

THE Freethinker

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PRICE TWOPENCE

A counting-house passes away; a school remains.
—VICTOR HUGO.

War Flags.

THERE is an intimate relation between religion and war. Both belong to the age of faith. When the age of reason has fairly dawned both will be despised and finally forgotten. They are always and everywhere founded on ignorance and stupidity, although they are decorated with all sorts of fine names. The man of sense sees through all these fine disguises. He knows that the most ignorant people are the most credulous, and that the most stupid are the most pugnacious. Educated and thoughtful men shrink alike from the dogmas of religion and the brutalities of war.

The Christian deity is still the lord of hosts, the god of battles. His eyes delight to look over a purple sea of blood, and his devotees never invoke his name so much as when they are about to emulate his sanguinary characteristic. The clergyman does not shock, he only gratifies, the feelings of the orthodox world when he blesses the flag which is to float over scenes of carnage, and flame like a fiend's tongue over the hell of battle, where brothers of the same human family, without a quarrel in the world, but set at variance by thieves and tricksters, maim and mangle and kill each other with fratricidal hands, which ought to have been clasped in friendship and brotherhood.

Yet these hireling priests, who consecrate the banners of war, dare to prate that God is a loving father and that we are all his children. What monstrous absurdity! What disgusting hypocrisy! Surely the parent of mankind, instead of allowing his ministers to mouth his name over the symbols of slaughter, would command them to preach "peace, peace!"

"Until the war-drums beat no longer and the battle-flags are furled

In the parliament of man, the federation of the world."

Of course there is a comic side to this, as to almost everything else. The priests of the various nations consecrate rival banners, pray for victory for their own side, and swear that God Almighty is sure to give it them if they trust in him. Now what is the Lord to do when they go on in this way on opposite sides? He is sure to disappoint one party, and he is likely to get devilish little thanks from the other. A wise God would remain neutral, and say, "My comical little fellows, if you will go knocking out each other's brains because they are not strong enough to settle your differences by peaceful means, by all means get through the beastly business as soon as possible; but pray don't trouble me with your petitions for assistance; both sides are fools, and I wash my hands of the whole affair."

We have heard of an old Dutch commander who actually prayed the Lord to remain neutral, although from a different motive. On the eve of battle he addressed the deity in this fashion: "O Lord, we are ten thousand, and they are ten thousand, but we are a darned sight better soldiers than they, and, O Lord, do thou but keep out of it, and we'll give them the soundest thrashing they ever had."

Our Prayer Book pays a very poor compliment to the god of battles. "Give peace in our time, O

Lord," says the preacher. "Because there is none other that fighteth for us but only thou O God," responds the congregation. The compilers of the Prayer Book evidently blundered, unless they secretly felt that the Lord of hosts was used up, and not worth a keg of gunpowder or an old musket.

Consecrating colors, like consecrating graveyards, is after all only a trick of trade. The clergyman only practises the arts of his profession, and probably laughs in his sleeve at his own public performance. Perhaps he knows that God, as Napoleon said, is always on the side of the big battalions; just as, probably, every bishop knows that Church corpses rot exactly like Dissenting corpses, although they lie in consecrated ground. Priestly mummeries will last as long as there is a demand for them. It is of little use to quarrel with the supply. The Freethinker's duty is to lessen the demand.

The war which is at present spreading death and desolation over a large part of Europe is greatly due to the personality of the German Emperor, who has never outgrown his childhood, when "a box of soldiers" was reckoned a suitable present. Ever since he came to the throne—or, at least, ever since he parted with Bismarck—he has been "playing at soldiers" on a bigger scale. He has saturated the German nation with the same folly, and they are following him to their own destruction in a war with the bulk of Europe. This could not have taken place under a Republic. It is only under a Monarchy that one man is able to pervert a whole nation in this way. The King rules by divine right and the grace of God; public documents, processes of law, the very coinage, proclaim this as if it were an actual fact; and to the people who are born and brought up under this delusion, the King stands for something supernatural and immortal.

Here, again, the evil influence of religion may be distinctly traced. Nothing of the kind is noticeable in France where religion has been dethroned from all public positions, and left as a purely private matter between the people and their own consciences. President Poincaré could not hurl the French Army at Germany, but the Kaiser has hurled the German Army at France. The President must respect the law, the Emperor follows his own will. And it is nothing but religion that renders this dangerous absurdity possible.

It is only in a very limited sense that war makes people think. Religion promotes war, and war in turn promotes religion. Barbaric practices stimulate barbaric modes of thought. Not the man, but the brute, is roused in people by a return to the settlement of quarrels by brute force. Kill or be killed becomes the law for human beings, as eat or be eaten was the law of existence for the lower animals. Life becomes atavistic instead of progressive. Man's face turns in the wrong direction, and the faster and farther he goes the more leeway he has to make up again when he recovers his better senses.

This war has stimulated the monarchical superstition in England. The King's portrait is on the cover of *The History of the War*—which he has never been near. It was announced that he was going to the front—at Aldershot! And "God Save the King" is the universal song—in spite of its ridiculous words.

G. W. FOOTE.

Christianity's Failure.

ALL sorts of morals are being drawn and all kinds of lessons derived from the present condition of the European nations, and it is only natural that the Churches should draw therefrom conclusions favorable to themselves. To those who are not blinded by religious prejudice it would seem that the one certain thing is the decisive disproof of religion as a civilising force. This remains true even though one were to grant the claim that European nations are as they are because none of them have really adopted Christianity. For surely that is as clear a proof of failure as anyone could desire. Christianity is not a thing of yesterday. It has a very long history, and it has had unexampled opportunities of asserting its claims. To say, therefore, that it is still untried, is to admit wholesale and irretrievable failure. The first business of a religion is, obviously, to get itself adopted; and if it cannot do this in the course of nineteen hundred years, it had better be cleared out of the way, and so make room for a teaching with a more hopeful outlook.

It becomes still worse if it is argued that what we have had in actual operation is a Christianity distorted and utilised in the interests of selfish Powers. On that one may well ask, What is there about Christianity that it should so readily lend itself to schemes of governmental tyranny and social exploitation? For there is no doubt that, from the time of Constantine, Christianity has been so utilised. Whether it has been governmental or other forms of exploitation, Christianity has been universally recognised as a capital means to that end. Not so recognised by the exploited, of course. They have continued to look to it for consolation and deliverance. That has been the condition of its serviceableness. But the exploiters have had no doubt as to its value. In the old Roman Empire, Christianity converted the emperor into a sultan. It gave his rule the authority of divinity, and made disobedience a religious offence. It cannot be said with truth that prior to the establishment of Christianity the rule of the emperor was ever completely divorced from the popular will. It was Christianity that made this separation as complete as it ever can be made. Professor Seeley well points out that—

"Constantine, if he was influenced by policy, was influenced by a wise policy when he extended his patronage to the Church. By so doing he may be said to have purchased an indefeasible title by a charter. He gave certain liberties, and he received in return passive obedience. He gained a sanction for the Oriental theory of government. In return he accepted the law of the Church. He became irresponsible with respect to his subjects on condition of becoming responsible to Christ."

Nothing could be more favorable to tyranny in every form. The Christianised Roman Emperor, like the German Kaiser, willingly admitted his responsibility to Christ, but he repudiated it in the only direction in which it could have social value. No religious ruler would ever dispute his responsibility to God for all he did; but, on the other hand, I cannot recall a single case in which this recognition has ever stood in the way of governmental wrongdoing. It cannot, for instance, be denied that the German Emperor is an intensely religious man. He believes in God, and he also believes God believes in him. It is idle to call his constant use of religious phraseology hypocritical. It is equally idle to say that the brutality of the German soldiery is a proof of that hypocrisy. It may be granted—what is extremely likely—that Kaiser William is a paranoic, and therefore a fit subject for medical attention and restraint. The fact remains that he is an intensely religious man, and that his natural inclinations—whether normal or morbid—have been sustained and strengthened by his religious beliefs.

The apologists who argue on the lines above indicated have thus to face this conclusion, and it is one that follows from the success of their own arguments. Christianity has never yet been adopted by

any nation on a sufficiently general scale to warrant one saying that its conduct may be attributed to the Christian faith. On the other hand, tyrants have found in what they conceived to be Christianity encouragement in conduct that has involved widespread ruin, misery, and degradation. This is absolutely all that their arguments prove; and if that does not demonstrate the failure, the worthlessness, of Christianity, what does it prove?

Needless to say, this is not the conclusion at which Christian writers arrive. One religious journal says:—

"If only there had been enough Christianity in the world, no man, prince, potentate, or private citizen, could have hated or envied or overreached or dreaded his neighbors enough to bring war to pass."

If only there had been enough Christianity! Whose Christianity? After all, Christianity in practice can only be what each one, or each Church, takes it to be. Whose Christianity is it, then, that is to make war and hatred impossible? Is it the Christianity of Germany? Obviously not. Is it the Christianity of England, of America, of Russia? Is it even the Christianity of any one of the Churches? Which of these has ever declared war wrong, or acted so as to make it impossible? At present, so far as this war is actually concerned, we are all agreed that England could not have kept out of it with honor; and we are, therefore, at one with the Churches in this respect. That, however, is true only under present conditions. The further question remains as to the responsibility for those conditions that make war sooner or later inevitable. And here the position of all the Churches is very different. Uniformly, in every country, and no matter the character of the war in which that country has been engaged, the influences of the Churches have been on the side of war. They have encouraged, they have blessed it; they have given it the moral and religious sanction without which the true nature of warfare might be more apparent. There are enough Christians in the world to make war a practical impossibility if only the Churches were genuinely on the side of peace.

In what way is more Christianity going to prevent war's recurrence? Will it cause people to even live amicably together? Consider one fact as illustrative of a whole class. The fact of this country being at war has, for the present at least, broken down a host of differences. Political divisions have, for the moment, disappeared. Men of all shades of religious opinion, and of no religious opinion at all, have volunteered for service, and are ready to lead a common life, share a common danger, for a common cause. They will eat together, sleep together, fight together, die together. The one thing they will not do is pray together. When it comes to the question of religion, all the old differences remain. The Catholic, the Protestant, the Jew, will each continue to perform his religious devotions in his own way, and so far alone. If they have ceased to quarrel for a time about religious formulæ and doctrines, it is only because more insistent and more fundamental social forces are making themselves felt. No amount of religious conviction is strong enough to bring these people together, working side by side for a common object. It could only be done, and has been done, by something more fundamental and more genuinely universal—by a direct appeal to the social nature of mankind.

