed for by Sir Oliver Lodge." But if the address marked a profound change in the attitude of science, why plead for tolerance? Why ask for a fair field? The "profound change" would itself guarantee tolerance—more than tolerance; it would bespeak a warm welcome.

I prefer the heading of the news column to the senseless prattle of the anonymous editorial. And I think Sir Oliver would agree that he gave the fairer view of the situation. For he gave plenty of evidence that in dealing with religion before a scientific assembly he was very much alone. He felt his audience to be either hostile or indifferent. He confessed that he ran "the risk of annoying my present hearers." He asked scientists to "allow us to make the attempt" of dealing with the universe on religious lines. He asked them to "give us a fair field." Such language is absolutely meaningless unless used to an audience by one who feels that he is in almost a minority of one. Sir Oliver was, and is, evidently under no delusion on this point. He knows that science has undergone no profound change in its attitude towards religion; that neither himself nor philosophers of the Bergson type speak for religion in the name of science. He and they may criticise the findings of science if they please; they may see fit to supplement scientific generalisations with religious beliefs; but the attitude of science towards religion remains exactly what it was.

Here is another piece of *Daily News* religion that I may as well deal with before I come to what Sir Oliver Lodge actually did say. Says the writer of the editorial: "He carried the war into the camp of the Materialists, and sought to make the doctrine of personal immortality credible, if not on a fictitious basis, at least on assumptions that science might accept." Evidently, even the *Daily News* realises that Sir Oliver's studies in psychical research does not put the doctrine of immortality on a fictitious basis. And, after all, the only assumptions that science might accept with honor are those that do rest on a scientific basis. The *Daily News* writer seems to be under the delusion that assumptions need not rest on anything. But, in science, assumptions must have a basis in fact, and must prove their utility by their ability to explain facts. An assumption that does not rest upon facts generally accepted by the scientific world is neither more nor less than a scientific nightmare. And Sir Oliver Lodge himself admits that his "facts" of psychical research are not generally accepted. In the *Christian Commonwealth* for September 10 there appears the report of an interview with Sir Oliver, and one of the questions put to him was: "What are the assured scientific conclusions regarding psychical research?" The answer was: "Scientific men have not universally accepted any conclusions—not even telepathy." Not even the data of the psychical researchers are accepted by scientific men as a body. How, then, in the name of all that is rational, can an assumption be acceptable to science before the facts it sets out to explain are admitted to be genuine. The order of scientific procedure is simple: First, establish your facts; then show that these facts are not explained by any theory at present in the field; next, propose

a theory that will cover the facts established, and which does not conflict with what we otherwise know to be true. That is the only plan of operation acceptable to science, and the theory of immortality does not fulfil a single one of these conditions.

(To be concluded.) C. COHEN.

An Old System Under a New Name.

"BOYCOTT" is a new word in the English language, being only a little over thirty years of age. It first came into use with the agrarian disturbances in Ireland during the years 1880-1. The Nationalists maintained that if a man took a farm from which another had been evicted he thereby became a deserving object of punishment, and no punishment was held to be adequate if it fell short of "isolating him from his kind as if he was a leper of old." That teaching quickly struck its roots into the Irish mind, grew, ripened, and bore abundant fruit in terrible deeds. At that time, Captain Boycott acted as Lord Erne's agent, and came into serious conflict with the Land Leaguers. He evicted many tenants for what the agitators considered to be inadequate reasons. The consequence was that the tenantry and others were restrained from all intercourse with him and his family. His servants were forced to leave him, and his crops were gathered in by Orangemen from the North. Such was the treatment meted out to Captain Boycott, and subsequently the system was baptised into the name of its first victim. But while the name is new the system is old, possibly the oldest in the world. It is the worst form of coercion, or a general conspiracy to compel the offending party to desist from his grievous course of action. An older term for it is ostracism, which takes us back to the end of the sixth century B.C. in the history of Greece. Ostracism was a political device adopted by Clisthenes at Athens to protect the democratic government against seditious sentiments and actions on the part of private citizens. The punishment was a ten years' banishment from Athens, and it is well known that among the first exiles was Clisthenes himself. The law provided that once a year the people should have an opportunity of indicating who, in their opinion, required to be banished, which indication they made by writing the name or names on oyster-shells; hence the word that has been in use ever since, the Greek for oyster being *ostracoon*.

We thus see that boycott is a very recent coinage to represent a fresh development of a very ancient system of persecution. Boycott applies to opinions, however, much more than to actions. The Christian Church has been, in all ages, the biggest boycotter in the world. How many thousands of heretics it has isolated, banished, and burned, confiscating their goods, and making beggars and outcasts of their children, during nineteen hundred years! The record is not a pleasant one to contemplate even for the blindest believers. The first boycotter of whom we read was God. For the most trivial act of disobedience he banished Adam and Eve from their home, not for ten years, but for good and all, with the result that their descendants are spoken of as miserable exiles at this very day. God having left them such an example, it is no wonder that his people have always prided themselves upon their boycotting performances. No example has ever been more faithfully followed. We do not feel disposed to blame God's people, for so long as they believe in him it is their first duty to imitate him, which, in this particular at least, they have most loyally done. While strongly deprecating the fierce persecution of the Jews under Christianity, we cannot shut our eyes to the fact that as long as they had the power they were cruel persecutors themselves. In the Jewish Church heresy was guarded against by the most stringent and heartless measures. Korah, Dathan, and Abiram were not sinners above their fellows, nor was any charge of immorality or of crime ever brought against them;

but because they foolishly imagined that they were as good as Moses and Aaron, and could celebrate the offices of the Tabernacle as efficiently and with as much acceptance as if they had been of the priestly order, they were completely excommunicated and ostracised at the instigation of Moses, who, however, put the whole responsibility for his action upon Jehovah, saying, with the proverbial cunning of his race:—

"Hereby ye shall know that the Lord hath sent me to do all these works; for *I have not done them* of mine own mind. If these men die the common death of all men, or if they be visited after the visitation of all men; then the Lord hath not sent me. But if the Lord make a new thing, and the earth open her mouth, and swallow them up, with all that *appertain* unto them; then ye shall understand that these men have provoked the Lord. And it came to pass, as he had made an end of speaking all these words, that the ground clave asunder that was under them. And the earth opened her mouth, and swallowed them up, and their houses, and all the men that *appertained* unto Korah, and all their goods. They, and all that *appertained* to them, went down alive into the pit, and the earth closed upon them; and they perished from among the congregation. And all Israel that were round about them fled at the cry of them: for they said, Lest the earth swallow us up also. And there came out a fire from the Lord, and consumed the two hundred and fifty men that offered incense" (Numbers xvi. 28-35).

Those were deeds of which Moses felt somewhat ashamed, as we judge from the words, "I have not done them of mine own mind." With the historicity of the narrative we are not now concerned, our whole attention being concentrated upon the fact that, in the story as it stands, three men, found guilty of a technical or ceremonial offence, are hurled into and completely swallowed up by a cleft of the earth, Divinely provided, *together with their wives, children, servants, most distant relations, and entire property*, and that in connection with the same offence two hundred and fifty more are put to death. Do believers in the Bible as God's Book realise that it contains such unspeakably horrible passages? Our point is that primarily boycotting is a Divine act, and that in all cases persecutors justify themselves by falling back upon the authority of God. In this respect there is no difference between the Jewish and the Christian Church. It is God who is ultimately held responsible for the acts of both.

We are often assured that the boycott of people whose opinions differ from those of the majority is now at an end. Proudly do many tell us that this is the age of freedom, in which every person is at liberty to hold and express what opinions he or she pleases. Theoretically, this may be true enough, but practically it is as false as it can be. Unpopular opinions are still penalised, not by the death of their promulgator, and the confiscation of his goods, but in various little ways which in their sum total are exceedingly irritating and injurious. The whole community is biased against the Freethinker. He is not only looked down upon and despised, but he is also subjected to a systematic treatment that both annoys and harms him. If he keeps a shop, it is shunned; if he runs a newspaper, it is ignored; if he has a profession, his chambers are seldom visited and possible clients are warned against him; if he takes part in a public propaganda, he is reviled and slandered; if he has literary gifts, they are woefully depreciated. In these and a million other ways he is made to suffer, and those who make him think they glorify God thereby. It is surprising to what an absurd extent certain forms of literature maltreat Freethought. There is a new *Encyclopaedia*, called the *Everyman*, in the process of publication just now, which is to consist of twelve volumes, of the same size as the *Everyman Library* books. It is therefore our latest work of reference; but, unfortunately, those who refer to it find it seriously disappointing. They search for an article on Freethought, but discover that the word does not occur in it as a heading. Thirteen lines are devoted to "Freethinkers," but all the information we derive is that it is "a term used of all who reject belief in divine revelation,

applied specially to the deistical writers of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries." Reading these few lines no one would dream that there are such wretches as Freethinkers in existence to-day; and the only authorities mentioned are Lechler, who published his work on *Deism* in 1841, and A. S. Farrar, whose book appeared in 1862—both absurdly out of date. The article on "Atheism" does not occupy one column, and there is not a single word in it concerning the Atheism of the present time in Great Britain and America. The writer does not cite one authority. "Agnosticism" gets three-quarters of a column, and is dismissed as having had in this country "many able exponents in the 'seventies and 'eighties of last century." You are to infer that it is quite dead now. The only authorities alluded to are "*An Agnostic Apology* by Leslie Stephen, and Professor James Ward's *Naturalism and Agnosticism*," neither of which conveys the slightest information about present-day Agnosticism, which is a greater factor in the life of the people than at any former period. In its treatment of such subjects the *Everyman Encyclopaedia* ranks no higher than the periodical literature of the Churches.