There is no need to multiply instances. The one plain outstanding truth is that while the general tendency of the social forces is to unite people, that of religion is to divide them into hostile camps. In its wider aspects religion is always a separative force. This is a fact that all statesmen, from Constantine onward, have had to recognise and deal with. Very often rulers have taken religion under their charge because they saw in it a useful agent for their purpose; but often they have been compelled to do so because they saw it meant splitting up the nation into so many warring groups. Let anyone, in imagination, strip from the various

sects in this country the influence of a common social life, leaving only the religious belief, and then consider what prospect of co-operation would remain. It is true that these sects do co-operate to some extent now, but their co-operation is not based upon religion. Their union is due either to social considerations, or to hostility directed against a common enemy. And their union for social purposes is not without its dangers. For they bring to the consideration of several questions a narrowness of view and a bitterness of temper that is almost fatal to a genuinely helpful settlement of any problem that may arise.

Europe needs neither more Christianity nor more religion. It has plenty of both; it has never lacked either. As a mere force Christianity has failed utterly to unite two nations in any part of the world in bonds of genuine friendship. There is not a country on the face of the globe that can appeal successfully to another country in the name of Christianity. It is Christian nations that threaten the peace of the world, it is Christian nations that drive non-Christian powers to arm and spend their revenues in preparations for war, it is a Christian nation that has shown itself careless of written agreements and of common decency in even the conduct of war. Some time back Canon Scott Holland said:—

"The Roman Empire far more nearly succeeded in giving unity of life, culture, government, and intercourse to the entire body of civilised men—European, Asiatic, and African—than we in our wildest dreams could ever imagine possible to-day.....A common unity for Christian Europe is infinitely less conceivable now, eighteen hundred years after Christ, than it was in pre-Christian Europe. It is Christian Europe which gives us the spectacle of race divided against race by implacable enmities.....Racial differences grow more intense, and let us note it is Christianity itself which tends to sharpen them."

Two thousand years ago a Roman citizen might travel from Rome to Britain under the safe protection of Roman law and Roman civilisation. To-day, could that Pagan traveller be resurrected and perform the journey, he would find some fifteen millions of soldiers, belonging to the Christian Powers of Europe, invoking their Deity to aid them in their work of mutual destruction. What clearer proof of Christianity's failure could be needed?

C. COHEN.

Nietzsche.

IN almost every pulpit and religious journal at present the unbelief and Materialism so prevalent in Germany, and particularly in Prussia, are said to be responsible for the calamitous war which is being so savagely waged. Atheism is described as the root of all evil, and Atheism is declared to be supreme in Prussia. That great champion of Anglican exclusiveness, the Bishop of Zanzibar, tells us, in a most violent discourse, that Prussia is the home of the false prophet, the prophet who denies, not only the true incarnation of God in Jesus Christ, or that "God, through God in human flesh, died upon the Cross," but also even the very existence of God, as taught by the Church, as well as the laws of morality. Now, what is the inevitable result of such wicked denials? "Look," exclaims his lordship, "look over at Prussia, and there you see it. You see a race proud of its past, but prouder still of its imagined future; a race that names God only to bless its own purposes and deeds." Of course, Dr. Weston, being a rabid partisan, deplorably misrepresents the facts and woefully misleads the uninformed among his hearers. Can he be really ignorant of the fact that Prussia is an exceedingly religious kingdom, sixty-four per cent. of its population being Protestants, and thirty-four per cent. Catholics? Is he unaware that the imperial influence is scrupulously employed on behalf of orthodox Christianity? Whatever be

the explanation, these facts he entirely ignores, and puts the whole blame for the war upon the shoulders of the Modernists in the Catholic Church and of the Liberal Christians in the Protestant, well knowing that these heretical parties form but insignificant minorities in their respective communions. Thus the Bishop of Zanzibar must be dismissed as a hopelessly biased and wholly unreliable authority.

The next witness is Dr. Campbell Morgan, who has already preached five of "those great sermons which have made Westminster Chapel in August more than ever the centre of London Nonconformity." So eager are people to hear this comparatively new oracle that they crowd the large building from floor to ceiling every time he is announced to speak. One of his utterances is this: "When there is a denial of morality, then immediately there is an apotheosis of brute force." Again: "At the back of everything there is lust for power," which is described as the inspiration of war. Then comes this illustration:—

"That great nation of Germany, to which we owe so much for its scientific investigation and its wonderful learning, has, for more than a generation, been under the influence of a philosophy that has denied that reality of the moral. The philosophy of Nietzsche may be condensed into this one brief sentence: 'Nothing is true. Everything is permitted to the strong.' When that is believed sub-consciously by a people, it comes out sooner or later into actuality. At the back of a passion for war, wherever it exists, is this denial of morality."

Dr. Clifford and Principal Griffith Jones make the same charge against the great Basel Professor. The Principal speaks of the extent to which the cult of Nietzsche is in the ascendant among the ruling and official people of Germany, and adds:—

"We are now reaping the consequences of that movement in a harvest of blood and tears. For the German attitude in this war is the translation into action of the theories of that bold and unscrupulous thinker; and it is against Nietzsche that the rest of the world is instinctively under arms."

Dr. Clifford asserts that, according to the Nietzschean philosophy, "ethics are ruled out of the life of States, only naked might remaining." "The superman has arrived, all brawn and brain and without conscience." "Goliath is lord of all." Then comes the elegant conclusion of the whole matter in these words:—

"This is the incarnation of the philosophy of Nietzsche; the logic of the criminals of Dartmoor; the defence of the barbaric march of the world-conquerors, Attila and Napoleon; and the audaciously proffered vindication of the action of the military caste in Berlin."

What these divines are anxious to impress upon the minds of their people is that the present war owes its origin to the influence of an anti-Christian philosophy, or that it is in no sense a Christian war except on the part of the Allies. They forget that the German Emperor and his court are distinctively Christian, and that with them lies the origin of the war. However numerous Nietzsche's disciples may be in Germany, the fact remains that German militarism has the Kaiser as its head and inspiration. It is to him that the Empire is indebted for its ambitious aims and idealism. It was he who drove Bismarck out of office in order to get the reins of power more fully into his own hands. It was he who gave birth to a world policy and began to work for a world-Power. *And William II. is an orthodox Christian believer and an exceedingly pious man.* The German Government has sought to prevent the spread of Freethought within its bounds. If "at the back of a passion for war, wherever it exists, is the denial of morality," then the denial of morality, in the present instance, lies at the door of the German Emperor, a zealous preacher of the Gospel of Christ. Consequently, we declare, without fear of intelligent contradiction, that all the Powers involved in this gigantic conflict are engaged in it in the name of the Christian God, and in oft-expressed dependence upon his direct protection. The attempt to throw the

responsibility for this war upon the Nietzschean philosophy is therefore a ludicrous Christian blunder, and to make it at the expense of telling lies about "the mad philosopher" is a heinous crime. It is a complete falsehood to assert that Nietzsche denied morality. So far was he from teaching that morals are obsolete that he posed as an advocate of morality. He denounced, not morality, but slave-morality—the morality that secures the perpetuation of the weak and unfit, and gives undue prominence to pity and compassion. He says:—

"In a tour through the many finer and coarser moralities which have hitherto prevailed or still prevail on the earth, I found certain traits recurring regularly together and connected with one another, until finally two primary types revealed themselves to me, and a radical distinction was brought to light. There is *master-morality* and *slave-morality*" (*Beyond Good and Evil*, p. 227).

Master-morality is a morality that originates in master-minds and seeks to promote the advancement of the human race. Dr. Clifford is guilty of bearing false witness against a great man and a great system when he says that "ethics are ruled out of the life of States," or that "morals are obsolete," the truth being that Nietzsche takes special trouble to emphasise the truth that the welfare of society is the only real ethical end. Many men of God merely infer from the title of the little book just mentioned, *Beyond Good and Evil*, that the author must be a denier of morality, whereas, if they only carefully perused the work, they would learn that the good and evil he claims to be beyond and above are those stereotyped in a slave-morality. Divines are quite free to disagree with and attack Nietzsche's moral theory; but they commit a moral crime when they deliberately misrepresent it.

A writer in the *Christian Commonwealth* for September 2 may be fully right when he says that "German militarism is not merely the product of its geographical situation, but a symptom of national aims, an expression of national ideals"; but he is fundamentally mistaken in the statement that it challenges the pacific ideal of Christianity because it has Nietzsche for its philosopher, Treitschke for its historian, and Strauss for its theologian. The curious thing is that, when it suits their convenience, the theologians confidently announce that Professor Eucken, "the greatest thinker in the world," is Germany's present guiding star in philosophy, and Eucken makes a firm profession of Christianity. It is well known that the heretical theologians of Germany, the so-called Liberal Christians, among whom is Professor Harnack, a close friend and admirer of the Kaiser, are second to none in their adherence to what they glory in as the religion of Jesus. Indeed, we have been assured again and again that Nietzsche's influence is greatly on the wane, that his day is past or rapidly passing even in Germany. The writer in the *Christian Commonwealth* just referred to is of opinion that Germany, "while preparing to found a world-empire, is also preparing to create a world-religion." He says:—

"No cultured European nation since the French Revolution has made any experiment in creative religion. The experiment which England, with her dull imagination, has recoiled from, Germany will make; the fated task, which England has declined, she will essay."

That is pure speculation, for which there is no foundation in fact; but, whatever we may think of it as such, there is no doubt whatever that the present war is prosecuted in the name of the Prince of Peace, and that the prayers of all the parties to it, except Japan perhaps, are addressed to "Our Father which art in heaven."

J. T. LLOYD.

A God who damns his own creatures for exercising the reason he gave them, proves that he has none left for himself.

The Origin of Supernatural Ideas.—VIII.

(Continued from p. 565.)

" ' Nations, like individuals, have their periods of youth, of manhood, and decay.' Religions are the same. The same inexorable destiny awaits them all. The gods, created by the nations, must perish with their creators. They were created by men, and like men they must pass away. The deities of one age are the bye-words of the next. The religion of our day and country is no more exempt from the sneer of the future than the others have been. When India was supreme, Brahma sat upon the world's throne. When the sceptre passed to Egypt, Isis and Osiris received the homage of mankind. Greece, with her fierce valor, swept to empire, and Jove put on the purple of authority. The earth trembled with the tread of Rome's intrepid sons, and Jupiter grasped with mailed hand the thunderbolts of heaven. Rome fell, and Christians from her territory, with the red sword of war, carved out the ruling nations of the world, and Christ sits upon the old throne. Who will be his successor? "—COLONEL INGERSOLL, "Oration on the Gods," *Oration*s, p. 37.

"Before God! But God has died! Ye higher men, God was your greatest danger. It is only since He was laid in the grave that ye have risen from the dead. It is now only that the noonday arrives, it is now only that the higher man becomes—master. Take heart, ye higher men! Now for the first time the mountain of man's future is in travail. God is dead; we now want—the overman to live."—NIETZSCHE; cited by Dr. Common in *Nietzsche as Critic*, etc., p. 132.

"Thou art judged, O judge, and the sentence is gone forth against thee, O God.
Thy slave that slept is awake; thy slave but slept for a span;
Yea, man thy slave shall unmake thee, who made thee lord over man."

—SWINBURNE, *Hymn of Man*.

THE peculiarities that so easily distinguish the negro from the European, both in mind and body, are the result of the environment in which he lives. Major Ellis, whose testimony we have cited, and who is one of the greatest authorities on the subject, also observes:—

"Joachim Monteiro, indeed, in his work on *Angola and the River Congo*, attributes the 'rudimentary character of the negro intellect' entirely to climate, and holds that countless ages of battling with malaria have produced, by a process of natural selection, a peculiar insensibility of both mind and body, which now admits of his inhabiting, with comparative impunity, regions which are deadly to the white and more highly organised races."*

Major Ellis also cites the weighty opinion of Professor Waitz, who holds very similar views, and observes, in the Introduction to his *Anthropology*:—

"The comparatively low degree of civilisation among the negroes may be chiefly explained by the relaxing effects of the climate, the geographical position of those regions, the few requirements as regards dress, food, and habitation, all of which nature yields in abundance, and are obtainable by the simplest efforts. A high degree of intellectual development, deep thought, and a refined morality seem scarcely compatible with the mental prostration which life in torrid zones produces in the European as well as in the native. Human art will hardly ever overcome the power of these natural obstructions."

It will be as well at this point to make a digression to consider the much-vaunted claims of missionaries as to the civilising influence of the religion taught by them to the natives; and as two million pounds a year are spent by this country alone in missions, there ought to be some return for the money.

The theory the Churches and the missions work upon is that conversion to their peculiar beliefs has a civilising influence; that the convert is regenerated—spiritually "born again" is their mystical description of the process. Now, it is a fact—and all the rhetoric of the missionaries cannot explain it away—that the converted negro is not made a better man by conversion, but a very much worse one. No one in Africa would think of employing a mission boy. We have produced much evidence on this point in these columns at different times, which is confirmed by Major Ellis, who says that "the expenditure of large sums of money by various philan-

* A. B. Ellis, *The Tshi-Speaking Peoples of the Gold Coast of West Africa*, pp. 6-7.

thropic societies, and the exertions of missionaries and teachers of all denominations, have failed to do more than impose a mere veneer of civilisation upon the inhabitants of Sierra Leone, and then only upon a small minority, and this after a century of labor" (p. 7). "For," as he further remarks, "it is not the religion that is the cause of the civilisation, but rather the higher stage of civilisation that gives birth to higher religious ideas" (p. 10).

Thus it is not religion that these primitive people require. To relinquish their superstitions for those of the missionary would only place them in the position of the gentleman who abjured the errors of the Church of Rome to embrace those of the Church of England. On the other hand, if you civilise these people in the first instance, then they can do without the religion. The Japanese adopted Western civilisation, but refused to have anything to do with our religion; and in the march to Peking, to relieve the Legations, they showed by their conduct to the Chinese a far higher morality than the representatives of the Christian nations who accompanied them.

As the historian Buckle pointed out long ago:—

"Whoever will compare the triumphant reports of the missionaries with the long chain of evidence supplied by competent travellers, will find that such profession is only nominal, and that these ignorant tribes have adopted, indeed, the ceremonies of the new religion, but have by no means adopted the religion itself. The rites and forms of a religion lie on the surface; they are at once seen, they are quickly learned, easily copied by those who are unable to penetrate to that which lies beneath. It is this deeper and inward change which alone is durable; and this the savage can never experience while he is sunk in an ignorance that levels him with the brutes by which he is surrounded."*

The truth is the natives take over the forms and ceremonies of the new religion without relinquishing their own beliefs. Miss Kingsley tells us: "For the African, whose mind has been soaked in Fetish during his early most impressionable years, the voice of Fetish is almost irresistible when affliction comes upon him." And, speaking of the mission converts, she observes: "How many of these earnest people could one guarantee to have completely cast out their belief in Ju-Juism? If I were put upon my oath to answer truthfully according to my individual belief, I am afraid my answer would be, *Not one.*"† And although Miss Kingsley, who shows a great deal of sympathy with the natives—much more than most Europeans who have known them—thinks, in spite of a mass of evidence, that it is too much to say that the African will never advance above his present level, yet she declares:—

"I am certain they will never advance above it in the line of European culture. The country he lives in is unfitted for it, and the nature of the man himself is all against it—the truth is the West Coast mind has got a great deal too much superstition about it, and too little of anything else. Our own methods of instruction have not been of any real help to the African, because what he wants teaching is how to work."‡

Therefore the money spent in the attempt to Christianise these natives might just as well be taken out and dropped into the ocean for any good it does.

As Mr. King observes, under the newly adopted religion the old spiritual conceptions survive.

"The fetish still lives, and the Obi mysteries are still rehearsed, though the black devotee raises his hands in pious acknowledgment of the blessings he receives from Allah, or worships with the white man in the Methodist communion. The same cry comes from the missionary to the Zulu, from the remote shores of Patagonia, from the humble teachers of the Eskimo in Greenland or Labrador; even the attentive and pious Australian aborigine maiden, scarce from her birth out of the higher influence, flies from the greater civilisation to revel in the bora association. As it was in the ancient days, so it is now; like forms of spirit influence still retain their prestige; the gods of the vulgar never die; they still claim the reverence of like fears, and like

superstitious rites, as when they were the only known local supernal powers."*

Let us consider the religious ideas prevalent to-day among ourselves. What are they but a crude Anthropomorphism? That is a long word, but it has a very simple meaning. It is composed of two Greek words, meaning "man-like" and "form"; and Anthropomorphism in religion means that God is conceived of as being like a man. Nor is this to be wondered at when every child derives his religious notions from the Bible, where we are told that the Almighty was tired, "and on the seventh day he rested, and was refreshed" (Ex. xxxi. 17); that he walked and talked in the Garden of Eden "in the cool of the day" (Gen. iii. 8), choosing the "cool of the day" because umbrellas and sun-helmets had not been invented then. He possessed a nose, for when Noah offered a burnt sacrifice "the Lord smelled a sweet savor" (Gen. viii. 21). He was evidently not infinite—that is, everywhere at once—omniscient or all-knowing—for we learn that when the Tower of Babel was being built "the Lord came down" (Gen. xi. 5) to see for himself what was going on, and, there being no architect to tell him that the thing would collapse when it reached a certain height, he sent a confusion of tongues, lest the builders should carry it up to heaven. Finally, he had the bodily form of a man, for Moses had the dubious honor of being shown his "back parts" (Ex. xxxii. 23). In other places we learn that he was jealous, vain, and shockingly revengeful.

Moreover, man, by the limitations of the human mind, is incapable of conceiving God in any other manner. The Greek philosopher Xenophanes, five hundred years before Christ, arguing against the superstition of his countrymen, observed:—

"It appears to mortals that the gods are like them in form, apparel, and language. The negroes serve black gods with flat noses, the Thracians gods with blue eyes and red hair. If the oxen and lions had hands to fashion images, they would give the gods a bovine or leonine shape."

Ludwig Feuerbach observed that "If God were an object to the bird, he would be a winged being: the bird knows nothing higher, nothing more blissful, than the winged condition."† And, as Buchner well remarks, "No one has demonstrated and explained the purely human origin of the idea of God better than Ludwig Feuerbach," who declared "God is the self-consciousness of man. Man created God in his own image."‡

W. MANN.

(To be concluded.)

Bible Makers.—IV.

RUTH, SAMUEL, AND DAVID.

SANDWICHED between Judges and Samuel is the Book of Ruth. How it came to be incorporated in the Bible it would be difficult to tell without great faith and a prayerful spirit; and unless we suppose that some lewd fellow, thinking a little more prurience would be an improvement, by some dexterous and surreptitious means slipped the book in, there is no accounting for its appearance among the sacred writings at all. It is, however, a pretty love story. It tells of a poor simple girl from the country, who came up to town to see her cousin Boaz, and, having successfully repelled the advancements of numerous young men who were infatuated with her charms, steals slyly to bed with her cousin, who blesses her for her unselfish kindness, and ultimately rewards her by making her his wife. As no more mention is made of them, we will be generous enough to suppose that they lived happily ever after. If Miss Ruth, however, wrote this delightfully brief autobiographical sketch, it must be confessed that she

* Buckle, *History of Civilisation*, p. 145 (1904).

† Miss Kingsley, *West African Studies*, pp. 125-482.

‡ Miss Kingsley, *Travels in West Africa*, p. 513.

* J. H. King, *The Supernatural*, pp. 236-7.

† Ludwig Feuerbach, *Essence of Christianity*, p. 17.

‡ Buchner, *Force and Matter*, pp. 393-4.

was as candid in revealing her failings as Jean Jacques Rousseau was in revealing his, if, indeed, she meant this little business with her cousin to be considered as an iniquity at all. Then we come to Samuel. He was the son of Elkanah. He wrote a book, or a number of books, and followed his predecessor Moses's example, in being careful to give a full account of his own death and burial. His father was described as "a certain man of Ramathaim Zophim and Mount Ephraim." Most fathers are "certain men." He gives an account of a man named Saul, who was seeking his father's asses which had gone astray. The children of Israel at the same time were in search of a king. The asses were found, so was Saul, who was at once anointed by Samuel who, from an early age, was a prophet of the Lord.

His early appointment to this profession took place in this wise; he received a "call" from the Lord, who, hiding himself in an obscure corner of the sky, had an inoffensive game at bo-peep with the child Samuel, and after allowing the lad to make a couple of wrong guesses as to who it was that had called him, permitted him to guess correctly the third time and thus save his bacon, and become a perpetual prophet of the Lord of Hosts ever after.

Samuel faithfully recorded the lives of such illustrious kings as Saul and David, and gave a graphic description of the unequal encounter between David and Goliath, in which he showed how easy it was for a little boy, with a sling and a stone, to kill a giant; and, further, how difficult it is for a harpist—a Jew harpist—by dulcet strains of music to soothe the savage breast of a king, after having taken from him the favor of the people. Samuel also demonstrates that a high degree of mental culture was not an indispensable accomplishment of a prophet.