The reality of the boycott cannot be doubted. It meets one at every turn. Freethinkers have never yet had fairplay, and are not getting it now. We do not complain, because we know that in spite of the boycott Freethought is silently spreading. It is a leaven that is gradually transmuted the whole lump of human thought. In spite of the burning zeal and incessant labors of innumerable Christian workers, the Churches are becoming more secularised every year. Supernaturalism is a vanishing quantity everywhere. Christians ought to learn a lesson from their own history. There was a time when they too felt the terrible pinch of the boycott, and groaned with fear and trembling under it; but they triumphed in spite of it. We are a despised and persecuted minority to-day, and we too feel the crushing weight of the boycott. But let us not lose heart, for our day of power is coming quite as certainly as theirs did. Yes, it is even now hastening on; and our only hope is that when it is come we shall be too noble-minded, too self-respecting, to apply the boycott to them in their days of decline, as they are doing to us. We assure them that we have no desire to retaliate.

J. T. LLOYD.

The Remedial and Fatal Effects of Faith.

AMONG the peasant populations of Catholic Ireland, France, Spain, Germany, and Italy a firm faith in the efficacy of relics and other forms of superstition still retains its force, and, melancholy to relate, cultured lay Catholics are not above pandering to this ignorant credulity of their uneducated fellow-religionists.

The two most celebrated centres of the contemporary survival of the crude superstitions of savage humanity are located at Lourdes and Treves. The one is in rural France and the other in Catholic Germany. Seated near the Pyrenees, and safely sheltered from the more civilised influences which have made intellectual France possible, Lourdes became the scene of some very remarkable events.

According to a carefully elaborated legend, the Blessed Virgin appeared to a peasant girl at noon on February 11, 1858. During the succeeding six months, the apparition reappeared on seventeen different occasions. To add to these marvels, a previously unknown spring suddenly sent forth its waters on the sacred spot. This liquid was endowed with miraculous powers, and many wonders were reported. As was doubtless foreseen, the populace flocked to the scene of these extraordinary events, and the barriers which had been erected by the incredulous local authorities were very soon removed by command of the Emperor Napoleon III., to whom, as supreme magistrate, such superstitions were eminently useful. The Bishop of Tarbes then

selected a commission of priests and "scientists" to examine the evidence for these astonishing occurrences, and after three years' "inquiry" this accommodating commission came to the conclusion that the apparition was genuine; that the ecstasies of the girl to whom the Blessed Virgin Mary had appeared were also genuine, and that the miraculous properties of the waters were quite above suspicion. This piece of solemn imposture has since grown in importance. A fine basilica, together with the Church of the Rosary, now adorn the scene of the alleged miracles. The Fathers of the Immaculate Conception kindly superintend the holy grotto, and a flourishing business has been developed.

The second outstanding instance of pious legerdemain is associated with the old-world city of Treves. The Holy Coat—der heilige Rock, as the Germans call it—is preserved in the cathedral of this city. In the words of the *Catholic Dictionary* :—

"A very ancient tradition asserts it to be the seamless coat which our Savior wore at the time of his Passion. The Empress Helena [the same lady, we may remark, who so providentially discovered the identical cross upon which Christ was crucified] having come into possession of it in the Holy Land, is said to have given it to the city of Treves, where she resided for a considerable time. The earliest written testimony to this effect is found in a chronicle of the first half of the twelfth century, where Helena is said to have presented the relic to the church during the episcopate of Agritius (314-334). Several other notices of the Holy Coat are found in documents mounting up to, or nearly to the twelfth century. But the most remarkable and interesting piece of evidence, in support of the authenticity of the relic, is an ancient ivory belonging to the Cathedral (lost for some time but recovered in 1844), on which the Empress is figured seated at the church door, and awaiting the arrival of a procession closed by a chariot in which there are two ecclesiastics guarding a chest. Above the chariot is the face of Christ, by which some relation between our Lord and the contents of the chest seems to be indicated."

This famous bit of old ivory was submitted to the Archaeological Society of Frankfort, and that learned body pronounced it of fourth or fifth century origin. As to the Holy Coat itself, it is supposed to have been translated from the choir to the high altar of the cathedral in 1196. There it appears to have remained for nearly four hundred years, when the clergy exposed it to the gaze of the credulous multitude on various occasions during the sixteenth century. The ancient garment was stored for security either in the Castle of Ehrenbreitstein or at Augsburg throughout the next two hundred years. In 1810, that deeply pious man, the great Napoleon, consented to the restoration of the old coat to its native city, and if we may trust Catholic writers, a gaping multitude of a quarter of a million of people journeyed to Treves to celebrate this great event. But all earlier triumphs were eclipsed by the splendors of 1844, "when eleven bishops and more than a million of the laity flocked to Treves from all sides during the period.....for which the Holy Coat was exhibited."

To be sure, on such an occasion as this miracles occurred, and the "joy and piety" of the deluded multitude must indeed have been a moving sight. The scornful and superior sceptic who regards religion as a splendid thing for the crowd—had such an one been present—might conceivably have recognised in this spectacle another mournful illustration of the truth of Campanella's line—

"The people is a beast of muddy brain."

In any case, even Catholics were shocked at the sorry business :—

"Certain unstable Catholics [solemnly says the *Catholic Dictionary*] took offence at the proceedings, and wrote against the authenticity of the Holy Coat. Among these were Czarski, an ecclesiastic from Poson, and Ronge, a suspended priest of Breslau."

But, despite the indignant protests of these enlightened priests, the faithful remained faithful still. The Holy Coat was again exhibited at Treves in 1891, and added to the profits and prestige of the

church, and miraculous cures were alleged by more or less truthful witnesses.

That nervous diseases may be alleviated or even temporarily cured by suggestion is a statement that few medical men would dispute. A doctor with a good bedside manner, which is united with a sunny and optimistic temperament, is nearly always more successful in rallying his patients than an abler and more experienced rival practitioner in whom these estimable qualities are lacking. Pleasurable emotions of all kinds act beneficially upon the most dejected of invalids. And those best qualified to form an unbiassed judgment upon the cures reported from Lourdes and Treves—if we accept a small percentage as genuine—are convinced that imagination, excitement, change of scene, and other natural phenomena are the real explanation of the supposed miracles. As a matter of plain fact, no healing of organic disease has ever been known at either shrine. Broken limbs are never set; amputated organs are never restored. Cancer, consumption, and scores of other malignant diseases await present treatment and ultimate cure at the hands of the man of science alone.

Just as hopeful feelings exalt the human system, so do fearful forebodings depress it. Nor are these phenomena confined to the civilised races. Savage peoples supply abundant illustrations, and the beneficent or baleful effects of happiness or misery may be easily observed in animal life by the least attentive onlooker.

Among the New Zealanders the sanctity of their divine chiefs was so great that it proved fatal to all who inadvertently or deliberately profaned it. Writes Professor Frazer :—

"For instance, it once happened that a New Zealand chief of high rank and great sanctity had left the remains of his dinner by the wayside. A slave, a stout, hungry fellow, coming up after the chief had gone, saw the unfinished dinner, and ate it up without asking questions. Hardly had he finished when he was informed by a horror-stricken spectator that the food of which he had eaten was the chief's. 'I knew the unfortunate delinquent well,' [proceeds Professor Frazer, quoting from a work by a Pakeha Maori]. 'He was remarkable for courage, and had signalled himself in the wars of the tribe,' but 'no sooner did he hear the fatal news than he was seized with the most extraordinary convulsions and cramp in the stomach, which never ceased till he died about sundown the same day. He was a strong man, in the prime of life, and if any pakeha [European] Freethinker should have said he was not killed by the *tapu* of the chief, which had been communicated to the food by contact, he would have been listened to with feelings of contempt for his ignorance and inability to understand plain and direct evidence.'**

Numerous similar well-authenticated instances are mentioned by Professor Frazer, such as the following: A Maori woman, having innocently partaken of some tabooed fruit, on being informed of its sanctity, at once wailed out that it would kill her. She ate her forbidden fruit in the afternoon, and gave up the ghost before noon on the following day.

Among the Maoris the most innocent infringement of the customs relating to tabooed persons or things was, when made known to the transgressor, practically certain to prove fatal. On one occasion, the tinder-box of a native chief became the unconscious cause of the deaths of several savages. This article was mislaid by the chief, and was picked up by some natives, who used it to light their pipes. But when they discovered that it was the chief's property, and was, in consequence, sacred or taboo, they were so overcome by superstitious fear that they all died from fright. Even the "holy coat" of a New Zealand chief proved fatal to anyone who, through accident or design, happened to use it as an article of attire :—

"A chief was observed by a missionary to throw down a precipice a blanket which he found too heavy to carry. Being asked by the missionary why he did not leave it on a tree for the use of a future traveller,

* *Golden Bough* (1911), "Taboo and the Perils of the Soul," pp. 134, 135.

the chief replied that 'it was the fear of its being taken by another which caused him to throw it where he did, for, if it were worn, his tapu [that is, his spiritual power communicated by contact to the blanket and through the blanket to the man] would kill the person.' For a similar reason a Maori chief would not blow a fire with his mouth; for his sacred breath would communicate its sanctity to the fire, which would pass it on to the pot on the fire, which would pass it on to the meat in the pot, which would pass it on to the man who ate the meat, which was in the pot, which stood on the fire, which was breathed on by the chief; so that the eater, infected by the chief's breath conveyed by these intermediaries, would surely die."