David prophesied upon a harp; many of the people prophesied with cymbals and with song; and some, no doubt, produced the same result upon the banjo, or with the tom-tom or the bones; but King Saul put them all to the blush. Finding that everybody was going in for prophesying, he divested himself of all his raiment, and lay on his back and prophesied as hard as any of them. This, as a faithful historian, the prophet Samuel has faithfully set down, not in a spirit of malice or uncharitableness, but in that of candor and truth, that ordinary folk might understand some of the strange doings of the godly.

Samuel's account of the life of David is filled with interest. If only the letters of David to his various mistresses had been preserved, what a splendid addition they would have made to this fascinating biographical sketch! Great affection, unselfish devotion, David unquestionably displayed towards Jonathan; but how infinitely small it was compared with the unbounded love he showed towards the wives of Nabal and Uriah. David robbed, outraged, and murdered wherever he went; and in true prophetic strain Samuel described him as a "man after God's own heart," clearly showing that he knew the character of the Jewish God very well; and he therefore represented David as much "after the image of his Maker" as possible. It was said that David, at the end of his career, repented; but so have many other pious murderers—at the rope's end.

The Books of Kings and Chronicles, which are merely a combination or repetition of the stories of Samuel, I pass over, as also the Book of Job, a Gentile production, which deserves to be considered on its merits, apart altogether from the place it occupies in men's minds on account of being one of the books of the Bible.

We come now to the Psalms of David, which throw a flood of light upon the inner life of the king and prophet. They are a collection of songs—not comic—mostly expressive of praise to Deity. What many-sidedness of nature these poetic expressions disclose! What great piety, combined with consummate rascality—what unctuousness, covering the imperious dogmatism of a king and a priest!

How anxious David is that the religious shall have no "fellowship with the ungodly"; that the Lord

shall rebuke the unbeliever and afflict him with great suffering!

David's God was essentially a butcher and a king. Give heed to this poetic strain:—

"O clap your hands, all ye people; shout unto God with the voice of triumph.

"For the Lord most high is terrible; he is a great king over all the earth.

"He shall subdue the people under us, and the nations under our feet.

"He shall choose our inheritance for us, the excellency of Jacob whom he loved. Selah" (Psalm xlvi.).

As for the Atheist, David loathed him with every drop of his blood. He regarded him as a fool, and said as much. Most people call those persons names whom they cannot answer.

"The fool hath said in his heart, There is no God. Corrupt are they, and have done abominable iniquity; there is none that doeth good" (Psalm liii.).

In a more humble mood was the Psalmist when he penned the following:—

"Lord, my heart is not haughty, nor mine eyes lofty: neither do I exercise myself in great matters, or in things too high for me.

"Surely I have behaved and quieted myself, as a child that is weaned of his mother: my soul is even as a weaned child.

"Let Israel hope in the Lord from henceforth and for ever" (Psalm cxxxi.).

But in his true colors David is seen when, from the depths of his fiendish heart, he gives vent to his views as to how God should treat those who had been his (David's) and God's enemies:—

"Set thou a wicked man over him, and let Satan stand at his right hand.

"When he shall be judged let him be condemned, and let his prayer become sin.

"Let his days be few and let another take his office; let his children be fatherless, and his wife a widow.

"Let his children be continually vagabonds and beg; let them seek their bread also out of their desolate places.

"Let the extortioner catch all that he hath, and let the strangers spoil his labor.

"Let there be none to extend mercy unto him; neither let there be any to favor his fatherless children.

"Let his posterity be cut off, and in the generation following let his name be blotted out. Let the iniquities of his fathers be remembered with the Lord, and let not the sin of his mother be blotted out."

Oh, what a difference between the sentiments of the Atheist poet Shelley and the Theist poet David! The one wrote for the ignorant and cruel and despotic people of ages that have gone; the other, in incomparably grand verse, breathed the pure and lofty sentiments of the humanity of the future.

ARTHUR B. MOSS.

It is far more important to love your wife than to love God, and I will tell you why. You cannot help him, but you can help her. You can fill her life with the perfume of perpetual joy. It is far more important that you love your children than that you love Jesus Christ. And why? If he is God, you cannot help him, but you can plant a little flower of happiness in every footstep of the child, from the cradle until you die in that child's arms. Let me tell you to-day it is far more important to build a home than to erect a church. The holiest temple beneath the stars is a home that love has built. And the holiest altar in all the wide world is the fireside around which gather father and mother and the sweet babes.—*Ingersoll*.

To die is one of two things; for either the dead may be annihilated and have no sensation of anything whatever, or, as it is said, there is a certain change of passage of the soul from one place to another (metempsychosis). If it is a privation of all sensation, as it were a sleep in which the sleeper has no dream, death would be a wonderful gain; for this futurity appears to be nothing more than one night.—*Socrates*.

The palace of the Bishop of Llandaff has been destroyed by fire. There is no cause for undue alarm. There is no possibility of his Lordship, like his poor Master, not knowing where to lay his head.

Acid Drops.

The dear old *Daily News* is gushing away as usual on the War. A gentleman who signs himself "A. G. G." (no doubt the editor) is turned on to do the double-extra piety. Under the title of "The God of Blood and Iron" this gentleman treated his Nonconformist public the other morning to some unctuous silliness which he should have been ashamed to write as they should have been ashamed to read. The writer tries to make out that Germany's mean and horrid treatment of Belgium is due to "infidelity." "Belgium," he says, "has been desolated in cold blood, on calculated principles, by a nation of philosophers and intellectuals." Mr. Gardner must have written this with his tongue in his cheek. He knows very well that the Kaiser is notorious for his piety, which is of the true-blue Protestant persuasion; and that the name of God is always upon his lips. The Kaiser, too, has built more Protestant churches in Berlin than the whole city fills. Is it not infamous, then, to ascribe this imperial bigot's wanton cruelties to the influence of the "philosophers and intellectuals"—that is to say, to the Freethinkers of Germany? It reminds us of the compelling of poor Simon to carry the cross of Jesus. When the Christians are caught with a load of evil on their backs they shuffle it off on the shoulders of the Freethinker. "It doesn't belong to us," they say; "he put it there."

Lord Rosebery's appeal for volunteer soldiers to fight the battle of England in the present war was mixed with a reference to the "just God" who is on our side. Well, if God is to settle the matter, after all, we may as well leave it in his hands. Why should we trouble? It will go his way at the finish. The victory will be by prayer and not by fighting. This is recognised in Berlin as well as in London. The English church in that city bears a notice that the services may go on there as usual during the war, but *prayers must not be offered up for the success of the British arms.*

Mr. Gardner wants us to believe that the people who put up that notice are Atheists—or something of that sort. There is nothing too idiotically absurd for Christian advocates nowadays.

Mr. Robert Blatchford has never been quite able to drop "God." He says he is not an Atheist but an Agnostic—which is a distinction without a difference. He is now declaring, in the *Weekly Dispatch*, that Kipling did not discover (or should it be invent?) Tommy Atkins. Nor did anybody else except R. B. He alone did it. "I discovered Tommy Atkins," he says, "for the first time in the Vale of the White Horse in 1809, and I thanked God." Has he had an acknowledgment yet?

Mr. Asquith goes down to the City of London one day—with Mr. Bonar Law, Mr. Balfour, and Mr. Churchill—and pleads with the people of England to join the Army and save the nation. You would think they were saints and heroes. The next day the "pubs." are shut early—and the practice is to be continued—in order to keep these saints and heroes from getting drunk. Something is wrong somewhere.

Practically every paper in the country is now a war sheet. Naturally, the keenest interest displayed is in war news, and everyone is deeply concerned with the news—good or bad. But that hardly seems a sufficient reason for all the papers dropping all their ordinary articles and giving nothing else but war news. That policy seems calculated to encourage what should be our chief concern to avoid—panic. And nervous people who read the papers can hardly avoid a "panicky" frame of mind at present. If "business as usual" is a sound policy, we think the press should set an example by retaining some of its old features, and giving a little less than ten or twelve pages of war news—half of which is sheer repetition. In this connection, and as one way of avoiding panic, we are glad to see the Home Office issuing a warning concerning the spy mania. This document states that there has been no actual case of outrage brought to the notice of either police or military, that all the reports of attacks on police constables, sentries, etc., are lacking in truth, and there have been no discoveries of secret arsenals. We hope this statement will serve as a check upon the imagination of journalists, and allay the fears of nervous people.

"At this critical hour," says the *Christian Commonwealth*, "people are looking to the Christian pulpit for light and guidance." Rubbish! People are doing nothing of the kind. Indeed, one of the striking features of the situation,

and one which shows how much of their hold on the people the Churches have lost, is that very few people are paying the slightest attention to the clergy. In the more pressing business before the nation the clergy have been shouldered out of the picture. Of course, there were plenty of special services in connection with the war, and the clergy have done their share—perhaps more than their share—of talking. But to suggest that the people are looking to the Churches for guidance is supremely ridiculous. Listen to conversations in 'bus or tram, speak to the people one meets, and then see how much they are thinking of the clergy as guides.

"Our world has passed away, In wantonness o'erthrown," sings Mr. Rudyard Kipling. We thought something was wrong, but we do not seem to be living in heaven.

We notice that the days of intercession arranged by the officials of the Government religion were also observed by some of the fancy religionists, including the Nonconformists and Roman Catholics. Adversity makes strange bed-fellows.

"Nothing German" is a bellicose notice displayed in shop-windows, which we hope booksellers will not imitate. We cannot afford to exchange Goethe and Heine for Miss Marie Corelli and Mr. Charles Garvice.

Poets have the privilege of poetic licence. Mr. Rudyard Kipling chants "There is but one task for all, For each one life to give." If this sage advice were taken, the earth would be depopulated, and there would be no Kiplings to amuse us in troublous times.

The whirligig of war has brought in many revenges. It has changed that hero of a hundred tea-fights, the Bishop of London, into a six-weeks' soldier.

Piety appears to be very closely related to patriotism, but if you want to get the quintessence of Christian emotionalism, you will find it in the pages of the *Daily Telegraph* and the *Daily Express*, the proprietors of which both belong to good old English families.

Many years ago a book was published with the title *Guesses at Truth*. It would not be a bad headline for the war news in the paper, for most of the paragraphs appear to be as true as the Gospels. As far as we can see, the correspondent who gets to the telegraph wires first, claims the victory for his side.

We are informed by the *Catholic Herald* for September 5 that the late Pope "breathed his last affecting sigh over the world's wickedness, and died because he could not persuade the rulers of men to keep peace among themselves and their subjects." As a matter of fact, Pope Pius X. was of no account in the council of nations. As God's vicegerent on earth, he did his utmost to prevent the war, writing "the most pathetic letters" to the rulers of men, "imploping them to spare the Christian peoples. Those letters were not delivered, or not read, or, at all events, were disregarded." Thus the Holy Father was thrust aside, and when the end came, the sad conviction lay like iron in his soul, that "what was called society was lapsing into unbelief."

Principal Griffith-Jones says that "pure Darwinism spells pure *egoism*." That is the utterance of a man who does not know what "pure Darwinism" is, which is proved to the hilt by the fact that the same man of God speaks of "the crudely Darwinian philosophy that once prevailed." Not one essential element in the Darwinian theory has been discarded by present-day biologists. Even the Mendelists are as firm believers in Natural Selection as was Darwin himself. Now, Dr. Griffith-Jones is perfectly well aware that orthodox Christianity seeks to suppress all *egoism*. Has he not often heard the prayer, "O! to be nothing," offered up at revival meetings, and does he not know that apart from true *egoism*, true altruism is a natural impossibility?

Principal Griffith-Jones, a mediocre Nonconformist divine, imagines, in his abysmal ignorance, that he is competent to sit in judgment upon and demolish so subtle, nimble, independent, original, profound, and brilliant a thinker as Nietzsche. Condescendingly he allows that, as "a needful corrective of the 'soft' tendencies of much modern speculation, Nietzscheism has its undoubted place, and has done good work," but haughtily contends that "the sublimatic

and refined but truculent self-assertion which was Nietzsche's central principle of thought and conduct is a hopeless anachronism." Such supercilious criticism only shows how utterly unequal to his self-chosen task the reverend gentleman is. He does not even understand what the Nietzschean philosophy really stands for, any more than he can tell us what "sublimatic" means. Only an ignoramus could have applied the adjective "truculent" to such a system. Nietzsche was an ardent lover of vigorous life, and of power when justly acquired and wisely exercised. The central and grandest quality in his philosophy is "justice," which, as we all know, occupies a very secondary position in the Christian scheme.

Clearly Dr. Griffith-Jones is equally unacquainted with Nietzsche's "conduct," in which there was certainly nothing "truculent." Has he never read how ardent was this "truculent" fellow's patriotism, how deep his inner sympathy for private soldiers—"les âmes les plus délaissées"; how, during the Franco-Prussian War of 1870, he abandoned his professional work at Basel and went to assist in the ambulance corps; how he tended the wounded with zealous care, and carried out his duties at the cost of a serious illness? Even the *British Weekly*, to its honor be it said, published these facts a few years ago in a review of a new *Life* by Daniel Halévy.

"Both England and Germany are nominally Protestant countries," says the *Christian Commonwealth*, "but their Protestantism has worked out in very different directions." The difference, as stated, appears to be this. England is concerned "with peaceful government of an empire long since acquired." In Germany "the dominant" interests have been those of expansion rather than consolidation. We quite fail to see any substantial difference here. This only means that Germany is trying to acquire, as England has already acquired. But their Protestantism appears to have led both along the same direction—in that of seizing and controlling, rather than in the direction of developing friendly intercourse. For over two hundred years the nations of Europe have been battling for the ownership of colonies and the control of markets, and so far their religion, whether Protestant or Catholic, has quite failed to direct that competition into friendly instead of militant channels. Not only has it failed in this, but the influence of Christianity in every country has been given to the encouragement of conditions that make such an outbreak as the present war, sooner or later, inevitable. In both Germany and England the Protestant Church gives the Government of the country to which it belongs the same unhesitating support. And that fact alone is enough to show its worthlessness as an instrument for the moral betterment of the world.

The *Christian Commonwealth* adds, "It may well shake the faith of some if, in such a contest, God does not decisively declare against the doctrine that might is right; if broken treaties, and civilisation outraged, and all the horrors of war forced upon innocent people go unavenged." Here is all the old Christian cant served up anew. How often in the past has might overcome right? And if God allowed it then, why should he not allow it now? And if it occurred once more, why should that shape religious faith to-day more than it has done in the past? The question of might versus right is not a matter of chronology. When the Germans overran France in 1870 did that prove they were in the right, or did it prove that they possessed the best fighting machine? The Germans could not do better than they are doing, even if they had right on their side, they will not do worse because they have not. And, after all, the Kaiser is very confident that God is on his side. He is as good a Christian as anyone that is opposed to him. Whether he is as good a man is quite another question.

If God wished "to decisively" declare that he was on the side of right against might, he had a magnificent opportunity when the Germans invaded Belgium. Here was a people who had done nothing to injure Germany. They were guiltless of offence—at least, there only offence was a geographical one; that, and having the courage to stand up for their rights. Yet God has allowed Belgium to be overrun; its cities destroyed; its men, women, and children murdered. And now, when the Allies defeat Germany, we shall be informed that God has vindicated might against right. Absurd! How can the defeat and humiliation of Germany make good the horrors through which Belgium has passed? Is there a single Belgian who has had his home and family destroyed that will feel the defeat of Germany compensates him for his loss? So far as that mass of suffering is concerned, might and not right is triumphant. If God wished to prove that might could not stand against right he had his opportunity when the German troops

attacked Liege. He should have blasted the Kaiser's armies then. Their defeat after months of carnage and brutality can only prove that in "God's world" right *plus* might is effective. Right *minus* might is of small account—so far as God is concerned.

Rev. W. E. Orchard has joined the prophets. The whole mechanical explanation of nature, he says, will appear in the next generation as one of the most amazing blunders in the world of thought. *Will* appear; not *does* appear. Had Dr. Orchard spoken in the present tense, he might have been asked to prove it. To speak in the future tense is a much safer plan. For our part, we are quite content with the fact that the "mechanical" conception of nature is simply universal in the world of science. "Mechanical" is not, by the way, a good term; it has too many misleading connotations. "Causational" is a much better term to express the truth that in nature every phenomenon is the product of all preceding conditions. This is not only the ruling conception in the world of science; it is inevitable to all systematic thinking. Even theologians cannot escape it. Even though matter were not ultimate, but, as some theologians assert, there is beyond that a world of "spirit," the position remains substantially unchanged. All that occurs would still be due to the action and interaction of the properties of this "spiritual" substance. Whether we believe in "spirit" or "matter," the principle of universal causation remains as the indispensable condition of scientific thinking. And so long as that is established the case for Theism is hopeless.

Dr. Orchard asks, "If this universe is a purposeless machine without a mind to guide, how much longer will man be content to be one of its cogs? Is it possible to content his mind, his aspirations, his strivings after better things, with a life and destiny which are the mockery of his whole nature?" Content whose mind? One might paraphrase the question by asking, Is it possible to content one whose whole nature cries out for some alcoholic stimulant with water, tea, or ginger-beer? One would have to answer, No. But one would also add that the craving itself pointed to a more or less unhealthy condition of the organism, and the chief thing was to create counter desires in a healthier direction. So in reply to Dr. Orchard. It may be quite true that a man brought up under strong religious influences will feel that without religion life would not be worth living. But this does not mean that we must fall in with his view of life. On the contrary, what we have to do is to bring him to realise that the craving after better things may receive full satisfaction after all specifically religious beliefs have been rejected. It is the problem of the alcoholic over again. And the real test of the value of religion is not found in those who say they cannot live without it, but in those who do, and are none the worse for its absence.

Sir William Lever says it is depressing to find that Christians, after preaching the gospel of peace and goodwill for nearly twenty centuries should now be at war with each other. It is depressing; but that ought to lead thoughtful men and women to query the value of a preaching that has borne so little fruit. The fact is that Christians have preached goodwill, and practised its opposite. They have praised peace, and made every possible preparation—material and mental—for war. And when nations prepare for war they will, sooner or later, have it.

What Secularists these Christians are! In the current issue of *Home Words*, a pious periodical circulating in thousands of parishes, nearly two pages are devoted to such sacred subjects as pea-soup, plum-pudding, roly-poly, mince-meat, fig pudding, and similar culinary delicacies. Perhaps they are meant to be "sweets" after "the bread of life." As the pill advertisers are also in evidence in the magazine, doubtless the editor anticipates some of his readers overeating.

Pious versifiers are busy invoking the Deity concerning the alleged killing of children in the present war. When the reports are confirmed, it will be high time to write poems; but religious folk might reflect that it is not irreligious persons who imagine that unchristened babies are damned through all eternity by the "God of all Christians."

One would think that "Thou shalt not kill" and "Forgive your enemies" were in the *Analects of Confucius*, and not in the Christian Bible. At Southend-on-Sea the Church Army band has been playing the recruits to the railway station, and among those who have joined the colors are members of the Salvation Army.

To Correspondents.

- PRESIDENT'S HONORARIUM FUND, 1914.**—Previously acknowledged, £201 15s. 0d. Received since:—R. C. Proctor, 2s. 6d.; Anglo Italian Secularist, 2s. 6d.; Charles and Collis Cade, 10s.; A. Firth, 5s.; A Few Workers (per M. Beagling), 8s. 6d.; C. J., £3.
- C. AND C. CADE.**—Thanks for your pleasant and encouraging letter.
- J. D.**—"Peace on Earth" is hardly up to our mark.
- MILDRED WINTERS (Canada).**—Glad to have your letter, but the political aspect of the matter is of course tabu in our columns.
- W. P. BALL.**—Thanks for cuttings.
- E. B.**—Always welcome.
- RAMSEY TESTIMONIAL FUND.**—We have received:—C. J., £1.; R. Gibbon, 5s.
- R. C. PROCTOR.**—Your N. S. S. sub. is passed over to the Secretary.
- ANGLO-ITALIAN SECULARIST.**—(1) Our correspondents should not give themselves great historic names. We object to answering Cæsars, Cromwells, etc. They give a comic aspect to the "Correspondents" column. (2) Never trust Cassell's or other orthodox Cyclopedias in relation to dead Freethinkers.
- W. J. MOLINEUX.**—The reverend gentleman's remarks had been dealt with by anticipation. Pleased you think this journal "delightful."
- M. BEAGLING.**—Thanks to yourself and friends for "a tribute to what they know to be good work for the best of all causes. Back numbers forwarded for free distribution.
- R. GIBBON.**—We should be very pleased to see you by appointment. You would probably waste your time by calling at a venture.
- C. J.**—May all your good wishes be realised.
- 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.
- THE *Freethinker*** will be forwarded direct from the publishing office to any part of the world, post free, at the following rates, prepaid:—One year, 10s. 6d.; half year, 5s. 3d.; three months 2s. 8d.