The above illustrations of the fatal effects of morbid fancy could be easily augmented by examples from the various Polynesian peoples, to whom the Maoris are closely related. Nor is this deadly influence of imagination restricted to this race. There is evidence that it is widespread among savage stocks. In their important work dealing with *The Native Tribes of Central Australia*, Spencer and Gillen record instances of savages who, having discovered that otherwise quite harmless wounds had, unfortunately, been inflicted by weapons endowed with magical powers, immediately give up all hope of recovery, refuse all food, and soon pine to death.

In South America kindred cases are met with. If the medicine-man of a Brazilian tribe—

"predicted the death of anyone who had offended him, the wretch took to his hammock instantly in such full expectation of dying, that he would neither eat nor drink, and the prediction was a sentence which faith effectually executed."

In savage Africa, when the most hardened warriors are once persuaded that they have been bewitched, they regard death as their immediate doom, and all attempts to save them prove unavailing.

Professor Frazer mentions a remarkable instance of the fatal consequences of superstitious fear which was recorded by the Capuchin missionary, Merolla, who travelled in the Congo towards the end of the seventeenth century. Among the Congo natives it was customary for the wizards to ordain that certain foods should be avoided by the young savages. These prohibited foods were termed *chegilla*. It so happened that a young native, whose *chegilla* was a "wild hen," while on a journey, put up at a friend's house by the way. The host prepared a wild hen for his guest's breakfast, and the traveller asked whether it were a wild hen:—

"His host answered 'No'; then he fell on heartily, and afterwards proceeded on his journey. About four years after these two met together again, and the aforesaid negro, not being yet married, his old friend asked him, 'If he would eat a wild hen?' To which he answered, 'That he had received the *chegilla*, and therefore could not.' Hereat the host began immediately to laugh, inquiring of him, 'What made him refuse it now, when he had eaten one at his table about four years ago?' At the hearing of this the negro immediately fell a trembling, and suffered himself to be so far possessed with the effects of imagination, that he died in less than twenty-four hours later."

The foregoing examples of the fatal effects of superstitious terrors possibly help to make plainer the circumstance that the religious frenzy excited by such exhibitions as those at Lourdes and Treves may occasionally so exalt the nervous system that neural diseases may experience a temporary benefit. But, obviously, there is nothing in these very few instances of alleviation of pain and suffering which in any way demands a supernatural explanation. The most vaunted recoveries alleged at Lourdes and Treves count as nothing when compared with the marvellous operations so successfully performed by famous surgeons like Sir Victor Horsley and other true benefactors of the human race.

T. F. PALMER.

Theology is nothing more than a science of words, which by dint of repetition, we accustom ourselves to substitute for things.—D'Holbach.

Acid Drops.

"Christianity," said Nietzsche, "has been the greatest misfortune of mankind." As one sees it incarnated in the average Christian it is positively loathsome. It robs him of whatever little sense of honor he was born with, and leaves him without common moral decency—especially in relation to "infidels," as these paltry, pernicious people call their intellectual superiors who have the brains and courage to think for themselves. We have just heard, for instance, quite accidentally, of the death of Mr. S. H. Munns, of the Terrace Hotel, Margate, a well-known place on the old front by the sea. We have known Mr. Munns so long that we cannot recollect off-hand when we first made his acquaintance. He was known, and known as a Freethinker, to nearly everybody in Margate; and during many years of the later part of his life (he was a good deal over eighty, we believe) his position as a local magistrate brought him into public prominence. His tall figure, his benevolent face, his humorous eyes, and his jocular manner, made him a noticeable personality. You couldn't confuse him with the ruck of people even in a crowd. He was in the fullest sense of the word a Margate character. And his Atheism was a fact of common knowledge. We repeat it—his Atheism was a fact of common knowledge.

Nobody is immortal. Atheism seems conducive to longevity, but even Atheists must die, and old Mr. Munns has "joined the majority"—as the polite Romans of the pre-Christian days so cleverly and nicely put it. The moment the breath was out of his body the Munns family—who, we suppose, inherit the business that his energy, sagacity, and assiduity built up—proceeded to treat him as if all his rights expired when he became incapable of defending them. They buried him as quickly as the transaction could be carried through, and they gave him a Christian funeral. And some man of God was found (for the usual consideration) to tell lies over the old Atheist's coffin. Lies that he knew to be lies; lies that the "mourners" (heaven save the mark!) knew to be lies.

Mr. Munns was the wag of Margate. But people did not roar with laughter at his sallies; their faces broadened with a happy appreciative smile under the influence of his sly ironical humor. He would not have lost his temper, we believe, even if he could have witnessed the pious farce at his graveside. He would probably have smiled and said "I told you so."

What looks like another case of similar Christian piety occurred in last week's *Athenæum*. We found there a notice of the sudden death of Mr. William Carow Hazlitt—a grandson of the Hazlitt, who was a friend of "Saint Charles" Lamb, and Samuel Taylor Coleridge, and William Wordsworth, and himself a great writer, for whom Robert Louis Stevenson had such high admiration. Mr. W. C. Hazlitt did a lot of dryasdust work. He also wrote two real books. One was on Shakespeare. This is mentioned in the *Athenæum* obituary notice. The other was as he himself called it "a book for men and women," its title being "Man considered in Relation to God and a Church." He favored us with a presentation copy of this book last spring, when we were too ill to give it the good long notice that we intended to give it in the *Freethinker*—and a short notice of such a book would hardly have been just or useful. It was the fifth edition "greatly enlarged and partly re-written," and the first edition had been published as far back as 1891. We had read our own (purchased) copy of the 1895 edition, and held it in much respect. The last edition was obviously a great improvement. It contains 352 pages, besides 58 pages of Introduction; say 600 pages in round numbers. It is thus a big book, and it is also an original book; that is to say, it came almost entirely from the writer's own brain and pen. It is a thoroughgoing criticism of Christianity and Priestcraft by a scholar and a gentleman. It is a noble book, and a brave book, and it is the writer's gravely considered and carefully written message to his fellow-men. Yet it is not so much as alluded to by the *Athenæum*. Such is Christian honor even in what used to be the leading literary journal in England!

We shall make it a point of honor on our own part now to give a longer account of the late W. C. Hazlitt's book to our readers very shortly; as soon, in fact, as we can find time to do it.

A meeting of the Society for Promoting Christianity among the Jews was held the other day to consider the question of finance. The Society has a deficit of £8,200.

and it is necessary to raise a sum of £10,000 to meet the needs of the coming year. There was, of course, the usual talk of opportunities for increased work opening, but the principal opportunities appear to be those presented by indigent Jews who have worn out the charity of their co-religionists. How otherwise a Jew is to benefit by becoming a Christian no one has yet been able to explain. Christianity does not make them more sober, more law-abiding, better parents, or better husbands. They simply become Christians—for a time. Very few of them take this step. The natural evolution of the Jew is to Freethought. To change one religion for another is like exchanging an abscess for a cancer.

"Deny Heaven and Hell," says "Dagonet" in the *Referee*, "and the Bible goes by the board—and the New Testament follows it." Mr. Sims evidently thinks the New Testament is not a part of the Bible, but a different book altogether. He must have known better once. But we dare say it is a long time since he last opened the "Blessed Book."

Lord Loreburn's letter about Home Rule by consent was quickly challenged by the National Free Church Council, or at least the portion of it that met at Shrewsbury on Friday, September 12. The resolution passed at this meeting is sufficiently drastic:—

"That this joint meeting regrets that Lord Loreburn should have suggested, even by implication, that the Welsh Disestablishment Bill may possibly have to be sacrificed to facilitate a Home Rule settlement; and this meeting desires to state in the clearest and most emphatic manner that not even in the interests of Irish Home Rule, or of any other question, can Wales consent to any postponement of the Welsh Bill, whether out of consideration of the exigencies of any political party or otherwise; and confidently calls upon the Government to fulfil its repeated pledges to Wales, and as confidently calls on the Welsh Members to see that the Welsh Disestablishment Bill, without further delay or concessions shall become law during the lifetime of the present Parliament."

What the Nonconformists really care about is the destruction of the Established Episcopal Church. State privileges to religion, outside the Establishment, they are quite willing to share in; such as exemption from rates and taxes, which are paid by all their fellow-citizens.

Home Rule appears to be doomed. The Bishop of Ardagh has "been in constant prayer to God that he would take the matter into his own hands, and avert the danger that threatens us." Mr. Asquith will please note. Perhaps he will turn on a Catholic praying machine to counteract the Protestant one—before it is too late.

Rev. A. F. Tracey, who has been vicar of Townstall with St. Savior, Dartmouth, for twenty years, says he has been there too long to be good for the parish or himself. "As there seems no room in England," he says, "I am going to try my fortune in New Zealand. I would have sought a curacy in England, but my wife says no vicar would stand me more than three weeks." That may be true without being to his discredit. In our (paper) crossing of swords with him we have always found him a gentleman. Our good wishes go with him wherever he goes.

Mr. Tracey has a parting shot at the *Freethinker* in his parish magazine—and incidentally at Mr. Bottomley who relied upon Mr. Foote's *Bible and Beer*. Mr. Tracey quotes Proverbs xxxi. 6, 7:—

"Give strong drink unto him that is ready to perish, and wine unto those that be of heavy hearts. Let him drink, and forget his poverty, and remember his misery no more."