Sugar Plums.

Mr. Foote's engagement at the Birmingham Town Hall on Sunday, November 1, is cancelled. The great hall is being used for drilling and other military purposes. Mr. Foote's visit, therefore, is postponed indefinitely.

Pious folk pretend never to have heard of Mr. Foote, but, somehow, their innocence is not so filmy-eyed as that of prattling childhood. A religious publisher has issued a book with the title, *Bible Heroes*. Of course, the book is not Mr. Foote's, but the fat will be in the fire if the wholesale booksellers supply Mr. Foote's publication instead of the other one.

An Outdoor Demonstration has been arranged for Sunday, September 13, in lieu of the ordinary lectures in Finsbury and Regent's Parks. The speakers will include Messrs. C. Cohen, C. E. Ratcliffe, W. Davidson, A. D. Howell-Smith, and Miss Kough. The brake, kindly supplied, as on former occasions, by Mr. Edwin Wilson, will be in position at Finsbury Park at 3 o'clock sharp, and at Regent's Park at 5 p.m. There should be a good rally of North London Freethinkers at both stations.

The September *Humanitarian* contains a good article on the War, and a fine one on Schopenhauer's "Basis of Morality." We heartily commend this little monthly (organ of the Humanitarian League) to the attention of our own readers.

The *English Review* for September opens with a fine poem on "August, 1914," by Mr. John Masefeld. We like him better in this vein than in the turbulent and (may we say so?—raw one) on which his fame mainly depends.

The most noticeable of the rest of the contents is a reprint of Mr. Frederic Harrison's article from the January, 1913, number—warning England against the German menace. Prophets are apt to forget that prophecy is not an exact science, and that many prophecies come true in the course of what may be called accident. Mr. Harrison's article, however, is well worth reading again. The editor's contribution is very ably written, and "hits the nail on the head." The Kaiser started with his Kruger telegram and has been going war-mad ever since. English publicists might have the courage to point out that this could only have happened under a Monarchy. Shelley's "King-deluded Germany" still holds the field as the poetico-philosophic description of the great central European nation from a political point of view.

The Secretary of the Camberwell Branch, N. S. S., asks us to remind readers that, in consequence of the earlier closing of Brockwell Park, lectures from Sunday next, till end of season, will commence at 5 p.m.

Cardinal della Chiesa is the new Pope, and his election to the post seems to give satisfaction. Man for man, we prefer him to the Kaiser. What he might be if the Catholic Church had its old power we do not know, but as things are (and it is no good talking about anything else) the Pope beats the Kaiser hollow from a humanitarian point of view. The Protestant monarch talks and acts like a brutal egotist. For years he has been boasting of his intention of smiting down whoever didn't agree with him, and now he is doing it. He is practising brigandage by murder (and something worse) on a colossal scale; and he will never stop until he is beaten down, for the appetite for that sort of thing grows by what it feeds on. But the new Pope, coming into office amidst all this horror of deliberate bloodshed and desolation, shudders at the prospect. One is not surprised to hear him say so in his first message to the world. We quote the following from the Rome correspondent of a London newspaper:—

"Immediately after he was elected, the Pope said he could not imagine how his frail being would be capable of enduring the weight of the enormous responsibility thrown on his shoulders, especially at a moment when almost all the countries of Europe were stained with blood. The war had armed the faithful against the faithful, while the priests and bishops of each country had to offer prayers for the success of the arms of their own nation; but the victory of one side meant the slaughter of the other, a destruction of children equally dear to the paternal heart of the Pontiff."

Freethinkers will chuckle over the Pope's perception of the absurdity of rival nations praying to the same God for victory; but they will recognise that the avowal of it in the open daylight of publicity does him credit. For the rest, *we* are not bigoted; we like to see all influences working on the right side in this dreadful crisis; and are glad to see even the Pope talking the language of sense and humanity.

What Protestant priest of any eminence has done this? Those who say that Protestantism is in itself better than Catholicism are talking nonsense out of ignorance. Protestantism *is* better than Catholicism, but not in the sense in which they mean the statement. Protestantism is better than Catholicism in the sense that the less religion you have the better—just as a mild attack of fever is better than a severe attack of fever. Protestantism has all the harsh features of Catholicism, with none of its grace and tenderness. Hell and damnation belong to both, but not the adoration of motherhood, symbolised in the Virgin and Child—the holy conception (*really* holy) into which so many great artists have poured the splendor of their genius—and which every evolutionist knows is the vital secret of all human culture. Catholicism did not invent the worship of the divine mother and child, but Catholicism adopted it, while Protestantism (especially of the Kaiser's sort) spits upon it. As for absurd superstition, Protestant men of God pray to him for victory in war, just as Catholic men of God do. From that point of view they are all in the same (ridiculous) business.

This is not a bad time for our friends to push the circulation of the *Freethinker*. Something really sensible, not only about this war, but about all wars, is uncommon enough to attract a good many people if it were only introduced to their notice.

After the first "knock" caused by the war, our circulation has suffered very little. If anything, indeed, it has been going up a little. But this always was a peculiar journal. We hope to be able to maintain our present size, even if we have to print on an inferior paper. It will be a triumph if we have to make no change at all. But the price of things keeps going up.

The Heart of the Rose.

LIKE most preachers, he spoke under the influence of the delusion that all his hearers believed in the ideas upon which he placed his faith. Consequently, his sermon was thoroughly dogmatic throughout. Nothing he said required weighing in the balance of truth and error. Everything he said was right. It never occurred to him that some of the members of the congregation considered him an unmitigated ass. It never seemed to dawn upon his vision that, perchance, he was not so much an ass as a fool. He sailed from one open port, across a very calm sea, to another open port; and before he asked God to bless and fructify the words he had just spoken, he wiped his forehead with a silk handkerchief, and sighed heavily; and then he sat down to rest awhile.

His sermon was entitled "The Rose of Christianity"; and, after a few remarks upon roses in general, went something like this:

You may have little appreciation of flowers; you may regard roses with as much respect as you give the down-trodden daises of the fields; but you cannot quell the conquering admiration this flower of flowers awakens within you. You cannot negligently overlook it. You cannot treat it with indifference. You cannot remark unconcernedly upon its beauty and pass on, more or less disinterestedly, to something else. You cannot, try as you may, subdue the glow of delight that suffuses your soul when its loveliness first fascinates you, and you feel your more animalistic senses becoming lulled into slumber by its aroma.

You *must* regard it with awe and wonderment. You *must* recognise that all other flowers are as leaves of grass, even as straw, compared to it; you *must* be conscious of the divine inspiration of its creation. You cannot help yourself. The beauty of it dulls your critical power, as it negates the apathy of the careless. Though your mind be full of facts relative to its growth and history, and your reason inclined towards doubt, there is still the warm corner of your heart that tells you of the beneficent influence of the rose of Christianity; how it has sweetened and gladdened life. Behind your knowledge of the erring ways of its votaries, behind your knowledge of the weaknesses of its lovers, weaknesses you, too often, call its failures and shortcomings, there lies the silent admission of the great charm of it. Its tender loveliness, its dignity and grace, its quiet majesty, all evoke an admiration you vainly endeavor to hide.

Its ethereal nature gives suggestiveness to your wonder and awe; the many unpleasant things in the lives of its apostles are forgotten; and from your thoughts and dreams arise convictions. Nothing else on earth is like it. Nothing else is so lovely. Nothing else shows so clearly that there is something within it we do not rightly understand.

One step only, and we are with God. Then we understand. And the rose of Christianity, as you stand in worshipful attitude before it, your mind picturing its age, its power, its influence, its supremacy; your eyes seeing, in the figures of time, its claims to greatness; your ears listening to the low music of its invisibly moving petals, hearing the voices of the many martyrs who gave their lives for its love; your nostrils dilating with the subtle incense of its breath—the rose of Christianity waves a wand over you; doubts and fears disappear; you see the glory of God. The rose of Christianity enslaves you to make you free. You are impelled by a mysterious power to seek what your will may deny, but what your soul rejoices to own. And so on, till one got sick.

It may be very nice, all this romantic stuff; but the worm of it is in its untruthfulness. Lies can be told so easily. Falsehood arrayed in solemnity often carries more weight than truth spoken royally. Any quack can gather a crowd and keep his audience if his tongue be nimble enough in following his

imagination; and priests are only a portion of the quack class after all.

Christianity may be a blossom on the rose-tree of life; but to call it the most perfect is to forget that many a rose has withered and dropped into oblivion long before this particular one opened its petals to the light. To prate about its glorious beauty, saying it is the flower of flowers, is to forget that the tree is old, and has, even yet, a long life hidden in the roots of the future. Remembering these things, there is no sacrilege in tearing off the petals one by one. You come nearer to the heart of the rose; and, regardless of your equanimity, of your enthusiasm, of your admiration, the sight of the worm in its heart will discolor all the delicate tints of your idealism. Your commonplace human nature does not allow you warmly to honor something internally rotten. The worm in the heart of a rose feasts as much on its loveliness and charm as on its sappy materialistic strength. Your appreciation becomes hesitant; then it ceases; for our natures rebel against praising the surface beauty of the corrupt.

So with Christianity. Freethinkers have plucked petal from petal, and have bared the heart of the rose; and not a priest, pastor, or minister exists who does not know that the worm is there. The knowledge has shocked, maybe stunned them; but, in their slow recovery, they have turned for safety to the stuff that forms the first portion of this article. Around the heart of the rose they have been, and are, fixing false petals. They are exhausting the resources of language in the endeavor to hide the truth. A sermon of to-day is as sloppy as a baby's breakfast. They are decorating the worm with phantastic petal wings, and coloring them with all the tints of poesy. To their congregations the petals are not the worm's mausoleum; they are the walls of a heavenly palace within which everything is lovely.

Inside the heart of the Christian rose is the lie of all religion, the lie that came as a tremor of fear, bidding the human mind hate and worship. Out of it has come, as real history teaches us, disaster and death. No pen can fully picture the horrors inflicted upon Humanity by the influence of this lie. For it gave to the cutest minds the miserable opportunity to dominate their fellows. It put authority in their hands. Religion meant autocracy; and the little of civilisation that there is amongst the mass of men has come only in so far as religious autocracy has gone.