Mr. Tracey contends that this is not Bible teaching. "The words are not those of an inspired writer at all." The first verse of the chapter states that it was spoken by King Lemuel. This is true. But the first verse is confused, and it probably means "a nameless king." Moreover, the speech is adopted and made a part of the book of Proverbs, whose author, by the way, is just as "nameless" as that old king. If the question of authorship is pressed the whole book is wrapt in a fog. Besides, that last chapter of Proverbs contains the description of the good wife and mother, which the Christians are never tired of quoting. Perhaps, by this time, Mr. Tracey is ready to endorse his own statement that "No ordinary Christian knows his Bible half as well as the editor of the *Freethinker*."

The *New Witness*, run apparently by the Chestertons, has an article "On Place-Names in Poetry," in which we read that "Are not Abana and Pharpar, rivers of Damascus" is

"a phrase which stands unrivalled in the poetry of the world." The writer should read Milton.

Another article in the *New Witness* is by Mr. Cecil Chesterton on the new edition of Mr. Bernard Shaw's *Quintessence of Ibsenism*. Mr. Chesterton has a peculiar view of his own as to the old edition of "G. B. S.'s" book:—

"The real value of the *Quintessence of Ibsenism*, especially its historical value, is of quite another kind. Mr. Shaw calls it a torpedo, and he is right. How well that torpedo was aimed I have only too good reason to know, for I was on the ship that it struck. The ship was irreparably damaged. It sank; and while a few strong men (like Mr. Foote and the Under-Secretary to the Board of Trade) are still clinging to the wreckage of its stout timbers, the majority of its crew are struggling in the water in a manner at once grotesque and pitiable. For myself, I had the good fortune to be picked up by the boat of an obscure fisherman—that was called Peter.

"Mr. Shaw may have thought he was firing his shot at Orthodoxy. I do not know; anyhow, he did not hit Orthodoxy. What he did hit, what he certainly brought down was that high Idealistic Rationalism, the creed of Mill, of George Eliot, of Huxley, which was at that time the creed of almost all intelligent people."

There is something very novel about this. We fancy it will astonish Mr. Shaw himself. That terrible explosion never reached our ears, and we don't remember the ship going down. Mr. Chesterton is quite mistaken as to the state of Freethought in England to-day. It has permeated the public mind to an enormous extent. Bradlaugh's following was largely political. Freethought is stronger now than when he left it; as, indeed, it was bound to be with the course of time.

There was food for thought in the *Daily Sketch* picture of pilgrims being carried on board the boat conveying them from England to France. They were going to Lourdes to be cured of their physical maladies. "Now and then," the *Sketch* said, "one is healed—but nearly all return, their hopes shattered once more. But still they pray." Poor creatures! They believe that the Holy Virgin could cure them all if she liked, but it would be "blasphemy" to ask why she doesn't.

The "now and then" cases of healing are mainly nervous, and the benefit received (more or less temporarily) is due to excitement and auto-suggestion. Nobody ever went to Lourdes with one leg and came away with two.

The epidemic of visions at Alzonne, in the South of France, referred to in last week's *Freethinker*, is growing rapidly. At first the visions were confined to two little girls who received messages from Joan of Arc. Now nearly everybody sees her; while others see the Virgin Mary, St. Michael, St. Margaret, St. Catherine, and "the Holy Face." Alzonne appears to have become a regular holiday resort for saints. According to the *Daily Telegraph*, one who goes to Alzonne and fails to see a vision runs a chance of being lynched. Indeed, a reporter of the *Matin* who did not see any of the saints had to leave in a hurry. The villagers suggested throwing him into the river. Going to see the visions, says the *Telegraph*, has become the chief occupation of everybody. Processions are constantly visiting the place. People come in on bicycles, and, although the bishops remain aloof, the clergy appear to be reaping a harvest. It is just probable that we may see another Lourdes established.

Rev. C. B. Law, vicar of Cheshunt, who made himself notorious over the Hoddesdon motor-bus disaster, declares that "God is calling upon men everywhere to repent." Judging from the newspaper reports, the clergy want this call as badly as any other class. Maybe the reverend gentleman wants it a bit himself. Preachers are not necessarily good at practice. "A daw's not reckoned a religious bird because it keeps a cawing from the steeple."

Some people, says Mr. R. J. Campbell, are asking, in connection with the disaster on the Midland Railway, where God comes in? Exactly; if there is a God, he must come in somewhere, either in a positive or a negative sense. When the smash occurred on the Great Eastern, the Rev. Len Broughton explained what God was doing at the time. The preacher, who was on the train, was saved by the direct interposition of Providence. That is all right. God was looking after Broughton, and could not attend to others at the same time—or, perhaps, they were not worth the trouble. Mr. Campbell says that he had himself travelled over the Midland line the day before the accident, but he does not feel inclined to thank God for his

safety. We congratulate Mr. Campbell on his modesty, and so much common sense.

Still, where does God come in? The question is insistent. Mr. Campbell practically says he doesn't know. But he suggests things which he believes may comfort people. His advice is to bear in mind that it is not only in railway collisions and *Titanic* disasters that pain and suffering exists:—

"Somewhere in London now there is someone going through mental and bodily anguish at least equal to anything experienced by anyone involved in the Midland Railway disaster. If we wonder why God does not prevent a calamity on such a scale as this, we must also wonder why he does not stop the suffering that is going on all the time."

Well, we do wonder; but we fail to see that the presence of pain everywhere answers the question raised by pain being present in a particular direction. It can only be that suffering is general, which we quite admit. And, instead of blaming God for being careless or cruel on a special occasion, we have to conclude that carelessness is characteristic of his conduct of things in general. Finally, Mr. Campbell asked his hearers to remember that the next life was very near, and death was the only means of living it. Really! We may suggest to Mr. Campbell that death is a fact, a solid, indisputable fact. Another life is only an assumption, and one in favor of which no reliable evidence has ever been produced, in spite of it being the business of many thousands of people to provide it.

What always strikes us about this kind of apologetic talk is its utter futility. It never comes into contact with the question raised. The Christians, ancient and modern, orthodox and heterodox, are continually furnishing the world with accounts of cases in which God has directly interfered for the benefit of particular individuals. It may be a case of conversion, or the cure of a disease, or a "providential" prevention of disaster, or a feeling of happiness in response to prayer. Yet when anything like the Aisgill collision occurs, and the Christian is asked why the God who could intervene to secure a convert remains passive during a collision, the answer forthcoming is that God is just as careless or as brutal in other directions, and we must not expect him to be kinder or more careful here. As though there is anything more in this than an extension of the charge! God *can* intervene to secure a convert; he does nothing to prevent three little children being crushed or roasted—perhaps crushed and roasted—to death. "We feel," says Mr. Campbell, "that if we could prevent a thing so terrible we should do so. But the Almighty did not interfere." Quite so; one only need add, What would be thought of the man who could have interfered but refrained from doing so?

Several Pacific islands in the Tongo group have dropped "down below," and hundreds of natives and a few whites have gone down with them. Beautiful, benevolent "Providence"! "For his tender mercies are over all his works."

According to the London correspondent of the *Glasgow Herald*, the Secretary of the Lord's Day Observance Society expressed surprise at the recent prosecutions for playing golf on Sunday in Scotland. From this professional Sabatarian's remarks we gather that he has a most elementary knowledge of the law. We accept him, however, as an authority on the decline of Sunday observance in Great Britain. "He pointed out," the *Herald* correspondent says, "that the opening of golf courses on Sunday has sadly depleted Sunday-schools and Bible classes of their senior boys. In one case he specially mentioned all the senior boys save one were absent from a Bible class on the first occasion that a neighboring golf course was open on Sunday." How sad! Where is our pocket handkerchief?

The Glasgow godly are in a flutter. We understand that their churches, and other buildings connected with them, are exempted from rates; but that is not enough—they want to frustrate the mere correct valuation of the properties by the City Assessor. In other words, they don't want the public to know the full extent of their relief from the local obligations that devolve upon the rest of the community. The Valuation Committee gave a discreet decision on appeal. The churches and the halls, etc., connected with them are to be valued separately. This looks fair enough, but in practice it reduces the value of the churches immensely. So the godly will soon recover their old peace of mind. They haven't to pay, and nobody knows what they are worth. Which is privilege supported by mystery,—a state of things very much to the taste of the men of God.

According to a Reuter telegram a young Christian Syrian girl, having wedded a Mussulman, her family killed her with stones and sticks, and then fled to England, where it is hoped they will be arrested. Religious bigotry is capable of anything. It was always the same, and it always will be.

Bishop Gailor, head of the Protestant Episcopal diocese of Tennessee, was arrested up-country on a charge of being a confidence man of some sort. It was a case of mistaken identity. But the charge was a shrewd thrust at the Bishop's profession.

A Reuter's telegram from Berlin explains the disaster to the Zeppelin airship, through which thirteen people were drowned. It says that the airship was properly equipped, it was not overweighted, and the gas had not diminished. The wreck was entirely due to a change in the weather, and "the accident must be attributed to a Higher Power." Evidently, God doesn't like the Zeppelins. We remember that when some people tried to scale heaven by building a tower, the "Higher Power" got riled. On that occasion he confounded their tongues. This time he drowned them. What will he do next?