The spirit, ghost, or God idea could never become truth; for all the belief in the world cannot make a lie even a half-truth; and the lie of Religion, once fastened to life, and supported by all the most cunning faculties of the human mind, flourished exceedingly. Its nourishment was of the richest and rarest. It fed sumptuously upon the very sap of life. Its home was in the heart of the rose.

Gradually primitive cunning became civilised astuteness, forced not so much by devotion as by the social power it involved. Gradually the heavy curtain of sacredness was woven. Around the ugliness of the worm arose the protecting grandeurs of mediæval power, the elaboration of the primitive hut, the dignification of the mysterious medicine-man. As the leaves dropped, faded and withered by the sun's rays of civilisation, they were replaced by others more refined, with more semblance of culture. Around the unchangeable ugliness gathered the sweet fruits of man's brain. Religion, being the social power, impinged its character upon everything. Delicate artistry beautified the worm's tomb. Loveliness more and more enveloped the internal coarseness, till the human mind could not conceive it other than it seemed. Wonderful ingenuity forced the horrible corruption deeper into the darkness, and incense sweetened the atmosphere that once reeked with blood.

But with all the accumulations of false beauty and surface delicacy, the lie was never in the least made more worthy by its environment. The worm fattened,

but despite the gold and glory of its home, it remained a worm. Time, with its cohorts of civilisation, has altered the rose from a thing of materialistic significance to a thing of spirituous incandescence; but the nature and activities of the worm in its heart remain unchanged. And to-day the rose of Christianity, with all its marvellous loveliness, all its ineffable influences, all its sweetness, and purity, and delicacy, its tenderness, refinement, and charm, all the thousand graces that adorn it and beautify Humanity, as we are told—where is it? Growing in the cruel sorrow and blood of a battlefield, growing amidst shattered bones and quivering flesh and spilt brains, growing amidst desolation and horror and murder, growing with all its false hypocritical meekness and mildness and Christlike simplicity, amongst the ruins of the work of laborious years. How similar its surroundings are to its heart! Yea! it is a marvellously wonderful flower, this rose of Christianity. Christians have cause to be proud of it; but we are glad we are Freethinkers.

ROBERT MORELAND.

Heredity and Progress.

(BY THE LATE J. M. WHEELER.)

THE law of heredity in its wider aspects is hardly popular, although observed in all ages. As a scientific theory, it has the misfortune to come in conflict, not with facts, but with what are often more potent—namely, prejudices and dogmas. The *Catholic World*, reviewing Galton's work on *Hereditary Genius*, declared the doctrine "is at variance with Christian theology, with the freedom of the human will and man's moral responsibility. It excludes all morality and all sin, and recognises only physical good or evil." Without troubling to follow these charges, which have been reiterated *ad nauseam* whenever positive science has ventured on fields over which theology has vainly claimed jurisdiction, let us simply look at the facts.

The truth of the law of heredity cannot be denied. Were it not the primary fact that like produces like, there would be no constancy of species. No one doubts that the hard head of the Negro and the light foot of the Indian are inherited. Inheritance extends not simply to size, complexion, and figure, but even to tricks of expression, handwriting, tastes, disposition, intellect—in short, to all that is summed up in the word "character." Anyone who considers the Jews will see at once that their characters, as much as their noses, are an inheritance. A Scotchman "caught young," as Johnson said, may lose some of the superficial characteristics, but will retain all the national peculiarities of his race; and so will the Irishman. The most noticeable qualifications of the law of heredity are those of sex and age. Various characteristics (as in the human family, teeth, beards, and various diseases) appear not at birth, but at the same age as in parents. Striking instances have been recorded of suicide, insanity, and special diseases, breaking out at the same age as in parents. It is even noticed that in men there are long-lived and short-lived stocks. The famous Turgots, of France, scarcely ever reached over half a century, while centenarians usually spring from a long-lived stock. Darwin noted that "on this principle of inheritance, at corresponding periods, we can understand how it is that most animals display from the germ to maturity such a marvellous succession of characters." He also considered this tendency of the utmost importance in determining the laws of embryology.

Theodule Ribot, the French writer on heredity, alleges two causes as among the chief in cases where the law does not obviously manifest itself. First, the disproportion of an initial force to the amount of energy it may liberate or direct. Each individual having two parents with the latent qualities of their ancestry, and being subject to new embryological conditions, is, however, slightly

diverse from every other individual. As affecting this, the military excitement in which Mme. Buonaparte lived prior to Napoleon's birth has been instanced. The Greeks surrounded expectant mothers with beautiful works of art. The second cause is that characteristics are transmitted, which, though modified, are the same at root. Thus a consumptive father may have a child with rickets or rheumatics. An hysterical mother may give birth to a child afflicted with epilepsy. The children of drunkards are often imbecile or otherwise unhealthy, while those born previously to the parents taking to drink have been healthy.

What Darwin calls the "prepotency of one sex in the transmission of character" is also to be noted. In crosses, the most thoroughbred animal is usually prepotent in the offspring. G. B. Starkweather is even of opinion that the sex of human beings may be determined by a study of prepotency, or what he calls "superiority."

The seeming absence of certain elements in one generation, and their reappearance in the next or a later generation, is just what should be expected. A father may transmit certain qualities to his daughter which her sex will prevent being other than latent ones, but she in turn transmits them to a son, who thus inherits from his maternal grandfather. Readers of Darwin know the importance of *atavism*, or the reversion to an earlier type, in determining the stock whence an animal proceeds. Atavism is explained by the latency of traits which are kept in check by other circumstances, but which, upon a fitting opportunity, again take shape. Scratch a Russian, and you find a Tartar. Under the veneer of our civilisation lies the disposition of an earlier savage life, ready to crop up in sport, Jingoism, or love of adventure. The momentum of ages is not to be stayed by the training of a single life. The man who fights his ancestry is often worsted in the last round, giving in in old age to what he has resisted in his manhood. We are, for instance, all more superstitious than we know. Mme. de Staël spoke for many when she replied to the question, "Do you believe in ghosts?" by saying, "No; but I am afraid of them."

In addition to the tendency to transmit peculiarities to the same sex should be noted the more general, slowly acting, and weaker tendency of transmission to both sexes of qualities, or degrees of qualities, which originally appeared in one sex only. This tendency is shown in connection with the tendency to inherit acquired qualities at earlier and earlier ages, and therefore in a manner independent of adult sex development.

Those who accept the facts of biology will find no difficulty in Galton's contention that it would be quite practicable to produce a highly gifted race of men by judicious marriages during several generations. In the case of the Brahmans it has been done, although the adverse forces have been strengthened by the habits of superstition and the lack of education on the female side. Every stockbreeder knows the difficulty of keeping up the high character of any valuable variety. There is a steady tendency to revert to the average ancestral character which has to be guarded against by careful selection. With every race of animals, if unpruned for a single generation, the weaker varieties would survive, and the average quality of the race deteriorate. The usual question asked of the believer in inheritance is, How is it the breed falls off? Why was not Cromwell's son, or Milton's daughter, as superior to their parents as they were to theirs? A consideration of the laws already mentioned will, in part, supply the answer. The case of Cromwell, also, deserves a word of notice. His military and political genius may be said to have developed with his opportunity. Had Charles been a good king, Cromwell might only have been a self-willed yeoman and a leader of opinion among the Huntingdon gentry. He had come of good descent, and his high qualities appeared to some extent in his daughters.

The difficulty is, however, properly met by Mr.

Galton in his latest researches. It lies in the constant tendency to mediocrity of which I have spoken. In experiments on seeds of different size, but of the same species, Galton noticed that the offspring did *not* resemble their parents in size, but always tended to approach a medium size—to be smaller than the parents if the parents were large, to be larger than the parents if the parents were small. The point of convergence was below the average size. In regard to human height, an experiment furnished the result that where the average height of the two parents either exceeded or fell short of the mean standard height, that of their offspring would be one-third nearer. The explanation, of course, is that the child inherits partly from his parents, partly from his ancestry. The further his genealogy goes back, the more numerous and varied his ancestors become, until their mean stature becomes the same as that of the race. The man who boasts descent from some Norman baron rarely reflects how inconceivably small can be the share of that remote ancestor in forming his own constitution. The father transmits, on an average, one-half of his nature, the grandfather one-fourth, the great grandfather one-eighth, the share decreasing in geometrical ratio with great rapidity. This law of regression, towards the average of parentages, tells heavily against the full transmission of any rare and valuable gift. The more exceptional the gift, the more exceptional is the good fortune of a parent who has a child of equal or greater abilities than himself. If this discourages extravagant hopes in gifted parents, it no less discourages extravagant fears in those a little below the standard.

(To be concluded.)

Joseph Priestley.—IV.

By G. W. FORTÉ.

[Reprinted.]

(Concluded from p. 573)

THE logical corollary from this Materialism was the doctrine of Philosophical Necessity, the absolute denial of the unintelligible doctrine of the freedom of the will. In his correspondence with Price he argues and illustrates this theory with great power. Man as an organised system of matter is subject to the inevitable laws of his nature, and his actions depend upon his general frame of mind in presence of the conditions which surround him. Owing to the complexity of his structure, and the multiplicity of environmental circumstances, it is often impossible to predict in what precise manner a man will act in any particular instance; but we ought not, therefore, to infer that his actions conform to no laws whatever. It may be impossible to predict how the wind will blow to-morrow, but the winds are nevertheless subject to the laws of meteorology. This doctrine of philosophical necessity was not new; it had been propounded by Hobbes, by Spinoza, by Toland in his *Letters to Serena*, by Dr. Coward, by Collins, and by a number of less distinguished writers; but Priestley presented and defended it with trenchant and irrefragable logic, and so perspicuously presented it that it never could again be misunderstood, except by wilfully perverse persons or imbeciles.

In his treatment of the problem of the existence of evil, he by no means manifested his customary rigor of logic and clearness of perception. Moral evil, he argues, is ultimately resolvable into physical pain, and physical pain is necessary to the progress of the human race. If we were not stimulated by hunger to partake of food, we should die of inanition. Throughout nature what seems evil is only a necessary part of the great providential scheme of good. Now this is the veriest sophistry; it is an invasion of the difficulty. The human suffering complained of by those who deny that the existence of evil is irreconcilable with the existence of a being at once omnipotent and good, is not that pain which is a beneficent stimulus to action, but that appalling misery which, in the shape of congenital disease or social servitude or semi-starvation, attends from the cradle to the grave vast

numbers of the human race, even in some of the most civilised countries of the world. Priestley, however, was not the first philosopher who sacrificed reason in the attempt to gloss over the difficulties of Theistic conceptions. His belief in the ultimate perfectibility of mankind does credit to his humane feelings, if not to his intellect. Even if it be a delusion it is a very harmless one. Many people, as Huxley says, would be glad to share it, if it could be reconciled with scientific truth. The earth is cooling very fast, and the rate of human progress is very slow, so that the perfected man is likely to be only a perfected Esquimaux.