Father Henry Day, S.J., attended the Trades Union Congress, and gave his impressions of the Congress to his congregation in the Church of the Holy Name, Manchester. He was most struck by the absence of religion of any sort, and he felt that the one thing needed to make the Congress really powerful was to Christianise it. Of course, Father Day means the right sort of Christianising, and would like the delegates to have a nice compact body of Catholic priests as their acknowledged head. This Jesuit priest does indeed dream of a time when the Roman Catholics shall have captured the Trades Union Congress. He advises "Catholic working men to join trade unions wherever they were." Then let them "take off their coats for work, make their power felt, become secretaries in the branches, and have a say in things." It is to be observed that Father Day doesn't advise them to join the trade unions as working men, but as Catholics. And it is as Catholics that they are to "have a say in things." That is, Catholics are to become trade unionists in order to play the game of the Catholic Church in a quarter from which all Churches should be excluded. We hope that genuine trade unionists will bear Father Day's advice in mind.

Mr. Lloyd George has been doing some week-end talk in a Methodist chapel in Mid-Wales lately. He appears to think that the Welsh have succeeded the Jews as the Chosen People. "It is my belief," he said, "that Wales will not go astray so long as it has its mountains and men, and God will see that it will have its mountains and men to the end of time—the mountains to mould the men and the men to emulate the mountains in their stability and their unconquerable strength." We understand now. We also understand why most of the great men of the United Kingdom—including Mr. Lloyd George—came out of Wales. It is all due to the mountains. Flatter parts, like Warwickshire, produce inferior personages, like Shakespeare and George Eliot; and flatter parts still, like Lincoln and Norfolk, produce more inferior personages, like Nelson and Tennyson. This is as clear as daylight; it looks so plain when you once see it. We thank Mr. Lloyd George for the explanation.

Addressing the Sunday-school children, Mr. Lloyd George said: "If anything is worth quoting at all it is worth quoting correctly." We quite agree with him. But we do not follow him when he goes on to say "I am sure this applies to God's Word." We presume the book referred to is the Bible—and we should really like to know in what sense Mr. Lloyd George regards it as God's Word. We don't think he will oblige us. There will be crinkles round his eyes—but no answer.

A Lancashire reader sends us a local paper containing a report of a sermon on the latest burning question, "Is There a Hell?" by the Rev. Ralph Shields, of Haslingden. There is nothing of any importance in the sermon; the preacher just gives the old orthodox doctrine. It is "Hell-hot—without sugar." But there is something funny at the finish. The column had to be filled up, and either by accident or design the editor stuck in a paragraph advertisement headed "Are You Ill?"

One morning's *Daily Mail* list of "latest wills" contained the following:—Rev. Benjamin Cotton, of Rochford, Essex, left £1,018. Rev. James Annesley Dawkins, of Leamington, left £9,810. Rev. Henry Dickenson Hubbard, of Reading, left £13,786. They were respectively 87, 85, and 89 years of age. How slow these men of God are to go "home"!

Mr. Foote's Engagements

Sunday, September 21, Secular Hall, Humberstone Gate, Leicester; at 6.30, "Shakespeare's Humanism in the *Merchant of Venice*." Admission free. Questions and Discussion after the Lecture.

October 5, Birmingham Town Hall; 19, Manchester; 26, Stratford Town Hall.

To Correspondents.

- PRESIDENT'S HONORARIUM FUND, 1913.—Previously acknowledged, £183 17s. 9d. Received since:—E. Raggett, 10s.; W. Lupton, 10s.; J. D. Hyman, 2s. 6d.
- L. E. ADAMS.—See paragraph. Thanks.
- REV. U. DHAMMALOKA.—Your letter to hand, with enclosure, which is placed to your credit. Change of address noted. Glad you have recovered from your long illness, and shall be pleased to hear from you again when you have any news to communicate.
- THOMAS FOWLER.—Always glad to receive cuttings, but please let them be as up-to-date as possible.
- R. S. P.—We are obliged.
- A. M.—We don't want to be too hard on Praed. We read him in the long ago, when we had youth and more leisure than we have now, and read "everything." He wrote society verses and political satires—good enough in their way, but belonging to the passing hour. You ask our opinion of Victor Hugo. Matthew Arnold described him as half man of genius and half charlatan. We think that was Arnold's arithmetic, but we are only quoting from memory. We should alter the proportions, but Arnold noted a real flaw in that splendid genius. *Les Misérables* is one of the great books of the world. We cannot deal with Hugo's poems in a brief reply to your question.
- E. B.—Many thanks for cuttings
- E. RAGGETT.—The object of *Bible Romances* is to teach as well as to amuse. It contains more information about the Bible—rather about its contents—than any other single book ever published; and it anticipated every important point of the "Higher Criticism." Our object has always been serious. We never had a taste for mere clowning, and clowning for a living, except in a circus, is a very poor position for any man with the least self-respect. Grinding out "humor" daily is a frightful occupation for a rational being. It is calculated to drive a superior practitioner to suicide and an inferior one to the brandy bottle. For real wit read Shakespeare. For laborious and sometimes painful impromptus read Oscar Wilde.
- H. DAWSON.—We had already noticed the *John Bull* paragraph. Thanks all the same. The letter is not editorial. It will do good in that district.
- A. TAYLOR, who sends us a report of a discourse on Hell "by a local Fire Insurance agent," says: "The *Freethinker* is just 'ripping,' and I am already looking forward to next week's particularly."
- R. AXELBY (1) Your friend's statement about Shelley is a rare joke. We have heard lots of funny falsehoods about that great poet, but we never heard before that he was "a victim to drink." Shelley was the most abstemious of men, often dining on bread and water. He very rarely touched wine; probably not half a dozen times in his life. Some of his friends were of opinion that he injured his health by over-abstinence; not doing justice to his body and overtaxing his brain. Practically he was a teetotaler and vegetarian. (2) The *Globe* Shakespeare is in one volume, but the type is small; so is that of the one-volume Oxford Shakespeare. The type of the Leopold Shakespeare is larger: so is the price.
- W. P. BALL.—Many thanks for cuttings.
- C. W. THOMAS.—Glad to receive such an appreciative and encouraging letter from New Zealand. By all means send us the paper you mention.
- IRISH FREETHINKER.—It is the usual news from Lourdes; just a few instances of benefit from excitement and expectation.
- J. WEST.—The reverend gentleman's views on vaccination and smoking are no affair of ours. The *Freethinker* only deals with persons as parsons.
- H. READ.—"Lectures on Noses"—a book at one time well known, but now only obtainable second-hand, and that rarely.
- A. J. MARRIOTT.—We may give Mr. Shaw's new play a turn.
- MCCANN.—Cuttings are too late on Tuesday.
- THE SECULAR SOCIETY, LIMITED, office is at 2 Newcastle-street, Farringdon-street, E.C.
- THE NATIONAL SECULAR SOCIETY'S office is at 2 Newcastle-street, Farringdon-street, E.C.
- When the services of the National Secular Society in connection with Secular Burial Services are required, all communications should be addressed to the secretary, Miss E. M. Vance.
- LETTERS for the Editor of the *Freethinker* should be addressed to 2 Newcastle-street, Farringdon-street, E.C.
- LECTURE NOTICES must reach 2 Newcastle-street, Farringdon-street, E.C., by first post Tuesday, or they will not be inserted.

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

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

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Sugar Plums.

Mr. Foote's last lecture before his late severe illness was delivered, we believe, at Leicester. We have not access at the moment to the *Freethinker* file, and we are writing from memory. It is curious that Mr. Foote's first lecture after his recovery from that illness should also be at Leicester. He occupies the Secular Hall platform in Humberstone-gate this evening (Sept. 21), his subject being "Shakespeare's Humanism in the *Merchant of Venice*." The Leicester "saints" are always fond of hearing Mr. Foote on Shakespeare, and this special subject should prove attractive to a good many other liberal-minded people, especially to those among them who have a taste for literature. Mr. Sydney Gimson, the Leicester Secular Society's president, takes the chair at 6.30 p.m. A reasonable time will be allowed for questions and discussion after the lecture.

The Leicester Secular Society sends us its Lecture Program from the first Sunday in September to the last in December. It is a very varied list of attractions, and should fill the Hall when the weather is not too bad. We are glad to see Mr. J. M. Robertson's name in the list. It may be taken as an answer to those who ask questions about his Freethought occasionally—forgetting that his sceptical books are still on sale as openly as ever.

Mr. Foote has been prolific in lecture titles. A complete list of them, from 1870 to 1913, would be fairly exhaustive and rather striking. We notice two of his old titles in the Leicester list against the names of Mr. J. M. Robertson and the Rev. R. Roberts, of Bradford—"Christianity in the Melting Pot" and "The Use and Abuse of the Bible." The latter was one of the subjects in the list of Mr. Foote's first lectures in the old, and long ago pulled-down, St. James's Hall in Regent-street in 1895. We are not suggesting plagiarism, but only stating an interesting fact.

Mr. Bottomley has "done the handsome." The following paragraph appeared in last week's *John Bull*:—

"BLESSED BE BEER!

"Many readers have written expressing their surprise at the weight of Biblical authority which we adduced in favor of gladdening the heart with wine. If they would know more of this aspect of the subject, they should read the pamphlet *Bible and Beer*, by Mr. G. W. Foote, published by the Pioneer Press, 2 Newcastle-street, E.C., to which we were indebted for much of our information."

Thanks!

The Demonstrations arranged by the North London Branch of the N. S. S. on Sunday last at Parliament Hill and Finsbury Park were highly successful. The addresses delivered by Messrs. Davidson, Hecht, Hope, and Ratcliffe were received with great applause by large audiences. The platform, a brake drawn by a pair of magnificent horses, was generously supplied by Mr. E. Wilson.

We are always glad to see one of our exchanges, the *Examiner*, edited by Mr. W. W. Collins, at Christchurch, New Zealand. We get it rather late—the August number reaches us about the middle of September. But its interest does not depend so much on chronology. We hope our contemporary has a constantly increasing circulation—as it deserves.

Mr. Stopford Brooke's new volume of lectures, *Ten More Plays of Shakespeare*, is one that we shall have to introduce more formally to our readers. At present we want to bring the following important passage to their attention on Shakespeare's religion—or rather his irreligion:—

"His belief in a divine justice is shaken in *Hamlet*, is almost mocked at in *Measure for Measure*, is really absent in *Macbeth*, but is replaced by a belief in chance as at the root of the universe in this play, *Othello*, while in *King Lear* it is altogether gone."

Some of our readers will recollect that this is essentially what

we have been arguing for twenty or even thirty years. The *Freethinker* has been a pioneer in all sorts of ways.

It is in *King Lear*, perhaps the very greatest work of human genius, that Shakespeare shows himself, practically, a pure Atheist. This is a very significant fact. Tolstoi called this great play a poor stupid production. Mr. Bernard Shaw knows better than that. He has said that *King Lear* is a masterpiece, and that no man will ever write a better tragedy. And it was in this wonderful play that Shakespeare's mind reached the climax of its sceptical development.

Mayor Gaynor, of New York, who died so suddenly on his "holiday" voyage to England, seems to have been a remarkable man in many ways. We have seen references to him, from time to time, in the New York *Truthseeker*, as a liberal-minded man on several questions related to religion, — for instance, the Sunday question. This impression is confirmed by some extracts from his letters wired over by the New York correspondent of the *Daily News*. The following is a brisk passage from a letter to a complaining clergyman:—

"Reverend and Dear Sir.—You tell me your parishioners insult you because of your beard. Have you trimmed it in some peculiar way contrary to Scriptures, or are you certain it is your beard which is the cause of the trouble?"

Here is another passage, also from a letter to a minister, who wanted a licence to preach for the conversion of the Jews in the streets of the most Hebrew part of New York:—

"This work of proselytising from other sects is carried too far. Haven't Christians appropriated the entire Jewish sacred Scriptures? Was not the New Testament also written entirely by Jews? Was not Jesus born of the Jewish race? The Jews' pure belief in one true living God comes down to us from the twilight of fable: it is the one great unbroken lineage and tradition of the world. How many Jews have you converted so far?"

Writing to his sister, six weeks after he was shot, three years ago, he expressed himself as follows with regard to death and the "hereafter":—

"I was not a bit afraid to die, if that was God's will. I said to myself, 'Just as well now as a few years hence.' No one who contemplates the immensity of Almighty God, his universe and his works, and realises what an atom he is in it all, can fear to die in this flesh, even though it were true that he is to lose his identity and be dissolved for ever into infinity, the matter and mind from which he came."

We shall look forward to something interesting about Mayor Gaynor in the *Truthseeker*.

Lady Sophia Palmer (as was), the Comtesse de Franqueville (as is), gives in the *Nineteenth Century* what to her is a sad account of the results of the separation of Church and State in France. "Not only in State functions and public ceremonies and great public administrations," she says, "is God ignored; in schools, colleges, clubs, hospitals, and asylums the name of God has been wiped out. And the result of this permeates every town and village, every workshop, and every home." In other words, when Church and State are separated, religious people can no longer put their symbols and shibboleths on public property. This is the newest "martyrdom."

But if you wish to shatter the social fabric, you must not expect your professor of Social Anthropology to aid and abet you. He is no seer to discern, no prophet to foretell a coming heaven on earth, no mountebank with a sovran remedy for every ill, no Red Cross Knight to head a crusade against misery and want, against disease and death, against all the horrid spectres that war on poor humanity. It is for others with higher notes and nobler natures than his to sound the charge and lead it in this Holy War. He is only a student, a student of the past, who may perhaps tell you a little, a very little, of what has been, but who cannot, dare not tell you what ought to be. Yet even the little that he can contribute to the elucidation of the past may have its utility as well as its interest when it finally takes its place in that great temple of science to which it is the ambition of every student to add a stone. For we cherish a belief that if we truly love and seek knowledge for its own sake, without any ulterior aim, every addition we make to it, however insignificant and useless it may appear, will yet at last be found to work together with the whole accumulated store for the general good of mankind.—Prof. J. G. Frazer, "*Scope of Social Anthropology*."

Rough work, iconoclasm; but the only way to get at Truth.—O. W. Holmes.

Salvator Rosa: Artist and Rebel.

(1615—1673.)

IT must always be a source of wonder that Christianity which, at a certain period was the greatest enemy of art, should turn as its most powerful patron. Over and against this religion which destroyed almost every vestige of ancient art, stands the great art fervor of the Church. Yet it is not so difficult a problem to solve after all. In truth, the Church was impotent against the imaginative impulse of the Latin race,* which sooner or later was bound to assert itself in art. Thus, the Church had no alternative but adaptation; but, of course, with a means. Through the medium of art, she saw how she could further clinch the mind. Where doctrines were only inculcated through the heart, they were now to be preached only through the eye. The flowers of paradise, the fires of hell, the ineffable Madonnas, and the martyred saints, were all to appeal to the senses. Little did Mother Church foresee whither her scheme would eventually lead her. She simply awakened mankind to the realities of life. Those very flowers of paradise were still flowers, and they meant the country and nature. Those fires of hell and the martyred saints meant suffering, and, above all, human suffering. Those Madonnas meant the mother and the family. For the arts are only the mirror of life after all, and perhaps, as Heine says, the Italian painters combated priestdom more effectively than did the Saxon theologians.

Thus did art become the "handmaid of God," and, incidentally, of the Church. Everything connected with art came from her or to her. Giotto was lauded and befriended by the pontiffs of his day. Raphael was offered a cardinal's hat, whilst Michael Angelo and Pope Giulio were almost inseparable. If the Church did not always have the mind of the artist, as with the freethinking Perugino, or the Atheist Da Vinci, yet it always had his brush, for there was small subsistence for an artist outside of "the fold." Indeed, few would have dared to have stood outside. Among the few who dared, was one who not only refused both his art and his knee to Church and State, but openly attacked them. His name was Salvator Rosa.

The mind of genius, and the artistic genius especially, is inherently anarchistic. It is "something unsociable," as Anatole France says. Revolt is its *note sensible*, and determines the whole *gamut* of its expression. Indeed, one is almost tempted to say, the greater the genius the more pronounced is this revolt. Of Salvator Rosa it has been said that "from his cradle to his tomb he was the creature of impulse." Boyhood finds him in antagonism to his masters; youth, in Bohemian wanderings and sojourning with *banditti*; opening manhood, in opposition to the art schools and its resultant—*misère*. Then the bloom of life brings him among the rebels of Masaniello. Thus the formative years of his life are spent in conflict. We shall see how this constitutional impulse or revolt adapts itself to the circumstances of his life and again reacts upon his art.

Salvator Rosa was dedicated to the Church, and as a youth entered a monastic seminary in Naples, known as the "Collegio Somason." His studies naturally brought him in contact with the literature of ancient Greece and Rome, and from that moment his naturally free and independent spirit fell in line with the pagans. But his masters would not allow such profound veneration for the pagans as Rosa was prone to express, and soon his classical studies had to cease. Virgil had to make way for Johannes Scotus, Sallust for Chrysostom Javello, and so forth. Rosa strenuously resisted these Church studies, and neither reward nor punishment could induce him otherwise. He had to leave the school in conse-

* All miracles that are worth calling miracles belong to the Latins, the Italians especially.

quence. From the day he stepped from the doors of the school, Rosa belonged to the Greeks. To them he owed his fundamental conceptions of art and life. Their influence glow and flash in every canvas and poem that came from his master mind.

Literature and art had a strong attraction for Rosa, and no sooner had he returned home from the *collegio* than we find him in the workroom of his brother-in-law, an artist, Francanzani. In those days it was considered "the thing" for all and sundry who sought painting as a profession to submit to a certain routine or beaten track. First, there was the workroom of some master; then came what was called seeking their *giro*, a sort of artistic pilgrimage to the galleries and churches throughout the land; and, finally, was their definite attachment to some art school or faction, who ruled everything in the art world from a commercial point of view. Naturally, the young rebellious Rosa would no more submit to this art routine than he would submit to the Church routine at the *collegio*. He was, as Lady Morgan, his most sympathetic biographer says: "A lover of liberty upon instinct." And so, one fine day, he set off from his native town, like a true Bohemian, to seek his own workroom, his own *giro*, and his own school. Not to the crowded cities, but to the wilds of Apulia, Calabria, and the Abruzzi. These wild but splendid regions had once formed part of that *Magna Græcia*, vestiges of the towns which still remained, and even the inhabitants still held the old free spirit which animated the citizens of the Greek republic.* Such an atmosphere was most congenial to the impulsive spirit of Rosa. Here he found his workroom on the broad bosom of Nature, his *giro* in "liberty" his watchword through life, and his school in those pagans who lived before the night of Christian superstition fell on this world.

All of Rosa's art work and his writings reveal a deep reverence for nature. It was innate. "How I hate the sight of every spot that is inhabited," he writes to a friend. It was his wonderful landscapes that made him the idol of the Roman people, and perhaps has given him more lasting glory with posterity than any other class of his work.

Sir Joshua Reynolds says:—

"Rosa saw the necessity of trying some new source of pleasing the public.....and therefore struck into a wild, savage kind of nature, which was new and startling."