Of Priestley's contributions to chemical science only a scientific man is competent to speak with authority. We, therefore, prefer to borrow from Professor Huxley's address on Priestley's Life and Labors, rather than attempt an independent account ourselves. The quotation is not characterised by the Professor's customary grace of style; but that is readily accounted for by the fact of its being taken from a newspaper report:—

“To estimate what Priestley did in chemistry, you must carry your minds back to the beginning of the last century, and try, difficult as it is, to form a notion of what was then the condition of chemical science. At that time there was no one who believed, hardly anyone who suspected, that the doctrine of the ancients, that air and water and fire are elements, was other than true. The researches, indeed, of Boyle and Hayles had tended to define the qualities of air, had tended to show that there were different kinds of air; but that there was anything like a multiplicity and diversity of elementary bodies, which we now branch under the name of gases, was entirely unsuspected. But immediately at the commencement of the second half of the last century—about the year 1755—a most remarkable young man, a young Scotch doctor, Dr. Black, had made investigations upon the nature of what was then called fixed air. He had shown that this substance could be combined with such matters as lime, and such matters as alkali, and could be got again from these combinations; that it was an acid substance, capable of neutralising the strongest alkali; and had then paved the way for the conception of an air-like body, an aeriform elastic substance, which, nevertheless, was independent, and could play the character of an independent existence totally distinct from common air. And then a little later, in 1766, Henry Cavendish, one of the most remarkable men who ever adorned the science of this or any other country, in a series of researches which strike one at present by their precision, and by their exactness of statement, showed the nature of sundry other gases, particularly that gas which is called hydrogen now, which was then termed ‘inflammable air’; and the special peculiarity of Cavendish was that to the investigation of these questions he applied a rigor of method which was almost unknown before. For he brought the balance into play, and he implied, although he did not express, that great truth which it remained for the French chemist Lavoisier to formulate, the doctrine that ‘matter is never created and never destroyed.’ It was following immediately after Cavendish's work that Dr. Priestley commenced his inquiries, and if we look upon them as contributions to our knowledge of chemical science they are something surprising—not only surprising in themselves, but still more surprising when we consider that he was a man devoid of the academic training of Dr. Black, that he had not the means and appliances which practically unlimited wealth put at the disposal of Cavendish, but that he had to do what so many Englishmen have done before and since—to supply academic training by mother-wit, to supply apparatus by an ingenuity which could fabricate what he wanted out of washing-tubs, and other domestic implements and then to do as many Englishmen have done before, and many have done since—to scale the walls of science without preparation from the outside. The number of discoveries that he made was something marvellous. I certainly am well within the limit when I say that he trebled the number of gases which were known before his time, that he gave a precision and definition to our knowledge of their general characteristics, of which no one before had any idea; and, finally, on the 1st of August, 1774, he made that discovery with which his name is more especially connected—the discovery of the substance which at the present day is known as oxygen gas.”

On the 1st of August, 1874, a great gathering took place at Birmingham to do honor to Joseph Priestley. There, in the very place whence the noble-minded man had been driven by political and theological hate, was unveiled a statue

erected by the lovers of science and liberal thought to his great memory. It was the centenary anniversary of his discovery of oxygen gas, and Professor Huxley was chosen to present the statue to the Mayor of Birmingham, and to deliver a commemorative address in the Town Hall. And not in Birmingham alone on that day had thinkers and men of science assembled to celebrate Priestley's praise. Away on the far-distant banks of the Susquehanna, by the grave of the good old man, American savants met for a similar purpose; and another gathering assembled at Leeds near the place which gave him birth. Surely some progress has been made since Joseph Priestley was hunted from his native land, and compelled to lay his bones in alien soil. It is to him, and to such as he, that we owe much of that great and beneficial change. In the eloquent language of Huxley, "Such men as he are not men who care very much for honors and rewards; happily for them, for their generation is not usually disposed to give them any very great share of these matters. They are men who say in another spirit than Falstaff's,—

'What is honor, who hath it, he who died o' Wensday?' But whether such men undergo after their death that sort of lay canonisation which we have to-day bestowed upon Priestley, whether posterity erects statues to their memory, or whether their name and fame and remembrance are blotted out from the recollection of man, there still remains to them one thing which shall never die—every truth which they advocated. The whole progress of truth has been helped by them, and for all generations and for all time to come truth will be stronger for their efforts; and for every lie which they have smitten, and every imposture they have detected, falsehood and imposture will be weaker until time is no more."

A New Carol.

Recommended to be sung by the Christian soldiers of the Powers now at war.

God save you, merry gentlemen,
List kindly to our lay,
Remember now our Savior's birth,
For whom we fight to-day:
And 'tis tidings of comfort and joy.

'Twas nineteen centuries ago
And fourteen years to-day,
And now we Christian folk are out
To rob and burn and slay:
And 'tis tidings of comfort and joy.

They say that he was meek and mild,
And harmless as a dove,
But fierce as tigers clemmed are we,
And naught but carnage love:
And 'tis tidings of comfort and joy.

Goodwill and peace he brought to men,
Or so his priests have said;
But goodwill long has left the earth,
And peace lies stark and dead:
And 'tis tidings of comfort and joy.

His soldiers have his doctrines preached
In every age and clime,
With sword and fire and tortures dire,
And many a flagrant crime:
And 'tis tidings of comfort and joy.

The Prince of Peace they named him once
In mockery and scorn,
But not to bring peace on the earth,
But warfare, was he born:
And 'tis tidings of comfort and joy.

'Tis said he gave his blood to save
Mankind from mortal doom;
But 'tis our purpose now to send
A million to the tomb:
And 'tis tidings of comfort and joy.

God save you, merry gentlemen,
Christ's followers are we:
The fountain filled so oft before,
We'll fill again with glee.

B. D.

The Good God.

ONE day the good God got out of bed
In a very good humor for us, 'tis said;
He put his nose to the window light—
"Perhaps their planet has perished quite."
Not yet; in its corner very far
He saw it twinkling, our little star.
"If I can think how they get on there,"
Said he, "the Devil may take me, I swear;
The Devil may take me, I swear.

"Black or white, frozen or broiled
(He said, like a father to children spoiled),
Mortals whom I have made so small,
They pretend that I govern you all;
But, God be praised, you shall also see
That I have ministers under me.
If I don't give the sack to one or two pair,
My children, the Devil may take me, I swear
The Devil may take me, I swear.

"To make you live in peace divine,
Have I not given you women and wine?
Yet in my teeth with prayers and boasts
The pigmies call me the Lord of Hosts;
And even dare to invoke my name
When they light the murderous cannon's flame!
If ever I commanded column or square,
My children, the Devil may take me, I swear;
The Devil may take me, I swear.

"Who are those dwarfs so richly drest,
On gilded thrones in sumptuous rest?
The head anointed, so proud and pert,
These chiefs of your insect-swarms assert
That I have blest their rights of place,
That they are kings by my special grace.
If it is by me that they reign thus there,
My children, the Devil may take me, I swear;
The Devil may take me, I swear!

"Then these other dwarfs, all black, of whom
My poor nose hates the incense fume?
They make of life a dismal fast,
And in my name fierce curses cast
In their sermons — Very fine, said he;
Only, by gad, they're Hebrew to me;
If I believe anything they declare,
My children, the Devil may take me, I swear;
The Devil may take me, I swear!

"Children, enough of this: no sect
But the good kind hearts shall be my elect.
Make love to each other and live in joy,
Without any fear that God will annoy;
Laugh down the great and the canting crew —
But suppose the *mouchards* should hear me? Adieu!
If into heaven those fellows fare,
My children, the Devil may take me, I swear;
The Devil may take me, I swear."

—JAMES THOMSON, from *Beranger*.

"Jewish history as revealed in the Old Testament is sacred, and our English history is no less sacred." Thus says the Bishop of Chelmsford. His Lordship has a stronger faith than we have, for the lively days of Charles II. and his lady friends and the period satirised by the great Hogarth do not move us to adoration.

As an index to what lengths war will lead ordinary folk, the suppression of German music from concert programs shows a deliberate want of judgment. As the Messiah is out of date now-a-days, we suppose that even Handel is a back number. Perhaps the Germans will refuse to read Shakespeare.

"Scratch a Russian and you find a Tartar," says the old proverb, and the zest with which the ordinary Christian enters into "the game of beasts" on the Continent shows that two thousand years of contact with the pacific commands of Christianity has had little or no effect on the race. It is all to the tune of "an eye for an eye," but as for Christianity, that's "all my eye."

Mr. Rudyard Kipling has been strumming his lyre on the subject of the war. Two of his lines read, "Though all we knew depart, The old commandments stand." This is news! We thought "Thou shalt not kill" had been overlooked by European Christians.

SUNDAY LECTURE NOTICES, Etc.

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

LONDON.

INDOOR.

KINGSLAND BRANCH N. S. S. (Mr. Neary's, 94 Lordship-road, Church-street, Stoke Newington): Monday, Sept. 14, at 8.30, Business Meeting—*Re* Outdoor Week Evenings, Propaganda, etc.

OUTDOOR.

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

CAMBERWELL BRANCH N. S. S. (Brockwell Park): 5, Mr. Hope, a Lecture.

EDMONTON BRANCH N. S. S. (Edmonton Green): 7.30, Mr. W. Davidson, a Lecture. Lincoln-road, Ponders End: Wednesday, Sept. 16, at 8.30, Mr. Davidson, a Lecture.

KINGSLAND BRANCH N. S. S. (corner of Ridley-road): 11.30, J. Bellamy, "Christians of To-Day"; 7.30, C. Burke, "Facts and Fictions."

NORTH LONDON BRANCH N. S. S. (Finsbury Park): 3, Freethought Demonstration. Speakers: Messrs. C. Cohen, W. Davidson, Miss Kough; chairman, C. E. Ratcliffe.—Parliament Hill: 3.30, Mr. Rowney, a Lecture.—Regent's Park (near the Fountain): 5, Freethought Demonstration. Speakers: Messrs. C. Cohen, W. Davidson, A. D. Howell-Smith, Miss Kough; chairman, C. E. Ratcliffe.

WEST HAM BRANCH N. S. S. (outside Maryland Point Station, Stratford, E.): 7, Miss Kough, "Christianity and Crime."



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