Nothing could have been more alien to the spirit of Rosa than "pleasing" that class which Tourgeniev called "that old woman—the public." Rosa simply painted nature as his *revolté* organism conceived it. In the hands of his great landscape predecessors, Claude and Poussin, nature had always appeared in beauteous repose and tranquillity, clothed in radiant sunlight or refreshing skies, verdant fields or quiet lagoons. That was nature, healing and beneficent, as they saw it. But to Rosa it appeared different. He saw nature cruel and pitiless: the tornado or threatening sky, the yawning chasm or blasted forest, the seething gorge or desolate pass. His figures, too, in these scenes. No ideal arcadians have contemplation here, but men, banditti, wayworn travellers—all who have suffered or been at the mercy of this cruel nature.

After his sojourn in the wilds, Rosa returns to civilisation, full of aspirations such as all young geniuses are wont to have, but alas! there was a grave awakening for a soul enamored of nature, liberty, and the ancients. He had yet to learn of the old Bohemian road, *misère*, which a modern (that grand Bohemian, Murger) speaks of, upon which everyone must tread who enters the arts, without other subsistence than art itself. Soon Rosa was to tread that road. If he had but bowed to the art conventions of the day, as taught in the workroom, the routine *giro*, and the schools, he would have learned that Madonnas, dead Christs, holy families, martyred saints were the only marketable art com-

modities. Instead of this, young Rosa was painting his wonderful landscapes or scenes from classical history. And so no patrons came to poor Rosa, who could only get rid of his work through the *revenditori* for a small pittance.

Chance threw his work in the way of Lanfranco and Falcone, both eminent painters, whose influence would have been invaluable to anyone but a rebel like Rosa, who steadfastly refused to prostitute his art for any market or patron, and would say: "Liberty was beyond price, and the honors and wealth of the world would not purchase him."

Rosa then tries Rome, and like Horace, makes the journey on foot. But the Eternal City, the very cradle of Western art, was no different to Naples. The "schools" and the market commanded everywhere. Once again he has to bargain with the miserable *revenditori*, and once again *misère*. But his art had some consolation for him. Day and night found him feasting his eyes on the Rome of the Cæsars from one of the seven hills or along the Tiber's shores.

Rosa was the first great artist to stand outside the "patronage" of the Church, State, and the Schools. Not that he did not work for patrons (for he admits himself that sometimes he had to keep down his "infernal pride" in this respect) but never did he seek patrons or submit to orders from them. "Carpenters," he would say, "may work upon given plans, but genius never." Nor would he cater for the public in their insatiable demand for "saints and saints and saints again." As for the schools, which he considered were labels to cover mediocrity, he never ceased to pour out his wrath upon them. These attacks brought the whole of the artistic community in open hostility to him, which did not abate until his death. From this he suffered much, and it was the means of keeping him out of the most influential art society—the Academy of St. Luke.

A most important event in the life of Rosa was his friendship and service with Masaniello and the Neapolitan revolution. When the revolt broke out in 1647, Rosa immediately set out for the scene of action, to throw in his lot with the rebels. Here Falcone and other artists had already formed themselves into a troop known as the *Campagna della Morte*, of which Falcone was a captain. This had offered its services to Masaniello, and in this *campagna* Rosa became enrolled. History records that it took part in the chief events of the rebellion, and Rosa is spoken of as one of Masaniello's "best soldiers." However, Masaniello was betrayed and assassinated, and that practically ended the revolution. The *Campagna della Morte* was disbanded, Falcone flying for safety to France, whilst Rosa hurried to Rome.

At the outset I spoke of the main influences which seemed to subordinate the art and philosophy of Rosa—his nature worship, his democratic views, and his reverence for the classic ideal. Of his nature worship as shown in his landscapes and marine views I have already dealt with. It remains now but to delineate the influence of the other two.

Rosa was always a rebel, and it must be remembered that he was the first who dared to write in the cause of liberty in Italy. His poem of *La Poesia* is a most powerful indictment of the crimes of the rich and the miseries of the poor. How he escaped the dungeon is an enigma to me, for we know how his brother-in-law, the artist, Francanzani, suffered capital punishment for a political offence, whilst Nicolo Franco was put to death by Pius V. for a satire.

Rosa's cantata, beginning, *Non à trequa*, is a long complaint against society for its treatment of genius. In the satire, *La Musica*, he rails at the hands which shower wealth upon people who "amuse" the public, "whilst genius can scarcely procure a sheaf of straw to rest upon." One of his etchings displays the figure of genius careless of the treasures which wealth pours out before it, for the eyes are directed towards the form of liberty, who

* Rosa even lived for a time with a troop of banditti in the Abruzzi.

presents her cap. The picture bears the following distich:—

"Ingenuus, liber, Pictor, succensor et æquus,
Spretor opum, mortisque, hic meus est genius."

Rosa had a deep reverence for the person and ideals of Masaniello, and his death and the failure of the democratic cause sank deep into his mind. His whole being glowed with indignation when he contemplated that vile priesthood and sordid aristocracy triumphant over the suffering people. Anguish and bitterness drove all thoughts of his art from him. The pen alone could soothe his wounded feelings, and it was then he wrote his great satires *La Guerra* and *Babilonia*. How beautifully he apostrophises the heroic Masaniello in *La Guerra*. In *Babilonia* he refers to his country as the "slave of slaves," the "very focus of all abuses in government, of all ridicules and superstitions in society." He tells us he has no illusions in life: "I know that man is the jest of fortune; mortal glories may never seduce me, I have ever before me the image of the tomb." He knew, too, that this freedom of speech would "keep him in the shade," and throw him "out of the pale of common sympathy." These satires were delivered before the very *élite* of Rome, including the high officials of Church and State, who sat and listened to Rosa inveighing against their tyranny of the people.

When he settles down once more to his art, the brush of Rosa only speaks as his pen had done; and when the "smart set" came to his studio, they found two canvasses entitled *L'Umana Fragilita* and *La Fortuna*, which were but a reflex of the bold opinions of his satires. Princes and prelates who saw them went their way saying, that they had already heard Rosa's satires, but now they had seen them.

L'Umana Fragilita, which might be called "The Insignificance of Life," represented a beautiful girl, decked with fragrant flowers, seated on a glass globe, and bearing a sweet child, which she caresses. Another child lies cradled at her feet blowing air bubbles, whilst a third plays with a skein of flax which it has set fire to. Hovering over this joyous group is death, grim and dreadful, dictating these words: *Nasci pæna—vita labor—necesse mori*. Rosa expressed in this picture, as he did in *Babilonia*, his view of the worthlessness of life, when one confronts its *all*, with "that fell sergeant, death."

The second picture, *La Fortuna*, depicted a fair woman pouring from a shell a stream of riches, crowns, mitres, honors, orders, jewels, and gold into the hands of a seething multitude, all striving for fortune's favors. These are beasts of the field, reptiles, carrion, and swine, who, in their greed and avarice, trample under foot the symbols of genius, liberty, and philosophy—the pen, the pencil, the compass, the book, the globe. Whilst the ass decks himself with orders, the swine dons the mitre, the fox mounts the cross, and crowns and coronets are assumed by wolves and vultures.* This daring picture, with its companion, soon spread abroad the cry of Atheism and sedition, which was furthered by Rosa actually exhibiting them on the feast of St. John. Rosa had already incurred the *odium theologium* for previous satires, and now his recent connection with Masaniello's revolution, followed by these "blasphemies," made everything clear to his enemies. Some actually saw in the swine and ass of *Fortuna* the physiognomies of certain prelates of the Holy Church, and in a goat the features of Innocent X.; and, in a very short time, information was laid against Rosa. Within the dread walls of the Inquisition clouds were gathering, but just before his arrest his friend, Don Mario Ghigi, interceded on his behalf by means of an "explanation" of his picture. But the Church would not be appeased, and Rosa's fate looked black. Fortunately, his friend enabled him to escape to Florence, and the Church was cheated of its prey.

* There is another picture of Rosa's with this idea. It shows fortune shading her eyes with one hand, whilst the other scatters gold indiscriminately.

What Rosa's precise religious views were there is no definite record, but he was clearly a Freethinker. No one who has read the cantata beginning *Non à tregua*, in which Rosa rails at everything human and divine, could accept him as a son of the Church. Accustomed from his youth to drink his philosophy from the founts of classical literature, he had a decided leaning to Epicurianism, although he was a Stoic from temperament. That the Church branded him as a heretic, and that he refused the sacrament on his deathbed, is perhaps mere negative evidence. Rosa not only looked upon the Church as an enemy to liberty but he had a personal quarrel with it as an artist, and strongly blamed it for the deterioration of painting. Also, when he saw the sister art, music, suffering in the same way (at a time when the Church was trying to make its services "attractive" by introducing light music) he made a terrific onslaught upon it, in which occurs the following profane couplet:—

"In loose strain the *Miserere* is given,
And waits the soul upon a jig to heaven."

All this apart, as high above everything else, stands Rosa's *art opposition* to Christianity, since he almost entirely ignores its doctrines in his paintings. The one great instance of its use is his famous picture of *Purgatory*, which at the same time preaches a higher doctrine than might be expected from its mere title. This "double meaning" was evidently divined even during Rosa's lifetime, since he was accused of painting a satire. Here is the picture: below are the lost souls in hell with agonised looks and outstretched hands, supplicating the Blessed Virgin, seated above in all her beatific glory, and smiling benignly. But the Holy Mother of God knows them not, nor even heeds them. There is also an *Assumption of the Virgin*, dating from the same period; but the great bulk of his work reveals a wider religion—one that embraced humanity. The pagan spirit dominates throughout his art, and whatever one may claim for this selection, either deliberate or instinctive, it certainly carries its significance.

Look at his greatest creations: the sublime *Prometheus*, which has been described as portraying "all human symmetry and suffering." His *Philosophy Holding a Mirror to Nature*, bearing an old lesson of Rosa's—philosophy alone can see nature as she really is. The *Death of Socrates*, a subject chosen later by another rebel and Freethinker, the most famous painter of the French Revolution, David. *Pindar and Pan*, which shows satire dictating to poetry. *Polyrates Expiating His Crimes*, by that death which the tyrant of Samos had often doomed others. *Justice*, banished from heaven taking refuge with some peasants on earth. This a most heretical idea; fancy finding more justice in "courts below" from the "lowly," than in "courts above" from the "Most High"! *Diogenes*, flinging away his cup on seeing a child drink from its hand. *Pythagoras on the Seashore*, paying fishermen to free the fish they had caught. *The Death of Regulus*, another superb satire on human society. The famous *Catiline Conspiracy*, *Mercury and the Woodman*, and a host of others, all of which testify how completely Rosa was obsessed with the pagan ideal.

"The Jew Book" gives Rosa but a tithe of material. Among the most noted from this source is the fine *Job*, *Hagar in the Desert*, *St. John in the Wilderness*, and *Jeremiah*. The artist had a sort of spiritual kinship with these folk. They, like himself, were "bitter in soul" and victims of *misère*. Sir Joshua Reynolds (*Discourses*) speaking of *Jacob's Dream*, refers to "the sublimity and grandeur of the sacred volume from which he drew his subject." So you see, if one cared to apply this canon of Sir Joshua's to a subject taken from pagan literature, say, the *Catiline Conspiracy*, it will make the Bible stand in comparison with Sallust, as the "Gaby Glide," does to the *Eroica* Symphony.

I have previously claimed as an argument, the selection of the subject, and so it may be urged, *per contra*, that Rosa painted a Christ! The reply is,

that he also painted a Mahomet, a Jupiter, a Bacchus, and so on, to a score; and if he once or twice chose a Christian saint for a subject he did the same for a Roman Augur.

Salvator Rosa became the most famous painter of his day, and that notwithstanding all his political and religious heresies. The courts of Europe begged the honor of his brush and palette. To all, whether high or low, who were willing to accept his art, as he conceived it, he would say Yes. But to dictation he would not submit, neither to patrons, the schools, nor the market. And so it happened that this great genius, whose fame rang through Europe, and who numbered princes and prelates among his personal friends, was not "officially" recognised in his own country. To Church and State, as such, his name was anathema. He was a heretic and a rebel. Year after year went by and he saw all the official and public work being placed in the hands of second-rate artists, whilst he was ignored. But finally the conspiracy against him breaks down awhile, and in 1669, four years before his death, the "official" recognition comes, and this is how Rosa writes his friends concerning it:—

"Ring out the chimes! At last, after thirty years existence in Rome, of hopes blasted, and complaints reiterated against men and gods, the occasion is recorded for me giving one altar-piece to the public. The Signor Filippo Nerli, the Pope's *depositario*, resolved upon vanquishing the obstinacy of my destiny, has endowed a chapel.....and in despite of the stars themselves, has determined that I shall paint the altar-piece."

Four years later, Rosa was beyond the Church's favors of flats. They buried him in the church of *Santa Maria degli Angioli alle Terme*—a fitting tomb for this great pagan of art. This very church was once the principal hall of the Thermæ of the great Emperor Diocletian, the treasure-house of the great art of the Roman Empire. What a revenge!

H. GEORGE FARMER.

Twin Spirits.

It is an interesting study to trace the duality of purpose and spirit in those liberators and leaders of mankind who are only divided by language. Swinburne and Nietzsche, living in the same period, labored to destroy this thing called Christianity, and unconsciously they worked in harmony, although they chose different mediums for their attack. Rich with invective, and with words clothed with fire, Swinburne's style contrasts vividly with the aphoristic prose vigor of Nietzsche; but they both beheld the common enemy in all its hideousness and depravity. With a taste of what Byron would have called "Attic salt," the creator of the Superman delivers his opinion of Christian saints in this manner: "In order that the lowest instincts may also make their voices heard, God must be young. For the ardor of the women a beautiful saint, and for the ardor of the men a Virgin Mary has to be pressed into the foreground." Swinburne, surveying the whole Valhalla of gods and goddesses, with almost a note of pity for her, says of the Virgin Mary:—

"For thine came pale and a maiden, and sister to sorrow."

Both of these intellectual monarchs derived most of their inspiration from the study of Greek; the high road to Atheism or Agnosticism is to be found through that land where gods are plentiful as stars. Perhaps we poor Freethinkers may have a glimmering of the childishness and vicious monopoly contained in the First Commandment. Be that as it may, we are entitled to resent the arrogant claims of that small patch of land called Palestine when it presumes to produce the only God, after centuries of other god-making and god-breaking by other countries.

In reading *The Antichrist*, with its wealth of bitterness and denunciation directed against Christianity, one is instinctively reminded of the "Hymn to Proserpine." The fierce derision of one and the

sublimity of the other forms a mental picture of destroyer and builder. The anger of Nietzsche knew no bounds when dealing with the effects of priestly destruction:—

"The whole labor of the ancient world in vain! I am at a loss for a word which could express my feelings at something so atrocious.....In one night it became merely a memory. The Greeks! The Romans! Instinctive nobility, instinctive taste, methodic research; not stamped to death by Teutons and other heavy-footed vandals! But destroyed by crafty, stealthy, invisible anæmic vampires! Not conquered, but only drained of blood!"

Could the analogy of thought be more complete and striking when we remember the lines, "The world has grown grey from thy breath"? and further on in Swinburne's masterpiece, where Proserpine is compared with the mother of God, we see the desire to exalt and praise one who could even give death with loving hands. The present writer trusts that he has given a correct impression in this imperfect article of that subtle spirit of working in unison which exists in all countries. Nietzsche attracted to his destructive side Strindberg, Brandes, Zola, and a whole host of stalwart cosmopolitans. In a like manner, Swinburne's powerful influence drew Victor Hugo and Mazzini from their native homes, and all were practically agreed on the essentials of true progress. It would appear that the barbarous Christian creed creates its own destroyers; Nietzsche had been a Christian, with aspirations of becoming a parson! But Greek culture and a catholicity of reading has a magnetic influence on those who are not content to seek refuge in clouds of faith. Our greatest poets do not rummage in the charnel-house of Christianity for inspiration; they roam over those wide and free worlds where Eros, Aphrodite, and Hyperion welcome their arrival with the best they can bestow. In passing, we might mention that the poet of the pot-house is indicative of how far England has fallen from those standards of taste in Greek ideals which were good enough for Swinburne and Nietzsche. Those readers who have endured the tortures of "The Everlasting Mercy" will be able to judge for themselves.

Over the universe the fine threads of thought, shining like gold, connect country with country—Lucretius to Anatole France, Theocritus to Swinburne, Theognis to Nietzsche; but all, be it noted, do not have their starting-point from Nazareth, the negation of culture, the sepulchre of the spirit of humanity. I cannot do better than conclude with an aphorism from Nietzsche: "It is indecent nowadays to be a Christian." This is magnificent, sublime, glorious. It is concentrated venom and wisdom, and with the spectres of the "gibbeted Gods" looming against the murky sky of ignorance, not all the Walter Paters, or Coleridge's, or Christian subsidised painters can lend a dignity to a faith drenched with blood at its conception, and maintaining its tradition to this day.

WILLIAM REPTON.

WHY INFANTS OUGHT TO BE DAMNED.

If we want to see Christian theology at its best, we must go to the old divines. A famous Presbyterian of his day was Dr. William Jameson, who occupied the post of Professor in Glasgow University. In his *Verus Patroclus*, published in 1689, he explains why children are damned in the following manner (pp. 147-8): "Certain it is, from the whole tenor of the Scriptures, and, in special, Revelation xxii. 25, that those who in the sight of God are dogs are guilty persons, and to be excluded from heaven, and, therefore, to be thrust into hell; but whole nations, without exception, are such (Matthew xv. 26). Therefore, infants, being a part of these nations, deserve to be excluded from heaven and sent to hell.....'None can enter into the kingdom of heaven except they be born again' (John iii. 7). But surely this new birth is the gift of God, and a privilege which he may withhold from whom he will; and, therefore, without prejudice to his justice, may exclude whosoever hath it not from the kingdom of heaven; but none are excluded from it but guilty persons, which, I believe, none will deny; therefore infants may well be accounted guilty persons."

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BETHNAL GREEN BRANCH N. S. S. (Victoria Park, near the Bandstand): 3.15, a Lecture.

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EDMONTON BRANCH N. S. S. (Edmonton Green): 7.45, Mr. Burke, a Lecture.

KINGSLAND BRANCH N. S. S. (corner of Ridley-road): 11.30, W. J. Ramsey, "Life of Charles Bradlaugh."

NORTH LONDON BRANCH N. S. S. (Parliament Hill Fields): 3.15, M. Hope, a Lecture. Finsbury Park: 6, M. Hope, a Lecture.

WEST HAM BRANCH N. S. S. (outside Maryland Point Station, Stratford, E.): 7, Miss K. B. Kough, a Lecture.

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